

Léa Barbazanges



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Léa Barbazanges

All the Beauty of the World

An exhibition by Fondation
d'Entreprise Hermès in partnership
with the Museum of Modern
and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg
for La Grande Place,
Musée Saint-Louis.

Curated by Estelle Pietrzyk,
chief Curator of Heritage,
Museum of Modern and
Contemporary Art, Strasbourg.

Bringing together the animal, plant and mineral
kingdoms, the exhibition “All the Beauty of the World”
presents a snapshot of the work of Léa Barbazanges
at the intersection of emptiness and fullness,
of imperceptibility and light.

Like the stones that were dear to the writer
Roger Caillois, the materials used by the artist
are “neither useful nor renowned.” But they are
magnified through her attentive gaze and
by her hands working, arranging them and thus
revealing to the world their unsuspected beauty.
Speaking to the hand that longs to touch as well as
to the eye, at times challenging its perception,
Léa Barbazanges, joined by the musician and ondes
Martenot specialist Christine Ott, has created
an unprecedented total project for La Grande Place.
“Not for all of beauty shall I ever lose myself,
but for some unknown that perchance one may hope
to win,” wrote the Spanish mystic poet Saint John
of the Cross (1542-1591). The work of Léa Barbazanges
is resolutely made up of this “I know not what”,
whereby the encounter with a work of art is
transformed into a spiritual and sensory experience.

Estelle Pietrzyk



Omentum
2007-2026

Assemblage of pork omentum (caul fat)
145 × 184 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place, musée
Saint-Louis, 2026.

The omentum is a part of the peritoneum, the fine membrane lining the inside of the abdomen, enveloping and protecting the digestive organs. In farm animals, it is also known as caul fat. From this greasy tissue Léa Barbazanges has made a surprisingly delicate organic lace: like an infinitely precise map, *Omentum* reveals a hidden order of things, something embedded within, yet letting you see through it in a multitude of directions.



