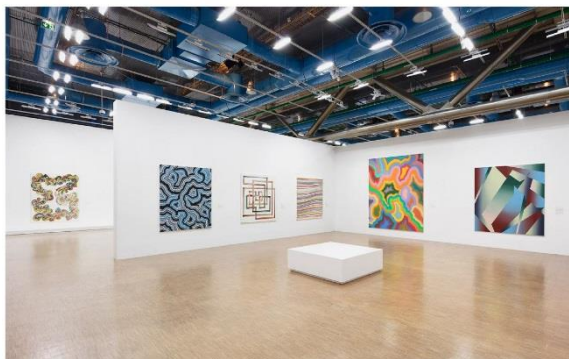


Wallpaper*

A double bill of Bernard Frize hits all the right notes

It's been over a decade since the artist last exhibited in France. Now, a duo of Paris exhibitions at [Perrotin](#) and Centre Pompidou are casting his four decades-long [painting](#) practice in a new light



Installation view of Bernard Frize: 'Without Remorse' at Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photography: Claire Durr. Courtesy of Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCJ

For the first time in over 15 years, painter Bernard Frize is exhibiting in his native France, having opened not one but two major solo shows in May. Currently on view at the [Centre Pompidou](#) is 'Bernard Frize. Without Remorse', a show featuring more than 40 works made during the last four decades. Concurrently, at [Perrotin Paris](#), 'Now or Never' comprises an additional selection of nearly 20 paintings made within the last three years, many of which are on view for the first time. And it's through this duet of exhibitions that the artist's practice can be seen afresh as new paradoxes arise.

Frize's approach to [painting](#) has always gone against the grain, defying traditional notions associated with the medium. His practice is industrial, rather than figurative; deliberate, rather than spontaneous. Yet somehow, it's also experimental and uncalculated. To make many of the paintings on view at Perrotin, for example, he painted with a type of resin that appears white until dry. So although he follows a geometric grid drawn on the canvas, the final image comes as a surprise – not dissimilar to the process of developing a photograph in a darkroom. He might not always like the results, but he does always learn from what you could call 'mistakes'.

'One failure provokes the next [painting](#)', he says, sitting in a gallery at the Centre Pompidou. 'The destruction becomes the real subject of the [painting](#). The norms and rationality are challenged.' Frize's work presents continual paradoxes, making it only fitting for the Pompidou show to be arranged across six spaces, the titles of which are paradoxical in and of themselves: with unreason, without effort, with system, without system, with mastery, and without stopping. Works from the same series appear in different sections, asking the viewer to reconsider their first impressions, and tongue-in-cheek wall texts written by the artist himself provide critical information – about every [painting](#) at hand as well as the complexity and many facets of his artistic practice.

While many people say that Frize's practice is based on constraints and pre-established sets of rules, he lowers his eyes and shakes his head at the suggestion of this idea, explaining that there are rules because 'you have to have a good reason to wake up and start to work' but that he's 'trying to find a way to go beyond the grid'. Whether looking at a work from 1978 or 2019, the tension between experimental and deliberate mark making remains apparent. As Frize has written in one of the wall texts: 'I always try to have more than one thing in the [painting](#): a single thing shown, but that there is a paradox, an antagonism [...] I try to get a confrontation between things happening.' ★