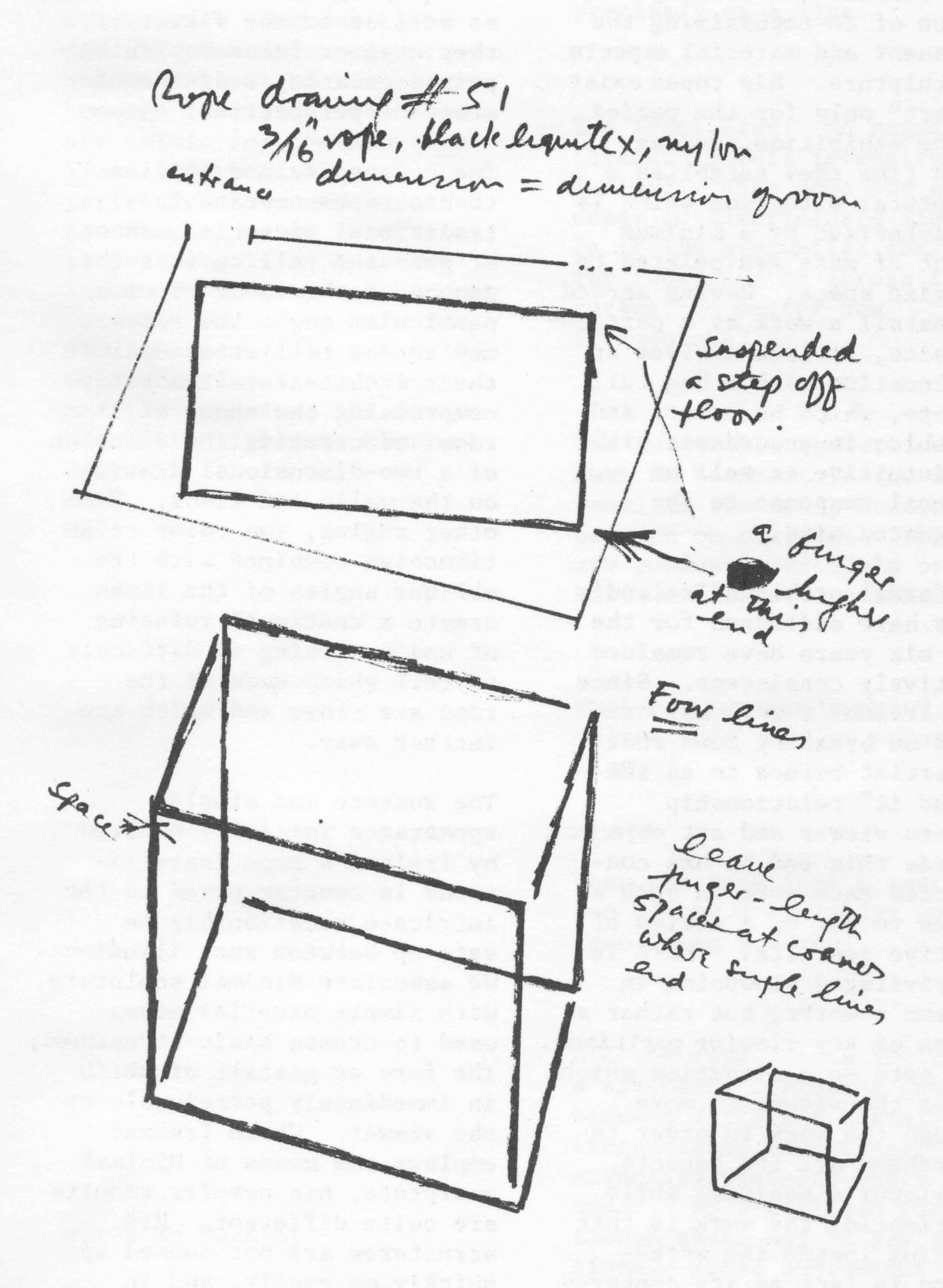
Rope Drawing #51 (notebook sketch showing two views of UAM installation), 1979



Patrick Ireland's rope installations represent an extension and expansion of the aesthetic tenets of Minimalist sculpture. His utilization of rope as a simple building module is conceptually parallel to Andre's use of fire bricks, Flavin's use of commercially produced fluorescent tubes and Judd's use of pre-fabricated boxes. Ireland's works also reflect the contemporary notion of de-emphasizing the permanent and material aspects of sculpture. His ropes exist as "art" only for the period of the exhibition, during which time they establish a sculptural situation which is characterized by a minimum amount of mass manipulated to energize space. Having agreed to install a work at a particular site, Ireland arrives at the location with a bag full of rope, which he colors and assembles in accordance with his intuitive as well as rational response to the designated site.

