



# LIAM GILLICK

Liam Gillick's also crosses the boundary between art and design as is evident in his piece for the Yokohama Triennale 2001 which is indistinguishable from interior décor coordinated with what appears to be seating (but I am not sure whether the museum would allow the visitor to sit on these pieces). It is interesting to note that Gillick's design in the Yokohama is not especially modernist. Like other postmodern artists Gillick is eclectic, able to mix the rectangularity of classical modernist design with popist colour of the sculptural pieces and the funky curvilinearity of his wall decoration.

Adrian Searle has noted Gillick appears to be 'testing the permeability of the walls we build around different spheres of human activity' {Searle, 2002}. To his credit Searle also notes that it is not entirely clear what that statement means. What is apparent is that Gillick's work is at the opposite end of the spectrum from Arte Povera. It is slick, modernist, minimalist and corporate, but thanks to Gillick's use of colour it is also popist and, on occasion, funky.

Gillick, however, obviously wants his work to go beyond mere formalism and intersect with a social dimension via the resonance of his work with architecture. The extent to



which he is successful in this endeavour will be proven, as in the sphere of architecture, via its social function. This is problematic when one is primarily a sculptor. Pardo comes closer to solving this conundrum by pushing his practice more towards functioning design than pure sculpture. Indeed according to his LA dealer Brian Butler (in conversation with the author May 2005) Pardo has begun to employ industrial robots for his constructions. But in some instances Gillick has taken Pardo's route and applied his design sensibility to real-life architectural projects.

The most positive way of viewing Gillick's more sculptural, and less functional work, would be to compare it with a pioneer of conceptual installationism, Dan Graham. Since the 1970s Graham's installations have intersected the dimensions of sculpture, architecture and a concern with human perception. This approach seems to be akin to what Gillick is trying to achieve. However, in the case of Gillick's work style seems more salient than concept whereas in Graham's work the reverse is the case. Graham has never been a formalist whereas like his minimalist predecessors (in particular Donald Judd) Gillick does travel very close to the formalist tradition.