

Thematic presentation

Jean-François Lemaire, Visual artist

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1. Creative approach

Jean-François LEMAIRE

Visual artist



AN ARTISTIC AND TECHNICAL DEFINITION

Since my studies at ENBA in Dijon, my creative approach has evolved through experience, experimentation, encounters and artistic and technical research. Generally speaking, the materials I use to create my work, and my mastery of their manufacture, have played a major role in my development. Fascinated by the arts of fire, I started out in the world of lost-wax steel and bronze, I have also used ceramics and, for many years now, glass or crystal paste (also lost-wax) has been an essential part of my work, both for its expressive possibilities and the meaning it brings to my work, and for the permanent challenge it represents, to innovate and invent new textures and a new plastic vocabulary for the glassmaking material.

J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2020, optical glass, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *Du Chaos à la Lumière*, 2021, crystal, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *Du Chaos à la Lumière*, 2021, crystal, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *H*, 2008, céramics & crystal, h. 18 & 30 cm



GLASS IN THE CITY

As a creator of sculptures that express my quest for the human being's capacity for growth and his relationship with the world that surrounds him and of which he is a part, I created this *Élévation, bleus nymphéas*, for the fountain on the Place de la Tour in Troyes. The theme was dear to me: the celebration of water and its relationship to light, and its omnipresence in the history and space of the city. The 20 panels of optical glass paste are carried, like "slices" of water, by a steel shaft, echoing the camshafts of Troyes' ancient mills, powered by countless rivulets and races. It is a tribute to the Seine, the city's wealth and soul. This first creation dedicated to an urban and architectural space will give rise to a new aspect of my work.

J-F. Lemaire, *Élévation, bleus nymphéas*, 2019, optical glass and steel, h. 3,10 m : Complete work,

Installation *in situ*, Welded arms,

J-F. Lemaire, *Élévation, bleus nymphéas*, 2019 : detail of a panel





ÉLEVATIONS

Human standing, inner being and outer being, rhythms and architectures... these are all themes that pâte de verre can be used to address when presenting, with the *Élévations* series, forms enmeshed within themselves, combining total volume and inner volumes, glass and non-glass materials, opacity and transparency in one and the same piece, as the fruit of one and the same melting and annealing.

For me, these creations were a technical, philosophical and aesthetic laboratory, marking my transition from colorless or body-tinted glass paste to a material with colored and textured interior shapes in a totally transparent case.

J-F. Lemaire, *Élévation colorée*, 2021, optical glass, detail

J-F. Lemaire, *Élévation noire et blanche*, 2019, optical glass, h. 35 cm

J-F. Lemaire, *Elevation*, 2021, crystal, h. 32 cm

J-F. Lemaire, *Elevation*, 2019, optical glass, detail

FROM CHAOS TO LIGHT

From 2019 onwards, *the Du Chaos à la Lumière* series will enable me to express both the principle of growth, of elevation towards the light, through knowledge and a certain inner peace. Here, technical creativity and aesthetics combine with craftsmanship. New glass textures appear, symbolizing the chaos of our lives, before their gradual resolution, their unification in the beautiful transparency of optical glass.

The idea of minerality, of rock gradually changing into light, begins to emerge in these pieces as the series evolves. Their verticality reinforces their identity with bodies, their exteriority and their mysterious interiors, made visible.

The great work of 2021, on the next page, will take this intuition to an unusual realization, in which the idea of the link between our planet, its long evolution and the appearance of life on Earth is reflected. I tell it as a story of elevation, from the original rocks to the warm, shallow seas, translucent environments and cradles of the first living cells.

J-F Lemaire, *Du Chaos à la Lumière*, 2020, optical glass, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *Du Chaos à la Lumière*, 2020, optical glass, h. 68 cm





DU CHAOS A LA LUMIERE 2021

This large-scale sculpture offers a real diversity of glass textures, some close to rock and ore, a reminder of the birth of the world, an appeal to our bodily and spiritual intimacies, a cosmic interplay between the infinitely small and the infinitely large.

J-F. Lemaire, *Du Chaos à la Lumière* 2021, cristal, 85x32x17 cm, 80 kg, integral part & détails.



