The Minimal Unconscious*

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The literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader.

—Wolfgang Iser[1]

Joe is unique. He's an artist.

—Donald Judd[2]

Unwanted

Untitled (1967) is a work without an author. A three-and-a-half-foot red relief with six convex elements, it is easily identified as one of Donald Judd's classic Progressions of the 1960s. And yet *Untitled* is nowhere to be found in Judd's catalogue raisonné, which lists three other works of similar shape, size, and color from the same year.[3] In fact, it was during the preparation of this volume that the work's authenticity was questioned, leading to its expurgation from the Judd literature. A

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1. Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 50.
2. Donald Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," *Kunst Intern* (November 1990), p. 13.
3. Brydon Smith, *Donald Judd* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), p. 150. Judd later executed versions of this form in unpainted galvanized iron (three examples: see ibid., p. 154), galvanized iron with purple lacquer (one example: see ibid., p. 152; this work was destroyed), brass (five examples: see ibid., p. 215), copper (three examples: see ibid., p. 224), and stainless steel (three examples: see ibid., p. 237).

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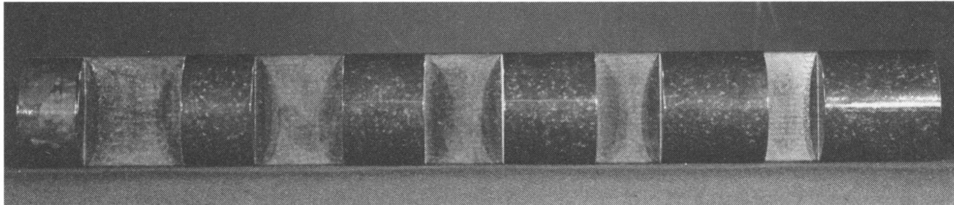

Untitled object fabricated and rejected by Donald Judd. 1967. Courtesy Williamstown Art Conservation Center. ©Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

letter signed by the artist's wife, Julie Finc ., arrived at the High Museum in Atlanta in the fall of 1973:

> It has been brought (regretfully) to our attention that you have bought a [*sic*] untitled piece of sculpture by Don JUDD .... It was a damaged piece; not intended for sale; and so badly damaged that... it will not be listed in the catalogue raisonee [*sic*] ... This piece was given to Mike Howard, who used to work for Don, more as a personal "present," etc. We thought you would like to know.[4]

An inspection of *Untitled* clarifies Judd's concerns. The first of the elements is buckled at the right seam, where the edge of one of the iron sheets has curled into a ribbon. A viewer is able to peer into the work's interior, an interior Judd meant to be closed. This blemish alone disqualified the piece; yet there was more trouble to come. Like those other industrial materials favored by the exacting artist—the pristine Plexiglas that is easily scratched, the gleaming copper that discolors with the slightest touch—galvanized iron is surprisingly fragile. When *Untitled* fell to the floor during an exhibition, the same element was bruised yet again. A conservator replaced the dented sheet with a different grade of iron. The flocking of the surface was too large, and of a dissimilar pattern: the effect was discordant. *Untitled* could no longer be exhibited.[5] The relief had entered the High Museum as a Specific Object, an authentic Judd. It was now an orphaned work, unwanted, a Judd that never was.

A minor episode in the annals of Judd's career, the story of *Untitled* tells us much about the artist's practice. Already by the early 1970s, Judd had lost a certain control of his art. His turn to serial schemes and fabrication in 1964–65 had circumvented the compositional methods of a previous generation. These objects were more "real" and more "specific" than previous artworks, Judd claimed. But this new

4. Letter from Julie Finch to Gudmund Vigtel, Director, Archive of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, November 15, 1973.
5. The work was donated to the Williamstown Conservation Center in 2000.

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Untitled object fabricated and rejected by Donald Judd. 1967. Courtesy Williamstown Art Conservation Center. ©Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

mode of production, he discovered, was not without risks, for it entailed a reliance on a retinue of assistants—including members of the artist's family—in the fabrication and oversight of his work.[6] Making, for Judd, had become a collaborative endeavor, a circuit of production. It involved a loss of manual control in order to exert another kind of control, a relinquishment of the hand to achieve the right result. Judd's technique reversed the old assumption of Renaissance *disegno* that a work's quality depended on the artist's manual skill, on his or her ability to transfer the image in the mind's eye to a panel or relief.[7] A work looked *more* like a Judd when it was not *made* by Judd—when it was built by someone with superior technique. The slightest deviation from Judd's plan and the work was no longer a Judd, for it could no longer be considered a representation of the artist's intention.

6. Julie Finch was actively involved in the preparation of the catalogue raisonné. Judd's father, Roy C. Judd, fabricated a number of object and prints. See, for example, Smith, *Donald Judd*, p. 107, cat. # 26; p. 113, cat. # 38; and p. 115, cat. # 41.
7. Georgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Cinaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 277.

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There existed, at the margins of Judd's art, many such objects—boxes and reliefs whose fabrication he had overseen to some degree, and subsequently disavowed. (In her letter, Finch alludes to "far worse situations," other dubious "Judds.") The preparation of the catalogue raisonné during the lead-up to the artist's retrospective at Ottawa in 1975, the occasion of the book's publication, was an opportunity to clean house.[8] Judd hunted down all the works that had been attributed to him with ruthless zeal. He took it upon himself to establish the paternity of every one of these objects, to determine whether they were *his*. This trailblazer of seriality ("I like to think I invented something"),[9] this champion of noncompositional techniques, insisted he was an author after all. He readily embraced the old-fashioned tactics of the connoisseur, the obsessive, monographic impulse of the cataloguist; he asserted the traditional, authorial basis of his practice.

Judd's repudiation of *Untitled* points more broadly, I think, to a central anxiety of the Minimalist venture. From the moment that artists like Judd, Dan Flavin, Carl Andre, and Robert Morris began to exhibit their work, their practices fell under a veil of suspicion. The description of their practices as "minimal" pointed to two types of inadequacy, one morphological, the other conceptual.[10] According to Michael Fried, the most articulate spokesman of this point of view, the Minimalists had brought the modernist impulse of reflexivity too far. They had rid the work of art of so many formal decisions, so all that remained was an uninflected shape—a shape that declared its condition *as* shape. The literalist work, as Fried described it, was tediously self-referential, "hollow." A mere box or polyhedron could easily be seen, taken in, known. It had nothing to communicate other than the brute awareness of its banal presence; it had nothing to *say*.[11] The literalist work aspired to the condition of a tautology; it repressed its semantic nature, its capacity to mean. This was its greatest offense. The experience of a work that claims to mean nothing, that denies that it could mean, was for the critic a deeply alienating one. Fried describes the encounter with the literalist work as the experience of its presence—as a "theatrical" encounter. Theatricality is a *distancing* effect. The literalist work refuses to "let the viewer alone—which is to say it refuses to stop confronting him, distancing him, isolating him," Fried writes.[12] Objecthood is not simply a "bad" phenomenology, the unsatisfying awareness of the sculpture's shape, its bland materiality, the space it inhabits and of one's body standing in this space in "real" time—the affectively neu-

8. The Ottawa volume includes most of Judd's objects and paintings produced between 1960–75. It does not include his paintings of the 1950s, nor the prints and furniture he developed during this period.
9. Donald Judd, interview with the author, Marfa, Texas, October 27, 1991.
10. For a further exposition of these claims, see James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).
11. Mel Bochner, initially a strong supporter of Minimalist practice, arrived at a similar estimation of its tautological aspiration in "Serial Art, Systems, Solipsism" in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, Gregory Battcock, ed., (New York: Dutton, 1968), pp. 92–102.
12. The literalist work "distances the beholder—not just physically but psychically." Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in ibid., p. 140.

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tral encounter theorized by Morris.[13] The offense of the literalist work is far greater. Objecthood is the *imposition of hollowness onto the viewer*, a reinscription of the self in a world of banal objects and spaces and alienated, theatrical relations, the world evoked by Tony Smith's provocative account of his midnight joy ride on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike, for Fried the antipode of the experience of art. Objecthood is the affect of literalness: it is what it *feels* like to stand in front of a Morris or Smith. It is the numb solipsism, the state of incommunicability, that we typically experience as subjects when we are not looking at works of art. ("We are literalists for most or all of our lives.") Because the literalist work declares that it means nothing, it is indistinguishable from those mundane objects and situations we encounter during the course of our daily lives that are not works of art, that are not imbued with an artist's intention or feeling.[14]

The "Minimal" implied a morphological and semantic vacuity, a dearth of invention ("anyone" could exhibit a cube or column); it spoke to the troubling fact that the artists didn't build their works, did not imbue their sculptures with markers of feeling.[15] A work devoid of feeling, it was suggested, must be an idea. A mere idea could be realized by just about anybody. This implied that the Minimalists weren't quite artists: to exhibit a sequence of lamps or a row of firebricks entailed too little effort.[16] It imputed that a work that wasn't built by an artist was not-art-enough, or "just nudgeable" into this epistemological category (Greenberg).[17] It constructed the Minimal work, incorrectly, as a readymade.[18] It is within this discursive framework

13. Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," in ibid., pp. 222–35.
14. "Art and Objecthood," p. 147. In contrast, a modernist work—a sculpture by Anthony Caro—is a precipitate of the artist's subjectivity. It can exist in no other form, for Caro has arranged and welded the metal beams in a particular way. It cannot be made by another, for if someone else dared to build it, it would no longer embody Caro's meaning. It embodies the principle that an artwork is a significant thing, that it is more than an "object." ("Art and Objecthood," p. 136, n. 10.) Caro's arrangements allude to the syntax of a body's gestures—to those movements that accompany speech or connote what we mean. His works evoke the idea of "meaningfulness *as such*" (ibid., p. 138.) In other words, they remind us of our own communicative potential when, during the fugitive moment of presentness, we experience their semantic plenitude. Which is to say they are *anti*-theatrical. As I have argued elsewhere, Fried's analysis was inspired by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's later semiological writings, in particular the essay "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," and is profitably compared to Stanley Cavell's Wittgensteinian reading of *King Lear*, "The Avoidance of Love." See *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, pp. 229–43.
15. "Art-lovers . . . either wonder where the 'art' went or where the 'work' went." Robert Smithson, "Donald Judd," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 4.
16. Judd didn't "qualify as an artist because he doesn't do the work." Mark Di Suvero in "The New Sculpture," Panel Discussion, The Jewish Museum, 1966, Archive of the Jewish Museum, New York.
17. "Minimal works are readable as art, as almost anything is today—including a door, a table, or a blank sheet of paper." Clement Greenberg, "Recentness of Sculpture," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, p. 183. Greenberg's interpretation of the Minimalist object as readymade is incisively discussed in Hal Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," in *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 38–40.
18. An unwanted pedigree for most (Morris excepted). See, for example, Carl Andre, "Against Duchamp," *Praxis* 1:1 (Spring 1975), p. 115. For Judd, Duchamp was the brilliant inventor of "several fires" who "unfortunately didn't bother with them. Good beginnings . . . aren't enough; the developed thing counts." Donald Judd, "In the Galleries, *Arts Magazine*, March 1965: Marcel Duchamp and/or Rrose Sélavy," in *Complete Writings 1959–1975* (Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), p. 166. For a Duchampian "misreading" of Flavin's lamps, see David Bourdon, "Tenth Street: Dan Flavin," *Village Voice*, November 26, 1964.

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that the so-called Panza affair must be understood. Unlike such skeptics of the new sculpture as Fried and Greenberg, the Italian collector Giuseppe Panza admired the alleged transparency of Minimalist form. Minimal Art was advanced, according to Panza, because it transfigured the modernist work into a concept, a concept that he could mentally grasp and render in material form. It was an art he could make.[19] Armed with this conviction, the collector came to believe that he could fabricate these works as well as the artists, who repudiated his efforts as deliberate misrepresentations (Flavin) and even "fakes" (Judd). I would describe his efforts somewhat differently as *misprisions*. Panza's "Judds" and "Flavins" misread the authorized Minimalist work. Like the ill-fated *Untitled*, they hold the "real" Minimal object up to a raking light. Panza's appropriation of what remained of the author-function of Minimalism revealed the underlying arbitrariness of this endeavor, its repressed subjectivity, its latent conceptual nature. The literalist work was not what it seemed.

Panza's Idealism

What drew Panza to Minimalism? During the mid-1960s, a period when few collectors were willing to acquire Morris's bulky polyhedrons or Flavin's fluorescent installations, Panza bought these objects en masse. As Judd pointedly observed, the collector's practice of buying several works from an artist at considerable discounts, and immediately storing them in warehouses, suggests that, as for Charles Saatchi in the years to come, speculation was very much a part of his calculus, an impression that was certainly confirmed with the 1990 sale of his collection of art of the 1960s and '70s to the Guggenheim Museum at an astounding profit.[20] Yet a desire to make

19. See Martha Buskirk's excellent account of Panza's conceptualist reading of Minimalism in her introduction to *The Contingent Object in Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), and Susan Hapgood, "Remaking Art History," *Art in America* 78:7 (July 1990), pp. 114–23, 181.

