

ARCANES RITUELS ET CHIMÈRES

To commemorate the centenary of the famous Surrealist Manifesto, FRAC Corsica presents a collective exhibition exploring the current relevance of an irrational artistic approach. Highlighting works primarily from the emerging scene, this exhibition is conceived as a journey through a space not solely mapped by consciousness. Under the aegis of the historical figure Leonora Carrington, presented here as a contemporary, the invited artists invoke mystical practices and symbols to re-enchant a world imprisoned in a modern ideal of clarity and absolute control. In contrast to this still-dominant movement, each work acts as an intermediary to alternative realities, poetic and occult escape routes.

Arcanes, rituals and Chimeras is intended as an ode to esotericism, as well as to the mysterious forces that express the element of indeterminacy still active today. The creations presented are the riddles of the Sphinx, knowing that the answers to the questions posed by our existence can never be fully direct: contrary to what consciousness suggests, each thing withdraws from the world of evidence the moment it is grasped by our mind. Art thus becomes a tool to deconstruct certainties and offer a map of the unexplored. In this logic, this exhibition asserts the potential for material reinvention present in this sanctuary of the imagination that remains creation. It is then a matter of following the secret intuition of Leonora Carrington who affirmed that “we are all doors, passages to the invisible.”

Curated by: Fabien Danesi

① **JI-MIN PARK** **BODYSOUL-** **SOUNDSCAPE (2024)**

At the opening, Ji-Min Park presents a performance inspired by the shamanic rituals of the Mudang, the renowned shamans of Korea. The goal of this creation is to explore the body's capacity to become a channel between the material and spiritual dimensions, realms often perceived as contradictory. With the assistance of a dancer, Ji-Min Park uses corporeality to create a space of convergence and dialogue between the vertical and horizontal planes, symbolizing the fusion of the tangible and ethereal worlds. The stage design, enriched with emblematic elements of Mudang practices, includes costumes, soundscapes, and evocative choreography, offering a feminist approach to this fundamental mediator figure in this polytheistic religion. Each component of the production aims to immerse the audience in an enveloping experience, pushing them to the edge of a trance state. This performance is intended as a gateway to exploring the depths of human consciousness, a journey through the subtle veil that separates the real from the invisible. It also offers a reflection in action on cultural syncretism, where a tradition is reappropriated to give rise to an invented form.

Ji-Min Park is a visual artist and actress, born in South Korea and immigrated to Paris with her family at the age of 9. She has made her mark in both visual arts and cinema, acting in the film *Return to Seoul*, which was presented at the Cannes Film Festival 2022 in the Un Certain Regard section. This film explores the story of a transracial adoption, a theme that resonates personally with the artist, having herself experienced immigration and cultural adaptation. In her artistic work, Ji-Min Park uses resins, metals, and latex to create sculptures and installations that often reflect the fluidity and complexity of crossed identities. Her work evokes cultural dualities by exploring how these aspects meet and interact in sometimes contradictory ways. Ji-Min Park's approach to visual arts is deeply influenced by her personal experiences, offering a unique perspective on the dynamics of self-construction.

② **ANTOINE GIACOMONI** **LES ALPHABETS** **MAGIQUES (1994-2024)**

Lettrage adhésif sur mur

For several decades, Antoine Giacomoni has been designing magical alphabets that reveal a rich intertwining of signs intended not only for linguistic communication but also to convey deeper layers of meaning. First presented at the FRAC Corsica, one of his alphabets uses the Pan-African colors—green, red, and yellow—imbued with a political significance associated with the struggle for freedom and unity of the African continent. Each letter is linked to a specific symbol, such as the moon, a candle, a seahorse, a sword, a lyre, safety pins, and even the Moor's Head from the Corsican flag, evoking natural or cultural elements as well as mystical or historical connotations. These symbols create a dual functionality for the letters: they represent sounds while evoking images and ideas that transcend simple words, transforming each letter into a gateway to often cryptic

cultural interpretations. The second alphabet combines forms that are halfway between technology and craftsmanship. This fusion intrigues with its apparent anachronism: it connects a futuristic industrial imaginary with ancient symbolisms in the logic of challenging the presumed transparency of communication since the advent of Reason. The symbols here are not simply tools of communication but also carry broader implications that refer to the world of printing through a certain resemblance to typographic compositions. By tracing this link between our contemporary world and that of more religious cultures, Antoine Giacomoni offers a reflection on how our communication is codified, not only linguistically but also through the tools and technologies we use. These two magical alphabets highlight the complexity of human communication and how our language systems are loaded with multiple connotations, given the principle of knowledge accumulation, and their persistence through time in often fragmentary forms. By mixing the past and the present and invoking numerous images, Antoine Giacomoni invites us to reflect on the visible and invisible dimensions of language. His magical alphabets are thus an opening onto a mystical thought whose potential lies in the belief that our world can never be reduced to what is said about it in a simple and direct manner.

Born in 1955 in U Borgu, Antoine Giacomoni is a French photographer and musician. After growing up in Corsica, he moved to Paris where he studied Fine Arts at the Sorbonne. His career took on an international dimension when he moved to London in 1977, immersed in the punk scene, and then to Jamaica where he became a professional photographer. He is noted for the iconic photo of Cedric Myton, leader of the reggae group The Congos, which became the cover of the album *Congo Ashanti* (1979). He then became initiated into Rastafarian spirituality, the starting point of an inner quest, developing over the years a deep interest in the more mystical and symbolic aspects of visual culture. He returned to Paris in 1983 to continue working in photography. In addition to this career, which led him to work with both Serge Gainsbourg and Brion Gysin, Antoine Giacomoni also explored music, producing singles in the pop and electronic genres exemplary of the 1980s. With a focus on portraiture, Antoine Giacomoni has always invoked the inner gaze. With the Mirror concept (a shooting process through a mirror surrounded by bulbs, reminiscent of a star's mirror) and his Mirror's sessions, he opened a door, going behind the mirror, plunging his gaze into the soul of his subjects. Affected by progressive blindness, he has been working for over twenty years on the development of a tarot deck as well as the creation of magical alphabets and esoteric installations, exploring the intersections between the visual, the spiritual, and the tactile, where he thus expresses his graphic talents that combine calligrams and symbol creation. He continues to influence and actively participate in the artistic and cultural community despite the challenges imposed by his visual condition.

