

La Maréchalerie  
centre d'art contemporain  
*ÉNSA Versailles*

# La grotte de l'amitié

Alex Balgiu  
Marie Bette  
Charlotte Charbonnel  
Vincent Ganivet  
Brion Gysin  
Balthazar Heisch  
Laurent Le Deunff  
Amélie Lucas-Gary  
Ben Orkin  
Daniel Pescio  
Gianni Pettena  
Jean-Jacques Rullier

**Alexandra Fau**

Commissaire de l'exposition

# LA GROTTTE DE L'AMITIÉ

To commemorate its 20th anniversary, the art center La Maréchalerie in Versailles is celebrating «La grotte de l'amitié.» The exhibition serves as both a retrospective of our experiences and an invocation for future generations of artists.

«La grotte de l'amitié» is teeming with benevolent spirits. The spirit of Kurt Schwitters, founder of the «Merzbau,» permeates the exhibition's scenographic design, punctuated by cavities resembling small sanctuaries. The influence ranges from Miralepa (1040-1123), the Tibetan hermit who inspired Jean-Jacques Rullier, to Gianni Pettena's house on the island of Elba, Wolfgang Laib's wax grotto in the eastern Pyrenees, Brion Goulet's 'Dream machine' in the Pyrenees, and the 'Merzbau' in the south of France.

Brion Gysin's 'Dream Machine,' reactivated using processes left open-source by its visionary author, captivates the public with a whirlwind of inspiring figures. «La grotte de l'amitié» also resonates with landmark projects like the «Circus Hein» exhibition at the Frac Centre - Val de Loire in 2010, which united Jeppe Hein, artists, and friends in a vast circus structure. These works underscore the significance of artistic exchange and, more broadly, explore how to «connect» through contemporary art. However, this question is seldom approached from the perspective of space: how certain places facilitate encounters or foster artistic communities. With the invaluable assistance of Alex Balgiu, the aim is to illuminate the precedents set by Natalie Clifford Barney's 'Temple of Friendship' (1876-1972) and Mieko Shiomi's Fluxus cartographies.

The exhibition is traversed by zones of varying intensity, no longer positioned ahead of us as a future goal, but displaced in the past as an origin or focus, constituting the forces at play. Ben Orkin's sculpture «How to Have Sex in an Epidemic: Second Approach» (2022) intricately weaves skeletal structures, remnants of indistinct bodies. Balthazar Heisch's 'Tombereaux' alludes to a primitivist sanctuary addressing «entities without bodies, or let's say other types of presence.» Marie Bette's structures, crafted from sheep's wool and alpaca, pierced by enigmatic eyelets, echo these themes. Laurent Le Deunff, known for transforming numerous art centers, re-enacts the troglodyte atmosphere alongside olfactory designer Daniel Pescio. In «Aura Loci, activation #1» (2022), Charlotte Charbonnel captures the spirit of an excavation, precisely dated by the presence of iridium, associated with

the impact of a large meteorite 65 million years ago. Vincent Ganivet's «Les Martyrs,» scarifications on wood, reinstates the cave as the site where the first sign of sensibility is constructed.

The cave's geological makeup, its stratification, and the stability of its ecosystem are surprisingly reminiscent of the museum's beginnings. With the Inventor, a term used to designate the discoverer of a cave, the kinship with the artist becomes even more apparent (Amélie Lucas-Gary, Grotte, 2020). Within the art center, which serves as a refuge, a space for production and dissemination, 'connections' are cultivated, sometimes with significant mediation. This exhibition serves as a call to duplicate the visible world with an invisible world, which constitutes its secret architecture. «La grotte de l'amitié» celebrates 20 years of fruitful exchanges between the art center La Maréchalerie, the artists, ÉNSA Versailles, and its audience.

Alexandra Fau  
Curator of the exhibition

Alexandra Fau is an exhibition curator, art critic and art history teacher. She has organised a number of exhibitions, ranging from art and architecture («Architecture invisible?», «Architecture au corps», «Chez soi») to art, design («la tyrannie des objets», UNBUILT) and craft («les 30 ans de la Villa Kujoyama» at the Palais de Tokyo, November 2022 and support for the winners for 2023-2026). Since 2023, she has been working for the Orient-Express, a legendary train that is becoming the new international showcase for today's arts and crafts. In 2023, her interest in know-how and the applied arts led her to join the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, where she is scientific and artistic director of the NID, the Chair dedicated to the New Imaginations of Drawing, supported by Hermès.

[www.alexandrafau.com](http://www.alexandrafau.com)

<sup>1</sup>These included his artist and architect friends, the Mondrian altar, the Hannah Hoch caves, Mies Van der Rohe, Arp, Richter and even Gropius.

