

MACS

Musée des Arts Contemporains
Grand-Hornu

Gaillard & Claude

A Certain Decade

27.02 > 18.09 2022

PRESS PACK



Gaillard & Claude, *Orchestral Issues (suite)*, 2015-2016. Photos: Kiriakos Doum



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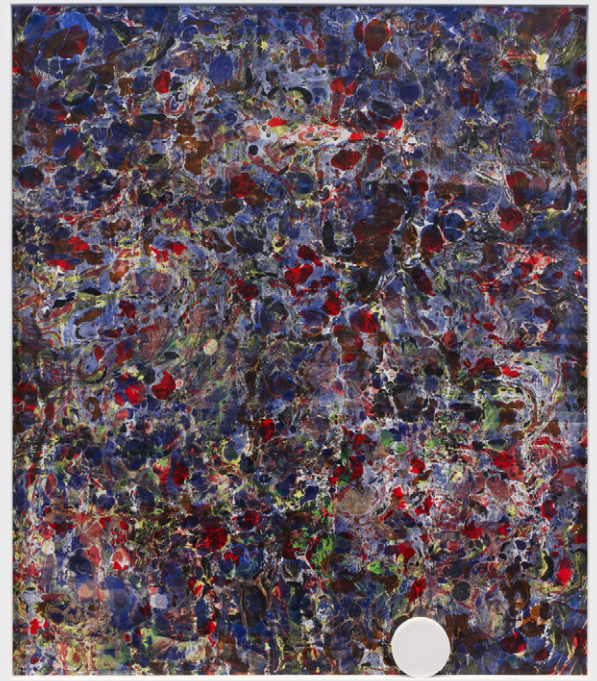
With the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Loterie Nationale

The Exhibition

As its title suggests, *A Certain Decade*, the first retrospective in Belgium of Gaillard & Claude since they moved to Brussels in 2008, looks back on the French artist duo's artistic production over the past ten years. The Museum has set out to shed light on a work that is still little known to the general public, despite having been supported in Belgium by independent venues (Établissement d'en face, Deborah Bowmann), exhibition curators (Jean-Paul Jacquet) and major artists (Michel François). As critical yet amused observers of the social imaginary of our time, since their partnership began in the early 2000s Gaillard & Claude have cultivated an art of absurd intrusion and poetic incidents, which questions the paradoxes of our postmodern society with a humor close to English nonsense and a taste for psychedelic excesses. From plaster sculpture to polyurethane bas-relief and marbled paper to printed textiles, via electronic music and the dramatisation of their own works, Gaillard & Claude's polymorphous approach achieves its coherence through the fact that its references all bathe in the same "cultural magma", with its prevailing spatial confusion and temporal discordance. By extending the 1960s mathematical Set Theory and the sociological and psychoanalytical research from French Theory into aesthetics, Gaillard & Claude also question the individual freedom within society, through perpetual round trips between the family dimension (individual and affective) and that of the group (collective and normative). Past masters in the subtle art of double meaning and inference, paradoxical affinities and unexpected convergences, scientific formulas and vernacular expressions, the duo thus produces complex works which invite the public to decipher them, like puzzles which appeal to intuition and poetic sensitivity.

In addition to the enigmatic sculpture *UU* (2013) and *Troubles for a French Horn and a Bongo* (2014), a limited series of unisex tracksuits produced in collaboration with stylist a.Knackfuss — made from a roll of fabric previously exhibited by Gaillard & Claude at Vitrine, Bermondsey Square, London — and worn during a performance by several personalities from the art world at the FIAC in Paris, the exhibition essentially focuses on three major bodies of work: *Le Groupe et La Famille* (2010), *Orchestral Issues* (2015-2017) and *Baloney!* (2020-2022).

In the series *Le Groupe et la Famille*, begun in 2010, Gaillard & Claude combine a sheet of marbled paper with an oversized paracetamol pill. The



Le Groupe et La Famille, 2010.
© Kristien Daem

minimalist sobriety of the white pills and their standardised appearance (reflecting their habitually industrial production) contrast with the baroque character of the marbled papers, each one a unique print results from chance and the moment. The marbling is achieved by printing coloured pigments floating on the surface of the water onto a sheet of paper. This ancestral technique (called ebru, “cloud” in Persia) is also frequently used in early learning and art therapy.

