

MACS

Musée des Arts Contemporains
Grand-Hornu

PRESS PACK

DANIEL TURNER

15.12.24 > 06.04.25

COMPRESSEUR

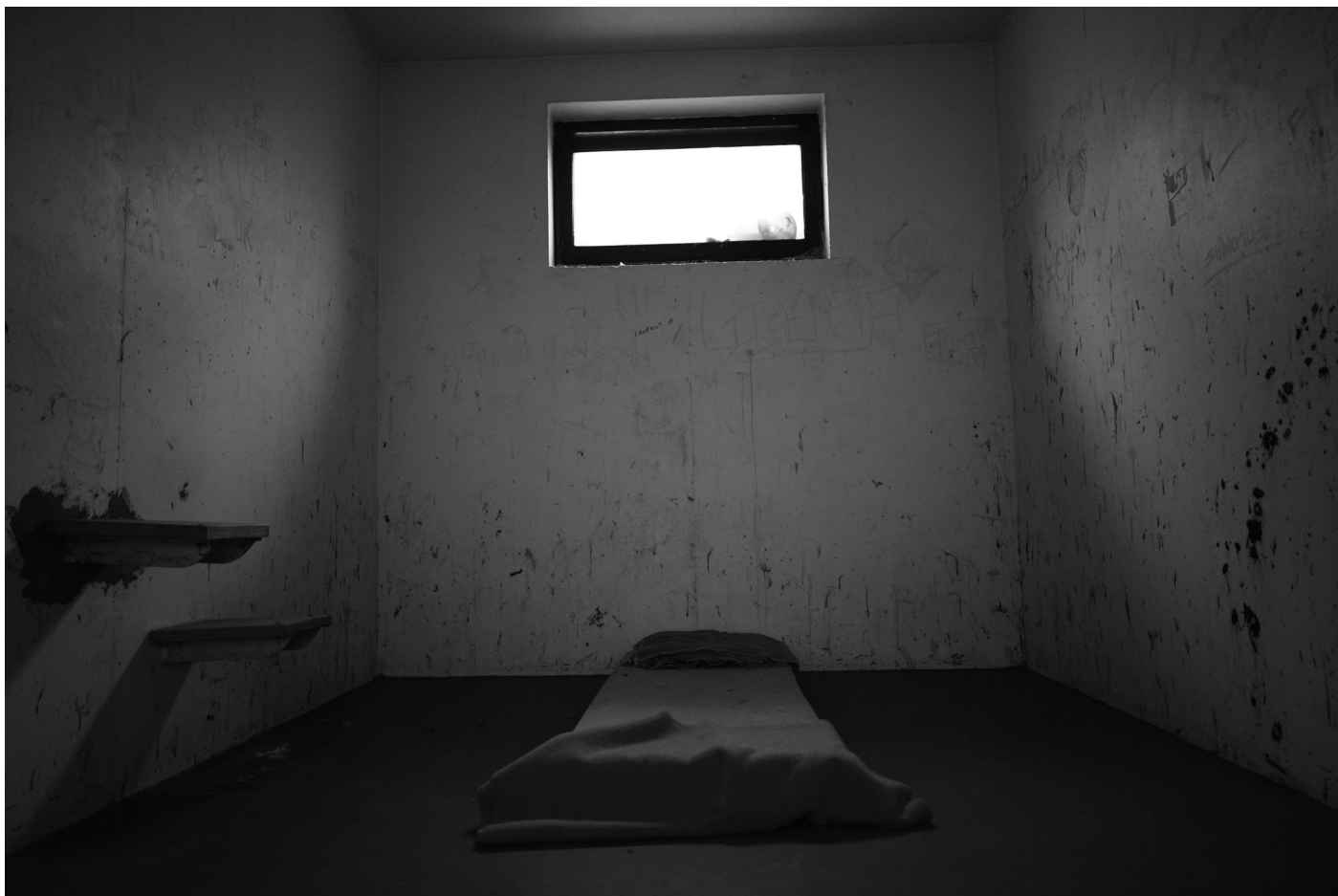


“The basis of my practice is archaeological. When I speak about my working process, I speak in terms of ‘mining’ because, in a sense, I’m working as an amateur miner: sourcing materials, sifting for materials, and extracting materials.”