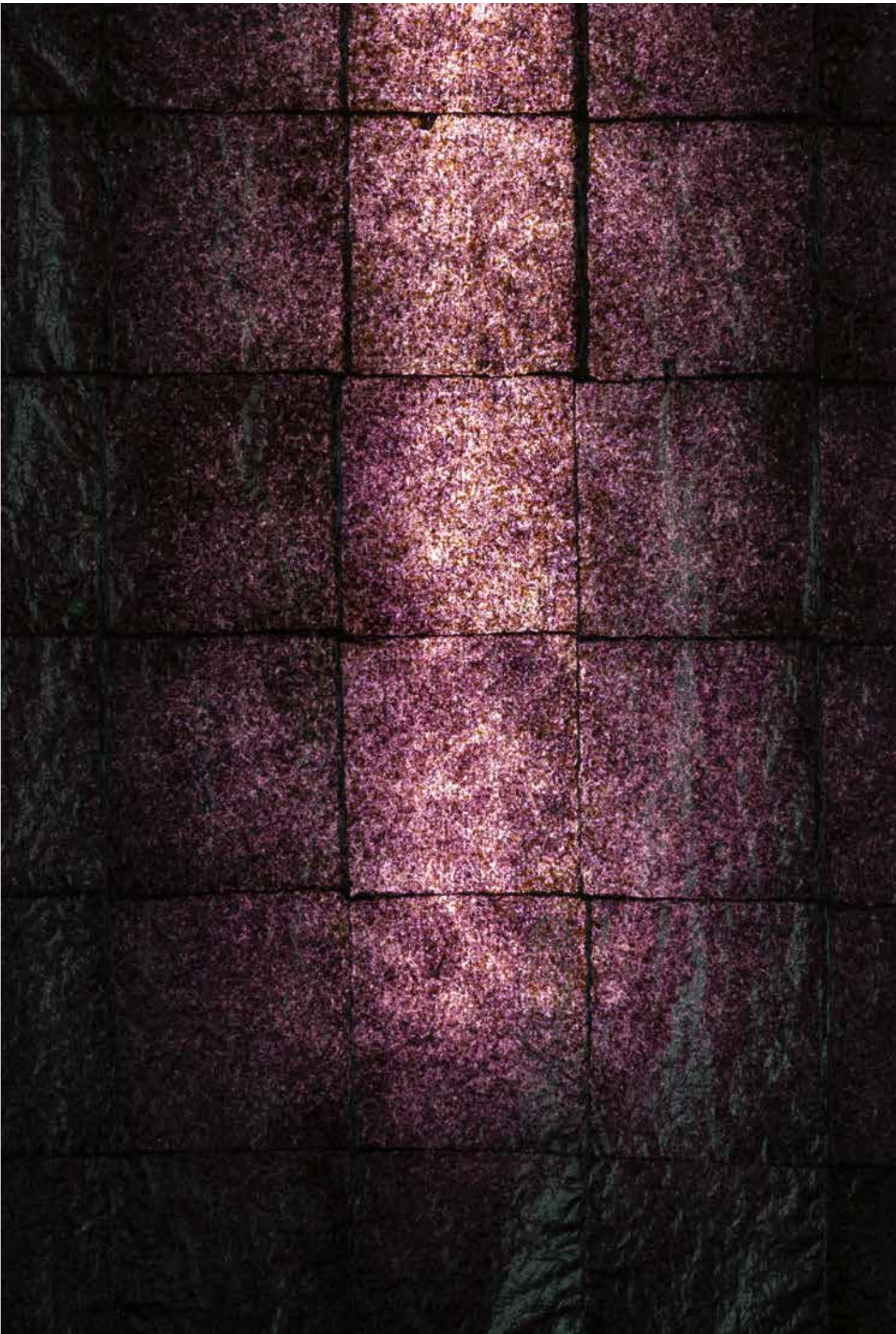


Algae enclosure
2014-2026

Algae
130 × 130 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place,
musée Saint-Louis, 2026.

Léa Barbazanges chooses to work with algae
because they have preceded us in the history
of evolution. She is interested in the effect produced
on them by exposure to light. Similarly to its role
in analogue photographs, it shifts the colour
of the algae and allows the artist to create large
polychrome compositions.





Diatom
2026

PLA, Dyneema® cable,
mechanical device
156 × 80 × 80 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation des artistes, Grand Est Region
and Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès,
with the expertise of Karine Leblanc,
oceanographer and CNRS research director
at the MIO in Marseille.

Here for the first time, Léa Barbazanges presents
her work begun more than three years ago on diatoms.
Invisible to the naked eye, these microalgae are essential
to the planet's equilibrium and play a key part in regulating
the climate. This *Leptocylinthus mediterraneus* was
gathered off the Kerguelen Islands in the southern
Indian Ocean and photographed using electron microscopy.
Using a particular mechanism, the artist shows the
serrated architecture of a diatom on an unprecedented
scale. When diatoms die, their silica structure remains
and they move from the plant to the mineral kingdom.





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Marble veins
2017

Marble powder from sanding a block
of marble, sandpaper, aluminium,
anti-reflective glass and lead
27.5 × 22.5 cm / 42.5 × 37 × 1 cm
(with the frame)

The tree-like structure of the markings on this piece
of marble is common to all natural kingdoms and
on all scales, from iron inclusions to blood vessels
and sap veins. It reveals the imprint of water, the trace
of the liquid that formed the material and hence
a trace of life. This work reminds us that marble is made
from debris of the solid matter of the first living beings
on the seabeds of the Precambrian: in dying, animals
and plants became mineralized.





Earth
2017

Black faience
34 × 44 × 14 cm

Work created with Sylvain Rieu-Piquet
and produced with the support
of the Cité Internationale des Arts
and the Ecole nationale supérieure
des Beaux-Arts de Paris.

