

# *The Narcissus Theorem*

## Jean-Michel Othoniel

September 28, 2021 – January 2, 2022



Petit Palais  
Musée des Beaux-Arts  
de la Ville de Paris

Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Late opening only on Friday until 9:00 p.m.  
Access is free of charge

Information  
[petitpalais.paris.fr](http://petitpalais.paris.fr)



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Gold Lotus*, 2019  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

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Exhibition organized with the support of Perrotin and Christian Dior Parfums as part of its *Cultural Gardens* initiative.



## Press Release

# *The Narcissus Theorem* Jean-Michel Othoniel

**From September 28, 2021 to January 2, 2022, at the invitation of the Petit Palais, Jean-Michel Othoniel is taking over the museum and its garden. This will be the artist's biggest solo show in Paris since his retrospective *My Way* at the Centre Pompidou in 2011.**

For the occasion, with more than 70 new artworks, Othoniel has invented *The Narcissus Theorem*, about a man-flower who, in reflecting himself, reflects the world around him. According to Gaston Bachelard "narcissism is not always neurotic. It can also play a positive role in aesthetic work. Sublimation is not always the negation of desire. It can be sublimation for the sake of an ideal".

Othoniel weaves a web of unreality, enchantment, illusion and liberation of the imagination. *Rivers of blue bricks*, *Lotus*, *Necklaces*, *Crown of the Night*, *Wild Knots*, and *Precious Stonewall* are hidden in the architecture, placed on the water mirrors of the pools, hanging from trees; new works dialogue with the architecture of the Petit Palais and the golds go its garden.

This exhibition is a message of opening, freely given to the public. Placed under the sign of re-enchantment and the theory of reflections that the artist has been developing for going on ten years in a dialogue with the Mexican mathematician Aubin Arroyo, this exhibition is an occasion to dream and, as long as it lasts, to resist the disillusionment of the world.

### Curation

Christophe Leribault, Director of the Petit Palais  
Juliette Singer, chief curator of heritage, responsible for contemporary art projects at the Petit Palais



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Gold Lotus*, 2019  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

## The exhibition

### *Blue River* (2021)

Sending out a clear call to passers-by, a shimmering blue river made of glass seems to flow down the grand stairway of the Petit Palais. Made in-situ with blocks of Indian glass, this architectonic sculpture plays on the expressiveness of two palettes: the cool and nocturnal aquamarine tones of the blue river responding to the warm gold of the stunning ironwork gate by Charles Girault (1851-1932) that stands at the entry to the museum. With this dazzling installation, like a pavement of gemstones, Othoniel transforms the museum into a storybook castle. The magic is especially captivating in the evening, when his creation seems to float surreally.

Through this installation, Jean-Michel Othoniel explores the symbolic meaning of stairways, a path that elevates man to knowledge and wisdom, under the auspices of *The City of Paris Protecting the Arts*, a sculpture by Jean-Antoine Injalbert (1845-1933) that dominates the porch. The artist also evokes the passage from one world to another, which is linked to water in most religions. The great river is like the first step in an initiatory journey that leads, if not to Paradise, at least to a world of poetry, far from earthly cares and its disillusionments. Like Orpheus in Jean Cocteau's film, the visitor is invited to pass through a mirror to get to another dimension: that of a fairy tale, where time stands still and the "normal" is not the norm.

### The Garden (26 sculptures, 2014-2021)

A monumental lotus flower in black and gold appears through window of the reception rotunda. Like Odysseus' companions in Homer's *Odyssey* who no longer wish to leave the enchanted island inhabited by lotus-eaters after tasting the magical flower, visitors are invited to enter the garden and forget everything for a moment of bliss. The garden has many surprises in store that are in perfect harmony with the Art Nouveau spirit of the Petit Palais. Six silver Knots, with intertwining beads made of stainless steel, rise up from the colourful mosaic floor of the peristyle and reflect everything that surrounds them, notably the semi-circular colonnade and frescoes painted by Paul Baudouin (1844-1931) that retrace the four seasons and the hours of the day and night. They open onto the infinity of the cosmos and eternal renewal.

In the lush garden, other delights await among acanthus plants and palm trees: precious *Necklaces* draped on the branches of trees. Their golden hues echo the garlands that hang around peristyle, but they introduce another dimension that has to do with desire and sensuality, like the necklaces on the floor in the peristyle alcoves. In the pools decorated with turquoise and purple mosaics like those of eastern pleasure gardens, three golden lotus flowers are reflected in the water, which in turn is reflected in the lotuses' mirrored beads. They evoke the yellow flower that Narcissus, in love with his own image, turned into at the end of the myth.

