

LE THORONET ABBEY
LE THORONET VAR

LULLABIES FOR THE STORM
7 JUNE – 21 SEP. 2025

Founded by monks of the Cistercian order in the heart of the forests of Provence, Le Thoronet abbey was built between 1160 and 1190 and completed in 1250. It is an architectural ensemble from the Romanesque period with characteristic features: purity of lines, Cistercian simplicity of volumes, harmonious proportions. It has established itself as a model of spatial design, light and the relationship with nature. Along with the abbeys of Silvacane and Sénanque, Le Thoronet is one of the three Cistercian abbeys in Provence.

ARTISTE
Laurence Aëgter

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Et toutes les équipes du monument

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Conception graphique: Cyril Cohen
Impression: BC Studio Graph

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Son: Storm Parser
Chanteurs: Jorn Beuzekom, Caitlin Boonstra, Ferdinand Lankamp, Storm Parser, Liesbeth Schillemans, Uwe Uhlendorff
Bruitage: Cécile Tainturier
Tapiserie: Maud van Baar de Knegt, TextielLab Tilburg, Fraaimetaal Amsterdam
Film: Uwe Uhlendorff, Jack Milner

Illustrations
1. Valère Maxime, Dits et faits mémorables, traduction française de Simon de Hesdin et Nicolas de Gonesse, BNF
2. Cathédrale hermétique, Sénanque
Courtesy Laurence Aëgter, © ADAGP, 2019
3. Arithmétique du miracle
Courtesy Laurence Aëgter, © ADAGP, 2023
4. Portait de Laurence Aëgter
Bastiaan Musscher, museum of the Mind, Haarlem
5. Cathédrale hermétique, Le Thoronet
Courtesy Laurence Aëgter, © ADAGP, 2019

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HOW DO YOU RIDE OUT A STORM?

This is a question that has always gripped the arts and literary worlds, whether literally or metaphorically, and no definitive answer has yet been found. While art recognises that it can do little in the face of the storms the world experiences, it is perhaps better armed to deal with our innermost torments. The arts, poetry and love are then the cornerstones of a potential existence in the face of inner turmoil.

Laurence Aëgter’s *Berceuses pour la tempête / Lullabies for the Storm* gives visitors the opportunity to experience Thoronet Abbey, a jewel of Cistercian art, with a certain sensitivity, its austerity reflecting its purpose as a place of meditation and spiritual appeasement. Keen art historian Laurence Aëgter has long been interested in places steeped in history, and these are among her favourite playgrounds of creation. The layers of invisible memory at Thoronet, the dreams, feelings and aspirations deposited within its walls over the centuries, lie at the heart of her quest. Her work has been fuelled by in-depth research into the art and Cistercian order within the building, in an attempt to capture and transpose the emotions that it continues to arouse in us today.

Laurence Aëgter draws on the themes of the miraculous, the invisible, and hope to explore what triggers spiritual experience . The three works incorporated in the tour route — The Concert of Sighs, Arithmetics of Miracle and Revelations - The Three Provençal Sisters — are presented here in a way that is very much in keeping with the building and respects its original minimalism. As sonorous, conceptual and visual pieces, they play on different registers of the perception and understanding of reality and in doing so question what remains of our relationship with the sacred.

Damarice AMAO

1 – CHURCH
LE CONCERT DE SOUPIRS /
THE CONCERT OF SIGHS



The celebration of faith through song is central to the Cistercian rule, with churches designed as musical instruments, providing exceptional acoustics that enhance the monks' voices. Laurence Aëgter has composed a secular concert of sighs for six voices to be performed in the nave at Thoronet Abbey. Similar to prayer, sighing is the universal language of emotional release, with the artist claiming that “the inverted boat that the vault evokes symbolises the common journey our lives take through storms and lulls”.

“The soul is renewed in the sighs that carry it towards justice.”

Hildegarde von Bingen
Liber divinorum operum

“If there is a song, let it be gentle, without being light, let it charm the ear so as to move the heart, let it relieve sadness, let it calm anger.”

Saint Bernard de Clairvaux

2 – CHAPTER HOUSE
RÉVÉLATIONS – LES TROIS SŒURS
PROVENÇALES / REVELATIONS –
THE THREE PROVENÇAL SISTERS



“Contemplate, not the visible things but the invisible ones, because the visible things are fleeting while the invisible ones are eternal.”

The Holy Bible
CORINTHIENS 4:18

In 2019, Laurence Aëgter began work on three Cistercian abbeys in the Provence region, namely Silvacane, Sénanque and Thoronet. Careful observation of the interiors of each of these three churches resulted in a series of photographs screen-printed using thermo-reactive ink, part of the *Hermetic Cathedrals* series inaugurated in 2015, whereby exposure to the sun and the warmth and ultra-violet rays it emits gradually reveal the images. The film *Révélations* extends this meditative experience of time, light and matter.

LAURENCE AËGTER
LULLABIES FOR THE STORM
LE THORONET ABBEY
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21 SEP. 2025

LAURENCE AËGTER

LE THORONET ABBEY
EXHIBITION
7 JUNE
21 SEPTEMBER 2025



Laurence Aëgter is a French artist born in Marseille in 1972, who lives and works in Amsterdam.

