

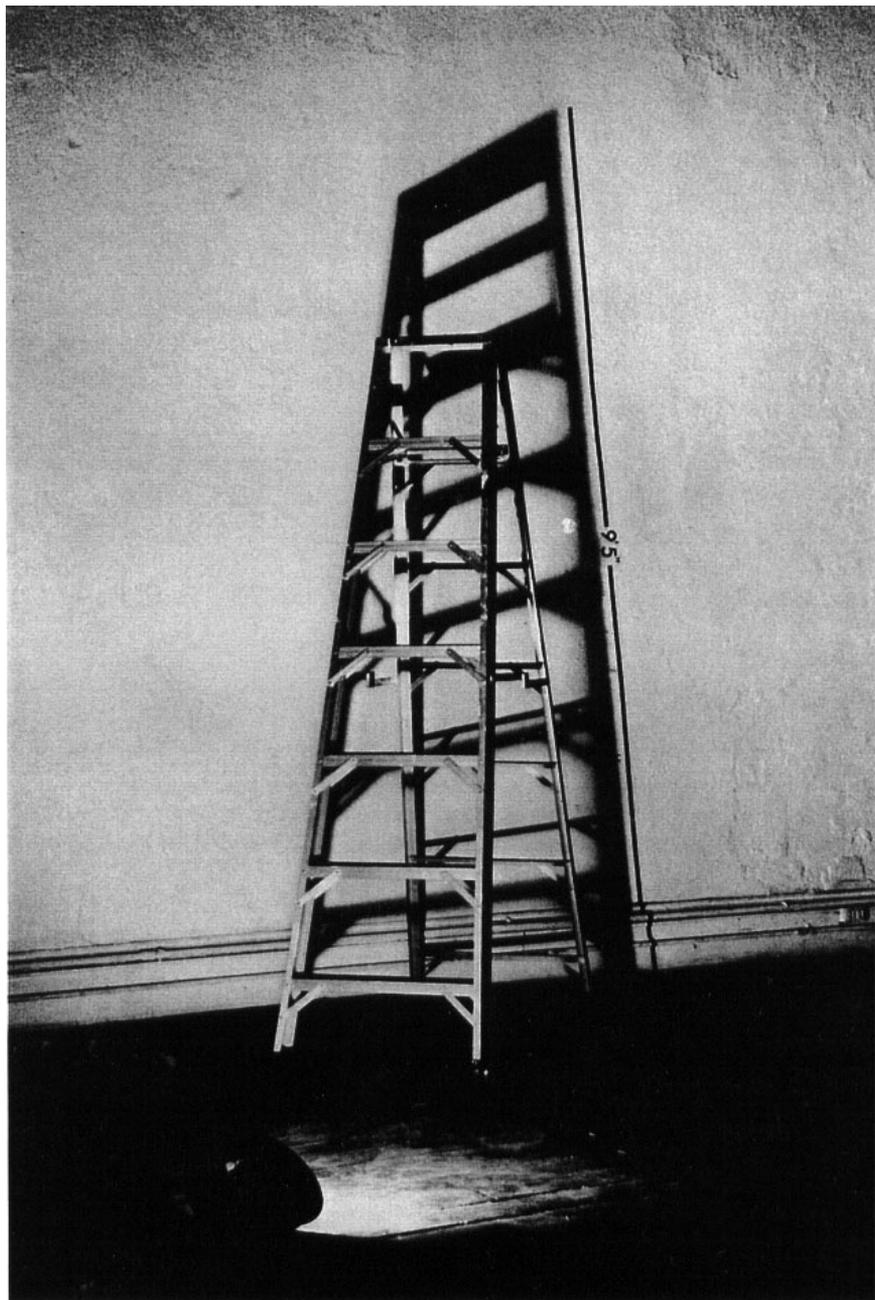
TEMPORARY SERVICES

Guide to Re-Creating “Measurement: Shadow” by Mel Bochner

In 1969 Mel Bochner created a work in his studio titled “Measurement: Shadow.” This piece is a continuation of a series of measurement works that make visible the exact dimensions of rooms, gallery and museum spaces, and even a live plant using the materials of black tape and Letraset rub-on lettering to indicate lengths in feet and inches.

“Measurement: Shadow” was created using an aluminum ladder, a clamp on light, black tape, and Letraset. Though illustrated in a photo of a studio installation in a 1995 book on Bochner’s early work, this particular piece has never been publicly exhibited.

In this booklet, Temporary Services shows you how to faithfully re-create Mel Bochner’s “Measurement: Shadow” piece so that you may experience this work of art. We are not aware that the artist has surrendered ownership of this work, however we believe that this is a work that you could re-create accurately without relying on, or waiting for, someone else’s permission.



Measurement: Shadow 1969
Aluminum Ladder, Clamp-on Light,
and tape and Letraset on wall
Installation: artist's studio

Details about Materials and Execution

Clamp Light: Bochner appears to have used a standard metal clamp light. These are commonly available at any hardware store and their design has not changed significantly since this piece was made. The choice of light bulb seems unimportant. A 100 watt bulb should be adequate. The light should be positioned sitting on the floor in front of the ladder.

Tape: Tape should be black. Half inch wide black electrical tape appears to be what has been used. This tape has a clean, smooth, plastic surface and is available at any hardware store. The taped line should be straight and should extend alongside (without touching) the shadow. The tape should begin at the bottom of the wall (running over any piping or baseboards) and extend to the top of the shadow.

Letraset: Letraset is a brand of rub-on lettering that comes in many sizes and styles and is available at art and design supply stores. Bochner has used a simple font like Helvetica that is quite large - probably 96 point. If Helvetica is not available use a close substitute such as Arial. When marking the height of the shadow use only feet and inches rather than metric measurements. Put the height indication in the middle of the line where it can easily be read, not at the top or the bottom. Make a break in the tape line to insert the measurement; do not place the measurement above or below the tape but in between.

Ladder: Bochner has used an aluminum ladder that appears to be eight feet in height. A plain wooden ladder is a reasonable substitute. The ladder should be placed with one corner touching the wall so that the shadow is cast primarily onto the wall rather than the floor.

Shadow: Bochner states that its size can be determined by installation. In the illustration he has created a 9'5" shadow.

Wall: Bochner's studio wall in the photo is quite rough. Ideally the wall should be white enough to accept a strong shadow and smooth enough to easily accept the tape and letraset.

“It was in the *Measurements* in 1969 that I found a vehicle to express some of the things I had been thinking about. That was the work in which conception and perception cut across each other. The *Measurements* were about occupying real space and yet seeing it as an idea....In these installations you experience the physical space of the room and you experience a conception of that space....That led to certain theoretical questions....how can the space, or how can the world, contain an idea about itself? How can the two things overlap? Where are the boundaries?”

Mel Bochner

From: “Building a Language” by Elaine A. King in Mel Bochner: 1973-1985

Recommended Reading:

Mel Bochner: Thought Made Visible 1966-1973, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT. 1995.

Mel Bochner: 1973-1985, Carnegie Mellon University Art Gallery, Carnegie Mellon University Press, Pittsburgh, PA. 1985.

Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966-1972, Lucy Lippard, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 1973

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