

DANIEL BUREN

For his exhibition *The Eye of the Storm: Works in situ* by Daniel Buren, the artist created a major site-specific work that engaged with the powerful architecture of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building and created different perspectives and new experiences, even for seasoned visitors. In the museum's central rotunda, Buren conceived an immense, reflective, cube-like tower that

dissected the interior of the building and climbed to the height of the oculus. Visitors entered the museum and passed directly into the tower, walking through the shadowy interior with its scaffolding skeleton left visible, and proceeded out a



doorway into the light-filled rotunda. The mirrored surface of the massive structure reflected the interior architecture of the museum: the ramps were left empty, accentuating the building's form. Buren's familiar stripes adorned the parapet walls

and drew visitors' attention to the powerful character of the building itself.

The Eye of the Storm built on an earlier project that Buren had conceived for the *Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition* in 1971. Designed to highlight new approaches to making art, Buren created a work for the exhibition that responded to the lyrical void of the famous spiral by

designing a 66 x 32-foot striped banner to bisect the space. Hung from the skylight and filling the center of the rotunda, the work obstructed views across the once-open space and angered several fellow exhibiting artists. The banner

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was removed, and the ensuing controversy made the work legendary. Over thirty years later, the museum was pleased to be able to invite the artist to continue his engaging dialogue with the museum.

While his new work effectively continued this engagement, Buren anticipated that, as with many of his other works, writers and critics would misinterpret *The Eye of the Storm*. Thus, for his Public & Artist Interaction he seized the opportunity to have a public forum to respond to the critical reviews and audience reaction that the exhibition would inevitably garner. In turn, the Education Department organized “Daniel Buren: In Response” to provide the artist with the rare opportunity to “talk back” to his detractors.

As predicted, the exhibition provoked a host of reactions from viewers and critics ranging from the ecstatic to the angry, from the poetic to the

misinformed. Buren meticulously collected and selected reviews from New York publications and highlighted in advance particular passages from each that warranted a response. He then choreographed his lecture in performance-like fashion. One male and one female reader accompanied the artist onstage and enacted the voices of the critics, reciting passages from their reviews followed by Buren's critical response to each excerpt. The precision and thoughtfulness with which Buren articulately critiqued and, on occasion, concurred with and complimented the critics, resulted in an illuminating presentation of the artist's intentions and the many nuances and layers of experience revealed by his work.

In Daniel Buren, we found a most willing, enthusiastic, and thoughtful collaborative partner. His offering not only provided the Education Department with new ideas for future “talk back” series to feature curators as well as artists, but demonstrated the significance and relevance of a key objective of the Public & Artists Interactions—giving artists a voice in the interpretive process of their own work.

BUREN “TALKING BACK” IN RESPONSE TO HIS CRITICS. PHOTO BY ROSANNA FLOUTY. OPPOSITE PAGE: DANIEL BUREN'S INSTALLATION AT THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM. PHOTO BY DAVID HEALD.

