

# GALERIE MITTERRAND

## KEITH SONNIER

### FILES, SHIELDS AND NEONS

23 JAN > 21 MAR 2020

PRESS KIT

OPENING ON THURSDAY 23 JANUARY

Galerie Mitterrand is delighted to announce a new exhibition from American artist Keith Sonnier. The exhibition, entitled *Files, Shields and Neons*, will take place from 24 January to 21 March 2020, bringing together both early and more recent works, completed by the artist between 1968 and 2005.

Keith Sonnier is a post-minimalist American artist who began his career in New York City in the 1960s, alongside other artists from Rutgers University. Sonnier redefined sculpture by using materials and techniques that were previously restricted to the hardware store. Although he may share some of the ideas of anti-illusionist sculpture with Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, or Sol LeWitt, his works have always offered a more narrative and literary aspect than those of minimalists. Early in his career, Sonnier worked with a wide variety of materials such as latex, fabric, and found objects to create sculptures which had an ephemeral and transitory quality. Starting in 1968, he was among the first artists to explore the effect of incorporating light in his work. Initially using light bulbs (incandescent light) and introducing arched neon that wrapped around the bulbs, he began creating a dialogue between architecture, environment, and lines drawn in space.

For this new exhibition dedicated to Keith Sonnier's work, Galerie Mitterrand, who has represented Sonnier since 2008, is showing seven wall sculptures from the *Files, Shields*, and *Neon Wrapping Incandescent Series*. The works *Veiled File I* (1968) and *Flocked File* (1968) belong to the *File* series that Keith Sonnier began in 1966, before he became known for his use of light. From the starting point of a cardboard nail file wrapped in string in 1966 (*Small File Study*), he produced many versions of this simple form, sometimes recognizable but at times veiled, hidden, disguised, covered, or even stuffed. With these works, deliberately created with limited resources, the artist experimented with the tactile and sensual implications of surface, manually coating, wrapping, or filling.

Keith Sonnier says of the origin of this series: "*The idea of isolating an object in this way made me think about redefining the shape by wrapping it, kind of like adding drawing on top of it, but essentially wrapping it like a mummy. Then other ways of developing the work for the File series came after that. Things were layered. Things were stuffed. Things were filled. Touch, as opposed to concept, was crucial.*"<sup>1</sup>

With *Neon Wrapping Incandescent I* (1970), the artist entered a more emblematic and expressionist period with works that incorporated light bulbs, as well as his famous curved neon tubes. In these pieces, whose titles quite simply describe the materials and the actions involved, Keith Sonnier's lines, arches, and upstrokes reflect the sensual, or even sexual, element of his work.