Here, man and his image are at the heart of the matter and stand in for the artist and his work. Or for the visitor who is drawn into this game to discover a certain little-known image of the world - and of himself - through these reflections.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Gold Lotus*, 2015  
Kukje Gallery, Séoul  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adago, Paris, 2021

### *Crown of the Night* (2008)

Suspended above the magnificent spiral staircase by Charles Girault, *Crown of the Night* acts like a giant chandelier and surprises visitors, like a hidden architectural “folly”. Pendant to the fresco *History of French Art* by Maurice Denis (1919-1925) located in the opposite wing, the work is dominated by deep blues, ultramarine and aquamarine, which invoke the Queen of the Night, the heroine of Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute*.

These cool tones are counterbalanced here and there by a few scattered red beads, like a star-spangled sky. Two overturned hearts, the symbol of romance par excellence, occupy the centre, below an enormous ball-mirror, the so-called “scarer” which usually serves to drive away birds. This ball-mirror reflects the entire sculpture, but also the magnificent vault, endowing it with a cosmic dimension.

Composed of a constellation of shimmering beads that reflect the image of the Petit Palais ad infinitum, *Crown of the Night* captivates visitors, transporting them to another space and time between the real and the imaginary.

Aesthetically-speaking, this work recalls Othoniel’s *Kiosque des noctambules* (2000) located near the *Comédie française* playhouse in Paris. The artist drew inspiration from Hector Guimard’s Art Nouveau arabesques, including from his wood-work at the Petit Palais. Made of blown Murano glass beads, *Crown of the Night* takes on a magical dimension thanks to its affiliation with popular cult objects, and a majestic dimension linked to its evocation of storybook kings and queens.

Displayed for the first time in 2008 in a centuries-old forest in Sonsbeeck, the Netherlands, the work now enters a whole new phase. As they pass beneath it, visitors leave the garden of delights to access the darker realms of an underground world. There, *Ugolin* by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827-1875) awaits, ready to devour his own children and marking the entry to Hell, or at least an imaginary cache conceived by Othoniel.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Crown of the Night*, 2008  
Collection of the Petit Palais  
Photo : Othoniel Studio  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

### *The Grotto of Narcissus* (46 works)

Hidden from prying eyes, caves have sometimes served as sanctuaries. Plato’s allegory of the cave shows how difficult it is for men, imprisoned by their illusions, to grasp the truth and share it with others. Here, *Agora* (2019), a grotto of silver bricks, offers a haven where visitors can sit alone or with others to engage in a simple and direct dialogue, out of the sight of others and sheltered from intrusive video cameras and social media.

The relief sculptures in coloured glass that adorn the walls of the lower rotunda are the fruit of a daily, quasi-meditative practice of the artist during the lockdowns of 2020, when he came to terms with hermetic isolation by necessity. Inspired by the minimalist works of American artists of the 1960s, these “Precious Stonewalls” combine pure lines and zen-like forms with a rich, vibrant, and mineral baroque palette.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Agora*, 2019  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

The journey continues in the vast hall below with a new river that, unlike the “blue waterfall” of the entrance, stands still as a peaceful lake, offering a place of rest and contemplation.

A mirror between two worlds, this river reflects multi-coloured shimmering Knots suspended above that call the space into question. In 2013, Othoniel discovered the Mexican scientist Aubin Arroyo and his forms born of complex mathematical models that bore an uncanny resemblance to his sculptures. A dialogue began between the two men, and *Wild Knots* was born. The name was coined by Arroyo himself and the sculptures take his theory of infinite reflections to a new level. Reviving ancient links that unite astronomy and mathematics, Othoniel invents fresh theorems, giving free reign to an infinity of configurations.

Painted in black ink on white gold leaf, these knots, inspired from the shape of peonies, respond to the sculptures on pedestals, real or imaginary *Knots*; the *Grotto of Narcissus* thus opens onto the infinite complexity of humanity. Lastly, in the southern rotunda, a superb 19th-century display case houses a small sculpture in purple glass beads inspired from Japanese chrysanthemums. This *Kiku* (2021), like a small gem, is one last nod to Narcissus and his reflections.

