

# OTHONIEL

2019



# PROJECTS

## INTRODUCTION

**ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS**, Paris, France.

**FEBRUARY 19**

« **ARTISTES À LA UNE - TOGETH'HER, POUR LA LIBERTÉ DES FEMMES** »  
Hôtel de la Monnaie de Paris, France.

**MARCH 15**

« **ORACLES** »  
Solo exhibition, galerie Perrotin Paris, France.

**MARCH 28**

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR**

Monumental installation conceived in a resonance with Jean Nouvel's architectural design.

**MAY**

« **STONEWALL 50** »  
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH), Texas.

**JUNE 1**

**L'HERBIER MERVEILLEUX AT THE LOUVRE MUSEUM**

The Louvre Pyramid 30th anniversary, Paris, France.

**JUNE 27**

« **NUDOS SALVAJES, LES NŒUDS MATHÉMATIQUES** »  
Centre Culturel Néstor Kirchner, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

**JULY 5**

**THE NECKLACE'S HOUSE**  
Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Japan.

**AUGUST 20**

« **ÎLES SINGULIÈRES** »  
Solo exhibition, Château la Coste, Puy-Sainte-Réparate, France.

**NOVEMBER 20**

« **A ROSE GARDEN** »  
Solo exhibition, galerie Perrotin Shanghai, China.

# 2019

## A NEW YEAR FILLED WITH MAJOR PROJECTS, COMMEMORATIONS AND COMMITMENTS.

**In Paris, Doha, Houston, Monaco, Château La Coste, Tokyo and Shanghai, the artist is undoubtedly embarking on one of the most important years in his career: site-specific projects, a retrospective, installations, books, paintings and new sculptures.**

In late 2018, Othoniel was elected at the **Académie des Beaux-Arts** in the sculpture section. Starting in January 2019, when the acceptance ceremony takes place, he will help the Academy fulfill its mission to defend, promote and support artistic creation.

In February, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year, Jean-Michel Othoniel will participate in the exhibition and sale “**Artistes à la Une - Togeth’Her,**” held at the **Monnaie de Paris** in partnership with Vogue magazine. Proceeds will benefit UN Women, a global champion for gender equality dedicated to fighting violence against women.

In March, Othoniel will present a **major exhibition at the galerie Perrotin in Paris**. Entitled “Oracles,” this solo show will unveil a new series of minimal, colorful, monumental and immersive artworks in keeping with the artist’s *Big Wave* of glass bricks, presented last summer at the Musée d’art moderne et contemporain in Saint-Etienne.

In late March, the new **National Museum of Qatar**, designed by architect Jean Nouvel, will be inaugurated. Among the artworks commissioned for the museum is a project by Jean-Michel Othoniel conceived on a monumental scale that echoes the museum’s sprawling structure. It comprises 114 fountain sculptures whose water jets evoke the fluid shapes of Arabic calligraphy. This permanent installation will be unveiled on March 28th.

In early April, Othoniel will be invited by the Louvre Museum to celebrate the pyramid’s 30th anniversary. The artist’s *l’Herbier Merveilleux du Louvre*, a unique book published especially for the occasion, will reveal his poetic, often playful reading of the outstanding collection of the world’s largest museum, highlighting treasures he selected from 8 of its different departments.

In Texas at the end of April, Othoniel will present an enormous installation of glass bricks at the **Contemporary Arts Museum Houston: *The Yellow Brick Road***. Alongside other international artists, he will be honoring an event that is very close to his heart—the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising.

In early May, a new exhibition space will open in the **heart of the city of Monaco**. Othoniel will inaugurate the venue with an installation of his monumental wave sculpture in black glass. This exhibition will emphasize the artist's special affinity with the environment and his sensitivity to the problems caused by climate change. Inspired by the 2011 tsunami disaster, his wave sculpture strongly resonates with the Principality's deep commitment to safeguarding oceans and preserving the earth's water resources.

Returning to France in mid-May, Othoniel will relocate his 3 Parisian studios to a single **workshop in Montreuil**. In this new space, which measures some 4,000 square meters, he will not only bring together his different collaborators and make his own artworks, but also wishes to use the spaces to invite art-world figures to experiment and exhibit their work in the broadest possibly way, creating a space for dialogue and exchange as well as linking the different domains of creativity that fascinate him: literature, dance, architecture, cinema and the visual arts.

In June, the **Centro Cultural Néstor Kirchner (CCK) in Buenos Aires** will offer the artist an important solo exhibition, with some 30 of the artist's works related to the world of mathematics. Since 2009, Jean-Michel Othoniel has been creating sculptures inspired by infinite symbols. In 2017, he began collaborating with the Mexican mathematician Aubin Arroyo. This retrospective exhibition offers an opportunity to bring together works from the last 10 years. Publications and numerous conferences will also be organized on this occasion under the sponsorship of Cédric Villani.

In July, a new voyage: the artist will be in Japan to install a sculpture he has been working on for more than 3 years in the public space. Invited by the **city of Tokyo**, Othoniel conceived a temple under the open skies symbolically protecting a gigantic mirrored necklace sculpture, in the heart of the historic Nihonbashi district. Inspired by old Japanese fire houses, this architecture-artwork allows him to celebrate the presence of former members of the local fire brigade in a neighborhood that is currently in the midst of urban upheaval.

From August 20 to November 20, at **Château La Coste in the south of France**, Othoniel will present an important installation entitled "Îles singulières." Specially created for the site's new exhibition space designed by Renzo Piano, this installation will allow Othoniel to affirm once again his interest in and love for interacting with architecture by his peers.

