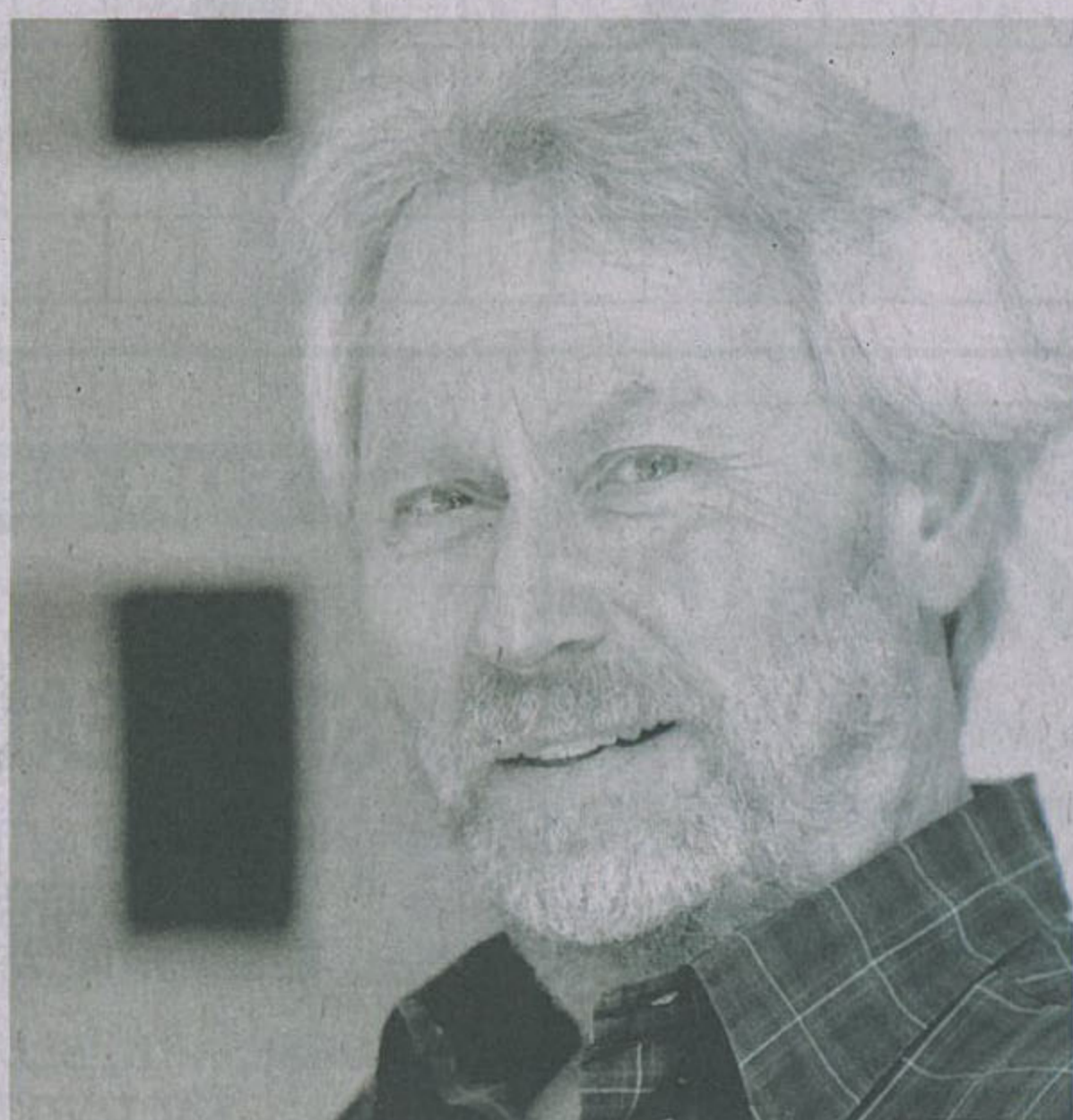


Donald Judd's signature works "Untitled" (1970), left, and "Untitled" (1992) are on display at the Kukje Gallery in central Seoul as a part of the American artist's exhibition.

Courtesy of Kukje Gallery

Donald Judd — complexity in simplest form



Portrait of Donald Judd in 1991

Courtesy of Kukje Gallery

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American artist Donald Judd (1928-1994) created "specific objects," which is neither traditional painting nor sculpture. Donald's works have certain industrial quality in them with the use of steel or wood and regular intervals. These objects create a unique sense of space and maximize the texture of material as it is while exploring the fundamentals of geometry.

Some of his "Untitled" masterpieces, such as an aluminum tube on red wooden hexahedron and steel boxes installed at a regular interval, are on display at Kukje Gallery in central Seoul and his son Flavin Judd, co-president of the Judd Foundation visited Korea to introduce his father's works.

Donald's works are in their simplest form using industrial materials such as plexiglas, steel, concrete and wood, and he was often categorized in minimalism, but the artist openly protested the term. Flavin referred his father as a "maximalist," who sought the balance between his works and life.

"Flat and monochrome paintings were not interesting enough for him. So eventually the pieces started to come off the wall and get deeper and deeper, which developed into floor pieces. Then he started to work with separate units to find space between them and it's an evolution of

his interest into space itself — a navigation of space."

Donald first worked with garbage he found on the street, which led him to his signature use of industrial materials. "He had to figure out what to do with them. He wanted to make something that is so simple that you could understand as soon as you saw it," Flavin said. "It's just a simple form. You immediately understand what it is, it's not hiding anything and there is no mystery. Don was always trying to get away from mystery or narrative."

Judd Foundation

When his father passed away in 1994, Flavin and his sister Rainer were left with Donald's artworks and his debt. Everyone told the Judd siblings to sell their father's works to clear off the debt, but they established a foundation instead.

"It was clear that it was what Don wanted to do. I had conversations (with Donald) when he was alive and he said everything should stay as it is, meaning everything should be preserved," Flavin said in a simple way. "This is what was important to him in his lifetime and we had to try."

Flavin, who is named after Donald's friend and artist Dan Flavin, recalled his childhood of growing up as a child of an artist. "You get raised in a certain way by an artist — basically everything is possible and open. What you find interesting can

be absolutely anything from anywhere at any-time, so you have less preconceived notions about how you should behave and what's good and bad."

Flavin called his father by his first name Donald, which he did since he learnt to talk as a rejection of convention. "My parents decided to so from the beginning. So when I moved to Texas where kids addressed their parents sir and ma'am, it was a big culture shock."

Flavin studied art, film, architecture and philosophy, but now he runs a foundation for his father. He is in charge of design, architecture and curating. "It's like running a small country," Flavin said. His main project was restoring 101 Spring Street, a studio of Donald in Manhattan, which re-opened to public last year, and now he is concentrating on preserving works in Marfa, Texas, where his family once lived.

"We tried to do little restoration as possible because the way it worn out was part of the space. So we tried to keep the age of the building evident," Flavin commented on the 101 Spring Street's restoration process.

Flavin grew up as a child of Donald Judd and now works to preserve his father's legacy. "This is my job to preserve someone's life, but this is what Don wanted," he said.

Donald Judd's exhibition at Kukje Gallery runs through the end of November. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.kukjegallery.com or call 02-735-8449.