



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING **LES MOULINS** HABANA

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 Open from Wednesdays to Sundays from noon to 6pm and by appointment.

DANIEL BUREN

Autour du retour d'un détour

Opening on Sunday, October 15, 2017, as from noon
 Exhibition from October 15 to December 31, 2017

When construction work got underway for installing Daniel Buren's now famous, monumental piece, *Les Deux Plateaux*, in the courtyard of the Palais Royal in Paris, the controversy surrounding this state-commissioned meeting of contemporary art and architectural heritage was already boiling. Numerous attempts were made, through petitions and other means, to put an immediate stop to construction, and the hoardings around the worksite became a platform for launching a wide variety of invectives in graffitied messages aimed at Buren and the incumbent ministers for culture (Jack Lang, then François Léotard), along with afflicted expressions of outrage on the part of a number of anonymous defenders of the heritage site. The new work, soon nicknamed *Les Colonnes de Buren*, was unveiled in 1986, the same year Buren represented France at the Venice Biennale, where he received the Golden Lion. An essential landmark in the history of contemporary art both in and beyond France, *Les Deux Plateaux* broke the habitual boundaries of the art world and, both because of its intrinsic qualities and the controversy surrounding it, became the most celebrated contemporary artwork in the country.

Now that *Les Deux Plateaux* have long-since settled into their place at the Palais Royal, the traces of the tumult surrounding their installation are being exhibited at the Galleria Continua, at the Moulin de Boissy-le-Châtel. The original artwork takes its place at the Moulin through the mediation of the real hoardings from the worksite, now installed and reinterpreted for a new piece whose title is also that of the exhibition: *Autour du retour d'un*

détour. The visitor can read across their surface the still legible, at times amused, at times transfixed inscriptions. The coloured area they enclose, inaccessible to the public, outlines in chromatic vibrations the violence of a long controversy, and raises important questions to do with public commissions and our at times difficult relationship to heritage, as well as art in general and its public reception. Two works, above and below the balcony of the exhibition space, accompany this presence. They testify to twenty two years of close collaboration between Daniel Buren and Galleria Continua. A series of projections recall his whole body of work, while a sort of chronological frieze displays the key dates, but not in a simply backward-looking glance, as the whole is, of course, turned towards not only the present, but above all the future, with the presence of a new work on the edge of the River Grand Morin, where the gallery is situated.

This chronology, marked in vertical stripes, refers to another major controversy Buren found himself at the centre of in 1971 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. The only French artist invited to participate in the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition, his work was removed from the museum rotunda the night before the opening, in his absence. A long and difficult dispute between Buren, the museum, and a number of the other exhibiting artists followed. The catalogue for the exhibition was initially meant to include an unfolding, detachable sheet, offered to every participating artist with, regarding Daniel Buren's intervention, alternating red and white stripes, captioned on each page as true-scale details of

works from 1965 to 1971, year of the exhibition, adding a temporal continuity to the visual continuity formed by the succession of stripes. The detachable sheet was removed from most of the catalogues following the dispute, by the executives of the Guggenheim museum themselves, so that only a few, rare copies still include it.

The visual tool constituted by these vertical stripes, lending their rhythm to Buren's body of work, act like bearings throughout the exhibition, which the visitor encounters step by step as she wanders through the different spaces of the Moulin. Buren's works have in fact accompanied Galleria Continua's history at the Moulins since the beginning, where a number of site specific works have successively found their place. This complicity is now being celebrated for the tenth anniversary of Galleria Continua in France, at the Moulins de Boissy-le-Châtel.

Daniel Buren was born in 1938 in Boulogne-Billancourt. He lives and works in situ. The artist began his career as a painter, pushing his practice towards an intentional abandonment of affect and a radicalisation of painting, arriving at a pure relationship between the ground and the form, stripped of any narrative element. He then chose to get out of the frame of the canvas and use an industrial tool, the vertical, evenly spaced stripes he is now recognised for, at first in the street, overlaying posters with his own. This first questioning of art and its environment continues today in public and cultural sites in which Buren finds himself more and more often invited to intervene. Almost systematically conceiving of his work for the host site, the artist continues to develop an incisive critique of the cultural system and its museumifying practices. He is today one of the most significant contemporary artists at work.