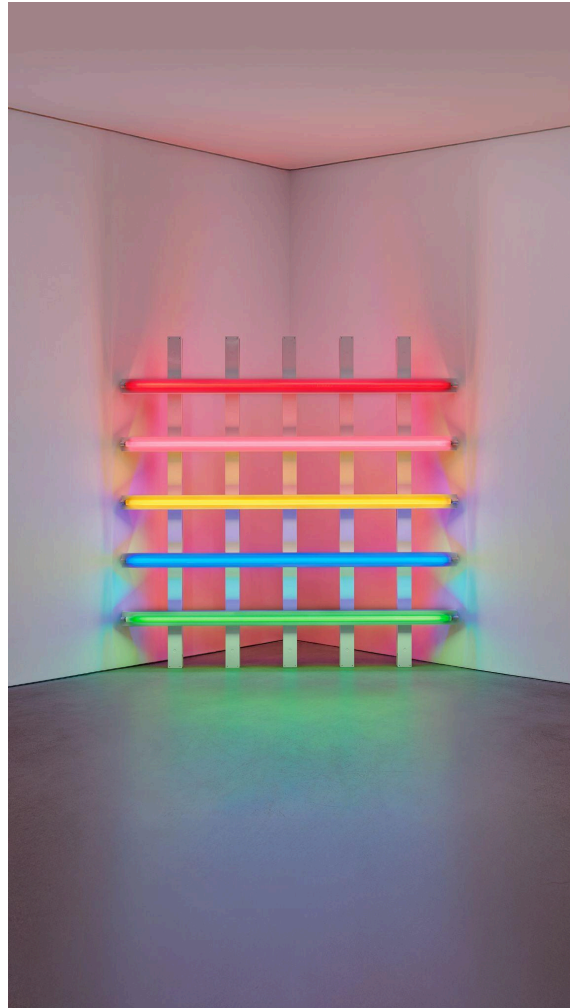


# Dan Flavin *Grids*

January 15–February 21, 2026  
537 West 20th Street, New York



Dan Flavin, *untitled (in honor of Leo at the 30th anniversary of his gallery)*, 1987  
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David Zwirner is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by Dan Flavin featuring the artist's grids, a key body of work that he began in 1976. The first focused examination of this form, this presentation will include several re-creations of the way Flavin installed the grids in significant exhibitions during his lifetime, and will feature loans from important public collections as well as the Estate of Dan Flavin.

From 1963, when he conceived *the diagonal of May 25, 1963 (to Constantin Brancusi)*, a single gold fluorescent lamp installed diagonally on a wall, until his death in 1996, Flavin produced a singularly consistent and prodigious body of work that utilized commercially available fluorescent lamps to create installations (or “situations,” as he preferred to call them) of light and color. Through these light constructions, Flavin was able to literally establish and redefine space.

As curator Michael Govan observes, the grids count “among the most intense and concentrated of Flavin’s lights.”<sup>1</sup> Constituting one of the artist’s most complex and nuanced chromatic investigations, these constructions are composed of an equal number of vertical fixtures facing backwards and horizontal fixtures facing forwards in varying color combinations. Situated in the corner of a room, they simultaneously project a blend of colors outward towards the viewer and inward into the corner, highlighting the architectural conditions of the space.

More than almost any other format Flavin worked with, the grids—which grew out of his cornered squares of the late 1960s—simultaneously engage both the phenomenological and the rational concerns that were central to the artist’s practice. As he described in a 1978 letter to Thomas Armstrong, then the director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, who was in the process of acquiring a grid for the museum’s collection: “[The grid has] a rich contrast, front over rear, and an optical interplay ... all modified by reflected color mixes and shadows of the grid structure itself. As an ensemble, this intense fluorescent light use/abuse seems to me to be rare in my production. And I commend it all to you.”<sup>2</sup>

Featured in the exhibition are Flavin’s first grids, *untitled (for Mary Ann and Hal with fondest regards) 1* and *2* (both 1976), two eight-foot square constructions each composed of five pink lamps facing one direction and five green lamps facing the other in inverse configurations. These works debuted in Flavin’s solo exhibition at Otis Art Institute Gallery, Los Angeles in 1976 where they were installed kitty corner to one another in a single gallery—as they are here—and are dedicated to Hal Glicksman, who was at the time the gallery director, and his wife, Mary Ann.

A number of Flavin’s grids are dedicated to his longtime New York dealer, Leo Castelli, who began representing the artist in 1969. The exhibition will include *untitled (for you, Leo, in long respect and affection) 1* and *2*, two eight-foot grids from 1977 in which the artist begins to blend color more freely. First shown at Heiner Friedrich, Inc., in New York that year, these works each feature three yellow and three blue lamps facing one direction, and three green and three pink lamps facing the opposite direction. These constructions also represent Flavin’s first experimentations with scale in this format; the following year he made four-foot versions of these two works—*untitled (for you, Leo, in long respect and affection) 3* and *4*, which will also be on view—with four lamps facing outward and inward that he intended to be installed suspended across a corner.

