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Cover image: Donald Judd, 100 untitled works in mill aluminum, 1982–86, each unit 41 x 51 x 72 in. (104.14 x 129.54 x 182.88 cm). The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas (Photograph courtesy of The Chinati Foundation. © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York)

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Judd on Phenomena

Adrian Kohn

Judd as critic

Donald Judd's 1964 essay "Specific Objects" probably remains his most well-known.¹ In it, he described new artworks characterized by, among other features, "a quality as a whole" instead of conventional "part-by-part structure," the "use of three dimensions" and "real space" as opposed to depiction, "new materials [that] aren't obviously art," and the unadorned appearance and "obdurate identity" of materials as they are.² Judd held that the "shape, image, color and surface" of these objects were more "specific," that is to say, "more intense, clear and powerful," than in previous art.³ While these positions demonstrate Judd's subjective preferences as an artist and art critic, they also convey some of the wider debates driving American avant-garde practices in the 1960s, such as the supposed "insufficiencies of painting and sculpture" as mediums.⁴ Art historians tend to find such breadth appealing of course—sweeping statements bring retrospective order to what was actually haphazard and unruly. But Judd knew that you lose much in eliminating complexity for the sake of clarity. He emphasized this point in his earlier essay "Local History" so as to qualify the more general of his own arguments. "The history of art and art's condition at any time are pretty messy," he declared. "They should stay that way."⁵

The hundreds of exhibition reviews and dozens of articles Judd wrote between 1959 and 1994 make up the sort of messy history he proposed. He saw things others missed when analyzing pieces by Lee Bontecou, Kazimir Malevich, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, and Jackson Pollock. Some of the other artists Judd favored contradict today's emerging canon of mid-twentieth-century art. For example, in 1963 he proclaimed that "[Al] Jensen is great [and] is one of the best painters in the United States," as well as expressing his high regard for the work of Nina Kogan, Verena Loewensberg, Richard Long, John Wesley, and others who often do not show up in the postwar survey texts.⁶ And Judd sometimes changed his mind. His esteem for Roy Lichtenstein's paintings and John Chamberlain's sculptures grew, while his early enthusiasm for Robert Rauschenberg's assemblages and Jasper Johns's paintings waned.⁷ Although Judd's empiricist worldview and concept of specificity recur throughout his writings, he appreciated many very different works of art.⁸

On the whole, Judd's critical essays and reviews document the diverse trajectories of contemporary art. In "Local History" he identified two trends in particular, suggesting that "three-dimensional work . . . approximating objects, and more or less geometric formats with color and optical phenomena are a couple of the wider categories of new and interesting work."⁹ Judd positioned paintings with so-called phenomena by Larry Poons, Ad Reinhardt, Frank Stella, and Neil Williams as a grouping parallel to the objects of Bontecou, Chamberlain, Oldenburg, and others. But this division was "hardly definitive," as Judd made clear.¹⁰ He addressed Stella's works twice in "Local History" since they fit both tendencies: the paintings are "slabs [that] seem like objects" and yet their successive painted angles create phenomena in the form of optical illusions,



Fig. 1 John Chamberlain, *Miss Lucy Pink*, 1962, painted and chromium-plated steel, 47 in. x 42 in. x 39 in. (119.38 x 106.68 x 99.06 cm). Private collection (Photograph courtesy of the artist. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)



Fig. 2 Claes Oldenburg, *Floor Burger*, 1962, canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, painted with latex and Liquitex, 52 in. high x 84 in. diameter (132.08 x 213.36 cm). Collection Art Gallery of Toronto, Toronto, Purchase 1967 (Photograph courtesy of the artist. © Claes Oldenburg)

“ambiguous, lively bands across the fairly impassive fields of parallel lines.”¹¹ The following year, Judd’s article “Specific Objects” examined the provisional category of the same name in full detail. He never compiled an analogous summation for the category of optical phenomena, however. Organizing Judd’s scattered references and considering art on the basis of this tentative classification might seem to clean up the mess he endorsed, but in fact the opposite is true. There is more to Judd’s art criticism than specific objects. Reconstructing his analysis of phenomena offers one way to complicate how a major artist and critic understood art of the 1960s and after, which, above all, helps restore to postwar art history some of the variety and intricacy of the artworks themselves.

Specificity, multiplicity, phenomena

A unique lexicon distinguishes Judd’s writing. The best art is the most “interesting,” and the most interesting art tends to be that in which the form, color, surface, space, and other “aspects” are “polarized” and “specific”—that is, jarring with but not counteracting one another.¹² “To state the idea a little too simply,” Judd ventured, “the better the work, the more diverse its aspects.”¹³ In accordance with this art-critical framework based on aspects, specificity, and interest, Judd named Pollock and Chamberlain among the best artists of their time. The multiple attributes in their works are as specific as possible since either at odds or incommensurable. “Elements and aspects...are polarized rather than amalgamated,” Judd remarked about Pollock’s paintings. “A point of sensation, the immediacy of the dripped paint, is opposed to a volume of structural and imagistic forms.”¹⁴ He discerned a similarly stark multivalence in specific objects such as Chamberlain’s crushed metal constructions (fig. 1):

[There is a] three-way polarity of appearance and meaning, successive states of the same form and material. A piece may appear neutral, just junk, casually objective; or redundant, voluminous beyond its structure, obscured by other chances and possibilities; or simply expressive, through its structure and details and oblique imagery.¹⁵

Pollock’s paintings are at once immediate, structural, and imagistic; Chamberlain’s sculptures are neutral, redundant, and expressive. In these works, Judd’s concept of specificity entails multiplicity.

Beyond disparate visual and physical properties, Judd also appreciated referential aspects of specific objects. As long as such associations stayed polarized from other features, he commended the additional layer of possible interpretation, as with suggestions of “war [and] sex” in Bontecou’s pieces and the unusually “extreme [...] anthropomorphism” of Oldenburg’s works (fig. 2).¹⁶ But traditional illusionism, the depiction of and allusion to actual entities and space through pictorial devices such as perspective and modeling, remained too corrupt for contemporary art in Judd’s opinion.¹⁷ Even so, he knew giving up illusionism was risky. Imitation of real things and spaces amounts to an entire realm of meaning in painting and sculpture, no matter how false Judd and other artists and art critics thought it.¹⁸ To preserve complexity and sustain interest without illusionism,

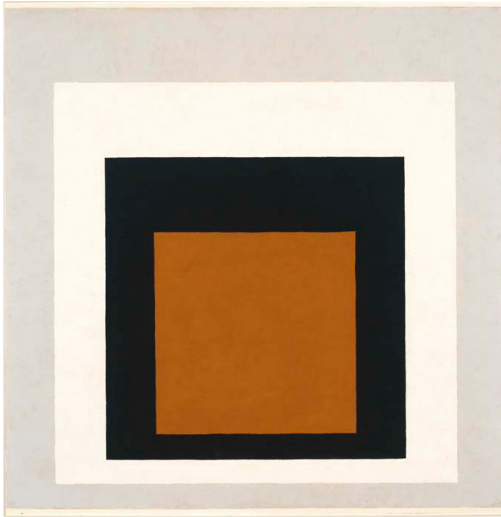


Fig. 3 Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square, New Gate*, 1951, oil on fiberboard, 24 in. x 24 in. (60.96 x 60.96 cm). Collection of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, Connecticut. (Photograph courtesy of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn)

Fig. 4 Victor Vasarely, *Illik*, 1965, oil on board, 31 ½ in. x 31 ½ in. (80.01 x 80.01 cm). Private collection. (Photograph courtesy of Fondation Vasarely, Aix-en-Provence. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York / ADAGP, Paris, Fondation Vasarely)