### *Wild Knots*

With his “scar necklace” displayed in the garden of the Peggy Guggenheim collection in Venice in 1997, blown glass beads became Jean-Michel Othoniel’s hallmark. In the 2000s, on the other side of the world, in Mexico, Aubin Arroyo, a young mathematician, was busy working out a new theory of reflections. He used the virtual image of bead-mirrors as a base for his “wild knot” calculations. In 2015, thanks to a chance encounter on the Internet, Othoniel’s knotted necklaces and Arroyo’s virtual images came face to face to reveal their uncanny resemblance.

The two men decided to meet and an enriching relationship ensued. In 2017, Othoniel designed *Infinite Knot*, a sculpture in mirrored glass that he offered to the Mathematics institute of the national University of Mexico, where Arroyo presents the fruit of his research. These forms, the result of one man’s personal artistic oeuvre and another’s mathematical research, bear astonishing similarities. They open doors onto the idea of a perceivable world in mathematical infinity. This theory of reflections sparks a cosmic vision of the Narcissus myth.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Wild Knots*, 2019  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

## Interview with Jean-Michel Othoniel

Extract from an interview between Jean-Michel Othoniel and Christophe Leribault from a book due out at the start of the exhibition. Published jointly by Actes Sud and the Perrotin gallery.

### **Christophe Leribault, Director of the Petit Palais — How did you take the space of a historic place like the Petit Palais and make it your own?**

Jean-Michel Othoniel — It's the Petit Palais itself, with its history and garden, that is the common thread in the exhibition. The building was built around a garden, a hidden Eden at the heart of the architecture. I drew inspiration from the golden hues of the Petit Palais and the flowers in the garden to install new sculptures: mirrored works that reflect the frescoes of the portico painted by Paul Baudouin, monumental Lotuses sitting at the surface of the water in the pools paved with blue and gold mosaics, golden Necklaces draped on the branches of trees native to the East, and beads placed in the alcoves of the peristyle. This reference to a "water mirror" shows up elsewhere: the river of blue bricks cascading down the steps of the grand staircase at the entrance, or the still surface of the shimmering lake in the rooms below.

My works are in dialogue with the architecture, reflecting the building and its garden. The garden from 1900 is a place of discovery, a utopia with flowers from far-off places that visitors came to see during World Fairs. This strange vegetation inspired many writers, notably Huysmans, who, fascinated by these new flowers, invented in his novel *A Rebours* a garden of metal flowers that imitated tropical blossoms. My golden Lotuses on the water are not so far from this immutable vision of a garden that lends well to contemplation and the sacred.

### **It seems you wanted to start this initiatory journey with a bang.**

Thresholds are unique places. The in situ work that greets visitors is a river of a thousand shimmering blue bricks flowing down the grand staircase of the Petit Palais, like a cheery waterfall in a fairy tale. You can see it day and night and it marks the start of a path; its freshness and clarity make us want to follow it. It's an invitation to the marvellous and it reflects the extravagant gilded bronze gate designed by Charles Girault for the 1900 World Fair.

### **You follow Girault's oeuvre by introducing into the décor of the Petit Palais a work that will stay in the museum's collections for good: *Crown of the Night*. Tell us about that.**

*Crown of the Night* was brought here from a forest in northern Europe. The sculpture long remained hidden among the 300-year-old oak trees of a forest-cathedral. Today, it fills the stunning cupola of the northern staircase like a giant spider in coloured glass, echoing the southern cupola painted by Maurice Denis. It invites us to leave the light and descend into a darker universe, where a macabre sculpture of Ugolin ready to devour his children, made by Carpeaux who was obsessed with Dante's Hell, greets us.



### **Many works involve an interplay with glass bricks. Can you explain the symbolic value of that?**

In the other works on display, glass bricks from India take on different forms: blue rivers placed on the ground or sculptures in low-relief on the walls. Like an illustrated music score, variations of coloured bricks are composed like a polyphony of little bits of precious walls hanging from the museum's picture rails.

During the long days of lockdown in 2020, I used the same theme to create a series of low reliefs entitled *Precious Stonewall*, like two-tone paintings or monochrome triptychs.

Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Precious Stonewall*, 2019  
Photo : Livia Saaverda  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

Through this play of glass bricks, I was reconnecting with my first artistic loves: minimalism and conceptual art. Although all donning bright colours and the shimmer of Indian glass, each work is entirely unique, designed and made according to a precise meditative – almost spiritual - method, imposed by the isolation and hermit-like existence of lockdowns. It was an opportunity for me to return to my roots. I got my art education in the 1970s at the museum of modern art of Saint-Etienne, notably through the works of Donald Judd and Carl Andre. In addition to some titles that clearly evoke the events of Stonewall in 1969 in New York, the aesthetics and engagement of the 1970s are present in this series of 19 works especially designed for the exhibition at the Petit Palais.

