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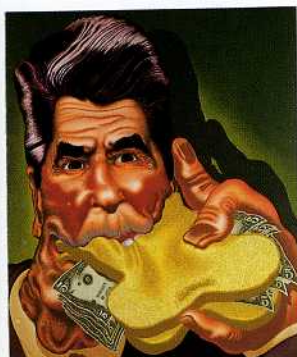


Jonathan Lasker, *Gutteral Antiquity*, 1989, Oil on canvas, 49" x 42". Courtesy Massimo Audiello Gallery. Joseph Masheck's article begins on page 38.

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Jacques Villeglé, *Rue Francois Miron, July 9, 1963*, 12¼" x 18". Courtesy Zabriskie Gallery. Michèle Cone's interview with Pierre Restany begins on page 66.



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Cover: Silvia Kolbowski, *Project* commissioned by Arts Magazine on the occasion of the relocation of their editorial and business offices from 23 East 26th Street to 561 Broadway, New York, 1989. Detail view of Arts Magazine logos (1989, 1987, 1965, 1964, 1953). See page 64 for additional details.

Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power

Anna C. Chave

Let me begin with an anecdote: while I was looking at Donald Judd's gleaming brass floor box [fig. 1] of 1968 from a distance in the galleries of the Museum of Modern Art last Spring, two teenage girls strode over to this pristine work, kicked it, and laughed. They then discovered its reflective surface and used it for a while to arrange their hair until, finally, they bent over to kiss their images on the top of the box. The guard near by, watching all of this, said nothing. Why such an object might elicit both a kick and a kiss, and why a museum guard might do nothing about it are at issue in this essay. I will argue that the object's look of absolute, or "plain power," as Judd described it, helps explain the perception that it did not need or merit protecting, that it could withstand or even deserved such an assault. What concerns me about Minimalist art is what Teresa de Lauretis describes as "the relations of power involved in enunciation and reception; . . . the ideological construction of authorship and mastery; or more plainly, who speaks to whom, why, and for whom."¹ I want, further, to historicize those relations—to examine the rhetoric inscribed in Minimalism, and the discursive context of the movement, in relation to the socio-political climate of the time during which it emerged. Richard Serra remembers that in the 1960s, "It was your job as an artist to redefine society by the values you were introducing, rather than the other way around."² But did Minimalist art in any way propose, or effect, a revaluation of values? And how are we to understand its cool displays of power in relation to a society that was experiencing a violent ambivalence toward authority, a society where many were looking for the means of transforming power relations?

By manufacturing objects with common industrial and commercial materials in a restricted vocabulary of geometric shapes, Judd and the other Minimalist artists availed themselves of the cultural authority of the markers of industry and technology. Though the specific qualities of their objects vary—from the corporate furniture-like elegance of Judd's polished floor box, to the harsh, steel mesh of Robert Morris's cage-like construction of 1967 [fig. 2], to the industrial banality of Carl Andre's *Zinc-Zinc Plain* of 1969 [fig. 3]—the authority implicit in the identity of the materials and shapes the artists used, as well as in the scale and often the weight of their objects, has been crucial to Minimalism's associative values from the outset.³ In one of the first Minimalist group shows, *Shape and Structure*, at Tibor de Nagy in 1965, Andre submitted a timber piece so massive it almost

caused the gallery's floor to collapse and had to be removed. The unapologetic artist described his ambitions for that work in forceful and nakedly territorial terms: "I wanted very much to seize and hold the space of that gallery—not simply fill it, but seize and hold that space."⁴ More recently, Richard Serra's mammoth, curving, steel walls have required even the floors of the Castelli Gallery's industrial loft space to be shored up—which did not prevent harrowing damage to both life and property.⁵

The Minimalists' domineering, sometimes brutal rhetoric was breached in this country in the 1960s, a decade of brutal displays of power by both the American military in Vietnam, and the police at home in the streets and on university campuses across the country. Corporate power burgeoned in the U.S. in the 1960s too, with the rise of the "multinationals," due in part to the flourishing of the military-industrial complex. The exceptionally visible violence of the state's military and disciplinary establishments in this period met with a concerted response, of course. Vested power became embattled on every front with the eruption of the civil rights alongside the feminist and gay rights movements. In keeping with the time-honored alignments of the avant-garde, the Minimalists were self-identified, but not especially clear-thinking, leftists. "My art will reflect not necessarily conscious politics but the unanalyzed politics of my life. Matter as matter rather than matter as symbol is a conscious political position I think, essentially Marxist," said Andre, contradictorily, in 1970.⁶ "A lot of people believed that there were really *changes* . . . in the sixties," Frank Stella recently observed, "I believed it too. It did seem that way. A lot of the work seems . . . strong to me. But it does seem that it didn't do what it was supposed to do."⁷ However, Stella didn't specify what the art of the sixties was supposed to do, or why "strength" was expected to accomplish its errands.

Now, as in the 1960s, the dominant accounts of Minimalism do not portray it as an instrument of social change but, on the contrary, as art that somehow generated and occupied a special sphere, aloof from politics and commerce and above personal feeling. The language typically used to describe Minimalism employs a rhetoric of purity, primacy, and immediacy in focusing on the artists' means and on the objects' relations to the constitutive terms of their media. "The demand has been for an honest, direct, unadulterated experience in art . . . minus symbolism, minus messages and minus personal exhibitionism," wrote Eugene Goossen in 1966⁸; with Minimalism, "the very means of art have been isolated and exposed," he stated two years later.⁹ In the standard

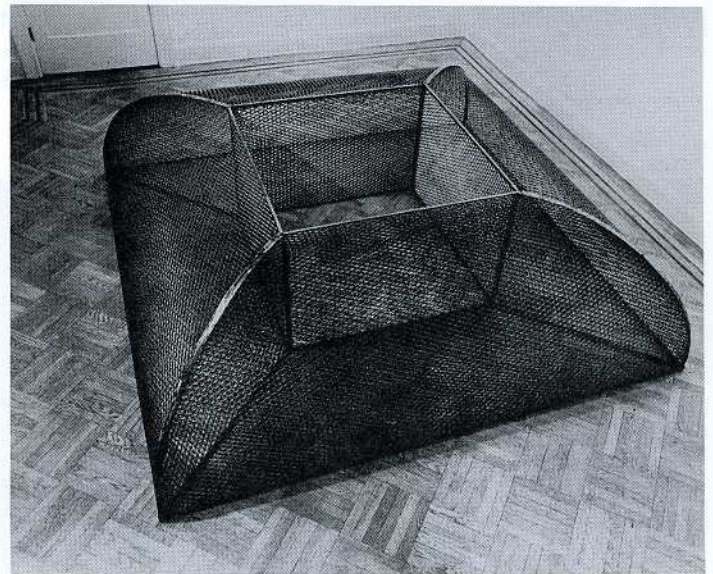
narratives, Minimalism forms the terse, but veracious last word in a narrowly framed argument about what modern art is or should be. As it happens, the person most responsible for framing that argument, Clement Greenberg, finally disliked seeing his logic carried to its extremes: "Minimal works are readable as art, as almost anything is today," he complained in 1967, "including a door, a table, or a blank sheet of paper . . . it would seem that a kind of art nearer the condition of non-art could not be envisaged or ideated at this moment. That, precisely, is the trouble. Minimal Art remains too much a feat of ideation, and not enough anything else."¹⁰ But it was an account of the history of modern art that Greenberg had inscribed as the true history that enabled these objects, which verged on being non-art, to be lionized instead as art of the first importance. Andre's metal plates and Morris's cage could only be regarded as works of art in the context of a discourse in which they stood as compelling proof of the unfolding of a certain historical inevitability. Lay spectators only recognize such objects as works of art (when or if they do so) because they are located in the legitimating contexts of the gallery and museum, installed by curators and dealers in thrall (as the artists themselves were) to a particular account of history.

Most of the artists and critics concerned would have agreed with Goossen that, with Minimalism, "the spectator is not given symbols, but facts"¹¹; that it offers no quarter to "the romantic mentality, which fails to appreciate experience for its own intrinsic value and is forever trying to elevate it by complications and associations."¹² The present account is concerned precisely with how such patently non-narrative art is "complicated" by "associations," however, and is bent on describing those associations. Morris's *Cock/Cunt* sculpture of 1963 [fig. 6], with its schematic image of sexual difference and coitus, demonstrates plainly that highly simplified, abstract configurations may indeed be coded. A more characteristic example, however—one that is not literally, but metaphorically, "inscribed"—is Dan Flavin's seminal and canonical work (I choose my adjectives advisedly), *The Diagonal of May 25, 1963 (to Robert Rosenblum)* [fig. 7], his first work done entirely in fluorescent light. The type of power involved here is, in the first place, actual electrical power (with the requisite cords and connections hidden so that that power's contingency remains inapparent), but the rigid glass tube is also plainly phallic. This is, literally, a hot rod, and Flavin coyly referred to the specific angle he poised the fixture at as "the diagonal of personal ecstasy,"¹³ alluding to the characteristic angle of an erect penis on a standing man.

Sympathetic critics have described Flavin's art as embodying "the potential for transcendental experience that is inherent in ordinary experience and that has been recognized through light in virtually all spiritual traditions" (to take a representative phrase), while alluding to the artist's Roman Catholic upbringing.¹⁴ Though he called some of the first works he created with light "icons," Flavin knew that his commercial light fixtures "differ from a Byzantine Christ held in majesty; they are dumb—anonymous and inglorious . . . They bring a limited light."¹⁵ He invoked his religious upbringing in different terms, moreover, telling of the "rank suppression" he experienced "in the name of God the Father" at the hands of his own father, Daniel Senior, who



1. Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1968, Brass, 22" × 48½" × 36". Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip Johnson.



2. Robert Morris, *Untitled*, 1967, Steel and steel mesh, 31" × 108" × 108". Private collection. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery. © Robert Morris.

he described as "an ascetic, remotely male, Irish Catholic truant officer."¹⁶ In Flavin's mind, his *Diagonal* was less a reaffirmation of the possibility for spiritual experience in contemporary society, than "a modern technological fetish"¹⁷—a fetish being, in Freudian terms, a talisman against castration and impotence, a symbolic surrogate for the female body's absent penis. From this perspective, Flavin's dependence on technological artifacts for his work may evince the sense of impotence visited on the once sovereign, universal (read: male) subject by the ascendancy of technology. "Disenfranchised by an independently evolving technology, the subject raises its disenfranchisement to the level of consciousness, one might almost say to the level of a programme for artistic

production,” as Theodor Adorno observed.¹⁸ Flavin’s *Diagonal* not only looks technological and commercial—like Minimalism generally—it *is* an industrial product and, as such, it speaks of the extensive power exercised by the commodity in a society where virtually everything is for sale—where New York Telephone can advertise “love,” “friendship,” and “comfort” for “as little as ten cents a call,” for instance. Further, in its identity as object or commodity, Flavin’s work may arouse our ambivalence toward those ever-proliferating commodities around us for which we have a hunger that is bound to be insatiable, as they will never fully gratify us.

Standard products, or commercially available materials, can also be seen to bear secondary meanings in Andre’s famous *Lever* of 1966 [fig. 8], done for the important *Primary Structures* show at the Jewish Museum in 1966. “Artworks at their best spring from physical, erotic propositions,” Andre stated. And with its one hundred and thirty-seven fire bricks set side by side in a row thirty-four-and-a-half-feet long, *Lever* manifests his determination to put “Brancusi’s *Endless Column* on the ground instead of in the sky. Most sculpture is priapic with the male organ in the air. In my work, Priapus is down on the floor. The engaged position is to run along the earth.”¹⁹ In terms of the artist’s view of it, then, *Lever* is closer to Morris’s *Cock/Cunt* than to Flavin’s *Diagonal*, as it offers a schematic image of coitus with the floor serving as the (unarticulated) female element. Significantly too, of course, a “lever” is a long, rigid tool used to pry or lift, while *lever* means to rise, raise, or lift in French.

Though the critics have mostly ignored them, the suggestive titles of many of the objects now regarded as cornerstones of the Minimalist movement prove that the artists themselves were prone to “complicating” their work by “associations.” In the 1970s, Brenda Richardson and William Rubin, exceptionally, mined valuable information about the titles of Stella’s black and metallic pinstripe paintings, but without attempting any extended analysis of their implications for the work. Rubin suggested that Stella’s titles have “a simple emotional straightforwardness that is akin to [the paintings’] emblematic mode,” but he also asserted that the “very fact of their [the titles’] existence . . . suggests the way in which Stella is drawn to associations whose ambiguities potentially subvert the formal and intellectual rigor of his art”—implying that the titles are not so straightforward after all. In an effort at safeguarding the art’s (phallic) “rigor,” Rubin warned, however, with exaggerated deference to the artist’s wishes, that Stella’s titles constitute strictly “personal associations with the pictures” and that “he would be horrified at the idea that a viewer might use them as a springboard to content.”²⁰ I will argue that Rubin errs on both counts: that the relation between words and work in Stella’s case is not straightforward, and that the titles’ ambiguities do not dilute or obviate, but enhance the complexity and, as Rubin calls it, the “force” of the work.

Reichstag of 1958 marks the first time Stella “consciously set out to make a black painting,” though it differs from the series of pictures that followed insofar as its stripes do not completely cover the canvas.²¹ If *Reichstag* distantly evokes a schematic ar-



3. Carl Andre, *Zinc-Zinc Plain*, 1969, Zinc, 6' × 6' (36 plates, 1' × 1'). Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery.