Daniel Turner in conversation with Denis
Gielen, May 2024

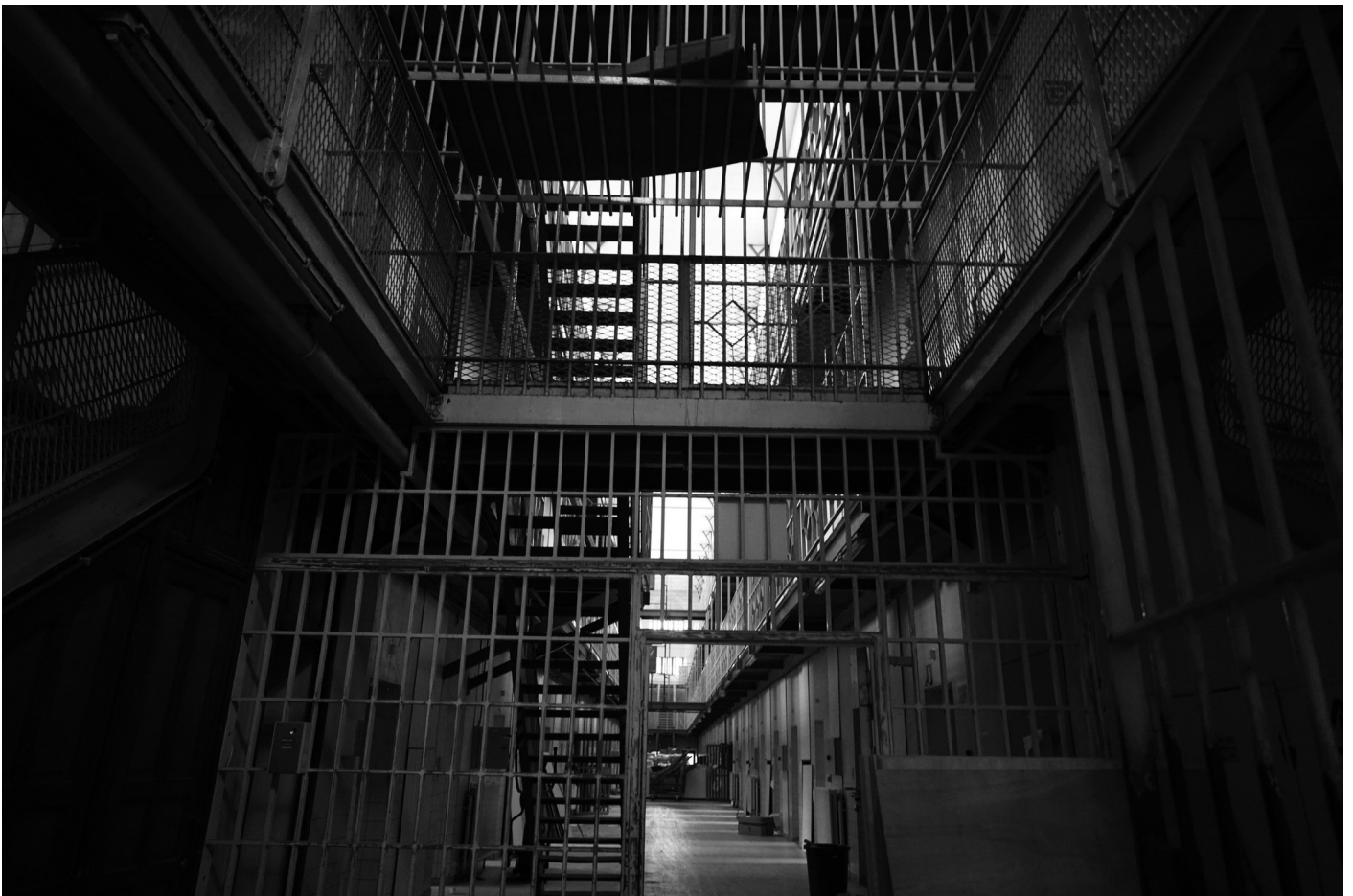
Introduction to the Exhibition

For more than ten years, American artist Daniel Turner has worked from disused sites, with their infrastructures still charged with the human presence of former occupants or users. In this context, a 'site' is the location of an industrial activity (factory, laboratory, etc.) or a so-called 'total' institution (psychiatric hospital, prison, etc.). Harsh and inhospitable, almost unbearable to inhabit, these sites nevertheless exert a strong attraction on the artist who turns to them to explore their aesthetic resources. In this way various objects, materials or equipment abandoned in the bowels of the place in question are removed, either to be exhibited as is, or to undergo reduction or transformation processes. Turner's predilection for metals, linked in part to his father's profession (a shipyard welder and scrap metal merchant), makes him not unlike the alchemist seeking to convert lead into gold, to sublimate waste and to 'make the invisible visible': the invisible being the soul of objects, the atmosphere of places, the spirit of materials. For his first museum exhibition in Belgium, Daniel Turner has turned to a highly charged site: the former Forest Prison (Prison de Forest - 1910-2022).



Compresseur, details, four channel HD digital video, sound, b/w, 36', loop, 2024. Photos: Daniel Turner

Compresseur, details, four channel HD digital video, sound, b/w, 36', loop, 2024. Photos: Daniel Turner



Forest Prison