And concluding this busy year, in November, **galerie Perrotin Shanghai** will host Jean-Michel Othoniel's first solo exhibition in this city. There, he will present a new series of monumental sculptures and gold paintings that have never before been shown, inspired by his passion for flowers as well as by his first voyage to China 27 years ago.

The year 2019 will also be marked by the publication of several new books on the artist's work.

# L'ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS

During the plenary session on Wednesday, November 14, 2018, the Académie des beaux-arts elected Jean-Michel Othoniel to the fifth chair in the sculpture section that was previously occupied by Eugène Dodeigne (1923-2015). The election was approved by the President of the Republic and Protector of the Academy on December 13, 2018. The artist's installation ceremony will take place under the Academy's famous dome in late 2019. There are currently 6 members of the sculpture section: Jean Cardot, Claude Abeille, Antoine Poncet, Brigitte Terziev, Pierre-Édouard and Jean Anguera.

The Académie des beaux-arts is one of the 5 institutions comprising the Institut de France. With 63 members within 9 artistic sections, the Académie promotes and encourages the creation of artistic expression in its various forms and defends the French cultural heritage. To fulfill its missions of supporting creation, it awards numerous prizes each year, organizes active partnerships with cultural institutions and acts as an advisory body to the French public authorities. In order to carry out these missions, the Académie des beaux-arts also administrates cultural donations and the legacies it possesses, including such important cultural foundations as the Paul Marmottan Foundation (the Marmottan Monet Museum in Paris and the Marmottan Library in Boulogne-Billancourt), the Claude Monet Foundation in Giverny, the Ephrussi de Rothschild Villa in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat and the Jean and Simone Lurçat Foundation in Paris.



Born in 1964 in Saint-Etienne, Jean-Michel Othoniel has, since the late 1980s, invented a universe with multiple contours. Having first explored materials with reversible qualities such as sulfur or wax, he has been working with glass since 1993.

Today, his works have willingly taken on an architectural dimension and can be found in gardens or historic sites as a result of public and private commissions around the world.

Choosing sensitive materials that have poetic properties, Jean-Michel Othoniel began in the early 1990s creating works in sulfur and wax, which were exhibited as early as 1992 by Jan Hoet at the Documenta in Kassel.

The following year, Othoniel began using glass, marking a profound shift in his work. He began collaborating with artisan glassblowers from Murano, exploring the potential of this material that has since become his trademark. The delicate quality of glass and the subtlety of its colors play an important role in Othoniel's artistic project: to poeticize and reenchant the world. In 1994, he participated in the exhibition "Féminin/Masculin", presenting a series of works in sulfur as well as the installation performance *My Beautiful Closet*, featuring dancers filmed in the darkness of a storeroom.

In 1996, Othoniel was awarded a residency at the Villa Medici in Rome. From that moment on, he began to make works that interact with the landscape, suspending giant necklaces in the gardens of the Villa Medici and from the trees in the Venetian garden of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (1997), or at the Alhambra and in the Generalife in Granada (1999).

In 2000, Jean-Michel Othoniel received his first public commission, to transform the subway station Palais-Royal–Musée du Louvre in Paris into *the Kiosque des Noctambules (The Kiosk of the Nightwalkers)*. Since then, his creations have graced both public spaces and museum spaces. In 2003, for the exhibition “Crystal Palace,” presented at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris and at the MoCA in Miami, he worked in Venice and at the International Glass Center in Marseille (Cirva) to produce enigmatic sculptures in blown-glass shapes that lie between jewelry, architectures and erotic objects. The following year, in 2004, an invitation from the Louvre Museum to exhibit in the Mesopotamian rooms, in the framework of the exhibition “Counterpoint,” offered him the opportunity to produce his first freestanding necklaces, including the large-scale *Rivière blanche (White River)*, later acquired by the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris.

Travel is one of the recurring themes in his work. The idea of travel is reflected in the project *Le Petit théâtre de Peau d'Âne* (2004, Center Pompidou collection), inspired by small puppets found in Pierre Loti's house and presented onstage at the Théâtre de la Ville in Rochefort, then at the Théâtre de Châtelet in Paris. Cultivating the art of reconciling opposites, the artist created a dialogue between the poetic and the political in his *Bateau de Larmes (Boat of Tears)*, a tribute to refugees made from a salvaged Cuban migrant boat abandoned in Miami that he covered with a cascade of colorful glass beads, transforming them into huge tears of limpid crystal. This work was shown at Art Unlimited 2005. During a visit to India in 2010, Othoniel collaborated with glassmakers in Firozabad, producing a series of works that would be presented the following year at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, in his exhibition “My Way.” In 2012, an invitation from the Eugène Delacroix Museum, in the painter's former apartment and studio in Paris, offered Othoniel an opportunity to dialogue with this space steeped in history in a series of sculptures inspired by the structure of flowers, along with watercolors from his *Herbier Merveilleux*. Othoniel's installations and site-specific sculptures reflect the beauty of a place and heighten its magical qualities. In the spring of 2013, for its 10th anniversary, the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo commissioned *Kin no Kokoro*, a monumental heart of gilded bronze beads permanently installed in the Japanese Mohri Garden, allowing him to orchestrate an encounter between his habitual artistic themes and sacred Eastern symbolism.

The year 2015 was marked by the realization of an exceptional project realized in collaboration with the landscape designer Louis Benech: the redevelopment of the Water Theatre Grove in the gardens of the Chateau de Versailles. For this commission, awarded in an international competition, Jean-Michel Othoniel created 3 fountain sculptures in gilded glass inspired by the work of choreographer Raoul-Auger Feuillet, dancing master for the court of King Louis XIV. With *Les Belles Danses (The Beautiful Dances)*, Othoniel thus created the first permanent installation commissioned for the palace by a contemporary artist. Conceived as an architectural project, these 3 fountain sculptures embody some of the qualities that characterize Othoniel's recent work: monumental scale, relationship to history and uniqueness. In September 2016, Jean-Michel Othoniel unveiled the immersive artwork *Le Trésor de la cathédrale d'Angoulême*, a project he developed over more than 8 years.

