



# THE GARDENS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PERFUME MUSEUM

Mouans-Sartoux

**PRESS KIT**  
**2026**

*"Acting on all our senses, the garden is an ideal place of serenity, a place conducive to contemplation, imagination, understanding and harmony".*



# SUMMARY

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At the same time, it was renamed the Gardens of the International Museum of Perfumery in 2010, when it was taken over by the Conurbation du Pays de Grasse, the Musée de France label was awarded, consolidating and symbolising the new ambitions for this vast set of gardens and greenhouses located in Mouans-Sartoux.

For economic reasons related to wage costs and the globalisation of businesses, flower growing and the very presence of fields of scented flowers had almost disappeared from the Grasse area. It was, therefore, fundamental for the International Museum of Perfumery (MIP), through the Gardens of the MIP, to continue this tradition, registered in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage .



A tuberose harvest in the early 20th century, Grasse

And so, we reveal to visitors from across the world what it is to grow scented plants in open fields as it was done in Grasse.

One of the principles of the Gardens is to operate several of these plots of these flowers which are so iconic in perfumery and the first link in the chain of this industry: the Provençale rose, jasmine, lavender, narcissus, tuberose... every field has its idiosyncrasy and there are many projects to recreate and conserve this Grasse heritage in the coming years.

Another part of the Gardens offers an extensive olfactory trail, an exploration of the plants and an invitation to discover their scents. Here, our aim is to establish genuine research programmes and a conservatory of forgotten perfume. We could then lay claim to being a proper botanical garden. But the Gardens also form a direct and continuous part of a visit to the museum. The ability to establish a genuine link between the Gardens at Mouans-Sartoux and the collections conserved in Grasse in the former Hôtel de Pontevès is a unique opportunity which we will further develop over the next few years, offering our visitors an original and extended approach beyond what museums normally offer.

Henceforth in full association with the International Museum of Perfumery, the Gardens will be able to initiate new synergies and a shared ambition to maintain and conserve a heritage linked to a culture, to a region, that of Grasse, all the while opening new perspectives for reflection and research in the field of perfumes and olfaction.

### **Olivier Quiquempois**

Director of the Museums of Grasse  
and the Gardens of the International  
Museum of Perfumery  
Head Curator of Heritage

