

DANIEL BUREN

Variable/Invariable

11 January – 15 February 2007

Press Release

Bortolami Dayan is proud to present two concurrent exhibitions by Daniel Buren. At 510 West 25th Street, Buren will exhibit paintings from 1965-66. At 508 West 25th Street, in the outdoor space adjacent to the gallery, the artist will create a unique Plexiglas installation.

The paintings exhibited here in the gallery represent the first works in which Buren started using a pre-printed fabric to express his vision. Up until this point, the artist had been painting colored shapes, specifically stripes, on various fabrics and colored bed sheets. In September of 1965, while in a Parisian market, Buren found different kinds of commonly used pre-printed striped fabrics, including one with alternating white and colored stripes. Buren realized this was the perfect medium in which to create his work, reducing his paintings to their simplest visual and physical elements and ridding them of allusion or subjectivity. Each stripe has a standard width of 8.7cm and was limited to the colors green, yellow, blue, red, orange, brown, and black interspersed with equidistant white bands. Given these standardized limitations, Buren varied the size and proportion of the canvases. He would then apply white painted lines or scalloped patterning at the edges of these canvases to differentiate his work from a readymade. The artist was able to break down the paintings to the very basic components of the work – a partly painted surface, a support and its surroundings.

From the late 1960s on, Buren began thinking of his work in terms of its location in regards to both interior and exterior, private and public environments. Although the bold patterns of colored stripes command attention in interior spaces, because of their ordinary associations (beach umbrellas, awnings, and wallpaper) they are often not recognized as art when installed outdoors in the public realm. This aspect of Daniel Buren's work is, in effect, one of his intentions; to create an art that defies a traditional definition of art as an object for aesthetic contemplation. In December 1967, for the first time, the artist pasted pre-printed posters with vertical bands on outdoor wall advertisements, phone booths and throughout the Parisian urban landscape thus opening up Buren's work to a much larger, very public audience – challenging the conventional notions of where art can be seen and how it can be understood. It was at this time that Buren introduced the term "work in situ" to the art world. Since this first attempt in 1967, Buren has modified and changed his idea using various materials and mediums like glass, mirrors, and Plexiglas to bring his ideas to public places such as billboards, doorways, railways, parks and various other public entrances and access routes. Nevertheless, he has continued to work with the vertical alternated white and colored stripes as what he calls his "visual tool."

For his installation at 508 West 25th Street, Buren will create an installation underneath the Highline consisting of a broad range of colored Plexiglas squares strategically arranged from the ground up. Buren has been experimenting with colored plexi and its ability to transmit and reflect colored light for a number years now. Similar to the idea of the stripe, the colored plexi creates a bold patterning and an order based on arrangement of color and placement within a space.

Daniel Buren was born in 1938 in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris. He has exhibited extensively in museums and galleries worldwide. Since 1972, he has participated four different times at

Documenta in Kassel. The artist has been invited to the Venice Biennial more than ten times, where he was honored with the Golden Lion for the best pavilion in 1986. That same year he completed the work, "Les Deux Plateaux, sculpture in situ" at the Palais Royal in Paris. It was Buren's first, of now more than eighty, official public works he has created around the world. He received several awards including the "International Award for the Best Artist" given in Stuttgart, Germany in 1991 and the "Grand Prix National de Peinture" in France in 1992. In 1990 the artist was honored as a "Living Treasure" in New Zealand for the country's 150th anniversary. In 2002 Buren had a solo exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and in 2005, he had a solo exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.