

At Aicon, Rasheed Araeen Shows Minimalism Engineered for Real Life

THE DAILY PIC: The Pakistani Londoner lets real engineering trump
Platonic Ideals

Blake Gopnik, May 27, 2015



THE DAILY PIC: I raved about the British Minimalism of Rasheed Araeen when it was on view last year in the Jewish Museum group show called “Other Primary Structured”. Now Araeen has a solo at Aicon Gallery in New York; it includes today’s Daily Pic, titled *First Structure* and conceived in 1966-67 (i.e., at the same moment when New York’s Minimal art was coming together).

Araeen was trained in Pakistan, as a civil engineer, before starting his art career in London in 1964. What I particularly enjoy in work like today’s is that it embraces the idea of built structures with real engineering demands, instead of resorting to the idealized, pseudo-industrial solids of figures like Donald Judd. (See Josiah McElheny’s brilliant Artforum article on industrial pseuds from 2004.)

Araeen’s cross-brace is the most important thing about his piece, in that it recognizes that a perfect-pure cube can only exist, in reality, with the help of a diagonal. After seeing Araeen’s work, American Minimalism feels fatally indebted to the Old World Platonic forms of Mondrian.