

centre  
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olivier  
debré

olivier debré  
1920 2020

*expanse, body, space.*  
*olivier debré and artists - architects*

16 october 2020 - 28 march 2021

opening day : friday, october 16

an exhibition organised for the Olivier Debré centennial

curators : isabelle reiher, director & marine rochard, exhibitions officer



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## *scope, body, space. olivier debré and artists - architects*

A stroke, line or movement, the gestures that compose and recompose to produce a trajectory, everything in Olivier Debré's graphic, pictorial and sculptural work relates to the architectural concept of structure. When the artist constructs his paintings, he has the eye of an architect.

The aim of this exhibition is to gather around the artist Olivier Debré creators who, to this day, have moulded the intention of their work around architectural foundations and principles – the discipline of architecture being very closely linked to human beings and the body. Some of them, like Olivier Debré, have trained as architects and have designed and/or constructed urban planning and functional building projects even if often utopian, like Yona Friedman and Pascal Hausermann.

Others are contemporary artists whose practice is multi-faceted, but in most cases is based on characteristic architectural features, by asserting the codes.

Synthesis of the arts or the concept of total artwork, often forms a foundation that is common to these creators, whether architects or artists, they come together in a syncretic vision of what 'living' or 'being in the world' might mean.

Ignoring works that serve as pure representations of existing architectures, like visual documentation, or propose direct interpretations, the exhibition favours artists who approach architecture like a project, a conceptual basis enabling another object to be created, a diverted rhetoric, a way of seeing the world differently.

Through their research in the wake of the metaphysical principles such as space, structure and light, these artists transcend formalism to explore the role of humans in design. The heart of the theme of the exhibition is the undifferentiated transition from place to sculpture, from drawing to spatiality, from tangible to virtual – many unexpected approximations that Debré enjoyed experimenting within his work.

## olivier debré

born in france  
1920-1999



In 1937, Olivier Debré was 17 when he decided to apply to study architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris. The department was headed by his uncle Jacques Debat-Ponsan who was an architect and a recipient of the Grand Prix de Rome. During 1938, he spent more time in Le Corbusier's studio in rue de Sèvres, than in his uncle's studio at the Beaux-Arts. In parallel he studied literature and history at the Sorbonne, regularly attending the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. He obtained his degree in history in 1942. He never graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts, due in part to the war. He met Pablo Picasso several times during the Occupation before joining the Resistance. After the Liberation, he decided to dedicate his full attention to painting and devoted his time to his Cachan studio as of 1946.

Architectural concerns, such as structure and space – or even the environment that he depicts in paintings for viewers to lose themselves within – remained central to the artist's work. Architecture was never far from the artist's mind, repeatedly producing, as requested by architects, monumental paintings to integrate new buildings (1% for art projects).

With Debré, to paraphrase Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, art begins at home, in more ways than one: his initial insight into organising the composition of his paintings was born of his knowledge of architectural structure, along with an understanding of the body and movement encountering space; furthermore, for the artist, creativity is subject to the place, whether a traditional studio or a remote fjord.

<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?*, Paris, Minuit, 1991.

His more direct links with architecture are less widely recognised, but nonetheless tenuous. From the 1940s to the 1990s, his archives reflect continued research, through notebooks sometimes exclusively dedicated to architectural sketches. Outlined by swift and taut lines, these examples belong in most cases to the realm of utopian architecture and directly identify with so-called informal expression – traditionally oriented towards painting and sculpture.

Within a competitive framework, he designed several much more concrete projects, in partnership with agencies. If most of them were never executed, Debré still brought some of them to fruition.

This seemingly marginal aspect of his work did however span the whole of his career as an artist, Debré frequently reaffirming his belief in the porosity between the arts: he did not differentiate between a pictorial project and an architectural project, each mutually enriching one another. This interpenetration of the arts is apparent in his sketches and models, blending various techniques and materials. Just like the other artists featured in the exhibition, the status granted to models is extremely ambivalent. It is not always necessarily a simple scale model, merely the draft of a larger model. Often, the object speaks for itself, with its own aesthetic qualities and technical characteristics, making it more akin to sculpture and painting, basically to an autonomous work of art.

If the notion of space permeates Debré's work as a whole and in the same manner depending on the media and materials, the formal connections are strongest between the so-called architectural models and sculptures. There are for example models of informal towers worked by hand in modelling clay, that are explicitly linked with sketches of bronze sculptures, first modelled in clay. In addition, and in Debré's lexicon, the 'model' is also related to the draft. These may be sketches that he outlines on small canvases using oil (these sketches are often preparatory works for producing monumental works such as mural decorations and stage curtains). It may also be cut and painted paper that he lays out, like Matisse, to form scenery for certain dramatic and choreographic performances. These paper cut-outs also feature in some of his architectural models.

Anyhow, all disciplines are on the same level with Debré. The experiments carried out over the course of various preparatory works (monumental paintings, scenic components, buildings) expand on this as they always have the same starting point for reflection and evolve through similar techniques.

<sup>2</sup> Read or reread in particular both essays below about models:

Élie During, 'Le monde doit être maquetisé', in David Zerbib (ed.), *In Octavo — Des formats de l'art*, Dijon, Les Presses du Réel, 2015, p.23-42;  
Marie-Ange Brayer, 'Un objet 'modèle' : la maquette d'architecture. Histoire critique d'un mode de représentation', in Marie-Ange Brayer (dir.), *Architectures expérimentales, 1950-2000*. Frac Centre collection, exhibition catalogue, Frac Centre and other places, 11 June – 12 October 2003, Orléans, Hyx, 2003, p.15-25.

