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swiss museum
for ceramics
and glass
geneva



MUR | MURS
JACQUES
KAUFMANN —

architectures
céramiques

17 mai —
10 novembre 2019

Un musée
Ville de Genève

www.ariana-geneve.ch



VILLE DE
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Press Kit

16 May 2019

MUR | MURS

Jacques Kaufmann, ceramic architecture

Musée Ariana, 17 May – 10 November 2019

Press visit: Thursday, 16 May at 11am (pre-booking required)

Exhibition preview: Thursday, 16 May 2019 at 7pm

Musée Ariana

Swiss Museum for Ceramics and Glass

10, avenue de la Paix

1202 Geneva - Switzerland

Press kit available under “Press”: www.ariana-geneve.ch

Visuals and photos on request: laurence.ganter@ville-ge.ch

This exhibition has received the support of the Fondation Amaverunt.



MUR | MURS
Jacques Kaufmann, ceramic architecture

Musée Ariana, 17 May – 10 November 2019

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MUR | MURS

Jacques Kaufmann, ceramic architecture

Musée Ariana, 17 May – 10 November 2019

INTRODUCTION

The theme of the wall is universal, polysemous and contradictory: permanent or ephemeral, impassable or permeable, tangible or symbolic, the wall is always built by man, paradoxically, both to unite and to exclude. At the heart of international Geneva, in the context of today's burning political issues, the Musée Ariana is examining this rich theme.

For over 25 years, internationally-renowned artist and ceramist Jacques Kaufmann (France / Switzerland, 1954) has been creating powerful architectural and monumental installations whose starting point is the brick. Beginning with this element scaled to the human hand, he is installing his projects in the landscape setting of the Ariana's grounds, introducing new paths, an ephemeral wall between the museum and the UN, a house made of clay and even a bridge that symbolically passes through the museum's architecture.

After the park, the artist-builder will further develop within the museum a widened essential discourse, spanning the entire history of ceramics right up to contemporary creation. This theme and the artworks are sure to provoke reactions and questions and arouse debate.

MUR | MURS

This ambitious exhibition is taking place in two stages, each on a different scale:

- . from 17 May in the grounds of the Ariana;
- . from 2 July, it will also occupy the temporary exhibition space in the museum's basement.

From 17 May, five monumental and ephemeral installations will be created in situ in the museum's grounds, mainly in Jacques Kaufmann's preferred material: brick. Through them, Jacques Kaufmann questions the notion of the wall, its nature and its functions. He strives to cloud the issues in this high-security district of international organizations and embassies, introducing a material with subversive potential (brick), as well as original visions and pathways.

"Flight of the fly, 2"

This piece takes the form of a sinuous wall snaking down the gentle slope towards the Place des Nations. The shape, created from hollow bricks, can be compared to a membrane, a stream or a pencil line drawn on a sheet of paper.

"Filigree"

Visitors will be greeted by this work, placed near the central approach to the museum. Composed of honeycomb bricks and playing with different perspectives, the structure, when viewed from the front, reveals the Musée Ariana in the background and an archetypal ceramic form: the bowl. Being able to see through this piece creates a sense of porosity, a vibration, like a breath.

“Mud fired house”

Through this installation, the artist is making a long-held dream come true: to build a house from clay and to fire it from inside. This monumental work, three metres in diameter, comprises a metal structure covered with chicken wire and then a thin layer of clay. The low temperature firing will last for two days, ending on the day of the exhibition preview.

“Bringing down the wall”

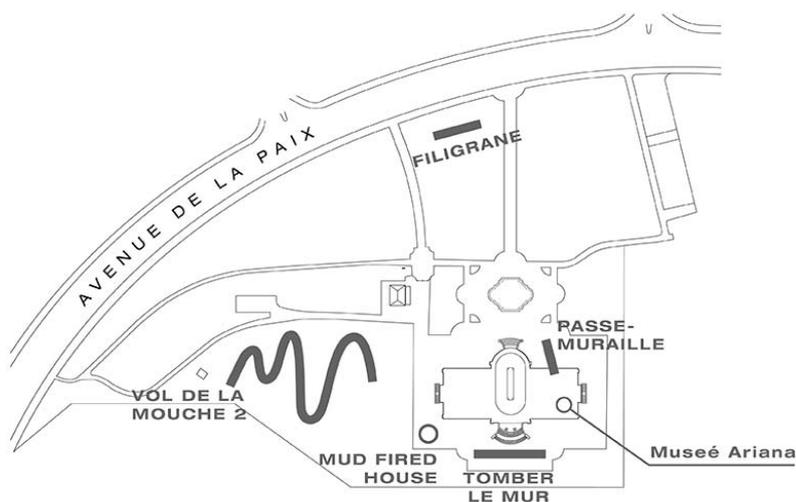
This project pays tribute to the desire for freedom.