20. Panza's denials in this regard are hard to swallow. For example, he observes to Christopher Knight that investment concerns were "impossible . . . when you were buying something everybody else refused to buy," a not inaccurate description of the market for Minimal work during the 1960s and early '70s. Christopher Knight, "Interview with Giuseppe Panza" (1985) *Art of the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies: The Panza Collection* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book, 1999), pp. 31 and 62. Yet the thrill of identifying potentially important works and paying extremely low sums for them is apparent in the same interview. Panza notes that he purchased Morris's polyhedrons for "very cheap" prices (in the $3,000 range, according to a letter from Leo Castelli to Panza, November 4, 1966, Panza Collection Archive, Guggenheim Museum, and several Flavins for "about $400" each (*Art of the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies*, pp. 41–42); on the low prices Panza paid for other works, usually in the $10,000 range or less, see ibid., pp. 32 and 60–61.) Although these sums were well below market value, the net profit based on the original purchase prices was considerable. For example, Judd's *Untitled* (1970), cold rolled perforated steel (DJ4: this and the following inventory identifications, based on the artist's initials, are Panza's), purchased from Castelli for $700 in 1972, was sold in 1990 for $78,780. *Untitled* (1969), a copper Stack (DJ3), cost $8,000 in 1973 and was resold for $157,530 in 1990. Projects purchased as diagrams brought equally impressive results. The so-called *Large Tube, Parallelogram Inside* (DJ31) Panza purchased for $12,500 in 1974 was resold for $131,280. Most of these drawings were bought for sums between $10,000 and $15,000 and fetched $90,000–$130,000, "a special price to the Guggenheim ... one third of their actual value," the collector noted. (Grace Glueck, "Millions of Art, a Lot of It Unfinished," *New York Times*, June 12, 1990, Section C, 15.) Works by Flavin, Andre, and Morris were sold at comparable profits. The total sum of $32 million paid for the collection was covered by the controversial sale of works by Chagall, Kandinsky, and Modigliani from the museum's collection, a deal overseen by the Guggenheim's director Thomas Krens. See Philip Weiss, "Selling the Collection," *Art in America* (July 1990), pp. 124–31.

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a killing cannot entirely explain these prolific acquisitions—some thirty Flavins, sixteen Morrises, fourteen Andres, and thirty Judds, and a number of site-specific works conceived for the collector's Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza in Varese.[21] "I am not a great businessman," Panza once explained to Christopher Knight, "but as a connoisseur I think I am good."[22] Something else, something dear to the collector, was also at stake: his taste. Simply put, Panza was drawn to works that appeared to be manifestations of ideal forms, ones that fostered "transcendental" perceptual encounters.

His idealism long preceded his acquaintance with the Primary Structure.[23] As a student at the liberal Malagugini High School in Fascist-era Milan, Panza steeped himself in a humanistic course of study that remained deeply influential for him, as his later writings confirm.[24] His essay "Minimal Art and the Classical Tradition" (1980), for example, suggests that the idealist aesthetics imbibed during his youth remained intact.[25] Panza argues for an art that does not depict empirical reality but underlying "universals," "the real behind the appearance of reality." His narrative of art history unfolds from this premise. Panza rates the *kouroi* of archaic Greece more highly than the veristic figures of Hellenistic art. He prefers Cézanne, discoverer of the cylinder and cone in nature, to the Impressionists with their "ephemeral" depictions.[26] But the most paradigmatic of Panza's "classicists" is Duchamp. With the readymade, he observes, the idea was revealed, at long last. Once Duchamp established that art could be a concept, it was no longer necessary for the artist of the future to build his or her work. The Minimalists alone had fully absorbed the Dadaist's lesson.[27]

Although Panza describes his aesthetic as "Platonic," it is helpful to recall Panofsky's caveat in the opening passages of *Idea* that there is no one idea, and no

21. Panza had of course already built significant collections of Tachisme, Abstract Expressionism, Neo-Dada and Pop, and was assembling substantial holdings of Light and Space and post-Minimalist work at the same time. On Panza's previous collecting activity see *Panza: The Legacy of a Collector: 1943–1969, 1982–1993* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), especially Caroline A. Jones, "Coca-Cola Plan or, How New York Stole the Soul of Giuseppe Panza," pp. 22–49.
22. See Knight, "Interview with Giuseppe Panza," pp. 28 and 62.
23. On Panza's idealism, see Yve-Alain Bois, "Panza the Idealist?" *The Journal of Art* (October 1990), p. 29. Bois's brief summation of this issue inspired the present account. See also Germano Celant's remarks in David Galloway, "Count Panza Divests," *Art in America* (December 1984), p. 13; and Panza's remarks in Knight, "Interview with Giuseppe Panza," p. 55.
24. Panza recalled that he read widely in Western art history and aesthetics as a child under the tutelage of his mother and aunt at the Malagugini school and during the year and a half he spent in Switzerland after graduation, to where he had apparently fled to avoid conscription. See ibid., pp. 18–19. During this same period, his father was ennobled by King Vittorio Emmanuel III, the supporter of Mussolini.
25. Giuseppe Panza, "L'Arte Minimal e la Tradizione del Classico" in *Carl Andre/Donald Judd/Robert Morris: Sculture Minimal* (Rome: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Villa Giulia, 1980), p. 5. These and subsequent translations from the Italian are mine. The collector speaks in similar terms in Bruce Kurtz, "Interview with Giuseppe Panza di Biumo," *Arts Magazine* (March 1972), p. 43.
26. Post-Impressionism holds an important position in Panza's canon, reviving the old image of Cézanne as the modern avatar of French classicism (his cylinders and cones had restored "order" to painting.) On this turn-of-the-century construction, initially generated by a famous letter addressed to Émile Bernard, see Theodore Reff, *Cézanne: The Late Work—Essays*, ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977).
27. Panza, "L'Arte Minimal e la Tradizione del Classico," p. 6.

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single Plato.[28] In his genealogy of this aesthetic principle, Panofsky distinguishes the idea of the Athenian philosopher from the Neo-Platonic models of Cicero, Ficino, Bellori, and Winckelmann, to name a few. While Panza claims Plato as his inspiration, his notion of the artwork as idea contradicts the Platonic view that ideas do not exist in our minds, but on a spiritual plane most of us aspire to know: the work is a simulacrum of the idea it fails to depict.[29] Panza's "idea" is syncretic, unrigorous—an amalgamation of Winckelmann (who, following Bellori, grants the artist the capacity to conceive ideal forms) and Hegel's narrative of art history as a progressive unveiling of truth.[30] If these thinkers lurk in the murky background of the collector's thinking, Panza's text more readily evokes the claims of Joseph Kosuth, whose work he also collected. Kosuth's model is not the dynamic machine of Sol LeWitt, a means of generating a visual result, but a tautological operation: as art approaches the condition of the idea, claims Kosuth, its immanence is revealed.[31] Like Panza, Kosuth traces the idea's emergence to Duchamp, and like the collector, he sees Minimalism—and the work of Judd in particular—as its present-day apogee. Once Judd began to employ others to build his works, Kosuth argues, an artwork could be the "presentation of the artist's intention."[32] Kosuth restages Judd's maxim "If someone calls it art, it's art" as the programmatic statement of a nominalist conceptualism. Judd's art is art not because it is formally compelling, as Judd aspired for it to be. A box is art because Judd *said* it was.[33]

Panza's narrative lurches from sixth-century Athens to cinquecento Florence, from early-twentieth-century Paris to contemporary New York.[34] The Minimalists had of course repudiated this very framing of their work years before. In a well-known interview of 1964, Judd, Flavin, and Stella established the "classical tradition"

28. Erwin Panofsky, *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. Joseph J. S. Peake (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), Introduction.
29. *The Republic*, Book 10, repr. in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 33.
30. According to Winckelmann, the art of ancient Greece reveals "something beyond nature, namely certain ideal forms of its beauty, which, as an ancient interpreter of Plato tells us, come from images created by the mind alone." Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. Elfriede Heyer and Roger C. Norton (La Salle, Il: Open Court, 1987), p. 7.
31. Joseph Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy" (1969), repr. in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds.(Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 158–77.
32. Ibid.,165.
33. Judd's statement appears in Kynaston McShine, *Primary Structures* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1966), without pagination. Kosuth's reading of the Minimalist object as a nominative act was anticipated in some of the earliest reviews. For example, Lucy Lippard described Andre's first one-person show of styrofoam beams as "conceptual extremism . . . . The styrofoam logs are not attached, only laid on top of one another, so that the structures are dismantled after the show, ceasing to exist as anything but ideas." Lucy R. Lippard, "New York Letter," *Art International* 9, no. 6 (September 20, 1965), p. 58. For a superb analysis of Kosuth's appropriation, see Thierry de Duve, "The Monochrome and the Blank Canvas" in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal 1945–1964*, Serge Guilbaut, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 244–310.
34. On Panza's narrative of art history as cultural hegemony, see Jones, "Coca-Cola Plan or, How New York Stole the Soul of Giuseppe Panza," pp. 22–49.

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of "European art" as their principal target.[35] They asserted that the simple shapes and serial systems employed in their work evaded the balancing and hierarchical arrangements favored by a long line of composers from the 17th century onwards, from Poussin to Mondrian.[36] Judd claimed that his works achieved an intuitive sense, yet without compositional balancing. We easily discern that the units in one of his Stacks have been attached to the wall in a vertical line, that the dimensions of the elements and the volumes between them are identical, and that the boxes have been built of the same materials. But these facts, Judd maintains, are all we can know. The work's modular organization is a method for arranging the units, a provisional order. That order was "not rationalistic...but simply order, like that of continuity, one thing after another."[37]

The blunt conviction of this famous assertion, so typical of Judd's writings, gives pause. Judd insists that we take *his* account of his work at face value, when our experience of his objects exceeds and contradicts such claims. In theory, his aim was to "get rid of compositional effects," he told Glaser.[38] In the non-relational art he describes, none of the parts should appear distinct from or subordinate to any other. In practice, Judd took care to adjust the proportions of his works, their overall arrangement, their measure, in the classical sense. He deliberated over which materials to use, and which colors. The interaction of these effects could only be known after the work had been made. An object that did not meet his expectations was de-authorized, destroyed. In other words, he *composed*. Composition—which, according to Alberti's famous definition, consists of a "harmony of all the parts ... fitted together with such proportion and connection, that nothing could be added, diminished or altered"—approximates Judd's method more closely than he might be willing to concede, even if the anthropocentrism of Alberti's formula could not be further from his aims.[39]

The Specific Object claims to yield no metaphysical truths, and it grounds this insistence in a material form. It does so because only a visually compelling work—what Judd would call an "interesting" work—is able to convey this skeptical assertion.[40] A work "needs only to be interesting," Judd writes. An interesting work, in his sense, is one that compels us to look at it, that captures and sustains our attention. It grounds perception in an object that is sufficiently compelling

35. See Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, pp. 148–164. This line of discussion was provoked by Glaser's mention of the exhibition "The Classic Spirit in Twentieth Century Art" recently on display at Sidney Janis Gallery. The show attempted to trace a narrative of "purist" abstraction from the 1920s (Mondrian, Léger, Malevich) to such artists as Stella, Kelly, and Poons.
36. Ibid., p. 151.
37. Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Complete Writings 1959–1975*, p. 184.
38. Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," p. 150.
39. Leon Battista Alberti, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, ed. Joseph Rykwert (London: Alec Tarant, 1955), Book VI, Ch. 2, p. 113.
40. On the meaning of "interest" for Judd, a term derived from the pragmatist philosopher Ralph Barton Perry, see Frances Colpitt, *Minimal Art: The Critical Perspective* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990), p. 124; Richard Shiff, "Donald Judd: Safe From Birds," in *Donald Judd*, ed. Nicholas Serota (London: Tate 2004), pp. 35–36, n. 22; and David Raskin, "Judd's Moral Art" in ibid., pp. 79–95.

