

MAC

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VAL

Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne

Place de la Libération — Vitry-sur-Seine (94)

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Opening hours

Museum

Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays from 11 am to 6 pm.
Last tickets sold 30 minutes before closing time.
Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 15 August and 25 December.

Garden

Tuesday to Sunday from 9 am to 6 pm.
Free access

— Romain Kronenberg
Romain Kronenberg develops narrative devices that take their codes, systems and references from the worlds of novels, cinema and music. Varying in complexity, highly structured and interwoven, his projects reflect the quest for a lost and impossible completeness. Mystery, secrecy and hiding are at play here. As the veritable spectator of his own works, Kronenberg is sometimes overwhelmed, trapped by his own characters. 'Providence' provides clues to a total work of which we will only ever know fragments. As a totality, reality always eludes us.

— Sam Moore
Fiction is at the centre of artist Anabelle Hulaut's concerns. Her works have, in particular, taken on the appearance of investigations based on Sherlock Holmes or Maigret or even Monsieur Hulot, invented and embodied in the 1950s by the films of Jacques Tati. With Sam Moore, a character who has slowly been coming to the fore in Hulaut's work since 2013, things get more complicated. Endowed with an autonomous existence, Sam Moore collects objects and produces works: the series known as 'Les paysages agités' (Restless landscapes) begins in 2019, based on arrangements of modest trifles, salvaged scraps assembled to make a landscape in a DIY and pop aesthetic.

— Sebastien Loghman
Sebastien Loghman makes films. He plays with the processes of identity construction. With poetry and delicacy, he takes up the codes of fantastic cinema. Rhizomatic and labyrinthine, this work develops in interconnected cycles shot through with recurring motifs: the double, the face, cinema. Calling upon personal and collective memories, the reality thus narrated unfolds in a troublingly uncanny atmosphere.

— SMITH

In the work of SMITH we find a whole poetics, even a politics, of metamorphosis. Spectres, ghosts and invisible presences populate his pictures. Resonantly melancholic, his work questions the shape-shifting of identity. Of identities. For some years now, his attention has been focused on the notion of 'Desideration', a concept he has developed with his partners (Lucien Rafmaj, Nadege Piton et al) to circumscribe and describe, to express this nostalgic relationship that humanity has with its stellar origins. In 'Lignes de vies - une exposition de légendes' he laid out the premises of this philosophical and artistic adventure, outlining the possibility of another history of humanity in a fable that brings together end of the world and revelations.

— Suzanne Husky
Whether it is the daily struggle of a farmer, manu militari expulsion from a ZAD (a zone earmarked for development), police violence, the aberrations of so-called organic products, the tapestries, carpets and ceramics made by Suzanne Husky relate contemporary 'eco-societal' struggles. She narrates the violence and tensions that run through Western society and meditates on our links to other life forms, taking an ecosystemic and 'eco-feminist' approach.

— Sylvie Ruaulx

Sylvie Ruaulx is interested in the scraps and reliefs of industry, its know-how, its tools and machines, its poetry. With 'similiblic' she is continuing her project, inspired by the cult show hosted by Guy Lux: Le Similiblic (1969). The word, coined in 1950 by Pierre Dac, has since become a synonym for 'thing'. In 2016 and 2018, two fictitious shows were filmed, two 'television exhibitions', one of which was held at the MAC VAL. The set-up was the same each time: a TV set, a set, a host and hostess, an audience, and a question: what is it and what is it for?

— Véronique Hubert

Véronique Hubert mixes and matches elements of all kinds. Readings, films, situations are the materials of her plastic explorations. Overproductive, in her works she responds to the incessant flow of information. She borrows, quotes, diverts and recycles the texts of others. Whether we follow the adventures of her alter egos (Mimicry, the Fairy Utopia), or immerse ourselves in her novelistic

escapes (Noutres), Hubert truly lives with several people inside herself.

— Vincent Volkart

Vincent Volkart's visual rants are absurd and silly. With a sense of humour, his burlesque and whimsical playlets set up a world where human bodies and objects interact. *Les récits d'Yves acte 1 et 2, Le bobard* - the titles are clear. These little occupations will not cure our contemporary disarray. Smiling as a remedy for boredom?

