

MAC VAL

The MAC VAL celebrates its 10th anniversary

You will find the whole MAC VAL programme at www.macval.fr and Facebook

Place de la Libération — Vitry-sur-Seine (94)

T +33 (0)1 43 91 64 20
F +33 (0)1 79 86 16 57

contact@macval.fr

Tuesday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm

Ticket office closes 30 minutes before closing time

Closed on May 1st

Full fee

Reduced fee

Admission free

Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 12 am to 7 pm

Fixed visits on Wednesdays at 3 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays at 4 pm. Free with the ticket for admission to the museum

5€

2,50€
Groups of more than 10 people, teachers, senior citizens over 65

Under 26, students, jobseekers, RSA beneficiaries, members of the Maison des artistes, etc. (see the complete list on the website)

Admission free on the first Sunday of the month

Visitor's cloakroom free

Free audioguides available at the museum reception desk

Curated by:

Frank Lamy, assisted by Julien Blanpied and Ninon Duhamel

Chercher le garçon

A group exhibition of male artists

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Artists in the exhibition

Soufiane Ababri, Vito Acconci, Boris Achour, Bas Jan Ader, Stéphane Albert, Dove Allouche, Carlos Amorales, David Ancelin, Kader Attia, Fayçal Baghriche, Gilles Barbier, Taysir Batniji, Jérémie Bennequin, Patrick Mario Bernard, Tobias Bernstrup, Jérôme Boutterin, Genesis Breyer P-Orridge, Alain Buffard, Chris Burden, André Cadere, Maurizio Cattelan, Brian Dawn Chalkley, Nicolas Chardon, Nicolas Cilins, Claude Closky, Florian Cochet, Steven Cohen, John Coplans, Didier Courbot, Christophe Cuzin, Denis Dailleux, Sépand Danesh, Alain Declercq, Dector & Dupuy, Brice Dellsperger, Noël Dolla, Olivier Dollinger, Thomas Eller, Simon English, Simon Faithfull, Dan Finsel, Charles Fréger, Jean-Baptiste Ganne, Pippa Garner, Jakob Gautel, Douglas Gordon, Tomislav Gotovac, Rodney Graham, Ion Grigorescu, Joël Hubaut, Charlie Jeffery, Pierre Joseph, Michel Journiac, Dorian Jude, Jacques Julien, Jesper Just, Jason Karaïndros, Meiro Koizumi, Jiri Kovanda, Antti Laitinen, Alvaro Laiz, Matthieu Laurette, Leigh Ledare, Claude Lévêque, Pascal Lièvre, Emilio López-Mencheró, MADEleine ERIC, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jean-Charles Massera, Florent Mattei, Théo Mercier, Pierre Molinier, Kent Monkman, Jacques Monory, Yasumasa Morimura, Laurent Moriceau, Ciprian Mureşan, Bruce Nauman, Krzysztof Niemczyk, Oriol Nogues, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Carlos Pazos, Bruno Pelassy et Natacha Lesueur, Régis Parray, Philippe Perrin, Grayson Perry, Pierre Petit, Laurent Prexl, Prinz Gholam, Florian Pugnaire et David Raffini, Philippe Ramette, Patrick Raynaud, Hubert Renard, Santiago Reyes, Bertrand Rigaux, Didier Rittener, Lucas Samaras, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Florian Sicard, Pierrick Sorin, David Teboul, Laurent Tixador et Abraham Poincheval, Gavin Turk, Frédéric Vaesen, Jean-Luc Verna, Yan Xing.

Publication

Chercher le garçon, 240 pages, 150 reproductions, bilingual French-English, 13×19,5cm, 25€. Essays by Raewyn Connell, Fabienne Dumont, Alexia Fabre, Éric Fassin, Jean-Yves Jouannais, Frank Lamy, Giovanna Zapperi.

