

From June 1 to August 28: the artist, Sylvie Michault exhibits her vegetal compositions with contemporary lines

« Frémissements » “Quivering” at Saint-André Abbey



From June 1 to August 28, the Saint-André Abbey unveils the collages of Sylvie Michault, through “Quivering”, the second temporary exhibition of the season. Essentially composed of tropical plant matter, the creations of Sylvie Michault are lost gardens that one easily imagines nestled in the curve of a river in the Amazon forest where the artist lived for a long time. The often degraded leaves are pressed down one by one. They are sometimes so thin that you cannot hold them with your hands. A technique that requires patience and skill. Some artworks are textured with colored papers, others display a geometric rigor and intense colors that contrast with the natural element. Precarious balances that highlight the tenuous relationship that humanity maintains with its environment. Behind the soft curves and tones, a life force springs up, like a last hope offered to us by this artist who knows nature well and the irrevocable destruction of primary forests. In the caption of each composition, haikus reinforce the poetry of this exhibition where it is good to linger.

Saint-André Abbey, facing Avignon – “Quivering” from June 1 to August 28 – gardens + exhibition: €9 – www.abbayesaintandre.fr



An endless marveling

Having lived for a long time in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, far from everything, this adventurer began in the 90s to use tree leaves and bark like other artists handle oil or acrylic.

The Amazonian forest was a powerful revelation for her: living in the forest, apprehending its dangers, meeting its inhabitants in osmosis with their environment... an initiatory rite that makes you grow, that models you.

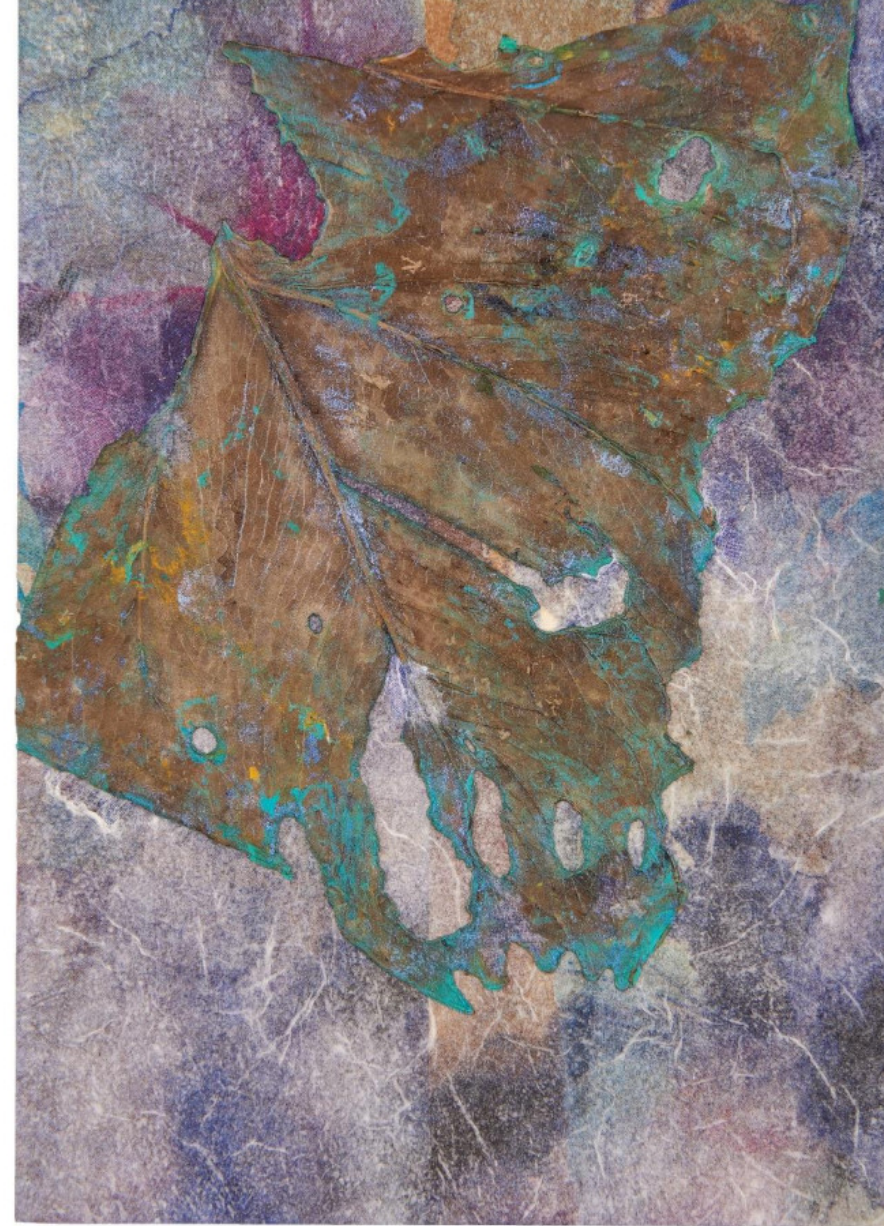
Sylvie Michault creates as one weaves bonds with others, like one knits fragile moorings with Nature. Creation as an emergency. Some compositions cry out in the forest