Othoniel's works can be found in the world's most important contemporary art museums, foundations and private collections.

# ARTISTES À LA UNE

## MONNAIE DE PARIS

February 19 - 23, 2019



The news shows us daily that conditions for women around the world are still quite fragile. Progress in France can mask setbacks in the wake of wars and the rise of extremism elsewhere. In 2019, the project “Artistes à la Une - Togeth’Her” will mobilize a number of international artists with their depictions of exceptional women. Borrowing the format of Vogue Paris magazine, the selected artists will create, using their chosen techniques, portraits of iconic women they find inspiring. The faces of these feminine evocations will be compatible with the elegant spirit that characterizes Vogue, that of women who, today and yesterday, participate in the culture of their time, who dare to break boundaries, who transform the way we see the world with style, audacity and creativity. The artists’ original works produce will be exhibited at the Hôtel de la Monnaie (the Paris Mint) and sold by the Christie’s auction house to benefit the global programs of UN Women and its national entity, the National Committee for UN Women in France ([www.onufemmes.fr](http://www.onufemmes.fr)), which is dedicated to promoting gender equality and to combating violence against women around the world.

For his participation, Jean-Michel Othoniel chose to collaborate with the dancer Marie-Agnès Gillot and the photographer Christian Lartillot, creating a dreamlike cover design that immortalizes the prima ballerina’s performance inside his enormous wave sculpture of glass bricks.

# ORACLES

## GALERIE PERROTIN

March 16 - May 25, 2019

PARIS



*Amber Oracle, Mirrored glass bricks.*

The artist will present in Paris a new body of work including monumental sculptures and large-scale installations created with his new iconic module, the mirrored brick. These bricks allow the artist to go further in the creation of large-scale artworks such as his *Big Wave*. Othoniel creates pieces that go beyond the idea of sculpture, to become real glass and metal architectures like walls, roads, grottos and agoras. Works on such a scale, that people will be able to enter them, to experience them as spaces of freedom.

### THE GENESIS

In 2009, with the assistance of the French Embassy in New Delhi, Jean-Michel Othoniel traveled to India with one of his collaborators, a European glassblower, to learn about local glass artists and their savoir faire. In Indian culture, glass has been linked to jewelry and architecture since ancient times.

While exploring this country, Othoniel was quite moved by the small stacks of glass blocks he saw lying along the roads. In India, the poor often purchase plots of land and then stack bricks on them, hoping one day to amass enough to build a house. These shapeless monoliths seemed to him like universal monuments filled with hope, a symbol of our dreams to one day build our own homes. This inspired him to collaborate with local craftsmen to create mirrored glass bricks that would serve as modules for his artworks. A universal symbol of solidity, Othoniel's bricks remain nonetheless paradoxical because of their hollow nature and the fragile glass from which they are crafted. For nearly 10 years, this module has allowed the artist to build monumental sculptures that can also be seen as architectural structures.



These radical sculptures both pay homage to Christopher Street's iconic Stonewall uprisings and denounce the silence that still threatens this worldwide movement, initiated in New York in the early 1970s. On the floor, the artist's Brick Roads, paths made with his mirrored bricks, guide the visitors as they move about the space while evoking a wonderful dream world that echoes the paved roads in *The Wizard of Oz*.



*Oracle Mirror, stainless steel bricks by Polimiroir.*

#### **THE FOUNDING MYTH AND NEW UTOPIAS**

In New York in March 2018, Othoniel presented his most recent minimalist and utopian glass sculptures-architectures, which reflect his obsession with the myth of the fall of the Tower of Babel. At the time of his exhibition, the artist was completing the workshop "Glass Architecture" (organized in collaboration with the New York Public Art Fund, specialists and architecture students), which explored the questions: What did people do after hope was destroyed, with the millions of bricks from the Tower of Babel scattered on the ground? What did they rebuild afterwards, and what should we build in their footsteps? Can an artwork of art become a new agora?

At the galerie Perrotin Paris, Jean-Michel Othoniel will present new sculpture-architectures in glass and metal bricks coming out of this desire for reconstruction - enclosed spaces conducive to dialogue, meeting and meditation. Low piles of brick transformed into garden landscapes, the *Oracles* will invite visitors to lose themselves in the infinite depths of their reflections; glass waves become abstract bas-reliefs reminiscent of melting icebergs. The central work, *Agora*, will be conceived as a protected, enclosed environment. Taking shape as a stack of mirrored bricks and surrounded by benches, it will be designed as a work that visitors can penetrate in order to slow down and meet one another.

# THE NATIONAL MUSEUM DOHA - QATAR

28 mars 2019

**The National Museum of Qatar will be inaugurated on March 28, 2019.**

**It will offer visitors an exceptional, immersive museum experience.**

**Centered on Qatar's restored historic palace and surrounded by vast gardens, Jean Nouvel's architectural masterpiece will welcome important collections of rare objects as well as commissioned artworks and videos.**



Close-up view of the interlocking discs on the upcoming National Museum of Qatar. ©QMA

**Doha, November 5, 2018** - Qatar Museums announced today that the National Museum of Qatar, a spectacular building by the French architect Jean Nouvel, will be officially inaugurated on March 28, 2019, under the high patronage of the Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The immersive and experiential National Museum of Qatar will tell the story of Qatar and its people from 700,000 years ago to the present day, giving voice to Qatar's rich heritage and culture and expressing a vibrant community's aspirations for the future.

