

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

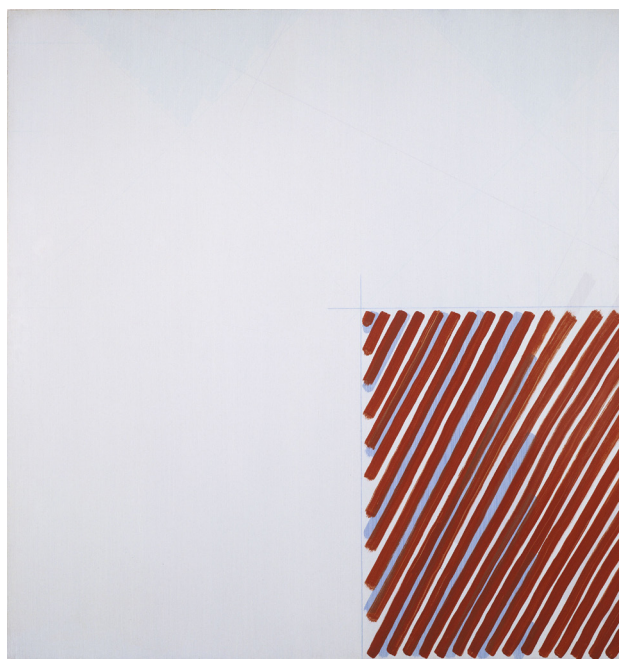
PARIS - BRUXELLES

Martin Barré

1972-1977, the decisive years

April 4 - June 29, 2013

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri - 75004 Paris



76-77-C-147, 5X140
1976-1977, 147,5 X 140 CM / 58,2 X 55,2 IN.
ACRYLIC ON PLYWOOD © ADAGP 2013

Twenty years after the artist's death, Galerie Nathalie Obadia is honoured to be presenting a selection of Martin Barré's works from the 1970s. Exhibited together for the first time, they show the artist returning to painting after a period of conceptual enquiry and instate the series as central to his approach.

A major figure in the history of abstraction, Barré questions the fundamental elements of painting: format, gesture, series, hanging. «*I do not paint to convey moods,*» he told an interviewer in 1977. «*I use a rule, a rule of play, and I transgress it when the painting so requires.*»*

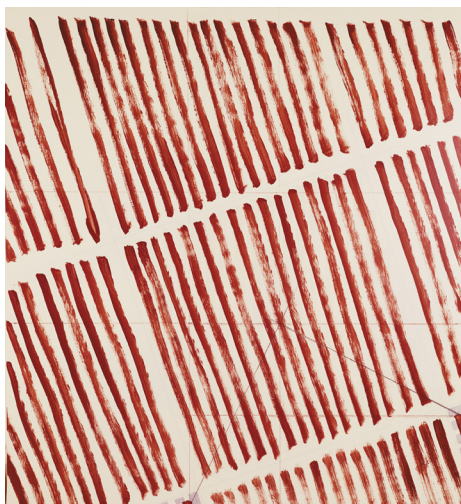
This historical exhibition continues the rediscovery of Barré's work undertaken by the Obadia gallery since 2006 and extends the 2010 exhibition, «91», which featured a complete series of paintings made for the first Biennale d'Art Contemporain in Lyon and the «*Homage to Martin Barré*» orchestrated in summer 2006 by Jean-Pierre Crique, where Barré's paintings were hung alongside works by painters such as Robert Mangold, On Kawara, Christian Bonnefoi, Christopher Wool, and Pascal Pinaud.

Assembling a significant selection of pieces made by Barré between 1972 and 1977, the show follows the key stages during what was a decisive period for his art, one that saw him adopt the serial approach. From now on, each painting would be generated by the same principle, relating it to the others. Each painting is like the fragment of a greater whole, part of a modular grid of which we can only see the details.

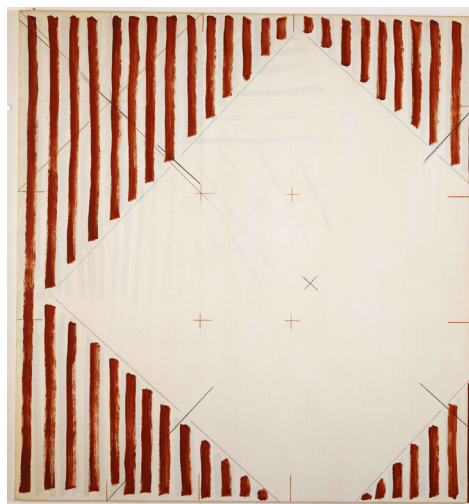
Seriality was central to Barré's creative process as of 1972, which is when he quite literally carried out the same operations on all the canvases within a given ensemble during a succession of «*sessions*» - the «*grid session, hatching session, covering session.*» A veil of white was also applied over the surface of the canvas at the end of the gridding and hatching stages in a layering of transparencies made possible by the use of fast-drying acrylic paint.

Marking a return to painting, but also to the use of the brush, which he had abandoned in favour of the paint straight from the tube and, later, the spray can, in his effort to achieve a kind of immediacy, these series from the mid-70s (1972-1977) also evince a return to colour (given up in 1963 in favour of matt black spray paint). Initially limited to brown («72-73»), the range of colours spread in the course of subsequent series to blue, ochres, yellow and orange, although these coloured elements were sometimes no more than traces beneath the veil of white.

