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Marc Blane at Paula Allen Gallery

by Janet Gillespie

Playing a game of hoop in the prison yard of Sing Sing would be pretty similar in feeling to a game imagined in any of the four sculptures exhibited here. The three smaller sculptures are constructed of sheets of rusted iron forming steep walls topped with copper bars in the form of a fence serving as further fortification. Two tiny basketball hoops and backboards are situated back to back in two of the three small pieces; this mutual reflection perverts the intent of the game to convey, along with the distortion of scale, a feeling of futility. As a metaphor for life in the urban ghetto these miniature monuments express the means by which many escape their poverty, but in these sculptures, scoring a goal is improbable and escape impossible. The horizontality of Blane's room-sized sculpture suggests a much greater expanse, but is equally as claustrophobic in its effect. In this piece, the low position of the goals serves to keep the players repressed. Ironically, this sculpture can be read as a blown-up fragment of the miniatures, lacking only the sheet metal walls. Executed entirely in rusted iron, its aged appearance enhances its archaeological aspect. Rich in social, political and emotional meanings, this is a provocative exhibition.



Playground / Landscape T – 1987 – 6' x 12' x 21' – iron