<sup>2</sup>Tristan Garcia, *La vie intense, une obsession moderne*, p129.



## ALEX BALGIU

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Since 1985, Alex Balgiu has been a jack of all trades, especially in books. He is an active reader, a poet-printer, a bibliomaniac-radio speaker, and a teacher, notably at ENSAD - École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris, where he graduated with honors. His eclectic and skillful publishing practice disseminates words and their graphic landscapes. His profound affinity with reading is reflected in a variety of proposals, experiments, and objects that leave ample space for the successes of collective creation. Since 2016, Alex Balgiu has been at the forefront of the 'Designing Writing' research project, exploring graphic design and literature intimately through poetry and publication. A fan of collective creation, experimentation, and transmission, you'll find him sharing, playing, and disseminating in Lausanne (Écal), Paris (Doc & Pca), Kyoto (Villa Kujoyama), or at a bookstore near you. Alex Balgiu was born in 1985.



ALEX BALGIU - *Meanwhile, Alex Balgiu is in the library*

## MARIE BETTE

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Marie Bette has a somatic relationship with sculpture, focusing on evoking specific physical sensations in her pieces. Her practice is characterized by a predilection for the 'handmade', combining processes borrowed from art and craft without hierarchy. Her work has been exhibited at Halle Nord (June 2023) and Galerie Mezzanin in Geneva, the Centre d'art les Capucins in Embrun (FR), the Swiss Institute in Rome, CAC Passerelles in Brest (FR), Fieldwork Marfa (US), and Pauline Perplexe, an artist-run space in Arcueil (FR), with which she regularly collaborates. Marie Bette was born in 1988.



MARIE BETTE - *Les* (2023) 260 x 210 x 90 cm  
Sheep's wool insulation plated with alpaca wool, anti-yellowing shampoo, acid dye, steel, tin, inner tube, nails  
Marie Bette  
© photo credit Thomas Maisonnasse



## CHARLOTTE CHARBONNEL

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Charlotte Charbonnel lives and works in Paris. After a three-month residency in India at the Sanskriti Kendra Foundation in 2003, she graduated from ESBAT in 2004 and ENSAD in 2008. Named «Woman to Watch» in 2018 by the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, she has exhibited in various institutions, including the contemporary art center La Maréchalerie in Versailles, the Verrière Hermès in Brussels, the Musée Réattu in Arles, the Domaine de Chamarande in Essonne, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the MAMAC in Nice, the MAC VAL in Vitry-sur-Seine, the Abbaye de Maubuisson in Saint Ouen l'Aumône, the Creux de l'enfer in Thiers, and recently the Kunstmuseum in Bonn, Germany. Several exhibition catalogs have been published, as well as a monograph on her work, A07-A17, published by Presses du réel. Charlotte Charbonnel is an artist interested in the energy contained in matter, and her work stems from empirical research. She explores and transmits the acoustic vibrations of the places where she exhibits, probing our environment to bring out its natural forces and allowing us to feel its flows. Her multidisciplinary practice is linked to space and draws on sciences, collaborations, and investigations in different fields and disciplines.

Charlotte Charbonnel is represented by galerie backslash, Paris. [www.backslashgallery.com](http://www.backslashgallery.com)

Charlotte Charbonnel was born in 1980.



CHARLOTTE CHARBONNEL - *Aura Loci*, activation #1, 2022, 43°17'57"N 2°15'41"W, zumaia, Espagne. production co-op  
© Charlotte Charbonnel

## VINCENT GANIVET

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Vincent Ganivet describes his work as «do-it-yourself». Like a giant Lego game, Vincent Ganivet assembles and superimposes breeze blocks, bricks, and other unwieldy objects, taking a virtuoso approach to the codes of the construction industry. The forty-year-old has worked on building sites for a long time, which has left him with an obsession for heavy, raw materials. With this cumbersome raw material, Vincent Ganivet builds arches, curves, and domes that evoke, at times, the skeletons of Romanesque cathedrals. He is fond of quoting Antoni Gaudi: the artist borrows the Catalan architect's «chain technique», or how to make a concrete arch stand upright without collapsing. «More than sculptures, my productions unfold first and foremost to my own surprise,» he continues. The viewer, too, will easily be surprised by the astonishing lightness that emanates from his works: monumental, his work is never without grace.

Vincent Ganivet was born in 1976.