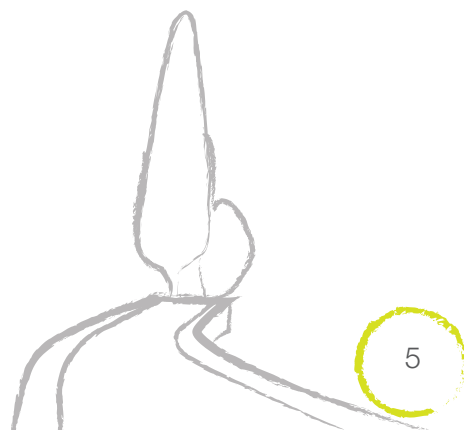
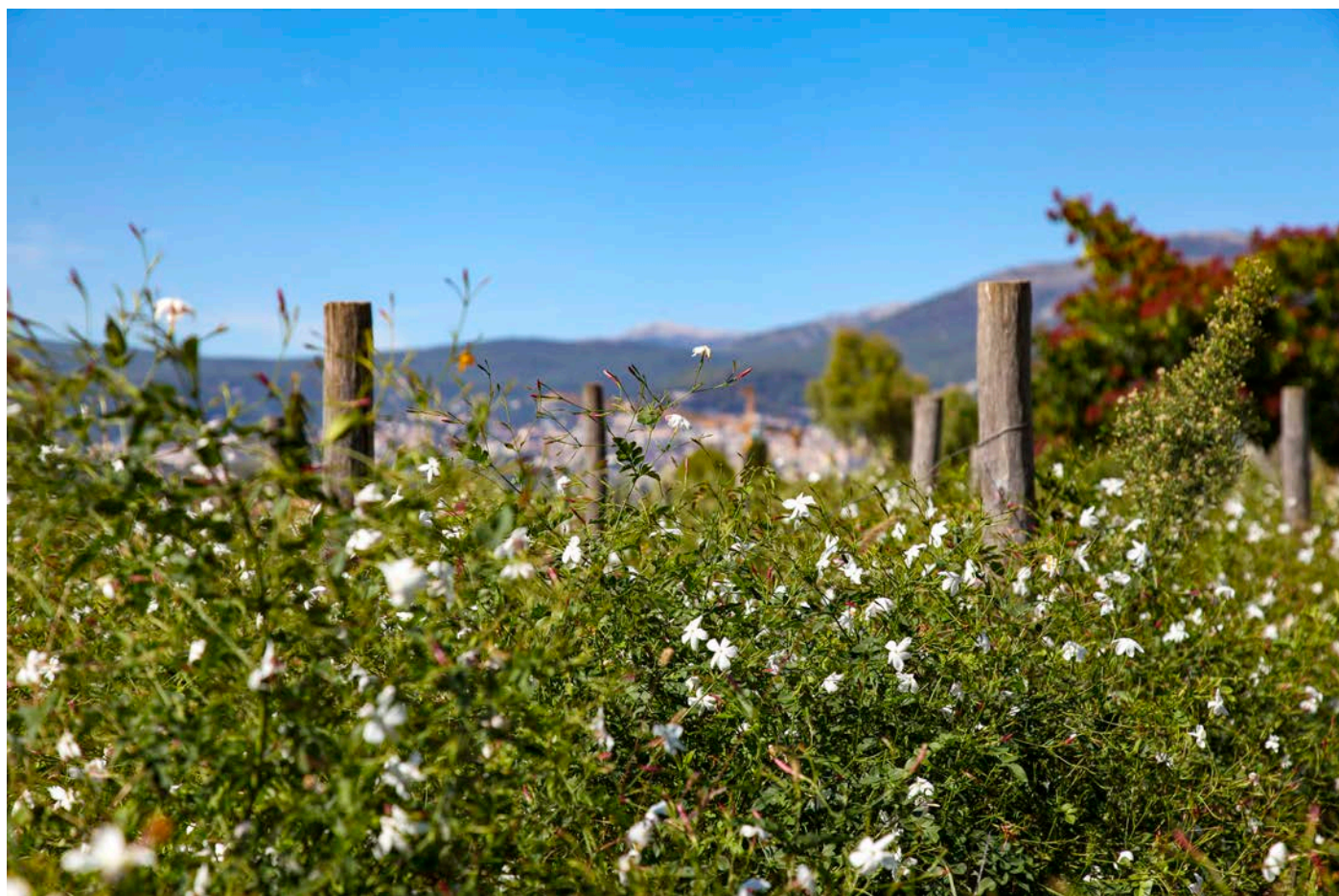
## SCENTED PLANTS... A HERITAGE

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The Provence rose, jasmine, tuberose, lavender, geranium, broom, orange blossom ..., perfumes are born in plants, from here and abroad. In the unique setting of the Gardens of the International Museum of Perfumery, these species which through the centuries have supplied the precious raw materials of perfumery can be explored and smelled.

Located at the foot of the aromatic capital in Moauns-Sartoux, the Gardens of the International Museum of Perfumery are part of a regional project led by the Conurbation of the Pays de Grasse and, through this, the conservatory of scented plants for the museum and a natural space which is evidence of the olfactory landscape associated with local agriculture, reflecting the know-how relating to perfume, registered in UNESCO's Immaterial Cultural World Heritage in 2018.

Hingeing around an old canal and an agricultural basin, the site extends over 2.5 hectares. In these gardens, open fields growing species traditionally cultivated for perfumery are side by side with landscapes presenting a variety of collections of aromatic or scented plants. Their primary purpose is to contribute to conservation of the varietal range of species grown for perfumery.



