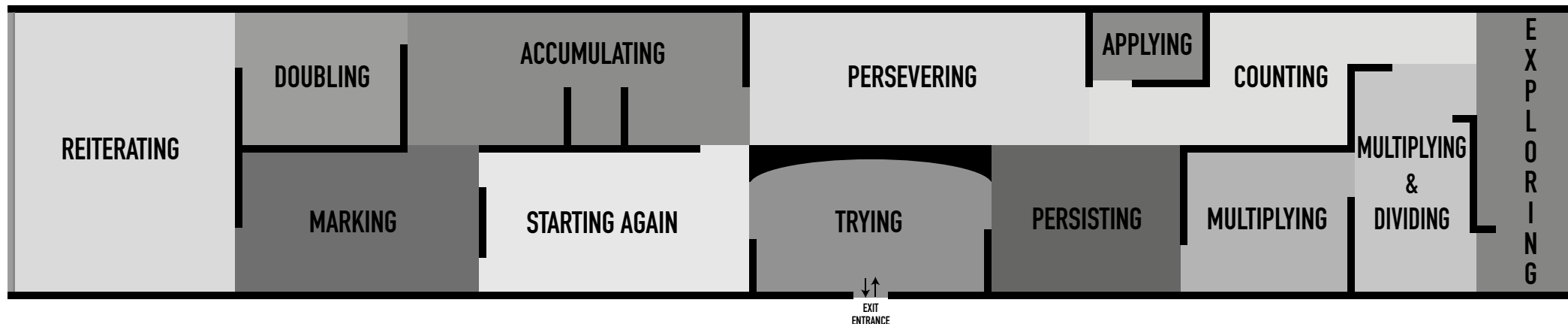




Repetition

GALERIE 1



LA RÉPÉTITION

In 1936, **Marie Laurencin** painted *La Répétition* (The Rehearsal). At first sight, there is nothing to distinguish it from a conventional genre scene. It depicts a gathering of young women; one is holding a book for singing, another a guitar for music and yet another is performing a dance move, while two others watch them. Although it may not look like it, this painting is nothing less than a reformulation of Pablo Picasso's *Demaiselles d'Avignon*, one of the pioneering works of modernism: it shows the same curtain being opened by one of the models, the same number of female figures arranged in a pyramidal composition and the same chromatic rhythms. The whole canvas is marked by a doubling. Repetition is not only the painting's subject (the repetition required to make a performance successful), it is also its method, embodied by the similarity in the depiction of the faces – a doubling within a doubling.

This exhibition attempts to show how, for many 20th- and 21st-century artists, creation has been a product of repetition, through multiplication, accumulation, doubling and starting again. It calls into question the simplistic idea that modernity is characterised solely by invention and the exceptional. It reveals the continued importance in our times of a very old way of creating images and objects, often utilitarian or decorative, as demonstrated here by a Gallo-Roman stela adorned with three almost identical female figures.

Forming a loop without beginning or end, the exhibition, which mostly consists of works from the collections of the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, invites visitors to wander freely among various phenomena of repetition.

Éric de Chassey,
director of the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, curator of the exhibition.

An exhibition in 13 sections.



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TRYING

Up until the end of the 19th century there was a clear separation between the finished work of art and the studies that preceded it. Modernism, however, introduced the idea that each creation should be a new adventure, independent of the previous ones. It highlighted the gradual nature of the creative process. Artists no longer focused on realising a final masterpiece but rather worked through a succession of attempts, each one just as valid as the others.

French artist **François Morellet** was a major figure of geometric abstraction and a precursor to minimalist painting. In the 1960s, he founded GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel), which radically transformed our understanding of form and an audience. **1952 x 4 no. 4 Quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand** is an all-over geometric painting that he worked on at several different times, returning to it 55 years after he began and enlarging it so that the original became confused with the copy.

PERSISTING

Focusing on certain gestures and repeating them persistently to the limits of what is physically bearable shows to what extent the body can be a vehicle for unconscious and conscious obsessions.

In this video, **Bruce Nauman** filmed himself for nearly an hour falling backwards and getting back up in a corner of his studio. In the late 1960s, the artist used video to record his obsessive behaviour and his repetitive body movements in his studio. The body and human nature were central to his practice, as was the idea of process. For him, what happens between two works is just as important as the final result.