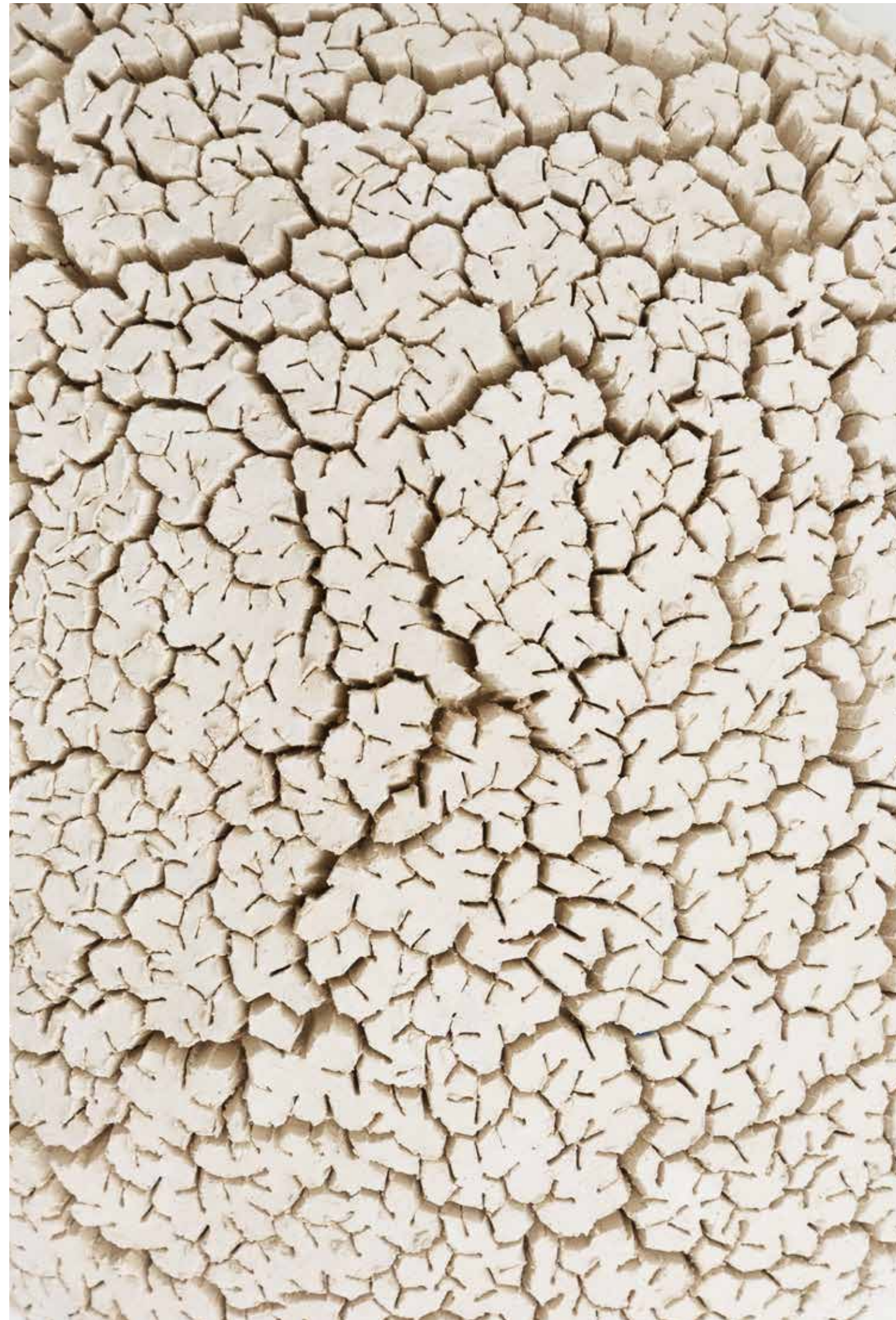




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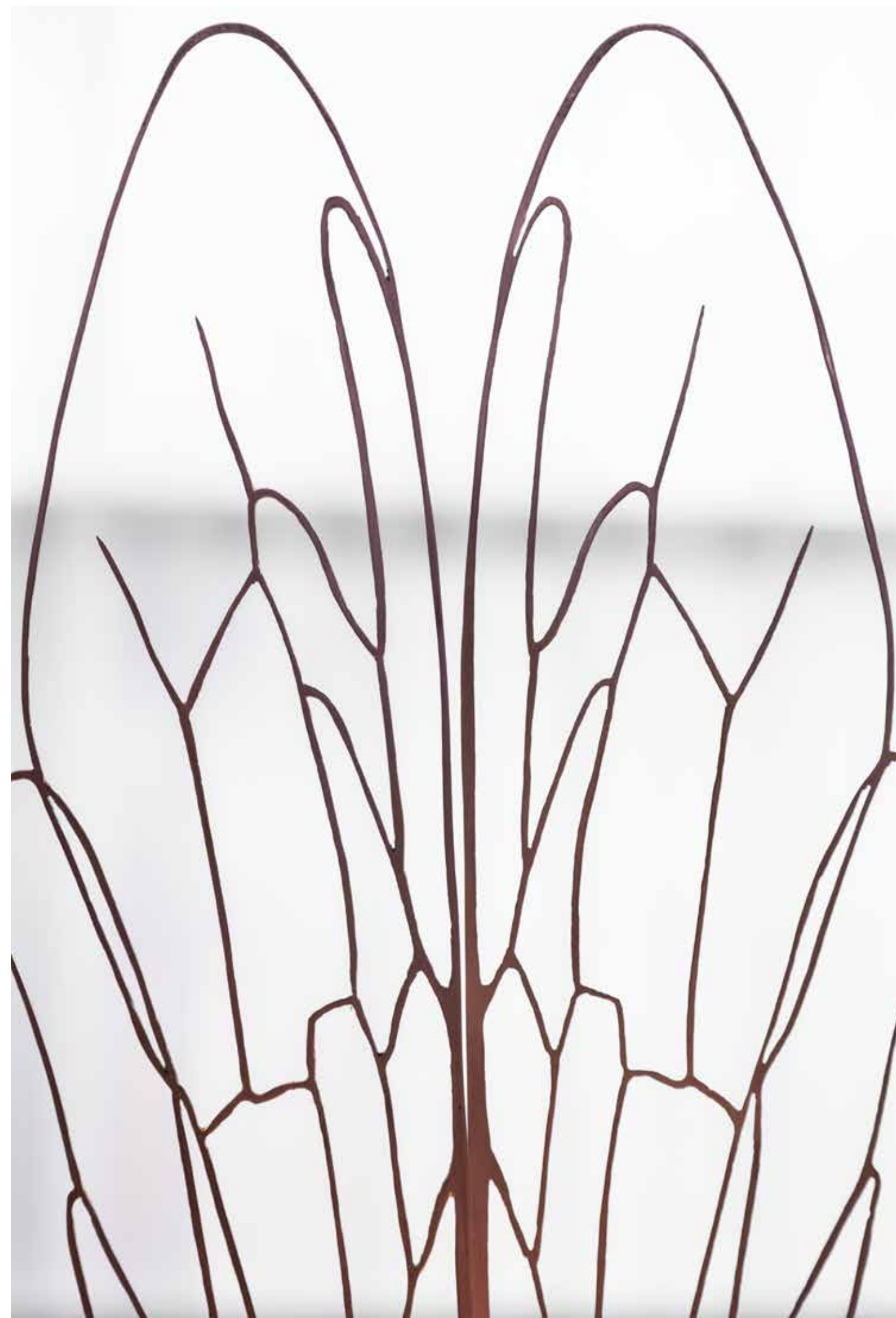


Apis
2018-2026

Copper, mechanical device
58 × 28 × 1.5 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place,
musée Saint-Louis, 2026.

