

Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS



**SABINE MIRLESSE**

Born in 1986, USA.

Lives and works in Paris, France



## SABINE MIRLESSE

Sabine Mirlesse is a franco-american artist living and working in Paris. Her research is centered around the visibility of thresholds and the interiority of landscape, with a particular interest in how geological sites are divined, interpreted, and recounted. Weaving her way through mineral narratives and cosmologies, Mirlesse's multidisciplinary approach manifests across an accumulation of strata, completing sculpture with photography, installation, video and writing. She is particularly interested in the ways earth materials and image come together to create geomantic readings. Her interest in the instrumentation with which we measure the invisible explores a variety of formal possibilities in fusion with a kind of exegesis of landscape. Her creative practice is rooted in her background in mysticism and literature.

Mirlesse holds an MFA from Parsons the New School for Design in New York City. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree double majoring in History Religion and English Literature from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec.

In 2022-2023 she was a laureate for the Mondes Nouveaux prize awarded by the French Ministry of Culture, and created *Crystalline Thresholds | Les Portes de Givre*, an ephemeral installation of seven portals activated by ice storms at the top of the Puy de Dôme volcano, in collaboration with the oldest weather observatory in France. This project is the subject of the artist's latest monograph, published in April 2024 by Filigranes Editions, with essays by Bernard Blistène, Pierre Coutris, Nathalie Huret and Sabine Mirlesse.

She teaches at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, and has been invited to present her work during conferences at the Pompidou Centre and the Sorbonne.

She is a studio resident at Poush in Paris and is Artist Laureate for the French Ministry of Culture's Mondes Nouveaux prize.

### Education

- 2008-2010** Master of Fine Arts, Photography, Parsons the New School for Design, New York, USA  
Bachelor of Arts, Literature & Philosophy of Religion (double diplôme), McGill University, Montreal, Canada
- 2004-2008**

### Solo Exhibitions (selected)

- 2025** *The Instruments*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.  
**2024** *Voyant*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Paris, France  
*Ofrenda*, Le Marais des Arques, ENS, Les Arques, France  
**2023** *Crystalline Thresholds | Les Portes de Givre*, Puy-de-Dôme, Auvergne, France  
**2022** *Nelle Viscere: Ardent Terrane*, Poush, Clichy, France  
**2020** *Pietra di Luce*, Galerie Bigaignon, Paris, France  
**2019** *Pietra di Luce*, Galerie Au Roi, Paris, France  
**2016** *As if it should have been a quarry*, La Galerie Particulière, Brussels, Belgium  
**2015** *As if it should have been a quarry*, La Galerie Particulière, Paris, France

### Groups Exhibitions (selected)

- 2025** *SYMBIOSIUM 2*, Centre Wallonie Bruxelles, Paris, France  
*Par quatre chemins*, Château La Coste, Le Puy-Sainte-Réparate, France  
*Apocalypse. Hier et Demain*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France  
*Rire sur un Volcan*, Poush, Aubervilliers, France  
**2024** *Orbis Tertius*, AIUla x AFAIUla, Paris, France  
*Pratiques Cosmomorphes* curated by Nathalie Ergino, Institut d'art Contemporain Villeurbanne, Lyon, France  
**2023** *Histoire de Pierres*, curated by Jean de Loisy & Sam Stour dzé, Villa Medici, Rome, Italy  
*Quelque Chose Ici Va Venir*, curated by Emmanuel Tibloux, Les Ateliers, Les Arques, France  
*To Walk in the Image*, curated by Susan Bright, St Carthage Hall, Lismore Castle Arts, Ireland  
*Mondes Nouveaux*, curated by Caroline Naphegyi & Bernard Blistène, Beaux-Arts de Paris, Paris, France  
**2022** *Palimpsest of Time*, Mabiti Palm Grove, AIUla, Saudi Arabia 'Borderlines' Pavillon Vendôme, Clichy, France

## SABINE MIRLESSE

Sabine Mirlesse est une artiste franco-américaine qui vit et travaille à Paris. Sa recherche est centrée sur la visibilité des seuils et l'intériorité du paysage, avec un intérêt particulier pour la façon dont les sites géologiques sont devinés, interprétés et racontés. Tissant son chemin à travers les récits et les cosmologies minérales, l'approche pluridisciplinaire de Mirlesse se manifeste par une accumulation de strates, complétant la sculpture par la photographie, l'installation, la vidéo et l'écriture. Elle s'intéresse particulièrement à la manière dont les matériaux terrestres et l'image s'associent pour créer des lectures géomantiques. Son intérêt pour l'instrumentation avec laquelle nous mesurons l'invisible explore une variété de possibilités formelles en fusion avec une sorte d'exégèse du paysage. Sa pratique créative est enracinée dans sa formation en mystique et en littérature.

