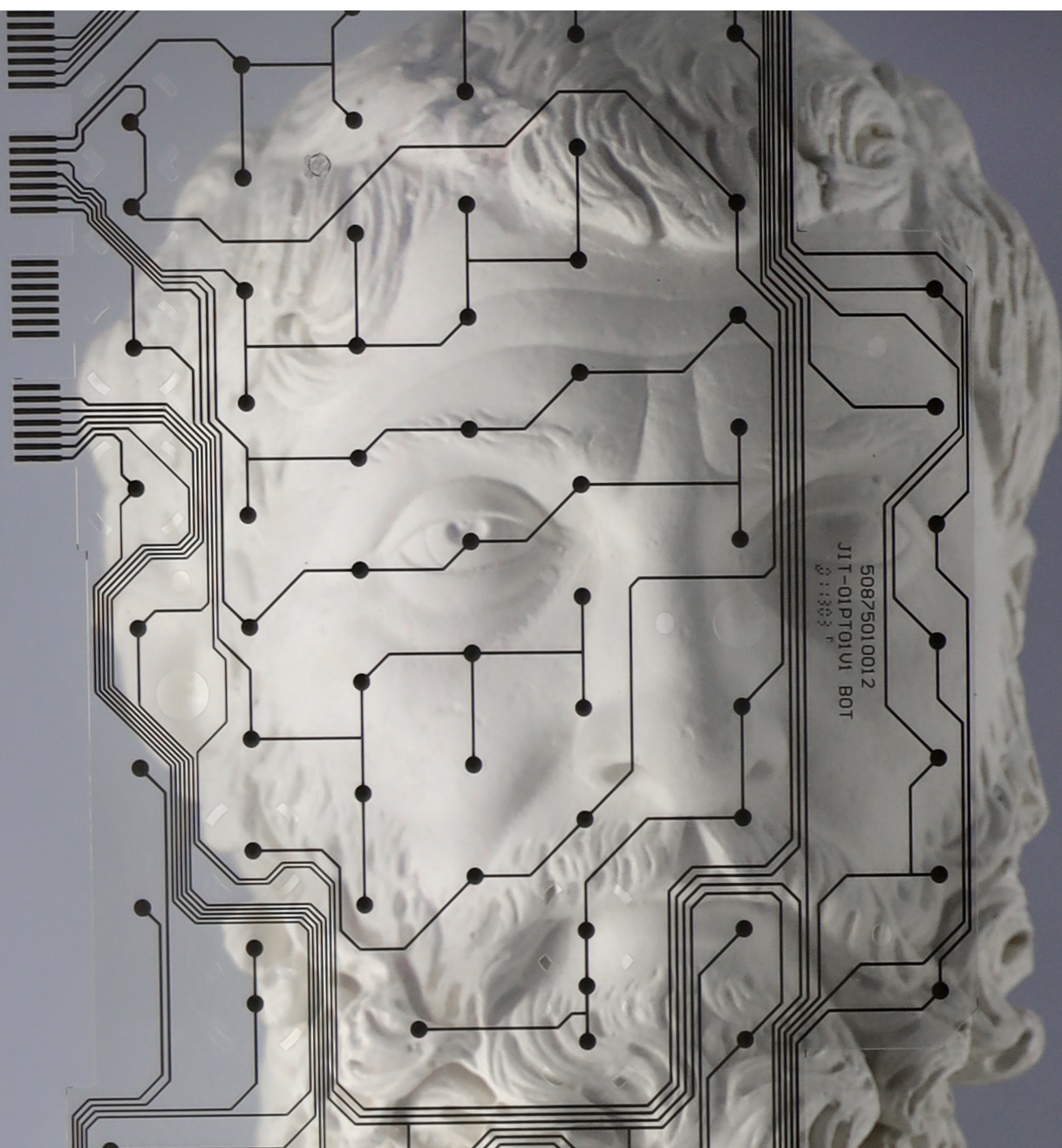


centre  
de  
création  
contemporaine  
olivier  
debré

**nicolás lamas**  
*times in collapse*  
january 22<sup>nd</sup> - august 29<sup>th</sup> 2021



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## the exhibition

With its insatiable networking of ideas, concepts, objects and images, Nicolás Lamas' exhibition is a metaphor for living matter and its countless cycles. But the living matter it references is by no means restricted to human beings: it concerns everything through which energy flows as well as inert matter brought to life by the effects of contamination. Hence, the exhibition takes the form of a gigantic body within which multifaceted changes take place due to interactions between the organism's various components.



