

PRESS KIT



REPETITION

 $04.02.23 \rightarrow 27.01.25$







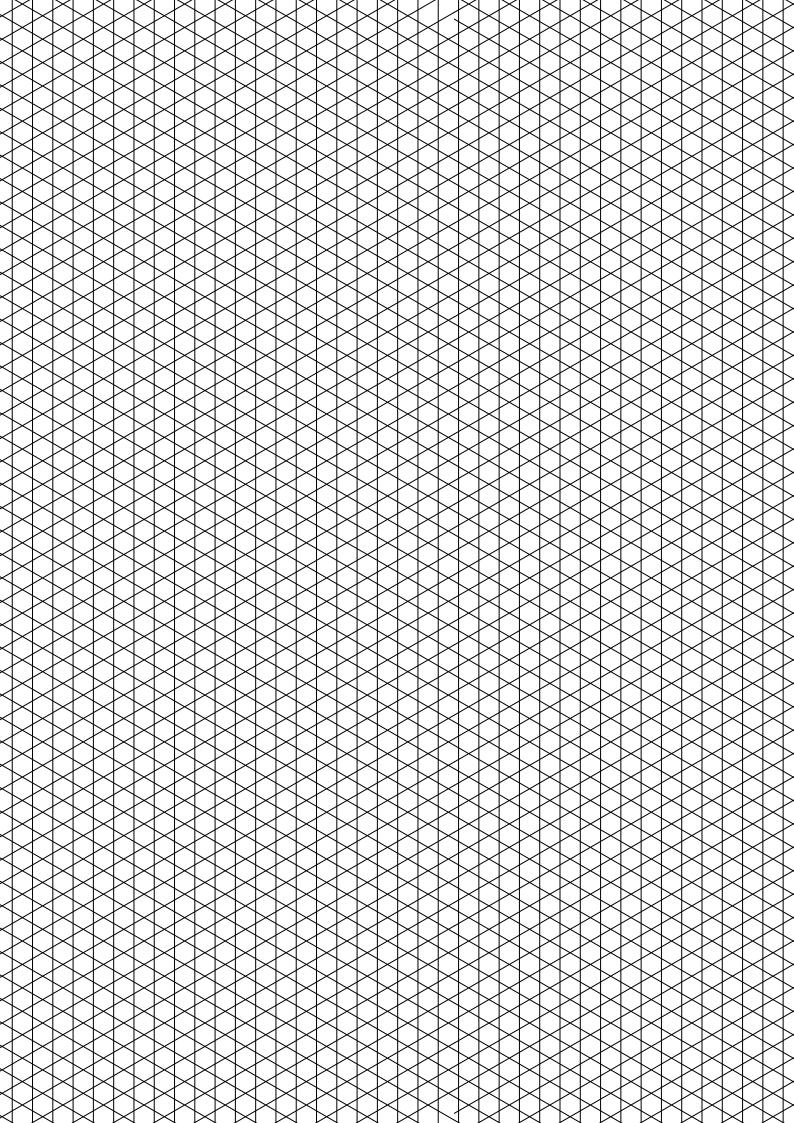












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1. INTERVIEW WITH ÉRIC DE CHASSEY, CURATOR

How did the idea for 'Repetition' come about?

Chiara Parisi director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, invited me to curate an exhibition featuring works from the collection of the *Musée National d'Art Moderne — Centre Pompidou* which, it should be remembered, possesses the largest collection of modern art in Europe, with more than 60,000 works. Rather than take a chronological journey through art history, I wanted to focus attention on the creative process itself. In general, since the beginning of the 20th century, we have prioritised invention and the new, but repetition is in reality a modus operandi and a motif that is highly present. I simply wanted to highlight this fact.

What is your definition of repetition?