Mirlesse est titulaire d'une maîtrise en beaux-arts de la Parsons the New School for Design à New York. Elle a obtenu un baccalauréat ès arts avec double spécialisation en histoire, en religion et en littérature anglaise à l'Université McGill de Montréal, au Québec.

En 2022-2023, elle est lauréate du prix *Mondes Nouveaux* décerné par le ministère français de la Culture, et crée *Crystalline Thresholds / Les Portes de Givre*, une installation éphémère de sept portails activés par les tempêtes de glace au sommet du volcan du Puy de Dôme, en collaboration avec le plus ancien observatoire météorologique de France. Ce projet fait l'objet de la dernière monographie de l'artiste, publiée en avril 2024 aux *Éditions Filigranes*, avec des essais de Bernard Blistène, Pierre Coutris, Nathalie Huret et Sabine Mirlesse.

Elle enseigne à l'École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs de Paris et a été invitée à présenter son travail lors de conférences au Centre Pompidou et à la Sorbonne.

Elle est résidente de l'atelier Poush à Paris et artiste lauréate du prix *Mondes Nouveaux* du ministère français de la culture.

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Sabine Mirlesse  
*Par quatre chemins* at Château La Coste, Aix-en-Provence, France, 2025





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*Par quatre chemins* at Château La Coste, Aix-en-Provence, France, 2025





Sabine Mirlesse  
*Apocalypse. Hier et Demain* at Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2025



Sabine Mirlesse  
Installation view, *Rire sur un Volcan*, Poush, Aubervilliers, France, 2025





Sabine Mirlesse  
Installation view, *Oribis Tertius*, AIUla x AFALULA, Paris, France, 2024





Sabine Mirlesse  
Installation view, *Oribis Tertius*, AIUla x AFALULA, Paris, France, 2024





**Sabine Mirlesse**

Installation view, *Voyant*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko Paris, 2024





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Installation view, *Voyant*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko Paris, 2024





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Installation view, *Voyant*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko Paris, 2024





**Sabine Mirlesse**

*Divining lungs no. 4, 2024*

Bronze cast, copper, natural pigments

65 x 55 x 5 cm

25 5/8 x 21 5/8 x 2 in





**Sabine Mirlesse**

*Diving lungs, no. 5, 2024*

Bronze, natural pigment made from zeolite

63 x 43 x 5 cm

24 3/4 x 16 7/8 x 2 in



**Sabine Mirlesse**

*Electric Prayer no. 2, 2024*

Bronze cast, fulgurite

190 x 70 x 16 cm

74 3/4 x 27 1/2 x 6 1/4 in



**Sabine Mirlesse**

*Strike*, 2024

Bronze cast, fulgurite

240 x 100 x 40 cm

94 1/2 x 39 3/8 x 15 3/4 in





## **Crystalline Thresholds | LES PORTES DE GIVRE, 2022 - '23**

Located at the summit of the Puy de Dôme, this project takes the form of an installation of monumental ephemeral sculptures in the form of arches that are erected over the winter thanks to the effects of frost, then disappear with the arrival of spring. It was created in collaboration with the on-site weather station, the oldest in France. This exceptional site, a Unesco heritage site, was chosen for its unique and pure atmosphere, known for the growth of frost and ice, and on the basis of my grandfather's research in the 1930s for the Ministry of Air, and the Roman ruins of the pagan temple of Mercury that still stands there today.







## **Mercurial, 2023**

Inspired by the Mirlesse installation at the summit of Puy-de-Dôme, she used white bronze to find the shape of a solid mercury in the form of frost, installed in the doorway between two spaces.