### **Are metal bricks a new building block in your work?**

*Agora*, a big construction of metal bricks, sits at the bottom of the interior stairway. It's a sculpture visitors can enter like a cave, born of a project that I dreamed up in New York to create a safe space for intimate conversation in an urban setting. A different sort of agora where we can't be recorded and that shields us from the prying eyes of the new society we live in; this enclosed work protects us from the intrusive technology of the digital world. It's a project that could be transposed onto public space on a larger scale. I think that art is the only thing that still has the power to distance us from the world we live in and its harsh reality.

### **You speak of a project of “re-enchantment”. What is that about? Resistance to this disillusionment with reality?**

With this exhibition, I wanted to create a place of unreality, of enchantment, illusion, unbridled imagination, a place that borders on dreams and allows us to resist the disillusionment of the world at least while we're visiting the exhibition. With more than 70 new works, *The Narcissus Theorem* is truly about re-enchantment and the theory of reflections that I developed for nearly ten years with the help of the Mexican mathematician Aubin Arroyo and am showing for the first time in France.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Agora*, 2019  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

**When the doors of the museum close as night falls, you have to imagine these sculptures left all alone in the enclosed garden, finally free to reflect nothing but the stars...**

## Biography

Born in 1964 in Saint-Étienne, Jean-Michel Othoniel has been inventing a universe of multiple shapes since the late 1980s. At first exploring materials with reversible qualities such as sulphur and wax, he turned to glass and metal casts in 1993.

His works now take on an architectural dimension and can be found in gardens and historic sites by way of public or private commissions throughout the world. Favouring materials that have poetic and sensitive properties, Jean-Michel Othoniel started making works in wax and sulphur in the early 1990s that were presented from 1992 by Jan Hoet at Documenta Kassel.

The following year, the introduction of glass marked a turning point in Othoniel's oeuvre. Working with the best craftsmen in Murano, the artist explores the properties of this material which has since become his trademark. The delicate nature of glass and its subtle tones are an integral part of the Othoniel's project to "poetize" and re-enchant the world.

In 1995, he participated in the exhibition *Féminin/Masculin* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, presenting a series of works in sulphur as well as *My Beautiful Closet*, an installation/performance featuring dancers filmed in a dark cupboard.

In 1996, he was granted a residency at the Villa Medici in Rome. He then began creating works that interact with the landscape, suspending giant necklaces, for instance, in the Villa Medici gardens; in the trees outside the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (1997); or at the Alhambra, Palace of the Generalife in Granada, Spain (1999).



Jean-Michel Othoniel's portrait, 2021  
Photo : Claire Dorn / Courtesy of the Artist  
& Perrotin  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *The Kiosque des Noctambules*, 2000  
Photo : Philippe Saharoff © Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

In 2000, Jean-Michel Othoniel received his first public commission: to transform the Parisian metro station at Palais-Royal – Musée du Louvre, into the *Kiosque des Noctambules*. His creations have since graced both public squares and museum spaces: in 2003, for the exhibition *Crystal Palace* presented at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris and the MOCA in Miami; in Venice and at the International Glass Centre in Marseille (Cirva) he produced enigmatic sculptures in blown-glass shapes that lie between jewellery, architecture and erotic objects. That same year, Perrotin gallery starts representing him.

The following year, in 2004, an invitation to exhibit in the spectacular Mesopotamian rooms of the Musée du Louvre for the exhibition *Contrepoint* offered him an opportunity to produce his first freestanding necklaces, including the large-scale *White River* later acquired by the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris.

Travel has become a recurring theme in Othoniel's work. The idea of travel is also reflected in his project *Le Petit Théâtre de Peau d'Âne* (2004, Pompidou Centre collection), inspired by small puppets found in the house of Pierre Loti and presented onstage at the Théâtre de la Ville in Rochefort, then the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

Cultivating the art of reconciling opposites, the artist mixes the political and the poetic in his *Bateau de Larmes* (Boat of Tears): a tribute to exiled people made from a salvaged Cuban refugee boat found in Miami. He covered it with cascades of colorful glass beads, like huge, limpid crystal tears. The work was shown at Art Unlimited 2005, at the entrance of the Art Basel exhibition. During a visit to India in 2010, Othoniel worked with glassmakers in Firozabad, producing a series that was presented the following year in his exhibition *My Way* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

In 2012, an invitation from the Eugène Delacroix Museum offered Othoniel an opportunity to dialogue with this historic location via a series of sculptures inspired by the architecture of flowers and watercolours from his book *Herbier Merveilleux*. In the spring of 2013, the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo commissioned *Kin no Kokoro*, a monumental heart of gilded bronze beads in which Othoniel associates the recurring themes in his work with Eastern sacred symbolism. A celebration of the museum's tenth anniversary, the sculpture is permanently installed in the museum's Mohri Garden.