Made by the duo from paracetamol molecules, the pills are potentially consumable and could satisfy the needs of a group of 200 to 300 people. Their disproportionate size and round shape evoke the idea of community. The psychedelic connotation of marbling refers both to atmospheres and to mental states. On difficult mornings after the night before, everyone turns on the screen of their conscience and immerses themselves in the meanders of their mind. It is a “pyjama drug” to cure a collective malaise.

The musical instruments that make up Gaillard & Claude’s orchestra are hollow organs whose mouthpieces and holes allow us to imagine the breath that passes through them.

Formally strange, they are nevertheless inspired by traditional instruments that Gaillard & Claude observed at the MIM in Brussels. These include the slit drums and double flutes shaped like legs, which have existed for

several centuries and whose morphologies have been regularly revisited throughout history.

They were made of white plaster of Paris, a material generally associated with Fine Arts and classical sculpture. The duo reappropriates the academic method here with the intention of diverting it from its naturalist, anatomical standards.

Placed on the stands and tripods typically found in music studios and concert halls, this abstract ensemble gives the impression of forming an “orchestral body” embodying both the musicians and the instruments. Arranged in various ways according to the places where they are presented, the elements of the orchestra appear in various configurations: a quartet, quintet or sextet, for example. Thus questions of a social, collective or even emotional nature also implicitly arise within the orchestra, as within a “family”. Who will play with whom? What is each one’s status? What are their artistic ambitions, their political demands?

Talking Baloney is a series of bas-reliefs made from a knotted polyurethane sausage with a label attached at one end inscribed with the word “NO”. *Talking Baloney* is a slang expression derived from the name of a Bologna sausage commonly used in the press to refer to the contorted speech of politicians.

Orchestral Issues, 2015-2017.
© Kristien Daem



Talking Baloney could therefore be understood as a metaphor for oral and written language where the intertwined sausages refer to two of its aspects: on the one hand, the convoluted detours that speech sometimes takes, and on the other, the upstrokes of calligraphy. The flexible form of this “nonsense” thus contrasts with the rigid, categorical “NO”, written in capital letters and composed in the industrial standards of printed writing.

By choosing polyurethane, Gaillard & Claude are offering a stage to a material with a paradoxical destiny: popular in the 1970s, its use has now become “politically incorrect” while remaining omnipresent—albeit hidden—in our daily lives. “Urethane is not going to disappear right away,” the duo told Patrice Joly for the magazine *Zérodeux*. “It is omnipresent in our daily lives, but camouflaged. Its applications are very wide-ranging and it has a variety of changing names. The new paint on our bikes we use to fetch our organic boxes is in urethane, we sleep on memory foam, we sweat at the gym in synthetic tops and we calm our anxiety disorders with a pharmacopoeia derived from urethane... If we chose this industrial molecule to produce coloured bas-reliefs, it is for its qualities of softness and expansiveness which are difficult to control on our scale. And also because it is not politically correct nowadays to produce urethane objects without a virtuous purpose. Channeling this foam into a long, flexible tube is an extravagant exercise. The distant goal is to produce an analogy of writing. By giving volume by loops, knots and suspensions, we touch the curve of a consonant, a vowel or an ampersand.”¹

¹ Interview with Patrice Joly for the exhibition *Des Choses vraies qui font semblant d’être des faux-semblants*, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris, 2020 (Curated by Michel François).