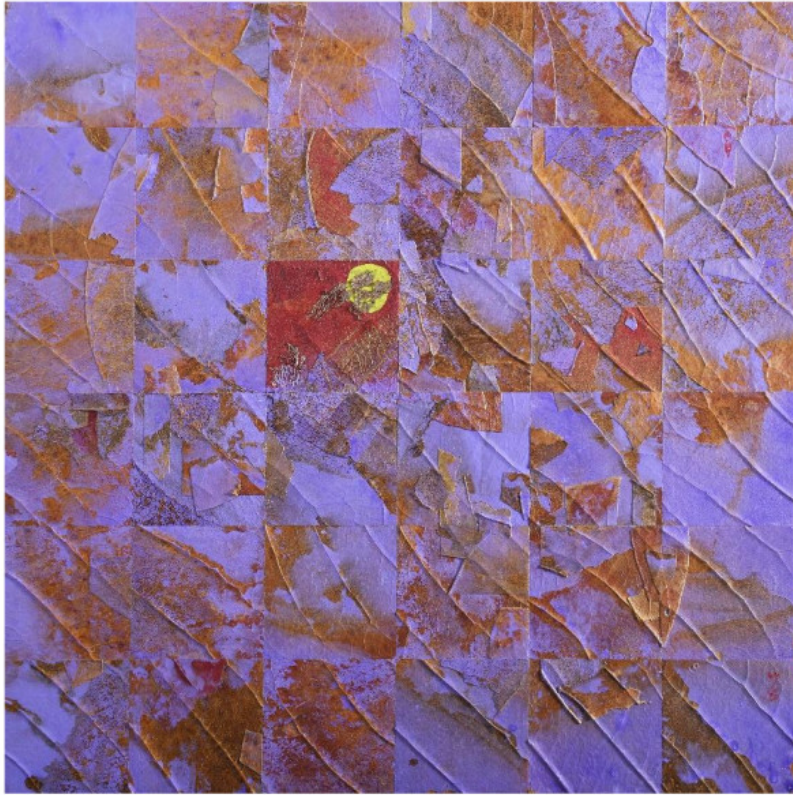
with sounds that are as joyful as they are painful.

Her work is intended to be a staging of the brilliance of the wild nature that never ceases to amaze her and "Quivering" is a trace of it.

A surface fragility

Leaves that are too smooth, too beautiful are not pinned to her picking creations, Sylvie Michault is on the lookout for elements damaged by bad weather, nibbled by insects, close to decomposition, sources for her of abstract landscapes. This fragility forced the artist to invent a protocol of great rigor and slowness close to the work of a weaver that she masters so well. Some artworks that are anything but ephemeral will sometimes require a year of work, alternating manipulations of the rehydrated material and smoothing with organic glue, not to mention the collection and drying time.





An art of collage which requires the monastic patience of illumination but which uses contemporary codes: purity of lines, abstraction of the pattern, large flat areas or mosaic, accumulation and serial repetition... The vegetal structure allows all phrasings, provided that it consents. "I like to say that I have to tame the material, it remains alive, unpredictable. Most of the leaves can be approached, but some are stubborn and remain an indomitable enigma for me," explains Sylvie Michault with humor, who sometimes has to resort to the aquatic element to assemble the most delicate fragments.

Her palette rarely copies the tones of raw nature, she reinterprets with small touches of acrylic, natural pigments, colored papers, accentuating her magic and her vulnerability.

