Fabienne Verdier in Cézanne country

Aix-en-Provence
21 June—13 October 2019

Musée Granet
Pavillon de Vendôme
Cité du Livre

Press pack
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Mayor of Aix-en-Provence

Foreword by Bruno Ely,
Senior curator and director of the Musée Granet

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Public support for cultural activities takes on its full meaning when driven by conviction and sharing, curiosity, a desire to help the public discover things afresh, and a sense of empathy towards a work and what it may teach us. What sets it apart, I am convinced, is also the fact that it enables us to take risks and plays a useful and essential role in the development of the arts. An important vehicle for sharing our common cultural heritage, it is, in addition, free from the need to take a conventional approach to art and artistic trends or to make an instant profit. It has vision and offers new perspectives.

As heir, in France, to the desire of monarchical, imperial and republican governments to ensure the protection and flowering of our artistic heritage while shaping its form for decades to come, the cultural vocation of public institutions has time on its side. This underpinned André Malraux’s French-style cultural voluntarism, the aim of which is to give access to key works that have been important to humanity, but also to encourage the creation and recognition of new works of art and the intellect.

At a time when the State is increasingly taking a back seat on these matters, the City of Aix-en-Provence and its Musée Granet will continue to support this great ambition and, within its scope, act on it. I would like to thank everyone involved, including our Culture Department and the museum, under its director Bruno Ely who, along with his teams, has never been afraid, season after season, to take risks and trust in the sensitivity and intelligence of the public when confronted with collections, comparisons and works rarely presented to the public. The wonderful exhibition on “non-figurative” French post-war painters, which gave pride of place to Roger Bissière, is one such event.

Visitors to the museum will see another compelling example this summer. By playing host to the first major retrospective in France of works by visual artist Fabienne Verdier, we have done something that is both exhilarating and rash, since her oeuvre is undoubtedly demanding, innovative, abstract and complex, intense and spiritual.

A painter who trained under recognized Chinese masters for more than a decade, Fabienne Verdier has never wavered in her quest, alone or in the company of other artists, musicians and scientists. She has always sought, in the perfection of her art, to reinterpret the world and the elements, from the bamboo leaves that shiver in the wind to the clouds that skitter across the sky, traces of snow on rocks, the outline of ridges on the horizon, the ceaseless movement of water and flows of energy.

It is an astounding sight for visitors. Far from easel paintings, brush strokes or traditional studio work, Fabienne Verdier’s very personal pictorial style reinvents the relationship between the artist and the art of painting. Her brush is so heavy and imposing that, to move it over the canvas, it requires a mechanism physically controlled by the artist herself, who directs its line in an astounding and precise movement reminiscent of the martial arts and dance. Full and loose, her moving lines express Verdier’s emotions, but also our own.

Constantly searching, Fabienne Verdier develops her oeuvre by confronting her work, intuitions and observations with other worlds, with calligraphy, but also with the energy of words and even sport and music, as shown in her support for our opera festival, and the landscapes and natural elements of the sites where Cézanne himself painted.

At the foot of Mont Sainte-Victoire, Verdier dialogues with Cézanne, revisits his open-air works, creates and proposes to the public a new and stimulating artistic adventure. These are just some of the remarkable aspects of a show made possible by the cultural support of Aix-en-Provence. Visitors will be invited to judge it on its merits at the Fabienne Verdier retrospective and to explore the idea that a love of art comes from a living interaction with art works. And how wonderful it is to offer all those who wish to access it the opportunity to do so.

Maryse Joissains Masini
Mayor of Aix-en-Provence
President of the Conseil de Territoire du Pays d’Aix
Vice-President of the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolitan Area
An artistic and human adventure

The encounter between a living artist and a museum is always an adventure. We had no idea that this particular adventure, naturally and unavoidably artistic, would also become a human one. This vast project, which includes exhibitions, events and an entire season organised around Fabienne Verdier’s work, has brought together a huge number of people on one emblematic site—Cézanne country.

Extending beyond the Musée Granet and the City of Aix-en-Provence, it is rooted in the landscape—and what a landscape—as part of a commitment to a territory and a contemporary art project that transcends the usual fields of expression. Many communities, institutions and organisations, bringing together people with a variety roles, have been or will be part of this ever-growing adventure, including educational and artistic institutions—renowned international centres for musical and choreographic productions, permanent or organised as part of a festival—along with metropolitan bodies responsible for overseeing the development of a prestigious site or organisations devoted to its preservation. This is why, in symbiosis with the three venues in Aix exhibiting her work—the Musée Granet, the Pavillon de Vendôme and the Galerie Zola in the Cité du Livre—an artistic and cultural season worthy of the name has steadily emerged, expanding to better meet the many and varied expectations of its various audiences and their curiosity. As usual, and as part of their tireless quest to broaden the scope of their action, the Musée Granet and its partners have organised some truly outstanding cultural activities for these audiences, who will have the chance to explore Fabienne Verdier’s creations through a variety of issues and programmes, including the use of new technologies.

In fact, the artist’s work, which benefits greatly from being shown as part of a retrospective, the first in a French museum, has been given added impetus in contact with our region, and draws inspiration from one of its major sites, which Paul Cézanne raised to the status of a universal mountain. Fabienne Verdier’s relationship with our region dates back to 2004 and her understated yet superb exhibition “Résonance” in the very beautiful Cistercian abbey of Silvacane near Aix, an ideal setting for her work, displayed as part of the “Aix-en-Provence, Chinese Summer” cultural season. She was struck from the very outset by the “intelligence” of this abstract and monastic architecture. Then, in 2013, a friend, Daniel Abadie, one of the finest connoisseurs of the artist’s work, gave me The Spirit of Painting: A Tribute to the Flemish Renaissance, a book published to coincide with an exhibition of the same name at the Groeninge museum and the Memling museum at St John’s Hospital in Bruges. As I contemplated with fascination the fruit of more than four years of reflection and study on these masters, and taking a broader interest in her oeuvre, it became obvious to me that Fabienne Verdier should one day find a place at the Musée Granet. Creation takes time, like museums need time, and both live by encounters. It was not until 2017 that we met to discuss the idea, and almost immediately decided to go ahead with the project in Aix-en-Provence. During that summer, the Festival d’Aix, building on her incredibly enriching experience at the Juilliard School in New York in 2014, invited the artist to deepen the relationship between painting/music and music/painting as part of an ongoing process of reflection on both of these expressive media and what they can bring to each other by exploring their interactions. Bernard Focroulle, the festival’s director at the time, came up with the idea of showing, at the Musée Granet, the work produced as part of this residency, which had allowed Fabienne Verdier to express herself through painting in direct contact with musicians from several quartets performing a repertoire that was both open and unusual. Unfortunately, the museum’s programme was already set in stone by that point, but it got the ball rolling and the adventure had begun. The enormous privilege of attending a working session with these musicians in the Baroque chapel of the Visitation convent, and observing the artist’s deep commitment and enthusiasm, was decisive. We planned the exhibition in meetings and conversations, which took an unexpected turn after a long discussion with the artist, who was attending, in “solidarity”, the opening of an exhibition at the Musée Granet called “Cézanne at Home”. This exhibition had provided us with an opportunity to present, in addition to the Cézanne collections of Aix-en-Provence, one of the painter’s late masterpieces, loaned exceptionally by the Pearlman Foundation and the Princeton Museum in the United States. After talking for two good hours, which I will always regret not recording, we decided to explore the Mont Sainte-Victoire, its surroundings and viewpoints, and ended up climbing it on a wonderfully crisp winter’s day. A crazy, risky idea crept up on us almost without our noticing it: Fabienne Verdier would leave her studio behind and come here to paint in the open air.