## BIRTH OF THE PROJECT

In 2007, the project the “Bastide du Parfumeur” was born, enjoying major private funding (especially from Botanic Garden Centres), specialist advice (architects, gardeners, botanists, perfumers), the support of the Council of Mouans-Sartoux and the Conurbation of the Pays de Grasse (formerly Pôle Azur Provence).

The “Bastide du Parfumeur” was brought into being with the aim of raising public awareness, at the most extensive scale, of the history of the growing of scented plants in the Pays de Grasse. This project, exclusively angled towards the various issues suffered by local agriculture, provided an essential place both to sustainability and the tangible and intangible heritage of the Pays de Grasse.



The Gardens of the MIP, Iris florentina in bloom

This conservatory is a means of explaining the agricultural and landscape heritage.

Its commitment is to present to the public scented plants, aromatic plants and other vegetation of interest from the point of view of the history of Mediterranean cultures and perfumery. Over and above wanting to be an open-air botanical conservatory, the gardens want to be a fun way of raising awareness of organic gardening. Compost, green fertiliser and mulching techniques are used to bring the plants what they need to flourish, while respecting the soil and making best use of the water supply.

The principle of respect for the environment has, indeed, been established from the start of the project. Laying out the gardens required earth-moving but very little earth was brought in or taken away. With great care for sustainability, the groundwork was prepared with organic fertilisers, planted up with young plants and with the benefit of a greenhouse made of iron and glass.

## SOME KEY DATES

**December 2003:** Establishment of the conservatory of scented plants of the Pays de Grasse (law 1901).

**May 2005:** Nomination of the project architects - Sensini and Moralès.

**November 2005:** Nomination of the landscape designer - François Navarro.

**30 June 2007:** Official Inauguration of the Bastide du Parfumeur.

**January 2010:** The "Bastide du Parfumeur" is acquired by Pays de Grasse Urban Community (CAPG) and becomes the MIP's Gardens.

**June 2011:** 1st summer exhibition centred on the contemporary artist, Bernard Abril.

**April 2012:** Inauguration of the permanent exhibition which completes the tour of the site.

**June 2012:** 2nd summer exhibition “5 Plants in all their States” in collaboration with the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis and the students following the Chemistry course, Master 2 Foqual.

**May 2013:** Reopening and inauguration of the Gardens after a year's work on their layout.

**May 2014:** Exhibition by the artist Cathy Cuby – Natural Art.

**May 2015:** Exhibition by the artist René Bruno, photo-plastician – From Image to Heart.

**May 2018:** Armand Scholtès Exhibition.

**May 2019:** Exhibition: Free' Figures – A Stroll in the Gardens.

**April 2021:** Exhibition of photographs by Pierre Escoubas – Our Magnificent Neighbours.

**27 April 2022:** Official award of the Remarkable Garden label to the MIP's Gardens.

**April 2023:** Exhibition by the artist Bernard Briançon, sculptor – "Alice", works on the themes of dreams and travel, a tribute to Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

**April 2024:** Exhibition of works by the Grasse-based artist Dominique Thévenin (1955-2023)

A sculptor of movement, the artist created his works out of rough metals, raw, basic materials.

**April 2025: Antoine Pierini**

Glass artist based in Biot and founder of the Contemporary Glass Centre, Antoine Pierini takes over the International Perfume Museum and its Gardens. He draws his inspiration from the great Mediterranean heritage, natural elements and Graeco-Roman culture, creating works in resonance with Grasse's natural and olfactory heritage.

## THE REMARKABLE MIP GARDENS!

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Fifteen years after they opened, the International Perfume Museum's Gardens have been awarded the "Remarkable Garden" label. Well-earned acknowledgement of this natural area bearing witness to the olfactory landscape connected with local agriculture.

"The label provides us with great visibility and makes it all the more legitimate for us to take part in large-scale national events such as European Heritage Days and Rendezvous in the Gardens. In addition to the beauty of the gardens, the label also puts their management in the spotlight", explains Olivier Quiquempois, Chief Curator of Heritage.

