

JEAN-BERNARD MÉTAIS

Clepsydras *Esprit de vin*

Photographs
and sculptures

EXHIBITION
June 10 - July 11, 2026

OPENING
Wednesday, June 10, 2026

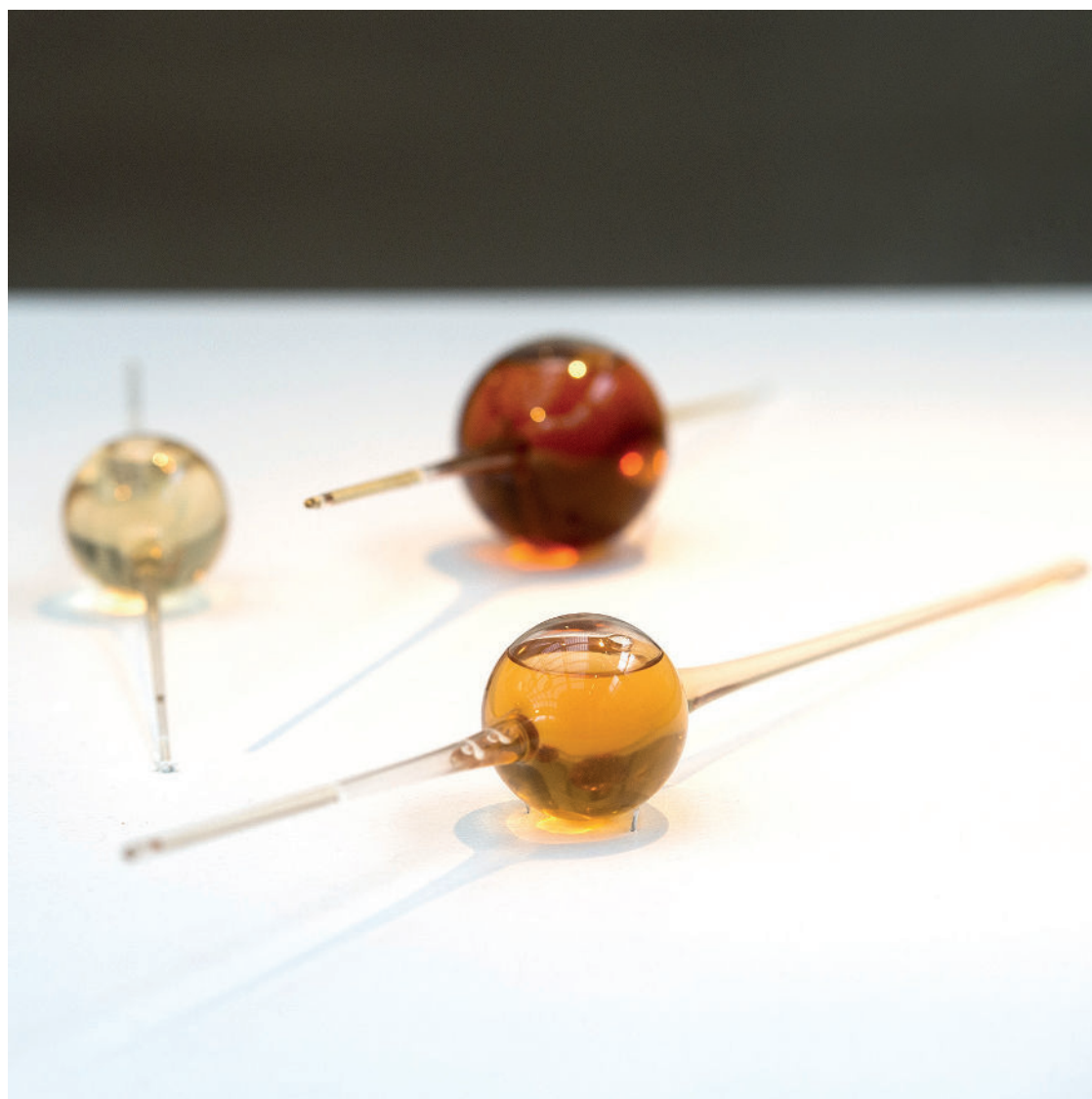
EVENT
«Jeudi des Beaux-Arts», Late Opening
July 2nd, from 6pm to 8 pm



Jean-Bernard Métais, *Le Cuvier de Jasnières*, aluminum-mounted print, edition of 6 + 2 AP, 105 × 105 cm, 2018