MULTIPLYING

In painting and video, rigour and mathematical exactitude reinforce the certainty and inevitability of a reasoning that is supposedly abstract and devoid of emotion. This precision ultimately embodies more a way of thinking, a search for the absolute.

Marie Cool Fabio Balducci based this video on the repetitive gestures of a female assembly line worker in an Italian textile factory. We see the artist re-enact

Hand Catching Lead was the first film made by American artist **Richard Serra**, known for his minimalist metal sculptures of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This film is a mise en abyme of the cinematic structure: the artist tries to catch pieces of lead that fall repeatedly just in front of his hand. The hand gets darker the more it enters in contact with the lead, recalling the original process of traditional shadow puppetry.

Romanian artist **Victor Brauner** was regarded as one of the leading figures of Surrealism by André Breton. For a while, Breton owned this painting representing a mythical figure inspired by an **Ubu Roi** in positive-negative. The double is a recurring theme in the artist's oeuvre. This work can be interpreted as a caricature responding to growing fascism and a powerful vision of revulsion.

a series of repetitive gestures, duplicated by the mirror behind her. Here, the gestures of work are transformed into a poetic choreography

MULTIPLYING AND DIVIDING

Hardly any shape is more minimal than the square. Divided and multiplied, its minimalism reveals its dynamic potential, which is both formal and conceptual.

Originally from Budapest, **Vera Molnár** moved to Rome and then Paris in the late 1940s. She explains that she situates her work 'between the three "cons": conceptual artists, constructivists and computers'. She belongs to a generation of artists influenced by the emergence of new technology, as well as mathematics and theories in geometry.

For a long time **Agnes Martin** was associated with the minimalist movement, even though she felt closer to the Abstract Expressionists. She created the work **Untitled 1** after a period of mourning and withdrawal from the art world. Here she employed a new visual language that was more radical than before.

A teacher at the Bauhaus and then Black Mountain College, **Josef Albers** painted more than 2,000 **Homages to the Square** between 1949 and 1976. The canvases systematically represent three or four superimposed squares in a strictly identical arrangement. The colours change, revealing their power and expressiveness.

EXPLORING

In France and all over the world, the 1960s and 1970s were marked, by a tendency to deconstruct the component parts of a painting. This was a new way of exploring the painted surface.

Claude Viallat was the leading figure of the Supports-Surfaces group, formed by French painters in the late 1960s at the same time as when Daniel Buren was founding BMPT, an acronym for the members' initials: Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni. They all placed emphasis on the physical reality of the painting and the experience that it brings into play, while rejecting the idea of meaning.

COUNTING

The Western world is characterised by the repetition of countable operations. Conceptual artists adopted them as a modus operandi, in painting, sculpture and photography.

In 1978, **Allan McCollum** proposed a paradigm: he replaced the painting with a substitute, a surrogate. These generic products incorporated the elements of traditional painting, complete with frame and border. The surrogate possesses minimal formal characteristics that allow it to be considered as a work of art.

In 1965, **Roman Opałka** set out to represent passing time. Thus, on the first canvas, which he primed with a black background, he inscribed the number 1 in white paint in the top left using a no. 0 brush. He then covered the surface of the canvas and the subsequent canvases with the following numbers up to infinity, or rather, the indefinite. With each canvas, he added 1% more white than the previous painting so that the background became increasingly lighter and eventually the numbers were inscribed in white on white.

APPLYING

In the mid 1920s, drawing on the discoveries of Sigmund Freud, Surrealism sought to capture the images produced by the unconscious, particularly in dreams. Photography and cinema became the media for new narrative structures, highlighting obsessive bodily activities and the way we relate to the world around us through our drives

Written by the poet Antonin Artaud, and editing becomes an artistic tool for **Germaine Dulac's *La Coquille et le Clergyman*** was the first Surrealist film. Here, film becomes a visual medium

PERSEVERING

Simon Hantaï is considered as a major figure in abstract art. In 1960, he began to adopt 'folding as a method': he folded, crumpled, and deformed unstretched canvases and then painted them. Executed in 1958–59, *Peinture (Ecriture rose)* dates from the previous period and bears witness to the constancy of the artist who painted it, day after day, throughout an entire year.