Introduced in 2004 and valid for a renewable 5-year period, the State label is awarded by the French Ministry of Culture upon proposal of the Remarkable Gardens commissions set up by Regional Directorates of Cultural Affairs, chaired by Regional Prefects, and composed of representatives of regional parks and gardens associations belonging to the Committee of Parks and Gardens of France (CPJF). It meets exacting quality criteria on composition (layout of areas), integration into the site and quality of surroundings, remarkable features (water, follies, plant architecture, etc.), botanical interest, historical interest, public reception, and maintenance in respect of environmental quality. It takes full account of the diversity of parks and gardens and can apply to small gardens and historical and contemporary expanses alike, and to all styles.

Becoming a "Remarkable Garden" ensures that the MIP Gardens enjoy a reputation across the whole territory alongside such outstanding gardens as the Phoenix Park in Nice and the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild's gardens in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. The label provides excellent visibility and makes it all the more legitimate for us to take part in such major national events as European Heritage Days and Garden Rendezvous. In addition to our Gardens' beauty, it is also their management that is spotlighted by the label.





## WHY A CONSERVATORY OF SCENTED PLANTS?

The heyday of perfumery in the Grasse area was in the early twentieth century, a period when much of the raw material used by producers in Grasse was grown locally.

From the 1960s, large multi-nationals bought up the factories in Grasse and their synthetic scents gave perfumers an ever richer and more varied palette at very attractive prices which led to their success, often at the expense of natural products... and sometimes of the quality of the perfumes. The biggest part of the production costs for perfumes coming from hand-picking, the only alternative for jasmine, Grasse's flagship product, was "to go and grow elsewhere."

Between 1970 and 1980, building development flourished at the expense of agricultural land: jasmine growing was exported to Egypt, in the Nile delta, then Southern India.

Nowadays, these two countries supply in equal proportions 90% of world production.



A jasmine harvest in the early 20th century, Grasse

Provençale rose production exists in the countryside around Grasse thanks, in part, to a partnership between Chanel and the Mul company in Pégomas, while that of the damask rose is on the rise in Turkey and Bulgaria.

Orange trees are returning to Tunisia; the tuberose is disappearing from the countryside around Grasse to re-appear in India; the leaf of the violet is still collected to some extent in the Grasse region and in Tourrettes-sur-Loup, but has to put up with Egyptian competition; mimosa

is still produced despite the development of harvests in Morocco and India.

From the thousands of tonnes of flowers processed at the beginning of the 20th century, there are several tens of tonnes produced by the year 2000, that is some 40 hectares of fields (jasmine, rose, tuberose, violet, mimosa).

While the world perfume market was preoccupied by the direction of its global strategy and concerned with ecological, economic issues of fairness, some young farmers from Grasse were struggling to restore the prestige of their region. In general, they were the successors to a family heritage who refused to let it disappear and were determined to maintain the tradition.

If production around Grasse is nowadays much reduced, the know-how is still there requiring only to be used and to endure. The same goes for the iconic and prestigious image that Grasse represents in the world of perfumery.

As a living memory and an ambassador for perfumery across the world, the International Museum of Perfumery has as its mission the presentation of varied features related to this industry.

As with the preservation of a perfume factory, the establishment of a conservatory of scented plants is fundamental to the survival and development of the industrial heritage of Grasse and its areas of expertise have been inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List since 2018.

The stakes are high since this is about:

1. Safeguarding for generations to come a natural heritage, of globally recognised quality;
2. Retaining know-how typical of Grasse, tangible and intangible;
3. Responding to the high expectations of people from Grasse and tourists who miss oral culture in the urban environment.

Historically, botanical conservatories and museums have developed in the same way. The history of the first botanical gardens shows, in the same way as the collections which became museums, that their establishment and purpose was closely linked to Higher education.

