

**Selection of artworks from the exhibition ELEVATION  
curated by Artmonist at Castle Saint-Maur  
summer 2017**



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# PHILOSOPHY

As an artist and an engineer, I associate the most recent technologies to the power of [poetic imagination](#).

## ***Creation process***

A synaesthesia (intellectual evocation of the sea when I brushed a concrete wall) provoked my desire to link concrete to the sea.

Now, my work evolves from [sea](#) towards sky, clouds, stars, infinite... [space](#), another fearsome and fascinating universe.

The perpetual motion of the sea resonates with the infinity of space. Continuity, no border... neither in time nor in space.

## ***Concrete***

I choose to work with concrete (omnipresent and often unpleasant material) to convey emotions, feelings and messages.

[How, with a few grams of concrete, can we be transported to the sea?](#)

## ***Concrete / Poetry***

***The human being is at the heart of my creation***

My work may be apprehended at different levels. Touching is the most [universal](#) and direct.

## ***Nothing is exclusive***

Driven by this deep conviction, I put concrete into museums and take out from there Contemporary Art.



# BIG BLUE



blue high-performance fiber-reinforced concrete of 69\*15\*0.6 in., 2017.

What is this intense blue, smooth, even and reflecting surface?  
This strangely installed slab seems to be an artwork but there is no sign of the artist's action or craftsmanship, and no imprint of the tool.

Its dimensions refer to human beings.  
It is 69 in. high, which is the average height of a man. It is 15 in. wide.  
So its face plus its back total  $\frac{4}{3}$  square meters. In adding the shadow's area, 2 square meters are obtained, which is the average surface of the skin of a human.

The thinness of *BIG BLUE* is possible thanks to the high performance of its material.

This artwork rests on the floor. It is neither hung as a painting nor installed on a podium as a sculpture. Nor is it part of the architecture.  
*BIG BLUE* seems to rest by delicately leaning against the wall as a man might do.

Is it light and mobile?  
Nevertheless, this artwork is made of concrete, material for immobile constructions, for real estate par excellence.

Its position delimits a real space between itself and the architecture.  
It creates here a set of colored shadows due to the intense blue of the pigments in its flesh. This in-between space in which the air circulates prompts us to move to go to see what takes place behind it ...

The back part of *BIG BLUE* seems to be an artwork itself.  
The colored shadows are due to the reflection of the light on the blue concrete.  
By approaching it, the back reveals, in the shadow, its roughness and hairiness.  
This hidden side, at first glance, is very blue like all the rest of the concrete, but not smooth like the outside face.

Would it be the metaphor of the human being, smooth only at first sight?



detail

# GREY WAVY



sheets of 4ft.\*2.6.ft\*0.5in. made of Craters Concrete<sup>®</sup>, 2009.

*GREY WAVY* crawls, topples and takes off to escape from the workshop.

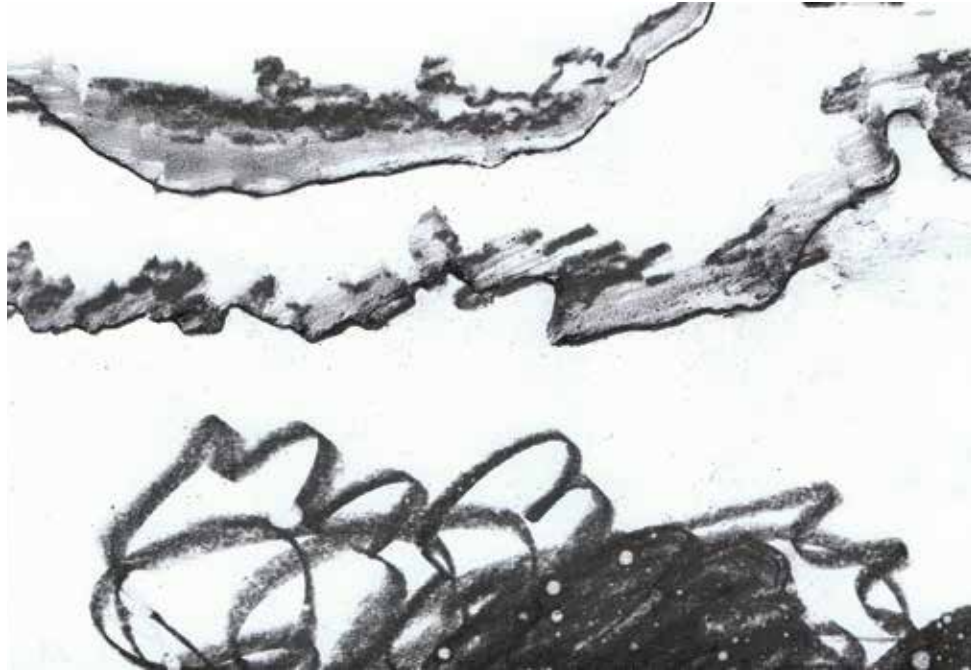
The top side of this concrete sheet is perfectly smooth.  
On the underside, a landscape of irregular craters appears.

