



Exhibition view of *Precious Stonewall* (#9), 2021. Sculpture: Blue and amber Indian mirrored glass, wood. 33 x 32 x 22 cm. Photo : Claire Dorn. Courtesy of the artist & Perrotin. © Jean-Michel Othoniel / ADAGP, Paris, 2022

JEAN-MICHEL OTHONIEL

January 15 – February 26, 2022

Perrotin Hong Kong is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Jean-Michel Othoniel, marking his second gallery presentation in Hong Kong.

Oscillating between fragility and strength, the infinite and the tangible, rationality and sensuality, Othoniel's artworks embrace and transcend opposites in order to expand our conception of reality, reconciling contradictions and opening up realms of wonders. Since 1993, the French artist has been working in collaboration with some of the finest glassblowers in the world on the formal and chemical properties of glass, exploring its manifold possible metamorphoses and substantial variability. A product derived from the transfiguration of matter and melted sand, glass, in essence, is rooted within nature and reflects the exuberance of its potentials and beauty. Similarly, and like an alchemist, Othoniel sublimates natural elements, recomposing and transforming them according to his emotions and to the cultural context he is working in.

At Perrotin Hong Kong, Othoniel proposes two contrasting yet connected universes with his signature bodies of work: the rigorous and systematic configurations of *Precious Stonewall* sculptures made in collaboration with Indian glassmakers; and the ethereal and translucent glass bead compositions, blown in the Italian island of Murano, where the finest glass has been produced since the thirteenth century. In between, the floating and enigmatic *Wild Knot* (*Noeud Sauvage*, 2021) casts an overall cosmic radiance on the exhibition, embracing all its featured elements in its inclusive circular movement.

尚-米歇爾·歐托尼耶

2022年1月15日至2月26日

貝浩登（香港）榮幸呈現法國藝術家尚-米歇爾·歐托尼耶（Jean-Michel Othoniel）個展，此為藝術家第二次於香港舉辦的畫廊空間展覽。

歐托尼耶的作品擁抱和轉化各種對立，在脆弱與堅韌、無限與有形、理性與感性之間，擴闊我們對現實的理解與重修各種矛盾，並啟發我們探尋美好的萬事萬物。他自1993年起便與世上頂尖的玻璃吹製師合作，共同研究玻璃形體上和化學上的特性，探索其難以估量的可變性。由物質的變形和熔化的沙子轉化而成的玻璃，與大自然本為一體，本能地昭示自然無限的潛力和美態。歐托尼耶根據自身的情感和身處的文化脈絡，像煉金術士般將自然元素昇華、重組和改造。

是次於貝浩登（香港）的展覽中，歐托尼耶以其標誌性作品提出兩個對比鮮明卻又相互關聯的宇宙：與印度玻璃師合製的《珍石牆》（*Precious Stonewall*）雕塑系列，展現一股嚴謹並井然有序的姿態；以及在意大利穆拉諾島——一個自13世紀起盛產最精美玻璃的小島——製作富空靈感的半透明玻璃珠串組合。介乎兩者之間，作品《野結》（*Noeud Sauvage*, 2021）則以抽象迷幻的玻璃結造型漂浮於展覽空間中，彷彿散發著一股宇宙的光芒，像星環般包納其它作品所折射的光芒。



Wild Knot, 2021. 90 x 90 x 90 cm. Mirrored glass, stainless steel. Photo: Claire Dorn. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin. © Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2022.

Developed after a residency in India near the ancient capital of Agra, Othoniel's *Precious Stonewall* series, mounted onto the walls of the first exhibition room, consists of glass bricks of various sizes and colors that the artist assembles to create voluminous tableaux. A symbol of the human's ability to construct civilizations and empires, bricks are universally associated with strength and immutability. In contrast, Othoniel's glass bricks are fragile and non-functional: they cannot be piled up and could not therefore hold anything, only giving the illusion of stability and force. A hint to the vulnerability of today's world during pandemic times, the series also refers to the frailty of every breakthrough in social transformation, and in particular to the precarious empowerment of the gay community. While bricks are historically linked to revolutionary movements, the brick house of the Stonewall Inn in New York city and the Stonewall riots are remembered as a catalyst for the gay rights movement in the United States, and around the world, from the late 1960s. For the artist, these bricks are precious because they embody such emancipatory moments that ultimately contribute to transforming our society yet could be reversed at any time. His own glowing bricks could be perceived as lighthouses that would keep us awake in the obscurity of turbulent times. As always with Othoniel, this underlying sociopolitical layer is hidden behind the sheer beauty of the pieces, which recall, in their own colorful and poetical manner, the compositions of minimalist artworks, based on the infinite interplay between elementary geometric shapes.