③ **CECILIA GRANARA** **L'ÊTRE SUSPENDU** **(2024)**

Peinture murale

Cecilia Granara presents a new mural painting inspired by Leonora Carrington's tarot card, *The Hanged Man* (1955). This representation enigmatically explores themes of

patience and reversed perception by depicting a protagonist suspended by one leg from a tree branch, forming the number four with his entangled body, hands tied behind his back. Such a posture represents a moment of stasis, a time when action stops, calling for reflection and observation of the world from a new angle. The card thus suggests a pause in the daily tumult that invites contemplation. The upside-down character also symbolizes this inversion of view, often required in the creative process – a metaphor for questioning and adopting a new perspective. Cecilia Granara makes the tree a key actor in her composition, interacting with the site. The tree, both rooted and rising toward the sky, echoes the duality of human experience between earth and ether, between the concrete and the spiritual. The painting invites the viewer to introspect on the balance between action and reflection, acceptance and transformation. With *The Hanged Man*, Cecilia Granara does not merely reproduce a tarot image but appropriates this symbol to offer a meditation on the meaning of stillness, proposing the paradoxical yet relevant principle that sometimes, it is by stopping that we can truly progress.

Born in 1991 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Cecilia Granara is an Italian painter and writer. After living in various major cities such as Rome and Chicago, she now resides and works between Paris and Mexico City. Cecilia Granara received extensive artistic training, studying at the prestigious Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design in London before continuing her studies at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and Hunter College in New York. Her work, deeply rooted in autofiction, poetry, and symbolic iconography, explores cultural attitudes toward sexuality and the body, as well as the use of color as a vehicle for emotions. She uses her paintings to create spaces where emotions such as suffering and anger can be expressed and relived, transforming these experiences into a collective and immersive meditation that fosters empathy and resilience. Cecilia Granara has participated in several institutional exhibitions, including at the Fondation Ricard in Paris, MAXXI in Rome, and Château La Coste. Notable among her solo exhibitions are *No love without grief* at Exo Exo in Paris and *Brittle Stars* at the Sapling Gallery in London. She was also a finalist for the Prix Antoine Marin in 2019 and nominated for the Prix Cairo in 2021.

4 KÉVIN BRAY 4 EXS (ÉCHO DES LUTTES ET DES CONQUÊTES) (2023)

Sculpture imprimée en 3D à partir de PLA blanc - 255 x 200 x 140 cm.

This work combines a sculpture and a video projection that maps and animates its surface. This moving digital skin displays a bipedal character with a fish head, performing a circular movement and presenting various tools symbolizing the different stages of the formation of power. The work reinterprets a Russian tale, *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*, written by Pushkin in the autumn of 1833 and first published in May 1835. This tale explores themes of abundance and deprivation through the story of an old couple living modestly, whose fisherman husband catches a golden fish that offers to grant wishes in exchange for its freedom. The wife, greedy, asks for increasingly extravagant

improvements until the fish ends her greed by restoring the initial state of things. The looping sculpture engages in a dialogue between symbolism and ecological awareness, examining the dynamics of power and their consequences. It uses the motif of the fish as a metaphor to explore themes such as abundance and deprivation, as well as human agency. By emphasizing the cyclical nature of power and its potential to be both nurturing and exploitative, Kévin Bray's work offers a critical commentary on contemporary sociopolitical structures. It echoes the work of Leonora Carrington, who explores the interaction between the human psyche and the natural world through mythical creatures and alchemical symbols addressing themes like identity, mortality, and spiritual transcendence. Such a sculpture also functions as an allegory warning against the harmful consequences of ecological neglect, reminding us of the symbiotic relationship between humanity and the environment and the urgent need for respectful and attentive stewardship.

Kévin Bray is a French artist born in 1989 in Corbie. He currently lives and works in Amsterdam. Initially trained in graphic design, he obtained two master's degrees, in France and the Netherlands. He then completed a residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam from 2018 to 2019. In his artistic practice, Kévin Bray explores the boundaries between different disciplines to understand how the forms and languages of various software and media are visualized and how they can be manipulated to function differently. His works, characterized by a hybridity of techniques, motifs, and visual codes, are influenced by his experience in graphic design and his interest in the history of painting. Bray uses a variety of communication strategies, including video, painting, animation, sculpture, music, and writing, to create captivating realities that reflect the evolution of our narratives. Notable works include "*Morpher*," a video project started in 2018 and still ongoing. This work acts as a living archive of his practice, continually evolving and integrating various characters from his paintings into an extended reality. Kévin Bray has participated in several important solo exhibitions, including "*The Transformation of Matter Creates Light*" at the Trauma Bar und Kino in Berlin in 2022, as well as "*Wills, Wheels, Wells*" at the Future Gallery in Berlin in 2021. He has also been featured in group exhibitions such as "*Future, Ancien, Fugitif*" at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2019.

5 MATHILDE ALBOUY LES FAVORITES (FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN) (2024)

See note 11.

6 WILMA HARJU PHANTOM RED (2022)

Soft pastels on MDF, wood, gouache, steel.

