RELATED EVENTS

PERMANENT COLLECTION
Continue your visit in room 8 located on the museum’s third floor to discover minimal and conceptual artworks selected from the Bernar Venet collection.

PARTNER EXHIBITION AT THE MAC LYON
From 21 September 2018 to 6 January 2019, the MAC Lyon is showing the Bernar Venet, Retrospective 1959-2019 exhibition curated by Thierry Raspail.

SUNDAY SAUNTER
Sunday 14 October 2018 at 11 am, Valentine Dechambre, a psychiatrist practicing in Clermont-Ferrand and member of the AIDPS (Association of Psychoanalysts and Themes of the ACP - Association of Psychoanalysts and Themes of the ACP) invites you to come and see the exhibition Bernar Venet, the conceptual years, 1966-1976. Valentine Dechambre will share her singular observations of this artist’s period of production joined by Hélène Guenin, Director of the MAMAC, and the artist himself.

CONVERSATION AND PERFORMANCES
Friday 12 October 2018, 7-8 pm
Bernar Venet, Performances 1968-2018
Tying in with the exhibition dedicated to Bernar Venet and Fôle de la Science, the MAMAC is holding an evening of performances first staged at the Judson Theatre in New York in 1968 with the participation of scientists alternating with readings of poems by the artist. An unforgettable evening devised by and in the presence of Bernar Venet. This evening is organized in close collaboration with the ICA (Université Nice Côte d’Azur) and J.A. Clavéronne’s mathematics laboratory.
Museum auditorium – Free admission

Saturday 13 October 2018, 7 pm to midnight
Late night launch of the Festival est trop court! (Short Film Festival in Nice)
The MAMAC is opening its doors for an evening in partnership with the Héliotrope association and the Festival est trop court! for a dance and cinema night with the artistic collaboration of Eric Oberdorff from dance troupe Compagnie Humaine.
To celebrate the opening of the 18th European Short Film Festival in Nice, the museum will be inviting the public to visit its permanent collections, the Bernar Venet, the exhibition conceptual years, 1966-1979 and Framing Judson Dance 1960-1969, also the Sosno garden amphitheatre and terraces. Dance is the beating heart of the programme for this latest edition of Un Festival c’est trop court! A call for films on the theme of dance was launched especially for this exceptional evening. This programme of this multidisciplinary event includes screenings in the Sosno court! A call for films on the theme of dance was launched especially for this exceptional evening. Un Festival c’est trop court! for a dance and cinema night with the artistic collaboration of Eric Oberdorff from dance troupe Compagnie Humaine.

CONVERSATION AND PERFORMANCES
Wednesday 7 November 2018: Conversation with artist Bernar Venet talking about his career and his conceptual decade 1966-1976.
Guided exhibition tours:
> Every Saturday at 3 pm in French and 4 pm in English
Individual price: €6, includes museum admission (free for under 13s)
Group price (10-30 visitors): €20
> Guided tour for school parties (booking compulsory)
Single price: €50 per class for schools – free for schools in the Métropole Nice Côte d’Azur

PUBLICATIONS
On sale at the museum shop
Bernar Venet, special issue of Beaux-Art Magazine. Texts by Renoud Fauvar and Judith Lavarrière. In partnership with the exhibitions at the MAMAC Nice and MAC Lyon.
Bernar Venet catalogue – the conceptual years, 1966-1976 (French/English) with texts by Catherine Millet, Alexandre Quoi, Erik Verhagen, Hélène Guenin, published by Dilecta.
Bernar Venet catalogue – retrospective, 2019-1959 (French/English) with texts by Thierry De Duve, Donald Grau, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, published by Dilecta.

MAMAC, 2nd floor
Exhibition running until 13 January 2019
Curated by Hélène Guenin, Director of the MAMAC, and Alexandre Quoi, Art Historian
Every day from 11 am to 6 pm except Monday (closed 25 December, 1 January, Easter Sunday and 1 May).
+33 (0)4 97 13 42 01 - www.mamac-nice.org

AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF
VENET-THE CONCEPTUAL YEARS

Born in 1941 in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Bernar Venet is a multidisciplinary artist who splits his time between the south of France and New York and is perhaps best known for his monumental steel sculptures. Yet with the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, Bernar Venet established himself as a major proponent of conceptual art. Alongside Sol LeWitt, On Kawara, Joseph Kosuth, and Art & Language, he contributed to spearheading this sweeping movement that totally transformed the art scene in the second half of the 20th century.

In pursuit of this, Bernar Venet introduced various fields of scientific knowledge into the artistic sphere.

By presenting what are usually defined as ‘mathematical objects’, numbers, figures, spaces, functions, relationships, structures, etc., an artwork is able to elevate itself to the greatest level of abstraction, which was foreign to it. The ‘non-referential’ is stretched to its furthest limits. We no longer have symbolism, as in abstract art, nor that of form or colour for example... I offer an optimum self-referential system, which can only be contained in a mathematical equation.

After a spell living and working in Nice in the early 1960s, Bernar Venet went through two distinct but complementary periods, between 1966 and 1976, primarily in New York, an international epicentre of the American art scene, conceptual art and abstract art. For example... I offer an optimum self-referential system, which can only be contained in a mathematical equation.

In pursuit of this, Bernar Venet introduced various fields of scientific knowledge into the artistic sphere.

