



Cindy Bernard, *Ludwig Bandshell (City of Clear Lake, 1954) Clear Lake, Iowa, 2004*, color photograph, 24 x 32".

campaigns valiantly on behalf of such notoriously "difficult" local musicians as Tom Recchion, Joe and Rick Potts, and other former members of LAFMS (the Los Angeles Free Music Society), as well as their various spin-offs. She acts as curator of the "Sound" concert program and releases recordings of them on the soundCd imprint, which credits her as producer.

An offshoot of this enterprise, a series of sharp prints reminiscent of the semi-empirical manner of the *neue Neue Sachlichkeit* (i.e. Thomases Ruff and Struth et al.), was first exhibited at the former Lemon Sky Projects gallery in 2004. Each image comprised two principal elements: a standing or seating area and a performance area, the first lying right beneath the second. As in rudimentary landscapes, these two pictorial tiers are both connected and divided by a central horizontal line, asserting a symmetry fraught with social implications.

This time around, the formula has been further simplified and generalized: Documenting, Becher style, the morphological range of the bandshells that she encountered in parks throughout California and the Midwest, Bernard leaves both the audience area and the stage empty, shifting the focus to a form of civic architecture. From a 1928 World War I memorial, the Battell Park Band Shelter in Mishawaka, Indiana, to the 1996 Metrostage in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, the bandshells shelter the players but also serve as a rudimentary amplification technology, one that is simultaneously shaped by scientific understanding and stylistic trends. Reduced to a consistent, diminutive scale, they can be seen as diagrams for how sound works, architectonic analogues of the famous

pebble dropped into a pool of still water, even as they undergo all the formal permutations of loudspeaker design.

These compositions elegantly overcome the pointed discrepancy between what a photograph is and what it is "of." Sitting atop the horizon line that bisects each image, the bandshells conflate the perspectival recession of the visual with the eddying projection of the aural. As the silence that is germane to the medium becomes figurally pervaded with sound, it gives way to an aesthetic that is autonomous, in that it resists translation into words, but is not apolitical. Like Bernard's earlier photographs, these position the viewer not to one side or the other so much as right in between: between production and reception, picture and sound, the aesthetic and the social—at the very sites where culture is negotiated.

—Jan Tumlir

CINDY BERNARD

MARGO LEAVIN GALLERY

Once known for tightly plotted, high-concept musings on the ongoing annexation of everyday life by the entertainment industry, Cindy Bernard has more recently converted to the (quasi-)formalist cause. For an artist whose formative years were spent Greenberg bashing, this may come as either a surprising case of pent-up desire finally released or as a concession to the dictates of fashion. In actuality, it is probably a little of both. Like many of the '80s generation, Bernard has no doubt felt firsthand the confining effect that "issues" can have on art, and her decision to strike out for less-predictable terrain is well taken. That she has wound up in the general category of "sound art" also makes sense: For artists eager to channel the avant-garde spirit of experimentation, this is as good as it gets.

There are two sides to Bernard's current practice. The founder and director of the not-for-profit LA sound-art organization SASSAS (The Society for the Activation of Social Space through Art and Sound), she