PICTO

VAL de
MARNE
Conseil général

Friday 10 April	Boys don't cry ^{Free}
	SOS, an action by Oriol Nogues
10.30 am — 6 pm	Case study With the participation of: Soufiane Ababri, Anaïs Bohuon, Marc Donnadieu, Thomas Eller, Stéphane Léger, Édouard Louis, Caroline Mécary, Sébastien Rémy
	Screening of <i>Gineva</i> , a film by Nicolas Cilins, followed by a discussion with the artist
Saturday 11 April	Boys don't cry ^{Free}
	SOS, an action by Oriol Nogues
12 am — 7 pm	<i>Questions hommes / femmes ou vice-versa</i> , a proposition by Esther Ferrer and Frank Lamy
3 pm	Screening of <i>Bania</i> , a film by David Teboul, followed by a discussion with the artist
4.30 pm	A critical visit to the exhibition "Chercher le garçon" by Fabienne Dumont, author of the catalogue, and Frank Lamy
5.30 pm	<i>THE White Male Complex</i> , a performance by Thomas Eller
Sunday 12 April	Boys don't cry ^{Free}
	SOS, an action by Oriol Nogues
12 am — 7 pm	<i>Questions hommes / femmes ou vice-versa</i> , a proposition by Esther Ferrer and Frank Lamy, followeb by a exchange at 5.30 pm

3 pm	Screening of <i>The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye</i> , a film by Marie Losier, followed by a discussion with the film-maker
4.30 pm	<i>Paroles Paroles (3 marches avec commentaires improvisés)</i> , a visit invented by Dector & Dupuy
	Information and reservations: reservation@macval.fr or 01 43 91 64 23
Saturday 16 May	European Museum Night ^{Free}
	SOS, an action by Oriol Nogues
	Activation of Pierre Joseph's figures, <i>GI (Vietnam)</i> and <i>Marine (Afghanistan)</i>
	<i>Plante verte, plastique, poils</i> , a performance by Florian Sicard
	<i>Paroles Paroles (3 marches avec commentaires improvisés)</i> , a visit invented by Dector & Dupuy
6 pm	<i>Paroles Paroles (3 marches avec commentaires improvisés)</i> , a visit invented by Dector & Dupuy
	Information and reservations: reservation@macval.fr or 01 43 91 64 23
7 pm	<i>Found and lost</i> , a performance by Laurent Moriceau, in partnership with UFA François Rabelais, Vitry-sur-Seine
9.30 pm	An I Apologize concert, a group created by Jean-Luc Verna
Sunday 7 June	Un dur, un vrai, un tatoué ^{Free}
	SOS, an action by Oriol Nogues
	Activation of Pierre Joseph's figures, <i>GI (Vietnam)</i> and <i>Marine (Afghanistan)</i>
3 pm	Screening of <i>Casse-Pipe</i> , a film by Florian Pugnaire et David Raffini
4.30 pm	<i>Paroles Paroles (3 marches avec commentaires improvisés)</i> , a visit invented by Dector & Dupuy
	Information and reservations: reservation@macval.fr or 01 43 91 64 23

4.30 pm	A visit improvised by Charlie Jeffery
5 pm	<i>Marc Antoine est un homme viril</i> , a performance by Christophe Fiat with the participation of Nicolas Fenouillat, as part of the group POETRY
Sunday 5 July	Je ne suis pas un héros ^{Free}
	SOS, an action by Oriol Nogues
3 pm	<i>La Maman de Jordan (ou Questions à Silvio Akiyoshi, patron des créatures qui vivent dans les herbes, les fourrés, les bois, les cavernes ou les lacs et responsable du redoublement de Jordan)</i> , a performance by Jean-Charles Massera
4 pm	Discussion with Frank Lamy about a selection of videos made by Jean-Charles Massera
5 pm	A visit improvised by Charlie Jeffery
5 pm	<i>Paroles Paroles (3 marches avec commentaires improvisés)</i> , a visit invented by Dector & Dupuy
Young public	
28 to 30 April 2015 10 am — 4 pm	Contemporary art factory <i>Le garçon idéal?</i> , a workshop run by Stéphane Albert
	Children from eight up, 2€ per participant per session. Information and reservations: reservation@macval.fr or 01 43 91 64 23
Saturday 11 April 3 pm	Artist's book workshop, run by Charlie Jeffery
	Parents and children over 5, admission free. Information and reservations: cdm.macval@macval.fr or 01 43 91 14 64

Boys keep swinging

by Frank Lamy, head of temporary exhibitions at the MAC VAL

“Men love talking about women. At least then they don’t have to talk about themselves. How is it that in thirty years no man has produced the slightest innovative work on masculinity? They are so expert, so voluble when it comes to holding forth about women, so why this silence when it comes to themselves? We know that the more they speak the less they say — of essentials, of what they really think. . . .