PRINTS OF TIME

With the *Empreintes de temps* series, starting in 2019, my creative approach has focused on the creation of new glass materials, to achieve contrasting textures, intimate finesse and a certain opaque minerality for the outer band encircling the pieces.

On the other hand, each piece in the series was conceived as a section of the "tree of time", readable like a lumberjack's cup, revealing mysterious, fragile and luminous interiors.

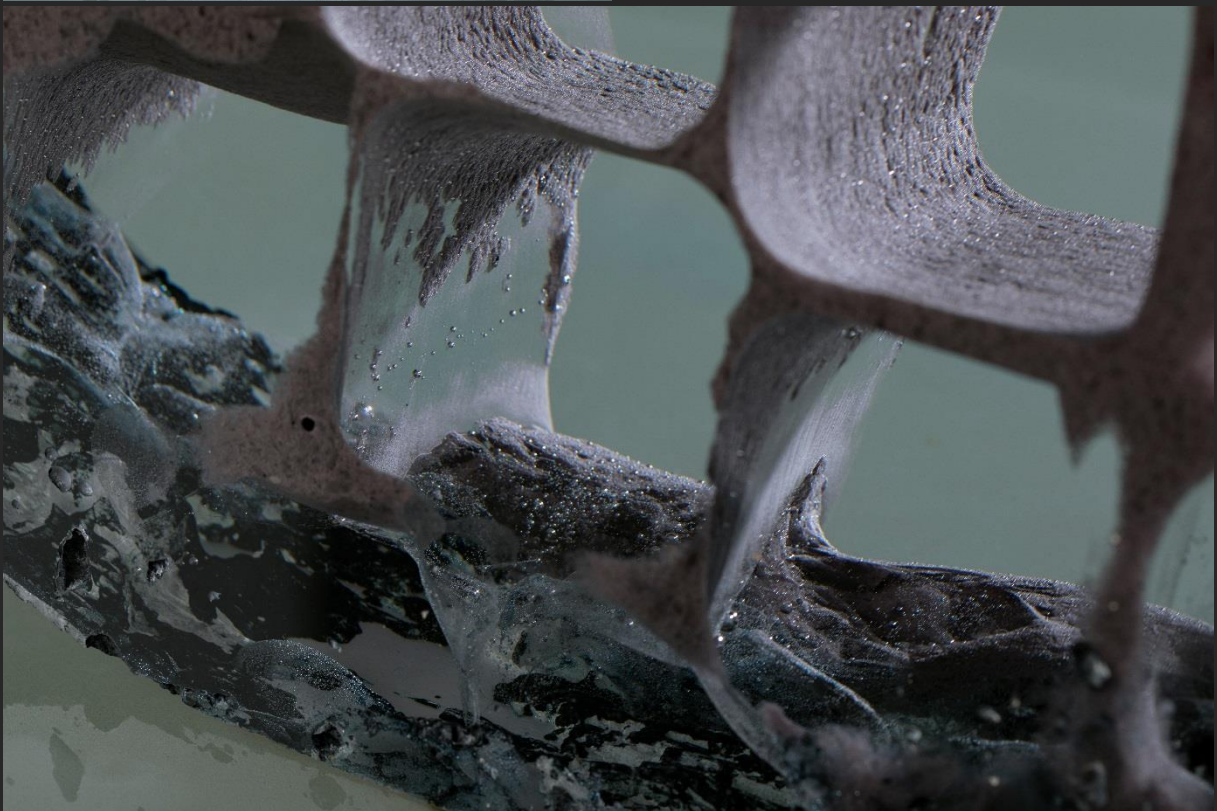
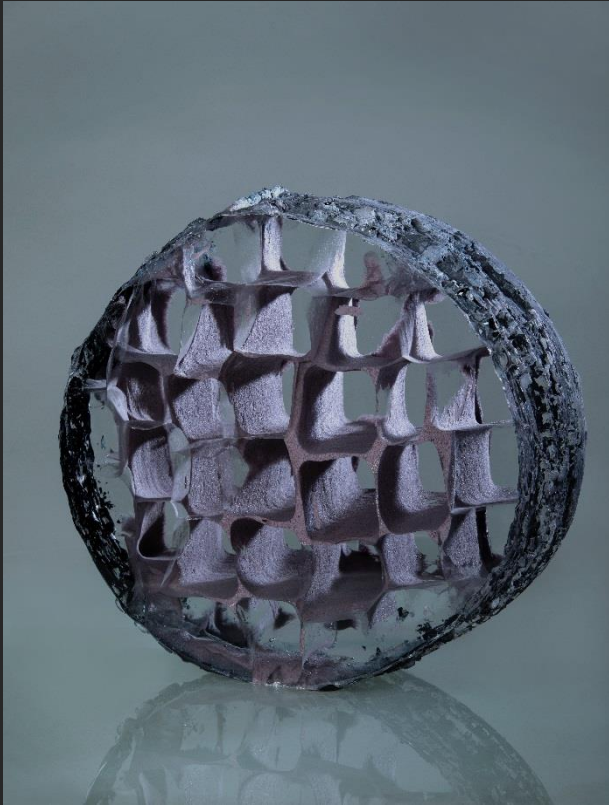
I believe that for artists and craftsmen, time is the material of their work. It's the long experience needed to acquire mastery and language, the time it takes to design and manufacture a finished piece. The time of the work's life too, depending of the randomness of destinations and the durability of materials, making it possible to pass on an impulse, an aesthetic, a technical and philosophical thought: so many tributes to those of the past, so many messages destined for those of the present and the future. In all these ways, time irrigates the work, bringing it, as it were, into the categories of the living.

