VENET FOUNDATION

Press Kit 2022



VENET FOUNDATION

Since 2014, the Venet Foundation's exhibitions are mounted in a unique location in the village of Le Muy (Var) in France. The site is open to the public during the summer (visits on Thursdays and Fridays, by advance reservation only).

Each year this unique property, set across some seventeen acres of the French countryside, offers visitors an original tour of a "total work of art" designed by one of the most famous French artists in the world, Bernar Venet, in collaboration with his wife Diane. The foundation is also an "exceptional mental studio" for Bernar and a unique setting for the monumental works in the collection by major artists of the last 50 years.

In 2022, from June 9 to September 30 in Le Muy, the Venet Foundation will present the exhibition *Homage to David Tudor*, the artwork *Environnement de Transchromie Circulaire* by Carlos Cruz-Diez in the Sculpture Park, and two artworks by Bernar Venet unknown to the public so far.

The Venet Foundation also includes:

- The Sculpture Park, which presents around thirty monumental works by artists from the Conceptual and Minimal Art Collection of Diane and Bernar Venet, with works by artists Arman, Tony Cragg, Tony Smith, Robert Morris, Anthony Caro, Phillip King, Larry Bell, Ulrich Rückriem... As well as those by Bernar Venet, including a major work from his exhibition at the Château de Versailles in 2011;
- The *Stella Chapel* created on site by Frank Stella for the foundation's inauguration in 2014 and featuring six of the artist's large reliefs;
- The two ongoing installations by James Turrell first unveiled in 2016;
- Two exhibition spaces: the Gallery, which hosts the designated summer exhibition, and the Factory, which hosts an exhibition of Venet's works every year;
- Diane and Bernar Venet's collection of Minimal and Conceptual art (which includes works by Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Robert Morris, Lawrence Weiner and Richard Long, to name a few), among the most important collections in the world.



Intention

Created under American law in 2014, the Venet Foundation aims to preserve the site in Le Muy, conserve its collection, and ensure that Bernar Venet's work will continue to be presented in an ideal setting.

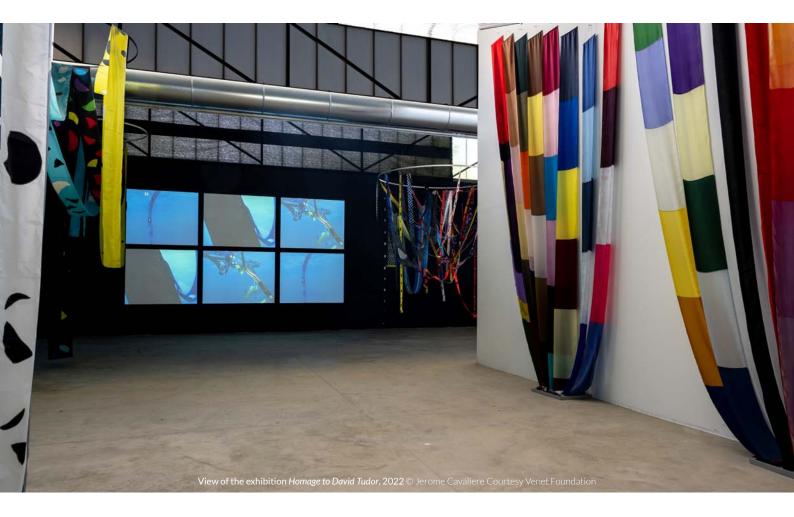
The foundation is the culmination of sixty years of artistic creation and Bernar Venet's encounters with an impressive roster of other major artists, French and foreign, who have become his friends; it is also the outcome of more than thirty years of intense work transforming the property at Le Muy into a "total work of art."

Discovered in the artist's native Provence, the property in Le Muy is both the inspiration and a beautiful setting for the Venet Foundation's exhibitions. The project of a lifetime, this exceptional seventeen-acre site where nature is omnipresent blends old, industrial, and contemporary architecture, a sculpture park, historical and recent pieces by the artist, and an extensive collection that is emblematic of minimal and conceptual art.

Bernar Venet and his wife Diane wish to share their passion with a broader public, one that is able to sense the magic of this unique place and the incredible concentration of creative energies in works by Bernar and the fellow artists in his collection.