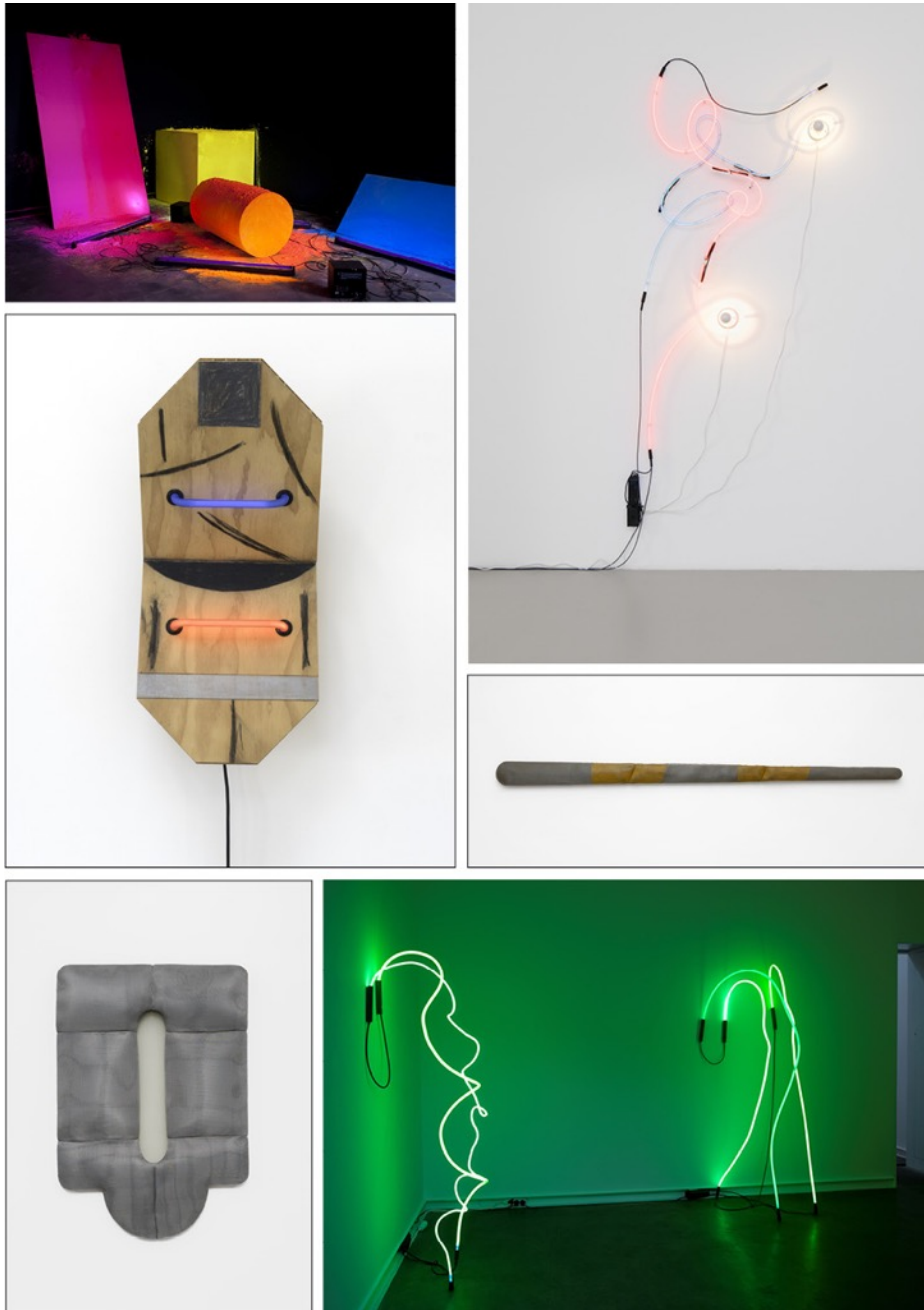
Three more recent works from the *Botswana Junction and Elliptical Shields Series* complete this overview of Keith Sonnier's work. *Botswana Junction I*, *Botswana Junction II* and *Elliptical Shield Extended Arm* (all completed in 2005) were inspired by the artist's interest in Africa in general, and in tribal shields in particular, whose elongated forms are replicated in these works. Since the start of his career, Keith Sonnier has been interested in the primitive arts of Africa and Asia. His appropriation and integration of these forms contributes to blurring the line between minimal and primitive art.

Keith Sonnier was born in 1941 in Mamou, Louisiana, in the United States. He lives and works in New York. Since the 1980s, he has received some twenty public commissions. His work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, notably at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, in 1979; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, in 1989; at the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, 2003; and more recently at MAMAC, Nice, 2015 and at the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, 2018. His works are included in the collections at the Whitney Museum of American Art and MoMA in New York, the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, and the MOCA in Los Angeles, among others.

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Sonnier, interview by Barbara Bertozzi Castelli in *Keith Sonnier: Files*, (New York: Leo Castelli, 2011).