Between pictorial flatness and three-dimensional object, *Phantom Red* presents itself as a window opening onto a symbolic world, where flora combines with fireworks and skeletal motifs to create a visual dialogue that is both

simple and complex. The central red motif shines on the black background, its shape reminiscent of both the radial structure of flowers and the luminous dispersion of fireworks. This dual reference creates a tension between the blossoming of life and the fleeting explosion that signifies both celebration and an end. Upon closer inspection of the stylized ornamental motif, one can notice that the “petals” of fire resonate with the structure of a skeleton, perhaps ribs or vertebrae, spreading out from the center. This skeletal imagery, borrowed from Gothic iconography, reinforces the idea of death inherent in life, a reminder of the vanity of all things since everything beautiful is ephemeral. The choice of the wooden arch also recalls Gothic lancet windows, often seen in Gothic architecture, which typically open onto sacred and transcendental spaces. Here, they seem to frame not a celestial escape, but an introspective and mysterious reflection, carried by the power of metamorphosis. The simultaneous representation of blooming and skeleton evokes a life cycle, where finitude is intrinsically linked to the brilliance of existence. Ultimately, *Phantom Red* merges the organic and the artificial, vitality and decomposition, in a visual celebration that is also a memento mori. The title itself implies this ghostly presence, both known and elusive, tangible and immaterial: an apparition from another world confronting the concrete without losing its unreal aspect.

Born in 1997 in Södertälje, Sweden, Wilma Harju is an artist based in Stockholm. She obtained her BFA in 2022 from the Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, where she specialized in illustration and graphic design. During her studies, she shifted towards fine arts and crafts, fields in which she continues to work today. Her academic and professional journey is marked by a transition from graphic publishing to a deeper engagement with contemporary drawing and the visual arts. This evolution is reflected in her works, which often explore textures and forms through various materials, incorporating a tactile dimension into her artistic expression. Wilma Harju has participated in several group exhibitions in Sweden, notably at the Konsthäuset in Stockholm, where she has showcased her works alongside those of other contemporary artists. Her work is appreciated for its ability to blend technical finesse with a particular sensitivity to detail and composition, making her a rising figure in the Swedish art scene.

7 KRIS LEMSALU LAZY FLOWER (2021)

Mirror, ceramic, metal, fabric, paint.
236 x 199 x 163 cm

This *Lazy Flower* is emblematic of Kris Lemsalu's expressionist approach. It belongs to a carnivalesque genre whose grotesque character is both alluring and alienating. At first glance, such a hybrid creature engages the viewer with its dancing and joyful dimension, with petals represented by legs and arms twirling around the head. But upon closer inspection, behind its exuberant polychrome appearance, an implicit distress can be perceived. In this way, *Lazy Flower* joins the other creatures invented by the artist that seem to belong to the exhausted universe of an after-party, where the bodies, drained from their exhibition, remain suspended in a state of poignant vulnerability. The childish aspect of the plastic treatment is explicit through the use of drippy, crude paint that schematically depicts the flower's face.

Kris Lemsalu brings together influences from her childhood, between an omnipresent nature and an early involvement in the fashion world, to propose a character that is both burlesque and melancholic, conveying an exacerbated otherness. The artist always confronts us with the monstrous, the strange, at the border between abstraction and figuration. Her work on materials demands direct physical manipulation and a craftsmanship often marginalized in Western contemporary art, dominated by conceptualism. This valorization of execution manifests in her choices of textures and forms that engage touch as much as sight, echoing a dialogue between the work, space, and the viewer. Such an approach often goes hand in hand with a performative perspective, indicating that Kris Lemsalu's work carries a very particular physical presence. This interrelation blurs the line between the object and the artistic action: **Lazy Flower** could indeed come to life, as suggested by the wheels on its torso, which invite potential movement. As the artist herself uses parody in her performances to thwart societal expectations related to the female body, this sculpture evokes a phantasmagoric world to better instill a sort of difficult-to-define disturbance. Between dream and nightmare, life and death, love and violence, **Lazy Flower** articulates a duality that shows Kris Lemsalu's ability to make opposites coexist and to transcend the limits of the body and materiality.

Born in 1985 in Tallinn, Estonia, Kris Lemsalu studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her artistic work is distinguished by her bold use of diverse materials such as porcelain, textile, silicone, and found objects, often assembled in monumental installations that explore universal themes like birth, transformation, death, and human rituals. She creates immersive and hallucinatory environments, animated by performances, where objects become totems or parts of her costumes, illustrating a shamanic force and a dreamlike vision of the world. Notable exhibitions include representing Estonia at the Venice Biennale in 2019 with her project *Birth V – Hi and Bye*, an impressive installation symbolizing the stages of life through ceramic sculptures. She has also participated in solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including in Berlin, Copenhagen, Tokyo, and New York.

8 RUBA AL-SWEEL & ROJDA YAVUZ VISTA IN THE SKY (2023)

Vidéo – 9'43

Vista in the Sky offers an ambivalent critique of capitalism and its alienating effects on society. This film serves as a visual meditation that transports us into the captivating and twisted aspects of our commercial system, marked by unrealized ambitions of growth and success. The central figure of this work, Dhātu-Ba'dan, is a mystical creation evoking a spiritual healer. Her name refers to an ancient goddess of the oasis, nature, and the rainy season, thus reinforcing the thematic link between mythical past and contemporary issues surrounding well-being and personal fulfillment. This link is strengthened by the use of modern technologies, such as AI chatbots, and older symbols like tarot cards, all in dialogue with philosophical approaches

such as Byung-Chul Han's in "The Burnout Society." The whole thus highlights the conflict between the individual's spiritual aspirations and the materialistic realities imposed upon them.

Vista in the Sky uses a non-linear structure that mimics the decentralized data flows of current media. This fragmentary approach allows for the juxtaposition of nocturnal urban scenes with sometimes pixelated desert images showing goats and gazelles, creating a collision of realities emblematic of our contemporary image consumption. The sequences include ostentatious advertisements for cars and yachts to found footage on TikTok, all treated in a syncopated style that might recall the playful frenzy of a city like Las Vegas—emblematic of the simulacra inherent in the capitalist universe. The voice-over unfolds a surprising dramaturgy, initially inviting abundance and tranquility, only to despair over the predation orchestrated by the powers of money leading to the destruction of ecosystems. Amidst the contradictions of our time, stretched between holistic aspirations and a warrior spirit embodied by a stealth aircraft, "Vista in the Sky" captures the pulse of our desires converted into objective hallucinations in the mad flow of our larger-than-life representations.

