

Impact of performance and video *Concerning the Difference Between the Delights of Pleasure and True Happiness*, Swedenborg Society, London, 2010

Interview with Stephen McNeilly, curator of the Swedenborg Society, on 19 April 2013.

Do you think the work has influenced the methods or ideas of anyone at the Society, or anyone who saw the work live or who has subsequently viewed the video?

Judd's work opened up Swedenborg House to the possibility of this type of work. It was the first time performance had ever taken place in the building. As a result, the Society was able to view itself and view its space in a different way. This had a significant impact on the Society. Also, the work itself radically changed the way the Society's members perceive their own relationship to Swedenborg. It was a revelation for them to see Judd come to the society and reuse Swedenborg's text in the way he did, in Swedenborg House. It has therefore altered the cultural values of the Society.

The Society has a public profile, and it does connect with thousands of people. Judd's work helped positively change the relationship between the public and the Society – it helped the public see us in a new way. After the exhibition, the Society is being viewed much more as a place of cultural exchange, where ideas to do with Swedenborg are no longer restricted to the realm of a dry academic discourse, there has been an explosion of new types of discourse, such as performance. Judd's work opened up new ways of viewing Swedenborg's work and the building itself.

The fact that we now have a wide range of members of the public in contact with us, who weren't before the performance, is evidence of its success and impact.

Did the work, as part of the exhibition *14 Interventions*, help the Society adapt to changing cultural values? Has the work presented an aspect of cultural heritage in this country, and if so has it helped to preserve and conserve it?

Judd's new way of engaging with the legacy of Swedenborg has helped to preserve and conserve it. Judd's work opened the legacy up to a new aesthetic, cultural, social value system that it didn't have before. New conversations emerged as a result of Judd's work, therefore the frame of reference around Swedenborg becomes broader and more legitimate.

Before the exhibition, Swedenborg was regarded as a marginal historical figure, and now suddenly he has become a focal point for a range of cultural,

literary and artistic perspectives. Our cultural heritage around him is shifting accordingly. Judd's work and his approach to it was a significant step in that direction.

Has the work helped to create, inspire and support new forms of artistic, literary, linguistic, social or religious expression?

Yes, since the exhibition, we continually receive proposals from artists to stage new performances within the Society. Judd's work has allowed people to view the space in a completely different way. Regarding religious expression, Judd's work did a very good job of consequently helping to strip Swedenborg's legacy of dogmatism, or of preconceived notions. He did this by pulling it into a space and allowing the material to engage in a new context. Judd's work helped to create, inspire and support new forms of religious expression by allowing the audience to see Swedenborg's religious context in a completely new way. The work positively challenged people with an orthodox Swedenborgian background to review their existing approach to the material.

As an example, there were many orthodox Swedenborgians there at Judd's performance, and they responded very positively to the work. Judd's work opened up a space for them to view Swedenborg differently; his approach to the material was quite open, and that had an impact.

It also had an impact on people from an art background, who found Judd's use of the space ambitious and engaging. People said that Judd's work was the most ambitious within the exhibition *14 Interventions*, and engaged most directly with the material.