

PARIS.- "Out Of My Body" is a major work by Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota, born in 1972. Thanks to a joint donation by Olivier Varenne and Guillaume Levy-Lambert, it has entered the collection of the Centre Pompidou - Musée National d'Art Moderne. This striking installation, composed of intricately woven red leather, was specially created by Chiharu for a unique exhibition organised by Olivier Varenne in November 2023 in Geneva, at the Splendid—a former pornographic cinema transformed into a temporary contemporary art space.

This donation is part of the spontaneous collaboration between two distant cousins, united by a shared passion for art and museums. Partners since 2019, they have facilitated the sale of exceptional masterpieces by some of the greatest artists of the 20th century. In many ways, the cousins felt the Centre Pompidou would be the natural beneficiary of this work's donation. Guillaume, a resident of Singapore, and Olivier, based in Geneva, both have a particular attachment to this institution which, the first in the world, succeeded in revolutionising access to culture.

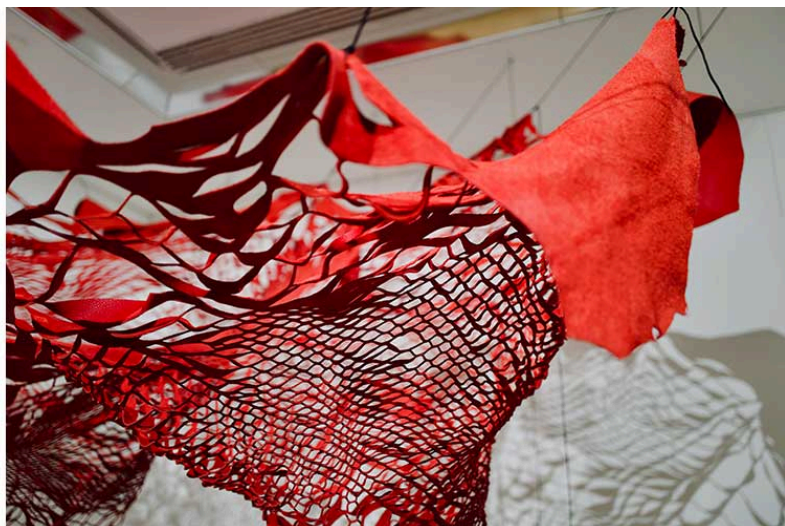


Guillaume Levy-Lambert. Photo: Victor d'Allant.

The choice of "Out Of My Body" followed discussions between Olivier Varenne and the museum. It is now the first major installation by Chiharu Shiota to be part of the museum's collection. The work reflects the numerous exhibitions and commissions Olivier has carried out with the artist over the past fifteen years, beginning in 2009 with her invitation to the 3rd Moscow Biennale, of which he was a co-curator.

Intangible and delicate, Chiharu's work explores intimate experiences, questioning identity, memory, the body, life, and death. To do so, she uses assemblages of diverse materials and objects, often personal.

Olivier and Guillaume grew up surrounded by artists and remarkable works from an early age. For generations, art has represented a spirit of openness and humanism within their families. "Our great-grandmothers were sisters, and I grew up hearing about donations," comments Guillaume. "We are delighted to continue this tradition."



"Out of my Body" by Chiharu Shiota, 2023 (detail). Gift of Olivier Varenne & Guillaume Levy-Lambert (MONAD Contemporary Art SA). Photo: Victor d'Allant.

To allow visitors to appreciate Chiharu Shiota's work, "Out Of My Body" is now installed in a dedicated room in the contemporary collections (level 4).

Laurent Le Bon, President of the Centre Pompidou, and Xavier Rey, Director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, are delighted by the inclusion of this work in the collection: "We are deeply grateful to Guillaume and Olivier for their generosity, which has significantly enriched the national collection with this donation."



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Guillaume Levy-Lambert

From their legendary encounter with Roy Lichtenstein’s “Desk Calendar”, Guillaume Levy-Lambert and his partner Mark Goh have built a touching and marvellous legacy. Together, they created the MaGMA Collection, part of which was exhibited in Paris during the exhibition “The Calendar Story” at Sotheby’s in 2014. Recently, they were named “Distinguished Patron of the Arts” by Singapore’s Ministry of Culture.

Guillaume is also the founder of Art Porters Gallery, which specialises in young artists from Southeast Asia, and a conceptual artist whose original works invite reflection on Divine providence. Born near Paris, he has lived in Singapore for 30 years, following stints in Tokyo and Hong Kong. An HEC Paris graduate, he worked for 13 years at BNP Paribas in asset management before a dramatic career shift that led him to head Publicis in Asia-Pacific for a decade.

<https://linktr.ee/guillaumelevylambert>



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Olivier Varenne

Born in Paris into a family of collectors and dealers, Olivier Varenne inherited his passion for art from his father, who opened a gallery in Geneva in 1978. After studying hotel management and earning a finance degree in California, Olivier quickly turned to the art market, drawn to artists such as Dubuffet, Ben, and Christo from a young age.

He began his career at Pace Wildenstein in New York, followed by Gagosian in London, where he met David Walsh, founder of the MONA museum in Tasmania. In 2006, Olivier joined Walsh to develop MONA’s contemporary section, travelling the globe for ten years in search of emblematic works. Returning to Geneva, he opened his gallery in 2022, opposite MAMCO, focusing on renowned 20th-century artists and the new generation.

<https://varenne.art>



From L to R: Xavier Rey, Laurent Le Bon, Guillaume Levy-Lambert, Olivier Varenne. Photo: Victor d'Allant.

Chiharu Shiota

Based in Berlin, Chiharu Shiota, born in 1972 in Osaka, represented Japan at the Venice Biennale in 2015 with "The Key in the Hand". Through installations woven with red or black threads, she explores themes such as memory, identity, and human connections.

After studying painting, she shifted to performance art before joining Marina Abramović in Germany to deepen her artistic practice. The red threads that dominate her work symbolise connections between individuals and the complex network of emotions. She describes the colour as representing blood, but also as a metaphor for the invisible links that bind us across time and space.

<https://www.chiharu-shiota.com>

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