Ruba Al-Sweel is a multidisciplinary creator whose practice is anchored in writing and research, centered on media theory and networked communications. She produces text-based video works that reference popular culture. By superimposing written and visual symbols, she parodies mass media by exaggerating certain aspects of contemporary society. She has published in magazines and books and is co-editor of POSTPOSTPOST, a semi-annual arts, culture, and design publication presented as an "anti-manifesto." Her work has been featured in publications such as Brooklyn Rail, Art Asia Pacific, DoNotResearch, DAZED, and DAMN Magazine, among others. She has exhibited her works at Alserkal Avenue, Dubai; POUISH, Paris; and Hayy Jameel, Jeddah. She holds a master's degree in media and creative industries from SciencesPo, Paris.

Rojda Yavuz is a writer and researcher based in Brussels. Their interests include the body and digital subcultures, which they address through the critique of power and coloniality. Yavuz holds a master's degree from SOAS, University of London.

⑨ DOMINIQUE DEGLI ESPOSTI **BRUSGIATURE (1972)**

Movie – 106'

Brusgiature (Blessures) is a film that follows a couple in their mental escape from the boredom of an evening to an isolated place, both paradise and desert, the beach of Nonza. In this radically dreamlike atmosphere, the unnamed heroes undergo a series of transformations and almost mythological visions, where they relive universal archetypes such as Adam and Eve or Romeo and Juliet. This work by Dominique Degli Esposti explores themes of love, human nature, and contemporary society through a fragmented narrative structure that blends multiple hallucinated visions, where the couple experiences contradictory emotional and physical states.

The choice of Nonza as the main location underscores the timeless dimension of the film and isolates the scenes

from the outside world, reinforcing the sense of returning to origins. Through its baroque aesthetic, *Brusgiature* offers a destabilizing experience that relies on a glaring discordance between images and sounds. The extravagant costumes and minimalist sets contribute to a surreal atmosphere from which emerges the tension between the quest for ephemeral pleasures and the presence of immutable telluric forces. Thus, Dominique Degli Esposti's experimental film fits into the context of the radical independent cinema of the 1970s, evoking works by directors such as Federico Fellini for his visual style and Alejandro Jodorowsky for his mystical explorations.

Made in a communal spirit and with limited means, it reflects the libertarian ideals of the time, where the creative process was as valued as the finished object. Although controversial upon its release, the film was gradually recognized as an important work in Corsican cinema that accompanied the cultural movement of *u riacquistu*. It represents a total and multidimensional art form, combining polyphonic chants and visual delirium in an unrestrained format where tradition and modernity constantly collide.

Dominique Degli Esposti, born in 1946 in A Venzulasca, is an artist who lives and works in U Castellà di Casinca. Educated at the Artistic Section of the high school in Bastia, he initially distinguished himself in painting and directing. His work crosses the boundaries between visual arts and live performance, marking his presence in creative and participatory projects. In 1972, his film *Brusgiature* won an award at UNESCO and was presented at Cannes. Involved in the Fête de la Musique from its inception, Dominique Degli Esposti has enriched various festivals and cultural events with his *Mises en fêtes*. His talent in photography and video has been showcased in several exhibitions, notably at the Théâtre National de Chaillot in 1980 and the Venice Biennale in 2012. He has also collaborated with musicians and artists for stage and audiovisual productions, such as the award-winning music video *Altrove*. Active in theater directing and photography, Dominique Degli Esposti continues to contribute to visual culture by exploring the intersections between the imaginary and the real.

⑩ ANTOINE GIACOMONI **LES ALPHABETS MAGIQUES (1994-2024)**

Lettrage adhésif sur mur

See note 2.

⑪ MATHILDE ALBOUY **ESCAPE PLAN (2024)**

Mathilde Albouy's work explores the significance of everyday objects to imbue them with both mental and symbolic dimensions. By reducing them to a pure form and giving them a human scale, the artist performs a transformation that aims to grant them a new identity, almost totemic in nature. Traditionally associated with care and beautification, the comb here acquires an almost sacred gravity, becoming a bronze sculpture charged with ambivalent force. Moved from the private to the public sphere, it undergoes a minimal metamorphosis that

questions beauty injunctions and self-presentation rituals. By its nature, the comb retains and orders: it reflects control and conformity. But it also celebrates the intimacy of the gesture, as the act of combing has remained a very personal connection with the body through the centuries. The oversized comb thus emphasizes its ambiguous role between ornament and instrument of control. It is stretched between beauty and violence. By referencing caryatids, Mathilde Albouy grants her work an architectural character: the comb becomes a structure supporting an invisible space, suggesting a real supporting power. Thus, *Les Favorites (falling in love again)* can be interpreted as an object of seduction and liberation, an object whose purpose is to enchant, like a bewitching elixir.

Similarly, *Espace Plan* operates a slight shift: it is a wooden labyrinth that, placed vertically, resembles an ornate door and marks an interface between two worlds. Like the comb, this object, both flat and three-dimensional, evokes anthropomorphic dimensions and creates a meditative path on emancipation. The size of the work places the viewer in a direct physical relationship with this sculpture that secretly speaks of the transition from one state to another: although devoid of perspective, *Escape Plan* indeed opens onto a vanishing point that becomes strictly magical. With its warmth and organic texture, the labyrinth offers an abstract narrative from concentric circles that trace the paths to come that each must find to assert themselves and escape the multiple conditionings that limit our potential.

