

INSTITUTIONAL ANATOMIES (I)

MINIMALISM

THE WHITE CUBE

What comes to mind when you hear “minimalism”?

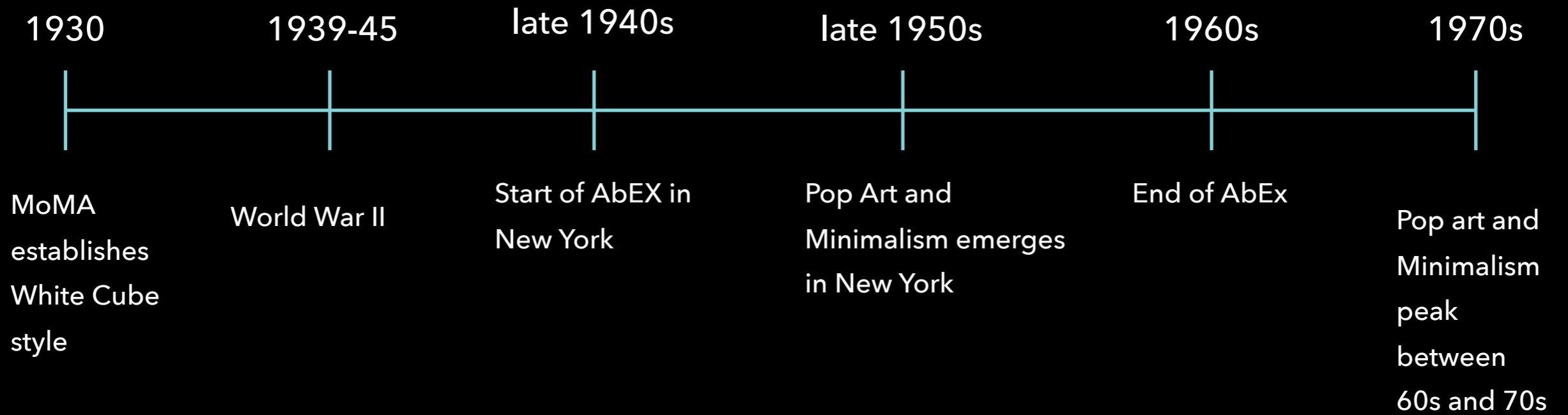
What comes to mind when you hear “minimalism”?





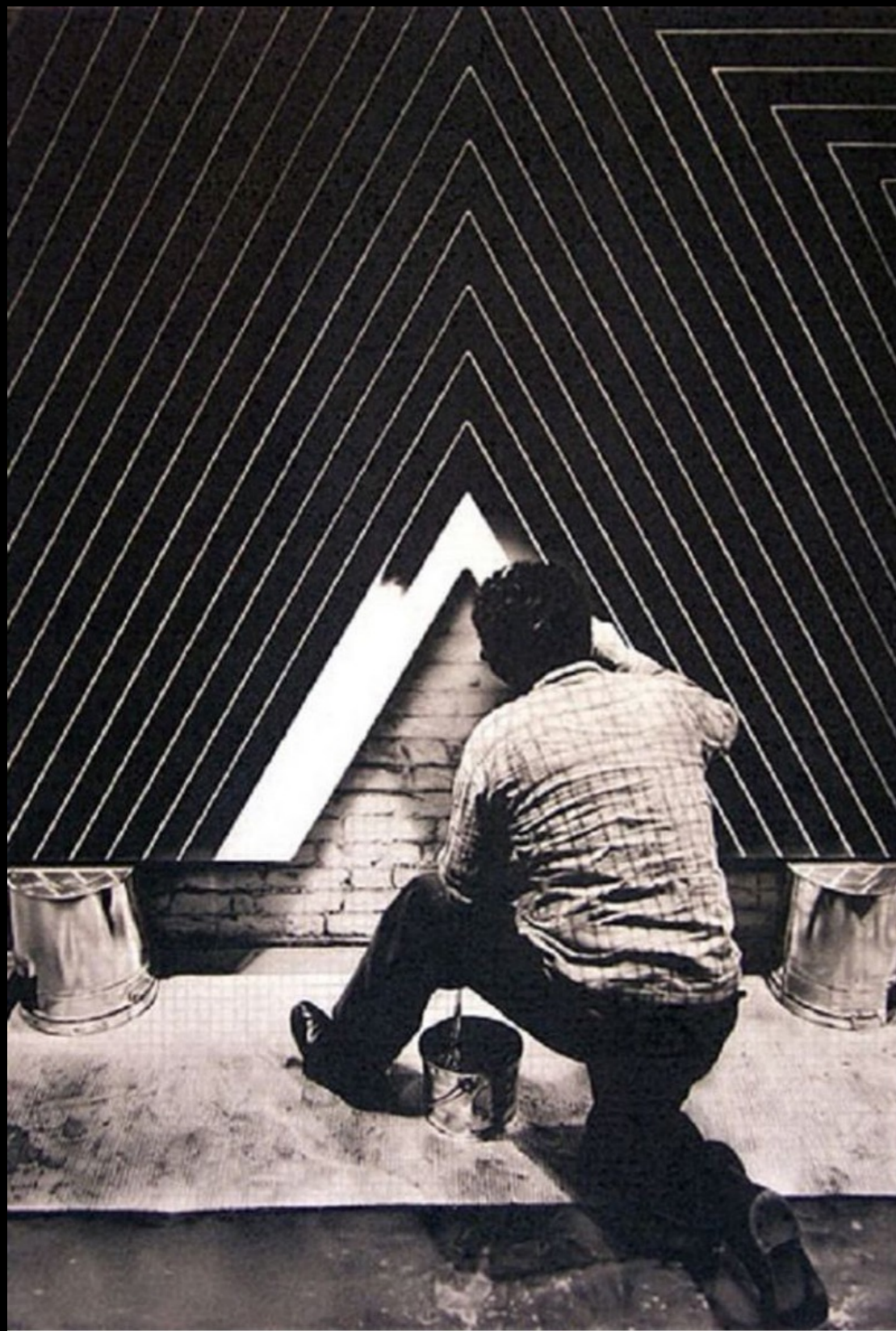
Jo Baer, *Replica: White Horizontal (yellow line)*, 1965