J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2019, optical glass
28x12x25 cm

J-F. Lemaire, *Empreintes de temps*, 2020, optical glass,
détails



J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2022, crystal, Ø 30 cm ; integral part & détail.



J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2020, optical glass, Ø 35 cm ; integral part & détail.

THE FOAM OF TIME

Recent, large-scale works, the *Écumes du Temps* show a strengthening of the architectural density already present in the previous series. They also assert the liberation of the exterior form, which dialogues in a new way with the interior form of the piece.

If the *Empreintes de Temps* serie was a kind of capture of original time, shaping the planet and living things, the *Écumes du Temps* work makes room for the traces of what is smaller and more fragile, of all the memories that rise to the surface to join the shore of the present.

It's a question of the richness of memory that now emerges outside the work, making it more accessible and more human, giving a new tone to the research of previous years.

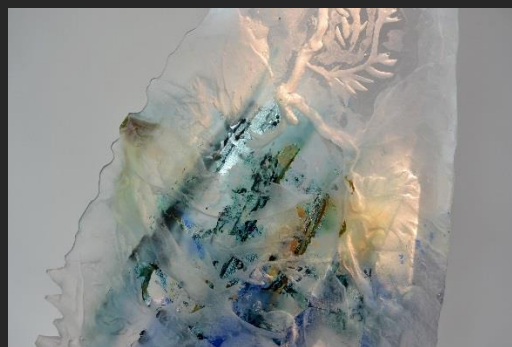
J-F. Lemaire, *Écume du temps*, 2023, crystal

J-F. Lemaire, *Écume du temps* 2022 , crystal and bronze, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *Écume du temps*, 2023, crystal, détail

Next page :

J-F. Lemaire, *Écume du temps*, 2023, crystal
H. 80 cm





A FEW TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



Nabatherm fusing kiln, for glass firing and annealing (the mold is first dewaxed in another kiln)



Glass powders ground to various particle sizes



One of the workshop's polishing stations

By way of example, for the work shown on page 9, *Empreinte de temps 2020*, here are some details of the techniques used:

Lost-wax *pâte de verre* technique. Design and drawing. Elastomer molding of a piece of sapwood (for a rendering of bark and also a mineral aspect). Casting of wax impression. Production of an open mold in plaster and refractories, in two parts (base and lathe), with several layers of different compositions for the lathe, the first layers applied with a brush. Mesh reinforcement. Then assembly. Dewaxing 36 hours at 700° in a vertical gas kiln. In the dewaxed mold: copper monoxide is brushed onto the inside of the mold, on what will be the part's circumference, then the optical glass elements are positioned over the entire surface and several in-house mixes are placed between them: different granulometries of optical glass powder, manganese dioxide, ceramic and refractory powders, carbonates, etc. The mold will remain open.