Baloney!, 2020-2022.
© Kristien Daem

Works

Baloney!, flexible polyurethane foam, strap and aluminium frame, 167 × 121 × 40 cm, 2020

Baloney!, flexible polyurethane foam, strap and aluminium frame, 167 × 121 × 40 cm, 2020

Baloney!, flexible polyurethane foam, strap and aluminium frame, 167 × 121 × 40 cm, 2020

Le Groupe et la Famille D01, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2010

Le Groupe et la Famille D02, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2010

Le Groupe et la Famille D10-S04, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2012

Le Groupe et la Famille S01, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2010

Le Groupe et la Famille S14, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2011

Le Groupe et la Famille S18, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2012

Le Groupe et la Famille S28, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2012

Le Groupe et la Famille S29, original marbled paper and paracetamol pill 250 gr, 143 × 123 × 6 cm, 2012

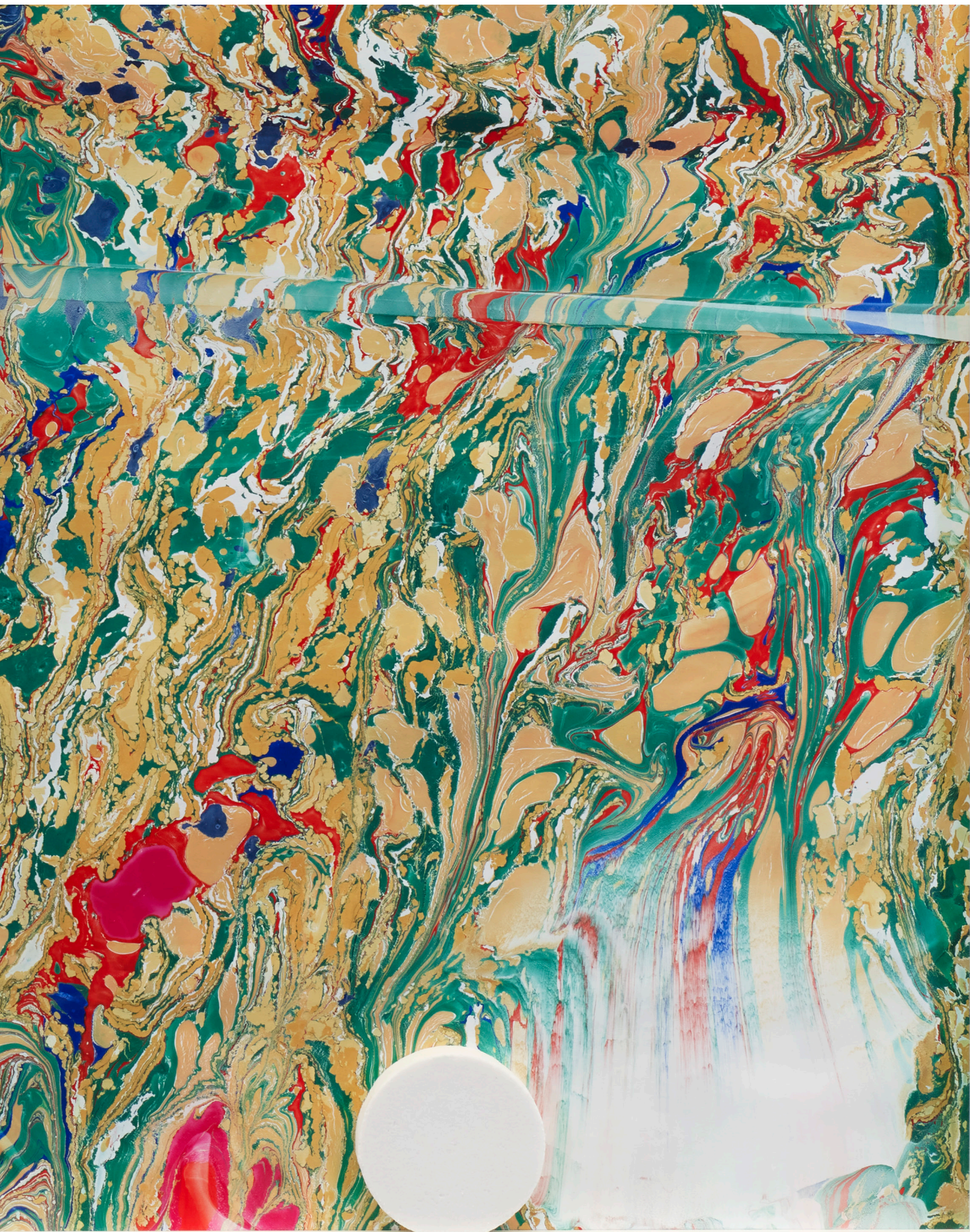
Orchestral Issues, plaster, conga and speaker stands, piano stools, variable compositions, variable dimensions, 2015-2016