SUMMER EXHIBITION

June 9 - September 30, 2022



THE VENET FOUNDATION IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE ITS SUMMER EXHIBITION IN LE MUY: HOMAGE TO DAVID TUDOR

The show on view this summer, with the support of Wolfgang and Anne Titze pays homage to the American composer David Tudor (1926-1996). It also offers the chance to discover an artwork that Tudor created in collaboration with the artist Jackie Matisse and the experimental filmmaker Molly Davies. The piece was first presented in 1983 at the Pompidou Center.

Tudor was already playing the piano in childhood and became known, as a young man and later still, for his ability to perform complex compositions by such avant-garde composers as John Cage, La Monte Young, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, and Earle Brown. In the 1950s, he helped to introduce pieces notably by Pierre Boulez and John Cage to classical music audiences. For the former, he was the first to perform Boulez's *Piano Sonata No. 2* in the United States, while for the latter, Tudor premiered Cage's famously silent work 4'33" at the Maverick Concert Hall in Woodstock, New York, in 1952. Tudor and Cage went on to collaborate numerous times until the latter's death in 1992.

Tudor gradually devoted himself to art and musical composition. Making sound a true raw material in and of itself, he upended the traditional use of instruments and favored improvisation and electronic music. His works are interdisciplinary, bringing together performance, objets d'art, and installation. The piece called *Sea Tails* (1983), for example, is a perfect illustration of this decompartmentalization of different practices. The musician collaborated on the project with two others, Henri Matisse's granddaughter the artist Jackie Matisse (1931-2021), and the American filmmaker and videographer Molly Davies. In the early 1980s, Jackie Matisse, who was fascinated by kites, turned to her two friends and together the three designed an installation for experimenting with space through sound, movement, color, and light. The piece involved filming underwater a number of kite tails that measured from 9 to 17 meters long and 5 to 34 centimeters wide. Matisse made the tails in Cadaqués (Spain). What is shown is the movement and our perception of the kite tails according to the density of the water, the current and the light.

The kite tails with their abstract motifs were broken down into three groups (one group of small colorful radiant kite tails; a second of large ones painted on filter paper; and a final group done on canvas in both bright and dark colors). They were plunged in the clear waters of the Bahamas (and hence freed from any discernable background) and filmed. For each group, the best sequence was divided in three. Each of the final work's three films is made up of six sequences (two for each group of kite tails). Running around 20 minutes, each film is repeated in a loop and shown on two screens simultaneously (i.e., six monitors set up in two rows of three screens). The soundtracks accompanying the images were created by Tudor from sounds that were recorded during filming (shrimp, coral, splashes, wind, etc.). Repeated indefinitely, the sounds and images create a true visual and audio environment that plays on viewers' memory and perception. This then is the exceptional experience the Venet Foundation is inviting visitors to share. And as a final grace note to our reading of *Sea Tails*, Matisse's kite tails are on display in the exhibition space, prolonging the experience of being immersed in color and light begun in the film.

David Tudor's work has been seen in the most prestigious international institutions, including the MoMA, the Pompidou Center, at the Lyon, the Lyon Biennial, and recently at the Museum of Modern Art in Salzburg.



This exhibition-homage to David Tudor is part of the cycle of sound artworks that the Venet Foundation inaugurated in 2021. Last summer, the foundation commissioned the artist Oliver Beer to create the on-site piece Sound Barriers (Infinite Variation Theme) for the bridge-art piece called Pont Arc spanning the Nartuby, the river that crosses the park. Concomitantly, the Venet Foundation featured in 2021 the exhibition Robert Morris – Voice, 1974, in its gallery space. Shown for the first time in 1974, Morris's installation called Voice was a pure sound art piece articulated in four parts.