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to stand as a work of art.[41] In his criticism Judd took pains to distinguish the interesting from the uninteresting, the "minimal" from the more-than-minimal work. (Judd helped invent the term he came to loathe.) A painting by Barnett Newman—such as the white monochrome *The Voice* (1950)—may appear the ultimate "minimal" work. It isn't. Judd's experience of Newman's paintings led him to conclude they were, in the end, "no simpler" than Cézanne's—the very measure of formal interest.[42] Judd came to a very different conclusion in response to Rauschenberg's *White Painting* (1951). Confronted with Rauschenberg's four identical, indifferently painted square canvases, the artist wondered why anyone would "build something only barely present." Rauschenberg's polyptych was too "minimal." The canvases were "next to nothing," Judd complained. "I need more to look at and think about."[43]

In order for a work to incite interest, an artist had to retain a degree of control: he had to compose. The subjectivism of Judd's method is among its many contradictions; his art is riddled with paradox, as Robert Smithson and Rosalind Krauss were the first to note, beginning with the claim that his objects are "specific."[44] In truth, the path to success, the achievement of interest, was paved with failures—all those discarded boxes, all those imperfect reliefs like *Untitled*, that could not qualify as *bona fide* Judds. To accept this work and reject another, to adjust a form again and again—these decisions were integral to Judd's method, even though motivation was his stated aim. Motivation—the drive to rid the artwork of associations, of the self that generated it—is an asymptotical impulse, as Yve-Alain Bois insists.[45] Never achieved, it has been nothing if not generative: like the Rodchenko of 1921, the serial artists of the 1950s and 1960s—the Parisian Ellsworth Kelly, the Jasper Johns of the *Number* paintings, the Warhol of the Factory and the Minimalists—proceeded *as if* they could achieve this aim, could produce an art devoid of an author. Absolute motivation is the collective fantasy, the grail, of the American neo-avant-garde. Yet, feeling—the residue of a subjectivity more durable and more insistent than most accounts of these practices, my own among them, would have us believe—

41. Judd, "Specific Objects," p. 184.
42. Ibid. Judd elaborates this point in his meticulous analysis of *Shining Forth (to George)* in "Barnett Newman," in *Judd, Complete Writings 1959–1975*, pp. 200–02.
43. Donald Judd, "Black, White and Gray," in *Complete Writings 1959–1975*, p. 117.
44. The quality of perceptual knowability suggested by this word is belied, and even undermined, by Judd's works. On the paradoxical visuality of his practice see Smithson, "Donald Judd"; Rosalind Krauss, "Allusion and Illusion in Donald Judd," *Artforum* 4, no. 9 (May 1966), pp. 24–26; Elizabeth Baker, "Judd the Obscure," *Art News* (April 1968), pp. 44–45 and 60–63; Yve-Alain Bois, "The Inflection," in *Donald Judd: New Sculpture* (New York: The Pace Gallery, 1991), without pagination; Briony Fer, "Judd's Specific Objects," in *On Abstract Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 131–51; and Alex Potts, "Objects and Spaces" in *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 269–310.
45. See Yve-Alain Bois, "Strzeminski and Kobro: In Search of Motivation," *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 125–55, "Ellsworth Kelly in France: Anti-Composition in Its Many Guises," in *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954* (Washington: The National Gallery of Art, 1992), pp. 9–36, among other texts.

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could not be entirely suppressed. This "subjective remainder" is stubborn; it refuses to be silent; it is the unacknowledged term—and as the thing negated, that *must not be*—the driving engine of the serial impulse of late twentieth-century art. "When I set out on the great adventure of my art I dedicated myself to the creation of work utterly free of human associations," Carl Andre wrote. "It was precisely the impossibility of this quest that made my work possible."[46] As Mel Bochner observed:

> The use of self-generating procedures to make art was a liberation from the limitations of my own ego. It represented an escape from individualism by the objectification of process. I remember believing that it may be the means of achieving Flaubert's dream of the annihilation of the author. On that point, however, I was probably mistaken.[47]

Panza, for his part, took all this at face value. The Flaubertian dream of the author's death afforded an unprecedented collecting opportunity. If the work was no longer the vessel of an authorial self, as the artists claimed, what did it matter if he oversaw its making? What prevented him from installing the work as he pleased?[48] Taking the drawing or certificate for the work, the collector came to believe he could divine the project from this sheet of paper; his peculiar, idealist reading of Minimalist form emboldened him to present these works as he saw fit. Making "Judds" and "Flavins" as he wished, Panza exposed the underlying arbitrariness of the Minimal work, its suppressed subjectivity, its *im*materiality.

A Minimal Underbelly

It is toward the conclusion of *Feelings Are Facts* that Yvonne Rainer recalls her involvement in Minimalism. No mere recitation of the artist's choreographic and cinematic achievements, Rainer's memoir is brutally confessional. We learn of her abandonment, with her brother Ivan, as a small child at the Sunnyside Home for unwanted children, of her mother's chronic depression, of the artist's adolescent erotic encounters and her marriages, and her near successful suicide attempt after her husband, Robert Morris, had left her: it would seem that no painful detail of her personal history has been hidden.

Her discussion of Minimalism leads us to the analyst's couch—literally. Rainer recalls the remark of a former psychiatrist, John Schimel, from a session during the 1960s, the period of Minimalism's apogee—a comment so memorable

46. Chantal Pontbriand, "Carl Andre: Fourteen Written Answers to Questions," *Parachute* (Winter 1979), pp. 67–68.
47. Mel Bochner, letter to the author, January 13, 1992.
48. In an interview published in 1990, at the height of his contretemps with Judd, Panza observed: "There is a difference between Minimal Art and Conceptual Art, because Minimal Art is closely connected to the project, and the collector has the right to produce it, but his freedom of interpretation is very limited." "Interview: Giuseppe Panza with Suzanne Pagé and Juliette Laffon," *Un choix d'art minimal dans la collection Panza* (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1990), p. 22. As this account suggests, Panza frequently ignored this important distinction.

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that Rainer will choose it as the book's title. Feelings, Schimel observed, are facts. And yet, Rainer notes, Minimalism—the quintessential "art of facts"—had little use for feelings:

> Ignored or denied in the work of my sixties peers, the nuts and bolts of emotional life comprised the unseen (or should I say "unseemly"?) underbelly of high U.S. Minimalism. While we aspired to the lofty and cerebral plane of a quotidian materiality, our unconscious lives unraveled with an intensity and melodrama that inversely matched their absence in the boxes, portals, jogging and standing still of our austere sculptural and choreographic creations.[49]

Rainer points to a common ambition of those figures we associate with the Minimal field—the generation of sculptors, dancers, painters, and musicians who, converging in New York during this period, aimed to purge their work of feeling.[50] These tokens of subjectivity remained in the work nonetheless—were present, she insists, in an inverse ratio to their occlusion. The more veiled the artist's presence in the work, the more volatile his or her unconscious life—and the more imminent its unraveling. Rainer's understanding of "Minimalism" is subtly dialectical, a riposte to Stella's famous tautology, expressed to Glaser, that "what you see is what you see," and to Rainer's own high Minimalist discourse, as we shall see.[51] The Minimalist operation enumerated in *Feelings Are Facts* is a covering up, a secreting of the unseemly, a repressive impulse. The Minimal is not "what is," a positive assertion of empirical knowability, as Stella would have us believe. The Minimal reduces: *it is that which it is not.* In fact, there is no "Minimalism" without this underbelly, Rainer insists, for these terms are mutually constitutive, of a piece.[52]

49. Yvonne Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), p. 391.
50. The word is Rainer's. Yvonne Rainer, "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Qualitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, p. 267.
51. A substantial feminist literature developed in response to this literalist conception. See Lucy R. Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," in *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: Dutton, 1971); Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (New York: Doubleday, 1975); Susan L. Stoops, *More than Minimal: Feminism and Abstraction in the Seventies* (Waltham: Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, 1996); and Lynn Zelevansky, *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), among other texts. Rainer's identification of an affective and allusive dimension within Minimalism is a reply to the view—espoused by such contemporaries as Judy Chicago—of Minimalism as *merely* repressive. As Rainer suggests, a non-narrative, disjunctive, factual presentation afforded a set of formal procedures for analyzing emotions in her early practice. "At first, Robbe-Grillet's prescriptions against 'depth' and 'what cannot be seen' did not seem contradictory to my newfound preoccupation with the specifics of emotional life . . . . Dr. Schimel's 'feelings are facts,' far from violating the interdictions of the *Nouveau Roman* and the Minimalists, coincided with my previous techniques for handling props, movement phrases, and bodies . . . as objects that could be endlessly reorganized and manipulated in space and time." *Feelings Are Facts*, pp. 395–96.
52. The Minimalist "reduction" is a deliberate suppression. Within the Freudian lexicon, the mode of defense identified as negation (*Verneinung*: "to disown, deny, disavow, refute"), a resistance to and refusal of interpretation, is most evocative of the Minimalist operation. See "Negation," in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* XIX, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 235–36, and "Negation" in J. LaPlanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 261–63.

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Minimalism is often seen as the final episode of modernist negation, as modernism's curtain call. Minimalism concludes and completes modernism, as Hal Foster concisely argued; it hypostasizes negation as such.[53] The rhetoric of refusal permeates Minimalist discourse. The new art "eliminates" (Rainer), it "renounces" (Rose), it "rejects" (Lippard).[54] It says "no" (Rainer again). Rainer's definition of this aesthetic in a text of 1964–65 is a list of negative tactics. "NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic...no to moving or being moved."[55] As the final term of this recitation, feeling occupies a central status in Rainer's thinking. To "move" or "be moved" is the ultimate "no."

Minimalism's opening salvo, Andre's "Preface to Stripe Painting," similarly describes the making of Stella's Black Paintings (1958–59) as a practice of exclusion.[56] Stella has reduced the picture's morphology to the stripe module and its diagrammatic iteration; he has drastically simplified the process of covering a canvas. Having established the sequence in advance, he pencils in the patterns on canvas and fills these in using a housepainter's brush. The making of the Black Paintings, as recorded in Hollis Frampton's photographs, is after-the-fact, perfunctory—the opposite of the Action Painter's bravura performance. Stripe painting is a task to complete, a job to get done. ("Stella's stripes are paths of brush .... These paths lead only into painting.") There is "nothing" in Stella's paintings apart from these stripes, Andre suggests—no expression, no sensitivity, no symbolism. His account is more proleptic than accurate, for he imagines a semantic vacuity that the Black Paintings resist. Their dour hues and titles evoke a motley array of "downbeat" associations (the word is Stella's): the dreary apartment houses where the artist worked as a house painter (*Arundel Castle*, 1959; *Tomlinson Court Park*, 1959), a shipwreck (*Morro Castle*, 1958), illegal gay and transvestite bars (*Club Onyx*, 1959; *Seven Steps*, 1959), and most notoriously, Nazi iconography (*Die Fahne Hoch!*, 1959; *Arbeit Macht Frei*, 1959). Negating the "unnecessary," Stella's works elicit negative associations. Purgation *produces* affect.[57]

The reductive tendency progresses rapidly after the meeting of Flavin and Judd sometime in 1962. Like the Stella of the Black Paintings, Flavin conceived his series of *Icons* diagrammatically, in advance of their making. Flavin and his

53. Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," pp. 35–69.
54. Rainer, "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Qualitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*," p. 267; Andre, "Preface to Stripe Painting," *Sixteen Americans* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1959), without pagination; Barbara Rose, "ABC Art," *Art in America* 53:5 (October/November 1965), pp. 57–68; and Lucy R. Lippard, "New York Letter: Rejective Art," in *Changing* (New York: Dutton, 1971), pp. 141–53.
55. Yvonne Rainer, "Parts of Six Sextets," in *Works 1961–73* (Halifax: NSCAD, 1974), p. 51.
56. Andre, "Preface to Stripe Painting."
57. Andre, "Preface to Stripe Painting," *Sixteen Americans*, p. 76. The various allusions in the series have been definitively discussed in Brenda Richardson, *The Black Paintings* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1976). See also Mark Godfrey's careful analysis of Stella's navigation of subject matter in the Black Paintings and *Polish Village* series in *Abstraction and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

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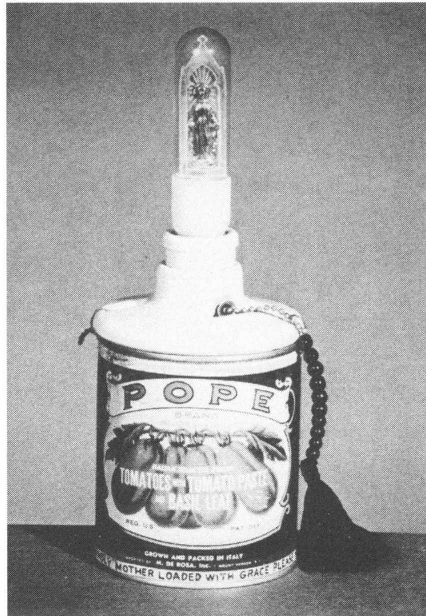

Dan Flavin. East New York Shrine. *1962–63. © 2009 Stephen Flavin/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*

spouse Sonja Severdija built the reliefs, painted the Masonite surfaces, and attached the electric fixtures in a no-nonsense manner. The *Icons* brim with allusion: each work is dedicated to an individual who impressed the artist in some way (a fellow guard at the Museum of Modern Art is the dedicatee of *icon I*; *icon IV* is a memorial to Flavin's twin brother), and as has often been noted, the series as a whole invokes the kitsch Catholic shrines of Flavin's native Brooklyn. Even as they reveal the formal beauty of the electric lamp, however, the *Icons* ironize the transcendental associations that traditionally accrue to light. In *East New York Shrine* (1962), an empty can of Pope brand tomatoes is surmounted by a porcelain fixture and Aerolux bulb. A pull of the rosary sash illuminates the miniature Virgin, affording the spectator a meretricious grace. "My icons do not raise up the blessed savior in elaborate cathedrals," Flavin wrote of these works. "They are constructed constructions celebrating barren rooms. They bring a limited light."[58]

Perhaps because the *Icons* retained such associations, Flavin felt impelled to explore the perceptual qualities of the lamp as such. With the *diagonal of May 25, 1963 (to Constantin Brancusi)* (1963), he established that an unadulterated fluorescent bulb could stand alone as an object of formal interest. He discovered that the abundant luminosity of the lamp could only be revealed once this was staged as a

58. *Dan Flavin: Three installations in fluorescent light/Drei Installationen in fluoreszierendem Licht* (Cologne: Kunsthalle Köln, 1973), p. 83. See Michael Govan's discussion of these works in "Irony and Light" in *Dan Flavin: A Retrospective* (New York and Washington: Dia Art Foundation and National Gallery of Art, 2004), pp. 19–33.

