

Introduction

Justin Caguiat (b. 1989, Tokyo, Japan) is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the relationship between architecture, spirituality and the rituals embedded within everyday urban infrastructure. *Change Ringing*, the artist's first solo institutional exhibition in the UK, brings painting, sculpture, printmaking, sound, and film together in a site-responsive multimedia installation.

Throughout the exhibition, a series of bronze bells, cast in the shapes of various flowers and plant seeds, ring in continually changing sequences. The score, created by composer Lily Pickett, draws on the principles of English change ringing, in which bells are rung in a changing order, cycling through every mathematically possible sequence. Here, the bells are mechanically struck in repeating sequences by pistons following a programmed order. The sound changes as it interacts with the different surfaces of the gallery. Exposed brick and metal absorb the bells' chimes, while the oculi and circular openings in the walls gather and amplify them. Reflecting Le Corbusier's idea of architecture as an acoustic receiver, the gallery is transformed into a listening instrument.

Working with the gallery's architectural and infrastructural features, Caguiat presents a new series of thermochromic paintings on copper, which change in response to heat and light. As temperatures fluctuate, layers of heat-sensitive pigment reveal and conceal different forms within works that remain in a constant state of transformation. Connected by rudimentary microcontrollers, cabling, heat pads, and circuits, each bell chime triggers a thermochemical reaction on the surface of each copper painting.

The large-scale, unstretched paintings in the exhibition are inspired by Justo Gallego Martínez's *Catedral de Justo*, which the self-taught architect designed and built alone in Madrid, using only recycled and found materials. Circular motifs found in the cathedral influenced some of the shapes in Caguiat's works and exhibition design. The walls on which the paintings are presented have also been partly stripped of plasterboard, revealing the original brickwork of the building with traces of its material histories and past refurbishments.

Change Ringing evolves ideas first explored in Caguiat's project *Zodiac Machine*, which La Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Madrid organised across the city's Santa Ana y la Esperanza Church, the nearby Moratalaz Market, and surrounding public spaces. Through this exhibition, Caguiat explores the relationship between devotion, architecture and materiality, and considers how buildings accumulate memory through traces of ritual and transformation.



Angel's Trumpet. Photo: BIOSPHOTO / Alamy

Zodiac Machine

2025–2026

The most efficient and holistic way to explore space and architecture is through acoustics. If you're going to work with architecture, you've got to use sound.

—Justin Caguiat

The bronze bells in the exhibition are made using an ancient lost-wax casting technique, following a Russian Orthodox tradition in which the tonality of each bell remains unknown until it is complete. Considered to hold the voice of God, the bells are not carved or altered after casting, allowing their individual tones to emerge through the process itself.

Caguiat draws on this tradition, creating a sound installation for the exhibition with bells in the shapes of flowers and plant seeds, including poppies, buttercups, foxgloves, acorns, and chestnuts. The form of some of the bells in the central gallery is inspired by angel's trumpets (*Brugmansia*) – flowers historically associated with witchcraft due to their potent hallucinogenic and delirium-inducing properties.

Together, the bells form an automated sound sculpture based on the 16th- and 17th-century English change ringing tradition. This art, still practised in churches, assigns a number to each bell's tone, then places these in precise progressions. Change ringing is a communal activity, a ritual that can alter the mental state of ringers engaged in repetition, duration and collective performance.

Here, a series of electrically charged pneumatic pistons strikes the bells according to a score written by Caguiat's collaborator Lily Pickett. Resembling an early algorithmic score, Pickett's composition uses mathematical sequences and harmonics to blend technical rigour with avant-garde concepts.



Works in progress. Photo: Justin Caguiat

Bread and mixed media sculptures 2026

Another body of sculptural work in the exhibition is made with bread, wax, adobe, and found materials. Caguiat's practice is informed by ideas of alchemy, chemical processes and thermodynamics. Harnessing the capacity of fire and heat to transform materials, the artist embraces change and chance as part of his process.

Caguiat draws on the tradition of encaustic painting, also known as hot wax painting, and incorporates it into bread sculptures resembling different archetypes, including humans and animals. The kiln built by the artist to cast the bread sculptures has been dismantled and reassembled into sculptures that hint at architectural forms, placed throughout the exhibition. Together, these works reveal Caguiat's experimentations with chemistry and his interest in processes of growth, decay and decomposition.



Detail from *Catedral de Justo*, Madrid, Spain. Photo: Justin Caguiat

Hysteresis Loop

2026

My ideal painting is a painting that looks different every time you see it.

—Justin Caguiat

Several works in the exhibition, including the bells and bread sculptures, are formed and transformed through heat. Drawn to the generative and unpredictable qualities of this process, Caguiat applies this same experimental approach to the circular paintings in this room, which change in response to temperature.