In 2014, Othoniel undertook an exceptional project: the redevelopment of the Water Theatre grove in the gardens of the Château de Versailles with the landscape designer Louis Benech. For this commission, awarded in an international competition, Jean-Michel Othoniel created three fountain sculptures in gilded glass inspired by the choreography of the dancing master of King Louis XIV, Raoul-Auger Feuillet. *Les Belles Danses* (The Beautiful Dances) is the first permanent installation ever commissioned for the palace by a contemporary artist. Developed as an architectural project, these three fountain sculptures respond to several of the broad directions that Othoniel's work has recently taken: monumentality and the relationship to history that are increasingly becoming his trademark.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Les Belles Danses*, Versailles, 2015, *L'Entrée d'Apollon* (detail)  
Photo : Philippe Chancel  
© Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

In September 2016, Jean-Michel Othoniel unveiled a total and monumental work of art, *Le Trésor de la cathédrale d'Angoulême* (The Treasury of Angoulême Cathedral), the fruit of more than eight years of research. His works can be found in important contemporary art museums, foundations and private collections around the world.

In late 2018, Jean-Michel Othoniel was elected to the *Académie des beaux-arts* in the Sculpture section. Since January 2019, has joined forces with the body to fulfil its mission of defending, promoting and supporting artistic creation.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, *Alfa*, 2019  
Photo : Othoniel Studio / Martin Argyroglo © Jean-Michel Othoniel / Adagp, Paris, 2021

The same year, Othoniel created *Alfa* for the new national museum in Qatar designed by the architect Jean Nouvel – a project conceived on the monumental scale of the building. It consists of 114 fountain sculptures that launch arabesques of water into the sky, recalling the forms of Arabic calligraphy. In September 2019, the artist exhibited a new series of paintings at the Musée du Louvre made to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the glass pyramid. Hung on the walls of the Cour Puget, the museum has since decided to make the works part of their permanent collection.

In 2021, the Petit Palais invited Othoniel to make a work for the garden and permanent collection rooms in an exhibition in dialogue with the site's architecture. With *The Narcissus Theorem*, the artist paves a path of wonders for visitors.

The same year also marks Othoniel's official entry into the *Académie des beaux-arts*.

During its plenary session on Wednesday, 14 November 2018, the body elected Jean-Michel Othoniel to a 5th seat previously occupied by Eugène Dodeigne (1923-2015) in the Sculpture section. The election was approved by the President of France, protector of the Académie, on 13 December 2018. Othoniel will be officially installed on 6 October 2021. There are currently five members of the Sculpture section at the *Académie des beaux-arts*: Claude Abeille, Antoine Poncet, Brigitte Terziev, Pierre-Edouard and Jean Anguera.

The *Académie des beaux-arts* is one of five academies that make up the *Institut de France*. With 55 members divided into nine artistic sections, it strives to promote and encourage artistic creation in all its forms, and ensures the defence of French cultural heritage.

The Académie fulfils its mission to support artistic creation by distributing several awards each year, pursuing an active policy of partnership with cultural institutions and engaging with public authorities to provide council. In order to succeed in its endeavours, the Académie manages its revenues from donations and bequests including from major cultural foundations such as the Fondation Paul Marmottan (Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris and the Bibliothèque Marmottan in Boulogne-Billancourt), the Fondation Claude Monet in Giverny, the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat and the Fondation Jean et Simone Lurçat in Paris.