Mathilde Albouy was born in France in 1997. She studied at the Haute École des Arts du Rhin in Strasbourg, where she graduated in 2020, and continued her studies at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, graduating in 2022. Her aesthetic approach is characterized by a play of ambivalences, both formal and conceptual, pushing the viewer to interact with often obscure rules. Her work explores the blurred boundaries between seduction and threat, through sculptures that question the notion of beauty and its oppressive implications. Influenced by feminist science fiction, Mathilde Albouy uses the narration of her works as a political lever to escape traditional and binary perceptions of reality. Her recent exhibitions include presentations in Paris and Brussels, with works shown at the Bourse Révélation Emerige, the Galerie Derouillon, FORMA, and the Fondation Boghossian, as well as at the Villa Empain.

12 YOURI JOHNSON PROTOGONOS (2024) LA CONSPIRATION DES ŒUFS (2024)

In his recent series of works, Yuri Johnson explores themes of rebirth and transformation through the use of diverse materials and references to mythological elements, primarily the Orphic hymns attributed to Hesiod. The triptych titled *Protagonos* is named after the androgynous mythological figure born from a cosmic egg, symbolizing the generative power of all things as described in these ancient texts. In this series, the artist uses materials laden with symbolic content, such as thorns and metals, whose arrangement allows for the opening of portals and access to other worlds. The work *The Conspiracy of Eggs* expands this exploration, materializing the cosmic egg as a nexus of mystical forces

orchestrating a radical upheaval. This installation is not only a subversion of established paradigms but also an echo of the notion of Endarkenment, which the artist contrasts with the Enlightenment, thus challenging the humanist and rational logic of the Enlightenment.

Enhancing his approach, Johnson adds an invocative dimension to his art, paying homage to Leonora Carrington, Leonor Fini, and Remedios Varo as “magician friends.” This invocation manifests specifically in a ground arrangement, where ovoid shapes set in metal rest on a worn quilt, forming a constellation of magical creatures. On the wall, three altars dedicated to each of the magicians feature distinct eggs, establishing a sacred space of energetic convergence. These works are thus not mere artistic creations: they are active spaces of contestation and re-enchantment, offering deep reflections on the links between aesthetics, ritual, and efficacy. They reveal the artist’s commitment to rethinking the connections between humans and their environment, emphasizing the importance of shadows and the mystical journey. Through this approach, Yuri Johnson proposes an artistic vision coupled with an ecology of the invisible that questions our era and envisions alternative futures, while paying homage to the ancestral links that unite creation and magic.

Youri Johnson is a fiction producer of fictions. His works, which take the form of poems and magical objects, feed into a larger project titled *The Secret Art of the Secret War*. His work has been exhibited in France and internationally. Notable exhibitions include **Le Grand Désenvoûtement* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2022), *Histoires Vraies* at the Macval in Vitry-sur-Seine (2023), and *L’amitié : ce tremble* at Crédac and Crac Alsace (2024). Yuri Johnson also published *Mycelium, petit-conte post-apocalyptique* in 2021, a text in which he continues his attempt to escape the traps of human identity.

13 MICHELE GABRIELE EGOLATRA (2022)

Two vines wind through space, embodying a strange intersection between the vibrancy of the vegetal world and the functional aspect of industrial cables. These hybrid forms, both taut and intertwined, seem trapped in a frozen ballet, where nature’s fluidity is constrained by artificial rigidity. They create a visual dynamic capable of conveying the complex relationship between constraint and adaptation. This conceptual and aesthetic tension is reflected in the installation’s title, *Egolatra*, which, according to the artist himself, comes from the Greek words “ego” (self) and “latria” (worship, religious devotion). “Egolatra” thus refers to someone who engages in self-worship. For Michele Gabriele, the series of works, including the two vines, embodies the principle of self-representation: they define themselves, focused on their own complexity and infinite details. This term resonates with the entire history of modernity, for which the question of autonomy was fundamental. Yet, it retains an intrinsic ambiguity, carried by a mystery stemming from the multiple images the work evokes.

If the vines are a manifestation of the work’s identity itself, self-drawing and contorting in a quest for self-determination, they also resemble a snake, an electrical system, or a slimy, mossy monster. Entirely chimerical, they represent the artist’s ardent desire to leave his mark on the continuum of art history, struggling with the discomfort and tenderness that

accompany the recognition of his own artistic aspiration. These forms, which cannot reconcile with themselves, reveal that beyond this process lies a sort of palimpsest, whose deciphering remains unfinished.

Born in 1983 in Italy, Michele Gabriele is an artist residing in Milan. His academic background includes a Master's degree in Visual Arts from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan, as well as a study period at Paris 8 University. He is known for his hyper-realistic sculptures that irreverently and personally question the issues of the contemporary post-digital world through what he defines as hyper-materialism. Gabriele's work addresses the contrast between the digital and material worlds, exploring the sense of inadequacy engendered by progressive visions of an eco-sustainable future versus the disillusionment of their concrete realization. His work is deeply rooted in the exploration of the distances between representation and materiality, as well as the divergences between space and time relative to the observer. Among his notable solo exhibitions are those at EACC Espacio de Arte Contemporáneo in Castellón, Comunidad Valenciana in 2023, MeetFactory in Prague in 2023, NAM Museum, Manifattura Tabacchi in Florence in 2022, Ashes/Ashes gallery in New York in 2022, Fondazione Pini in Milan in 2016, and Art All Kunstihoone in Tallinn in 2015. He has also participated in various group exhibitions, such as at ICA Institute of Contemporary Art in Maine, Portland in 2024, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva in 2023, International Objects in New York in 2023, the 16th Alios Contemporary Art Biennale in 2019, and Et al. gallery in San Francisco in 2018.

14 LEONORA CARRINGTON BIJOUX 1 2 3 ET 5

See note 18.