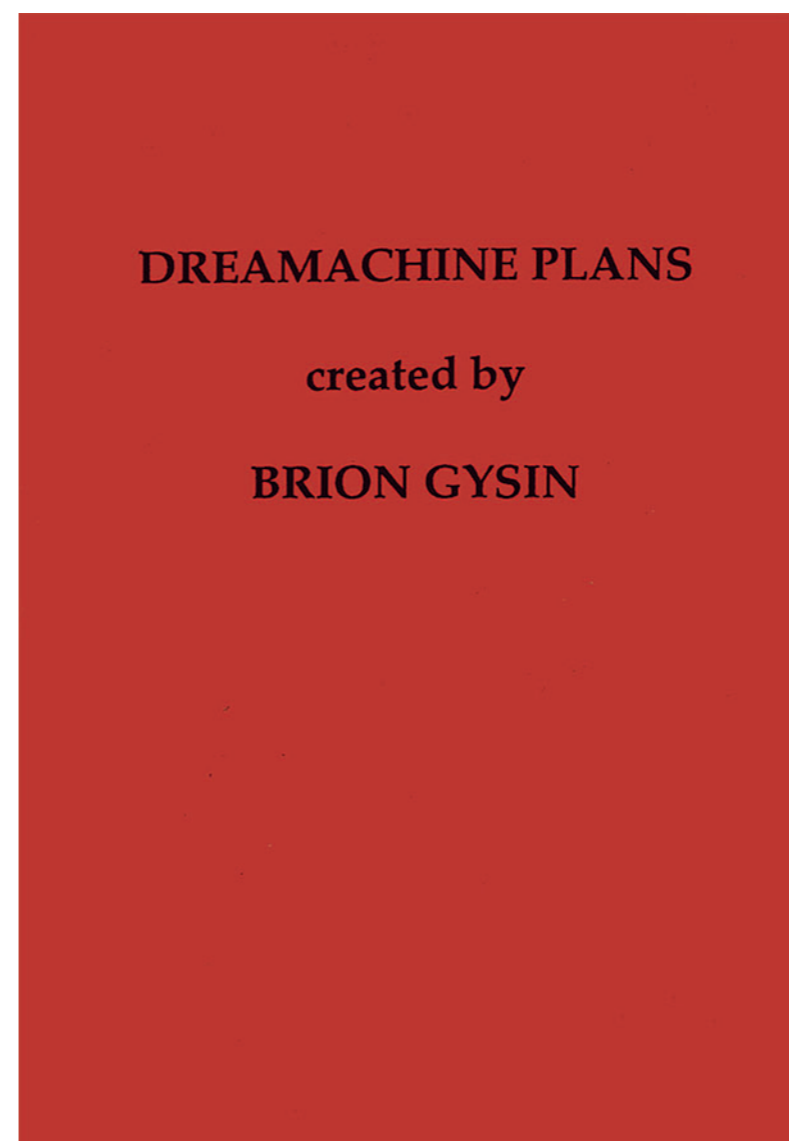
VINCENT GANIVET - *Martyr of Hermes*. Printed with a digital spoon. 2019  
© Vincent Ganivet



## BRION GYSIN

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The exhibition revisits the Dream Machine by Brion Gysin (1916-1986), the first work to invite us to close our eyes rather than open them. The artist refers to Saint Paul on the Road to Damascus, a tree-lined road where he is said to have undergone an alpha wave experiment on his brain. The story goes that when he and William Burroughs talked about it, they laughed a lot about the parallels they could draw. This psychedelic experience took place at the same time as the creation by scientists of machines «with memory», or how to use electronic means to draw a picture of brain activity. «At the time, it was possible to remove the support and the material from the works, but not the light,» remembers Brion Gysin.



