

# François Morellet

## Annely Juda Fine Art | London

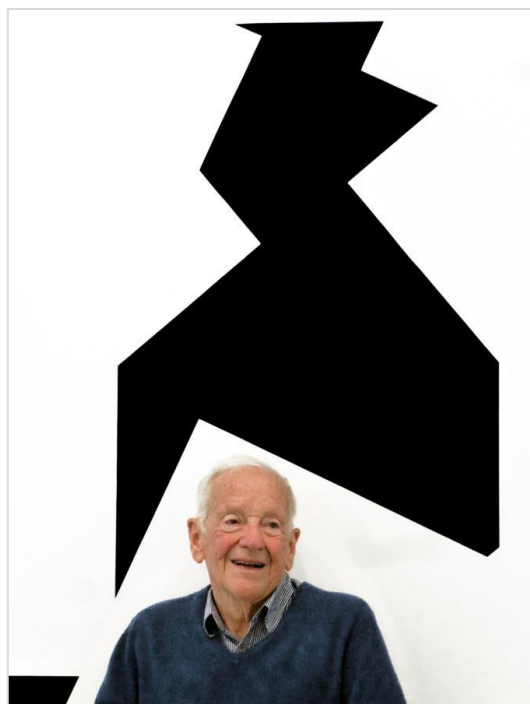
5 April – 9 July 2016

## The Mayor Gallery | London

6 April – 27 May 2016

## Dan Galeria | São Paulo

23 April – 31 May 2016



François Morellet in his studio. Courtesy Studio Morellet, Cholet.

**This April, three important exhibitions will take place to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of François Morellet, a major international figure and widely regarded as one of the most important French artists working today.**

The exhibitions offer an exceptional opportunity to review the long and pioneering career of Morellet and will include 30 significant works from the 1960s and 1970s at The Mayor Gallery, London and Dan Galeria, São Paulo, as well as 16 new and recent neon works and paintings at Annely Juda Fine Art, London. Annely Juda Fine Art will publish a catalogue with a contribution from the artist and the Mayor Gallery and Dan Galeria will publish a catalogue with contributions from Serge Lemoine and Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Few artists have enjoyed such a long and illustrious international career, pursued with playful invention at more than 130 solo exhibitions which have included being honoured with a major retrospective at the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 2011, as well as exhibitions at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; Modern Art Oxford and MoMA, New York.

Since he first began making work in the 1950s, Morellet has been engaged in creating work which has expanded the very definition of what abstract art can be, whilst also seeking to free the artist from his subjective function in the act of making. This pioneering approach has included using chance and simple mathematical formulas to produce complex grids and patterns for his paintings, and in his role as a founding member of the influential French collective, Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV), making playful and often disorientating installations which demand active participation from the spectator.

*'In order to channel my sensibility as an 'Artist', I did away with composition, removed any interesting aspects of execution and rigorously applied simple, straightforward systems that could develop in a completely random way by means of participation.....The Plastic arts should allow the spectator to find what he wants, in other words what he brings to them. Artworks are picnic areas, places where you take potluck consuming whatever you have brought along.'*\*

\*François Morellet, 'Du spectateur au spectateur ou l'art de débarrer son pique-nique' (1971)

The dynamic spirit of modernism of the 60s was also channelled through his use of materials which notably included the adoption of tape and neon, Morellet explained, *'We were passionate about modern materials that hadn't been 'polluted' by traditional art.'* Or, as he also stated, creating work using neon in which *'the light source itself, not its reflection, is regarded as a plastic material'*\*\*

\*\*François Morellet, 'Les sources lumineuses directes dans l'art' (1966)

The final, transformative element of Morellet's work, which has seen him dubbed the 'precisionist punster', is the humour and love of word play which runs through all his production and which has elevated it from the austere to a response more akin to the subversive freedom and fun of Dada.

Morellet commented on this aspect with typical wry humour in a recent interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist; *'without humour, everything can become indigestible, that is to say in my work and in my life in general. If I had to speak seriously about humour, this could impair my own health'.*

Morellet's work is held in numerous important public collections around the world, including Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA and The Guggenheim Museum but it is the element of play and playfulness which continues to animate and inspire this great artist to create work in his 9<sup>th</sup> decade from his childhood home in the town of Cholet in the Loire region of France.

*'My work is based on a game with constraints, which is why I love so much ephemeral installations, and site-specific commissions for architecture. When there are no constraints I invent them for with my systems and chance. The need of its full realisation is one of my basic constraints before imagining a project. Furthermore, I have never been impressed by huge things – as a child I annoyed my parents by my fascination with the gravel at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, rather than tower itself'.*

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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#### **Annely Juda Fine Art**

• Established in 1960 • Specialises in British and International Contemporary, Russian Constructivism and masters of 20<sup>th</sup> century avant garde. • Represents artists including Anthony Caro, Christo, David Hockney, Leon Kossoff and the Estate of Naum Gabo.

François Morellet has had five one-man shows at Annely Juda Fine Art in 1977, 1981, 1990, 2008, 2011.

#### **Mayor Gallery**

• Established in 1925. First Gallery to open in Cork Street, Mayfair, London • The first gallery to show artists for the first time in London such as Bacon, Calder and Miro, later specializing in leading American artists including Lichtenstein, Martin, Rauschenberg, Ryman, Warhol and Conceptualism • Promoting ZERO and affiliated movements for more than 15 years.

François Morellet has previously been shown in two curated exhibitions at Mayor Gallery in 2012 and 2015. Morellet's 90th birthday is the perfect occasion to celebrate his work after several years of exhibiting at the Mayor gallery.

#### **EXHIBITION FACTS:**

**Dates:** Annely Juda Fine Art: 5 April – 9 July | The Mayor Gallery: 6 April – 27 May

**Locations:** Annely Juda Fine Art, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 23 Dering Street, London W1S 1AW | The Mayor Gallery, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 21 Cork Street, London W1S 3LZ

**Opening Hours:** Annely Juda: Monday – Friday 10:00-18:00, Saturday 11:00-17:00 | The Mayor Gallery: Monday – Friday 10:00-17:30

**Websites:** [www.annelyjudafineart.co.uk](http://www.annelyjudafineart.co.uk) | [www.mayorgallery.com](http://www.mayorgallery.com)

**Twitter:** @Annely\_Juda | @MayorGallery