I don't really have a definition, because it's a polymorphous process and is more complex than it appears. Creation, including that of the 20th and 21st centuries, also consists of repetitive gestures, forms and actions. Some artists even used it as their main method – those who have been brought together in this exhibition. As Deleuze put it, when we concentrate on repetition to the point of obsession we find exciting 'small differences'.

How did this theme inspire you when choosing works at the *Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou?*

I have a lot of experience with the museum's collections. To be honest, I approached it without any preconceived ideas. The works chose themselves, one leading to the next, forming a counterpoint to it, giving it extra depth or contradicting it. I added a few works from private collections and other public collections when the ones at the Mnam that I had intended to use were not available, usually because they were involved in other projects. I must confess that when I was revisiting the Mnam's collections I had a big surprise. It was the painting by Marie Laurencin, with the title *La Répétition*, which is very rarely displayed. I was struck by the fact that it is not only a depiction of a theatrical rehearsal, but also, and perhaps above all, a work whose theme and method is repetition, something that nobody had noticed up until now and which I wasn't expecting from an artist I had previously neglected and had a clichéd view of. I think that it is a major work that is indeed decorative, uncomplicated and pleasing, but which nevertheless deconstructs the principles we believe underpin modern art, in particular by tackling, without appearing to, Picasso's monument *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.

Is repetition ultimately a creative act?

Repetition is totally a part of the creative act. For some artists, it is the creative act itself. An artist's life is made up of repetitions: getting up, going to the studio, etc. These are repetitive tasks, and in fact it's often these that give rise to works. Repetition is a method of concentration both for the person who creates the artwork and the person who looks at it. It is a long way from the image of the isolated, spontaneous genius that we continue to believe in. A number of artists see art as work. The question of the everyday process seems to me one of the most important ones there is: it places art as close as possible to our ordinary experience, rather than thinking of it as something extravagant and abnormal. Its 'small difference' is perhaps that it is particularly insistent, given that we spend most of the time passing from thing or task to the next, without pausing. When I was preparing this exhibition, I discovered something that reinforced my intuition of the neglected importance of repetition as a major principle of creation. It relates to the prehistoric tools that were placed in the Mandrin cave, in the Drôme, around 54,000 years ago. Researchers have shown that what distinguished those that were developed by *Homo sapiens* is not so much their inventiveness as the fact that they are the product of a process of systematic repetition.

The exhibition begins with an invitation to try and ends with the idea of beginning again. What can we expect?

In reality, the exhibition functions both ways: this is the very principle of repetition. In my opinion, an exhibition should not aim to lecture, but rather to raise questions. What is important for me is the way in which the works interact together and offer visitors unique experiences, hopefully repeating themselves and producing 'small differences' that become more pronounced.



Éric de Chassey is an art historian and head of cultural and research institutions. He has been the director of the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA) since July 2016 and professor of the history of contemporary art at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon since 2012. He is honorary director of the Académie de France de Rome — Villa Médicis, which he was director of for six years (2009—2015). He has published essays, catalogues and books about the history of the arts from the 19th to the 21st century, the political history of the visual, and the history and theory of art history. He has also curated around forty exhibitions, in France and abroad. Since 2021, he has been *chair of the editorial board* of the project 'The Visual Arts in Europe: an Open History', affiliated to the RIHA.

2. PRESENTATION

REPETITION

Leading works from the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou

4 February 2023 to 27 January 2025 Gallery 1 Curator: Éric de Chassey



Marie Laurencin, La Répétition, 1936 © Fondation Foujita / ADAGP, Paris, 2022 - Photo : © Centre Pompidou MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI

In 1936, Marie Laurencin painted *La Répétition* (The Rehearsal). At first sight, it resembles a conventional genre scene showing preparations for a recital, the prelude to a future creation. Although it might not look like it, this painting is actually a reformulation of Pablo Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, one of the pioneering works of modernism: it features the same number of figures, the same curtain, being opened by one of the models, and the same pyramidal composition. Repetition is not only its subject; it is also its method, embodied by the similarity of the depicted faces — a doubling within a doubling.