A link between continents

The plurality of species is appropriate for this idealist: banana leaves, flower petals, bark, coconut fibers, tropical fragments mingle with high altitude foliage. Snippets of nature are assembled here, elements from all continents in a single canvas, a transversality that challenges us.

Always in strata, in successive layers which overlap a little, a lot, almost completely, her collages revealing only part of the veins, of the calyx. No doubt echoing the emotional layers of our lives, our wounds and our weaknesses. As the sensual, sometimes mysterious haikus that are sprinkled under each work throughout the exhibition.

Passing through France, this adventurer scrutinizes our territory like a new biotope, reconnects with her rites, far, very far from her priorities in the Amazon forest where survival takes precedence over everything, and continues to weave new gardens, this time, imaginary ones.





A politically engaged artist whose only homeland is the forest...

Born in 1957, Sylvie Michault grew up in Brittany, she takes up artistic practices, starting with the art of weaving in Nantes, vegetal dyes and then textile sculpture in Marseille. She then takes over the management of a weaving workshop in the Mercantour before setting out to sea by sailboat with her family in 1987. They cross the Atlantic, then sail along the coasts of Brazil and the Caribbean. Finally in 1991, she decides on a home port: French Guyana. A stopover that will last twenty years, during which she teaches plastic arts and is involved in various associations for the protection of the environment. Finally, she settles on the Mana River where she acquires a garden of several hectares and a hut in the middle of the Amazonian forest to realize her dream: to create an artist residency and an educational place.

It was then that she seized an opportunity, an authorization for a few weeks, obtained during a cultural project, to access the "prohibited zone" which protects the populations and their customs of certain traditional villages of the French Amazon: "My strongest experience will be meeting the Wayana Amerindians. A feeling of fulfillment in contact with them that still carries me", specifies this woman who felt very concerned by the fight of these villages

against the gold traffickers who perpetuate an ecological and human disaster in this whole region.

After a forced return to France due to the monopolization of her garden by these same traffickers, here she goes again, this time, in Asia: Thailand, Cambodia and Laos to meet the Mekong.

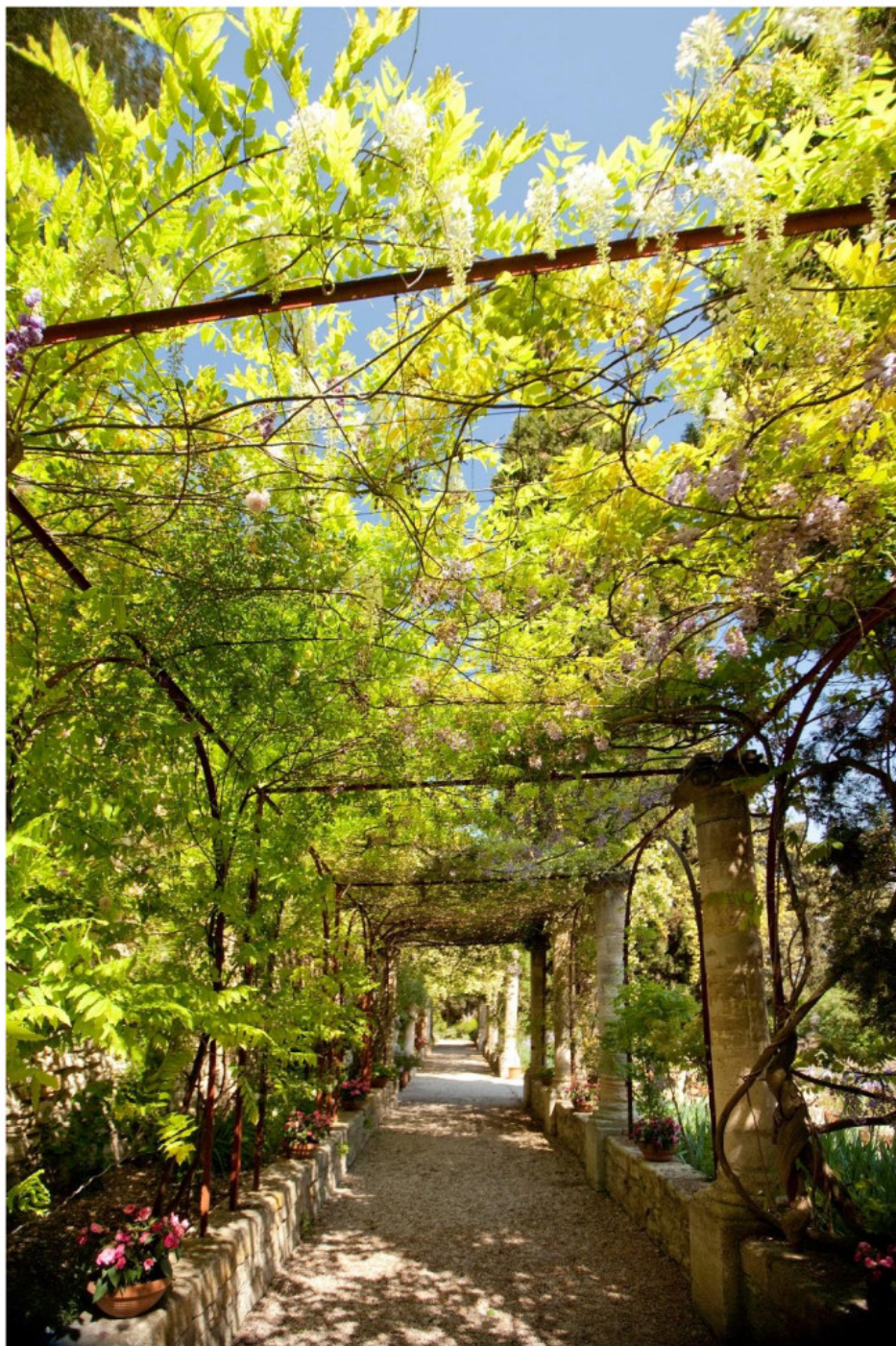
Then, she returns to France in Tende in the Roya valley, a valley in the Alpes Maritimes that was hit very hard by storm Alex in October 2020.