As a counterpoint, and displayed in the middle of the same room, *Wild Knot* (2021) breaks the linear forms of the bricks and imposes a metaphysical dimension to the ensemble. A constellation of white and red glass beads, the work belongs to a series that began in 2015 when the artist met with Mexican mathematician Aubin Arroyo. The shape of the sculpture recalls the "Borromean knot," a fascinating entanglement of three interlocked rings with unique mathematic features. As a symbol, it was notably used by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to describe the connection between the imaginary, the symbolic and the real, three necessary and complementary modes of perceiving reality. Located at the junction of these three spheres and embedded at the same time in the scientific and the poetical realms,

掛在第一個展廳牆上的《珍石牆》系列，由不同尺寸和顏色的玻璃磚排列而成，創造出目不暇給的靜態畫面。歐托尼耶在印度古都阿格拉附近駐留後開始創作此系列，磚塊向來予人堅固無比、永恆不變的形象，象徵人類建設文明和帝國的能力。然而他以玻璃打造出易碎且非功能性的磚塊，它們無法堆疊同時承托任何東西，僅能予觀者一種穩定與力量的錯覺。藝術家藉此暗示在疫症當下的世界如斯脆弱，以及人類社會的突破，尤其是同性戀社群被賦有的權利如此不堪一擊。磚頭在歷史上經常與革命運動掛勾，位於紐約市的石牆酒吧與所發生的暴動自 1960 年代末起被美國和世界各地的民眾視為同性戀權利運動的催生地。對歐托尼耶來說，這些玻璃磚塊的珍貴之處，在於它們體現了解放的時刻，這些突破縱使最終促進了社會的改變，亦能隨時逆轉。透光的磚塊就如燈塔般，讓觀者在模糊不清的動盪時期中保持清醒。一如歐托尼耶的其它作品，這些璀璨晶瑩、極具詩意的磚塊作品按照幾何形狀無限延伸的特性，以極簡的方式進行排列，隱藏於純粹美感背後的卻是各種社會政治角力。

置放在這個展廳中間的《野結》(2021)則脫離了上述磚塊的線性形態，為展覽的整體增加了形而上的維度。這件由白色和紅色玻璃組成的珠串雕塑，屬於 2015 年歐托尼耶與墨西哥數學家奧賓·阿羅約 (Aubin Arroyo) 會面後開始創作的系列。雕塑的形狀讓人聯想到波羅米昂三環結，以相扣的圓環來傳遞一種數學語言。法國精神分析學家雅克·拉康 (Jacques Lacan) 便利用這符號來描述想像界、象徵界與真實界的關係，並以此作為感知現實世界的基本框架。歐托尼耶懸垂的珠串結交匯這三個界域，同時穿梭科學和詩意的領域，彷彿將無限小與無限大聯繫起來，暗示著它們之間相互流動的關係。珠串蜿蜒而迷人的線條，亦讓人想起書法家在空氣中揮毫的動態，彷彿其筆觸瞬間凝固了起來。

繩結藝術在中國傳統文化中源遠流長，這些延綿無盡的繩結具有長壽和永恆的象徵。漢語中的「結」暗示著一種聯繫，如「團結」、「結婚」。前者有為了集中力量而聯合在一起的意思，後者的「結」亦



Suspended Lover Alessandrita, Aquamarine and Cobalt, 2021. Murano glass alessandrita, aquamarine and cobalt, stainless steel. 70 × 15 × 15 cm. Photo: Claire Dorn. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin. © Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2022.

Othoniel's suspended knot seems to connect the infinitely small to the infinitely large, suggesting a mutual and fluid relationship between them. Curved and sensual, it also recalls the imaginary gesture of a calligrapher whose writing would have crystallized in the air.

In Chinese culture, where the art of knotting is an ancestral custom, these endless knots have a spiritual connotation and symbolize longevity and eternity. The word "knot", or "jié" (結) in Mandarin Chinese, implies a connection: when combined with "tuán" (tuán jié 團結), it means "to unite", and when associated with "hūn" (jié hūn 結婚), it means to marry. "Jié" in this context derives from the tradition of tying strands of hair from a couple during their wedding ceremony in ancient times. In the second room of the gallery, bathed in daylight from a large window, suspended glass sculptures from the series entitled *Suspended Lover (Amant Suspendu, 2021)* could relate to these traditions and to the union of lovers.

Inside the lower and transparent beads of these necklaces are nestled smaller glass spheres whose delicate hues echo the palette of the pieces themselves. The colors of the glass derive from mixing pigments, powdered minerals and metal with melted sand; Othoniel purposefully and carefully chooses the spectrum of his colors to retain authentic and natural shades. This series unfolds in blue and purple tones created with cobalt, amethyst and alexandrite, a rare mineral known for its color-changing properties: purple under daylight, dark grey by nightfall. An additional dimension is offered by a subtle play of light as views of the bay of Victoria Harbour are captured and inverted within the small spheric universes like worlds within worlds. Just like the lenses of a photographer, each bead recreates a miniature of the landscape and multiplies its reflections.