Close observation of the nerve patterns
of a honey bee's (Apis) wings reveals their perfection.
By enlarging these and setting them in very slow motion,
Léa Barbazanges shows us something we do not usually
notice thereby paying homage to a structure as beautiful
as it is efficient.





Silk drawings
2007

Walnut husk on spider silk
26 × 31.5 × 3.1 cm /
44 × 50 × 7 cm (with frame)

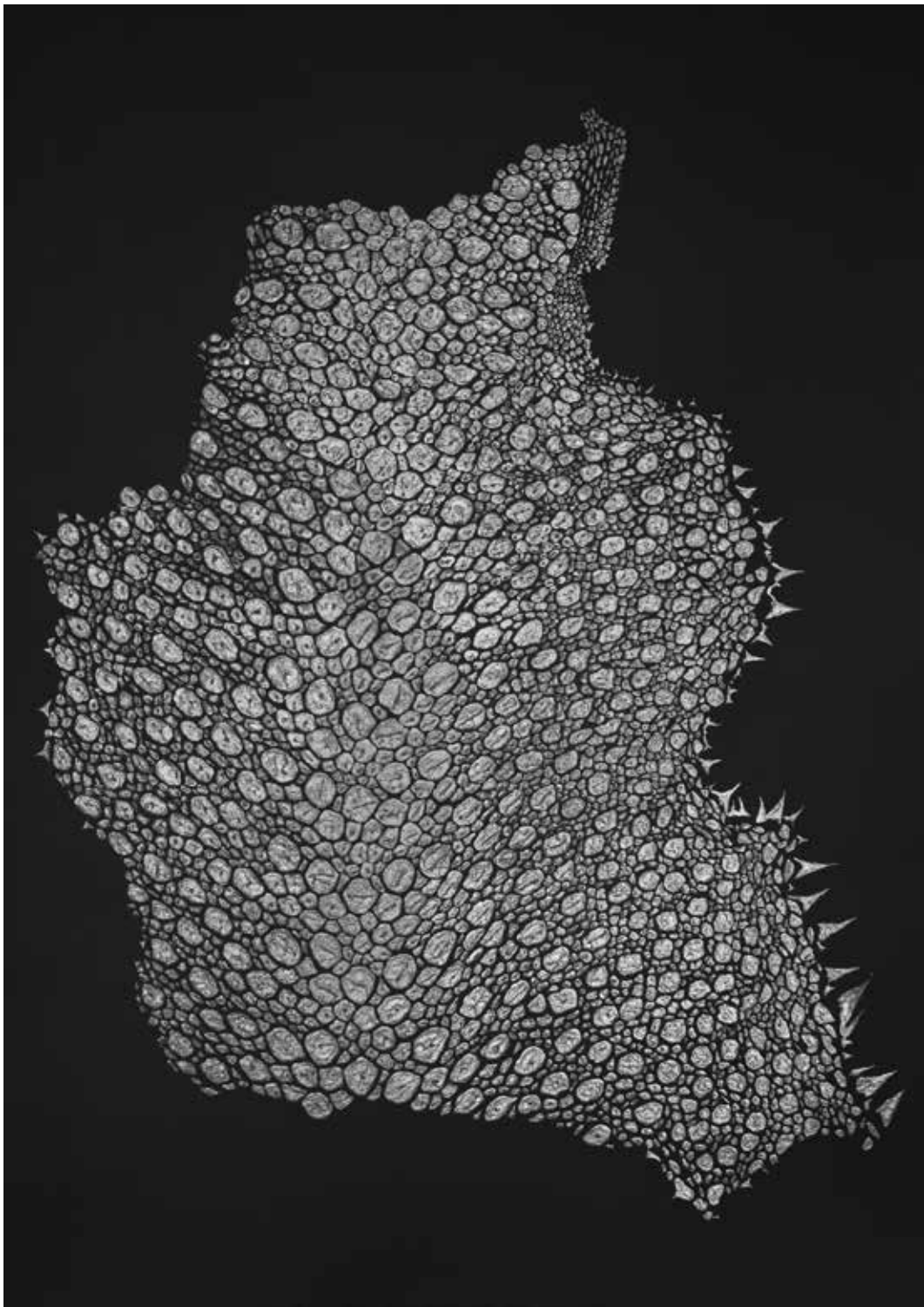
The Latin name of the house spider, *Tegenaria domestica*, is derived from *tegetarius*, meaning “blanket-maker”. The silk it produces has unsuspected properties: it is extremely flexible but also particularly durable. Léa Barbazanges gathers cobwebs abandoned by their occupants and turns them into a sheet for drawing on, showing the subtle structure of this natural weave.



