

# SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

**Robert Morris**

***Hanging soft and standing hard***

**3/05/13 – 15/06/13**

Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are delighted to present an exhibition of sculpture by American artist Robert Morris, in his first solo show in London in four years. The exhibition will focus on Morris's diverse use of media, which here oscillates between soft, *hanging* felt and rigid, *standing* plywood. In addition, the presentation at Sprüth Magers London will explore how the artist activates performative and self-reflective modes of perception in the viewer, through the specific spatial arrangement of the works.

Considered one of the most important American artists of the post-war generation, Robert Morris's interdisciplinary work, which extends from objects, sculptures and drawings through performances all the way to films and texts, explores the relationship between art, gesture and the body. The artist assumed a visible position in determining both the objectives and the tenor of Minimalism in America in the 1960's, detaching himself early on from a rigid concept of the work of art as an autonomous object and addressing above all the process of artistic production which he displayed as an essential component of his works. An involvement with the Judson Dance Theatre in New York during this period gave rise to a significant aspect of his oeuvre: a consideration of the viewer which focuses on the temporal perception of sculpture by means of bodily movement through space. This notion of a self constituted in experience rather than an as a contained whole relates to his engagement with post modern dance, an activity where selfhood is neither stable nor constant but emerges in time for both the performers and viewer.

At the centre of the exhibition will be Morris's seminal *Untitled (Three L's)* (1965), consisting of three large L shaped polyhedrons in plywood, arranged anthropomorphically in positions relative to the floor; one upended, one lying on its side, one inverted. While the logic of the forms uniformity is clear, the variability of their positioning prevents seeing them as the same. Morris therefore demands the viewer to set aside their preconceptions, memory and knowledge, and approach the sculpture from a level of basic perception in order to grasp the reality of the experience.

Morris often works with interchangeable structures, reconstructing and repeating forms such as the L-Beams, in materials including wood, aluminium and steel mesh, thereby dissolving the notion of the original or seriality within his own work. Displayed alongside the plywood original will be a version of *Untitled (Three L's)* entitled *Steel Mesh L's* (1988), constructed in metal. Conforming on one hand to industrial production and to the solid, cool surfaces of Minimal Art, the steel structure also contradicts this correspondence through the semi-transparent grid which concedes unstable and disconcerting perspectives onto the objects.

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Drawing attention to the relationship between material and gravity as well as that between spatial arrangement and random indeterminacies will be *Untitled* (1976), a wall piece belonging to a second wave of works in felt which the artist began to develop in 1974. Morris had been experimenting with felt since the mid 1960's, primarily drawn to the material by its unlikely adequacy for sculpture. Morris mounts the felt pieces to the wall in pocket or diamond-shaped folds, leaving the metal grommets exposed as an important aspect of the work that reveals the process of its assembly. The colour of the work contrasts starkly with the connotations of the material, the purity of the white proving impractical for industrial use. The artist takes gravity into consideration, allowing the physical movement of the material to determine how it hangs from the wall and into which forms it settles. By endeavouring to compel the flexible texture of felt into rigid, geometrical forms, Morris reflects ironically upon the formal severity of the visual icons of abstract art or Cubism.

Robert Morris (born 1931 in Kansas City, Missouri, USA) lives and works in New York State. His works have been presented throughout the world in solo exhibitions at institutions including the Whitney Museum, New York (1970), the Tate Gallery, London (1971), the Art Institute of Chicago (1980), and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (1986). Morris has presented at documenta 6 (1977) and documenta 8 (1987), as well in exhibitions at the Venice Biennale in 1978 and 1980. In 1994, the Guggenheim Museum in New York organized the extensive retrospective *The Mind/Body Problem*, which travelled to the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg and the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris. Recent solo exhibitions include Tate Modern, London (*Bodyspacemotionthings*, 2009); the Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (*Notes on Sculpture – Objects, Installations, Film*, 2009/2010), the Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, Valencia (*Drawing As Thinking*, 2011 – 2012) and the Asheville Art Museum, Asheville (*Robert Morris*, 2012-2013), as well as the group exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London (*Move: Choreographing You – Art & Dance*, 2010/2011).

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## Visitor Information

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Opening hours:	Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 6pm
Admission:	Free
Nearest Tube:	Green Park
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