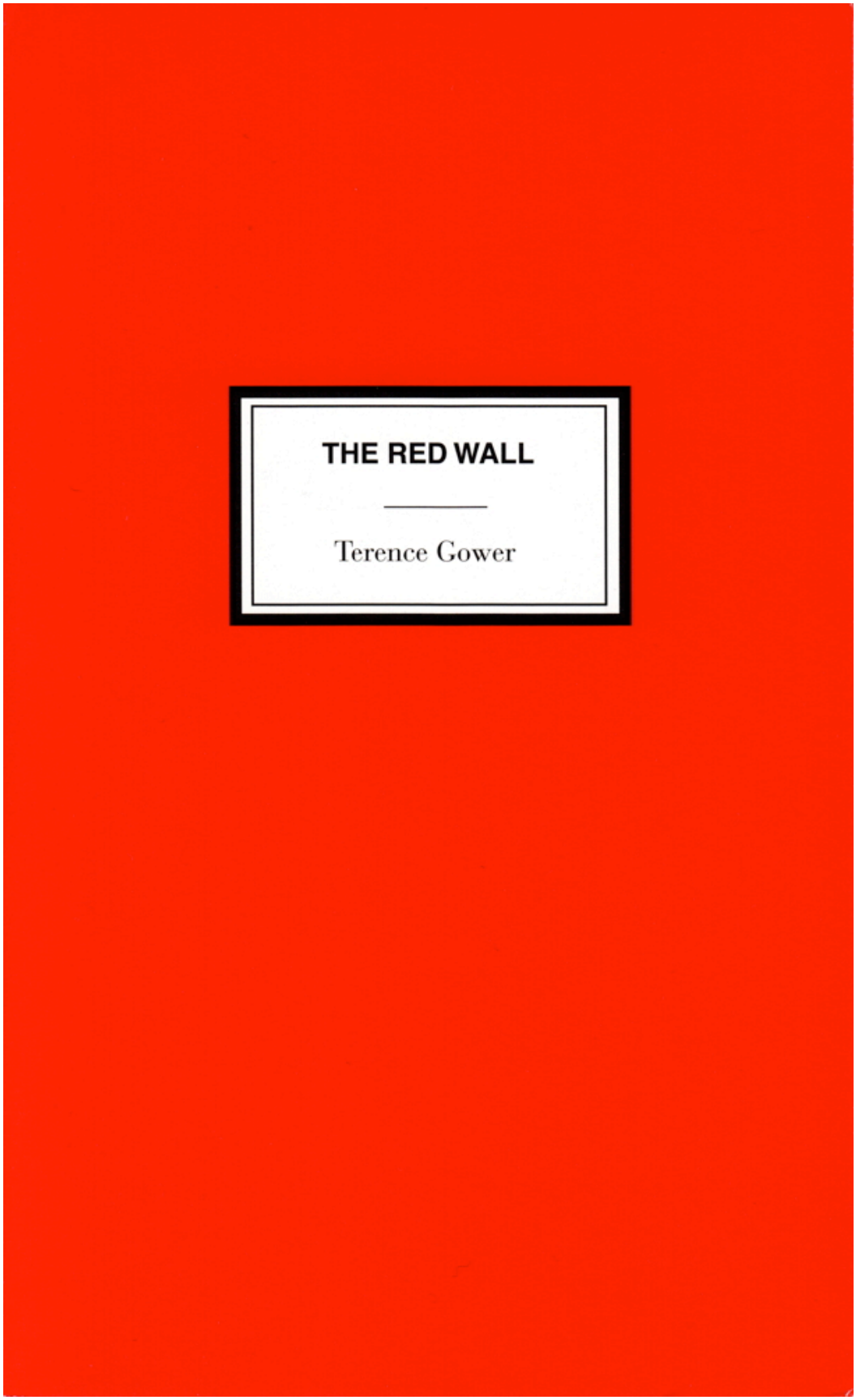
Queens Museum: The Red Wall

The Red Wall

Offset on card, single fold, 20.6 x 12.6 cm

Printed to accompany artist’s project at the Queens Museum, New York in 2004.

Related Project: The Red Wall (Queens I & II)


THE RED WALL
Terence Gower

Donald Judd: *The Red Wall...*

Theo van Doesburg: *It reminds me of my architectural interventions in the 1920's. I used to think we should create a new profession called "architectural colorist."*

Le Corbusier: *Well, I would say that it existed and that you were its first Modernist practitioner, though it was only one of the many hats you were wearing at the time... painter, writer, architect? Perhaps as early as 1917, when you introduced the concept of* das kolorierte Haus, *you became the first Modernist architectural colorist.*

TD: *Yes, the colored house. That's where I started the practice of "freeing" adjacent planes through the application of contrasting colors.*

LC: *But there was often a violence to your color juxtapositions, particularly when you introduced red planes. You really altered the formal and spatial appearance of buildings. These interventions struck me as very close to what Moholy-Nagy described as* sculpting *space with color.*

DJ: *I think Theo's was an incredibly dynamic and unprecedented use of color. What came after him was really just decoration.*

LC: *I would have to disagree. Think of the color schemes I worked out, often in collaboration with Amédée Ozenfant, who later became a* real *architectural colorist. I felt, and still feel, that colors should highlight the existing spatial qualities of a room. I like to paint a wall red to "hold the wall." But I do agree with Theo's early color applications, in which adjacent planes were always painted distinct colors.*

DJ: *Here is where I disagree with both of you. In the early 1960s I was painting entire objects cadmium red. Painting everything red was a way to show off the tonal contrast of adjacent planes. Red functioned like gray. I really can't see how colors can "hold" or "free" things—I see things as much more reduced, optically.*