This panorama is particularly meaningful to the artist, who spent one month working from the rooftop of the former Hong Kong Museum of Art thirty years ago, enjoying the same view on Victoria Harbour. Invited for the exhibition *Too French*, he then had to set up an outdoor studio because of the toxic smell emitted from his creative experimentations, based on the use of sulfur. At that time, he was melting his materials



Suspended Lover Alessandrita, Aquamarine and Amethyst, 2021. Murano glass alessandrita, aquamarine and amethyst, stainless steel. 70 × 15 × 15 cm. Photo: Claire Dorn. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin. © Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2022.

能追溯至古時新人於大婚當日進行的結髮儀式。懸掛在第二個展廳的《懸浮戀人》(Amant Suspendu, 2021) 玻璃雕塑系列，沐浴在穿透大窗的日光之中，遙遙回應這些古老的傳統和情人的重逢。

在這些珠串最底部的玻璃珠內包含著更為細小的玻璃球，其細膩的色彩與珠串本身的色調相互呼應。歐托尼耶透過混合顏料、粉狀礦物、金屬和熔化的沙粒，謹慎地調配出這些別出心裁的顏色，以保留真實和自然之感。此系列是次展出的大部分作品以藍色和紫色為主調，利用鈷、紫水晶和亞歷山大變石這種以其變色特性而聞名的稀有色彩與珠串本身的色調相互呼應。歐托尼耶透過混合顏料、粉狀礦物、金屬和熔化的沙粒，謹慎地調配出這些別出心裁的顏色，以保留真實和自然之感。此系列是次展出的大部分作品以藍色和紫色為主調，利用鈷、紫水晶和亞歷山大變石這種以其變色特性而聞名的稀有礦物製成。亞歷山大變石在日光下呈紫色，夜幕降臨時則呈深灰色。當維多利亞港的整個景色，透過窗戶的光線若隱若現地倒映在這些球形玻璃珠內，構成一個蘊藏萬千世界的小宇宙。就像攝影師的鏡頭一樣，每顆珠子都濃縮了一片風景，卻同時折射出更寬闊的一片天空。

折射在玻璃珠內的全景對藝術家來說亦別具意義，因為他在三十年前曾於前香港藝術館的天台上工作了一個月，欣賞了同樣的維多利亞港景致。其時歐托尼耶受邀參加《Too French》展覽，由於他使用硫磺進行的實驗性創作釋放出有毒的氣味，因此不得不建立一個戶外工作室。他親自實驗和熔化這些硫磺，把玩物質變形的特性，創造出一種火山玻璃。這一段早期煉金術般的實驗，驅使他投身玻璃的創作，更在其後於 1992 年入選第九屆卡塞爾文獻展 (Documenta IX)。香港從此成為他職業生涯的一個重要轉捩點，也是他持續的靈感來源。

歐托尼耶的標誌性的作品《雙項鍊(亞歷山大變石、紫水晶、雲母)》(Double Collier Alessandrita-Améthyste Mica, 2021) 長約三米，其美



Precious Stonewall, 2021. Green Indian mirrored glass, wood. 79 × 55 × 22 cm. Photo: Claire Dorn. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin. © Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2022.

himself, creating a form of volcanic glass and already playing with the metamorphosis of matter. Selected for Documenta IX in 1992, he pursued these early alchemical experiences which ultimately led him to glassmaking. As such, Hong Kong represents an essential turning point in his career and a continuous source of inspiration.

The centerpiece of this room, *Double Necklace Alessandrita-Amethyst Mica* (*Double Collier Alessandrita-Améthyste Mica*, 2021) is one of Othoniel's iconic artworks. About three meters long, it unfolds its sensual body like a living creature, combining the preciousness of a rare piece of jewelry with a sense of robustness derived from its weight and gigantic size. Just like bricks, beads emerge as a unitary element that can combine endlessly to reflect living forms of the universe. Beyond its organic features, the necklace motif takes on various meanings according to the context it is exhibited in and the traditional culture it refers to. For Hong Kong, the artist wishes to hint at the spiritual dimension of handblown glass beads, which brings to mind devotion beads used by Buddhists to measure time, to support meditative breathing, or to count the repetitions of prayers, chants, or mantras.

Relentlessly exploring the miracles of nature and the enlivening of matter, Jean-Michel Othoniel's new solo exhibition is an invitation to refresh our gaze and reach out to the wonders of reality.

– Caroline Ha Thuc

More information >>>

艷動人的曲線使之宛如生物，棲息於這展廳的中央。作品在呈現珍稀珠寶的瑰麗之時，同時凸顯其因重量和巨大尺寸而衍生的堅固之感。如磚塊一樣，圓珠作為一個單位元素無休止地串合，反映宇宙的生命形式。除了其有機的特徵外，串珠的項鍊亦因應其展出環境的文化脈絡而產生多種含義。而在香港這個地方，藝術家希望聯繫這些手工玻璃珠的精神層面至宗教的體系，讓觀者聯想起佛教徒用於測量時間、冥想呼吸，或計算誦經持咒次數的佛珠手串。

就讓尚-米歇爾·歐托尼耶新個展中不斷探索自然奇蹟和物質的活力，帶領我們更新視野並接觸現實的奧妙。

– Caroline Ha Thuc 撰文

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