Bruno Ely
Director of the Musée Granet
Three venues and a “season”

**Musée Granet**
**Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme**
**Cité du Livre**

Throughout the summer, three leading cultural institutions in Aix-en-Provence—the Musée Granet, the Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme and the Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola—will explore the various aspects of Fabienne Verdier’s work as well as her latest creations, inspired by a year of visiting sites familiar to Cézanne.

**Musée Granet**
From 21 June to 13 October 2019, in an exhibition space covering more than 450 square meters, the Musée Granet follows in Fabienne Verdier’s footsteps, from her return to France from China, where she lived for over a decade, to works created in recent months in the quarries of Bibémus, opposite Sainte-Victoire, at the top of the legendary mountain, in Saint-Antonin, and on other sites. This is the artist’s first retrospective in France.

This exhibition will allow visitors to appreciate the artist’s work in its entirety, better understand the lessons she learned from Chinese scholars in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and explore how, following her return to France, Fabienne Verdier developed a new aesthetic by drawing on major intellectual currents in Western painting, from the Flemish Primitives to the Abstract Expressionists. As visitors move through the museum, they explore six major themes that shed light on the evolution and richness of the artist’s work.

The final rooms feature her latest works painted outdoors in Cézanne country, revealing for the first time how, over a period of almost two years, the artist drew inspiration from Mont Sainte-Victoire and other places familiar to Cézanne.

**Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme**
The Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme will present Fabienne Verdier’s working techniques from 21 June to 13 October 2019. In this unusual 18th century space dedicated to contemporary art, set in a garden at the heart of the city, visitors can admire the artist’s “nomadic studio”, which enabled her to work in nature itself. Items include brushes made from rat whiskers and rooster feathers, and an entire room devoted to drawings and gouaches made atop Mont Sainte-Victoire; a film, Walking Painting, provides insight into the complexity of the artist’s creative process. Echoing this, on the first floor, a “storyboard” reveals the different phases of work that led to her most recent creations inspired by places familiar to Cézanne and on show at the Musée Granet.

**Cité du Livre — Galerie Zola**
From 21 June to 14 September, the Cité du Livre—Galerie Zola presents Sound Traces—a truly immersive video installation. This cinematographic work was produced during a residency in the summer of 2017 at the invitation of the Academy of the Aix-en-Provence Opera Festival.

In the Chapel of the Visitation in the heart of the city, Fabienne Verdier studied with four of the most talented young quartets of their generation, to discover how the writing of each musical work might reveal, through her brushwork, the voids and forms that allow us to hear these works in a totally new way, as the artist explains: “This work is a visual and sound journey that allows the spectator to feel music and painting at the rhythm and tempo of their imagination.”

These exhibitions are part of a packed programme of events aimed at a wide audience, including talks, encounters, concerts, educational workshops, guided tours, dances, readings and more. (See below for a more detailed programme or visit museegranet-aixenprovence.fr). An exhibition is also being held at the same time in the cloister of the Prieuré de Sainte-Victoire, restored in 2018 by the Friends of Sainte-Victoire. A large-format photograph by Philippe Chancel photographing the artist working on the crest of Mont Sainte-Victoire will be presented alongside some twenty facsimiles of drawings made in October 2018 by Fabienne Verdier.

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**Curators**

Musée Granet: Bruno Ely, Head Curator and Director
Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme: Christel Roy, Director/co-curator: Alexandre Vanautgaerden, Royal Academy of Belgium
Cité du Livre — Galerie Zola: Fabienne Verdier

**Works of art exhibited**

About fifty large-format works (paintings, drawings and objects of the painter)
Video documents and digital devices. Video installation (Sound Traces at the Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola).
Nomadic studio and giant brush.

**Catalogue**

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A contemporary artist ventures into Cézanne country

The Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence is presenting the first retrospective exhibition of Fabienne Verdier's work in a French museum. What makes this major contemporary artist's approach so original is the constant dialogue she maintains with other artists, thinkers and scientists.

Her initial thinking on aesthetics was rooted in an encounter with Chinese scholars calligraphers. Then, after years of disciplined study, she returned to the West to continue her research by re-appropriating the foundations of her own culture. Rather than the world's external reality, her works reveal the flow of energy which sets the elements in motion. She is interested as much in the organisation of the universe as the forms from which language or music emerge.

Her work is composed of paintings, drawings, films, notebooks and, much more recently, installations in which the spectator stands at the centre of a whirlwind of images. In Aix-en-Provence, she experimented for the first time with a nomadic studio and began to paint in the open air. Faced with the same challenges that Cézanne set for himself, how does a contemporary artist subvert her world and our own?

Fabienne Verdier's work is a journey on which visitors are invited to renew their relationship with the landscape and the mountains of the mind.

Fabienne Verdier working in the open air on the Sainte-Victoire massif in May 2018. Photo: Philippe Chancel.
Section 1 — Formative years in China

At the age of nineteen, Fabienne Verdier was excluded from classical art classes at the École des Beaux-Arts de Toulouse for refusing to sketch inanimate plaster models. Unable to find a course that satisfied her desire to study the world in its spontaneous dimension, she began observing birds in flight. Keen to understand the structures that give vitality to the forces of nature, she then sketched their skeletons at the Museum of Natural History.

At the same time, she took courses in the school’s graphic arts department, the Scriptorium, where Bernard Arin taught the art of drawing letter shapes and words, shedding new light on thought in movement.

“if I’m bold enough to venture deep into China, maybe I could learn from the great masters who possess this traditional knowledge.”

In 1983, she left for Chongqing, a city in Sichuan province at the foot of the Tibetan plateau. When she arrived, she battled her way through the Fine Arts Institute and its official arts programme. Then she sought out the venerable painter Huang Yuan who defied an official ban to teach her the essentials of his art. He also arranged for her to study under a seal engraver—Cheng Jun—from whom she learnt the freedom of the brush and the vigour of sigillary carving.

Verdier explored the principle of “the single brushstroke” in depth, mastered her body, and stood to paint vertically. The force of gravity thus became an actor in her painting.

She also made several study trips to explore China’s many cultures and traditions, including the Miao and Yi ethnic groups in Guizhou. She made drawings, listened to the songs of the Yangtze boatmen, and amassed a store of equipment. In 1989, she exhibited her student work in Chongqing.

Verdier left China in the wake of the events in Tiananmen Square, but later returned. Diagnosed with a serious illness, she eventually moved back to France in 1992, where she began to work on her oeuvre.

She describes this formative period in Passagère du silence (2003), a book that has sold more than 300,000 copies.

“I will not show you how to use a brush until you understand the power of the lines on the steles you have studied, [...] until you manage to bring the horizontal line to life, we will not move on to the other strokes or write out characters. The single brushstroke is the founding stroke.”

—Master Huang Yuan to Fabienne Verdier

Tribute to Yehudi Menuhin’s Variations sans thème. Cobalt meditations, 1997
Cobalt ink and cinnabar on silk canvas, 180 x 260 cm.
Musée Cernuschi © ADAGP, Paris 2019
Section 2 — Deconstructing the sign

After moving back to France permanently in 1992, Fabienne Verdier slowly but steadily began the process of deconstructing ideograms—“deconstructing the sign.” Simplifying her lines to the extreme, she struck up a new dialogue between her apprenticeship and Western painting. In 2005, she exhibited a series of works at the Alice Pauli Gallery in Lausanne which were marked by a new dynamism and energy under the influence of Abstract Expressionist painters such as Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock.