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Jean-Bernard Métais, *Ampoules temporelles*, wine and glass, 2021

1. PRESS RELEASE

Clepsydras *Esprit du vin*

From June 10 to July 11, Galerie La Forest Divonne presents **Clepsydras**, an exhibition of photographs and sculptures by Jean-Bernard Métais. **The photographs all share the same framing, all the same subject: wine vats...** Always the same circle inscribed within the square edges of the image. Within this restricted space, however, the full diversity of biology, matter, forms, and colors unfolds before our astonished eyes. Moving from one image to another, we no longer know whether we are pressed against the lens of a microscope or that of a telescope. The boundary between the infinitely small and the infinitely large disappears. **Métais draws us into his poetic vision of the world:** grape juice becomes the Milky Way, the residue it leaves behind becomes a river delta, sand, a retina... The alchemy of the winemaker, who transforms fruit into nectar, meets that of the artist, who transforms reality into a poetic song.

We know Jean-Bernard Métais as a sculptor, often working on a monumental scale, with large works visible in public spaces around the world—in Tianjin, Shenzhen, Cardiff, Luxembourg, Brussels, Valenciennes, Paris... Wine collectors also know him as a great vintner, heir to a centuries-old family tradition in a little-known French appellation: Jasnières, a small viticultural treasure nestled in the heart of Touraine, where the Métais family has produced, from father to son since the 16th century, one of the most age-worthy wines in the world. The best vintages can easily be kept for over a hundred years... While his career as a sculptor takes him across the globe, Métais always returns to his few acres of vines, which he tends with devotion and from which he sculpts wine with an artist's inspiration.

Since 1976, when he took over the family estate, **Métais has developed a singular photographic practice:** he photographs the bottoms of his wine vats. Always following the same protocol, capturing the evolution of the wine at every stage of its transformation. In 1989, he began archiving them under the title *The Births of Wine-Being*. **From this body of work, we have selected the most emblematic, the most powerful images to assemble the first retrospective of Jean-Bernard Métais' photographic work in Paris.**

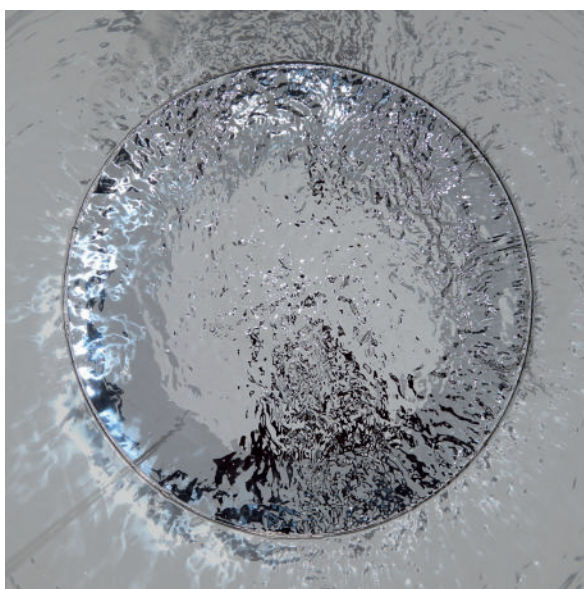
Hourglasses, a reflective stele, and several glass bulbs filled with century-old wines will complete the exhibition, opening onto Jean-Bernard Métais' sculptures, with which the photographs share a passion for time and light. Sand—emblematic of Métais' work—was first encountered in the family cellar, where pockets of sediment, trapped in rock for thousands of years, would sometimes flow: the solid world becoming liquid, the distant past revealing itself in the present... Métais' hourglasses, time-catchers, echo his wine: "When tasting very old vintages, one physically experiences a journey back in time; one becomes the time of that wine, which becomes a part of oneself," he explains. Enclosed in baroque glass bulbs, which Métais presents among his photographs, we glimpse the color of time—from the pale yellow of recent wines to the amber hue of old vintages. All these creations come together under the sign of clepsydras, those jars whose steady emptying allowed the Greeks and Egyptians of antiquity to measure time.