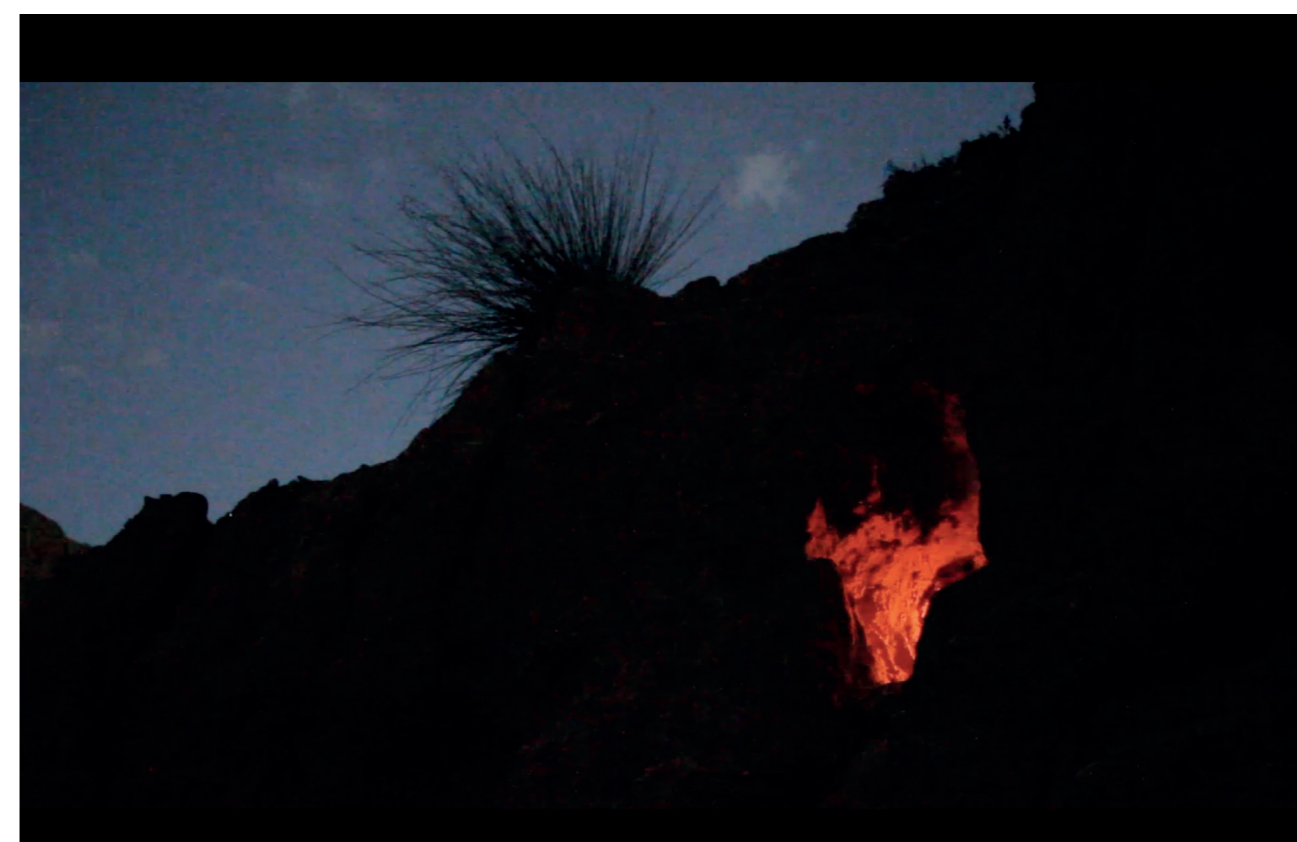
BRIAN GYSIN - *Dreamachine. Plans* © Temple Press Limited. 1992

## BALTHAZAR HEISCH

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Balthazar Heisch graduated from the «art espace» course at the École des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 2019 and is continuing his analogical research between human bodies of flesh and thought, architectural and landscape bodies, and symbolic and performative bodies in site-specific works. His studio is usually aquatic: torrents, springs, tellurian basins, underground galleries, rocky faults, rewilded buildings, and corporeal: respiratory tracts, blood, vocal cords, dermis. The works that emerge are of the order of action, performance, and video.

Balthazar Heisch was born in 1991.



BALTHAZAR HEISCH - *Tippers*. Photogram. 2018. Film video 1:44  
© Balthazar Heisch

## LAURENT LE DEUNFF

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Laurent Le Deunff's sculptures deceive the eye with the discrepancy between the materials and the object represented, with a pronounced taste for popular techniques derived from arts & crafts and decorative devices. The modesty of papier-mâché and fingernails coexists with the nobility of bronze and deer antlers, the rarity of dinosaur coprolites with the prosaic nature of cement rockwork. Le Deunff's meticulousness and sense of observation are also evident in his series of drawings - animal coitus, footprints of imaginary monsters, or artists' cats - in which he explores animality in a narrative open to the imagination. Dolphins, slugs, moles, seahorses, or bears, his bestiary brings together a number of creatures, with no hierarchy of kingdoms. Humans are not excluded from the story, but a form of archetypal primitiveness is reactivated: prehistoric phalluses, totems, and gris-gris take civilization back to its most beautiful origins.

Laurent Le Deunff is represented by Galerie Semiose, Paris. <https://semiose.com>

Laurent Le Deunff was born in 1977.



