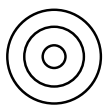


© Cyprien Tokoudagba, photo Maurice Aschmann, courtesy The Jean Pigozzi African Art Collection | Forme Sign, Formech

NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS



FONDATION OPALE

15.12.24 — 20.04.25

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NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS

From December 15, 2024, to April 20, 2025, Fondation Opale (Lens/Crans-Montana) presents its new exhibition NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS, carte blanche to French curator Jean-Hubert Martin.

Delving into the richness and extravagant diversity of the artistic expression of human spirituality, NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS unfolds in three steps with more than 60 works. It begins with altars from cultures around the world, at the crossroads of sacred architecture and ceremonial objects, here reconstituted in a museum context. They are followed by artists, often marginalised, born in the first half of the 20th century, who refer directly to their beliefs and claim this dual affiliation with religion and modern art, or even the avant-garde. Following in their footsteps is a new generation of artists freed from their complexes regarding colonisation, who are campaigning for the recognition of their cultures, particularly indigenous ones, and the enhancement of religious aspects, whether dogmatic, shamanic or animist.

Art has always been a powerful means of expressing faith, gratitude and quest for transcendence. Through sculptures, paintings, altars, songs, dances and rituals, believers from various cultures have sought to honour their gods or spirits and connect with a higher spiritual dimension. For those who do not follow a particular deity, artistic creation becomes a search for meaning and a union with a supreme entity, inspired by nature, philosophy, meditation or other mystical sources. This exhibition reveals how these practices, far from being relics of the past, continue to nourish contemporary art.

NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS explores the diversity of spiritual and artistic practices, exhibiting altars and contemporary works that embody this universal quest for transcendence. Artistic creations from ancestral African, Caribbean, Oceanic and Asian traditions rub shoulders with those of contemporary artists such as Kimsooja, El Anatsui, Sandra Vasquès de la Horra and Christian Boltanski, who reinterpret these forms of devotion from a modern perspective

In contemporary art, where the boundaries between disciplines and cultures are increasingly blurred, the exhibition deals with the place of the sacred and the sacred being in our societies. The works shown, including one created in situ by Anmatyerr artists from the Napperby community in the Central Desert of Australia, demonstrate that these traditions are not frozen in the past, but are living, dynamic elements that continue to influence and inspire today's creators.

NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS reflects on the link between art, spirituality and culture. By broadening the scope of what we consider "art", visitors are invited to confront the way in which Western institutions have historically defined and limited this notion. The exhibition seeks to lift the veil on the visual expressions of Indigenous cultures, often ignored in the context of contemporary art, and to reveal their current relevance.

Curators: Jean-Hubert Martin, with Tijs Visser and Georges Petitjean

ARTISTS

AFRICA

Cyprien Tokoudagba
El Anatsui
Hervé Youmbi
Jean-Jacques Efiainbello
Romuald Hazoumè
Younès Rahmoun

AMERICA

José Bedia Valdés
Mestre Didi
Ricardo Linares Garcia
Rubem Valentim
Sandra Vasquès de la Horra
Santos Motoapohua de la Torre

ASIA

Kazuo Shiraga
Kimsooja
Saodat Ismailova

EUROPE

Art Orienté Objet Marion Laval-Jeantet & Benoît Mangin
Christian Boltanski
Deidi von Schaewen
Hermann Nitsch
Marina Abramovic et Ulay

OCEANIA

Cliffy Tommy, Martin Hagan, Michael Pengart Tommy, Morris Wako
Freda Brady, Iluwanti Ken, Imatjala Pollard, Keith Stevens, Leah Brady, Marinka Tunkin, Nyunmiti Burton, Sylvia Ken, Tanya Brady, Taylor Cooper, Teresa Baker, Witjiti George, Yaritji Young
George Nuku
Jimmy Njiminjuma
Narritjin Maymuru

THE EXHIBITION

ADAPTED SECTIONS FROM THE FORTHCOMING CATALOGUE,
BY JEAN-HUBERT MARTIN

The museum serves as a space for the public to honor their ancestors and, for certain social circles, to engage with the work of contemporary artists—a place where sensibility finds both pleasure and fulfillment, offering a mirror for the imagination. Consequently, museum pieces are often regarded as “sacred.”

