

Press Release

Donald Judd

A good chair is a good chair

22 September – 14 November 2010

Ikon presents the first major exhibition in the UK of furniture and related drawings by Donald Judd (1928-1994). Now regarded as one of the most important artists of the twentieth century, Judd became known as a key exponent of minimalism, although it was a label that he strongly rejected.

Working in New York in the 1960s before moving to Marfa, Texas, in 1972, Judd initially forged a career as a writer and critic, his theoretical writings on art and exhibition practice still having great relevance today. As an artist he worked across art, furniture and architecture, retaining the distinction between each discipline whilst simultaneously allowing each to inform the other. During his lifetime Judd exhibited internationally; his work is now included in numerous permanent museum collections including the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and Tate Modern (London).

A good chair is a good chair focuses exclusively on Judd's furniture, including chairs, beds, shelves, desks and tables made from solid wood, metal and ply. Charting the refinement of Judd's design and production process, it includes the presentation of actual prototypes resolved during his lifetime.

The exhibition begins with early works constructed by the artist himself, such as *Bookshelves* (1968), *Children's Desk* (1977) and *Children's Bed* (1978), rarely shown outside of Marfa. Though simply constructed from available timber-yard pine planks nailed together, these basic forms inform the later designs put into limited production by local craftsmen.

During the 1980s Judd's designs became more commercially orientated and encompassed industrial manufacturing methods. Of this work, *Desk* and *Chair* (both 1984) will be displayed, made in clear anodised aluminium and copper respectively. A set of *Ten Chairs* (1991), fabricated specifically for this exhibition, epitomise Judd's uncompromising philosophy of combining form with function, the internal space of each unit subdivided across a variety of permutations. These deceptively simple objects encompass demanding solutions to structural problems, together illustrating how different materials provide contrasting opportunities in construction and form.



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Ikon Gallery is a registered charity no. 528892

This exhibition is in collaboration with the Neue Sammlung, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, and is supported by the Henry Moore Foundation, The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation and Sebastian + Barquet, New York.

An illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition, including Judd's definitive essay *It's hard to find a good lamp*.

Ends.

Note to Editors:

1. Press Preview, Tuesday 21 September 2010, 12-8pm
2. A selection of images is shown below
3. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Free entry.
4. Ikon Gallery is a registered charity and receives core funding from Birmingham City Council and Arts Council West Midlands.
5. For more information and images please contact Helen Stallard, Press and PR Consultant, on 0774 033 9604 or h.stallard@ikon-gallery.co.uk

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|  | <p><i>Arm chair #47</i></p> <p>Judd Furniture™ © Judd Foundation courtesy of Sebastian + Barquet.</p> |
|  | <p><i>Bench #53</i></p> <p>Judd Furniture™ © Judd Foundation courtesy of Sebastian + Barquet.</p> |
|  | <p><i>Detail, Chairs (10 Examples) #84/85</i></p> <p>Judd Furniture™ © Judd Foundation courtesy of Sebastian + Barquet.</p> |