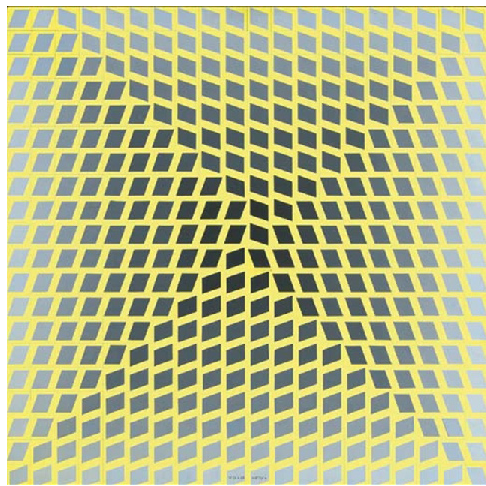


Fig. 5 Larry Poons, untitled, c. 1968, acrylic on canvas, 125 ¼ in. x 89 ¾ in. (318.14 x 227.97 cm). Private collection (Photograph courtesy of Jacobson Howard Gallery. © Larry Poons)

he recognized “a need for something complicated and ambiguous but, unlike imitated space, actual and definite.”¹⁹ Bontecou’s violence and carnality and Oldenburg’s gross simulacra filled the void for Judd. Another possibility he considered was “color and optical phenomena.”²⁰

Defining phenomena is tricky. Judd seems to have meant real optical illusions that everyone sees, such as retinal afterimages, one hue modifying those adjacent, the chromatic depth of pushing and pulling colors, and many other puzzling perceptions. Judd called these illusions “absolutely objective” and “perfectly matter-of-fact” since they occur through direct visual experience.²¹ Unlike illusionism, illusions are not pictorial artifice.²² In a 1993 talk, for example, Judd cited Josef Albers’s 1963 volume *Interaction of Color*: “Albers says to paste a red circle and a white circle on a black sheet of paper and then stare at the red circle. Then, look at the white circle: it is green or blue-green, the complementary of red.”²³ The reality of the white belies the illusion of green and yet the sensation of hue is real too, a physiological effect of the human eye that is neither imagined nor mistaken. The phenomenon of white appearing green met Judd’s criteria—complicated and ambiguous, but actual and definite.

Phenomena in painting: Josef Albers, Larry Poons, Victor Vasarely

Albers’s works demonstrate how phenomena fit into Judd’s art-critical model. Illusions in the *Homage to the Square* paintings (fig. 3), such as “one color altering another” and other kinds of “actual change in a color throughout an area,” constitute one of several specific aspects in these pieces.²⁴ Judd described how *Homage to the Square: At Sea B 1964* (1964) has a central square of “more or less zinc yellow” surrounded by a band of “light-yellow-green gray,” itself encircled by another band of “light gray.”²⁵ He noticed that the inner yellow causes the adjacent light-yellow-green gray to appear simply gray. The outermost light gray looks yellow-green. The center changes too. “[Each] color varies according to the colors surrounding it and it also has an identity as a changed color,” Judd observed.²⁶ These phenomena modify the sequential transition between hues, a second attribute Judd recognized, which produces a wholly optical and non-imitative space. As he explained, stepwise modulation in “either color or value or both at once” introduces undulating illusions of surface “flatness and stability [but then] recession and projection.”²⁷ Albers initiated a third aspect, which Judd called variable color “texture” and “luminosity,” by scraping some of the painted bands to expose the underlying coarse and bright white fiberboard.²⁸ And the paintings’ geometric layouts function as a fourth quality. Judd noted that each band’s single hue diverges into “three different colors” through its shifting dimensions, intensity, and position—narrowest and most brilliant at the bottom, wider and more moderate along both sides, and broad and subdued on top.²⁹ It is a “lambent geometry,” he announced.³⁰ Contradictory characteristics such as the “unbounded color” and “rigid...geometry” vivify rather than compromise one another, and this makes for multifaceted, interesting art.³¹ Albers’s color phenomena of fluctuating yellows and grays coexist with contrasting chromatic ranges, oscillating surface frontality, and assorted textures and opacities, all within a fixed format. Or, in Judd’s sometimes elliptical language, “the work...presents a conception of multiple distinctions within a single context, itself in turn manifold.”³²

Curator William C. Seitz heralded this new art of phenomena with The Museum of Modern Art's 1965 blockbuster exhibition "The Responsive Eye." He selected for display 123 pieces by ninety-eight artists and collectives from nineteen countries, anchored by "best-known masters" Albers and Victor Vasarely (fig. 4).³³ Judd complained that this breadth collapsed separate categories of phenomena. Seitz was "gathering everything at all allied, from [Neil] Williams' work, which is somewhat involved, through Stella's, where optical effects are occasional and not great, to plain hard-edge, in which color may vibrate along a juncture."³⁴ Judd insisted on upholding these distinctions. "Optical effects are one thing, a narrow phenomenon," he maintained, "and color effects are another, a wide range."³⁵ Albers's paintings exemplify the wide variety of aspects originating from color effects. Narrow optical effects include illusions that may not rouse much curiosity when presented alone. For example, Judd compared pieces by Larry Poons and Swiss artist Karl Gerstner (figs. 5, 6). Afterimages from Poons's paintings "are a phenomenon . . . but they are much besides"; the wavy distortion of moiré patterns in Gerstner's works remain just a phenomenon, which was not enough for Judd.³⁶

Further examination of the differences between color effects and optical effects clarifies Judd's praise for Poons's work in contrast to his dismissal of most Op art.³⁷ He asserted that Poons's painting was "the only thing new [because] it's more than afterimages" and so located its "affinities . . . with the best American art and not with optical art."³⁸ Only works with several attributes, some broader than visual phenomena and requiring interpretation, seemed to keep Judd interested. Reminiscent of his meticulous description of Albers's *Homage to the Square*, Judd studied the "definite [...] polka dots" in Poons's pieces, then their "transitory [...] afterimages," both one by one and as a "whole pattern"; next he considered the dots' "sparse and somewhat casual and accidental, and yet seemingly controlled" arrangement; finally, he contemplated wider philosophical propositions in the conflicting "senses of order, relative order and chance."³⁹ "It takes quite a while to look at Poons' paintings," he affirmed.⁴⁰



Fig. 6 Karl Gerstner, *Lens Picture No. 15*, 1964, Plexiglas lens mounted on painted Formica, 28 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{13}{16}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (72.07 x 73.18 x 18.41 cm). Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1965 (Photograph courtesy of Albright-Knox Art Gallery. © Karl Gerstner)

Fig. 7 Gerald Oster, *Sine and Rotated Sine*, 1964, silkscreen on Plexiglas, 36 x 36 in. (91.44 x 91.44 cm). Private collection (Photograph courtesy of Rago Auctions, Inc. © Gerald Oster)



Whereas Poons used phenomena well in Judd's opinion—as one specific aspect among others—Vasarely did not. Conventional easel techniques such as part-by-part balancing restrict phenomena in his paintings. “The color effects are interesting,” Judd acknowledged, but for Vasarely “they’re never enough, and he has about three or four squares, one slanted or tilted inside the other and this is all arranged. [That] is about five times more composition and juggling than he needs.”⁴¹ An overall equilibrium and uniformity prevail and, in Judd's estimation, the work suffers. Again, Poons served as the standard of comparison. “Vasarely's paintings are full of interesting effects but they usually cancel out,” Judd objected. “Any one of them, used powerfully and complexly, as Poons uses his means, would be enough.”⁴² Judd felt that, unlike Poons, Vasarely tinkered with, composed, and in so doing depleted his phenomena.

Waning confidence in the very practice of painting underlay Judd's account. In an otherwise favorable review of pieces by Kenneth Noland, whom he rated “one of the best painters anywhere,” Judd faulted the medium itself. “Painting now is not quite sufficient,” he declared, “although only in terms of plain power. It lacks the specificity and power of actual materials, actual color and actual space.”⁴³ While Judd wrote in 1965 that Poons's paintings attest to a powerful and complex handling of optical effects, he tempered this earlier praise in a 1966 symposium. “I believe something of the order that Larry has in his paintings, but I disbelieve the kind of illusionism,” Judd stated. “If you are going to use just an optical effect, it has to be made so definite that you don't have an illusionistic surface[,] so that you don't somehow destroy the surface you are working on.”⁴⁴ But according to Judd no painter had ever eliminated all spatial illusion. Art critic Barbara Rose asked him during the same roundtable, “Do you think there is such a thing as a flat painting?” He answered, “No, there isn't, so far. I think it's probable that someone will manage to make one...but so far, no one has.”⁴⁵ Judd confirmed that his opposition to painting was not “retroactive,” as he put it; he still thought of Barnett Newman as “one of the world's best artists” and regarded Pollock “a greater artist than anyone working at the time or since.”⁴⁶ And while Judd posited that paintings by Vasarely did not make the most of phenomena, those of Albers and Poons by and large did. Beyond these

exceptions, however, Judd's wider criticism of painting implied that new phenomena required new mediums.