## robert breer

born in the united states of america  
1926-2011

# the artists

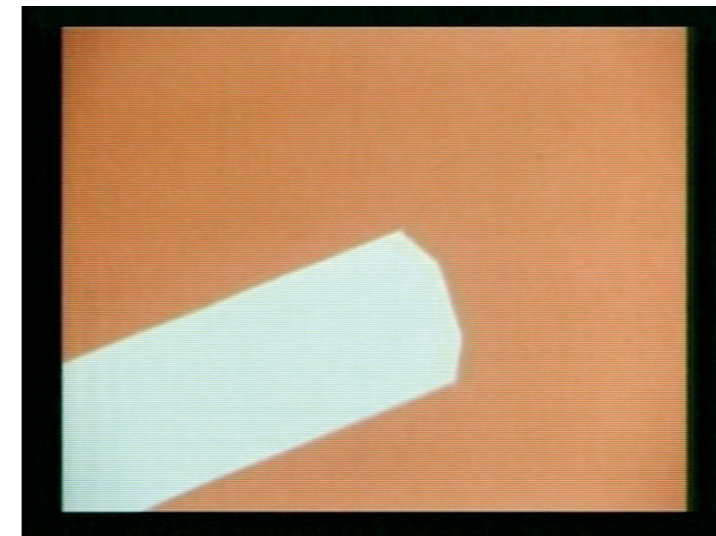
Robert Breer is an artist who throughout his lifetime has developed a diverse and humorous body of work connected to images in motion. After studying art in California, his career started in Paris in the 1940s, where he was represented by Galerie Denise René, producing abstract geometric paintings. In the 1950s, he experimented with animated film, influenced by European avant-garde cinema and artists such as Jean Tinguely, Yves Klein, Hans Richter and Soto.

His studies into movement were first expressed in the film series Form phases. He combines paintings and collages produced on slides that he projects, then films the projection, thereby constructing landscapes from animated forms. His taste for optical effects and illusion phenomena led him to continually experiment, whether through the speed of the images or the imperceptible movement of objects and forms in space.

In the film 6g<sup>1</sup>, an accelerated succession of images, jerky rhythm and overlaying of colours and objects simultaneously subject the viewer to the extreme limits of visual perception. This work is a good example of how Breer focuses on space always approaching it through temporal dynamics.

It was in this spirit that he took up sculpture in the 1960s. The collection of Floats are floating objects with minimalist shapes that move extremely slowly and randomly in the exhibition space, circumventing the scrutiny of the viewer. Counter to the rigour of the minimalist trend, these kinetic sculptures shake up typically rigid exhibition and scenography codes as well as the notion of 'canonised' works of art. Breer's work is characterised by lightness and imbued with humour and simplicity. He focussed throughout his life on tipping reality towards a new equilibrium, taking the effects of rhythm and weightlessness even further.

<sup>1</sup> 1968, digital video, Frac Franche-Comté collection



Robert Breer, 6g, 1968, digital video, 5', Frac Franche-Comté collection  
© Robert Breer photo : DR

## bernard calet

born in france in 1958

Fuelled by references to history, literature, music, cinema, the permanent basis of Bernard Calet's work is built on what qualifies as architecture in the broad sense of the term and how it influences our lifestyles and actions. Questions relative to space are ceaselessly asked, whether by drawing on a play on scale, interpretation, movement or in a conceptual way by manipulating words and ideas.

In his sculptures and installations, he very subtly uses light and colour as two tools for seeing, able to penetrate space and reveal its volume. With sharp wit regarding issues surrounding urban planning, ecology and organisation of community life, his works raise fundamental questions on how we should live today, on relations between private and public, relationships between interior privacy and unveiling the exterior.

Adept at interventions in urban space, he also produces works in very small formats that are often miniatures as such of larger scale potential worlds. This is why in 2020, during the lockdown imposed on part of the planet by the COVID 19 virus, he made collages in a format barely bigger than a postcard. They combine various plants and architectural elements to create, through overlaying plans and perspectives, phantasmagoric and illusory spaces.

Models play an important role in Bernard Calet's work, scale models relating both to reality and fiction. The change in scale is a tool for the artist to indicate shifts, ambiguities, distortions, many phenomena that may occur on a physical level and from a philosophical and political perspective across a society. With particular sensitivity focussed on humans and their apprehension regarding the surrounding environment, the presence of the body is inferred in most of Bernard Calet's works, whether as actor of the mechanism or receiver of sensations.

## chanéac (jean-louis rey)\*

born in france  
1931-1993

A painter by training, Chanéac encouraged architects and urban planners at an early stage to partner with artists, painters and musicians to rethink tomorrow's cities. He embarked upon his first architectural research from 1958, working on the creation of Multi-purpose pods – that in 1962 became Proliferating pods - standardised, prefabricated and possible to assemble in only two hours, as well as enabling modularity.

Discovering plastic materials in 1961, he experimented with more complex forms comprising stacks of spherical or oblong units. He considered architecture the result of an industrialisation process, not however standardised and the aesthetic of which, as much as the functioning, is inspired by organic forms. These Architectures à géométrie variable are units of plastic resting on house support structures.

Chanéac's proposals also address urban issues raised by ever-expanding cities, focusing mainly on traffic issues. In his projects, the traffic circulation framework is raised above the ground and becomes a supporting structure to which the mobile units of the inhabitants are attached (Ville alligator, 1967). As part of his reflections on insurgent architecture, he also devised parasite units that plug into building façades. In 1971, like many architects – including Olivier Debré -, he participated in the competition for the Centre Pompidou with Claude and Pascal Häusermann.

