

PRESS RELEASE

Karlsruhe, July 23, 2026

Special Exhibition at the Orangerie

Nicolas Daubanes

Le feu intérieur

September 26, 2026 – January 10, 2027

Press Conference: Friday, September 25, 2026, 11:00 a.m.

What remains of resistance? What traces do oppression, violence, and the desire for freedom leave behind in buildings, landscapes, and collective memory? These are the questions explored by the French artist Nicolas Daubanes (*1983). His large-scale wall drawings and immersive installations make visible both historical and contemporary structures of power, as well as the strategies developed to overcome them.

From September 26, 2026, to January 10, 2027, the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe presents at the Orangerie the first major solo exhibition by Daubanes in Germany. Through large-scale drawings, photographs, and installations, the artist reflects on forms of violence and oppression, but also on strategies of resistance and remembrance. Materials such as iron filings and objects from former prisons provide a compelling gateway to the past. The Karlsruhe exhibition *Le feu intérieur* presents a body of work whose relevance is particularly striking in light of global wars, authoritarian developments, and increasing social polarization.

Daubanes' artistic practice is rooted in historical research into French and German history, which he connects with contemporary social issues. His focus lies less on historical events themselves than on their spatial memory: prisons, factories, ruins, and places of house arrest become carriers of historical experience. Combining documentary precision with poetic visual power, his works present history not as a closed

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chapter of the past, but as an ongoing social process.

For *Le feu intérieur*, Daubanes traces a line from Galileo Galilei's house arrest at the Villa Medici in Rome—where the artist worked as a fellow in 2024/25—through the artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi, the painter Gustave Courbet, and the poet Pierre Dupont, to Jean Moulin, a key figure of the French Resistance. The exhibition also addresses the prison uprising in Nancy, France, during the 1970s, as well as the history of the former Charles III prison.

The exhibition title *Le feu intérieur—The Inner Fire*—refers to a dual meaning: social conflicts that continue to smolder beneath the surface, and the inner force that drives people to stand up against injustice. Daubanes understands art as a space for historical memory and social reflection. His works tell stories of the courage to disobey, of sabotage, subversion, and strategies of survival—and make clear that the confrontation with freedom and resistance is more urgent today than ever before.