Silk drawings II
2007

Walnut husk on spider silk
26 × 31.5 × 3.1 cm /
44 × 50 × 7 cm (with frame)

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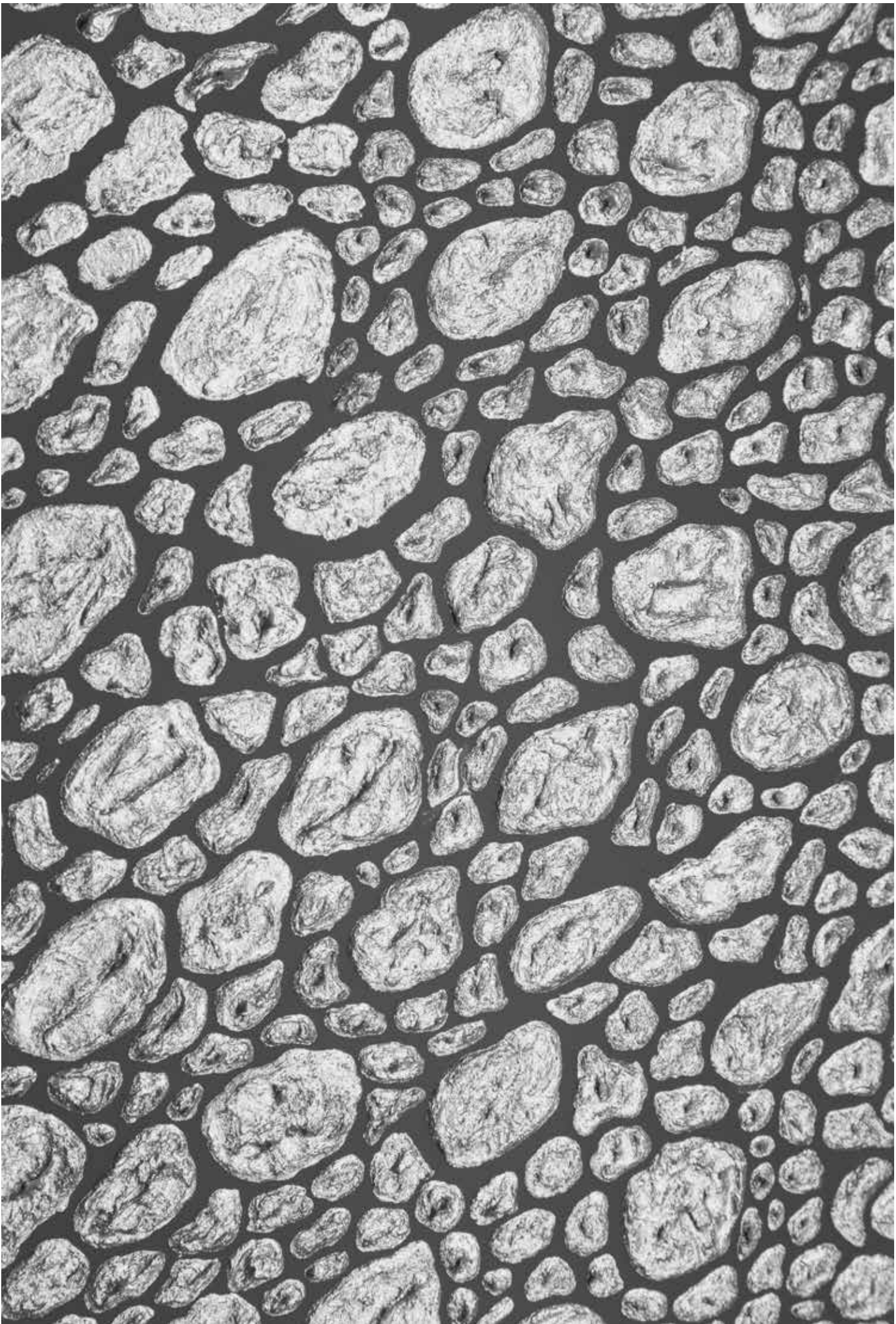


Moult drawing
2026

Mica, binding agent, tracing paper
126 × 91.6 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.

Based on the greatly enlarged moult of a reptile (Pogona vitticeps), this drawing on tracing paper takes us deep into the rich structure of the creature's scales. Léa Barbazanges attends carefully to each outline, creating a veritable landscape of craters and confluences, and blurring the boundary between the infinitely small and the infinitely large.





Moult
2026

Crystal
41 × 45 × 4 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.

This sculpture made of crystal from the Saint-Louis factory should be seen not as a skin having become too small and shed by the reptile wearing it, but as its inverted image: the artist returns the envelope and transforms the container into content. The crystal fills it like solidified water, revealing the subtleties of its outlines.