4. Frank Stella, *Die Fahne Hoch*, 1959, Black enamel on canvas, 121½" × 73". Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene M. Schwartz and purchased with funds from the John I. H. Baur Purchase Fund; the Charles and Anita Blatt Fund; Peter M. Brant; B. H. Friedman; the Gilman Foundation, Inc.; Susan Morse Hilles; the Lauder Foundation; Frances and Sydney Lewis; the Albert A. List Fund; Philip Morris Incorporated; the National Endowment for the Arts; Sandra Payson; Mr. and Mrs. Albrecht Saalfeld; Mrs. Percy Uris; and Warner Communications Inc.

chitectural plan, it bears no evident relation to the massive, neo-classical parliament building it was named for. A time-honored symbol of imperial Germany, the Reichstag is, in modern history, associated with the rise of the Nazi party: when it was set on fire by an arsonist in 1933, Hitler, then chancellor, pronounced the fire to be part of a Communist conspiracy and exploited the incident to help proclaim himself Führer. In a sheet of sketches and notes that he made in 1960 for a lecture at Pratt [fig. 9], Stella traced the thinking that led him, through the use of ever-stricter symmetry and more continuous repetitions of basic patterns, to the formats of his classic black paintings. He sketched the schema for *Reichstag*, the penultimate one on the sheet, with

the annotation "turning the corner." Richardson observed simply, in a parenthesis, that this is "obviously a remark of both literal and metaphorical implication." Presumably she alludes to the (literal) way that two ninety-degree corners are repeatedly turned in the picture, as well as to the (metaphorical) turning point the burning of the Reichstag represented in Hitler's rise to power. Perhaps she alludes as well to the turning point the painting represented in Stella's own ascendancy, however, as *Reichstag* led immediately to the series of black pinstripe pictures that the Museum of Modern Art and the Castelli Gallery would vie with each other to exhibit first.²²

In the eyes of those best positioned to insure his future, Stella's elegant but drastic black paintings represented the crucial, historically necessary, next step after the art of the New York School. But others found the paintings troubling. Stella now says that the hostility and the charges of nihilism leveled at the black paintings irritated him, though such responses would seem to have reciprocated his own perception of the work more nearly

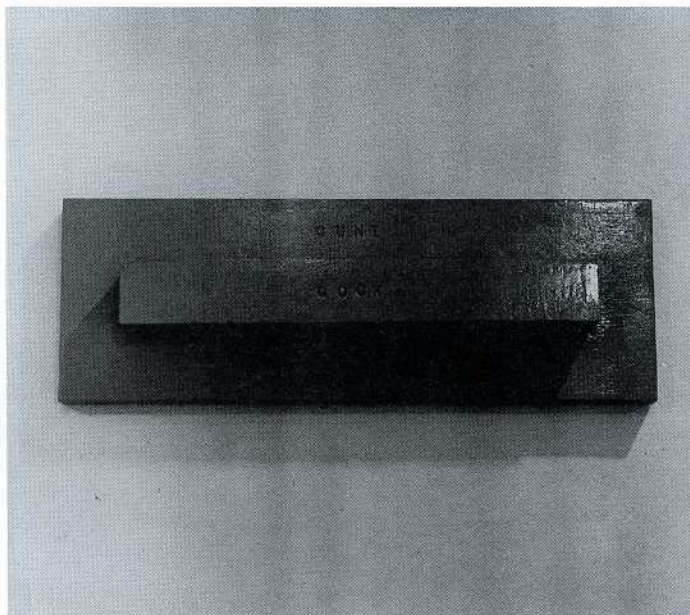


5. Tony Smith, *Die*, 1962, Steel, 72" × 72" × 72". Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery.

than the genial embrace of the cognoscenti. The artist has described the black paintings haltingly, in terms of force, fear, control, and confrontation. In conceiving the pictures, he aimed for an effect that was, like a punch, "direct—right to your eye." He achieved that effect by "forc[ing] illusionistic space out of the painting . . . by using a regulated pattern."²³ What resulted was an "element of exclusion and an element of necessary rigidity." But the experience of painting these pictures taught him "how to be forceful and direct, and really just paint without fear." Stella remembers sensing that he was on to something important when he began work on those paintings—"I mean I had it there. I had it down and I had it under control"—but he was still "afraid it might go away—I wanted to hold it down and establish control."²⁴ Finally, "they're very good from an argumentative point of view, the paintings . . . because they take away . . . and the enemy is clearly defined. It's anybody else."²⁵

That control and force were central to the conception of the black paintings was affirmed also by the titles of two of them especially: *Arbeit Macht Frei* of 1958, the first of the classic black paintings, and *Die Fahne Hoch* [fig. 4], done some months later in 1959. (*Arbeit Macht Frei* is the same image as *Die Fahne Hoch* oriented horizontally: the longer edges of both pictures have identical dimensions; the shorter edge is a foot shorter in *Die Fahne Hoch*.) "Work makes [you] free" was the motto inscribed over the gates of Auschwitz, while "The Flag on High" was the first phrase of the official marching song of the Nazi party, the Horst Wessel Song. In the sequence of annotated sketches Stella made in 1960 [fig. 9], the cruciform configuration that forms the basis for both these paintings is the final schema, and the caption below it reads: "the final solution."²⁶ Richardson takes this note at face value as indicating that this schema represented the final resolution of the set of formal problems that culminated in the classic black paintings. Neither she nor anyone else mentions the well-known fact that "the final solution" (*die Endlösung*) was the Nazi code phrase (coined at the Wannsee Conference in 1942) for the Third Reich's infamous answer to the "Jewish Problem": the annihilation of the Jews. Whereas the two paintings most directly based on the cruciform schema are rectangular, the little sketch is square, framing an equal-sided cross more like the black Maltese cross, emblem of the Third Reich.

If he had wanted to fit his titles straightforwardly to his images, Stella could have given his rectangular, cruciform paintings Christian titles. In fact, he considered calling *Arbeit Macht Frei* "The Sacred Heart," but finally decided to eschew religious titles because, he said, they had "less referential potency over time than did political symbols or allusions" (though, for that matter, only two of the titles in this series of twenty-three paintings—*Arbeit Macht Frei* and *Reichstag*—have immediately recognizable political connotations).²⁷ If he had wanted his images to relate unambiguously to their titles, Stella could also have based the paintings with Nazi titles on a Maltese cross or a swastika. He more than once considered and then dismissed the idea of using a swastika pattern, however, most notably in the case of a picture projected as the final painting of the black series, a painting to be called "Valle de los Caídos." The Valley of the Fallen is a memorial north of Madrid built as Franco's tomb and also supposedly to honor all the dead of the Spanish Civil War, but



6. Robert Morris, *Untitled (Cock/Cunt)*, 1963, Painted wood. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.

Spaniards widely regard it strictly as a monument to Franco and his forces: the monument's official meaning was, in other words, at odds with its perceived meaning.²⁸

Though he never painted the "Valle de los Caídos," Stella remained fascinated by such contradictory or unstable signs, with *Arbeit Macht Frei* being another case in point. Richardson describes the use of this phrase in its original context as "euphemistic," but deceitful might be closer to the mark. If an argument can be made that labor liberates, it would of course not apply to forced-labor camps where the only liberation, or at least release, afforded the laborers was death. The meanings attaching to language are contingent on who uses it, who hears it, and who has the power to enforce a given point of view, to define the official code. The phrases in Stella's Nazi titles are not inflammatory on the face of it; their history (underscored by their being in German) is what makes them potentially explosive—though their seeming innocuousness has effectually rendered them negligible in critics' eyes.²⁹ Even Richardson, in her useful study of the black pictures, consistently uses tentative or reluctant formulations like—"It would be difficult to ignore, too, the relationship between the black of the painting and the 'Blackshirts' of the fascist parties"—in assaying connections between works and words.³⁰ For that matter, so wary have critics been of exploring what Stella's art signifies that even the most unavoidable allusion has passed essentially unremarked: the likeness of the black paintings' patterns to those bolts of fine pinstriped wool flannel used for decades by Brooks Brothers and J. Press to make the suits of bankers, executives, and politicians. The full connotations of the quintessential Power Fabric could scarcely have been lost on Stella, a 1958 graduate of Princeton University and an alumnus of Andover prep school.³¹

On the subject of his Princeton education, Stella recently commented: "A geology field trip to Bethlehem Steel was the highlight of my four years there. I was interested in the outside world. The worst slums seemed like the greatest places on earth.

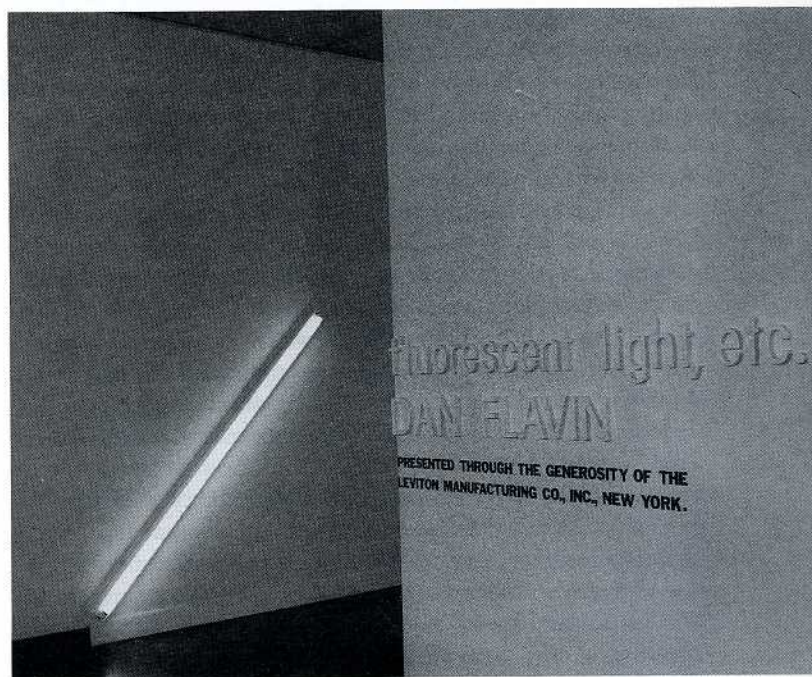
Of course it's not true, but everything looked interesting compared with Andover and Princeton."³² This youthful romanticizing of adversity surfaced in the titles of the paintings Stella did just after he left Princeton—such as *Bethlehem's Hospital* of 1959, named for a once-notorious insane asylum in London. To some, Stella's title may evoke a specific institution for the demented and deviant, but to most viewers—who would recognize that asylum only by its colloquial name of "Bedlam"—the title might well suggest some ordinary maternity hospital, Bethlehem being Christ's birthplace. In Stella's mind, the name "Bethlehem" was evidently most immediately associated with his tour of the Pennsylvania steel mills (as he had not been to England, he had no such direct experience of Bethlehem Hospital); but he let that telling private association remain buried, awaiting the art historian's spade. Here as elsewhere in his titling of the black series both the title's private meanings and its more sinister meanings are obscured, though those grim associations are what best make sense of the paintings' all-consuming darkness, repetition, and sameness.

The glamorous titles of two other black paintings, *Arundel Castle* and *Morro Castle*, also conceal grim allusions: privately, Stella connected these titles, in the first instance, with the name of an apartment building in the Bedford-Stuyvesant ghetto of Brooklyn (where he had been employed briefly doing commercial painting jobs) and, in the second instance, with a famous disaster, the burning of an American steamer named the Morro Castle en route from Havana to New York.³³ Stella considered naming an entire series of paintings for disasters, but settled, in the black series, for a miscellany of titles related only by their association with what he mildly described as "downbeat" or "depressed political" situations. Some other paintings in the series are titled for seamy New York nightclubs, such as *Zambezi*, a Harlem club known for its male and female impersonators³⁴—another instance of something, or rather someone, being other than what is apparent. What helped prompt the black series, by Stella's own account, was his initiation into the underside of New York City: "You start at the bottom in New York, and the bottom is pretty bottomlike in New York. This gives you a good idea of what it's like. It's still like this at the bottom in New York. These paintings are not inaccurate."³⁵ When he made the black paintings, "I was looking for limits, places that I couldn't go back from"³⁶; and he established those limits by covering expanses of canvas with nothing but black paint applied in uniform stripes traced in simple patterns that echoed the pictures' rectangular supports. It was not those paintings titled for sites in New York (fewer than a third of the paintings catalogued by Richardson) that inaugurated the black series, however, but *Reichstag* and *Arbeit Macht Frei*—titles which, with their indelible associations with Nazism and the Holocaust, underline the paintings' liminal aspects, and reinforce their chilling effect on the viewer.

To some critics, the fact that most of the paintings in Stella's black series do not have Nazi titles effectually renders his use of those phrases incidental or benign—just one more kind of disaster among others. Given the paintings' very extremeness, however, the extremeness of the Nazi titles might instead influence us to look at all the pictures in the series as abstract images of to-

talitarianism, of social disasters of a scrupulously planned, not accidental, nature. Some critics did perceive the black paintings as nihilistic³⁷—that is, loosely, as a repudiation of all traditional beliefs or of the existence of any basis for establishing truth or knowledge. Historically, the Nihilists (active in Russia c.1860–1917) were a revolutionary, not a reactionary group, but they formed a movement committed to the use of violent means, including terrorism and assassination, in the effort to destroy existing social, political, and economic institutions. In their severity—in the violence they do to the conventions of art and in the ruthlessness they exhibit toward viewers—the black paintings, like Minimalism generally, might well be described as perpetrating a kind of cultural terrorism, forcing viewers into the role of victim, a role that may or may not bring with it a moment of revelation depending on the viewer's prior experience with victimization. Like terrorism also, Minimalist art was, to a degree, designed to work through the manipulation of the media: I refer to the extensive texts produced by several of these artists (not including Stella) in a largely successful effort at dictating the terms in which their work would be received, and at locating it in the most opportune position relative to the dominant critical discourse.

Minimalism forms the terse, but veracious last word in a narrowly framed argument about what modern art is or should be.



7. Dan Flavin, *The Diagonal of May 25, 1963* (to Robert Rosenblum), 1963, Cool-white fluorescent light, 96" x 33/4". Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery. © Dan Flavin.

Stella has never discussed his Nazi titles at length, maintaining that his choice of titles is "not a big thing. It's casual."³⁸ Michel Foucault observed that fascism has come "to be used as a floating signifier, whose function is essentially that of denunciation."³⁹ Stella may have intended such a broadly denunciatory gesture by using fascist phrases for his titles, but as he does not explicitly use them as epithets, this remains perilously uncertain. Stella was only a child (of Catholic, not Jewish background) when the concentration camps were liberated, but he was old enough to be impressed by some of the devastating images that emerged in the media at the close of the war. He told William Rubin that *Die Fahne Hoch* had reminded him of images in old Nazi newsreels of big hanging flags: "That big draped swastika . . . has pretty much those proportions."⁴⁰ If Stella's offhandedness about his use of such titles (or, in more recent years, of his *South African Diamond Mine* titles⁴¹) is bound to offend some viewers, however, the critics have never berated him for it, and he would likely be indifferent to such complaints in any case: "For the most part, the people that have the kind of drive and will to do the things they want to do, they don't honestly care that much about what other people think in the end if the truth be known."⁴²

Given his callow or callous attitude, Stella's Nazi titles may evoke the use of Nazi imagery by middle-class, white boys in punk rock bands or by working-class, white, male toughs in motorcycle gangs. A flirtation with extremes of violence can be seen in all these cases as appealing most deeply to some of those most insulated from violence by virtue of their race, nationality, and gender. Unlike the Hitler Youth, the Surf Nazis, or the Hell's Angels, however, Stella did not employ the visual emblems of Nazism, the swastika or the Maltese cross. Only tenuous and abstract relations exist between his images and their Nazi titles, in the paintings' blackness and massiveness, and in their regimented and totalizing effects. If he used Nazi rhetoric casually, Stella refused Nazi imagery outright and he would not paint paintings that presumed in any explicit way to depict fascism or the Holocaust. In this first instance he separated himself from Walter De Maria, whose *Museum Piece* [fig. 10] is a swastika constructed of shiny aluminum troughs⁴³; and in the second instance he separates himself from the Holocaust series done more recently by Robert Morris.⁴⁴

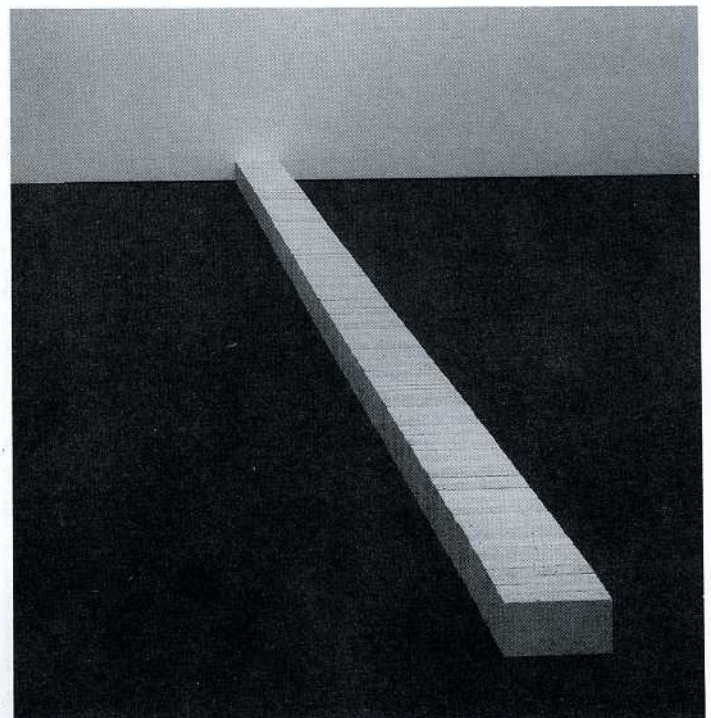
Though Stella insisted about his pictures that "What you see is what you see," and that "The title seems to me the way the painting looks,"⁴⁵ his titles function to undermine such baldly positivist statements and to situate the work instead in an unstable symbolic space. Broadly speaking, what the elliptical relations between Stella's paintings and his titles point to is the treacherous slipperiness and the multivalence of words and signs, including their private versus their public meanings (and the politics of the Cold War may have helped sensitize him to that shiftiness). In their insistence on the fraudulence or bankruptcy of existing systems of producing meaning, and in their very absoluteness, Stella's paintings make an unrelievedly negativistic statement. Here we find art on the brink of not being art, blacked-out paintings identified with Nazi slogans. From this perspective, Stella's use of the notorious phrase from Auschwitz might evoke Adorno's saying that, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric"⁴⁶; for the "poems" constituted by these graphic paintings are non-poems

or the negatives of poems, with thin white lines where the black lines should be on a sheet of writing paper, and line after line ineradicably deleted in black where the white spaces and the poem's text should be.