TIMELINE



Key characteristics of minimalist art

- ▶ **Not connected to the outside world:** does not refer to anything beyond its literal presence: the idea that art should have its own reality and not be an imitation of some other thing (not a landscape, portrait or a soup can)
- ▶ **Non-referential:** The materials used are not worked to suggest something else; color (if used) is also non-referential, i.e. if a dark color is used, this does not mean the artist is trying to suggest a somber mood.
- ▶ **Pure aesthetics:** It can also be seen as representing such qualities as truth (because it does not pretend to be anything other than what it is), order, simplicity and harmony.
- ▶ **Deliberate lack of expression:** With no trace of emotion or intuitive decision making, little about the artist is revealed in the work: objects were as impersonal and neutral as possible.
- ▶ **Space awareness:** directly engages with the space it occupies. The sculpture is carefully arranged to emphasize and reveal the architecture of the gallery, often being presented on walls, in corners, or directly onto the floor, encouraging the viewer to be conscious of the space



Photograph of Frank Stella creating one of the Black Paintings



Frank Stella

Jill

1959

THE REMOVAL OF THE ARTIST'S HAND

WALL DRAWING FOR HALLWALLS

ON A YELLOW WALL DRAW A SIX INCH GRID WITH A HARD (9H) PENCIL. FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE WALL DRAW STRAIGHT BLUE LINES (USING CRAYON) TO RANDOM POINTS ON THE GRID; RED LINES ARE DRAWN FROM THE FOUR SIDES AND WHITE LINES FROM THE CENTER. THE LINES ARE DRAWN AS FOLLOWS: BLUE LINES - FROM EACH CORNER ONE LINE IS DRAWN TOWARD THE CENTER, FOUR LINES ABOVE THE CENTER, FOUR LINES BELOW. RED LINES - FROM EACH SIDE (MIDPOINT) ONE LINE IS DRAWN TOWARD THE CENTER, FOUR LINES ABOVE (OR RIGHT) FOUR LINES BELOW (OR LEFT). WHITE LINES - ONE LINE IS DRAWN TOWARD THE CORNERS & SIDES AND TWO LINES BETWEEN EACH OF THESE LINES.