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## Practical information:

Galerie Mitterrand - 79 rue du Temple - 75003 Paris

T 33 1 43 26 12 05 - F 33 1 46 33 44 83 - [www.galeriemitterrand.com](http://www.galeriemitterrand.com)

## Opening hours:

From Tuesday to Sunday 11 am > 7pm and on Monday by appointment

## Press contact

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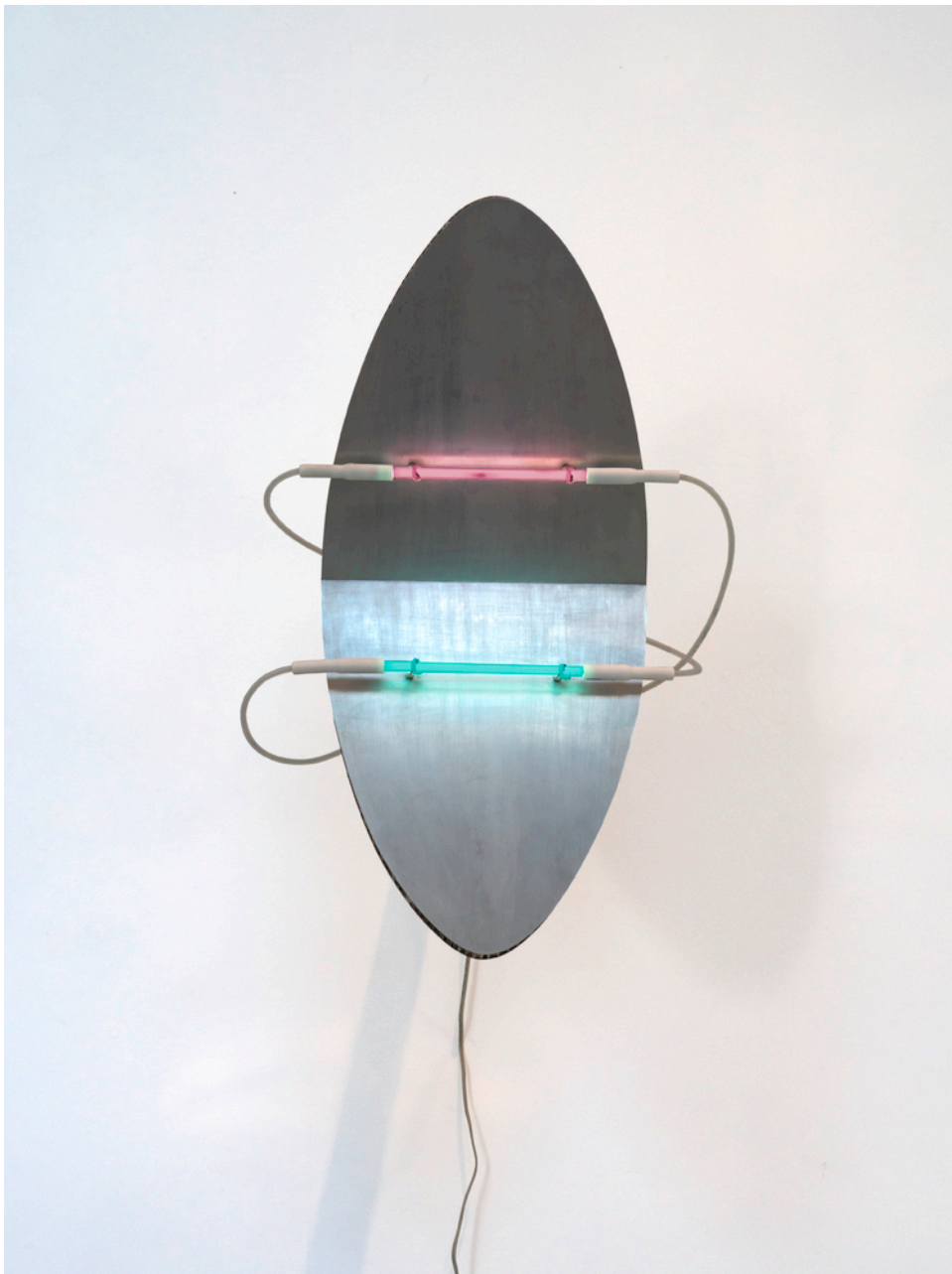
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# GALERIE MITTERRAND



Vue de l'exposition, *Files, Shields and Neons*, Galerie Mitterrand, Paris, 2020 /  
Exhibition view, *Files, Shields and Neons*, Galerie Mitterrand, Paris, 2020.