— Virginie Barré

Virginie Barré works the territories of fiction from close-in. She puts into space, images and colours dreamy and fantastic stories in resolutely cinematographic works that orchestrate the world. In 2012, she began working directly with the camera, making short films and installations that develop in a disturbing back and forth between real space and filmic space.

— Yan Tomaszewski

Here, a 13th century Korean tale, the contemporary Korean obsession with 'mentoplasty' (chin surgery) and the diabolical and controversial character of Oli London dissect questions of the body, both social and individual, both what is given and what is constructed. Elsewhere, a meditation on the extraterrestrial origins of Life, on the mysterious destruction of a villa in California, on the relationship between a Czechoslovakian font from the 1920s and on mediumnity, or the semi-fictional recreation of the life and work of the Polish constructivist and mountaineer

Mieczysław Szczuka, As a good alchemist, Yan Tomaszewski combines, in his filmic and sculptural worlds, historical, mythological, scientific elements and motifs to form a layered narrative framework.

— Youri Johnson

Not much is known about Youri Johnson. We do know that Romain Noël prefaced one of his writings, 'Mycélium, petit conte post-apocalyptique', published in 2021. We know that he also wrote 'The Secret Art of Secret War', a novel that nobody has read but that everyone is talking about. We know that his Instagram account is regularly filled with images of his work. We also know that his assemblages, with their radical economy of means and the appearance of ex-votos and magical talismans, are regularly exhibited around the world. But who is Youri Johnson?

Frank Lamy, curator of the exhibition

Looking further
Publication
<i>Histoires vraies</i> . 320 pages, 250 reproductions, texts in French and English, 22 x 15 cm, 25 euros. Texts by Nicolas Surlapierre, Frank Lamy, Sarah Ihler-Meyer.
Fun tour
A self-guided tour for children aged 6 and over takes them on a fun itinerary through the exhibition, with games, drawings, riddles or visual exercises. <small>Free of charge, available on request at reception and downloadable from macval.fr</small>
Ressources centre
Librarians provide the works of reference to take your visit further. <small>Free access from Tuesday to Saturday from noon to 6 pm. cdm.macval@macval.fr or 01 43 91 14 64</small>
Regular tours
For adults and young people upwards of 11 years old Every Saturday and Sunday, 4pm
For families and children upwards of 4 years old Every Sunday, 2.30 pm Wednesdays during school holidays, 2.30 pm <small>Free with the museum ticket. Information and reservation: reservation@macval.fr or 01 43 91 64 23</small>

True Stories

Curator: Frank Lamy, assisted by Julien Blanpied
Lighting design: Serge Damon

With works by Aletheia (Hugo Dumont, Anthony Vernerey), Alexis Foiny, Alice Brygo, Anaïs-Tohé Commaret, Anne Brégeaut, Anne-James Chaton, Aurélie Ferruel and Florentine Guédon, Aurélien Mauplot, 1.0.3 collective, Esther Ferrer, Étienne Charry, Farès Hadj-Sadok, Hippolyte Hentgen, Jean-Charles de Quillacq, Jordan Roger, Katia Kameli, Kenny Duncan, Kent Monkman, Laura Bottereau & Marine Fiquet, Marie Losier, Mary Sibande, Mehryl Levisse, Olivier Nottellet, Pejvak, Regine Kolle, Romain Kronenberg, Sam Moore, Sebastien Loghman, Suzanne Husky, SMITH, Sylvie Ruaulx, Véronique Hubert, Vincent Volkart, Virginie Barré, Yan Tomaszewski, Youri Johnson.

English

This new group exhibition brings together works by some forty artists and several generations. Continuing the exploration of the construction of the Subject, pursued in our temporary exhibitions since 2005, ‘True Stories’ follows on from the group exhibition ‘Lignes de vies – une exposition de légendes’ (2019) which explored the passageways between art and autobiography, between reality and fiction. This new instalment pursues the idea that everything is fiction, that the real is a set of superpositions, layer on layer, interwoven with sundry stories, but this time focusing less on the effects of the toing and froing between art and the world and proposing, instead, various parallel approaches to realities.

The artists in this exhibition have in common the use of fictional devices, strategies and postures which, nevertheless, are grounded in an attempt to describe the world, tinged, among other things, with speculative or even documentary narration. Inventing, narrating, imagining. They peel back the layers of appearance to uncover other narratives, to bring forth other stories.