This *GREY WAVY* is one of the characteristic illustrations of my work on ambivalence:

- simple design but complex shape,
- raw, heavy, inert material but poetic evocation of a light and alive work,
- pouring all at once in a perfectly smooth mold but different result on each of its faces,
- serial manufacturing by the same technique but each work is unique.



# MÉMOIRES DE VOYAGES



Each "frottage" (rubbing) of graphite on paper uses a Craters Concrete® matrix, 4\*6 in., 2013.

Each *MÉMOIRE DE VOYAGE* is like a postcard, or souvenir of a trip. But it is also the memory of a memory that changes, adding new details that the brain chooses to impose. Although we possess our brains, we are powerless to completely control the process of recollection.

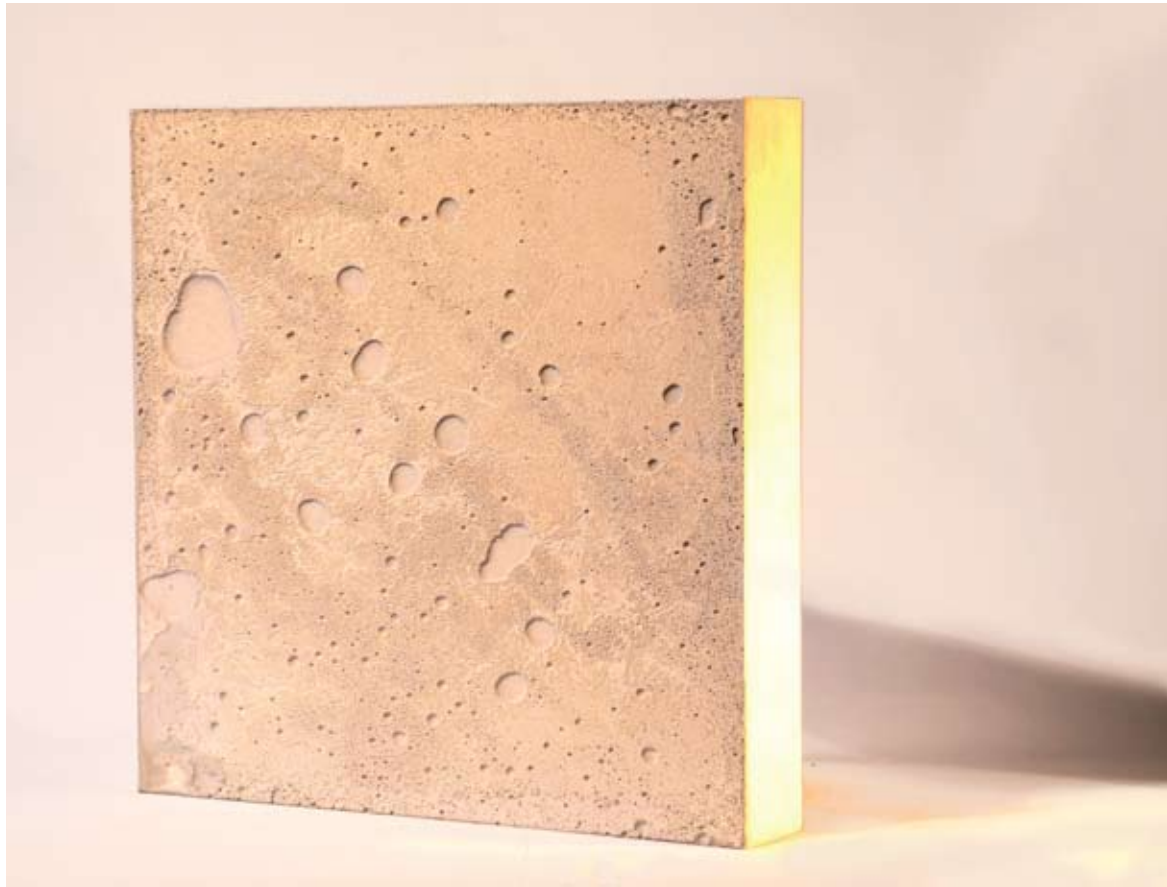
The imperfections on the surface of artworks made of Craters Concrete are the result of action I take on the material after pouring, just before its crystallization. In this way they are like a souvenir snapshot of the way I manipulate the concrete at a precise moment.