Métais' singular body of work thus stands at the crossroads of science and art. Photographs and sculptures seem to emerge straight from an alchemist's workshop. Like the wine from which they originate, they induce a slight vertigo—before the corridors of time they open, before the distances they traverse, from cells to comets and planets. **Métais, the alchemist, unfolds his poetic intoxication with the world.**

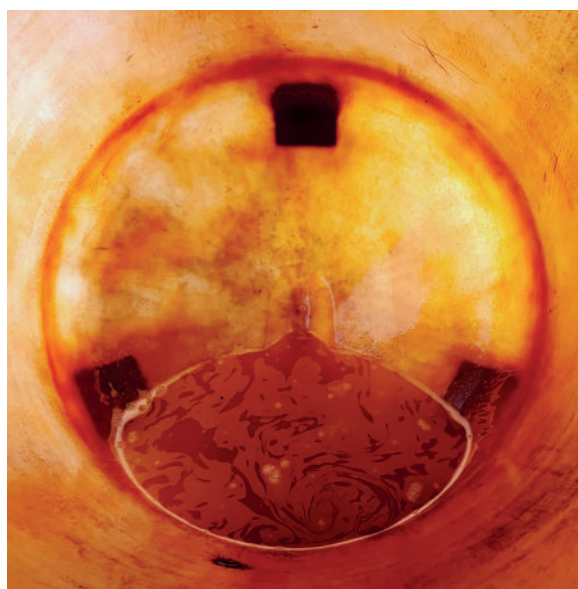
2. FOCUS SUR LES OEUVRES

LE CUVIER DE JASNIÈRE

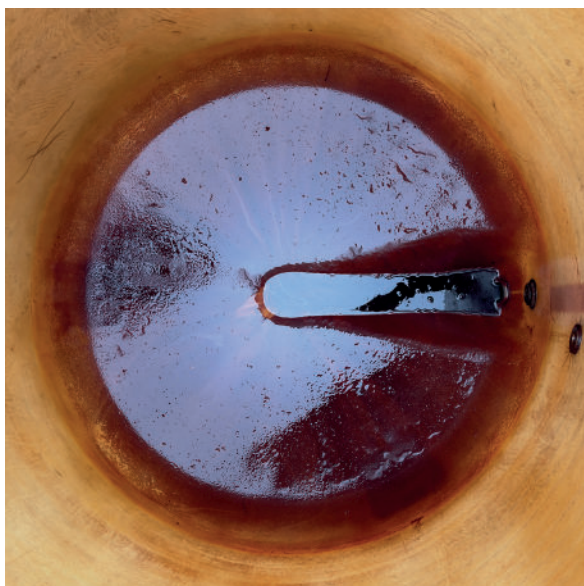
These photographs all share the same framing, all the same subject: wine vats... Always the same circle inscribed within the square edges of the image. Within this restricted space, however, the full diversity of biology, matter, forms, and colors unfolds before our astonished eyes. Moving from one image to another, we no longer know whether we are pressed against the lens of a microscope or that of a telescope. The boundary between the infinitely small and the infinitely large disappears. Métais draws us into his poetic vision of the world: grape juice becomes the Milky Way, the residue it leaves behind becomes a river delta, sand, a retina... The alchemy of the winemaker, who transforms fruit into nectar, meets that of the artist, who transforms reality into a poetic song.



Jean-Bernard Métais, *Le Cuvier de Jasnières*, aluminum-mounted print, edition of 6 + 2 AP, 95 x 95 cm, 2017



Jean-Bernard Métais, *Le Cuvier de Jasnières*, aluminum-mounted print, edition of 6 + 2 AP, 24 x 24 cm, 2017



Jean-Bernard Métais, *Le Cuvier de Jasnières*, aluminum-mounted print, edition of 6 + 2 AP, 120 x 120 cm, 2025



Jean-Bernard Métais, *Le Cuvier de Jasnières*, aluminum-mounted print, edition of 6 + 2 AP, 95 x 95 cm, 2010

OTHERS

The Hourglasses

Sand, emblematic of Métais's work, first appeared to him in the family cellar, where pockets of sediment, trapped in rock for thousands of years, would sometimes flow out: the solid world becoming liquid, and the distant past revealing itself in the present... Métais's hourglasses, time-catchers, echo his wine: "When tasting very old vintages, one physically experiences a journey back in time; one becomes the time of that wine, which in turn becomes a part of us," he explains.

Movement is also at the heart of the hourglasses, which the viewer is invited to set in motion in turn. These works are an invitation to fully experience the emotion of the present moment—ever shifting, ever fleeting, yet always beginning anew.



Jean-Bernard Métais, *Sablier ICI*, "être-mot" 1/3, glass, sand and metal, 59 x 45 x 15 cm, 2024



Les Stelae

Following in the wake of his often monumental "sensory chambers," Jean-Bernard Métais's stelae combine monumentality and transparency, giving them both a strong presence in space without ever risking heaviness. Mysterious and impenetrable when one stands before them, they become almost transparent as one moves away, suffused with light.