What autonomy is so terrifying to men that they continue to remain silent, not inventing anything? Producing no new, critical or creative discourse about their own situation?

How long do we have to wait for male emancipation?

It’s up to them, to you, to take your independence.”

Virginie Despentes, *King Kong Theory*, London, Serpent’s Tail, 2009, pp.127–129.

The exhibition “Chercher le garçon” will bring together some hundred male artists who, in one way or another, destabilise the established models. Rejecting all forms of authority, questioning values traditionally associated with masculinity (efficiency, authority, heroism, conquest, strength, etc.), the works on show will all articulate strategies of resistance and redefinition of the masculine paradigm. This is *called into question* in all its plasticity.

Anthropology has taught us that the minimal and irreducible difference between male and female lies in the different roles played in the chain of procreation. The rest is social and cultural construction, grounded in and dependent on location, epoch and culture. Men and women are thus ideological constructs, “political fictions”, to paraphrase Beatriz Preciado and, in this regard, open to analysis.

Putting the emphasis on slowness, falling, failure, the invisible, playing on the codes of representation of the masculine ideal that, according to Georges L. Mosse, are “all pervasive in Western culture”,¹ throwing into

crisis the whole utopian and modernist history of art, thereby questioning the role and function of the artist, these works make art history *stammer* and tend to be positioned on the side of the minor (Gilles Deleuze) and with the molecular revolutions favoured by Félix Guattari. The exhibition will develop a historical approach oriented towards artists and works that can be apprehended in relation to the feminist theories and positions articulated since the 1960s. Seen as an effort of deconstruction of every kind of system of domination, feminism informs contemporary art in that it helps provide it with a necessary grounding in a space of reflection and analysis of reality.

In her recent introduction to Carla Lonzi’s book *Autoritratto* (1969), Giovanna Zapperi describes the contribution of feminist studies to art history as taking us from “the statement of an authoritarian me to the expression of a multiple and fragmented subject”. She argues that “Producing knowledge on the basis of subjective experience is one of the distinctive features of feminist practices,” these being grounded in “the narrative of the self, the primacy of

subjectivity, and the pleasure of conversation”. The works brought together here partake of this dynamic: artists express themselves in the first person singular, taking charge of the narrative of their own subjectivities. They play the game of me myself.

As Virginie Despentes writes, “Feminism is a revolution, not a rearranged marketing strategy . . . Feminism is a collective adventure, for women, men, and everyone else. A revolution, well under way. A worldview. A choice. It’s not a matter of contrasting women’s small advantages with men’s small assets, but of sending the whole lot flying.”²

If we consider feminism as a theoretical and practical enterprise of resisting EVERY form of domination; if we consider that patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity are ideological forms that must be combatted; if we esteem that patriarchy and capitalism are two faces of the same regime of power; if all this is the case, then it seems important and urgent to question the masculine. To deconstruct it. To analyse, interrogate, reformulate it, with lucidity and distance. Not to accept it as a “natural” given that is “essential”

and non-negotiable. To think of it as a political fiction. And therefore to open up a space where men can talk about themselves and their condition, in full consciousness. How do men think the masculine and think *about* the masculine?

Necessarily partial (in both senses) and subjective, this exhibition will not claim to settle the question, but, on the contrary, to stimulate what, we hope, will be a more productive debate. It aims to offer multiple, even contradictory voices. The works it features are critical, distanced, analytical. The subjects are images, representations, deconstructions, plasticities, bodies. Observing a similarity between the figure of the modern artist

(as genius, utopian, conquering, innovative, etc.) and that of the dominant male, it questions them both at the same time. Attacks are made on all figures and forms of authority, exploring the plasticity of bodies, the theatre of ideological forces that are present. An exhibition is a fragile edifice, built around intuitions, decisions, choices, chance events and omissions. An exhibition is always an incomplete exercise. There are the works that are exhibited, and there are the others. The ones that are not

available (for all kinds of reasons: their fragility, or because of technical, budgetary or spatial limitations, etc.). The ones you don’t know. The ones you have forgotten. The exhibition is always, already, one possible proposition among many.

The works are chosen on account of their inherent qualities, for sure, but they are also seen in relation to the artist’s overall corpus. The point is not so much to bring together art objects as to elicit experiences of art.