The Bernar Venet exhibition in the Factory

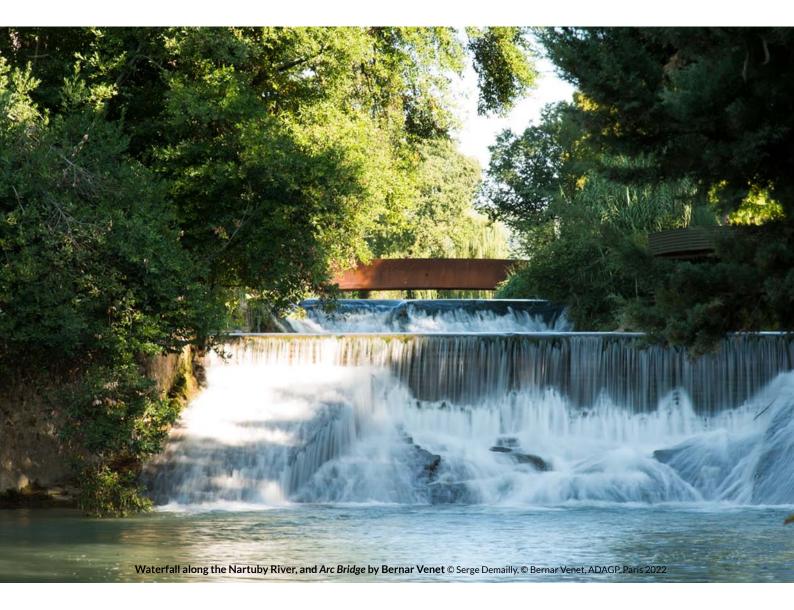
This summer, the factory and its extension will play host to two sculptures – thus far unknown to the public – by Bernar Venet.

The first piece is a *Straight Line* of 17 meters in length, leaning on a large cube. On the wall of the gallery is inscribed a sentence that defines with precision the particularities and the exact positioning of the line:

A line positioned diagonally in relation to the space of this place - Supported on a base of $150 \times 140 \times 220 \, \text{cm}$ - Orientation of 16° in relation to the central axis of the gallery and 9° in relation to the ground - Corten steel - Assembled via welding. $1400 \, \text{kg}$ - $17 \, \text{m}$ long - $30 \, \text{cm}$ square section.

The second work, composed of 18 arcs, each 5 meters in diameter, is presented in the form of a very unstable stack. It may be similar to the disordered *Collapse* sculptures, but its precarious verticality gives the impression that it is being shown here as the stage preceding the fall of the arcs. A step that will certainly be proposed in the very near future...





Le Muy, an exceptional mental workshop, built over the years

In the late 1980s, Bernar Venet was looking for a space to store and safeguard his sculptures. In 1989, after several months of searching, he acquired the Serres property. Laid out around a dam with a mill that was built in 1737, the property lies next to the village of Le Muy, nestled in the Var countryside. This is Bernar's native region. He spent his childhood in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence area of France and cut his teeth as an artist in Tarascon and Nice.

The site quickly came to occupy a central place in Bernar's art practice while defining new connections between art-making and the exhibition space.

Le Muy has to be understood then as a new type of workshop where nothing is created. No drawing, sculpture, or work of art has been produced there. All that remains is a mental space, a veritable crossroads where ideas, knowledge and theories are exchanged.

The Le Muy property has been constantly evolving since its purchase, like a protean work of art in a state of perpetual reinvention. It is above all the work of the artist with the support of his wife, Diane.

THE SCULPTURE PARK

For the garden, Bernar Venet remembered his conversation with Donald Judd in Marfa, placing large works in perfect harmony with the environment he was going to model. Le Muy's conception starts from this idea, on a smaller scale. Designed for sculptural works, the site showcases works by Venet — *Indeterminate Lines*, several *Arcs* and a monumental sculpture *Effondrement*: 24 Angles — as well as those of other artists in his collection. Art and nature are one in an endless dialogue. The majority of the works are presented to the public for the first time in Le Muy or especially conceived for this location – like the *Stella Chapel*.

Since it opened to the public in 2014, the property has continued to evolve, expanding at several points onto adjoining land, enriching the experience for visitors with new works each year. In Le Muy, the sculptures, in harmony with the space that surrounds them, integrate with the environment.

Art is everywhere, and the works of art lead to reflection.

This year, the park will also play host to the sculpture *Environnement de Transchromie Circulaire*, a work by Carlos Cruz-Diez that was previously presented in FIAC's 2019 *Hors les Murs* circuit and as part of Frieze Sculpture Park in London in 2021. It is a circular, participatory and shimmering structure, at the heart of which the spectator is invited to rediscover his natural environment. Designed to be constructed in situ, outside, the work takes into account the external reality and transforms it by subtracting color using transparent slats.