For each *MÉMOIRE DE VOYAGE*, I select craters on the concrete for the actual rubbing. By this selective translation, the frottage becomes a new memory of the memory.

The format of an individual "frottage" is like a common postcard. The larger ones are a succession of several *MÉMOIRES DE VOYAGE*, symbolizing the souvenirs that we accumulate intellectually (memories) or materially (travel postcards, snapshots on a roll of film, images of a movie,...).



# MINI WALLS



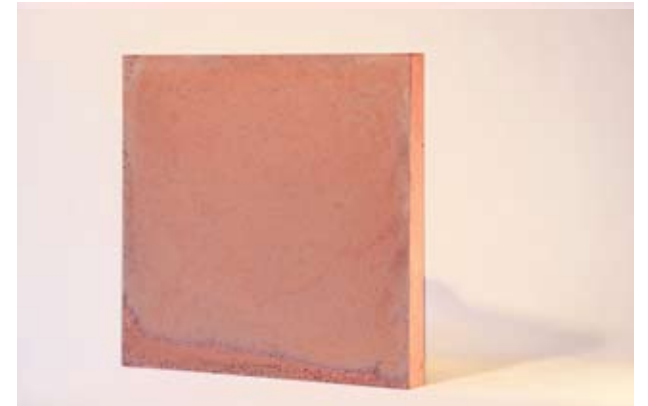
Craters and sonic Polysensual Concretes® of 19\*19 \*3 in., 2014.

Touch this *MINI WALL*  
and it will emit some sounds  
according to your magnetic field.

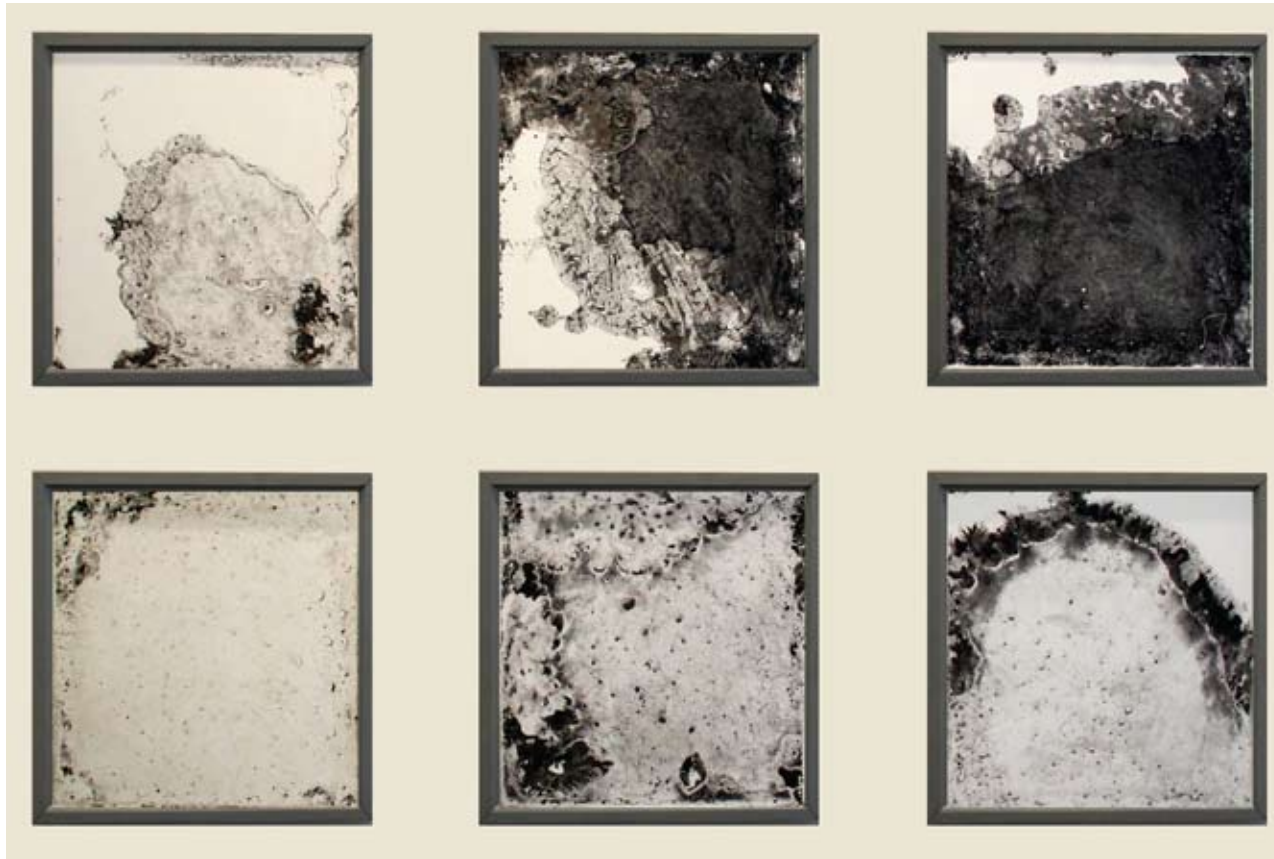
Color, texture & sounds are unique for each *MINI WALL*.