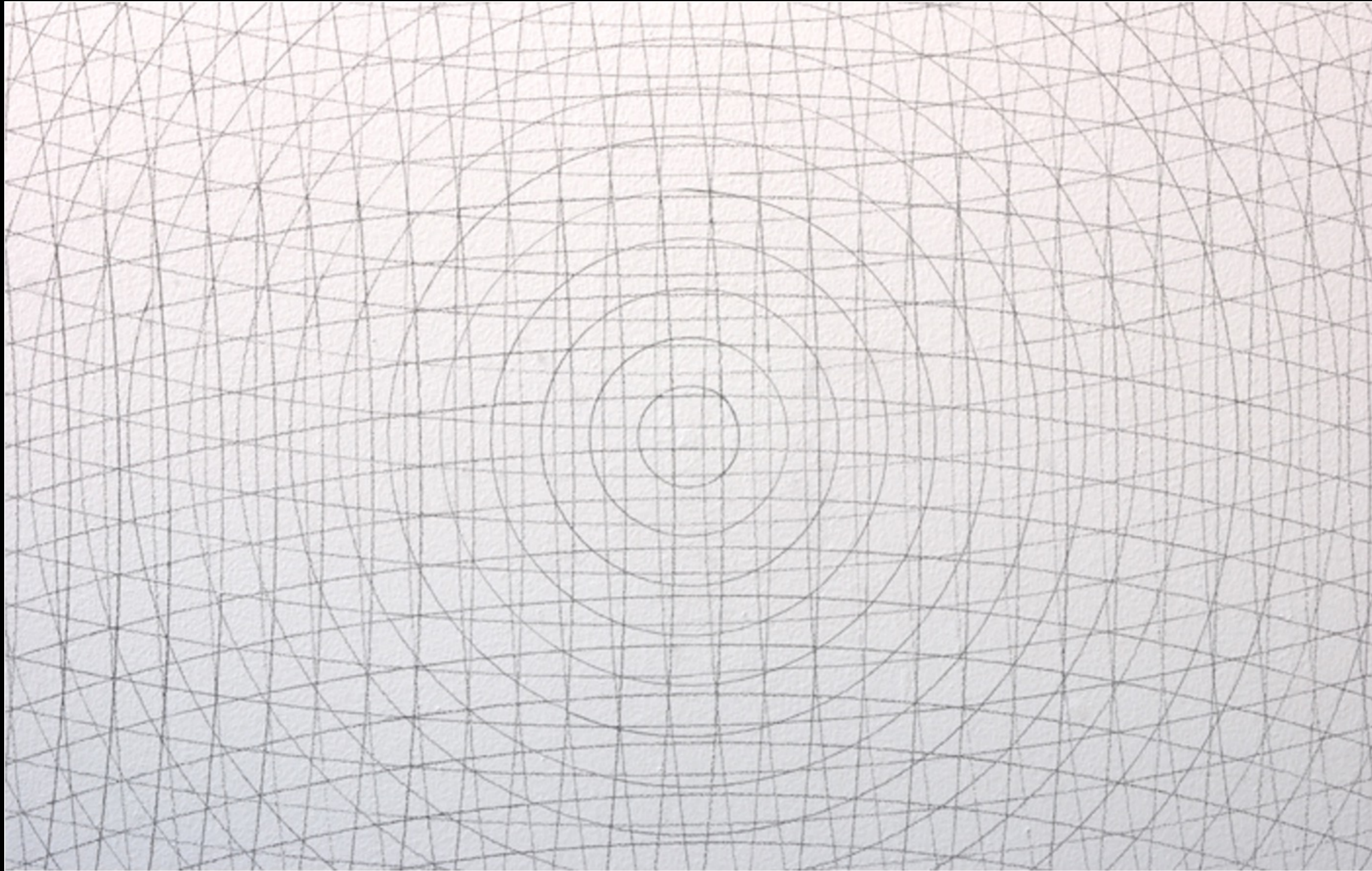
Sol LeWitt

Lewitt's instructions, 1976 (photocopy from personal archives of Charles Clough).



WALL DRAWING FOR HALLWALLS (LeWitt, 1976, pencil, crayon, latex on dry wall, 6'6" x 208", drawn according to LeWitt's instructions by Diane Bertolo, Linda Brooks, Charles Clough, Alan Hayes, Gary Judkins, Pierce Kamke, Robert Longo, Kevin Noble, Joseph Panone, Robert Reslawsky, Cindy Sherman, Michael Zwack)

Video showing installation of drawing 797: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=963qJjcbYLM>



Sol LeWitt Wall

Drawing 138

Pencil

Instructions: "Circles and arcs from the midpoints of four sides."

