

Press Kit



The "Regard d'Obsidienne" Exhibition (Visions of Obsidian)

Conceived by Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc

and produced by cub-ar

at the Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier

8, rue Debelleye - 75003 Paris - Tel. + 33 (0)1.49.96.63.00

www.pacea.fr

From January 21 to March 12, 2011

Obsidian through the eyes of 13 contemporary designers:

**Mathilde Brétilot, Roland Daraspe, Marion Fillancq, Olivier Gagnère,
Christian Ghion, Tetsuo Harada, Arik Levy, Patrick Nadeau, Elie Papiernik,
Nestor Perkal, Sylvain Rieu-Piquet, Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc and Flavien Théry**

**The "Regard d'Obsidienne" exhibition is the outcome of an encounter between
Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc and Michel der Agobian (of cub-ar),
the presenter of precious objects in obsidian from Armenia.**

**Sibertin-Blanc's fascination with obsidian led him to ask 13 artists for their personal take
on this classic stone. Each one has produced his or her own vision of this extraordinary
material through an original creation, limited to only eight copies, each different, and
now exhibited at the Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier in Paris.**

Introduction by the exhibition curator:

Born millions of years ago on the slopes of Mount Ararat in Armenia, obsidian was first created when a lava flow met with water and suddenly cooled.

In a day when what we make is governed by advanced technology and complicated economic structures, why go back to one of mankind's earliest raw materials?

I love materials; and obsidian is a mineral, a stone, a perfect glass that I find fascinating. A few years ago, in an exhibition I called "La Matière des Lieux" ("A Sense of Place"), I attempted an unlikely showcase of ten projects from France and abroad in which not just local culture but local living matter contributed the broad strokes of my drawings.

When I met Michel der Agobian of cub-ar, I told him how I wished to present and explore this particular material from added points of view, calling on friends and artists from a rich variety of professions—goldsmith, architect, sculptor, designer—people whose work and purpose are also all about material and craft.

Prehistoric man made use very early on of obsidian for tools, for living. And there has been such a thing as design ever since we became human.

"Visions of Obsidian" is thirteen intersecting tales that invite us to rediscover this material, through different cultures that open like so many doors into the museum of our imaginations.

Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc, Exhibition Curator
December 2010

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Presented and produced by



Images available on request

MATHILDE BRETILLOT *Designer*



Centerpiece: "Swan Lake" (Obsidian and glass)

"The 'wings' play with obsidian's opacity and transparency, creating a fluid choreography. Set on a bright-colored, frosted glass disk, the shapes seem to skate and highlight the composition."



ROLAND DARASPE

Goldsmith, Maître d'art (French Grand Master)



Spinning top: "Vortex" (Obsidian and silver)

"Slabs and boulders and ore trapped in its matrix—from these the obsidian and silver spring forth in a whirling eddy."



MARION FILLANCO

Compagnon verrier (European Glassmaking Diploma)



Sculpture: "Crognongnon" (Obsidian and bronze)

"Prehistoric man shaped stone to serve his needs, and it seems we are still shaping it for new purposes."



OLIVIER GAGNERE

Interior Architect



Candelabra: "Carousel" (Obsidian and 18 carat gold plate)

"Darkness and transparency are the words that come to mind when I look at obsidian. So it seemed so obvious to me to relate this material to light and the golden metal that reflects it. The candlestick carries the light that chases away the gloom; the lantern holds in light that escapes, through the transparency of the obsidian."



CHRISTIAN GHION

Designer



Vase: "Mineral Vibration" (Obsidian)

"A mineral vibration, a shock wave, and reference to a seismogram."

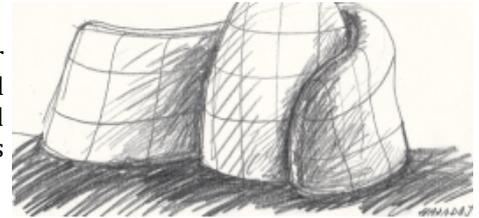


TETSUO HARADA
Sculptor



**"Coiling"
(Obsidian)**

"I was attracted by simple shapes, just two or three that nest and intertwine. I imagined showing the elegance of obsidian, a material with a certain nobility along with its softness and purity."



ARIK LEVY



**"Absence"
(Obsidian)**



PATRICK NADEAU
Architect



**Vase: "Eruption"
(Obsidian and crystal)**

"Obsidian is beautiful in slab form, as a fragment of vitrified lava, black, opaque and reflective. Once machined, to a fine thinness, it becomes transparent, precious, luminous, crossed with mysterious striping and emitting a kind of strangeness. Are we looking at stone or glass? "Eruption" is an assembly of coarse rock, polished rock and colored crystal. The crystal emerges from the obsidian and the two materials meld into a faded color. This is a vase. It relates the vegetable to the mineral, evoking pioneer plants that colonize the lava fields."



ELIE PAPIERNIK
Designer



**Bestiary: "The Zebra"
(Obsidian, stainless steel and wood)**

"This is a zebra, treated as a logo. Its outline is made of stainless. The outline forms a frame and will hold the obsidian. The obsidian imitates, in its natural state, the markings on the animal. To make very plain that the zebra is not real, the frame is empty between the front and rear portions . . ."



NESTOR PERKAL

Interior architect



**"Triptych Mirror"
(Obsidian and steel)**

"Mexican obsidian is jet black, while that of Armenia is amber. The piece I have imagined juxtaposes these two worlds. It is a mirror, or rather, an object that plays with reflection. Two grimacing and translucent masks inspired by pre-Columbian civilization surround a magic mirror with an opaque surface. This triptych conveys the strangeness and expressive power of obsidian, which here is cut from the block."