For his 1987 exhibition at Castelli Gallery, which was simply titled *Dan Flavin: A New Work*, the artist devised a new large-scale grid to pay homage to his dealer, *untitled (in honor of Leo at the 30th anniversary of his gallery)*. Presented at Castelli’s SoHo space, the exhibition included all of the three editions of the work (now in the collections of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), which were joined together, spanning twenty-four feet in length across a corner. Re-created for the first time in this exhibition, this installation transforms and redefines the surrounding architecture.

Dan Flavin (1933–1996) was born in Queens, New York. He began to devote an increasing amount of time to both making and viewing art during his service in the US Air Force in the mid-1950s. While stationed just outside of New York City, Flavin briefly enrolled at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts

as well as the New School for Social Research in 1956, before attending Columbia University where he spent three semesters studying art history. He subsequently worked in the mailroom at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and as a guard at The Museum of Modern Art before devoting himself primarily to his own practice.

His first solo exhibitions were held at the Judson Gallery in 1961 and the Green Gallery in 1964, both in New York. His first European exhibition was in 1966 at Galerie Rudolf Zwirner in Cologne, Germany; in 1969, the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, organized his first major museum retrospective. His work was included in a number of key early exhibitions of minimal art in the 1960s, among them *Black, White, and Gray* (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, 1964); *Primary Structures* (The Jewish Museum, New York, 1966); and *Minimal Art* (Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 1968). Additional exhibitions were held during the artist's lifetime at the St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri (1973); Kunsthalle Basel (1975); Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam (1975); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1986); and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1992), among others.

A major museum retrospective devoted to Flavin's work was organized, in cooperation with the Estate of Dan Flavin, by the Dia Art Foundation in association with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, where it was first on view in 2004. The exhibition traveled from 2005 to 2007 to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Hayward Gallery, London; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Flavin's work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2008. In 2012, the Morgan Library and Museum, New York, presented a retrospective of the artist's drawings; from 2012 to 2013, a retrospective of his work traveled from the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, to the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland. From 2013 to 2014, *Artist Rooms: Dan Flavin* traveled from Tate Modern, London, to Gracefield Arts Centre, Dumfries, Scotland. From 2019 to 2020, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami presented a focused exhibition of the artist's works from the mid-1960s. In 2022, Collection Lambert in Avignon, France presented the solo exhibition, *Dan Flavin: Epiphanies*. The Qatar Museums in Doha, hosted a two-person presentation, *Dan Flavin / Donald Judd: Doha*, in 2023.

A major permanent installation can be seen in Bridgehampton, New York, where in 1983 Flavin began renovating a former firehouse and church to permanently house several of his works and to serve as an exhibition space and printmaking facility for local artists. The building was named the Dan Flavin Art Institute and is maintained by the Dia Art Foundation. Other long-term, site-specific installations are located at the Santa Maria Annunciata in Chiesa Rossa church, Milan; The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas; Dia:Beacon, New York; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Nationalgalerie Berlin; Kunstmuseum Basel; Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, New Jersey; The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas; Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Flavin's work can be found in significant international museum collections, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Ho-Am Art Museum, Yongin, South Korea; Kunstmuseum Basel; Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent; Tate, United Kingdom; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

David Zwirner has represented the Estate of Dan Flavin since 2009. Exhibitions with the gallery include *Dan Flavin: The 1964 Green Gallery Exhibition*, a critically lauded re-creation of an early, seminal show of Flavin's light works, in 2008, and *Dan Flavin: Series and Progressions*, which spanned the gallery's West 19th Street spaces in New York, in 2009. In 2013, the two-person exhibition *Dan Flavin and Donald*

*Judd* inaugurated the gallery's new building on West 20th Street in New York, and included Flavin's *European Couples* (1966–1971) series in its entirety. The show was followed by *Dan Flavin: Corners, Barriers and Corridors*, featuring significant works from the late 1960s and early 1970s, in 2015; and *Dan Flavin: in daylight or cool white*, examining Flavin's use of different variations of fluorescent white light, in 2018. A solo exhibition of the artist's work was on view at the gallery's Paris location in 2019–2020. Spanning three decades of his career, this was the first major presentation of Flavin's work in the French capital since his 2006 retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In 2023, concurrent presentations of the artist's work were on view at the gallery's London location and at the gallery's East 69th Street location in New York.

## Notes

1. Michael Govan, "Irony and Light," in Michael Govan and Tiffany Bell, *Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights 1961-1996*. Exh. cat. (New York: Dia Art Foundation, in association with Yale University Press, 2004), p. 77.
2. Letter to Tom Armstrong, Dan Flavin, Record Book no. 16, p. 276, May 4, 1978. Collection of Stephen Flavin.

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