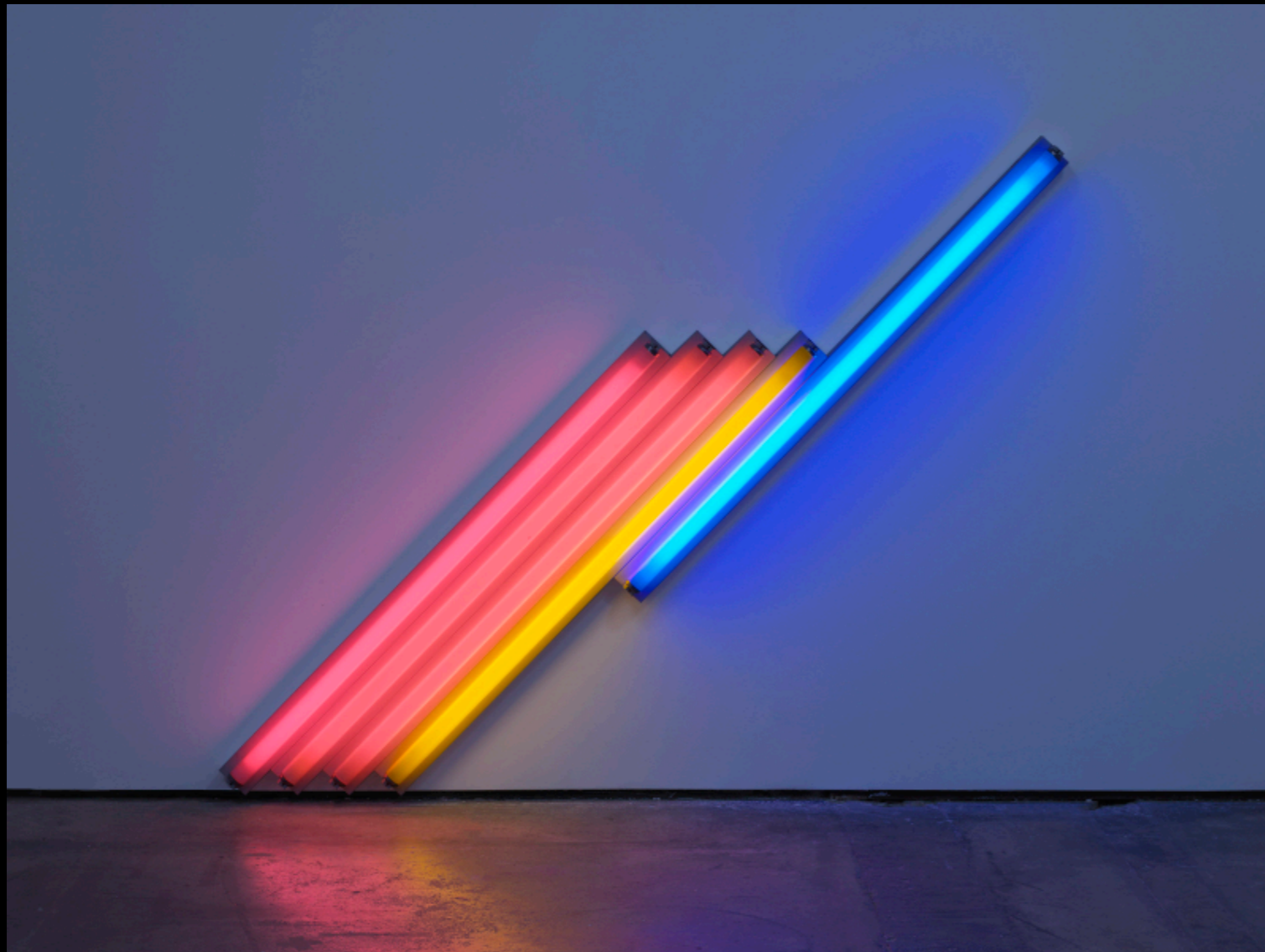
Conceptual Art

- ▶ Art that emerged in the late 1960s, emphasizing ideas and theoretical practices rather than the creation of visual forms.
- ▶ In 1967, the artist Sol LeWitt gave the new genre its name in his essay "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," in which he wrote, "The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product."
- ▶ Conceptual artists used their work to question the notion of what art is, and to critique the underlying ideological structures of artistic production, distribution, and display.

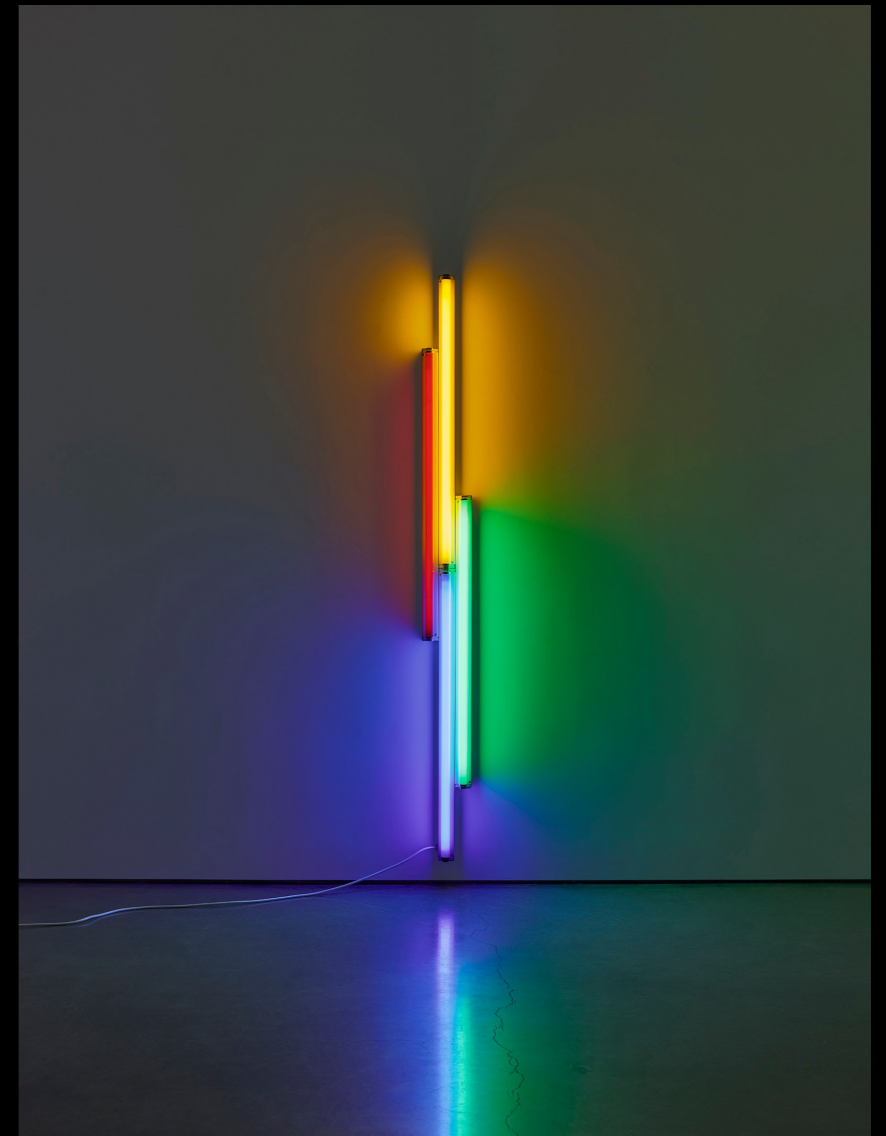
THE DEMATERIALISATION OF ART

Mass Production: The production of large amounts of standardized products through the use of machine-assembly production methods and equipment.

Installation: A form of art, developed in the late 1950s, which involves the creation of an enveloping aesthetic or sensory experience in a particular environment, often inviting active engagement or immersion by the spectator.



Dan Flavin, Untitled (for Frederika and Ian) 3, 1987



Dan Flavin, Untitled (to Veronique), 1987



Dan Flavin installation of neon lights

THE PRESENCE OF THE VIEWER

I found very important the idea of the body passing through space, and the body's movement not being predicated totally on image or sight or optical awareness, but on physical awareness in relation to space, place, time, movement." -Richard Serra



Richard Serra

Torqued Ellipses

1996

Installation at Dia Beacon

<https://www.diaart.org/visit/visit-our-locations-sites/dia-beacon-beacon-united-states>