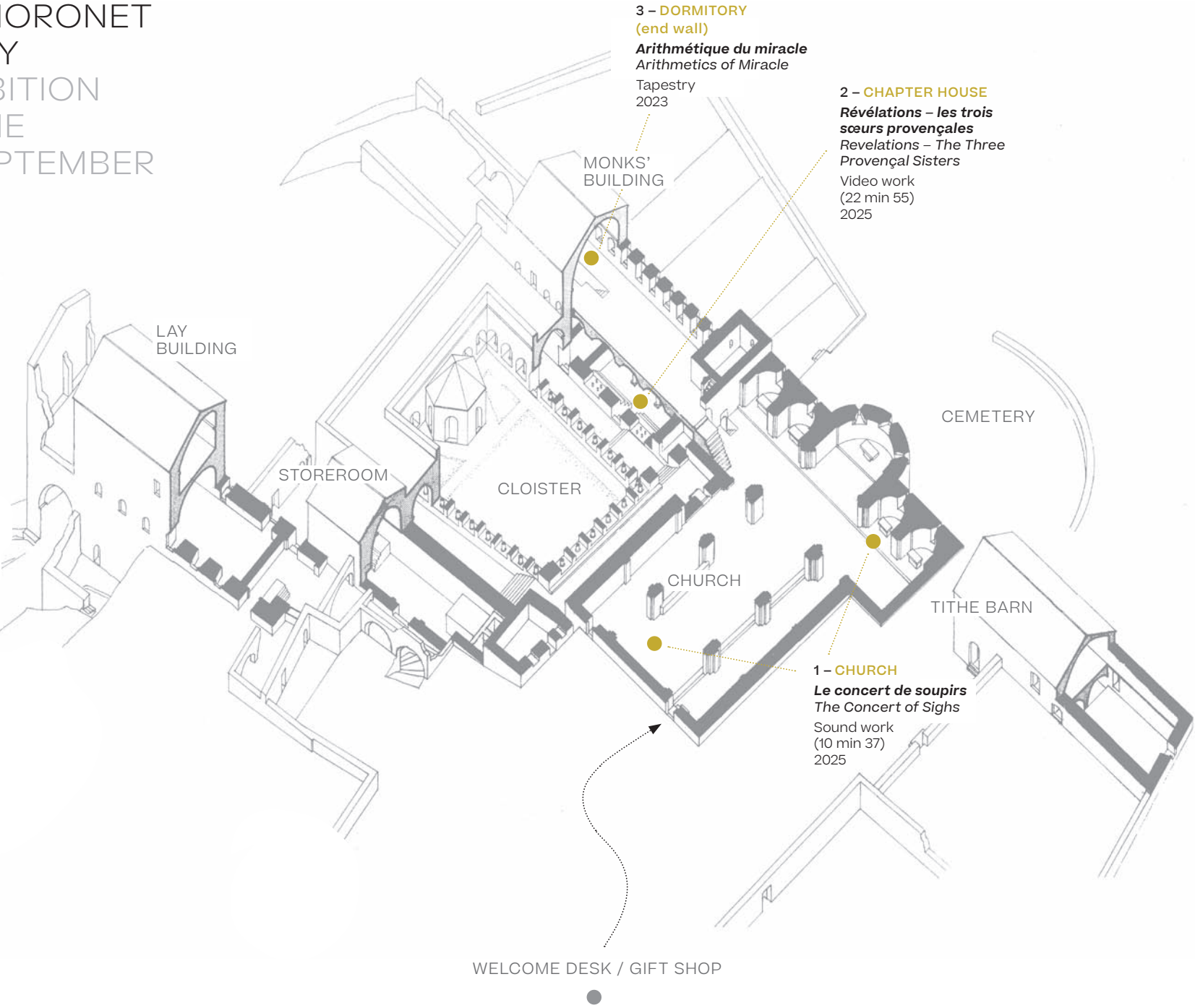
With degrees in art history and visual arts, she explores the worlds of the visible and the invisible through site-specific installations and a multitude of techniques: photography, tapestries, sound, ceramics and glass.

The human condition, the perception and the memory are the three pillars of the artistic practice of Laurence Aëgter, an artist fascinated by the metamorphoses of the image.

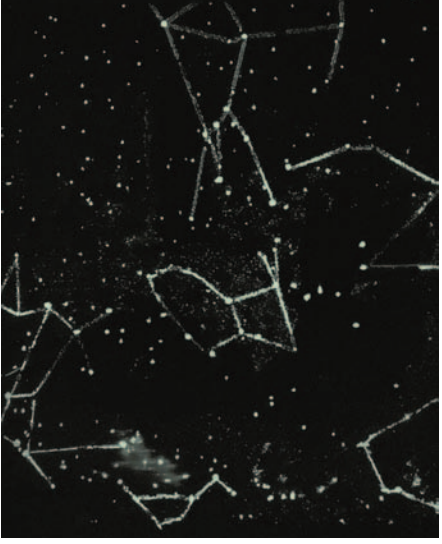
Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Musée du Petit Palais in Paris (2020-2021), the Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles (2019) and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (2015).

