



**Art:** *Torqued Ellipses*

**Site:** Interior, factory-building space

**Place:** DIA: Beacon

**Location:** Beacon, NY

**Artist:** Richard Serra



diacenter.org, Richard Barnes

How can something so primeval in its rawness and simplicity be so enhanced in a 20th-century industrial building? I have seen Serra's work outdoors, but the interaction of it within an enclosed space magnifies the power. The complementary scale of both the artwork and the housing is in perfect synch, a combination causing containment, compression, mystery and the dramatic lighting that only a basement-level interior can offer. Grouped like a herd, these powerful giants are captured spirits, although each has a reckoning force; their critical massing has an effect not dissimilar to the clustering of menhirs at Stonehenge:

independent members whose meaning is increased by association. Although all are rusted steel, the surfaces are so tactile and sensual, and have a rich color palette of umbers, siennas and ochers; and, with each one leaning a little differently, they are so animated. Inside, their maze-like pathways feel like ancient rock faces and mountain passes and, yet, also like aged, abandoned, primitive spaceships. Serra's subtlety can be lost sometimes in outdoor applications. This setting allows it to be seen and felt. The overwhelmingness of this hangar-sized space held in check by these graceful, lumbering creatures or structures is a perfect match presenting a primal power all its own.

**Impact:**

- Containment
- Scale
- Primal/spiritual fortress
- Exemplar use of both interior and exterior space
- Alchemy of materiality (changing hard to soft)
- Experiential
- Power of grouping

**Art-to-Site Rating:** High

**View Date:** July 2007



*Sculpturehead*

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