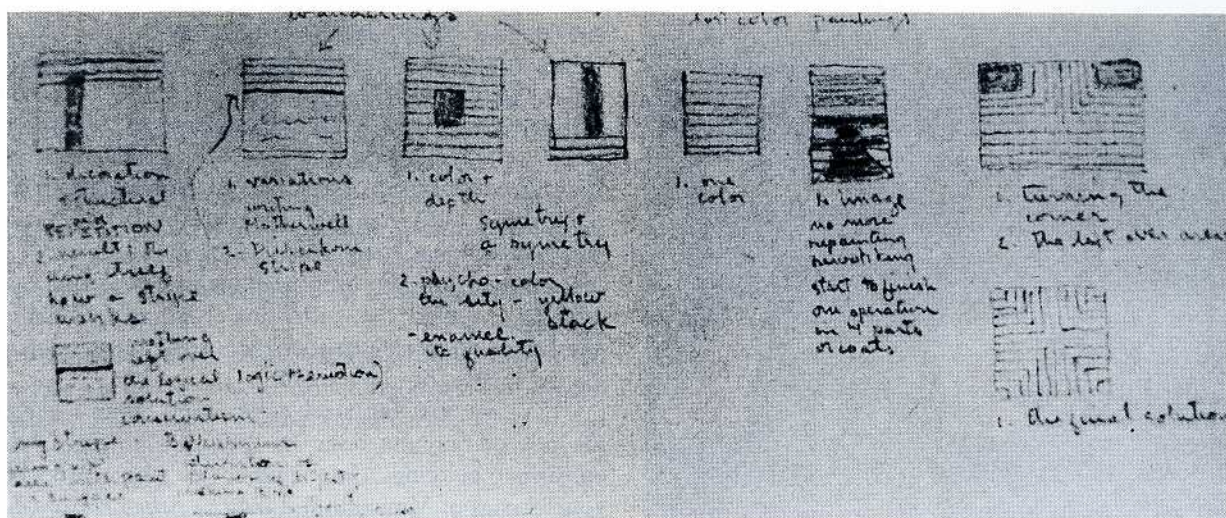
If Stella's black paintings may be read as a kind of cancelled poetry that impedes or frustrates reading, the literature they most closely parallel could be the writing of Samuel Beckett. "There is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express": so Beckett had described the modern artist's dilemma. Stella affirmed that

*The idea of repetition appealed to me, and there were certain literary things that were in the air that corresponded to it. At the time I was going to school, for example, Samuel Beckett was very popular. Beckett is pretty lean . . . but he is also slightly repetitive . . . I don't know why it struck me that bands, repeated bands would be somewhat more like a Beckett-like situation than, say, a big blank canvas . . . There was something about Beckett that seemed kind of insistent about what little was there. It also seemed to fit me. The whole thing about pattern, regulated pattern, was to keep the viewer from reading the painting.*⁴⁷

Stella's interest in preventing viewers from reading his pictures is telling also in light of his and Judd's interest in creating a "nonrelational" art. By their account, this meant an art characterized by the subordination of parts to a formal totality, but the implications extended further, to encompass a kind of non-relation to the viewer. Stella said of the surfaces of his metallic pinstripe paintings of 1960, "I was interested in this metallic paint, and . . . it was the kind of surface that I wanted . . . I'd have a real aggressive kind of controlling surface, something that would



8. Carl Andre, *Lever*, 1966, 137 fire bricks, 4½" × 8⅞" × 348" (each brick 4½" × 8⅞" × 2½"). Courtesy National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



9. Frank Stella, *Untitled drawing*, Pencil on paper, 1960.

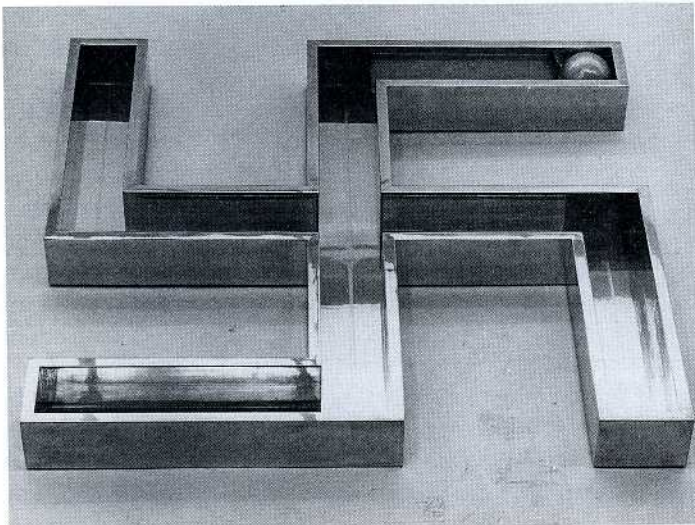
sort of seize the surface . . . I also felt, maybe in a slightly perverse way, that it would probably also be fairly repellent. I liked the idea, thinking about flatness and depth, that these would be very hard paintings to penetrate."⁴⁸ The psycho-sexual valence of this last remark bears underlining, as does the (repeated) interest in keeping viewers from straying past the picture's surface in search of its subjects (whether author or theme). Refusing the abstract artists' accustomed, humanistic rhetoric about improving the spiritual or social well-being of the viewer through the expression of their own inner visions or feelings, Stella insisted that he was producing plain objects incapable of expression. Taking a cue from Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt, Stella set the tone for what followed, for a visual language apparently disinvested of all private feeling. He brushed paint onto canvas in as uniform a way as possible, keeping it to the best of his ability "as good as it was in the can."⁴⁹ For their part, the Minimalist sculptors had their work factory-made (as soon as they could afford to) with such antiseptic or impersonal materials as galvanized, hot- and cold-rolled steel. (Judd sometimes proved an exception here, using brass, for example, which is warm and reflective, and also using richly sensuous, if chemical-looking, enamel colors, such as purples and greens.)

In 1966, Brian O'Doherty lauded the "new object makers" for producing a kind of "aesthetic furniture" that "can be all things to all men while remaining totally unchanged," as well as for the smart marketing strategy demonstrated by their avoidance of those "obsolescence cycles" to which avant-garde art was notoriously prone.⁵⁰ On the face of it, certainly, Minimalist objects are as interchangeable, as neutral, and as neutered as standard consumer goods. That neutralization is crucial to capitalism, that "differences must be neutralized to come globally under the law of the interchangeable," of exchange value, has been persuasively argued by Jean-François Lyotard.⁵¹ From this perspective, Minimalism can be seen as replicating—and at times, perhaps, as implicating—"those systems of mediation which have (over)determined our history: Money, the Phallus, and the Concept as privileged operators of meaning."⁵² The perceived neutrality of

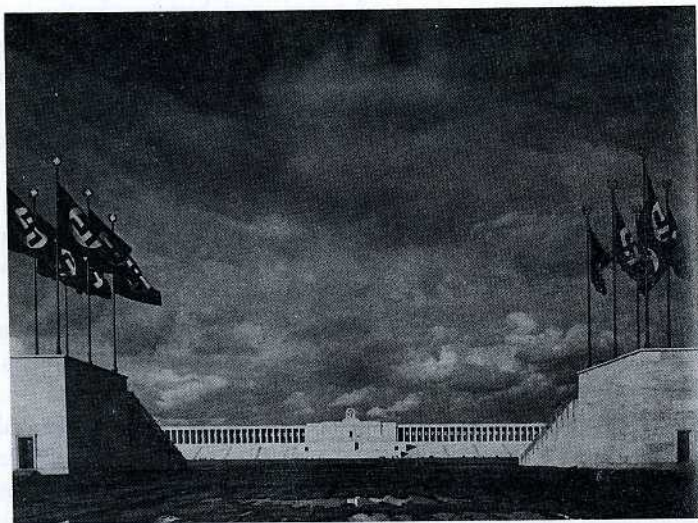
Minimalist objects might also be explained, however, by the fact that the qualities or values they exemplify—unfeelingness and a will to control or dominate—are transparent by virtue of their very ubiquity. With closer scrutiny, in short, the blank face of Minimalism may come into focus as the face of capital, the face of authority, the face of the father.

Minimalism's partisans have all along insisted that it is wrong-headed to look for, let alone to interrogate, any found subject or author behind the art's patently object-like and de-subjectivized façade. Thus Douglas Crimp insists, for instance, that "Characterizations of Serra's work as macho, overbearing, oppressive, seek to return the artist to the studio, to reconstitute him as the work's sole creator, and thereby to deny the role of industrial processes in his sculpture."⁵³ We can be interested in Serra's use of industrial processes, however, and still hold him to account as the creator (not to say fabricator) of his work—work that plainly manifests certain personal ambitions and interests, its industrial facture notwithstanding.⁵⁴ That Serra's artistic gestures have less in common with the sculptor's conventional rituals than with the rituals of the industrial magnate who merely lifts the telephone to command laborers to shape tons of steel according to his specifications, and the rituals of the foremen or construction bosses who oversee the processes of fabrication and installation, does not render those gestures altogether impersonal: Serra's choice of a metal with a particular surface quality and density, and his decisions about the shape and proportions that metal takes, represent on their own terms a set of gestures hardly less individual than those of, say, Rodin.⁵⁵

The materials used by Serra and the other Minimalists are indexed to, or have a value within, the political economy, however, in a way that Rodin's clay and bronze do not. In their ambition to make something that would be somehow more than or other than fine art (an ambition articulated most plainly in Judd's "Specific Objects"⁵⁶), the Minimalists found ways of using or commanding industry as another of the artist's tools. Working in heavy industry as a young man proved a deeply formative experi-



10. Walter De Maria, *Museum Piece*, 1966–67, Aluminum (solid, welded, and polished), 4" x 36" x 36"; and aluminum ball, 3½" diameter. Courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.



11. Albert Speer, *Nuremberg Parade Ground*.

ence for Serra (as well as for Andre), contributing to his self-identity as a virile artist-worker.⁵⁷ A photograph of 1969, for instance, shows Serra standing in work clothes with his arms and legs spread wide, swinging a large metal ladle over his head as he flings hot molten lead. Though he is executing a work of art, he looks like a man about to mortally fell someone or something—or, as Rosalind Krauss puts it, “Dressed as though for battle, he is helmeted, goggled, gas-masked. The field on which he stands is strewn with slag.”⁵⁸

Isaac Balbus has perceptively suggested (in a critique of Foucault) that “any True Discourse that relies on a *disembodied* founding subject does indeed both mask and justify the authoritarian process by means of which such a subject has (at least in part) been formed.” It follows that “a True Discourse that posits an embodied founding subject is a prerequisite for any material appeal against this very process.”⁵⁹ What partisans of Minimalism have had to gain by denying the art’s identity as a private statement

is a masking of the mechanisms by which it has been elevated or empowered as a public statement of the first importance. To keep the public focus on the historical stage, where the work would appear most right or inevitable, the matter of the personal statement—who is speaking to whom, and by what authority—would have to be suppressed. As soon as anyone was permitted to ask—as soon, that is, as it was admitted to the level of a public discussion—why a grown man might fling lead at a wall, or order a big steel cube from a foundry, who such actions were addressed to and who they profited, the scaffolding of arguments holding that historic stage up to view as the center stage, or the only stage, was bound to start becoming visible.