## jordi colomer

born in spain in 1962

Jordi Colomer's practice is prolific and lies at the intersection of several disciplines such as sculpture, architecture, photography, film, performance and theatre. Issues relating to town planning and its influences on the organisation of our contemporary societies are central to his concerns. His films invent fictions from our everyday mundane gestures and behaviours pointing out inconsistencies, inequalities, absurdities generated by urban environments and their various uses.

The video *Anarchitekton/Barcelona* (2002) belongs to a cycle of four films (*Anarchitekton* produced from 2002 to 2004) that show a young man running in the cities of Barcelona, Osaka, Bucharest and Brasilia, brandishing a cardboard model of a building. Uniting in one word the concepts of anarchy and architecture, Jordi Colomer adopts through this title a critical perspective on the modernity that is intended to improve the emancipation of the individual. Here, the wandering character is interpreted protesting against an incongruous building project as well as being the messenger of hopeless political propaganda. We cannot help but see the symbol of the silent hero bearing his cross.

The contrast of scales between the model (a reference to *Architectones* by Kasimir Malevich, plaster models aimed to be cosmogonic produced by the artist around 1920-1925) and the real buildings, sometimes virtually identical, sometimes different, highlights the grotesque and derisory nature of the undertaking. The districts that he crosses ad infinitum are at the periphery of the city, districts earmarked for immigrants in the 1960s, springing up without time for reflection and urban integration, leaving little room for individual and collective comfort and living well together.

The scenic, theatrical and artificial appearance is a constant feature in Jordi Colomer's language, these references form the basis for a philosophical reflection on the ephemeral nature of things in the present, a certain nostalgia for the past and a fortiori a rather sceptical view of the future.

## peter downsbrough

born in the united states of america in 1940

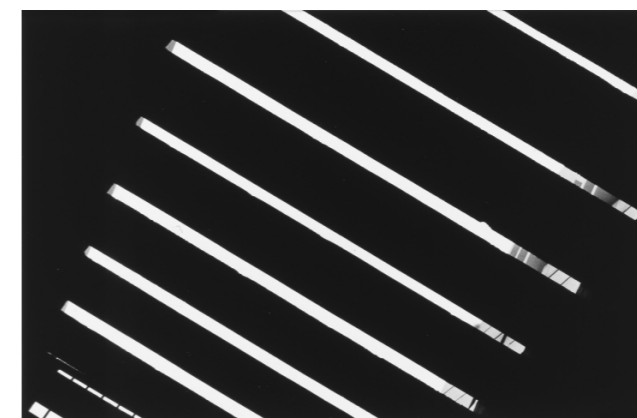
After studying architecture, Peter Downsbrough embarked upon work that has continued until now experimenting with space. An all-round artist, he employs photography, sculpture, typography and publishing to explore issues relating to various scale ratios in a surface. His minimalist and conceptual methods of intervention tend to reveal the main lines of direction of a given volume, prioritising empty space. Known for his installations in situ in urban contexts, he creates protocols that can be adapted generically to various exhibition venues and acknowledge all the architectural components of the space.

His has a very specific vocabulary consisting of lines that are sometimes solid, sometimes dotted, metal or vinyl letters, adhesive tape and metal tubing, everything is always black in colour. These codes, alternating between vectors and signs, provide viewers with a real visual experience, intended to represent, or even shake up benchmarks, to highlight phenomena conducive to disorientation. They are not designed to reveal the space that they integrate but to work with it and replay it. This is exactly what happens in the piece *SA, IF, TO<sup>1</sup>* exhibited in the large white room at the CCC OD. A large black rectangle painted directly on the wall is truncated by a section which only exists virtually from the angle formed where the floor and wall meet. The device does not adapt to the architecture of the room but more to the scale of the body of the viewer. The viewer is invited to attempt to mentally recompose the lost integrity following a series of breaks.

In Peter Downsbrough's photographs, representations are usually urban spaces that are free of human presence, the interpretation of the images lies in the various lines that span and form them. The artist offers us a true vision system that, like his installations, pertains to a revisited relationship of the space made possible thanks to the framing by the lens.

Inventing a language that transcends the limits of sculpture, Peter Downsbrough's work propels the viewer in a spirit of openness rather than withdrawal. In this sense, his works always demonstrate humility inherent to the gesture that is offered but never imposed.

<sup>1</sup> 1992, painted wall, adhesive letters and metal tubing, varying dimensions, Regional Fund for Contemporary Art (FRAC) Lorraine collection.



Peter Downsbrough, *Untitled (Kaiserslautern)*, 1995, black and white photo, silver gelatine print, 23,8 x 30,3 cm, FNAC 05-552, Centre national des arts plastiques © Adagp, Paris / CNAP  
Crédit photo : Yves Cheno