Caguiat's interest in thermodynamics and chemistry also informs his approach to painting, and the materials he works with. These paintings on copper are made with thermochromic pigments, which change colour in response to heat and light. Caguiat painted these works in near-complete darkness, as the light-sensitive pigments degrade over time – a characteristic he embraces in his work.

The title of this series, *Hysteresis Loop*, is taken from a differential control algorithm used in thermostats. Caguiat uses this everyday mechanism to create a feedback loop between the paintings and the bells. Heat pads attached to each painting activate when a corresponding bell rings, triggering a change in pigment colour and revealing different layers and shapes. The painting then cools towards the temperature of the gallery space. Installed as a dynamic mobile sculpture that responds to the gallery's architecture, the paintings are in constant dialogue with space and sound. In them, Caguiat brings together photography, painting and moving image in order to explore the possibility of colour as form.



Justin Caguiat's studio. Photo: Brendan Jaks

Unstretched paintings

2026

I see different perspectives pushing against each other and they never settle into a cohesive compositional form. It's pushing things to the edge of collapse on a structural level while still maintaining some sort of feeling of harmony.

—Justin Caguiat

The unstretched paintings featured here were made earlier this year for Caguiat's exhibition *Zodiac Machine*, organised by La Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo across Madrid's Santa Ana y la Esperanza Church, the nearby Moratalaz Market, and surrounding public spaces. These mural-scale paintings draw on architectural and artistic references Caguiat encountered in Madrid, most notably Justo Gallego Martínez's *Catedral de Justo* and Francisco de Goya's print series *The Disasters of War*, 1810–1820.

These works reflect Caguiat's visual language and approach, in which structures and systems are interrupted by improvisation. In their compositions, various abstract symbols, spatial elements, figurative details, and colours collide. Circular forms are a recurring feature in Caguiat's work, resembling a network of nodal points.



Posters installed for *Justin Caguiat: Zodiac Machine, 2026*, Madrid, organised by La Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. Photo: Justin Caguiat

Prints 2025–2026

Drawn to the history of traditional and experimental printmaking, the chemical reactions involved in etching, and experimenting with base materials, Caguiat tests and misuses established printmaking techniques to develop his own processes. The prints here bring together different strands of the artist's practice, recycling materials from various bodies of work. Several prints feature stills from the film *Border Jump of the Circle, 2026*, also on view in the exhibition.



Border Jump of the Circle

2026

This non-linear, experimental video follows a wandering figure across symbolic landscapes. Vernacular cinema, kitsch references, hallucinatory sounds, voiceovers, and scoring build into a sensorial collage. Moving between abstraction, poetry and science fiction, the film is an exploration of genre tropes, motifs and archetypes.



Stills from *Border Jump of the Circle*, 2026



Serpentine South Building, ca. 1934

History of Serpentine South Building

Serpentine South was originally constructed in 1934 to house a tea pavilion. Designed by James Grey West, it was built on the site of an earlier building designed by Sir Henry Tanner in 1912. The Arts Council took it on in 1970, establishing the Serpentine Gallery. In 1996, the building underwent a major renovation to better accommodate its use as an art gallery.

For this exhibition, ahead of a previously planned renovation, parts of the plasterboard walls have been removed from three rooms, revealing the building's original brickwork alongside alterations made over time. Caguiat works directly with this material history, exposing the layers and previously hidden features of the building. His paintings are installed directly onto its metal grid supports, while materials from past exhibitions are repurposed to make vitrines and benches. Through these interventions, Caguiat incorporates the building's permanent and temporary architecture into the exhibition's design.

List of Works

Installed throughout the galleries

Zodiac Machine, 2025–2026
Bronze lost-wax cast bells,
circuit and pistons, sound
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Mixed media sculptures, 2026
Bread, adobe, wax, jute,
mixed media
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Prints from series:
Alphabet of Dots, 2025
Mixed media
Synonyms for Imitation, 2026
Photo, flat bite toner transfer,
aquatint etching on paper
Street Furniture, 2026
Flat bite toner transfer, gampi
paper, rosin medium, on acetate
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

South Gallery

Slouching Through the Sensors, 2026
Oil, silver leaf, distemper on canvas
175.3 × 121.9 cm (each panel)
175.3 × 365.8 cm (overall)
Courtesy Private Collection,
Greene Naftali and Modern Art

North Gallery

Hysteresis Loop, 2026
Thermochromic pigment
and oil on copper
76 cm diameter each (16 paintings)
122 cm diameter (1 painting)
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Incarnate World, 2026
Oil, chalk, pigment on linen
322.6 × 225 cm
Courtesy Sandretto Re Rebaudengo
Collection; Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

East Gallery

Harvest Corpuscula, 2026
Oil, chalk, pigment, pencil,
wax on linen
228 × 285.5 cm
Courtesy The Al Thani Collection;
Greene Naftali and Modern Art