Like museums, they went on to become places of research which were open to all, where the public can only marvel, without fully understanding, the beauties on display.

At a time when many museums, like the International Museum of Perfumery, are re-inventing themselves and their collections are no longer on public display in their entirety, but according to a theme or scientific discourse, conservatories are turning into museums of life.

So, the implementation of modern museographic techniques, suitable for an open air setting, as well as a presentation policy derived from the interpretive trails adopted by natural parks, turn out to be indispensable.

## THE GARDENS OF THE MIP AND THE LEAGUE FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

As part of the partnership agreed by the Conurbation of the Pays de Grasse with the League for the Protection of Birds (LPO), the Gardens of the International Museum of Perfumery are committed to a "Refuge LPO" initiative in order to promote wildlife on the site.

This is a commitment to use techniques which respect the environment, to practice organic gardening (no phytosanitary products – neither pesticides, nor synthetic fertilisers), to prune trees outside nesting season, to promote biodiversity by installing nest-boxes, hibernation shelters, making woodpiles, favouring native plants.



Robin, © J.M.Rossi

Through this initiative, the Gardens of the MIP will become a haven for birds, insects, small mammals and also for the associated flora.

In 2012, the MIP's Gardens obtained the "LPO Refuges" label awarded by France's League for the Protection of Birds. Their certification was accompanied by naturalist inventories that aimed at providing a better grasp of the wildlife diversity present in the Gardens. The inventories revealed a wide variety of butterflies, due to the presence of so many food plants. The "LPO Refuges" label was renewed in 2024, with the addition of a "butterfly meadow". This new area will be laid out with plant species carefully selected to attract pollinating insects, fostering their food supply and reproduction alike and so contributing to preservation of biodiversity. The LPO is set to draw up new biodiversity inventories with support from the CAPG, in order to monitor its evolution.



Water retention pond, the Gardens of the MIP

# THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

As agricultural land for many years, the Gardens of the International Museum of Perfumery have accommodated many different operations. Under Napoleon, on this plot the peasants cultivated olive groves laid out in terraces. When perfumery arrived on the scene, the farmers dug up the olive trees, replacing them with scented plants and flattened the fields out. Cattle rearing at the same time enabled ploughing of the plots and generated income from the manure.

## THE FIELDS

- ❖ 2.5 hectares, North-west facing;
- ❖ calcareous soil;
- ❖ Mediterranean climate (rare frost + dry summers).

The project presented in 2005 by the architects Sensini/Morales proposed a contemporary structure which reclaimed the site and buildings which were laden with history, echoing the agriculture architecture by re-interpreting the way we read the landscape. The existing buildings retained a cultural atmosphere which had to be preserved and highlighted. The bastide and shed were renovated and redeveloped as administrative offices, toilets and changing rooms. In the bastide, the offices take up the upper floor while on the ground level, a 50m<sup>2</sup> room was designed for conferences, meetings, events or screenings. One old shed was demolished, its location used as the base for setting up the greenhouse which runs along the side of the site.

## THE GREENHOUSE

Gilles Sensini, the architect, commented: “The greenhouse forms a barrier which whets the visitor’s curiosity. This allows us to stage the process of entering the gardens to make it like immersing oneself in an atmosphere conducive to a special experience. This barrier acts as a passage between the urban world and the landscape of the hills. Grafting a contemporary extension onto a traditional bastide is not simple, as the graft has to be accepted by the social body of the heritage it represents. The greenhouse recalls the agricultural culture of the region and engages easily with the local landscape”.



The greenhouse of the Gardens of the MIP

**The greenhouse is divided into 4 spaces over a total area of 560m<sup>2</sup>:**

### ❖ Reception and Shop

### ❖ Permanent Exhibition space

A permanent exhibition has been in place since 2012, to complete the tour of the olfactory trail and making the link between the botanical production and perfumery. Thanks to scenography combining objects and interpretive visuals, visitors can understand why and how plants produce a scent, what links there are between the plants grown and their environment, how the growing of scented plants has developed over the centuries, how raw materials are processed on their arrival at the factory. This permanent exhibition space has been renovated for the opening in April 2019, to complement the narrative of the International Perfume Museum in Grasse.