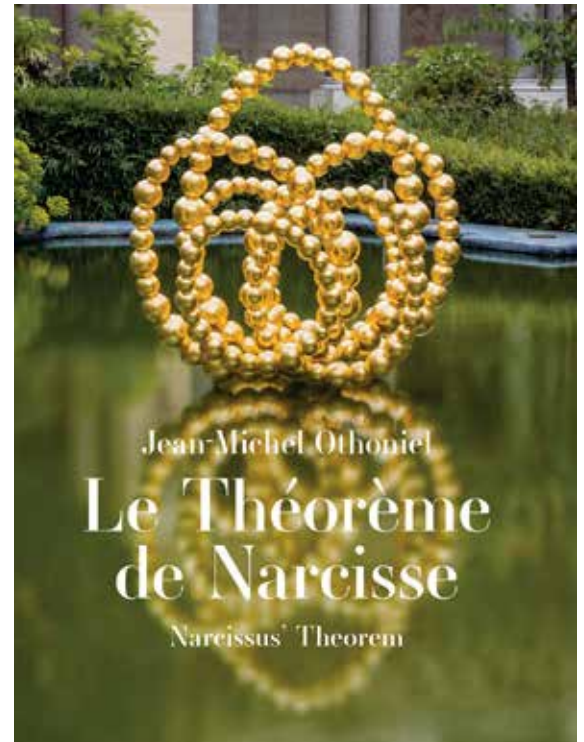
## Exhibition catalogue

### *The Narcissus Theorem*

Joint publication by Actes Sud / Perrotin  
Bilingual French / English  
23 x 17.5cm

48 pages (two 20-page photo sections: the first of works in the garden and the second of new sculptures *Wild Knots* and *Precious Stonewalls*).

Central text: dialogue between Jean-Michel Othoniel and Christophe Leribault, Director of the Petit Palais and exhibition curator





## Exhibition-related programme

### **Conference:**

Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 12:30 pm “Rencontre avec Jean-Michel Othoniel”  
Conversation with Christophe Leribault, Director of the Petit Palais

### **Visit for families with children aged 5 and up: Journey to the country of Narcissus**

Saturday, Sunday and *Toussaint* and Christmas school breaks

In the company of a guide, children and parents embark on an initiatory journey through the colourful and poetic world of Jean-Michel Othoniel. All along the way, from the blue river of glass to the lotuses in the garden to *Crown of the Night* and Narcissus' grotto, visitors collect words, beads and paper bricks. This makes for a unique take-home souvenir of a visit that is sure to enchant.

### **Guided visits for adults and teenagers (from 14 years)**

Tuesdays and Fridays at 12:30 pm

### **Guided visit for the blind and people with impaired sight**

In the company of a guide trained in leading visits for people with disabilities, participants discover the exhibition thanks to a multi-sensory approach. Discover the colourful and poetic world of Jean-Michel Othoniel through hearing, touch and smell.

Reservations by e-mail at [petitpalais.handicap-champsocial@paris.fr](mailto:petitpalais.handicap-champsocial@paris.fr)

**Group visits:** programme available upon request at [petitpalais.reservation@paris.fr](mailto:petitpalais.reservation@paris.fr)

### **Lithography workshop: Reflections in a golden flower**

Two-day workshop

In the company of an artist and printmaker, participants discover a selection of works from the exhibition while making preparatory sketches. Then, in the workshop, they make a composition on a lithographic stone that evokes Othoniel's golden lotuses and necklaces.

After printing in the lithographic press, each participant embellishes their creation with metal leaf to create playful reflections in a creative process similar to that of Othoniel.



## Exhibition-related programme

### **Printmaking workshop for ages 8-12**

Wednesday afternoons and during the *Toussaint* and Christmas school breaks

Children discover the exhibition in the company of an artist and printmaker. Drawing on the poetic universe of the artist, each participant makes a print using the monotype process that combines drawing and colours.

### **Printmaking workshop**

Every Friday from 1:30 to 5:30 pm. Total 4 hours. 20 euros.

Limited to 10 participants. Material provided. Participants must bring an apron.

Drawing inspiration from museum and exhibition works, participants make a print using different printing techniques.

Drypoint based on the exhibition *The Narcissus Theorem*.

### **Printmaking workshop**

Saturdays from 10:30 am to 5:30 pm (lunch break from 12:30 to 1:30). Total 6 hours. 30 euros.

Limited to 10 participants. Material provided. Participants must bring an apron.

Drawing inspiration from museum and exhibition works, participants make a print using different printing techniques.

2, 9, 16 October: Embossment and carborundum printmaking based on the exhibition *The Narcissus Theorem*.

13, 20, 27 November: Sugar technique based on the exhibition *The Narcissus Theorem*.

4, 11 December: Roller inking and cut-outs based on the exhibition *The Narcissus Theorem*.