The nave has become a field of action for visitors, who, as they make their way through the exhibition's itinerary, constantly reinvent the narrative and fictional potential of the works on show, so adding the system's previously missing link. As Nicolás Lamas himself put it, instead of considering each object in isolation, its purpose is rather to be discerned in the connections and relationships generated between them. This is why everything that might appear absent, forgotten, becomes a fundamental part of the work at hand, starting with the visitors' physical presence, their viewpoints and infinitely varied interpretations.



The exhibition's title, *Times in Collapse*, suggests the disruption of a certain world order. The installation is a dizzying journey through time, from Antiquity to the present day, giving equal weight to fragments of natural matter, mutilated artefacts, rebuses and other more or less clearly identified remains. Connected so incongruously with one another, these ersatz realities cannot but provoke reflection, perhaps even incredulity. Lamas asks a multitude of questions that

transcend language, referring to rules yet to be established and in most cases finding the beginnings of answers in the intuitive, error, chance and the unsuspected.

By making use of the "commercial display" technique, a scenographic procedure whose application to presentation of artworks has recently come under study<sup>1</sup>, Lamas focuses the exhibition on critical points of view that our contemporary societies



might give rise to: the future of our ways of life in the face of the rapid changes that our planet is undergoing due to overproduction and overconsumption; in contrast, the notion of wandering, meandering, the bargain-hunter's casual rummaging; and in between the lines, the desire for the beautiful, the search for something lasting, our capacity for resilience in the face of disasters, wars and epidemics.

Highlighting the mundane and imbuing it with value, encouraging us to look more closely at the anecdotal, the abandoned, even the ugly, the artist's every action relates to this impressive undertaking that seeks to relativise humanity's importance on the Earth by focusing on other potential lifeforms. In the era of transhumanism, humankind's central position on the planet is called into question in favour of a broader vision of life, taking account of the possible interactions between all living organisms, in their infinite ability to intersect and hybridise. Humankind does not rule here, but interacts on an equal footing with all the other species.



By bringing the various objects' scales of values into collision, along with their geographical provenances and the eras in which they were created, whether or not they were seen as artworks, Lamas' work continuously brings us back to the here and now of our condition of being in the world. *Times in Collapse*, a large-scale composition designed as a single entity, may be interpreted as a vanitas, a contemporary allegory of the passage of time, of our finiteness and various dependences. But this great ecosystem also raises the question of a possible posthuman condition for humankind, assuming the existence of complex, unrecognised interactions likely to provide new hypotheses of life.

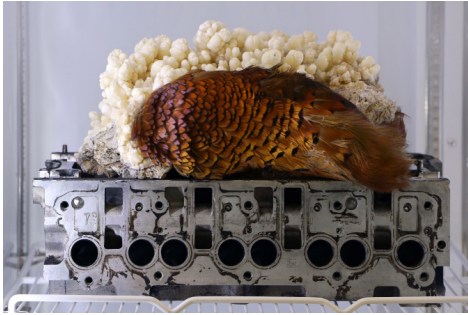
As we follow the train of associations of ideas that he suggests, Nicolás Lamas invites us to delve into our imaginations and decide where the objects around us come from and what their destiny might be. There is an urgent need to examine the present in order to better speculate on possible futures. In consequence, our comfort zones are upset, shifted, just as certain journeys we undertake lead us to review our prejudices and shake up our convictions. In a universe where everyday conventions and interactions are turned on their heads, each individual would have to reinvent their own world, new social structures, suitable modalities of existence, different ways of living together.



First of all, the installation relies on presentation systems alien to the museum environment: the artefacts on show are not set on bases or in display cases, but rather in large refrigerated supermarket cabinets. Further along, columns from IKEA storage units form vertical racks, shelving for valuable items, classified and inventoried like a collection in a museum of natural science or cabinet of curiosities. Provoking culture and context shock, building audacious bridgeways between disparities, the artist highlights the gap between the quest for knowledge and mass hyperconsumerism.