Firing control during the rise in temperature and the melting stage at 950° (some twenty hours), then control when the kiln is opened to obtain thermal descent and "blocking" at 520° , just before starting 10 days (and nights) of annealing and temperature descent, with several stages and regular monitoring, all this in an electric and horizontal fusing kiln, with programming. Once the part had cooled, the mold (which will be recycled) was broken and the surface scraped, followed by sandblasting, then diamond polishing (8 successive granulometries) to obtain transparency, followed by cerium oxide polishing to obtain a mirror polish. The polishing phases were particularly long and delicate, as the materials fusing with the glass (refractories and metal oxides) tend, when they emerge on the surface, to cause scratches.



ART WORKS IN METAL

Disbonded steel, oxy-cutting, welding, then lost-wax bronze, metal was the material of choice when I started out. After training in the basics of the technique, my apprenticeship in bronze was a school of rigorous discipline.

From the making of the wax model, the understanding of jets and vents, the necessary quality of the mold, to the intense and unique moment of casting, well before cold work, it's a whole process of submission to the demands of the material and observation of its behavior under heat that takes place.

Although I mainly use *pâte de verre* or *pâte de cristal* in my abstract creations, I have always maintained a more figurative production of bronze pieces, in my research on the human being and his fragility, but also as elements of large formats.



J-F. Lemaire, *Humain nature*, 2012, bronze, h. 55 cm

J-F. Lemaire, *nu*, 2012, bronze, h. 52 cm

J-F. Lemaire, *Les portes de la Connaissance, un Vaisseau vers la Lumière*, 2021, steel, bronze, crystal, détail, h. 1,00 m

J-F. Lemaire, *Renaissance*, 2002, crystal & bronze, l. 55 cm



STEEL, BRONZE, MIRROR

The large sculpture above was commissioned by the developer DESIMO. Its creation, like that of *Élévations, bleus nymphéas*, required the assistance of Didier Duchêne, Compagnon métallier, M.O.F. and his company CMD2, Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant.

J-F. Lemaire, *Les portes de la Connaissance, un Vaisseau vers la Lumière*, 2021, steel, bronze, crystal, h. 4,50 m, Résidence Harmony, 10430, Rosières-près-Troyes

J-F. Lemaire installing a bronze *Élévation* on a mirror, 1992



PRINTS AND CASTS

Plaster, elastomer and clay molds, casting molds, lost-wax molds... Wax, plaster, clay, resin, glass and bronze prints...

For decades, since my training in bronze and molten glass, followed by two years in a renowned stage decor workshop (Prélud', 21700 Corgoloin), taking impressions and making molds of all kinds has been part of my daily life and my creative approach.

Starting from nature (bark, driftwood, stones, bodies, faces) and, more generally, from what already exists, is an important source of my inspiration. For me, casting is not about copying, but about associating, creating something new, shapes from a dream world, close by yet hidden.



J-F. Lemaire, *Empreintes*, 1998, water, bottle, text and crystal

J-F. Lemaire, *Elévations*, 2001, crystal, bark and driftwood prints, h. 45, 30 & 20 cm

J-F. Lemaire, *Polir son image*, 1998, résin and polishing machine.

FIRE

As soon as fire, the great transformer of matter and a dangerous but fascinating partner, came into my life, it became part of my creative process. Since 1991, I have been patiently recording firing curves and the behavior of materials in fire, in bronze and especially in glass.

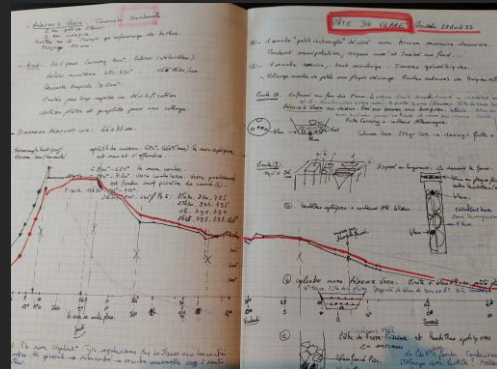
Ever since the great pioneers, such as François Décorchemont and Gabriel Argyr-Rousseau, the world of pâte de verre and pâte de cristal has clearly associated technique and artistic creation in the same movement and the same invigorating source of inspiration.

fusing kiln Nabatherm, with glass annealing in progress

Bronze casting in my workshop

Glass jars in the dewaxing kiln, reloaded during firing, and reflection of the fire on my mask.