“Fabienne Verdier does not reproduce objects figuratively. She prefers to provoke, through gravity and movement, the emergence of organised forms such as they appear in the various formal phenomena of the visible world. Her abstract paintings thus evoke spontaneous associations with reality, from the capillary systems of internal organs to the branches of river mouths, from gnarled branches to lava flows and coastlines, making complex geological processes visible, and from heart and respiratory rhythms to the rhythm of rain drops.”

—Corinna Thierolf, Curator in Chief, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich

In 2007 she was commissioned by the Hubert Looser Foundation in Zurich to produce five large paintings to echo abstract works by the American Expressionists and Minimalists in its collection. Verdier spent three years studying and establishing a dialogue between her artistic practice and that of John Chamberlain, Donald Judd, Willem de Kooning, Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin, Robert Ryman, Richard Tuttle and Cy Twombly.
RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION

Section 3 — Flemish masters and apparent immobility

The paintings presented in this section were first shown at the “Fabienne Verdier—The Spirit of Painting: A Tribute to the Flemish Renaissance” exhibition in Bruges in 2013. In 2009, the Groeninge Museum in Bruges invited Fabienne Verdier to work on masterpieces of 15th century Flemish painting. She initially resisted the idea but finally accepted and embarked on four years of pictorial meditation, with help from specialists in the field. The result was an impressive body of work influenced by the notion of labyrinthine thinking. The headdress of Margareta van Eyck, wife of the painter, for example, reveals a multiplicity of serpentine lines. Verdier isolates this sinuous form and makes it the starting point for her project.

She realized she needed greater control over her brush in order to translate these meanderings, so she sawed off its wooden handle and replaced it with a bicycle handlebar, freeing her to create a third dimension in her brushwork. She achieved a greater sense of depth by working the whole painting with glazes—thin uniform layers of paint. This marked the second break with her previous practices. “How do you transmit life to the painted matter?” she asks in her studio notebook: through light, movement, a constructive impetus, in a dazzling instantaneousness.

“Fabienne Verdier’s work has a way of eschewing self-expression and lyricism, which would be purely personal, and thus makes it possible to express how humans exist amid the intellectual or spiritual forces of which they are simply the expression [...] in the end, Fabienne Verdier is the brush of the world’s forces.”

—Jean de Loisy, former director of the Palais de Tokyo

1 Jan van Eyck,
Portrait of Margareta van Eyck, 1436
Oil on wood,
41.2 × 34.6 cm
Bruges,
Groeninge Museum

2 "Margareta I"
Labyrinthine Thoughts.
After Portrait of
Margareta van Eyck by
Jan van Eyck (1438), 2011
Acrylic and mixed
technique on canvas,
180 × 403 cm.
Private collection
© ADAGP, Paris 2019
Section 4 — Intuition of the sound landscape

Like leading 20th century avant-garde artists, such as Wassily Kandinsky and, later, John Cage, Fabienne Verdier is interested in the relationship between painting and music. She experimented with these complex relationships in 2014 during her residency at the Juilliard School in New York. Verdier explored rhythms, sound vibrations, oscillations and tempo, in the moment and over time. She translated this experience into a series of paintings that express the subtleties and jolts of music through her brushstrokes. She also invented new brushes made from wild boar hair to communicate in more refined fashion the emotions arising from her contact with music.

As well as painting, she used her time in New York to experiment with filmmaking. Mark Kidel’s documentary film The Juilliard Experiment is an account of this work in progress. In 2017, she continued her New York experience at the Aix Festival, where she made a new film, presented this summer at the Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola.

“The energy, vitality and wonder that Fabienne Verdier captures inside music are also those that surround us: flashes of lightning in the night sky, the turbulence of running water that had so mesmerized da Vinci, the movements of the stars that, it is said, govern our acts.”

—Jean Frémon, President of Galerie Lelong & Co.
RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION

Section 5 — Void/Vibration

The works in this section reveal Fabienne Verdier’s interest in the vibratory energy that fills what we perceive as being in the void. Multiple curves like vibratory waves unfold over large canvases, spreading from shape to shape. They turn the surface of the canvas into an energy field, materialised by small particles of silver or black pigment, which the artist sets in motion. In her notebooks, Fabienne Verdier asks: “The substance of the void? A magma of kinetic wave energy? A place that does not have its own existence, but which contains a potential of explosive energies in the making? A matrix with a constant sequence of dynamic interactions?” This void is a place of poetic exploration: “Everything seems to be mutation, instability, mystery and indeterminacy. This is the poetic field that interests me, this territory of vibratory agitation. I am a mere witness, a messenger particle of these forces at work.”

“Vide-Vibration” was the subject of an exhibition at the Alice Pauli Gallery and builds on the “Experience of Language” series presented at the Voltaire Museum in Geneva in 2017. The energy retranscribed in the painted waves is the energy exchanged between beings and their inspirations. This plastic dialogue is informed by the philosophy of Chinese characters, conversations with the astrophysicist Trinh Xuan Thuan and letters written by Paul Cézanne (“I am still searching for the expression of those confused sensations that we bring with us at birth”, Paul Cézanne, Letter to Joachim Gasquet, 1896).

The artist used her research into the birth of forms, language, painting and the universe to create her first cinematic installation on the power of language.

“The movement is a definitive effacement, as radical in its apparent serenity as were razor slashes and punches for Fontana: immediate success or failure, relentlessly unforgiving.”

—Daniel Abadie, Art Historian
Fabienne Verdier first visited the Aix region in 2004 for an exhibition of her work at Silvacane Abbey in La Roque-d'Anthéron as part of the “Aix-en-Provence, Chinese summer” season. Dazzled by the clarity and spareness of the Cistercian architecture, Fabienne Verdier created the installation Résonances while living in Saint-Marc Jaumegarde.

Some years later, in 2017, one of her works was shown at the Musée Granet as part of the “Passion for Art, the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger Gallery Since 1925” exhibition. Building on her experiments at the Juilliard School, she was invited by the Aix-en-Provence Festival of Opera and its Academy to undertake a chamber music residency in the Baroque Chapel of the Visitation in the heart of Aix. Using a laboratory studio she set up in the chapel, she explored new territories created by the interplay of musical and painted lines. The Sound Traces installation at the Cité du Livre provides an insight into this research. During her residency she met Bruno Ely, director of the Musée Granet, who introduced her to the countryside painted by Cézanne, and first floated the idea of a retrospective exhibition.

Leaving her studio for the first time to paint rather than to draw, walk or climb, she grappled with nature and, at times harsh elements. Contending with the wind, cold and rain, or appreciating the light and the mildness of the landscape, she awakened her senses, listened to them, and gradually brought the space under control and made it her own. Working in the open air, in harmony with nature, she established a constant dialogue with it, until it was no longer an “object” of study. Her intensive production of sketch books, research and canvases marked a new stage in her creative output. To paint in nature, she created a mobile studio laboratory—her “nomadic studio”. This “note-taking” work is presented at the Pavillon de Vendôme museum.

The final section of the exhibition thus examines her trips to the region between May and October 2018. A work in progress, it includes drawings, preparatory studies and large canvases.
ABOUT THE MUSEE GRANET

One of France’s most beautiful regional museums

Opened in 1838 in the former 17th century Prieuré de Malte, the Musée Granet, which has been awarded "Musée de France" status, has been run by the City of Aix-en-Provence since 2016. From 2003 to 2015, responsibility for the museum was transferred to the Communauté du Pays d’Aix (CPA), which continued the renovation and restoration work begun by City of Aix-en-Provence in the early years of the last decade, until its completion in 2006.