A set of sixteen paintings is on show here in a linear hanging which uses the gallery spaces to follow the methodical sequence of the series, with each one having its own dedicated room: three paintings from «72-73»; four paintings from «73-74»; six paintings from «75-76» and three paintings from the final series «76-77». As the five series unfold - one a year between 1972 and 1977 (only «74-75» does not feature in the exhibition), we can observe their increasing pictorial complexity.



75-76-D-157X145
1975-1976, 157 X 145 CM / 61,8 X 57,1 IN.
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS © ADAGP 2013



75-76-A-157X145
1975-1976, 157 X 145 CM / 61,8 X 57,1 IN.
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS © ADAGP 2013

The form-ground opposition recedes. The space determined by the line often seems to continue beyond the canvas. Traced in pencil using a ruler, the grid contrasts with the coloured stripes, painted freehand, as they fill different zones. In some of the pictures this covering extends over every area (75-76-D-157X145); in others it delimits the contours of a zone left empty, which is then put forward as a negative figure (75-76-A-157X145).

This play of repetitions and variations in the inscription of the hatching is redoubled by the effect due to the variations in the angle at which the grid meets the sides of the picture object. This device has its counterpart in the system determining the choice of formats, vertically extended false squares whose dimensions now appear in the titles of the works for the first time.

After the vertiginous «*great emptiness*» evoked by Yve-Alain Bois with regard to the tube and spray paintings of the 1960s, the paintings of the 1970s confront us with an «*over-fullness*,» an overdetermination that is just as disconcerting for the viewer, who is invited to «*stray somewhere in the labyrinth of painting*».**.

* Martin Barré, interview with Jean Clay, *Macula*, n° 2, 1977, p. 77-78.

** Yve-Alain Bois, *Martin Barré*, « La Création contemporaine » (Collection), published in 1993 by the Cnap and Flammarion, p. 72.

In partnership with Éditions Dilecta and the art critics Ann Hindry and Paul Galvez, a 72-page catalogue will be published on the occasion of the exhibition.

In order to expand the discussion of Barré's work, a round table will be organised at the Pompidou Centre on 16 May (7pm) with the authors Ann Hindry and Paul Galvez, Jean-Pierre Criqui, editor of *Les Cahiers du Mnam*, and Michel Gauthier, curator of contemporary collections at the Pompidou Centre.

Born in Nantes en 1924, Martin Barré died in 1993, leaving a body of work whose diversity and intelligence assure him of an eminent place in the history of the art of the second half of the 20th century.

Crowned by France's Grand Prix National des Arts in 1988, his work is held by numerous museums, including the Guggenheim in New York, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Städel Museum in Frankfurt and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. There have been retrospectives at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Sonja Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter Foundation, Oslo, in 1979, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tourcoing and the Galerie des Ponchettes, Nice, in 1989, at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris in 1993.



DR. PHOTO HANS NAMUTH

Since 2005, numerous monograph shows have been held in France and beyond, notably at London's Sutton Lane Gallery (2005); Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris (2006, 2010); Daniel Buchholz in Cologne (2007); Esther Schipper, Berlin (2010); and Andrew Kreps in New York (2008, 2011). These exhibitions have given a new generation of artists the chance to make their own readings of the work and to reconfirm its significance. It is not surprising, for example, that artist Wade Guyton wished to include a Barré painting in *Oranges and sardines - Conversations on Abstract Painting*, the exhibition he presented at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, in 2008. Likewise, painters such as Rebecca Quaytman and Cheyney Thompson consider him an essential figure in their formative period and in their current practice as painters. Yve-Alain Bois' major monograph on Barré (1993) has been translated into English and jointly published by Thea Westreich, Ethan Wagner, and the Obadia, Buchholz and Kreps galleries. Thanks to this new publication (2008) Barré's work has begun to attract the interest of growing numbers of collectors, curators and artists internationally.

In 2010 the American art critic Joe Fyfe put on a group show at Cheim & Read Gallery (New York) with work by European and American artists surrounding pieces by Martin Barré. Titled *Le Tableau*, it pursued the ideas explored in his 2009 article for *Art in America*, «Martin Barré, a French alternative.» In 2011-2012, two group shows, *Les Sujets de l'Abstraction : 101 Chefs d'oeuvre de la Fondation Gandur pour l'Art* (curator: Eric de Chassey), held at the Musée Rath in Geneva and the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, and *Déplacer, déplier, découvrir*, at the LaM in Lille, showcased Barré's work. That same year, the Centre Pompidou presented three spray paintings from the 1960s in its contemporary collections, while the Guggenheim in New York featured a 1957 painting by Barré in its exhibition *Art of another kind. International abstraction and the Guggenheim, 1949-1960*.

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Galerie Nathalie Obadia
Paris
Bourg-Tibourg

Enoc Perez
Paris mon amour
16 May - 27 July 2013

Jean Dewasne
Anti-sculptures
12 September-31 October 2013

Galerie Nathalie Obadia
Paris
Cloître Saint-Merri

Martin Barré (Gallery I)
1972-1977, the decisive years
4 April - 29 June 2013

Martin Barré / R.H Quaytman
(Gallery II)
Arrhythmia (A Tale of Many Squares)
20 June- 13 July 2013
Vernissage on June 18th, 6pm-8pm

Rosson Crow
7 September-October 2013

Carole Benzaken
November-December 2013

Galerie Nathalie Obadia
Brussels

Pieter Schoolwerth
Shadows Past
16 April - 1 June 2013