

Laurent Grasso, *Cosmic Drive*, film HR, 2026 (in progress). © Laurent Grasso Studio. Courtesy of the artist, Sean Kelly, and Perrotin. © Laurent Grasso / ADAGP, Paris, 2026

METAPHYSICAL MAZE

Laurent Grasso

November 7, 2026 – January 16, 2028
Opening Preview Reception November 7, 5:30pm

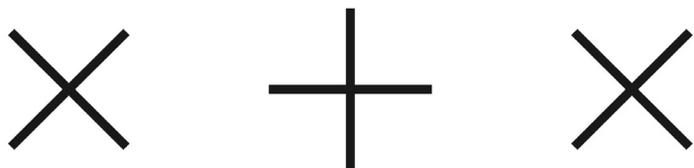
January 15, 2026, North Adams, MA – In November 2026, MASS MoCA will present *Metaphysical Maze*, the largest exhibition to date in the United States devoted to French conceptual artist Laurent Grasso.

Installed in the museum's iconic Building 5, *Metaphysical Maze* will take the form of an immersive installation bringing together, for the first time, the artist's most emblematic films, along with a new commission in progress, *Cosmic Drive*, produced during his research residency at the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California.

Conceived as a journey, the exhibition immerses visitors in a contemplative state that expands the perception of time. The installation extends beyond the realm of film to include new works — paintings, sculptures, and architectural interventions — forming a whole. In Grasso's universe, all lines are blurred: artworks are presented without specific titles, dates or identifying labels. Within the exhibition time appears suspended, unfolding a carefully orchestrated environment. "Entering my exhibition," says the artist, "is like walking into a forest — an imaginary landscape where you wander without trying to identify every species of tree."

"This project has been ten years in the making," notes Denise Markonish, former MASS MoCA Chief Curator and now Martin Friedman Chief Curator at Madison Square Park. *"I first presented Grasso's work at MASS MoCA in Explode Every Day: An Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder (2016–2017), and since then we've been in dialogue about how to bring his expansive vision to Building 5. I'm thrilled that MASS MoCA's audiences will encounter such a wide range of his work — it will truly be an exhibition filled with wonder."*

Using three cross-shaped structures specially designed to span the length of the former industrial space, Grasso transforms the vast gallery into a machine of vision. These structures draw inspiration from Sol LeWitt's geometric works which are on view in his *A Wall Drawing Retrospective* installed in MASS MoCA's adjacent gallery and establish a dialogue between the two spaces.



Grasso further enriches these structures – which will be home to films and accompanying artworks – by rotating them 45 degrees so that, as visitors move through the space, they evoke the hands of a clock. Their walls become the projection surfaces for his films and the circular movement of visitors reinforces the impression of being inside a living mechanism of time, creating an experience that evokes time travel – a theme Grasso has explored throughout his career. This is further enhanced by the ways in which Grasso alters the space to evoke invisible energies. Gallery windows, sealed with metal panels, appear to have been marked by unknown radiation. And sound permeates throughout the space creating layers that merge into a continuous presence. These soundtracks include contributions from his collaborations including Warren Ellis (Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds) and Nicolas Godin (Air).

“Beyond the layers of detail in Grasso’s technically rich structural forms is his interest in life in the intersections of science, the natural world, poetics, and time,” adds Kristy Edmunds, Director of MASS MoCA. *“Metaphysical Maze explores and provokes us toward a multitude of invisible and continuous forces that are at play around us, both real and imagined. Through cinema, architecture, sculpture, and painting, Grasso establishes a call and response between forms and symbols that take form in slowly developed associations. These seamlessly threaded elements work together to draw visitors into an exploration of metaphysical time from prehistory to imagined futures.”*

This exploration of temporal distortion is evident in the new film *Cosmic Drive*, set within an altered space-time continuum and fueled by the artist’s enduring fascination with invisible phenomena and the porous boundaries between science and fiction. For this project, Grasso collaborated closely with scientists at the SETI Institute, a non-profit research organization, who study the emergence of life in extreme environments and beyond Earth.