detail



# MIRAGES



prints of black concrete on wooden panels of 1,8ft.\*1,8ft.\*0,1in., 2010.

Evocation of the transparency, the fragility ...

The a priori opaque, solid, male concrete becomes translucent, delicate, feminine eyelid make-up.

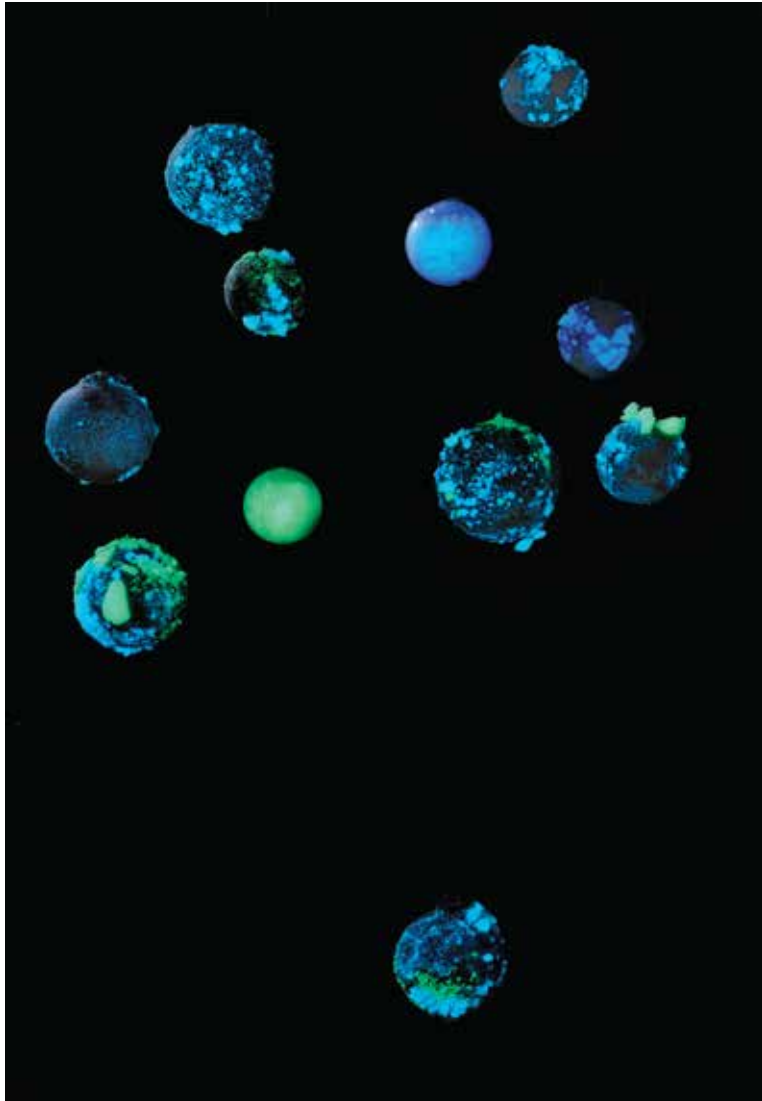
A few grams of powder put in a frame and hung on the wall.  
It is the same graphic universe as the Craters Concrete but just with a dust of material, unlike the robust slabs of *CONCRETE SQUARE FEET*, *CRYSTALLIZATION*, *SUSPENSION*...



