

# Daimler Art Collection

Minimalism and After I

Daimler Contemporary, Berlin

February 8 – May 20, 2002

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Foreword

Minimal Art—the name of the historical movement is linked with a small number of artists who worked on a new definition of works of art as they relate both to the space and to viewers. Minimal Art's objectively describable structures and proportions, its elemental forms and serial accumulations, its industrial materials and production forms argue consistently against abstract art's all-over and the subjective painting gestures of the 1950s. Non-relational, non-hierarchical and anti-compositional are the keywords of the day. At the same time, Minimalism developed as a general phenomenon that embraced parallel developments in music and dance as well as painting and sculpture. Minimal Art and Minimalism have been discussed uninterruptedly ever since. This is clear from recent publications (James Meyer, Anne Rorimer) and also from various exhibitions following Minimalism's powerful history of influence down to the present day ('Minimalisms', Berlin 1998; 'Minimal Maximal', Bremen etc. 1998/99; 'Minimalia', New York 1999; 'Minimal Art', Karlsruhe 2001).

'Minimalism and after'—the title of our exhibition including new acquisitions for the Daimler Art Collection—suggests two things. Minimalism: the artists in our exhibition display a broad

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spectrum of Minimalist tendencies from about 1960 to the present day. They make it possible to discern the various ways in which Minimal Art has been appraised over the decades and the generations, from Elaine Sturtevant's conceptual reworkings of Stella from 1965 onwards via the picture-objects of an artist like Olivier Mosset in the 1970s and 1980s and the—apparently functional—*specific objects* created by artists like Heimo Zobernig, and then on to Gerold Miller's wall sculptures, Jan van der Ploeg's wall paintings and Jonathan Monk's ironical-critical treatments of Sol LeWitt's canon of forms and motifs.

Early European reflections and refractions of the conceptual facet of Minimalism are set alongside our new acquisitions. So we would like to suggest that the serial grid drawings by an artist like Jan J. Schoonhoven dating from the early 1960s, which used to be classified as part of the Zero movement, should be read from the perspective of the formal and drawing vocabulary of Sol LeWitt, for example, which emerged at the same time. The inclusion of aspects relating to space, viewer and action and also Minimal Art's emphasis on 'place and presence' find a response in the work of Andre Cadere, infiltrated into the context of art in a guerrilla campaign. And finally, the Minimalist object-boxes by the Dutch artist Douwe Jan Bakker (who left behind a restricted but high-quality set of works) are a real discovery, and so are the sculptures of the Kiel artist Eckhard Schene, who died recently. The picture painted by Robert Ryman in 1969 can be said to have a 'bridging function' between all these individually very different positions: his work has tried over four decades to achieve a consistent reduction and reflection of creative resources, while at the same time expanding and refining the question of how pictures relate to the space, to the viewer and to themselves. "The picture is exactly what you see: the paint on the card and the colour of the card and the way it is made and felt. That is what's there." (Robert Ryman, 1971)

And after: the shows focuses on young international artists whose work is essentially to be understood from the point of view of the history of Minimal Art and its effects. Given the nature of the Daimler Art Collection, we have concentrated on pictures (while historical Minimal Art was more concerned with sculpture) that consider the central criteria of Minimalism from today's perspective: the essentially sculptural presence of the picture-object, coolly geometrical structures, intuitively intelligible order and proportions, works presented so that they relate to the space and the viewer, rejecting anything of a symbolic or narrative nature. Despite all this, the works are grounded in individual arguments, though

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these may be political, formal, art-reflective or purely aesthetic. But the 'arguments' retreat behind the simple perceptual reality of the object, behind plane color areas and modular structures, behind 'Grids, Shapes and Colours'.

(from the publication: 'Minimalism and After', Stuttgart/Berlin 2002, pp. 2-3. You can purchase this book online.)

**Daimler Contemporary**  
**Haus Huth Alte Potsdamer Str. 5 10785 Berlin**  
**daily 11 am - 6 pm**

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