The new museum embraces as its centerpiece, the restored historic building that formerly was both the residence of the royal family and the seat of the government, and subsequently housed the original national Museum: the Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani (1880-1957), son of the founder of modern Qatar.

Jean Nouvel's new 40,000-square-meter building incorporates the former palace and its collections while seamlessly integrating innovative artworks commissioned from Qatari and international artists, rare and precious objects, documentary materials and interactive learning opportunities. H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, said, "Qatar is an ancient land, rich in the traditions of the desert and the sea, but also a land that hosted many past civilizations. While it has modernized its infrastructure, it has still remained true to the core cultural values of our times. We look forward to sharing new museum experiences with our proud and diverse communities, as well as welcoming international guests in the spring of next year."

Jean Nouvel's dynamic architectural design echoes the geography of Qatar while evoking the history and culture of the nation. According to Nouvel, "Qatar has a deep rapport with the desert, with its flora and fauna, its nomadic people, its long traditions. To fuse these contrasting stories, I needed a symbolic element. Eventually, I remembered the phenomenon of the desert rose: crystalline forms, like miniature architectural events, that emerge from the ground through the work of wind, salt water and sand. The museum that developed from this idea, with its great curved discs, intersections and cantilevered angles, is a totality, at once architectural, spatial, and sensory."

Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al Thani, Director of the museum, said, "The National Museum will give visitors an unprecedented museum experience, with people at the heart of its vision and development—this is a museum that narrates the story of the people of Qatar and shares this story in an innovative, holistic and immersive way.

Central to the vision of the museum is intergenerational learning, for school children, for adults, for all, through our multi-layered thematic exhibits, interactivity and programming. At the core of the museum's permanent exhibits and accessible to the public is a digital archive of thousands of images, videos and documents from Qatar and abroad. And all these elements will be made accessible to as many people as possible."

Artworks commissioned for the museum include a piece by Qatari artist Ali Hassan in the ground-floor public entrance, a work by Qatari artist and arts patron Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Ali Al Thani at the entrance to the galleries, and a sculpture by Iraqi artist Ahmed Al Bahrani in the outdoor space known as the Howsh, or caravanserai.

Commissioned artworks in the museum park include a monumental installation by the French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel comprising 114 individual fountains set within the lagoon, their streams designed to evoke the fluid forms of Arabic calligraphy, and a sculpture by the Syrian artist Simone Fattal, Gates of the Sea, which evokes the petroglyphs found in Qatar at Al Jassasiya.



# STONEWALL 50

## CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM

April 27 - August 4, 2019

Houston - Texas



*The Yellow Brick Road, 2018.*

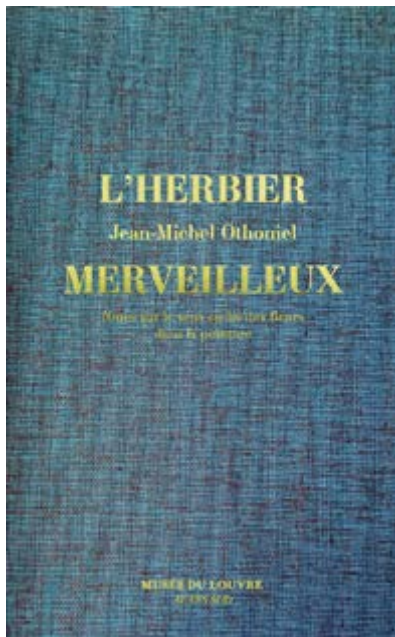
“Stonewall 50” is an exhibition that will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, representing the symbolic moment that is seen as a catalyst for LGBT activism in the United States and around the world.

# L'HERBIER MERVEILLEUX

## MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

*The Secret Language of Flowers*



©Actes Sud / ©Musée du Louvre

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Pyramid, Jean-Michel Othoniel is publishing a new book, *L'Herbier Merveilleux du Louvre*, in collaboration with the museum and the publisher Actes Sud.

This volume gathers together Jean-Michel Othoniel's notes on the secret language of flowers and their symbolism; he reveals their hidden meaning by recounting their stories and their mythologies. Here, he enhances his herbarium with recent discoveries from the Louvre's collections. With this project, the artist returns to his first love: as a young art student, Othoniel worked as a day and night watchman at the Louvre. Throughout the year 2018, he once again explored the empty galleries of the world's largest museum, "gathering" flowers—painted, from 8 museum departments, in this way composing a new herbarium. Moving through the Louvre's galleries, Othoniel photographed the flowers represented in sculptures, tapestries, frescoes, architectural elements, furniture and paintings. Among the highlighted details: a thistle in a Durer self-portrait, an apple resting on a stool in *The Bolt* by Fragonard, a peony tucked into the open blouse of the young girl with the broken pitcher painted by Greuze, or a palm branch in the arms of Zurbarán's *Saint Apollonia*.

*Press release from the Louvre Museum to come*



©Actes Sud / ©Musée du Louvre

And in this immense field of symbolic flowers, the artist asked himself, if it were necessary to choose one, which flower would the Louvre be?

He had to remember his first strong emotions, mixed with some life lessons and the historical importance of certain artworks, to locate the exceptional work that conceals this flower. The political events connected to the work's creation as well as its unique location in the museum were also important details. Once he had put all this information together, a flower appeared to him, one that bore the stigma of our knowledge, and it was indeed a rose. A flower amongst the flowers, the triumphant rose painted by Rubens in a painting that seals the marriage between Marie de Medici and Henry IV speaks of a woman's destiny, of her beauty, of her love stronger than death, of the history of the France and, too, the history of the Louvre. Inspired by this rose, a symbol of power and passion, the artist made watercolor and ink drawings of the discovery into the herbarium's centerpiece.

