

PRESS RELEASE

FRANÇOIS MORELLET | GIANNI COLOMBO

OPENING THURSDAY 21 MAY 2026 6 P.M.

On Thursday, 21 May 2026, at 6 p.m., A arte Invernizzi opens the exhibition *François Morellet | Gianni Colombo*, curated by Luca Massimo Barbero. The exhibition marks the launch of the national project *∞François Morellet∞ Centenario in Italia 1926 - 2026*, coordinated by A arte Invernizzi in close collaboration with the Estate Morellet, to mark the centenary of the French artist's birth. Throughout the year, a series of exhibitions and events are planned to pay tribute to Morellet in a country where he exhibited for the first time in 1960 at the Galleria Azimut (Milan) – at the invitation of Piero Manzoni – and where the last exhibition he curated took place at A arte Invernizzi in 2016, opening shortly after his death.

The exhibition aims to explore the relationship between Gianni Colombo (Milan, 1937 - Melzo, 1993) and François Morellet (Cholet, 1926-2016) – two leading figures in the international art world – who shared a mutual respect and friendship from the 1960s onwards. A relationship that inevitably led to new connections and collaborations: Epicarmo and Tiziana Invernizzi met François and Danielle Morellet through Gianni Colombo in the 1980s. It is for these reasons, including personal and private ones, that we have chosen, through this double solo exhibition – organised in collaboration with the Archivio Gianni Colombo and the Estate Morellet – to highlight and commemorate the bond between two pioneers of international art and Italy, and in particular with A arte Invernizzi, which has always enjoyed a special relationship with both artists.

The portrait that Morellet dedicated to Colombo dates from 1987 and serves as a threshold that unveils the exhibition route: the lines on the surface of the work connect, in pairs, the letters of a double alphabet arranged along two adjacent sides of a square, generating a grid formed by intersecting lines that spell out the name "Gianni Colombo". These lines, along the flight of stairs connecting the gallery's levels, become inclined planes that put the concept of balance to the test through the reconstruction of the installation *Bariestesia*, designed by Gianni Colombo in 1975. This work follows on from the large adhesive tape installation by Morellet presented in the first room on the upper floor, the catalogue raisonné of which is due to be published in 2027 by the Estate Morellet. The wall installation highlights the work's relationship with the spatial context in which it is situated, in terms of the systematic activation of new visual and experiential pathways. Adjacent to it are three works by Gianni Colombo: *Strutturazione pulsante* (1959) – a seminal work in his research – and two from the "Opus Incertum" series (1992) – one of which, featuring red elements, is the artist's final work.

In both Morellet's and Colombo's works, the perception of space is altered and the viewer is gradually drawn into a fluid, enveloping dimension that becomes an "environment" – drawing inspiration from Lucio Fontana's Spatialism. The next room features *Spazio curvo* (1992), an installation by Colombo consisting of PVC fluorescent tubes which, in their perpetual motion, trace curvilinear and undulating forms suspended in the void of the dark room, offering an early illustration of the close and indissoluble link between the visual and the psychic at the heart of the artist's research.

On the lower floor of the gallery, a selection of works emblematic of the artistic trajectories of Colombo and Morellet is presented; these works have tirelessly contributed to redefining new horizons in art by activating and expanding the space of experience, transforming it into a place of interaction.

Arranged in sequence on the walls, Morellet's neon works *Sens dessus dessous n° 1* (2012), *Cruibes n°16* (2013) and *Néons 3 D: 65°, 90°, 25°* (2015) are made from industrial materials that take on a poetic quality, and are based on the deconstruction and recomposition of geometric archetypes. The rhythmic aspect and the luminous shift, as a means of perceiving the presence of light, engage in a dialogue with Gianni Colombo's work *0↔220 Volt* (1976-77), displayed on the opposite wall. The work is based on the skilfully combined juxtaposition of luminous elements with a slow saturation of intensity, whose variations in light are modulated according to different, mutually interfering cycles. The exhibition concludes with Colombo's installation *Spazio curvo* (1991), which consists of three large metal strips deformed into irregular perimeters in slow, continuous rotation.

For both artists, there is a clear desire to explore the mechanisms underlying the process of seeing, the introduction of modularity and distortion, the intention to make the viewer a conscious participant in the formative processes, and to make the work itself a dynamic process in progress, engaging the bodily dimension in all its complexity.

A bilingual volume will be published in conjunction with the exhibition, with an essay by Luca Massimo Barbero, an interview with Danielle Morellet – François's wife and lifelong companion in the art world –, reproductions of the artworks on display, and an update of the artists' biographical and bibliographical information.

EXHIBITION: FRANÇOIS MORELLET | GIANNI COLOMBO

CURATED BY: LUCA MASSIMO BARBERO

CATALOGUE WITH AN ESSAY BY: LUCA MASSIMO BARBERO

INTERVIEW WITH: DANIELLE MORELLET

EXHIBITION PERIOD: 21 MAY - 17 JULY 2026

OPENING HOURS: FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. 2.30-6.30 P.M., SATURDAY BY APPOINTMENT