

## Jean-Michel Othoniel

### JANUS' KNOTS

*Sculptures, works on paper*

10 Impasse Saint-Claude : October 22 - December 23, 2009

The **Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin** presents *JANUS' KNOTS* by Jean-Michel Othoniel, a collection of works never shown before, **from October 22 to December 31, 2009.**

After exploring the transformative qualities of sulfur, in 1993 Othoniel discovered the ancestral art of glass and its metamorphoses in Murano.

Since then, he has been creating a world of poetic and baroque (a term that originally referred to an irregularly shaped bead) works. Like the vanitas, or the decor of antique sepulchers, the shimmering colors and materials of the necklaces, crowns, mandorlas and outsized baldachin beds of shimmering colors and materials illustrate the presence/absence of beings.

Yet beyond the appealing, formal aspects, his art displays a fragile beauty of tangible wounds (the *Collier Cicatrice* in 1997, FNAC collection; in 2003, necklaces suspended from trees depicts the lynching of African Americans during segregation: *L'Arbre aux Colliers* in the New Orleans Museum of Modern Art; *Le Bateau de Larmes* topped with a crown, exhibited in Basel in 2005, was a tribute to the Cuban boat people).

The ambiguity of the artist's works also resides in the equivocal nature of glass, a sacred material that refracts divine light, as in a church, as well as the profane aspect, as a symbol of the transparency of desire (feelings most fully developed in the *Crystal Palace* installations at the Fondation Cartier, the MOCA in Miami in 2003-04, or *L'herbier merveilleux* at the Chapelle du Méjean in 2008).

Othoniel is now working to move beyond the hieratic character of his works, and to depict or capture movement while moving toward greater abstraction. He examines "the question of the absent body. It is about creating volumes of absence, constructions of variable sizes in which bodies could curl up."

At the entrance to the exhibition, a suspension of a few black and silver beads spins endlessly.

The suspended sculpture *Les Noeuds de Lacan*, 2009 materialized the psychoanalytic theory of the Borromean rings that structures a subject with a fragile equilibrium between Reality, Symbolic and Imaginary.

The complex circumvolutions of the two-tone *Lassos* are inspired by minimal art and the *conchetto spaziale*, especially by Fontana's work *Spatial Light* (1951).

*Les Lacets bleus*, placed on a base rather than suspended like the necklaces, falls into the same category of works as *Rivière blanche*, created in 2004 for the Mesopotamian rooms in the Louvre—a work purchased by the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris/ARC—and *Peggy's Necklace*, exhibited at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice in 2006.

The series of works on papers—created with the Michael Woodworth studio in Paris—introduces "the idea of movement, of actual rebounds, of ricochets, of imaginary desires and the bound heart."

As part of the exhibition, Éditions Dilecta and Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin have published an artist's book, *Les Nœuds de Janus*. Othoniel designed this work as a pop-up book; the animated watercolors are actual models for future sculptures. The beads seem to follow the trajectory of an imaginary ribbon tossed in the air. 24-page hardback book with 10 watercolors. Price: €45. Limited edition: 20 copies with 10 artist's proofs: €450.

Jean-Michel Othoniel is born in Saint-Étienne in 1964. He works and lives in Paris.

Solo Exhibitions: Brooklyn Museum, New York (2012); Hara Museum, Japan (2011); V&A Museum, Londres (2011); Centre Pompidou (2011); Monaco projects for the arts; Galerie Karsten Grève, Cologne; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; *Peggy's Necklace* Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; *Dessins* Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris; *Le Petit Théâtre de Peau d'Âne*, Théâtre du Chatelet, Paris; *House of Glass*, MOCA, Miami; *Crystal Palace*, Fondation Cartier, Paris; *Lagrimas*, Museo del Vidrio, Monterrey, Mexico; *Collier*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; *Parade*, Newcomb Art Gallery, New Orleans; *Le Kiosque des Noctambules* - Palais Royal - Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Group Exhibitions: *Le Petit Théâtre de Peau d'Âne*, Dolmabahçe Palace, Istanbul; *Quintette*, French Institute, Ankara; The Museum of Glass, Seattle; *Dialogues Méditerranéens*, Musée de L'Annonciade, St Tropez; *Peggy's Necklace*, Nuit Blanche 2006, Crédit Municipal; *La Force de l'Art*, Grand Palais, Paris; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris; *Fragile*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Reims, France; Musée du Louvre, Paris; *Heart of Glass*, Queens Museum of Art, New York; *Heaven*, Tate Liverpool, United Kingdom; Kwangju Biennial, South Korea.



extract of the book *Les nœuds de Janus*, 2009



*Pink Lasso*, 2008  
Murano glass  
9,6 feet x 56 inches x 25 1/4 inches



*Untitled*, 2009  
Lithographic print on white gold leaf mounted on vélin de Rives.  
43 1/4 x 31 inches



*Blue Lasso*, 2008  
Murano glass  
51 1/4 x 55 1/4 x 15 3/4 inches



*Les Lacets Bleus*, 2009  
Mirrored glass, mirror polished inox  
8.2 feet x 70 3/4 inches x 55 1/4 inches