The exhibition explores its questions, indeed, on existential and metaphysical levels as well as on metaphorical, iconographic and symbolic levels.

The works can never be reduced to a single interpretation: they are always multiple. Because they come from a weave of connections, they cannot be assigned an unambiguous meaning. I would like to straighten a few loops, a few of the choices made from among the multiple strategies, tactics and techniques developed by contemporary artists.

Gender is a question of performativity. Of theatre and masks. It is a material in motion. The works

assembled here belong to the fields of action, performance and experience. The great question here is the image. Self-image. Working on the image, its making and materiality, has the effect of perturbing and even abolishing the purported frontiers between self and self-image, between surface and interiority.

For most of the artists assembled in this exhibition, the body is something that is represented and/or worked. It is image and raw material. The body is effectively perceived as a space both constituted and pulled in different directions by a certain number of forces and tensions. The body is a theatre where the players are political, technological, social and cultural agents. An interface. With artists, the body becomes a tool. Experimenting with the limits of their own bodies, they defy the supposed frontiers between art and life. They explore processes of visibility and their libidinal economy.

Here the body is constrained, impeded, formed, deformed, re-formed, deconstructed and reconstructed. There, it is fragmented. Elsewhere, hybridised. The body can also be the support and tool for reflection and analysis of a political, social, moral and ideological situation.

While disguise, in all its forms, can be a tool for combating ideological stereotypes of all kinds, the body is sometimes presented in its raw nudity, heightening its power of presence. In public space, nudity is a powerful gesture of resistance and affirmation. The body irrupts, becomes an event, in the literal sense, in the flow of the real.

Far from glorification, the bodies shown here may be ageing, deficient, ill, sapped by mortality and degeneration. The body, that is to say, in its fundamental corporeity. Such an approach is transgressive to say the least in our hygienist, youth-obsessed world of the early 21st century. It may also be deactivated, incapacitated and twisted, thereby questioning art’s ability to intervene in the real and attempt to reflect on social and economic imperatives of efficiency and productivity. Hence the recourse to the figures of the antihero, the tired, the deserter, to the dynamics of failure and doubt, to the idea of falling, of overturning (of bodies, values and situations).

Western art assigns women a passive position, between model and merchandise, object of the phallographic gaze. This *dispositif* or mechanics of the

gaze is sometimes turned back on itself here by, for example, delegating the construction of self-image to the other’s gaze. Man then leaves his position as subject and becomes the *object* of gazes.

To fight against the Moral Order, mischief and proliferating actions are multiplied. Burlesque, idiocy, bad taste, excess and sexuality are brought into play as disruptive forces.

In this history, the appearance of certain common iconographic tropes is not insignificant: trophy, firearm, fountain, bodybuilder, tank top, car, clothing. Fetishes are felled, toppling the assumed attributes, symbols and signs of masculine power, but also questioning zones of exclusion, competition and hierarchy, domination and affirmation of a certain idea of — male and other kinds of — power such as the army or sport.

Bodies are constantly mutating, orders endlessly being recombined. They can be diverse and hybrid. Clones and other avatars and heteronyms (disrupting, for one thing, the chain of traditional filiation) used by artists function as fictions of the self, thus playing on the multiplication of the self in a reflection on the plasticity of identity.

Stirring visual gender trouble, they undermine fixed identities, notably in works made *à deux*. Many artists share the aim of attacking and deconstructing authority figures, of attacking the heroic painting of the 20th-century avant-garde movements. They seek to pervert with humour the rigour of constructivist research by sapping the very foundations of abstraction. To beset the virile heroism of Abstract Expressionism. To attack the erectile aspect of sculpture. To undermine authority figures by reprising, quoting, diverting. By queering. To attack the modernist mythology. To expose all notions of authenticity. To adopt a position of self-declared non-inventiveness. They remake, reprise, repeat, loop.

Men are just as oppressed by patriarchy, even while being its main agents. The task for conscious male artists, therefore, is to fight from within and to bring down the order of things in a logic of sideways steps, of shifted perspectives. To place themselves within the history of art, that is, in a non-amnesic relation to the real and, in the same movement, to adopt junior, minor viewpoints, in order to pick apart (or) the dominant order. For that is what this is. An inner struggle.

1 — George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 3.

2 — Virginie Despentes, op. cit., pp. 130–131.