

vitamin C). It is valuable as a refreshing drink in case of fevers or to quench thirst. The juice can be used in diaphoretic and diuretic treatments.

Origin: Southeast Asia.

Silent history: the geographical origin of the lemon is thought to be near China and India, probably in Kashmir, about three thousand years ago. It has been produced in Asia for a very long time; the first traces of cultivation, in China, date back two thousand five hundred years.

Lemon Basil

Gossip: a symbol of mourning in Greece known as 'basilikon', it means beautiful or royal herb, a symbol of ideal femininity and motherhood. Sacred basil is considered in India as the holiest of all plants, the threshold between heaven and earth.

Magical use: in Nepal and India, basil is a sacred plant offered to Krishna, a god who saved the world. Planted around temples and placed in the hands of the deceased, it was supposed to protect them in their passage to the afterlife. In ancient times it was considered a royal plant.

In some parts of Africa, basil is used to ward off ill fortune.

In medieval Europe, basil was one of the plants used for witchcraft. Taken as a tea, it was said to help women during pregnancy and childbirth and to increase lactation.

Properties: digestive tonic, it treats bloating, indigestion and heartburn. Febrifuge, stimulant and antispasmodic.

Silent history: Basil is native

to South Asia and Central Africa. It was imported into Egypt at least 4,000 years ago. It was then imported to Rome and from there to all of southern Europe in the 2nd century. It is thought not to have reached England before the 14th century. It arrived in the Americas with the first emigrants. Basil is widespread throughout the world. However, it remains deeply associated with Asian and Mediterranean culture and gastronomy.

Lemongrass or India Verbena (Cymbopogon citratus)

Gossip: spiritual elevation, calm, purification.

Magical use: to gain an optimistic view of the future, burn lemongrass to banish anxiety and purify the mind.

Properties: known for its digestive and calming properties, it aids digestion, reduces intestinal problems and stomach cramps. Drink a cup after a meal to help you sleep. It has a hypoglycaemic effect. Keeps insects away. Its lemony fragrance is released by crumpling its leaves.

Origin: it is cultivated mainly in temperate Asia (China, Taiwan), North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco), Cyprus, West Africa (Ghana, Togo, Benin), Central Africa (Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon, Gabon), the Caribbean (Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands), Mexico, Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama), as well as Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina and Chile.

Silent history: originally from Indonesia, but introduced to Europe in the 4th century by the Romans.

Mango

Gossip: for Hindus, who consider it a good luck charm, it is a symbol of love and fortune associated with the goddess Lakshmi.

Magical use: for Buddhists, the fruit is a valued offering and planting a mango tree is an act of wisdom and faith, a sign of loyalty to Buddha. Prosperity and luck. Hanging mango leaves outside your door will bring prosperity and good luck. They also ward off the evil eye. Drying the leaves and burning them as incense will ward off bad luck and trouble.

Planting a mango tree in front of your front door brings happiness, if you water it regularly, with both hands. It is a way of respecting the plant and asking it for favour. Leaving a mango tree to rot can lead to financial problems.

Properties: vitamin C and lupeol, slows the growth of cancer cells, especially in prostate cancer. Mango contains fibre, including pectin. These substances help to reduce bad cholesterol and potassium. Its soluble fibres limit constipation. It also contains digestive enzymes that help digest the proteins consumed.

Origin: The mango is native to the forests of India, where mango trees still grow wild. In Meghalaya, traces of mango have been found in fossils dating back over 60 million years.

Silent history: the 15th and 16th centuries were a turning point in world gastronomy. The discovery

of the 'New World' opened up new horizons for fruit and vegetables in the 'Old World' (Europe and Asia) and transformed cuisines. It was during this period, known as the 'Columbian Exchange', that the potato, tomato and maize were introduced to India. But the exchange was two-way, as it was also during this period that the Portuguese brought the most popular Indian fruit, the mango, to Europe.

Succulent Gasterhaworthia

Gossip: some Haworthia feature among the traditional pharmacopoeias of South Africa, but their medicinal properties are not disclosed in order to protect indigenous rights to natural resources from laboratories.