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**Keith Sonnier**

*Elliptical Shield Extended arm*, 2005

Métal, néon / Metal, neon

71 x 33 x 25,4 cm / 27.95 x 12.99 x 9.84 in

Unique

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**Keith Sonnier**

*Veiled File I*, 1968

Maille aluminium, spray email métallique, nylon et bois / Aluminium mesh, metallic spray enamel, nylon and wood

112,5 x 79 x 8,9 cm / 44 1/4 x 31.8 x 3 1/2 in

Unique

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Vue de l'exposition, *Files, Shields and Neons*, Galerie Mitterrand, Paris, 2020 /  
Exhibition view, *Files, Shields and Neons*, Galerie Mitterrand, Paris, 2020.



# GALERIE MITTERRAND

## ARTIST

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### KEITH SONNIER

Born in Mamou, LA, USA, in 1941

Lives and works in New York, NY, USA

## EDUCATION

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1963 : University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA, B.A.

1966 : Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, M.F.A.

## SOLO SHOWS (SELECTION)

### 2020

*Files, Shields and Neons*, Galerie Mitterrand, Paris, FR

### 2019

*Ethereal/ Ephemeral: Keith Sonnier in the Sixties*, Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier: Louisiana Suite*, Kasmin, New York, NY, USA

### 2018

*Keith Sonnier : Inflated Works (1965-1966)*, The National Exemplar, New York, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier : Early Concepts / Recent Sculptures*, Castelli, New York, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier : Until Today*, Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier : Dis-Play II*, Dia - Dan Flavin Art Institute, Bridgehampton, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier: Light Works 1968 to 2017*, Galleria Fumagalli, Milan, IT

### 2017

*Keith Sonnier : Portal Series and Selected Early Works*, Häusler Contemporary, Zurich, Switzerland

*Keith Sonnier : Three Neons/Three ecades*, The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, USA

### 2016

*Keith Sonnier, Selected Works*, Galerie Frosblom, Helsinki, Finland

*Keith Sonnier : Light Works*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK

*Keith Sonnier : Portals*, Macarrone, Los Angeles, CA, USA

*Keith Sonnier*, Pace Gallery, London, UK

*Keith Sonnier : Ebo River and Early Works*, Pace Gallery, New York, NY, USA

### 2015

*Keith Sonnier*, Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, France

*Keith Sonnier : Portal Drone*, Häusler Contemporary, Munich, Germany

*Keith Sonnier : Early Neon*, Hall Art Foundation's Galleries in Reading, Vermont, USA

*Keith Sonnier : Castelli Warehouse 1970 / Castelli Gallery 2015*, Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

### 2014

*Keith Sonnier : Elliptical Transmissions*, Tripoli Gallery of Contemporary Art, Southampton, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier*, Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum, University of Lafayette, Lafayette, LA, USA

*Keith Sonnier : Elysian Plain + Early Works*, Pace Gallery, 510 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY, USA

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## 2013

*Keith Sonnier : 68-70*, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*Keith Sonnier : Demi-Lune, Early Neon Works*, JGM. Galerie, Paris, France

*Keith Sonnier : Cat Doucet Series*, Guy Pieters Gallery, St. Paul de Vence, France

*Keith Sonnier : Not Neon*, National Exemplar, New York, NY, USA

## 2010

*Keith Sonnier: Dis-Play II*, JGM Galerie, Paris, France

*Keith Sonnier: Selected Works 1996-2008 in Light, Metal and Cloth*, Bernier/Eliades Gallery, Athens, Greece