LAURENT LE DEUNFF - *Woodland Shark I*. 2015. Pigment print on Hahnemühle paper  
Image : 110 x 169 cm  
Courtesy Semiose, Paris



## AMÉLIE LUCAS-GARY

Amélie Lucas-Gary is the author of three novels: *Grotte*, *Vierge*, and *Hic*, all dealing with the question of creation: the history of art in *Grotte*, her own genesis in *Vierge*, and that of the Universe in the latest, *Hic*, published by Seuil in 2020. She is often invited to write short fiction for catalogues, exhibitions, and performances. During her residency at the Les Tanneries art centre in Amilly, she wrote 'Qu'avez-vous vu ?' (Ed. Vanloo, 2023), a collection of answers to a question asked a hundred times: «What extraordinary things have you seen in your life?» In 2023, she devised *Proue*, a soap opera that accompanied the year-long series of exhibitions at the Verrière - Fondation Hermès in Brussels. She regularly writes for artists such as Marie Quéau, Maude Maris, Flora Moscovici, and recently Daniel Mato, Chloé Quenum, and Simon Feydieu. Last November, she published *Féticheuses* (Sun/Sun ed.), a novel based on an autochrome from the Albert-Khan collection.

Amélie Lucas-Gary was born in 1982.



AMÉLIE LUCAS-GARY - *Grotte*. Editions Vanloo, Aix-en-Provence, 2020.  
Cover - graphics  
© Maxime Sudol. (first edition, Christophe Lucquin Éditeur, 2014)

## BEN ORKIN

Ben Orkin is a sculptor from South Africa. His ceramic vessels reflect a queer intimacy, oscillating between moments of nourishment and dependence, validation and resistance, love, and separation. Their textured finish testifies to the care taken by the maker with the hand, giving the sculptures a sense of the tactile and, at times, the erotic.

Orkin shares his perception of these objects as more dead than alive: «I think of ceramics as I think of bones. Bones form the basis of our bodies. We stand on them. But bones are a fluid. When that foundation breaks, it regenerates. Clay is fluid. It can be manipulated, and it can be built. The fluid in clay is lost after firing. It turns to stone. When we die, our flesh disintegrates, but our bones remain. They dry up and become as hard as stone. I like to think of how ancient Egyptian or Greek tombs are found. We often see someone's remains, in the form of their bones, and a clay vessel nearby. Both have survived for centuries and tell so many stories about the civilizations to which they belonged.»

Ben Orkin is represented by WHATIFTHEWORLD Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa. [www.whatiftheworld.com](http://www.whatiftheworld.com)

Ben Orkin was born in 1998.



BEN ORKIN - *How to Have Sex in an Epidemic: Second Approach*. 2022



## DANIEL PESCIO

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Daniel Pescio is a freelance perfumer and olfactory artist who divides his time between creating perfumes and raising awareness of odors among a wide range of audiences. Through workshops and training courses, he uses the different components of this invisible olfactory material to create sensory experiences around perfume, wine, and gastronomy. His expertise, recognized and appreciated, is in demand by major fashion, perfume, and wine houses. In 2016, his olfactory quest led him to Kōdō, a traditional Japanese art form, which he has since been learning about through several trips to Japan and practicing in France. Winner of the Villa Kujoyama in 2019 with his project based on Kōdō, Daniel Pescio has developed the «Parfum à Boire» and a perfume to be worn incorporating sake in its composition. In 2023, he will return to Japan on a post-residency to develop new projects on the scents of rice and the development of incense for the Osaka World Expo in 2025.

Daniel Pescio was born in 1970.



Portrait of Daniel Pescio. Studio  
© Villa Kujoyama

## GIANNI PETTENA

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Born in 1940 in Bolzano (Italy), Gianni Pettena is part of the original nucleus - along with Archizoom, Superstudio, and UFO - of Italian Radical Architecture, a movement that has had a considerable impact on the practice of architecture and design. His deep commitment to thinking about art, architecture, and design has led him to teach at various institutions, including the Architecture Association in London and the School of Architecture at California State University Program in Florence. He published his views in a manifesto entitled *L'Anarchitetto: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Architect* (1973, Guaraldi Rimini), which has influenced several generations of artists and architects. In it, the author rejects the boundaries between disciplines and defines himself as an «anarchitect», someone for whom talking about architecture is a way of designating a creative condition intended to make architecture but which results in an art of living. Among the tools and subjects present in his work are the use of language, the relationship with nature and context, and the junctions between reality and reproduction.

