

CARL ANDRE
TRAVERTINE / BASALT

19 January – 05 March 2011
4 New Burlington Place London W1

Sadie Coles HQ is delighted to present an exhibition of stone sculptures by Carl Andre, comprising a sequence of works in Icelandic basalt and two major works in travertine.

Throughout his fifty year career, Andre has created sculptures by placing standard units of stone, metal or wood in simple geometric arrangements. In early works such as *Equivalents* (1966; eight different configurations of 120 bricks) and *Cuts* (1967; a negative variant in which eight voids were made by removing combinations of blocks from a grid), Andre articulated the concepts of horizontality, repetition and implied extension that have remained central to his methodology



Andre's *ALTBASE* series of floor sculptures, made in Reykjavik in 1996, consists of differently sized groups of basalt squares (12, 15, 21, 24), variously stepped and layered in order to occupy the same three-by-three grid. *GRECRUX* (Rome, 1985), one of Andre's earliest works in travertine, uses fifty-three blocks to form a square-shaped Greek cross or *crux quadrata*. Its intersecting lines accord with the artist's famous statement in 1970 that "my ideal of sculpture is a road. That is a road doesn't reveal itself at any particular point or from any particular point ... I think sculpture should have an infinite point of view." *SUM ROMA* (Marseille, 1997) arranges the same material in a thirty-unit solid triangle whose stepped form recurs throughout Andre's oeuvre.

Eschewing metaphorical connotations, the sculptures draw attention to their essential materiality and to the stone's intrinsic aesthetic qualities. The travertine works recall the material's use in iconic modernist buildings and in Roman art and architecture – an association underscored by the title of *SUM ROMA*. Andre was indeed originally inspired to use travertine by a trip past the quarries on the road to Tivoli. In common with the majority of Andre's work, these pieces also foreground the dynamic between work, viewer and architectural context. The artist has tellingly described the progression of his own work, and twentieth-century sculpture in general, as a shift in emphasis from "sculpture as form" to "sculpture as structure" and finally "sculpture as place".

Along with Donald Judd, Dan Flavin and Sol LeWitt, Andre emerged in the 1960s as one of the key exponents of Minimalism. In the late 1950s he shared a studio with Frank Stella, whose minimal black paintings of that period provided a formative influence, and in the 1960s he worked as a freight brakeman on the Pennsylvania Railroad – an experience that shaped his interest in linear forms and materials excised from pre-existing masses and contexts. A similarly significant episode was his realisation during a canoeing trip that sculpture could be "as flat as water".

Carl Andre's work has been the subject of a number of museum retrospectives, notably at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 1970; the Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, Texas, in 1978; the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in 1978; the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, in 1987; the Haus Lange und Haus Esters, Krefeld; the Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, in 1996; and the Musée Cantini, Marseilles, in 1997. Recent solo exhibitions include '@', Alfonso Artiaco, Naples, Italy, and 'Carl Andre' at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas. In 2013, Dia Art Foundation, New York, will host the first major retrospective of his work in North America.

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 Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 11 – 6pm