15 NILS ALIX-TABELING LA COUR DES ARAIGNÉES-PAONS (2024)

110 x 110 x 140 cm

Wood, papier-mâché, metal, beeswax, shellac, deadhead violet pigment

This work unfolds an intriguing visual spectacle where identity is shaped by a powerful metamorphosis through two male peacock spiders depicted in full courtship display. These creatures, rendered with astonishing precision and acute attention to detail, showcase figurative portraits on their backs, reminiscent of tattoos or tribal insignia. These images function as identification elements, akin to signs of allegiance to a secret community. The first spider bears a portrait inspired by Delphine Seyrig in Harry Kümel's film "Les Lèvres Rouges" (1971), framed by motifs and symbols that evoke the visual universe of this work, midway between horror and eroticism. The second features an image of Judee Sill, an esoteric folk artist, surrounded by graphic elements that reference her spiritual songs. Such iconographic choices are, of course, not accidental as they illustrate a quest for belonging and recognition while highlighting themes of love and admiration. By incorporating these artistic

references, Nils Alix-Tabeling creates a bridge between the natural and cultural worlds, thus exploring the boundaries between animality and humanity. The materiality of the work, which combines organic and synthetic elements, also plays a crucial role in this logic of amalgamation and grafting. The beeswax finish adds a tactile dimension that enriches the sensory experience. The almost gothic treatment of the wood introduces a dark and complex atmosphere, reinforcing the dramatic and ultimately theatrical nature of the representation. All these aesthetic choices ground the work in a reflection on the roles that each performs socially, while the use of caput mortuum pigment opens up an alchemical perspective that hints at the esoteric nature of such an assemblage. Born in 1991 in Paris, Nils Alix-Tabeling was trained at the National School of Visual Arts in La Cambre, Belgium, and also studied at the Royal College of Art in London. His work is characterized by an exploration of theatricality and performativity, blending sculpture, video, and sound to create immersive experiences. His installations and performances question the relationships between body, object, and space, while integrating elements of mythology, classical narratives, and contemporary motifs to examine power structures and identities. Nils Alix-Tabeling is particularly interested in the notion of ceremony, exploring the transformation and ritualization of space and everyday life. He has exhibited notably in "Futur, Ancien, Fugitif" at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2019, in "Possédé.e.s" at Moco in Montpellier in 2020, and at the Kunstverein in Dortmund in 2023.

16 SHUO HAO CINQ CHOSES ET LE GARDIEN (2022)

Huile sur bois – 170 x 207 cm

The work *Five Things and the Guardian* showcases Shuo Hao's approach, blending mythology and modernity. On one side of the screen, hands hold various symbolically charged objects: a scepter topped with a horse head, a ball of fire, a mirror revealing an ear, a serpent, and a sinuous shape ending in a floral-like button. These elements seem to invoke power, knowledge, and metamorphosis, echoing attributes typical of legendary tales. On the other side, a dog is depicted, symbolizing protection and passage between worlds. The screen itself, in its traditional function, creates a threshold, often concealing a person and marking the transition from one space to another. The hands and the dog, rendered in almost pearly tones, add a derealizing effect to the work, as if they were stone sculptures from another time intruding into our reality. The neutrality of the monochromatic backgrounds enhances this impression, suspending them in a timeless space, thus opening up a myriad of interpretations. Thus, Shuo Hao's work becomes a doorway between the real and the mythical, the visible and the invisible, reflecting the metamorphoses of the living, the psychic, and the unconscious—a recurring theme in her artistic approach that blends Eastern and European influences.

Born in Baoding in the Hebei province of China in 1992, Shuo Hao trained at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, where she graduated in 2014. She briefly continued her studies at the Sorbonne before joining the illustration studio of the Haute École des Arts du Rhin in Strasbourg, where she graduated in 2020. Her artistic work,

initially focused on publishing, gradually shifted towards contemporary drawing, a discipline in which she now excels. Her works explore themes of metamorphosis and strangeness, often through representations of transforming human and non-human bodies. Shuo Hao fuses elements of Eastern and Western cultures in her works, creating a dialogue between symbols from different origins—from bas-reliefs inspired by Michelangelo to sculpted jade Asian objects. Shuo Hao's art is characterized by the use of vaporous pastels and oils, where the contours of forms seem to float, adding a dreamlike quality to her paintings. Her recent exhibitions include *Voyager l'Hiver* at the Center for Contemporary Art in Shanghai, *Mes mensonges sont aussi les vôtres* at the Fondation Fimenco in Romainville, and *L'Amour, La Mer, Les Femmes* at the Design Parade in Toulon, all in 2023. She has also had solo exhibitions at Galerie Derouillon in Paris, including *Love me Tender* and *The Rings of Saturn*.

17 ISAAC LYTHGOE WHY CAN'T WE REMEMBER THE FUTURE? (2023)

210 cm x 70 cm x 80 cm. Plywood, epoxy, carbon fiber, cow belly leather, oiled walnut, automotive paints, lacquer, acrylic, stainless steel, epoxy clay, PLA, fillers.

This sculpture is truly a chimera, combining eclectic elements to create a work that defies conventional categories. The hybrid dimension is evident through the assembly of various materials and recognizable yet transformed elements. The platform shoes, evoking the style of Drag Queens, are not mere fashion accessories but take on a sculptural dimension, serving as the foundation of the structure. They introduce a queer aesthetic that plays with identity codes, blurring the boundaries between genders and socially constructed roles. The wings, made from dried cow belly leather, provide an organic texture and recall artisanal traditions that contrast with the modern, almost industrial finish of the shoes. This combination projects us directly into a future where the lines between natural and synthetic materials are increasingly blurred, while the oversized wooden crescent sculpted like the character's pelvis adds a surreal touch. In this context, it becomes an abstract form, a puzzle piece that refuses to easily fit into our understanding to form a clearly recognizable entity. The artist's collage-like approach, which can remain cryptic, invites deeper exploration of each component. The materials used are indeed carefully chosen for their tactile quality and expressive potential, giving the work an imposing physical presence. In short, Isaac Lythgoe's sculpture is a monster that merges multiple vocabularies to better transcend any univocal resemblance.