As for that big steel cube, Tony Smith’s *Die* [fig. 5], a six-foot black cube done in 1962, has emerged with Stella’s pinstripe paintings, as another of the cornerstones and touchstones of Minimalism. Like *Die Fahne Hoch*, *Die* was symmetrical, unitary, and made of commercial materials. More than Stella’s painting, however, *Die* set the stage for what followed in being an object with almost none of the standard signifiers of a work of fine art, except for a title. When Smith said of *Die*—which is patently lacking in formal complexities—“This is a complicated piece. It has too many references to be coped with coherently,” he must have been alluding in part to the multiple valences of the object’s title. A die is one of a pair of dice, the small, sequentially marked cubes used for games of chance; but Smith’s black cube offers only a fixed fate as all the sides are unmarked and identical and it is too big to roll. *Die* (!) is also a verb form, constituting a command—the cruelest command that the empowered can issue to the powerless: a murderer to his victim, a judge to a convicted criminal, or a soldier to his enemy captive. The blackness, the sealed state, and the human scale of Smith’s cube help reinforce this reading of the title, which—considering that the command is directed at the viewer—renders the work a gruesome gesture: a bleak crypt presented to the viewer with succinct instructions to perish. “Six feet has a suggestion of being cooked. Six foot box. Six foot under,” wrote Smith, who related *Die* also to a passage by Herodotus about a chapel found in the enclosure of a temple: a “most wonderful thing . . . made of a single stone, the length and height of which were the same, each wall being forty cubits square, and the whole a single block!”—a description of a rather mausoleum-like structure.⁶⁰

A die is also an industrial device that works by force, by pressure or by a blow, to cut blanks in, or to mold, an object or raw material. Though the making of *Die* did not involve such a device, as a standard form made of steel in a factory it might evince such means of facture. “I didn’t make a drawing; I just picked up the phone and ordered it,” the artist boasted.⁶¹ The “death” at issue with this blank cube was not only that of the spectator, then, but also that of art, as *Die* effectively offers itself as the mold or die for the new non-art, as a machine that “stamps out” art as we know it. A strange junket Smith organized in the early 1950s, a night-time car ride on an unfinished freeway with a group of students, had persuaded him that art as such was finished: “Most painting looks pretty pictorial after that [the car ride]. There is no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it.” The experience of different spaces or “artificial landscapes” was, in Smith’s view, bound to take the place of art as we know

it—the specific example he singled out admiringly being Albert Speer’s Nuremberg Parade Ground [fig. 11], “a drill ground . . . large enough to accommodate two million men. The entire field is enclosed with high embankments and towers. The concrete approach is three sixteen-inch steps, one above the other, stretching for a mile or so.” Like Andre, Smith was intoxicated by the prospect of “seizing” or occupying space; and, without considering what constellations of social forces might lead to the erection of comparable sites in the United States, he decried the dearth of art on such a scale in this country: “I view art as something vast . . . Art today is an art of postage stamps.” In his own work, he increasingly aimed to make “cited monumental expression[s]” that would be not “personal or subjective [but] . . . as urbane and objective as possible.”⁶²

Fascist architecture, especially “the planning of Nazi Berlin” and “Mussolini’s constructions around Rome,” also intrigued Frank Stella: “The Fascist architects wanted to get on firm foundations. And the irony of their using what was considered to be classical art struck me . . . as did the whole concept of public buildings in the U.S.A.—which amount to much the same kind of thing.”⁶³ For Western civilization, classicism is conventionally “the art of authority, authoritative art.”⁶⁴ The architectural modes developed in Greece in the fifth century B.C. have, for evident symbolic reasons, long been a model for the buildings of democratic and liberal societies. Since the Roman Empire, however, certain, often monumentalized and sharpened variations on the same structural language have served equally (as Stella noted), as a model for the architecture of autarchy—as in the Nuremberg Parade Ground. Because the Minimalists tended to work with completely regularized, geometric elements—not admitting anything like the subtle naturalistic swelling or tapering of the columns of Greek temples, for example—the relation of Stella’s or Judd’s work [fig. 12] to Speer’s [fig. 13] is closer, finally, than their relation to the Temple of Hera at Paestum [fig. 14], for instance.

The turn to non-relational form that characterizes Minimalism was utterly alien to the history of Western painting and sculpture, as the artists well knew (as for “the whole European tradition,” Judd declared, “it suits me fine if that’s all down the drain”⁶⁵), but it was hardly foreign to the dominant tradition of Western architecture. Minimalist art depends, like classical architecture, on the repetition of simple geometric forms—especially the cube or rectangle, whether closed or open—and on certain elementary principles of construction such as the post-and-lintel arrangement. Formally, Minimalism is simple in many of the same ways as classical architecture and complex in some similar ways as well: both are distinguished by the use of plain, lucid forms that tend to reveal themselves in their entirety from any viewpoint. What renders a given Minimalist sculpture successful, finally, are many of the same things that make an ancient temple memorable: a pleasing sense of proportion and scale coupled with a clarity and austerity of design.

Minimalism’s fundamentally architectural, classical, visual language invites comparison also with the classically founded, architectural mode of the International Style. By the 1960s, those elegant, precise, and antiseptic-looking glass boxes that we recog-

nize as the legacy of the International Style had become well established as the architecture of big business. “Not surprisingly, ever since his student days [Stella] had admired the architecture of the Chicago School and the International Style,” Rubin noted.⁶⁶ Tony Smith had been trained as an architect at the New Bauhaus School in Chicago in the late 1930s, and Sol LeWitt was employed as a graphic artist by I. M. Pei in 1955–56.⁶⁷ Also just like architects, the Minimalist sculptors produced their work by drawing up plans or instructions that others would execute, using “strong” materials as Judd called them. “I’m not sure that what I’m doing, what a few other people are doing, has any real legitimate connection to past art,” observed Robert Morris.

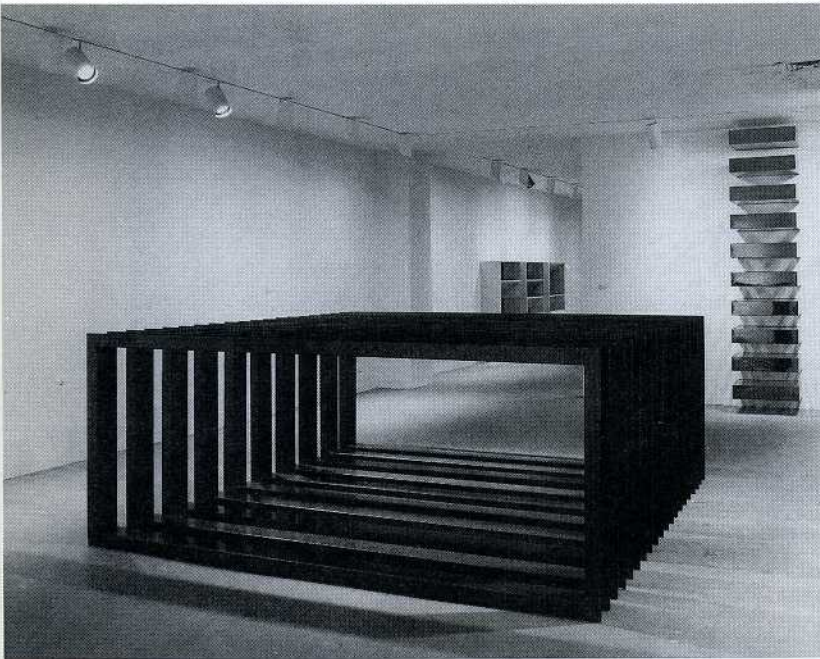
*... there’s a kind of order involved in this art that is not an art order. It’s an order of made things that is pretty basic to how things have been made for a very very long time . . . The clearest example I suppose you could cite would be the kind of ordering and object quality that you get in maybe bricks and in the way bricks are used—you know, the cubic form and the right-angled grid. It’s a kind of unit in a syntax that has been in the culture since the Stone Age, I suppose, and it’s still very basic to industrial-type manufacturing—standardization and repetition and repeatability, the wholeness of a part that can be extended.*⁶⁸

Stella, too, considered that “My whole way of thinking about painting has a lot to do with building . . . I enjoy and find it more fruitful to think about many organizational or spatial concepts in architectural terms.”⁶⁹

Like much of Morris’s and Judd’s work of the early and mid-1960s, Kenneth Noland’s pictures often involved simple, repeated, geometric forms, his favored schemas being those military emblems, the chevron and the target, realized on an outsized scale, often with bold, bright colors. But Noland’s reliance on comparatively weak and natural materials (cloth and wood), not to mention his art’s accustomed placement on the peripheries of space, made some problems for him within the Minimalist ambit. “Noland is obviously one of the best painters anywhere,” wrote Judd in 1963 in his guise as critic and monitor of the Minimalist ethos, but his

*paintings are somewhat less strong than the several kinds of three-dimensional work. Painting has to be as powerful as any kind of art; it can’t claim a special identity, an existence for its own sake as a medium. If it does it will end up like lithography and etching. Painting now is not quite sufficient, although only in terms of plain power. It lacks the specificity and power of actual materials, actual color and actual space.*⁷⁰

Judd continued to insist on the paramount importance of the “plain power” of art in “Specific Objects,” the essay he published in 1965 that is often taken as a kind of keynote essay for the Minimalist movement.⁷¹ Minimalism began to coalesce as a vision in 1964 and 1965 when the first group shows bringing together the artists now regarded as the Minimalists took place.⁷² Historically, 1965 is also the year the first regular American combat troops entered Vietnam; the year the U.S. started massive bombings of North Vietnam; the year Watts exploded in riots; and the year Malcolm X was assassinated. De Maria’s *Death Wall* of 1965 [fig. 15], a small stainless-steel plinth marked by a notch-like



12. Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1966, Painted cold-rolled steel, 48" x 120" x 120" (ten rectangles, each 6 1/2" x 120" x 48"). Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of Howard and Jean Lipman.

Judd and the other Minimalist artists availed themselves of the cultural authority of the markers of industry and technology.

opening with the word DEATH engraved over it makes an exceedingly discreet, but evidently directed nod toward the violence of the time. Here, however, as with Minimalism generally, the art's political moment remains implicit largely in its acts of negation; it negated, that is, almost everything the public associated with or expected from works of art, including a sense of moral or spiritual uplift. Some female critics, especially, pointed (though not in a censorious way) to the violence implicit in the Minimalists' categorical refusal of the humanist mission of art: "a negative art of denial and renunciation" and a "rejective art," Barbara Rose and Lucy Lippard, respectively, dubbed it in 1965, while Annette Michelson suggested in 1967 that negation was the "notion, philosophical in character, . . . animating [this] contemporary esthetic."⁷³

The Minimalists effectually perpetrated violence through their work—violence against the conventions of art and against the viewer—rather than using their visual language to articulate a more pointed critique of particular kinds or instances of violence.⁷⁴ Judd insisted in 1970 that his work had not had

*anything to do with the society, the institutions and grand theories. It was one person's work and interests; its main political conclusion, negative but basic, was that it, myself, anyone shouldn't serve any of these things . . . Art may change things a little, but not much; I suspect one reason for the popularity of American art is that the museums and collectors didn't understand it enough to realize that it was against much in the society.*⁷⁵

But Judd's work was not, as he would have it, aloof from society. And given the geometric uniformity of his production, its slick surfaces, its commercial fabrication (often in multiples), and its stable, classic design, those prosperous collectors and institutions who were drawn to it could hardly be called obtuse if they perceived it not as "against much in the society," but as continuous with their own ideals. Judd's work can easily be seen as reproducing some of the values most indelibly associated with the modern technocracy, in other words, even as it negated many of the qualities the public most fondly associated with the fine arts.

Though some of the Minimalists were alluding, by 1970, to a political moment implicit in their work, it was not at all plain from the way they represented their enterprise in the 1960s that they initially conceived it as a form of political resistance in keeping with the avant-garde mandate for oppositional artistic practices. Some critics now point to the Minimalists' interest in Russian Constructivism as a sign of their simmering political consciousness, but that interest revealed itself sporadically and not in politicized terms.⁷⁶ In 1966, on the other hand, Brian O'Doherty was congratulating the Minimalists for confronting "what has become the illusion of avant-gardism," and developing "a sort of intellectual connoisseurship of non-commitment." This artist-critic went on to claim that the "anti-avant-garde" object makers were successfully establishing a new academy. Comparing the ambit of contemporary art to that of show jumping, he continued: the latest work "sits blandly within the gates, announcing that it is not ahead of its time (therefore arousing no shock) and that the future is simply *now* . . . This is going to be a tough academy to displace."⁷⁷

O'Doherty was prescient about the seamless assimilation of, at least the look of, the new objects into the dominant culture: the clean, bold, precise, eminently classic and stable look of Minimalism soon permeated the design, the publicity, the products, the furnishings, and the buildings of corporate and institutional America. Images like Noland's cropped up in commercial graphics, while Judd's gleaming boxes became, however indirectly, a model for the cabinets of advanced business machines and office furnishings. As assimilable, or readily colonized, as it proved in the corporate ambit, however, Minimalism met with a far less smooth reception from the general public. O'Doherty to the contrary, it did shock or anger people, and it does still, as eavesdropping in museums readily confirms. Minimalism dismays viewers by its obdurate blankness, by the extreme limitations of its means, by its harsh or antiseptic surfaces and quotidian materials, and by its pretensions, in spite of all this, to being fine art. Rather than soliciting the viewers' attention, as art objects customarily do, the Minimalist object is perceived as exhibiting a cruel taciturnity and disinterest in the spectator, as its extreme

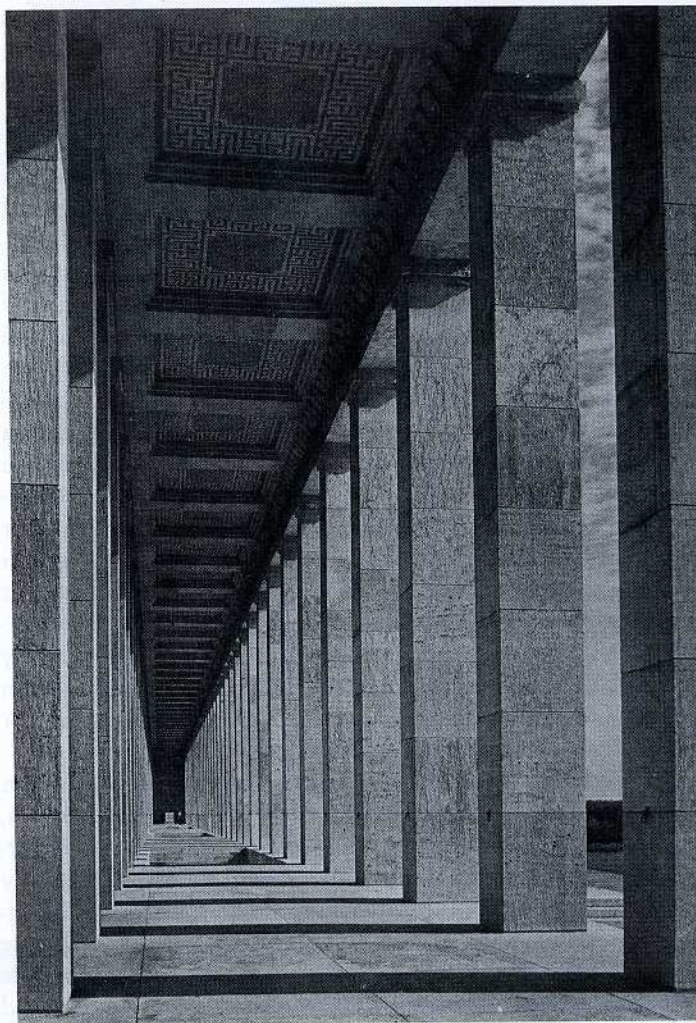
simplicity and dearth of detail act to distance viewers and to repel the close scrutiny they expect to bring to works of art.

The viewer of a Minimalist art object necessarily takes cognizance of all that it lacks by comparison with other art: not only anthropomorphic or natural form, but traces of craftsmanship or touch, signs of inventiveness or uniqueness—qualities that help conjure the aura of a separate, specially inspired class of objects. Whether or not the Minimalists formed a self-conscious avant-garde, their work achieved what self-identified avant-gardists found increasingly difficult: it induced a sharp frisson, an intensely negative response. Whereas Pop Art initially caused a collective shudder of distaste within the intelligentsia while being rapidly embraced by the public at large, Minimalism (in the same period) generally garnered toleration, at the least, from the cognoscenti, and either deep skepticism or unmitigated loathing from the public at large. That very loathing could be construed as a sign of this art at work, however, for what disturbs viewers most about Minimalist art may be what disturbs them about their own lives and times, as the face it projects is the society's blankest, steeliest face; the impersonal face of technology, industry, and commerce; the unyielding face of the father: a face that is usually far more attractively masked.