## Ofrenda, 2023

*Cridi los vius  
Plori los mòrts  
Bresi los lhauçes  
Bolegui las prigondors  
Agachi enlà de las aigas.*

Located in the Lot village of Les Arques, this work hangs above a natural spring in the marshes of the Espace Naturel Sensible. The bell is made of bronze, mixed with offerings of copper and pewter from local residents, inspired by the story of a bell that disappeared from the village church and was hidden, sunken in the marsh's sacred spring. The inscription was inspired by the opening lines of a poem by Friedrich von Schiller, entitled The Song of the Bell. The poem is written in German from the point of view of the poet, who describes his amazement at the making of a bell, a thing that rings from the fires of the earth. But before he begins his description, he lets the bell speak for itself - in Latin, with the first three lines quoted here. Mirlesse added two more sentences, to refer to the specificity of this story. She then asked the townspeople and a group of local Occitan dialectologists to discuss a translation, inscribed here in bronze at the time of casting.

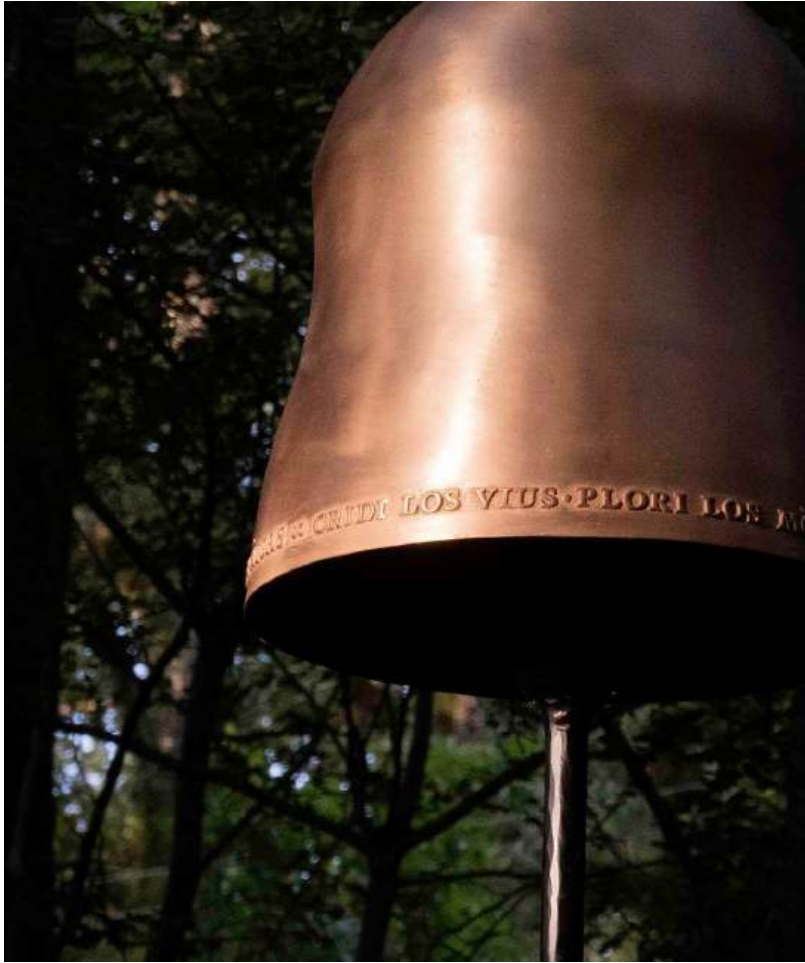
The clapper, made of iron and steel, is over three metres long and alternates between frôlement and the stirring of the water's surface, as a nod to traditional hydro- mantic practices in the region, in which individuals could read the movements of the water's surface in response to the touch of their hand. In keeping with Quercy traditions of naming and bapêmeing a bell, this one is called *Aïga*, in reference to the goddess of the stream just a few metres away.

*J'appelle les vivants  
Je pleure les morts  
Je brise la foudre  
Je réveille les profondeurs  
Je vois à travers les eaux*











## Geomancy ('ilm al-raml), 2022



Geomancy is a method of divination whose etymological root comes from the Arabian Peninsula and includes several mythological associations rooted in Islamic mysticism. A Latin cognate of the Arabic 'ilm ar-raml (the science of sand), this divinatory system is based on making and interpreting marks and patterns in sand. Originally created as an ephemeral installation as the result of a research residency, the work is inspired by the wheel mechanisms of a 13th-century divinatory tablet, and consists of a series of discs interacting with the mineral earth. The work is inspired by the wheel mechanisms of a 13th-century divinatory tablet, and consists of a series of discs interacting with the mineral earth. The whole proposes a reflection on the activation and posing of a question through gesture, and refers back to the source of the oasis, another word for the eye, as an example of our reading of the earth.