Untitled, 2026
Oil, chalk, pigment, pencil,
wax on linen
228.6 × 289.6 cm
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Necromaniac, 2026
Oil, chalk, pigment, pencil,
wax on linen
228.6 × 284.5 cm
Courtesy Collection of Aishti
Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon

Untitled, 2026
Wood, steel sheet metal
183 × 183 × 66 cm
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

West Gallery

Green Deer, 2026
Oil and distemper on linen
147.3 × 221 cm
Courtesy Collection of
Jessica and Matt Farron

Forensics with Air, 2026
Oil, chalk, pigment on linen
231.1 × 284.7 cm
Courtesy Sandretto Re Rebaudengo
Collection; Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Angel's Trumpet, 2026
Oil, chalk, pigment, pencil,
wax on linen
228.6 × 287 cm
Courtesy The George Economou
Collection; Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Cinema Room

Border Jump of the Circle, 2026
8mm, 16mm, digital video,
printed on 16mm, sound
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

The Neophyte, 2026
8mm and 16mm film on CRT monitor
Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali
and Modern Art

Rafael Delacruz
Little Believer (London), 2026
Wind, anemometer, midi computer
software

Saturday Talks

Learn more about *Justin Caguiat: Change Ringing* on Saturday Talks Free, booking required

10 October 2026, 11 AM

Alexa Chow, Assistant Exhibitions Curator

14 November 2026, 12 PM

Natalia Grabowska, Curator at Large, Architecture and Site-Specific Projects

BSL interpretation is available on request for all our Saturday Talks.

Catalogue

On the occasion of Justin Caguiat's exhibitions at Serpentine and La Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, a catalogue documenting the two shows and the research process will be published with Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König. Richly illustrated with images of works, artist's sketches, diagrams and installation images, the book is designed by Amsterdam-based designer Irma Boom and includes contributions by the artist, his collaborators and writers including Dodie Bellamy, Blue Marcus, Lawrence Rinder and Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist.

For more information and to pre-order, visit: shop.serpentinegalleries.org

Limited edition

Serpentine has a rich history of publishing artists' editions for more than 30 years. Working with established and emerging artists, architects and designers, limited editions offer our community a unique opportunity to acquire works to support Serpentine's exhibitions, architecture, education, live and digital programmes.

To accompany Justin Caguiat's exhibition at Serpentine, the artist has produced special limited edition works.

Available in the shop or online: shop.serpentinegalleries.org
For more information on available editions, please contact: editions@serpentinegalleries.org

Exhibition credits

Justin Caguiat: Change Ringing is curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, and Natalia Grabowska, Curator at Large, Architecture and Site-specific Projects, with Alexa Chow, Assistant Exhibitions Curator.

Produced by Richard Install, Head of Production; Honor Bailey-Rosse, Production Manager and Alice Houghton, Registrar.

Serpentine Technicians: Anthony Silvester, Giacomo Layet, Adam McGowan, Kenji Takahashi, Charlotte Buckler and Maja Quille.

Exhibition build by Beyond Surface.

AV by ADi Audiovisual.

Bell Founder: Dave Snoo Wilson
Bell Support Structures Fabrication: Jack Stiling
Bell Composition: Lily Pickett
Creative Technologist: Himanshu Bablani

Studio Director: Blue Marcus

Print Technician: Courtney Sennish

Painting conservation: Julia Nagle
Sculpture conservation: India Carpenter
Print conservation: Roo Foley
conservation

Film Credits

Border Jump of the Circle, 2026

Actors: Dávid Varhengyi, Tenko Nakajima Glenewinkel, O.C.
Milliner: Hurtence
Costume Designer: Ellen Poppy-Hill
Voice Over Artist: Eugenie Vronskaya
Special Thanks to: Ricky Thorson and Yaxkin Fuentes

Film Projection: David Leicester

The Neophyte, 2026

Actors: Juliette Lena Hager
Additional Camerawork: Rafael Delacruz
Sound Piece: Rafael Delacruz

Graphic Design: Irma Boom Office (Irma Boom, Anna Moschioni)
Printed by Impress Print Services Ltd.

Zodiac Machine organised by La Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Madrid was curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and produced by Isabela Mora.

Serpentine

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Front Cover:

Untitled 13 (Synonyms for Imitation), 2026 (detail)
Photo, flat bite toner transfer, aquatint etching on paper
30.5 × 26 cm
Edition of 5 plus 5 AP

Back cover:

Untitled 17 (Synonyms for Imitation), 2026 (detail)
Photo, flat bite toner transfer, aquatint etching on paper
30.5 × 26 cm
Edition of 5 plus 5 AP

Justin Caguiat: Change Ringing
Made Possible by

Major Support



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Discover more about *Justin Caguiat: Change Ringing* in our free digital guide on Bloomberg Connects



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