

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DONALD JUDD
PROGRESSIONS 1960s AND 1970s

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Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present Donald Judd: *Progressions 1960s and 1970s*, a solo show of the late American artist's three dimensional wall mounted works. This show of early wall pieces is a focused cross section of Judd's exploration into the relationships between colour, space and the object, which has defined his career as one of the most prominent in art history.

Donald Judd (1928-1994) is a name widely associated with minimalist art. From the Early 1960s Judd was experimenting with space, geometry, form, and material in ways that had not really been considered before. Pre-occupied with the complex issues surrounding the image, representation, and perception in art, Judd sought to establish a practice removed of all representative imagery, subject matter, composition and symbolism. In other words he strove for objectivity in his work, and by moving away from painting, or two dimensional work, he was able to produce objects that simply occupy space rather than represent it. So, in the early 1960s he turned his attention from painting to three dimensional forms.

Influenced by the radical ideals of Russian Constructivism and Suprematism, in particular the view of Kazimir Malevich that all art of the past was "imitation" Judd tried to remove his work of all illusionistic qualities. In 1962, when first experimenting in three-dimensions, Judd's hand-made, hand-painted wooden boxes retained a certain sculptural quality through their various imperfections; a sculptural quality that alluded to "imitation". So in order to relieve his work of these marks of artistic expression, Judd began to have his work manufactured using materials and techniques widely used in industry.

The progressions included in this exhibition are some of the earliest examples of Judd's industrially manufactured objects, and they follow a common pattern. For these pieces Judd worked with linear structures that grow from one edge to the other in a progression based on arbitrary mathematical sequences. He used these sequences as a compositional tool, which remained detached from any forms of representation. They were intended to do nothing to the viewer but appear in front of them, simply as an object. The viewer 'reads' the object by scanning the relationship between the parts of the object and the dimensions of the room. The rules of composition, taste and balance are absent; the form of the work is determined by simple rules of proportion and arithmetic.

The exhibition includes four works based on the original 1964 hand made prototype, with the same "bullnose" profile, all made to varying proportions, dimensions and from different industrial materials. The "bullnose" form was one that Judd returned to frequently during the period of progressions, with the examples in the show ranging from 1968 to 1975. During this period the evolution of manufacturing processes is also apparent, with the progression from galvanised iron painted with lacquer, to highly polished brass, to anodized aluminium. There are also square profiled works from 1967 and 1974 respectively which introduce a different aesthetic, with squared edges that would later become synonymous with Judd's work. The saturation of colour increases with the years, as techniques of fabrication became more sophisticated, and the later, anodized aluminium pieces exhibit the smooth, graceful marriage of industrial material, colour and form that would define Judd's whole career.

Donald Judd was born in Missouri, USA in 1928 and died in New York in 1994. He studied at Columbia University, New York from 1953-1963. His work is in permanent collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and has been exhibited in museums all over the world including the Whitney Museum of Modern Art (where he had his first solo exhibition in 1968); the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Venice Biennial; Documenta Kassel; Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Kunstmuseum, Basel; and Tate Modern, London.

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