Laurence Aëgter's work can be found in public and private collections such as the MAMAC in Nice, the Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam. A monograph on her work, *ici mieux qu'en face*, has been published by Actes Sud (2020).

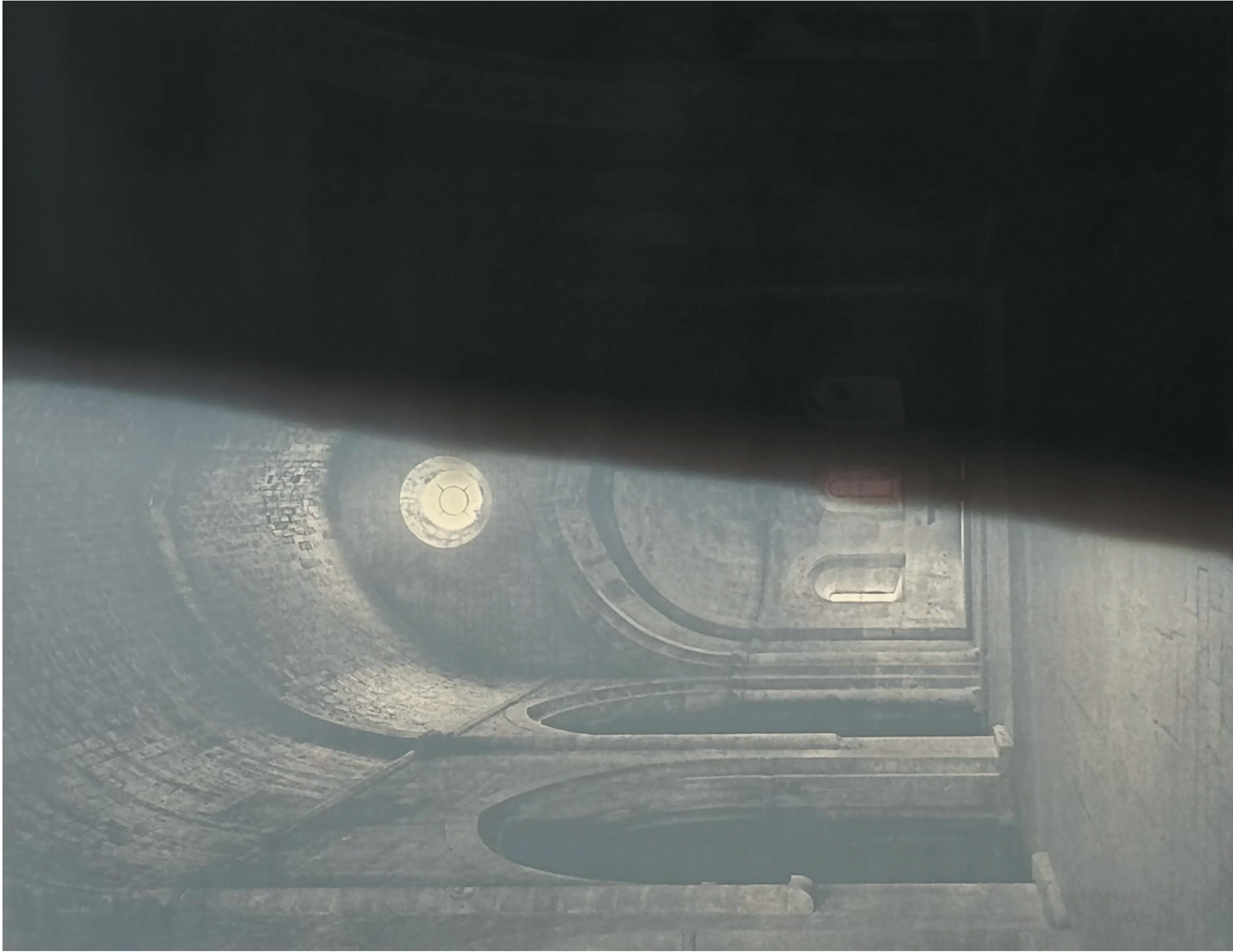
Winner of the Prix du livre d'auteur at the Rencontres d'Arles in 2018 and in 2023 the national photographic commission by the Ministry of Culture and the CNAP, the Centre des monuments nationaux entrusted her a carte blanche photographic project in 2023 at Montmajour and Thoronet abbeys.



3 – DORMITORY
ARITHMÉTIQUE DU MIRACLE /
ARITHMETICS OF MIRACLE



Laurence Aëgter takes over the monks' dormitory with *Arithmetics of Miracle*, a monumental jacquard tapestry evoking the existential fear of death. The work depicts a miraculous scene in the form of a hare using its survival instinct to escape certain death in an eagle's clutches. When night falls, the tapestry also reveals the phosphorescent outline of the constellation Orion (The Hunter), which only appears at night. *This work “illustrates the link between the earthly and the celestial, the magic of dreams and the monks' hypersensitive relationship with nature and the mystery it holds” – Laurence Aëgter*



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