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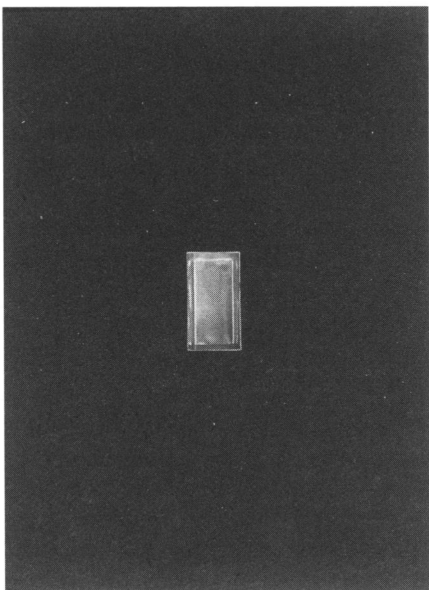

Donald Judd. Untitled. *1961. ©Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.*

single entity. The eight-foot diagonal was part of a system of industrial units of standard length and hue that could be arranged in a seeming infinity of combinations. Like Judd, Flavin would now require the assistance of others to install his works: the Minimal object maker has trumped the stripe painter. It is at this point that he develops the diagrammatic certificates that Panza would so avidly collect.

If Flavin's lamps retained an evocative luminescence—and as found objects, the memory of the factory and hardware store—the early objects of Judd vigilantly avoid such allusions.[59] In 1961, Judd inscribed a bread pan in a relief. Lodged in the center of a matte, black ground, the container is no longer recognizable as itself: it fails to elicit the pleasant associations of such a pan (a warm kitchen, the scent of freshly baked bread, and so on.) The pan is rather the marker of the shallow depth discernible in between the relief's Masonite surface and its wooden back end. Its battered edges literalize, through a sort of mimicry, the conventions of orthogonal perspective, underscoring the artifice of this conceit and establishing that one is not peering into illusionistic space, but real space, small as this is. (The golden background, the pan's bottom, returns one's reflection as an opaque image, underscoring that awareness.) In the untitled red Plexiglas box of 1965, the new morphology and fabrication techniques are inextricably joined. The spatial recession staged in relief in the work with the bread pan has become actual. The box recedes nearly three feet on one side, four feet on the other. The floor is

59. Even these works did not escape attributions of resemblance (to a letter box, record cabinet, and so on.)

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plainly visible through the structure's transparent sides. The box is the container of an empty volume adumbrated by steel wires; it is all shape and nothing more. "Every surface is within full view, which makes the inside and outside equally important," Smithson observed of this work.[60] The maker's hand, still apparent in the relief with the bread pan's impastoed surface, is absent: Judd has achieved a work so "hollow" it could now be misconstrued by Panza as an idea.[61]

Panza's Liberties

Let us turn to the "Panza affair" itself.[62] The story of Panza and Flavin is that of a failed romance. Panza was among Flavin's earliest and most avid supporters. He purchased numerous works from the artist's first exhibitions in Cologne, Milan, and Los Angeles, in 1966 and 1967; he acquired several major installations by the late 1960s; in 1976 he commissioned Flavin to design a site-specific work for the first floor of the Rustici wing of the Villa Litta—the *Varese corridor*.[63] During the mid-1970s the relationship of artist and collector was particularly genial. A letter from this time reveals a grateful Flavin thanking Panza effusively for his "splendid commitment" to his art. In a public speech at the opening of Judd's Ottawa retrospective, Flavin acknowledged Panza's "unique patronage" of his and Judd's work.[64] A minor dispute regarding the *Varese corridor* a few years later, in 1980, marks the point at which their association has begun to sour. Panza had asked Flavin's permission to exhibit the work at another space in Italy, the stables at the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano, where he had been invited to install a part of his collection. Flavin's assistant, Helen Geary, refused this request. The corridor was site-specific, Geary told Panza. The *allée* of lamps was "uniquely situated" at Varese; it could not "be adapted to changed circumstance."[65] By 1988, we find Flavin curtly fending off Panza's demands for

60. Smithson, "Donald Judd," p. 6.
61. "As a result of this simplification, thought has conceived things and makes them knowable." *Panza, Memories of a Collector*, trans. Michael Haggerty (New York and London: Abbeville Press, 2007), p. 131.
62. Although it is common to speak of Minimalism's industrial techniques, there is not one "Minimalist" mode of fabrication but several. Panza's methods most conflicted with Judd's and Flavin's practices; consequently his disputes were confined to these artists. Morris's theory of fabrication was oddly compatible with—if not identical to—Panza's (he took the collector's side against Judd and Flavin during their dispute, as will be seen.) Andre publicly disowned a "version" of his sculpture *Fall* that Panza and the dealer Douglas Chrismas "refabricated" for exhibition at the Ace Gallery in Los Angeles in 1989. See Carl Andre, "Letter to the Editor," *Art in America* (March 1990), p. 31.
63. Panza bought works exhibited in Flavin's exhibitions at Galerie Rudolf Zwirner in Cologne and Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles, in 1966, at Galleria Sperone in Milan in 1967. He then purchased the installations *an artificial barrier of blue, red, and blue fluorescent light (to Flavin Starbuck Judd)* (1968,) *greens crossing greens (to Piet Mondrian who lacked green)* (1966), and *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* (1972–73) from Heiner Friedrich Gallery in 1973.
64. Unpublished letter of October 9, 1975, Panza Collection Archive, and "Address to Officially Open Donald Judd's Retrospective Exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa," May 23, 1975, repr. in *Chinati Foundation Newsletter* 5 (September, 2000), p. 25.
65. "Dan feels the corridor installation must remain in place at Varese. The work was designed specifically for that space and is, therefore, uniquely situated; it cannot be adapted to changed circumstance." Helen Geary, Letter to Giuseppe Panza, September 30, 1980, Panza Collection Archive.

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discounts—a necessity, the collector claimed, to "make all the beautiful things I would like to do."[66] Their discord became public that spring, when Flavin used the pages of *Art in America* to denounce Panza's presentation of his barrier *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* (1972–73). It is to this incident that we now turn.

The exhibition, at the Reina Sofia in Madrid, was one of several organized by Panza in an effort to place his collection of 1960s and '70s art in a museum (the Guggenheim sale was the successful conclusion to this campaign).[67] Panza personally oversaw these installations, as well as the fabrication of certain works, purchased as plans, that he hoped to realize with institutional support. Flavin's light installations filled an impressive fourteen galleries, all conspicuously installed without the artist's participation. How could this occur? Flavin had not been asked to install his works, the Director of National Exhibitions, Carmen Giménez, explained in a letter to the artist, out of concern for his health. "We were told that you were very sick, and unfortunately it didn't seem [a] good moment to invite you along." Flavin, a diabetes patient, had indeed been quite ill.[68] But Giménez revealed another reason why Flavin hadn't been invited to Madrid. She begged the artist to understand

> that our invitation to Dr. Panza to present his collection had to be with a respect to his ideas. He designed the whole project for the installations, and we never had any information of misunderstandings in the right to do it. He informed us that he counted with the ownership . . . the building of the pieces, and in every moment he manifested a clear concern about the artist's thinking for each piece.[69]

In order to secure the show, the museum had agreed to allow Panza to present his collection with respect to "his ideas." For it was a point of pride with the collector that he, and he alone, choose which of his works were to be shown and oversee every detail of their installation. Exhibitions of his collection were meant to be

66. Letter from Giuseppe Panza to Dan Flavin, February 3, 1988, Panza Collection Archive. Flavin rejected Panza's overtures in a letter of April 22, 1988: "Count Panza, You are a wealthy businessman. I am a working artist who is not wealthy. I simply cannot sell off my art, my only source of income, at large discounts. Fond regards and best wishes, Dan F."
67. "Arte Minimal de la Colección Panza," Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, March 24–December 31, 1988. The collection was also presented at the Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf (1980), the Museum für Gegenwartkunst in Basel (1980–81), the Musée Rath in Geneva (1988), and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1990), among many other venues, prior to its sale to the Guggenheim. Negotiations had been underway to sell the collection to the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, then headed by Thomas Krens. See Ken Johnson, "Showcase in Arcadia," *Art in America* 76, no. 7 (July 1988), pp. 94–103.
68. Letter from Carmen Giménez to Dan Flavin, November 30, 1988, Panza Collection Archive. Flavin had had surgery to remove parts of both feet, narrowly avoiding amputation, the year before the Reina Sofia show ("Chronology," *Dan Flavin: A Retrospective*, p. 186). Although he seems to have been well enough to oversee an exhibition of his work at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden the following February (1990), Flavin had grown increasingly reluctant to assist Panza in installing his work. He recalled a failed visit to Varese during which he and his electrician were "surprised sadly to find that you were not prepared for us at all . . . . Robert and I had to leave disappointed." Dan Flavin, Letter to Giuseppe Panza, September 14, 1988, Panza Collection Archive. Judd, in "Una Stanza per Panza," recounts similarly disappointing visits.
69. Giménez, letter to Dan Flavin, November 30, 1988.

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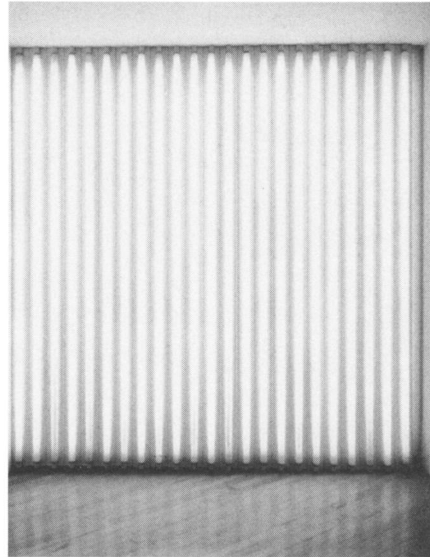

Flavin. untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg). *1972–73. © 2009 Stephen Flavin/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*

demonstrations of Panza's taste, his "ideas." "If I had to consult the artists about every exhibition I did," the collector observed in his recent memoir, *Memories of a Collector*, "then it would no longer have been mine but someone else's."[70] And so he made a point of *not* asking artists to put up their works. "I have never invited an artist to the installation of a show, as I know from experience that artists create problems," he confesses without apology.[71] What were Panza's ideas with regard to Flavin's work, exactly? Did the collector demonstrate a "concern" for the artist's thinking, as Giménez claimed? A letter sent to Flavin shortly after the opening is telling:

> I was back yesterday from Madrid . . . . 14 rooms are devoted to your works . . . . [They] are beautiful and strongly metaphysical. Spaces at the end of human possibilities, at the border of the endless.[72]

Flavin's response was cool. As his assistant Morgan Spangle informed the collector, Flavin, having seen installation shots of the show, found the presentation of *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)*, "incorrectly installed, much too wide."[73] The criticism did not stop there. In a blistering letter to the editor, Flavin informed the readers of *Art in America* that Panza's rendition of the barrier revealed "an

70. Panza, *Memories of a Collector*, p. 144.
71. Ibid., p. 125.
72. Giuseppe Panza, letter to Dan Flavin, March 28, 1988, Panza Collection Archive.
73. Morgan Spangle, letter to Giuseppe Panza, August 11, 1988, Panza Collection Archive. Spangle also objected to Panza's presentation of an untitled room in ultraviolet light, originally installed at Documenta IV in Kassel. Morgan Spangle, letter to Stuart Morgan, *Artscribe*, March 19, 1989, Dan Flavin Archive, cited in Michael Govan and Tiffany Bell, *Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights 1961–1996* (New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2004), p. 276.

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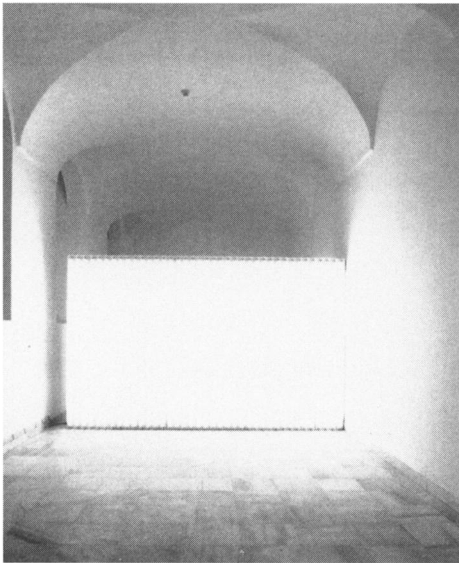

Flavin. untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg). *1972–73. Installation view, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 1988. © 2009 Stephen Flavin/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*

utter spatial and architectural misinterpretation" of his work. He demanded that the offending installation be taken down.[74]

What was the matter with Panza's installations, according to Flavin? Displayed according to his specifications, *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* is an upright barrier eight feet tall and wide. Comprising two structures placed back-to-back, yellow on one side, green on the other, the work is positioned at the mid-point of a white corridor of identical height and width. A narrow opening to the left side, the width of a single lamp, reveals the light of the hidden barrier. Standing before the row of green lights, we catch a glimpse of yellow; we are intrigued; and we find ourselves exiting the space in which we stand and proceed to the other side. In order to take in Flavin's work, we must shuttle back and forth between the two sides. We are forced to remember the green barrier while standing in front of the yellow, and the yellow barrier as we stand before the green. Yet we cannot: to see these lamps we must forget the lamps we have just seen; the work is never fully present, can never be experienced as a whole.