Othoniel's book was conceived as an ABC enriched by selections made by the artist in the museum galleries, photographic details of paintings and of flowers, drawings and texts on the secret language of flowers.

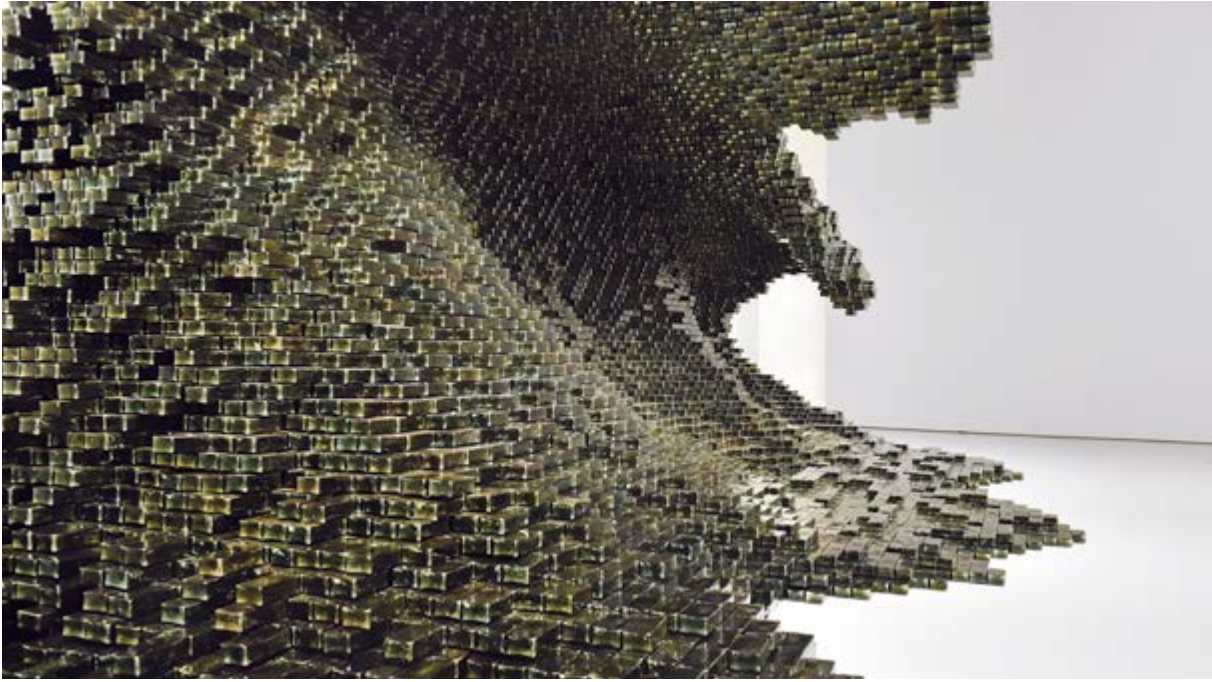
L'Herbier merveilleux has also been published in English under the title *The Secret Language of Flowers*.

*Press release from the Louvre Museum to come*

# THE BIG WAVE

## PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

May 2019



*The Big Wave*, 2018

*The Big Wave* is a monumental work that takes on a surprising architectural dimension.

*The Big Wave* is built as a metal frame covered with glass. It is the result of 2 years of work and several months of technical drawings. This radical, monochrome and abstract folly is composed of more than 10,000 bricks in black glass, hand-blown in India following the artist's residency with Indian glassmakers. This life-size wave almost engulfs us, and is filled with contradictions, between sorrow and joy. It also reflects the violence of the elements, recalling the 2011 tsunami that struck Fukushima while the artist was preparing an exhibition in Japan.

Inaugurating the Monte-Carlo Winter Sporting showroom by presenting *The Big Wave* will highlight the Principality's commitment to safeguarding of oceans and preserving water resources in the Mediterranean Sea. The knowledge and preservation of marine ecosystems have been linked to the history of the Principality since the 19th century, with the many marine explorations conducted by Prince Albert I, a passionate explorer and a demanding scientist who was one of the founders of modern oceanography.

*Press release to come*



*The Big Wave, 2018*

This commitment to protect our oceans continued throughout the 20th century, in particular with the 1976 signing of the RAMOGE Agreement between France, Monaco and Italy, to protect the waters on the Mediterranean coast. In 1982, the Principality was also one of the first signatory states of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In June 2006, Monaco created the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, taking on important initiatives such as the 2008 effort to ban the consumption of Mediterranean bluefin tuna or the 2009 Monaco declaration on the acidification of oceans. The Foundation also launched in 2010 the Monaco Blue Initiative (MBI) and, in 2013, of an environmental fund dedicated to the management of marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2015, the Be-Med initiative was born to fight against plastic pollution in the Mediterranean; in 2016, the Principality of Monaco instigated a special report by the IPCC devoted to climate change, the oceans and the cryosphere, to be finalized in autumn 2019. In 2017 and 2018, the Principality organized Monaco Ocean Week, a weeklong series of meetings, debates and actions dedicated to preserving the ocean and conserving the marine environment.



# LA SOLFATARA

## OTHONIEL STUDIO

May 2019

Montreuil



In the spring of 2019, Jean-Michel Othoniel will be relocating to a new workshop in Montreuil, in Paris' eastern suburbs. The Coudé Delboeuf covered market halls, a 4,000-square-meter space built between 1869 and 1936, will unite under their vast Eiffel skylights, Othoniel's 12 collaborators. They will imagine and fabricate his artworks, conceive exhibitions and manage the artist's archives in the space.