New phenomena: Karl Gerstner, Gerald Oster, Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel

Judd made striking predictions about phenomena in reviews from early 1965. Assessing optical effects created by the constructions of Karl Gerstner, American artist-physicist Gerald Oster, and the Parisian collective Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV), he asserted that "something may be done with the phenomena which will replace present art [and] start . . . what will be an important kind of art."⁴⁷ Experimental materials yield unusual sensations in these artists' works. Concave and convex Plexiglas lenses alter the appearance of black and white concentric circles in Gerstner's "lens pictures." The compound curvature of each lens gives rise to moiré distortion, which Judd detailed:

One sequence produced by an indented lens over the concentric lines, seen dead on, is, from the center, a band of fine, progressively wider lines, a colored moiré pattern, a spiral set of larger, also progressively wider lines, another and larger moiré, and around the circumference, a third moiré, still larger and, like the first one, colored.⁴⁸

Oster's pieces bring about similar illusions (fig. 7). A pane of glass with radiating concentric rings superimposed over another pane with thin horizontal stripes causes "vertical moiré" while a complementary work's rings and verticals generate "horizontal moiré."⁴⁹ Reporting on GRAV's first exhibition in the United States, Judd wrote that a wall piece with plastic tubing by Yvaral "produces a moiré haze . . . [that is] dizzying, impenetrable, recondite" (fig. 8).⁵⁰ A "four-foot ball of aluminum rods" by fellow member François Morellet "opens and closes according to the angle from which it is seen" (fig. 9).⁵¹ For Judd, the moiré and other real optical effects made possible by these mediums had the potential to surpass the complication, ambiguity, actuality, and definiteness of painted color effects.

Gerstner, Oster, and GRAV fabricated pieces with much promise in Judd's opinion, though also many shortcomings. New phenomena did not guarantee innovative art. In his review of Oster, Judd maintained that "oil paint and description are at least obsolescent. Obviously the old painting is being replaced by the use of specific materials, forms and phenomena."⁵² In spite of the alleged obsolescence of illusionistic painting, Judd granted that the most advanced abstract painting still outstripped works by Gerstner, Oster, and GRAV. They had not mastered their medium or maximized its visual possibilities as Albers and Poons had theirs. "The use of this kind of phenomena, the way in which it will be good art, is going to be one of the big problems," Judd warned.⁵³ Plastic works by GRAV member Francisco Sobrino, for instance, retained "too much of the old compositional structure."⁵⁴ Both Gerstner's and Oster's constructions were too small, suggesting defunct easel painting rather than vying with large avant-garde canvases. "One thing necessary is size, scale," Judd insisted.⁵⁵ As with Vasarely's paintings, he determined that features borrowed from older art

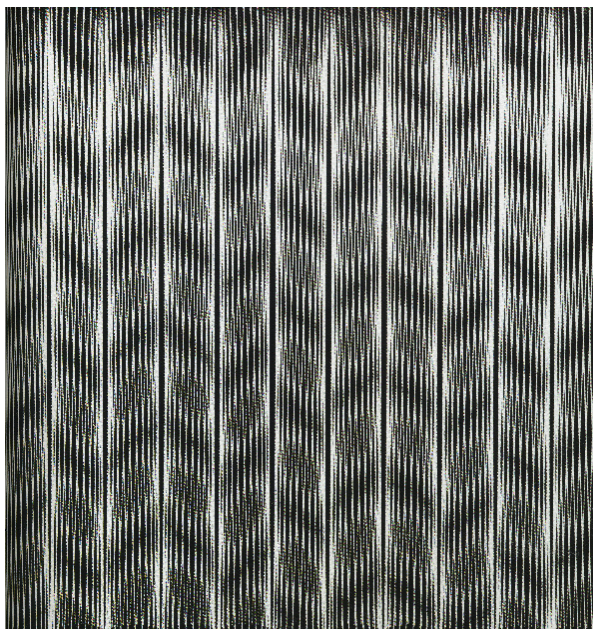


Fig.8 Yvaral, *Cylindres en accélération*, 1961, wood, plastic, vinyl wires, 23 7/8 x 23 7/8 x 3 1/8 in. (60 x 60 x 8 cm). Private collection (Photograph courtesy of Fondation Vasarely, Aix-en-Provence. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York ADAGP, Paris, Fondation Vasarely)

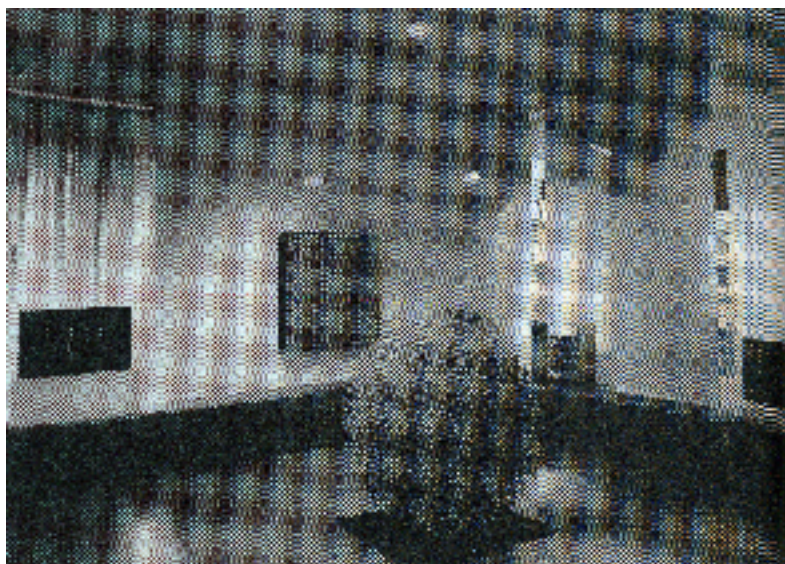


Fig. 9 Exhibition view of works by Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV) at The Contemporaries, New York, November 11–December 15, 1962 (Photograph courtesy of O. E. Nelson Estate. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York / ADAGP, Paris and O. E. Nelson Estate)

lingered on, generalizing distinct qualities and undermining new phenomena.

Because they exhibited their creations as visual art, Judd believed Gerstner, Oster, and GRAV were obligated to contend with prior pioneering sculpture and painting. In his judgment, they neglected this responsibility. “Oster is presenting the phenomenon [of *moiré*],” Judd acknowledged, “but otherwise his work doesn’t have much to do with the problem, which especially involves what has been done so far, and the best art generally. [This] means mostly that the art is old.”⁵⁶ He noted a similar flaw in GRAV’s pieces. “The primary fault of the group is that they consider themselves to be working within a certain tradition and philosophy, one which is self-contained,” Judd stated. “Their work, however . . . is necessarily measured against anything that is art, that is interesting to look at.”⁵⁷ To emphasize his point, Judd compared GRAV to both Piet Mondrian and Yves Klein, the sort of juxtaposition with the best previous art that he felt the group had overlooked. Judd found the implications of Klein’s blunt and uncomposed monochromatic blue paintings more credible than the “idealistic, rationalistic[,] universalizing” philosophy and “fixed platonic order” invoked by Mondrian’s balancing of regular forms and primary colors.⁵⁸ GRAV, in Judd’s view, ignored Klein’s advance and returned to Mondrian’s “universality,” now untenable and obsolete.⁵⁹ He criticized them for it: “The group is seeking too wide a generality for the present, a generality claiming an objective validity.”⁶⁰ The metaphysical order seeming to underlie GRAV’s compositional balancing convinced Judd that their works did not progress beyond the foremost painting of the time. “Klein, claiming less, overpowers them,” he concluded.⁶¹ In Judd’s final estimation, Gerstner, Oster, and