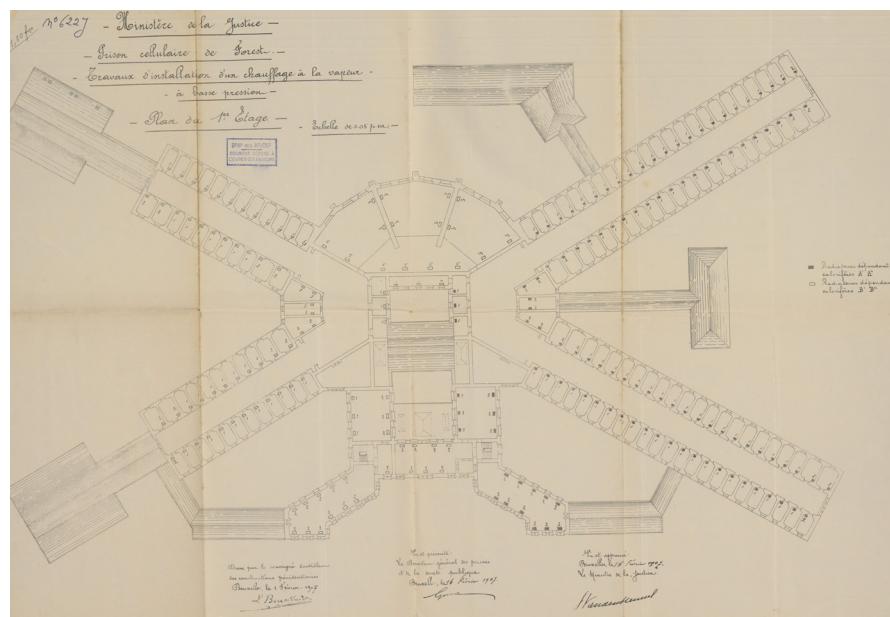
Located on Avenue de la Jonction opposite the Prison of Saint-Gilles, the Prison of Forest, now permanently closed, opened its doors in 1910. It was designed by Édouard Ducpétiaux – creator of the Belgian penitentiary system – on the cell-based model, inspired by the panopticon principle invented in 1791 by Jeremy Bentham. The cell-based model was, however, distinct from the panopticon in that its primary intention was to keep prisoners apart in their daily lives rather than holding them under constant observation.

The prison's architecture, typical for the penitentiary establishments of the 20th century, takes the shape of four cell wings fanning out star-wise from central surveillance offices. Originally, men and women were confined in separate wings. In 1921, a psychiatric annex was added to the building.

From the 1980s onwards, Forest Prison was confronted with serious overcrowding. Cells originally designed for two persons (9m²) now had to accommodate three inmates. Lack of space, absence of toilets, unsanitary conditions and dilapidated conditions were prisoners' daily lot. In 2012, for example, the prison housed 706 inmates in a total of 405 cells. In 2013, detention conditions were judged degrading for the first time by the CPT (European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). In November 2022, the last inmates from Forest Prison were transferred to the Haren "penitentiary village", which will eventually group all inmates from the three Brussels prisons of Saint-Gilles, Forest and Berkendael.