My beginner's notes (April 28, 1993!) with glass firing and annealing curves



INNOVATING



We generally expect glass to be transparent, even if we have appreciated its more or less luminous opacity since the creations of Daum or Décorchemont and, of course, since many contemporary artists have magnified the use of opaque *pâte de verre* in their sculptures.

However, the potential of glass - or crystal - in terms of its plastic vocabulary is still a continent to be discovered. Indeed, colors and textures have yet to reveal all their secrets, and the glass artist can opt for ongoing research, to succeed in fusing glass and other materials together, annealing them together, without creating tensions likely to shatter the cooled piece at the first thermal shock, even a simple ray of sunlight.

Perhaps it's because I also work in bronze and ceramics, but I've always explored innovative avenues with glass materials, such as those that have produced the textures opposite, whose appearance may evoke minerality or burnt wood, but which are actually composed of optical glass or crystal. In this way, technical creation serves artistic creation, extending the expressive capabilities of the material.

J-F. Lemaire, *texturing test*, 2021

J-F. Lemaire, *Cristal Cristal*, 2022, crystal, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2020, optical glass, détail

J-F. Lemaire, *Du Chaos à la Lumière*, 2021, crystal, détail

PASSING ON

Since 1994, I have striven to pass on my knowledge and know-how in a variety of ways:

With professionals, in the form of continuing education courses (lost-wax bronze training), or training students in the workshop (ENSAAMA Olivier de Serres, CNIFOP, ENSA Limoges), or during a long collaboration with the Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant CMD2 and its companions and apprentice metalworkers. This was in the form of participation in bronze castings, work and exchanges or "causeries" on the company's site. For over 10 years, I also created and ran an art library specializing in glass, ceramics and metal.

By taking part in local projects, with the general public, schoolchildren or people in difficulty, in the form of educational workshops, exhibitions, performances or conferences on the theme of glass and/or the "arts du feu".

For amateurs, with regular courses and workshops in plastic art techniques, including casting, fusing, ceramics and bronze, complemented by regular lectures on twentieth-century art.

For the general public, with the *Galerie Artes* in the Troyes area, which specializes in the "arts du feu" and has held over 80 exhibitions since 2008, featuring both young artists and those of international renown.



Salle d'exposition de la Galerie Artes, ateliers et lieux de cours et de stages

L'art pour mieux vivre en entreprise

Dans l'Aube, un galeriste propose aux entreprises d'emprunter des sculptures. Une façon de provoquer la rencontre dans les lieux de vie.

Lucie Tanneau

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2. Further information

Jean-François Lemaire
Visual artist



J-F. Lemaire, *portrait*, 2021
J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2022,
crystal, h. 24 cm
J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2019,
optical glass, Ø 26 cm
J-F. Lemaire, *Empreinte de temps*, 2021,
crystal, h. 24 cm