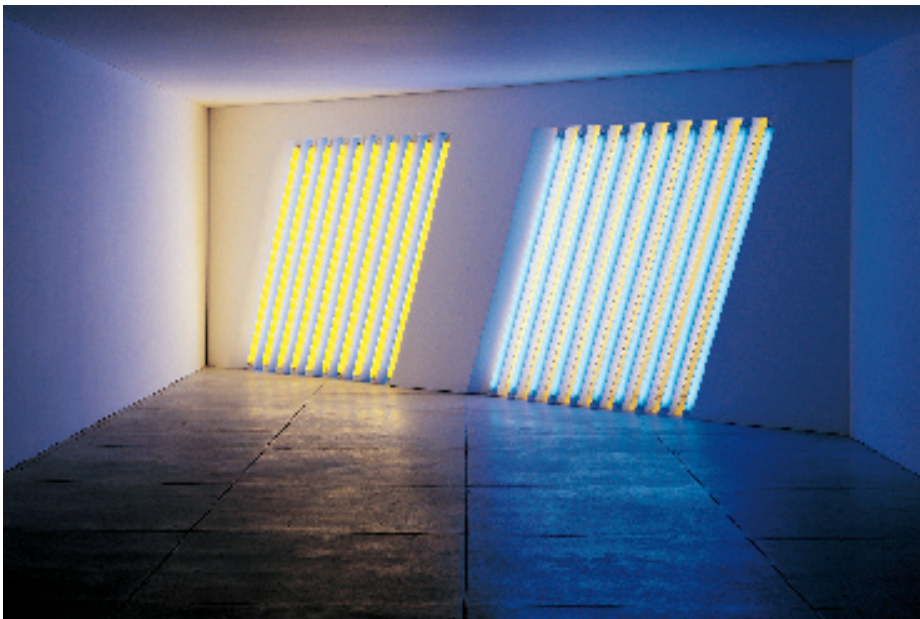


Fig. 10 Dan Flavin, untitled (Marfa project), 1996, pink, green, yellow, and blue fluorescent light, six buildings, two sections each: 8 ft. (244 cm) long on the diagonal in corridors with walls measuring 8 ft. (244 cm) long on the diagonal and spaced 5 ft 8 in. (170 cm) apart. The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas. (Photograph courtesy of The Chinati Foundation. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York.)

Fig. 11 Larry Bell, untitled, 1968, vacuum-coated glass and chromium-plated brass, 20 in. x 20 in. x 20 in. (50.8 x 50.8 x 50.8 cm). Private collection. (Photograph courtesy of the artist. © Larry Bell.)



GRAV failed to solve the principal challenge posed by their new phenomena—how to cultivate an original and important kind of art by extending beyond familiar practices.

Single phenomena: Dan Flavin, Larry Bell, Robert Irwin

Judd recognized in Dan Flavin's fluorescent light constructions what he thought previous phenomenal art lacked: an "immediate means...used for an immediate purpose" (fig. 10).⁶² He recorded the elaborate color and optical effects of four vertical lamps placed side by side:

The two outside tubes are [so-called] "Cool" white and the inner ones are [so-called] "Daylight" white, which looks blue in this context. A line of light is thrown along each tube by the adjacent ones. The space between the two central tubes is blue, bluer than the bulbs. The two other spaces are less blue because of the [outer Cool] white.⁶³

Additional discussion of these perplexing phenomena clarifies Judd's account. Flavin's two tightly aligned colors become four. Both retain some of their original hue, but beside one another the Cool white appears more cream-colored than it does on its own and the Daylight white appears bluer. Compounding this initial doubling, the light mixes and multiplies in actual space. The creamy white and bluish white blend in the outer left and right gaps between lamps, resulting in a tertiary color both bluer than creamy white and creamier than bluish white. The central gap, however, remains tinted a pure blue, even bluer than the two central lamps since untouched by the creamy white of the outer lamps that saps their hue. "The lit tubes are intense and very definite[,] very much a particular visible state, a phenomenon," Judd reported in summarizing these complexities.⁶⁴

The creamy and bluish glow of Flavin's white lamps recalls the color effects Judd discerned in Albers's *Homage to the Square*, except for the added brilliance of cast fluorescent light. "Two juxtaposed painted whites are subtle," he commented, "two juxtaposed white tubes are pretty obvious."⁶⁵ Judd documented this overall strengthening of phenomena throughout the 1960s. Color and optical effects at first constituted one property among others of comparable specificity and interest in Albers's and Poons's paintings; then, more potent illusions arose from the modern materials of Gerstner, Oster, and GRAV only to diminish alongside traditional techniques; and finally, phenomena began to exceed all other qualities in the art of Flavin, Larry Bell, and Robert Irwin (figs. 11, 12).⁶⁶

The evolution of Judd's thinking on Flavin's work in particular clouds the distinction drawn in "Local History" between objects and phenomena. Judd made no mention of Flavin's phenomenal features in "Specific Objects." Instead, he predictably accentuated the objectness of fluorescent lamps and housings and their status as "industrial products."⁶⁷ This reading soon changed. In a 1964 *Arts Magazine* review, Judd examined one of Flavin's *alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964 (to Don Judd)* (1964).⁶⁸ Phenomena such as the "spaces between the red tubes [appearing] rose" coexist with a variance in how far the fixtures jut out, the work's "very open" relationship to the wall, the "disproportion" of the four short red lamps and one long yellow lamp, and the "four-and-one relationship" itself.⁶⁹ Phenomena seem to constitute one attribute of a multifaceted specific object in this account, thereby collapsing the two categories as the latter subsumes the former. This balanced multiplicity then gave way to the primacy of phenomena in a 1969 catalogue essay for the National Gallery of Canada. Here Judd identified "three main aspects" in Flavin's art, all somewhat phenomenal: "the fluorescent tubes as the source of light, the light diffused throughout the surrounding space or cast upon nearby surfaces, and the arrangement together or placement

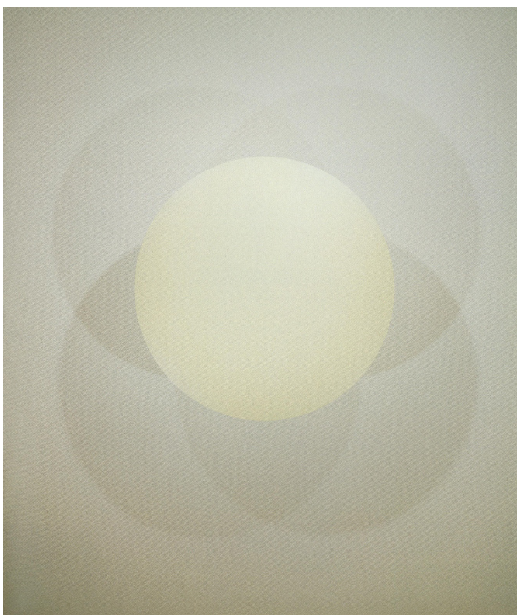


Fig. 12 Robert Irwin, untitled, c. 1966–67, sprayed acrylic lacquer on shaped aluminum, 60 in. (152.4 cm) diameter disc. Private collection (Photograph courtesy of the artist. © Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)

upon surfaces of the fixtures and tubes.⁷⁰ For Judd, Flavin's lamps transformed from specific objects with insignificant phenomena, to specific objects with noteworthy color and optical effects, to phenomena above all else.

