



CHÂTEAU LA COSTE

Provence



JULIAN SCHNABEL

25 April – 15 August 2026
Galerie des Anciens Chais

Château La Coste is pleased to present an exhibition by the American multidisciplinary artist and filmmaker Julian Schnabel from 25 April – 15 August 2026 in the Galerie des Anciens Chais. This exhibition features a rare selection of his most-loved important works, chosen in dialogue with his friend and the show's curator Donatien Grau.

Schnabel has become widely known for his highly experimental approach to painting and incredibly varied output across his five-decade career. From his initial wax paintings, velvet paintings and plate paintings to his most recent works that challenge the traditional way of using a paintbrush, the artist has always demonstrated a sense of limitless and nonconformity, blurring the distinction between abstraction and figuration. As Donatien Grau writes, 'Schnabel's work is a quest for freedom...he has never let himself be limited to one form, one style, one material, or one period'.

'Jack the Bellboy A Season in Hell' (1975) is the earliest painting in the show and exemplifies Schnabel's contribution to the vocabulary of mark-making. To the artist, painting is the act of making a series of marks on a physical reality, signifying an action – a trace of intervention – in the greater wall of time. Built up with layers of joint compound, Rhoplex, oil, plaster, and wire mesh on canvas, the painting began Schnabel's lifelong investigation into found materials and chance-based processes. 'The Edge of Victory' (1987) is another example. Here, repurposed fabric from a boxing ring floor used as a painting surface is at once a pictorial reality and a metaphor for an artist's psyche, whilst also carrying the history of its past life.

Schnabel is widely recognised for his Plate Paintings, an ongoing series which he began in New York in the 1970s after visiting Barcelona, where he was inspired by Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí's mosaics. Shards of broken crockery, painted in thick impasto textures, appear almost like sculptural brushstrokes, rejecting the flat planes of Minimalism that were popular at the time. On view from the series, 'The Red Sky' (1984) is one of the artist's first paintings to include a complete human body and alludes to his awareness of how the act of painting – particularly with this unprecedented technique – inscribes him into the long history of human beings, painters and depictions of people that have come before him. A much more recent Plate Painting 'Untitled (Self-Portrait)' (2023) shows how themes of self-awareness in space and time, humanity, and autobiography remain consistent in his work and across his different series. For example, the resin painting 'Christ (Victor Hugo Demo)' (1997) represents Christ on the cross, the most quintessential iteration of being human.

Schnabel's life and work is rooted in a belief in poetry and its ability to intensify and transform language. This is reflected in his use of preexisting materials, which he intensifies and transforms into a painterly version of poetry. 'Untitled (Sister of Ozymandias)' (1990) references 'Ozymandias', the famous sonnet by Percy Bysshe Shelley that explores the transience of power. Painted *en plein air* on a sailcloth, the work is exuberant, dynamic, and allows natural forces and chance marks to form the painting, merging environment and gesture and overcoming the limitations of time. 'Untitled (Los Patos del Buen Retiro III)' (1990–91) also explores the role of fabric as a parallel to that of text. As poetry is the sewing together of words, Schnabel's works are a series of fragments that are woven together to form his oeuvre.

Notions of seriality can also be explored in Schnabel's iconic 'Blind Girl' paintings, the last of which is featured in the exhibition. Based on a small painting of a blonde girl by an unknown artist that he found in a Houston thrift shop in 1987, each painting follows the same pattern: an image of a blind girl painted on a very large surface with heavily worked, powerful paint, however the colours, brushstrokes and image differ. Each girl is stripped of her sight, forcing viewers to look at the painting itself, not the

eyes. This seriality means that every work is part of a larger ensemble yet can stand completely on its own.

Concurrently with this tight survey, a series of new paintings representing Mediterranean umbrella pines was selected especially by the artist to be shown at Château La Coste and echo its Provence setting. On view in the Bastide until the end of June, this presentation extends the exhibition across the site and underscores the artist's continued commitment to experimentation.

An accompanying book published by Hatje Cantz with the support of Château La Coste, Vito Schnabel Gallery and Pace Gallery will be available to purchase.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Julian Schnabel: Nine Works at Château La Coste

25 April – 15 August 2026

Château la Coste, 2750 Route de la Cride, 13610 Le Puy-Sainte-Réparade, France

www.chateau-la-coste.com

About Julian Schnabel

Julian Schnabel was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1951. His first solo show was at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in 1975. Since then, his work has been exhibited at renowned institutions worldwide including the Tate Gallery, London (1983), the Whitney Museum of American Art (1987), Inverleith House (2003); Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (both 2004); Mostra d'Oltramare, Naples (2005); Schloss Derneburg, Germany, Tabacalera Donostia, San Sebastian, and The Beijing World Art Museum, China (all 2007) and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2010). His most recent exhibition, "Julian Schnabel: Permanently Becoming and The Architecture of Seeing," opened in June 2011 at the Museo Correr, Venice. His work is included in major international museums and private collections, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art; the Guggenheim Museum; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles; Reina Sofia, Madrid, and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Schnabel lives and works in New York City and Montauk, Long Island.

About Donatien Grau

Donatien Grau is a philologist. A scholar of the Ancient Roman Empire, he is the author of *Néron en Occident* (Gallimard, 2015) ; *La Mémoire numismatique de l'Empire romain* (Les Belles Lettres, 2022) and *De Civitate Angelorum* (Yvon Lambert, 2023). In his work as a literary thinker, he has authored studies such as *Tout contre Sainte-Beuve* (Grasset, 2013) ; *Dans la bibliothèque de la vie* (Grasset, 2019) and *Un Autoportrait* (Le Seuil, 2024). As a conversation-partner to artists, he has curated dozens of exhibitions, written and edited essays and publications. A leading museum scholar, he is notably the author of *Living Museums* (Hatje Cantz, 2020) and *Under Discussion. The Encyclopedic Museum* (Getty, 2021). As a museum executive, he established Azzedine Alaïa's exhibition space into an institution prior to the passing of the couturier, his close friend, and has served as head of contemporary programs at the musée d'Orsay and then at the Louvre. He is the co-founder, editor-in-chief and artistic director of the magazine *Alphabet*. In 2026, he was appointed curator in charge of Conciliazione 5, the Holy See's exhibition space in the Vatican City. He is a close friend and

conversation-partner to Julian Schnabel, whose 2018 exhibition at the musée d'Orsay he curated and on whose work he has written numerous essays.

About Château La Coste

Situated in one of the oldest winemaking regions of France, between the historic city of Aix-En-Provence and the Luberon National Park, Château La Coste is a vineyard where wine, art and architecture co-exist in harmony. Since it opened to the public in 2011, Château La Coste invites visitors to discover over forty major works of contemporary art installed in the open air and five gallery spaces dotted across the 500-acre site.

Each year artists and architects are invited to visit the domain and discover the unique beauty of this Provençal landscape, with its famed cypresses, stone pines, olive trees and ancient oaks. They are given the freedom to create a site-specific work in an area of the site that inspires them, so Château La Coste continues to evolve as new projects and installations are developed. Artists and architects who have created permanent works at Château La Coste include Frank O. Gehry, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Louise Bourgeois, Richard Rogers, Sophie Calle, Prune Nourry, Tracey Emin and Jean Nouvel.

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