

# le Crédac — *Press kit*

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## Jochen Lempert Winter garden

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»—> **Exhibition from 24 January to 29 March 2020** —  
Opening on Thursday 23 January from 5 to 9pm, in the  
presence of the artist <—<<

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### **Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac**

La Manufacture des Œillets  
1 place Pierre Gosnat, 94200 Ivry-sur-Seine  
+ 33 (0) 1 49 60 25 06 | [contact@credac.fr](mailto:contact@credac.fr)

**[www.credac.fr](http://www.credac.fr)**

Free admission  
Open from Wednesday to Friday from 2pm to 6pm,  
on weekends from 2pm to 7pm (except on public holidays)

**Contemporary art center of national interest**

Member of TRAM and d.c.a networks, Crédac receives support from  
the City of Ivry-sur-Seine, the Ministry of Culture - Direction Régionale des  
Affaires Culturelles d'Île-de-France, the Val-de-Marne Departmental Council  
and the Île-de-France Regional Council.

### **Press contact**

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Jochen Lempert, *Untitled (Morning Glory)*, 2019  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper, 113 x 96,2 cm, edition of 5.  
© Jochen Lempert / ADAGP, Paris 2020  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)

## Natural History

Jochen Lempert's solo show at Le Crédac is part of our drive to continue to closely work with invited artists. Indeed, the German artist (born in Moers in 1958, lives and works in Hamburg) was included in an earlier project, *The Registry of Promise* that Le Crédac mounted with the curator Chris Sharp in four art centers around Europe (2014–15)<sup>1</sup>. Lempert exhibited his work in the section called *The Promise of Melancholy and Ecology* that was on display at the Giuliani Foundation in Rome. That show questioned the trauma linked to traditional ways of understanding the idea of nature. Lempert has a degree in biology and worked as an ornithologist on research vessels stationed in the North Sea; he views his photographic subjects then from a scientific perspective that is tinged with both humor and a certain melancholy, although it is always free of morality.

Developed by the artist himself in a darkroom, Lempert's photos seem out of time. His art isn't limited to producing images, a significant part of it being articulated in the pages of books and the exhibition venue. Lempert turns an interested, sensitive eye on the interconnections of things, and it is in space that he generates analogies and correspondences. To these he lends a particular rhythm that drives our reading of his work forward. This exercise suggests one that his compatriot Aby Warburg, in Hamburg as well, undertook with his famous *Mnemosyne Atlas* in the summer of 1926.

Lempert's method for shooting photographs is akin to that of modern photographers like Karl Blossfeldt (1865–1932) and August Sander (1876–1964), although it is even more like that of the botanist Anna Atkins (1799–1871), whom Lempert greatly admires. She was the first before William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877) and his *Pencil of Nature* to work on an index of plants in the service of biology.

The austerity, even disarming simplicity of Lempert's work, joined to a documentary approach, probably springs from the artist's studies in biology. But his eye is not solely

scientific. It is phenomenological and empirical, sometimes even metaphorical. Some of his series seem to belong more to the realm of a bygone era, an extinct one even. Witness, for instance, his series *Alca impennis* or the great auk (*Pinguinus impennis*), which was driven to extinction in 1844. Over the last twenty years until today, Lempert has photographed 35 of the 78 reserved specimens that are found in natural history museums the world over.

If Jochen Lempert makes a connection between biology and photography, it probably isn't only because he knows his way between the two fields, but also because several of his photographs can be read as the result of a studied field and because he introduces the theory of evolution directly into his work. The art critic Roberto Ohrt, moreover, has pointed out quite rightly that the naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and the photographer William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877) were contemporaries. A subject then brilliantly emerges at this point, i.e., the discovery of the theory of evolution and the invention of photography in the same era sound like the prelude to a surprising thesis on the theory of the media.

The show at Le Crédac called *Jardin d'hiver* (*Winter Garden*) followed on *Sudden Spring* and *Predicted Autumn*, a program that the artist pursued in time with the seasons.<sup>2</sup> Lempert designed an installation of vitrines like botanical cases but holding photo compositions that play out a vegetal motif as the prints of a nature hanging on the promise of renewal. An *Ipomoea tricolor* (the morning glory), a detail from Botticelli's *Spring*, and the floral print of a cotton shirt are elements that form a visual narrative through the play of free conceptual or formal associations fashioned by the artist.

After a tour punctuated by static black-and-white images, visitors can then experience color and moving images in two films selected with the artist and screened in *Crédakino: Weltenempfänger* (*World Receiver*), 1984, and 15

1 The Registry of Promise, texts by Chris Sharp, Roma Publications, 2015.

2 At the Bildmuseet, University of Umeå, Sweden (2018), and the Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne, Château de Rochechouart (2018).