## Partners

*The Narcissus Theorem*, Jean-Michel Othoniel  
An exhibition sponsored by Christian Dior

Christian Dior  
PARFUMS

Gardens have always been at the heart of Dior, as they allow artistic dialogue to bloom. Christian Dior himself tended gardens as places of memory and rebirths, endowing them with an aesthetic in line with his taste for 18th-century refinement. Heir to this penchant for loving and caring for conceptualised gardens, Parfums Christian Dior has created the Dior Cultural Gardens initiative to foster dialogue between art and nature, thus perpetuating a relationship that has helped shape its identity. The opportunity to add the Petit Palais to this collection of landscaped spaces within the framework of the exhibition *The Narcissus Theorem* was too good to pass up, especially since Parfums Christian Dior is a sponsor of Jean-Michel Othoniel. A garden “planted” with artworks inspired by the beauty of flowers is perfectly in line with the guiding spirit that has nourished the entire haute couture fashion house from its very beginnings.

By associating itself with the works of Jean-Michel Othoniel - sculptures that mingle with exotic trees and grasses in the garden of the Petit Palais - Dior is celebrating the importance of **gardens in movement, where an artist’s creations dialogue with nature.**

It comes down to a principal of alliance between man and nature that the Maison Dior wishes to perpetuate by the *Cultural Gardens* initiative. A collection of landscape spaces that is no stranger to the magnificence of French gardens, whose arrangement and beauty bear witness to a rare encounter between art and the vegetal world. Contributing to the preservation of their beauty, Parfums Christian Dior has committed to re-plant, by 2022, the green spaces near the large pool in **the Tuileries Gardens**, an icon of the gardens designed by André Le Nôtre in the 17th century. The fashion house has also chosen to sponsor the restoration of **the Queen’s Grove at the Château de Versailles** by planting no less than 600 rose bushes of 30 different species. These contributions highlight the ties Dior has with garden art, seen as a space for artistic creativity in its own right, and that the fashion house has also decided to extend to new, original partnerships.

Dior is going even further in its decision to generate synergies between art and nature. Recently, it created **the Colle Noire Dior Award**: the permanent display in the gardens of Monsieur Dior’s provençal château of the work of the winner of a new chair created by Parfums Christian Dior and **the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris** called “**Inhabiting the Landscape – where Art Meets the Living World**”.

Like the sculptures of Jean-Michel Othoniel installed in the garden of the Petit Palais, this opens the door to new gardens as spaces in movement and harbingers of meaning and beauty, kneaded through and through by multiple influences



## Partners

*The Narcissus Theorem*, Jean-Michel Othoniel

An exhibition organised with the support of the Perrotin art gallery.



## PERROTIN

Emmanuel Perrotin founded the Perrotin art gallery in 1990 at the age of 21. Since then, he has added more than 18 different locations, offering his artists increasingly stimulating venues.

Perrotin boasts some ten spaces around the world with galleries in Paris, Hong Kong, New York, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai. Total gallery surface area amounts to about 7,500m<sup>2</sup>.

The different locales offer great flexibility to set up exhibitions and ambitious projects by the artists the gallery represents.

The Perrotin gallery represents some 50 artists and six estates and collaborates with about 15 other artists. In total, the gallery works with seasoned and budding artists of more than 21 nationalities.

The Perrotin gallery participates in more than 20 art fairs per year, including Art Basel (Hong Kong, Basel, Miami), Frieze (London, New York, Los Angeles), FIAC (Paris), Dallas Art Fair, Expo Chicago, Art021 & West Bund (Shanghai), The Armory Show, TEFAF New York and Art Genève, among others.

In December 2020, the gallery announced the creation of Perrotin Second Marché: Emmanuel Perrotin, Tom-David Bastok and Dylan Lessel have joined forces in this new endeavour with headquarters at 8 avenue Matignon in Paris.

The new gallery opens its doors in September 2021 with a large collective exhibition spread over the five floors of an entirely-renovated *hôtel particulier*, or private townhouse.

The gallery's offering has diversified in recent years, notably by organising conferences, workshops for children and concerts, but also producing videos and podcasts. Perrotin also publishes works, editions and artist's prints, available in each of its shops. Perrotin will also be present at la Samaritaine in a 200m<sup>2</sup>-space on the ground floor of the Parisian store on rue de Rivoli until late October.



## Paris Musées, a museums network

Administratively grouped together as Paris Musées, the fourteen museums and heritage sites of the City of Paris possess collections that are as exceptional for their diversity as for their quality.