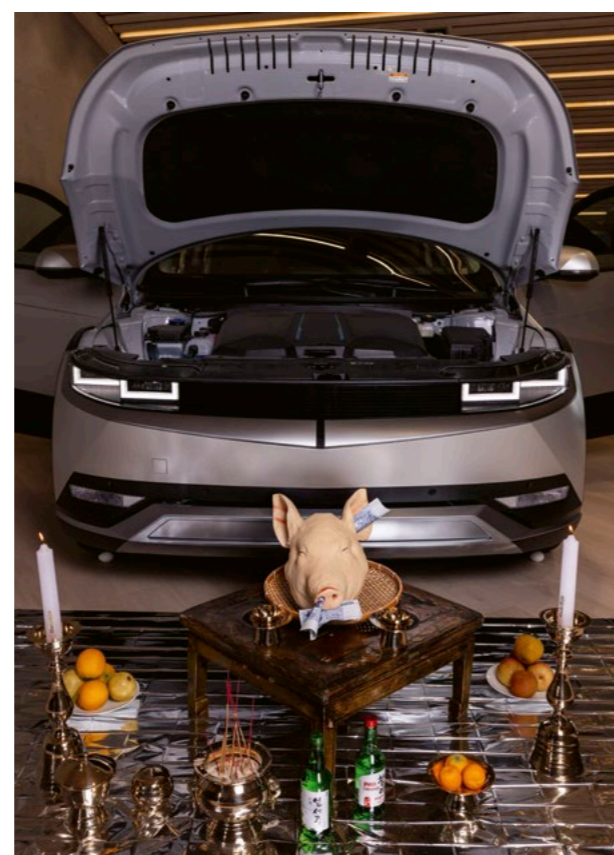
While 19th-century museums, with their pediments and columns, evoke the appearance of ancient temples, their sacredness is secular, rooted in republican ideals. This exhibition, however, does not focus on the atheistic spirituality inherent in art but rather examines the rituals of diverse religions and belief systems that are increasingly influencing contemporary art.

Central to this exploration is the altar—an entity situated between the architecture of temples or churches and the functionality of furniture. While architecture has its histories and furniture its collectors and museums, the altar occupies a liminal space and has largely been overlooked. Yet, it remains a crucial element in connecting with the divine: architecture provides functional coverage, while the altar, as an object, embodies sacred power, albeit diminished when isolated from its context.

This neglect highlights the art market’s focus on movable objects, which are easier to trade, as opposed to a complete altar—challenging to transfer for both buyers and sellers. Contemporary artists, however, are redefining this dynamic, moving beyond wall-mounted paintings to create immersive spaces imbued with their installations. The altar, a “missing link” in the narrative of modern art, is deserving of renewed attention. It has suffered from a dual marginalization: the impacts of colonization and the rise of atheistic

modernity. While altars or their fragments can be found in museums if they are ancient, they are conspicuously absent in the modern era.

The exhibition unfolds in three phases:



Car altar, 2024 (South Korea) | Shamanic consecration ceremony | Car, pig's head, fruit, bowls | Photo: Alexprod

ALTARS RECONSTITUTED IN A MUSEUM CONTEXT

NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS showcases fully reconstituted altars, though removed from their original contexts and deprived of the sensory dimensions that once defined them—ceremonies, music, song, and the evocative scent of incense.

The altar of *Mami Wata* stands out with its striking composition of 43 statues. The goddess herself, depicted as white, symbolizes her connection to the after-life, resembling a mermaid emerging from the ocean’s depths. Surrounding her are the Tohossou figures, female water spirits born from the dreams of priests. This altar contrasts starkly with traditional museum displays, where these ritual objects are often isolated in glass cases, disconnected from their cultural and spiritual significance.



Sossa Guedengoue & Djale (Bénin) | *Mami Wata altar*, 1999 | Vodoun cult | Various materials | Soul of Africa Museum, Essen, Allemagne | Photo: Lumento

The Oumbanda/Quimbanda altar of Brazil reflects the syncretism between pre-Columbian Indian traditions and Catholicism. During ceremonies, devotees may enter a trance state, acting as intermediaries between the gods and humanity. Exu, a prominent orisha, bridges these worlds, while his feminine counterpart, Pomba-Gira, embodies the spirit of demi-mondaines and femme fatales, recalling the cult of Aphrodite.

In urban Korea, shamanic practices persist in modernized forms. New milestones, such as acquiring a car or inaugurating an office, are marked by small ceremonies and offerings, including the display of a pig’s head gripping banknotes in its teeth—a nod to the pig as a symbol of fertility and prosperity. The practice of invoking divine protection, such as for safe driving, echoes prophylactic rites performed by priests in Brittany as recently as the last century.

Sections adapted from Georges Petitjean’s text



Quimbanda altar | Quimbanda Cult, Brazil | Painted plaster | Variable dimensions | Soul of Africa Museum, Essen, Germany | Photo: Lumento

Altars were absent in Aboriginal cultures prior to contact with settlers. Their integration into modern

Australian First Nations culture and society is largely a result of colonization and subsequent missionary activities.

However, one could argue that Aboriginal societies possess their own form of “altars,” deeply embedded in the landscape. For initiated individuals, the traces of ancestral beings—manifested as impressions or transformations in the land—are ever-present and carry profound spiritual significance. These sacred sites remain integral to Aboriginal spirituality today.

Ground paintings are perhaps the closest equivalent to ephemeral altars in Aboriginal traditions. Created for ceremonial purposes, these intricate works of art—crafted from plant material called *anteth* (in Anmatyerr language, known as *wamulu* in Warlpiri language) found in abundance in the Central Australian desert region around Alice Springs—are erased once the ceremony concludes. This ancient practice, dating back thousands of years, holds a highly sacred and often secretive nature, making public examples exceptionally rare.

For NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS, four Anmatyerr men have expressed their desire to produce a ground painting in *anteth* in situ at

Fondation Opale, in a public performance in which the story depicted will also be sung and danced. The subjects of the painting are linked to stories of the *Rrpwamper* (possum) and *Yerramp* (honey ant) endemic to the Napperby region.

In contemporary Aboriginal art, traditional images on the ground are one of the fundamental sources of acrylic paintings on cardboard or canvas. The preparation of the painting confirms a physical link between people and the land, since it is made on the ground, with materials derived from the earth.

One notable example of this connection is the work of **Narritjin Maymuru**, a Yolŋu artist and activist renowned for his ceremonial bark paintings. His intricate depiction of a funeral sand sculpture holds historical significance. Displayed in Maymuru’s art gallery in Yirrkala during a public funeral for his brother Nanyin, the painting features a diamond-shaped sand sculpture used in the ceremony, with the body placed at its center and flanked by two series of wells (circles). Beyond its ceremonial function, the painting also serves as a powerful assertion of land ownership.



Narritjin Maymuru, *Untitled (Djarrakpi)* (c. 2002) | Natural ochre pigments on bark | © Collection Bérengère Primat, courtesy Fondation Opale | Photo: Vincent Girier Dufournier

ARTISTS REFERRING TO RELIGION

Sections adapted from Jean-Hubert Martin's text

The exhibition highlights several artists born in the first half of the 20th century who directly engage with their religious heritage, navigating the dual affiliation of faith and modern art, or even the avant-garde.

This ambivalence has often led to misunderstandings, resulting in the marginalization or erasure of the religious dimensions in critical discourse. A newer generation, free from the colonial legacy (particularly in indigenous cultures), advocates for the recognition and celebration of their cultural and spiritual traditions—be they dogmatic, shamanic, or animist.

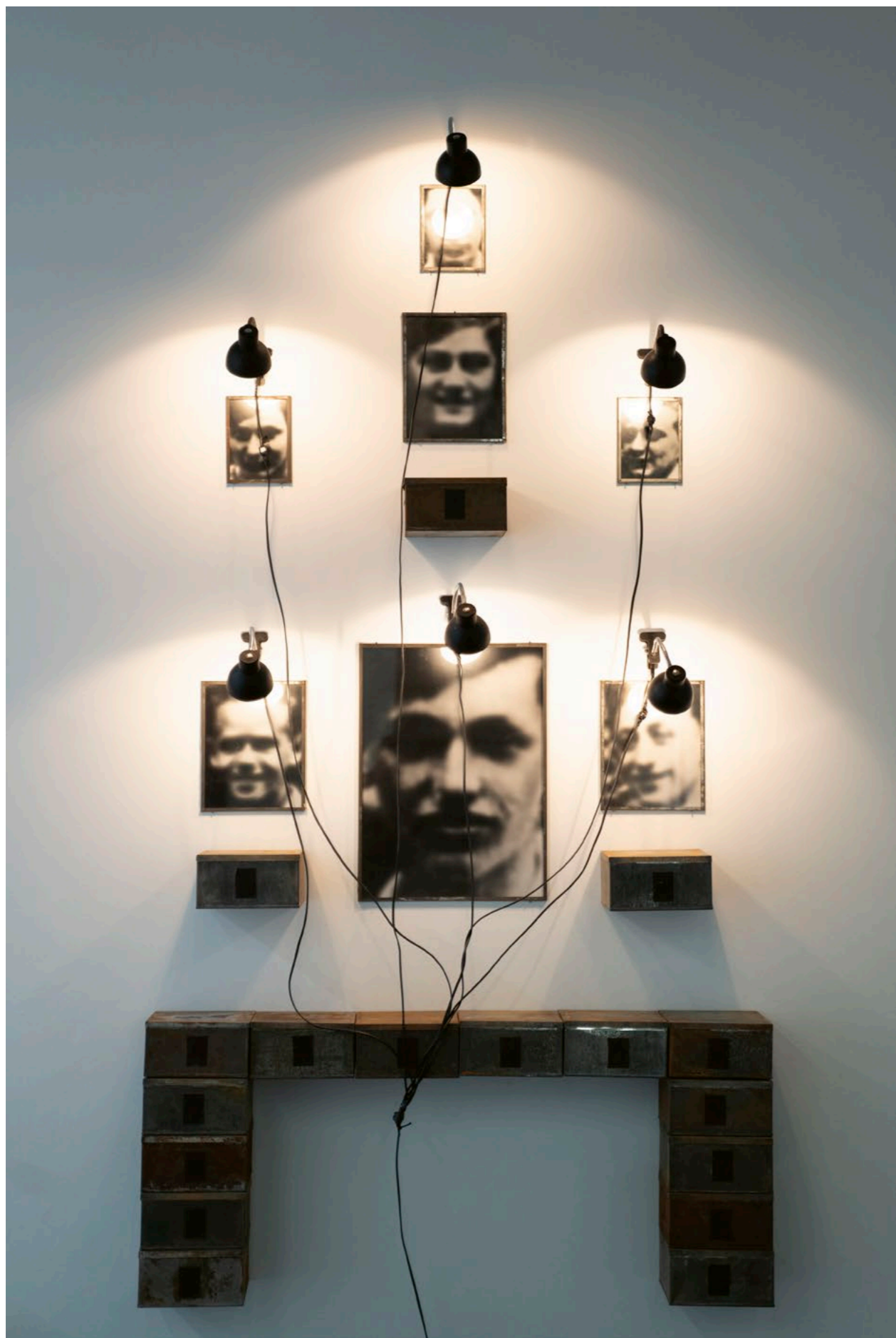
Altars are in fact places of devotion, i.e. facilities where the presence of gods or spirits is concentrated, enabling the believer to enter into communication with them. For a Christian observer, their extraordinary diversity in form

