

Larry Bell

THE CHINATI FOUNDATION
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Larry Bell's *6 x 6 an improvisation*, 2014, pares the cube to its essential component: the right angle. Extending his series of "Standing Walls" begun in 1968, this site-responsive work consists of thirty-two glass panels, each six feet square and perpendicularly paired with another. Staggered throughout a U-shaped room, the corners thus formed are unseamed and removed of human touch. Alternately clear or coated in nickel-chrome, they present lush mineral hues. Puce and slate shade into obsidian, shifting with one's position like the gleam of gasoline in water.

The glass's chromatic contingency is heightened by its finish, here reflective, there transparent. As with Dan Flavin's fluorescent fixtures, the crisp contours of each panel oppose the immaterial effects of light. Color features as both a halation and a solid, projecting in hazy geometries that fail to resolve. Viewed from certain angles, the corners deliquesce, their surface so smooth that they slide into their surrounds. Dematerialization becomes a process observable in real time.

Since 1959, Bell's work has mined the possibilities of glass, using its properties to test the limits of Euclidean space. He treats the material as a prosthesis, a tool for amplifying the capacities of the human eye, otherwise constrained by the inefficiencies of fovea and lens. Filtered by Bell's corners, space assumes another dimension. Images of one's body laminate views of the room and reflections of the structure, multiplied en abyme. Space spreads into so many facsimiles of itself, the precise location of which is impossible to ascertain. The effect is both excessive and exquisite, a vitreous sublime.



Larry Bell, *6 x 6 an improvisation*, 2014, thirty-two glass panels, each 6 x 6'.

— Courtney Fiske