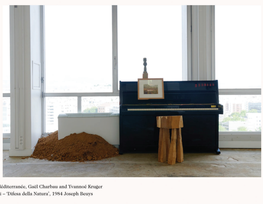
About
'PROGRAMME SPÉCIAL'
Art collective La Méditerranée questions contemporary curation at POUSH, Paris

Exhibition view of 'Programme Spécial' curated by La Méditerranée, Gaël Charbau and Yvannoé Kruger

In Paris, a new collective of artists which operates as a research group is exploring curation and the relationships between non-correlated artists, periods and works in a dynamic, shifting exhibition high above the Paris suburbs. Under the new umbrella La Méditerranée, Edgard Sarin, Mateo Revillo and Ulysse Geissler have joined forces to present *Programme Spécial*, their inaugural exhibition at POUSH – a temporary artist incubator by the art consulting agency Manifesto that has played host to over 170 artists since taking over a soon-to-be-destroyed 70s office building in the Paris suburb of Clichy.

Programme Spécial is a complex yet organic marriage that embodies La Méditerranée's philosophy as a collective. The curation of 18 artists – which includes contemporary works of artist duo Aurèce Vettier (Paul Mouginot and Anis Gandoura), Edgar Sarin, Bianca Bondi, Mateo Revillo, Apollinaria Broche and Alex Ayed as well as pieces by modern and classical masters – explores the synergies between diverse bodies of work, calling upon the principle of *bon voisinage*, a concept first introduced by German art historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929) which encourages new relationships between surrounding objects as a result of proximity. After opening late June, the show entered a second phase on September 24th, unveiling an extended programming that includes works by New York painter and sculptor Zak Ritnick. "The original idea was to create an exhibition that wasn't frozen in time and that would allow the works presented to travel within its frame," said Gaël Charbau, one of the project's co-curators alongside Yvannoé Kruger, Manifesto's artistic advisor.

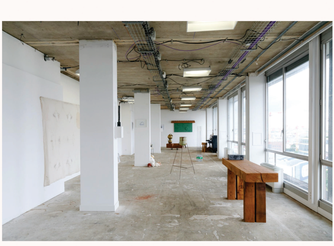


Details of *Programme Spécial* curated by La Méditerranée, Gaël Charbau and Yvannoé Kruger
L-R: 'The wishing well', 2020 Bianca Bondi – 'Tribou della Natura', 1984 Joseph Beuys

La Méditerranée describes itself as a multi-faceted, ever-evolving artist collective united by a 'Mediterranean' vision of the world: to consider the world as a coherent, harmonious whole made of different entities, an idea truly embodied by the geographical layout and the proximity of the Mediterranean countries. "Rather than thinking of the world as an illusion diverting us from what's essential, or an absurd entity we must rationalise, we see the world as a potential mine of infinite beauty", explains Paul Mouginot, one half of Aurèce Vettier. "At La Méditerranée, we use our rebellious spirit to grasp what is precious in a constant search for balance", he adds.

For its part, Aurèce Vettier explores the connections created by the combination of technology and the human touch. "Our work is attempting to create sincere collaboration between human and machine in order to find new paths of creation", Mouginot explains. In 2016, the duo co-founded daco, a start-up specialising in strategy consulting using their own AI image recognition tool for brands in the fashion and luxury industries. Considering computer and handcraft to be equal partners in its artistic process, some of their standout works include *Elegia Machina*, a collection of poems generated through the Markov chains algorithm, or *Colorimeters (After Barcenas)*, a series of oil pastel drawings which unique forms and colors are the result of artificial intelligence (the latter is presented in *Programme Spécial*).

"Everyday, the pieces are moved, recomposed, reassembled, switched or even isolated", explains Mouginot of the curators' decision to continually adapt the exhibition, moving artworks through its different rooms over time. "It creates heuristic moments and allows to find a new balance between the works of contemporary artists and those of legends like Goya, Yves Klein, Danh Vo, Anna-Eva Bergman or Joseph Beuys". La Méditerranée operates according to the principle that all works of art are living bodies of work that need to circulate and be exposed next to each other, independently of their importance in the history of Art and their belonging to a collection. "It happens quite often that artists are themselves passionate collectors of the works of other artists and want to see these works live next to each other. Such was the case of Picasso, Morellet, Lee Ufan or Donal Judd, to mention just a few," said Mouginot. Beuys' historic performance series *Difesa della Natura* (1972-1985) is also featured in *A Magazine Curated By Lucie and Luke Meier* which explores the idea of nature both as a provider of life and a mirror of our human condition.



by Mateo Revillo

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Aprika Ravenne S.E. distorted co

For Gaël Charbau, this duality transpires in the works presented in *Programme Spécial*. "For long, we have lived with this idea of inhabiting the world, but it's only recently that we realized we must cohabit with it". In that sense, works of *Programme Spécial* create a living ecosystem that allows the creation of endless connections. It was Charbau who introduced Manifesto to La Méditerranée through mutual projects. "The artists and curators who are part of La Méditerranée are like my accomplices, especially Edgar Sarin and Mateo Revillo", he told A Magazine. "I've shown their work before at the Collège des Bernardins and as part of the 2018 Nuit Blanche in Paris, where they presented an installation that took over the entire Île Saint-Louis". Edgar Sarin won the Bourse Révélations Émergée, which was co-founded by Charbau and the French real estate developer in 2014. Charbau is also the artistic director of the 2024 Olympic village, a project he carries out alongside Manifesto.

The relationship between Manifesto and La Méditerranée came as a result of lockdown. "I guess I've played the role of a matchmaker," Charbau says. "We've imagined our own projects from home, and they all came together quite organically at POUSH, which felt like a place where artists from all horizons could bond and explore the relationships between their work in the most human and natural way. Finding these synergies is precisely what defines La Méditerranée's approach, so exploring the endless analogies between the works in an exhibition setting was the starting point of *Programme Spécial*."

Programme Special runs through October 10th at 6 Boulevard du Général Leclerc, 92110 Clichy, Paris, France.

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A Studio Visit with Hillary Taymour
Jemma Pissaro

For her first show outside New York, Hillary Taymour brought Collina Strada to Copenhagen for Spring Summer 2027, a season that also marked Copenhagen Fashion Week's 20th anniversary. Collina Strada was the first brand invited to take part in its new International Guest Slot, supported by The Climate Pledge.

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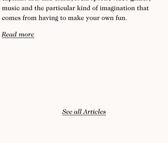

A Studio Visit with Paolina Russo and Lucile Guilmard
Jemma Pissaro

There is something about Paolina Russo that makes you want to be part of the gang. Canadian-born, half Filipina and half Italian, Russo grew up in Markham, Ontario, while her French co-founder Lucile Guilmard was raised in Fouras, a small seaside town on France's Atlantic coast. Their London-based label draws on the things they grew up with far away from fashion capitals: arts and crafts, local sports, video games, music and the particular kind of imagination that comes from having to make your own fun.

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A Studio Visit with Jenia Kim
Jemma Pissaro

On a leafy street in Yunusabad, just north of central Tashkent, behind a wrought-iron gate and a garden planted with roses, irises and young fruit trees, stands a pale yellow villa that once belonged to a prosecutor in the municipal justice system. Today it houses the studio of designer Jenia Kim, whose eponymous label — founded in 2014, while she was living in Moscow — has become one of the defining voices in contemporary Central Asian fashion. While many designers from the region have built careers by leaving, Jenia has spent the last four years doing the opposite: building a company, a studio and, increasingly, a creative community in the city where she was born.

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