Magical use: a symbol of luck and serenity, it will attach positive values to your communication.

Properties: secret.

Origins: South Africa (Cape Province in particular), Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Silent history: these plants were discovered by Henri Auguste Duval (1777-1814) in 1809. The name of the genus is inspired by the English botanist Adrian Hardy Haworth (1767-1833), a great collector of succulents. The genus *Haworthia* is related to the Aloes and the Gasterias.

Sweet Potato

Gossip: in the United States, the sweet potato has been chosen as the 'State Vegetable' of North Carolina, the largest sweet potato producing state in the US, and of Louisiana.

Properties: different parts of the plant have been used in traditional medicines. In Ghana, the Akan peoples used the leaves to treat diabetes. In Brazil, they were used to treat infectious or inflammatory mouth and throat diseases.

In Japan, in the Kagawa region, they were consumed to combat anaemia and high blood pressure. They contain vitamins B2, B6, A (beta carotene) and vitamin C.

Origin: accounts by early European explorers of America indicate that the sweet potato was consumed throughout tropical and subtropical America over a wider area than its original range.

Silent history: in 1492, when Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola, now Santo Domingo, he reported that the 'very gentle and fearful' inhabitants grew tuberous roots which they called *mames* (according to Las Casas). Spanish explorers brought them back to Spain.

Tea Plant or Camellia Sinsensis (Chinese camellia)

Gossip: fortune, courage.

Magical use: to ensure wealth, burn tea leaves. Tea has a natural place in mixtures and in sachets used when wishing for prosperity.

This herb is also used in talismans to bring courage, strength and fearlessness to those who wear them.

Many aphrodisiac drinks are made from green tea.

Properties: antioxidant, vitamin C. Treats fatigue, overweight and water retention

Origin: Asia and Africa

Silent history: 'Compagnie Coloniale' was the first colonial

company to import tea to France in 1948 from Sri Lanka, a Portuguese, Dutch and then British colony, and Hong Kong a British colony—which is why the Brits drink tea!

Turmeric

Magical use: in India, the root is considered a symbol of prosperity and seen as a physical and spiritual purifier. A mixture of the root and lime water is still used in rites in many temples. In Polynesia, turmeric is spread on the shoulders during ritual dances to ward off evil spirits.

Properties: numerous antioxidant benefits, anti-inflammatory, helps digestion and reflux, anti-cancer, fights acne and psoriasis and reduces cholesterol. It helps with osteoarthritis problems and is also beneficial for the memory.

Origin: turmeric is a plant native to South Asia.

Silent history: originating from India and South-East Asia, the use of turmeric dates back over four thousand years. In the PENTSAO of Sheng Nung, one of the oldest treatises on Chinese medicine (2600 BCE), it was already recognised as a remedy for joint pain. Used as a spice, food colouring and dye, it is also a cosmetic and medicine. The growing trade in this spice meant that it quickly found its way throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Near and Middle East, which is why it is used in both traditional Asian and Arabic medicine.

White Arum

Gossip: in the language of flowers, it is the symbol of the soul and the desire to be loved.

Magical use: in the past, its tuber was thought to be wrapped in an Apollo laurel leaf and to further legal undertakings.

Properties: healing plant and treats breast cancer, expectorant properties.

Origin: from Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia, with the greatest diversity of species found around the Mediterranean basin.

Silent history: the leaf was used, after maceration in brandy, to disinfect wounds and accelerate healing, a use still practised in Switzerland and Tuscany.

Gaëlle Choisne would like to thank Karbonw Eco-conception, the Christophe Crublet company and Galerie Air de Paris.

Looking further

Audio guide

A selection of works with commentaries by the artist, including recollections and secrets about how they were made.

Free of charge, available on request at the reception and downloadable from macval.fr

Regular tours

For adults and young people from 11 years old. Every Saturday and Sunday, 4pm.

For families and children upwards of 4 years old.

Every Sunday, 2.30 pm, Wednesdays during school holidays at 2.30 pm.

Visits are free with the admission ticket.

