

D A N I E L B U R E N

Daniel Buren is the most famous living French artist. As part of the 1990 celebrations, he came to New Zealand as a 'Living Treasure', to construct a large scale installation at Shed 11, National Gallery, Wellington. The coming exhibition at the Sue Crockford Gallery will be the first dealer exhibition of Buren's work in the Southern Hemisphere, and it will be, for many Aucklanders, their first chance to see Buren's work in the flesh.

As always with Buren, the exhibiting site will, in the artist's words, be 'defined by the work', which is 'specifically intended for a place which pre-exists it'. The work will actually be made in the Sue Crockford Gallery, responding to its specificities, so that the site of production and the site of consumption are made as one. That is, the work will be absolutely site-specific. However, there will also be what the artist has called 'the unspeakable compromise of the portable work'. These, the detachable items, will be the souvenirs of the show.

Buren's work proceeds from the extinction of the studio, and is a gesture of resistance to the cemetery of the museum: it is a kind of graffiti applied, on the spot, to innumerable sites throughout the world. This graffiti takes the invariable form of stripes, 8.7 cm wide, in alternate white and coloured sequence. It is neutral, repetitive, completely precise. It refuses the bathos of expressivity. It discovers its boundaries (its frame), its ground and its meaning wherever it finds itself. And, as if by happy accident, it is beautiful.