ALMINE RECH

James Turrell
Heavy Water

May 28 — Oct 11, 1992 | Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France

" This is the first time Turrell has mixed water with his light-inspired work. He has designed water and light projects for a Napa Valley winery and a private home in San Diego, but they were never built.

Heavy Water is a white wood and sheetrock structure that took local craftsmen and sponsors three months to build under Turrell's specifications. "Turrell is as much an engineer as he is an artist," says Frederic Migayrou, a French art critic who is working on a *catalogue raisonne* of the artist's work. Turrell may have been influenced by his French father, who also was an engineer.

A photography exhibition retraces the different building steps of "Heavy Water" and another space called "Earth Shadow," which raised the show's cost to more than $600,000, mostly financed by the Ministry of Culture. At the opening ceremony, Turrell was awarded the medal of Chevalier des Arts et Lettres (Knight of Arts and Letters), France's highest cultural distinction.

"Earth Shadow," a 450-square-foot structure, was also built inside the warehouse. Visitors enter through a dark corridor into a room dimly lit by two spotlights on each side. Very slowly, as the eyes adjust to darkness, visitors perceive a lilac-color rectangle, like a shimmering shadow, in front of them.

The rectangle is a cutout from an inclined and curved wall lit from inside with tungsten bulbs. "Your approach to the space changes the space," Turrell explained. "As the space opens up you actually begin to see it.""

- Excerpt from the article written by Hector Feliciano, 'Taking the Plunge Into a Batch of *Heavy Water', Los Angeles Times,* June 06, 1991.