Taken as a whole, the nave becomes a vast landscape formed by a series of islands whose substrata are still in motion. The eye drifts and alternates between verticality and horizontality. A syncretic landscape that does not feature sculptures shaped by the artist's hand, but rather assemblages and collages without any clearly defined aesthetic, interacting to generate dynamics of forces, pollinations and symbioses, as is the case with the functioning of any community.



The associations are certainly surprising: a pair of burnt trainers whose soles have melted but in whose cavities sickly shrubs continue to grow, leathery roots gaining ground on the resistant plastic of the shoes, a sign that life always finds a way in spite of everything. Prosthetic human limbs refer to a present slowed down by constrained gestures, obsolete bodies. In contrast, sedimentary fossils of organisms are evocative of the origins of life. Further off, a wasps' nest, broken open and dried out, is set on a photocopier like an ancient sculpted head, evoking an artistic vocabulary that has been copied a thousand times over. As if a fresh dispute had broken out between ancient and modern, this incongruous coming together seems to express the notion of a game that pits our contemporary world, extoling innovation and upholding the idea of progress, against a return to Antiquity, symbolising perfection and the culmination of an unsurpassable style.



In the refrigerated cabinets – attempts at long-term conservation, a determination to freeze living matter – a whole world of objects dialogues interdependently. A transverse flute is paired with a bone in reference to the first prehistoric flute. A copy of a classical philosopher's bust can be seen through a computer keyboard layout screenprinted on a windowpane. Right beside it, an imposing marine plant spreads its countless networks of fragile little tendrils like the brain's synapses. Giving concrete expression to the notion of knowledge and its various forms of transmission, this confrontation of images speaks to us of language and its translations, from orality to writing, from the Classical Age to modern technologies.



In Lamas' work, the animal and plant kingdoms, as well as the mineral world, are constantly interacting, overlapping in order to hybridise, so producing new species straight out of fiction, a virtual reality that might well become our everyday experience given the incisiveness and lucidity of this view of our environment. It is up to us to explore it and find whatever will enable us to visit the world in its subjective beauty, as Hans Bellmer suggests in his *Petite Anatomie de l'Image*: "(...) an object, a woman's foot for example, is only real if desire does not inevitably take it for a foot"<sup>2</sup>. Hence, our desires can project specific identities onto things, the memory of an experience or the invention of a personal reality.



By purposely choosing objects from all eras, the artist has provided us with an anthropological history revisited in the light of multiple potential futures. Like an archaeologist drawing on the traces of a past civilisation in order to reconstruct the missing components of a relic, Lamas turns to the past to seek out what may enable us to imagine the future, bridging the interstices with reversible prostheses.

The vertical features in the centre of the nave are references to the column as a classical architectural component and pillar of all systems. Set atop a photocopier whose inner workings are left visible, a replica of a torso of the Phrygian satyr Marsyas, flute player and inventor of music, imposes its presence in all its subtle poetry and fragility. In its gradual evolution, mass reproduction raises the question of progress alongside that of loss, as the details of information tend to dissipate as time goes by.



In another area, stranded in the midst of a stretch of stagnant water, a legless black plaster Venus is enclosed in a dark orange plexiglass column whose protective walls are perforated with a diagram of an electronic network, another indication of the flows of information in constant circulation in the exhibition. Perched on a base composed of old hard drives from obsolete computers, the goddess' seemingly charred body has lost its canons of beauty and stands frozen in a pool of dirty water.

A crashed car lies at the bottom of the same pool, annihilated by speed and giving free rein to the idea of a time now past when oil was still used to provide energy for travel and exchanges. With no trace of nostalgia but highlighting the rapid, almost uncontrollable changes in our contemporary world, this area with its apocalyptic overtones is intended as a departure point for a new era, unrecognised as yet perhaps, but in which the notion of post-humanism opens up new possibilities. After dusk has fallen, everything that comes from the earth returns to the earth in order to live once again in other ways.



<sup>1</sup> Natacha Pugnet et Arnaud Vasseux (dir.), *Faire étalage, Displays et autres dispositifs d'exposition*, Nîmes, école des beaux-arts de Nîmes, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Bellmer, *Petite anatomie de l'image*, Editions Allia, Paris, 2005.

## nicolás lamas

born in 1980 in lima (peru)

lives and works in brussels (belgium)



While carefully manipulating images, texts and sounds associated with the notions of detection, interpretation and transmission of information, Nicolás Lamas attempts to highlight the inconsistencies generated by representation. He creates a world filled with possibilities, permanent interactions, ellipses, attractions and repulsions, incompatibilities between void and matter, distortions of logic. Lamas develops a meticulous network which ultimately allows the "system" to find its own equilibrium in the imbalance.