### ❖ A patio

**❖ A multi-purpose protective greenhouse for plants, which can be converted to an exhibition or conference space, or used for private functions.**

## EXPLORING THE GARDENS

With input from the shared ideas of the specialists and funders, the Gardens of the International Museum of Perfumery fit in, on the one hand, with the imperatives of sustainability, and on the other hand, the programme of explaining the landscape and agricultural heritage of the Pays de Grasse.

### THE OLFACTORY TRAIL

Since the 18th century and with modern perfumery, the use of natural raw materials has diversified considerably. Whatever their origins, their display is indispensable to understand the art of perfumery.

Designed to allow people to explore or re-discover the fragrances and olfactory notes used in perfumery, the olfactory trail combines fragrant plants, aromatic plants as well as part of the collection of scented plants grown in the Pays de Grasse. A fun approach allows them to smell the different aromas straight from the plants which are organised in olfactory zones, as perfumers do, floral note, woody note, fruity note, spicy note, culinary or herbaceous notes, etc. allowing the visitor to discover part of the world of the perfumer or grower, according to the seasons. All along the way, visitors are, therefore, welcome to run their fingers through the fragrant foliage and sniff the flowers at the edge of the path.

To complement these facilities, the trail also has explanatory panels about the origins of the perfume plants, their history and use in perfumery, scented plants, olfactory families and the biodiversity of the garden.

### THE GARDEN OF FORGOTTEN PLANTS



As part of a collaboration between L'Occitane and its Foundation, the Nice Institute of Chemistry and the FOQUAL Masters Programme (University Côte d'Azur), the International Perfume Museum

(MIP) and its gardens (JMIP), an interdisciplinary team of researchers are attempting to resolve the mystery of perfume plants which have been forgotten over the history of perfumery.

Thus, L'Occitane Foundation, in partnership with the Nice Institute of Chemistry and the FOQUAL Masters Programme, sponsors this research work and wants to restart the cultivation of some of these plants within the gardens of the MIP. The aim is to retrace their history and explain the reasons for their neglect.

### THE CONSERVATORY

The conservatory part of the gardens has been laid out on the scale of the flower fields as they were cultivated in the era of the perfume plant industry.

The first perfume plants used in Grasse in the 16th century were wild orange trees, from the Italian Riviera; lavender, quintessentially Provençale; sweet acacia, from the mimosa family, imported from Africa; myrtle and mastic, produced locally.

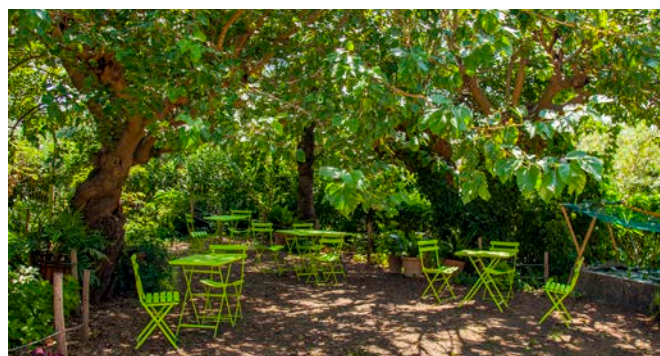
Thanks to local production of aromatics, the glovemakers-perfumers were able to find the essences and fragrant products they required.

But the three main plants, iconic in the perfumery of Grasse, became, from the 17th century, jasmine, rose and tuberose. Jasmine, brought from the Indies, appeared around 1650 in the Grasse area. At the same time, the Provençale rose, smaller but more fragrant than the common rose, was also being cultivated here.

As for the tuberose, which came from Italy, it was first planted around 1670 in the Grasse area.