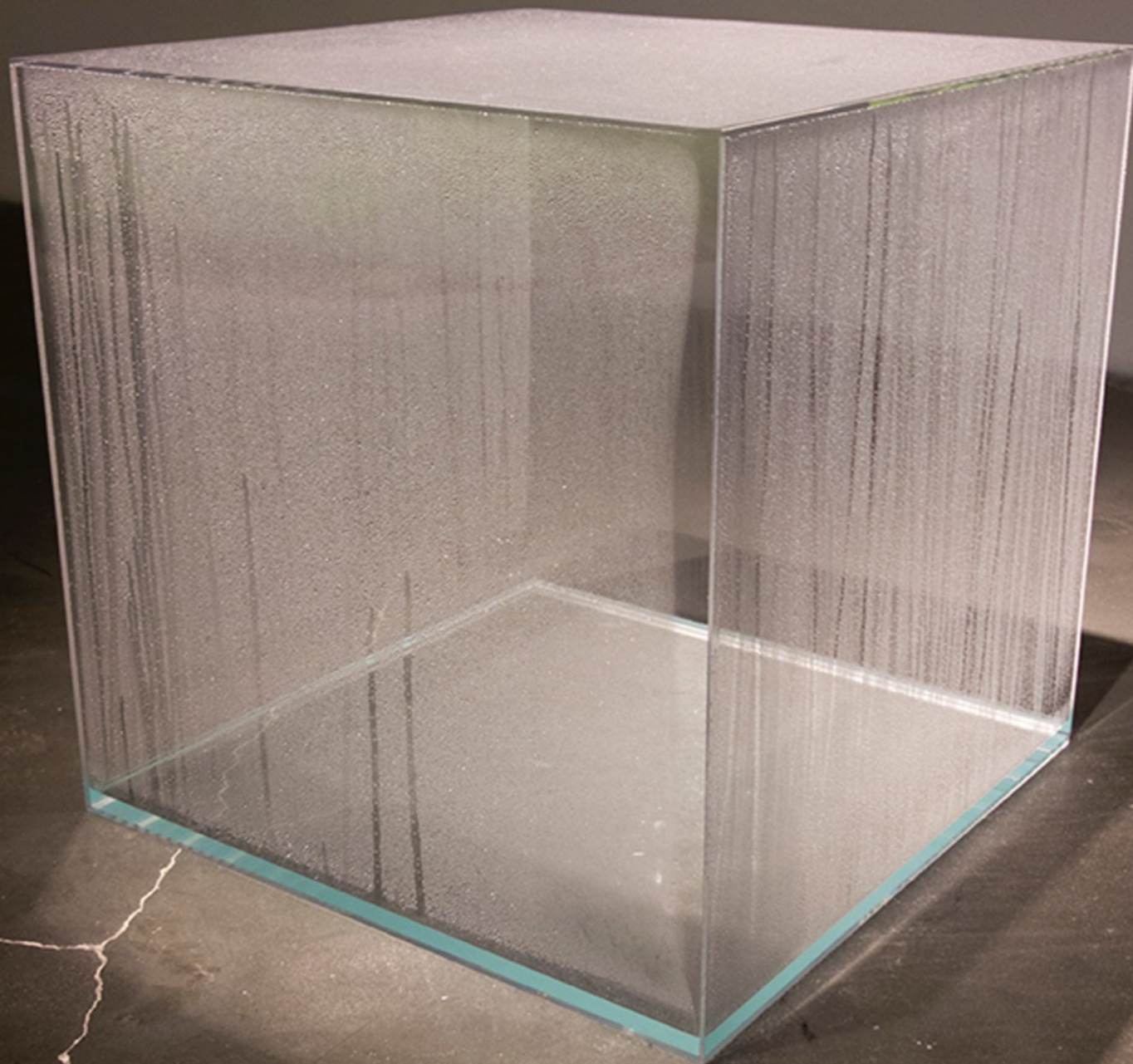
Richard Serra

Tilted Arc

1981-1989

Jacob K. Javits Federal Building in Manhattan,
New York City.

