

**BURGOYNE DILLER**

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MICHAEL ROSENFELD GALLERY

BY ROBERT G. EDELMAN

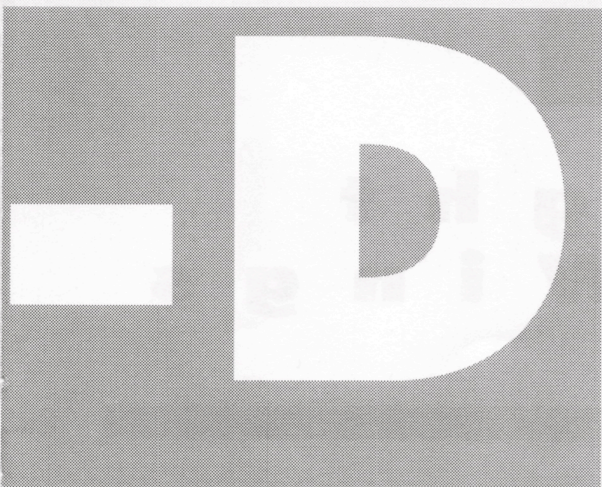
**B**urgoyne Diller was one of the devout acolytes of Piet Mondrian and the Neo-Plastic ideal in American art during the 30s and 40s. Known primarily as a painter and an assiduous draftsman, Diller also made sculpture that was based on the principles of the De Stijl group (with the exception of an Doesburg, who advocated diagonals): precise geometry, primary color and a gridded, linear infrastructure.

This exhibition brought Diller's sculpture into focus, offering an opportunity to study the relationship between a work's conception and its execution, as well as those ideas that never left the drawing board. On both accounts, Diller's work anticipated the larger-scaled minimalist, geometric sculpture of the 60s by Donal Judd and others. In fact, Diller made sculpture well into the 60s that can now be seen a part of the formal dialogue of that period in American art. This is evidenced by a drawing from 1930, "Sculptor's Studio," which curiously predicts the look and scale of minimalist sculpture some three decades later.

Diller's early efforts from the 30s are indebted to Mondrian's guiding principles: that art should be conceived as an integral part of architecture and the larger urban habitat. In "Construction," (1940), Diller experiments with a three dimensional painting that fits snugly into a corner, suggesting a miniature model for a modern dance set or a fragment of a reductive urban dwelling. The austere "Third Theme Construction" (1940-43), made from painted wood, has monumental aspirations; one could see its crossed and carefully balanced red, yellow and white beams on its black base against the rolling green hills of the Storm King sculpture park in upstate New York.

The wall reliefs Diller made in the 60s using the cruciform as a primary structure, and the severe geometry of his late constructions connect him with artists as diverse as Barnett Newman, Richard Serra and Ellsworth Kelly. Certainly a reappraisal of Diller's sculpture on a larger scale is overdue, but this show went a long way in correcting this oversight.





JONATHAN BROOKS

Talks  
with  
J. O.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DEAN BOURGNER

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# uture of Minimalism