VENET PROTO-CONCEPTUEL

Bernar Venet, Tube no. 150x45x60x1000, 1966. Drawing on graph paper and Bakelita tube. 15 x 100 cm. Donated by the artist in 1999. MAMAC collection, Nice. © Adagp, Paris 2019 - Photo: Muriel Anssens/Villa de Nice

A sounding board for his nascent theorems on the art and the status of the artist. In 1961, Venet’s earliest years were characterized by a ‘painting’ created by tar that had spilled and run down a cliff face. This period was characterized by the artist’s use of gravity, covered surfaces and industrial materials boxes, tar, industrial paint, waste and such. Bernar Venet produced monochrome works, mainly black, and showed a preference for materials in their raw state as seen in the iconic ‘Tube de charbon’ (Tube of Coal) in 1963. Venet had his sights on destroying the artist’s ‘hand’ and traditional processes of pictorial practice which also prompted him to introduce innovative approaches to composition. In 1963, he created Methode de recouvrement d’un tableau (Method for Covering a Painting) instructions showing the owner of the canvas, divided into equal rectangles, how to assemble it and then destroy it once it was completely covered. This work heralded the artist’s conceptual future, which was further confirmed in 1966 when he presented a tube accompanied by an industrial drawing.

THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE

Bernar Venet, Lignes obliques [Nine Oblique Lines], 1986. Black painted rolled steel, 4.5 metres high.

In 1966, Bernar Venet swapped Nice for New York, where he joined Arman. This was an opportunity for him to come face to face with artistic refection that would clarify his own conceptual empowerment. By mixing with a network of vital figures on the New York art scene, Venet was inspired by his period of unique abstraction, emulated and began to assemble a minimal and conceptual art collection of pieces by Donald Judd, On Kawara, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris and others. Today, these pieces form the Venet Foundation collection and are on display in room 8 of the MAMAC as a continuation of this exhibition. These works provide a thread we can follow to understand the artist’s journey and place him on an international aesthetic and artistic landscape.

1966-1970 THE VENET ‘PROGRAMME’

Between 1966 and 1970, Bernar Venet pursued a programme at the end of which he made the decision to cease his artistic practice. On the search for objectivity in art and a new concrete abstraction, he produced mathematical technical drawings inspired by scientific disciplines that he chose based on a number of criteria—potential for self-referentiality, actuality and degree of abstraction of the subject, and so forth. From 1966 to 1970, Venet explored myriad fields including but not limited to astrophysics, nuclear physics, meteorology, the stock market, metamathematics, sociology and mathematical logic. From these fields of knowledge, which he transposed to the artistic sphere, he singled out the most recent discoveries and advancements and combined them with various media. In succession, he explored meticulously copying mathematical diagrams onto canvas, transcribing scientific data onto large sheets of graph paper, blowing up photos of data extracted from scientific journals or textbooks, switching from conference performance to sound recording to wall drawing.

What this diversity of media in fact shows is Bernar Venet’s deliberate intention to switch up forms of presentation to highlight the authority of content, the idea, over appearance. Characteristic of conceptual art, the process of prioritising thought over action and the neutrality of the artist’s personal expression gradually pushed Venet towards abandoning manual copying—which might afford the spectator a margin for interpretation—in favour of photographic transcribing or the intervention of scientists at performed conferences.

1 Interview with Bernar Venet by Philippe Piguet, ‘Bernar Venet variations pour équations’, © Bernar Venet Archives, New York

2 Domaine du Muy became home to the Venet Foundation which houses a part of his oeuvre and his minimal and conceptual art collection.

Renaectment of the Walldrawings

Hommage à Rodtchenko and Calci de la diagonale d’un rectangle were conceived for MoMA PS1, where Venet was participating in the exhibition revolving around the question of drawing. A Great Big Drawing Show, in 1979, along with Mel Bochner, Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt and others. His wall drawings have been recreated for the first time along a corridor at the MAMAC show.

WORK ANCHORED IN THE NICOIS LANDSCAPE

Bernar Venet, 2 lignes obliques [2 Oblique Lines], 2010. Cor-Ten steel, 30 metres high, Promenade des Anglais, Nice. © Villa de Nice, France

While he made strong connections with the US, where he would spend part of the year in New York, Bernar Venet created his own foundation in the Var. In 2014, the Domaine du Muy became home to the Venet Foundation which houses a part of his oeuvre and his minimal and conceptual art collection. A number of his sculptures can be seen in the public space in and around Nice.

In 2010, 9 lignes obliques [Nine Oblique Lines] a 30 metre steel structure commemorating the 100th anniversary of the County of Nice’s annexation to France—was erected along the famous Promenade des Anglais, on the Quai des États-Unis. Another, ‘Arc de 115,5°, was installed on the greenway (Jardin Albert 1er) and represents the universe’s angle of curvature according to Einstein’s theory of relativity. His sculptures also grace Cannes, Roquebrune-sur-Argens, Antibes and other localities.


Donated by the artist in 2007. MAMAC collection, Nice. © Adagp, Paris - Photo: Muriel Anssens/Ville de Nice

Bernar Venet, 9 lignes obliques [Nine Oblique Lines], 1986. Black painted rolled steel, 4.5 metres high.

Donated by the artist in 2007. MAMAC collection, Nice. © Adagp, Paris - Photo: Muriel Anssens/Ville de Nice