

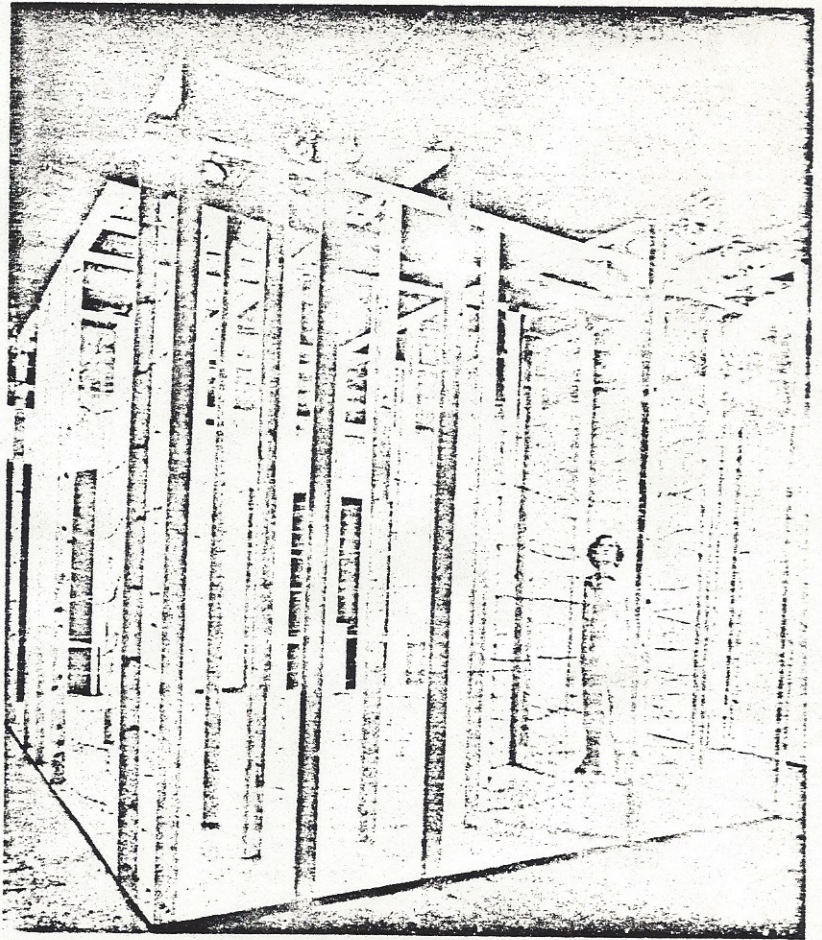
# ARTFORUM

MAY, 1975

ROBERT BARRY, Gian Enzo Sperone Gallery; VITO ACCONCI, Sonnabend Gallery; MARISOL, Sidney Janis Gallery; CAROLEE THEA, 14 Sculptors; JUDY RIFKA, Artists Space, Bykert Gallery downtown; ALIGHIERO BOETTI, John Weber Gallery; LAURACE JAMES, A.I.R.:

It is the viewer who is the performer in CAROLEE THEA's work. A maze bounded in hardware cloth and barbed wire extends from floor to ceiling in the center of the gallery. Black curtains block the street world outside. And an amplified metronome steadily beats the measure of time. In the back Thea sits, knitting. An allusion to Ariadne guiding Theseus out of the labyrinth with her ball of thread. Less symbolically, the observer, watching the viewer proceed on the stage. Perhaps a reference to the impassive spectator detachedly noting the fall of a guillotine. But to return to the maze. A confrontation? The choice is left open. One can walk around, outside, peering into the cage. Or one can enter, treading along the narrow corridors, looking out through the fences of barbed wire. The sense of a concentration camp? Yet somewhere the potential immediacy of experience dissipates. Is it that I am nowhere really trapped, lost in the tangle of an encroaching web? The correct passage out always safely in sight. I try to pretend. Does the sheen of the small-holed hardware cloth mute the potent connotation of the barbed barriers? Associations to porch screening, familiar enclosures. Or is it the almost glossy newness of the wire itself which neutralizes its danger? And the noise. A drumlike rhythm. The sounds of drama. I hear a movie-track of thumping heartbeats, jungle dances. A parody of my position. But in a way maybe this does heighten my awareness of my presence as situated. I sense myself playing a part. Contrived in the piece. Not so much a participant involved in an event, more an accomplice agreeing to manipulation by the script.

— SUSAN HEINEMANN



Carolee Thea, *For fools and madmen*, 1975, m/m.