Today, many associations are fighting for the emergence of a new, more humane prison model, on the lines of certain experiments carried out in Germany and Finland.

Plan of the cell-based Prison of Forest, 1907 © Archives Générales du Royaume/Algemeen Rijksarchief





Production of (de Forest) Radiator bar 1 and 2, Fonderies de la Scarpe. Photo: Jeanne Mouffe

NEW
PRODUCTION

(de Forest) Radiator Bar

MACS' production

From an industrial boiler situated in the basement, the iron radiators distributed heat throughout the prison infrastructure: cells, offices, kitchens, workshops, visiting rooms, etc. As a circulation system, central heating is, for Daniel Turner, an essential element of the prison's functioning. In one of the four prison wings, some fifty radiators were collected, melted down and transformed into two heavy rectangular bars of a now minimalist coldness.



(de Forest) Radiator Bar 1 and 2, iron (Provenance : Prison de Forest), 17,78 x 365,76 x 10,16 cm, 2024. Photo: Philippe De Gobert

Interview with Daniel Turner by Denis Gielen

Extract from the exhibition catalogue

[...]

You work a bit like an archaeologist, don't you?

I mean the basis of my practice is archaeological. This idea of locating a site and then going into the site and mining the site. When I speak about that work in the process, I speak in terms of 'mining' because in a sense, I'm working as an amateur miner: locating materials, digging for materials, the extraction of materials. This idea of classification of materials and then to interwind those classifications into the title seems to make the more appropriate sense.

«Mining» probably does not evoke the same reality from the viewpoint of the archaeologist as it does from that of the miner, it seems to me. The one is looking a priori for objects, the other for materials. In your research, do you make this distinction between the artefact and the raw material that can then potentially be transformed into an object?

Both and it's both happening simultaneously. I'm looking for objects of interest visually but I'm also looking for specific alloys of metals that I can machine or I can melt, and I'm thinking of metals in terms how those metals may have been used historically. For instance, copper was used for its antiseptic properties, so it's used in hospitals so germs are not transmitted. Copper for example is an excellent conductor of heat.

When I'm working in the site, I'm more or less working the site as if I was in my studio. Of course, time is precious. I walk around with the people who run the site, control the site. It takes a little bit of expertise to do this because I'm photographing the site, I'm trying to hold some small conversations with the team. It's rare that they say: 'you have three days, go play around...' So, I'm asking, 'is this available, is that available?' what can be used. I'm also thinking about the context of the exhibition, I'm thinking about weight, I'm thinking about architecture of the museum in relation to the architecture of the prison. I'm thinking about weights, I'm thinking about what's possible to physically extract or to manipulate. So many things will happen at once.

It's a sort of 'materiology'.

Yes, in a Beuysian sense, you know.

And how do you choose the site from which you will draw your material?

When I mounted a show in Basel, it was clear to me that I should probably work with pharmaceutical labs or chemical companies because as that is the prevalent material being exported out of Basel. Those medicines make their way, or the production of materials make their way to your body, so there's a localized set, there's an economy, taking place in relationship to the context of the site, and those objects get dispersed universally, so there are global ramifications concerning Basel. Sometimes that causing effect is closer in proximity to the museums. That was the case with the Prison de Forest here in Belgium.

For your exhibition at Grand-Hornu, you used the recently disused site of Forest Prison in Brussels. This was a proposal the Museum made to you after searching for sites in the region, but without being sure that this infrastructure would suit you. So, I wonder today what made you decide to accept it, and whether the prison immediately interested you?

The prison was so rich visually and historically that it would have been a shame not to. When I discovered the first images, I immediately thought this was very interesting. These materials and how they were left in the site, the effect of the emotional charge which is inset into the material, the way the material is just lying about and positioned. That really spoke to me.

The fact that the prison had been recently decommissioned is also an important fact, it seems to me. When thinking about the proposal that the Museum might make to you, I obviously asked myself whether or not the Grand-Hornu, as an industrial archaeology site, could be an interesting venue. But this was purely theoretical: the fact that this former coal mine had ceased operating already in the mid-1950s made it an infrastructure you could not do much with. You work, as we have said, like an archaeologist, but on sites that are still 'warm', if you like...

