

François Morellet

1 May – 14 July 2013

This exhibition by acclaimed French artist François Morellet (b.1926) comprises a selection of paintings made in 2006 which replicate works by him from 1952, magnified to a scale of 4:1. They exemplify the profound influence of Pacific barkcloth (tapa) on Morellet's distinct style of abstraction, and visitors have an opportunity to compare them at Ikon through the simultaneous presentation *Tapa: Barkcloth Paintings from the Pacific*, from the great collection of the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Cambridge, in our first floor galleries.

Arising out of modernism, François Morellet's work embodies a knowing playfulness that appeals both conceptually and aesthetically. Born in Cholet, France, in 1926, he received no formal artistic training and taught himself to paint, his early works of the 1940s marked by semi-figurative painting and sculpture. Later, in the 1950s, he turned to abstract art, heralding a prolific and lengthy career marked by simple geometric forms encompassing drawing, painting, sculpture and installation. Often using systems or rules to create compositions, Morellet's work turns away from the conventional notions of inspired mark-making which are supposed to signify fine art, and it is this sensibility that made him susceptible to tapa.

This exhibition comprises a selection of works from his show *Blow Up. Quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand* at the Musée d'art modern de la Ville de Paris in 2007. In each of the enlarged versions of paintings made in 1952, the influence of tapa is clearly evident. He has said "my first love was focused on the art...of the islands of Oceania and especially tapa from Fiji and the Solomon Islands, that contain everything that I loved and I still love: precision, rigor, geometry...". On the question of the size of the original paintings, Morellet is incisive: "Why in 1952 did I not choose larger sizes? It is, of course that I and many European 'post-war' artists suffered from three crippling obstacles: lack of space, lack of encouragement and perhaps also the lack of courage."

This new series, made more than fifty years later, can be seen as an adaptation to fit a new cultural environment. As a gesture the new series of paintings is completely in keeping with Morellet's artistic proposition: it is repetition by an artist for whom repetition is a trade mark.

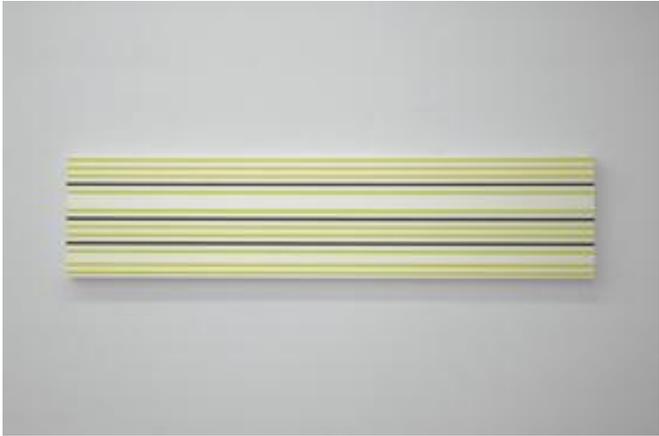
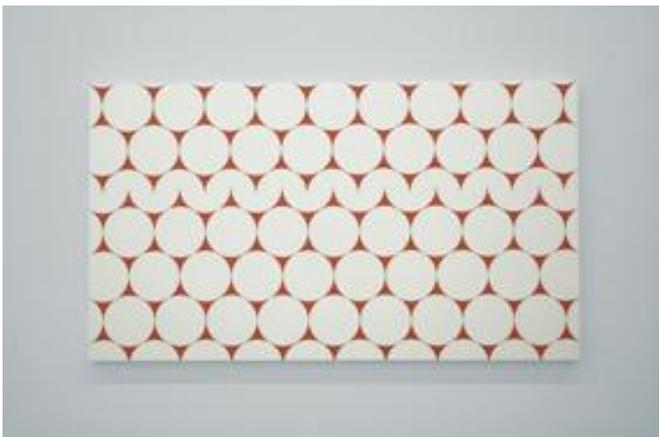
There will be an exhibition catalogue, comprehensively illustrated and featuring texts by Morellet himself.

Ends.

Note to Editors:

1. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Admission is free.
2. A selection of images is shown below.
3. Ikon Gallery is a registered charity and is funded using public funds from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.
4. For more information, high-res images and to arrange an interview with the curator please contact Helen Stallard on 0774 033 9604 or email h.stallard@ikon-gallery.co.uk

Sample images

	<p>"52 x 4 n°2 (quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand)" (n°52005 "Parallèles jaunes et noires" - 16 x 69 cm multiplié par 4)</p> <p>Acrylic on canvas</p> <p>Courtesy the artist</p>
	<p>"52 x 4 n°3 (quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand)" (n°52010 "Cercles et demi-cercles" - 40 x 70 cm multiplié par 4)</p> <p>Acrylic on canvas</p> <p>Courtesy the artist</p>

	<p>"52 x 4 n°5 (quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand)" (n°52012 "Peinture" - 40 x 50 cm multiplié par 4)</p> <p>Acrylic on canvas</p> <p>Courtesy the artist</p>
	<p>"52 x 4 n°10 (quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand)" (n°52004 "Peinture triangles" - 40 x 70 cm multiplié par 4)</p> <p>Acrylic on canvas</p> <p>Courtesy the artist</p>
	<p>"52 x 4 n°11 (quand j'étais petit je ne faisais pas grand)" (n°52006 "Lignes grises et noires" - 40 x 70 cm multiplié par 4)</p> <p>Acrylic on canvas</p> <p>Courtesy the artist</p>