## larissa fassler

born in canada in 1975

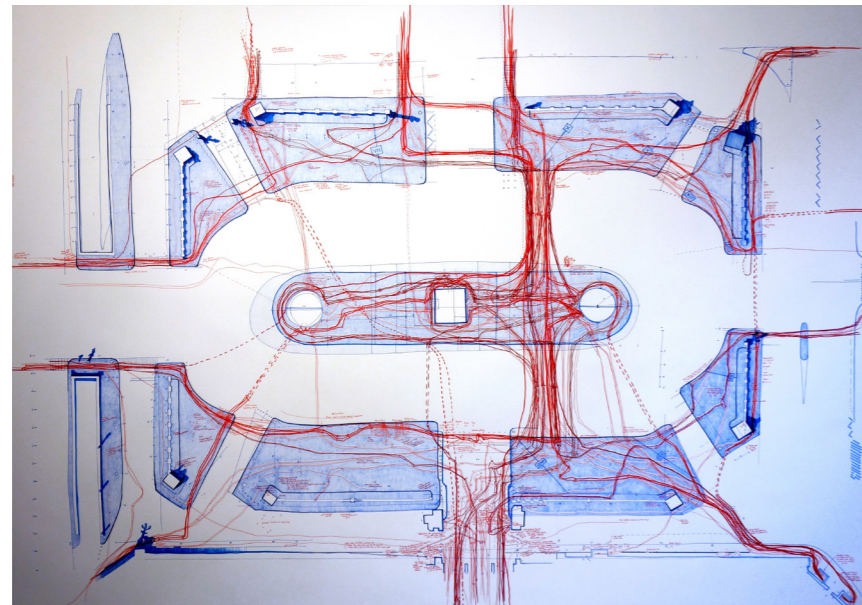
Larissa Fassler's work focusses on cities and the way in which they transform in a similar manner to a living organism. As an inhabitant of a large European city, she engages in deep reflection on the way in which inhabitants, both individually and collectively, can interact with their urban spaces and perhaps modify the uses for which they were initially designed. Highly political, her approach is similar to a sociologist or anthropologist.

Organised into collections, her large drawings are subjective and unprecedented cartographies of urban areas that she chose as observation points: Alexanderplatz (Berlin, 2006), Regent Street (London, 2009), Gare du Nord (Paris, 2014), Kotti (Berlin, 2014), Place de la Concorde (Paris, 2017).

Along with these large sketches, she produces models that, unlike the usual goal to promote a real estate project, are transpositions of an urban reality marked by the economic and social uncertainties of our contemporary societies.

On the basis of strict parameters that she first establishes and following long hours of observation on site, the artist compiles her notes and sketches to subsequently adapt them in the form of large drawings. The result takes movement, flows and human behaviour into account as well as clusters of shops, residential buildings and services, enabling a critical representation of urban space, in augmented reality, to be revealed.

Her analysis led her to focus in particular on the way in which contemporary urbanisation is not only designed by politicians and architects to improve traffic flow and the quality of community life but also to channel mass movement and control group gatherings.



Larissa Fassler, Place de la Concorde X, 2017, ink and pencil on paper, 138 x 192 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Jérôme Poggi gallery, Paris

## yona friedman

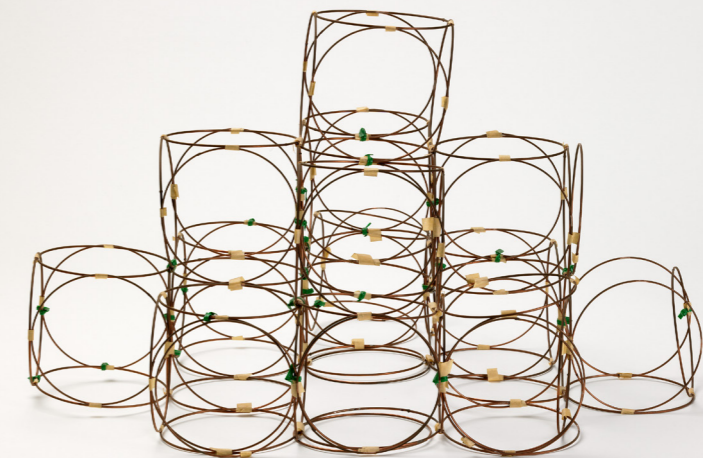
born in hungary  
1923-2019

Throughout his career as an architect and teacher, Yona Friedman has developed a libertarian approach to architecture designed to enable new social space to be created. After studying in Budapest (Hungary), he perfected his technique in Haifa (Israel) from 1945 to 1948. The first part of his career was conducted in Israel before going to work in Paris with Jean Prouvé in 1957. At an early stage he focussed on prefabrication techniques, as well as self-planning and self-build.

To make architecture accessible for everyone, he subsequently adapted his theories and manuals into cartoon form, and also focussed on local techniques and building materials.

From 1956, at the 10th International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), in Dubrovnik, he proposed architecture that can be reconstructed by the inhabitant, to ensure their 'social mobility'. In 1958, he lay down the principles of the 'spatial city' in his manifesto L'Architecture mobile and founded the GEAM (Groupe d'Études d'Architecture Mobile). For him, architecture should adapt to a mobile society favouring mobility and the freedom of the user. La Ville spatiale is therefore a three-dimensional structure built on stilts and over several levels. The trihedral elements that form it are inhabited volumes and empty volumes (not used); they are freely taken over by the inhabitants – to reflect their use, imagination and creativity – to configure their housing.

Remaining committed to an experimental, multi-disciplinary and collective architectural practice, in 1965 Friedman was one of the founding members of the GIAP\*.



Yona Friedman, Space Chains, c. 1960, brass, plastic, adhesive, 31 x 50 x 50 cm, FNAC n°07-007, Centre national des arts plastiques

\* the giap (international group of prospective architecture) : Founded by Michel Ragon in 1965, the aim of the GIAP is to study mobility in architecture. The first founding figures gathered around Michel Ragon were Friedman, Paul Maymont, Georges Patric and Nicolas Schöffer, rapidly joined by Walter Jonas and Ionel Schein. The founding members were very quickly surrounded by a certain number of architects, like Chanéac and Pascal Häusermann, as well as by artists like Pierre Székely and Victor Vasarely, engineers (Abraham Mole), directors (Jacques Polieri) and economists (Jean Fourastié).