Among the works on view in the Scupture Park:

Richard Long, Bush Stone Line, 1994

This line of 17 meters made of white stones from the Australian outback evokes the path that the artist has followed walking in England since 1967.

Anish Kapoor, Intersection, 2012

Like James Turrell's *Skyspace* and Frank Stella's *Chapel*, the piece is a structure wide and deep enough for a person to enter. It is formed of two domes, abutting one another on one of their sides and open on the other. Following the Minimal art tradition, it is implicitly about the body in the way it towers above the viewer.

Sol LeWitt, Horizontal Progression, 1991

A master of the mathematical system, the artist built here a kind of elongated pyramid, the elements of which are all proportionally linked.

Larry Bell, Someting Green, 2017

A member of the *Light and Space* movement alongside James Turrell, Larry Bell has produced three entangled green glass cubes for the Venet Foundation, modeled on those exhibited at the Whitney Biennal.

Phillip King, Slant, 1966

Phillip King's emblematic sculpture was made in 1966 for the exhibition, *Primary Structures*. These "boards" mimic the drawing of a broken cone, a recurring figure in the artist's work during those years. Representing Great Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1968, King was one of the pioneers of New Generation Sculpture.

Anthony Caro, Skimmer Flat, 1974

This British sculptor figures among the first artists to create sculptures for public space that are posed directly on the ground. The radical nature of his work, along with the classes he taught at St Martin's School of Art in London, inspired a whole generation of artists. Made from upright heavy metal plates, this piece creates an illusion of lightness despite its weight.

Carl Andre, Fourth Piece of Nine, 1983

Carl Andre, one of the major figures of minimal art in New York, designed his sculptures by tapping into rectilinear motifs in the form of grids in order to highlight the properties of the material employed. The piece shown here is made up of cinder block painted white.

Richard Deacon, Infinity #30, 2006

This sculpture uses stainless steel, an industrial material of which the artist is especially fond of. Heir to the renewal of British sculpture that Anthony Caro set in motion, the form of this piece is both organic and abstract. It refers to nothing other than its own materiality.

Robert Morris, Labyrinth, 2012

This sculpture by Robert Morris, the American artist and central theoretician of minimal art, is in the form of a maze. It is a shape the artist returned to over and over starting in the late 1990s. Here the maze is done as an industrial grid and refers to losing one's bearings.





In 2005, a 700m² gallery is designed by the architects Berthier and Llamata. Conceived as a silver shell, in inox steel, the contemporary architecture breaks with the grass and the landscape it reflects. It is located across from the old 2,000 m² factory, and was made into an exhibition space. A *Diagonal* by Bernar Venet leans on the building, at the 74.3° that is reflected in its engraved title. These two spaces allow the artist endless possibilities for ambitious installations.

In 2008, the huge footbridge, *Arc Bridge*, is designed by the artist and made of Corten steel. It is comprised of a long, curved, square passageway, with a white lacquered interior. Pierced randomly with holes to compose a mosaic of luminous points, the bridge connects groups of works across two sections of the park.

Past exhibitions



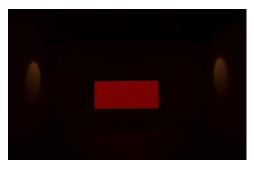
2014

The Venet Foundation is inaugurated with an exhibition of major Minimal and Conceptual pieces from the collection, and with the construction onsite of the *Stella Chapel* by Frank Stella.



2015

The cycle of summer shows dedicated to a single artist starts with *Jean Tinguely — Last Collaborations with Yves Klein.*



2016

Two perennial works of James Turrell are installed for the summer show, James Turrell — Inspire the Light.



2017

The Sculpture Park is expanded, and the summer show is dedicated to, *Fred Sandback — Pedestrian Space*.



2018

The Venet Foundation participates in the celebrations in honor of what would have been Yves Klein's 90th birthday, and presents the summer show, Yves Klein — Pure Pigment.



2019

The Venet Foundation pays homage to Claude Viallat, one of the most important colorists of his time with, *Claude Viallat — Unleashing Color*.



2020

The Venet Foundation presents a new installation by American artist *Lawrence Weiner, Statement*.