THE PRESENCE OF THE VIEWER



Hans Haacke

Condensation Cube

1963-65

BOUNDARIES OF MEDIUMS



Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1967



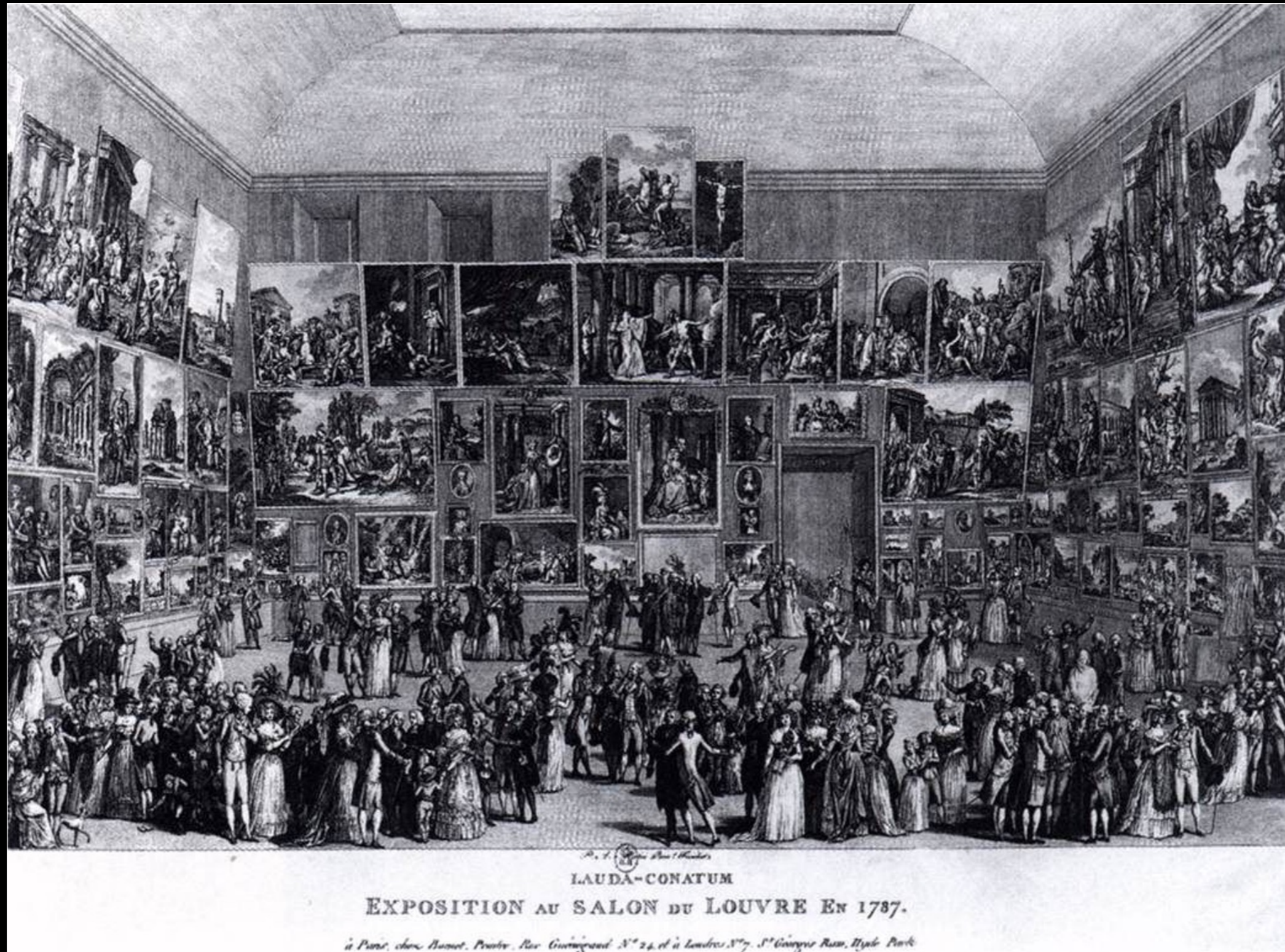
Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1978

What is the White Cube?

The White Cube refers to a kind of museum or gallery aesthetic that is characterized by white walls, artificial light and neutral colored or wooden floors. The aim is to create a decontextualized environment in which the artworks can be viewed without any influences from the outside world.