They are kinetic works: their surface shimmers and subtly comes to life as one moves around them, creating a dynamic illusion of motion that also engages in dialogue with the landscapes in which they are installed.

Jean Bernard METAIS, *Stelae* & *Sensory Chamber*. Courtesy Emmanuel Crooy

Wine Ampoules

These glass ampoules reveal the hue of century-old wines, as another materialization of time, astonishing liquid, colored hourglasses in which his wine matures. Enclosed in unique, baroque glass vessels, one glimpses the color of time, from the pale yellow of younger wines to the amber tones of aged vintages.

Sealed capsules through which Jean-Bernard Métais shares his sense of wonder at the transformation of matter, where microcosm and macrocosm seem to converge, as the surface of the wine in the process of aging evokes milky ways or distant planets.



Jean Bernard METAIS, *Chenin 1947*, blown glass and Chenin wine 947, 56 x 6 cm, 2022

3. EDITO DE JEAN-BERNARD MÉTAIS

The Jasnières Vat Room, or the Tumultuous Moods of Wine

One day in my youth, I accidentally awakened the dormant eye of a sediment from a red Aunis wine that had been forgotten for several months at the bottom of its vat.

This thick, muddy sediment had secreted, to protect itself from oxidation, a strange iridescent coating of bluish-gray mycelium, also known as “the flower of red wine.” It was by slowly drying out and escaping in stubborn little streams, like phosphorescent, concentric meanders with hundreds of tiny branchings toward the drain, that “the blue eye” formed, unexpectedly, in the darkness of the cellar.

This first photograph of the vat room, taken on a cold day in December 1976, exists simply because, in my haste to leave on a journey just after the harvest, I had forgotten to clean one of my settling vats. From that negligence was born the first image, and all the others that have followed up to this day. Without that delay, without that oversight, nothing would likely ever have begun.

In my photographs, I always try to get as close as possible to the wine in the process of becoming, to find and capture in the lens the most intense, the most violent, but also the most fleeting and even the most insignificant aspects. Some older images, now cooled on their glossy paper for decades, still carry the scent of the wine’s unpredictable fermentations.

Immense, magnificent, and uncertain, fermentations are battlefields where shimmering struggles unfold, luminous or dark as the black night of infinitely large and small galaxies. Everything revolves here around the digestion of sugars, acetic pricks, alcoholic yeasts, and other malic transformations. Fermentations are unstable worlds, spaces where acids, yeasts, and bacteria confront one another. Everything transforms, everything slips, everything resists.

When I press the shutter to capture the fleeting instant of the wine, I have no particular expectation, except the desire to be there, watchful and fully present. When I press the shutter, in truth, I expect nothing. I simply want to stand before what is forming, within this slow alchemy that sometimes resembles what we are: unstable, in flux, filled with tension and uncertainty. There may also be, deep within me, a desire to become intoxicated, to lose myself a little more deeply with each session. From almost nothing, it is said, the world was born.

The persistent observation of the ebb and flow of wine in its primal phase has something of a waking dream. Joseph Delteil wrote that “man is an arrow chasing after a dream.” I deeply believe that wine is a kind of spur of nature, chasing after its own dreams of wine, dreams likely born of humankind and its inspiring gods. Wine dreamed that man would create it, just as man must have dreamed that wine would one day refine him, protect him from dryness of heart, awaken insolence within him, sharpen his mind, and delight his body and soul. Man had an immense need for wine in order to be fully human.

Since my first chance photograph in 1976, I have captured every vintage to this day, always using the same circular framing. These are thousands of portraits, thousands of moments of waiting where, perched above each of my vats, anticipating the alchemical miracle of the grapes’ transformation, I have watched for a sediment newly freed from its clarified wine.

This endeavor owes more to botanical record-keeping than to photography in the strict sense. In truth, I am not really a photographer: I know how to photograph nothing other than my vats of wine.

J.-B. Métais
1976 / 2026

4. BIOGRAPHIE JEAN-BERNARD MÉTAIS



Born in 1954 in Le Mans - Lives and works between France and China

Born in 1954, Jean-Bernard Métais lives and works between France and China. A large part of Jean-Bernard Métais's works are monumental sculptures, the result of public commissions or international competitions, from Europe to Asia. At the center of his creations is the articulation between sculpture and physics, often around matter and fluids: mainly sand that refers to time passing from the origins of the world, and light that conjugates the moment and eternity.