Although Judd wrote very little on either artist, his brief analyses of Bell's vacuum-coated glass cubes and Irwin's painted aluminum and acrylic plastic discs reestablished some disparity between objects and phenomena. "Most art, including mine, involves several things at once, none developed toward exclusivity," Judd observed. "Usually there is a comparative balance between the few main aspects."⁷¹ Contrary to this broader multivalence characteristic of specific objects, "single" phenomena predominate in pieces by Flavin, Bell, and Irwin. "The singleness or isolation of phenomena is new to art and highly interesting," Judd remarked on Flavin's works. "Irwin and Bell and a couple of others in Los Angeles are also interested in developing single phenomena."⁷² A difference of degree separates the three artists. Judd argued that single phenomena in the cubes and discs surpass other qualities even more than in Flavin's constructions. "The dominance as an aspect of the fluorescent tubes is not as great as that of single phenomena in Bell's and Irwin's work," he explained.⁷³ Nevertheless, all three investigate phenomena so fully that Judd felt their color and optical effects could sustain interest alone, unlike Gerstner's and Oster's *moiré*. Judging from his enthusiastic response, pieces by Flavin, Bell, and Irwin seem to have fulfilled Judd's 1965 prediction of an important phenomenal art capable of replacing present practices.⁷⁴

At first Judd considered Bell's glass cubes to be specific objects, but as with Flavin's lamps, he revised this 1964 account in 1969.⁷⁵ By turns reflective and translucent, the coated glass gives rise to single phenomena. When opaque and lustrous like a mirror from one viewpoint, a 1968 cube's twenty-inch panels seem to dematerialize into radiating light; when transparent like a windowpane from another angle, an iridescent sheen modulates through pink, yellow, ocher, purple, and violet from the center of the glass plates to their corners. Judd mentioned a second feature of Bell's works along with Oldenburg's droopy sculptures in his last essay, from 1993. Oldenburg's objects interested Judd for their "soft [and] flexible" space, which exists unseen inside a canvas or vinyl skin. Bell's cubes, on the contrary, contain "a visible space."⁷⁶ Their glass shell reveals a sealed interior, four cubic feet available to visual scrutiny but cut off from tactile experience. Phenomena confound any inspection, however. Peering down into a cube and to the left, you see what is outside it to the right. Reflections off the inner glass surfaces seemingly double space in every direction as you crouch to look up, crane to look down, and otherwise circle around. Judd regarded the impact of these and other optical illusions on one's perceptual capacities as a third property of Bell's glass cubes and subsequent pieces, "a phenomenological aspect . . . [that] modified" their visible inner spaces.⁷⁷ For Judd, the multivalence of Bell's works derived from the intricacies of single phenomena, a narrower overall scope than the several distinct attributes of specific objects.

Irwin's discs also create acute phenomena. Suspended twenty inches from the wall by a rear brace, an untitled 1966–67 work has a circular white face faintly tinted with pink, violet, blue, green, yellow, and grayish purple in successive rings from center to rim. These chromatic fluctuations generate optical effects that exaggerate the camber of the shaped aluminum surface. Looking at the disc head-on, you see a sphere instead, mistakenly construing five feet of nonexistent



Fig. 13 Donald Judd, 100 untitled works in mill aluminum, 1982–86, each unit 41 in. x 51 in. x 72 in. (104.14 x 129.54 x 182.88 cm). The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas (Photograph courtesy of The Chinati Foundation. © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York)

depth to correspond with its real five-foot diameter. If you continue to stare straight ahead, illusions abound as the eyes begin losing focus and retinal fatigue sets in. Shadows gleam and emerge rather than withdrawing. Pulses of light race around the lip. Large swathes of the disc, shadows, and wall disappear and reappear every so often as your visual acuity slumps and recovers. Intriguing in themselves, such remarkable phenomena also alter one's bodily experience of space. The gallery lighting seems to dim then brighten in a flash, compacting and distending the room in turn. As with Bell's work, Judd saw these features of Irwin's art as "a phenomenological aspect that has become an important new aspect."⁷⁸ In Judd's assessment, phenomena make up only one attribute of Albers's and Poons's multifaceted paintings; yet "developed toward exclusivity" by Flavin, Bell, and Irwin, single phenomena manifest their own kind of multiplicity—a primary quality's numerous qualities.⁷⁹

A phenomenal art history

Judd distinguished his goals from those of Dan Flavin, stating, "I think Flavin wants, at least first or primarily, a particular phenomenon. [...] I want a particular, definite object."⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the reassembled category of phenomenal art draws attention to the color and optical effects of Judd's own works. In one hundred aluminum objects at the non-profit Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, phenomena interact with space, volume, proportion, formal variation, and other aspects (fig. 13). The units, each measuring forty-one by fifty-one by seventy-two inches, sit in

two rectangular buildings with over 250 feet of glazing on both long sides. Sunlight floods over and into the works. Some channel light through their partitioned interiors, tempering its intensity. Afternoon brings forth a range of luminosities from the uniform aluminum—blazing lateral surfaces, glimmering corners, and darkened crevices. Each piece takes on tints from its location, such as the red of the buildings' brick walls, yellow from prairie grass outside, and blue from the sky. Judd also demonstrated the rich effects of natural light at Chinati with fifteen outdoor concrete works fabricated from immense units measuring two and a half by two and a half by five meters (fig. 14). Throughout the day, the rising sun and passing clouds change the size, shape, hue, and chromatic saturation of shadows inside and outside the open forms. In the northernmost work, one unit's shadow cuts a notch into another's lit interior, resulting in a radiant band running around its inner surfaces. The light gray concrete appears surprisingly different in the pale yellow glow of early morning, the blinding white afternoon, and under the deep orange setting sun. Like the art with phenomena that interested Judd, color and optical effects in his aluminum and concrete objects are complicated and ambiguous while also actual and definite.

Phenomena adjust current understandings not only of Judd's art and criticism, but perhaps also of art history. In 1983 Judd broadened the scope of his term. "The dripped paint in most of Pollock's paintings remains dripped paint as a phenomenon," he observed. "It's that sensation, completely immediate and specific, and nothing modifies it."⁸¹ By extending the word beyond definite illusions to encompass other kinds of sensations, Judd licensed his subsequent assertion of phenomena's major role in postwar artmaking. He declared that, "at the same time as Pollock and since, almost all first-rate art has been based on an immediate phenomenon."⁸² He went even further in 1993. In his final essay, Judd expanded phenomena to include one of the most basic properties of visual art. "Color," he proclaimed, "is an immediate sensation, a phenomenon."⁸³ Judd viewed the continuous strengthening of color as "the most powerful force" behind painting's evolution



Fig. 14 Donald Judd, fifteen untitled works in concrete, 1980–84, each unit 98 ½ in. x 98 ½ in. x 196 ⅞ in. (250 x 250 x 500 cm). The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas (Photograph courtesy of The Chinati Foundation. © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York)

during the twentieth century, and accordingly recast the “conventional history of recent painting” as “a history of color in art.”⁸⁴ “Color is the dominant aspect [in pieces by] Matisse, Mondrian, Malevich, Léger,” he contended, and in the paintings of “Pollock, Newman, Still, and Rothko . . . color is amplified beyond anything seen for centuries.”⁸⁵ Intense color led to color effects and other phenomena in painting and, in the end, to altogether new mediums. Albers’s *Homage to the Square* pieces and *Interaction of Color*, for example, “undoubtedly made color and optical phenomena familiar” to painters such as Poons but also to Flavin, Bell, and Irwin.⁸⁶ Put to diverse uses by numerous artists in countless works, much twentieth-century art manifests phenomena in line with Judd’s later and wider definition.

In 1963 Judd noticed “an increasing use of optical and color phenomena.”⁸⁷ When he wrote on Flavin in 1969, art with phenomena was maturing. Two decades later, Judd stated that “in general I think the future of art lies in stressing phenomena more, but you can also make too much of that.”⁸⁸ The stakes are high, his reserve notwithstanding. If Judd was right that phenomena comprise an aspect of some or most of the twentieth century’s best art, historical analysis has to catch up. Scrutiny of phenomena spurs new ways of seeing and thinking about art of the 1960s, work before and after this decade, and pieces yet to come. Familiar artworks begin to look a lot different than they do now in the survey textbooks. Judd would have approved. Restoring phenomena to his art, to his art criticism, and to art history helps make things messy again.