THE HISTORY OF THE WHITE CUBE



Print depicting a Salon in 1787

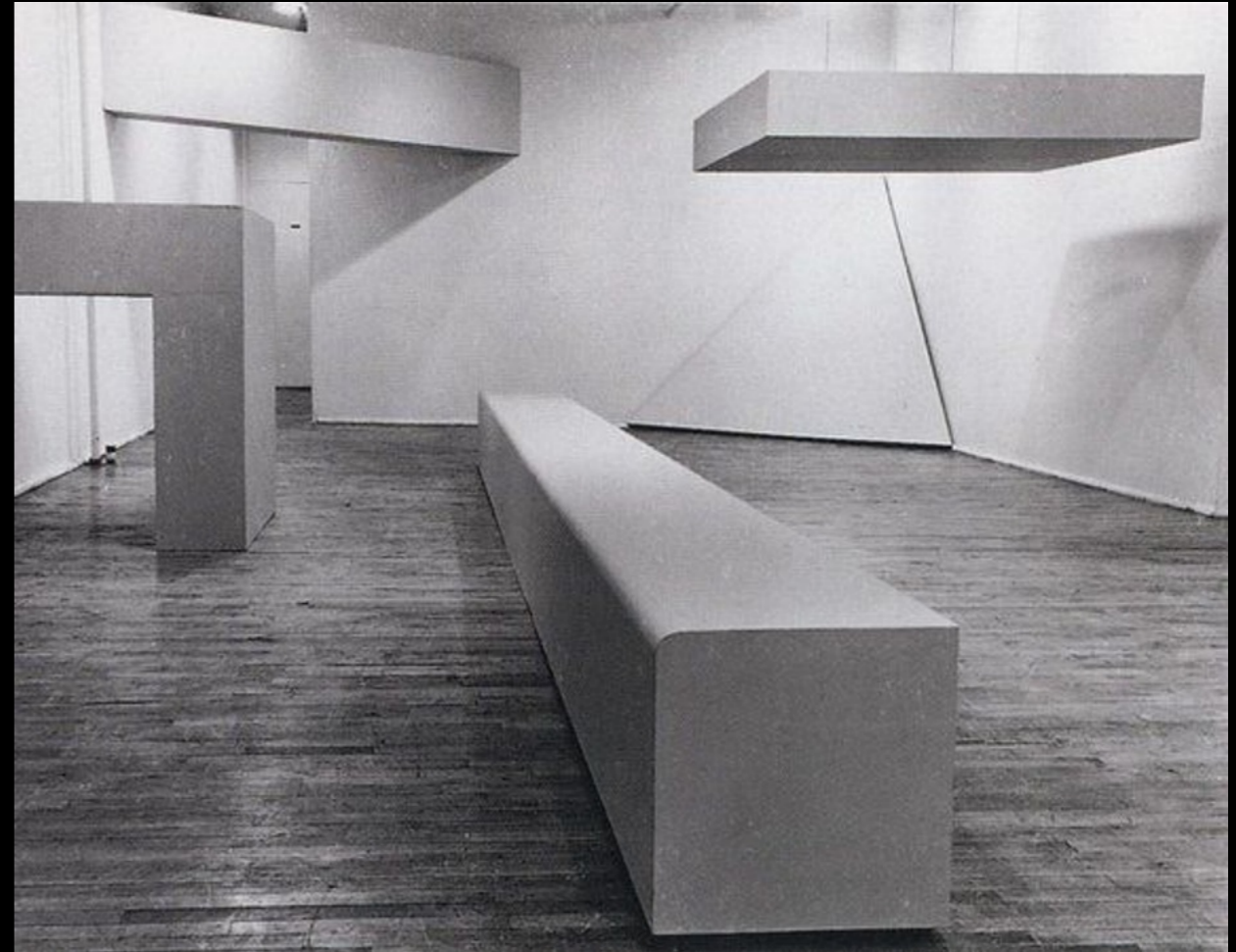


Louvre Museum, Paris



Installation view of the exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art," on view at The Museum of Modern Art, March 2-April 19, 1936

The colliding of Minimalism and the White Cube



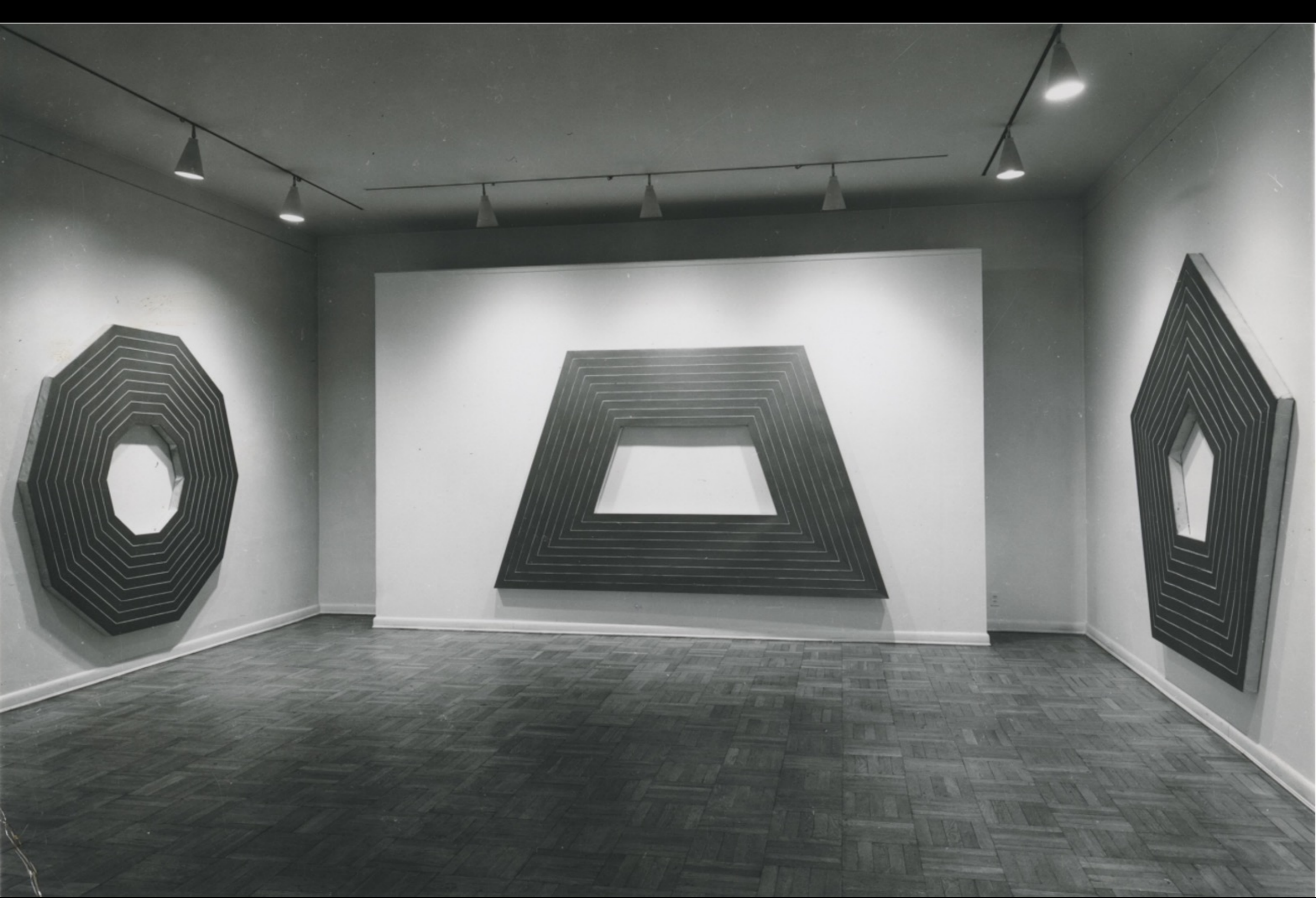
Installation view, Robert Morris's exhibition at the Green Gallery in New York in 1964



Robert Morris

Untitled

1965



Installation view, Frank Stella's exhibition at Leo Castelli in 1964

INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE

A form of conceptual art, which emerged in the late 1960s, centered on the critique of museums, galleries, private collections, and other art institutions. Artists working in this vein use a range of strategies to expose the ideologies and power structures underlying the circulation, display, and discussion of art.