*Keith Sonnier: Fort Crèvecoeur*, Louisiana Art & Science Museum, Baton Rouge, LA, USA

*Keith Sonnier: Fluorescent Room*, Art Club 1563, Seoul, South Korea

## 2009

*Shelf Works 1975/2008*, Häusler Contemporary, Zurich, Switzerland

*Keith Sonnier: Early Sculpture and Drawings*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 2008

*Sculptural Light Works from the 1980s*, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*Dis-Play*, Sadie Coles HQ off-site, London, UK

*Keith Sonnier : Recent Work*, PaceWildenstein, New York, NY, USA

*Selected Works, 1969/1989/2005*, Häusler Contemporary, Munich, Germany

## 2005

Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA

The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Joseloff Gallery, University of Hartford, Hartford, CT, USA

## 2003

Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 2002

Neue National Galerie, Berlin, Germany

## 2000

Marlborough Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 1999

Kunsthau Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria

## 1997

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 1996

University Art Gallery, Staller Center for the Arts, State University of New York, Stony Brook, NY, USA

## 1994

The Drawing Center, New York, NY, USA

## 1992

Musée-Chateau d'Annecy, Annecy, France

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Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany  
Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nürnberg, Germany  
Kunstverin St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland

1990

Städtisches Museum Abteiber Mönchengladbach, Mönchengladbach, Germany  
California State University Art Museum, Long Beach, CA, USA

1989

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., USA  
Cranbrook Academy, Bloomfield Hills, MI, USA

1988

The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA, USA

1987

Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, LA, USA

1985

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1984

The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan  
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1983

P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, NY, USA

1982

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1981

Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, OR, USA

1979

Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany  
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

1978

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, NY, USA

1976

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1975

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1974

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1971

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

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# GALERIE MITTERRAND

1970

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

1968

Galerie Rolf Ricke, Koln, Germany

1970

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

## GROUP SHOWS (SELECTION)

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2019

*Keith Sonnier, 6 Videos: A Selection of Performance based Video Works from, 1969-1971*, Torre Velasca/Converso, Milan, IT

*Energy: The Power of Art*, Nassau County Museum, Roslyn Harbor, New York, NY, USA

*Mulberry and Canal*: Joan Snyder, Keith Sonnier, Jackie Winsor, Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, NY, USA

2018

*La Luta Continua*, Hauser&Wirth, New York, NY, USA

*Americas Avant-Gardes*, Galerie 1900-2000, Paris, France

*Twilight*, Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey

2017

*Ease*, Galerie Steinek, Vienna, Austria

*Tree, Simulacrum, Sea, Moon*, Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey

*Richard Artschwager, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Morris, Keith Sonnier : 1962 – 1968*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*From the Cavern to the Moon - A Journey Through the Collection of the Pecci*, Centre Centro per l'Arte C, Prato, Italy

*Remains of the Days*, Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey

*Still (ed) Life, Part 2* Texas Gallery, Houston, TX, USA

2016

*Energie : analog*, Häusler Contemporary – Lustenau Lustenau, Austria

*Group Show 65 Works Selected by James Welling, David Zwirner*, New York, NY, USA

*SCRIPT*, Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey

*Neon : The Charged Line*, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, Lancashire, UK

*Shapes*, Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton, NY, USA

*Collector's Choice - Ordnung und Farbe | Ein Dialog mit der Sammlung Günter*, Hackenberg Häusler Contemporary, Munich, Germany

*Talking on Paper*, Pace Gallery, Beijing, China

*Deck Voyage*, Borusan Contemporary Istanbul, Turkey

2015

*Thirty Nine Years*, Susanne Hilberry Gallery, Ferndale, MI, USA

*Kunstlicht*, Galerie Lange + Pult, Zurich, Switzerland

*Museum of Stones*, The Noguchi Museum, New York, NY, USA

*40: The Anniversary Exhibition*, Hal Bromm Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*Collector's Choice: Andy Jllien | «My Shoes Are Your Shoes»*, Häusler Contemporary, Zurich, Switzerland