Moult
2026

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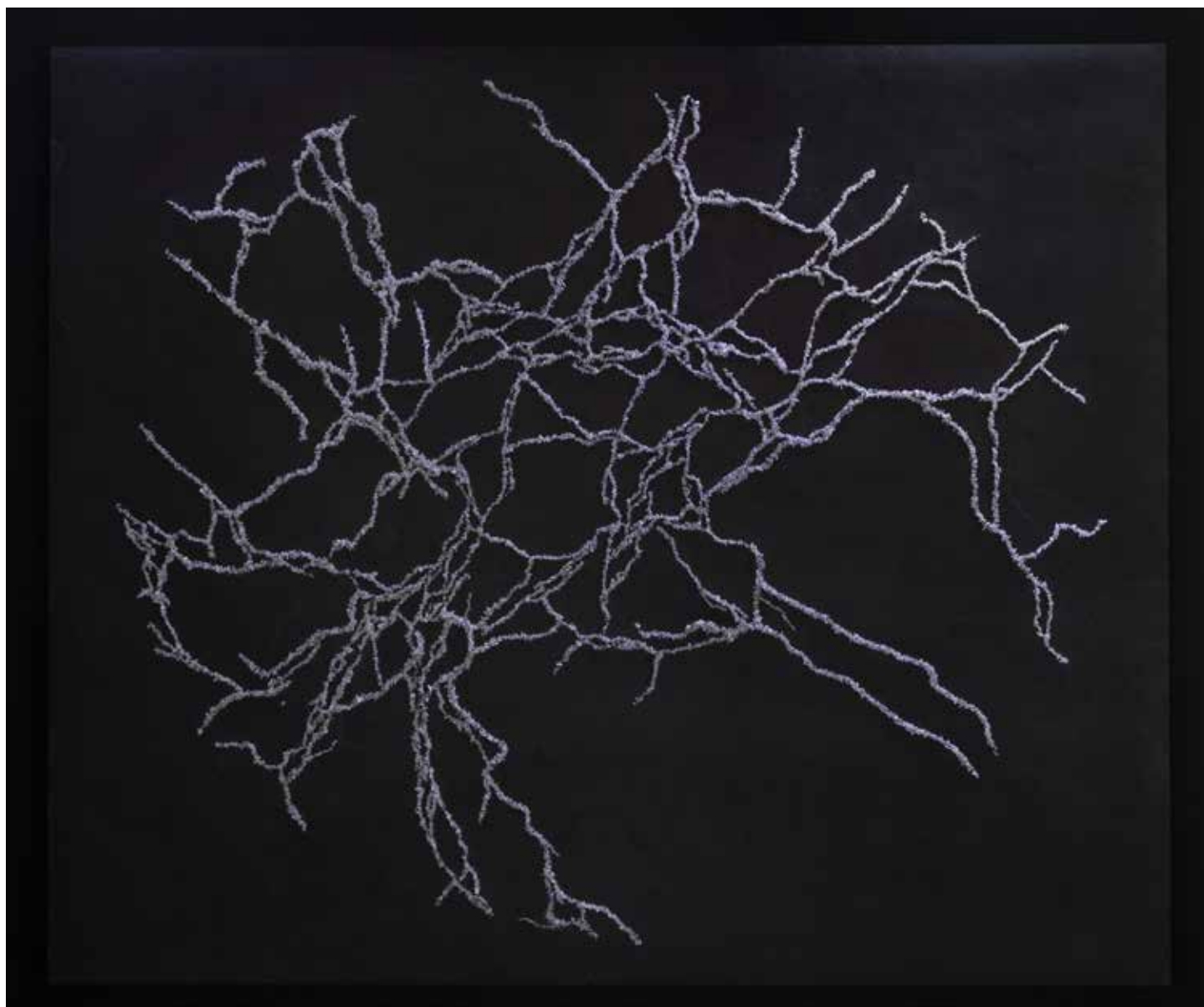


Landscape
2026

Sandstone, haematite, graphite and iron.
With the expertise of Catherine Remmy.
27.5 × 36.5 × 2.5 cm (each element)

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place,
musée Saint-Louis, 2026.





Stone fissures
2026

Fluorite, slate
99.5 × 120 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès

For this work, Léa Barbazanges started out by observing the thin film forming on the surface of a liquid and the sinuous patterns that appear in it. She reproduces this network of very fine lines in a kind of miniature plate tectonics, the faults of which are made of small, naturally fluorescent stones - extracted from a fluorite deposit in the Drôme department.