Telling (ourselves) stories: this immemorial need for narrative, to understand, articulate and reflect on the world, is particularly resonant in the age, among other things, of post-truth and the avatars that teem in the metaverse. Social media is filled with what are symptomatically called reels and stories. Decidedly, stories are everywhere. ‘Histoires vraies’. The title is paradoxical, to say the least. Where is truth in all this? Where is veracity? Should we believe what artists tell us? Does reality exist outside its formulation?

Fiction for putting in crisis, for questioning, for deconstructing, for making apparent; fiction for averting, for removing; fiction for repairing, for other ways of telling, for helping, for accompanying, for transmitting; but also for going deep into appearances, for questioning the facts, their veracity, the modes of narration themselves; fiction for proposing alternatives to the ‘grand narratives’; but also, fiction for the simple and joyful pleasure of making things up. To paraphrase Sarah Iher-Meyer in one of the catalogue entries, ‘Histoires vraies’ offers a constellation of ‘minimalist tragi-comedies and micro-narratives with multiple levels of interpretation. Each viewer is invited to compose their own narrative, between nightmare and dream.’

The exhibition will be extended by a programme of films and performances.

— Aletheia

The philosophical concept of Aletheia articulates the ambiguities between truth and opinion, reality and falsity, both revealing being and making it happen. For graphic designers Hugo Dumont and Anthony Vernerey, this generic term has defined their modus operandi ever since their studies at the École des Arts Décoratifs, designating both their agency’s activity and their visual project of a fictional city. Evoking the post-modern city where, according to the analyses of architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour in *Learning from Las Vegas* (published in 1972), communication dominates and constructs space, ALETHEIA acts as a veritable dystopia where borders, administrative institutions and generalized surveillance lay the foundations for a collective life wrapped in a promise of happiness, perfection and security. The future is now.

— Alexis Foiny

Proceeding from thorough and precise documentary investigation, Alexis Foiny sets out to give substance (if not life) to a plant that has been extinct since 1860, the Astiria Rosea.

Bringing into play ultra-contemporary technologies (3D printing, synthetic perfume, etc.), the artefacts thus produced are presented in display mode on pedestals/structures painted in green (reminiscent of the green of video inlays), proposing what could be seen as scenario of repair.

— Alice Brygo

As an attentive observer of the contemporary world, in her films Alice Brygo explores the questions raised by generations Y and Z: rejection of the productivist, capitalist and heteropatriarchal world, questions of identity, spiritual quests, etc. Interested in the plural dynamics between individuals and groups, she focuses on the invisible, the margins. Starting from an observation of ‘reality’, of existing people and/or situations, she avoids a strictly documentary approach and draws us into fables that amplify and pinpoint societal dysfunctions.

— Anaïs-Tohé Commaret

Co-writing with her protagonists, often without a predefined script, Anaïs-Tohé Commaret makes subjective and narrative documentary films that bear witness to the presence and impact of History on individual lives. How to deal with it and how to detach oneself from it? She focuses on those in the sub-classes, in the suburbs. Often working with her family and friends in familiar, everyday environments, her projects informed by a whole culture of moving images, she makes her life into narrative material while implicitly articulating the need to resume control of her own story.

— Anne Brégeaut

The small pictures that make up Anne Brégeaut’s current series, ‘Mes Insomnies’ (a paradoxical title, to say the least), are filled with fantastic and dreamlike visions. Certainly hallucinatory in nature, the painted sketches unfold

somewhere between hypnagogic vision and hypnopompic state. Far from the heroism of history painting, they do however tell us more than a few stories and offer springboards for multiple narratives.

The smooth, vinylic pictorial material, the sharp, pop colours, the motifs – everything here works to convey a falsely naive atmosphere in which angst is never far away.

— Anne-James Chaton

Texts are at the heart of Anne-James Chaton’s work. They surround us. They construct us. The world is text. Texts become the material of choice for practising a ‘poor literature’ that is conveyed in books, readings, performances and other plastic exports in which the notions of author and original are seriously challenged. Anne-James Chaton thus suggests the possibility of other ways of reading the world. Of moving through it. Of dwelling in it.

— Aurélie Ferruel and Florentine Guédon

Aurélie Ferruel and Florentine Guédon work as a duo. One sculpts and the other sews. Together, they create situational works. As anthropologists, the duo mixes and mingles, invests and deforms rituals, legends, traditions, family stories, know-how, costumes and customs in apotropaic rituals which, with a great deal of hullaballoo, articulate formal rigour and fantastical and carnivalesque proliferation.