In "Specific Objects," Judd adduced what he plainly regarded as a positive vision: that the art of the future "could be mass-produced, and possibilities otherwise unavailable, such as stamping, could be used. Dan Flavin, who uses fluorescent lights, has appropriated the results of industrial production."⁷⁸ In the final event, however, neither Flavin nor Judd would sacrifice the cachet or the profits that mass-producing their work would likely have entailed. Artists like Flavin and Andre, who worked with commonly available products, took care to work in editions, limiting quantities so as to assure market value and, in Flavin's case, issuing certificates of authenticity upon the sale of their work. If Flavin appropriated commercial lighting fixtures and Andre used common building materials, it was not, in the end, with a view to standing the economy, or the valuations of the market, on its ear. Collectors were compelled to spend thousands of dollars to have one hundred and twenty sand-lime bricks purchased by Andre—to make *Equivalent VII*, for instance—rather than tens of dollars to buy the bricks for themselves. Though the artists depersonalized their modes of production to the furthest extent, they would not surrender the financial and other prerogatives of authorship, including those of establishing authenticity.

The rhetoric Judd mustered in "Specific Objects" to promote the new (non-)art pointed to its attainment of "plain power" through the deployment of "strong" and "aggressive" materials. At a time when the call was going out for a reformulation of the configurations of power, however, Judd's use of the term bore no inkling of its incipient volatility. For works of art to be powerful and aggressive was, from the Minimalists' standpoint, an unproblematic good, almost as it was once self-evident that art should be "beautiful." For an artist, "power isn't the only consideration," Judd grudgingly allowed, "though the difference between it and expression can't be too great either."⁷⁹ This equating of expression with power, rather than with feeling or communication, may or may not strike a reader as strange. Some kinds of art are routinely described as powerfully (read: intensely) expressive or emotional,

but Judd's work is not of that sort: if his objects were persons (and I mean this strictly in a fanciful way) they would more likely be described as the proverbial "strong, silent type." In art-historical parlance, however, it has long been common approbatory language, even the highest level of praise, to describe works of art in terms of the exercise of power: as strong, forceful, authoritative, compelling, challenging, or commanding; and the masculinist note becomes even more explicit with the use of terms like masterful, heroic, penetrating, and rigorous. That what is rigorous and strong is valued while what is soft or flexible is comic or pathetic emerges again and again in the Minimalists' discourse, as it does in the everyday language of scholars. (Terms that might, but do not as readily, serve as high praise for art include, for instance: pregnant, nourishing, pleasurable.) The language used to esteem a work of art has come to coincide with the language used to describe a human figure of authority, in other words, whether or not the speaker holds that figure in esteem. As the male body is understood to be the strong body—with strength being measured not by tests of endurance, but by criteria of force, where it specially excels—so the dominant culture prizes strength and power to the extent that they have become the definitive or constitutive descriptive terms of value in every sphere: we are



13. Albert Speer, Nuremberg Parade Ground.

The Minimalists effectively perpetrated violence through their work—rather than using their visual language to articulate a more pointed critique of particular kinds or instances of violence.

preoccupied not only with physical strength and military strength, but with fiscal, cultural, emotional, and intellectual strength, as if actual force were the best index or barometer of success in any of those spheres.

Foucault has written at length about the power/knowledge paradigms that underwrite the master discourses, the "True Discourses" of the successive regimes of modern history, and has pointed also to the "will to power/knowledge" through which "man" has historically been shaped and transformed. In Foucault's scheme, however (as de Lauretis has incisively observed), "nothing exceeds the totalizing power of discourse, [and] nothing escapes from the discourse of power."⁸⁰ Foucault admits no possibility of a radical dismantling of systems of power and undertakes no theorizing or imagining of a society or world without domination. Balbus points perceptively to "the blindness of a man [Foucault] who so takes for granted the persistence of patriarchy that he is unable even to see it. His gender-neutral assumption of a will to power (over others) that informs True Discourses and the technologies with which they are allied, transforms what has in fact been a disproportionately *male* into a generically human orientation, and obliterates in the process the distinctively female power"—my own word would have been capacity—"of nurturance in the context of which masculine power is formed and against which it reacts."⁸¹ A persuasive case can be made, after all, that the patriarchal overvaluation of power and control—at the expense of mutuality, toleration, or nurturance—can be held to account for almost all that is politically reprehensible and morally lamentable in the world. The case can be made as well that what is most badly needed are, at least for a start, visions of something different, something else.

The Minimalists' valorization of power can readily be seen as a reinscribing of the True Discourses, the power discourses, found in art history as in the society at large. Received art-historical wisdom about what makes works of art "powerful" is a quality of unity, with effects of dissonance or difference successfully effaced or overmastered such that an object's or image's composite parts are maneuvered into a singular, coherent totality. Unity is associated with identity and a successful work of art is understood to require a whole identity no less than an integrated person does.

Crudely speaking, the task that an artist is conventionally said to have undertaken is one of balancing the multifarious elements of a composition until they are harmonized and unified. The canny Minimalists started at the usual end of that task, however, by using configurations that were unified or balanced to begin with, such as squares and cubes, rather than engaging in the process of composing part by part. Thinking about what the society values most in art, Judd observed that, finally, no matter what you look at, "The thing as a whole, its quality as a whole, is what is interesting. The main things are alone and are more intense, clear and powerful. They are not diluted by . . . variations of a form, mild contrasts and connecting parts and areas."⁸² In the best of the new art, Judd concluded (using Stella as his example), "The shapes, the unity, projection, order and color are specific, aggressive and powerful."⁸³

Returning to the anecdote I began with, a question that concerns me here—one I cannot presume to answer, admittedly, with any degree of specificity—is how the lay viewing public (as distinct from that specialized audience formed by critics) sees or responds to the powerfulness of work in the Minimalist idiom. Does Minimalist art strike viewers as exalting power? Or does it impress them as somehow indicting the overvaluation and the abuse of power? In either case, mightn't we anticipate that some viewers would be moved to endorse or embrace Minimalist objects while others would disparage or even assault them? Finally, might not the impulse to attack this art betray a perceived assault on the part of the objects themselves, be it a sense of their identity as instances or agents of authoritarianism perpetrating abuses of power against the hapless viewer or, from an opposing perspective, a sense of their implicating certain vital tenets of the True (or master) Discourse? Different answers are bound to pertain for different objects and viewers, and those answers will not likely be simple: the girls I observed with the Judd not only kicked, but also, however mockingly, kissed it (or kissed their images in it). The look of the objects Judd offers viewers tends to be commercial and corporate, as his structures and surfaces evoke shiny, expensive machinery done in this year's colors and materials, or the architectural and design fittings of modern airports and office buildings. As such (or but for their functionlessness), Judd's objects may well seem alluring to some viewers while others will deem them too impersonal or banal, desiring other qualities from art. In either event, few viewers are likely to feel terribly abused by Judd's objects, as their surfaces are not harsh and their scale and presence remain comparatively unobtrusive.

Like Judd's boxes, Morris's cage-like construction of 1967 [fig. 2] does not intrude aggressively on the viewers' space due to its moderate scale and its transparency. Unlike Judd's boxes, however, Morris's construction, with its steel materials reminiscent of chain-link fencing, evokes not corporate, but carceral images, of discipline and punishment, that intrude aggressively on the viewers' sensibilities.⁸⁴ A fenced-in quadrangle surrounded by a fenced-in corridor evokes an animal pen and run, both without exits. Made during a year of African American uprisings in Detroit and elsewhere, and the year of the siege of the Pentagon—a time when masses of ordinarily law-abiding citizens became subject to an exceptionally pervasive and overt meting out of

discipline and punishment—Morris's sculpture succinctly images containment or repression. If it does not refer in any more pointed or pointedly critical way to the events of the day, by representing power in such an abrasive, terse, and unapologetic way, the work nonetheless has a chilling effect: this is authority represented as authority does not usually like to represent itself; authority as authoritarian.

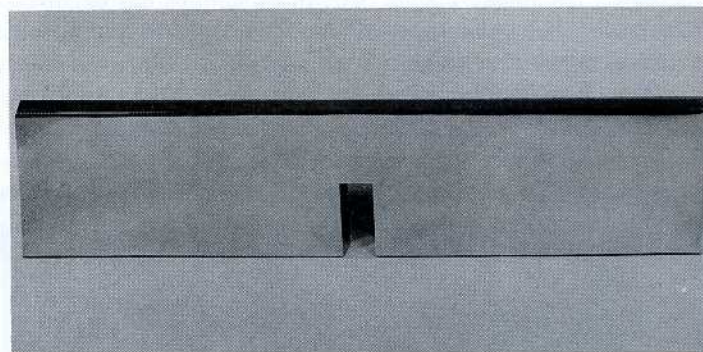
To judge by Morris's writings, his success at realizing such authoritative and oppressive images owed more to his infatuation with power than to his interest in finding strategies to counter the abuses of power rife and visible at the time. In terms befitting a military strategist, Morris wrote in his "Notes on Sculpture" of seeking "unitary" or "strong gestalt[s]" that would "fail to present lines of fracture" and that would offer "the maximum resistance to being confronted as objects with separate parts."⁸⁵ Separate parts could become entangled in internal relationships that would render the objects vulnerable; because they lead to weak gestalts, "intimacy producing relations have been gotten rid of in the new sculpture." An elimination of detail is required in the new sculpture, further, because detail would "pull it toward intimacy"; and the large scale of the work is important as "one of the necessary conditions of avoiding intimacy." There is plainly a psycho-sexual dimension to Morris's trenchant objections to relationships and intimacy, to his insistence on distancing the viewer, as well as to his fixation on keeping his objects discrete and intact.⁸⁶ In his pathbreaking study of male fantasies, for that (last) matter, Klaus Theweleit has described how the population of "soldier males" whose writings he analyzed

*freeze up, become icicles in the fact [sic] of erotic femininity. We saw that it isn't enough simply to view this as a defense against the threat of castration; by reacting in that way, in fact, the man holds himself together as an entity, a body with fixed boundaries. Contact with erotic women would make him cease to exist in that form. Now, when we ask how that man keeps the threat of the Red flood of revolution away from his body, we find the same movement of stiffening, of closing himself off to form a "discrete entity."*⁸⁷

Morris declared in 1966 that "The better new work takes relationships out of the work and makes them a function of space, light and the viewer's field of vision."⁸⁸ He referred not to a relationship between viewer and work, that is, but only to a relationship between the work and the viewers' "field of vision"—as if the viewers' sight were separable from their minds, bodies, or feelings. The relation between art and spectator that interested Morris became clearer over the course of the 1960s and early '70s as he made manifest an attitude toward the (embodied) viewer that was ambivalent at best, belligerent and malevolent at worst. The public, at times, returned the artist's animosity: his exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London in 1971 had to be closed after five days, allegedly to protect the public, but also to protect the work which the public was battering. Some of that work invited viewer participation—in simple tests of agility, for instance—but with work that engages the public, as the artist discovered, "sometimes it's horrible. Sometimes you just can't get people to do what you want." The following year Morris retaliated, as it were, against a different audience with a work called *Hearing*, a gallery installa-



14. Temple of Hera at Paestum, c.460 B.C.



15. Walter De Maria, *Death Wall*, 1965, Stainless steel, 5' × 20' × 1". Private collection, Courtesy Walter De Maria, © Walter De Maria.

tion that consisted of a copper chair, a zinc table, and a lead bed (still executed in a Minimalist idiom). The chair contained water heated almost to the boiling point, and the bed and table were connected with thirty-six volts of electricity, while loudspeakers broadcast a (mock) interrogation lasting for three-and-a-half hours.⁸⁹ Later still, to tout another show of his work at the Castelli Gallery, Morris exposed his bare-chested body clad in sadomasochistic paraphernalia [fig. 16], thereby equating the force of art with corporeal force, where what prevails or dominates is generally the greatest violence.⁹⁰

The increasing brutality of the Minimalist rhetoric may be charted also in the art of Walter De Maria. His *Cage* of 1965 (85 by 14½ by 14½ inches) looked insidiously like a stainless-steel standing cell, but its interior was inaccessible to the viewer. In 1966–67, De Maria made *Museum Piece* [fig. 10], the aluminum swastika that lies on the floor at the viewers' feet holding a metal ball that they can move around, engaging in an apparently meaningless, but sinister-seeming game. By 1968, De Maria's famous *Beds of Spikes* [fig. 17], large stainless-steel platforms covered with rows of sharp, obelisk-shaped spikes, were completely and lethally accessible to viewers, who were obliged to sign an unconditional release to absolve the Dwan Gallery for responsibility in the event of accident or injury.

Less imminently harmful, but still effecting a kind of psychological aggression are Andre's bare, metal "plains" [fig. 3]. Working in the late 1960s with plates of various kinds of metal laid

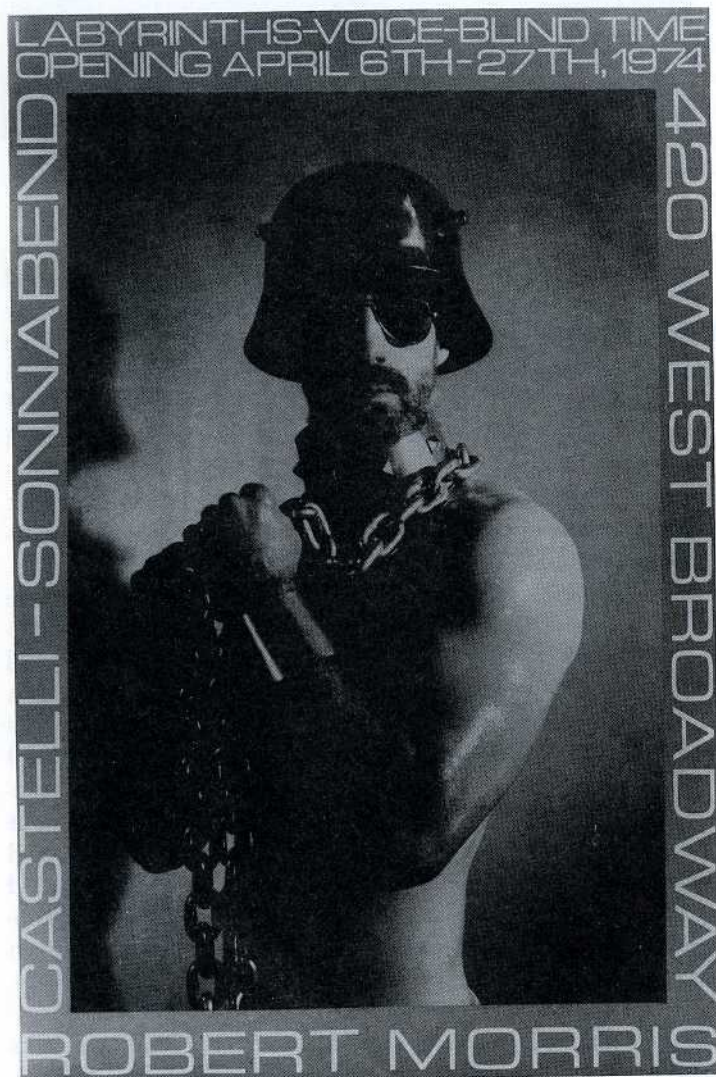
side by side on the floor, Andre built a unitary gestalt, a square, by working repetitively with a simple, one-foot-square module. Andre took this "strong" form and brought it low, however, spreading it laterally over the ground like a carpet. So "abased" are his sculptures that viewers are invited to walk on them, to enact a drama of humiliation that inverts the conventional relation of spectator and art work, evacuating the spirit of respect or reverence that customarily distances viewers from works of art. Andre challenges the viewers' cultural conditioning, their habit of "looking up to" art as something ideal and untouchable, by putting it literally beneath them, forcing them to look down on it. Walking on his work may make some viewers feel less triumphant than uncomfortable, however. As Stanley Cavell has observed, we are accustomed to regarding works of art as having identities, not unlike people; we are capable of having special feelings for them, almost as we have for people: to humiliate or abuse an other, even if that other is a very thing-like work of art, may feel like unworthy, even humiliating behavior. As Andre manipulates viewers into performing a transgressive act that re-

dounds on themselves, he does it less as a gesture of humility, in a sense, than as an assertion of power. Consider, too, the expression to "take the floor," which describes this work nicely and which means to claim the power to speak, to compel an audience to listen. What Andre achieved by spreading his materials out laterally was also the largest possible "seizure" of territory, as he takes up far more area than sculptors typically do, except in realizing monuments.