### THE RELAXATION AREA

Equipped with a picnic area, the Gardens of the MIP offer visitors the chance to take a break in the shade of the ancient cypress trees, in surroundings worthy of Tuscany.



## IN THE SHADE OF THE PERGOLAS



Pergola to the Gardens of the MIP

❖ **The Pergola of the rosebushes:** Made of metal and wickerwork, it references the harvesters' baskets.

❖ **The Pergola Belvédère:** Made of metal and wood, to refer to the huts sheltering the jasmine the huts where jasmine was dried, in the shade of which the harvesters placed panniers filled with flowers.

❖ **The Pergola of the Birds at the heart of a wooded area:** located in a setting of cypress and orange trees at the edge of the pool, it is made of wood. Nest-boxes have been provided, so it should be the chance to observe the birds of the garden.

❖ **The Pergola with the insect shelters:** It is built against a high wall by the side of the canal and looks onto a plot where there is a collection of rosebushes and a plot of mimosas bordered by an embankment of iris.

A pergola was also installed on the esplanade near the greenhouse as well as a shady floral tunnel in the open fields section.

Creation of arbours was funded by the Association des Amis des Jardins du MIP and L'Occitane en Provence.



## THE GARDENS OF THE MIP AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Since 2007, La Bastide du Parfumeur (the former name of the Gardens of the MIP) has pursued a policy of partnership with the aim of developing contemporary art in the gardens.

Between the old canal and the stone pool, a visit already gave regular opportunities to get close to contemporary art works as in the exhibition by the artist Michel Blazy in partnership with l'Espace de l'Art Concret, the hives made by artists for the town of Mouans-Sartoux and also the artwork of the students of **the Horticultural Lycée of Antibes** along with **Xavier Theunis**, the artist from Nice.

Furthermore, the International Museum of Perfumery has already called on renowned artists such as **Christophe Berdaguer & Marie Péjus, Peter Downsbrough, Gérard Collin Thiebaut, Brigitte Nahon, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Dominique Thévenin** (...) to give the finishing touches or new interpretations to the museum's internal or external spaces.

Indeed, contemporary art on the theme of perfumery can be open to many creative activities like Land Art, glasswork, stimulating the sense of smell, the industrial aspect...

In 2011, for the first summer exhibition in the Gardens of the MIP, the Curators of the Museums of Grasse under the aegis of the Conurbation gave

carte blanche to Bernard Abril, the contemporary visual artist. In 2014, it was the turn of an exhibition dedicated to the work of Cathy Cuby, a visual artist, which was on display for the summer season. To sustain this dynamic focusing on contemporary art, the Curators of the Museums of Grasse has decided to present the artistic work of René Bruno, photographer and visual artist. After an exhibition of the works of the Nice artist Armand Scholtès in 2018, the gardens of the MIP in 2019 host a collective exhibition of contemporary artists.

In developing this initiative on contemporary art, we hope to raise awareness of the public of the place of aesthetics and the art of the garden but also of art in the garden.

The contemporary art programme in the Gardens is evidence of a sustained will to develop contemporary art in a manner in keeping with the different sites in the care of the Curators of the Museums of Grasse.

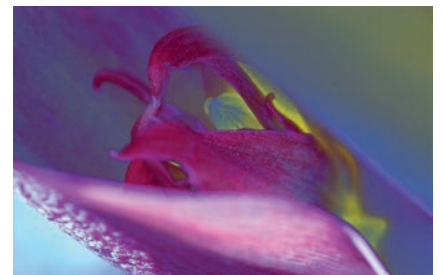
In conclusion, networking like this broadens the reach to a wider public access and enables the development of fundamental cultural partnerships in the area of the Conurbation of the Pays de Grasse.