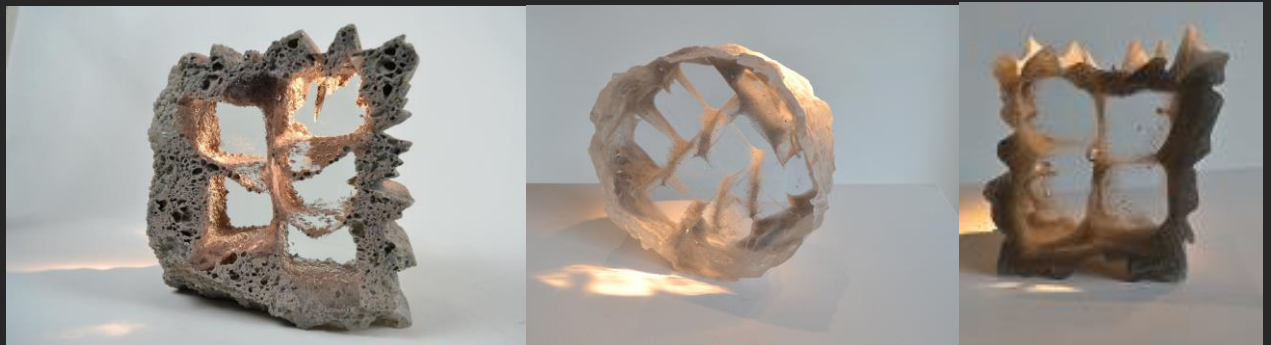
PRECISIONS

I consider myself first and foremost a visual artist, and although I devote a great deal of my work to researching and creating pieces in *pâte de verre* and *pâte de cristal*, I continue to create works in bronze, ceramic and steel, or even Corten.

My workshop is equipped for glass, ceramics and bronze, and I am regularly welcome by a metalworking company equipped for cutting and all types of steel processing.

I have also carried out numerous studies of decorative and artistic elements, friezes, lighting fixtures or even large screens of steel and glass.

I'm particularly interested in commissions works for the city and the architectural projects, whether monumental or ennobling.



NEWS & PARTNERS

Very enthusiastic about my recent large-scale urban sculptures, I'm currently working on a new project for the courtyard of a residence in Troyes, again as part of the *1 immeuble, 1 oeuvre Charter*, and some of my works found their place in gardens, yards and fountains.

I'm also continuing my artistic explorations and the creation of new glass compositions and textures, and their association with bronze, steel and ceramics. I present my sculptures in galleries and at exhibitions and competitions.

I also seek out new architectural or urban projects to realize.

For large-scale sculptures, the metal worker companion, "Best craftsman of the year", Didier Duchêne, company director of CMD2 in Estissac (Aube, France), designs and builds the metalwork, bring it up to standard and installation, with a ten-year warranty.

For big works, exhibitions or communication projects, I have technical partners around me, some of them long-standing used to work with me and familiar with my art production.

Find my *Curriculum vitae* pages 21 and 22

Publications :

38-page bilingual brochure 2024 with biography

https://www.jf-lemaire.com/files/ugd/ec959b_8b148847c2de4366b31e10977b0d79e3.pdf

64-page brochure 2022 with biography (in French)

https://www.jf-lemaire.com/files/ugd/ec959b_8322a65274a742f28458cb3b919e47a1.pdf

Crédits photos :

J-F. Lemaire : pages 1,3,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,18

D. Guy, Trinité Photo, Sainte-Savine : pages 2,4,5,6 ,7,9, 10,11,16,18

Artfusion : pages 12,13,14

P. Lemoine, Chaumont : page 14

O. Gobert-La Vie : page 18

Y. Trotzler, Strasbourg : page 19

Curriculum Vitae

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Collections and public commissions

Musée du Verre of CHARLEROI (Belgique) 2023

Musée du Verre of SARS-POTERIES (59) 2023

Ville de TROYES (10), monumental sculpture "Elévation, bleus nymphéas" 2019

D.D.J.S. CHAUMONT (52), Sculpture bronze and steel 1993

Private commissions urban sculptures (City of Troyes)

Monumental Sculpture Steel, Bronze and Crystal, Résidence Harmony (10), 2021

Monumental Sculpture Steel, Bronze and Crystal, Résidence Myrrha (10), 2023 (in progress)

Main exhibitions and galleries

Continuum Gallery, KÖNIGSWINTER (Allemagne) starting Décembre 2024

Selected by Elizabeth LERICHE for HONG-KONG Design Week, Décembre 2024

Galerie du Miroir et du Verre, PARIS (75016), November 2024

Selected by Ateliers d'Art de France for "Revelations China", PÉKIN, September 2024

Salon Révélations CHINE, with Ateliers d'Art de France, September 2024

Galerie Ador Expérience, LA ROCHELLE et ÎLE DE RÉ (17), starting June 14 Juin 2024