Panza's rendition of *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* was *double* the width of the original. The light of the hidden fixtures poured through a gap three lamps wide. Jettisoning the low corridor of Flavin's proposal, Panza installed the work in an open, cross-vaulted hall of the Reina Sofia, the former central hospital of Madrid.[75] The

74. Dan Flavin, letter to the editor, *Art in America* 76, no. 9 (September, 1988), p. 21. He requested the de-installation of the work, as well as Panza's version of *greens crossing greens (to Piet Mondrian who lacked green)*, in two letters to Tomas Llorens Serra of September 14 and October 16, 1988, Panza Collection Archive. The museum complied.
75. Francesco Sabatini, the court architect of Carlos III, constructed the structure housing the Reina Sofia in 1769.

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ceiling, suffused with the combined glow of both barriers, was a chartreuse muddle of yellow and green. The cross-vault was now a part of the work, a third term added to Flavin's two-sided conceit. Perceptually Flavin's barrier was no longer such. The floodlit vault revealed the monochromatic coloration of the other wall (merely hinted at by the removal of a single lamp) in advance. Flavin's scheme could be grasped at once—which is to say not at all. The "work" installed by Panza bore little resemblance to the proposal he had purchased from the artist.

One wonders how Panza could have misread Flavin's intentions so blatantly. Panza did not possess a certificate for the work, the artist having refused to send it,[76] and it is tempting to assume that the collector, having no diagram to consult, got the work wrong.[77] I do not think this is the case. Had Panza wanted to remain true to Flavin's proposal, he could have easily consulted photographs of previous presentations of the work.[78] For a Flavin certificate only tells so much. It is, Flavin warns on each of these sheets, "a certificate *only*" (my emphasis). A schematic depiction of the proposal and a brief description of the fixtures' color and length, it says little about how the work should actually be installed. It doesn't depict the lamps' pans or, in the more intricate arrangements, how the fixtures are laid upon one another. It doesn't specify how exactly the work should be placed—how high or low, or how far to the left or right. These details were left open, to be determined by Flavin himself. Flavin's certificates project the artist's presence, his subjectivity, into the finished work. Proposals for works-to-be-made, they exist in a future tense: they imagine that the artist, that Flavin, will be present to oversee their arrangement. They *resist* the radical premise of the author's "death" they unleash. The poignancy of these sheets of paper—as opposed to the highly detailed certificates of LeWitt, for example—is that they cannot envision Flavin's mortality, the actual death of the author.

The Madrid version of *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* was a deliberate departure from Flavin's proposal, a conscious misprision.[79] It spoke of Panza's reading of "Minimalism"—the reading advanced in "Minimal Art and the Classical Tradition" and similar texts. Exhibiting his collection in the former palaces and civic buildings of Western Europe, Panza forged an associative link between the American art of the 1960s and its alleged Renaissance heritage.[80] Flavin had

76. Flavin neglected to provide this and six other certificates for works purchased by Panza at Heiner Friedrich Gallery in 1973, Panza ruefully noted (Glueck, "Millions of Art, A Lot of it Unfinished.") Flavin seems to have retained the certificates in an effort to force Panza's hand. As he noted to the collector, none of the installations yet existed. "I never certify what does not exist." Letter to Giuseppe Panza, September 14, 1988. Flavin eventually sent the certificates "after a long time and a great deal of persistence," in *Memories of a Collector*, p. 124.
77. As Flavin's assistant observed: "Without the certificate, you do not have a specific diagram to use in the construction of the piece." Letter from Morgan Spangle to Giuseppe Panza, August 11, 1998, Panza Collection Archive.
78. Flavin had exhibited the work in "Drawings and Diagrams from Dan Flavin 1963–1972," St. Louis Art Museum, 1973, and "Dan Flavin: corridors," Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1981.
79. As confirmed by Panza himself: "I decided not to modify the room, an arbitrary operation .... The intense green and yellow light mixed to create a marvelous effect," in *Memories of a Collector*, p. 146.
80. "I always had the idea of putting together the culture of the past with the culture of our time .... There is no difference between artists of the Italian Renaissance and artists of America. They share the same cultural roots and development, they're branches of the same tree." Knight, "Interview with Giuseppe Panza," p. 68.

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heretofore worked almost entirely in modernist spaces or in historical rooms that had been modernized. The white cube was the artist's blank canvas, the preferred backdrop for his classic fluorescent works.[81] Now Panza insisted Flavin's lights had to accommodate a different kind of space—one the collector had chosen for them. The Reina Sofia, as a building of historical significance, could not be altered; its ceilings could not be lowered. Flavin's lights had to "go where the wall is," Panza lectured the artist. They had to *adapt*.[82]

Which is exactly what happened. Panza's bizarre rendition of *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* was no mistake, as Flavin understood perfectly. "You purchased finite installations of fluorescent light from me," he chided Panza. "You have no right whatsoever to recreate, to interpret, to adapt, to extend, to reduce them."[83] But Flavin's works weren't finite. By daring to double the barrier's length, the collector exposed the formal elasticity of Flavin's system, its lack of closure. He exploited the risk posed by Flavin's first serial proposal, *the nominal three (to William of Ockham)*, that Flavin's art could be extended at will. Flavin had dedicated this work to the nominalist theologian Ockham, whose famous maxim, "Ockham's Razor," asserts *Entia non multiplicanda prater necessitatem* ["Principles (entities) should not be multiplied unnecessarily."] In "rejecting the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas," Flavin explained, Ockham argued that reality "exists solely in individual things and universals are merely abstract signs."[84] Flavin's initial work named for the theologian, *one (to William of Ockham)* (1963), is a clear presentation of Ockham's proposition. Produced a month after the epiphanic *diagonal* (1963), it demonstrates the formal sufficiency of the solitary lamp with astonishing simplicity. Not unlike Andre's *Herm (Elements Series)* (1960–71), a single timber block stood on its end, *one* represents within Flavin's art an endpoint of reduction itself, a minimum of minimums: the point at which no further simplification is possible, short of removing or destroying this element.

The nominal three—six cool white lamps hung in sequential sets of one, two, and three—is nearly as parsimonious. And yet this work opens up the heady prospect that more and more lamps may be added to it—a fourth set, a fifth set, and so on (Flavin did in fact propose a "nominal four").[85] It hints that his works *could* be extended. It suggests that the forms of Flavin's works are potentially variable, that they are not closed. And in fact, the day that Flavin completed the drawing for *the nominal three*, he proposed *the continuous icon*, a barrier of identical vertical lamps receding into deep

81. Flavin produced notably few works for ornamental settings. His exhibition of green lamps at Kornblee Gallery in New York in 1967 illuminated the boiseries and carved mantelpiece of a former townhouse. Other, later projects involving historical interiors include the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum, Berlin (1996) and the Chiesa di Santa Maria Annunciata in Chiesa Rossa, Milan (1996).

82. "When we use a beautiful historical building, we cannot make the space shorter or the ceiling lower, because we cannot change an historical building, which must be as it is by law." Giuseppe Panza, letter to Dan Flavin, September 21, 1988, Panza Collection Archive.

83. Letter to Giuseppe Panza, September 14, 1988.

84. Letter to Mel Bochner, November 1, 1966, cited in Brydon Smith, *Fluorescent Light etc. from Dan Flavin* (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1969), p. 204.

85. Flavin's proposal for a "nominal four," each set of which was to be hung on a different wall of a single room, is reproduced in ibid., p. 207. His original drawing for his Green Gallery show, depicted in ibid., p. 201, also represented the work with four sets of lights.

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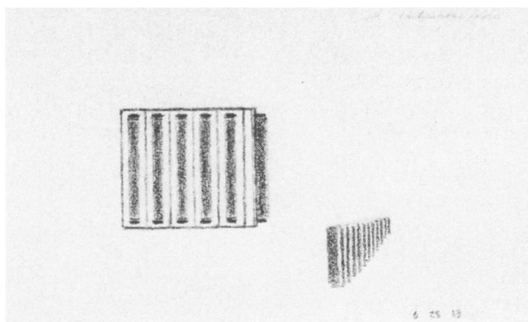

Flavin. the continuous icon. *1963. © 2009 Stephen Flavin/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*

space.[86] The subject of this fascinating proposal is what Eva Hesse would dub "expanded expansion," a staged infinity. *The continuous icon* is the ultimate serial work (it is literally "one thing after another"). A self-generating structure, it is a work that makes itself, and keeps making itself. It is a paragon of absolute motivation.[87] In fact, its motivation is so absolute, it is a work that can never be built. The conceptual inverse of *one* (the most minimal, the "easiest" of Flavin's works to make), *the continuous icon* can only be imagined: like the Great Wall of China of Kafka's parable, there will never be enough builders or materials, or enough time, to complete it.

The nominal three could be built. Consequently, it is a Pandora's Box of arbitrariness. Not only does it anticipate its possible extension (to a "nominal four," a "nominal five," and so on), it is endlessly variable. It is this work more than any other that exposed the contextual nature of Flavin's practice (much noted by Dan Graham, among others): the fact that, as Panza dared to remind the artist, his lamps "had to go where the wall is."[88] In the original installation of *the nominal three,* in his first one-person show at the Green Gallery in 1964, Flavin hung the fixtures only a few feet apart, and positioned them at the midpoint of the wall in between the ceiling and floor. At his retrospective at Ottawa in 1969, the artist lowered the lights noticeably—they now reached the floor molding—and hung the three sets several feet apart on a twenty-four-foot long partition.[89] Whole sections of wall in between the fixtures fell into shadow. Whereas at the Green Gallery the lights were

86. *One (to William of Ockham)* was completed on June 24, 1963; *the continuous icon* on June 28, 1963; and *the nominal three (to William of Ockham)* on June 28, 1963. See the entries for these works in ibid., pp. 170–75.
87. I draw the notion of "absolute" motivation from a recent lecture by Yve-Alain Bois, "The Difficult Task of Erasing Oneself: Non-Composition in 20th-Century Art," presented at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, March 27, 2008.
88. On the contextual nature of Flavin's practice, see Dan Graham, "Art in Relation to Architecture/Architecture in Relation to Art," in *Rock My Religion: Writings and Projects 1965–1990,* ed. Brian Wallis (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), p. 225.
89. See Brydon Smith's discussion of the two versions in *fluorescent light etc. from Dan Flavin,* p. 96.