This exhibition attempts to show how for many 20th and 21st century artists creation is 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 exception. 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 stele showing three almost identical female figures.

Forming a loop without beginning or end, this exhibition, consisting mostly of works from the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne — Centre Pompidou, invites visitors to wander freely among the various processes of repetition.

3. EXHIBITION LAYOUT

TRYING

Up until the end of the 19th century, there was a clear separation between the work of art and the studies that preceded it. Modernism was a turning point in this respect. It highlighted the repetitive, inchoate character of the creative process. Art became an experimental process in which the final result counted less than the journey. Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso thus presented a cinematography of creation, giving rise to a succession of separate states, executed over a more or less long period of time, while František Kupka attempted to capture the successive moments of an action in a single image. In the second half of the 20th century, the impossibility of completion emerged as a subject in itself: Richard Serra continually tries to catch the pieces of lead falling repeatedly in front of his hand, lead otherwise being the choice material of his monumental sculptures; François Morellet's enlargement of an old composition gives it added value, but the title suggests that this aggrandizement is actually derisory.

Frantisek Kupka, Femme cueillant des fleurs [Woman Picking Flowers], [1910–11] © Adagp, Paris, 2022 Photo: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Jacqueline Hyde/Dist.

PERSISTING

The body is the locus of our subconscious and conscious obsessions, through its actions as well as its interactions, in particular as an object of desire or repulsion. Focusing on particular gestures, repeating them insistently, going to the limits of what is physically possible, is a way of conveying this. It serves as the very principle of the actions filmed by Bruce Nauman in the 1960s and the performances of Marina Abramović and Ulay in the 1970s. The length of these works transforms the artists' actions, which are usually fairly generic and can be encountered in the most ordinary situations, into a hypnotic choreography. These actions can also be applied to body substitutes, which become objects of disgust or tenderness, like the numerous dolls, sometimes dismembered, that Surrealist painter Victor Brauner glued onto a canvas, and the little birds that Annette Messager arranged in vitrines after dressing them in knitted sweaters, as if they too were dolls.



Annette Messager, Les Pensionnaires [Lodgers], 1971–72

© Adagp, Paris, 2022

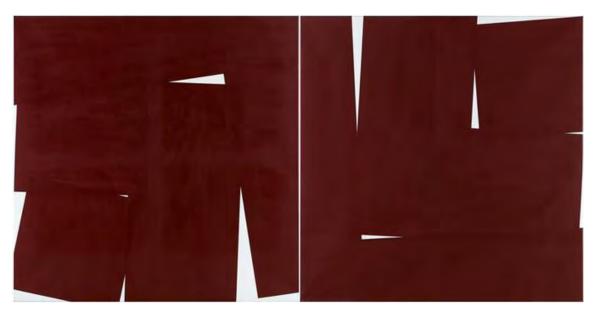
Photo: © Philippe Migeat - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP

MULTIPLYING

Reducing the vocabulary of art to one or two geometric elements, without seeking a reason for them in the outside world, and then multiplying the resulting module, with or without variations, is one of the bases of constructed abstraction. Aurelie Nemours became one of the major representatives of this movement in the 1950s. Cornelia Parker carried out the same act of modular multiplication in her series of *Bullet Drawings*. However, in a reversal of abstraction, which her works visually resemble, she found her materials in the outside world, in its most violent form, as the floating grids are made up of wires processed from bullets. As for Marie Cool Fabio Balducci, they take not only their materials but also their method from the world of labour, where the repetition of gestures obeys the rule of the maximisation of profit, which here becomes a source of subversive beauty.

