

Press Reviews

Caroline Goldstein, 'Is Batman Patrolling Marseille This Summer? No, That's Just Artist Alex Israel, Projecting the Bat Signal in the Sky Over the City', Artnet, July 2019

Is Batman Patrolling Marseille This Summer? No, That's Just Artist Alex Israel, Projecting the Bat Signal in the Sky Over the City

See pictures from the artist's Gotham City-themed installation on the rooftop of a Le Corbusier building.

Caroline Goldstein July 19, 2019



The Bat-Signal (1989) as part of Alex Israel's exhibition at MAMO, Marseille Modulor (2019). Photo: WE ARE CONTENT(S).

The one-and-only caped crusader of Gotham City has apparently taken a trip overseas for the summer. If you're in Marseille, France, this summer and look up into the night sky, you might notice a hazy beam of light projecting the Bat-Signal, courtesy of Los Angeles-based artist [Alex Israel](http://www.artnet.com/artists/alex-israel/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/alex-israel/>).

The work, backed by [luggage brand Rimowa](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/rimowa-x-alex-israel-1480234) (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/rimowa-x-alex-israel-1480234>), has been installed at the Marseille Modular Arts Centre, which occupies the rooftop of a Brutalist building designed by [Le Corbusier](http://www.artnet.com/artists/le-corbusier/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/le-corbusier/>), called La Cité Radieuse.

Israel told [Dezeen](https://www.dezeen.com/2019/07/16/alex-israel-bat-signal-cite-radieuse-le-corbusier/) (<https://www.dezeen.com/2019/07/16/alex-israel-bat-signal-cite-radieuse-le-corbusier/>) that he was inspired both by Marseille's unsavory history—at one point a hotbed of organized crime—and Le Corbusier's linear concrete building, which he said “has a hyper-urban sensibility” that reminded him of New York City. He said he hopes visitors will see the beacon in the sky and think “childhood dreams really can and do come true.”



The rooftop of Cité Radieuse, Marseille Modular Arts Centre. Photo © Olivier Amsellem.

Israel is best known for channeling the celebrity culture of California into cotton candy-hued installations that feature symbols of commercialism and the entertainment industry, like palm trees and mirrored sunglasses. While the color scheme of his latest project is something of a departure, evoking the dark and gritty streets of New York, using a symbol straight from a Hollywood studio is very much in the artist's wheelhouse.

To make the Bat-Signal, Israel reconstituted a World War II-era searchlight and obtained the rights to the Batman icon after lobbying Warner Brothers, the studio behind the 1989 Tim Burton-directed *Batman*. In addition to the project, Israel has also styled the roof like the Batcave and installed a re-imagined Batmobile.

Israel's exhibition marks the seventh artist takeover of the rooftop, which has previously served as a canvas for [Daniel Buren](http://www.artnet.com/artists/daniel-buren/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/daniel-buren/>), Xavier Veilhan, Dan Graham, Felice Varini, Jean-Pierre Raynaud, and Olivier Mosset.

See more pictures of the exhibition below.



Portrait of Alex Israel, 2019, Photo: Portrait: Quentin de Briey © We Are Content(s), courtesy of MAMO.



The Bat-Mobile (1989) as part of Alex Israel's exhibition at MAMO, Marseille Modulator (2019). Photo: WE ARE CONTENT(S).



The Bat-Signal (1989) as part of Alex Israel's exhibition at MAMO, Marseille Modulator (2019). Photo: WE ARE CONTENT(S).

"Alex Israel" is on view at the Marseille Modular Arts Centre, Centre d'art de la Cité Radieuse, 280 Boulevard Michelet, 13008 Marseille, France, June 8–August 31, 2019.