Information and reservation: reservation@macval.fr or 01 43 91 64 23

Resources centre

Librarians provide the works of reference to take your visit further.

Free access from Tuesday to Saturday from noon to 6 pm.

cdm.macval@macval.fr or 01 43 91 14 64

'Temple of Love – Atopos' is part of BIENALSUR (Argentina).



Temple of Love – Atopos

Invitation to Gaëlle Choisne

Love, a word that makes us blush. So we translate it into 'Wicked!' or into actions.

At the MAC VAL, in Vitry-sur-Seine, I invite all visitors to be careful with this word so delicate that we vulgarise it or do not speak it.

Here, it is yours and for you, for all of you, but especially for the minorities, for those left behind, for the abandoned, for the sidelined, for the originals. It accompanies your steps and everything you see from me is made with it. I am trying to tell you that you are unique, original and never interchangeable, you are singular creatures to be loved and I invite you to start with yourself. Take this chance to settle down, to feel through the breath of your lives, through the struggles but also through the laughter, through a sigh, a soothing. I offer you spaces in the museum, a lull in a benevolent place, to feel good, to do sport, to find yourself. The museum is indeed a place that is made for this, not only for connoisseurs or professionals, but for all those who want to experience, to feel.

Ode to love for all!

Gaëlle Choisne

English

The artist Gaëlle Choisine introduces *life* into the rooms of the museum; she welcomes the bodies of visitors as the very subject of the project and implements the principle of hospitality which is so precious to MAC VAL, in order to consider it and take care of it.

Invited to take over the museum, Gaëlle Choisine is proposing a total project that fits in with her exploration of Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. Entitled 'Temple of Love', over the last few years this project has been mapped in several different venues.

This new instantiation at MAC VAL, *Atopos*, is articulated in the heart of the space of the exhibition 'À mains nues', facing the other works. Using furniture and sculptural devices, it offers the public forms of reception, inviting them to participate and listen to artistic interventions programmed by the artist: philosopher, artist, musician, anthropologist, masseur... about twenty interventions will take place in these installations, which can be activated over the year.

Gaëlle Choisine accompanies the works in the collection with life, with what is the very essence of humanity: philosophy, thought, contact, the thirst to become, germination, life.

Here again his project is placed under the sign of love and relationships with others, an experience for living love as a response underscored by politics, sociality and solidarity. An ecosystem at the service of the living.

Alexia Fabre,
MAC VAL curator, January 2022

Pimp My Heart, 2021
'Workout', metal, stained wood, welds, silicone, flowers, oysters, jewellery, video, colour, sound, 1'11". Street gym workout structure to strengthen the heart and a tribute to bell hooks with a broadcast of her lecture in Harlem on 23 September 2000. bell hooks discusses her book 'All About Love: New Visions', published by William Morrow. In it she points out the sentimental aspects of romance, the sexual urges and details the problems that arise when the two are confused. She focuses on the lack of love in black society today. Translation Emmanuel Pierre and subtitles Martin Rouille, 'Lazlo'.

La larme arc-en-ciel, 2021
Wood, recycled cork, paint, inlaid objects. A stage, a podium and a seat at the same time, this hybrid sculpture is a point for withdrawal, for rest, for joy, for affirmation, for new points of view. A stage for being on show, a podium for winning all together, seat for taking a break and chatting. It is a giant tear, a collective tear of care.

La main flemme, 2021
Metal, acrylic resin (nature-friendly), printed fabric, recycled coating, recycled polyester foam, light bulb. A table for dozing, for putting your head down, for taking your time, a table for laziness. An ode to rest for all. Hand massage by massage therapist Elisabeth Potasso every first Saturday of the month from January to December 2022. Free with the museum ticket, free access.

In the main hall

Snails Party, 2021
'Workout' unit in metal, stained wood, welds, silicone Magnolia, flowers, oysters, video, colour, silent, 9'06". Street gymnastics training structure to strengthen the heart, a tribute to snails, to nature and to slowness. As if weightless, our body is guided by the dance of the snails which carry us along in their rhythm. Slowness is not a sign of stagnation, even if appearances are deceptive. A poetic message about persistence and temperance. Justice belongs to all humans and non-humans, slowly but surely.

