Bard exhibition features Liam Gillick

Influential artist’s work from the ’90s on display

A new art exhibit at the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College will focus on artist Liam Gillick’s works from the 1990s that helped push for a new awareness of how art institutions function.

Through Dec. 21, in celebration of its 20th anniversary, the Bard Center for Curatorial Studies presents “199A to 199B: Liam Gillick” an exhibition featuring more than a dozen projects from the influential Gillick, including specific projects that will debut in the United States.

Gillick was nominated for the Turner Prize in London in 2002 and the Vincent Award in 2008. In addition, in 2009, Gillick was also chosen to represent Germany for the 53rd Venice Biennale.

The official press release said, “Considering the relationship between the artist, the institution and the audience to be mutually co-dependent in the creation of meaning, Gillick created situations in which the outcome was incomplete without involving the institution and questioning the expanded role of the exhibition visitor.”

“He didn’t make artwork where you can just stand and look at,” according to Tom Eccles, the center’s executive director and curator for the event. “These are spaces where something happens so essentially it’s up to the viewer and the institution to create what happens in that space.”

According to Eccles, the exhibit features projects created by Gillick that portray specific scenarios being played out, a number of which feature current Bard students and alumni interacting with the environment established within the exhibit to bring a more realistic experience to visitors.

“One example would be the exhibit ‘The Moral Maze’ where students from our Human Rights Project interview people who have
been involved in some form of questionable moral activity," Eccles said.

Another example, is Gillick's "What if Scenario," a series of projects that require the viewer to participate in specific tasks. "Dining Table" will feature a table-tennis table with no net, paddles, a shaker filled with glitter and a ball. The visitor is encouraged to create a unique game and rules and play it.

The projects at the exhibit were created in Europe during a decade revolving around a shifting art world overseas.

"We did not want to have a fixed position because we realized that the '90s were really elastic. Some of the values of the period never really went away in art, strangely enough," Gillick said.

"Questions (arose) about social function, the role of the audience and where the artist stood in relation to things."