ACCUMULATING

Traumatized by the Second World War and fascinated by the beginnings of consumer society, a number of artists abandoned all forms of figurative representation for good, turning the accumulation of gestures, materials, and objects into a veritable artistic process.

Since the 1970s, **Paul McCarthy's** oeuvre has been detailing the unconscious mechanisms that regulate American society. His filmed performances reveal his interest in Body Art. In this video, he parodies expressionistic pictorial gesture rendered grotesque by his use of ketchup instead of paint

Alina Szapocznikow and **Rosemarie Castoro** each work here with fragile, non-traditional materials: one does this to make sculptures that recall the frailty of the human body, the other does so to denounce the smooth body of the feminine ideal.

DOUBLING

In 1969, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze drew attention to 'series of events with small internal differences' within certain works of art. In the 1980s, painters and sculptors appropriated this idea, alternating incessantly between difference and repetition in visual creations with deliberately psychological colouring.

Andy Warhol introduced the electric chair into his work in response to the controversy over the death penalty in the United States in the 1960s. It became one of the modern mythologies that he produced in multiple variations. The appropriator Elaine Sturtevant then copied his silkscreens. When asked about his own technique, Warhol replied: 'I don't know. Ask Elaine.'

Broadcast on German television in 1981 and published in 1982, ***Quad*** was described by **Samuel Beckett** as a 'televisual folly'. The play consists of four dancers with similar silhouettes moving repeatedly around a square, displaying free movement that is nevertheless mathematically organised into combinations.

REITERATING

The human space is inhabited by bodies whose positions, although similar, are never identical. Their reiteration in the same dance creates variations, more or less perceptible, which some artists have made their favorite subject.

In 1949, **Barnett Newman** radically simplified his painting. He produced solely monochrome works punctuated by vertical bands, which he called 'zips' to emphasize their dynamic quality. This simple form of modular abstraction inspired the following generation, in particular **Djamel Tatah** who, since 1986, has been painting monochrome backgrounds across which listless figures meander.

Fase is the cinematic adaptation of a choreographic spectacle created by **Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker** and **Thierry De Mey** to music by Steve Reich. The four movements are based on a seemingly childlike matrix, and yet complex, systematic, eternal motifs regulate their organisation.

MARKING

Represented space sometimes suggests a mental projection rather than identification. Here, it leads to a stroll through a forest, or through industrial or aerial landscapes, which is marked by the return of the same pattern.

Since the 1990s, **Éric Poitevin** has been photographing everyday environments. The setting is always the same and nature emerges for itself, revealing its intrinsic visual qualities becoming almost pictorial.

Marijke van Warmerdam's films, which are always silent, are repeated on an endless loop. Nothing, or almost nothing, happens in them. In 1997, she hired pilots and got them to draw an abstract vapour trail in the New York sky, which thus became a painted surface.

STARTING AGAIN

In the early 1980s, the omnipresence of images gave rise to the fear that all forms of invention would disappear. Finally, artists managed to show that it is always possible to redo, imitate or start again, while obtaining varied outcomes.

At the 1982 Venice Biennale, **Camila Oliveira Fairclough's** **Marthe Wéry** created a series of red paintings for the Belgian pavilion that bore the hallmarks of her art: a dialogue between monochromes and the place where the work was displayed. Placed on the floor and leaned against walls, the canvases structured the space and echoed the foundations of Venice.

Georges Tony Stoll uses the ancestral technique of weaving, the embodiment of repetitive, controlled gesture. As a non-specialist, he frees the technique from convention and creates a sometimes imperfect but always striking visual language. The paintings are composed of diverse elements borrowed from everyday life or from the signs that make up language. Yet for all that, they are not meant to be read, deciphered or understood, giving rise instead to poetry, unanswered questions and doubts brought about by reflection.

VISITOR INFORMATION

OPENING HOURS

Every day, except Tuesdays and 1st May

1st April to 31 October

Monday → Thursday : 10-18:00

Friday → Sunday: 10-19:00

1st November to 31 March

Monday → Sunday: 10-18:00

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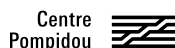
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