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In an Unlikely Pairing, Vito Schnabel Announces Collaboration With Dan Flavin Estate

by Eileen Kinsella
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Dan Flavin, *untitled (to Lucie Rie, master potter) 1y*; Photo by Dorothy Zeldman; © Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS)/New York; Image Courtesy Rubin/Spangle Gallery.

Gallerist Vito Schnabel has announced a collaboration with the estate of Dan Flavin. Schnabel is teaming up with the artist's son, Stephen Flavin, to present the Minimalist's light sculptures alongside works by European ceramicists he admired and collected. The show, curated by Flavin, marks the first time these works have been displayed side by side.

Flavin was so inspired by the British potter Lucie Rie and her protégé Hans Coper that he created two series of light works in their names in 1990. The show at Schnabel's St. Moritz gallery, due to open on December 19, will juxtapose 18 works from these series alongside 15 vessels from Flavin's personal collection, which he began assembling in the 1980s.

DAN FLAVIN



Left: Dan Flavin, *untitled (to Lucie Rie, master potter) 1rrr*, 1990. © Stephen Flavin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Courtesy Rubin/Spangle Gallery. Right: Hans Coper, *Spade*, c. 1970. © Estate of the Artist; Collection of the Estate of Dan Flavin.

Rie and Coper are regarded as the preeminent British potters of the latter half of the 20th century. Both were refugees from Nazism: Rie emigrated from Vienna in 1938 at the age of 36 and Coper fled Germany in 1939 at 19.

A pioneer of conceptual art and two leading Modernist potters might seem, at first, like an odd pairing. Flavin's best known body of work—commercially available fluorescent light bulbs—is famous precisely because it does not contain a trace of the artist's hand. But the show is meant to illustrate the artists' common interest in pushing the boundaries of sculptural tradition and exploring the essential elements of form.

The pairing between Flavin and Schnabel is also somewhat unlikely. Schnabel tends to work with living artists, such as Sterling Ruby and the Bruce High Quality Foundation. Flavin's estate, meanwhile, is most often associated with mega-galleries. (David Zwirner Gallery will continue to be the estate's primary representative.)

"Flavin's work has always resonated deeply with me, so it's a special honor to begin a collaboration with the Dan Flavin estate," Schnabel told *artnet News* via email, noting that the upcoming show is the start of an ongoing relationship.

Schnabel and Flavin worked together closely on both the show and a forthcoming catalogue, which will include essays by Marianne Stockebrand, the former director of the Chinati Foundation, as well as art historian Jenni Sorokin.



Flavin at his home in Wainscott, New York, 1995; Courtesy of Stephen Flavin.



Lucie and Hans in a taxi, c. 1960; Photograph by Jane Coper.

DAN FLAVIN

The collaboration will “explore Flavin’s work through exhibitions, research, and publications that can contribute to the ongoing conversation about how this remarkable American artist changed the course of things,” Schnabel says.

“I appreciate Vito’s interest in and enthusiasm for my father’s work,” Flavin, who oversees his father’s estate, told *artnet News*. “He has a very good eye and has built an excellent gallery. It has been many years—in some cases over 25 years—since these installations were seen. I look forward to seeing them illuminate St. Moritz.”

Dan Flavin, to Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, master potters at Vito Schnabel Gallery, Via Maistra 37, St. Moritz, Switzerland, runs December 19–February 4.



Lucie Rie, *porcelain bowl with small foot*, green and rose colored glaze and bronze metallic glaze dripped on top. © Estate of the artist. Courtesy Collection of the Estate of Dan Flavin.