Yes, there were certain sites that we were looking into where the material was too old and too abandoned. I like the material to be 'warm' as you said, that the material still feels 'alive', not completely buried.

In this sense, I read that you believe that the human presence in a place penetrates its materials over time. Is this a way for you to evoke the fact that we objectively leave traces there, or is it rather an imaginary vision, a kind of animism or fetishism? In other words, does this matter then enter into a so-called 'spiritual' relationship with existence?

I believe that if you are attuned, you can pick up some frequencies and I believe that actions in the past imbue materials and I'm certainly not the first person to believe in the invisible and in a sense, there is a long

tradition that is still very alive today in believing in the invisible spirit. I think it would only make sense that the conversations we've had or the actions that have taken place in a room survive in a certain way in the materials and that materials bear witness of those actions. That is very helpful in the selection process of the material because I can more or less feel when the materials have a presence, that if they could speak, they would have something to say.

[...]



NOUN 30:30, detail, 2022. Exhibition view *Three Sites*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2022. Photo: Daniel Turner/Kunsthalle Basel



NOUN 30:30, 2022. Exhibition view *Three Sites*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2022. Photo: Philipp Hänger/Kunsthalle Basel

Curriculum Vitae

Born: Portsmouth, VA, US, 1983

Education: BFA, The San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA, US, 2006

Lives and works in New York City and Columbia County, New York, US

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024

Hauser & Wirth, 'Daniel Turner', Los Angeles, CA, US

Musée des Arts Contemporains au Grand Hornu, 'Daniel Turner', Hornu, Belgium

2022

Kunsthalle Basel, 'Three Sites', curated by Elena Filipovic, Basel, Switzerland

2021

The Maria Leuff Foundation, 'Daniel Turner', Columbia County, NY, US

Galerie Allen, 'Daniel Turner', Paris, France

2019

Mast Books, 'Daniel Turner', New York, NY, US

2018

Le Confort Moderne, '(IPN)', curated by Sarina Basta, Poitiers, France

Galerie Allen, 'Daniel Turner', Paris, France

2017

Karma Amagansett, 'Three Movements (Bronze) no.3', Amagansett, NY, US

Karma Amagansett, 'Three Movements (Bronze) no.2', Amagansett, NY, US

2016

Karma Amagansett, 'Three Movements (Bronze) no.1', Amagansett, NY, US

Museum of America Books (MoAb), 'RH 21/2 RH 1', Brooklyn, NY, US

König Galerie, St. Agnes, 'Particle Processed Cafeteria', Berlin, Germany

Corbett vs. Dempsey, 'Daniel Turner', Chicago, IL, US

Franklin Parrasch Gallery, '110/120', New York, NY, US

Parrasch Heijnen Gallery, 'Daniel Turner', Los Angeles, CA, US

2015

König Galerie, St. Agnes, 'Daniel Turner', Berlin, Germany

New Positions: Art Cologne, 'Daniel Turner', Cologne, Germany

2014

The Chinati Foundation, 'Daniel Turner', Marfa, TX, US

Team Gallery, 'PM', New York, NY, US

And Now, 'Daniel Turner', Dallas, TX, US

Objectif Exhibitions, '2 220', Antwerp, Belgium

2013

Bischoff Projects, 'Daniel Turner', Frankfurt, Germany
Franklin Parrasch Gallery, 'Daniel Turner', New York, NY, US

2012

White Cube, 'Daniel Turner', London, UK
The Journal Gallery, 'Daniel Turner', Brooklyn, NY, US

2011

The Journal Gallery, 'Mariana', Brooklyn, NY, US
Pianissimo Gallery, 'Britannica', Milan, Italy

2010

Jericho Ditch, 'Daniel Turner', Isle of Wight, VA, US

2006

Gregory Lind Gallery, 'Daniel Turner', San Francisco, CA, US

2005

SoMa Projects, 'Daniel Turner', San Francisco, CA, US

2003

Rawls Museum of Art, 'Daniel Turner', Courtland, VA, US

2001

Old Dominion University Fine Arts Center, 'Daniel Turner', Norfolk, VA, US

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024

The Campus, '2024 Inaugural Exhibition', curated by Timo Kappeller in partnership with NXTHVN, Hudson, NY, US
Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, 'Stories From The Ground: 9th Biennial of Painting', curated by Martin Germann, Deurle, Belgium
Musée d'art Moderne de Paris, 'Beware*', curated by Ari Marcopoulos, Paris, France