detail

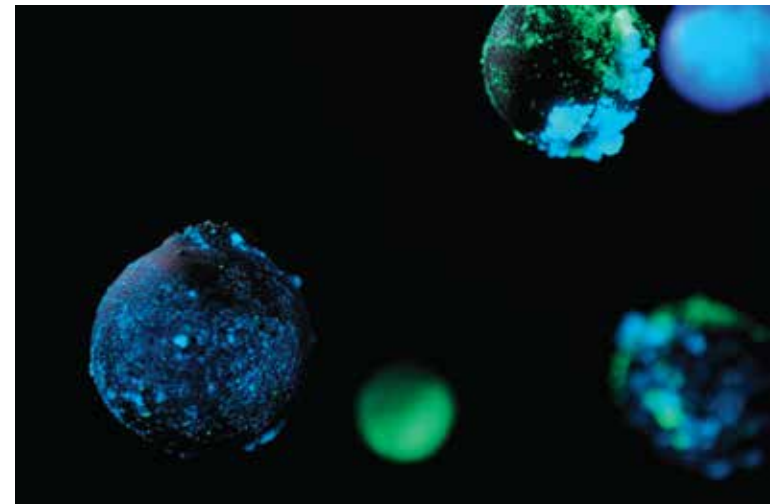
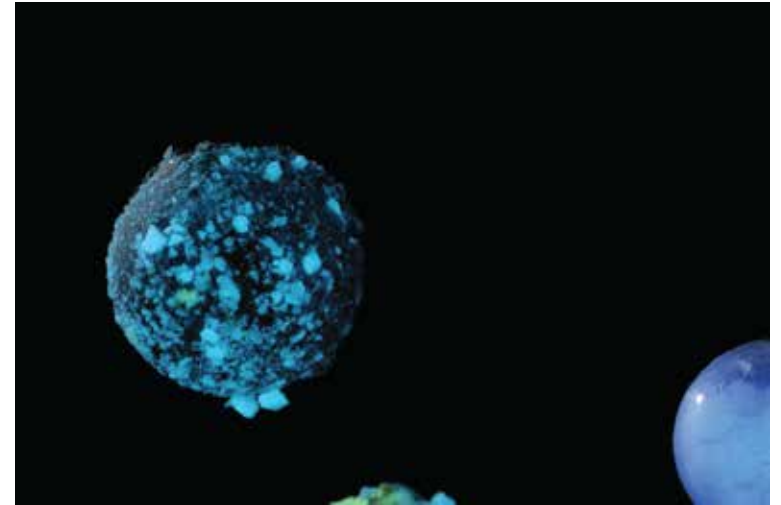


