



EXHIBIT | Dan Flavin: Constructed Light **LOCATION** | Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis **PHOTOGRAPHER** | Robert Pettus © Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Dan Flavin: Constructed Light

DAN FLAVIN: CONSTRUCTED LIGHT, AN EXHIBITION AT THE PULITZER FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS IN ST. LOUIS, is a natural fit for the sublime structure designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tadao Ando. The modestly scaled, beautifully proportioned three-level structure wraps around itself, creating a series of continuously linked interior and exterior volumes. Through the context of Flavin's work the surfaces in each of the nine exhibit areas, containing 26 installations, meld together to form a common vessel of light. The result is a volumetric and luminous expression of space that defines specific galleries while creating a new reading of Flavin's work. Witnessing such a complete display of interwoven luminosity is a rare treat for the museum visitor; a meaningful result of having the entire facility dedicated to a single exhibit.

Flavin limited his artistic palette to commercially available fluorescent products in standardized sizes, shapes, and colors, extracting banal hardware from its utilitarian context and inserting it into the world of high art. He expanded upon this very narrow medium only through compositional variation, color, scale, and multiplicity. Such choices surrounding the luminaire type, size, orientation, and placement in a given architectural context are completed by the resulting luminosity that transcends the luminaire's object-like qualities and engages the surrounding architecture. By virtue of this interaction, the "entire spatial container and all its components—wall,

floor and ceiling"—become an integral part of the work and "enfold it," Flavin said in a 1964 lecture at the Brooklyn Museum's art school. He considered the art's "situational" context to the architecture carefully, and used spaces typically recognized as inappropriate for display such as stairwells and corridors. Additionally, Flavin's work frequently assumes a posture contrary to conventions of formal presentation—in repose against a wall, traversing a corner, bisecting a room, laying on the floor—further removing it from the formalities and conventions of art display. Flavin developed a fascination for matters surrounding human perception and made careful choices regarding color, adaptation, time, and spatial sequencing to impact the viewer's perception. In May, the lamp colors will be changed, offering visitors a different experience to this long-running exhibit, which is on view through October 2008. Extended evening museum hours the first Thursday of every month will give guests the opportunity to see Flavin's work under a multitude of conditions.

From Flavin's point of view, the work is intended to be perceived, rather than simply seen; temporal experiences "free of content," focusing on the "situation of light only." These ideas, initiated in the early 1960s, consumed the rest of Flavin's artistic career until his death in 1996. The architectural quietness of the Pulitzer facility offers an ideal setting for experiencing and contemplating the subtle intentions behind Flavin's work. **DEREK PORTER**

Architecture and light become one at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis as it plays host to the work of Dan Flavin through October 2008. In the main gallery (above), Flavin's blue and green fluorescent installation—*untitled*, 1984—is juxtaposed with Ellsworth Kelly's *Blue Black*, 2000, an artwork of painted aluminum panels that is part of the Pulitzer's permanent collection.