“We are exposed to invisible forces that are often difficult to grasp. Through my installations, I try to bring viewers into contact with these forces and to create the conditions in which they can be sensed,” says Laurent Grasso.

MASS MoCA will also partner with Olana State Historic Site (Hudson, NY) and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site (Catskill, NY) to present two satellite programming and exhibitions, as well as the Burlington Center for the Arts (Burlington, VT), which will host a film projection. These presentations extend the exhibition beyond MASS MoCA, opening a dialogue between Grasso’s work and historically significant sites.

Recent works from Grasso’s ongoing *Studies Into the Past* series draw inspiration from the Hudson River School movement founded by Thomas Cole, and in particular from the 19th-century painter Frederic Edwin Church, whose home, Olana, stands directly across the Hudson River from his teacher’s house and studio. The year 2026 marks the bicentennial of Church’s birth (1826–1900), a moment accompanied by renewed interest in his artistic and cultural legacy across the United States.

Together, these presentations will bring past and present into conversation, placing Grasso’s work in a sensitive dialogue with historical figures of American landscape painting.



Laurent Grasso, *Orchid Island*, 2023, HR film, 20'. Courtesy of the artist, Sean Kelly and Perrotin
© Laurent Grasso / ADAGP, Paris, 2026



Portrait of Laurent Grasso, Courtesy of the artist and CNCITY Foundation.

About the Artist

Born in France in 1972, Laurent Grasso has developed a fascination with the visual possibilities related to the science of electromagnetic energy, radio waves and naturally occurring phenomena.

Grasso is the recipient of the Meru Art*Science Award in Bergamo, Italy, the Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the Marcel Duchamp Prize. He is the subject of a major monograph, *Time Travel*, published by Rizzoli in 2024.

Grasso's work has been shown in solo exhibitions at international institutions including Heredium in Daejeon, South Korea, the Abbaye of Jumièges, in France, Tao Art in Taiwan, the Collège des Bernardins and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Centre Pompidou x West Bund Museum in Shanghai, the Jeonnam Museum of Art in Gwangyang, South Korea, the Palais Fesch, Musée des Beaux-Arts in Ajaccio, France, the Hermès Foundation in Tokyo, the Kunsthhaus Baselland in Switzerland, the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Montréal, the Jeu de Paume and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the Bass Museum of Art in Miami, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C. amongst others.

Grasso has been included in many international biennials including the 21st Sydney Biennale, Australia (2018); EVA International, Limerick, Ireland (2018); Kochi, India (2014); Gwangju 9th, South Korea (2012); Manifesta 8, Cartagena/ Murcia, Spain (2010); Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2009); Moscow, Russia (2009); and Busan, South Korea (2004 and 2006).

Laurent Grasso has recently created several permanent installations in public spaces including *Solar Wind* on the Paris ring road, and a group of sculptures entitled *Roots of the Future*, which was installed for the 2024 Paris Olympic Village. Grasso was also commissioned to create a permanent site-specific installation for the ceiling of the new train station in Châtillon-Montrouge, as part of the Grand Paris project.

He is represented by Perrotin and Sean Kelly.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is a contemporary art museum that emphasizes bold creative exploration and fosters surprising connections between people every single day. It upholds artistic freedom and is an indispensable home for artists who stretch toward what has yet to be created. From its beginnings as the major textile mill Arnold Print Works in the mid-19th century, to its days as the Sprague Electric Company in the mid-20th century, to its current existence as a globally renowned, contemporary art museum and fabrication center, the MASS MoCA campus has a rich history of serving as an economic engine of the City of North Adams and the surrounding region. With vast galleries, artist studios and a variety of indoor and outdoor stages, MASS MoCA is able to embrace art in all forms.

For more information visit massmoca.org or follow on Instagram at [@massmoca](https://www.instagram.com/massmoca).

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For more information and photo inquiries, please contact:

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