2021

The Venet Foundation presents *Robert Morris* — Voice, 1974, echoing to the many works by Morris that are part of the Foundation's collection.

THE ONGOING INSTALLATIONS

Frank Stella

In 2014, the Venet Foundation inaugurated an unprecedented commission by Frank Stella: the *Stella Chapel*.

When Bernar saw Frank Stella's large composite reliefs in the artist's studio, he immediately sensed that he was in the presence of major works. He thought he might hang one in Le Muy and eventually left with six pieces without knowing where he was going to place them. Their imposing size (around $450 \times 250 \times 150$ cm each) discouraged interested institutions from taking them on loan since access to such monumental works would be impossible in practical terms. Thus, a building had to be constructed especially to house the works.

During discussions between the two artists, the idea of a chapel quickly took shape.

Such a building is part of the tradition of artists' chapels, with, for instance, Matisse's chapel in Vence, not far from Le Muy. Bernar himself designed the furnishings and stained glass for a chapel in his native village. But the initial model remains the Rothko Chapel in Houston, where the entire space is covered by paintings by Mark Rothko.

The building in this instance is a chapel in the ecumenical sense of the term, that is, above all a space for meditation where art and thought take precedence over religion. Frank Stella designed the hexagonal building that has a diameter of fifteen meters and a work of art hanging on each of its walls. Every edge of those walls meets empty space, leaving visitors free to wander through the chapel while opening it up completely to the natural setting.



James Turrell

In 2016, The Venet Foundation inaugurated two works by American artist James Turrell.

Turrell's light appears thanks to concealed devices that the artist plans out and constructs with great precision. That light reproduces natural phenomena that the artist builds up and stages like a dramatist.

Elliptic Ecliptic belongs to a series of "Skyspaces", buildings (in this case egg-shaped) in which viewers are invited to take a seat and observe the sky through a narrow space freed of all visual pollution and illuminated by a device that the artist conceals in the structure. Like Yves Klein, who sought to paint the sky, Turrell sculpts it in space and color by tinting its surroundings. The concentration within a confining space of the color blue, which runs from the lightest at the start of the day to the darkest at night, brings out its intensity and the immensity of the infinite. Freed from all context, the sky is an abstract monochrome that the viewer contemplates, a monochrome defined by its outlines but whose depth is unknown, even unexplainable.

Prana is on view in the Gallery, which was designed by architects Berthier and Llamata. The piece consists of a space that is hermetically sealed off from all exterior light. At the end of this space a red rectangle that actually conceals its exact nature can be seen. What seems to be an object painted in a pure pigment or a light projection of some sort proves to be, upon closer inspection, an opening (an aperture in Turrell's terminology) onto a light reflection. Behind the frame cut into the wall, all notions of space melt away in a kind of abyss clouded by a flaming red hue that suggests the inside of a seething volcano.





WORK FROM VERSAILLES, EXHIBITED IN LE MUY BY THE VENET FOUNDATION

Disorder. Instability. Haphazard. Turbulence. Collision. These are the concepts that govern this part of the park in Le Muy, and these artworks composed of *Arcs* or *Angles*. To the verticality and the grandiloquence of Versailles, the 2018 version responds with entropy. Venet's questioning is demonstrated here, as well as in his already vast spectrum of sculptural works, and his use of *Arcs*, *Angles*, *Straight Lines*, and *Indeterminate Lines* are the materials of a permanent metamorphosis.



BERNAR AND DIANE VENET'S ART COLLECTION OF MINIMAL AND CONCEPTUAL ART

In the old mill, the property's most intimate space, the Venet Collection boasts a hundred works of Contemporary Art, presented alongside Venet's most historic and recent pieces. His torch-cut steel furniture affirms its sobriety. Imagined as functional sculptures, the couches, tables, and chairs also show the artist's interest in the human body. The important library, full of exhaustive books and monographs, is quite important to the artist. He fuels himself with these writings, and shares the exhaustive resources of artist books and monographs with researchers and art historians who sojourn there. The library is thus part of the collection.