2023

Mori Art Museum, 'Our Ecology: Towards a Planetary Living ', curated by Martin Germann, Tsubaki Reiko, Tokyo, Japan

2022

Palais de Tokyo, 'Humpty Dumpty', curated by Cyprien Galliard and Rebecca Lamarche-Vidal, Paris, France
Galerie Allen, 'Interstices: Turns 3', Paris, France

2021

Musée des Arts Contemporains Grand Hornu, 'Like the Wall Awaiting the Ivy', Hornu, Belgium

The Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection, 'Inaspettatamente', Brussels, Belgium
Franklin Parrasch Gallery, 'Moments Between Events : Anne Appleby, Vija Celmins, On Kawara, Daniel Turner', New York, NY, US
Yvon Lambert & Galerie Allen, 'Lost Weekend', Paris, France
The Bunker, 'All Roads Lead To More Roads', curated by Beth Dewoody and Franklin Parrasch, Palm Beach, FL, US

2020

Musée d'art Moderne de Paris, 'Recent Acquisitions', Paris, France

2019

The Moore Building, 'The Extreme Present', curated by Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian, Miami, FL, US
Musée des Arts Contemporains Grand Hornu, 'Les Abeilles de l'Invisible', Hornu, Belgium
FIAC Projects, Petit Palais, Paris, France
Art | 50 | Basel, 'Parcours', curated by Samuel Leuenberger, Basel, Switzerland
The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts / Rawls Museum, 'Ship of Fellows', Courtland, VA, US
PinchukArtCentre, 'Future Generation Art Prize', Kiev, Ukraine

2018

MOCT Center for Contemporary Art, 'Future Relics', Moscow, Russia
Parrasch Heijnen Gallery, 'Anne Truitt / Daniel Turner', Los Angeles, CA, US

2017

Eleven Madison Park, 'Eleven Madison Park Commission', New York, NY, US
The Bunker, 'Inaugural Exhibition', Palm Beach, FL, US

2016

Kunstmuseum Thun, 'Die Kräfte Hinter Den Formen', Thun, Switzerland
Moscow International Biennale 5, 'Becoming Each Other', Trehgornaya Manufatura, Moscow, Russia
Istituto Svizzero, 'Riveria:Etudes', Milan, Italy
Laura Bartlett Gallery, 'Under a Fallen Sky', London, UK
Kunstmuseum Krefeld, 'Die Kräfte Hinter Den Formen', Krefeld, Germany
Museen Haus Esters und Haus Lange, 'Die Kräfte Hinter Den Formen', Krefeld, Germany
Franklin Parrasch Gallery, 'Burning Small Fires', New York, NY, US

2015

Galerie im Taxispalais, 'Die Kräfte Hinter Den Formen', Innsbruck, Austria



From left to right: *(Holdenweid) Burnish 4*, *(Holdenweid) Burnish 2*, 2022. Exhibition view *Three Sites*, Kunsthalle Basel, 2022. Photo : Philipp Hänger / Kunsthalle Basel

OPENING
14.12.24

Activities

Families

Fridays 27 December and 3 January: story walks
Sundays 29 December and 5 January: origami workshop
Thursdays 27 February and 6 March: family Thursdays (guided tour and chalk painting workshop)

Young Audiences

Saturday 14 Décembre: preview for children
Sunday 2 February: Baz'art workshop - around brass and jewelry creation with Alice Abels
From 24 to 28 February: multidisciplinary workshop around the object and memory
Sunday 2 March: Baz'art workshop - candle molding with «Jolie Passion»

Teenagers/Adults

Sunday 12 January: candle making workshop with «Alchemy Collective»
Sunday 9 February: jewelry workshop with Alice Abels
Sunday 9 March: upcycling workshop with Virginie Ongenae



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Practical Information

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#macshornu

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