The GIAP manifesto was published in May 1965:

'The demographic explosion, the spectacular acceleration of technical and scientific progress, the constant increase in living standards, the socialisation of time, space and art, the growing importance of leisure, the importance of time factors and speed in the notions of communications, cause traditional societal structures to rupture.

Our cities, our territories are no longer adapted to these transformations. It is urgent to foresee and organise the future instead of enduring it.

The aim of the GIAP is to gather all those, technicians, artists, sociologists and various specialists who seek new urbanistic and architectural solutions.

The GIAP intends to be a link between researchers from all countries, even if their theories are sometimes conflicting. The GIAP's only doctrine at present is architectural prospective.

AGAINST retrospective architecture. FOR prospective architecture.'

## isa genzken

born in germany in 1948

Isa Genzken, known for having contributed to the renewal of sculpture, nonetheless develops hybrid work that transcends the traditional definition of the discipline, exploring various mediums and practices (sculpture, installation, video, photography, painting, collage). She started studying in 1969 before completing her training at the Arts Academy Dusseldorf from 1973 to 1977. This is where she met Gerhard Richter – her teacher -, as well as Benjamin Buchloh - future neo avant-garde theorist -, Sigmar Polke, Bruce Nauman, Dan Graham and Lawrence Weiner.

Closely linked to conceptual art in the 1970s, she set herself apart during the 1980s by revisiting the material, central to her work and often worked in an almost artisanal way. The notions of architecture and monument therefore occupy a fundamental place in her work. Her raw concrete assemblages are built on rectangular plans, without windows and placed on steel pedestals. The play on scale creates confusion between model and sculpture and the components forming the works appear as fragments, quotes or more importantly diversions from modernist architecture and the minimalist aesthetic. She uses these references to undermine them, challenging the autonomy of art elevated into ideology by modernism and questioning the systematic deconstruction carried out by postmodernism.

Isa Genzken seeks to show how art can reconnect with society by giving shape to ideas, by examining the collective experience, while more specifically highlighting economic and social disparities that can be conveyed and illustrated by architecture.

From the 1990s, she abandoned concrete and integrated light and transparency into her work thanks to epoxy resin, a translucent material. Relinquishing a formal approach, her models – pop, hybrid, cobbled together and very colourful – indicate greater freedom in terms of movement.



Isa Genzken, Blick,  
1987, cement, steel  
and mirror, 225 x 120  
x 70 cm, Frac Grand  
Large, Dunkerque

## pascal häusermann\*

born in switzerland in 1936

A graduate of University of Geneva in 1962, Pascal Häusermann was one of the first architects to develop modularity that he links to the free expression of the individual. From 1958, he finalised the technique for shotcrete outer layers without formwork which enabled bubbles and hulls to be produced (he had previously produced his first wooden units).

With Chanéac and Antti Lovag, as well as with his wife Claude with whom he repeatedly collaborated, Pascal Häusermann focussed on organic architecture during the 1960s and built many unit homes that were oval in reinforced concrete and without any formwork. A metal iron bar framework covered by hexagonal metal chicken cage mesh supports the concrete (this model led to Maisons-coquillages and to J.H.70). Like Chanéac, he then developed liveable plastic units.

With Pascal Le Merdy, he also invented Domobiles (which he was already reflecting on in 1955). This is housing derived from the assembly of components manufactured in factories, thanks to new synthetic materials. He therefore advocates an increased industrialisation of architectural design while developing an approach against right angles. Like Debré, indeed he thinks that curves are better adapted to human life, making the volume brighter, less sharp and determining a more homely atmosphere.



## georg herold

born in germany in 1947

Trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and Hamburg during the 1970s where he frequented Sigmar Polke, Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen and Werner Büttner, Georg Herold is a sculptor whose work fits into the dynamics of Arte Povera and minimalism but above all he was mainly influenced by Joseph Beuys.

He uses raw and natural materials like brick, wood, glass, canvas and water. Refusing his work to be categorised, he instead demands a form of ambiguity and prefers to give his works several lines of interpretation. Also practicing painting and the art of assemblage, his works are often imbued with irony and a critique of the art system, as well as of the social and political context.

The photograph Cube III, the third in a series of three photographs, is a self-portrait of the artist. He is depicted standing, in an elegant suit, handling a model in a geometric shape. The black and white frontal shot highlights the romantic tones of the image that can be interpreted as a parody of the artist as demiurge in front of his work. The man's gaze is turned to the viewer, opening a potential dialogue between the viewer and the artist, in the style of a scientist carrying out a demonstration. The model, of very simple workmanship, is placed on an incongruous pedestal, a wooden chest of drawers, an object that serves to shift the scene into the domestic world rather than confining it to a sacred museum context. Nevertheless, the cube is not an ordinary cube but a distortion de la figure by a framework of interweaving of the various constituent segments. This image acts like a witch's mirror showing what is not in fact reality.



Georg Herold, Cube III, 1987-2003, black and white photo on baryta paper, 143 x 96 cm, Frac Bretagne.

## thomas huber

born in switzerland in 1955

Thomas Huber is a painter who speaks and makes his painting speak. Since the very start of his career, his pictorial language has remained unaltered, complemented by written work related both to autobiographical fantasy and philosophical considerations about art and existence.

Thomas Huber is a representational painter, affirming that everything can be represented and himself running lectures related to his paintings, that are equally part of the work. He states that language constitutes for him the main exhibition space, this intersects with the spirit of theatre where everything takes place in the translation and transmission through words and representation.