Numerous art movements are represented in the Collection such as Nouveau Réalisme, Conceptual Art, Narrative Art. Minimal Art holds a central place in the collection, and it manifests itself in works exchanged between Venet and artists he met upon his arrival in New York in 1966:

Donald Judd (Untitled, 1972),

Sol LeWitt (an *Open Cube* from 1966, first one of the series),

Dan Flavin, (Untitled, to Hans Cooper, master potter, 1990),

Robert Morris (Untitled, a felt piece from 1969),

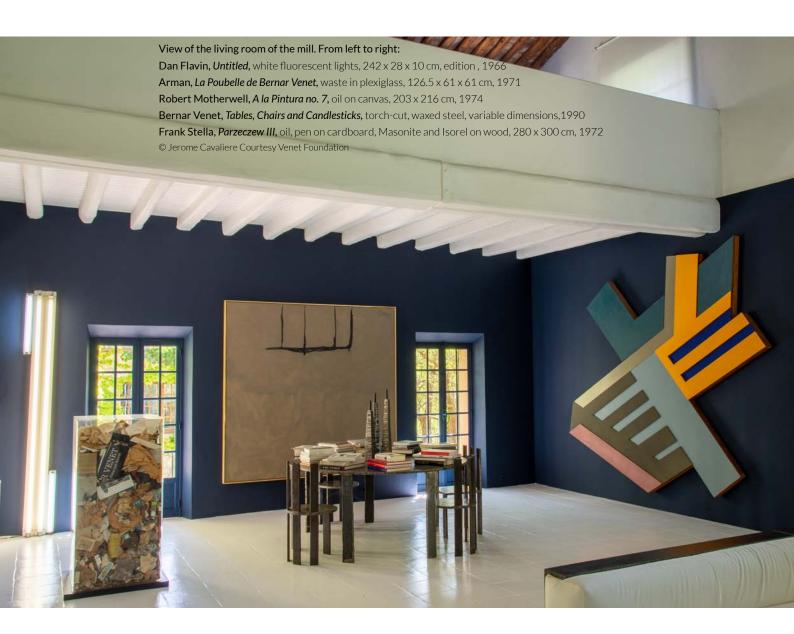
François Morellet (Lamentable, 2006).

The Foundation's collection as seen by Bernar Venet: exchanges, purchases, and friendly arrangements

"In 1963, I quickly drew the support and friendship of artists like Arman, César, Villeglé, and Deschamps, who were very generous to me. I was a complete nobody, and to enjoy the privilege of interacting with artists who were in the process of changing, in Europe, the course of history was gratifying and reassuring to me.

Some pieces are not very important in terms of size but precious for their originality. During a very late evening spent at the Rosebud Bar in Montparnasse, for example, Raymond Hains, Villeglé and Rotella signed the artistically torn label of a box of Seita matches for me. The three signatures on what you might call a "miniature" dating from 1964 remain something precious for me.

I had the good fortune to meet and regularly see the great majority of the artists whose work I own. The exceptions are rare and most of the works were done for me, with a story that attaches to them in each instance. There was, to mention just a few, Morellet, who created a piece from the letters of my name; Arman, who did my Trash Can, and my Portrait robot; César, who compressed my car; and Rotella, who created one of his Blanks in my studio on Canal Street. I remember an exchange with Takis when we were both staying at the Chelsea Hotel in 1968. Jean Tinguely realized a very baroque candlestick for my fiftieth birthday. Soon after my arrival in New York, Christo also did a wrapped portrait



for me, and in exchange I offered him a *Diagram* painting, which I saw each time I visited him. That was the spirit in which my collection began to take shape.

My exchanges with Sol LeWitt and Donald Judd date from the late 1960s and the very beginning of the 1970s. On Kawara, who I was very good friends with because we frequently got together to play ping pong, sent me a series of "I Got Up At" postcards every day for the month of December 1969. "

Quotations from Bernar Venet

 ${\it Excerpts from the \it Collections d'artistes catalogue, Avignon/Arles, Collection \, Lambert/Actes \, Sud, 2001}$

BERNAR VENET BIOGRAPHY

1941

Born in Château-Arnoux-Saint-Auban, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, France

1961

First works painted with tar

1966

Settles in New York and paints his first mathematical diagrams

1967

Lays out a four-year program for making art, at the end of which he decides to bring his artistic activities to a close