On s'assoit sur le hasard, 2017-2018
Textile, foam. The motifs are the backs of playing cards found in the street by the artist. Possibility to sit down and take a break.

* Throughout the exhibition 'À mains nues', you will come across parts of the work *Hors-sol*, plants developing and growing in bottles. Here are their names and their legends.

Amaryllis

Gossip: he amaryllis symbolises pride and captivating beauty. The flower also conveys a sense of friendship and affection. In ancient times, the amaryllis symbolised the blood of Amaryllis, the enamoured nymph. To a Victorian gentleman, an amaryllis symbolised a beautiful, capable and confident woman. An amaryllis in

the shape of a star or trumpet also symbolises pride.

Magical use: when you plant an amaryllis bulb, say: 'At the beginning of this new year, I renew my commitment. May the coming months bring me abundance and health; and may everyone enjoy peace and wealth.'

Properties: essential oils for perfumes and aromatherapy products are made with the flowers. It is believed that their fragrance is both relaxing and invigorating.

Origin: native to tropical regions such as the West Indies, South Africa and the South Sea islands, the amaryllis is found everywhere except Antarctica. Growing from a bulb, each plant produces two to five flowers that remain open for about six weeks.

Silent history: the first to commercialise the amaryllis were the Dutch, who imported bulbs from Mexico and South America. They started to develop hybrids in the early 18th century. Since then, many countries have become producers of this plant. The double-flowered amaryllis, produced in Japan, is currently very successful.

Avocado Tree

Gossip: the Aztecs called it the testicle tree.

Magical use: the Aztecs made an elixir of long life by macerating the pulp with various herbs and roots. They also considered the fresh fruit to be an excellent sexual stimulant. Many recipes for ointments to delay old age are based on avocado flesh. Westerners who germinate an avocado stone at home by placing it on a decanter

think they are doing an amusing botanical experiment; in reality, they are unconsciously making a lucky charm that is extremely common in all tropical countries.

Properties: combats malnutrition due to its abundance of vitamins A, B, C, E and minerals. Easily taken by ulcer patients. Helps combat male impotence due to its richness in nutrients. Beneficial for menopausal women, against constipation, insomnia and nervousness.

Origin: the avocado pear is the fruit of the avocado tree (*Persea americana*).

Silent story: the avocado tree is a hermaphroditic species whose yellow-green flowers, gathered in terminal clusters, open in two stages. First, the pistil (female part) appears, then the flower closes during the night, opening the next day to let the stamens (male part) release their pollen.

The time lag in the maturity of the floral organs is a peculiarity. Known as dichogamy in scientific language, it makes self-fertilisation of the flower impossible. This is an excellent way for the plant to ensure genetic mixing, which is crucial for the survival of the species (it prevents degeneration).

Basil

Gossip: a sacred plant offered to Vishnu, the protector of the world, and to Krishna, a world-saving god. In ancient times, it was considered a royal plant.

Magical use: the herb is widely used for divination purposes, especially when one wishes to read the omens of an emotional situation. Two leaves are dropped

together on hot ashes, still strewn with glowing embers. If they both remain where they fell, ignite quickly and mix with the rest of the ashes, it is excellent: the person has every chance of success.

Properties: rich in antioxidants, vitamin K, antibacterial, digestive properties;

Origin: basil originates from South Asia or Central Africa. It was imported into Egypt at least four thousand years ago.

Silent history: the Egyptians discovered that basil was a bactericidal herb that could be used to preserve food – and the dead.

Chocolate Mint

Gossip: incantation for illness: 'Good morning Mister Mintstalk, in the morning I lament, I have a fever, you do not, and I bring you my meal: bread, salt, goat's milk, but take my fever'.

Magical use: heals soul ailments, strengthens courage, used in temples to perfume and make actions auspicious.

Properties: mint has many virtues, in infusion, it is tonic, aperitif, facilitates digestion, treats bronchial problems, calms nerves, cramps, migraines and insomnia.