# PLANETS PHOSPHO



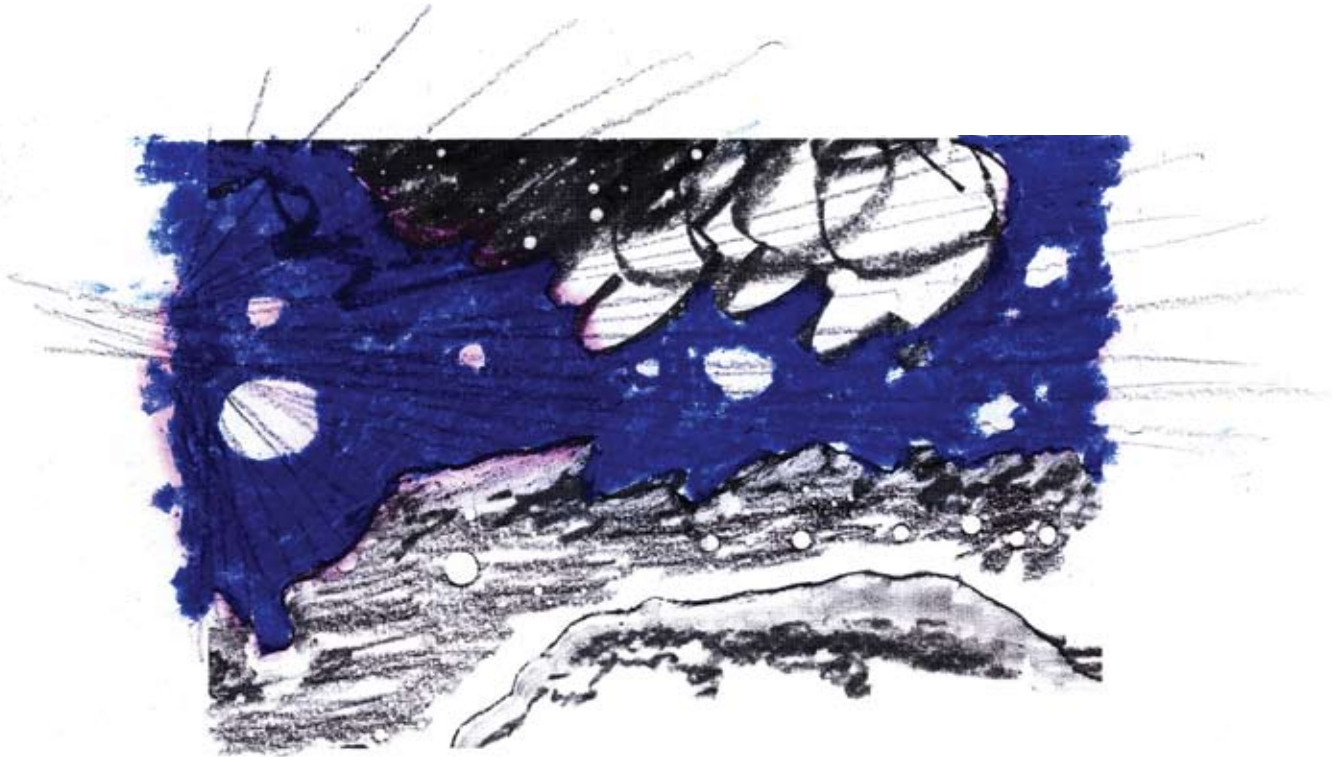
concrete covered with phosphorescent aggregates  
in a 2 \* 2 \* 2,6 ft. black box with mirrors inside, 2014.

Through two holes of a black box, we can discover *PLANETS PHOSPHO*.  
These celestial bodies are formed by concrete and by yellow, green and blue  
phosphorescent aggregates of various sizes. They are reflected in mirrors into infinity.



details

# SCANNED FROTTAGES



rubbings of graphite and pastel on paper and colored plastics, A4 size, 2015., 2015.

I printed about twenty times the scan of *A MEMOIRE DE VOYAGE* which is a rubbing realized thanks to a matrix made of Craters Concrete.

Then I put each of these scans on some Concrete Craters slabs, and create new rubbings on them. In some places, the paper tears off and on others it is covered with rhodoïds or coloured copies.

The memories overlap.

The overall memory is transformed here by accumulation.



three SCANNED FROTTAGES

# WILD PLANETS



Craters Concrete® balls 1 to 4 in. in diameter with embedded optical fibers, 2013.

These *WILD PLANETS* are made of concrete but they seem to float!

Each of these stars has its own identity by its birth, its name, its form, its peculiarities, its course.

When you approach it, you can appreciate its uniqueness with flashes of light, craters, faults, matte parts, colors, lakes, rings,...



# CRITIQUE BY ÉMILIE BOUVARD

“Memory and matter

In Physics, we speak about the “memory of the material” for the “alloys shaped by memory”.