With the support of the Ministère de la Culture et de la communication—Direction des Musées de France, the Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, and the Département des Bouches-du-Rhône, the Musée Granet now has six times more exhibition space than before. It covers an area of nearly 4,500 square metres, mainly given over to paintings and sculptures from the museum’s collection.

In 2013, the Musée Granet added an extra 700 square metres of exhibition space following the opening of Granet 19th in the Chapelle des Pénitents blancs, renovated to accommodate the remarkable Jean Planque collection, on long-term loan from the Jean and Suzanne Planque Foundation.

Exceptional collections

The Musée Granet presents almost 750 works, offering an extensive survey of artistic creation from the primitives and the Renaissance to the masterpieces of modern and contemporary art.

A rare collection of objects from the Celto-Ligurian archaeological site at Entremont explores the links between the Celtic and Greek civilisations in Gaul before the arrival of the Romans and the foundation of Aquae Sextiae (Aix-en-Provence) at the end of the 2nd century BC.

The sculpture gallery reveals the talent of sculptors in Aix from the 17th to 19th centuries, including Chastel, Chardigny, Ramus and Ferrat. Along with the bust sculpture displays, this gallery sheds light on leading figures from the Aix region, including Vauvenargues, Cézanne and Mirabeau.

From the Italian and Flemish primitives to the Baroque, and the Renaissance to Classicism, the historical painting collection explores the complete range of artistic production in Europe, including history and religious painting, genre scenes, portraiture, landscapes and still lives. The most outstanding pieces include works by the Fontainebleau school, the Le Nain brothers, and Hyacinthe Rigaud in France, Mattia Preti in Italy, and works by great northern painters Robert Campin, Rubens and Rembrandt.

Works by the museum’s benefactor and exceptional landscape painter, Aix-born artist François-Marius Granet, form the core of the collection. The luminous views of the Roman countryside echo the masterful portrait of the artist by his friend Ingres. The monumental Jupiter and Thetis by Ingres forms the centrepiece for the collection of French paintings from the first half of the 19th century, from Neo-classicism (Duqueylard) to Romanticism (Géricault). Lastly, the masters of Provençal landscape-painting, Loubon, Grésy and Engalières, illustrate the vitality of pictorial creation in the region before Cézanne.

Pride of place is given to Paul Cézanne, with nine paintings from the French state collection on permanent loan to Aix. The museum itself owns six watercolours and several drawings and engravings. Another work, the only known portrait of Zola by Cézanne, dating from 1862-1864, was added to the collection in the summer of 2011 by the Communauté du Pays d’Aix.

The influence of Cézanne on European artists can be traced in the museum’s 20th century collections. It is home to the donation of physicist and collector Philippe Meyer (1925-2007), "From Cézanne to Giacometti", which includes a remarkable set of nineteen works by Alberto Giacometti (paintings, sculptures and drawings), produced between 1940 and 1969, as well as works by Piet Mondrian, Bram van Velde, Balthus, Giorgio Morandi, Fernand Léger, Picasso, Nicolas de Staël, Paul Klee and Tal Coat.

Building on these exceptional collections, the Musée Granet has developed a dynamic programme of contemporary exhibitions, guided tours and guides, and educational and cultural activities. While open to modern and contemporary art, by exploring other periods in the history of art it reflects Cézanne’s own philosophy of marrying tradition with modernity.
Granet xxᵉ, collection Jean Planque
Long-term loan from the Jean and Suzanne Planque Foundation

The museum’s modern art collection enjoyed a major boost in 2010 following the 15 year loan by the Jean and Suzanne Planque Foundation of the collection of Swiss painter and collector, Jean Planque, who died in 1998. This collection consists of 300 paintings, drawings and sculptures by Impressionists and the post-Impressionists—Renoir, Monet, Van Gogh, Degas, Gauguin and Redon—along with major 20th century artists including Bonnard, Rouault, Picasso, Braque, Dufy, Laurens, Léger, Klee, Bissière, de Staël and Dubuffet.

To display as much of this wonderful collection as possible (nearly 130 works), the Communauté du Pays d’Aix expanded the museum’s exhibition facilities by renovating the Chapelle des Pénitents blancs. This jewel in Aix-en-Provence’s architectural crown, located close to the museum, was built in 1654. The building became the property of the City of Aix-en-Provence during the French Revolution and has been altered considerably over the centuries. In 1971, the city transformed the chapel into a conference centre before closing it for renovation works in 2001.

This renovation underlines the commitment of the Communauté du Pays d’Aix, in partnership with the City of Aix-en-Provence, to providing the Musée Granet with new exhibition spaces worthy of the masterpieces entrusted to it. This project added over 700 square metres to the museum’s displays.

This new area—“Granet xxᵉ, collection Jean Planque”—opened its doors in Spring 2013.

The museum at a glance

Visitor numbers
More than 2 million visitors since 2006.
For the following exhibitions:
• “Cézanne en Provence” (2006): 450,000 visitors
• “Picasso Cézanne” (2009): 371,000 visitors
• “Alechinsky, Les Ateliers du Midi” (2010) 90,000 visitors
• “Collection Planque, L’exemple de Cézanne” (2011): 120,000 visitors
• “Chefs-d’œuvre de la collection Burda” (2012): 93,000 visitors
• “Le Grand Atelier du Midi, De Cézanne à Matisse” (2013): 242,000 visitors
• “Masterworks from the Pearlman Collection” (2014): 115,000 visitors
• “American icons: masterworks from SFMOMA and the Fisher collection” (2015): 94,000 visitors
• “Camoin: Light & Life” (2016): 105,000 visitors
• “Passion for art, the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger gallery since 1925” (2017) 57,000 visitors

Key dates
1838: inauguration of the Musée d’Aix
1849: death of François-Marius Granet (bequest of 150 works and 300 paintings from his collections)
1860: Bourguignon de Fabregoules bequest (600 paintings)
1906: death of Cézanne
1949: the Musée d’Aix becomes the Musée Granet
1984: long-term loan by the French State to the Musée Granet of eight paintings by Cézanne
2000: the City of Aix begins renovating the Musée Granet with support from the French Ministry for Culture and Communication, the Conseil général and the Conseil régional
2000: 71 works from the exceptional “De Cézanne à Giacometti” Philippe Meyer donation on long-term loan to the museum
2002: end of the renovation works in the sculpture gallery and 19th century galleries
2003: transfer of the Musée Granet to the Communauté du Pays d’Aix
2006: 4 March, museum partially reopens to the public
9 June, opening of the “Cézanne en Provence” exhibition until 17 September. The exhibition is recognised as of “national importance” by the Ministry of Culture and Communication—Musées de France Department. As a result, it benefits from special State funding.
2007: 22 June, museum opens permanently.
2008: two exhibitions “La BD s’attaque au musée I” and “Granet, une vie pour la peinture”
2009: international exhibition “Picasso Cézanne”, in coproduction with the RMN
2010: two exhibitions “Jean-Antoine Constantin, dessins”, “Alechinsky: les ateliers du Midi”.
5 July, the Musée Granet becomes an “associate museum” of the RMN.
2011: two exhibitions “Futuréalismes” and “Collection Planque, l’exemple de Cézanne”
2013: “Exquisite corpse—Mediterranean Suite” exhibition as part of Marseille Provence 2013, European Capital of Culture
21 May: inauguration of the extension of the Musée Granet in the Chapelle des Pénitents blancs to host the Planque collection. 13 June: opening of the “Grand Atelier du Midi” exhibition until 13 October, in coproduction with the RMN and the City of Marseille as part of Marseille Provence 2013, European Capital of Culture.
2014: two exhibitions “Trésors de Beisson”, “Masterworks from the Pearlman collection, Cézanne and Modernity”
2018: “Tal Coat, la liberté farouche de peindre”, “Picasso Picabia, La peinture au défi”
EXHIBITION

Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme
Nomadic studio

21 June–13 October 2019

Presented alongside the Musée Granet’s monographic and retrospective exhibition of Fabienne Verdier’s oeuvre, including a final section showcasing her latest creations, dedicated to Mont Sainte-Victoire, the show at the Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme probes the artist’s creative process and techniques through photographs of her studios and her drawing studio from Mont Sainte-Victoire.

The Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme:
a testing ground

This exhibition presents Fabienne Verdier’s laboratory and the preparatory work that led to her finished oeuvres.

On the ground floor, the artist’s objects—nomadic studio, brushes and drawings—are presented in the fashion of a cabinet of curiosities.

The nomadic studio, created by the artist to paint in the open air, can be physically explored by visitors. A video of the artist working within the structure—Walking painting (10’47”)—immerses visitors in the intensity of flowing matter and reveals the complexity of her creative process.

One room presents previously unseen drawings and gouaches produced by Fabienne Verdier on Mont Sainte-Victoire, which explore the landscape’s geomorphology—the moving forces of rocks and trees.

On the first floor, a running fresco on picture rails walks us through the storyboard of her creative process and highlights the different stages of her creative output. Verdier’s work is the art of montage and dialogue with past forms and contemporary artists and scholars.

The dialogue between historical and contemporary art

The Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme has cultivated a dialogue between historical and contemporary art for several years. Artists are regularly invited to exhibit their work in the gallery and draw on the museum’s collection.

Among the artists who have appropriated this jewel in Aix-en-Provence’s architectural crown are Isa Barbier in 2011, Aicha Hamu in 2013, Sophie Menuet in 2014, Dominique Castell in 2016, Clémence Carsberg in 2017, Nadine Lahoz-Quilez in 2018 and Marie Ducate in 2019. Its history, architecture and collections are placed at the disposal of artists, who set up a dialogue between them and shed new light on the space by bringing together past and present, heritage and creation.

The museum also plays host to photography exhibitions, once again in a spirit of dialogue, with featured artists including Christian Tagliavini in 2014, Alfons Alt in 2015, Chema Madoz in 2016 and Villers/Picasso in 2018.

The works in the collection of the Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme, which date from the 17th century to the early 20th century, and include a major graphic art collection, are brought to life by the artists who offer a fresh perspective on them. They animate the collection by setting up a conversation between historical and contemporary works, which echo and reveal each other.

Photos:
J.-C. Carbonne, ville d’Aix-en-Provence.

Painting session at the Prieuré Sainte-Victoire, on the top of Mont Sainte-Victoire. Philippe Chancel.

Fragment from the storyboard.
The purpose of this exhibition at the Pavillon de Vendôme is to show the other side of the picture and to see what no one else sees. It shows, in slow motion and at a thousand images per second, Verdier’s painting process, as she wields her brushes or throws 100 litres of paint onto a canvas. It reveals how this work of beauty and meditation emerges from a struggle with the natural elements—the wind and rain—and the forces of gravity on Earth. Verdier’s art sets up a permanent dialogue with her surroundings and the people—artists, scientists and writers—she works with. The exhibition takes the form of a storyboard of films, texts, the artist's brushes and still images taken by photographers who have recorded, over the years, the artist as she creates her works.

—Alexandre Vanautgaerden, Royal Academy of Belgium
Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola

Sound Traces, an installation

21 June–14 September 2019

A multimedia work produced in partnership with the Aix-en-Provence Festival

After her first experiments exploring the relationship between lines of sound and painting at the Juilliard School in New York, Fabienne Verdier accepted Bernard Foccroulle’s invitation in 2017 to take up a residency at the festival Academy to continue her research, this time in conjunction with an emblematic chamber music formation—the string quartet.

The festival and the City of Aix made the Chapelle de la Visitation, rue Mignet, available to her over summer. The team from the Academy wanted to explore, in conjunction with four of the most talented young quartets of their generation, how the style specific to each musical work might give rise, in brushwork, to voids and forms that would allow us to hear these works in a new way.

This multimedia installation immerses the visitor in a completely new experience. As painting and music progress or come to a standstill, the spectator interprets them according to their own imagination, letting their mind wander freely between the conceptual limits of the abstract and the figurative, as they recall aesthetic emotions gleaned from their own previous contemplation of the natural environment around Aix and beyond.

Four works were at the heart of these experiments:

• Lo que no’ contamo’ composed by Ondrej Adamek in 2010—Mettis Quartet
• Officium Breve, op. 28, composed by Gyorgy Kurtag in 1989—Gerhard Quartet
• Ainsi la nuit, composed by Henri Dutilleux for a string quartet in 1971—Aquilone Quartet
• Quartet in D minor, Op. 76 No. 2, composed by Joseph Haydn in 1797—Hanson Quartet

“As an extension of my work as a painter, four years ago I felt the need to create works that allow the spectator to see both the body and brush in movement, rather than simply the result of the creative movement on the canvas. The relationship between pictorial language and musical language has interested me for a long time, because the movement of body and brush resonates with the forces that take hold of the musicians as they perform a work.

I set up my first laboratory studio at the Juilliard School in New York in 2014.

The City of Aix-en-Provence and its festival offered me the chance to continue my research for the whole of summer 2017. They made the Baroque Chapel of the Visitation on rue Mignet available to me along with four young string quartets, among the most talented of their generation, and we worked together every morning in the church, which was temporarily converted into a painting and recording studio.

I collaborated with the director of photography Ned Burgess on design of a new device to capture the synchronicity of my work with the musicians from each quartet. Our aim is to offer the public a new and immersive experience at the heart of the creative process.

The work is a visual and sound journey that allows the spectator to feel music and painting at their own tempo, and at the rhythm of their imagination. The physical proximity of the violin, cello and viola immerses the spectator, through the brush’s movements and silences, in the singularity and modernity of each of the pieces written for four string instruments.

In the Cité du Livre in Aix-en-Provence, visitors gradually leave behind light from the street and enter this former factory where they are surrounded by four giant screens. They can then decide to sit or stroll, allowing themselves to be surprised by the images and music that sometimes begin in front of them, sometimes to their right or left, within an area of more than sixteen meters. The four-screen film montage is designed to offer the viewer a multiplicity of simultaneous perspectives that allows the works of Haydn, Dutilleux, Kurtag and Adamek to be read, watched and heard in a new way.

All of us now live in a world of multiple screens, particularly young people, and it’s a great way to give people access, through the moving image, to the creative force of music and painting.

This immersive journey differs from the solitary experience of a virtual reality headset since it allows us to share the essence of music: its ability to bring us together and deepen our psyche.

The fact that the Cité du Livre is free was really important because I wanted this work, presented for the first time, to give everyone access to a multi-sensory experience, in total freedom.”

—Fabienne Verdier
Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola

The Cité du Livre, housed in a renovated industrial building—a former match factory in Aix—has been home to the Mejanes library since 1989, in one building, and since 1991, an amphitheatre and the Galerie Zola, in another, which give priority to exhibitions related to a wider event, such as the Book Festival, the 9th Art Festival, Phot’Aix, and the Digital Arts Biennale.

In partnership with Black Euphoria for digital coordination and scenography (scenographer Xavier de Cormis).
EXHIBITION EVENTS

Events

For more information on events organised around the exhibition visit museegranet-aixenprovence.fr

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Talk

Fabienne Verdier
Talk organised by the Amis du Musée Granet
Thursday 4 April at 6:15 p.m.
Venue: Institut de management public et gouvernance territoriale, hôtel Maynier d'Oppède, 21, rue Gaston de Saporta, Aix-en-Provence.

Fabienne Verdier and Bruno Ely, head curator of the Musée Granet, present the next major summer exhibition at the Musée Granet exploring the work of this leading contemporary artist and events related to this exhibition in and around Aix.

Member admission: €5/Non-member admission: €7
Subject to the number of available places.
Information: Amis du musée Granet on +33 (0)6 77 58 29 49

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Opening weekend of the retrospective exhibition

Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 June, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Venue: Musée Granet

Saturday and Sunday at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m.: free guided tours of the exhibition

Saturday:
• Between 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.: permanent workshops for children aged 6 to 12
• 4 p.m.: talk on the exhibition by Fabienne Verdier and Bruno Ely, followed by the signing of the book Passagère du silence
• 5 p.m.: reading of the book Passagère du silence by French actress Anouk Grinberg

Sunday:
• Ballet Preljocaj Junior performances between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.

The young trainee dancers of the Ballet Preljocaj drew inspiration from Fabienne Verdier’s work to create their choreographies.

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Gabriel Dussurget Prize Concert

Saturday 29 June at 8.30 p.m.
Venue: conservatoire Darius-Milhaud, 380, avenue Mozart, Aix-en-Provence

Since 2006, the Gabriel Dussurget Prize has been awarded to an outstanding artist performing at the Aix-en-Provence International Festival of Operatic Art. Since 2015, the “Gabriel Dussurget Young Hope Prize” has been awarded to a student from the Conservatoire Darius-Milhaud. At the 2019 awards ceremony, Darius Milhaud’s Suite provençale will be performed against a projection of works by Fabienne Verdier, including those produced in tribute to the Aix-en-Provence-born musician.

The programme also includes a Cello Concerto by Anton Dvorak and the 5th Symphony by Ludwig van Beethoven.

Admission: €15/reductions: €10
Ticket office open from 24 June at the conservatoire Darius-Milhaud from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on the evening of the concert from 7 p.m.

Information: aixenprovence.fr
Conservatoire on +33 (0)4 88 71 84 20.

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Museum admission fee (see p. 28) gives access to free performances and events. Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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Exhibition
"Passion for art, the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger gallery since 1925", in 2017 at the Musée Granet.
Photo Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence.

"Köningsklasse III" exhibition
Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, 2015.
Talk

The “Grand Site Sainte-Victoire”
Friday 5 July at 7 p.m.
Venue: Musée Granet

By Cyrille Naudy, Director of the Grand Site Sainte-Victoire.

Free admission
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

Talk

Friday 12 July at 6:30 p.m.
Venue: amphithéâtre de la Verrière, Cite du Livre, 8-10, rue des Allumettes, Aix-en-Provence

Talk by Alain Berthoz, French neurophysiologist, member of the French Academy of Sciences and honorary professor at the Collège de France.

Free admission
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

Cinema

As part of the “Instants d’été” programme, in partnership with the City of Aix-en-Provence
Thursday 29 August at 8:45 p.m.
Venue: Musée Granet

The Pillow Book

The daughter of a famous calligrapher, who once wished her happy birthday by writing birthday wishes on her face, takes up the torch and writes poems on the body of her lover, Jerome.

Free admission to visitors with a voucher from the Bureau Information Culture, 19 rue Gaston de Saporta (subject to availability). From 8:30 p.m., vacant seats will be reassigned to people without vouchers.

Bureau Information Culture:
19, rue Gaston de Saporta, open Tuesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Tel.: +33 (0)4 42 91 99 19.
**Dance**

Choreography with Claire Camous.
Sunday 1 September and Sunday 6 October at 3 p.m.
**Venue:** Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme

Dance performances will be followed by a visit to the “Nomadic studio” exhibition

Free admission
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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**Sainte-Victoire concerts**

Performed by Les Temps présents ensemble.
Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 September at 5, 8 and 11 p.m.
then at nightfall (time to be announced)
**Venue:** Prieuré de la montagne Sainte-Victoire

Programme includes the *Leçons de Ténèbres* by Michel Lambert, and works by François Couperin, Jean de Sainte-Colombe and Marin Marais.

Free admission
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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**European Heritage Days**

**Musée Granet**

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday:
• at 10:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m.: free guided tours of the exhibition
• at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.: free guided tours of the “Sainte(s)-Victoire(s)” event

Saturday at 4 p.m.: talk by Fabienne Verdier and Bruno Ely, followed by the signing of the book *Passagère du silence*

Sunday 5 p.m.: choreography with Claire Camous

Admission fee
Free guided tours and events
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

**Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme**

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September
• 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.: guided tours of the exhibition
• 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.: workshop for all ages

Free admission
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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**From brush to bow**

Friday 27 September at 7 p.m.
**Venue:** Conservatoire Darius-Milhaud, 380, avenue Mozart, Aix-en-Provence

A conversation between Jean-Philippe Dambreville, director of the Darius-Milhaud Conservatory, and Fabienne Verdier on the theme of “music and painting, from the painter’s movement to musical movement”. This discussion will include musical excerpts performed by the Darius string quartet.

Free admission
Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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Exhibition
Talk

**Fabienne Verdier and Alain Rey, Polyphonies**

Wednesday 9 October at 7 p.m. (subject to conditions)

**Venue:** Cité du Livre

Talk by Alain Rey, French linguist and lexicographer, editor-in-chief at Le Robert. During their collaboration in 2017, Alain Rey and Fabienne Verdier set out to discover the sources of their linguistic and pictorial inspiration.

Free admission

Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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**Harpsichord concert — Bernard Foccroulle**

Saturday 12 October at 8.45 p.m.

**Venue:** Saint-Jean-de-Malte church

(Last to the Musée Granet)

Late-night opening of the retrospective exhibition until 8:30 p.m. in the presence of Fabienne Verdier, followed by a concert at Saint-Jean-de-Malte church with Bernard Foccroulle on harpsichord, the lid of which has been painted by Fabienne Verdier. An opportunity to discover an unusual instrument!

The programme features a selection of works by John Bull, Francisco Correa de Arauxo, Johann Jacob Froberger, Matthias Weckmann, Dietrich Buxtehude and Johann Sebastian Bach.

Tea graciously provided by the Dammann Frères boutique in Aix prior to the concert.

Exhibition admission fee

(Ticket office closes at 8 p.m.)

Free admission to the concert

Without reservation subject to the number of available places.

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**School visits**

The educational activities of the Musée Granet and the Pavillon de Vendôme for 2019-2020 are dedicated to Fabienne Verdier. Some fifty classes from the Aix-Marseille school district will visit the exhibitions as part of an annual project. Teachers will receive training from the artist and renowned linguist Alain Rey.

After discovering works by Fabienne Verdier, the students will continue their research in class as part of a project to be presented at a special event in spring 2020.

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**Students**

The Ecole supérieure d'art d'Aix-en-Provence is this year working with Fabienne Verdier as part of the project. The artist will visit the students for two working sessions.

A smaller number of students will meet Fabienne Verdier at the Musée Granet and discuss works from the permanent collections. This exchange will give rise to a working session in which students will select an item from the museum's collection and propose a personal vision of it.

In conjunction with Aix-Marseille Université, historians, art historians and geographers will be invited to a symposium to share their thoughts on Mont Sainte-Victoire and discuss the notion of working in the open air. This symposium will be held at the Musée Granet in November and will be open to the general public.

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**Socially challenged individuals and people with disabilities**

To bring Fabienne Verdier's work to the broadest possible audience, the Musée Granet Museum organises special tours and hands-on workshops on creative practices.

Partnerships with the Cultures du cœur 13 non-profit organisation, the Ensemble en Provence départemental initiative and the Montperrin hospital will enhance access to the museum and thus enable them to learn more about Fabienne Verdier's work.

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**Exhibition**

"Samsung Looser"

Kunsthaus Zurich, 2013.
CATALOGUE

Fabienne Verdier in Cézanne country

The catalogue for this exhibition is a survey of the artist's work and a proposal for new lines of thought. Fabienne Verdier's work is, by its very nature, an oeuvre built on the idea of dialogue, initially with Far Eastern culture and then with Western painting and scientists.

During the Renaissance, aesthetics were shaped around the notion of dialogue with the ideas and art of antiquity, and, on a literary level, textual dialogue. Fabienne Verdier works in the same vein, and constantly refers to the idea of communicating with others—it might be a millennia-old civilization like China, a group of painters who reflected on oil painting in the 15th century, or one that introduced a new dynamic to pictorial expression in America fifty years ago.

What is unusual about the work of this contemporary artist is that she wants to establish a dialogue not only with painters but also with scientists and specialists in language such as Alain Rey and astrophysics such as Trinh Xuan Thuan. Whether art or science, in both cases what allows her to advance, to better “lead” her brush, are the questions she raises about the origin of images and forms in order to grasp this flow across the universe, which is the real subject of her paintings, and independent of the idea of representation or abstraction.

This is why the book Fabienne Verdier, sur les terres de Cézanne (Fabienne Verdier in Cézanne country), gives a voice not only to art historians such as Daniel Abadie, Bruno Ely, Corinna Thierolf, Germain Viatte and Alexandre Vanautgaerden, but also to a poet, Charles Juliet, a musician, Bernard Foccroulle, a linguist, Alain Rey, and a specialist in the brain and the physiology of movement, Alain Berthoz.

A long dialogue with Alain Berthoz, professor at the Collège de France, offers fresh insight into the painting experience both of Cézanne and Fabienne Verdier. The physiology of the body and the wonderful complexity of the brain shed light, even if through trial and error, on the act of painting. We often give an image of painting that is too static: physiology has something to say about the act of painting, because it combines discoveries in anatomy and cell biology, as well as mathematical and physical models, and experiments in cognitive psychology, to propose new explanations. By inviting a neuroscientist to experiment in an artist's laboratory, the Musée Granet is offering the general public a new way to understand art: rather than the notion of beauty or intention, the subject of reflection is the understanding of the universal laws of creation, based on the sciences of the brain's mechanisms. This extensive interview is a counterpoint to a text by Bruno Ely, the originator of the nomadic studio project.

This catalogue therefore offers fresh perspectives both on the work of a contemporary artist and on the approach we might take to the phenomenon of Cézanne’s creation and work.

Catalogue

Editorial director Alexandre Vanautgaerden
Editions 5 Continents, Milan
34 × 19.5 cm, 168 p.
Price: €29
Fabienne Verdier
**Passagère du silence**

Ten-year initiation in China
A full written account of the artist’s initiatory journey

Was it sensible to suddenly drop everything and go in search of the forgotten secrets of ancient Chinese art, alone, in the depths of communist China? This was not a question Fabienne Verdier asked herself: in the early 1980s, this young and brilliant fine arts student was drawn to the idea of learning about the pictorial and calligraphic art devastated by the Cultural Revolution. And when, as a foreigner vanished into the Sichuan province, she found herself in an art school controlled by the Communist Party, she determined to overcome every obstacle: the language and mistrust of the Chinese, but also the terrible lack of privacy, the misery and filth, the disease and the suspicious questioning of local officials. Leaving the West far behind, she studied under great but scorned and marginalized artists who initiated her into the secrets and conventions of a millennia-old education. From this unique experience emerged a true adventure story and fascinating personal oeuvre combining Eastern inspiration and contemporary art, as revealed in her extraordinary art book *L’Unique trait de pinceau* in 2001 (Albin Michel).

**Fabienne Verdier, Passagère du silence, 2003**
Editions Albin Michel
Also available from Livre de poche

**In English (publication in June, 2019)**
Fabienne Verdier, *Passenger of Silence*
Lelong Edition and Waddington Custot joint publication

**Book-signing of Passagère du silence**
**Venue:** Musée Granet  
Saturday 22 June and Saturday 21 September at 5 p.m.
LIFE AT A GLANCE

Fabienne Verdier
Born in 1962

2019
• Three exhibitions in Aix-en-Provence: retrospective exhibition at the Musée Granet, “Fabienne Verdier in Cézanne country”; “Nomadic studio” at the Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme and “Sound Traces, an installation” at the Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola.
• Permanent collection of the Kunsthaus in Zurich.
• Creation of a stamp commissioned by the French Post Office’s philatelic programme, as part of the Imaginary Museum series.
• Publication of Fabienne Verdier, sur les terres de Cézanne, ed. by Alexandre Vanautgaerden (Milan, 5 Continents).

2018
• Design of the poster for the Roland Garros 2018 tennis tournament.
• Group exhibition: “Kunsthalle Krems”, Austria.
• Nomadic studio around Mont Sainte-Victoire.
• Stained glass windows for Nogent-sur-Seine church.
• Group exhibition: “Another eye, from Apollinaire to the present day”, Dunkirk Museum of Contemporary Art.

2017
• Installation of a laboratory studio in residence at the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence.
• Twenty-two paintings created for the 50th anniversary edition of the Petit Robert dictionary.
• “Vide-Vibration”, Galerie Alice Pauli, Lausanne.
• Publication of Alain Rey et Fabienne Verdier, Polyphonies, ed. by A. Vanautgaerden (Paris, Albin Michel)

2016
• “Rhythms and Reflections”, Waddington Custot, London.
• “Soundscapes”, Galerie Patrick Derom, Brussels.
• Documentary film by Mark Kidel: The Juilliard Experiment.
• Permanent collection of the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.
• Permanent collection of The Juilliard School, New York.

2015
• “L’Œil écoute”, Alice Pauli Gallery, Lausanne.
• Group exhibition: “Koningsklasse III”, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.

2014
• “Crossing Signs”, Le French May, City Hall, Hong Kong.
• Group exhibition: “Formes simples”, Centre Pompidou, Metz.
• Group exhibition: “Koningsklasse II”, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, at the Herrenchiemsee Palace.
• Unibail-Rodamco commissioned a monumental work for the Majunga Tower, La Défense, Paris.
• Artist in residence at The Juilliard School, New York.
• Publication of La Traversée des signes, Daniel Abadie (Paris, Albin Michel).

2013
• Documentary film by Mark Kidel: Fabienne Verdier, peindre l’instant.
• “Fabienne Verdier, the Spirit of Painting: a Tribute to the Flemish Masters of the Renaissance”, Groeninge Museum and Hans Memling Museum, Bruges.
• Collaboration with Jean Nouvel, National Art Museum of China in Beijing.
• “A Solo Exhibition”, Art Plural Gallery, Singapore.
• “Fioretti”, Galerie Patrick Derom, Brussels.
• Group exhibition: “Samsung Looser”, Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich.
• Publication of Fabienne Verdier, l’esprit de la peinture, hommage aux maîtres flamands, ed. by Daniel Abadie (Paris, Albin Michel).

2012
• Group exhibition: “My Private Passion—Hubert Looser” Foundation, Kunstforum, Vienna.
2011
• Group exhibition: “Art of Deceleration, from Caspar David Friedrich to Ai Wei Wei”, Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg.

2010
• Commission from the Palazzo Torlonia in Rome.
• Documentary film by Philippe Chancel: Fabienne Verdier: Flux.
• Publication of Fabienne Verdier, Palazzo Torlonia, Eric Fouache and Corinna Thierolf (Paris, Xavier Barral).

2009
• Group exhibition: “Elles@Centre Pompidou”, Musée national d’Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

2007
• Publication of Entre ciel et terre and Entretiens avec Charles Juliet (Paris, Albin Michel).
• Commission for five paintings from the Hubert Looser Foundation, Zurich.
• Permanent collection of the Musée national d’Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. 2005

2005
• “Paintings”, Galerie Alice Pauli, Lausanne.

2003
• Publication of Passagère du silence, dix ans d’initiation en Chine (Paris, Albin Michel), account of her apprenticeship with master Huang Yuan.
• Permanent collection of the Musée Cernuschi Paris.

2001
• Publication of L’Unique trait de pinceau (Paris, Albin Michel).

1984–1993
• Studies painting, aesthetics and philosophy with the last great Chinese masters of painting.
• Graduate of the Sichuan Institute of Fine Arts.

1983
• Graduate of the Toulouse School of Fine Arts.

Photos: Laure Vasconi.
USEFUL INFORMATION

Musée Granet
Retrospective exhibition

Place Saint-Jean-de-Malte
13100 Aix-en-Provence
Entrance for people with reduced mobility:
18, rue Roux-Alphéran
museegranet-aixenprovence.fr
Tel: 04 42 52 88 32

Opening times
Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Closed Mondays.

Admission fees to the exhibition
Included in admission to the Musée Granet:
Saint-Jean de Malte and “Granet xx”, collection Jean Planque site

Full admission: €8
Reduced admission: €6, trainees aged 25 and under, people accompanying a person holding an inclusion (CMI) or disability mobility card, bulk purchases from 15 paying tickets, holders of a paying ticket under 6 months old from the Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM, Marseille).

Free of charge: under 18s, students under 26, long-term unemployed (from six months), RSA beneficiaries (on presentation of proof of less than three months old), beneficiaries of minimum welfare allowance (CAF), minimum old-age pension or disability benefits, holders of the mobility inclusion card (CMI) or disability card, holders of the Ministry of Culture card, members of ICOM, Icomos, AGCCPF, holders of a press card, regional, national and international approved guide-lecturers, members of the Amis des musées d’Aix-en-Provence association, members of the Maison des artistes, subscribers to the Musée Granet, teachers at the École Supérieure d’Art d’Aix-en-Provence, holders of the City Pass Aix-en-Provence card.

To qualify for reduced and free admission, you must present a current proof of status.

Tickets
Musée Granet ticket office
Online from museegranet-aixenprovence.fr

Guided tours
• In French (1 hour)
  Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.
• In English:
  From 1 July to 13 October,
  on the first and third Fridays of each month at 3 p.m.
  Price: admission fee + €4

Audio guide
Available in French, English, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese.
Hire: €3

Tours for people with disabilities
By reservation only on 04 42 52 87 97
or granet-reservation@mairieenprovence.fr
Maximum ten people.
Price: admission fee + €4

Tours for the hard of hearing
A hearing aid equipped with an induction loop system (T coil) is available for all guided tours.

For visually impaired and blind visitors
Saturday 5 October at 10:30 a.m.
Descriptive tour for adults (90 minutes)

GROUPS

Groups of 15 to 25 people:
• 1 hour visit with a museum guide: admission fee/pers. + €65 speaker fee (€50 for work committees).
  • Visit with external museum guide (speaking rights*): admission fee/pers. + hire of headphones (compulsory) €35.
  * on presentation of a guide and lecturer card.
By reservation only on +33 (0)4 42 52 87 97
or granet-reservation@mairie-aixenprovence.fr

FOR CHILDREN

Audio guide
Suitable for children aged 6 and over.
Available in French and English.
Hire: €2

Games booklet
A fun way to explore the exhibition.
Suitable for children aged 6 and over.
Please ask for your free booklet at reception.

“My holidays at the museum”
Exhibition activities for children aged 6-10.
Tuesday 9 to Friday 12 July, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Rate: €5 per child per half-day
By reservation only on +33 (0)4 42 52 87 97,
for all four days,
or for half a day.

MUSÉE GRANET
Aix-en-Provence
museegranet-aixenprovence.fr

MUSÉE GRANET  
Aix-en-Provence  
museegranet-aixenprovence.fr
Musée du Pavillon de Vendôme
Nomadic studio

Labelled Musée de France
Listed as a Historic Monument
13, rue de la Molle or 32, rue Célony
13100 Aix-en-Provence
aixenprovence.fr
Tel: 04 42 91 88 75
Rotonde or Pasteur car park

Opening times
Daily, except Tuesday,
from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 13:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Full admission: €3.70

Free of charge: visitors under 26, long-term unemployed (from six months), RSA beneficiaries (on presentation of proof of less than three months old), beneficiaries of minimum welfare allowance (CAF), minimum old-age pension or disability benefits, holders of the mobility inclusion card (CMI) or disability card, holders of the Ministry of Culture card, members of ICOM, Icomos, AGCCPF, holders of a press card, regional, national and international approved guide-lecturers, members of the Amis des musées d’Aix-en-Provence association, members of the Maison des artistes, subscribers to the Musée Granet, teachers at the École Supérieure d’Art d’Aix-en-Provence, holders of the City Pass Aix-en-Provence card.

Free on the 1st Sunday of each month.

Guided tours of the exhibition
In June, July and August:
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 11 a.m.
In September and October:
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 3 p.m.
Registration and information:
Tel.: 04 42 91 88 74
animationpavillon@mairie-aixenprovence.fr

Games booklet
A fun way to explore the exhibition.
Suitable for children aged 6 and over.
Please ask for your free booklet at reception.

“My holidays at the museum”
For children aged 7 to 11.
Monday 8 to Friday 12 July, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Programme on request or on the city's website:
aixenprovence.fr
Admission: €5 per child
By reservation only on +33 (0)4 42 91 88 74,
or animationpavillon@mairie-aixenprovence.fr

Cité du Livre, Galerie Zola
Sound Traces, an installation

8, rue des Allumettes
13100 Aix-en-Provence
citedulivre-aix.com
Tel: 04 42 91 99 19

Opening times
21 June–14 September 2019,
Tuesday to Saturday, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Free admission

Free on the 1st Sunday of each month.

Games booklet
A fun way to explore the exhibition.
Suitable for children aged 6 and over.
Please ask for your free booklet at reception.

“Musée Granet → Pavillon de Vendôme → 15 min
Pavillon de Vendôme → Cité du Livre → 10 min
Cité du Livre → Musée Granet → 10 min
Fabienne Verdier
in Cézanne country
21 June to 13 October 2019

Press contact

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