*The Science of Sand, 2022*  
brass, sand, unique piece

Installation at Mabiti Palm  
Grove, AlUla





## **The Dowsing Bones, 2022**

according to the history of the Mosque of Bones (Masjid Al-Izam)



One of the earliest examples of geomancy is the use of divining rods to find sources of water - the movement of the rods, for those sensitive to their charge, can identify the location of springs. When I arrived in AlUla for my artist residency, I was told the story of the Bone Mosque, which owes its name to its unusual origin story. It is said to have been built because the prophet arrived with the bones of a camel in his hands and insisted that the place be built in that position. After checking with an archaeologist that the bones were used as divining rods, I decided to create a set inspired by this story.

## Postcards to Volcanoes 2020-2022

Begun during the pandemic as a daily ritual, and now comprising over 100 unique works on paper, these intimate correspondences in the form of letters to volcanoes began as a call to the entities that represent both the beginning of the universe and the end of the world, the force that lives on, those who have all the answers.



*11 Postcards to Volcanoes*, exhibition view of *To Walk in the Image*, Lismore Castle Arts, 2023





## The day it stopped raining stone, 2022



The cloud that suffocated the inhabitants of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 BC was fiery. An ancient martyrdom of the volcano's neighbours, whose wrath fascinates to this day. These ashes, so favourable to crops, are the same ones that encourage market gardening even on the slopes of ancient volcanoes that were thought to be extinct. Sabine Mirlesse has hand-harvested this calcined and pulverised rock from the bowels of the earth in the Canary Islands, using it as the infinitely precious material and pigment for this new work that has suddenly appeared in Poush: The day it stopped raining stone, no. 1.

In the centre of the room, a long white veil forms a tent, a fragile shelter whose sensual drapery is hemmed in with a line of black. Dust has coagulated into fine wrinkles in the folds of the fabric. It carves out geological ravines. The run-offs trace the network of their rainy tributaries. Erosion makes a spectacle of itself in the whiteness of the text, as if on the slopes of a volcanic massif.

This black pigment on the floating canvas is the same ash from the Cumbre Vieja volcano, the shadowy old man of the Canary archipelago who, last December, sprinkled the white greenhouses of Spanish growers. Here are a few handfuls of ashes smuggled from the Canaries to Clichy. And here is the source image that forms the matrix of this original work by Sabine Mirlesse, produced at Poush for the exhibition.

- excerpt from the text written by Alexandre Colliex for the solo exhibition *Nelle Viscere: Ardent Terrane*





Installation view of *Nelle Viscere: Ardent Terrane* at Poush Manifesto, Clichy





## On Divination: Alchemical Objects & Oracular Vessels, 2021



An installation of photographs, videos and sculptures on the theme of the oracular and protective qualities transferred to objects by individuals faced with uncertainty, this work begins with a reference to Homer's Odyssey and the alchemy of sea oil, and manifests itself in a series of unique hybrid sculptures referring to apotropaic amulets and tools of prediction (divining rod, solid glass pendulum).



Installation view of *Ce qu'on tire de la mer (on Divination)* at Poush Manifesto

## Pietra di Luce, 2017-2019

'and we walked out once more beneath the Stars.'

Inferno Canto XXXIV, 143

'healed of Winter's scars; perfect, pure, and ready for the Stars.'

Purgatorio Canto XXXIII, 14Y-6

'as in a wheel whose motion nothing jars - by the Love that moves the Sun and the other Stars.'

Paradiso Canto XXXIII, 14Y-6



Installation view, Galerie Au Roi, 2019





*Stelle, Stelle, Stelle (text written for the monograph Pietra di Luce)*

Any exploration of the stars would have to begin by looking up into the sky, into the cosmos, through a telescope. Instead, my research began with a journey into the earth, armed with a camera and a poem. Through a dark, damp tunnel, I reached the heart of the mountain, an inner quarry, purple and full of echoes. This vast, cold cavity is called the cathedral. It was the first day of a kind of cosmological excavation, and although I wasn't sûre about the shape of what I had come to look for, I was quite sure I would find it. I had come in search of the stars, or 'luz'ke'/'lucciche' as they are called in the dialect of Carrara.

Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy begins with a descent into the heart of the earth and takes us beyond the firmament. The poem is divided into three parts, each ending with the word 'stars' (stelle). In this way, a geography is revealed at the end of each part of the journey, like a kind of poetic architecture and, through the placement of the word itself, an ultimate presence is affirmed. They are there, somewhere, in each of the strata of our universe, they are the end of it. I went to the Apuan quarries, the only place where such a descent seemed possible in the poet's native region, to find a form, a fragment, a glimmer. Examining mineral forms, explosions of dust, spiral nebulae with diamond threads and fractures, the project became a series of reflections on the search for stars through the underground world. More than a tribute to the poet's mine, it is an adventure guided by clues drawn from his epic text. For me, the poem has become a kind of essentially visual map, indicating coordinates suggested by the placement of syllables and the construction of lines.

Each quarry became the site of a cosmological excavation. I looked for what each one described differently when I questioned them: 'little lights', pieces of quartz fragmenting or perforating the marble, breaking its uniformity, creating a rupture and revealing an inner scintillation (which broke the industrial project of making it a perfect commodity). I looked for an indication in the cracks, exploring the surface with my hands and using long lenses capable of getting close to places I couldn't reach, because the walls of these artificial craters are dizzyingly high. It was only later that the information contained in these exposures of stone and light appeared and faded thanks to photochemical baths, accompanied by graphite drawings, oil monotypes and relief engravings, sculptures of the stone itself, until the stars were created that you could hold in both hands.

I went to the quarries of northern Tuscany for their unparalleled immensity and constellation of contradictions. These surreal landscapes, the result of a collaboration between man and nature, are the source of the materials used to sculpt some of the most famous works of art, but at the same time exist as disturbing wounds on the body of the earth. I was intrigued by this land that has been quarried for centuries, famous for its blinding whites (often mistaken from a distance for snow), for its subtle accents and its potential for 'purity' - a land that the quarrymen themselves told me resembled the spiral of Dante's Inferno, with its amphitheatre shape spinning towards the depths, long before the arrival of the machine. The region bears witness to a wider and more complex human tendency to dig downwards to reach something essential, whether for archaeological, industrial, scientific or ritual reasons, something absent from the surface, covered, protected. A little closer to the earth's core, I found a kind of glow.

- Sabine Mirlesse



*Gallegiante*, 2019, silver print, unique piece



*Dust and Snow*, 2019, silver print, unique piece





*Starckaeology no. 1, no.2*, installation view, Galerie Au Roi, 2019



Installation view, Galerie Bigaignon, 2020, Paris





The last pages of each cantica in La Divine Comedie, mentioning the stars, burned in the image of the stone,  
*Slarchaeotogy no. 2*, installation view, Galerie Au Roi, 2019

### **As if it should have been a quarry, 2013**

exhibition and book published by Damiani Editore in 2013, with an essay by Eduardo Cadava

This work, a collection of photographs, drawings and prints of earth and volcanic ash entitled “As if it should have been a quarry”, was named after a phrase in the poem “Directive” by the American poet Robert Frost. It was made between 2011 and 2013 in Iceland - a country located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, positioned directly over a continental divide, making it the site of frequent seismic and volcanic activity. In January 1973, a volcano erupted without warning in the small town of Heimaey, in the Westman Islands, off the southern coast. The work is inspired by the story of the town's inhabitants who dug themselves out of the ashes and prevented the flow of lava from destroying their harbour. Despite the chaos caused by the eruption, they were determined to stay. Now, forty years later, while many houses have been salvaged and reoccupied, abandoned excavations contain the remains of houses that proved irretrievable. The digs provide a unique scenario in which, during an individual's lifetime, their own archaeological history is explored - a chance to literally see their own stories come out of the ground, with the survivors living to confront them in person.



Untitled, no. 1 and no. 6, *As if it should have been a quarry*, pigment prints, variable dimension





Exhibition view, *As if it should have been a quarry*, 2015, Le Galerie Particulière, Paris / *Paysage/Visage*, 20122, lava ash on canvas, unique piece