



The Cannibal Lot

Gordon Matta-Clark

Artist

New York, 1943 - 1978

Demolition Art

Summary

A pivotal artist in the 1970s downtown New York art scene, Gordon Matta-Clark introduced a revolutionary approach to art by directly interacting with urban spaces and their communities. He created large-scale architectural interventions, physically cutting into buildings slated for demolition, while critically examining the structures of the built environment.

In his work "Splitting" (1974), Matta-Clark took a suburban house slated for demolition and precisely cut it in half along its vertical axis. The result was a visually striking and conceptually rich installation that revealed the inner layers and structure of the house. "Splitting" served as a commentary on suburban life, division, and the transformative potential of art.

Lessons

- Highlights the temporal nature of art and architecture. By working with buildings slated for demolition or transformation, he draws attention to the impermanence of structures and the evolving nature of the urban landscape, encouraging a consideration of ephemerality and change
- The transformative potential of space, actively shaping and altering physical environments. This spatial exploration challenges viewers to perceive and experience space in unconventional ways, encouraging a dynamic interaction with the built world
- Matta-Clark's practice intersects social and environmental activism. Issues like urban decay, demolition, and the reimagining of spaces, he contributes to a broader conversation about the social implications of the built environment. Considering the socio-political dimensions of urban spaces and architecture, the role that art can play in raising awareness and creating dialogue about such issues