Gianni Pettena is represented by the Salle Principale gallery, Paris. [www.salleprincipale.com](http://www.salleprincipale.com)

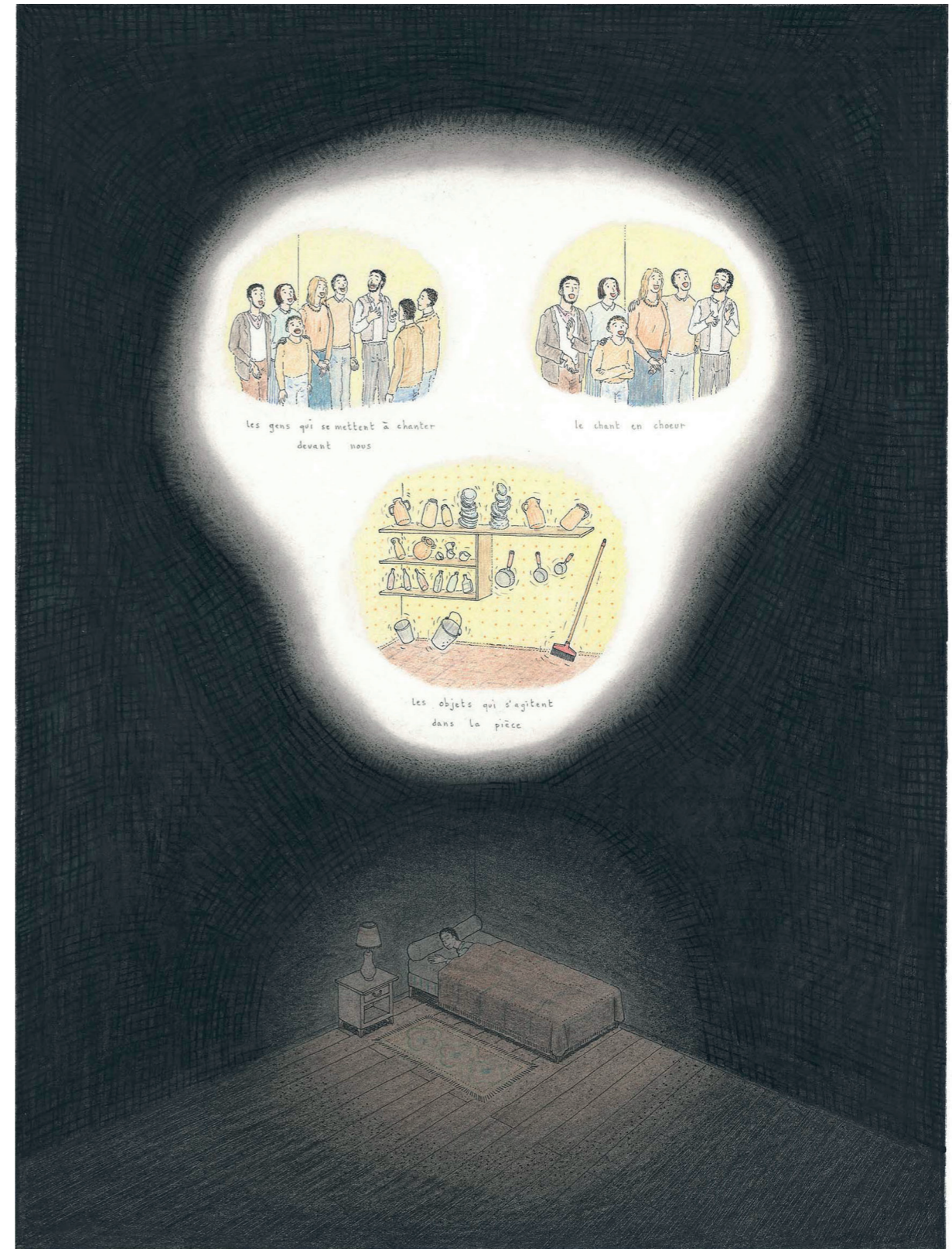


GIANNI PETTENA - *La mia casa all'Elba, Viticcio, Isola d'Elba*, 1978 - 2011 — courtesy of the artist and Salle Principale, Paris. Gianni Pettena is represented by Salle Principale Gallery, Paris.



## JEAN-JACQUES RULLIER

Drawing is Jean-Jacques Rullier's preferred mode of expression. With a line that is both meticulous and light, the artist shares his favorite themes and attempts to explain the world. Fascinated as much by the vertigo of the fragment as by the encyclopedic temptation, Jean-Jacques Rullier's work seeks to highlight forms and aspects of our daily lives that are often neglected or downplayed. Attracted by travel as a privileged space of experience, each of his stays near or far gives rise to series of photographs, drawings, and installations. His taste for frontier places naturally leads him to research where anthropology, scientific inquiry, cartography, the explorer's tale, and poetic reverie meet. Jean-Jacques Rullier is currently presenting an exhibition of his work at Château-Gontier in Mayenne. Jean-Jacques Rullier was born in 1962.