He paints museum architectures, paintings within the painting, interiors of deserted buildings, views of fictitious cities (for example the series Huberville), and imaginary geographies. He is passionate about social issues, coexisting and citizenship, many subjects that he covers by questioning their structure in his paintings and conferences. He believes that painting is a 'social occasion'. In this utopia, he seeks to provide an explanation of the world as a whole using biblical symbols, figures and references to create paintings which seek only to communicate with the viewer who is moreover physically overwhelmed by the painter's methods of composition who repeatedly uses a play on perspectives, mise en abyme and a play of relationships between colours and forms.

His paintings have the strange and intriguing character of illusionist worlds where different temporalities and various registers of objects overlap. Marked by culture and keen to share, or even to 'create culture' by communicating with the viewer, he views paintings as the real way to access reality and imagination.



Thomas Huber, Panorama, 1999, marker pen and acrylic on wood, 172 x 444 cm, Frac Bretagne

## rémy jacquier

born in france in 1972

Rémy Jacquier's work has a very wide variety of forms (sculpture, drawing, installation, performance) for which the starting point is sometimes music or literature. Attached since the start of his career to the notion of space, the artist seeks, through a range of media, to propose various ways of inhabiting space. If drawing – often in charcoal and on the ground in large formats – is the starting point of his thinking, Rémy Jacquier also develops sculptures taking on the form of models, or more specifically 'architectural volumes', or musical instruments, in most cases string instruments.

The black architectural volumes in the Pavillons Diderot series are derived from a protocol predefined by the artist, providing elevation and volume to braille characters. The Pavillons Parker series is in contrast based on more spontaneity and improvisation: from a starting point - a module -, Rémy Jacquier, like in music, develops variations that he assembles and multiplies almost organically. This series is closer in this way to the very intuitive and experimental exercise of drawing that the artist practices gradually perusing the sheet of paper, until forms take shape, despite successive drawing and erasures. The body also lies at the heart of his research when he creates musical sculptures/instruments, activated by performance.

This is not a matter of individual guitars, but architectural volumes with strings producing their own sound, irrespective of any academic musical norm. Discovering sound from a volume, deploying a sound volume, is another way for the artist to inhabit the space.

## antti lovag\*

born in hungary  
1920-2014

Antti Lovag first trained in the fields of shipbuilding and mechanics in Sweden then moved to France in 1947 where he studied architecture. During the 1950s, he mainly worked with Jean Prouvé before embarking upon more personal experiments that he conducted throughout his life. His research mostly consists of cabins and units in the form of bubbles and hulls, with enhanced resistance, that free standing when they support each other. His constructions are usually membranes of sprayed concrete or fibre-reinforced cement.

He was one of the first in France to develop an organic architectural style. Rather than an architect, he considers himself a 'habitologist' primarily interested in humans. He defined the 'habitological game' by a series of possible forms of assemblages with varying combinations according to the site and the inhabitant. The environments that he designs are also living spaces, originating in studying man's movements in domestic space.

Advocating the principles of self-build and refusing right angles, like Chanéac and Pascal Häusermann, he engages his clients in designing their own habitat and champions construction free from any geometric or spatial constraint. With Antti Lovag, each habitat is a new bespoke prototype adapted to the needs of its inhabitants. He attaches considerable importance to the penetration of light in space and certain modules that open even enable the integration of nature.

## eva nielsen

born in france in 1983

A graduate in 2009 of the Beaux-Arts de Paris, Eva Nielsen paints while intersecting it with various techniques which when combined contribute to revealing the image. Her large paintings invent fictitious spaces through a play on interweaving between architecture and landscape. Through her various journeys, her immersion in both urban and natural contexts, she draws on sources from work always focused on humans permeating their surroundings.

To a great extent inspired by the colours of the earth and sun, the special light of the atmosphere of the West Coast of the US, among others the famous 'Sunset' by Ed Ruscha, she acknowledges a relationship with the sublime, the state of shock facing the landscape, not hesitating to quote romantic artists such as Caspar David Friedrich. Always in large formats, her works use the body as if to take measure, as much in their method of production as in their relationship with the viewer. By means of cut segments, assemblages, baths of ink and paint in succession, sedimentation of the layers, she combines photography, silkscreen printing and painting techniques, never restricting herself to one technique but more on the boundary of all of them. She borrows features from film trying through her painting to make viewers dizzy, this limit where our markers are called into question.

Eva Nielsen considers herself a filter, a sponge, a witness who uses her tools as an artist to copy what she captures both in the everyday aspects of the city, changing urban areas, and in distant natural spaces. 'The landscape is never neutral, it bears the scars of the past and the role of the painter is perhaps to bring out the underlying, invisible or forgotten mechanisms'.



Eva Nielsen, Ascien IV,  
2017, oil, acrylic and ink  
silkscreen on canvas,  
200 x 150 cm, galerie  
Jousse Entreprise, Paris

