

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Dan Graham *Here's Looking at You*

March 21 – April 8, 2023
508 West 24th Street, New York

Just over one year ago, we lost a wonderful artist and friend in Dan Graham. The artist will be honored in a memorial to be held at the Metropolitan Museum of New York, on March 31st, on what would have been his 81st birthday. Lisson Gallery, 303 Gallery, Marian Goodman Gallery, 3A Gallery, The Museum of Modern Art and Printed Matter are honored to present works by Graham across their NYC gallery spaces to coincide with the memorial, paying tribute to a figure whose legacy extends beyond his art making and will continue to be felt by the many who encountered Graham while he was alive.

Dan Graham's work questioned the relationship between architecture and its psychological effects on the spectator, latterly through his mirrored and mazy glass and steel pavilions. His inquiries remain as poignant today as they did in the 1970s when Graham first explored issues such as 'the performative', exhibitionism, reflection, mirroring and the mundane. Lisson Gallery is pleased to present three seminal performances by Graham: *Past / Future / Split Attention* (1972), *Performer / Audience / Mirror* (1975), and *Lax / Relax* (1969-1995, filmed in 1995). Graham did not view footage of his performances as strictly documentation, but rather as extensions of the performances themselves.

In *Past / Future / Split Attention*, Graham focuses on the assumption of time in the perception of oneself and others. Performed at Lisson Gallery in London in March 1972, Graham placed two people in the same space, representing the present. The first person begins by predicting the future behavior of their counterpart, and the second recounts the past of the first from memory. Graham writes: "For one to see the other in terms of the present (attention), there is a mirror reflection or closed figure-eight feedback/feedahead loop of past/future. One person's behavior reciprocally reflects/depends upon the other's, so that each one's information is seen as a reflection of the effect that their own just-past behavior has had in reversed tense, as perceived from the other's view of himself."

Also performed at Lisson Gallery, *Lax / Relax* studies the appeal of a modified state of consciousness. Graham presents himself to the audience with a tape recorder and a microphone. A pre-recorded female voice softly announces "lax" and Graham responds with "relax", generating an auditory sensation that mirrors the inhale-exhale practice used in yoga. Inspired by Steve Reich's phasing technique, Graham creates a minimalist, trance-like rhythm.

The presentation concludes with Dan Graham's seminal work of 1975, *Performer Audience Mirror*. Introducing audience participation for the first time in his practice, Graham situates himself between a large mirror and an assembled crowd. The audience views themselves as the subject of their gaze, a position usually reserved for artworks themselves. Filmed in his San Francisco studio, Graham first faces the audience and embarks on a stream-of-consciousness monologue describing both the audience and himself. He then turns to the mirror and describes the reflected gathering. Graham explained, "first, a person in the audience sees himself 'objectively' ('subjectively') perceived by himself, next he hears himself described 'objectively' ('subjectively') in terms of the performer's perception."

A new essay by Specific Object President David Platzker accompanies the exhibition. Before founding Specific Object, Platzker was the Curator of Drawings and Prints at MoMA, New York from 2013-2018, and Executive Director of Printed Matter from 1998 to 2004. Platzker has curated presentations of John Baldessari, Hanne Darboven, Marcel Duchamp, Guerrilla Girls, Jenny Holzer, Yoko Ono, Raymond Pettibon, Ed Ruscha, and Claes Oldenburg, as well as *There Will Never Be Silence: Scoring John Cage's 4'33"* in collaboration with Jon Hendricks at MoMA in 2013.

About the artist

For fifty years, Dan Graham traced the symbiosis between architectural environments and their inhabitants. With a practice that encompassed curating, writing, performance, installation, video, photography and architecture, his analytical bent first came to attention with *Homes for America* (1966–67), a sequence of photos of suburban development in New Jersey, USA, accompanied by a text charting the economics of land use and the obsolescence of architecture and craftsmanship. Graham's critical engagement manifests most alluringly in the glass and mirrored pavilions, which have been realised in sites all over the world. These instruments of reflection – visual and cognitive – highlight the voyeuristic elements of design in the built world; poised between sculpture and architecture, they glean a sparseness from 1960s Minimalism, redolent of Graham's emergence in New York in the 1960s alongside Sol Le Witt, Donald Judd and Robert Smithson. Graham himself described his work and its various manifestations as 'geometric forms inhabited and activated by the presence of the viewer, [producing] a sense of uneasiness and psychological alienation through a constant play between feelings of inclusion and exclusion.' Considered himself first and foremost a writer-artist, Graham's writings and periodicals from the 1960s, including *Figurative* (1965) and *Schema* (1966), include published essays and reviews on everything from rock music and television culture to Dean Martin and Dwight D. Eisenhower's painting. These publications, predating Conceptual art, were a rejection of the limits of the art gallery's 'white cube' format and an embrace of the ubiquity and disposable nature of monthly periodicals.

Dan Graham was born in Urbana, Illinois, USA in 1942 and died in New York, New York, USA in 2022. He had solo exhibitions at Sirius Arts Centre, County Cork, Ireland (2018); the Red Brick Museum, Beijing, China (2017); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia (2017); The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, USA (2016); Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH, USA (2016); MAMO, Marseille, France (2015); ETH Zurich, Switzerland (2015); Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2014); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2014); Kunstmuseum Sankt Gallen, St Gallen, Switzerland (2011); Center for Contemporary Art, Kitakyushu, Japan (2010); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2009); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy (2006); Museu Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2001); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK (1997); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands (1993); Kunsthalle Berne, Bern, Switzerland (1983); and the Renaissance Society, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA (1981). He participated in dOCUMENTA 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10, Kassel, Germany (1972, 1977, 1982, 1992, 1997) and showed work at the Venice Biennale, Italy (1976, 2003, 2005). Among numerous awards he received the Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award, Zurich, Switzerland (1992), the French Vermeil Medal, Paris, France (2001) and was honoured by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, USA in 2010.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, two in New York, one in Shanghai and Beijing, as well as a forthcoming gallery in Los Angeles, opening 15 April. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estate of Leon Polk Smith. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky and Cheyney Thompson.

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