For the duration of the exhibition, groups of young people and adults will have the opportunity to create graffiti frescoes to cover this 12-metre long brick wall.

This political work symbolizes walls built by people to exclude others or to protect themselves. It will be destroyed on 9 November 2019, 30 years to the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The resulting pieces will be sold to raise funds for the Association romande des familles d'enfants atteints d'un cancer (ARFEC / French-speaking association for families of children with cancer).

“The passer-through-walls”

“The passer-through-walls” is a two-part installation: given a rough external treatment, it extends inside the museum and takes on a more precious quality. Through an interplay of inside/outside, interior/exterior, this work raises the issue of the museum as a secure location, an impregnable safe. It invites visitors to consider the option of heading off the beaten track and to continue their tour of the exhibition in the building's basement.



Jacques Kaufmann's installations in the grounds of the Musée Ariana

In the second phase, starting on 2 July, the artist will be taking over the museum's basement for a presentation of his recent works. These show the diversity of his research based on the theme of the brick.

Occupying the basement's central ellipse, the installation "**Floating Bricks**", made up of some 2500 metal rods from which small bricks are suspended, sways in rhythm with vibrations generated by viewers' movements. The six peripheral showcases are pretexts for the artist to relate **six brick-related narratives**, ranging from the "oldest brick in the world" to the journey across India of a "VIP" brick, and including a Chinese brick on which a cat's paw is imprinted for posterity next to an image of Buddha.

In one of the gallery's wings, the concept of "**Penetrable walls**" is addressed, entailing the introduction of a maximum number of irregular voids into each brick during the shaping process. These voids create a sense of visual porosity and of openness. Also on display are "**Talkative walls**", with a levitating brick and another one entitled "**Certitudes**", which decomposes before your very eyes. The subjects are infinite, just like Jacques Kaufmann's imagination! Visitors too will not be left out, being called on to adopt a position on the polysemy and paradox of walls.

JACQUES KAUFMANN, BUILDER OF WALLS AND CREATOR OF BRIDGES

Jacques Kaufmann is a complex and paradoxical figure: if this artist has devoted a substantial part of his career to architectural ceramics and therefore to the construction of walls, he has done so all the better to breach physical barriers and to reach out to the other, in a constant desire for exchange and openness.

Exchanges between the Musée Ariana and Jacques Kaufmann have always been rich and frequent. The institution has around 30 works by the artist in its collections. Jacques Kaufmann also contributed, by means of an installation, to the exhibition marking the reopening of the Ariana 25 years ago.

The idea for an ambitious exhibition had already occurred to Jacques Kaufmann and Anne-Claire Schumacher, curator of this exhibition and of the Musée Ariana, a few years ago. Right from the start, there was a common desire to go beyond the museum's walls and set up monumental installations in the large and magnificent grounds surrounding it. This first "extramural" experiment became an adventure which rapidly assumed a collective and collaborative aspect, both on the part of brick suppliers and on that of educational structures for young people (the Accès II wood workshop, Les Ateliers ABX metal workshop and the ceramics section of CFP Arts). These young people have not only helped to assemble the exhibition but have also been able to observe how an institution functions, to interact with the artist and to adopt a stance on the theme of the wall.

An exhibition taking the wall as its thematic scope is naturally rich in meaning in the context of a museum surrounded by international organizations like the United Nations (UN), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Labour Office (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Physical or symbolic walls, walls that protect or divide, impassable barriers or porous facades, it's far from innocuous to be constructing walls in this particular district!

The theme is reflected, moreover, in the history of the Musée Ariana itself and its grounds. The establishment of the League of Nations on land bequeathed to the City of Geneva by the Ariana's founder, Gustave Revilliod (1817-1890), was in fact carried out in total contradiction with the terms of his will. The prevailing political interests deprived the museum of its view of and access to the lake, forcing it to modify the museum entrance and circulation within the grounds. A dual barrier - fence and built structure – has since stood to the east of the Ariana.

The exhibition *MUR I murs* has everything it takes to energize our passion for contemporary ceramics. Innovative formal proposals, poetic installations in the landscape, stimulating socio-political avenues for reflection and a solid basis in the history of the material. Like the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara¹, Jacques Kaufmann seems to have a thousand arms and eyes which give him a wide perspective on the world so as to restore its essence.