DIVIDING AND MULTIPLYING

There is hardly any shape more minimal than the square. By dividing it and multiplying the resulting elements, this minimalism becomes potentially dynamic, as demonstrated by the constructions of Jean Gorin dating from the 1940s, which succeeded paintings that were barely distinguishable from those of Piet Mondrian. As for Josef Albers and Vera Molnár, they divided a square into several squares in interlocking and shifting arrangements. In Albers' Homage to the Square, the interaction of the colours creates a complex space that is different yet similar each time. In 2006, for a series of square paintings, Olivier Mosset repeated a single colour, stated in its literal materiality. Assembled in a grid that simultaneously multiplies and divides them, they create an emphatically static effect. Agnes Martin also often resorted to square formats, but by delicately covering them with a series of horizontal lines, she created an invitation to meditative contemplation, with no certainty.



Vera Molnár, 2 carrés en 3 morceaux [2 Squares in 3 Pieces], 2005 © Adagp, Paris, 2022

Photo: © Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-G

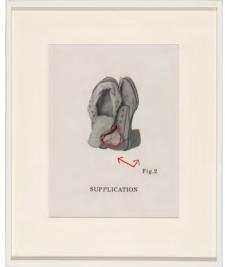
EXPLORING

In France and throughout the rest of the world, the 1960s and 1970s were marked by a tendency to deconstruct the material components of paintings. In 1966, Niele Toroni definitively reduced his vocabulary to the imprint of an identically sized paintbrush, spaced with an invariably sized gap. Since then, he has restricted himself to an endless repetition, which nevertheless generates infinite variations through simple changes in colours and surfaces. This way of exploring the surface of the world through painting was also the basis for the work of other artists who, between 1969 and 1974, formed the Supports-Surfaces group. The leading figure of this group was Claude Viallat, even though he left it in 1971. Marked by their Maoist convictions, the group's artists saw their method, which was deliberately impoverished and ordinary, as an action derived from dialectical materialism, with rural connotations in the case of Viallat and working-class ones in the work of Noël Dolla and Jean-Pierre Pincemin.

COUNTING

The Western world is characterised by the countable repetition of moments and objects, something that was adopted by Conceptual artists – and also those whose work, be it painting, sculpture or photography, has a conceptual basis. Beginning in 1965, in Poland then France, Roman Opałka gave material form to the passage of time through a series of paintings presenting a succession of systematically progressing numbers, inscribed in an increasingly pale colour on a white ground, until they eventually disappeared. This series, which can be accompanied by recordings and photographs, forms a sort of self-portrait interrupted only by death. In Hungary, Miklós Erdély produced works combining texts and images in which he analysed the effects of mechanical reproduction, which makes things both identical and different. In the United Kingdom, Mary Kelly, through similar means, has explored the way in which society treats aging women, using clothing as a metaphor. In the United States, Allan McCollum exposed the mechanisms of consumer society by showing the transformation of every object, including painting, into an easily exchangeable sign.







Mary Kelly, *Interim: Corpus, Preliminary Artwork*, 1984 © all rights reserved

Photo credit: © Audrey Laurans – Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP

FIXATING

In the mid-1920s, Surrealism sought to reveal the processes at play in the workings of the subconscious discovered by Sigmund Freud, notably those of dreams. While the movement's painters drew mostly on the traditional codes of representation, photographers and film-makers - in particular women, whose place was often undervalued due to strong misogyny - avoided recourse to the usual narrative structures, replacing them with a principle of repetition, applied to objects and situations. The films of Germaine Dulac, for example, showed the impulsive nature of our relationship to the world, even among people, notably men of the Church, who wish to deny it. Surrealist photographers, like the artists of New Objectivity, who shared their sense of the world's familiar strangeness, focused their attention on the bodily functions linked to obsession, in particular vision and prehension, with a preference for the use of mirror reflections. Nearly a century later, the Campana brothers emphasised the same functions.