Nicolás Lamas is represented by the galleries Meessen De Clercq, Belgium and Sabot, Romania.

Artist's website : <https://nicolaslamas.net/>

### personal exhibitions

2021

*Times in collapse*, Centre de Création contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours, France

2020

*Liquid bones*, Galerie La Borie, Solignac, France

*Impermanence*, In Extenso. Clermont Ferrand, France

*Screening*. Centre Culturel de Namur. Namur, Belgium (with Daniel Locus)

2019

*Life of things fades into nothingness*. Spazio ORR. Brescia, Italy

*Various others*. Loggia. Munich, Germany (with Tramaine de Senna)

*Archaeology of darkness*. Meessen De Clercq. Bruxelles, Belgique

2018

*Liminality*. Sabot, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

*Despise the solid burgher, but drink deep from his flagon*. Martin van Zomeren gallery. Amsterdam, Netherlands (with Matt Bryans)

*Against the boundary of its own definition*. Ladera Oeste. Guadalajara, Mexico

*Becoming animal*. Tenderpixel. London, England (with Petra Feriancová)

2017

*The form of decay*. P/////AKT. Amsterdam, Netherlands

*Artissima* (solo project) with SABOT. Turin, Italy

*Before disappearing*. 019 - Design Museum Gent. Gand, Belgium

*Ocaso*. Galería Lucía de la Puente. Lima, Peru

*Cuánto del espacio es espacio?* Salón. Madrid, Spain

*Duck full of ants*. Second Room. Antwerp, Belgium (with Juan Pablo Plazas)

*Three chapters of a meaningless story*. Tripla. Bologna, Italy

*Ephemeral conditions*. Marion de Cannière. Antwerp, Belgium



2016

*Todo objeto es un espacio temporal.* Espai 13 (Fundació Joan Miró).  
Barcelona, Spain  
*Loss of symmetry.* Loods 12. Wetteren, Belgium  
*The structure of the wild.* Brand new gallery. Milan, Italy  
*Dysfunctional links.* Meessen De Clercq. Brussels, Belgium  
Art Brussels with Meessen De Clercq. Brussels, Belgium  
*An apparent chasm among things.* ARCO with SABOT. Madrid, Spain

2015

*Potential remains.* DASH. Kortrijk, Belgium  
*To contain is not to possess.* Lokaal 01. Antwerp, Belgium  
*Without form or particular order.* Lokaal 01. Antwerp, Belgium  
*Dynamic exchange between fragments.* Art Rotterdam (Intersections).  
Rotterdam, Netherlands

2014

*The value of formlessness.* SABOT. Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
*Configuraciones.* Galería Lucía de la Puente. Lima, Peru

2013

*Reference points.* Meessen De Clercq. Brussels, Belgium

2012

*La inconsistencia de lo visible.* Galería Lucía de la Puente. Lima, Peru  
*Espacio de contingencia.* NNM, Live broadcast residence-Act #5. Lima,  
Peru  
*Data entrópica.* ICPNA. Lima, Peru

2011

*Backlight: la naturaleza como espectáculo.* Galería L'imaginaire - AF.  
Lima, Peru  
*Desencuadre y superficie.* Galería Lucía de la Puente. Lima, Peru

2009

*Denaturaciones: Cultura y fractura.* Galería Lucía de la Puente. Lima, Peru

2006

*Desborde y contención.* Galería 80m2. Lima, Peru

centre  
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contemporaine  
olivier  
debré

## the centre de création contemporaine olivier debré

jardin  
françois 1<sup>er</sup>  
37000  
tours



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.

+33(0)2 47 66 50 00  
contact@cccod.fr  
www.cccod.fr

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

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37000 Tours  
T +33 (0)2 47 66 50 00  
F +33(0)2 47 61 60 24  
contact@ccc OD.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

### temporary closure

#### restaurant

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

REOPENING IN 2021

#### free access - limited to 2 people

#### the bookshop

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

### opening hours

temporary closed

### 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

The ccc od is a cultural equipment of Tours Métropole Val de Loire.  
Its achievement was made possible thanks to the State and territorial collectivities support.

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