Origin: chocolate mint is a variety of mint with a real chocolate taste. The mint originates from Europe and has spread all over the world. There are about 600 varieties of mint (many of them hybridised).

Silent history: In Greek mythology, Menthe (Ancient Greek Μένθη, Menthe) or Minthe (Μίνθη, Minthê) is a nymph who was transformed into a plant.

Christophine or Chayotte

Properties: Chayotte is rich in fibre (transit), antioxidants, vitamin C and zinc, and low in calories. The leaves and fruit have diuretic, cardiovascular and anti-inflammatory properties, and leaf decoctions can be used to prevent arteriosclerosis and hypertension, and to dissolve kidney stones. It has slimming and cell regenerating properties.

Origin: this species is native to Mexico (Oaxaca, Puebla, Veracruz) and Central America. Widely cultivated in tropical areas, particularly in South America, it is also widespread in the Mascarene Islands, especially Réunion.

Silent history: christophine is named after Christopher Columbus, the Italian explorer who decimated several native American populations, notably the Arawaks, during his colonial voyages at the end of the 15th century.

Hemp

Gossip: fostering love.

Magical use: In Sicily, people ensured the fidelity of their companion by making him or her wear a braided hemp cord.

Properties: it is rich in proteins, fibres, essential amino acids and has a perfect balance between Omega 3 and 6. Medicinal hemp has analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. It is used in cases of muscle contractions related to multiple sclerosis, chronic pain, lack of appetite and nausea induced by infectious diseases.

Origin: hemp was one of the first plants domesticated by man in the Neolithic period, probably in Asia.

Silent history: it has accompanied migrations and conquests and spread to all continents. Its fibres were being used to make clothes in China in 600 BCE and in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Hottentot Fig, Sour Fig, Ice Plant, Highway Ice Plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*)

Gossip: increases physical and emotional strength; increases stamina; aids in entrepreneurship and improves the work ethic.

Magical use: Metatron and Michael.

Properties: hottentot figs are thought to offer interesting prospects for anti-cancer and anti-bacterial molecules.

Origin: hottentot figs originate from South Africa (Cape Town region)

Silent history: introduced as early as 1680 in the botanical garden of Leyden (Holland) as exotic ornamental plants.

Jade Tree or Crassula Ovata

Gossip: luck, abundance.

Magical use: to be placed to the right of the house's main entrance, facing North. Absorbs the numerous electromagnetic waves in a house: telephones, television, microwave oven, etc.. To stimulate this prosperity, add a few coins to the earth and place it in a blue metal pot.

Properties: not edible, toxic for dogs and cats.

Origin: South Africa.

Silent history: Philip Miller was the first to describe this plant. A botanist of Scottish origin, he was born in 1691 and died on

18 December 1771 in Chelsea, Great Britain. He was the head gardener of the Chelsea Physic Garden until his death, and made it one of the main sites for the acclimatization of exotic plants from all over the world. Miller was a major horticultural pioneer, contributing through his practical works to the Western enthusiasm for botany.

Lemon

Gossip: symbol of perfect union and eternal love

Magical use: lemon tea will cleanse the toxicity within your energy body (or aura).

It is said that a slice of lemon placed under a visitor's chair will ensure their lasting friendship.

A lemon pie given to the spouse will help to reinforce fidelity.

If you give a gift of a lemon tree that has been grown from the seed of a lemon you have eaten, it will create a lasting friendship.

To undo a spell, lemon helps to break the negative links with your past.

Lemons are associated with the magic of the moon. Add lemon peel to love sachets and mixtures to boost your amorous energy. Soak the peel in water and use the mixture to clean and wash magical objects. Eliminates all negativity, especially for second-hand items.

Properties: limonoids help to clean and protect the lungs.

Lemons have antiseptic and antibacterial properties. Lemons are traditionally used to help the liver and kidneys. As an alkaline fruit, lemons can help calm digestive acid. Lemon juice is probably the most effective antiscorbutic (excellent source of

MAC

For details of the exhibitions and the programme: www.macval.fr

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Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays from 11 am to 6 pm.
Last tickets sold 30 minutes before closing time.
Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 15 August and 25 December.

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