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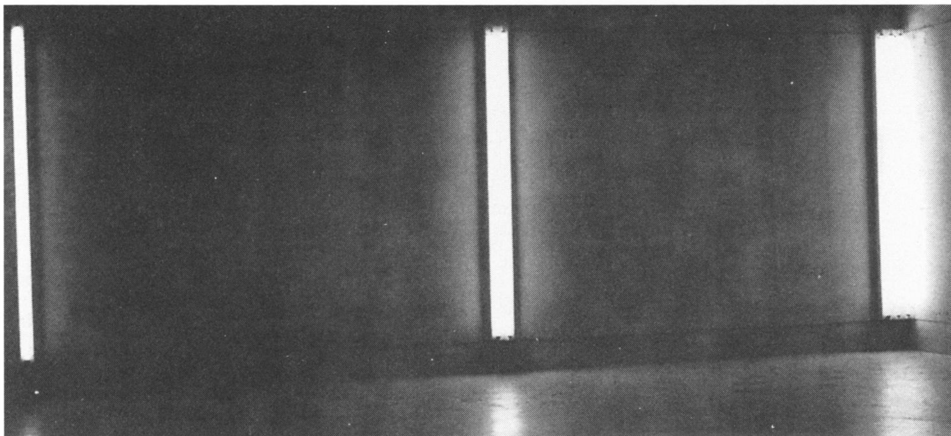

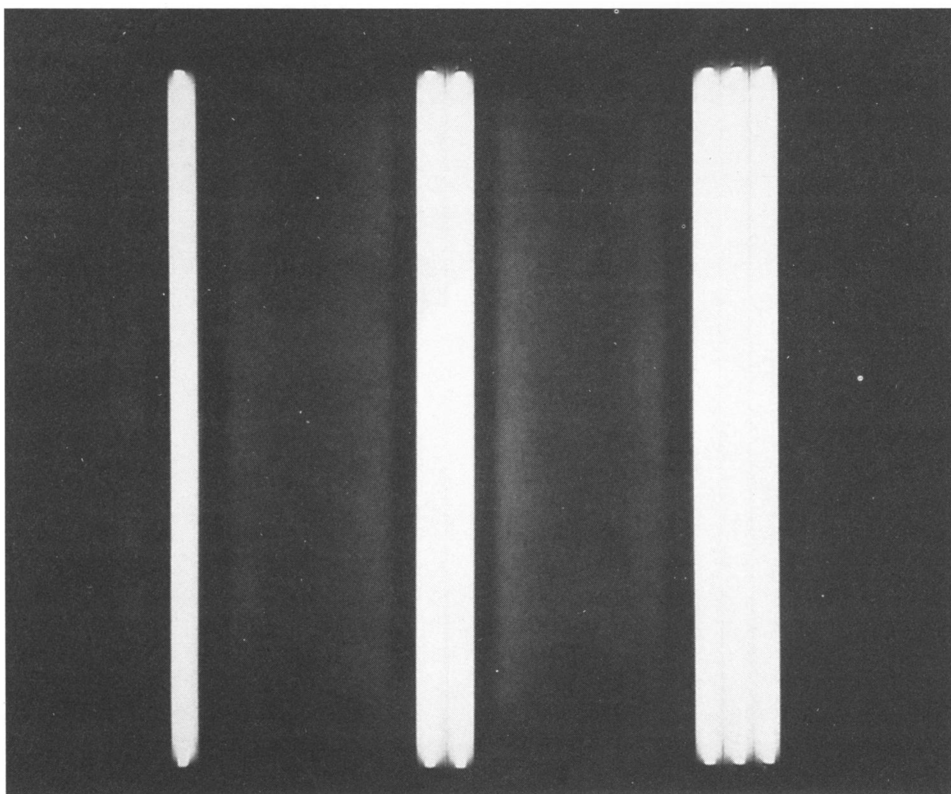

Flavin. the nominal three (to William of Ockham). *1963–64.* *© 2009 Stephen Flavin/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*
Top: Installation view, the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1969.
Bottom: Installation view, the Green Gallery, New York, 1964.

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compressed into a whole entity, here the first and third sets were positioned at the peripheries of vision: as one approached the work, it could no longer be grasped as a unified image.[90] The alteration of *the nominal three* from one setting to another (it has seen numerous variations) established that the same proposal could engender different perceptual encounters, different *nominal threes*.

Flavin insisted that his proposals were finite. Panza's installations implied they were hardly such. As Giménez placidly observed, Panza held that the ownership of a Flavin came with the right to build it "with respect to *his* ideas" (my emphasis.) "When we buy a work of art [Panza dilated on this point] we have the right to install [it] in the way we believe is better for seeing it."[91] Flavin may have bristled at this outrageous claim, yet the collector was technically correct. Neither the contracts of sale drawn up by Leo Castelli's lawyer, Gerald Ordover, nor the certificates for Flavin's works that Panza managed to acquire state that only the artist could oversee their installation.[92] Panza took Flavin's diagram and certificate at face value: having purchased these pieces of paper, he considered the works his to install. He was, he assured the artist, more than up to the task. His assertion that "everybody having seen the Reina Sofia exhibition . . . found this installation the best ever made" imputed in the strongest possible terms that his installations of Flavins were *superior* to Flavin's. They were better, according to Panza, because they revealed the transcendental beauty of the electric lamp, which the Icons had staged ironically and the fluorescent works (all those barriers that intruded into the gallery, all those corner works that spanned its walls, all those glaringly plain white *monuments to V. Tatlin*) had both revealed and suppressed.[93] Panza was determined to expose the perceptual sublimity of Flavin's art, imagined and foreclosed in *the infinite icon*, the work that could never be made. Thanks to Panza's interventions, the "mystical," "supernatural" character of Flavin's project had been revealed:

> They were works that needed mystical attention if they were to be understood . . . Here was the apparition of a supernatural image. It was religious art, without symbols, without rites, and without intermediaries; it was the direct and immediate presence of the supernatural.[94]

90. It would appear that Flavin intended this version to be an homage to Newman, to whose work it has often been compared. Only months before his death, the painter attended the opening of Flavin's exhibition and flipped the switch that "turned on" the show. See Barnett Newman, "Remarks on the Occasion of the Opening of the Exposition *Fluorescent Light etc. from Dan Flavin* in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, on 12 September 1969," *Chinati Foundation Newsletter* 5 (September 2000), pp. 14–15.
91. Panza, letter to Dan Flavin, September 21, 1988, Panza Collection Archive.
92. The contracts were drafted by Gerald Ordover. However, as Flavin reminded Panza, he did not agree to the contracts nor sign them. "The damned fool Ordover, so-called contract means nothing to me. I never agreed to it nor signed it. In fact, I denounced it as nonsense, when I heard about it. And you *always* knew of my opinion." Letter to Giuseppe Panza, September 14, 1988.
93. Flavin had long fought the charge that his works were "too beautiful." For an early example of this sort of criticism see Lucy R. Lippard, "Dan Flavin, Kaymar Gallery," *Artforum* 2, no. 11 (May 1964), p. 54.
94. Ibid., p. 123.

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Judd once described Flavin's art as a "light and a phenomenon." For Judd, a Flavin consists of the material lamp and the experience of its luminosity.[95] To see a Flavin, Judd says, is to see doubly. Our first impression is of the light, which we perceive instantaneously. As our eyes adjust to this image we become cognizant of the glass tubes and their supporting pans, and the shadows they cast. We see that the light's source is an industrially-made thing, and that this has been affixed to the wall or floor. We perceive the lamp's effulgence and its objectness simultaneously—which is to say we see neither entirely. To see doubly is a flickering awareness, a wavering comprehension. Panza's installation counteracted this paradoxical perception. The Janus scheme of *untitled (to Jan and Ron Greenberg)* was revealed at once, so could not be experienced. The lit vault transfigured Flavin's model of perceptual contradiction into a Panzaesque aesthetic of resolution and tawdry transcendence.

The collector's presentation of Flavin's *monument 4 for those who have been killed in ambush (to P.K. who reminded me about death)* (1966), at the Villa Litta, was similar. Initially built for the *Primary Structures* exhibition of 1966, Flavin's "monument" shared a gallery with six other sculptures, which absorbed and defused its intensity.[96] At Varese, Panza installed Flavin's work alone in a room hidden behind a closed door. Suspended above a buffed white linoleum floor, the four cherry-red fluorescents dissolved in their own luminosity. Neither daylight nor other works disrupted this numinous encounter. The physical contours of the room were indeed difficult to grasp. A haptic comprehension of the fixtures was foreclosed.[97] The corner—the *locus classicus* of Constructivist experimentation, of Tatlin's *Corner Reliefs* (1914–1915), of the tactile tradition of modern sculpture—became the vehicle of a dematerialized perception, an unabashed visuality. The Villa Litta was Panza's laboratory for the re-imagination of the Minimalist installation as hyperspace—a project that found its apotheosis in his installations of his collection at Madrid and at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1988–89. As at Varese, Panza installed Flavin's lights in total darkness and in separate chambers or alcoves, exaggerating the saturation of the colors. The "Art Deco" Flavin of the Paris installation—the spectacularized Flavin decried so memorably by Rosalind Krauss in her essay "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum"—was Panza's Flavin.[98] Flavin's presentations of his works were "wrong," the collector complained, because he combined "too many" pieces in the same room. Flavin's Flavins were neither Minimal—nor "metaphysical"—enough. Panza's solution was simple. Isolate the work, and the light would "dominat[e] the

95. Donald Judd, "Aspects of Flavin's Work," *Complete Writings 1959–1975*, pp. 199–200.
96. Flavin placed another version in the bar Max's Kansas City, where it hovered over the famous back room furnished in red chairs and banquettes.
97. As Judd observed of this installation, the light cast by the work "flooded the whole room, became the space, which is unlike Flavin . . . and more like the banal colored rooms [of] James Turrell." See "Una Stanza per Panza, Part III," *Kunst Intern* (September 1990), p. 8. My own experience of the room confirms Judd's assessment.
98. Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Fall 1990), pp. 3–17.

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form." Thanks to Panza, the "mystic aspect" of Flavin's practice—ironized in the *Icons* and the *East New York Shrine* and suppressed in the fluorescent works—would be exposed, at long last.[99] This offense the former altar boy and would-be seminarian could forgive least of all, as Panza proudly recalled: "Flavin did not want this to be visible. He was a left-wing intellectual, a dissenter, and so his subconscious had to remain hidden .... I think it was because of this that he didn't like me, because I let others see a truth that he wanted to keep hidden."[100]

*

Panza found in Flavin's works those tokens of a sublimity first grasped in the sighting of a bowl of blue sky at the edge of a cliff. The memory of this perception remained among the collector's most vivid childhood recollections.[101] Flavin's works appealed to Panza intuitively; by comparison, his enthusiasm for Judd's works evolved slowly, during the early 1970s, when he purchased eleven completed objects.[102] He then acquired a number of proposals for works; these drawings would be the focus of their dispute.

The early 1970s was a turning point in Judd's practice: the moment when Judd condemned *Untitled* to orphancy, when he sought to exert a new authorial control. This was also the moment when Judd began to envision works of a newly ambitious scale and site-specific projects, such as the rectangular, concentric steel walls he built in the suburban garden of Joseph and Emily Pulitzer in St. Louis, and the concrete ring he installed behind Philip Johnson's Glass House. During the heyday of the earthwork and the axiomatic structure, the box and relief formats of the mid-1960s were not entirely adequate to his purpose. At St. Louis, at New Canaan, and at Sonsbeek, where Judd mounted two concentric square walls on the slope of a hillside, the archetypal object maker re-emerged as a sculptor of the "expanded field."

What sets Panza apart from these patrons is the sheer number of works he bought as *plans*.[103] Where Pulitzer and Johnson commissioned Judd to install their sculptures, Panza acquired numerous "projects" he would never realize, projects he would presumably oversee at some future—and perpetually deferred—point in time. We can only marvel at the collector's audacity, yet these purchases were not

99. Panza, *Memories of a Collector*, p. 125. See also the collector's remarks in Roberta Riccioni, "Interview with Giuseppe Panza di Biumo," in *Dan Flavin: Rooms of Light: Works of the Panza Collection from the Villa Panza, Varese and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum New York* (Milan: Skira, 2004), pp. 33–43.
100. Panza, *Memories of a Collector*, pp. 125–26. On Panza's Catholicism, see his recollections of the Di Simoni family in ibid., pp. 43–48. Flavin's religious upbringing is discussed in Angela Vattese, "Light as a Fact and as a Sign," *Dan Flavin: Rooms of Light: Works of the Panza Collection from the Villa Panza, Varese and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum New York*, pp. 23–31.
101. See Panza's remarks on the "discovery of infinity" in *Memories of a Collector*, pp. 30–31.
102. The works were built at Judd's preferred manufacturer, Bernstein Brothers in Long Island City, New York. They include a steel box painted in brown enamel (DJ1), a floor ramp in three parts in perforated cold-rolled steel (DJ2), a copper Stack (DJ3), two Progressions (DJ5 and DJ7), and six other works.
103. The "works" are listed as DJ 12–31 in Panza's inventory.

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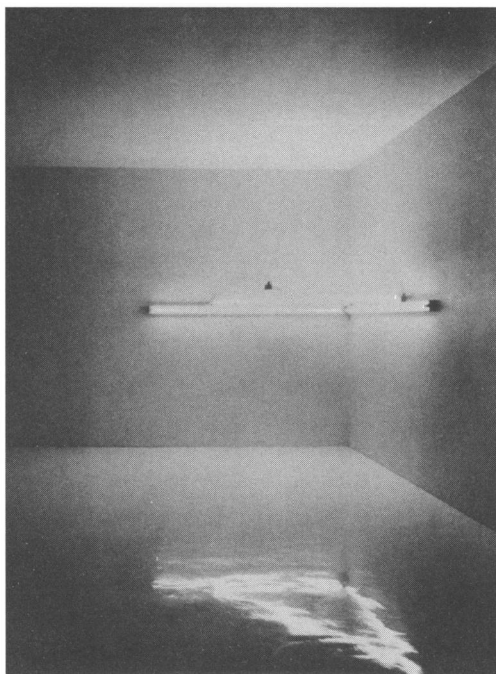
without a financial rationale. By buying projects on paper, Panza could have as many Judds as he pleased, at a considerable discount, without having to store or exhibit them—and then resell the sheets to the Guggenheim sixteen years later at a profit ("a million for paper," Judd ruefully noted).[104] He was able to buy these works for considerably less than the cost of realized objects, and if he decided to make them he could also save money, enlisting local fabricators rather than Judd's costly craftsmen. Better still for Panza, Judd set the price of these projects even lower than for his usual works, because they were meant to be site-specific. Unlike the portable modernist sculpture that could be easily traded, the site-specific work, as Judd conceived it, was to be unmovable and, as a consequence, unsalable.[105] As important to Panza as their affordable cost, these "works" could not be questioned. Forgeries or discredited works (such as the ill-fated relief) were impossible, the collector noted with satisfaction. Because the owner possessed the plan, only he or she could oversee the work's execution.[106] Better still, the "project" could not be taxed as "art." Not only



Flavin. monument 4 those who have been killed in ambush (to P.K. who reminded me about death). *1966. Installation view, Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese. © 2009 Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*

104. "Instead of the discount being given from Castelli's fifty percent, Castelli had given Panza a fifty percent discount or more. Then he had split my share fifty-fifty, so that I got less than twenty-five percent." Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part II," p. 10. The original sale prices of the "paper" works generally ranged from $10,000–15,000. (Invoices from Leo Castelli Gallery dated March 23 and 25, 1974, Panza Collection Archive.) Judd noted that the same works fetched between $70,000 to $100,000 when they were sold to the Guggenheim in 1990, an appreciation of 700–1000 percent. Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 17.