*Tage Fieber* (15-Day Fever), 1989, both made by the experimental film collective Schmelzdahin (Jochen Lempert, Jochen Müller, and Jürgen Reble), which was active between 1978 and 1989. Together they explored the possibilities that existed in processes using chemical treatments and the celluloid film as an art material in itself. Working with sequences they found or shot themselves, they created films that are highly plastic in the sense of the plastic arts, thanks to chromatic changes, exposure and erasure, corrosion, and bacterial cultures. Featured in the exhibition context, these two films emphasize an explosion of color verging on psychedelia.

As a complement to the approach adopted by Jochen Lempert in his work, we are also offering the public the chance to see a performance called *Wir lagerten uns ums Feuer* (We Gathered Around the Fire) by Schmelzdahin (Jochen Lempert and Jochen Müller), which was first done in 1987. The artists have agreed to redo in public their experiments with Super 8 film. During the screening, the film negative, made up of sequences created by the collective, will be chemically altered, scratched, and heated. Like alchemists of the moving image, they will show the transformation of the film from one loop to the next.

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## Artist's bio

Jochen Lempert was born in 1958 in Moers, Germany. A graduate in biology, he began making art alongside his activities at the University of Bonn. A self-taught photographer, he initially used the medium as a documentary tool. He was also active in the experimental film collective Schmelzdahin, which explored, between 1979 and 1989, the chemical possibilities that analog film offered artists. Lempert's activities as a biologist, notably observing and mapping fauna and flora for research institutions, were a large part of his life until recently. His photography, exhibited internationally, has been influenced by the experimental and documentary dimension that was part of his studies of living organisms.

Jochen Lempert lives in Hamburg and is represented by the galleries ProjecteSD (Barcelona), and BQ (Berlin).

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## Non-exhaustive list of visuals

### ***Camouflage, 2016***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Eristalis, 2019***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Falling Leaf (Site Corot), 2019***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Flight attendant, 2017***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Full Spiderweb, 2012-2015***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Ginkgo, 2018***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Jack Daw - Fontana I, 2014-***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Kirschen, 2019***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***On Photosynthesis, 2009***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Swans (Stockholm), 2018***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Untitled (Botticelli IV), 2018 et Profil, 2017***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Untitled (Ivy and Bee), 2019***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Untitled (Mobile), 2016***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Untitled (Segelfalter, Rom), 2013***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Untitled (Shadows On Stairs), 2014***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Untitled (Vanessa atalanta II), 2019 -***

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper

### ***Vitrine Botanical Box, Zagreb, 2018***

Exhibition view by Ana Opalic

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## Performance

### *Wir lagerten uns ums Feuer*

Performance by Schmelzdahin (Jochen Lempert and Jochen Mueller), 1987-2020  
25 min

With *Wir lagerten uns ums Feuer* (« We gather around the fire »), two former members of Schmelzdahin, Jochen Lempert and Jochen Müller, will redo in public their experiments with Super 8 filmstock. During the screening, the negative film, made up of sequences shot by the collective, will be chemically altered, scratched, heated. Like alchemists of the moving image, they will show the transformation of the film from one loop to the next.

- **Sunday 29 March at 3pm and 5 pm** -  
Free access, booking required :  
contact@credac.fr ; 01.49.60.25.06



Schmelzdahin, *Wir lagern uns ums Feuer*, 1987-88  
View of the performance at the Brotfabrik Bonn (Allemagne) during a  
experimental film festival « Experi und Nixperi », 5 December 1987.  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)

## Crédakino program

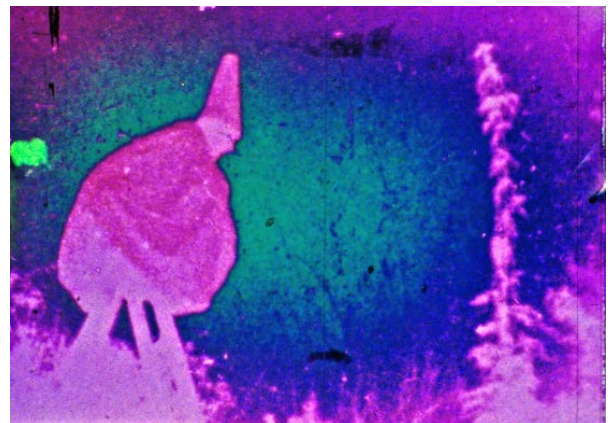
### Schmelzdahin

(Jochen Lempert, Jochen Müller, Jürgen Reble)

Schmelzdahin is an experimental film collective made up of Jochen Lempert, Jochen Müller and Jürgen Reble that was active between 1979 and 1989. Together they explored the possibilities that processes using chemical treatments and the celluloid film as an art material in itself offered artists. Working with sequences they found or shot themselves, they created films that are highly plastic in the sense of the plastic arts, thanks to chromatic changes, exposure and erasure, corrosion, and bacterial cultures. Featured in the exhibition context, these two films emphasize an explosion of color verging on psychedelia.