A hectic life that taught her detachment and connection with the fundamentals, a certainty that nothing is ever granted.

Through her travels, Nature, an inexhaustible source of wonder, will be her mantra, even becoming the raw material of her works, often the only resource available in the forest. Her artistic creations have been exhibited in the Caribbean, in Rio, Paris, Cayenne or New York and, in particular, she won the first prize at the Commemoration of slavery in 2001, in Guyana.

More info on: www.endehors.fr





Focus on the abbey and its remarkable gardens

On the heights of Villeneuve lez Avignon (Gard), hidden within the walls of Fort Saint-André, the "Remarkable Garden" of Saint-André Abbey unfolds on a balcony, offering a breathtaking view of the Palace of the Popes and all Provence. Listed as a Historic Monument, the abbey which welcomes, excluding Covid 19, 30,000 visitors per year, in its romantic gardens as well as in its 17th century abbey palace, received the 2021 Garden Art Prize from the Signature - Institute of France- Ministry of Culture. A visit to an inspiring place, full of poetry that harmoniously blends the art of gardens and a mosaic of religious heritage since the 6th century, between Provence and Languedoc. An intimate and family friendly monument in full revival, which multiplies the worksites in its gardens and carries out annual restoration campaigns through sponsorship. This abbey invites the arts to its galleries and gardens throughout the season from March to October.

Pratique

More information and the full program at: www.abbayesaintandre.com

Contact : 04 90 25 55 95 ou info@abbayesaintandre.fr

Address: rue Montée du Fort -30400 VILLENEUVE LEZ AVIGNON

Opening 2022: from March 1 to October 30, except Mondays. Open on public holidays.

Opening hours: May to September: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. In October 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2 p.m.-5 p.m.

Prices: Visit of the Gardens + temporary exhibition (including the 2ha of gardens and circuit history): Price: €9 - reduced price: €7, free for children under 8 - family price (children aged 8 to 17 years old): 2 adults + 1 child €20 or 2 adults + 2 children and more €26 - disabled rate: €6 (large print and Braille notebook and FALC audio application). Solidarity rate for support the abbey: €12.

Guided tour, Thursdays at 11 a.m. by reservation: €14 (from May to september).

Gardens/Exhibitions Pass: €28/pers per year (unlimited access), €60/family (2 adults + children up to 17 years old).

Heritage of Villeneuve: group ticket at 17€.

Avignon-City Pass or Vaucluse Provence Pass of which the abbey is a member.

Contact Press

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