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## Jean-Michel Othoniel's major solo exhibition at the Sara Hildén Art Museum

Jean-Michel Othoniel (b. 1964, Saint-Étienne) is one of France's best-known contemporary artists. This summer, the Sara Hildén Art Museum will host his solo exhibition for the first time in the Scandinavia.

Othoniel possesses a fondness for metamorphosis and reflective mediums, particularly blown glass, which has remained a hallmark material in his creations since the early 1990s. These material characteristics accentuate the ambiguity and contrasts present in his art: monumental yet delicate, baroque yet minimalist, poetic yet political.

The exhibition "Under an Endless Light" showcases Othoniel's works from the early 2000s to the present, centered around the theme of nature's marvels. Featuring approximately sixty pieces, many of which are imbued with colors reminiscent of the miraculous emergence of spring blooms, the artist shares, "I hold a deep fascination for botany, and in a land where flowers bloom amidst snow, I've curated this exhibition by selecting a significant array of works that evoke renewal and the urgency to fully embrace our fleeting springs."

The exhibition's conception draws inspiration from the Sara Hildén Art Museum and its idyllic setting. Visitors are greeted by *Wonder Blocks*, specially created for the exhibition, described by the artist as "a forest of softly hued green and saffron yellow monoliths". Echoing the ambiance of an oriental garden, *Fontaine*, adorned with fountains, harmonizes with the landscape overlooking Lake Nasijärvi and Finnish nature through panoramic windows. Sculptures inspired by flowers, such as the *Passiflora* and *Gold Lotus*, contrast with the rugged concrete walls of the museum's brutalist architecture. The exhibition extends into the sculpture park, featuring a kinetic sculpture, one of Othoniel's largest *Gold Lotus*, alongside two huge necklaces suspended from the trees, *Collier Or*.

Othoniel has created his unique language using glass bricks and beads, employing his own palette of colors. These sculptures evoke a realm of jewelry and enchantment.

Spanning from the intimate to the monumental, the exhibition includes Othoniel's red and white necklace *Collier rouge et blanc* (2010), a towering two-meter-high Murano glass sculpture from the Sara Hildén Foundation Collection. Also featured are selections of *Wild Knots* in stainless steel, *Invisibility Faces*, made of volcanic glass, and a series of his new paintings inspired by flowers.

Othoniel's installations and sculptures not only reflect the splendor of the environment but also illuminate its magical essence. Characterized by their grandeur, they establish a dialogue with both history and innovation. In recent years, Othoniel has collaborated with architects to produce site-specific artworks worldwide, receiving acclaim in major exhibitions such as those at the Pompidou Center and Petit Palais in Paris, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in New York, and the Samsung Museum in Seoul. Noteworthy commissions include *Le Kiosque des Noctambules* at the Palais Royal metro station in Paris, installations in Japan's Mori Garden, and *Les Belles Danses*, completed in 2015, marking him as the first contemporary artist to create a permanent piece for the Palace of Versailles.

Jean-Michel Othoniel – Under an Endless Light  
8.6.-15.9.2024 at the Sara Hildén Art Museum

For more information

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