

NIKOLAUS RUZICKA

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FRANÇOIS MORELLET

CAMERON MARTIN

Opening on 18 March 2016 at 6.30 p.m.
18 March – 30 April 2016

"Art-works are picnic areas where you eat what you've brought with you" says **FRANÇOIS MORELLET** (b 1926 in Cholet, FR); in other words, visual art has to allow the viewer to see in it what he wants to see. For more than 60 years, **FRANÇOIS MORELLET** has been an important representative of concrete geometric art, which he executes in the media of painting, sculpture, installation, drawing and kinetic art. In 1960 he co-founded the Paris Groupe de recherche d'art visuel (GRAV), as an antithesis to the gestural painting of the Ecole de Paris. Until its dissolution in 1968, the artists of the group questioned the contemporary concept of the author, and challenged the accepted viewing habits of the public by means of kinetic objects and interactive art. Since then, geometrical forms and their arrangement, with the aid of a systematically applied contingency principle, have been central elements in **FRANÇOIS MORELLET's** œuvre. Representative of the artist's methods are the two works exhibited here, from the *Néons 3D* series: a white canvas stretched on a wooden square serves as a picture support, with neon tubes projecting beyond its borders. The format of the picture support and the light elements arranged on it are established through a randomised algorithm regulated by the artist. This strict criterion is contrasted with punning titles reminiscent of the onomatopœic experiments of the Dadaism practised by his *spiritus rectores* Hans Arp and Hugo Ball. These puns, usually combined with frivolous double meanings, reveal the artist as a man with a sense of humour and full of *joie de vivre*, having at the age of 90 lost nothing of his vivacious wit, and continuing to create new works. His most recent series *Faut le fer*, also an integral part of our exhibition, is characterised by total reduction to the combination of two right angles of black iron. In *Faut le fer N°2* and *Faut le fer N°3*, these two elements overlap, in the third work, *Faut le fer N°4*, they appear to approach each other, almost like a kissing couple. The dissolution of artistic structures, which accommodates Morellet's approach of "making do with as few resources as possible", is increasingly clear in his works of recent months. We selected these a few weeks ago in the artist's studio in Cholet, France. Our exhibition is the starting-point for a series of retrospectives in museums and galleries worldwide, in honour of **FRANÇOIS MORELLET's** 90th birthday on 30 April; this day also marks the end of our exhibition.

CAMERON MARTIN (b 1970 in Seattle, USA), who lives and works in Brooklyn, studied Art and Semiotics at Brown University, Providence, and participated in the 2004 Whitney Biennial in New York. In Europe, he is still considered an insider tip, while in the USA his outstanding reputation is borne out by a solo exhibition in the Saint Louis Art Museum and the award of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2010. **CAMERON MARTIN** teaches at the Milton Avery School of the Arts in the famous Bard College in New York State. After more than two decades of concentration on colour-reduced landscape painting, his work underwent a radical change of style two years ago, since when he has painted small-format, abstract, vividly-coloured works with geometrical patterns. Four of these are displayed for the first time in the upper storey of the Gallery, offering a unique reflection of the diversity of **CAMERON MARTIN's** new œuvre.

Salzburg, March 2016

Katja Mittendorfer