SOLO SHOWS

- 2026 Clepsydres, Esprit de vin, Gallery La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
La Couleur du temps, Gallery La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
- 2024 Resonance, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
- 2022 Ivresse, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
- 2021 Les Extatiques, La Seine musicale, Ile Seguin, Paris
- 2019 Chambre sensorielle, Galerie La Forest Divonne Bruxelles, Belgique
- 2018 Installation de Komobeli, Saint-Germain des Prés, Paris, France Vivre,
Abbaye de Silvacane, La Roque d'Anthéron, France
- 2017 Ivresse, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris
Ombres et esprits de vins, Musée des Beaux Arts de Lille
- 2016 Temps imparti 1990-2016, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Bruxelles Red
- 2015 Sun, Changra, Chine
Wind Organ, Nanjing, Chine
Entreprendre, Bordeaux, France
L'Horloge, Le Havre, France
Margot - Collection privée/2eme étude, Luxembourg

- 2014 Phoenix/oriflamme, Tianjin, Chine
Vortex, Jurong, Chine
Sensorial Room «Jurong 2142», Jurong, Chine

- 2013 2142 Jurong, Jurong, Chine
Le Dragon de soie, Jurong, Chine Vis à Vis, Lyon, France

- 2012 Le Phoenix et 2142 Jurong, commission carte blanche, Chine
Gira l'onda, Projet Bordeaux, France
Grand Memorial, projet, Lorette, France

- 2011 Se créer dans le monde Recréer le monde, Ambassade de France, Pékin, Chine

- 2009 Parc du musée de Tessé, Le Mans, France

- 2002 Temps imparti, Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris, France
Boa Vibrant, collection particulière, Bruxelles, Belgique

- 2000 Les êtres mots et Intuition, collections privées, France

- 1999 1.2.3 Sun - Chambre d'éclipse, Donjon de Vez, France
- 1990 Temps imparti, Fondation Cartier, Jouy-en-Josas, France
- 1981-1985 Série des equinoxes et des pièces immergées
Les Orixas et La Forêt, bourse de la DRAC

GROUP SHOWS

- 2021 Art Paris Art Fair 2021, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris
- 2019 La Biennale-Paris, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris
- 2017 Galeristes, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris
- 2016 Stratification de l'invisible, avec Guy de Malherbe, Château de Poncé, Poncé-sur-le-Loir, France
Art16 London, Galerie La Forest Divonne
- 2015 Art Paris Art Fair 2015, Grand Palais, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris
Undertaking - Bordeaux, France
Peinture et sculpture, avec Guy de Malherbe, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris
- 2013 Passions-partagées, Château de Poncé, Poncé-sur-le Loir, Sarthe, France
- 2012 Architect Art Work, Grand Hall de la Villette, Paris
- 2000 Temps et Paysages, Exposition universelle, Pavillon de la France, Hanovre, Allemagne

PUBLIC ORDERS

- 2021 Agali-chambre extatique, Site de la Seine Musicale, Collection du Département des Hauts-de-Seine, France
- 2019 Vortex babbelut, Laeken, Belgique Mémorial de l'armée de l'air, le Bourget
- 2018 Parc de sculptures, Sanya, Chine
- 2016 Phoenix, oriflamme, Tianjin, Chine 2014 Vortex, Jurong, Chine
Sensorial Room, Jurong 2142, Chine
- 2012 Polyphonie, Ville de Vitry-sur-Seine, France
- 2012 Le grand Mémorial Projet, site de Lorette, France
- 2011 Pollen, Londres, Royaume-Uni
Se créer dans le monde, recréer le monde, Ambassade de France, Pékin, Chine
- 2010 Capteur de songes, Bergen, Norvège La lettre, Équeurdreville, France
- 2009 Temps imparti II, Parc du Musée de Tessé, Le Mans Bicéphale, Vancouver, Canada
Fluorescence, Kumamoto, Japon
Alliance - St David's 2, Cardiff, Pays de Galles
- 2008 The ring - Middle Dock, Londres, Royaume-Uni Immersion, Queensbridge, Londres, Royaume-Uni
- 2007 Clepsydre, Conservatoire de musique, Levallois L'onde, Ville de Luxembourg, Luxembourg Litanie, Valenciennes, France
- 2006 Passe-muraille, Parc du Pescator, Luxembourg
- 2005 Structure anthropologique de l'imaginaire, Strasbourg, France
- 2004 Etre-Noms, Archives Départementales de La Sarthe, Le Mans, France
- 2002 L'Auréole, Porte Maillot, Paris, France
- 2000 The Persistent Desire to Persist, Vannes, France
- 1999 Temps imparti, Éclipse, Jardin des Plantes, Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris, France
- 1996 Promenade Road, Port de Dublin, Irlande
- 1994 Connaissance, Palais de la Découverte, Paris, France
La Chambre de Phaistos, Le Creusot, France
- 1989 Porte du Sahel, Dakar, Sénégal
- 1981- 1985 Formentera, pièces fonctionnant avec le soleil, Espagne Cosmogonie, Jaipur, Inde