It is a metaphor: how can concrete, this composite, or this alloy have memory? These are inert materials, lifeless, soulless, without feeling. What would be their senses?

If a memory lodges itself in the folds and creases of the “grey matter” of the brain, or in the flashes of the nervous system, it cannot be established, in the sense that we understand it. Indeed, we speak of the memory of materials in the sense that they are capable of recalling an ancient form, or keeping a new form. They have no true history, because that would imply a conscience and a narrative, however minimal. Even in general, as shown in Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* of 1896, as memory requires a material substrate, like life or thought of which it is but a synonym, it cannot then be understood as a thing. This is the perennial problem of the relationship between mind and body, from Descartes to Bergson and in the cognitive sciences.

Yet some materials record human memory - its history - in a way that tends to make us forget that they are only ink and paper, parchment, tape: these are the foundations of archives. The singular nature of their content, and sometimes their shape, acting like ancient documents, manuscripts, or modern documents, having been formatted in a particular way, at least awaken our sensitivity and intelligence when they are read - as in front of unique individuals. For people, they are not strictly equal to the sum of what they tell us, even after exhaustive study of everything about them. The value is not purely informative, it is also emotional: they are the material of our collective memory. They have a legitimate existence as objects, they are tangible evidence that “this has been”, they are an actual and real presence of the past, they travel through time, they form our patrimony.



detail of *MUR OCÉANE*, made of Craters® and Polysensual Concretes®, 2007

The concrete of Milène Guermont affects us like archival papers, but also in other ways, using our experiences and our sensory and aesthetic memory (in the etymological sense). For a number of years this singular artist has complex technological practices to animate this inanimate material – the world of matter. Using sensors that trigger sounds or vibrations, embedding optical fibers that create light in this inert material, refining the material as a skin or forcing it into random forms, her work evokes emotion in that from which it should be absent. Therefore the concrete becomes a kind of memory of sounds, tactile sensations, images, capable of reacting to the stimulus of spectators’ bodies, and in turn inspiring their own associations and memories. It awakens the memory of the body, stimulates the mind, and plays on our synesthetic abilities. Here are the “correspondances” of Baudelaire: if this rustling, quivering concrete can cause me to dream of the sea, it is because I remember the hard, wet smash of water which then withdraws, taking with it the sand from the beach.

Our collective sensitivity is memorial and spiritual; memory is a sensitive organ, and that's what interests Milène Guermont. ”

Émilie Bouvard,  
art historian, art critic and curator at Musée Picasso Paris, 2012.

# BIOGRAPHY

**MILÈNE GUERMONT**  
born in 1981

## Selection of lasting artworks

- *SIREINE*, Monaco (2017)
- *CAUSSE*, Montparnasse Cemetery, Paris (2016)
- *AGUA*, GA Company HQ, Toulouse (2015)
- *INSTANTS*, Utah Beach (2014)
- *FREE-PLANETS*, 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II, several countries (2014)
- *SPOR*, French Building Federation, Rouen (2014)
- *L'ARCHE DE MONET*, Le Havre (2013)
- *PARAMARTHA*, Buddhist Temple, Bussy-St-Georges (2012)
- *SUSPENSION*, Legallais Bouchard Company, Hérouville-St-Clair (2011)
- *M.D.R.*, Lycée Ste Marie, Neuilly-sur-Seine (2011)
- *FIRST STEP* on the Devil's Bridge, St-Guilhem-le-Désert (2008)