The formal problems Ireland's works have addressed for the past six years have remained relatively consistent. Since 1973 Ireland's work has centered on breaking down what the artist refers to as the "I and it" relationship between viewer and art object. Towards this end he has constructed each work in such a way as to set up a series of fugitive gestalts. There is no privileged viewpoint in Ireland's works, but rather a series of key viewing positions. This sets up a situation which forces the viewer to move through the work in order to comprehend all its aspects. The viewer's position while experiencing the work is that of being inside the work-acting in fact as its center-rather than a physically detached observer.

Ireland manipulates the space of a room with one of the most fundamental compositional elements: line--his suspended ropes acting as metaphors for abstract lines in space. These lines function in a variety of ways. Their most basic function is to create the illusion of spatial elasticity within an architecturally contained situation. Often placed at oblique angles to each other as well as to the viewer, they suggest false vanishing points creating a distorted sense of perspective.

The colors Ireland applies to his ropes operate in a traditional pictorial manner of push and pull against the ground of the room. From a particular angle the ropes may appear to flatten against their architectural backdrop, compressing the space of the room and creating the illusion of a two-dimensional drawing on the walls and floor. From other angles, the color relationships combined with the oblique angles of the lines create a continual twisting of space, making it difficult to tell which ends of the rope are close and which are farther away.

The austere and simple appearance initially offered by Ireland's rope installations is counter posed to the intricate relationship he sets up between such illusions. We associate Minimal sculpture with simple material means used to create basic structures, the form or gestalt of which is immediately perceivable by the viewer. While Ireland employs the means of Minimal sculpture, his complex results are quite different. His structures are not summed up quickly or easily, and in fact subvert any attempt to do so. They prod us into

motion, forcing our eyes to make numerous movements towards varying focal distances. Rather than a single image, one remembers a series of perceptual experiences.

Patrick Ireland is a pseudonym for Brian O'Doherty. O'Doherty was born in Ballaghaderrin, Ireland in 1934. In addition to his recognition as an artist, O'Doherty is a well known writer with numerous books and articles on contemporary and modern art to his credit. Between 1961 and 1964 he was art critic for the New York Times. During that same period he wrote and directed the Boston Museum television series as well as a weekly interview program on the arts entitled Dialogue, both for NBC. Between 1971 and 1974 he was editor for Art in America magazine. He is currently living in New York City.

MA

Excerpts from Patrick
Ireland's notebooks, 19731977 from Patrick Ireland:
Rope Drawings (La Jolla
Museum of Contemporary Art,
1977).

You can see a quarter-inch thick line against the sky over a quarter mile away.

You can make color behave precisely on a line.

The ideal line: no magnitude (breadth), full intensity (color). When does the eye cease to discriminate line? Is it its sequential character that lays it across the retina, no matter how filamentous?

Eye infallible on verticals, dumb on horizontals (no spiritlevel in the eye), somewhere between on obliques. Obliques are confused verticals or horizontals getting smart.

What has no name remains unlocatable. Color unnames line.

When you construct a gestalt, you become a vanishing point. Then where are you?

All the rope pieces include a spectator commuting gently between different gestalts (intentional wandering), constructing gestalts where none exist. No privileged position, though there may be key positions. After sufficient wandering, the spectator has become a crowd and populated the piece.

Works in MATRIX:

Rope Drawing #51, 1979, paint and rope installation, c. 17' x 21' x 21'. Selected one-person exhibitions:

Byron Gallery, NYC '66; Betty Parsons Gallery, NY '70; David Hendriks Gallery, Dublin '71; Name Change, Irish Exhibition of Living Art, Dublin '72; 112 Greene Street, NY '73; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC '74; Betty Parsons Gallery, NY '74; Los Angeles County Museum '75; Wright State University, Dayton, OH '75; Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, NH '75; 112 Greene Street, NY '75; Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, DC '76; La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, CA '77; Parsons-Dreyfus Gallery, Washington, DC '76; Portland Center for the Visual Arts '77; Seattle Art Museum '77; Visual Arts Museum, NY '78; Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati '78; Galerie December, Dusseldorf '78.

Selected group exhibitions: Institute of Contemporary Art, London, The Obsessive Image '67; Finch College Museum, NY, Projected Art: Artists at Work '71; Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin '72; Minnesota Museum of Art '73; The Clocktower, NYC, Discussions/Words '74; Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC, American Drawings, 1963-1973 '73; Betty Parsons Gallery, NY '75; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Labyrinths '75; School of Visual Arts Museum, NY, Line '76; P.S. 1, NY, Rooms '76; Philadelphia College of Art, Projects for P.C.A. '76; C Space, NY, Memory '77; P.S. 1, NY, Projects of the Seventies '77; Philadelphia College of Art, Point '78; Pace Gallery, NY, Grids '79; Max Protetch Gallery, NY '79; P.S. 1, NY, The Great Big Drawing Show 179.

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