PERSEVERING

When he arrived in France in 1948, Simon Hantaï embraced Surrealism but refused to represent the workings of the subconscious in images. Rather, he chose the method of 'physical automatism', which gave birth to paintings made up of an accumulation of gestures. When he broke with Surrealism in the mid-1950s, he systematised this process in canvases frenetically covered in large marks, embodying the obsessive workings of sexuality. His works of 1959 reflect a desire for depersonalisation, achieved through the laborious application of tiny repetitive marks, notably writing, which abolished the concept of skill and even that of composition. In 1960 this method led to folding as his sole method of creation. Producing works without seeing what was happening or being able to predict what would happen marked a profound change in painting. As the artist wrote in 1997, this was about nothing other than 'confronting what had happened in painting, confronting painting itself'.



Simon Hantaï, *Peinture (Écriture rose)* [*Painting (Pink Writing)*], 1958–1959 © Archives Simon Hantaï / Adagp, Paris, 2022 Photo: © Philippe Migeat — Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN- GP

ACCUMULATING

After the Second World War had led humanity to the brink of annihilation and made the traditional ways of celebrating beauty inadequate, artists began engaging physically with their materials. Thus the Abstract Expressionists, including André Lanskoy in France, created paintings through an accumulation of gestures and marks. Their legacy was immense, although paradoxical. It can be seen in the works of artists who created body substitutes without using figuration, such as Rosemarie Castoro, Alina Szapocznikow, and Takesada Matsutani. In performance, the artists subjected their own bodies to accumulation with, in the work of Paul McCarthy, a violence that is both prosaic and parodic. The Nouveaux Réalistes, in particular Arman and Gérard Deschamps, replaced gestural painting with materials from consumer society. Ploughing his own furrow, Eugène Leroy turned his paintings into literal bodies by accumulating layers of paint, sometimes over several decades.

REDOUBLING

In 1969, philosopher Gilles Deleuze highlighted the existence in certain works of art of 'series of events with small internal differences being regulated by a strange object'. This observation could apply equally to Andy Warhol's silkscreened works and the films that Samuel Beckett made for television, in which figures endlessly repeat almost identical actions, with no explanation. The doubling 'with small differences' became an even more systematic strategy when artists like Sturtevant and graphic designers like Peter Saville merely repeated pre-existing works, borrowing not only their imagery but also their processes, to the extent that it is barely possible to see them as a new creation. The painters and sculptors who emerged in the 1980s took up this strategy, producing those 'small differences' in their works, while reintroducing explicit psychological meanings. In so doing, they attempted to reveal human relations (Thomas Schütte), social environments (Ludger Gerdes) and identity stereotypes (Marlene Dumas).













Marlene Dumas, *Sang mêlé [Mixed Blood]*, 1996 © Marlene Dumas

Photo: © Adam Rzepka – Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN- GP

REITERATING

The human space is one inhabited by bodies whose positions, although similar, are never exactly identical. The reiteration of these positions in the same work gives rise to more or less immediately perceptible shifts and variations, which some artists have made the focus of their work, directly or indirectly. From 1949 onward, Barnett Newman exclusively painted abstract paintings where a uniform surface is traversed by one or several stripes. These stripes, which he called 'zips' to emphasise their dynamic effect, do not represent anything, but indicate to the viewer a position in space. In so doing, they create a place that is both physical and spiritual. By painting life-size figures on monochrome panels, Djamel Tatah offers a more social version of this place, simultaneously one of solitude and solidarity. The phasing and dephasing of the movements in Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's choreography, filmed by Thierry De Mey, reflect a similar tendency. Marlene Dumas finds a space that is both shared and individual through death, by repeating twice a recumbent model, recalling the one Hans Holbein had strikingly painted in the 16th century.