¹ Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin in China and Kannon in Japan), the bodhisattva of compassion, who renounced access to enlightenment to help humankind, is one of the most popular deities in the Buddhist pantheon.

BRICK, A RATHER UNUSUAL MORPHEME

“I might as well admit it straightaway, my connection with bricks was not the result of a career choice, but clearly originated in Rwanda where, from 1984 to 1986, I had the opportunity to lead a ceramics project on behalf of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. At the time, I experienced a real visual shock faced with the activities of brick makers in some of that country’s swamplands. Their work, theatrically unifying time and place, demonstrated every production stage, from extracting the clay to shaping, from drying in situ on the ground and then in well-ventilated rows to the “stack” kilns, and from assembly and firing right through to selling! This unity of action revealed, to the young ceramist that I was then, a scale hitherto unknown to me: the ceramic landscape. The notion of the hand’s or even the body’s dimensions as the gauge for the ceramist’s imagination and actions, was here turned completely upside down.

I don’t know what deep or unconscious ties bind me to this morpheme – brick or tile – making it one of the fundamental vectors of my work in clay. But I don’t think it’s a purely utilitarian connection. Thanks to the brick, which, from its underground origins, paradoxically conquers the world by its simplicity and modesty, I’ve found the means to explore my own.

The almost insignificant brick is the conveyor of our dreams, from the mildest to the craziest.”

Jacques Kaufmann

JACQUES KAUFMANN: A BIOGRAPHY

- 1954 Born 8 June, Casablanca, Morocco
- 1974-1977 Trained as a ceramist, École des arts décoratifs, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1984-86 Head of “Action céramique”, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Rwanda
- 1994-95 Director, Centre d'arts appliqués, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1994-2014 Professor in charge of the Ceramics Department, École d'arts appliqués, Vevey, Switzerland
- 2011 Honorary Professor, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts (GAFA), China
- 2013-16 Visiting Professor, Zhaoqing University, China
- 2016 Visiting Professor, Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, China
-
- Since 1982 Member of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC)
- Since 2008 Board member of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC)
- 2012-2018 President of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC)

Selected solo exhibitions (since 2012)

- 2018 “From Imperial brick kiln to Kaufmann”, BaoKu Art Center, Shanghai Tower, China
“Clay Stories”, Erskine, Hall & Coe gallery, London, UK
- 2016 “Terres / Earth”, Galerie Épisodique, Paris, France
- 2015 “Jacques Kaufmann, Qi”, Clayarch Gimhae Museum, Korea
“A Blend of Civilization”, four-man show, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China
- 2014 “An, Peace / Earth Garden” New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan
“Looking for Light”, City Art Museum of GAFA, Guangzhou, China
- 2013 “Embarquement pour Cythère”, Domaine de Rovorée - La Châtaignière, Yvoire, France
“With one brick, to build a world”, Zhaoqing University Museum, China
“Année du serpent, hommage à DMM”, Fondation Baur, Geneva, Switzerland
“Boîtes précieuses, du vide comme phénomène”, Galerie Hélène Aziza, Paris, France
- 2012 “Lever le voile”, Vieux four, Gradignan, France

Selected group exhibitions (since 2012)

- 2018 “To Ideal Land of Ceramics / Lovers”, Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing, China
“Looking for light N°2/ Reflection in the water”, Fiskars, Finland
“Mud fired house”, Indian Ceramics Triennale, Jaipur, India
“Clay stories”, Qingdao International Ceramic Exhibition, China
“Columns”, Hangzhou International Contemporary Ceramic Art Biennale, China
“Affinités partagées”, Galerie Hélène Aziza, Paris, France

- 2017 “2nd International Ceramic Biennale “, Qingdao Art Museum, China
 “De briques”, Le Non-Lieu, Roubaix, France; WCC, Mons, Belgium; La Borne, France
 “Lovers”, Swiss pavilion, Cheongju International Craft Biennale, Korea
 “La couleur”, Musée national de Céramique, Sèvres, France
- 2016 “Homage à Gaudi”, Nau Gaudi Museum, Mataró, Spain
 “IAC members’ exhibition”, DHUB Barcelona, Spain
 “Mineral Memory”, Hangzhou International Contemporary Ceramic Art Biennale, China
- 2015 “1st International Ceramic Biennale”, Qingdao Art Museum, China
- 2014 “Moving objects, IAC members’ exhibition”, Dublin Castle, Ireland
 “Ductile”, Hangzhou International Ceramic Biennale, China Academy of Art Gallery, China
- 2013 “WABA 1st exhibition”, Cathrinesmind Brickworks Museum, Denmark
 “Les enfants de Khnoum”, Ferrari Art Gallery, Vevey, Switzerland

