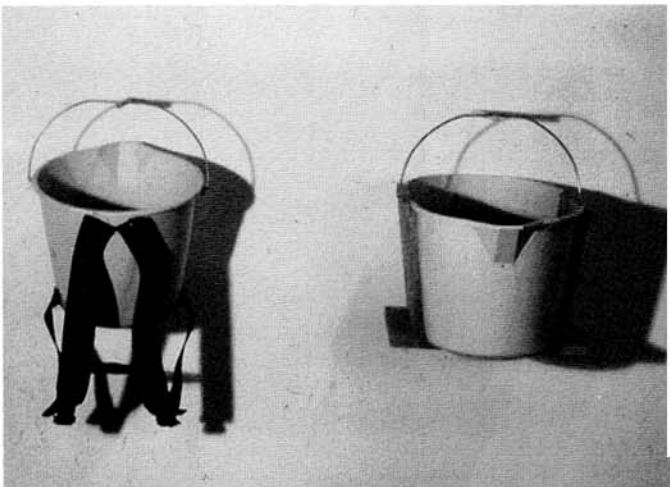


□ **Allan Wexler at Ronald Feldman.** Like the products of a somewhat lonly inventor or an incurable tinkerer, Allan Wexler's work embodies a quintessential Yankee ingenuity that is honest and direct while often being less direct than necessary. At Ronald Felman Fine Arts, Wexler presented suggestions for transport and/or control the path of water in a series of works through which he constructed objects that function as sinks, buckets and gutters out of wood, plastic, cement and other materials. In many cases his work is like re-inventing the wheel -there's no need to, but if you need a wheel and haven't got one handy why not make one yourself? Through his constructions, Wexler creates complex solutions to everyday problems that are inventive and beautiful. That this inventions are useful is clear. What is more curious is their appropriateness. Allan Wexler functions within an under-sung aspect of a can-do character who tackles a task utilizing the means and materials at hand in proportion to the task itself. Thus, what might seem to be an excessive gesture necessary to fetch a pail of water by first building the pail itself can also be an ingenious solution to making do with what is available. Like Robinson Crusoe, Allan Wexler fashions what he needs out of what he has. His work is generous in many ways, in addition to its simple beauty and utility. He lets us in on his working process of manipulating a basic idea in many different ways. We see this particularly in three series of "bucket" works. In one set, Wexler builds apparently water-tight vessels out of a variety of materials -laminated plywood, poured concrete. He even devi-

ses methods of carrying some of these unwieldy containers, integrating two sets of shoulder cuts into a yoke-like support for one. In the second set, the artist begins with identical, domestic-scaled tow gallon-sized beige-plastic buckets, transforming each in a different manner -inserting a copper faucet turns one into a sink, adding straps to another creates a bucket-backpack. Through some surgical insertions, Wexler adds a canvas sack to one bucket, and compartments/dividers to another. The third group takes the same everyday bucket as a point of departure, as they are expanded to encompass in one instance a bucket that has been argumented to the size of a small bathtub. In a series of fall standing sinks, as in many of this larger constructions, Wexler's craftsmanship is straight-forward. Simply and self-revealingly put together, these fantastic creations are no-nonsense constructions -simply spindly wooden legs screwed together supporting a clear-plastic film create a sink when a copper faucet is stuck into a hole and plugged with caulk. Trained as an architect, Wexler said in an interview that he probably would have been happy being a "tool man", but, as a promising student, pursued his interests towards establishing professional credentials. His training is visible in the forms of his work, and his earlier aspirations are evident through work in which the artist clearly delights in solving problems and building things. This smaller scale gives him an opportunity to do so without constantly being subject to a question of habitation. Additionally, Wexler has completed many projects that function more on scale of architecture than object. One of these -the "Parsons Kitchen: Sink Unit"- on view at Feldman consisted of a steel basin set inside what looked like a tall rectangular crate standing on four casters. Complete with a hose and compartments for dishwashing liquid, sponges, etc., this little cabinet was designed to fit a recessed space at Parsons School of Design where the artist teaches although it can also be wheeled around to wherever it is needed and hooked up to any water source. Like the buckets and sinks in the show, "Parsons Kitchen: Sink Unit", shows Allan Wexler to be an artist and architect keenly attuned to what is needed and what is appropriate in a manner that is both humorous and ingenious without being too clever or crafty. **Nicholas Tobler**



Due opere del 1994 di Allan Wexler, courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts
- New York