

## Dan Flavin in Milan: The Chiesa Rossa and the Fondazione Prada

Fondazione Prada

Milan

29 November 1997 - 31 January 1998

On November 29th the Fondazione Prada will present two important projects by Dan Flavin who, with Sol Le Witt, Donald Judd, Robert Morris and Carl Andre, was one of the main protagonists of the American minimalist art movement: *Untitled 1996* is a permanent installation at the church Santa Maria in Chiesa Rossa while *Works 1964 - 1981* is a selection of historically important works housed at the Fondazione Prada itself.

The work at the Chiesa Rossa was the last project conceived and designed by Flavin before his death, and consists of a permanent site-specific installation donated to the Chiesa Rossa by the Fondazione Prada. This system of fluorescent lights was especially designed by the artist for the main nave and transepts of the Chiesa Rossa, perhaps with the intention of bringing a metaphysical dimension to the immateriality of his minimalist work.

The installation consists of fluorescent tubes of different colours and lengths which are placed horizontally and vertically, symmetrically and asymmetrically about the space which, combined with the architecture of renowned architect Giovanni Muzio who designed the Chiesa Rossa in 1932, create a spectacular visual effect. This work continues the tradition of dialogue between visual research and places of worship, a significant theme in modern and contemporary art as well as in architecture from Matisse to Rothko, from Nevelson to Cucchi. The project also owes its existence to the cultural and pastoral initiatives of Don Giulio, parish priest at the Chiesa Rossa.

The second project involves two thematic installations of Flavin's works at the Fondazione Prada of Milan curated by Michael Govan, director of the Dia Center for the Arts in New York.

The first of these consists of works of the series *European Couples*, 1966-1976, a group of six 8 ft.-wide squares of fluorescent tubing, each in a different colour. The composition is extremely simple: in each set of four tubes, the two vertical ones are pointed towards the wall while the horizontal ones are aimed towards the installation space. Each ensemble is placed diagonally with respect to the corner of the room. The Milan exhibition will use a linear architectural layout designed by Flavin himself.

The second part of the show consists of a selection of *Monuments for V. Tatlin*, 1964-1981. These pseudo-monuments - Flavin used the term 'pseudo' to underline the ephemeral and temporary effect of the fluorescent tubes which produce light for 2100 hours before burning out - call to mind the image of the Monument at the Third International by Tatlin. They become an homage to the fleeting and communicative existence of light. This presentation also makes use of a zigzag architectural project conceived by the artist and so both *European Couples* and *Monuments for V. Tatlin*

may be considered as fresh, new readings and re-presentations of historical works by this classic minimalist.

Because of the complexity of this ambitious project which documents the meeting between a contemporary artist and architecture, in particular that of the historic Chiesa Rossa designed by Muzio, the Fondazione Prada has decided to produce a book that brings together reflections and theoretical essays on the interweaving of art and the sacred, contemporary research and places of worship, sculpture and the church, a space of ritual socialisation and an imaginary one. The main aim of this volume, edited by Germano Celant, is to decode or interpret the relationships existing between religious and secular projects in order to identify a point of cohesion or osmosis between the two different perspectives.

For this reason theoreticians, philosophers, architects and historians such as Carlo Bertelli and Germano Celant, Hubert Damish and Christine Gluckman, Michael Govan and Vittorio Gregotti, Fulvio Irace and Don Pier Luigi Lia, Mario Perniola and Gianni Vattimo have been invited to write on this theme.

Due to the double presentation of Flavin's works at the Chiesa Rossa and the Fondazione Prada the opening will take place as follows:

*Exhibition info*

Press preview: Friday November 28th 1997:

Fondazione Prada, Via Spartaco 8

10.30 am Press Preview

12.30 am visit Chiesa Rossa

Opening: Saturday November 29th 1997:

Fondazione Prada, Via Spartaco 8

5-7 pm Opening

S.Maria in Chiesa Rossa, Via Neera 24

6 pm Mass

7-9 pm Buffet

9-10 pm Concert

A bus shuttle service will be provided from the Fondazione Prada to the Chiesa Rossa.

For further information, please contact Fondazione Prada

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