

François Morellet

François Morellet (1926-2016) is widely recognised as a key representative of the Concrete Art movement. Morellet began making art in the mid 1940s, self-taught, his early paintings depicted realist still-life subjects. However, in the 1950s Morellet became heavily influenced by the Neo-Plasticism and Concrete-Constructivist group, in particular the works of Piet Mondrian and Max Bill, whose abstract and geometric principles influenced the way in which Morellet saw the picture field as an infinite structure reaching beyond the confines of the picture itself.

In the 1960's Morellet co-founded the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuelle (GRAV) with Le Parc, Sobrino, Yvaral and others; an experimental group, focusing on the creation of installations using non-traditional art materials. Working in an anonymous way, Morellet reduced the role of the artist's sensibility to a minimum - a distinct shift away from the egoism associated with Art Informel and Abstract Expressionist painters of this time. It was around this time that Morellet began working with neon. Morellet says of this time, 'We were passionate about modern materials that hadn't yet been 'polluted' by traditional art.' As well as optics and movement, Morellet was interested in using systems which combine logic and chance, juxtaposition, overlapping, interferences and fragmentation.

It was this exploration into the kinetic perception which brought Morellet's work critical acclaim, using systematic patterns, lattices and grids, his work created vibrant optical effects. Works such as *Sphère-Trame* (1962), created using intersecting steel rods created a dynamic multi-perspective work which challenged the relationship between perception and environment. Morellet works with mathematics, rules and constraints to establish guides for the creation of his works, but allows chance to play in his compositions, as with the colour dissemination of his *Random Distribution* screenprints of 1960.

Morellet's oeuvre attests to the acceptance of a world, as he said, 'governed solely by chance and tricks'. Combining chance with wit and playfulness, Morellet's interest lies primarily in a reality reigned by chance, and the relationship between the creator and the role of the audience in viewing a work. By reducing his arbitrary decisions to a minimum, de-personalizing the subjective processes, he endeavors to be anonymous, thus widening the realm of the viewer's interpretation. Through scattering and disseminating at random, many of his works are able to adapt and respond directly to all environments in which they are placed, creating consistently unique viewing experiences. By working in this unsystematic way, Morellet is able to take advantage of forms offered by chance, which often guide the development of many of his installations, not only changing the form of his works, but the environment in which these works are directly shown.

Selected recent solo exhibitions include; *François Morellet*, Dia:Chelsea and Dia:Beacon, New York, US (2017); *Henri Chotteau legacy: François Morellet*, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK), Gent, BE (2014); *François Morellet: du Pompidou Mobile au MuMa*, Musée d'art moderne André Malraux, Le Havre, FR (2013); *François Morellet: Lamentable*, Kunstverein Ruhr e.V., Essen, DE (2012); *François Morellet*, Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, KR (2011); *François Morellet:*

Réinstallations, Centre Pompidou Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, FR (2011) and *François Morellet, L'esprit d'escalier*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, FR (2010).