Troubles for a French Horn and a Bongo, edition of overalls, 12 items made in printed fleece from the eponymous installation, 2014

UU, raincoat, plaster, 33.5 × 37 × 25 cm, 2013

Le Groupe et La Famille
(detail), 2010.
© Kristien Daem





The Catalogue

A CERTAIN DECADE

To accompany the exhibition *A Certain Decade*, the first retrospective in Belgium since the French artistic duo moved to Brussels in 2008, this publication brings together and discusses three bodies of work: *Le Groupe et La Famille* (2010), *Orchestral Issues* (2015-2017) and *Baloney!* (2020-2022).

Editor: MACS

Authors: Yann Chateigné and Denis Gielen

Languages: bilingual French-English

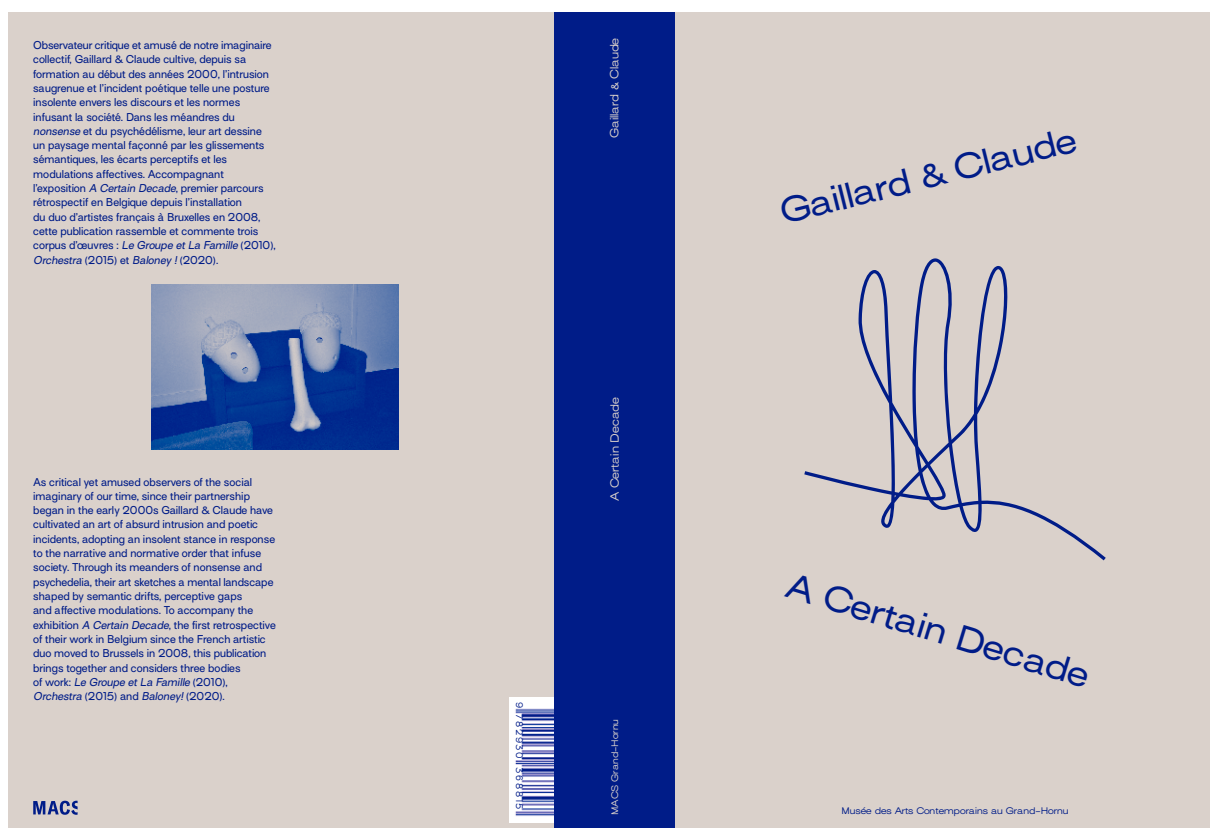
Pages: 112 pages

Illustrations / Documents: 60 colour illustrations

Format: 19 x 26.5 cm

ISBN: 9782930368825

Price: €18



Extract from the exhibition catalogue

"When art forges links with the psychedelic experience, it encounters the same temporal grip. It happens either downstream or upstream of time, but hardly ever in the sensorial stage. Some artistic production effectively emerges from an attempt to reproduce the dislocation of meaning and the lessons of experience: artworks are like the maps, stories and translations of what is inexpressible. Other works do not represent "paradise" as such, but generate it in the minds of the subjects themselves, using artistic means to incite altered states of consciousness.

This article postulates that a myriad of psychedelic connections can be found within the works of Gaillard & Claude. I would like it to be able to follow their lineaments, as one's gaze might scrutinise, at the risk of losing itself, the intertwining of a mescaline drawing by Henri Michaux. I have often wondered what twenty-first century psychedelic art would look like. G&C's art could provide an answer. Theirs is an art that does not fully correspond to the canons of psychedelic aesthetics, but which is akin to its images and pollutes its modes of representation, whilst at the same time holding them at a distance and distorting them. It is psychedelic art seen through a psychedelic filter. For the utopian breach created by the opening of minds in the 1960s has been infiltrated by certain tentacles of power, trade and control. The artists' perspective has therefore shifted elsewhere, as if withdrawn, to operate on and in the nervous system in another way, from another point in time and space."

Yann Chateigné