- **From 23 January to 23 February** -  
*Wellenempfänger (Récepteur des mondes)*, 1984  
digitalized Super 8 film ; color, sound ; 5'08"

- **From 26 February to 28 March** -  
*15 Tage Fieber (15 jours de fièvre)*, 1989  
digitalized Super 8 film ; color, sound ; 14'15"



Schmelzdahin, *15 Tage Fieber*, 1989  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Camouflage, 2016*

Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
© Jochen Lempert / ADAGP, Paris 2020  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Eristalis, 2019*

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*Falling Leaf (Site Corot), 2019*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
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Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Flight attendant, 2017*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
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Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Full Spiderweb, 2012 / 2015*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
© Jochen Lempert / ADAGP, Paris 2020  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Ginkgo, 2018*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
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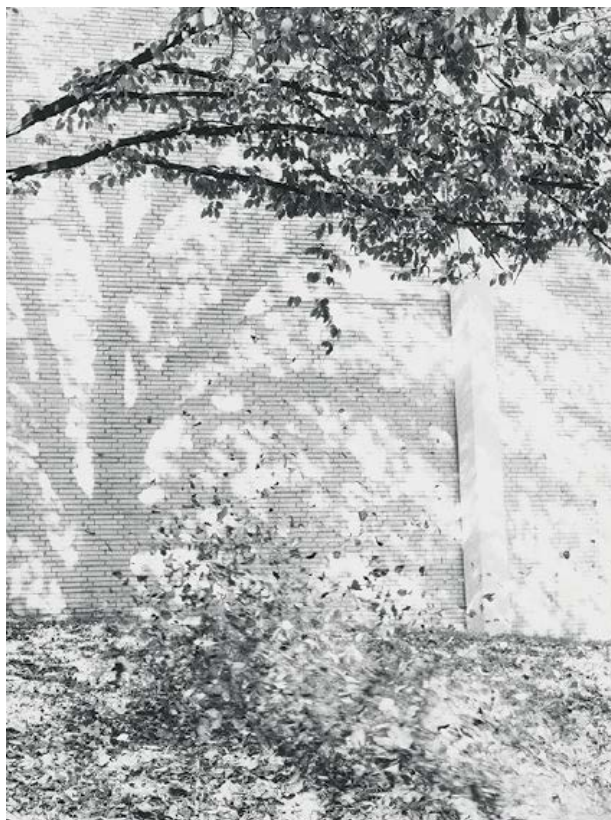




*Jack Daw - Fontana I, 2014*  
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© Jochen Lempert / ADAGP, Paris 2020  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Kirschen, 2019*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
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*On Photosynthesis, 2009*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
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Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



*Untitled (Ivy and Bee), 2019*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
© Jochen Lempert / ADAGP, Paris 2020  
Courtesy galleries : ProjecteSD (Barcelone) et BQ (Berlin)



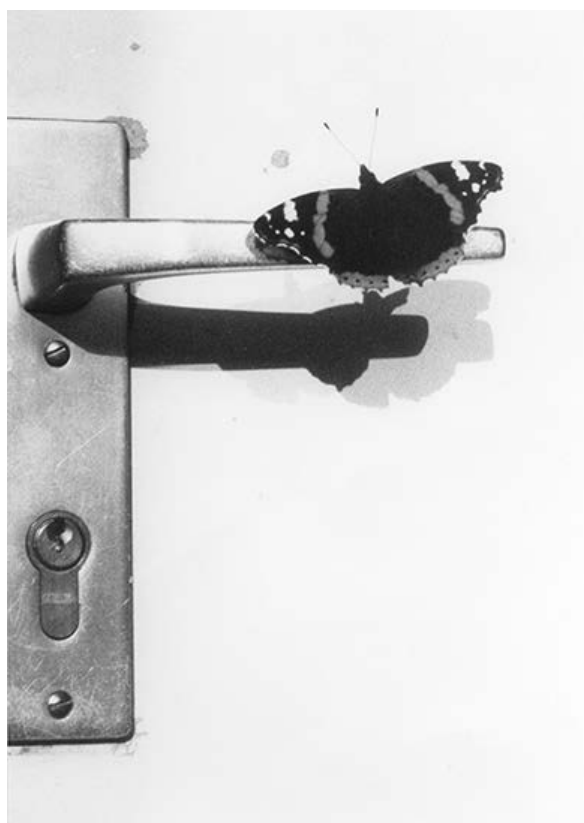
*Untitled (Mobile), 2016*  
Black/white photograph on matte baryta paper  
© Jochen Lempert / ADAGP, Paris 2020  
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*Untitled (Shadows On Stairs), 2014*  
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