JEAN-JACQUES RULLIER - *The dream of dancing objects*. Drawing  
© Jean-Jacques Rullier



# LA MARÉCHALERIE

La Maréchalerie is a contemporary art center at ÉNSA Versailles, contributing to the experimental and forward-looking dimension of the higher education establishment and offering the public outside the school an opportunity to learn about the challenges of contemporary artistic creation through close contact with the work. Each year, three artists are successively invited to engage in a personal reflection on the territorial and spatial context of the contemporary art center. The research carried out by the artist gives rise to a solo exhibition produced in situ, a publication designed as an artist's document, and a program of educational and outreach activities - visits, workshops, and meetings - which encourage open debate between the artists, the school's staff, and visitors wishing to learn about the visual arts.

Dedicated activities encourage students at ÉNSA Versailles to gain a more sensitive experience of the visual arts through the programming of workshops led by the teaching teams and guest artists, and through exhibition mediation, visits, and workshops conducted by student instructors.

La Maréchalerie is an experimental laboratory and resource center for the French Ministry of Education, offering a program of activities that form part of the Petite Ecole d'Architecture project, designed as the body responsible for Artistic and Cultural Education (EAC) at ÉNSA Versailles. Eventually, it will roll out a range of activities designed to raise awareness of contemporary architectural and artistic practices among the youngest members of society.

## ARTISTS INVITED 2004 - 2024...

Chedly Atallah, Art Orienté Objet, Berdaguer & Péjus, Michel Blazy, Karine Bonneval, Julia Borderie & Eloïse Le Gallo, Simon Boudvin, Pascal Broccolichi, Yves Buraud, Humberto & Fernando Campana, Jennifer Caubet, Les Frères Chapuisat, Charlotte Charbonnel, Collectif CLARA, Caroline Corbasson, Didier Courbot, Nicolas Daubanes, Alain Declercq, Dector & Dupuy, Didier Fiuza Faustino, Vincent Ganivet, Jakob Gautel, Christian Gonzenbach, Claire-Jeanne Jézéquel, Marc Johnson, Jason Karaïndros, Tadashi Kawamata, Ali Kays & Maha Kays, Jan Kopp, Laurent Mareschal, Vincent Mauger, Bertrand Lamarche, Perrine Lievens, Anne de Nanteuil, Cheickh N Diaye, Yusuke Y. Offhause, Lucy & Jorge Orta, Laurent Pariente, Jérôme Poret, Till Roeskens, Ghassan Salhab & Mohamed Soueid, David Saltiel, Emmanuel Saulnier, Edouard Sautai, Olivier Sévère, Laurent Sfar, Aurélie Slonina, Jeanne Susplugas, Laurent Tixador, Felice Varini, Emmanuelle Villard, Khaled Yassine & Kinda Hassan...

In 2024, La Maréchalerie will be celebrating 20 years of artistic production and interdisciplinary teaching. 2004-2024 means 54 exhibitions, 110 exhibited artists, 55 editions produced. It also means artists working with ÉNSA students and teaching teams, and with schools in the Yvelines department and Versailles in particular, as well as events open to all: debates, lectures, performances, visits and creative workshops. To mark the anniversary of La Maréchalerie, the floor has been given to guest curators: Anne-Laure Chamboissier (January-March 2024) and Alexandra Fau (May-July 2024).

Independently of each other, they are putting together an original exhibition in a dialogue between the identity of the site and the specificity of their respective research: space, sound, and narratives for the former, with the invitation of artist Myriam Pruvot, who, with the «Chant éloigné» exhibition, is composing the score for a listening space; art, architecture, and design for the latter, with the group exhibition «La grotte de l'amitié,» which highlights the dynamic of the artists' production, rooted in both history and a strong contemporary edge. Each of the curators will share their research in a session as part of the Manèges Debates series, entitled «Transversality, interdisciplinary teaching, and artistic research.»



# EVENTS

## VERNISSAGE

16.05.2024 from 6 pm to 9 pm

Return shuttle bus

from Paris Concorde at 6 pm

Information and registration at

[lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr](mailto:lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr)

## EXHIBITION

17.05 to 12.07.2024

## DEBATE MANÈGE 3.3

« SPACE, MAGIC AND CREATION. »

Based on a proposal by Alexandra Fau

With Isabelle Ewig, Alex Balgiu and Bernard Blistène

Thursday 30 May 2024 at 6.30pm

At the ÉNSA Versailles Auditorium

## SATURDAY WORKSHOP TOURS 6-12 YEARS

For children aged 6 to 12

Saturdays 01.06 and 29.06 from 14:30 to 16:00

Free with registration [lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr](mailto:lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr)





