

**PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art Presents its special Exhibition,  
*Jean-Michel Othoniel, My Way***

**Exhibition** : Jean-Michel Othoniel, *My Way*  
**Venue** : PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Samsung Life Insurance Building,  
Taepyeongno2-Ga, Jung-Gu, Seoul, KOREA  
**Location** : Glass Pavillion and Galleries A and B  
**Dates** : September 8 - November 27, 2011

SEOUL, September 6 2011 - PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art is pleased to present *My Way*, a retrospective of the internationally acclaimed French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel from September 8 to November 11, 2011. This world tour exhibition was first presented at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in March and will travel to Hara Museum in Tokyo and Brooklyn Museum in New York in the summer of 2012 after the current exhibition at PLATEAU in Seoul.

Jean-Michel Othoniel (b.1964, St. Etienne), who is best known for his permanent installation *Kiosk for the Nightwalkers* (2000) at the Palais-Royal Musée du Louvre metro station in Paris, has consciously distanced himself from the contemporary art trends over the past 25 years, instead pursuing a unique sculptural universe inspired by his personal life. His acute sensibility for loss and extinction has unraveled in his works through diverse transformative mediums, expressing the beauty and repulsion of the body. The artist has created a magical world sublimating tragedy into beauty and harmony, guiding the viewers into his own fantastic universe longed by our contemporary society.

As the title of the exhibition *My Way* indicates, this exhibition hopes to provide an opportunity to present Othoniel's unique artistic path over the past 25 years, sublimating the mourning of loss into beauty in his own way. Moreover, the exhibition also includes a photo-archive documenting the artist's prolific travels and personal encounters, which form the basis of his artistic inspiration, as well as a participatory installation, entitled *The Wishing Wall* that will allow more intimate connection between the visitors and the artist.

An exhibition of the Centre Pompidou, Paris

The exhibition Jean-Michel Othoniel, *My Way* has been designed by the Centre Pompidou in close collaboration with Jean-Michel Othoniel, and was presented at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, from March 2 to May 23, 2011.

## ■ Jean-Michel Othoniel's Artistic Career

Jean-Michel Othoniel began garnering international recognition since 1992 with his participation in the Kassel Documenta, as well as *Feminin/Masculin* exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in 1994, solo exhibition at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice in 1997 and more recently, through his Palais-Royal Musée du Louvre station project celebrating the centennial anniversary of the Paris metro.

Othoniel's artistic oeuvre has consistently maintained its uniqueness apart from the mainstream formalism and conceptualism in contemporary art, instead creating his own universe focused on the material itself. Although his works are sometimes criticized as being commercial for their beautiful form and popularity, they attract the viewer's empathy through sincere reflection on his personal suffering and by way of healing its pain and scars.

Including several new works exhibited for the first time, *My Way* traces the artist's career from the intimate and poetic early period to the spectacular world of fantasy that sparks the viewer's imagination. Othoniel's artistic oeuvre, based on personal experiences and trauma, can be characterized by the use of unpredictable and sensitive materials such as sulfur, phosphorous, wax and glass. These unique and rare materials centering on 'metamorphosis' reflect Othoniel's particular focus on the material as a way to escape reality as a larva morphs into a butterfly. These materials mostly reference the body in the context of sexual identity and body discourse of the 1990s, but at the same time, demand the viewer's sympathy for the artist's own suffering as an individual. Reflecting the ambivalence of life through the tension between beauty and repulsion inherent within the materials, the artist's oeuvre narrates a 'personal mythology' that is conceptually and formally distant from the contemporary art trends.

Exploring the boundaries of the natural and organic worlds, the artist has endlessly challenged the limits of the genre. After discovering glass in the 1990s, its color and infinite artistic possibilities of the medium that combines strength and fragility, Othoniel's work took on new monumentality beyond the sculptural dimension. Expanding the delicate form of the necklace into architectural scale, Othoniel's artistic strategy clearly pays homage to surrealism, but also reflects on history and popular culture. In particular, it adds new dimension to the visual field by restoring a world of fantasy and beauty that has long been neglected in contemporary art history.

Othoniel states he wishes to "re-enchant the world through his art, allowing the viewers to rediscover the basic things in life, like the beauty of nature, the wonder of materials, and the sincerity of feelings through a survivor vision in truly tragic moments of humanity we live in where standards are falling apart."

As the artist has shown at the Louvre in France and the Alhambra in Spain, the juxtaposition of Othoniel's works with historical masterpieces, Rodin's *The Gates of Hell* and *The Burghers of Calais* on permanent display at PLATEAU, will create a poetic dialogue highlighting the important themes within the artist's oeuvre, such as the connection with the body, the way to free oneself, or the mourning of love. Moreover, the glass architecture of PLATEAU, providing backdrop to Othoniel's

spectacular glass installations will provide a truly unique experience for this presentation of the artist's first world tour retrospective.



**The Great Double Lacan's Knot**

2011

Mirror glass, metal, 210 x 396 x 186 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Perrotin, Paris

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