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EXHIBITION: JOHN McCracken - NEW SCULPTURE

DATES: January 29 – February 28, 2004
Reception: January 29, 6 to 8 PM

Opening on January 29, the gallery will present recent sculptures by American artist John McCracken. This will be the third exhibition at David Zwirner of the New Mexico-based sculptor. John McCracken's work has been steadily exhibited in New York since the mid-1960s, and internationally since the early 1970's. His work will be included in *A Minimal Future? Art as Object 1958-1968*, the upcoming survey of Minimalism at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, opening in March 2004. A solo exhibition will open in October 2004 at the Museum for Contemporary Art in Gent, Belgium.

While Minimalist artists such as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Dan Flavin were gaining success with their new abstract work in New York in the mid-60's, McCracken was experimenting in Los Angeles with a similar vernacular. Having started his career as a painter, McCracken soon left the constraints of the picture frame in favor of a more three-dimensional understanding of painting. In 1966 he developed his signature sculptural form, which he continues to make today: the *plank*. These tall sculptures literally and formally define the space between painting and sculpture. With his simple gesture of leaning a monochromatic, rectangular, resin plank so it rests on the floor and wall, McCracken created a definitive work within the primary concerns of Minimalism: the desire to leave the two dimensionality of the picture plane for a new art that references and includes both architecture and the viewer.

McCracken continued to expand his vocabulary, creating works he called "columns, slabs, blocks, basic beautiful forms, neutral forms". In recent years, McCracken has increasingly experimented with more complex shapes, many of which are wall-mounted. At the same time, he continues to work on his trademark *planks* and his monolithic *columns*. For this exhibition McCracken has made a group of freestanding *columns*, a color chart, and two signature *planks*.

McCracken has stated that he uses color as "material". The inherent abstract qualities of pure color make it the perfect "other" material alongside pure form, providing the two basic tenets of McCracken's sculptural vernacular. While the bold colors and very slick and shiny surfaces of his sculptures seem to reject the appearance of the handcrafted, McCracken has always made his work himself. Although his Minimalist peers largely turned to fabricators to bring their work into existence, McCracken's works are products of a slow and laborious process of woodworking, resin application, and finishing. The monochrome surfaces are sanded and polished many times to such a degree of reflectiveness that they seem translucent. Thus the objects gain a singular and almost otherworldly quality: they are physical, yet at the same time immaterial. As the artist states: "I am after a physical object that appears to be nonphysical, hallucinatory or holographic." Ideally they aim to mirror the most ephemeral of all abstractions, that of pure thought.

For further information and visuals please contact the gallery or visit us online at www.davidzwirner.com