SYLVAIN RIEU-PIQUET

Designer and visual artist



**"Black Shadow"
(Obsidian)**

"Like Incan sacrificial knives, this is a ceremonial sword, caught in the duality of an object at once dangerous and precious, perhaps fragile. But this shadow-like weapon will cut. A secret murderess. The evanescent blackness of obsidian holds within it



stealthy, cruel intentions."

**JEAN-BAPTISTE
SIBERTIN-BLANC**

Designer



**Vase: "Nearly Perfect Chaos"
(Obsidian and gold-plated bronze)**

"Anyone who has seen lava flow down the sides of Mt. Etna will remember the power of the flames and earth's guts spilling out. But after the flood—balance is restored."



FLAVIEN THERY

Designer



**"The Door"
(Obsidian, modified LCD screen, medium and lacquered beech)**

"Obsidian was used by the Aztecs to make dark mirrors used for fortune-telling. Maybe that is why it symbolizes the passage between two worlds. Here the stone is set in light, the better to plumb its mysteries. As an object of fascination it therefore gives us a glimpse into a hidden dimension, a parallel universe that it seems to contain, concentrating all of space within its finite volume."



Obsidian

www.cub-ar.com



ORIGIN Born millions of years ago on the slopes of Mount Ararat, **obsidian was created when a lava flow met with water and suddenly cooled.** Mount Ararat is not only the chief symbol of Armenia, seen on the coat of arms of the national flag, but also the source of Armenia's obsidian deposits.

OVERLOOKED Obsidian from Armenia, **formed 4 million years ago**, accompanied mankind in its earliest steps from prehistory towards civilization. Because Armenia belonged to the Soviet Union and was closed off until 1991, it has preserved untapped obsidian flows of incomparable beauty. It was in 2004 that **Michel der Agobian** created cub-ar and presented his first collection of obsidian from Armenia. The pieces are made in workshops there. Confident in their unique and age-old know-how, Armenian workers handle the stone with unusual sure-handedness, which is a crucial talent when cutting obsidian. From each stone, selected for its beauty, can come only a very small number of pieces. This fact, along with the stone worker's handiwork, means that each piece is one-of-a-kind, something totally extraordinary that will meet the most exacting standards. Cub-ar believes in fair trade and the ethical treatment of employees and suppliers, as befits high-quality products. The cub-ar collection is carried by many stores around the world. Some of the most celebrated architects and designers have made use of obsidian.

TRANSLUCENT BLACK or IRIDESCENT BROWN

The features of Obsidian from Armenia make it an **extraordinary gemstone.** Highly consistent, it is renowned for its beauty and the way it cuts, and is the only obsidian in the world that is translucent. The sediments it incorporates take on breathtaking shapes. Obsidian is beyond category, and has been compared to Chinese lacquerware for its sheen and to black crystal for its translucency. It is a cross of every material there is. Its composition makes it the earliest natural glass, while its veining suggests fine wood and its streaking evokes sumi-e brush strokes.



SPIRIT Its blackness, which is the color of spiritual mastery in the East, endows it with an amount of higher consciousness. Besides its use as a jewel, Obsidian is also **famous for its health-giving energy.** Its benefits are applied in lithotherapy, where it is one of the primary stones used.

ART Stone-cutting is an **ancient technique in Armenia handed down from father to son.** Every piece is entirely hand-made, judged only by the naked eye. The Armenians are known the world over for their stonemasons who work with precious stones.

The Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier

8, rue Debelleye - 75003 Paris - Tel. + 33 (0)1.49.96.63.00 - www.pacea.fr
Open Tuesday through Saturday from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm



Converted by designer Christopher Pillet from old craftsmen's workshops, the four floors of the **Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier**, located in the heart of the Marais district near the Musée Picasso, contain an eclectic mix presented in the manner of a "**contemporary curio room.**"



Barely into his thirties, Pierre-Alain Challier is today **the youngest gallery owner in the very sought-after "contemporary art Marais."** He has, on his own and exclusively, continued to display the celebrated collection of *objets d'art* from the original ARTCURIAL gallery, established in 1975 with works from major 20th century artists—from Sonia Delaunay to Arman, from Man-Ray to Jean Cocteau or Zao Wou-Ki, and later Jean-Pierre Raynaud or Robert Combas.

His collections are regularly enriched by **exclusive new works**, such as those of designer Hubert Le Gall, a chest by Jean-Michel Othoniel, the functional art of Nicola L., along with sculptures by Yayoi Kusama, the paintings of Nils-Udo, the photographic work of François Rousseau and more.

Themed exhibitions—such as "CRAFT: The Ceramic Experience;" "She, too . . ." a tribute to the gallery's woman artists; "Damien Hirst, the Engravings;" "Gold and Silver"; kinetic artists up to Erwin Wurm; "Modern and Contemporary Prints" and "Jewelry by artists"—showcase **limited editions by contemporary artists** and alternate **with large-scale solo exhibitions** dedicated to artists promoted exclusively by the gallery (such Nils-Udo, François Rousseau, Marie-Noëlle de La Poype), not only in international fairs but also in the major Paris museums.

It was after the success of the exhibition devoted to contemporary ceramics, and his meeting with Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc and Michel der Agobian, that the idea took root to **continue exploring the infinite applications of art and technique with "Visions of Obsidian."**