can be striking. Rather than proposing a typology, the exhibition highlights select examples, particularly those that challenge Western notions of beauty rooted in order versus chaos. The evolution of Western aesthetics, influenced by modernity, has gradually integrated forms once dismissed as barbaric or primitive.

The infiltration of religious rituals into contemporary art was not the result of a deliberate strategy but occurred organically. One of the most surprising figures is Japanese artist **Kazuo Shiraga**, who is only now beginning to be put in the place he deserves. Founder of the Gutai movement in the 1950s, a few years before Group Zero, he is its most radical representative. Disgusted by the war, he painted blood-red pictures with his feet. Although he was spotted by Yves Klein and Michel Tapié and regularly exhibited by the Stadler gallery in Paris, his distance from the American media, which promoted Jackson Pollock,



Kazuo Shiraga, *Untitled* (1987) | Oil on canvas | © Musée Cantini, Marseille, France | © Kazuo Shiraga | Photo: David Giancatarina



Christian Boltanski, *Autel Chases* (1987) | 7 framed photographs, 17 tin cans, 6 lamps, electric wire | Annette Messenger, le Fonds de dotation Christian Boltanski et Marian Goodman Gallery | © Annette Messenger / Fonds de dotation Christian Boltanski, ADAGP, Paris | Photo: Lumento

delayed his recognition as the most important exponent of abstract expressionism. Yet this radical artist was a Buddhist monk, and before launching himself onto the canvas to spread color with his feet, he would recollect himself in prayer in front of a small altar.

Christian Boltanski, born of a Jewish father and a Catholic mother who became a Communist, has always questioned the existence of God and his relationship with him. In his later years, a conversation with Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur brought him peace when she explained that the essence of Judaism lies in questioning God's existence.

Describing himself as an expressionist, Boltanski pursued an unrelenting quest to elicit deep emotional responses from viewers.

In Boltanski's work, the entablature of an altar is crowned not with traditional religious imagery but with blurred, dimly lit portraits. These ghostly images, stripped of individual identity, evoke a haunting sense of mortality and loss.

NEW GENERATION OF ARTISTS

Sections adapted from Jean-Hubert Martin's text

Finally, a new generation of artists has emerged, marking a pivotal stage in the revival of spirituality. For representatives of indigenous cultures, this moment embodies an assumed hybridity—one that honors and revitalizes their traditions while embracing the freedoms and strategies of contemporary art. This exhibition showcases a select group of such artists, chosen for their exemplary diversity.



Sandra Vásquez de la Horra (1967, Chili | Chile) | *El Manto de Obatalá* | *Obatalá's Mantle*, 2022 | Installation, glazed ceramic | Kewenig Gallery, Berlin, Allemagne | © Sandra Vásquez de la Horra | Photo: Lumento



Kimsooja, *To Breathe: Mandala*, (2010) | Single American jukebox speaker, ready made, Gregorian, Muslim and Tibetan chants, single-channel sound installation | Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Wijnegem, Belgique | Tschudi Gallery, Zurich, Suisse | © Kimsooja | Photo: Lumento

Although many do not reintroduce themselves into ritual festivities, several—particularly from Africa and Asia—draw directly from their cultural heritage, employing the flexible, porous language of contemporary art to integrate symbols and signs from formerly colonized cultures. The liberation of art from the norms imposed by colonizers as “universal” has finally allowed for the expression of polyphony and polysemy.

Chilean artist **Sandra Vásquez de la Horra**, known for her disturbing drawings, takes inspiration from American religions. She reinterprets elements from voodoo altars, respecting their spiritual significance while transforming them into installations laden with meaning.

The circular representation of the world, almost universal in scope, finds resonance in the Tibetan mandala—a profound attempt to square the circle. **Kimsooja**, for instance, identifies a modern parallel in pop culture with her jukebox, which blends Gregorian, Muslim, and Tibetan chants into an incantatory syncretism.

Jean-Hubert Martin identifies **Hervé Youmbi** as an artist who exemplifies the complexities of globalization and biculturalism. Of Cameroonian origin, Youmbi studied at the IFA in Mbalmayo (Cameroon), then at the École des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg. He has carried out all kinds of public commissions in his country, demonstrating his perfect assimilation of modernity's codes. Far from contenting himself with this local evolution of aesthetic canons, he approached traditional chieftaincies to introduce his creations into the context of popular festivals.