Born in 1989 in Guernsey, Isaac Lythgoe graduated from the Royal College of Art in London in 2014. His work, primarily sculptural, functions as an exercise in non-fictional storytelling, where he explores power structures, science fiction, and theory. His research aims to identify information and events with potential cultural relevance for the future, translating these ideas into complex and allegorical works. Isaac Lythgoe uses a variety of materials and references to create an artistic universe where fictional characters and modern myths intersect, reflecting the complexity of

contemporary identity and the vast implications of modern industry. Notable exhibitions include solo shows such as *Sentient Beings Living Worthwhile Lives* at Duarte Sequeira Braga in 2022, *Railway Spine* at Super Dakota in Brussels in 2020, and participation in group exhibitions at Seventeen Gallery in London and Berthold Pott in Cologne. He has also participated in major exhibitions such as *Cute* at Somerset House in London in 2024 and *After Laughter Comes Tears* at MUDAM, Luxembourg, in 2023, as well as *Michael Jackson: On the Wall* at the National Portrait Gallery in London and the Grand Palais in Paris in 2018.

18 LEONORA CARRINGTON ANCESTOR

Silver alloy technique and precious stones

If Leonora Carrington maintained a continuous engagement with sculpture throughout her artistic career, with a first documented work, "Tête de Cheval," created in 1938 while she was living in Saint-Martin-d'Ardèche with Max Ernst, her return to this medium later in life was not a change but a true renaissance. This was due to the physical limitations caused by arthritis, which prevented her from continuing to paint and draw. This period led to the creation of a series of 38 sculptures and, influenced by her friendship with master goldsmith José Sacal, to an exquisite collection of jewelry made from metals and precious stones. Each of her jewelry pieces embodies mystical themes similar to those in her paintings, such as the sculpture *Martes*, which depicts a female figure with a ferret, reflecting the intimate interactions between humans and animals seen in her 1946 tempera *Tuesday*. Similarly, *White Face* is inspired by her 1959 painting *Who art thou, White Face?* featuring a mystical horse, while *The Ancestor*, inspired by her 1969 painting, addresses themes of memory and heritage. *Syssigy* captures a cosmic alignment, similar to a detail in her 1957 painting, symbolizing the union of natural and spiritual forces.

Created with her son Pablo in Mexico, these sculptures are not mere artworks but three-dimensional incarnations of her deep interest in the unconscious, mythology, and nature. These pieces, enriched with symbols and materials such as silver, rubies, and emeralds, serve as protective talismans, safeguarding her home and loved ones. This revival of figures demonstrates Leonora Carrington's nonlinear approach, where each character can be reactivated and carries an ever-present latent force.

Leonora Carrington (1917-2011) was a British-Mexican artist and writer, recognized as one of the iconic figures of the Surrealist movement. Born on April 6, 1917, in Clayton-le-Woods, Lancashire, England, she was the daughter of an English industrialist. She received a private education before pursuing art studies at the Academy of Florence and the Chelsea School of Art in London. Her artistic career took off in Paris, where she met Surrealist Max Ernst in 1937, becoming his companion and collaborator. The separation from Max Ernst during World War II, following his arrest, caused Leonora Carrington to experience a profound episode of mental distress. After her recovery, she emigrated to Mexico in 1942, a place that became her permanent home and a nerve center for her art.

In Mexico, she married Hungarian photographer Emerico Weisz, with whom she had two children. This

marriage created a stable environment that nurtured her creativity and allowed her to integrate into the rich local art scene, interacting with other artists such as Remedios Varo and Frida Kahlo. Her work, encompassing painting, sculpture, and writing, is deeply rooted in themes of esotericism, mythology, alchemy, and psychoanalysis, and is characterized by dreamlike scenes populated with fantastic creatures and mystical symbols. In addition to her paintings and sculptures, Carrington is also the author of short stories and plays that explore similar themes. Among her unique contributions to the art world, Leonora Carrington also created a tarot deck that blends Surrealist motifs with traditional elements of tarot cards to explore psychological and mythological archetypes. Leonora Carrington remains an influential figure in contemporary art, leaving behind a rich legacy that continues to inspire and fascinate. She passed away on May 25, 2011, in Mexico City, leaving an indelible mark on the world of art and beyond.

19 ALEXANDRA METCALF THE ROCKING WOMAN (2024)

Thonet wood, milliner's block, cathedral glass, lead core, stockings, and buttons. 72 x 112 x 23 cm

This sculpture presents a domestic and historical connotation, particularly through the use of Thonet wood, typical of 19th-century rocking chairs. With its natural curvature and fluid design elements, this material is transformed here into a stylized figure representing a grieving pregnant woman. Thus, the joyous event is imbued with pain, exacerbating the ambivalence of the feminine condition in the Victorian era. This image symbolizes the hidden struggles and emotions of women, often repressed because they were confined to the role of housemistress. However, the stained glass elements broaden the perspective by alluding to sacred spaces, while the fragmented portraits imply the multifaceted and complex nature of the female experience during this period when self-assertion appeared with the dawn of modernity. Thus, *The Rocking Woman* reinterprets traditional materials and methods to question historical social norms. By revisiting the Victorian trope of the "madwoman in the attic," Alexandra Metcalf explores themes of isolation, repression, and female resilience. Her work thus serves as an act of memory and resistance, revealing the underlying forces that shaped women's existence to better liberate them.

Born in 1992 in London, Alexandra Metcalf is an artist based in Berlin. She studied at the Chelsea College of Art and Design in London and the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Metcalf specializes in painting and sculpture, focusing on the history of gendered labor through ancient decorative traditions. Her work explores how historical counter-cultural movements influence modern aesthetics, with rich representations of patterns and colors depicting domestic landscapes full of tension and populated by expressive female figures. She revisits and critiques traditional representations of femininity through her paintings and sculptures, often reinventing techniques considered masculine, such as stained glass, bronze casting, and woodworking. Alexandra Metcalf has exhibited in prestigious venues such as 15 Orient Gallery in New York, Kunsthalle

Zürich, and Fitzpatrick Gallery in Paris. Her works are part of renowned collections, including the Museum of Modern Art library in New York.