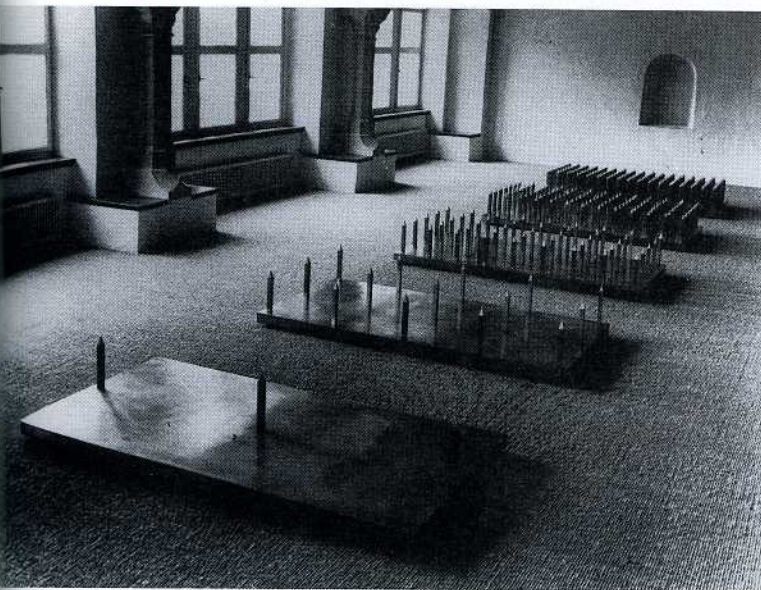
That the Minimalist idiom could be used on a monumental scale was mainly the discovery of the youngest member of the Minimalist inner circle. Richard Serra (who first moved to New York in 1966) swiftly assimilated a visual rhetoric developed by others and shaped it to his own ends—ends in keeping with the more overtly aggressive tone of some of the Minimalist production of the later 1960s and '70s. Serra's *Delineator* of 1974–76 [fig. 18] is similar to Andre's plains insofar as it provides a rectangular metal carpet (10 by 26 feet) for viewers to walk on. But unlike Andre's square, unitary planes, Serra's work revolves around a matrix of binary opposites: the "delineated" opposition of floor and ceiling, the opposing orientation of one rectangle to the other and, not least, the oppositional relation set in play between the viewer and the work of art. For a viewer to tread on Serra's work is not to engage in a scenario of transgression and humiliation, however, but in one of transgression and (imminent) punishment. As no visible fastenings restrain the two-and-a-half-ton panel on the ceiling, viewers must wonder how long this Houdini-esque and Herculean feat of engineering will last—or how soon they are likely to be crushed to death.

The paradigmatic relation between work and spectator in Serra's art is that between bully and victim, as his work tends to treat the viewer's welfare with contempt. This work not only looks dangerous, it *is* dangerous: the "prop" pieces in museums are often roped off or alarmed and sometimes, especially in the process of installation and deinstallation, they fall and injure or even (on one occasion) kill. Serra has long toyed with the brink between what is simply risky and what is outright lethal, as in his *Skullcracker Series: Stacked Steel Slabs* of 1969 which consisted of perilously imbalanced, 20-to-40-foot tall stacks of dense metal plates. Rosalind Krauss insists that "It matters very little that the scale of this work . . . is vastly over life size," but Serra's ambitious expansion of the once-moderate scale of the Minimalist object was, together with his fascination with balance and imbalance, central to his work's concern with jeopardy, and crucial to its menacing effect.⁹¹ Judging by his own account, what impelled Serra to make ever bigger works in ever more public spaces was never an interest in the problems of making art for audiences not fluent, let alone conversant, in the difficult languages of modernist art, but rather a consuming personal ambition, a will to power. "If you are conceiving a piece for a public place," he conceded (while avoiding the first-person pronoun), "... one has to consider the traffic flow, but not necessarily worry about the indigenous community, and get caught up in the politics of the site."⁹² Serra's assurance that he could remain aloof from politics proved fallacious, of course, as the public returned his cool feelings, most notably in the case of the *Tilted Arc* of 1981 [fig. 19].

It has been argued about the *Tilted Arc* that its oppressiveness could serve in a politically productive way to alert the public



16. Robert Morris, Poster for Castelli/Sonnabend Gallery exhibition, April 6–27, 1974, Offset on paper. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.



20. Walter De Marla, *Beds of Spikes*, 1968–69 (five sculptures), Stainless steel, five plates, $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 78\frac{1}{2}'' \times 41\frac{1}{2}''$ with obelisk-shaped spikes, $10\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{3}{16}'' \times \frac{3}{16}''$. Private collection, Basel. Courtesy Walter De Marla, © Walter De Marla.

to its sense of oppression. Though an argument can be made for Serra similar to the ones I have made here for Judd, Morris, and Stella—that the work succeeds insofar as it visualizes, in a suitably chilling way, a nakedly dehumanized and alienating expression of power—it is more often the case with Serra (as sometimes also with Morris) that his work doesn't simply exemplify aggression or domination, but acts it out. In its site on Federal Plaza in lower Manhattan, Serra's mammoth, perilously tilted steel arc formed a divisive barrier too tall (12 feet) to see over, and a protracted trip (120 feet) to walk around. In the severity of its material, the austerity of its form, and in its gargantuan size, it served almost as a grotesque amplification of Minimalism's power rhetoric. Something about the public reaction to that rhetoric can be deduced from the graffiti and the urine that liberally covered the work almost from the first, as well as from the petitions demanding its removal (a demand met last year).

A predictable defense of Serra's work was mounted by critics, curators, dealers, collectors, and some fellow artists. At the General Services Administration hearings over the petitions to have the work removed, the dealer Holly Solomon made what she evidently regarded as an inarguable case in its favor: "I can only tell you, gentlemen, that this is business, and to take down the piece is bad business . . . the bottom line is that this has financial value, and you really have to understand that you have a responsibility to the financial community. You cannot destroy property." But the principal arguments mustered on Serra's behalf were old ones concerning the nature and function of the avant-garde. Thus, the Museum of Modern Art's chief curator of painting and sculpture, William Rubin, taught a hoary art history lesson: "About one hundred years ago the Impressionists and post-Impressionists . . . artists whose works are today prized universally, were being reviled as ridiculous by the public and the established press. At about the same time, the Eiffel Tower was constructed, only to be greeted by much the same ridicule . . . Truly

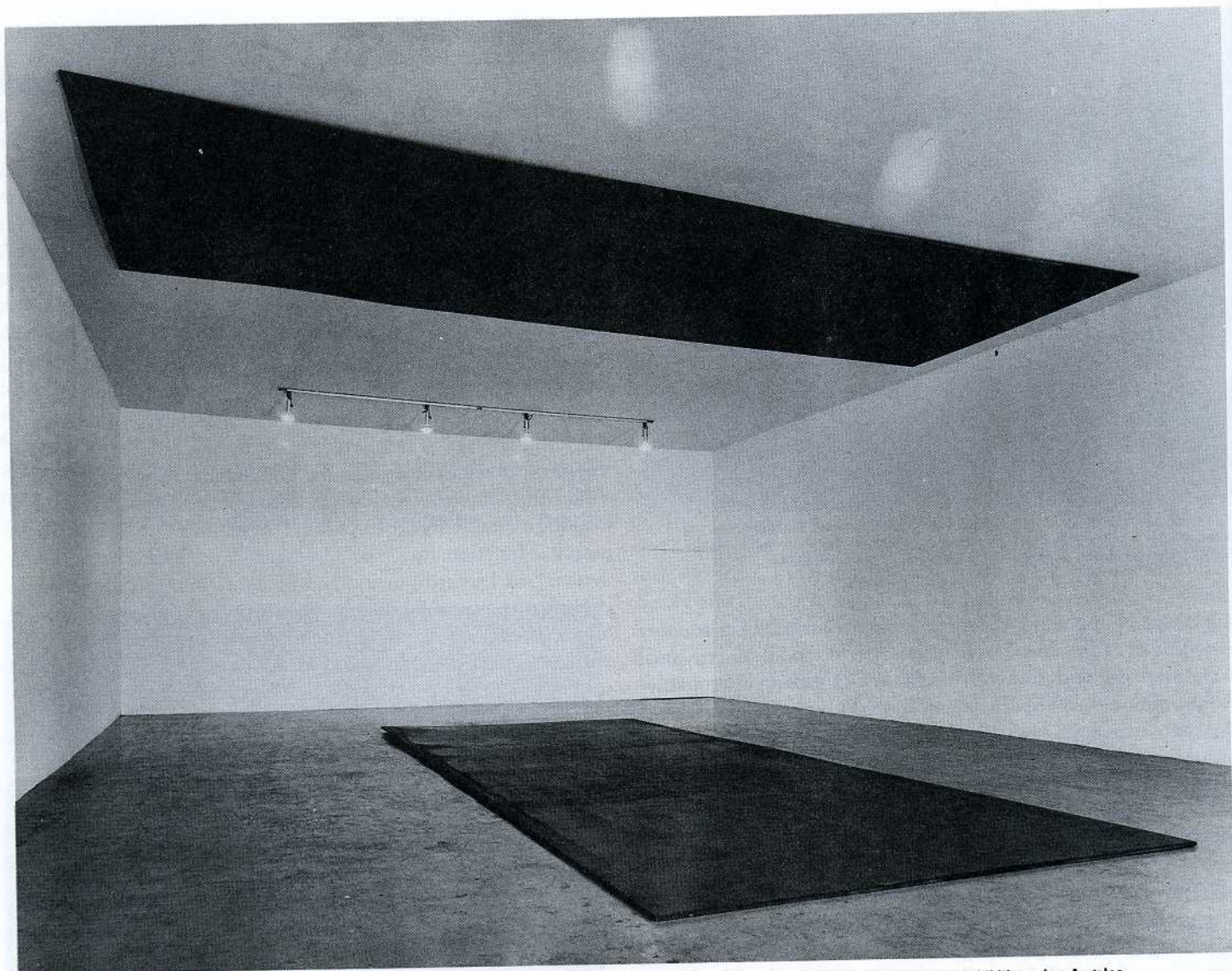
The blank face of Minimalism may come into focus as the face of capital, the face of authority, the face of the father.

challenging works of art require a period of time before their artistic language can be understood by the broader public."⁹³

What Rubin and Serra's other supporters declined to ask is whether the sculptor really is, in the most meaningful sense of the term, an avant-garde artist. Being avant-garde implies being ahead of, outside, or against the dominant culture; proffering a vision that implicitly stands (at least when it is conceived) as a critique of entrenched forms and structures. "Avant-garde research is functionally . . . or ontologically . . . located outside the system," as Lyotard put it, "and by definition, its function is to deconstruct everything that belongs to order, to show that all this 'order' conceals something else, that it represses."⁹⁴ But Serra's work is securely embedded within the system: when the brouhaha over the *Tilted Arc* was at its height, he was enjoying a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (in the catalogue of which, by a special exception, he was allowed to have a critic of his choosing, Douglas Crimp, make a case for him).⁹⁵ The panel of luminaries who were empowered to award Serra the commission in the first place plainly found his vision congenial to their own. And his defense of the work rested precisely on this basis, that far from being an outsider, he was an eminent member of the establishment who, through some horrifying twist of fate, had become subject to harassment by the unwashed and uncouth who do not even recognize, let alone respect, authority when they see it.

Because his work was commissioned according to the regulations of a government agency, Serra reasoned that "The selection of this sculpture was, therefore, made by, and on behalf of the public." Stella expanded on this theme in his own remarks at the hearing: "The government and the artist have acted as the body of society attempting to meet civilized, one might almost say civilizing goals . . . To destroy the work of art and simultaneously incur greater public expense in that effort would disturb the status quo for no gain . . . Finally, no public dispute should force the gratuitous destruction of any benign, civilizing effort."⁹⁶ These arguments locate Serra not with the vanguard but with the standing army or "status quo," and as such represent a more acute view than Rubin's, though the rhetoric they depend on is no less hackneyed. More thoughtful, sensible, and eloquent testimony at the hearing came instead from some of the uncouth:

My name is Danny Katz and I work in this building as a clerk. My friend Vito told me this morning that I am a philistine. Despite that I am getting up to speak . . . I don't think this issue should be elevated into a dispute between the forces of ignorance and art, or art versus government. I really blame government less because it has long ago outgrown its human dimension. But from the artists



18. Richard Serra, *Dellneator*, 1974–76, Steel plates, 10' × 26' each. Collection Richard Serra and Ace Gallery. Courtesy Ace Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles.

I expected a lot more. I didn't expect to hear them rely on the tired and dangerous reasoning that the government has made a deal, so let the rabble live with the steel because it's a deal. That kind of mentality leads to wars. We had a deal with Vietnam. I didn't expect to hear the arrogant position that art justifies interference with the simple joys of human activity in a plaza. It's not a great plaza by international standards, but it is a small refuge and place of revival for people who ride to work in steel containers, work in sealed rooms, and breathe recirculated air all day. Is the purpose of art in public places to seal off a route of escape, to stress the absence of joy and hope? I can't believe this was the artistic intention, yet to my sadness this for me has been the dominant effect of the work, and it's all the fault of its position and location. I can accept anything in art, but I can't accept physical assault and complete destruction of pathetic human activity. No work of art created with a contempt for ordinary humanity and without respect for the common element of human experience can be great. It will always lack a dimension.⁹⁷

The terms Katz associated with Serra's project include arrogance and contempt, assault and destruction; he saw the Minimalist idiom, in other words, as continuous with the master discourse of our imperious and violent technocracy.

