

## Carl Andre: sculpture as Place, 1958-2010



Vista de la exposición Carl Andre: escultura como lugar, 1958-2010, en el Palacio de Velázquez. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. Mayo 2015

<b>DATES AND PLACES:</b>	5 May - 12 October 2015 Palacio de Velázquez 6 May - 28 September 2015 Edificio Sabatini
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Dia Art Foundation in association with the Museo Reina Sofía
<b>CURATORSHIP:</b>	Philippe Vergne and Yasmit Raymond
<b>COORDINATION:</b>	Beatriz Jordana and Carolina Bustamante
<b>EXHIBITION TOUR:</b>	Dia:Beacon, Nueva York (5 May, 2014 – 9 March, 2015); Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Berlín (7 May – 25 September, 2016); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, París (20 October, 2016 – 12 February, 2017); The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (7 May – 18 September, 2017). This exhibition has been enabled to travel internationally thanks principally to the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and The Terra Foundation for American Art
<b>RELATED ACTIVITIES:</b>	- <i>A propósito de...</i> Carl Andre Guided Tours. Saturdays and Sundays at 12.30 p.m. July and August, Sundays only

Carl Andre (Quincy, Massachusetts, 1935), sculptor and poet, is one of the most outstanding and complex figures in Minimal Art, an artistic movement that emerged in the early sixties in the United States. From a reductionist stance, the minimalists attempted to explore the essence of the object by employing industrial materials and processes that would allow serial reproduction, eliminating every subjective trace so that the artwork would refer exclusively to itself.

The beginnings of this artist, who radically redefined the field of sculpture, were marked by his friendships with the filmmaker Hollis Frampton and the painter Frank Stella, and by his early Discovery of the sculpture of Constantin Brancusi and the poetics of Ezra Pound. With unaltered industrial materials and an irreverent approach to language, he proposed a revolutionary concept of composition involving the use of minimal units and a particular exploration of space. Traceable in his career are some of the most influential of the trends that followed the path of minimalism, from visual poetry to Land Art or conceptual art.

Upon arriving in New York City in 1957, after an erratic artistic education lasting several years, Carl Andre found himself able to develop his creativity in sculpture, drawing and 3xperimental writing. The abundant table top geometric constructions of his first period were made primarily from wood, but he soon identified the limitations of his own craftsmanship and became intrigued by the inherent properties of manufactured materials— their form, weight, and surface. In a span of six years, from 1958 through 1964, Andre would vacate the residues of the artist's hand from his sculptures, which before this time he had made by chiseling and cutting with power tools to render slender pillars from single planks or stacks that rise from the ground to his own height. He even radicalized his gesture of imbuing sculpture with horizontality to the point of laying it flat on the ground.

At the same time, accompanied by his avid intellect, a deep affection for poetry, and commitment to leftist politics, Andre would sharpen his questions and clarify his understanding of sculpture by making the typewriter his studio. In the 1960s, he generated over thirteen hundred pages of poems, in a monumental reflection that called attention to the subtle intertwining of materials and the English language. In his own words: "Art is not only the investment of creative energy, but the sharpening of the critical faculties. . . . I think art is truly an open set. There are no ideal forms to strive for nor hierarchies to obtain to. Things have qualities. Perceive the qualities."

At the outset of Andre's explorations with both writing and sculpting, the question became not whether scavenging from the streets for materials or extracting words from a book enacted a new and copious stance for originality, or whether the anonymity of the machine-made units or the typewritten text accounted for the juncture of instrument and instinct. It was rather that through thinking about the materiality of sculpting and writing, the form of language and matter, the artist operates within a historical development, providentially decodes and proposes a reading of present conditions, and ultimately shifts art into a realm of experience. The discovery of this examination proved to be a defining event in Andre's unorthodox probing with sculpture and poetry and led him to devise a notion of "place" that is charged with utopian energy and an invigorating understanding of art as a viewpoint into reality. It is the conjunction of these two modes of creation, the placement of materials and words, that is the root of Andre's reciprocal relationship to place, where we may recognize our presence and "perceive the qualities."

*Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958-2010*, the first retrospective on the artist to be held in Spain, reviews his fifty years of artistic production, in the course of which he created over two thousand sculptures and an equal number of poems, plus dozens of assemblages that are hard to classify, and hundreds of postcards. Organized along a loose chronology to construct different modes of looking, the exhibition unfolds over three sections. The first, consisting of sculpture, is mostly on display at the Palacio de Velázquez, while the others can be seen at the Sabatini Building. One brings together his unclassifiable productions, ranging from his ephemera to the enigmatic assemblages known as *Dada Forgeries*, which establish an irreverent dialogue with Marcel Duchamp, while the third and final section is devoted to visual poetry.

### **Catalogue**

For this occasion, the Museo Reina has edited a catalogue with texts of the curators Philippe Vergne y Yasmin Raymond, and of Vincent Katz, Brooke Holmes, Anne Rorimer, Marjorie Perloff, Arnaud Pierre, Alistair Rider, Mika Yoshitake, Christophe Cherix y Manuel Cirauqui plus a conversation of Carl Andre with Phyllis Tuchman.

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