Permanent installations:

- 2017 “Hu Garden”, Yixing, China
 “Brick Temple, homage to brick makers”, Art Ichol, Maihar, Madhya Pradesh, India
- 2014 “An, Peace / Earth Garden” New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan

PARTNERS

The construction of five monumental works in the Ariana's grounds would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of brick suppliers, private companies and educational structures for young people - Accès II, the Ateliers ABX and the ceramic section of the CFP Arts Genève. Aged between 15 and 20, these young people have not only helped to assemble the exhibition but have also been able to observe how an institution functions, to interact with the artist and to adopt a stance on the theme of the wall.

Private companies

Brick suppliers:



Educational structures

In partnership with the Accueil de l'enseignement secondaire II (ACCES II), the CFP Arts Genève and the City of Geneva's Department of Planning, Civil Engineering and Mobility



EVENTS

Publication

Isabelle Naef Galuba, Anne-Claire Schumacher, Luca Pattaroni, Jacques Kaufmann, *MUR I murs. Jacques Kaufmann, ceramic architecture*, French/English bilingual publication, 5 Continents, Milan, 2019
To be published on 2 July

Guided tours

Public tours on Sundays, 19 May at 3 pm (with the artist), 30 June, 1 September, 29 September (with the artist, to coincide with the Carouge Ceramics Trail), 6 October and 10 November at 11 am

Guided tours on request

In French, English or German
Fee payable, pre-booking required

Murs, membranes et lisières

Round table discussion
Friday, 13 September 1 pm – 5 pm, in partnership with Utopiana
(free admission, pre-booking required)

“My little brick house” workshops

For children 5 – 7 years old, Saturday, 11 May at 10 am and 2 pm (duration 1½ hours)
(fee payable, pre-booking required)

Graff workshops with Mans1 & Nadia Seika

Saturday, 18 May, 6pm – midnight (all ages, pre-booking required)

Graff workshops with Jazi

For 15 – 18 year olds, Saturday, 29 June, 2 pm – 5 pm
Adults, Sunday, 30 June, 2 pm – 5 pm
(fee payable, pre-booking required)

Graff workshops with Jazi

To coincide with European Heritage Days on the weekend of 14 – 15 September, 3pm – 5pm
(all ages, free admission, places subject to availability)

From park to park with the municipal libraries

From 16 – 27 July, the “Mobithèque” mobile library will be installed in the grounds of the Musée Ariana for a collaborative and rich programme of events.

La chasse du rêveur (The Dreamer’s Hunt)

Tales illustrated by Néfissa Bénouniche

Sunday, 6 October at 3pm (free admission, no pre-booking required, for children 8 years+)

Graff performance with Jazi

Sunday, 3 November, 1pm – 5pm (free admission, no pre-booking required)

Descriptive and tactile tour for visually-impaired and blind people

Tuesday 17 September at 2pm (pre-booking required, places subject to availability)

Bring down the wall!

Saturday, 9 November, 2 pm – 4 pm (to mark the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall).
This event will be followed by the sale of bricks to raise funds for the Association romande des familles d’enfants atteints d’un cancer (ARFEC / French-speaking association for families of children with cancer).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Musée Ariana

Swiss Museum for Ceramics and Glass

Avenue de la Paix 10 | 1202 Geneva

T +41(0)22 418 54 50 - F +41(0)22 418 54 51

www.ariana-geneve.ch

Open Tuesday to Sunday 10am – 6pm, closed Mondays

Admission fee

12 / 9 CHF (from 2 July); free admission to outdoor installations, for under 18s and on the first Sunday of the month; all other Sundays, buy one ticket, get one free

Visitor reception

Monday – Friday

T +41 22 418 54 54

F + 41 22 418 54 51

adp-ariana@ville-ge.ch

Website: www.ariana-geneve.ch

Facebook: @museearianageneve

Instagram: @museearianageneve

Twitter: @museeariana

Press visit Thursday, 16 May at 11am

Pre-booking required

Director

Isabelle Naef Galuba

Administration

Corinne Müller Sontag

Exhibition and Museum Curator

Anne-Claire Schumacher

Heritage Interpreters and Events Organisers

Hélène de Ryckel

Sophie Wirth Brentini

Press service

Laurence Ganter, T +41(0)22 418 54 55

laurence.ganter@ville-ge.ch