THE SOLFATARA is an open space that Jean-Michel Othoniel will share in part with the Belgian sculptor Johan Creten and his assistants. He has been a close accomplice of Othoniel's for many years, and his practice, primarily in ceramics and bronze, will continue to enrich their discussions about the savoir-faire and artworks they both cherish. The city of Montreuil is currently implementing an urban renewal project surrounding the Robespierre subway station which, by 2020, will give rise to significant developments revolving around cultural spaces. The Solfatara will be one of the landmarks of this new district, which is situated just beyond Paris' 20th arrondissement and just separated from it by the beltway.

# LES NOEUDS MATHÉMATIQUES

CENTRE CULTUREL NÉSTOR KIRCHNER

June - November 2019

Buenos Aires - Argentina



Virtual image, ©Aubin Arroyo, 2017

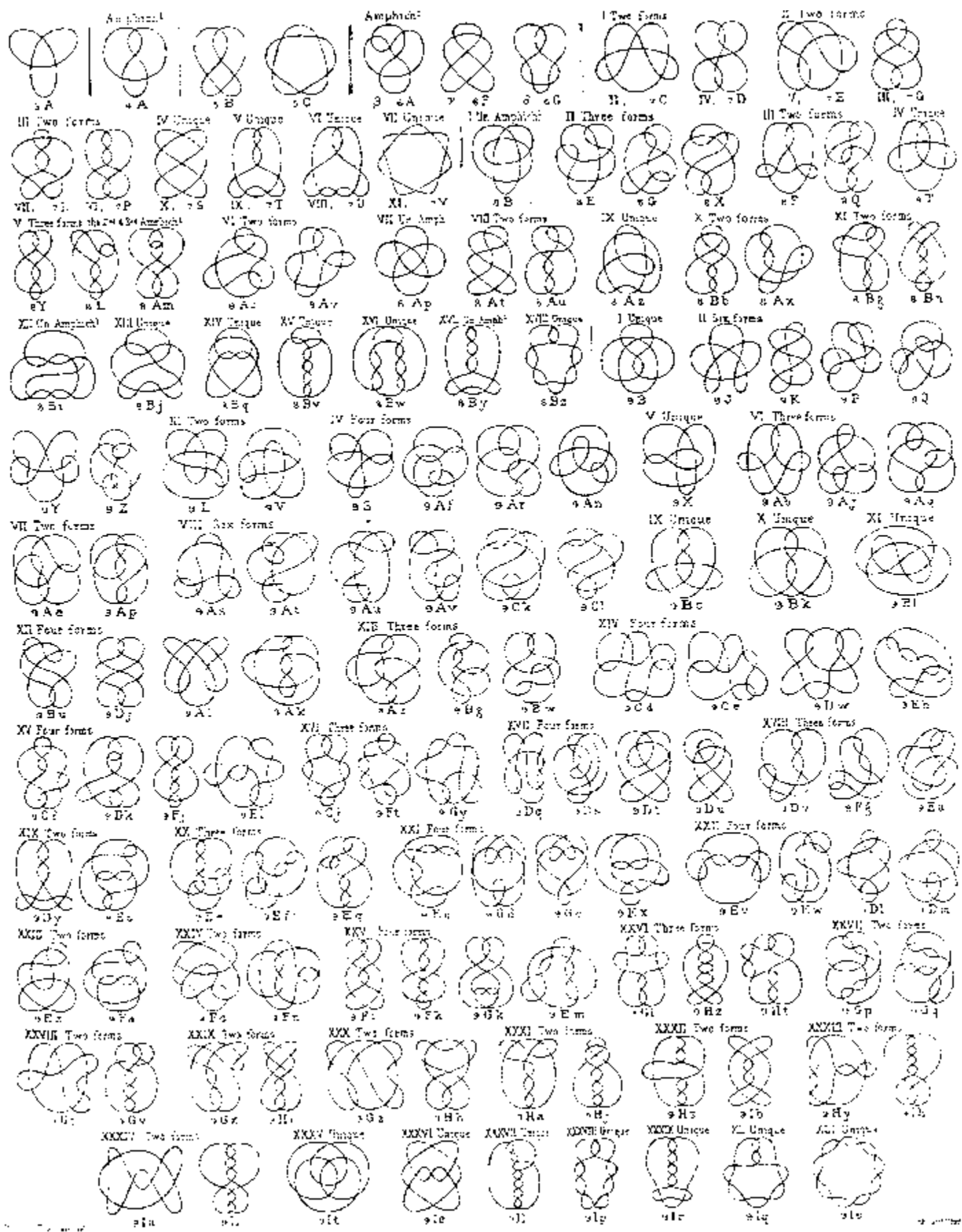


Nœud miroité, Jean-Michel Othoniel, 2017

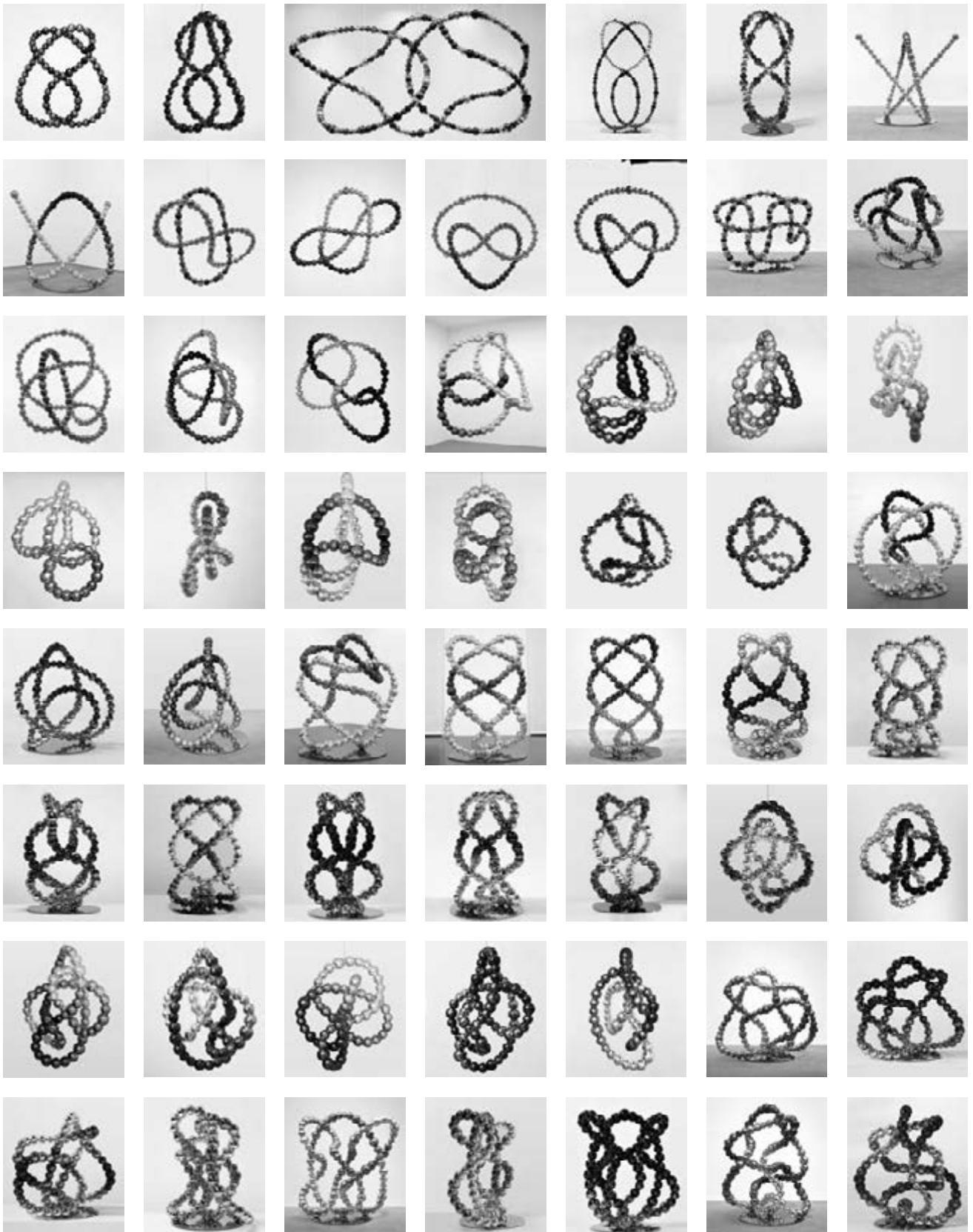
In June 2019, at the Centro Cultural Néstor Kirchner in Buenos Aires, Jean-Michel Othoniel will present a major exhibition linking his knot sculptures in mirrored glass beads to mathematics, more precisely to the wild knot theory. “Les Nœuds Mathématiques” will thus embody the dialogue that began in 2017 between the artist and the Mexican mathematician Aubin Arroyo.

This mathematics-inspired story began in April 2015, when Aubin Arroyo showed Jean-Michel Othoniel his research on wild knots and the reflection theory, which he had been analyzing for more than 15 years. The virtual images born of these mathematical formulas bore an uncanny resemblance to the images in the artist’s sculptures, a connection that inspired them and led to an intellectual and artistic encounter.