*Es werde Licht...*, Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland

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*Transmission - Legacies of the Television Age*, National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Melbourne, VIC, Australia

*Group Show Selections from the Kramarsky Collection*, David Zwirner, New York, NY, USA

*America Is Hard to See*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

*Nice to See You! 160 Works from the Collection*, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, Liechtenstein

## 2014

*Seeing Through Light : Selections from the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Collection*, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Manarat Al Saadiyat, United Arabs Emirates

*Legs*, National Exemplar, New York, NY, USA

*Post/Postminimal: The Rolfe Ricke Collection in Dialogue with Contemporary Art*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland

## 2013

*Light : Dan Flavin, François Morellet, Keith Sonnier*, Galerie Thomas Modern, Munich, Germany

*Artists Choose Artists*, Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York, NY, USA

*Indomania : From Rembrandt to the Beatles*, Center for Fine Arts, Brussels, Belgium

*Water*, Tripoli Gallery, Southampton, New York, NY, USA

*Home*, Octavia Gallery, New Orleans, LA, USA

*Etal Adnan and Keith Sonnier*, Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut, Lebanon

*Image and Abstraction*, Pace Gallery, 510 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY, USA

*Recent Works by Diana Kingsley, Robert Morris, Richard Pettibone, Mike and Doug Starn, and Keith Sonnier*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*When Attitudes Become Form*, Venice Corner della Regina, Fondazione Prada, Venice, Italy

*Exhibition of Work by Newly Elected Members and Recipients of Honors and Awards*, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY, USA

*Group exhibition*, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA

*Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts*, Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY, USA

*A Stone Left Unturned*, Yvon Lambert Gallery, Paris, France

## 2012

*Néon, who's afraid of red, yellow and blue ?*, La Maison Rouge, Paris, France.

## 2011

*Burning, Bright : A Short History of the Light Bulb*, The Pace Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 2010

*Contemporary Art From the Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

*50 Years at Pace*, The Pace Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 2009

*A Tribute to Ron Warren*, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY, USA

*Portrait of the artist as a biker*, MAGASIN – Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France

## 2008

*View : Fourteen/Hooking Up*, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY, USA

## 2007

*E Ricomincio da Tre*, Studio La Città, Verona, Italy

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2002

*The 1970s : Art in Question*, CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, France

2001

*The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

1999

*Afterimage : Film and Video Program*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA

*The American Century: Art and Culture 1950-2000*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

1997

*Selections from the Video Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

1996

*Reel Work : Artists Films and Videos of the 1960s and 1970s*, Center of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL, USA

1993

*Gravity and Grace : The Changing Condition of Sculpture 1965-1975*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK

1991

*The New Sculpture 1965-1975 : Between Geometry and Gesture*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA

1990

*The New Sculpture 1965-1975 : Between Geometry and Gesture*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

1987

*Illuminations : The Art of Light*, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio  
*The Sonabend Collection*, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain

1985

*Lightworks : Works of Art Using Light as Medium*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Australia

1983

*The First Show : Paintings and Sculpture from Eight Collections 1940-1980*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California

1982

La 40 Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy

1980

*Hier et Après*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada

1978

*Aspekte der 60er Jahre : Aus der Sammlung Reinhard Onnasch*, Nationalgalerie, Berlin, West Germany

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1977

1977 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA  
A View of a Decade, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois

1976

*200 Years of American Sculpture*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA  
*American Artists : A New Decade*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan

1974

*Art/Voir*, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France  
*Projects : Video 1*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

1973

1973 Biennial Exhibition : Contemporary American Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

1972

La 36 Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy  
Documenta 5, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, West Germany