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This essay develops analysis from an earlier book review. See Adrian Kohn, “Judd on Politics, Judd on Phenomena,” *Art Journal* 64, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 131-33.

1. See Donald Judd, “Specific Objects,” *Arts Yearbook* 8 (1965): 74-82. Judd authored all sources unless noted otherwise. In his 1975 collected writings, Judd indicated that he completed “Specific Objects” in 1964 and that it “was published perhaps a year after it was written.” See “Introduction,” *Complete Writings, 1959-1975* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), vii.

The many reprints of “Specific Objects” in exhibition catalogues and in several art-historical anthologies provide some evidence of its significance and continuing relevance to scholarship. See, for example, James Meyer, ed., *Minimalism* (New York: Phaidon Press Inc., 2000), 207-10; Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 114-17; Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1993), 809-13; and Ellen H. Johnson, ed., *American Artists on Art from 1940 to 1980* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982), 105-11; and Barbara Rose, ed., *Readings in American Art, 1900-1975*.

2. “Specific Objects,” 74, 78-80 (phrases reordered).

3. “Specific Objects,” 78 (phrases reordered).

4. “Specific Objects,” 74. Judd argued that “now [in 1964] painting and sculpture are less neutral, less containers, more defined, not undeniable and unavoidable. They are particular forms, circumscribed after all, producing fairly definite qualities. Much of the motivation in the new work is to get clear of these forms.”

5. “Local History,” *Arts Yearbook* 7 (1964): 26. Judd railed against organizing art into styles since doing so means ignoring differences between individual pieces. “I’ve expected a lot of stupid things to reoccur—movements, labels,” he claimed, “but I didn’t think there would be another attempt to impose a universal style. It’s naive and it’s directly opposed to the nature of contemporary art.” See “Complaints: Part I,” *Studio International* 177, no. 910 (April 1969): 183. For related discussion, see also the previously unpublished “(Claes Oldenburg),” *Complete Writings, 1959-1975*, 191; a letter to the editor in *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 6 (March 1964): 7; “Local History,” 26, 28, 35; and “French Masters of the Eighteenth Century,” *Arts*

Magazine 37, no. 7 (April 1963): 54.

6. "Al Jensen," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 7 (April 1963): 52. See also *Richard Paul Lohse, 1902–1988* (Marfa, Tex.: The Chinati Foundation, 1988), 9; "Ausstellungsleitungsstreit," 1989, in Marianne Stockebrand, ed., *Donald Judd: Book One*, unpublished manuscript (Marfa, Tex.: Archives of Judd Foundation), 309; and "John Wesley," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 7 (April 1963): 51.

7. Compare "Roy Lichtenstein," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 7 (April 1962): 52–53 and "Roy Lichtenstein," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 2 (November 1963): 32–33; "John Chamberlain," *Arts Magazine* 34, no. 5 (February 1960): 57 and "John Chamberlain," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 6 (March 1962): 48; "Robert Rauschenberg," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 4 (January 1962): 39–40 and "Robert Rauschenberg," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 3 (December 1963): 60; and "Jasper Johns," *Arts* 34, no. 6 (March 1960): 57–58 and "Six Painters and the Object," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 9 (May–June 1963): 108–9.

8. For a sense of the assorted art and designed objects Judd owned, see the reproductions of Todd Eberle's photographs in Renate Petzinger and Hanne Dannenberger, eds., *Donald Judd: Räume Spaces* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Museum Wiesbaden, 1993).

9. "Local History," 28. In this article, Judd's phrase "optical art" (35) overlaps but is not coextensive with Optical or Op art. See related discussion in the "Phenomena in painting" section below.

10. "Local History," 35. Judd persistently qualified his classifications. "The two categories, objects and optical art, . . . are far from being all of what is happening—and are hardly definitive," he affirmed. "A person could select other common elements which would make other groups. The proportion of things not in common far exceeds the things that are." See "Local History," 28, 35 (phrases reordered).

11. "Local History," 32, 35. Judd's various discussions of Stella's optical illusions remain ambivalent. Noticing that the adjacent angles in the stripe paintings seem to cohere into diagonals, Judd commented that "the sensation is optical and definite. The diagonals are free and electric in a static field." Two years later, though, Judd posited that Stella's "optical effects are occasional and not great." See, respectively, "Frank Stella," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 10 (September 1962): 51; and "Julian Stanczak," *Arts Magazine* 39, no. 1 (October 1964): 68.

12. On Judd's specialized use of the term "interest" in the behaviorist tradition of philosopher Ralph Barton Perry, see David Raskin, "Judd's Moral Art," in Nicholas Serota, ed., *Donald Judd* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 81–92. See also the discussion of multiplicity in Benjamin G. Paskus, "Donald Judd," *Complete Writings 1959–1975*, *Art Journal* 36, no. 2 (Winter 1976/1977): 174; and the analysis of polarization in Richard Shiff, "Donald Judd, Safe from Birds," in Serota, 48–58.

13. "Yale Lecture, September 20, 1983," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 7/8 (Spring/Autumn 1984): 153.

14. "Jackson Pollock," *Arts Magazine* 41, no. 6 (April 1967): 34; and "Chamberlain: Another View," *Art International* 7, no. 10 (January 16, 1964): 39. Judd praised Chamberlain's sculpture in part by describing similarities to Pollock's paintings. In an earlier review, Judd argued that "Pollock achieves generality by establishing an extreme polarity between the simple, immediate perception of paint and canvas, a reduction to unexpandable sensation, and the complexity and overtones of his imagery and articulated structure. Such diverse elements combined under tension produce a totality much greater and unlike any of the parts." See "Helen Frankenthaler," *Arts* 34, no. 6 (March 1960): 55.

15. "Local History," 31. See also "Specific Objects," 82. Earlier, Judd wrote that "the work is in turn neutral, redundant and expressively structured. . . . Initially and recurrently the metal is neutral, pretty much something as anything is something. [Also,] the sculpture is redundant. There is more metal and space than the structure requires. [And yet,] when the structure is analyzed, much of that metal becomes expressive detail." See "Chamberlain: Another View," 39.

16. "Lee Bontecou," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 4 (January 1963): 44; and "Specific Objects," 82 (phrase reordered). On Bontecou, see also "Lee Bontecou," *Arts Magazine* 39, no. 7 (April 1965): 20. On Oldenburg, see also "(Claes Oldenburg)," 191; and Richard Shiff, "Judd through Oldenburg," *Chinati Foundation Newsletter* 9 (2004): 33–44.

17. Judd asserted that "the depiction of [a] volume requires a unified, illusionistic space [that] signifies a unified and idealistic world." See "George Segal," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 10 (September 1962): 55. For related discussion, see also "Walter Murch," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 5 (February 1963): 46; and "Malevich: Independent Form, Color, Surface," *Art in America* 62, no. 2 (March–April 1974): 57.

Judd could appreciate works with recognizable imagery by Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, George Segal, and John Wesley because they diverge from traditional illusionism. Lichtenstein, by depicting comics, "is representing this representation—which is very different from simply representing an object or a view." Rosenquist's subjects are "not depicted in a representational way, but are painted in a billboard technique." Segal's plaster figures "seem both dead and alive, and the specificity of both aspects comes from the real space they occupy, their real size, their real appearance, their artificial material and the real furniture." And Wesley's paintings do not show how things appear, "but what some bumpkin made of appearances for some unartistic reason. This is a big difference and is interesting—it is a sort of meta-representation." See, respectively, "Roy Lichtenstein" (1963), 32; "Young Artists at the Fair and at Lincoln Center," *Art in America* 52, no. 4 (August 1964): 117; "Local History," 32; and "John Wesley," 51. (Philip Johnson seems to have composed the introduction to the "Young Artists" article, but Judd, uncredited, wrote the brief entries for each participant. See *Complete Writings, 1959–1975*, 130–31.)