PUBLICATIONS

- 2020 Quelle mouche l'a piqué, text by Cyrille Putman, published by Flammarion
- 2019 Chambres sensorielles, texts by Daniel Lebard and Jean de Loisy, published by Galerie La Forest Divonne
- 2018 Vivre, texts by Franck Maubert, Jean-Marc Bourry and Cyrille Putman, published by Sylvacane
- 2015 Jean-Bernard Métais, Temps imparti, Longjin Art and Métais Studio. Texts by Cyrille Putman, Pierre Giquel, Jean de Loisy, Bernard Dulieu and Jacques Brosse
- 2012 Jean-Bernard Métais, texts by Cyrille Putman, Skimao, Pierre Giquel, Hervé-Armand Bechy and Laurent Lebon
- 2010 Le cuvier de Jasnières, text by Philippe Claudel, published by N. Chaudin
- 2008-2009 Luxembourg, texts by Pierre Giquel and Cyrille Putman
- 2007 Jardins secrets, catalogue, texts by Pradel, Skimao, Claude Bouilleur
- 2006 Carnet de voyages, published by Ridellières Publishers
- 2002 Temps imparti, Galerie Baudoin Lebon
- 1999 1.2.3 Soleil, Donjon de Vez Publisher, text by Laurent Lebon
- 1996 Les Temps impartis, Revue 303 and Conseil Régional des Pays de la Loire.
Text by Pierre Giquel
- 1995 Sardane sidérale, texts by Skimao
- 1993-1994 Essai sur les machines à remonter le temps, Ville de Beyrouth. Texts by Jean-Bernard Métais
- 1992 Les Premières Machines à sable, Fondation Cartier and Galerie Froment-Putman.
Texts by Skimao, Pierre Giquel and Stéphane Carreyrou
- 1990 Les Aiguilles ou la fosse de Sussargue, Ville de Montpellier, FRAC Midi-Pyrénées.
Texts by Jean de Loisy, Skimao and Pierre Giquel
- 1988 Les Orixas ou les chemins croisés, Ville de Bouloire, FRAC Pays de la Loire.
Texts by Pierre Giquel, Mario Torent and Jacques Brosse

DOCUMENTARIES

- 2020-2021 Momox et Charly, by Pierre Schoeller
- 2019 Les shambres sensorielles, by Florent Touchard, 10 min
- 2017 Le guetteur de l'éternel instant, by Philippe Nahoun, 54 min
- 2015-2016 Jean-Bernard Métais, by Canal 8, 2 x 45 min
- 2011-2012 Portrait de Jean-Bernard Métais, film by Philippe Nahoun, 20 min, ARTE
- 2011 Se créer dans le monde, film by Philippe Nahoun, 14 min

2009-2010 Valenciennes, film by Philippe Nahoun, 20 min

2002-2003 Temps Imparti, film by Céline Thiou, 54 min

1994 Dépossession, film by Peter Roukos, 20 min. Ministry of Culture Lebanon and Centre Culturel Français de Beyrouth



Jean-Bernard Métais, Agali, *Ecstatic Chamber*, 2021, perforated metal and epoxy paint, 300 × 300 × 300 cm, permanent installation, Île Seguin, La Seine Musicale.

5. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

EXHIBITION - PARIS

from June 10 to July 11, 2026

OPENING

Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 6-9 pm

GALERIE LA FOREST DIVONNE - PARIS

12, rue des Beaux-arts
75006 Paris

Mardi-Samedi 11h-19h
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Jean-Bernard Métais, *Le Cuvier de Jasnières*, mounted print on aluminum, edition of 6 + 2 artist's proofs, 120 x 120 cm, 1976.