

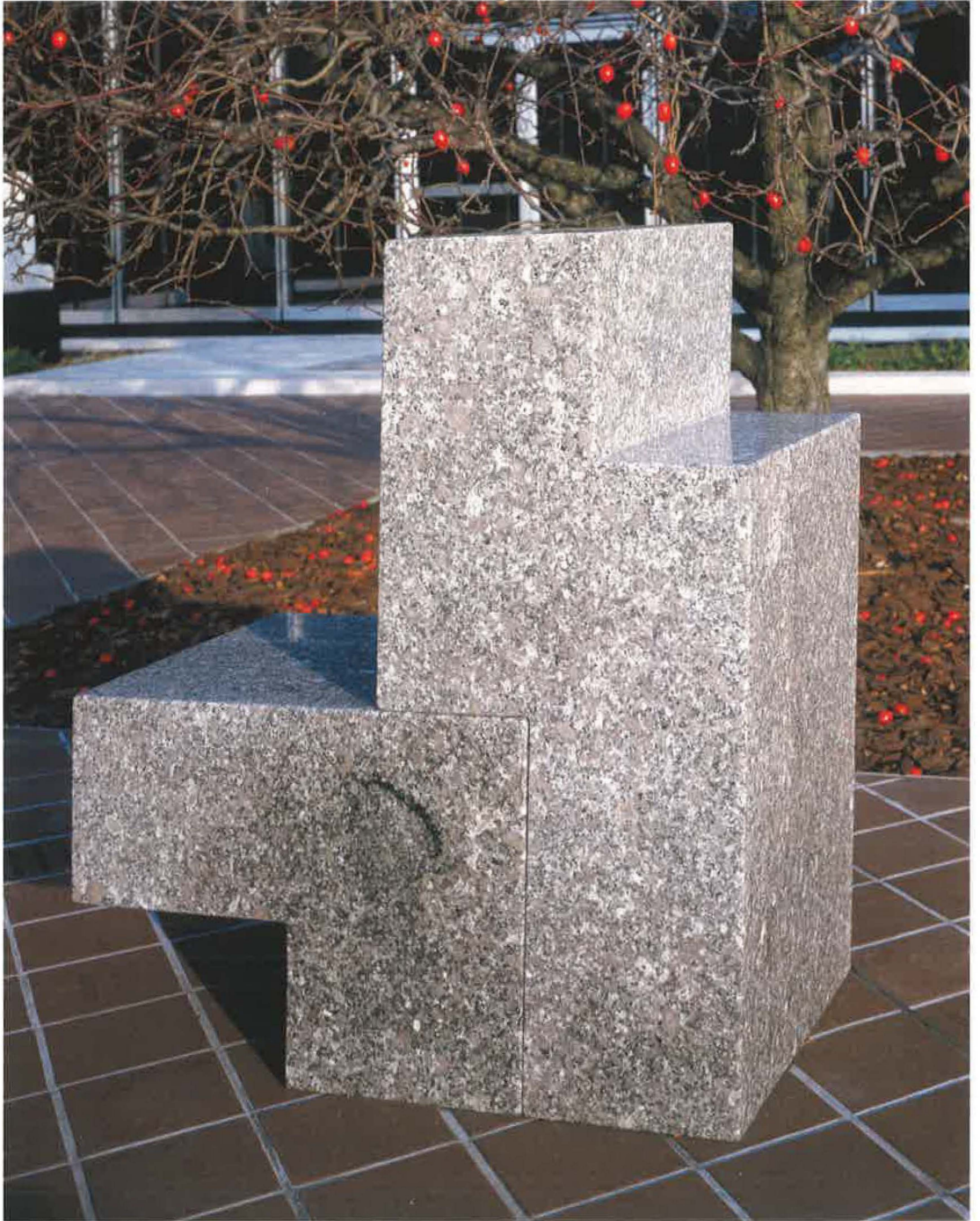
SCOTT BURTON

Scott Burton made *Two-Part Chair* in 1986, the year of his first museum retrospective. This was also the year that the effects of HIV had worn on him to the point where he decided to pursue experimental surgical treatment to halt its course. The cruel combination of this moment of arrival with the need for this drastic step initiated in Burton a fervent attempt to complete his large-scale public art projects and, with *Two-Part Chair*, to begin to reveal the queer experiences that had stealthily underwritten his public sculptures for museums and parks.¹ A watershed for Burton, *Two-Part Chair* was a last-minute but urgent addition to the retrospective, unfinished at the time the catalog went to press. It was a work of self-reflection and revelation.