— Aurélien Mauplot

In ‘naturalistic compositions’ that resemble cabinets of curiosities, Aurélien Mauplot combines and joyfully associates facts, artefacts, legends, stories and inventions. ‘Moana Fa’a’aro’ relates the discovery of an island in the Pacific Ocean in the 19th century, an island that disappeared as soon as it was seen. Intermingling credible references and inventions, this documentation brings together characters, discoveries and adventures in a huge wall-mounted travel diary that is reconfigured with each new presentation.

History is a manipulation.

In the age of fake news, it is this enterprise of constructing History that this narrative construction seeks to deconstruct as it flirts with stories of adventure and exploration.

— 1.0.3 Collective

With a mixture of humour and poetry, the 1.0.3 Collective (Anne Couzon-Cesca and Arnaud and François Bernus) dissect human organisations and modes of subjectivation in the digital age. For ‘Croat, croa, croa’, the logo of a famous online trading company is hijacked, modified, multiplied and accumulated. Evoking both The Birds (Alfred Hitchcock, 1962) and ‘Wheatfields with Crows’ (Vincent Van Gogh, 1890), this mural effectively materializes the threat of GAFAM omnipotence that hangs over humanity.

— Esther Ferrer

In the imposing corpus of performances built up by Esther Ferrer, ‘Je vais vous raconter ma vie’ (Let me tell you about my life) occupies a singular position. Bringing together several performers, each with the unique instruction to tell their life story (the content and veracity of what they say is left to their discretion), it unfolds like a musical canon. In the hubbub of voices, questions emerge: What is a life? What does it mean to tell? To related oneself?

— Étienne Charry

For several years now Étienne Charry has been engaged in a critical deconstruction of the music industry, something he knows from the inside. In ‘Catalogue’ he creates a group of artists and groups for whom he composes songs, invents costumes, instruments, a visual identity, etc. In faux-real shows that take up the codes of the genre, songs are lip-synched by those close to him. Retro, playful, joyful, inventive, makeshift and messy – such is Charry’s universe.

— Farès Hadj-Sadok’s

Farès Hadj-Sadok’s artistic gestures respond to intimate emergencies. He archives the ordinary and collects the evidence and traces of his existence. This ‘extimacy’ unfolds in places and expanses, in arranged and layered surfaces, in a practice of horizontality, in minor mode. Memories and mummified ghosts populate these mysterious ex-votos.

— Hippolyte Hentgen

Collage, its procedures and mythologies, fully inform the work of Hippolyte Hentgen. Indeed, the whole working process is almost contained in their name. Hippolyte Hentgen is, in fact, a dual entity whose moniker combines the surnames of its two constituent artists (Gaëlle Hippolyte and Lina Hentgen), introducing a change of gender in the process: 1+1=3. For ‘True Stories’, Hippolyte Hentgen proposes a work in situ, which, commenting on and diverting the exhibition’s hanging (and therefore its other narratives), installs another interlocking narratives.

— Jean-Charles de Quillacq
Jean-Charles de Quillacq’s work is about the body. A body that oscillates between the personal and the impersonal, a body that desires and is desired, that consumes (itself) and is consumed. Between subject and object, we witness the exploration of a plural and augmented I, in a posited equivalence between the desiring machines that are the artist’s body and his studio, both of which are traversed by libidinal economies and energies that this sculptural and performative work attempts to materialise. The elements, impregnated with fluids and substances (sweat, urine, tears, or Viagra and nicotine) are constantly moving and recombining in temporary arrangements. It is like a permanent reconfiguration, a conceptual and fetishistic exploration of the uncertain.

— Jordan Roger

In a radical break with his original milieu, as indicated by the redaction of his surname, Jordan Roger does the work of resistance against the backdrop of an SF scenario. Invoking the pop, subversive figures of the *Alien* and the *Madwoman*, he invents alternative, elective genealogies. By practicing the strategy of reversal, he develops a resolutely queer aesthetic and proposes alternative scenarios. The castle of the Disney princes and princesses, vector of the iteration of stereotypes, is on fire. A battle is brewing between reactionary forces and revolutionary energies, between the ‘House of Armageddon’ and the ‘House of Uranistas’. Which side will win?

