

# Will Ryman

## La Villette

**On View March 22 - September 16, 2018**

**Press opening Thursday, March 22 at 9.30am**

Curated by Jerome Neutres

**New York-based artist Will Ryman's outdoor site-specific installation at Parc de La Villette, Paris will mark his first major presentation in Europe.**



Installation rendering © Will Ryman

As part of the third edition of Festival 100%, the city's celebrated interdisciplinary arts festival initiated by Parc de La Villette's Director Didier Fusillier, **Will Ryman** was invited as an honorary guest for the visual arts to create three monumental works. Celebrating 35 years of Parc de La Villette, Ryman's exhibition will be the largest public art installation exhibited in the historic park to date. In 2019 the exhibition will travel to Lille, France.

Known for his theatrical and engaging sculptural works, **Will Ryman** will alter the visual and physical landscape of this popular urban cultural center. The artist's ongoing interest in the Theatre of the Absurd serves as the conceptual foundation for his **La Villette** exhibition comprised of three installations: **Heads**, **Sisyphus**, and **Pac-Lab**. Visually unified by their hand-worked material quality, Ryman's three installations are also connected thematically – each sculpture is an abstract metaphorical representation of our search for meaning throughout the stages of life.

## Heads, Place de la Fontaine aux Lions

Installation rendering © Will Ryman



Surrounding the **Place de la Fontaine aux Lions**, Ryman will install seven sulfur-yellow sculpted “heads” ranging in height from three to four meters. Abstract in form, with varying apertures (or eyes), each is purposefully imperfect. Sculpted in clay, cast in resin, and then painted, Ryman’s **Heads** are titled with lines from Samuel Beckett’s, *Waiting for Godot*, 1948. Originally written in French then translated into English by Beckett in 1953, the play’s universal and philosophical themes have continued resonance. For Ryman, the sculptures’ titles such as “The Essential Doesn’t Change”, “All Mankind is Us”, “Some Remain So”, and “Blaming the Shoes for the Fault of His Feet”, could be read as truths regarding the human condition. As the characters in Beckett’s play are waiting for Godot, a symbolic longing for God or spiritual fulfillment, Ryman’s **Heads** look up to the sky with a similar longing and desire for resolve.

Installation rendering © Will Ryman



## Sisyphus, Prairie du Cercle Nord

**Sisyphus**, takes its title from Camus’ absurdist narrative, Sisyphus (the mythological figure condemned to the meaningless task of continuously pushing a boulder up a hill and watching it roll down again). Ryman’s four-meter tall dark bronze sculpture installed on the **Prairie du Cercle Nord** alludes abstractly to our quest to find meaning in our lives despite facing mundane, challenging, or insurmountable circumstances.

Installation rendering © Will Ryman



## Pac-Lab, Prairie du Cercle Nord

**Pac-Lab**, the third installation in **Will Ryman: La Villette**, is a brightly coloured life-sized maze situated in the **Prairie du Cercle Nord** reflected in the iconic **Geode of the Cite des Sciences et de L’industrie**. This series of walls and pathways is designed to mimic a videogame maze in large-scale, which visitors can enter and navigate. Ryman sculpted the maze in clay, creating the effect of a primitive monument; each wall is painted a bold primary colour (colours that recall our childhood associations of

art-making, and equally the paintings of Piet Mondrian). This negotiation between the fundamental aspects of artistic creation and the influence of history on the artist’s work is a recurring theme for Ryman. While visually playful, **Pac-Lab** serves as a meditation on our contemporary consumer culture. A relic suitable for our era, **Pac-Lab** reflects the constant choices and many paths we navigate daily - whether in a physical space or a virtual reality.

**Together, Will Ryman’s monumental sculptural works manifest a consideration of our human journey through an ever-changing landscape.**

## Notes to Editors About the artist



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Will Ryman (b. 1969) lives and works in New York. Widely known for his large-scale sculptures, Ryman's work thoughtfully engages with history and questions societal notions of progress. Through his use of elemental or repurposed materials, Ryman's sculptures address essential aspects of the human experience as well as complex issues pertaining to our cultural systems.

Will Ryman's acclaimed public projects include: The Roses, Park Avenue, New York (2011), the artist's celebrated exhibition of whimsical oversized roses lining Park Avenue in New York City; *Bird*, Flatiron Plaza, New York (2013), a large-scale bird sculpted from over five thousand metal

nails; and *Cadillac*, College for Creative Studies, Detroit (2017). Will Ryman's work has been exhibited at numerous museums worldwide, many of which hold his work in their permanent collection, including MoMA PS 1, New York; The New Orleans Museum of Art; The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, Michigan; Frist Center for Visual Arts, Nashville, Tennessee; The National Academy of Design, New York; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Coral Gables, Florida; The Saatchi Gallery, London; and The Verbier Foundation, Switzerland.

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## About La Villette

Designed by the architect Bernard Tschumi, La Villette is the largest urban cultural park in Paris. Located in Paris' 19th arrondissement, Parc de la Villette is the site of leading cultural venues including the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, the Géode, the Zénith de Paris, the Musée de la Musique, and the Philharmonie de Paris.

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## About Festival 100%

In 2016, La Villette inaugurated a multidisciplinary arts festival offering theater, dance, circus, music, and visual art. 100% will satisfy the most demanding in artistic tastes for a huge celebration of creativity and innovation.

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## VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission: free  
Monday – Sunday: 6am – 1am  
211, avenue Jean Jaurès, 75019 Paris  
Tel. : +33 (0)1 40 03 75 75

### Transport (Metro Stations):

Line 5 - Porte de Pantin  
Line 7 - Porte de la Villette

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