Hervé Youmbi | *Tso Scream Mask and Tso Scream Leopard Mask* during a ritual ceremony in Fondanti, Cameroon, December 2022 | Courtesy the artist and Axis Gallery, NY & NJ

Hervé Youmbi's visionary approach lies in his ability to persuade local chiefs to incorporate his own mask designs into traditional dance ceremonies, breaking away from the repetitive use of inherited masks, often reproduced with varying degrees of skill. His journey began with a ghostly mask inspired by Munch's *Scream*, evolving into a diverse and liberated body of work. These masks now hold dual significance, presented in Europe and the United States both as contextual artifacts, accompanied by ethnological commentary, and as standalone works of art.

Bridging cultures and categories, Youmbi's monumental totems challenge colonial-era classifications and the rigid fetishization of ethnic styles. By playfully reimagining African forms and embracing vibrant color, he has cultivated a uniquely eclectic repertoire. His work defies the constraints of both so-called "primitive" and so-called "contemporary" art, embodying a bold creative freedom that disrupts traditional norms. In doing so, his "variegated eclecticism" may scandalize connoisseurs, but this very audacity signals the originality and innovation expected of a groundbreaking artist.

BIOGRAPHY

JEAN-HUBERT MARTIN

Born in Strasbourg in 1944, Jean-Hubert Martin is a renowned French art historian, institutional director and curator. He is best known for his innovative approach to contemporary art, highlighting works and artists from non-Western cultures, as well as for his unconfined exhibitions, mixing works from different cultures and periods, such as *CARAMBOLAGES* at the Grand Palais in Paris in 2016.

Jean-Hubert Martin begins his career at the Louvre in 1969, before being appointed curator at the Musée National d'Art Moderne de Paris (then located at the Palais de Tokyo) in 1971, and takes part in the creation of the Centre Pompidou, as contemporary collections manager. He then becomes Director of the Kunsthalle Bern, then Director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Pompidou in Paris, Director of the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie in Paris, General Director of the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf and finally Artistic Director of PAC, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, in Milan. Today, he is an independent curator.

Throughout his career, Jean-Hubert Martin has curated numerous international exhibitions that have expanded the boundaries of contemporary art by bridging diverse artistic and cultural practices. Renowned for challenging Western-centric classifications of art, he has championed a more inclusive and global perspective on artistic creation. Emphasizing an anthropological approach, his work reflects a commitment to rethinking art history within the context of an interconnected, globalized world.

In 1989, Jean-Hubert Martin curated the groundbreaking exhibition *MAGICIENS DE LA TERRE* at the Centre Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette. Widely regarded as a milestone in contemporary art, the exhibition was one of the first to present artists from around the globe on an equal footing, bridging Western and non-Western practices. Throughout his career, Martin has curated other influential exhibitions that continue to challenge and redefine artistic and cultural frameworks, including *AFRICA REMIX* at the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf (2004), which subsequently toured multiple continents.

In 2001-2002, Jean-Hubert Martin organized the exhibition *ALTÄRE (ALTARS)* at the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf, showcasing a remarkable collection of around sixty contemporary altars from diverse religions worldwide, and exploring their relationship to art.

In 2005, he curated *ARTE RELIGIONE POLITICA* at the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea in Milan, an exhibition examining the political significance of religion, particularly in the context of oppressed cultures. *NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS* builds on this ongoing exploration, delving into the expanding role of spiritual practices within the global landscape of contemporary art.

FONDATION OPALE



Photo:
Olivier Maire

VISION AND PURPOSE

Established in 2018, Fondation Opale is the sole contemporary art center dedicated to the promotion of Australian Aboriginal art in Europe. It strives to facilitate dialogue between peoples and cultures through art. The foundation is based on Bérengère Primat Collection which includes over 1,500 works by nearly 350 artists, making it one of the world's largest collections of contemporary Aboriginal artists in private ownership. Fondation Opale is a non-profit organisation with strictly cultural and artistic objectives.

Located in the heart of the Alpine panorama of Lens/Crans-Montana (Valais, Switzerland) at an altitude of 1140 meters, Fondation Opale offers visitors the opportunity to discover temporary exhibitions of international scope on two floors of almost 1000 m². These exhibitions highlight universal themes and values carried by contemporary Aboriginal art and build bridges with modern and contemporary artworks from around the world.

Focusing mainly on visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography, installations, etc.), the foundation is also open to other disciplines such as the performing arts, music and literature in the form of special events. Every exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue and a public program that includes workshops for all publics, residencies, conferences and artist talks, as well as academic research projects. In addition to its weekly activities (public guided tours and yoga classes), the foundation organises three to four events a month. Its boutique-bookshop, a member of the Indigenous Art Code, offers a wide range of objects created by Australia's Aboriginal communities.

Fondation Opale works closely with local and regional communities in order to improve cultural and tourist offers in the region of Lens/Crans-Montana, and thus actively contributes to its development. Its educational program promotes inclusive access to culture through state-of-the-art, constantly updated museum pedagogy.

CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL ART

Australian Aboriginal art and culture is the oldest continuous art tradition on the planet. In the last century it has also emerged as one of the world's most important contemporary art movements. Whether on bark, canvas or in new media, Aboriginal artists have used art to express the power and beauty of their culture, across cultures: to show their enduring connection to, and

responsibility for, ancestral lands and the continuity of their identities and beliefs. In our increasingly global world, this ability to speak across borders without forsaking any of its distinctive identity makes Australian Indigenous art some of the most innovative contemporary art being produced anywhere today.

NEW SPACES

After five years, Fondation Opale expanded with a new wing adjacent to the original building. Designed by the Sion-based architecture firm EFAR, the extension includes a 124-seat auditorium with a foyer, a library, an artwork storage area, a seminar room, and a green terrace. The building's striking façade features a work by Manyjilyjarra

artist Jackie Kurltjunyintja Giles Tjapaltjarri, selected for its sacred symbolism and evocation of a guardian figure. This artwork is reproduced on anodized aluminum panels. The art center's entrance has also been relocated to the new wing, now opening toward the village of Lens.

AUDITORIUM

A versatile, comfortable space equipped with cutting-edge audiovisual technology, designed for hosting conferences, concerts, screenings, and various artistic performances in optimal conditions. The room features an acoustically designed wave-shaped wooden ceiling and active accordion walls made of raw concrete, enhancing its sound properties.

LIBRARY

A dedicated resource center for contemporary Aboriginal art, the library offers a wealth of books and videos on Aboriginal art and culture for researchers and the public. At its core is a room housing archives, including those of artist, activist, and curator Bernhard Lüthi, with 5,300 documents, 5,000 slides, 150 works on paper, and 1,200 books. The library's ceiling is adorned with a piece by Yolŋu artist Naminapu Maymuru-White, depicting the Milky Way.

STORAGE AREA

A specialized facility designed to conserve and restore over 1,540 works from the Bérengère Primat Collection, as well as works loaned for exhibitions. The space is divided into two rooms: one for canvases, and the other for barks and wooden objects, all of which require specific temperature and humidity conditions for their preservation.

PAST EXHIBITIONS

16.06.24 → 10.11.24
**ARTIST ACTIVIST ARCHIVIST:
 BERNHARD LÜTHI INVITES**

This exhibition highlights the career of Bernhard Lüthi, an artist and curator from Bern, who has been a staunch advocate for the recognition of Australian Aboriginal art in Europe.



Exhibition ARTIST ACTIVIST ARCHIVIST:
 BERNHARD LÜTHI INVITES | Photo: Lumento

17.12.23 → 14.04.24
HIGH FIVE!

The foundation has challenged 26 figures from the Swiss cultural scene to choose a work of contemporary Australian Indigenous art from Fondation Opale's collections, by suggesting a "mirror work" that they own, that they have created or that the Foundation could borrow.

18.06.23 → 12.11.23
INTERSTELLAR

Curated together with artgenève, INTERSTELLAR invites us to explore the unknown and to stretch the limits of our imagination. Bringing together some sixty works by contemporary Aboriginal and international artists, this exhibition offers a new perspective on our relationship with the galaxy and leads us to question the meaning of our place in the universe.



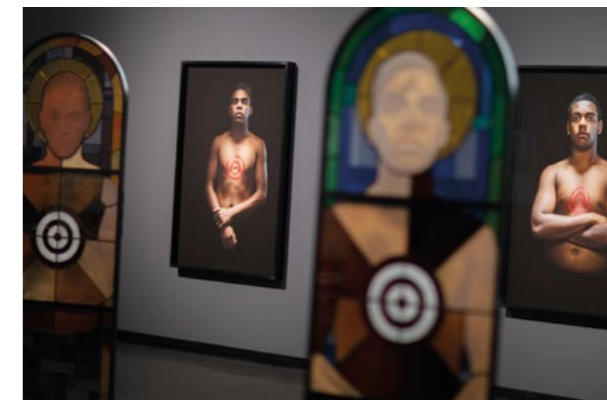
Exhibition DREAMING IN THE DREAM OF OTHERS |
 Photo: Yorick Chassigneux

10.12.22 → 16.04.23
**DREAMING IN THE DREAM
 OF OTHERS**

An exhibition juxtaposing the works by French artist Yves Klein with those of twelve Aboriginal artists, opening a sensitive, poetic path to this primordial brotherhood of awareness. Artist Ulay's *Aboriginal Afterimages* photography series completed the exhibition in the foundation's Special Focus space.

12.06.22 → 06.11.22
FUGITIVE PRESENT

An exhibition combining two very different types of artworks: contemporary photographs from Australian urban centers and unique traditional ground paintings made from *wamulu* (a yellow flower from Australia's Central Desert). Additionally, two Special Focus shows enriched the program: PAPUNYA 1971, which explored the origins of contemporary Aboriginal art, and a showcase dedicated to Swiss-Guinean artist Namsa Leuba.



Exhibition FUGITIVE PRESENT | Tony Albert, *Brothers and Brother (The Prodigal Son)* series | Photo: Yorick Chassigneux

13.06.21 → 17.04.22
BREATH OF LIFE

An exhibition dedicated to the *yiḏaki* (didgeridoo), an emblematic instrument of Aboriginal Australia, and to the artistic diversity of the Yolŋu people from whom it originates. Additionally, two Special Focus shows enriched the program: one on Czech-born French artist Vladimír Škoda, the other on artist Lena Herzog's immersive project LAST WHISPERS: PRELUDE.