Agenda of Activities

Info and reservations

Online: www.mac-s.be/fr/reservations

By telephone: +32 (0)65 613 902

By mail: reservations@grand-hornu.be

DAILY ENCOUNTERS (IN FRENCH)

Free guided visits from Tuesday to Friday at 2pm, Sundays at 11am and 2pm

ENCOUNTERS

day of the exhibitions *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade*.

Free when purchasing an entry ticket

Interview Aline Bouvy / Denis Gielen

19th May

7pm: unaccompanied visit of the exhibition

8pm: encounter

5€

NAVETTES

MACS - Wiels / Wiels - MACS Shuttle

Sunday 22nd May

Discover the exhibitions of the MACS and the WIELS with two shuttles leaving from the MACS or the WIELS.

Meet the artists

In July and August Dates to be confirmed
2pm

Visit the exhibitions *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade* in the company of the artists.

Free on purchase of entry tickets

Visit the exhibitions *Kasper Bosmans. Husbandry* and *Huguette Caland. Tête-à-tête* at the Wiels and *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade* at the MACS.

Visit with Denis Gielen

18th September

2pm

Guided visit with Denis Gielen, director of the MACS, on the last

Programme for the MACS - Wiels shuttle

10.30am: guided visit of the exhibitions *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade*

Midday: free time for lunch

1.30pm: departure to the Wiels

2.30pm: guided visit of the exhibitions *Kasper Bosmans. Husbandry* and *Huguette Caland. Tête-à-tête*

5.30pm: return to the MACS

Possibility to bring a picnic lunch, eat at the cafeteria or the restaurant Rizom (reservation highly recommended: +32 (0)65 613 876 - info@rizom-restaurant.be) €20 (includes entry tickets, guided visits and transport)

Reservation obligatory

Hasselt Shuttle

26th June

To be confirmed

The MACS and the Museum of Fashion in Hasselt have joined forces to present their respective exhibitions.

Climb aboard the art shuttle for a day filled with discoveries and artistic encounters shared with families and friends!

10.30am: guided visits of the exhibitions *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade*

Midday: free time for lunch

1.30pm: departure for Hasselt

3.30pm: guided visit of the exhibition *DressUndress*

7pm: return to the MACS

€25

EVENTS

Launch of the catalogue

22nd April

7pm

Launch of the catalogue for the Aline Bouvy exhibition in the

presence of the artist and graphic designers, followed by an informal drink.