To open up and share this significant cultural heritage, they have adopted a new visitor experience policy, moderated prices for temporary exhibitions, and focus on providing access to members of the public who traditionally lack access to cultural offerings.

Their permanent collections, which are free\*, and the temporary exhibitions and varied cultural programming reached 3 million visitors in 2018.

## Get the Paris Musées card!

A card can be bought from Paris Musées, which gives unlimited access, ahead of the queue, to the temporary exhibitions in all 14 of the museums of Paris\*, as well as special tariffs for activities.

It entitles the holder to reductions in the bookshop-boutiques and the cafe-restaurants, and to receive prior information about events in the museums.

In 2014, the card was bought by 9000 people.

Information is available at the Museum ticket offices or on [parismusees.paris.fr](http://parismusees.paris.fr).



\*Except the archaeological Crypt under the forecourt of l'île de la Cité and the Catacombs.

## The Petit Palais



© C. Fouin

Built for the Exposition Universelle de 1900, the Petit Palais building is a masterpiece by architect Charles Girault. In 1902, it became the City of Paris Museum of Fine Arts and presents a very beautiful collection of paintings, sculptures, furnishings and art objects dating from Antiquity to 1914.

Among the museum treasures are an exceptional collection of Greek vases and a very large group of Flemish and Dutch paintings from the seventeenth century, displayed around the famous Self-Portrait with Dog by Rembrandt. A magnificent collection of French paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries includes major works by Fragonard, Greuze, David, Géricault, Delacroix, Courbet, Pissarro, Monet, Sisley, Cézanne and Vuillard. The museum is also very proud of a very beautiful collection of sculptures by Carpeaux, Carriès and Dalou. The collection of decorative art is especially noted for objects from the Renaissance and the 1900s, including glasswork by Gallé, jewelry by Fouquet and Lalique and a dining room designed by Guimard for his private mansion. Finally, the museum has an outstanding graphic arts room featuring complete series of engravings by Dürer, Rembrandt and Callot and a rare collection of Nordic drawings.



© B. Fougeirol

Since 2015, the collection presentation has been extensively reworked. It has been enriched by two new galleries on the garden floor level, one of which is dedicated to the Romantic period. In one gallery, restored large-format paintings by Delaroche and Schnetz are surrounded by works of artists such as Ingres, Géricault and Delacroix. In the second gallery, decorative paintings by Maurice Denis are interspersed with works by Cézanne, Bonnard, Maillol and Vallotton. In the fall of 2017, the collection of icons and Eastern Orthodox arts, which is the largest one in France, will benefit from a new museographic presentation. An area will also be dedicated to sketches of the major nineteenth-century Parisian settings. Early in 2018, these new presentations will be complemented in the North Gallery by collections of monumental sculptures from the nineteenth century.

The program of temporary exhibitions at the Petit Palais alternates ambitious major subjects like Paris romantic, Paris 1900, Les Bas-fonds du Baroque (Baroque Slums) and Oscar Wilde with monographs that allow rediscovering forgotten painters such as Anders Zorn, Albert Besnard or George Desvallières. Since 2015, contemporary artists (Thomas Lerooy in 2015, Kehinde Wiley in 2016, Andres Serrano in 2017, Yan Pei-Ming in 2019 and Laurence Aëgerter in 2020) have been invited to exhibit in the Petit Palais permanent collections in order to create a dialog with these paintings and reveal links between their works and those of the museum.

**[petitpalais.paris.fr](http://petitpalais.paris.fr)**



© B. Fougeirol



## *The Narcissus Theorem*

Jean-Michel Othoniel

September 28, 2021 – January 2, 2022

Exhibition free of charge, presented in the collections of the Petit Palais and its garden.

### **Opening Hours**

Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Late opening on Friday until 9:00 p.m.

### **Petit Palais**

Fine Arts Museum of Paris  
Avenue Winston Churchill, 75008 Paris

+33 (0)1 53 43 40 00

Accessible to people with disabilities

### **Access**

Metro

Lines 1 and 13: Champs-Élysées Clemenceau

Line 9: Franklin D. Roosevelt

RER

Line C: Invalides

Bus

Lines 28, 42, 72, 73, 83, 93.

Vélib'

Petit Palais station n°8001

### **Auditorium**

Information on [petitpalais.paris.fr](http://petitpalais.paris.fr)

### **Café-restaurant *Le Jardin du Petit Palais***

Open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Late opening on Friday until 8pm

### **Bookshop**

Open from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm,

Late closing at 9 pm