Galerie Florence B, personal exhibition, NOIRMOUTIER-EN-L'ÎLE (85), summer 2024

Salon Maison & Objet PARIS-VILLEPINTE (93), January and september 2024

Double J Collective - Gallery, DUBAÏ (UAE), 2023

Galerie Internationale du Verre, Serge Lechaczynski, BIOT (06) permanent artist since 2020

Galerie Les trois Soleils, EPESSSES (Lausanne, Suisse), 2023

Salon "Révélations" Grand Palais éphémère PARIS 2022 et 2023

Personal exhibition Musée du Verre de CHARLEROI (Belgique), 24/09/2022 – 05/03/2023

Salons art3f MULHOUSE (68) 2022 et PARIS 2023

Salons Résonance[s], STRASBOURG (67), 2021 and 2022

Galerie Nicole BUCK, HURTIGHEIM (67), september 2022

Exhibition Maison Harismendia, August 2022 and August 2023, SARE (64)

Musée du Verre de SARS-POTERIES, Biennales du Verre 2019 and 2021

Galerie des Arts du Feu, ROUEN (76), since 2020

Maison du Vitrail d'Armance. Musée d'ERVY-le-CHÂTEL (10), 2021
 Musée de la Faïence, ANCY LE FRANC (89), 2020
 Musée du Verre de CARMAUX (81), Biennales du Verre 2019 & 2021
 Musée du Verre de CHARLEROI (Belgique), Biennales du Verre 2019 & 2022
 Biennales du verre contemporain, ALIZAY (27), 2019 & 2022
 Musée minier de FAYMOREAU (85), "Le Verre, expression d'art", 2019
 Galerie Maumu, MAUMUSSON-LAGUIAN, 2015-2021
 Galerie Peter, BORDEAUX (33), 2017
 "Lumière Blanche", RODEZ (12), 2014
 Galerie Artes, regular solo exhibitions, PONT-SAINTE-MARIE (10), 2009-2023
 Galleri Arto, BORGHEIM (Norvège), 2010
 "Regards sur la Pâte de Verre contemporaine", ST-LEU-LA-FORET (95) 2008
 Galerie Talbot, PARIS (75006), personal exhibition, mai 2008
 Magaglass Gallery, PEKIN (Chine) 2008
 Personal exhibition, Maison de l'Outil et de la Pensée Ouvrière, TROYES (10), 2008
 Personal exhibition, Maison du Boulanger, centre culturel de la ville de TROYES (10), 2008
 Galerie L'Eclat du Verre, PARIS (75001), 2008
 Galerie Laura, AUBAGNE (13), 2005
 Biennale de Céramique contemporaine, TROYES (10), 2005
 Exposition Verre International, SAINT-ETIENNE (42), 2005
 "Puissance du Verre dans l'Art Contemporain", TROYES (10), 2004
 Galerie Planète-Verre, MONPAZIER (24), 2003-2007
 Galerie A l'espace des Arts, ST-REMY DE PROVENCE (13), 2003
 Galerie Internationale du Verre (Galerie Novaro), BIOT (06), 2001-2002
 Exhibitions & International Glass Festival, TAIPE (Taïwan), 2001
 Galerie Art et Créations, LYON (69), 2000-2003
 Galerie L'Exception, POITIERS (86), 2000 & personal exhibition, 2001
 Galerie Place des Arts, MONTPELLIER (34), 1999-2004
 Galerie Tony Rocfort, RENNES (35), 1999
 Galerie Schwann, WUPPERTAL, (Germany), 1991 et 1992
 Exhibition *in situ*, Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, « Etat des lieux », DIJON (21), 1991
 Espace Camille Claudel, SAINT-DIZIER (52), 1991
 Galerie René Madec, QUIMPER (29), 1989

Finalist Concours Festival International Métiers d'Art, BACCARAT (54), 2019
 Finalist Fondation Bettencourt-Schueller concours "Talents d'exception", 2020 et 2021

Education : Baccalauréat scientifique 1977

Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts de DIJON
 Resin and elastomer molding, construction of stage sets
 Metalworking (welding, flame cutting, surface treatment)
 Lost-wax bronze casting.
 Glass paste and hot and cold glass working.