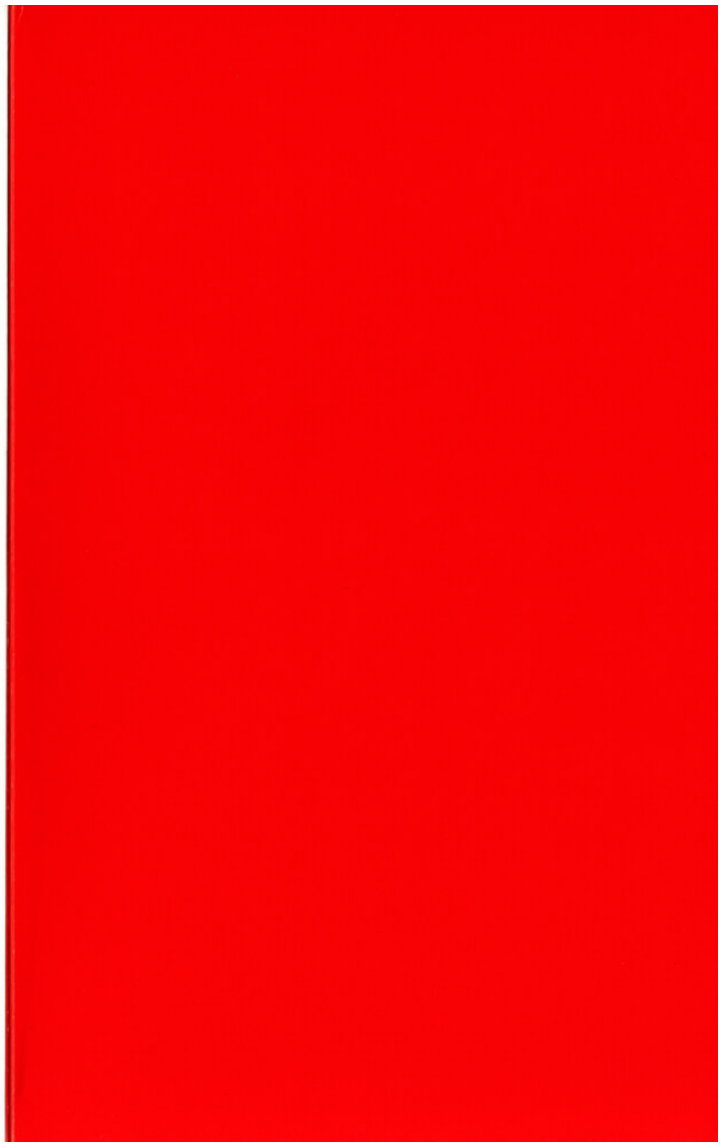
LC: *I prefer a deep red with some burnt sienna. You see it on a principal wall of my Villa Cook from 1926. It's really a constructive color used in all the great periods—excellent for volume.*

TD: *I use a scarlet, but always juxtaposed with other colored planes, frequently white. The planes become so clearly defined that space can be perceived at a glance, in the blink of an eye. Not like your slow progressions up ramps and around curved walls.*

LC: *Ah yes, the progression, the promenade...*

DJ: *...and the mystery... I'm more for clarity. The planes of my red floor pieces defined against the plane of the floor. It's a clear transition from plane to plane, but it's also rather a quiet one, located somewhere between Theo's flash and Corbusier's slow progression...*

Theo van Doesburg (1883 - 1931) Painter and writer, editor of the Dutch journal *de Stijl* from 1917 to 1931
Le Corbusier (1887 - 1965) Architect and planner, developed the influential theories of Functionalism and Purism in France in the 1920s
Donald Judd (1928 - 1994) Artist, considered a leading figure of the Minimalist movement in New York in the 1960s



The Red Wall
A Project for the Queens Museum of Art
July 18 to October 24th, 2004

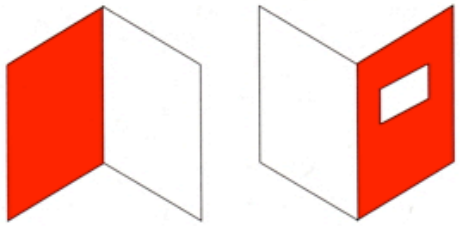
The Red Wall is a site-specific installation by Terence Gower. The artist has had the wall of the ramp which links the museum's two floors painted red, an intervention that experiments with the optical and spatial effects of color in architecture.

Moving up the ramp, the viewer encounters a small, framed text mounted on this wall. The text is a fictional dialogue among three prominent figures from twentieth century art and architecture: Theo van Doesburg, Le Corbusier, and Donald Judd. Each comment is based on an actual quote from the speaker on the effects of color in architecture or a more specific observation of the color red and its influence on formal and spatial perception.

Terence Gower has been working on representations of Modernist architecture for the past three years. A related project, *Color/Plane Study* (2004), was shown recently at Art in General in Manhattan. It was a large architectural wall-drawing showing a hypothetical space made up of distinctly colored planes. *The Red Wall*, installed at the Queens Museum, translates the *Color/Plane Study* to real space, and offers the viewer her/his own experience of the color red in architecture.

The Red Wall is made possible by The Greenwall Foundation, Cowles Charitable Trust, The Lily Auchincloss Foundation, and the Canadian Consulate in New York.

Note:
The pamphlet for *The Red Wall* also functions as a *Color/Plane Study,* featuring distinct red planes juxtaposed with white.



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QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART