

**Nouveau Musée National de Monaco**



# VARIATIONS

LES DÉCORS LUMINEUX

**D'EUGÈNE  
FREY**

PRÉSENTÉS PAR

**JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO**



**DU 7 FÉVRIER**

**AU 30 AOÛT 2020**



**VILLA PALOMA 56 BD. DU JARDIN EXOTIQUE**

Images : Dessins d'Eugène Frey

**MONACO  
NATIONAL  
MUSEE  
NOUVEAU**



*Variations*

*Eugène Frey's Light Set Projections presented by João Maria Gusmão*

NMNM – Villa Paloma

07.02-30.08.2020

Curator : Célia Bernasconi

Press release

Eugène Frey : a chronology

Biography of João Maria Gusmão

Biography of Célia Bernasconi, Curator of the exhibition

Public programme

Acknowledgements

Practical information

## *Variations*

### *Eugène Frey's Light Set Projections presented by João Maria Gusmão*

**Eugène Frey** (Brussels 1864 – Courbevoie 1942) was a painter and an artist whose work has been forgotten by the history of art and stage. In 1900 he invented the technique for “Décors Lumineux à transformations”, a complex system of light projections mixing pictorial, photographic and cinematographic techniques to bring diverse variations of colours, lights and forms to stage scenery, while also integrating moving pictures. He developed this unique process for on the stage of the Opéra de Monte-Carlo from 1904 to 1938.

With the aim of rediscovering Frey's prolific work, the NMNM has invited the artist **João Maria Gusmão** (Lisbon 1979) to reinterpret his Light Set projection technique.

Likening his research to a metaphysical inquiry in the field of analogue experimental media, with references to early film pioneers (such as Eadweard Muybridge), as well as science philosophers and physicists (James Clerk Maxwell, Ernst Mach), João Maria Gusmão has developed a scenographic installation composed of multiple modified slide projectors. Synchronised in the Villa Paloma's different spaces, they reactivate Frey's different animation techniques in the form of a “continuous light micro-cinema”.

A journey into pre-cinema, the exhibition confronts some of Eugène Frey's decorative projects with the experimental creations of other inventors from the early 20th century up to the present day: the shadow pieces of **Caran d'Ache**; the mechanical theatre of master-watchmaker **Emmanuel Cottier**; the artist **Hans-Peter Feldmann**'s shadow theatre and **Lourdes Castro**'s performances; the silhouette films created by **Lotte Reiniger** or **Michel Ocelot**; the phantasmagorical experiences of **Georges Méliès**, **Alexandre Alexeïeff** and **Claire Parker** as well as those of **Jean Hugo**; the light choreographies of **Loïe Fuller** and the installations of **Gusmão + Paiva**.

The catalogue of the exhibition will be published by Paraguay Press (Paris).

First publication dedicated to Eugène Frey's work, it will include texts by Stéphane Tralongo, Professor of cinema at Université de Lausanne and Laurent Mannoni, Director of the scientific collections at Cinémathèque française, as well as a fiction piece by João Maria Gusmão

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## Eugène Frey

### Chronology

This chronology, based on the one drawn up by Stéphane Tralongo for the exhibition catalogue, retraces the most important steps in the life and career of Eugène Frey. The works listed have been included on account of their importance in Frey's career in Paris and Monaco. Unless otherwise indicated, they include all his "Light Set projections".

**1864** 16 October, Hugues Frey (called Eugène Frey) is born in Brussels to Jean Charles Henri Frey, from Bergen (Germany) and Adèle Marie Antoinette De Candido, born in Trieste (Austria).

**1893** Participation in the Salon des artistes français (Paris) with *La Nuit*, a landscape.

**1894** Creation of *Tout Paris en revue*, a variety show by Henri Blondeau and Hector Monréal, at the Théâtre des Folies-Dramatiques (Paris), with "Light Set projections" by Frey.

**1897** A shadow theatre directed by Frey, the Boîte à Musique, opens at 75 Boulevard de Clichy (Paris). Here he programmes shadow plays such as *L'Inutile Vertu* by Jean Lorrain, *Le Retour* by René Maizeroy and *Les Saisons* by Auguste Germain. He also creates most of the sets.

**1898** Advertisements for the Boîte à Musique no longer appear in the newspapers.

**1899** Creation of *Au Pays breton*, a shadow play by René Delbost, Alphonse Mustel and Eugène Frey, at the Salle Mustel, 46 Rue de Douai (Paris). Creation of *La Fontaine des fées*, a ballet-pantomime by Gaston Salvayre, Jean Bernac and Louis Alix, at the Théâtre des Folies-Marigny (Paris), with "projections" by Frey.

**1900** Creation of *Terpsichore*, a ballet by Adolphe Thalasso and Léo Pouget, at the Palais de la Danse at the Exposition universelle in Paris. Frey remembers this production as being the first to use his "Light Set projections".

**1902** He is taken on for a music-hall show called *Kalythéa. À travers le monde*, at the Casino de Paris, and creation of *Eh ! Hop ! Au Casino*, an imaginary journey by P.-L. Flers, for the reopening of the Casino de Paris.

**1903** Creation of *Chansons de la terre*, a shadow play by Jules Gondoin, at the Salle Æolian, at 32 Avenue de l'Opéra (Paris).

**1904** Stay in Monaco for the performances of *Chansons de la terre* at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, and for the creation of *Hélène*, a lyrical poem by Camille Saint-Saëns, and *Contes d'Hoffmann*, an "opéra fantastique" by Jacques Offenbach, staged by Raoul Gunsbourg (director of the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo from 1892 to 1951).

**1905** Gunsbourg programmes a "trilogy of *Faust*" at the Opéra de Monte Carlo: *La Damnation de Faust*, a "dramatic legend" by Hector Berlioz, *Mefistofele*, an opera by Arrigo de Boito, and *Faust*, an opera by Charles Gounod. The "Ride to the Abyss" is staged using "Light Set projections" by Frey.

**1906** Performances of *Tannhäuser*, an opera by Richard Wagner, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

**1907** Creation of *Théodora*, a musical drama by Xavier Leroux, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo, and of *Le Lac des Aulnes*, a fairytale ballet by Henri Maréchal and G. Vanara, at the Opéra de Paris, directed by Pedro Gailhard.

**1909** Performances of the cycle of the *Ring des Nibelungen* by Richard Wagner, of *La Roussalka*, an opera by Alexandre Dargomyjski, and the creation of *Neigilde*, a ballet-opera by Jean Lorrain and Charles Silver, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo. Frey is taken on at the Théâtre Lyrique Municipal de la Gaîté (Paris) for performances of *Quo Vadis ?* an opera by Jean Nougues, directed by the brothers Émile and Vincent Isola.

**1910** Performances of *L'Africaine*, an opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer, at the Théâtre Lyrique Municipal de la Gaîté (Paris). Creation of *Don Quichotte*, a musical comedy by Jules Massenet, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo. Creation of *Vive Paris !*, an extravaganza by Maurice Millot, at Olympia (Paris).

**1913** Creation of *Sortilège*, a fairytale by Maurice Magre, at the Opéra de Paris. Creation of *Venise*, an opera by Raoul Gunsbourg, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

**1914** Performances of *Fêtes d'Hébé*, an opera-ballet by Jean-Philippe Rameau, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo. Creation of *Cléopâtre*, an opera by Jules Massenet, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

**1916** "Soirées d'art" organised by the Cercle des étrangers de Monte-Carlo, featuring "Décors lumineux à transformations" by Frey, at the Théâtre de Monte Carlo.

**1921** Creation of *Pompéi*, a ballet by Louis Ganne, and performances of *La Flûte enchantée*, an opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo. Frey is appointed a Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint-Charles.

**1923** Performances of *Nuit persane*, by Camille Saint-Saëns, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

**1925** He gives a lecture on Light Set projections at the Académie des Beaux-Arts de Liège.

**1926** Frey is made a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.

**1931** Participation at the Exposition coloniale in Paris.

**1937** Performances of *Moïse*, an opera by Gioachino Rossini, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

**1938** Creation of *Contes d'Andersen*, a fairytale opera by Edward Grieg, at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

**1942** 10 July, death of Eugène Frey at his home at 31 Rue de l'Alma, in Courbevoie.

## João Maria Gusmão

João Maria Gusmão, born in Lisbon 1979, studied painting in Fine Arts University in Lisbon (FBAUL) from 1997-2002. During his academical years he met Pedro Paiva (Lisbon 1978) with whom he started collaborating in 2001. Over the years they have produced together a large array of different artwork including sculpture, installation, 16mm and 35mm short films as well as writing and book publishing. In recent years Gusmão and Paiva's production has centred on the idea of movement and duration, both within the cinematographic vocabulary, with references to early film pioneers as Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey, and through the artists' own experiments and conceptual invention.

João Maria Gusmão has developed a long term relationship with other artists and alternative spaces in the Lisbon Art scene, developing content and writings for projects with Natxo Checa and ZdB, and collaborating with artists like Alexandre Estrela, Mattia Denisse, Gonçalo Pena and others.

Gusmão and Paiva's film production has been presented in immersive solo exhibitions all over the world and in several biennales, São Paulo (2006), Manifesta (2008), Gwangju (2010) and in Venice in (2009 and 2013). Their work is represented in several international museum collections like the Tate Modern, Reina Sofia, Serralves Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art, SFMOMA and in the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco.

## Célia Bernasconi, Curator of the exhibition

Célia Bernasconi is Chief Curator at the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (NMNM).

A graduate in modern and contemporary art history from the Panthéon-Sorbonne University and a PhD student under the direction of Daniel Arasse at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Celia Bernasconi joined the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP) in Paris in 2003.

From 2005 to 2012, she was Curator of the Musée Jean Cocteau - Collection Séverin Wunderman in Menton, where she directed the scientific and cultural program and the collection's catalogue, focusing on Cocteau's paper and film works.

Member of the Association L'Art contemporain et la Côte d'Azur (ACCA), she curated the exhibition *Montrer sa nuit en plein jour* (2011), dedicated to video art. At the Musée Jean Cocteau she curated solo shows of Jean Sabrier (2011), Bernard Moninot (2012) and Lucien Clergue (2012).

In 2013, she joined the team of the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (NMNM).

In charge of the museum's collections, she curated the exhibitions *Portraits d'Intérieurs* (2014), *Designing Dreams, A Celebration of Leon Bakst* in collaboration with the artist Nick Mauss and historian John E. Bowlt (2016), *Kasper Akhøj, Welcome (To The Teknival)* and *Saâdane Afif, The Fountain Archives* (2017).

In 2018, she presented the exhibition *Latifa Echakhch le jardin mécanique*, an installation specifically designed for the spaces of the Villa Sauber.

## Public Programme

The NMNM seeks to encourage meetings between the public, artworks and creators. The Villa Paloma and The Villa Sauber, *La Table des Matières* and *Le Salon de Lecture* offer visitors of all ages a special setting allowing them to extend their visit and quench their curiosity.

The NMNM also develops, in close collaboration with specialized associations in Monaco and its region, visits for people with disabilities. A program adapted for the visually impaired public is available on reservation and visits in sign language are also offered. Groups from the AMAPEI have also been welcomed regularly for several years, and still are today.

### Regardez Voir

Regardez Voir is an all public service offering an artistic vision for the duration of a conversation.

If perceiving a work requires looking at it, seeing allows us to understand its meaning.

This service can be activated every Tuesday between 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Activate the service with a person wearing the « Regardez Voir » badge.

In just a few minutes, the meeting offers an experience of seeing, a new way of talking about art.

### Guided tours

Mediators are available every Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday to guide the public in its visit or answer any questions (French and English).

Group visits are possible every day of the week, upon reservation

### Midi au Musée

Every Tuesday between 12 and 2.30 pm the visitors can access the Villa for free.

Lunch break can be a moment to relax and spend time in the gardens, drink a coffee and then visit the museum.

### Ateliers en famille

Two Sundays a month at 3pm, come as a family and discover the museum through a family workshop.

Length of the workshop: 45 minutes – Age group: 7-12 years old with at least one adult - participation is free, upon reservation

### Ateliers jeune public

The NMNM organizes workshops for children during the holidays.

For more information and updated events, please go to the NMNM website and its Facebook page.

Information and registration: [public@nmnm.mc](mailto:public@nmnm.mc)

## Encounters and conversation

During the exhibition, encounters with artists, curators... are organized. Entrance is free for events organized at the NMNM, registration is mandatory.

### Guided tour of the exhibition by Célia Bernasconi, curator

Saturday March 7, 2.30pm – in French

### Mattia Denisse

Thursday March 12, 6.30pm – in French [Canceled]

Table des Matières – Villa Paloma

Recently invited to illustrate the NMNM's new mediation programme, *Regardez Voir*. Mattia Denisse presents a selection of his recent silkscreens in Villa Paloma's Table des Matières. The works represent book cover projects which are to be published by *Éditions Tripé*.

In *Adão (Adam)* Étienne Disur recounts the first days of the first woman, while *O 'obsoletismo (Obsolescence)* is a collective work by researchers on the subject. *Absurdo (Absurd)* is another fruitless and useless attempt to re-establish the truth about the beginning, while *Tratado De 'Patafisica Aplicada (Treatise on Applied Pataphysics)* is a book so obviously necessary that it is difficult to understand why it does not already exist.

Mattia Denisse was born in Blois in 1967, the birthplace of the magician Robert-Houdin, the inventor of the steam-machine Denis Papin, and of René Guénon, the denouncer of hermetic and esoteric thought. He moved to Lisbon in early 2000 where he lives today, on friendly terms with many Portuguese artists, such as João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva, for whom he produced the anthology of texts in the book that celebrated the Portuguese pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale. More recently, he has had an exhibition at the GAK in Bremen (Germany) and published the incomplete catalogue of Éditions Tripé titled *K contra K* with Dois Dias. He is currently exhibiting at the West Den Haag in The Hague (Netherlands).

### Laurent Mannoni

*La lanterne magique au théâtre, de Leibniz à Méliès*

Le jeudi 19 mars à 18h30 – in French [Canceled]

Table des Matières – Villa Paloma

Laurent Mannoni is Scientific Director of heritage at the Cinémathèque française, Director of Conservatoire des techniques cinématographiques and exhibition curator. He is also a writer, in particular of about twenty books on the beginning of cinema. He has curated a dozen exhibitions, the last being dedicated to Georges Méliès (Madrid, 2013). His doctoral thesis focused on the recording of movement. His area of specialization concerns the history of cinematic techniques, from its furthest origins to the present day.



## Off-site programme

Guided tour of the exhibition by Célia Bernasconi, curator followed by a projection commented on by Hervé Joubert-Laurencin

Saturday March 7 – in French

2.30pm at Villa Paloma

4.30pm – Petite Salle of the Institut Audiovisuel de Monaco

Colours & forms, shadows & lights: another experience of animated cinema in Germany in the 1920s. Projection of short films by Lotte Reiniger, Walter Ruttmann and Oskar Fischinger, some projected on 16mm film.

A century later, we celebrate the artistic freedom of the 1920s with Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, specialist of animated film.

Reservation recommended (only 35 available seats): 3€ (screening)

## Screening of *Sunstone*, 2018 by Filipa César and Louis Henderson

In partnership with the Institut Audiovisuel de Monaco

In the frame of the « Film d'artiste » label

Tuesday March 31, 8.30pm - Théâtre des Variétés - [Canceled]

Art videos, a documentary on creation, the artist's film is all of that at once, a vast territory that the Institut audiovisuel and the NMNM have opted to explore since 2015. Choosing to shed light on the artist's chosen practice which lies on the fringe of cinema and the museum.

### *SUNSTONE*

Filipa César et Louis Henderson (2018)

France, Portugal, 2018, B/W and colour, 34 min. vostf

**Conception, image, sound and editing:** Louis Henderson, Filipa César. **Sound:** Joao Polido.

**Animation:** Philippe Cuxac. **Production:** Spectre Productions, Stenar Projects.

The film tracks Fresnel lenses from their site of production to their exhibition in a museum of lighthouses and navigational devices. It also examines the diverse social contexts in which optics are implicated, contrasting the system of triangular trade that followed the first European arrivals in the 'New World' with the political potential seen in Op art in post-revolutionary Cuba. Incorporating 16mm celluloid images, digital desktop captures and 3D CGI, the film also maps a technological trajectory: from historical methods of optical navigation to new algorithms of locating, from singular projection to multi-perspectival satellitic visions.

*Sunstone* by Filipa César and Louis Henderson presents a portrait of Roque Pina, the keeper of the Cabo da Roca lighthouse on the westernmost tip of continental Europe. He speaks off-camera about his work and complex origins as the son of a man from Cap Vert who fought alongside the Portuguese. He claims the need for a lighthouse philosophy. César and Henderson respond to his demand: through and beyond its portrait of the man, *Sunstone* explores the optical metaphors in Enlightenment rationality by means of two forms of lens-based technology – the lighthouse and the camera – at a time when they are being replaced respectively by GPS algorithms and synthetic images. The lighthouse becomes a figure from an ambivalent heritage of discovery and orientation, of notion as epistemological as they are territorial.

### **First part**

*All That Is Solid* by Louis Henderson (United Kingdom, 2014, 15 min. vostf).

With its interest in the mining industry in Ghana and the electronic waste dump in Agbogbloshie in Accra, *All That Is Solid* creates a story-within-a-story as a critique that attempts to dispel the capitalist myth of the immaterial nature of new technologies and return the Cloud to its mineral origins.

### ***Cinéma Performé***

Thursday April 9, 8pm - [Canceled]

Cinéma de Beaulieu

With works by Ernst Schmidt Jr, Morgan Fisher, Peter Miller, William Raban, ...

An evening of performances and projections in which the projectionist, usually a shadowy figure, becomes the main character. A tribute to Eugène Frey and his machines, the relationship between screen and projector is hereby updated by an audience that becomes active.

### **Animated projection**

Saturday April 25, à 3pm - [Canceled]

Petite salle of the Institut audiovisuel de Monaco

*Les Aventures du Prince Ahmed* by Lotte Reiniger (1h15, 1926, music with Hanna Schygulla's voice)

This film, entirely made out of cut-out silhouettes gives life to a tale taken from the *The Thousand and One Nights*.

Directed by a woman in 1923, it is the first animated feature film in the history of cinema.

Reservation recommended (only 35 available seats): 3€ (screening)

### ***The Mirror***

People Like Us

Tuesday May 5 [Canceled]

Théâtre Princesse Grace

*The Mirror is a live a/v performance which splices together movie snippets with unique sample-based music exploring the masks that we wear represented through the lens, using parallel narratives across the screen to depict an ever-changing stream.*

Since 1991 British artist Vicki Bennett has been working across the field of audio-visual collage, and is recognized as an influential and pioneering figure in the still growing area of sampling, appropriation and cutting up of found footage and archives. Working under the name People Like Us, Vicki specializes in the manipulation and reworking of original sources from both the experimental and popular worlds of music, film and radio. People Like Us believe in open access to archives for creative use. In 2006 she was the first artist to be given unrestricted access to the entire BBC Archive. People Like Us have previously shown work at, amongst others, Tate Modern, Whitechapel Gallery, The Barbican, Centro de Cultura Digital, Maxxi and Sonar, and performed radio sessions for John Peel and Mixing It. She has an ongoing sound art radio show 'DO or DIY' on WFMU. The People Like Us back catalogue is available for free download hosted by UbuWeb. Nothing Can Turn Into A Void – a

doc film about People Like Us has been screening in cinemas and festivals since Autumn 2015. Currently,

Vicki is focusing on expanding a/v work for a multiscreen and multi-speakered environment with RML Cinechamber, with 10-screen work "Gone, Gone Beyond". Also a new People Like Us live performance "The Mirror" premiered at Onassis Cultural Centre Athens in Spring 2018 and now tours worldwide. October 2018 saw the release of a new CD/online album also called The Mirror. Vicki is a participant in Sound and Music New Voices 2018 programme, a-n Artist Bursaries 2019 recipient, and will be Hallwalls Artist in Residence from 2019-2020.

## ***Variations***

### ***Eugène Frey's Light Set Projections presented by João Maria Gusmão***

**Director of the NMNM:** Marie-Claude Beaud

**Curator:** Célia Bernasconi

**Guest artist :** João Maria Gusmão

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Emmanuelle Capra and the NMNM team

**Scenography:** Jasmin Oezcebi

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Alessandra Santerini, Eleonora Minna, Giovanni Sgrignuoli

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Lourdes Castro

Hans-Peter Feldmann

Michel Ocelot

Mattia Denisse in LaTable des Matières

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Villa Noailles, Hyères

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Stéphane Tralongo, Enseignant chercheur en Histoire et Esthétique du cinéma, Université de Lausanne

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Sophie Le Tétour et Jean-Baptiste Garnero, Chargés d'études pour la valorisation des collections

**Crespi Cornici**, Vintimille: Margherita et Francesco Crespi

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**Studio O, Paris** : Michel Ocelot et Philippe Silvy

**Villa Noailles** : Jean-Pierre Blanc, Directeur, Stéphane Boudin-Lestienne, Chargé de mission, co-commissaire de l'exposition permanente et Cynthia Lodico, Responsable des prêts, dépôts et acquisitions

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**Centre National de la Danse**, Pantin : Dominique Tsekenis, Aureline Roy

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**Lobster Films**, Paris : Maria Chiba

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## Practical Information

Nouveau Musée National de Monaco

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#villapaloma



Exhibition on show from February 7 until August 30, 2020

### Opening hours

Every day from 10am to 6pm

### Entrance Rates

NMNM ticket: 6€

Free for everyone under 26 years old

Combined ticket NMNM / Jardin Exotique / Musée Anthropologique de Monaco: 10€

**Free entrance from 12.30 to 2pm on Tuesdays for “Midi au Musée” and every Sunday**

### NMNM / VILLA PALOMA

56, boulevard du Jardin Exotique

+377 98.98.48.60

### By bus

Line 2, direction Jardin Exotique, stop “Villa Paloma”

Line 3, direction Hector Otto, stop Villa Paloma

Line 5, stop « Parc Princesse Antoinette », access through public lift

### By car

**NEW:** Parking « L’Engelin », Bd du Jardin Exotique

Parking “Jardin Exotique”, access through Bd. du Jardin Exotique et Bd. de Belgique

### From the train station

Bus Line 2, direction Jardin Exotique, stop “Villa Paloma”

Or Ligne 5, stop « Parc Princesse Antoinette », access through public lift

### From Villa Paloma to Villa Sauber

Bus line 5

For Villa Paloma, stop « Parc Princesse Antoinette », access through public lift

For Villa Sauber, stop Grimaldi Forum – Villa Sauber

The NMNM is a member of **BOTOX[S]** réseau d’art contemporain Alpes & Riviera