Though Serra has garnered public art commissions in this country and in Europe, the Minimalist work of the other artists discussed here has remained largely in private and museum spheres. Minimalist cubes stand outside corporate headquarters and in public plazas across the country, but—as a photograph of one such work, in New York's Cooper Square [fig. 20], helps to show—the artists chosen to make such public statements were those (such as Alexander Liberman, Beverly Pepper or, in this case, Bernard Rosenthal) who embellished, and thereby eased the implacable rhetoric of Judd, Morris, Andre, and Smith.⁹⁸ The work in Cooper Square, *Alamo*, of 1966–67, is not a bare metal box set solidly on the ground, but a decoratively patterned cube poised coyly on a platform on one cut-off point; as the absolute

geometry of the Minimalist cube has been abrogated, the effect is accordingly no longer absolutist. Corporate and government bodies generally proved receptive to Minimalism's fierce rhetoric only at a softened pitch (or less often, as in Serra's case), a heightened one. After all, a plain steel box looks more like a product than like art, and when a corporate or government agency pays for art it demands the work of an artist, that figure who serves as the living trace of the autonomous subject. In the case of *Alamo*, the unsystematic patterning on the black cube's surface gives the reassuring sense of an idiosyncratic and improvisational activity on the artist's part, whereas in a steel box by Judd all the decisions were plainly fixed at the start and there is nothing to signal the personal imprimatur of the maker. Finally, Minimalism's denial of subjectivity acts to distance and isolate viewers, rather than integrate them into the cultural (and so the economic) system, as more obliging work (such as Rosenthal's) would do.

It proves less of a strain to perceive Minimalist art as "against much in the society" (as the artists themselves would generally have it) then, when we compare it with art that harbors no such ambitions. But can Minimalism readily be seen as having that oppositional moment we demand of vanguard or modernist art? The most defensible answer to this question is surely "no," but a contrary answer can still be contrived given the, at times, disquieting effect of the most uningratiating Minimalist production—that bothersomeness that impels some viewers even to kick it. To construct the inobvious answer takes a recourse to the modernist theory of Adorno, however. "One cannot say in general whether somebody who excises all expression is a mouthpiece of reification. He may also be a spokesman for a genuine non-linguistic, expressionless expression and denounce reification. Authentic art is familiar with expressionless expression, a kind of crying without tears," wrote Adorno.⁹⁹ If no general judgment of this kind can be made, I have proposed here that some local or specific judgments might be; that in some of the Minimalists' most contained and expressionless works we might infer a denunciatory statement made in, and not against, the viewer's best in-



20. Bernard Rosenthal, *Alamo*, 1966-67.

terests. Adorno suggested that "The greatness of works of art lies solely in their power to let those things be heard which ideology conceals."¹⁰⁰ Whether by the artists' conscious design or not, the best of Minimalist art does that well enough, through its lapidary reformulations of some especially telling phrases of the master discourse. Adorno championed modernist art not only for its negative capability, however, but also for its utopian moment, its vision of something other or better than the present regime. Here we encounter Minimalism's departure: its refusal to picture something else; a refusal which finally returns the viewer—at best a more disillusioned viewer—to more of the same. □

Special thanks are due to Calvin Brown for his conversation, to Larry List for help and encouragement, to Ann Gibson for reading an earlier version of the manuscript, to T.J. Clark and the members of Harvard's Fine Arts Department faculty seminar of 1987-1988, and to Deborah Haynes, Megan Holmes, and the members of my 1988 seminar on Gender and Interpretation, for their responses to oral presentations of some of these ideas.



19. Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1981, Cor-ten steel, 12' x 120' x 2½'.

1. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 179.

2. Harriet Senie, "The Right Stuff," *Art News*, Mar. 1984, 55.

3. Hal Foster alone has ventured in print (however tentatively): "Is it too much to suggest that 'art for art's sake' returns here in its authoritative (authoritarian?) guise, a guise which reveals that, far from separate from power and religion (as Enlightenment philosophy would have it) bourgeois art is a displaced will to power . . . and ultimately is a religion?" "The Crux of Minimalism," in Howard Singerman, ed., *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art 1945-1986* (New York: Abbeville Press, for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, c.1986), 174.

4. Phyllis Tuchman, "An Interview with Carl Andre," *Artforum*, June 1970, 61. Insofar as space or voids are conventionally coded as feminine, a symbolic form of sexual domination is at issue here too.

5. See Don Terry, "A 16-Ton Sculpture Falls, Injuring Two," *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1988, B6; and Ruth Landa, "Sculpture Crushes Two: Worker Loses Leg as 16-Ton Piece Falls," [New York] *Daily News*, Oct. 27, 1988, 1, 3. Douglas Crimp sees the outsized scale of Serra's work as proof that the artist uses the gallery as "a site of struggle," but for an artist to overload a floor hardly amounts to a struggle; and there was no struggle with the dealer, who could not have been more accommodating.

6. "Carl Andre: Artworker," interview with Jeanne Siegel, *Studio International*, v. 180, no. 927 (Nov. 1970) 178. Andre and, to a lesser extent, Morris, were active in the Art Workers Coalition, an anarchic body formed in 1969 whose principal achievement was helping to organize the New York Art Strike against War, Racism and Repression, which closed numerous galleries and museums on May 22, 1970 (a sit-in on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum, which did not close, drew about five hundred participants). The A.W.C. drew a distinction between the politicizing of artists, which it urged, and the politicizing of art, which it did not.

It bears noting that that prime motivator of political action in the student population, the draft, did not threaten any of the men discussed here, as most of them had spent years in the military—in some cases by choice—prior to pursuing careers as artists. Kenneth Noland, born in 1924, served from 1942 to 1946 as a glider pilot and cryptographer in the air force, mainly in the United States but also in Egypt and Turkey; he subsequently studied art at Black Mountain College and in Paris. Judd, born in 1928, served in the army in Korea in an engineer's unit, 1945-47 (before the outbreak of the war there); subsequently he studied at

the Art Students League and at Columbia University, from which he graduated in 1953 with a B.S. in Philosophy, and where he pursued graduate studies in Art History, from 1958 to 1960. Sol LeWitt, born in 1928, earned a B.F.A. from Syracuse University in 1949, and then served in the U.S. Army in Japan and Korea, in 1951–52. Morris, born in 1931, served time in Korea as an engineer toward the end of the Korean war; he attended numerous universities and art schools, including the California School of Fine Arts and Reed College, and did graduate work at Hunter College in New York in Art History. Dan Flavin, born in 1933, found himself, in 1955, by his own account, "loitering in Korea with an army of occupation as an Air Weather Service Observer"; he subsequently attended Columbia University. Andre, born 1935, studied at Phillips Andover Academy, 1951–53, and served in the army in North Carolina in 1955–56. Walter De Maria, born in 1935, earned a B.A. in History and an M.A. in Sculpture at the University of California at Berkeley, and was not in the military. Frank Stella, born in 1936, expected to be drafted on graduating from Princeton, but was exempted because of a childhood injury to his hand. Serra, born in 1939, also did not see military service.

7. From an unpublished section of transcripts of interviews with Stella conducted in Cambridge, Mass., in Dec. 1983 or Jan. 1984, primarily by Caroline Jones, in Harvard University Art Museum's archives, 61.

8. Eugene Goossen, "Distillation," 1966 (a text accompanying an exhibition held at the Tibor de Nagy and Stable galleries in Sept. 1966), rpt. in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), 169.

9. Eugene Goossen, *The Art of the Real: U.S.A. 1948–1969* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 11; this show represented the debut of Minimalism at the Museum of Modern Art, though it did not feature Minimalism exclusively.

10. Clement Greenberg, "Recentness of Sculpture," 1967, rpt. in *Minimal Art*, ed. Battcock, 183. In "The Crux," Foster discusses Minimalism aptly as representing at once an ultimate realization of, and a break with, the Greenbergian modernist model.

11. Goossen, *Art of the Real*, 11.

12. Eugene Goossen, "Eight Young Artists," 1964 (an essay accompanying an exhibition at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, N.Y. in Oct. 1964), rpt. in *Minimal Art*, ed. Battcock, 167.

13. Such was the title given to the drawing for the work in Brydon Smith, *Dan Flavin: Fluorescent Light* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1969), 166; and Flavin reiterated the phrase when showing a slide of the work at a lecture at Harvard University in 1986.

14. Melinda Wortz, "Dan Flavin: E. F. Hauserman Company Showroom, Pacific Design Center," *Artforum*, Jan. 1983, 82.

15. Smith, *Flavin*, 176.

16. From a venomous text in which he bemoans the religious training forced upon him as an adolescent sent to a junior seminary to fulfill his father's "lost vocation." The excesses of parental and religious authority visited upon Flavin as a child by his father, and a mother he calls "a stupid, fleshly tyrant of a woman," propelled him, by his own oft-repeated account, into a fantasy life centered on exhibitions of power in other spheres; he "dwelled in serious fantasies of war," doing "pencil sketches of World War devastation as it progressed," and amassing "hundreds of . . . drawings after the 'Horrors of War' picture cards of Gum, Incorporated, and sundry other war-time illustrations," Flavin, "... in daylight or cool white": An Autobiographical Sketch, *Artforum*, Dec. 1965, 21.

17. Dan Flavin, "... in daylight," 24.

18. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 35.

19. Siegel, "Andre: Artworker," 178, and David Bourdon, *Carl Andre: Sculpture 1959–1977* (New York: Jaap Reitman, 1978), 27. A key work Andre conceived in 1960, but could not afford to execute until 1966, was *Herm*, consisting of a single rectangular timber standing on end. The title refers to ancient Greek road markers, simple, rectangular, stone pillars often marked by an erect penis and surmounted by a bust of Hermes. In 1963, Andre made a wooden sculpture called *Cock* in evident homage to Brancusi (though "cock" does not have the explicit slang connotation in French that it has in English).

20. William S. Rubin, *Frank Stella* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 44–5. If Stella so deeply dreaded people probing the implications of his titles, he need not have provided any, of course, let alone such intriguing ones.

21. Brenda Richardson, *Frank Stella: The Black Paintings* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1976), 12.

22. Richardson, *Stella*, 14. Dorothy Miller put four of the pictures in her *Sixteen Americans* show in 1959; and Alfred Barr purchased the *Marriage of Reason and Squalor* for the museum's collection. Stella had his first solo show at Castelli in 1960.

23. Rubin, *Stella*, 30; from "The Pratt Lecture," delivered by Stella at the Pratt Institute in 1960, rpt. in Richardson, *Stella*, 78.

24. Jones, transcript of interview with Stella, 11, 62, 90; Calvin Tomkins, "The Space Around Real Things," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 10, 1984, 63.

25. Jones, transcript of interview with Stella, 61; ellipses are in the original, indicating pauses in the artist's speech.

26. Richardson, *Stella*, 14, 79.

27. Stella indicated also, however, that he "makes little distinction between Church and State in regard to similarities of ritual and rigidity of structure," Richardson, *Stella*, 26.

28. Richardson, *Stella*, 9.

29. Rosalind E. Krauss writes for three pages (262–5) in *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1981) on *Die Fabne Hoch*, for example, without ever mentioning the title's meaning. She mentions the cross's Christian significance and its function as a schematic sign for a person seen against a horizon, but insists that Stella is dealing in a strictly impersonal, "logical" and "natural" way with the "common repertory of signs."

30. Richardson, *Stella*, 39.

31. As well-educated, middle-class, white American males, the inner circle of Minimalist artists was generally socialized to assume a perspective of authority (this helped separate them from the contemporaneous Pop artists, including Johns and Rauschenberg, whose origins tended to be impoverished); but Stella had the most privileged background of all. He may not have been a stereotypical ivy-leaguer eager to don the pinstripes in his turn, but the proverbial "old boys' network" could not have served him better if he had pursued a career on Wall Street. Soon after he moved to New York, his Andover schoolmate, Andre, introduced him to Barbara Rose, then a graduate student in art history at Columbia. "After seeing the black paintings, she [Rose] decided that Stella was the most important artist of her generation" (Tomkins, "The Space," 72), and she soon became both Stella's first wife (in 1961) and a critic highly supportive of Minimalist art. The best man at the wedding was fellow Princetonian Michael Fried, soon to become Stella's most passionate and articulate supporter as well as

the most influential critic of the day. William Seitz (soon to rise to power at the Museum of Modern Art) and Robert Rosenblum, who taught art history at Princeton while Stella was there, both encouraged and helped him in numerous ways; Rosenblum introduced Stella to Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg when he arrived in New York, and went on to write the first full-scale magazine article and monograph on his work ("Frank Stella: Five Years of Variations on an 'Irreducible' Theme," *Artforum*, Mar. 1965, 20–25 and *Frank Stella* [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970]). Besides Fried, another friend and fellow-student at Princeton was Walter Darby Bannard, who became a fellow-traveller in the Minimalist movement and who introduced Stella in 1958 to the venerable Greenberg (Rubin, *Stella*, 155).

32. Quoted in Caroline Jones, "Spaces and the Enterprise of Painting," *Harvard Magazine*, May–June 1984, 46.

33. Richardson, *Stella*, 22; Rubin, *Stella*, 44.

34. Richardson, *Stella*, 72.

35. Jones, transcript of interview with Stella, 9, 91. Stella was pointing to *Arbeit Macht Frei* at the time he made this comment.

36. Jones, transcript of interview with Stella, 9.

37. Brian O'Doherty, for example, called the black paintings "semi-icons for a spiritual blank. They make Mr. Stella the Oblomov of art, the Cézanne of nihilism, the master of ennui," "Frank Stella and a Crisis of Nothingness," *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1964, sec. 2: 21, as cited in Rubin, *Stella*, 31.

38. Jones, transcripts of interview with Stella, 56.

39. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 139.

40. Rubin, *Stella*, 44.

41. This series of giant, sculpted, metal paintings—like so many spectacular pop-up books—display the artist's muscular gesture writ large in expensive materials, riotous colors, and glitter, and so exalt what the black paintings categorically denied: the creator's subjectivity. Critics never extolled the aggressiveness of Stella's most Minimalist paintings, however, as they have his expressionistic work. John Russell described elatedly how Stella's huge erections in metal make viewers "physically aware of every jet and thrust"; "jumping five and six feet out into the room," the works "come at us like well-trained pit bulls who know just when it is their turn to get in there and bite." "Risky works from Stella at the MoMA," *New York Times*, Oct. 16, 1987, sec. C, 1. The question is where the "risk" lies, a question made more pressing by the artist's own reference to the explosive country of South Africa. Stella has little direct involvement in the complex, but hardly risky business of making these objects which have evoked critical acclaim for over ten years now; and these works are often sold before they are shown, if not before they are made, to corporate or institutional collectors. If any of Stella's paintings could be characterized as risky, it was the pinstripe series of 1958–60, which for years were scarcely saleable. Lawrence Rubin, who represented Stella in Paris, sold only one painting by him between 1960 and 1965 (Tomkins, "The Space," 78). The Stella of the *South African Diamond Mine* series, by contrast, is the favorite artist of corporate collectors.

