At Bortolami, Daniel Buren has created a grid of columns, creating an Op Art orchard that is different from every possible angle. Credit 2017 Daniel Buren/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Bortolami, New York

DANIEL BUREN


Bortolami is celebrating its relocation to eastern TriBeCa from Chelsea with Daniel Buren’s “To Align: works in situ 2017,” a festive, optically rich threesome of site-specific installations by arguably the art world’s most Duchampian painter. In Paris in the 1960s, this French artist discovered what was, in effect, ready-made painting: Classic striped French awning canvas redolent of outdoor cafes and beach cabanas. Like Duchamp’s bottle rack or urinal, Mr. Buren’s fabric was mass-produced and presented unaltered; unlike those precedents, it also mutated wildly, adapting to situations indoors and out. Mr. Buren’s striped canvas has hung in galleries and been strung across streets. Printed on paper, the stripes have cropped up on city walls and kiosks like abstract posters. A line of striped ceramic vases eventually ensued, as well as public works, most notably his stunning 1985-86 commission for the Palais-Royal in Paris — once hated, now beloved — where a grid of black-striped marble columns of varying heights suggests an elegant ruin.

At Bortolami, Mr. Buren has created a similar grid of columns, all floor to ceiling. He began by tightly sheathing the gallery’s row of cast-iron columns in plywood painted differently on each side: red, yellow or blue, or the signature black-and-white stripes. (The leafy Corinthian capitals poke out at the top, suggesting a merger of elongated cabana and palm tree.) Then he doubled and multiplied the columns in regular rows, creating an Op Art orchard that is different from every possible angle, virtually four color-saturated installations in one. Mr. Buren’s interest in space and perception has rarely been more boldly stated. There are more stripes on the columns of the gallery’s facade and colored gels on its skylight that add even more when the sun is out.