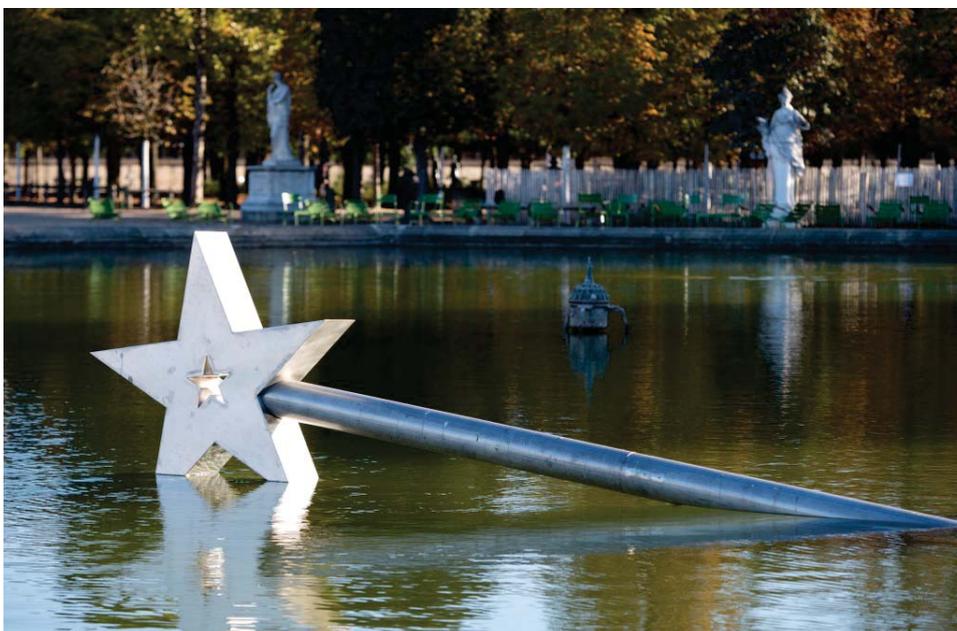


**“Jean-Luc Verna
— Vous n’êtes pas un peu beaucoup maquillé ?
— Non
Rétrospective”**

*“Jean-Luc Verna
‘Haven’t you overdone the make-up a wee bit?’
‘No’
Retrospective”*

**Exhibition by Jean-Luc Verna
22 October 2016 to 26 February 2017**

**Curated by Frank Lamy
with the assistance of Julien Blanpied**



1.

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A highlight of this autumn's programme at MAC VAL is the Jean-Luc Verna show being held in the temporary exhibition space. With this, his first solo show in a French museum, the artist has conceived a 'gesture of deposition,' as if to register his desire to start something new in a career that has already been going for a quarter of a century. A pioneer among members of his generation in the art of drawing, long before the current interest in this medium, at the MAC VAL he is presenting an art based on the body and all its states, explored in every possible medium: drawing, but also photography, installation, music and dance. 'The idea is less to show art objects than to convey by a material and spatial transcription the singular experience that is the art of Jean-Luc Verna,' notes the exhibition's curator, Frank Lamy. Draughtsman, writer, dancer, choreographer, director, actor – Verna is a multidisciplinary artist who places the body at the centre of his work, in all its dimensions and moods: by turns glorious, wretched, taking pleasure, suffering, altered, struggling, alive. He uses drawing the way he uses his body and his skin, as a space to both deform and disguise as well as embellish, to be transformed as much as celebrated.

His world, a mix of high and pop culture, is dense with artistic, mythological, cinematic and musical references, peopled with ghosts, presences and friends such as Bruno Pelassy, Brice Dellsperger and Gisèle Vienne. The retrospective sequence of this exhibition, punctuated by new pieces, highlights the constant, recurring nature of Verna's concerns and motifs. The strict, straightforward display stands in strong contrast to the baroque, carnivalesque and almost grotesque qualities of the work. At the centre, a theatrical device works both as an installation and a stage to be activated by the artist throughout the duration of the exhibition. An omnipresent soundtrack inhabits the sequence, 'by moonlight,' and, like the lighting design created specially for the occasion, helps visitors enter the artist's world, a world that may seem as dark as it is rich in signs of renewal. Indeed, the show may also be seen as recalling a *danse macabre* – 'not a Gothic one, but a New Wave one, of course!' adds Verna. It is like an epitaph but also embodies the life drive, symbolising a turning page: a retrospective enabling rebirth.



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Throughout its duration, the exhibition will be accompanied by musical, choreographic and cinematic events. The eagerly anticipated highlights of this programme include a cine-concert by Steven Severin, a show by Catherine Robbe-Grillet and Beverly Charpentier, a performance by poet Jean-Michel Espitalier and dancer, choreographer and Labanotation expert Valeria Giuga, a concert by I Apologize, cartes blanches to Stephen O'Malley and the record labels Les Disques en Rotin Réunis created by Arnaud Maguet and Optical Sound, created by Pierre Belouin and P. Nicolas Ledoux, and as well as the reactivation of 'I Apologize,' a 'post-dramatic' polymorphous work by Gisèle Vienne (February 2017). The exhibition catalogue features texts by Laurent Devèze, Alexia Fabre, Frank Lamy, Emmanuelle Lequeux, Philippe Liotard, Corinne Rondeau, Claude-Hubert Tatot and Bernard Vouilloux, plus an interview with the artist by Valérie Da Costa.

Jean-Luc Verna was born in 1966. He lives and works in Paris. He is represented in France by the Air de Paris gallery.
<http://www.airdeparis.com/artists/jean-luc-verna/>

The visuals

1. Jean-Luc Verna, *Magic Wand*, 2013. Stainless steel, 550 x 170 cm (tube, diameter 22 cm). Installation at the Jardin des Tuileries, Paris, 2014. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
2. Jean-Luc verna, *Magic Wand*, 2013. Stainless steel, 550 x 170 cm (tube, diameter 22 cm). Photo © Paul Chevallier.
3. Jean-Luc Verna, *Nul*, 2016. Transfer on paper heightened with pencil and make-up, 15.5 x 155 cm. Photo © Aurélien Mole. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
4. Jean-Luc Verna, *Silver Paramor*, 2011. Manual monochrome silkscreen on vinyl stretched on wood, LEDs, electrical system. Diameter 120 cm. Coproduction La Graineterie art centre, Houilles. Photo © Aurélien Mole. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
5. Jean Luc Verna, *There she goes again*, 2016. Transfer on paper heightened with pencil and make-up, 33 x 25 cm. Photo © Aurélien Mole. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
6. Jean-Luc Verna, *Par amour*, 2011. Transfer on varnished wood, fairy lights (80 colour bulbs). Diameter 265 cm. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.

7. Jean-Luc Verna, *Siouxie*, 2015. Transfer onto Bristol paper heightened with colour and make-up, 61.2 cm x 59.8 cm. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris.
8. Jean-Luc Verna, *Read into my black holes*, 2016. Transfer on paper heightened with pencil and make-up, 30 x 32.5 cm. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
9. Jean-Luc Verna, *Amputated Day*, 2000. Ink on fabric heightened with pencil, make-up and paint, ironwork nails, 118 x 71 cm. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
10. Jean-Luc Verna, *Ophelia in the Ghost Paradise*, 2011. Transfer onto wood heightened with dry pastel and acrylic pastel, synthetic hair, 110 x 110 x 15 cm. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
11. Jean-Luc Verna, *Mlle Fox*, 2016. Transfer on paper heightened with colour pencil and make-up, 42.5 x 53 cm. Photo © Marc Damage. Courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris.

For the full programme, see www.macval.fr