

Paris, 15 February 2017

JEAN-MICHEL OTHONIEL

Géométries Amoureuses (Love Geometry)

From 10 June to 24 September 2017



Jean-Michel Othoniel
Le parterre de verre, 2017 (detail)
Bricks of blue glass, metal, wood.
H : 7 x L : 307 x P : 1707 cm.
Photo : Claire Dorn



Jean-Michel Othoniel
Black Lotus, 2016 (detail)
Anodized cast aluminum painted in black.
H : 166 x L : 150 x P : 138 cm.
Courtesy Galerie Perrotin
Photo: Keith Park

From 10 June, two simultaneous monographic exhibitions dedicated to Jean-Michel Othoniel will be presented at the Centre régional d'art contemporain Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée (Regional centre for contemporary art), in Sète, and the Carré Sainte-Anne, contemporary art space of the city of Montpellier.

Under the title “Géométries Amoureuses”, this double event shows several facets of the artist’s work through some sixty sculptures, a dozen paintings and over a hundred works on paper. The title brings together the dualities that characterize the work of Othoniel: sensuality and rigor, the hidden and revealed, wounds and beauties.

The Centre régional d'art contemporain in Sète – a former industrial wasteland rehabilitated as an art centre – and the Carré Saint-Anne, Montpellier’s contemporary art space, both open their spaces to make the work of the artist resonate with the specific character and charm of each place.

The **CRAC in Sète** presents an exhibition composed of monumental, previously unseen works. Inspired by the forms and shapes of nature, this exhibition treads a path close to a radical, monochrome and abstract architecture. These new works – made up of glass, mirror, metal, ink or obsidian – show the evolution in the artist's work since his retrospective at the Centre Pompidou in 2011.

On the ground floor, the exhibition begins with a colossal 6-meter-high and 15-meter-long wave, consisting of more than ten thousand bricks of black glass. Specifically conceived for the location, this work echoes the first photograph taken in Sète in 1987 by Gustave Le Gray, titled *The Great Wave*. In the following rooms, the visitor will discover for the first time mysterious meteorites in obsidian – a black stone that originates in volcanic lava – as well as a series of unseen works, made on canvas and titled *Black Lotus*, surrounding sculptures of the same name. The last rooms of the exhibition bear witness to the violence of the elements, represented by a series of gigantic steel cyclones suspended in space, and a flower, *The Wild Pansy*, a large knot of colored-glass pearls – a tribute to the freedom of thought.

On the first floor, a hundred drawings, similar to a large travel diary made between 1996 and 2017, reveal the artist's thought process and the genesis of many of his works.

This project creates an oeuvre that establishes itself in close relation with Sète and the architecture of the art centre.

Curator: Noëlle Tissier

The Carré Saint-Anne of the city of Montpellier presents some fifty works by Jean-Michel Othoniel, taken from his personal collection. For Othoniel, collecting one's own works corresponds to a desire to escape from the world. By deciding to publicly display a part of himself, the artist shows the emotional ambivalence at the heart of his work. The works exhibited, dear to the artist, have been preserved by him since the 1990s, the time when he began to take interest in the use of glass. They are brought together in an installation specifically conceived for the Carré Sainte-Anne.

At the centre of the Carré Sainte-Anne, the artist chose to present *Le Contrepet*, the founding work of this passion, made in 1992. Organized around this fragment of body made of obsidian, the installation reflects the other key moments in Othoniel's artistic journey.

From *Collier Cicatrice* in red Murano glass, to the forbidden fruits of the Peggy Guggenheim garden in Venice, to the *Bannières* from his exhibition at the Fondation Cartier and the *Géométries amoureuses* in the Mesopotamian room of the Louvre Museum, these historical works are suspended, floating above a floor of blue bricks made with Indian glassmakers from Firozabad.

This exhibition allows the public an insight into the intimacy the artist maintains with his creations. He reveals why he chose to treasure and hold onto these works for the past fifteen years.

Curator: The Friends of the Musée Fabre
Art director: Numa Hambursin

Jean-Michel Othoniel, born in Saint-Etienne in 1964, lives and works in Paris. Beginning his career in the late 1980s with wax and sulfur works, the introduction of glass in his artistic practice in the early 1990s marked a turning point and became his signature.

His sulfur works presented in 1988 at the Villa Saint Clair in Sète, the installation in the gardens of the Villa Medici in Rome, followed by his works in the Guggenheim collection in Venice and around the Palais Royal metro station in Paris and at the Château de Versailles in 2015, made Jean-Michel Othoniel a leading artist. Furthermore, several large-scale exhibitions have defined his career; "Crystal Palace" at the Fondation Cartier in 2003, the retrospective "My Way" which traveled to the Plateau/Samsung Museum of Art in 2011 and to the Brooklyn Museum, New York, in 2012. With this double exhibition, Jean-Michel Othoniel shows his deep attachment to the Occitan region since his beginnings as a young artist.

Notes to the editors

The Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée Region

With a budget of €85.6 million for cultural activities, the Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée region is among the most culturally dynamic regions in France.

The Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée region has a strong ambition to support culture, arts and heritage, while paying particular attention to reducing territorial and cultural inequalities. Thus, in spite of limited public funding the budget devoted to culture and its heritage will represent in 2017 over 3.2% of the regional budget (excluding European funds, the regional administration and repayment of debt), in accordance with the region's cultural engagement. The region thereby clearly expresses its desire to promote culture – an aim shared by other public actors. In the particularly rich and dynamic contemporary art landscape of Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée, the region is committed to those who share art and bring it closer to all, with a concrete ambition and a desire to enhance the region's reach. Among the ambitious regional schemes in favour of contemporary art are: the direct management of the Centre régional d'art contemporain (CRAC, Regional center for contemporary art) in Sète and of the Musée régional d'art contemporain (MRAC, Regional museum for contemporary art) in Sérignan; the presence of the region within the Musée d'art moderne (Museum of Modern art) in Céret as founding member of the Public Establishment for Cultural Cooperation; the support of the region for the creation of a regional network of contemporary art in the aim of enhancing the territorial cultural grid in the sector of contemporary art, through assistance and support to more than fifty locations in the region; support for events; direct support for artistic creation; public commissions known as the "artistic 1%"; as well as support for associative art galleries or enterprises that allow them to take part in contemporary art fairs and salons in France and abroad.

The Centre régional d'art contemporain in Sète

Located in Sète, on the bank of the Canal Royal, the Centre régional d'art contemporain (CRAC, Regional centre for contemporary art) opens onto the Mediterranean sea. Its architecture offers an exceptional and vast space, thanks to the industrial typology of the building. Architect Lorenzo Piqueras has rehabilitated this original location in order to deliver the current configuration – the "organ" effect of which, produced by the various ceiling heights, characterizes the exhibition spaces.

The CRAC anchors its project on communication approaches that are at once artistic, historical, economic and touristic, bringing together the North and the South, the East and the West. A place dedicated to artistic creation, it presents a program of temporary exhibitions, of specific projects created *in situ*. It fosters international partnerships and make available to all a privileged access to the explorations of contemporary creation. It sheds light on the crossroads between different disciplines that constitute the art of today and of tomorrow through the discovery of new and unseen works.

A hub for production, research, experimentation and exhibition, the CRAC has presented to date over six hundred artists reflecting both the national and international art scenes.

The City of Montpellier

Montpellier #CulturalDestination: contemporary art at the heart of the City's priorities

By welcoming Jean-Michel Othoniel in the Carré Sainte-Anne, Montpellier reaffirms its cultural ambitions.

As a major window onto contemporary art in Montpellier and in the region, the Carré Sainte-Anne has opened its doors to major international artists who all strive to resonate with the desacralized church. This space devoted to contemporary art is at the core of the artistic experience offered by Montpellier through the synergy of various exhibition venues.

Since 2014, under the impetus of Philippe Saurel, Mayor of the City of Montpellier, President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, culture has taken a new turn in Montpellier -- #CulturalDestination, through its innovative spirit, excellence, wide diversity and its accessibility to all.

The Carré Sainte-Anne, a space for the sharing and the creation of contemporary art

Built at the end of the 19th century, the Sainte-Anne church is 69 meters tall. A parish church until the 1970s, Sainte-Anne was closed to worship in 1986. At that time, the City of Montpellier decided to make it a place for contemporary art exhibitions, under the name of "Carré Sainte-Anne". Since then, the Carré Sainte-Anne – which is free of charge – has become a major window onto contemporary art in Montpellier and in the region. After hosting numerous exhibitions of young regional artists, the venue has opened its doors since 2011 to international artists: Desgrandchamps, Gérard Garouste, Bernard Pagès, Hervé Di Rosa, Manuel Ocampo, Robert Combas, Léopold Rabus et JonOne, Carole Benzaken (prix Marcel Duchamp), Barthélémy Toguo (selected for the prix Marcel Duchamp in 2016). They have all devoted themselves to creating a dialogue between their work and the surrounding monumentality and symbolic value of this architectural jewel.

The programme of the Carré Sainte-Anne is characterized by a desire to account for contemporary artistic creation in all its eclecticism and diversity.

Innovation, excellence, diversity and accessibility

With renowned festivals, nationally recognised facilities, the emergence of new talents, the development of art in all its forms, Montpellier is undoubtedly a cultural haven. All disciplines are represented: from music to literature, from visual arts to theatre, from urban cultures to dance, from cinema to heritage.

Making culture accessible to as many people as possible is one of the City's main objectives – a goal already achieved through the creation of numerous events and facilities. As for exhibitions, all those presented at the Carré Sainte-Anne are entirely free. This is also the case of the Pavillon Populaire, the Espace Dominique Bagouet, and the Panacée.

Since 2014, the synergy between the various cultural facilities associated with the City – such as the Musée Fabre, the Panacée, the Pavillon Populaire, the Carré Sainte-Anne, the Musée Henri Prades, the Espace D. Bagouet and the Espace Saint-Ravy – has grown stronger. With the presence of internationally renowned artists and the upcoming opening of the MoCo – Montpellier Contemporary, a new kind of contemporary art centre – Montpellier offers an artistic journey in which contemporary creation finds its place.

With €62 million in operations and over €120 million of investments expected by the end of the mandate, the budget devoted to culture by the City of Montpellier is one of France's largest.



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