Free

Witches' Delight

Early May

Come and watch Aline Bouvy plant belladonna in the work *Enclosure*. For the occasion, the film *La Belladone de la tristesse* will be screened.

Free

Neighbours' Day

27th May

Rooftop Visit

To celebrate Neighbours' Day, the inhabitants of the miners' cottages are invited to discover the museum and their home in a new light, from the rooftops of Grand-Hornu. The evening will continue with a potluck dinner.

Free

21st July

2pm - 3pm - 4pm: guided visits of the exhibitions *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade*

From 2pm to 6pm: creative workshops related to the exhibitions.

Free day

Botanical aperitif

15th August

Discover the properties of plants

during a botanical workshop (followed by a tasting session).

€20

Heritage days

10th and 11th September

Accompanied by the origami expert Michael David, discover the practice of Orizome-Shi, a Japanese technique consisting of folding and dyeing paper.

Adultes and adolescents

Free

Reservation obligatory

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Preview

26th February - from 5pm to 8.30pm

Children's preview: 5pm
Guided visits for adults: 6pm and 7pm

- Free
- Reservations for the children's preview and guided visits by phone or mail
- Reservations to access the museum (unaccompanied visit) via: <https://bit.ly/3s7KWn3>
- Info and reservations : +32 (0)65 613 902 / reservations@grand-hornu.be

Ateliers Baz'Art

06.03, 03.04, 05.06, 04.09
From 2pm to 4.30pm

Discover the work of the artists Aline Bouvy and Gaillard & Claude

through practical workshops following a visit of the exhibition. Each workshop focuses on a specific technique: painting on silk, collage, moulding, paper marbling and lava lamps.

€5 / workshop

8 - 12 years

Family Thursdays

Every Thursday during the school holidays between March and May - 11am

Experiment with the marbled paper colour technique before a family visit to discover the exhibitions Aline Bouvy, Cruising Bye and Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade

Every Thursday during the school holidays between June and September - 11am

Wizard or witch, concoct potions using plants before a family visit to discover the exhibitions *Aline Bouvy. Cruising Bye* and *Gaillard & Claude. A Certain Decade*.

Free when purchasing entry tickets

Night at the Museum

13.05 and 16.09
9 - 12 years

As night falls, step through the museum's gates for an escape game and try to decipher the many riddles throughout the rooms. A healthy meal and a film will be waiting for the would-be investigators before leaving the museum to rest in peace.

€15 (meal included)

COURSES

Theatre initiation

From 4th to 8th April
9 - 12 years

Discover the theatre in the company of an actor and perform your work in the museum among the surprising works of Aline Bouvy and Gaillard & Claude.

From 9am to 4pm
€80 for the course (Including snacks.
Bring a midday meal)

Wizards and Witches

From 25th to 29th July
5 - 8 years

Come and learn about the art of plants and potions, experiment with ancient techniques to create incredible works and let yourself tell the story of real witches.

From 9 am to 4 pm
€80 for the course (Including snacks.
Bring a midday meal)

Sculpture and moulding

From 8th to 12th August
9 - 12 years

Inspired by the plaster sculptures in the exhibitions, this workshop offers the opportunity to experiment with several techniques using this material.

From 9 am to 4 pm
€80 for the course (including snacks.
Bring a pack lunch.)

Programming and AI

From 11th to 15th July
12 - 15 years

Discover coding and programming inspired by Aline Bouvy's remote-control cars which use artificial intelligence.

SCHOOLS

Workshop

The MACS is bringing together 2nd-year master's students 2 from the ArBA (sculpture option) and ARTS² (IDM option) for a workshop led in collaboration with Aline Bouvy. The result of this encounter will be presented at the MACS from 19th March to 17th April.

Free Activities

Free entry + guided visit
- Secondary school month:
from 19th April to 20th May 2022
- Nursery school month:
from 24th May to 24th June 2022

Future Exhibitions

Les Fabriques du cœur

Contes

23.10.22 > 26.02.23

Angel Vergara

Beginning in April 2023

Practical Information

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