Barnett Newman, Shining Forth (to George), 1961
© The Barnett Newman Foundation / Adagp, Paris, 2022
Photo: © Georges Meguerditchian — Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI / Dist. RMN-GPRMN-GP

SCANNING

The repetitive space can also be a represented space, which suggests mental projection rather than identification, showing landscapes marked by the return of the same. By carrying out a systematic inventory of typical industrial structures, Bernd and Hilla Becher created typologies that highlight their similarity as well as their diversity, in territories nevertheless distant from each other geographically. The same idea is found in a more limited territory- the woodland landscapes photographed by Éric Poitevin- where each trunk is both identical and different, and in Dove Allouche's stereoscopic images, redrawn after photographs representing the battlefields of World War I. Marijke van Warmerdam created a similar situation by synchronising the "ballet" of several planes in the sky, while Dóra Maurer found a medium for it in the folds of a sheet being made and unmade.



Éric Poitevin, *Sans titre [Untitled*], 2002 © Adagp, Paris, 2022 Photo: © Georges Meguerditchian — Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP

BEGINNING AGAIN

In the early 1980s, the flood of images available at any given moment seemed to doom painting to being, at best, nothing more than the repetition of already existing images with no possibility of innovation. Some painters have found a way to escape this aporia by incorporating repetition as an internal motif. Marthe Wéry paints multiple panels in identical formats, creating variations in the colour by applying it in different densities. Bernard Piffaretti places an image on one side of a painting and another almost identical on the other side, without one appearing to have originated from the other. Jonathan Lasker paints the transformations of a shape according to its position in the composition. Georges Tony Stoll embroiders mirror patterns using a single unit. They all show that it is always possible to begin again, on the condition that, as Camila Oliveira Fairclough suggests, we leave questions open rather than providing definitive answerss.



Camila Oliveira Fairclough, *Many Questions*, 2018 © Adagp, Paris, 2022

Photo: © Audrey Laurans – Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN- GP

4. LIST OF ARTISTS

Marina ABRAMOVIĆ Dove ALLOUCHE ARMAN Bernd et Hilla BECHER Samuel BECKETT Jean-Pierre BERTRAND Ilse BING Victor BRAUNER André CADERE Claude CAHUN Fernando et Humberto CAMPANA Rosemarie CASTORO Marie COOL Fabio BALDUCCI Anne Teresa DE KEERSMAEKER et Thierry DE MEY Gérard DESCHAMPS Noël DOLLA Germaine DULAC Marlene DUMAS Miklós ERDÉLY Ludger GERDES Jean GORIN Simon HANTAÏ Florence HENRI Mary KELLY František KUPKA André LANSKOY Jonathan LASKER Marie LAURENCIN Eugène LEROY MAN RAY Agnes MARTIN

Henri MATISSE

Takesada MATSUTANI Dóra MAURER Paul MCCARTHY Allan MCCOLLUM Annette MESSAGER Vera MOLNÁR François MORELLET Olivier MOSSET **Bruce NAUMAN** Aurelie NEMOURS Barnett NEWMAN Camila OLIVEIRA FAIRCLOUGH Roman OPAŁKA Cornelia PARKER Pablo PICASSO Bernard PIFFARETTI Jean-Pierre PINCEMIN Éric POITEVIN Peter SAVILLE Thomas SCHÜTTE Richard SERRA George Tony STOLL **STURTEVANT** Alina SZAPOCZNIKOW Diamel TATAH Niele TORONI Claude VIALLAT Andy WARHOL Marijke van WARMERDAM Marthe WÉRY

5. CATALOGUE

REPETITION

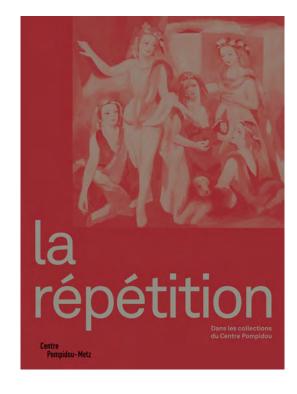
Initiated with Mimèsis. Un design vivant, the series 'Dans les collections du Centre Pompidou' is devoted to the exhibitions organised by the Centre Pompidou-Metz that draw on the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne. Each volume spotlights around fifty works in the exhibition and is lavishly produced (tinted paper, Swiss binding) with a simple design. Photographs of selected works are accompanied by in- depth texts explaining their history and meaning. The second one will be published in conjunction with the exhibition La Répétition and is written by Éric de Chassey, curator, art historian and director of the Institut national d'histoire de l'art, and Margot Sanitas, research assistant.