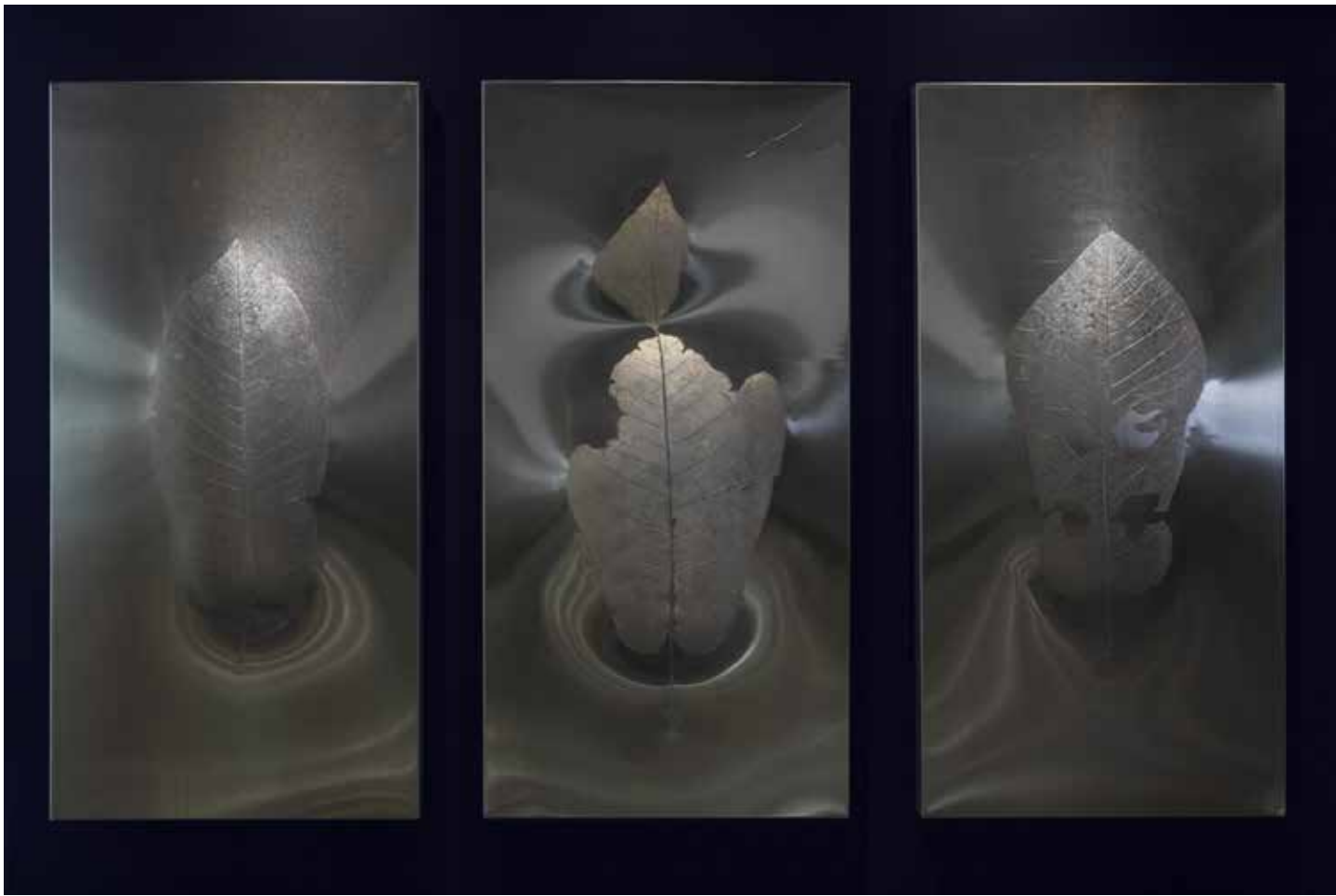
Mica line
2020

Backlit mica assemblage
32 × 1404 × 8 cm

Work produced with the support of Musée Ziem, Martigues, and the expertise of Sylvain Ravy, CNRS researcher and director of research at the solid state physics laboratory of the University of Paris-Saclay. Exhibition view at La Grande Place, musée Saint-Louis, 2026.

Depending on your point of view, mica is sometimes grey (its natural colour), sometimes multicoloured, across a startling spectrum reminiscent of soap bubbles. Léa Barbazanges works with mica sheets to create an elusive and ever-changing installation. Mica line is a fissure through which we glimpse a sky, an ocean, a dream of intensely eye-catching colours. But it is futile to try and capture this beauty, different for each of us and changing as soon as one moves. Mica line is an epiphany.





Magnolia macrophylla-The masks
2017

Stamped aluminium
80 × 40 × 4 cm (each element)

Work produced in collaboration
 with the HH Services classic car restorer
 (Strasbourg).

A leaf on a sheet: mimicking the technique
 of the sheet-metal worker, Léa Barbazanges transfers
 the pattern of a hollowed-out magnolia leaf on
 to a sheet of aluminium. Depending on the observer's
 position, the work can appear mute, with the
 sheet seeming empty; and then a slight sideways
 shift will make the subtlety of the pattern appear.
 The work reveals itself to those who approach
 it slowly and are prepared to move around.





Page of wings
2005

Wings of *Calliphora vicina* flies
assembled on an A4 page, edge to edge
7 pages of wings, one per year
29.7 × 21 cm / 60 × 49.5 × 7.5 cm
(with frame)





Plane tree fragments
2007-2026

84 structures of platano fruit,
copper, plane tree wood
19 × 30 × 4 cm

Work produced with the support of Fondation
d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place, musée
Saint-Louis, 2026.

The parts of this sculpture reminiscent of an age-old
calculating machine, an abacus, seem weightless:
here Léa Barbazanges highlights the round structure
- with its many tiny openings - hidden under plane
tree achenes.
Put together, they form rows and columns marking
a mysterious counting system perhaps related to the
passage of time - indeed, there are twelve sections like
the months of a year and the succession of seasons.