# INFORMATION

## OPENING TIMES AND ACCESS TO THE EXHIBITION

Free admission

Tuesday to Friday, 2pm to 6pm

2pm to 7pm at weekends

Closed on Mondays and public holidays

Access : 5, avenue de Sceaux 78 000 Versailles

## INFORMATION

La Maréchalerie - contemporary art centre

ÉNSA Versailles

5 avenue de Sceaux 78 000 Versailles

Tel. +33(0)1 39 07 40 27

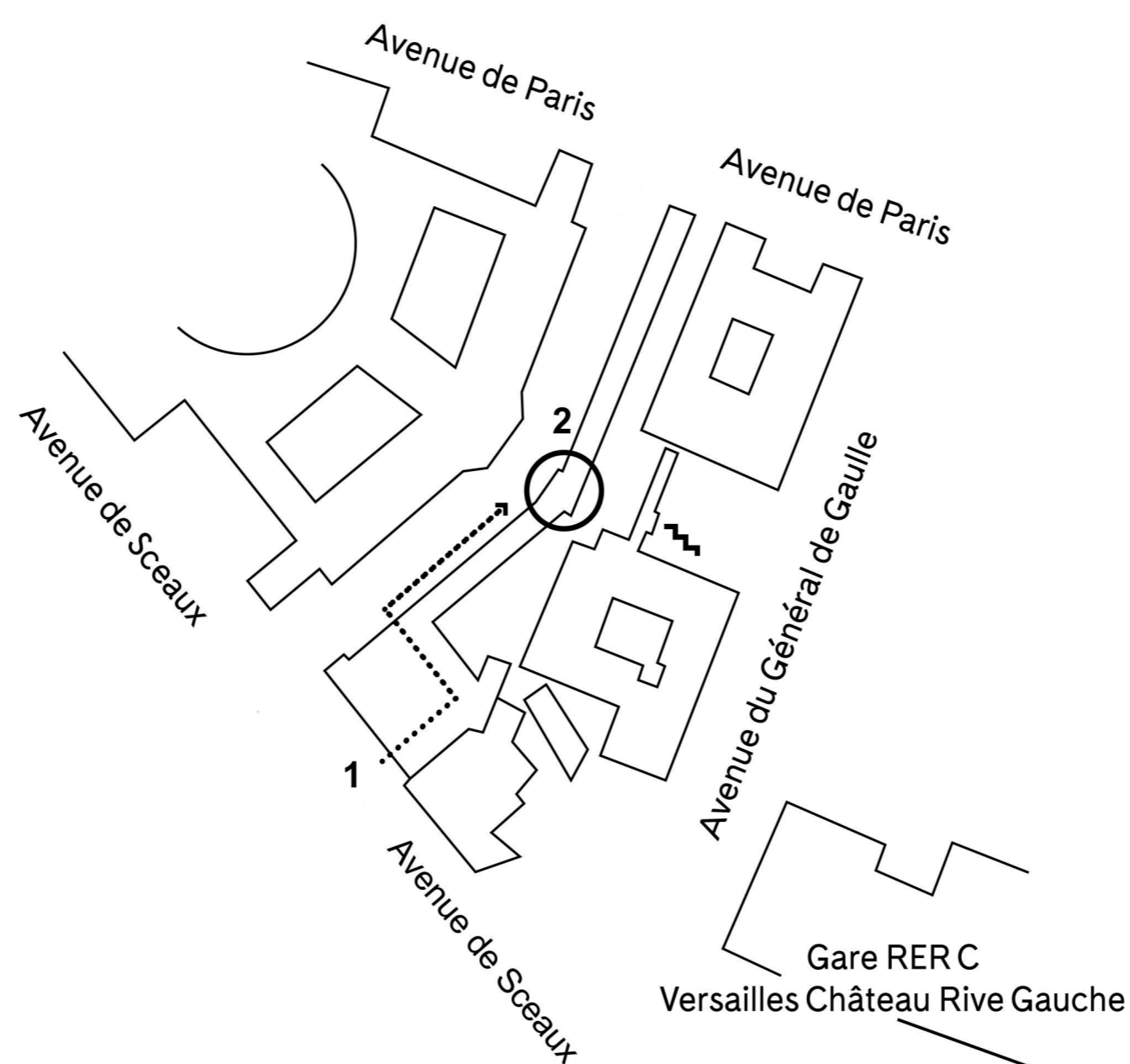
[lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr](mailto:lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr)

[www.versailles.archi.fr](http://www.versailles.archi.fr)

Individual visitors: Free admission

For information about tours and workshops for groups,

please contact Clara de Masfrand at : [lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr](mailto:lamarechalerie@versailles.archi.fr)



1. Entrée ÉNSA Versailles - 5 avenue de Sceaux
2. La Maréchalerie - centre d'art contemporain



La Maréchalerie  
centre d'art contemporain  
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