

BERNAR VENET



Born in 1941 in the south of France, Venet's attraction to art became evident at an early age after discovering historical artists in his mother's art books. At the age of seventeen, Venet moved to Nice and worked as a theatre set designer at the Opéra de Nice before dedicating his entire activity to making art. He started his art career as a painter in the early 1960s alongside other French artists of the Nouveau Réalisme movement.

In 1966, Venet established himself in New York where over the course of the next four decades he explored painting, poetry, film, and performance though he was particularly attracted to pure science as a subject for art. It was during this time that he gained prominence as part of the avant-garde NY art scene utilizing this new scientific language and mathematics alongside such contemporaries as Lawrence Weiner, Joseph Kosuth, and On Kawara. 1979 marked a turning point in Venet's career, when he began a series of wood reliefs - Arcs, Angles, Straight Lines - and created the first of his Indeterminate Lines works.

His explorations on these subjects and the variations on the concept of the line via these mathematical investigations have come to define his aesthetic. His groundbreaking use and manipulation of raw material and challenges to the traditional goals of sculpture have changed the face of contemporary art.

In 1994, Jacques Chirac, then the Mayor of Paris, invited Venet to present twelve sculptures from his Indeterminate Line series on the Champs de Mars, which subsequently traveled to Asia, Europe, South and North America.

In 2007, Venet was chosen by the French Ministry of Culture to paint the ceiling of the Galerie Philippe Séguin located in the Cour des Comptes in Paris. In May of 2010, President Nicolas Sarkozy inaugurated a 30-meter tall sculpture to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Nice's reunification with France.

In 2011, Venet unveiled seven monumental sculptures at the Château de Versailles for his solo exhibition.

2019 saw Venet inaugurate his Arc Majeur on the E411 highway in Belgium, which at 60 meters tall and 75 meters wide, is the largest sculpture in Europe. To date, Venet has mounted in over thirty-five public sculpture exhibitions and his work can be found in the permanent collections of over sixty museums worldwide including such institutions as the Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim, Centre Pompidou, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles. He has participated in biennales in Paris, Venice and Sao Paulo and Kassel Documenta in 1977.

His largest retrospective to date opened at the

Museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon (MAC) in 2018, and took over the entire museum during that time. Simultaneously, the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum in Nice (MA-MAC) mounted an exhibition dedicated to his conceptual years (1966-1976).

Venet has been the recipient of several distinguishing honors such as the Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres and France's highest decoration the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur. In 2016, Venet, along with Kiki Smith, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center.

Venet is also a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, and was recently made a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors in the UK.

The artist currently lives and works in NY and Le Muy, in the south of France.