## Selection of exhibitions

- NOVA XX, Halles St-Géry, Brussels (2017)
- ELEVATION, St-Maur Castle, Saint-Tropez (2017)
- French Pavilion at the International Exhibition, Astana (2017)\*
- ART PARIS ART FAIR, Paris (2016, 2008)
- CRISTAL A, Best of SCAM, Paris (2016)\*
- SPONGE MAN, Passager Museum of the Paris Region (2016)
- A BEAT, Eiffel Tower, Montparnasse Tower and Place de la Concorde, Paris (2016)\*
- LES CRISTAUX, Mineralogy Museum, Mines ParisTech (2016)\*
- NUIT BLANCHE & COP 21 with *PHARES*, Place de la Concorde, Paris (2015, 2016)\*
- VILLA DATRIS, Foundation for Sculpture, L'Isle/Sorgue (2015, 2013)
- BARRE, Fine Arts Museum, Caen (2015)\*
- VOILA LES DELTON!, Musée de la chasse et de la nature, Paris (2014)
- NUIT BLANCHE PARIS, Town Hall of the 15<sup>th</sup> arr. (2014)\*, St Merri Church (2009)\*
- STEEL & FREEDOM, Otto Zoo Gallery, Milan (2013)
- NUBES, Caja Galeria, Tijuana (2013)
- POLYSENSUAL, XL suite of Au Vieux Panier, Marseille (2013)\*
- ART PROTECT, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris (2013)
- BÉTON A TOUCHER, BÉTON ENCHANTÉ!, Children's Museum, Paris (2013)\*
- MEMOIRES SENSIBLES!, Museum of National Archives of France, Paris (2012)\*
- DÉCOUVREMENTS, Contemporary Art Center, Epinal (2012)
- FOLIES OF PHA TAD KE with Claude Parent, Cartier Foundation, Paris (2011)
- CONCRETE LANDSCAPES, Town Hall of the 8<sup>th</sup> district, Paris (2011)\*
- FLUID ADAGIO, Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City (2011)
- NORMANDIE IMPRESSIONNISTE, Abbaye aux Dames, Caen (2010)\*
- AUTO/PORTRAITS, Galerie Jeune Création, Paris (2010)
- LINKS, New Art Center, New York (2009)
- ART BASEL MIAMI, Bertin Toubanc Gallery, Miami (2008)\*
- International Biennial of young artists, Rome (2007)

## Selection of distinctions

- Patronage by the FNC of UNESCO for the international travel of *PHARES* (2017)
- Finalist in the international competition NOVA XX-women artists & hi-tech (2017)
- Named by Ingenieurs et Scientifiques de France to be the voice of France on the Women's Committee of the WFEO, UNESCO's partner (2017)
- *PHARES*, the only artwork (and the only French project) shown at UNESCO HQ for the final ceremony of the International Year of Light (2016)
- *PHARES* supported by the Presidency of France, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Sustainable Development; Interior; Culture; and by the President of Paris Region, the Mayor of Paris City and the Ambassador of Egypt in France; and received distinctions from IYL-UNESCO, COP21 & PARIS POUR LE CLIMAT (2016, 2015)
- *MEGA CONCRETO*, "coup de coeur" of DDessin - drawing art fair (2015)
- *CRISTAUX*, supported by SCAM, CNC, ARCADI, Arts Center Synesthesie (2014)
- *FUNNEL*, finalist in the Anonymous international competition (2012)
- *LITOTES*, awarded in the international competition by the Utah Ballet West Co. and by the American Institute of Architects of Salt Lake City (2011)
- OSEO EMERGENCE, prize given by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research for my innovations (2009)
- *MUR NUÉES*, awarded by the Bettencourt-Schueller Foundation (2009)
- *POLYSENSUAL CONCRETE*, awarded in the DEFI JEUNES (2008)
- *ITDTS?*, finalist of the High Prize of Creation of Paris (2008)
- Art&Creation grant given by Paris City (2008)
- *BARREL*, finalist in the Noilly Prat international competition of sculpture (2008)
- *MUR OCEANE*, awarded in the competition by the French Concrete Fed. (2008)
- CRE@RTEM first prize given by MEDEF (Association of French CEOs) (2004)

## Education

- Art and Object Design diploma from the National Superior School of Decorative Arts (ENSAD), Paris, FR (2007)
- Engineering diploma (major: materials/process) from the National Polytechnic Institute (ENSIACET) in partnership with Mines of Nancy (ENSMN), FR (2004)
- Guest Scientist at Brown University, Providence (RI), USA (2003)

\* solo show

# APPENDIX

## **Craters Concrete®**

Type of concrete with a patented creation process, in which the surface contains a random mix of unique crater depressions. Works best on high-performance concrete.

## **Polysensual Concrete®**

High-performance concrete with embedded electronic sensors that respond differently based on one's magnetism. Such sensual reactions include light, sound, and vibration.

## **Colored Engraving®**

Patented process to engrave colored imagery in 3 dimensions into concrete surfaces. Works best on high-performance concrete.

All the works are proprietary to Milène Guermont.  
Patent Pending.  
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