105. "The promise of work to be made was used to get it for nearly nothing. Permanence was part of the purchase price." Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part II," p. 8, and "Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 12. As it turned out, only one of these "permanent" projects, the *Varese Wall*, was built, which did not stop Panza from "rebuilding" it for an exhibition at Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, in 1989. On the distinction between the modernist, movable sculpture and the site-specific work see Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 276–91.

106. Panza, *Memories of a Collector*, pp. 138–139.

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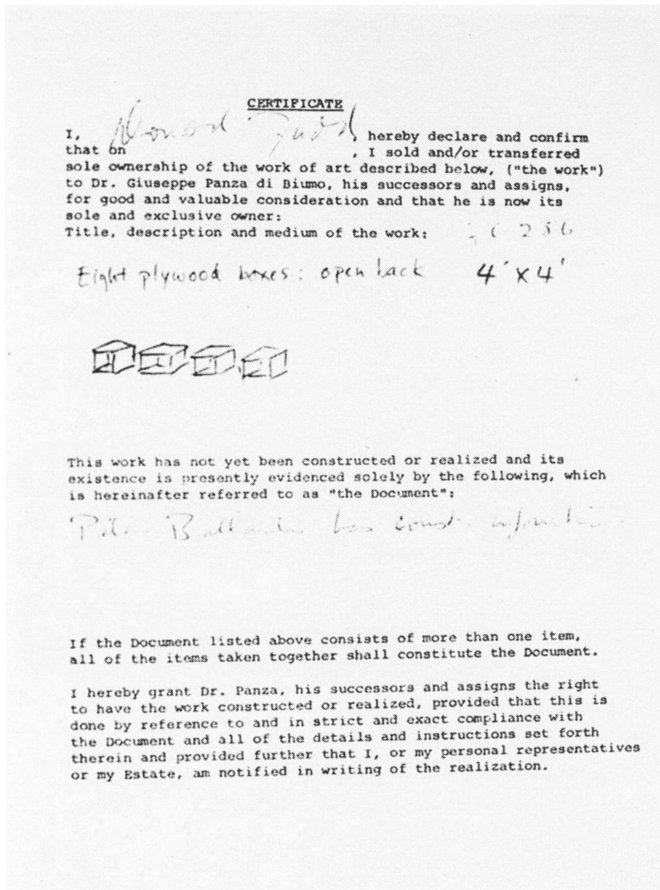
CERTIFICATE

I, Donald Judd, hereby declare and confirm that on , I sold and/or transferred sole ownership of the work of art described below, ("the work") to Dr. Giuseppe Panza di Biumo, his successors and assigns, for good and valuable consideration and that he is now its sole and exclusive owner:

Title, description and medium of the work:

Eight plywood boxes: open back 4'x4'

This work has not yet been constructed or realized and its existence is presently evidenced solely by the following, which is hereinafter referred to as "the Document":

If the Document listed above consists of more than one item, all of the items taken together shall constitute the Document.

I hereby grant Dr. Panza, his successors and assigns the right to have the work constructed or realized, provided that this is done by reference to and in strict and exact compliance with the Document and all of the details and instructions set forth therein and provided further that I, or my personal representatives or my Estate, am notified in writing of the realization.

Judd. Certificate for Untitled ("Eight plywood boxes: open back"). *1974.*

did Panza not have to pay Italian duties at the time of purchase, he could pass these works on to his children without inheritance taxes.[107] As the collector explained to Judd, "In Italy the law totally exempt[s] from this tax the intelectual [*sic*] creation, the manuscript of the writer . . . the drawing of an engineer, and a project by an artist." Collecting "projects"—works on paper rather than built things—was "the right thing to do."[108]

Panza's investment seems even more remarkable when we consider the kinds of drawings he purchased. Drawing, for Judd, was not a medium in its own right, so much as a method for recording things he had made, or was planning to make. His drawings from the early 1960s are elevations and axiometric views accompanied by

107. On these points, see Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*, p. 35.
108. Giuseppe Panza, Letter to Donald Judd, repr. in Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part III," *Kunst Intern* (September 1990), p. 4. As Judd noted, the word "project" was derived from Italian tax law.

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their generative schemes: we can more or less envision the work Judd had in mind.[109] Once he enlisted the assistance of workshops, his drawings resembled the final result less and less. "There was often a big gap between a drawing Don did and the fabrication process," one of Judd's fabricators later recalled. "Each case was very different. The materials were each different."[110] This "gap" between planning and execution became even more pronounced in Judd's plans for site-specific works. It is this type of drawing that Panza amassed. Uningratiating, workman-like, some of these depictions specify the work's dimensions, materials, and even the types of screws to be used. Others are deliberately vague. In the drawing for a wall of seventy brass boxes, for example, the width of the metal could vary between 1/5 and 1/4 of an inch. The width of the entire piece could vary between 3.5 or 3.7 meters. The boxes should be "hung tightly together," Judd notes. But how tightly? Who would make this determination? Judd left these projects open-ended because they were site-specific: the height, width, and volume of the installations could not be known in advance, such as the one for "Five or more boxes, backs open and against the wall. 1–3/16" A-B fir North American plywood." The exact number of boxes (how many more than five, one asks?) and the dimensions of each unit could only be determined *in situ*. Still another description of the *Wall of Boxes* is astonishingly loose: "One or more walls fitted floor to ceiling. Brass, copper, stainless steel, galvanized iron, iron sides. Backs same or painted colors, anodized colors, transparent plexiglas colors over painted colors, plexiglas colors. Backs recessed completely or a few inches or half way."[111]

But the most open-ended "drawings" of all were the certificates and purchase orders Panza acquired in large numbers.[112] As drafted by Ordover, the certificates are linguistic rather than graphic presentations. A schematic depiction of the future work is a mere supplement to the more substantial, contractual portion of the agreement. The six purchase orders acquired by Panza from another assistant, Dudley Del Baso, suggest the most drastic reduction of all, for now the "object" has been transfigured into pure exchange value. These slips of paper were not even signed by Judd. The handwriting is Del Baso's cursive script; even the thumbnail axiometric depictions of boxes appear to be hers.

Judd would make much of these sheets of paper in "Una Stanza Per Panza," his turgid prosecution of the collector, published in four parts in the German journal *Kunst Intern*.[113] As in the episode of the red relief, an assistant had acted against the artist's wishes. Contracts and purchase orders are "private" communications between the artist and fabricator, Judd notes. Purchase orders were

109. On Judd's drawing practice see Dieter Koepplin's foreword in *Donald Judd: Zeichnungen/Drawings 1956–1976* (Basel: Kunstmuseum Basel, 1976), pp. 3–12.
110. Dudley Lippincott, remarks on a panel on Judd's art and its conservation, New York, October 25–26, 1997.
111. Certificate for DJ 25–63.
112. The "works" are prominently illustrated in the catalogue of his collection, *Art of the Sixties and Seventies: The Panza Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), pp. 164–65. The purchase orders are notably absent in the second edition of the book.
113. Judd distributed English off-prints at that summer's Venice Biennale. See Jeffrey Kopie, "Chronology," in Serota, *Donald Judd*, p. 267.

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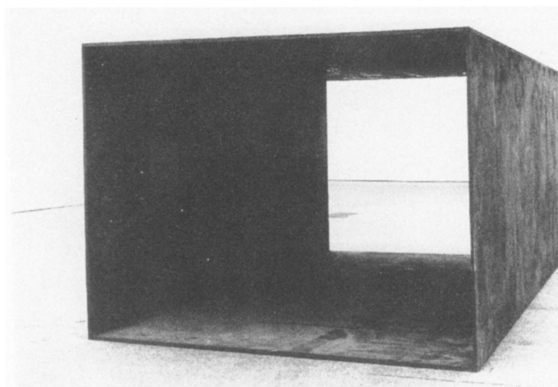
"not art," despite Panza's efforts to present them as such. Del Baso should never have given them to Panza; Panza had no right to possess them.[114] According to Judd, the only authentic works in Panza's collection were those fabricated under his supervision.[115] The "paper" projects —sculptures made from drawings and certificates in metal and plywood bearing such dubious titles as *Single Straight Tube, Eight Hot Rolled Steel Boxes,* and *Bern Pieces*—Judd dismissed as "fakes."[116] He even condemned the so-called *Varese Wall,* a work originally constructed at Castelli of a rough galvanized iron, whose refabrication at Varese he had approved. The metal Panza used was "too soft and delicate," Judd complained, and of the wrong width. Worse, Panza positioned the plates on wooden beams so as to compensate for the uneven grade of the former stable floor. This additive element precluded a viewer from grasping Judd's scheme, the orchestration of one plane in front of another.[117]



Judd. Untitled ("Single Straight Tube"). *1974. Fabrication by Giuseppe Panza. © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.*

Panza insisted that he'd built the works for pragmatic reasons. To have made them in the United States, enlisting Judd's craftsmen, and the kinds of metal and plywood Judd specified, would have taken far longer, and cost double.[118] Other artists

114. "Una Stanza per Panza, Part II," p. 11, and "Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 8.
115. These included, in addition to the works fabricated at Bernstein Brothers, the "dubious" Varese wall and a plywood piece built by Judd's favored woodworker, Peter Ballantine, for the opening exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in 1983. "Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 10.
116. Judd, who titled all of his works "Untitled" as early as 1958, attributed these fallacious titles to Panza. ("Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 10.) His recollection is somewhat disingenuous. In a handwritten letter to Panza of March 24, 1976, Panza Collection Archive, Judd listed several works as "belong[ing] to Giuseppe Panza." Among these were "1. Large aluminum straight single tube" and "4. Eight hot rolled steel boxes recessed, 5 x 5 x 5." Panza inappropriately assumed these descriptions were the works' titles.
117. Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, II," pp. 11–12. Judd initially accepted Panza's remake during a visit to Varese, a decision he later regretted. Panza executed another version of the wall without consulting Judd for an exhibit at the Ace Gallery in Los Angeles in the fall of 1989. Once again Del Baso acted on her own, "provid[ing] information for the construction" without informing the artist ("Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 11.) Declaring that fabrication of the piece was authorized without his "approval or permission," Judd ensured that the "work" was destroyed and left Castelli as a consequence (ibid.). See Judd's advertisement denying the work in *Art in America* (March 1990), p. 128.
118. Giuseppe Panza, letter to Donald Judd, December 19, 1989, Panza Collection Archive. Moreover, Panza claimed to have followed the instructions of Judd's wood fabricator, Peter Ballantine, in making the sculptures for exhibition at an Italian museum. The collector offered this consolation: "If in any way it will be again possible to exhibit your works you will see them, and if you do not like them [they] will be remade by the builder you believe to be the best." Ibid.

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were hardly so fussy! Bruce Nauman, for one: "One or two times when I haven't been consulted, Panza got [it] wrong. But most of my pieces can be adjusted quite a bit."[119] Nauman's remark that his works could be adjusted "quite a bit" suggests a profound difference in approach from the exacting Minimalist. An installation like *Green Light Corridor* is experienced haptically by a moving body: it is not a work to "look at" in Judd's sense. Forced to move sideways between the close walls, the rows of green lamps beating down upon us, we don't focus on the grain of the wood or the niceties of the work's construction. We feel entrapped in Nauman's constricting space—and are happy to leave it. Judd's plywood pieces are primarily directed to vision.[120] The American fir, A-B plywood he favored is not furniture-grade. More richly grained than Panza's bland poplar, and finished on both sides, without splits or holes, it is a material that compels us to look at it, and the shape it comprises.[121]

Robert Morris also expressed a casual indifference in matters of facture. In his dealings with Panza, one of his most devoted patrons, Morris was nothing if not pragmatic. Rather than dictate which materials Panza should use, Morris advised that his plywood works could be made in Fiberglas, and that any shade of pale gray would do; and he encouraged Panza to work with local fabricators.[122] And he

119. Bruce Nauman quoted in Glueck, "Millions for Art, a Lot of It Unfinished."
120. Judd was particularly annoyed when Panza wanted to destroy a plywood piece that had been built by Ballantine. "Una Stanza per Panza, Part IV," p. 3.
121. Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part II," p. 4. I owe these details to Derek De Luco, Collections Preparator at the Guggenheim Museum.
122. Morris discusses remaking his plywood works in Fiberglas in a letter of November 21, 1966, and his openness to Italian workshops in a letter of July 28, 1971. He reveals his willingness to accept different shades of gray in a letter of July 26, 1977. Panza Collection Archive.