14.06.20 → 25.04.21
RESONANCES

A dialogue between contemporary Aboriginal art and international contemporary art, with over 90 works of some 50 artists from the two sisters Bérengère and Garance Primat's collections. Additionally, two Special Focus shows enriched the program: one on the series *Broken Dreams* by Australian Indigenous photographer Michael Cook, the other on the Italian architecture agency Superstudio.



Nganampa mantangka minyma tjutaku Tjukurpa ngaranyi alatjitu / Women's Law alive in our Country, 2018, acrylic on canvas. Photo: Olivier Maire

09.06.19 → 29.03.20
BEFORE TIME BEGAN

An exhibition offering insights into the evolution of contemporary Aboriginal art from 1971 to the present day, with over 80 major works including paintings, sculptures and installations. Additionally, three Special Focus shows enriched the program: one on the photographic series *Painting on Country* by Australian Indigenous artist Robert Fielding, the second one on the projects of a group of Master students in Cinema from the School of Art and Design of Lausanne (ECAL) and Geneva (HEAD) entitled MYSTERY AND MODERNITY. The last on the series *Self-portrait* by Pintupi artist Walala Japaljarri.

OFFSITE COLLABORATIONS

PAST PROJECTS

Ocean Space – Venice, Italy

From September 25 to September 30, 2024, Ocean Space hosted the collaborative work *Emarr Totol / Emarr the Turtle* (2017) as part of a collaboration Fondation Opale × TBA21-Academy during the Venice Biennale.



Emarr Totol / Emarr the Turtle (2017) | Photo: Lynnette Griffiths

Musée Yves Saint Laurent – Marrakech, Morocco

From July 21st, 2023, to January 28th, 2024, the Musée Yves Saint Laurent in Marrakech presented the exhibition *SERPENT*, commissioned by Bérengère Primat and Georges Petitjean. The exhibition is based on works from the Collection Bérengère Primat, in which the snake plays a key role.

MUDEC | Museo delle Culture – Milano, Italy

For the exhibition *RAINBOW*, presenting the rainbow as a natural, cultural, spiritual and human phenomenon at the MUDEC – Museo delle Culture, Fondation Opale loaned the work *Rainbow Serpent* (1995) by John Mawurndjul. The exhibition ran from February to July 2023.

Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain – Paris, France Triennale Milano – Milano, Italy

Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain dedicated an exhibition to artist Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori, from July to November 2022. This exhibition was then presented at the Triennale Milano, from February to May 2023. Fondation Opale loaned two works: *Nyinyilki*, 2010, and *Dibirdibi Country* (2010), from the Collection Bérengère Primat.

Palais de Tokyo – Paris, France

Fondation Opale partnered with Palais de Tokyo for the collective exhibition entitled *RECLAIM THE EARTH*, presented from April 15th to September 4th, 2022. This exhibition was dedicated to a selection of international Indigenous artists who work differently with so-called “natural” matter.



Photo: Olivier Maire

Royal Museums of Art and History – Brussels, Belgium

The first exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal art presented at Fondation Opale from June 2019 to March 2020, *BEFORE TIME BEGAN*, has been shown in the Royal Museums of Art and History of Belgium from October 22th, 2021 until May 29th, 2022.

**Centre Pompidou – Paris, France
Guggenheim Museum – Bilbao, Spain**
Fondation Opale loaned a monumental collective work to the Centre Pompidou in Paris in May 2021 for the exhibition *WOMEN IN ABSTRACTION / ELLES FONT L'ABSTRACTION*, which was held from May 19th to August 23th, 2021. It was then shown at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao from October 22nd, 2021 to February 27th, 2022.

Muséum du Havre – Le Havre, France

In May 2021, Fondation Opale loaned four works in *Ghost Net* to the Muséum du Havre in Normandy for the exhibition *AUSTRALIA LE HAVRE – L'INTIMITÉ D'UN LIEN*, from June 5th to November 7th, 2021.

Biennale of Sydney – Sydney, Australia

Fondation Opale has worked closely with the 22nd edition of the Biennale of Sydney, *NIRIN*, from March 14th to November 15th, 2020. Fondation Opale supported several artistic projects and loaned a selection of Swiss curator Bernhard Lüthi's archive. The 22nd Biennale was the first edition under the direction of an Aboriginal artist: Brook Andrew.

Menil Collection – Houston (Texas), USA

For its first exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal art, the Menil Collection chose to display over 100 works from Australia's most isolated communities, all on loan from Fondation Opale. Named “best exhibition of the year” by the Houston Chronicle, *MAPA WIYA* took place from September 12th, 2019 to January 26th, 2020.