18. Judd even proposed that illusionistic representation is painting's primary mode of significance, an indefensible

compromise in his opinion: “Anything placed in a rectangle and on a plane suggests something in and on something else, something in its surround, which suggests an object or figure in its space, in which these are clearer instances of a similar world—that’s the main purpose of painting.” See “Specific Objects,” 77.

19. “Local History,” 34-35.

20. “Local History,” 35.

21. *Some Aspects of Color in General and Red and Black in Particular* (Sassenheim, Netherlands: Sikkens Foundation, 1993), 16; and Judd in Barbara Rose, et al., “Is Easel Painting Dead?” symposium transcript, November 1966, New York (Washington, D.C.: Barbara Rose Papers, Archives of American Art), 33.

22. Richard Shiff reintroduced this distinction: “Illusion [is] a natural condition of vision, a physiological fact; illusionism [is] a constructed effect for the pictorially indoctrinated. . . . Illusion is the way things are. Illusionism is the way things are not.” See Shiff, “Donald Judd, Safe from Birds,” 41-42.

23. *Some Aspects of Color*, 16. See Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 30 of the “Text,” 18 of the “Commentary,” and Plate VIII-1. Judd also claimed in *Some Aspects of Color* that “color as knowledge is very durable. I find it difficult, maybe impossible, to forget” (16). Indeed, he had used the same example thirty years earlier in his review of Albers’s study. “When you look at the white circle after staring at the red one, it flushes a light, intense cerulean blue,” he reported. See “*Interaction of Color* by Josef Albers,” *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 2 (November 1963): 67. Judd’s library, housed in the west building of The Block in Marfa, Texas, includes the 1963 first edition of Albers’s *Interaction of Color*.

24. “Josef Albers,” *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 7 (April 1963): 54; and “Josef Albers,” *Josef Albers* (Marfa, Tex.: The Chinati Foundation, 1991), 25. Judd owned a number of works by Albers, including two *Homage to the Square* paintings from 1958 and 1963, another 1958 oil on fiberboard painting, artist’s proofs of two 1964 prints *Midnight and Noon III* and *Midnight and Noon VI*, a 1967 set of screenprints titled *Ten Variants*, a 1971 screenprint *I-S LXXI a*, a 1971 set of inked aluminum plates called *White Embossings on Gray: Seven Plates*, and a 1972 two-volume portfolio of prints titled *Formulation: Articulation*. Craig Rember, Judd Foundation, statements to author, March 10, 2007. See also *Prints and Multiples, Tuesday 26 September 2006, Wednesday 27 September 2006* (New York: Christie’s, 2006), 45-46, lots 240, 243; and *Prints and Multiples, Monday 1 May 2006, Tuesday 2 May 2006* (New York: Christie’s, 2006), 155-56, lots 374, 376.

25. “Josef Albers,” *Arts Magazine* 39, no. 2 (November 1964): 60.

26. “Josef Albers” (1991), 24.

27. “Josef Albers” (1963), 54.

28. “Josef Albers,” *Arts* 34, no. 3 (December 1959): 57; and “Josef Albers” (1991), 23-24.

29. “Josef Albers” (1991), 24; and “Josef Albers” (1963), 54.

30. “Josef Albers” (1959), 56. See also “Josef Albers” (1963), 54. Thirty years later, Judd acknowledged that “I always admired Albers’s paintings; I’ve never otherwise used the word ‘lambent.’” See “Josef Albers” (1991), 21.

31. “Josef Albers” (1959), 56. Summing up his first review of Albers’s pieces, Judd wrote that the “unbounded color and the final disparity [of each colored area] belie the apparent rigidity of the geometry and provide the central lyric and exultant ambiguity of the painting.”

32. “Josef Albers” (1959), 57.

33. William C. Seitz, “Acknowledgements,” *The Responsive Eye* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1965), 3.

34. “Julian Stanczak,” 68. Judd himself grouped Stella and Williams along with Larry Poons and Ad Reinhardt in “Local History,” yet took care to emphasize the many differences between their paintings and the provisional nature of his categories. See “Local History,” 35. Presumably, The Museum of Modern Art had released a list of exhibiting artists ahead of time since Judd criticized “The Responsive Eye” months before the show opened on February 23, 1965.

35. *Ibid.*

36. “Karl Gerstner,” *Arts Magazine* 39, no. 6 (March 1965): 60; and rephrased in “New York Letter,” *Art International* 9, no. 3 (April 1965): 77.

37. Judd believed that the possibility of “doing first-rate work sometime . . . is beyond ninety-five percent of the optical artists.” See “New York Notes,” *Art International* 9, no. 4 (May 1965): 65. In repudiating “optical art” here, Judd seems to defer to the popular usage of that term with which he disagreed elsewhere: “There have been a lot of shows of optical work lately, at least ones called that by the galleries.” See “New York Letter,” 75; and n. 9 above.

38. “New York Letter,” 75 (phrases reordered).

39. “Local History,” 35 (phrases reordered); and “New York Letter,” 75.

40. "New York Letter," 75.
41. "The Classic Spirit in Twentieth-Century Art," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 7 (April 1964): 28; and Judd in Bruce Glaser, "New Nihilism or New Art," audio recording, February 15, 1964 (North Hollywood, Cal.: Pacifica Radio Archives, Archive Number BB3394), at track 2, 8:25. See also "Victor Vasarely," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 9 (May–June 1964): 31. Caroline Jones first cited the audio recording of Glaser's interview in *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 415, n. 152.
42. "New York Letter," 75. Judd made the same comparison a year earlier: "[In] two paintings by Vasarely . . . the color effects are interesting and certainly not classical. The classical composition, the tilted squares and their relation to the straight ones, is a nuisance. Larry Poons's painting is an alternative; the optical effects are more independent." See "The Classic Spirit in Twentieth-Century Art," 28. These two reviews from 1965 and 1964, respectively, demonstrate that Judd changed his thinking from a January 1962 account, in which he concluded that "Vasarely's work has an immediacy and rigor much needed now." See "Victor Vasarely," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 4 (January 1962): 33. While Judd had several works by Albers, he owned nothing by Poons or Vasarely. Craig Rember, Judd Foundation, statements to author, February 8, 2007.
43. "Kenneth Noland," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 10 (September 1963): 53. Judd also held that most paintings amalgamate different attributes rather than keeping them specific and polarized. "There's a gradation or evening out of the parts and aspects," he argued. "The quality always has something of moderation, the long view and the unity of all things. By now this kind of resolution seems easy and also untrue." See "Jackson Pollock," 34.
44. Judd in Rose, et al., "Is Easel Painting Dead?" 31-32 (phrases reordered).
45. Rose and Judd in Rose, et al., "Is Easel Painting Dead?" 30. Judd's response differs from and presumably rectifies earlier comments on Al Jensen and Yves Klein (which also seem contradictory in themselves). He had claimed that "many of Jensen's paintings are thoroughly flat . . . There are no other paintings completely without space," but also that "almost all paintings are spatial in one way or another. Yves Klein's blue paintings are the only ones that are unspatial." See "Al Jensen," 52; "Local History," 34; and "Specific Objects," 76.
46. "Specific Objects," 75; "Barnett Newman," *Studio International* 179, no. 919 (February 1970): 67; and "Jackson Pollock," 34. Although first published in 1970, Judd completed his essay on Newman in November 1964. See "Barnett Newman," 67.
47. "New York Letter," 77; and "Karl Gerstner," 59-60 (phrases reordered). Judd did not own works by Gerstner, Oster, or GRAV. Rember, statements to author, February 8, 2007.
48. "Karl Gerstner," 60; and repeated in "New York Letter," 77.
49. "Gerald Oster," *Arts Magazine* 39, no. 6 (March 1965): 65; and repeated in "New York Letter," 77.
50. "New York Letter," 77; and "Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 5 (February 1963): 45.
51. "Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel," 45.
52. "Gerald Oster," 65; and rephrased in "New York Letter," 77.
53. Ibid.
54. "New York Letter," 77.
55. "Karl Gerstner," 60. See also "Gerald Oster," 65; and "New York Letter," 77.
56. "Gerald Oster," 65; and rephrased in "New York Letter," 77.
57. "Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel," 45.
58. Judd in "Abstract Expressionism," BBC Television program for The Open University, 1983, at 3:26; and "Barnett Newman," 69.
59. "Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel," 45.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. "Dan Flavin," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 7 (April 1964): 31 (supplemented for clarity). Judd did not name the particular work he was describing and Tiffany Bell and David Gray list no such configuration in their catalogue raisonné of Flavin's fluorescent lights. See Tiffany Bell and David Gray, "Catalogue of Lights," in Michael Govan and Tiffany Bell, *Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights, 1961–1996* (New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2004). Judd probably saw *daylight and cool white (to Sol LeWitt)* of 1964 with its lamps reversed (T. Bell and Gray, 228, no. 39). Tiffany Bell suggests two explanations for this: Judd

may have seen an early version of the piece that Flavin later changed, or the exhibited work could have been a variation. Tiffany Bell, statements to author, September 18–19, 2006.