— Katia Kameli

Pursuing the porosities between the notions of copy and original, Katia Kameli focuses on the flow of stories. Whether through the ancestral figure of the griot storyteller, or in the construction of the ‘national novel’, or the extra-western roots of La Fontaine’s fables, Kameli is interested in the processes of translation, the circulation of narratives, and the notion of cultural exchange, all considered from the angle of individual and/or collective identity constructions.

— Kenny Duncan

Kenny Duncan takes his life as a young Parisian as the raw material of his works. He questions the place and the fictions associated with the black body in the Western space, between fragility, invisibility, exoticism and fetishism.

Strongly influenced by the Caribbean carnivals of his childhood in Guadeloupe, his works summon in single sweep scarecrows, remains, moults, armour, puppets, votive figures and sacred costumes. These are protective objects, fetishes that mark out and structure the enterprise of reappropriating one’s own image.

— Kent Monkman

Accompanied by his gender-fluid alter ego ‘Miss Chief Eagle Testickle’, Kent Monkman reverses perspectives and subverts the canonical narrative of North American history.

Exposing the power relations between the white and autochthonous communities, he also explores stereotypes of masculinity by creating gritty and funny situations that use sexuality as a tool to challenge the authority of these constructions. Taking up Western iconographies of the dominant, he literally reverses the colonial gaze and proposes alternative narratives, revealing the libidinal underside of any form of conquest.

— Laura Bottereau & Marine Fiquet

Laura Bottereau & Marine Fiquet is an artistic duo. In their work, childhood is the ideal place to reveal the power relations involved in the construction of gender norms, among other things, and to propose alternative scenarios with a ‘sur-realistic’ accent. Fragmented, prosthetic, cyborg, hybrid, the body is considered here in its interdependencies, its connections, its playful and libidinal energies, its relations with other living beings, imaginary or otherwise.

— Marie Losier

Marie Losier’s films and filmic objects are developed from encounters and friendships. Into her eccentric, burlesque and zany universe she draws extraordinary, larger-than-life personalities such as Mike Kuchar, Felix Kubin, Tony Conrad, Genesis Breyer P. Orridge and Lady Jaye, Peaches, Alan Vega and Cassandro el Magnifico. These figures become caught up in dreamlike, whimsical adventures full of cream pies, mermaid costumes and flowery bathing caps. This singular universe, nostalgic for the freedom of the early days of cinema, is like a hidden door into the world of documentary.

— Mary Sibande

Mary Sibande examines the question of identity in post-colonial South Africa. Drawing on her own family history, her sculptures, installations and images stage the figure of ‘Sophie’, the archetypal black maid of the Apartheid era. This alter ego turns violence back against itself and rather than passively undergo it. A figure of ‘empowerment’, she crystallises the whole history of women; their anger and their causes.

— Mehryl Levisse

Mehryl Levisse’s activable characters invent bodies beyond gender and biological data. Borrowing from the formal vocabulary of so-called folkloric, ethnic, drag and SM clothing, overloaded with patterns, with exuberance, she creates bodies that are other. In movement, worn by bodies or static on mannequins, these presences embody and summon

beings that are post- or pre-identity. Functioning as veritable visual tools, these entities that inhabit Trouble, that are Trouble, irrupt and shock.

— Olivier Nottellet

Olivier Nottellet’s site-specific interventions materialise flows of thought, the fluidity and polysemy of forms. For ‘True Stories’ he is deploying a promontory and organising a point of view on the exhibition by proposing a hypothesis on the origin of all narratives in what is a veritable vision machine, which hides and shows in the same movement.

— Pejvak

Pejvak embodies an artistic collaboration between Felix Kalmenson and Rouzbeh Akhabari. Their capacious projects combine archives, documents, urban legends, rumours, anecdotes, mythology and facts, assembled in a post-factual approach. Their research leads them to the intersection between political economy and visual creations, linking lived experience and constructed history in a political reflection around the notion of the archive and its corollary, truth.

— Regine Kolle

Regine Kolle paints. Graffiti, bad painting, pop art – she navigates through pictorial styles with a joyful and playful ease. Seizing on images that amuse, attract or obsess her (whatever their origin), she displaces them and practices what can be classified as a ‘Painting of Stories’.