- ▶ Artworks commissioned by the museum (eg. Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum*)
- ▶ Artworks not commissioned by the museum- artists intervening into the museum space on their own to critique it (eg. Andrea Fraser)
- ▶ Artworks proposed to the museum, but go against their expectations (eg. Hans Haacke)



Hans Haacke
Condensation Cube
1963-65



Fred Wilson
Mining the Museum
1992-93
Maryland Historical Society

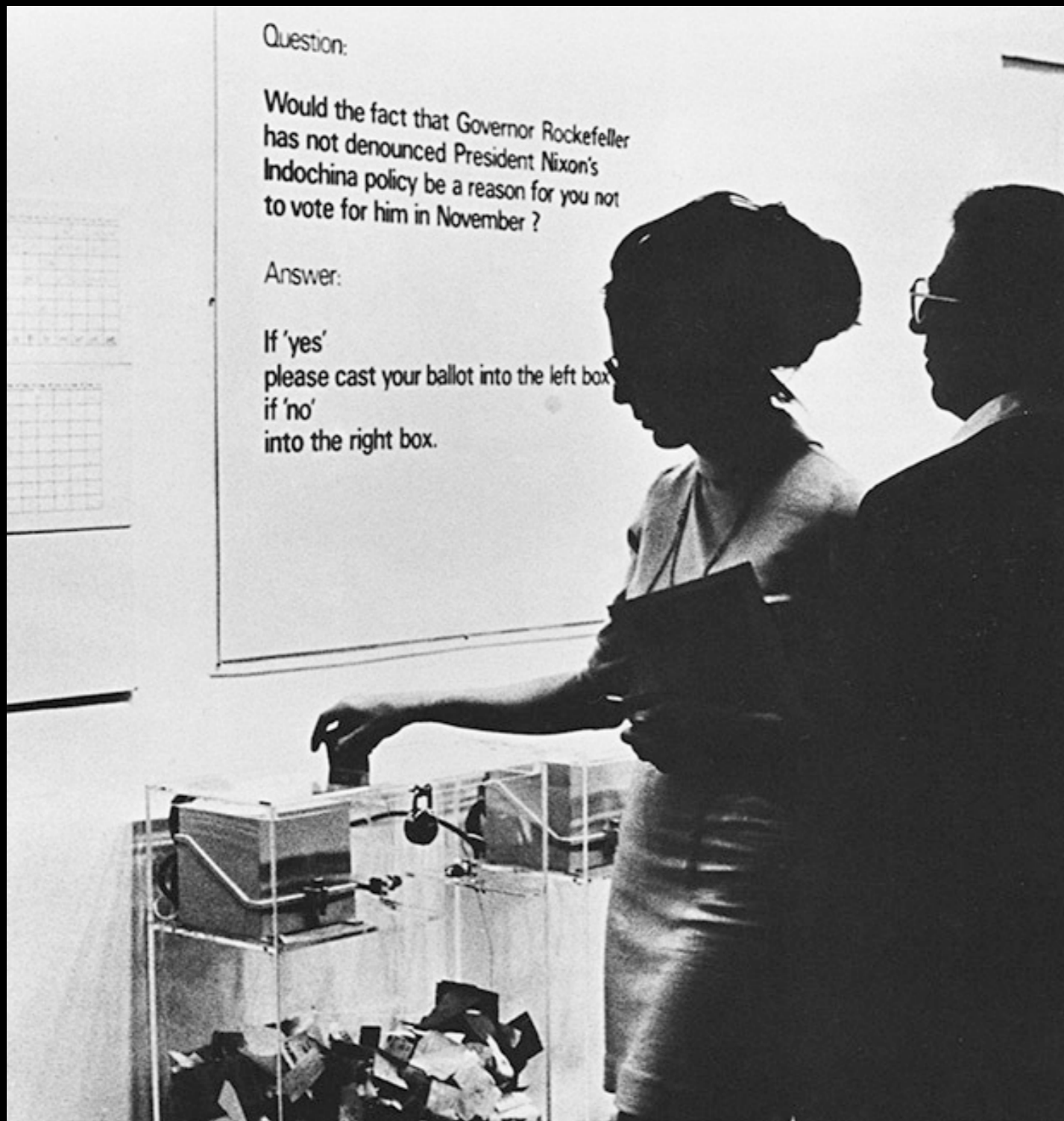
AUDIENCE RESPONSES TO MINING THE MUSEUM

When I go to a museum, I hope to say “Wow” but today I was thinking “Wow!” in a different way.
I like that he asks questions and doesn’t answer them.

Mining the Museum has the ability to promote racism and hate in young Blacks and was offensive to me. (Retired dentist)

I found *Mining the Museum* “artsy” and pretentious. It was a waste of space that could be used to better purpose. A museum should answer questions not raise questions unrelated to the subject. (Engineer)

I liked the pedestals without statues least because they were visually boring and emptiness is decidedly uninteresting, period. (Curator)



MoMA Poll (1970) by Hans Haacke



Andrea Fraser
Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk
1989
Philadelphia Museum of Art

GLOSSARY

- ▶ **Site-specific:** describes a work of art designed for a particular location.
- ▶ **Conceptual art:** Art that emerged in the late 1960s, emphasizing ideas and theoretical practices rather than the creation of visual forms.
- ▶ **Installation:** A form of art, developed in the late 1950s, which involves the creation of an enveloping aesthetic or sensory experience in a particular environment, often inviting active engagement or immersion by the spectator.
- ▶ **Mass Production:** The production of large amounts of standardized products through the use of machine-assembly production methods and equipment.
- ▶ **Minimalism:** A primarily American artistic movement of the 1960s, characterized by simple geometric forms devoid of representational content.