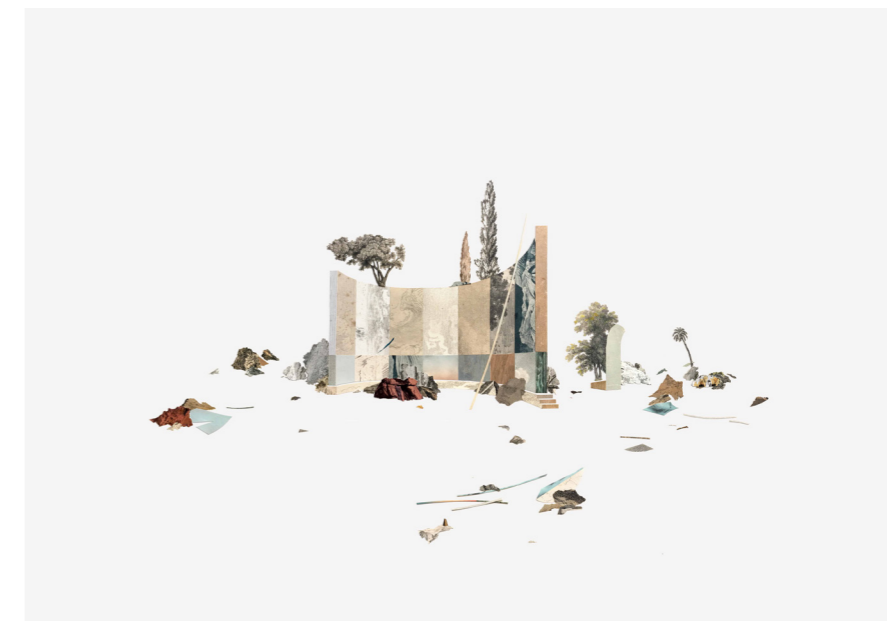
## claire trotignon

born in france in 1983

Like an architect, Claire Trotignon models spatial units that the viewer must roam mentally as if they were a repertoire of potentials. Trapped in apparent inertia, the compositions seem, after more in depth examination, to be animated by a continuous and centrifugal dilation movement that constantly and simultaneously reconfigures the various empty areas defined by the plastic components.

Working from reconstructed fragments (cutting out and collage of ancient engravings, postcards...), the artist implements the collision of heterogeneous elements on the surface of the paper, shattering the traditional space perspective and linear narrative to provide new situations. For a number of years now, the artist sometimes releases the drawing from the sheet of paper to deploy it in the space in the form of installations that also raise questions in relation to a fragmented and piecemeal vision of the world.

For the exhibition at the CCCOD, she produces a new installation referring to the intrinsic ambivalence of her work, the junction of the landscape and architecture. Building on the structure of the white gallery, the work will be deployed like a wooden building framework, like a slender frame the function of which escapes us, that would have been directly outlined in the space. This landscape, or this structured panorama, also refers to the history of architecture and its representations, marked notably by the absence of bodies but where, everything in the composition on the contrary suggests their presence, or to be more precise their movements. Looking at this sculpture, it is the body of Claire Trotignon, that of the artist, that one might well imagine moving in space to draw these wooden three-dimensional projections.



Claire Trotignon, Demain, Jadis,  
2019, collage of engravings,  
photos, atlas, 50 x 70 cm, Private  
collection

Focussing on geometrical modules and mathematical models, Raphaël Zarka is a sculptor who works both the plan and the volume. Each work, envisaged according to a new design protocol adapted, devised by the artist, owes more to treaties of perspective of the Renaissance than to the history of statuary.

Using found objects (industrial objects, works of art, scientific models), he uses a documentary method, accumulating extensive but non exhaustive knowledge of the subject concerned. The artist selects certain data, that he recontextualises and assembles. His works that often have the appearance of replicas – like in the series The Schoenflies Family and Monte Oliveto –, are actually the starting point for new narratives developed like reflections on changing forms – history of art and sciences combined. These countless references form, from one series to the next, a dense and complex network, a milieu of interrelations within which the works are mutually enriching and where each project resonates with another.

Raphaël Zarka's work, akin to very formal geometrical abstraction, departs however from modernist logic: he voluntarily conducts his research towards more traditional – and often more complex forms – which predate the geometrical models harnessed by suprematism and neoplasticism. If his approach bears some similarities to that of a researcher – since 2010 he has been enhancing a catalogue raisonné of the rhombicuboctahedron, a semi-regular polyhedron –, the artist comes across as more of a collector, making more arbitrary than objective choices. He therefore places major arts and minor arts, scientific objects and objets d'art on the same level, creating a whole new coherent universe although consisting of diverse fragments of reality.



Raphaël Zarka, Albert Schoenflies, 2016,  
cherrywood, 100 x 66 x 66 cm, Courtesy of  
the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels

## \*"habitat évolutif" association

After joining the GIAP\*, Chanéac, Pascal Häusermann and Antti Lovag – already working together since the start of the 1960s - founded the association 'Habitat évolutif' in 1971. Together they implemented the foundations of a collective architecture based on a key building component in the form of a unit or pod. The three architects, even if they create very distinctive projects, designed fittings together allowing residential units to be linked. Their works can therefore be combined ad infinitum by the user. Their vision of architecture is indeed collective, as well as evolving, adopting as principle the proliferation of units.

These construction methods give users new autonomy and responsibility. Chanéac mainly develops the notion of insurgent architecture the fundamental purpose of which is to encourage the intervention of users in creating their surroundings, for architecture to reflect life.

What these architects desire represent a comprehensive project to redesign housing that entails the complete destruction of urban conurbations followed by their reconstruction and proposing an alternative to subsidised housing standards.

The work of Chanéac, Pascal Häusermann and Antti Lovag opens the path to a facet of architectural research focussing on so-called spatial forms, and also marks a return to natural forms.

\* Founded by Michel Ragon in 1965, the GIAP (Groupe International d'Architecture Prospective/International Group of Prospective Architecture) acts for the study of mobility in architecture.