Bernard Abril, JMIP, 2011



Cathy Cuby, JMIP, 2014 Spiders



René Bruno, JMIP, 2015



Free Figures, JMIP, 2019



Pierre Escoubas, JMIP, 2021



Bernard Briançon, JMIP, 2023

# THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS OF THE MIP

To support the Gardens of the International Perfume Museum (AJMIP) was born at the time of the purchase of the Gardens of the International Perfume Museum. It brings together perfumery professionals, active and inactive who put their skills, savoir-faire and networking at the service of the Gardens of the MIP so as to promote their outreach and help to safeguard and disseminate the heritage of perfumery.

## THE GARDENS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF PERFUMERY HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT:

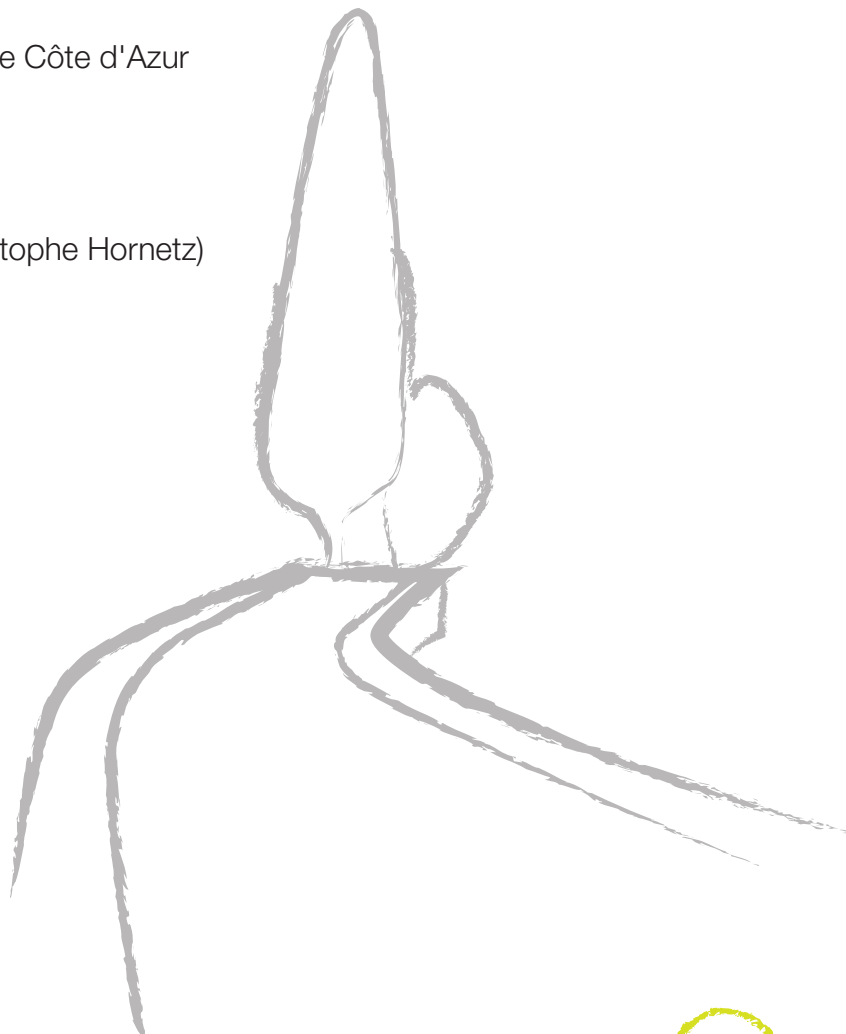
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## PRESS RELATIONS CONTACT

**Muriel Courché**

Tel.: + 33 (0)4 97 05 22 03

Tel.: + 33 (0)6 68 93 02 42

E-mail: [mcourche@paysdegrasse.fr](mailto:mcourche@paysdegrasse.fr)

## THE GARDENS OF MIP

979 Chemin des Gourettes  
06370 Mouans-Sartoux - France

Tel.: + 33 (0) 4 92 98 92 69

[www.museesdegrasse.com](http://www.museesdegrasse.com)

Free parking

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