

# PAULA COOPER GALLERY

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**CARL ANDRE**

***Small Sculptures and Short Words***

521 West 21st Street

February 11 – March 11, 2017

NEW YORK – Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of recent work by Carl Andre on view at 521 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street. Though officially retired since 2011, the artist has continued to make small-scale sculptures in a wealth of materials including wood, Styrofoam, clay tile, plastic, and galvanized, painted and industrial metal. On view from February 11 through March 11, the exhibition will include a selection of these recent works as well as small sculpture and poetry from earlier periods.

Since the 1960s, Carl Andre has created sculpture that departs from the traditional principles of verticality and monumentality. Neither hinged nor welded, his works are composed of standardized elements that are either juxtaposed in geometric patterns or randomly scattered over a horizontal plane. Rejecting relational or anthropomorphic sculpture, Andre instead draws attention to the material and spatial specificity of his sculptural objects. Though arranged as works of art, they persist as untransformed matter through their requisite provisionality.

Primarily known for large floor works made with unaltered materials, Andre experiments with extreme diminution of scale and delicate tactility in the works currently on view. Composed of thirteen uniform parts, *13 Part Galvanized Steel Disc Row* (2016) rises a mere sixty-fourth of an inch in height while *4 Part Red Clay Tile Square* (2016) has combined dimensions of less than one square inch. Others, including *Color Tiles* (1990) and *27 Red/Blue Rectangle* (2015), employ vibrant hues rarely seen in Andre's work. Their seductive brilliance underscore an occult-like geometric presence. Such playful intimacy recalls Andre's formative interest in sculpture, which began early in his life:

“What do little kids do? They crawl on the floor and they build with blocks. I just continued to do that for the rest of my life. My father had a workshop in the basement of our house in Quincy, Massachusetts. There was a bin where the wood was stored and there was a bench, which had a box underneath, and all of the non-ferrous metals accumulated there—copper, brass, nickel. And then there was a box for iron and steel. Those were my tools when I was a little kid. So I never stopped doing what I did as a child.”<sup>1</sup>

Also on view, Andre's early work from 1959, *Maple Spindle Exercise*, offers a rare example of the artist's practice before he abandoned all manipulation of material. From 1958 to 1959, Andre carved wood timbers to create abstract pieces with geometric, often symmetrical patterns. This saw-carved maple block prompts its viewer to perceptually engage the material as it relates to its spatial surrounding – a process Andre refined in his later works: “I realized that the thing I was cutting was the cut. Rather than cut into the material I now use the material as a cut into space.”<sup>2</sup>

Carl Andre was born in Quincy, MA in 1935. Andre's first one-person show was held in 1965 at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, and the following year his work was included in Kynaston McShine's and Lucy Lippard's seminal exhibition “Primary Structures” at the Jewish Museum. He was, with

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Rose, “Carl Andre,” *Interview*, (June/July 2013): 96-103, 123-124.

<sup>2</sup> David Bourdon, “The Razed Sites of Carl Andre: A Sculptor Laid Low by Brancusi Syndrome,” *Artforum* 5, no. 2 (October 1966): 15.

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Donald Judd, Dan Flavin and Sol Lewitt, one of the leading artists of the 1960s, often associated with Minimalism. In the 1970s, the artist created large installations, such as *144 Blocks and Stones* (1973) for the Portland Center for the Visual Arts, OR, and outdoor works such as *Stone Field Sculpture* (1977) in downtown Hartford, CT. Andre's work has been the subject of several retrospectives, most notably at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 1970; the Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, TX, in 1978; the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in 1978; the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, in 1987; the Haus Lange und Haus Esters, Krefeld; the Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, in 1996; and the Musée Cantini, Marseilles, in 1997. In 2014 the Dia Art Foundation presented Andre's first North American retrospective since 1978, which traveled to Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (5/7 – 10/12/15), Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart Berlin, Germany (5/7 – 9/25/16), Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France (10/20/16 – 2/12/17), and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (4/2 – 7/24/17). The artist currently lives in New York.