42. Jones, transcripts of interview with Stella, 62.

43. *Museum Piece* is part of what De Maria finally (but not initially) conceived as a trio of works: a *Cross* done in 1965–66, the swastika, done in 1966–67, and a Jewish *Star* done in 1972. The Guggenheim Museum, which owns the three works, issued a handout when they were first exhibited that painstakingly pointed to the antiquity of all three symbols and minimized their more historically immediate connotations. In a telephone interview with Brian Wallis, then a museum staff member, the artist stressed the "purity of the symbol," insisting willfully that the "pieces should be thought of as sculptures first; symbols second; and in no way to be thought of as games or participatory pieces," as if viewers were remotely capable of performing any of those separations of perception or association (Dec. 18, 1978, transcript in Guggenheim Museum files). The swastika thus served as an ultimate litmus test of the Minimalists' resolution to make art stripped of all reference. "The interesting thing about abstract art," said Serra in 1976, for example, "is that . . . the work remains free, in that it doesn't need to serve any ideological premise," interview by Liza Bear, Feb. 23, 1976, rpt. in Richard Serra with Clara Weyergraf, *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc. 1970–1980* (Yonkers, N.Y.: Hudson River Museum, 1980), 63.

44. When Caroline Jones questioned Stella about Morris's recent work, which involves elaborate assemblages of cast reliefs with dismembered body parts, including fetuses and genitalia, he was mildly derisive: "He had that theme before . . . he likes that kind of thing." Jones: "Would you say that that was not really a function of the artist?" Stella: "It's a function of the artist if he can make it come off. I think Bob Morris's problem is that he's always after the t.v. show. I don't know." transcripts of interviews, 33. Stella's suspicions are put in relief by a recent interview with Morris—whose theme is less the Nazi Holocaust than the potential for nuclear holocaust. Describing Morris as a "voyeur of the apocalypse," Phil Patton writes: "What the recent work does represent is not so much a political statement—'Credible political ideologies for the ideal future no longer exist,' he has written—as a testament to a fascination, still esthetic, with the possibility of apocalypse. Of nothing else does he speak as passionately as the possibility of nuclear annihilation. His eyes light up hauntingly—I am fascinated by all that power," he says. "It goes back to Xerxes, the raw power to create an empire. In the 20th century, the efficiency of it has increased exponentially. It's fascinating, the power that makes people do and build these things," "Robert Morris and the Fire Next Time," *Art News*, 90–1.

Stella resumed Nazi allusions in a more oblique, but evidently memorializing way, in his *Polish Village* series of 1972, in which the paintings were named for synagogues destroyed by the Nazis. (It bears noting, as an aside, that Andy Warhol was collecting photographs from Nazi Germany in his photo files starting in 1963, but did not use them in his work; Rainer Crone, *Andy Warhol* [New York: Praeger, 1970], 29.)

45. From an interview done in 1969; Rubin, *Stella*, 44; from an interview done in 1964, Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," ed. Lucy R. Lippard, in Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art*, 158.

46. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1981), 34.

47. From an interview conducted in 1970, Emile de Antonio and Mitch Tuchman, *Painters Painting* (New York: Abbeville, 1984), 141. In one of the first essays written on Minimalism, "ABC Art," of 1965, Barbara Rose quoted Beckett's *Malone Dies*: "I could die today, if I wished, merely by making a little effort, if I could wish, if I could make an effort," rpt. in Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art*, 293.

48. De Antonio and Tuchman, *Painters*, 140.

49. Glaser, "Questions," 157.

50. Brian O'Doherty, "Minus Plato," 1966, rpt. in Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art*, 252.

51. Jean-François Lyotard, "Some of the Things at Stake in Women's Struggles," *Wedge* 6

(Winter 1984): 27.

52. Alice Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 101.

53. Douglas Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity," in Rosalind Krauss, *Richard Serra: Sculpture*, ed. Laura Rosenstock (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 45.

54. Tellingly, Serra told one critic that he took a lot of art courses in college, "partly to boost his grade-point average and partly because he found art 'totally interesting and totally private,'" Senie, "Right Stuff," 57.

55. That Andre, for one, recognized this fact is evident in his response to Duchamp's readymades (which the artist himself insisted were chosen in a state of aesthetic "anaesthesia"): "Duchamp's taste is nothing short of exquisite, up to and including his taste in urinals," Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, ed., *Carl Andre, Hollis Frampton: Twelve Dialogues* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and New York University Press, 1981), 25.

56. Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," *Arts Yearbook* (8), 1965, rpt. in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings 1959-1975* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and New York University Press, 1975), 181-9.

57. Before and during his college years, Serra worked numerous summers in steel mills, work that he sought not only because it paid more than other types of summer jobs, but because he found it "actually, er... fun to do," interview with Bear, in *Serra: Interviews*, 62. After graduating from Phillips Academy and before a sojourn in Europe, Andre worked at the Boston Gear Works in Quincy, Massachusetts, his home town, and from 1960-64 he worked in New Jersey on the Pennsylvania Railroad as a freight brakeman and conductor. He said the (latter) experience made him a better sculptor, and his preferred materials initially included timbers like those used in laying railroad track.

58. Krauss, *Serra*, 15; the photograph is reproduced on 14.

59. Isaac Balbus, in "Disciplining Women: Michel Foucault and the Power of Feminist Discourse," in *Feminism as Critique*, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 125.

60. Samuel Wagstaff, Jr. and Tony Smith, *Tony Smith: Two Exhibitions of Sculpture* (Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1966), n.p.

61. As in note 60; Smith worked as a toolmaker and industrial draftsman in the 1930s.

62. Samuel Wagstaff, Jr., "Talking with Tony Smith," in Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art*, 384-6.

63. Stella speculated also "whether there is not some relationship between quality in art and architecture and the will to impose it—a kind of 'totalitarianism of quality'" (Stella's phrase), according to Rubin, *Stella*, 45, 153. His self-identity as a kind of autocrat emerged also in his descriptions of his present mode of fabricating his work, in a factory context, as "dictatorial proletarianism," Tomkins, "Spaces," 47.

64. Henri Zerner, "Classicism and Power," *Art Journal* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 36.

65. Glaser, "Questions," 150.

66. Rubin, *Stella*, 45. Morris was explicitly antipathetic to Mies van der Rohe, however (Eugene Goossen, "The Artist Speaks: Robert Morris," *Art in America*, May-June, 1970, 109).

67. In their most recent work—Le Witt in his wall murals, Pei in his additions to the National Gallery and the Louvre—both men have shown an affinity for pyramids, those emblems of hierarchy and of absolute power. (De Maria used pyramids earlier in his *Zinc Pyramid* of 1965, and *Pyramid Chair* of 1966, a throne-like object).

68. From "A Dialogue" between Morris and David Sylvester recorded in 1967 and published in an edited version in Michael Compton and David Sylvester, *Robert Morris* (London: Tate Gallery, 1971), 16.

69. Rubin, *Stella*, 46.

70. Rpt. in Judd: *Complete Writings*, 93.

71. While its rhetoric most plainly described Judd's own vision, this essay did not deal exclusively with the Minimalists, but included others such as Rauschenberg, Lucas Samaras, and Claes Oldenburg, who were using non-fine-arts materials or objects in their work.

72. Samuel Wagstaff, Jr.'s *Black, White and Grey*, an exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford in Jan.-Feb. of 1964, included Morris, Tony Smith, Flavin, Agnes Martin and Anne Truitt, for example, among other artists who would not become associated with Minimalism. Flavin organized an exhibition at the Kaymar Gallery in New York in Mar. 1964 that included himself, Judd, LeWitt, Stella, Bannard, Robert Ryman, and Jo Baer, among others. Goossen organized *Eight Young Artists* at the Hudson River Museum in Oct. 1964, including Andre and Bannard. The *Shape and Structure* show at Tibor de Nagy in 1965 included Judd, Morris, and Andre, among others. Michael Fried's *Three American Painters*, with Stella, Noland, and Olitski took place at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard in 1965. And Kynaston McShine *Primary Structures* exhibition occurred at the Jewish Museum in 1966.

73. Rose, "ABC," 296; Lucy R. Lippard, "New York Letter: Rejective Art," 1965, rpt. in Lippard, *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971), 141-153; Annette Michelson, "10 x 10 . . .," *Artforum*, Jan. 1967, 30-1.

74. That such a feat was possible was proved most recently by Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam War memorial with its graduated V-shaped, Minimalist wall which makes a stark, symbolic cut in the landscape. The names of the war dead etched in the wall's polished, black stone surfaces mingle with the reflections of the spectators, many of whom have described feeling a deep emotional connection to the work antithetic to the sense of deprivation or of being defrauded more typical of the public's response to Minimalism. The question is (as Daniel Abramson observed in conversation) whether the sense of identification and healing viewers reportedly derive from Lin's work effectually undercuts the critical message and the image of violence she intended to convey.

75. "The Artist and Politics: A Symposium," *Artforum*, Sept. 1970, 37.

76. Beginning in 1964-65, Flavin did a series of works entitled *Monument for Vladimir Tatlin*, which he later described as "pseudo-monuments," noting that they are made of common fluorescent bulbs "with a life of 2,100 hours of temporary illumination," Smith, *Flavin*, 218. Morris acknowledged Tatlin and Rodchenko, among others, as the progenitors of "non-imagistic sculpture" in his "Notes on Sculpture: Part One," 1966, rpt. in Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art*, 224. And Andre discussed Constructivism with Hollis Frampton in dialogues written in 1962 and 1963, but not intended for publication; said the sculptor, constructivism "provides the suggestion of an aesthetic which could be the basis for a kind of plastic poetry which retained the qualities of both poetry and painting. I am experimenting toward that end, anyway." "My Constructivism is the generation of overall designs by the multiplication of the qualities of the individual constituent elements," Buchloh, ed., *Andre, Frampton*, 34, 37. References to Duchamp or Brancusi generally occur more often than references to Tatlin and Rodchenko in these artists' discourse, however.

77. O'Doherty, "Minus Plato," 252, 254.

78. Judd, "Specific Objects," 187.

79. Judd, "Specific Objects," 181.

80. de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 87.

81. Balbus, "Disciplining Women," 120.

82. Judd, "Specific Objects," 187.

83. Judd, "Specific Objects," 184.

84. In 1978, Morris would do a series of ink on paper drawings, called "In the Realm of the Carceral"; see Stephen F. Eisenman, "The Space of the Self: Robert Morris' 'In the Realm of the Carceral,'" *Arts*, Sept. 1980, 104-9.

85. Morris, "Notes on Sculpture: Part One," 226, 228.

86. Morris, "Notes on Sculpture: Part Two," rpt. in Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art*, 232-3. Naomi Schor suggests that details have historically been coded feminine and viewed accordingly with suspicion, if not contempt, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987). The psycho-sexual aspect to Morris's project became clearer in a performance piece of 1964 called "Site" in which the artist moved standard 4 x 8' construction materials (painted plywood panels?) around a stage while maintaining a studied indifference to the nude body of a woman (Carolee Schneeman) posed as the courtesan Olympia. When a critic suggested that the work "implied that as the nude woman was to Manet, so the grey construction material was to him," the artist replied with a story about a woman being sexually aggressive toward him and so, as it seems, threatening the integrity of his work process: "Morris' comment was that he had been approached several times by a dancer who wanted to work with him, unbuttoning her blouse as she spoke. His solution was *Site*," William S. Wilson, "Hard Questions and Soft Answers," *Art News*, Nov. 1969, 26.

87. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, v. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 244. The specific population Theweleit studied is the German Freikorps, "the volunteer armies that fought, and to a large extent, triumphed over, the revolutionary German working class in the years immediately after World War I," ix.

88. Morris, "Notes: Part Two," 232.

89. Jonathan Fineberg, "Robert Morris Looking Back: An Interview," *Arts*, Sept. 1975, 111-13.

90. Morris's violence emerged most explicitly in some of the non-Minimalist work that forms the greater part of his production: he described a "process piece" he conceived in the 1960s as follows, for example:

I had them shoot a shotgun blast into the wall [of the gallery], and the pattern of the shot was photographed. That was a traveling show. At the next place the photograph was put up and the gun fired, and the result was photographed and enlarged. Each museum got a photograph of the shot photograph, and they shot that one so that you got a series of photographs of photographs that had been shot. Each photograph had to be bigger. I wanted it to get bigger and bigger, Goossen, "The Artist Speaks," 105.

91. Krauss, *Serra*, 24; see 25 for a reproduction of one of the works from the *Skullcracker* series (which is no longer extant), a work made of hot rolled steel, 20 x 8 x 10', at the Kaiser Steel Corporation, Fontana, Cal. Serra said the point of the exercise was to create a structure that would be just "at the boundary of its tendency to overturn." (The wall label for Serra's *Davidson Gate* of 1970, at the National Gallery of Canada, reads, in capital letters, "Attention! Great weight and delicate balance are essential features of this work. Do not touch, nudge, push or otherwise test the steel plates. Children must be accompanied by an adult.") An insight into Serra's motivations emerged in an interview about his video work: *I made an earlier videotape called Surprise Attack, which used a game theory that went: If you hear a burglar downstairs, should you pick up a gun. It was taken from Schilling's book The Strategy of Conflict . . . And then when I saw [Robert Bell] in New York recently he'd just finished a paper on Deterrents which mentioned this specific prisoner's dilemma. I read the paper, and in my trying to do out the pros and cons of it, . . . I found that my own thinking fascinated me, so much so that I thought it must have an awful lot to do with the way I think about anything.*

"Prisoner's Dilemma," interview with Liza Bear, Jan. 27, 1974, rpt. in *Serra: Interviews*, 43.

92. Interview with Liza Bear, March 30, 1976, in *Serra: Interviews*, 73.

93. "Transcript: The Storm in the Plaza," excerpts from the General Services Administration hearing on the *Tilted Arc*, *Harper's*, July 1985, 30, 32.

94. Jean-Francois Lyotard, "On Theory: An Interview," in *Driftworks*, ed. Roger McKeon (New York: Semiotext[e], 1984), 29.

95. William Rubin, "Preface," to Krauss, *Serra*, 9-10. Serra announced sententiously at the hearing that the *Tilted Arc* would, *de facto*, be destroyed if it were moved as he does not make portable sculpture; but he had erected similar pieces on public sites on a temporary basis and he had no plans to dispose of the numerous works in his exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art once it was over.

96. "Transcript," 28, 32.

97. "Transcript," 33. Katz went on to give Serra and the work the benefit of the doubt: "I don't believe the contempt is in the work. The work is strong enough to stand alone in a better place. I would suggest to Mr. Serra that he take advantage of this opportunity to walk away from this fiasco and demand that the work be moved to a place where it will better reveal its beauty."

98. A distinction is implied here between what might be called those fellow-travelers of Minimalism (i.e., Rosenthal, Pepper, and Liberman), who simply embroidered on its plain cloth in an evident bid to make it more appealing, and those "Post-Minimalist" artists, such as Joel Shapiro and Jackie Winsor, whose work clearly inverted or critiqued some of the most deeply held tenets of Minimalism: in Shapiro's case, by his full return to an unambiguously referential art, and in Winsor's case, by her foregrounding of the complex processes and the labor involved in the facture of her cubes (in contrast to Rosenthal's clearly machine-made box).

99. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 171.

100. Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," *Telos* 20 (Summer 1974): 58.

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