Publication date: 25 January 2023

Type: illustrated exhibition catalogue

Series: part of the Centre Pompidou series

Theme series : fine arts Forma t: 19 x 25.5 cm



6. PARTNERS

The Centre Pompidou-Metz was the first example of the decentralisation of a great national cultural institution, the Centre Pompidou, in partnership with local authorities. An autonomous institution, the Centre Pompidou-Metz benefits from the experience, expertise and international renown of the Centre Pompidou. It shares with its elder counterpart the values of innovation, generosity, inter-disciplinarity and openness to people from all backgrounds.

The Centre Pompidou-Metz organises temporary exhibitions based on loans from the collection of the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, which, with more than 120,000 works, is the biggest collection of modern and contemporary art in Europe and the second largest in the world.

It also develops partnerships with museums all over the world. To supplement its exhibitions, the Centre Pompidou-Metz organises dance performances, concerts, film screenings and talks.

It is supported by Wendel, its founding partner.















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Le Monde Beaux Arts



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Wendel has been a partner of the Centre Pompidou-Metz since it opened in 2010. Wendel was keen to support an iconic institution, whose cultural riches are shared with the largest number of people.

Thanks to its commitment to culture over many years, Wendel was awarded the "Grand Mécène de la Culture" in 2012.

Wendel was one of the very first investment companies in Europe to be listed on the stock exchange. It is dedicated to long-term investment, which requires a commitment on the part of shareholders that inspires trust, and constant attention to innovation, sustainable development and promising forms of diversification.

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Man Ray, *yeux- Lee Miller*, s.d.

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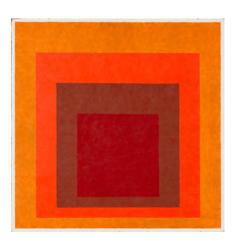
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Bruce Nauman, Bouncing in the Corner 1 and 2 (Upside Down), 1968-1969

© Adagp, Paris, 2022

Photo : © Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP



Josef Albers, Affectueux (Hommage au carré) [Affectionate (Homage to the Square)], 1954
© The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Adagp, Paris, 2022
Photo: © Bertrand Prévost - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /
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REPETITION



Sturtevant, Study for Warhol, Diptyc, 2004 © Sturtevant Estate, Paris. Photo: © Charles Duprat. Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac gallery, London-Paris-Salzburg-Seoul



Germaine Dulac, *La Coquille et le clergyman*, 1927 Photo: © Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP



François Morellet, *Peinture*, 1952 © Adagp, Paris, 2022 Photo : © Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP



Bernd et Hilla Becher, *Hochöfen*, 1979-1991 © Estate Bernd & Hilla Becher, represented by Max Becher © Philippe Migeat - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP



Claude Viallat, *Répétition*, 1968 © Adagp, Paris, 2022 Crédit photographique : © Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP



Arman, *Miaudulation de fritance*, 1962 © Adagp, Paris, 2022 Photo: © Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI / Dist. RMN-GP

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Daily, except Tuesdays and May

01.11 > 31.03

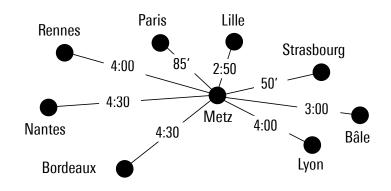
MON. | WED. | THU. | FRI. | SAT. | SUN.: 10AM - 6PM

01.04 > 31.10

MON. | WED. | THU.: 10AM - 6PMFRI. | SAT. | SUN.: 10AM - 7PM

GETTING THERE

The shortest journey times



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