Two-Part Chair is made to be sat upon. It performs as a functional chair while also appearing, at first, to be an abstract, geometric sculpture. That abstraction, however, comes into focus as subtly figurative when we circle to its profile. From there, the formal dynamics intimate a penetrative sexual act in which two schematically rendered figures face in the same direction with one bent over in front of the other. Beyond that allusion to anal sex, what I find especially poetic about the relationship between this sculpture's abstracted bodies is the way that the two equally massed components are mutually supportive. Alone, neither of these elements would be structurally sound as a chair, but together they are sturdy and load bearing. In Burton's earlier chairs made from two parts, at least one of the two components could stand on its own. The partners within *Two-Part Chair*, however, both rely on each other, locked in a reciprocal grip. If separated, the two parts would fall to the ground, be unrecognizable as figures, and become useless as furniture. Together these two near-identical elements keep each other vital in their endless moment of accord. It is only that interdependence that allows this work to be strong enough to offer itself to us. Should we agree and back onto the chair, we can, too, feel the sculpture's enduring performance of support.

—David J. Getsy

¹ I discuss the ways in which Burton drew on queer experience in his pursuit of democratic and accessible forms of art in my forthcoming book on Burton's queer postminimalism and performance in the 1970s. See also David Getsy, ed., *Scott Burton: Collected Writings on Art and Performance, 1965–1975* (Chicago: Soberseove Press, 2012).



SCOTT BURTON, *TWO-PART CHAIR*, 1986

Deer Island granite

Edition 3/5

1997:1b: 19 x 26 x 19 inches (48.26 x 66.04 x 48.26 cm); overall: 40 x 23 x 36 inches (101.6 x 58.42 x 91.44 cm);

1997:1a: 42 x 19 x 19 inches (106.68 x 48.26 x 48.26 cm)

Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Sarah Norton Goodyear Fund, 1997 (1997:1a-b)

© 2018 Estate of Scott Burton / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Photo: Biff Henrich

ART AFTER STONEWALL

1969-1989

EDITED BY JONATHAN WEINBERG
WITH TYLER CANN, ANASTASIA KINIGOPOULO,
AND DREW SAWYER

CMOA Columbus
Museum of Art

RIZZOLI **Electa**

Art after Stonewall, 1969–1989 has been made possible by the generous support of
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

The exhibition and its accompanying catalog were funded in part
with a grant from The Keith Haring Foundation, Inc.

Leadership support has been provided by

Jeff Chaddock & Mark Morrow
Envisage Wealth

Tom W. Davis
Equitas Health
Prizm

Lynn Greer & Stevie Walton and the Women's Collective

John & Michaela Havens, and
Parker Havens & Dean Panik,
in honor of Barbara Havens

D. Scott Owens & Kevin Kowalski

Harlan Robins & Shawn Shear
Dickinson Wright PLLC

John L. Wirchanski

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Art after Stonewall, 1969–1989*, organized by the Columbus
Museum of Art. Exhibition itinerary: The Grey Art Gallery, New York University and Leslie-Lohman Museum
of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York: April 24–July 21, 2019; The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami:
September 14, 2019–January 6, 2020; Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio: March 5–May 31, 2020.

First published in the United States of America in 2019
by Rizzoli Electa, a division of Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
300 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010
www.rizzoliusa.com

Copyright © 2019 by The Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior
consent of the publishers. Every image is copyrighted by the artist, unless otherwise noted.
2019 2020 2021 2022 / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Italy
ISBN: 978-0-8478-6406-5
Library of Congress Control Number: 2018964832

For Columbus Museum of Art:
Nannette V. Maciejunes, Executive Director
Tyler Cann, Head of Exhibitions and Pizzuti Curator of Contemporary Art
Daniel Marcus, Roy Lichtenstein Curatorial Fellow
Jordan Spencer, Curatorial Assistant

For Rizzoli Electa:
Charles Miers, Publisher
Margaret Rennolds Chace, Associate Publisher
Christopher Steighner, Senior Editor
Alyn Evans, Production Manager

For Pandiscio Green:
Richard Pandiscio, Creative Director
William Loccisano, Designer