

# THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES PAYS TRIBUTE TO FRANÇOIS MORELLET

Exhibition from 30 June to 1 November 2026

Versailles, 19 January 2026  
Press release

**In 2026, as part of 100 x Morellet, the celebration of the centenary of the birth of François Morellet (1926–2016), initiated by the Centre Pompidou in collaboration with the Morellet estate, the Palace of Versailles will present six major works by the artist. These works will enter into dialogue with the décor of the State Apartments and the perspectives of the gardens.**



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## FRANÇOIS MORELLET (1926 – 2016)

A prolific self-taught artist, François Morellet developed a radical approach to geometric abstraction through his paintings, sculptures, and installations over a career spanning more than six decades. Working primarily with basic geometric forms, Morellet embraced a methodology of rigorous objectivity and personal detachment, employing a wide range of materials in his works (steel, neon tubes, adhesive tape, wire mesh, wood, etc.). A painter of both rule and disorder, Morellet embodies the tension between geometric rigor and the jubilation of chance.

## THE EXHIBITION

François Morellet often confronted his minimalist protocols with natural environments or spectacular architecture. At Versailles, the centenary of the artist's birth provides an opportunity to present several major works, while attempting to imagine him at work, delighting in the dissonances and unexpected echoes they create.

**Inside the Palace,** at the beginning of the visitor route, the dialogue opens with two of the artist's renowned installations placed along the axis of the Royal Chapel. *Le Lamentable* lets its arc-shaped neon lights slump across the paving of the lower vestibule of the chapel, while the black sculpture *Beaming  $\pi$*  unfurls its segments — set at angles determined by the decimals of the number  $\pi$  — across the marble marquetry of the nave. Other works are installed in the King's State Apartments, where the profusion of Baroque decoration renders their geometric rigor particularly striking: from *Sphère-trame*, emblematic of the artist's practice and suspended in the Salon of Abundance, to the monumental *Super Position*, which reinstates, in a highly abstract form, the missing throne on the dais of the Apollo Room.

**In the gardens,** a double installation overlooking the Latona Parterre, playing on the hiatus between horizontality and the reality of the terrain with its carefully orchestrated slopes, will resemble a conversation—one we would have dearly loved to witness—between François Morellet and André Le Nôtre.

**100 x MORELLET**

**For the centenary of  
François Morellet's  
birth, an initiative  
of Centre Pompidou**

**brings together more than a dozen institutions in  
tribute to one of the major figures of contemporary art.**

Morellet's work is found in the greatest public collections in France, as well as many collections internationally, but he also made a lasting impression on public space, with over 100 works visible in our cities – on building façades, in gardens, at train stations and on public squares. Thanks to the freedom and humour with which he used the vocabulary of geometric abstraction, he was able to create a living dialogue between art, architecture and the public. Echoing the *François Morellet. 100 per cent* retrospective, presented at Centre Pompidou-Metz, a huge national program has been launched by Centre Pompidou in collaboration with Studio Morellet, Galerie Mennour (which represents the artist) and many partner institutions.

This large-scale project will unfold all over France through works on display for the first time and rediscoveries of works in collections and the public space, as well as a series of encounters, talks and an international symposium. The aim is to re-examine Morellet's legacy, his position in art history, his relationship to heritage and architecture, and his enduring influence on contemporary artists.

## CURATOR

Laurent Salomé, head of national museum of Versailles and Trianon Palaces.

## CONTACTS PRESSE

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