In Buenos Aires in 2019, Othoniel will continue to pursue this mathematical exploration and will present a major retrospective of his knot sculptures alongside the theories and mathematical images of Aubin Arroyo, with the support of Cédric Vilani. During the exhibition, which will be conceived as a major installation of his infinite knot sculptures, a series of conferences exploring knots in contemporary art, mathematics and psychoanalysis will also be organized.



# The first Seven Orders of Knottiness used by Aubin Arroyo



Families of Jean-Michel Othoniel's Knots

# THE NECKLACE'S HOUSE

## NIHONBASHI

July 2019

Tokyo - Japan

Invited by the city of Tokyo to create a site-specific sculpture, Othoniel was inspired by the old neighbourhood of Nihonbashi and the story of the ancient fire stations that once marked the landscape in this part of the city.

Those tall constructions were built to supervise the nearby houses and made it possible to spot the early stages of any fire within a very large perimeter.

What fascinated the artist is this idea of an architecture dedicated to alertness that became in ancient times a symbol of vigilance in the city, visible from a distance. Othoniel thus conceived a transparent architecture, both fragile and strong, evoking the old fire stations. He took his inspiration from the fact that these buildings brought together two elements of nature: Fire and Water. He thus designed a linear, symbolic architecture surrounding one of his immense sculptures, whose contours are shaped like the ancient fire stations built to fight Fire. This construction allows the viewer to turn around the sculpture, to see it from many points of views and to see what is inside. One can hence perceive in the heart of the architecture what is still today one of the most important resources on Earth: Water.



