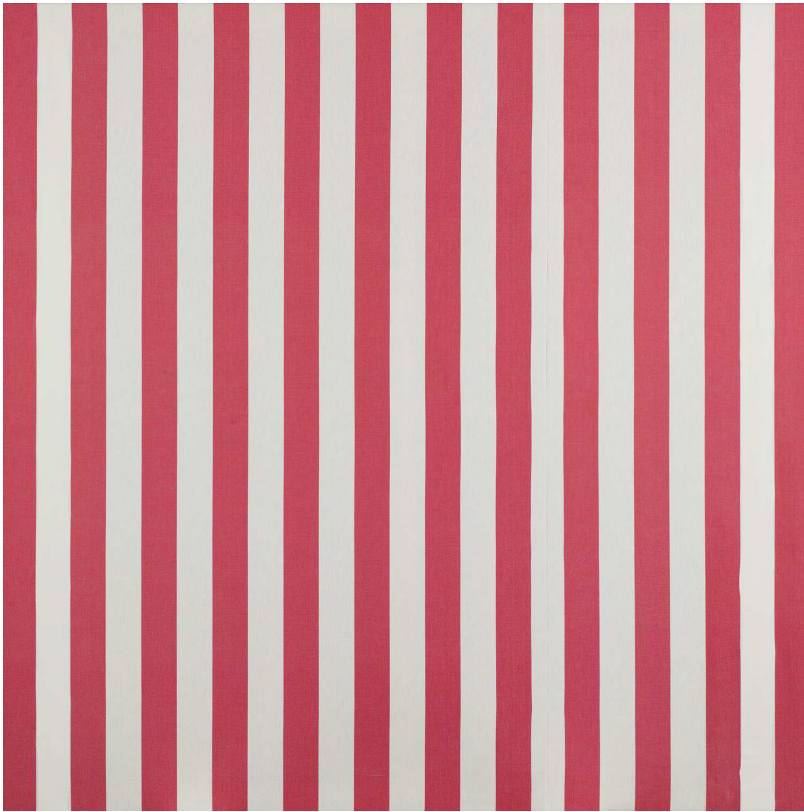


Daniel Buren. Fragmente einer Rede über die Kunst



Daniel Buren, Fragmente einer Rede über die Kunst. 18 peintures sur toile. Tissus rayés blancs et colorés. Octobre 1973 blanc et rouge, 1965-1981. With the support of Vereniging Rembrandt. Photo Peter Cox.

title	Daniel Buren. Fragmente einer Rede über die Kunst.
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curator	Christiane Berndes
text by	Marjon de Groot
photographer	Peter Cox

oeuvre in that they display the characteristics that have consistently appeared in his work since 1965: the choice of striped material, always a combination of white and another colour, and always with a width of 8.7cm – a consequence of his use of standard, striped awning. However, the paintings differ from most of Buren's other work in that they are not geared to a specific place.

In 1982, the Van Abbemuseum, with the support of the Rembrandt Association, bought 'Fragmente einer Rede über die Kunst. 18 peintures sur toile. Tissus rayés blancs et colorés' by the French artist Daniel Buren. To celebrate the 125th anniversary of this association, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam will organise an exhibition from 3 October 2008 to 18 January 2009, in which a large selection of works will be shown, including several from the Van Abbemuseum, which were acquired by Dutch museums with the association's help. Simultaneously, the Van Abbemuseum will be exhibiting the abovementioned work by Buren.

In addition to the collective title, the 18 paintings are individually titled with the month in which they were created. Buren painted the oldest two works, 'Novembre 1965' and 'Janvier 1966' with a white undulating pattern on the lower and upper side and along the left-hand side of the striped canvas. The two outermost stripes on the following two works, 'Novembre 1966' and 'Janvier 1967', are also painted white. Because they were originally coloured a double white stripe appears that differs slightly in terms of colour. The next series comprises paintings on which the outermost stripes are coloured and the outermost white stripes are painted over with white paint, representative of a profoundly minimalist way of

The title of the work gives away the fact that it involves 18 paintings, all of which are representative of Buren's

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painting. This method was indicative of the thinking behind painting in the 1960s and 70s. The tendency to return to the essence of painting was already emerging in the early 1900s. The pioneers of abstract art said that the quality of a painting was not dependent on the image and, as a result, they discarded the image altogether. The core was the power of the visual means themselves, such as colour, form, texture or idiom. These visual elements were used to convey ideas and emotions. In the course of the 20th century, modern art became increasingly autonomous; a painting reflected what a painting is or what it could be and a sculpture reflected the characteristics of a material or an object. The relationship between an object and its surroundings often played a role as well. Buren associated himself with this development by creating 'neutral' paintings, and by presenting them in such a way that the usual means of exhibiting was turned on its head. Former director of the Van Abbemuseum, R.H. Fuchs, wrote the following about Buren's choice of material in the Rembrandt Association's annual report in 1982: 'This material allows him to neutralise 'the painting' to a sign that refers to nothing but itself.' Further on, Fuchs wrote: 'In the spatial setting, he (Buren) simultaneously investigates the role, for example, that a museum plays in the observation of visual art. Museums around the world display paintings in the same way they have for time immemorial, at eye level on the same kinds of walls.' This uniform way of presenting adds nothing to how a painting looks. It is recognised as a painting because of its context. Buren was to question these conventions, mostly taking the location of the exhibition as his starting point. He exhibited his work in places where nothing normally hangs. The Van Abbemuseum acquired the work 'Peinture angulaire' from 1975, which consists of a rectangular striped canvas that must be hung in the corner of a room. During an exhibition of Buren's work in 1981, the attendants wore waistcoats made from the characteristic striped material. In this way, the work changes places all the time. And the people employed to supervise the paintings ended up wearing them. Buren's later work became more grandiose and complex, with spatial constructions that were complemented by walls, mirrors or ceilings. However, it remained a game involving the placement of the painting. Buren constantly invited the viewer to

observe his work, the space and the relationship between them in a new way.

The canvases that have been collected in this room appear to be conventional paintings. They are stretched on a frame and have the format of a 'normal' painting. There is also something painted on them. However, they do not act as 'normal' paintings. They stand on the ground, a precondition that Buren stipulated for all his exhibitions. They can be shown in any order, and some need not be shown at all. They can be spread over different rooms, giving them a cursory character, as if they are about to change position at any moment, like the waistcoats in 1981. They do not represent a traditional notion; they are, as the title suggests, fragments from a discussion about art.

Art works

Daniel Buren

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