

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Jean-Luc Moulène *Enlightenments*

Private view: Saturday 14 September, 12–6pm
Exhibition dates: 17 September–15 December 2024

Thomas Dane Gallery
Via Francesco Crispi, 69
Napoli

Thomas Dane Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of Jean-Luc Moulène, opening in September 2024. The exhibition, *Enlightenments*, will be the artist's sixth with the gallery and his first solo exhibition in Naples.

In the eight years since Moulène last exhibited with the gallery, his 'Objets'/'Objects' have been central to the current narratives and discourses on sculpture. Included in significant surveys, such as *When Forms Come Alive: Sixty Years of Restless Sculpture* (2023) at the Hayward Gallery and *May You Live in Interesting Times* (2019) at the 58th Venice Biennale, his works question the very nature, texture, core, envelope and, ultimately, future of the form. Like many artists before him, from Donald Judd to Michelangelo Pistoletto, Moulène conceives of his three-dimensional works as objects, eschewing the term and connotations of sculpture. In explaining his re-examination of the habitual through the process of creation, Moulène said: "I speak of image and object, of photograph and product, both transformed. What interests me are the functions of transformation. What then is an ordinary object? What orders organise it, construct and transform it?"

In Moulène's hands the quotidian transforms through rigorous improvisation. Enumerating the materials used across the thirty-six works in the exhibition reminds us of the resourcefulness that underpins the resulting alchemy: cardboard, plastic, plaster, bronze, zinc, aluminium, wood, bones, chicken wire, silicone, fabric or concrete adorned with resin, paint, glue, ink, silver leaf, wax and mushroom spores.

Moulène's Naples exhibition will focus on recent and new works from *Opus*, a body of work that has been in progress since 1995 and spans table-top, hanging and floor-based works. *Fixed Zinc*, Hobart (2021), first shown last year at MONA in Tasmania and made from alloyed zinc, smelted on the shores of the River Derwent and Bell Bay of Tasmania, will create a focal point for the exhibition, alongside a new work, *Vortex* (2024), inspired by the smoking Mount Vesuvius, seen from the gallery. The siting of the *Opus* series against the backdrop of Naples and its volcano will evoke the myths, excavations, vessels, relics, monuments, shrines and ex-votos that reside within this body of work.

Table-top works produced from raw or industrial materials, including bronze, stone and resin, that continue Moulène's exploration of materials, will be placed according to a mathematical grid across the gallery floor and walls. As with all of Moulène's work the objects and the display will follow strict rules imposed by the artist, often resulting in unforeseen interactions between materials and unusual object placements. Each work, whether an 'Objet', photograph, or drawing, that muddles the hierarchies of artistic forms, will sit at an intersection of this superimposed grid, remapping the gallery space as a quasi-archaeological search ground.

This grouping of works is titled *Enlightenments* in reference to the emergence in the 18th century of the philosophy 'Siècle des Lumières', which espoused knowledge and freedom as counteracting forces to tyranny and bigotry. The title could also name what Moulène conceives as an 'album', in which each work represents a song, a unique thought, or an experience, linked by a 'poetry' of collective memory and formal occurrence.

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Jean-Luc Moulène (b. 1955, France) lives and works in Normandy. He studied Aesthetics and Sciences of Art at the Sorbonne University in Paris where he lived for many years before building his new studio. Since the 1980s he has developed a body of work informed by the critical investigation of authorship, and an exploration of issues of autonomy, immanence, and anarchic politics. Over the course of his artistic career, Moulène has maintained a parallel exploration of materials – manufactured and found, industrial and organic. His work is an attempt to link art back to different modes of thought; at the same time, it is an integrative project that adamantly and systematically refuses to resort to prescribed approaches to theory and interdisciplinary characteristics of the contemporary art historical canon and curatorial practices.

Selected exhibitions include: *When Forms Come Alive: Sixty Years of Restless Sculpture*, Hayward Gallery, London, England (2024), *Jean-Luc Moulène and Teams*, Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Hobart, Tasmania (2023); *Técnico Libertário*, Casa São Roque – Centro de Arte, Porto, Portugal (2021); *More or Less Bone*, SculptureCenter, Long Island City NY (2019); *Jean-Luc Moulène, The Secession Knot (5.1)*, Secession, Vienna, Austria (2017); *Jean-Luc Moulène*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2016); *Larvae and Ghosts*, Thomas Dane Gallery, London, England (2016); *Documents & Opus*, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, Germany (2015); *Il était une fois*, Villa Medici, Rome, Italy (2015); *Works*, Beirut Art Center, Lebanon (2013); *Jean-Luc Moulène*, Modern Art Oxford, England (2012); *Jean-Luc Moulène: Opus + One*, Dia:Beacon, Beacon NY (2011); *Jean-Luc Moulène*, Carré d'art – Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes, France (2009). His work has been presented as part of the 58th Venice Biennale (2019), the Sharjah Biennial (2011), the First International Biennial of the Image, Laos (2007), the Taipei Biennial (2004), the 50th Venice Biennale (2003), the São Paulo Biennial (2002), and documenta X (1997).

Jean-Luc Moulène's work is included in the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Tate Collection; London, England; Carré d'art, Nîmes, France; MACVAL, Vitry-sur-Seine, France; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France; Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP), Paris, France; Collection Renault Automobiles, France; Fondation Louis Vuitton; Paris, France; FRAC Basse Normandie, France; FRAC Ile de France, France; FRAC Poitou Charente, France; FRAC Bourgogne, France; FRAC Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur, France; IAC, Villeurbanne, France; MOCA, Los Angeles CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York NY; Dia Art Foundation, New York NY; Kadist Art Foundation; Los Angeles CA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis MN; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

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Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Friday 11am–1:30pm & 2:30pm–7pm, Saturday 12pm–6pm, or by appointment
Admission: Free
Nearest station: Piazza Amedeo
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Instagram: @thomasdanegallery
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