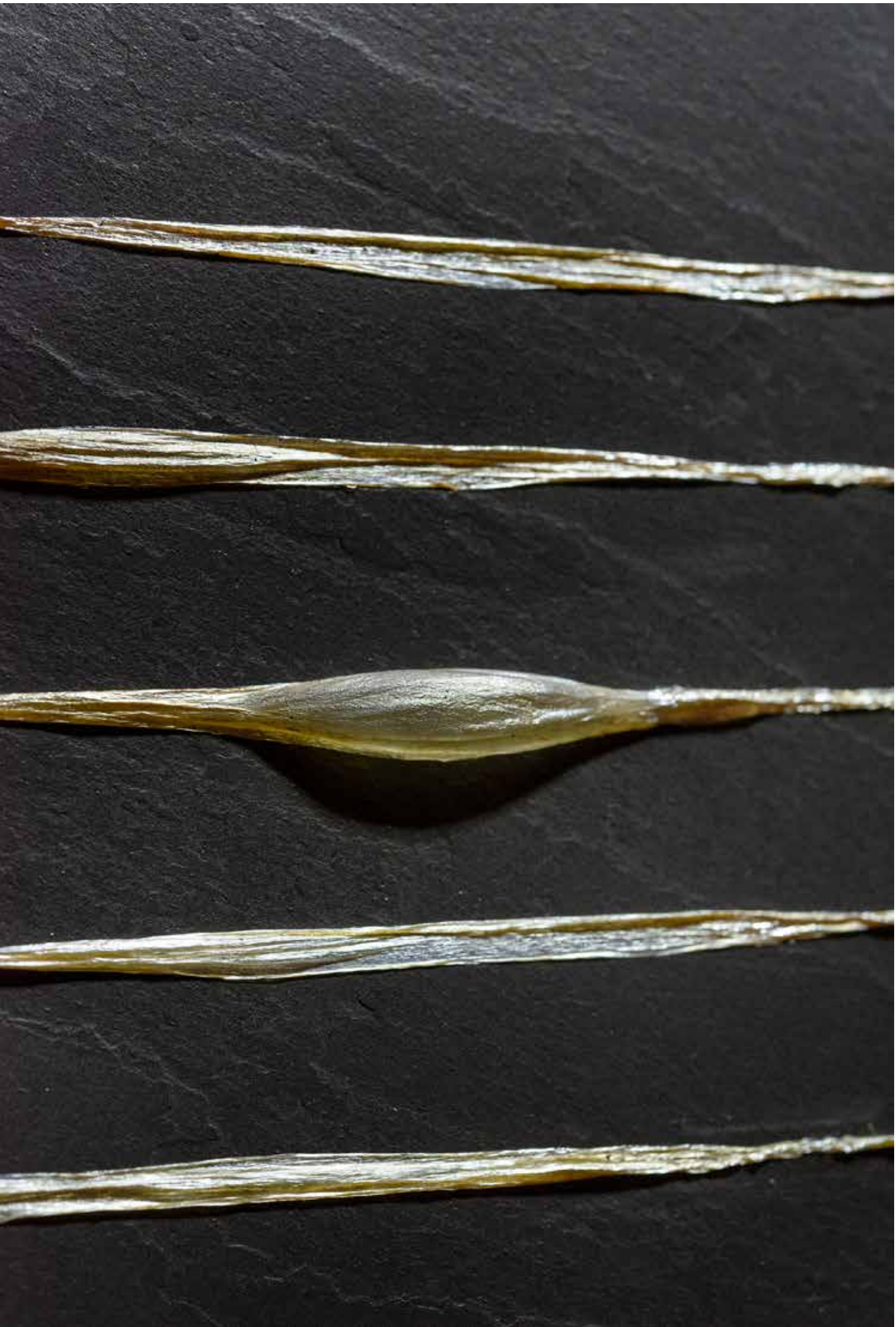


Of air and water
2008-2026

Fish swim bladders, slate
56 × 75 × 2.2 cm
altarpiece : 92 × 60 × 27.5 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place,
musée Saint-Louis, 2026.

The swim bladder is an organ found in bony fish. It looks like a small inflated bag and serves to ensure better flotation. With its completely unexpected colouring - at times it is iridescent, at times shot through with quicksilver - the collage Léa Barbazanges has created from this substance reveals its beauty, fascinated as she is by this “hidden organ” and its coruscating shimmer.





Optics
2015

12 photographs of crystals seen
through a lens, print on Hahnemühle
fibre-based paper, lead frames
with anti-reflective glass
19.5 × 14.5 cm (each element)

Formed by Petri dishes or refractor telescopes,
these circles show nature's refinements, microscopic
or macroscopic, vegetable or mineral, always animated
by cyclical fluids.



Vibrissae
2026

Cat's whiskers, sandstone
16 × 16 × 15 cm

Work produced with the support
of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès.
Exhibition view at La Grande Place,
musée Saint-Louis, 2026.