20 JUSTIN FITZPATRICK UNTRANQUILLISED HORSE 2: SITE OF INFLAMMATION (2024)

Oil on canvas

In this painting, Justin Fitzpatrick continues his exploration of animal iconography subjected to a process of stylization that leads to a true metamorphosis. This pictorial process transforms the representation of horses into a visual metaphor that assumes a fully esoteric dimension: the face-to-face of the two horses creates a mirror form where harnesses and gazes seem to diffract to the point of producing an almost infinite reflection. Treated in this strictly symmetrical mode, the drawing of the two horses constructs a kind of grid that indicates an opening onto another world, a hallucinatory world that twists or transcends our daily reality. This painting can then be understood as an invitation to look beyond its surface, to recognize a hidden depth or mysterious meaning underlying what is visible.

This idea of passage seems even more pertinent as a second motif infiltrates this frame, that of flames dancing in a regular manner face-to-face. Such repetition of motifs emphasizes the somewhat mechanical nature of this imagery, which could refer to a carousel of wooden horses. This folkloric quality may remind one of mechanical toys or engineering constructions, giving the subjects a depersonalized aspect, as if the horses were pieces of a larger and more complex machine. This principle could be interpreted as a metaphor for the instrumentalization of nature or living beings transformed into objects by societal structures. There is a certain malevolent aura emanating from this work, probably amplified by the bright orange flames that seem to consume or emanate from the base of the figures. This could suggest destruction or unleashed energy, recalling mythological stories where horses are often vectors of primordial or divine powers, sometimes linked to the apocalypse or demonic intensities.

Thus, Justin Fitzpatrick's painting is infused with symbols and allusions that challenge the viewer on the theme of hidden forces acting beneath the surface of explicit reality. *Untranquillised Horse II: Site of Inflammation* underscores the intentionally enchanting character of the artist's visual narration, where figurative elements intertwine with suggestive codification, all aiming to strike the viewer's mind to unleash their full potential.

Born in 1985 in Dublin, Ireland, Justin Fitzpatrick is an artist currently living and working in Montargis, France. He obtained a Master's degree in Painting from the Royal College of Art in 2015, after studying at St Oswald's School of Painting in London in 2007. His work interrogates power dynamics, transformation, and identities through an aesthetic that is both surrealist and symbolic. Over the years, Justin Fitzpatrick has showcased his work in numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Kerlin Gallery in Dublin, La Ferme du Buisson in France, and Seventeen Gallery in

London. He has also participated in group exhibitions such as “To be a giant and keep quiet about it” at Margot Samel in New York and “Motor Ideal” at Maison Populaire in Paris. Justin Fitzpatrick frequently incorporates textual elements into his paintings, exploring the boundaries between text and body, legibility and sensory perception. The artist delves into the selection of objects imbued with narratives while analyzing the syntax of their meaning, making painting a true “metaphor machine” for creating new worlds.

Currently a resident of the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, they have exhibited at the Samstag Museum of Art in Adelaide and the Sharjah Biennial. Additionally, their involvement in artistic collaborations through the platform GHOST, which they co-direct, has allowed them to develop projects that challenge conventional norms of art exhibitions.

21 MADISON BYCROFT JOYSTICK (2021-2022)

Video Game and Sculptures

In *Joystick*, players explore a 3D world built on Unity using a custom controller. This joystick, serving as a tool for navigation, selection, orientation, and enjoyment, redefines traditional interaction with commands that vary depending on time and place. The world created by Madison Bycroft is populated by heterogeneous visual collages forming an intriguing and symbolically charged universe. For example, a geodesic shape coexists with a Ferris wheel or a lamprey eel reminiscent of *Dune*, while eyes swarm in the air like bees around a hive. A hand — with the index and middle fingers used as legs — becomes the player’s guide through this surreal landscape, highlighting the continuous subversion of natural laws. This is also the case with rocks and fried eggs that seem to levitate. The different atmospheres traversed, from the desert to the sea, suggest a journey through various emotional states.

Madison Bycroft metaphorically stages themselves as a series of humps, identifying with swamps such as “the fire swamp,” “the swamp of sadness,” and “the Dagobah swamp” — a nod to Star Wars — enriching the game with both introspective and popular dimensions. Their personal reinterpretation of songs by Bonnie Tyler and the Backstreet Boys further creates a link with cultural objects from the past, offering a diversion from moments that may have shaped their identity. The game also encourages reflection on how the self is formed, exploring the fluidity with which Madison Bycroft embodies various characters. Through makeup, costumes, and accessories (strawberries, glasses, fur boas), the artist shifts the fixed roles each person adopts to better define themselves. The gameplay itself, limited to the use of the two joysticks and the X button, forces players to rethink their usual bodily movements and adapt their reflexes to an environment that rejects transparency and ease of understanding, in line with the thought of poet Édouard Glissant. Joystick thus presents itself as a unique work where the gaming experience is deeply intertwined with a critical reflection on how we perceive and interact with the world.

Madison Bycroft, born in 1987 in Tarndanya (Adelaide), Australia, is an artist based in Marseille. Bycroft completed their Master of Fine Arts at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam, where they studied thanks to an Anne and Gordon Samstag scholarship. In their works, they explore themes of visibility, illegibility, and power dynamics, using various mediums such as video, performance, and sculpture. Their artistic approach is characterized by a refusal to delimit and conclude, preferring open “floating spaces” that encourage systematic disorientation and a practice of pleasure without a specific goal. Notable exhibitions by Bycroft include participation in several international programs and group exhibitions in prestigious venues.