1971

Retrospective of his conceptual period at the New York Cultural Center,
The Five Years of Bernar Venet

1976

Takes up making art again and exhibits at documenta VI in Kassel, Germany

1983

Initial small-scale models of *Indeterminate* Lines

1985

Meets Diane Segard; they marry in 1996

1989

Acquires the property in Le Muy

2011

Solo show at the Château de Versailles

2014

Opening of the Venet Foundation

2016

Bernar Venet is the first French artist to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, awarded to him in New York by the International Sculpture Center

2017

Bernar Venet receives the Prix Montblanc de la Culture in France, for his cultural initiatives as founder of the Venet Foundation

2018

Retrospective at the Musée d'Art moderne et d'Art contemporain



Bernar Venet © Laura Stevens

(MAMAC) in Nice, Bernar Venet: The conceptual years, 1966 –1976

Retrospective at the Musée d'Art Contemporain (MAC) in Lyon, *Bernar* Venet, retrospective 2019 - 1959

2019

Bernar Venet's poetic writings, incarnated in the work *Poetic? Poétique?* Anthologie 1967-2017 wins the Prix François Morellet

Inauguration in Belgium of *Arc Majeur*, a monumental sculpture measuring 60 meters tall (the largest in Europe).

2020

Becomes a fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors in London

2021

Solo exhibition at the Louvre-Lens Museum and Another Language for Painting at the He Art Museum, Guangdong, China

2022

Solo show Bernar Venet, 1961—2021. 60 Years of Sculpture, Painting & Performance at the Kunsthalle Berlin Flughafen Tempelhof

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

For visitors:

Chemin du Moulin des Serres — 83490 Le Muy
The Venet Foundation is open to the public from June 9 to September 30, 2022.
Guided visits on Thursdays and Fridays at 10am, 1:45pm, 4:15pm, by advance online reservation only.

Reservations essential at www.venetfoundation.org and reservation for School and Museum groups info@venetfoundation.org
Rates: Adult \$15 / Student \$8 / Free under 12 years old

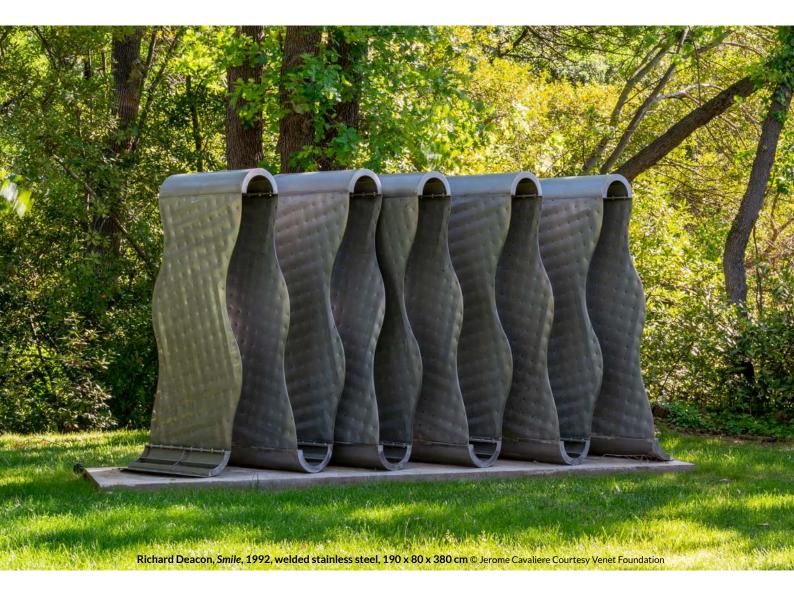
Recent publications:

Bernar Venet. Toute une vie pour l'art, Editions Gallimard, 2022 Venet Foundation, Editions Bernard Chauveau, 2021 Stella Chapel, Editions Bernard Chauveau, 2016

www.venetfoundation.org

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MEDIA CONTACT AND COMMUNICATIONS

l'art en plus Marion Gardair

m.gardair@lartenplus.com t/+33 (0)145536274 www.lartenplus.com

Other visuals are also available free of charge by request.



COVER PAGE
Bernar Venet
Versailles Effondrement: 85.8° Arc x 16, 2018
Corten steel, 7 x 41 x 16 m

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