TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRINT SUMMER 2015

AN INTERVIEW WITH DON JUDD

f ✉ ✓ ⊕

"I Am Interested in Static Visual Art And Not Initiative Of Movement."

JOHN CARTER, Don Judd, Interview, Summer 1968, Artforum, pp. 32–35.

JUDD: Two things: the public interest and my own interest. The public interest is that I don't want to be a public figure. I don't want to be a public figure because I don't have any ideas to offer or any ideas that anyone wants to hear about me. My own interest is that I don't like anything that's not static. I don't like anything that's not static. I don't like anything that's not static. I don't like people who worked that way—I don't like that—I don't like anything that's not static. I don't like anything that's not static. I don't like anything that's not static.

It has to do with the fact that museum lighting is pretty bad. The Whitney show was especially bad because of the spotlights. All my pieces are meant to be seen in even or natural light. The shadows are unimportant, they are just a by-product.

What about the horizontal wall pieces?

Some of them go to the side walls, and the interval between the walls and the boxes is identical. So they are related to the architecture, like the stacks, but horizontally instead of vertically. The height of the boxes from the ground is also critical. The viewer is meant to see a little of the tops of the boxes, but the ceiling height doesn't matter. They should be hung at either 62 or 63 inches. *The choice of that height is meant to avoid flattening the boxes when they are on the wall, if the viewer can see a little of the top plane it's going to hang them three-dimensional.*

And the floor boxes?

The floor boxes obviously come from the Green Gallery show. They are ones the same size. If they were not larger they would have been too gross or monumental. They have to look noisy, without monument. I am interested in static visual art and *hate imitation of movement.* The floor boxes with plastic sides and top started out in a practical way. I wanted them to be portable, and stackable—a knockdown piece. Then they are designed to be taken apart. The plastic sides are attached to the wood by a kind of tongue-and-groove system. It's very technically and requires four tension screws to hold them together. The pebbled finish on the plexiglass is because I didn't want the interior to be seen into at that time. I wanted the finish translucent, however, you can see the strips inside a little bit. Sometime later I had the idea of the clear boxes. None of the plexiglass boxes have a bottom, so in the clear ones the floor can be seen through the box. This opens the box up. The whole scheme has to do with defined voids and open body; this has been a sort of steady idea. Once I got the design of the wress better I was able to make the boxes of transparent plexiglass.

What about the boxes with a recessed top?

I made a chartreuse wooden box with a trough that was a little larger than the red box. I got tired of the trough or something that just cut across the top like a trough or a cut, and I started to do something more with the top, but with a single box. I thought it was too much like putting an element in a tray setting so, so I made a box milled and box and painted it. *(Fig. 13)*

What do you think the effect of lipping or recessing the box is?

The surface is pushed back. It occurred to me if you took one of the sides and pushed it in, it would open the top surface up. I was always interested in edges and flanges. I was also interested in a certain quality of thinness and elegance in the paintings. It bothers me when the boxes are made of by showing the thickness of the sheet metal, and thus becomes less arbitrary, more rigorous, with a more precise knowledge of the thickness of the material. So it shows, or makes, or emphasizes, the edge more clearly. One thing I liked about the red box when I originally made it was that now I had a broad shape with several edges, which I couldn't get in a painting. There are also plexiglass boxes with stainless steel tubes through the center. They are without frontplate and base, so are running in two directions. Another kind of tube is the double-walled box. You get two different types of space—the compressed space formed by the two walls and the open tubular space.

Some of the boxes have the insides lined with color.

The box with the plexiglass inside is an attempt to make a *delicate accented surface.* The inside is painted a very delicate green. The idea of the box with the plastic sides was to make an indefinite, The interior appears to be larger than the exterior. The plastic is very slippery to look. There is one thing I learn how to do very well and that is to produce a plain, sensuous piece. It's a quality that I like, and I get very *skeptical about it.* But I like to try other things to see what happens to the shape and surface. Also, I like to try different colors on the same form by using different materials. Brass, for example, is very yellow. I have very ambivalent feelings about plexiglass and don't like it too much as a material. In part it's a sort of slippery and slightly *disagreeable material.*

Don't you think that your color on the recent progressions is pretty opulent?

Yes, it's a pretty strong thing. I never use more than two colors on the progressions, and they are very *when just plain aluminum and one color.* One thing I have never liked is dividing a single surface with a color; color is always identical with a single surface. The reason I have two colors in the progressions is obviously that the tubes and the boxes are two different things.

What about the environmental quality of the boxes,with and the galvanized sheet piece?

I still intend to do discrete pieces, but I get a little tired of them. My work goes back and forth. I get a little tired of big pieces and want to do a few or an indefinite space, so it seemed to do something that dealt more with the space of the room. I don't know about its being environmental—it is just a piece that does something with the space of the room.

The 1966 piece that seems like a wedge on the floor is very anomalous. (Fig. 15)

The *pressed metal has to do with opening up the surface like the plexiglass.* Obviously by piercing it one can see into it. The wedge relates to a parallelogram, but it's made to be a very low piece.

It's the lowest piece you have ever made?

Yes. It's only eight inches high, and that height is very important. I thought if it was too flat, it would just be down on the floor, which is the same objection I have to painting.

Sculpture seems to have less attention than painting.

Obviously paintings are easier to handle, to buy and put in people's homes, etc. Also, since painting has been the medium in which most of the best work and innovation has been done, it has more prestige. I think a lot of people still believe that painting is the main thing, so it's easier to sell.

In your more recent pieces you have enhanced the scale. Is this as a result of better access to technology and money?

Yes. I think *about what I can actually do,* which has been true all along, ever since money and labor got into it. The plywood pieces took so long to make, I don't have too great a sense of progress of change, either. I like to work back and forth. There seems to be a lot more variety in my work than is casually apparent.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DON JUDD

"I am interested in static visual art and hate imitation of movement."