## the lenders

Olivier Debré's beneficiaries

The private collections

The artists :

Bernard Calet, Peter Downsbrough, Larissa Fassler, Rémy Jacquier,  
Eva Nielsen, Claire Trotignon, Raphaël Zarka

The Galleries :

Ceysson & Bénétière gallery  
Krings-Ernst gallery  
Michel Rein, Paris/Bruxelles gallery  
Jousse Entreprise gallery, Paris  
Jérôme Poggi gallery, Paris

The public collections : Centre national des Arts plastiques  
(and its depositaries : la Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine et  
le LaM - Lille Métropole musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain  
et d'art brut)

The Frac structures :

Frac Bretagne  
Frac Centre - Val de Loire  
Frac Franche-Comté  
Frac Grand Large - Hauts-de-France  
49 Nord 6 Est Frac Lorraine  
Frac des Pays de la Loire

the centre de création contemporaine olivier debré



Maurizio Nannucci, *Listen to your eyes*, 2010, FNAC 10-1055, collection du CNAP, 2018-2020

Right in the historic centre of Tours, with its contemporary architecture designed by the Portuguese agency Aires Mateus, the Centre de Création contemporaine Olivier Debré is somewhere the public can come and make discoveries, share knowledge and experiences in an open setting. A contemporary art centre, it is also a multidisciplinary culture venue which engages with all local stakeholders in its ambition to explore new ground.

The CCCOD is now the custodian of a donation of works by the painter Olivier Debré who lived in Touraine from early childhood. Hosting a historic collection within a contemporary art centre throws up a whole host of unique possibilities for building bridges between past and present creation.

All year round, our Visitors' Department organises a wide range of activities for young and old alike, tailoring their options to suit individuals and different groups. An exciting and intriguing programme of cultural events can be enjoyed alongside the exhibitions, including conferences, encounters, performances and film screenings – all designed to awaken your senses and broaden your knowledge.

With an ambitious exhibition programme, the CCCOD is forging ever closer ties with its region whilst exploring international creation. Pioneering, inquisitive and ever mindful of the issues that matter today, it looks ahead with the artists who are constantly questioning our world in a different way.

now



mathieu dufois // *dans l'ombre le monde commence*  
until october 18

galleries

The exhibition extends Mathieu Dufois' residency in the Egyptian Fayoum in 2018. An outstanding inspiration for this artist who explores through his drawings the memory of places.



vivien roubaud // *scalaire*  
until november 21

nave

As a contemporary sculptor, Vivien Roubaud introduces modern materials to the field of art. He develops each piece as a fully-fledged prototype, each one of them requiring various skills for their implementation.



marie-anita gaube // *odyssees*

18.09.2020 - 07.03.2020

black gallery

Marie-Anita Gaube's large figurative and colorful paintings invite us into multiple imaginary spaces, oscillating between dream and reality.

now



maurizio nannucci // *listen to your eyes*  
until 2021  
facade of the CCCOD  
Written in gleaming green letters on the facade of the art centre, Maurizio Nannucci's message is an invitation to passers-by to be cautious of the world around them.

upcoming



éric tabuchi // *atlas des régions naturelles*  
06.11.2020 - 28.03.2021  
galleries  
The «Atlas des régions naturelles» aims to identify and collect a photographic archive from the French territory various landscapes, as much as the natural sites as the different types of buildings. It focuses on Indre et Loire department and reveals the five landscapes specificities identified by the artist in this specific territory.

In collaboration with the caue37



nicolás lamas // *times in collapse*  
from december 18  
nave  
In Nicolás Lamas' work, he juxtaposes cultures and eras through a combination of objects, concepts and ideas.

partners and patrons

partner of the exhibition



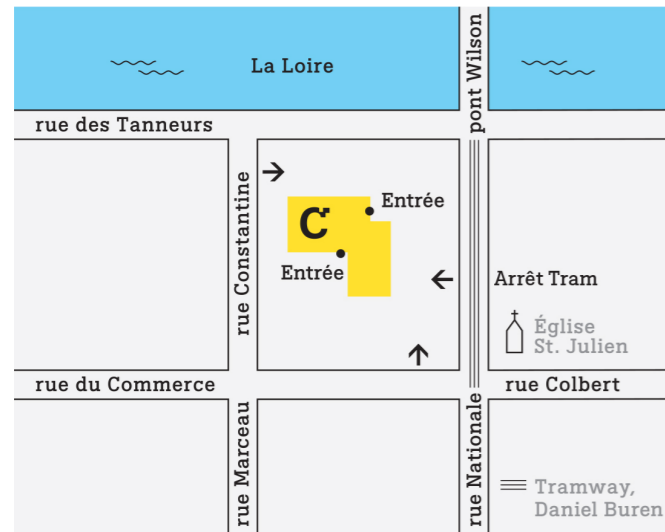
cultural and education partners



the patrons in 2020



In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure your safety and your health, the art center adapts the way it welcomes its visitors.



### getting here

Jardin François 1er  
37000 Tours  
T +33 (0)2 47 66 50 00  
F +33(0)2 47 61 60 24  
contact@cccod.fr

train station 70 minutes from Paris by TGV train  
by motorway A10, exit Tours Centre

### facilities

bike park  
car parking spaces Porte de Loire, place of the Résistance and street of the Commerce  
on-site amenities available : lifts, magnetic induction loop, disabled toilets, pushchair parking, baby change area, wheelchairs

### opening hours

tuesday - sunday from 11am to 6pm  
saturday until 7pm

### entry fees

4 € (reduced price)  
7 € (full price)  
free access under 18

### CCC OD LEPASS

unlimited access to exhibitions and events  
valid for 1 year  
27 € single pass  
45 € duo pass  
12 € for students / 7€ PCE

### temporary closure

#### restaurant

Come and discover our simple, creative menu taking its inspiration from the CCC OD's spirit.  
REOPENING IN OCTOBER

### free access - limited to 2 persons

#### the bookshop

The publisher Bookstorming-Paris proposes a broad choice of book specialized in art, architecture and design.

### press contacts

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The CCC OD is a cultural equipment of Tours Métropole Val de Loire.  
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