64. “Aspects of Flavin’s Work,” in Dan Flavin, *fluorescent light, etc. from Dan Flavin* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1969), 27.

65. “Aspects of Flavin’s Work,” 28. Judd examined several kinds of illusionary color effects in Albers’s paintings, one of which was how “the color varies according to the colors surrounding it.” See “Josef Albers” (1991), 24. Judd mentioned the same arrangement of dissimilar white lamps when discussing the independence of Malevich’s color from form. “Autonomous color is still full of possibilities,” he wrote, “for example, Flavin’s use of two adjacent tubes of contrasting white.” See “Malevich: Independent Form, Color, Surface,” 57.

66. Judd owned several works by Flavin, including *icon III (blood) (the blood of a martyr)* of 1962, *icon VI (Ireland dying) (to Louis Sullivan)* of 1962–63, one of the *alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964 (to Don Judd)* of 1964, an untitled 1970 modular barrier, and *Untitled (to Veronique)* of 1987, as well as two 1986 screenprints called *Untitled [for Rento]* and six 1987 lithographs titled *To Don Judd, Colorist 1-4 and 6-7*. See *Post-War and Contemporary Art (Afternoon Session), Wednesday 10 May 2006* (New York: Christie’s, 2006), 18–19, lot 409; *Prints and Multiples, Monday 1 May 2006, Tuesday 2 May 2006, 177-78*, lots 432, 433; and T. Bell and Gray, 211–13, 226, 292, 365, nos. 3, 6, 36, 255, 497.

Judd was the first artist to buy a piece from Larry Bell. He collected several works including glass cubes, two 1979 vapor drawings titled *PFBK 24, Vapor Drawing* and *SMMSHFAK 3A, Vapor Drawing*, and the 1962 painting *Lux at the Merritt Jones*. See *First Open: Post-War and Contemporary Art, Wednesday 13 September 2006* (New York: Christie’s, 2006), 170, lots 194, 195; and Larry Bell, statement in *Artforum* 32, no. 10 (Summer 1994): 73.

Judd also had a 1965–67 aluminum disc by Irwin. See “Una stanza per Panza, part II,” *Kunst Intern* 5 (July 1990): 8; and *Post-War and Contemporary Art (Afternoon Session), Wednesday 10 May 2006, 24-25*, lot 412.

67. “Specific Objects,” 80. Judd included Flavin in discussion of objects rather than phenomena in “Local History” based on the early icons, which preceded works with fluorescent lamps alone: “Dan Flavin has shown some boxes with lights attached.” See “Local History,” 32; and T. Bell and Gray, 211–14, nos. 1–8.

68. Flavin commonly dedicated his works to friends; thirteen include Donald Judd’s name. See T. Bell and Gray, 225–26, 362–64, nos. 35–38, 483–91. Judd owned a variation of *alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964 (to Don Judd)*, but with Daylight white and Cool white lamps rather than the red and yellow lamps of the variation he reviewed in the April 1964 issue of *Arts Magazine*. See “Dan Flavin,” 31; T. Bell and Gray, 225–26, nos. 35, 36; and note 66 above.

69. “Dan Flavin,” 31. As with *alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964 (to Don Judd)*, no properties dominated in Judd’s analysis of Flavin’s *the diagonal of May 25, 1963* (1963). He studied the “very different white[s]” of the lamp and the enameled metal housing, the “definite shadow” of the fixture, the light “cast widely” on the wall, and the “familiar” industrial nature of the lamp and housing. See “Black, White and Gray,” *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 6 (March 1964): 38.

70. “Aspects of Flavin’s Work,” 27.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.* Both Bell and Irwin began experimenting with new kinds of work in 1969, the year Judd’s reference to their art appeared in his catalogue essay on Flavin. Bell was making fewer cubes and instead constructing glass walls and other installations. Irwin painted his last disc around 1969 and started a series of acrylic plastic columns that informed later adaptations of existing spaces. The timing of Judd’s article makes it likely that he had in mind Bell’s cubes and Irwin’s discs, although his discussion also remains accurate for their subsequent investigations of phenomena.

Judd made only brief mentions of Bell and Irwin, but he admired their work and insisted that it merited more attention. He noted dryly in 1969 that for most art critics “Bell and Irwin hardly exist.” See “Complaints: Part I,” 184; and “A Long Discussion Not About Master-Pieces but Why There Are So Few of Them, Part II,” *Art in America* 72, no. 9 (October 1984): 10. In a 1993 interview, Judd also said that he hoped Bell and Irwin would install pieces at his non-profit Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, along with Flavin’s planned conversion of six army barracks. See Judd in Todd Eberle, “Donald Judd: The Interview,” *Interview* 24, no. 4 (April 1994): 98.

73. “Aspects of Flavin’s Work,” 27.

74. See “Karl Gerstner,” 59–60; and related discussion in the “New phenomena” section above.

75. See “Specific Objects,” 78; and “Aspects of Flavin’s Work,” 27.

76. *Some Aspects of Color*, 7.

77. *Ibid.*, (phrase reordered). Larry Bell built experimental interior architecture that further investigated this phenomenological feature. Judd planned to allocate space at the Chinati Foundation for the two darkened rooms that Bell constructed in his Venice Beach studio and in The Museum of Modern Art in 1969. See “A Portrait of the Artist as His Own Man,” *House & Garden* 157, no. 4 (April 1985): 220; and “The Chinati Foundation,” *The Chinati Foundation* (Marfa, Tex.: The Chinati Foundation, 1987): unpaginated (fourth page).

78. *Ibid.*

79. “Aspects of Flavin’s Work,” 27.

80. Ibid., (phrases reordered). Judd also remarked that, “as far as light goes I think that Flav[i]n is the best artist around. [My not focusing on light is] just a case of my not understanding it[,] not being able to use it. [. . .] Flavin and I have certain things in common, but we also have wide and different things not in common. We are friends, but couldn’t be more divergent.” See Judd in Richard Stankiewicz, “Judd Sculpture,” microfilmed interview transcript, undated (Washington, D.C.: Richard Stankiewicz Papers, Archives of American Art), roll 3750, frame 1191; and Judd in Angeli Janhsen, et al., “Discussion with Donald Judd,” *Donald Judd* (St. Gallen, Switzerland: Kunstverein St. Gallen, 1990), 50.
81. This citation combines two similar passages on Pollock’s dripped paint. See “Jackson Pollock,” 34; and “Yale Lecture,” 154. For related discussion, see also “Abstract Expressionism,” at 15:28.
82. “Yale Lecture,” 154. See also “Abstract Expressionism,” at 14:44.
83. *Some Aspects of Color*, 16.
84. *Some Aspects of Color*, 13, 15-16 (phrases reordered).
85. *Some Aspects of Color*, 16 (phrases reordered).
86. “Local History,” 35. “Color is an immediate sensation, a phenomenon,” Judd argued, “and in that leads to the work of Flavin, Bell and Irwin.” See *Some Aspects of Color*, 16.
87. “*Interaction of Color* by Josef Albers,” 75.
88. Judd in David Batchelor, “A Small Kind of Order,” *Artscribe International* 78 (November–December 1989): 65.