Photo: Sébastien Crettaz

RESTAURANT L'OPALE

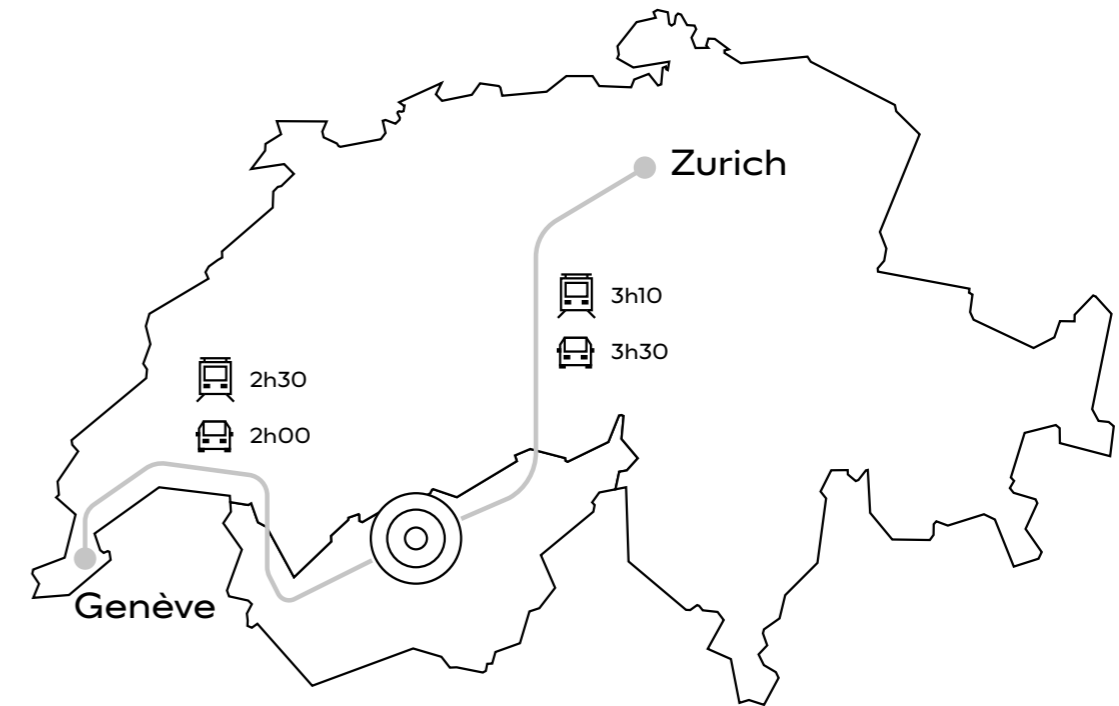
Located in the Art Center and overlooking Lac du Louché, Restaurant L'Opale serves simple, inventive cuisine paired with a thoughtfully curated selection of regional wines.

The menu features homemade dishes, crafted using ingredients sourced from local markets and producers, with a focus on sustainability. The cuisine evolves with the seasons, bringing fresh, new flavors to each visit. In fine weather, the sunny terrace offers breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding alpine landscape.



Photo: Lorenzo Lavecchia, Restaurant L'Opale's chef

USEFUL INFORMATIONS



CONTACT INFORMATION

Fondation Opale
Route de Crans 1
1978 Lens
Suisse

+41 27 483 46 10

info@fondationopale.ch
www.fondationopale.ch

OPENING HOURS

Art center and shop
Wednesday – Sunday: 10 am – 6 pm

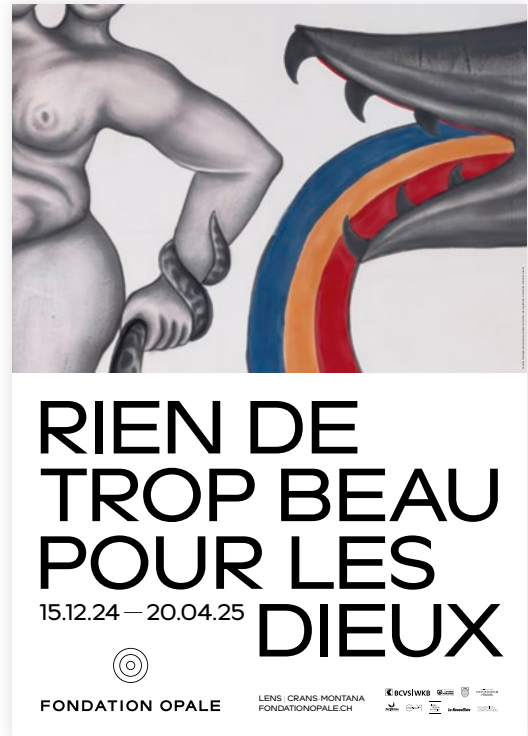
Restaurant L'Opale
Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday:
9:30 am – 10 pm
Friday, Saturday: 9:30 am – 10 pm

EXHIBITION NOTHING TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR THE GODS

December 15, 2024 – April 20, 2025
Wednesday – Sunday: 10 am – 6 pm

A catalog to be published by 5 Continents Éditions will complement the exhibition.

Restaurant L'Opale
Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday:
9:30 am – 10 pm
Friday, Saturday: 9:30 am – 10 pm



Credit: Forme, Sion

CONTACTS

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