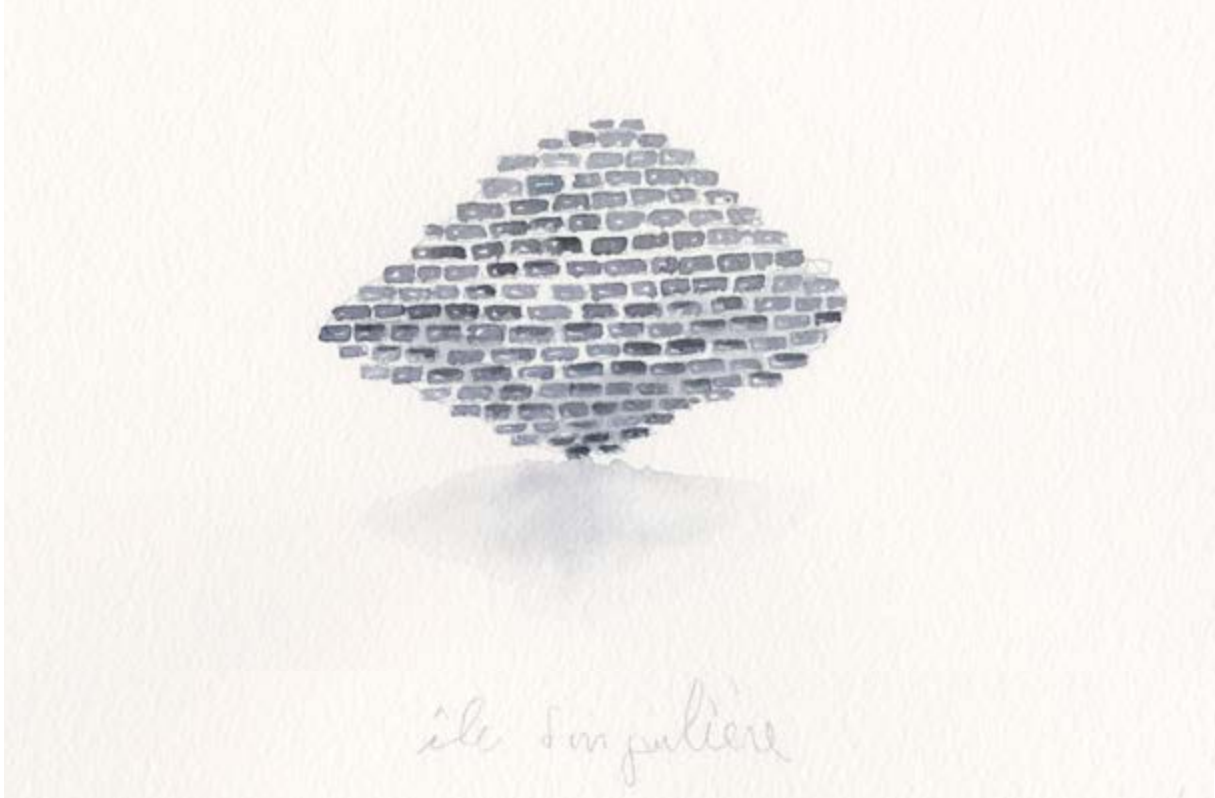
*The Necklace's House, simulation, 2018*

The Necklace of Water is presented like a precious resource protected in the architecture, as in a jewelry case. As Othoniel wanted the artwork to interact with its environment in the city, he incorporated an audio device in The Necklace's House in order to evoke the old bells of ancient fire houses.

# ÎLES SINGULIÈRES

## CHÂTEAU LA COSTE

August 20 - November 20, 2019



*Île singulière*, preparatory watercolor, 2018

From August 20 to November 20, Othoniel will present at Château La Coste in the south of France, an important installation entitled “Îles singulières.” Specially created for the new exhibition space designed by Renzo Piano, this exhibition will be an opportunity to reaffirm the artist’s interest in and love for interacting with the architecture of his peers.



Sketch on top of a location photo, 2018

Minimal and abstract blue and silver mirrored brick sculptures will marry the building’s pared-down volumes, creating other architectures. An infinite line of glass and metal bricks will accompany the visitor along the path to a mysterious and lonely island, “Calme bloc ici-bas chu d’un désastre obscure (calm block here fallen down from some far disaster).”

*Press release from Château La Coste to come*

# A ROSE GARDEN

## GALERIE PERROTIN

November 2019

Shanghai

For his first solo exhibition in Shanghai, Jean-Michel Othoniel will present a series of new monumental sculptures and gilded paintings that have never before been shown, inspired by his passion for flowers and their symbolism. Inspired by his many travels throughout Asia, the artist has perfected, in these recent works, a contemplative approach to nature that guides him toward shapes that are both sensual and radical.

On his first trips to China 27 years ago, he discovered a kind of abstraction linked to the study of knots. For this first exhibition at the galerie Perrotin Shanghai, he connects these knotlike forms to his study of flowers, 3 strings of beads draw 3 sculptures in the shape of a rose in space. A new series of paintings inspired by this “queen of the flowers” continues the research begun at the Louvre Museum in May 2019. The rose, which has been cultivated in Asia for over 5,000 years, is a universal symbol of passion, beauty and desire.

In this exhibition, which Othoniel imagined as a garden, elements of passion confront one another: sensuality and death, violence and beauty, icon and gesture. Othoniel's roses, often black, are here colored red for the first time. Flowers of evil with swollen petals and spiky thorns, they stain the gilded backgrounds of his new paintings on canvas. Black and red shadows tear the surfaces, and the garden becomes a battlefield. The artist, driven by the momentum of the knots, stains the gold in a practiced gesture close to calligraphy. He splashes the petals, and the rosebuds become targets. As in Lewis Carroll's fairytale, armed with a brush, he paints his roses red. In Othoniel's Wonderland, the gesture is suspended and the flowers are disguised as abstract calligraphy.

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