

Art in Forcalquier Celebrating 10 years of Les Ateliers Ouverts



The artists and artisans of Forcalquier celebrate their 10th anniversary! From July 28 through 31, dozens of creators and galleries of the association *Les Ateliers* will open their doors throughout the town, providing an opportunity to discover work that is as diverse as it is captivating. In addition, **the Ateliers Ouverts festival** includes musical events, guided tours and two free creative workshops for children during the weekend. An exhibit by internationally renowned artist Susan Stockwell will mark the occasion, as well as a group exhibition, a collaborative work by members of the association, an art installation by Michael Roberts and a photo exhibition by Yves Riché, **a retrospective of the last ten years**.

Art in Forcalquier

Painters, sculptors, ceramists, jewellers, bookbinders, weavers, engravers, and illustrators will show the incredible creative enthusiasm of this small Provencal town. The festival is a joyful and convivial opportunity to explore. Exhibitors will be listed on a map. A guide will give tours of the art route and exceptional places around the historic centre of Forcalquier, which was once the seat of the powerful Counts of Forcalquier and Provence.

Guest of Honour

This year, the association's guest of honour is **Susan Stockwell**, an internationally renowned British artist. In an astonishing and historical setting, Susan Stockwell's exhibition installation at the Hôtel d'Astier will evoke the night sky, hot air balloons, and a miniature universe. Similar to her previous works, meticulously crafted and subtly revealing, they will establish the links between global warming, pandemics, and our fragile world. In addition, she will create one of her **Sculptural Dresses**, especially for this location, to reflect her time in France and mainland Europe. Entitled *Europa*, the sculpture comments on recent and historical events in Europe, including the war in Ukraine, Brexit and mass migration. The exhibit is from July 28 through August 7. In addition, Susan will give an informal talk at 4:30 pm on Saturday, August 5.



Susan Stockwell ©Jonathan Turner



Territorial Dress, 2018
collection Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, NL



Cartographic Dress, 2019

© Peter Abrahams



Cocathédrale de Forcalquier Notre-Dame du Bourguet, © Sébastien Renard, L'oeil du Goupil



© George Greenlee



Works in progress, Susan Stockwell's studio in Provence 2023

La Haute Provence Inspires Michael Roberts

Painter and printmaker **Michael Roberts** will enchant the public with his installation entitled “Le souffle.” A series of vibrant flags will adorn the medieval arches of the Couvent des Cordeliers. They were inspired by the stunning architecture and the classical music festival “***Les Rencontres Musicales de Haute Provence***” (July 23 through 28).

Michael will employ his usual strong pop sensibility, sense of humour and artful subversiveness in an explosion of colour. His installation is visible during the RMHP concerts for concertgoers with tickets. Free entry from July 29 through July 31, 10 am to 1 pm and 3:30 to 7:30 pm, and during the guided tours.



Flags, Michael Roberts, Exhibit Passage au jardin, Bouzouls July 2022



South wall, cloister Couvent des Cordeliers

Art in Forcalquier

Both Susan and Michael are on a sabbatical year from London to the Forcalquier area. Witnessing the differences between France and the UK has been insightful and liberating for them. For Susan, whose work is made from found, everyday materials, having access to the bountiful brocantes in Provence has been motivating and a great way to source new materials. Michael discovers that impressive medieval spaces give him a fresh canvas to work with, inspiring site-specific pieces about the area, light, and subject.

True to their tradition of welcoming artists from all horizons and disciplines, the association “Les Ateliers de Forcalquier” is particularly pleased to welcome them to this artistic anniversary celebration.

Both exhibition sites are exceptional places in the town.

Unique Exhibit Spaces

The Hôtel d’Astier is a 15th and 16th-century mansion with a beautiful Italian Renaissance loggia courtyard. It is also a cultural centre where contemporary art rubs shoulders with theatre and music of all forms (exhibitions, concerts, theatre, and dance performances). Several artists are based in studios here.



Hôtel d'Astier ©Yves Riché

Long abandoned, the Hôtel d'Astier has been rehabilitated, thanks to the intricate restoration work of Alain Geray and his family.

Adjacent to the old 15th-century college, part of the property, the Hôtel d'Astier has an exceptional interior courtyard. The elegant and well-proportioned remains of an Italian Renaissance gallery can be seen here, with large, mullioned windows from the 16th century.

The Cordeliers convent was built in the 13th century, around 1236, on the site of a former Benedictine priory. It was built in a domain given by Raymond Bérenger V of Provence, Count of Forcalquier. It is one of the first Franciscan foundations in Provence.

This name of Cordeliers comes from the rope encircling the waist. This rope is tied with 3 knots signifying poverty, obedience, and chastity.



Couvent des Cordeliers ©Jeanne de Sainte Marie

Michael Roberts's work will be framed by the seven recessed arches on the southern façade (1260).

The arches marked the placement of lordly tombs with the sarcophagus in the lower part and the family coat of arms above, most of which were destroyed during the Revolution. The niches are framed by gothic arches resting on gothic capitals. Only one coat of arms is still visible, that of Dame Bérengère.



Couvent des Cordeliers ©Jeanne de Sainte Marie

The convent is currently the seat of the European University of Scents and Flavours and the **Artemesia Museum**.

A Collective Exhibition

About forty artists and artisans, members of the Ateliers Forcalquier, will exhibit their works in all their diversity and variety of materials and styles in the symbolic space, *Les Caves à Lulu*. In addition, this exhibition will give you a taste of some works of creators who are also exhibiting in other venues in the city.

A Collaborative Work, *The Artist's Hand*

The collaborative work will be a large patchwork, where the individual pieces will be hand-sewn together on a rectangular quilt. By choice of title, the artists and artisans of the association wish to underline what links them in their creations and their diversity. This theme will be interpreted more or less abstractly, depending on each participant's inspiration.

The choice of the quilt for the collaborative work is the original work of Susan Stockwell, the artistic director of the project. According to her, quilts resonate with the need to "create and repair." Recycling and ecology are integral to her creative process and artistic practice. The collaborative work will also be presented in "Les Caves à Lulu."

Every year, the festival "Ateliers Ouverts" is a unique event, with its artists and artisans constantly renewing themselves and evolving in their work. This year, with renewed vigour for their ten-year celebration, collaborative works and guest artists exhibiting in venerable settings, visitors will discover some of the best Forcalquier offers in art and architecture.

About the Author

Jeanne B. de Sainte Marie is an artist, illustrator and author of children's picture books. She loves to depict the magic of real-life or imaginary places, the changing seasons and the world of childhood.

Practical Information:

Susan Stockwell exhibition at the Hôtel d'Astier: 15 rue Marius Debout: from July 28 to August 7 from 10 am to 1 pm and from 3:30 pm to 7:30 pm, closing on August 7 at 1 pm, opening on Saturday, July 29 from 7 pm, meeting with the artist at the Hôtel d'Astier on Saturday, August 5 at 4:30 pm.

Installation "Le Souffle" by Michael Roberts at the Couvent des Cordeliers is visible on the evenings of July 26 to 28 for the public of the Rencontres Musicales concerts with tickets from July 29 to 31, free entry from 10 am to 1 pm and from 3:30 pm to 7:30 pm and during the guided tours.