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**ART & DESIGN**

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

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The stated mission of this new [TriBeCa project space](#), founded by a former partner at David Zwirner, is to exhibit artists who've had significant foreign impact but little exposure in the United States. Its inaugural show certainly qualifies: This is the first American solo outing for Michel Parmentier (1938-2000), one of the most undeviating abstract painters of postwar France, whose radically simple paintings fused minimalism, performance and institutional critique.

Mr. Parmentier is best known as one-quarter of the swashbuckling but short-lived group known as [B.M.P.T.](#) (The letters stand for the last names of the artists Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Mr. Parmentier and Niele Toroni.) In 1967, its members voiced their intolerance for gestural abstraction by painting ultra-minimal canvases at a Paris salon — in Mr. Parmentier's case, horizontal stripes exactly 38 centimeters wide, done with spray paint — and then quickly withdrawing them from view. Four paintings here feature his trademark stripes, in blue or silver or red or black, spanning the unstretched canvas and bulging out from the wall; you can see the creases where he folded the canvas and the punctures where staples held it to his studio wall.

Mr. Parmentier broke from B.M.P.T. just a year after the group's debut; he gave up painting from 1968 to 1983. His second phase also comprises horizontal stripes on unstretched supports, but now he has used delicate paper rather than thick canvas, and composed the stripes with dense freehand marks in pastel, paintstick or pencil. These fragile later works are as dispassionate and skeptical of gesture as his early striped canvases, though instead of the extreme authorial abnegation of spray paint, here the handmade marks marry restraint and repetition with subtle individuality.

French abstract painting of the 1960s, dismissed at the time by chauvinistic American critics, is having quite a moment in New York: Elsewhere in town now are exhibitions by [Martin Barré](#) and [François Morellet](#). But there is a particular satisfaction, in today's snapping and yapping New York art world, in rediscovering this most stringent painter of all.

JASON FARAGO

