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# Dan Flavin: A Retrospective



## Synopsis

Dan Flavin (1933–1996) is considered one of the most important and innovative artists of the late twentieth century. The simplicity and systematic character of his extraordinary work, along with his relentless exploration and ingenious discovery of an art of light, established him as a progenitor and chief exponent of Minimalism. Uniquely situated outside the mediums of painting and sculpture, the majority of Flavin's work after 1963 consists of art made from light. This landmark book—the first retrospective publication of Flavin's art since 1969—includes around 45 of the artist's most important light works, beginning with a pivotal series of constructed boxes with attached incandescent or fluorescent lights, called 'icons,' made from 1961 to 1963. Works spanning Flavin's career are discussed in depth, including examples that integrate light with the surrounding space and show the particular characteristics of blended fluorescent light, large-scale installations, and constructed corridors. The book also includes reproductions of Flavin's drawings, which show his thought processes and working methods. New scholarship and interpretation of Flavin's work appears in the form of three critical essays by experts, an extensive chronology, comprehensive bibliography, and exhibition history. In addition, Flavin's seminal text ' . . . in daylight or cool white,' an autobiographical sketch, originally published in *Artforum* in 1965, is included. Exquisitely designed and produced, with many new stunning color reproductions, *Dan Flavin: A Retrospective* captures the brilliance of this artist's contribution to and challenges of the art world and will be the authoritative volume on Flavin for years to come. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Light, considered the purest embodiment of the divine, is the basis of all art to one degree or another, so why not make art out of light? Dan Flavin (1933-96), an innovative and prolific American sculptor who can be considered an abstract, minimalist, and installation artist, chose as his medium commercial fluorescent tubes, and with these everyday lights created works of radiant and evocative beauty. Flavin had many major shows and created a number of permanent public installations; now his work is being celebrated in a magnificent retrospective exhibition that will travel across the country. This handsomely produced volume by Govan, director of the Dia Art Foundation, and Bell, who worked with Flavin, presents exquisite photographs of Flavin's seminal light compositions and expert biographical and critical assessments. Citing Byzantine icons, William Ockham, and Barnett Newman as influences, Flavin created ravishingly beautiful colors and profoundly nuanced constructions with seemingly banal industrial materials, transforming ordinary spaces into places of wonder. For a definitive catalog see *Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights, 1961-1996*, also published by Yale. Donna Seaman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Replete with informative essays and working drawings, this volume proposes a new understanding of Flavin's ground-breaking oeuvre.” —*Art in America* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Dan Flavin, an innovative and prolific sculptor, took an otherwise ordinary material--light bulbs--and made them into something fantastic. All shapes, colors, and sizes became fodder for his sculptures which invite the viewer to look at a common everyday material in an entirely new way. Many of his works can still be found in museums across the world. This book, while not a complete look at Flavin's works, offers the reader essays that place his work into the context of his life and times, and some similarities/influences in the wider art world. The one thing lacking from this volume is better and more illustrations of Flavin's works. Perhaps its due to the fact that they're photographing sculptures made of light bulbs, but some of the photos appear washed out and slightly grainy. Overall though, recommended to any fan of art and the extraordinary.

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