Judd. Purchase order for Untitled ("Wall of Boxes"). *1974.*

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staunchly distanced himself from Judd and Flavin during their melee with the collector, penning a defense of the Guggenheim acquisition and of the museum's director Thomas Krens. His account is no less self-interested than Judd's.[123] In a reprisal of the polemical stance of his early criticism, Morris singled out the author of "Specific Objects" as his principle target. Morris identified two strands of Minimalism—an "optical" art derived from painting (e.g., Judd's) and his own, "haptic" sculpture. The former was costly to make; the latter, the result of "straightforward craftsmanship," could be cheaply remade. Morris defended Panza overtly. Panza should not be blamed for Judd's travails, he argued, for the seeds of the sordid "affair" were to be found *in Judd's practice.* His works involved an inordinate fetishism of material and technique. An object looked more "specific," Judd insisted, when it was impeccably made. Morris attributed a different sort of motivation to the author of "Specific Objects": Judd's insistence on perfection spoke of a desire to make "precious" commodities.[124] Judd had portrayed Panza and Castelli as profiteers at the artist's expense. Now Morris made the unsavory claim that Judd produced exorbitant works intentionally, for pecuniary gain.

"Una Stanza per Panza" invokes a reader's sympathy—to a point. For one of the curious omissions of Judd's text is his participation in the events he so carefully reconstructs. Judd portrays himself as the guileless victim of Panza's greed, as the dupe of Castelli's shady business practices, as Del Baso's trusting boss. But, one wonders, why didn't Judd hire his own attorney to draft a certificate that specified how exactly his works should be carried out? Why didn't he read the contracts more carefully before signing them?[125] Judd had been perfectly willing to sell *him* the certificates, Panza noted dryly, and it may be that Judd, the recipient of a monthly stipend from Castelli, felt pressured into the deal. Castelli had fabricated works on speculation, Panza recalled. Some of these works failed to sell.[126] Morris had a point. Judd's techniques were costly; it was expensive to *be* Judd.[127] Perhaps because he didn't trade in "concepts," Judd couldn't foresee that others would interpret his works as such. Unlike so many of his peers, he never devised a proper certificate that could encapsulate his method: his practice cannot be translated into a linguistic representation. His art appears to enforce a gap between the plan and result, between the a priori and a posteriori, as LeWitt's practice, during the early years, claimed to do. It is far less radical than that. A description of a Judd is not a Judd, because a

123. Robert Morris, "What Did the Guggenheim Gain?" *The Journal of Art* (October 1990), p. 28. Krens first exhibited Morris's work in a 1977 show of the artist's mirror works at the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute. In 1990 Morris was involved in the preparations for his 1993 retrospective at the Guggenheim co-curated by Krens and Rosalind Krauss.
124. Ibid.
125. "It's important to say that all arrangements with Panza were made by Castelli and his lawyer, not mine, Jerry Ordover." Donald Judd, "Una Stanza per Panza, Part II," p. 11.
126. Panza, *Memories of a Collector*, p. 148.
127. Judd addresses his financial dealings with Castelli in "Una Stanza per Panza, Part II," pp. 10–11. He assigns a portion of his debt to Castelli's poor book-keeping. Nevertheless a bill from Judd's fabricator, Bernstein Brothers, for several thousand dollars included in Bochner's installation *Working Drawings and Other Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art* of 1966, the year of Judd's first show at Castelli, indicates a cycle of indebtedness at the outset of his career.

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"Judd" is the result of numerous decisions made by Judd. Panza scoffed at the assertion that the artist alone could oversee his work: just as he could install Flavin's work as well as Flavin, he could fabricate perfectly good Judds. More to the point, he was *entitled* to do so. As he informed Judd himself: "[It] is my will to do installation[s] made by you because [they] will be better than the one[s] made by anybody else."[128] Judd bristled at this arrogant claim, yet Panza, an attorney after all, was technically correct. Judd had forfeited the right to this oversight. The certificates Judd signed pointedly omit the requirement that he make the work. They state that Panza could "have the work constructed or realized," provided this was accomplished "by reference to and in strict and exact compliance" with the contract and its instructions.[129] Panza insisted that he had fulfilled the terms of these contracts, and to a certain extent he had. His were "bad" Judds, perhaps, but they were legal—and so legally speaking—authentic. Assigning the rights to these works to Panza's "successors and assigns," the contracts allow that such works could be made long after Judd, and Panza himself, were deceased; and they state that such documents "taken together, shall constitute proof of ownership of the work." The "work" was now defined as the certificate for the work—a linguistic description.[130] In other words, the contracts Judd signed betrayed his practice as he had formulated it: they sounded the death knell of the Specific Object, turning his art against itself into a Conceptualist activity.

Bruce Nauman. Green Light Corridor. *1970–71.* *© 2009 Bruce Nauman/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.*

For if Panza's reading of Minimal form evoked Kosuth's Art as Idea as Idea, his practice more readily recalled Lawrence Weiner's notion of artistic labor as a choice to complete the work or not, conjugated in the modal tense (the artist "may construct the piece," the piece "may be fabricated"). The decision no longer rested with the artist but with a "receiver."[131] Where the certificates of Kosuth and Douglas Huebler still attributed the artwork's intent to the maker, as Alexander Alberro has noted, the certificates of Weiner—which coincidentally were also filed with Ordover—dismantled any firm distinction between the artist and collector: the work is neither Judd's empirical object nor Kosuth's proprietary idea, but a contractual relationship.[132]

128. Giuseppe Panza, letter to Donald Judd, December 19, 1989.
129. The contracts state: "I hereby grant Dr. Panza, his successors and assigns the right to have the work constructed or realized, provided that this is done by reference to and in strict and exact compliance with the Document and all of the details and instructions set forth therein and provided further that I, or my personal representatives of my Estate, are notified in writing of the realization." Certificate for *Double Copper Wall, Enclosed,* July 3, 1976, Panza Collection Archive.
130. Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Art,* p. 34.
131. Lawrence Weiner, "Statement of Intent," 1968.
132. Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 97–98.

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Hal Foster once observed that Minimalism resulted not only in a new kind of sculpture, as its supporters claimed, it also produced a new kind of viewer—the phenomenological viewer theorized by Morris and denounced by Fried. The death of the author of Minimalism was at the same time "a birth of the viewer," Foster writes.[133] Panza took this formula—this shift from work to beholder—another step further. Fabricating these works as he pleased, he revealed that the death of the author of Minimalism was a birth of the reader in Wolfgang Iser's sense: a *post-*Minimalist viewer-participant who is no longer constrained to "look" at the work but is actively involved in its completion. As Iser argues in "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," a text published contemporaneously with these practices in 1974, the literary work consists of two poles.[134] The "artistic" pole denotes the text intended by the author; the second, "aesthetic" pole suggests the text's realization by a reader. The interpretative act breaches the gap or "virtual" space between these intentionalities. The literary work is not identical with the text, says Iser, nor is it its interpretation; it is neither one pole nor the other, but "lies halfway between the two." It is this gap that dynamizes the work, that transforms it into a "process." The literary work is not an objective entity whose meaning a reader unfolds (as for the New Critics, for example). The text is only realized in the act of reading, and so is open to countless readings. "Each reader will fill in the gaps in his own way."[135] Panza, we could say, rejected the empirical protocol of the Minimal object and the firm division of intentionalities of the artist and viewer it presupposed. He conceived the artistic act as a virtual exchange between these parties—as a financial transaction. This "virtual ownership," as Panza called it, conferred an enormous power upon the receiver. Not unlike the text of Reader Response theory, the modal artwork—the work-as-decision, as choice—comes into being at the moment of "realization." Just as the literary work exists during the process of reading—when a reader decides to read—the virtual artwork "exists or not according to the will of its owner."[136] The owner decides not only *how* the work should look; he determines when and *if* the work should be built. With virtual ownership, a collector's control of the work assumed an ontological status. For now the buyer authorized whether the work could exist physically—whether it could assume a form. Joe was indeed an artist.

The Post-Minimal Field

Panza imposed the readerly protocol of the art of the late 1960s and early '70s onto practices that had more or less evolved by 1966. Simply stated, he interpreted "Minimalism" through the lens of "post-Minimalism," blurring the distinction

133. Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," p. 50.
134. See Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" in Tompkins, *Reader Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, pp. 50–69. I thank Michael Ann Holly for directing me to this text. For another account of this shift of artistic intentionality during the 1960s, see Helen Molesworth, *Work Ethic* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 2004), especially pp. 30ff.
135. Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," p. 55.
136. Panza, *Memories of a Collector*, p. 138.

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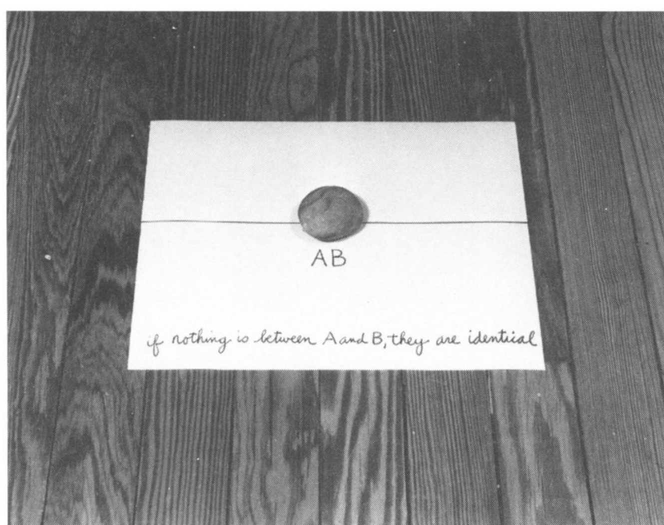
between these paradigms. It was, of course, Robert Pincus-Witten who coined the term *post-Minimalism* to mark the field of practices apparently engendered by Minimalism. Post-Minimalism, he wrote in an influential text, suggests the "multitude of stylistic resolutions preceded and posited by [the] apparent generative style" of Minimalism.[137] This definition is subtly continuous and discontinuous, positive and negative. It speaks of post-Minimalism as so many paths extending from a Minimalist core, some of which themselves extend, and others of which oppose, that matrix. It construes Minimalism and post-Minimalism as a diachronic pair within an art-historical procession of sculptural styles.[138] One could also speak of Minimalism and post-Minimalism as synchronic, interlocking formations. For post-Minimalism inhabits, even *precedes*, Minimalism: it is the return of all that Minimalism repressed.[139] Yvonne Rainer points to Minimalism's elimination of subject matter and autobiography, and their subsequent retrieval in her early films. The Panza affair exposed still other suppressions. It revealed that the literalist work denied its subjectivism, its conceptual nature: the object that claimed to be "itself," that aspired to the condition of a tautology, was not as hollow as it appeared.

Literalism splits into two further tautologies in post-Minimalism, with the conceptual and the anti-formal poised at opposite extremes. At one antipode of this scheme is Kosuth's Art as Idea as Idea; at the other, the literal shape denounced by Fried has collapsed into matter devoid of shape, as Matter-as-Matter (Serra, Morris).

137. Robert Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism* (London: Out of London Press, 1977), p. 16.
138. Pincus-Witten modeled this analogy on the relationship of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism as presented in the writings of John Rewald, among others.
139. The case for synchrony is suggested by the simultaneous installation of "Ten" and "Eccentric Abstraction," two shows associated with Minimalism and post-Minimalism respectively, at the Dwan and Fischbach Galleries in the New York Gallery Building on West 57th Street in October, 1966.



Mel Bochner. 7 Properties of Between: Seventh Property. *1971–72.* *© 2009 Mel Bochner.*

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In "Anti-Form," Morris describes Minimalism's division of making and result, of generative scheme and constitutive matter, as "reasonable," "dualistic." There is too much mind in Minimalism, Morris complains, and not enough body.[140] And so he devises a sculpture that stages the manipulation of matter as such, that makes palpable the distinctive tactile qualities of materials. And though "Anti-Form" entails a radical loss of artistic control (the material dictates its use: felt must be cut, molten lead must be poured, and so on) this version of post-Minimalism places the body of the artist at the center of the work's making (it is hard to envision Panza cutting Morris's felt). Last but not least, we could point to a post-Minimalism of "between," of the double; a post-Minimalism that undermines tautology: the LeWitt who exhibits the wall drawing adjacent to its generative idea; the Bochner who lays out pebbles and pennies in concert with numeric and linguistic proposals; the Nauman who combines and alternates between bodily, textual, and aural articulations; or the Hesse who, restoring the hand to ambitious sculpture, stages opposition as complementarity, as neutrality. The post-Minimal field is the unleashing of those antimonies of matter and idea, of composition and non-composition, of abstraction and allusion, that the Minimalist practitioners during the early 1960s endeavored to suppress.

140. Robert Morris, "Anti Form," *Artforum* 6, no. 8 (April 1968), pp. 33–35.

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