# LAFUGITIVE

Chantal Akerman, Mélissa Boucher, Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, Cécile Bouffard, Anne Bourse, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Jean de Sagazan, Marcel Devillers, Tirdad Hashemi and Soufia Erfanian, G.B. Jones, Ana Jotta, Marie Laurencin, Autumn Ramsey, Lena Vandrey, **Zoe Williams** 

An exhibition curated by Ana Mendoza Aldana in collaboration with Claire Le restif

### INTRODUCTION

Today a whole generation of artists, researchers, curators and the art venues associated with them are committed to confronting structural exclusions. This exhibition entitled *La Fugitive*, centred on the figure of Albertine, was curated by

Ana Mendoza Aldana, a deeply involved reader of Marcel Proust. Her engagement with a range of textual and film sources, including *Proust's Lesbianism* (1999) by

Elisabeth Ladenson, confirmed her intuition: For many decades critics have tried to reduce Proust's character Albertine to an Albert or Alfred in a woman's guise. Can lesbian identity today extricate itself from the image of it created by men?

With this often drole show the Crédac marks the centenary of Proust's death in its own way, with an homage to this key character in À la recherche du temps perdu (variously translated as Remembrance of Things Past and In Search of Lost Time), one of French literature's most canonical novels. We're certain that this group show will further fan the debate on this subject. To quote the French lesbian feminist author and activist Monique Wittig, in her introduction to The Straight Mind (first published in the U.S. in 1992 and not translated into French until 2001): "The only thing to do is to stand on one's own feet as an escapee, a fugitive slave, a lesbian."

Claire Le Restif Director of the Crédac

#### **CURATOR'S STATEMENT**

Albertine makes her first appearance on the beach at Balbec, among a group of athletic and impudent "young girls in flower". She becomes the standout character in this second volume of Proust's novel.

The object of the narrator's covetous desire, Albertine is a strong and self-assured woman whose real character nevertheless remains elusive, always just beyond our grasp.

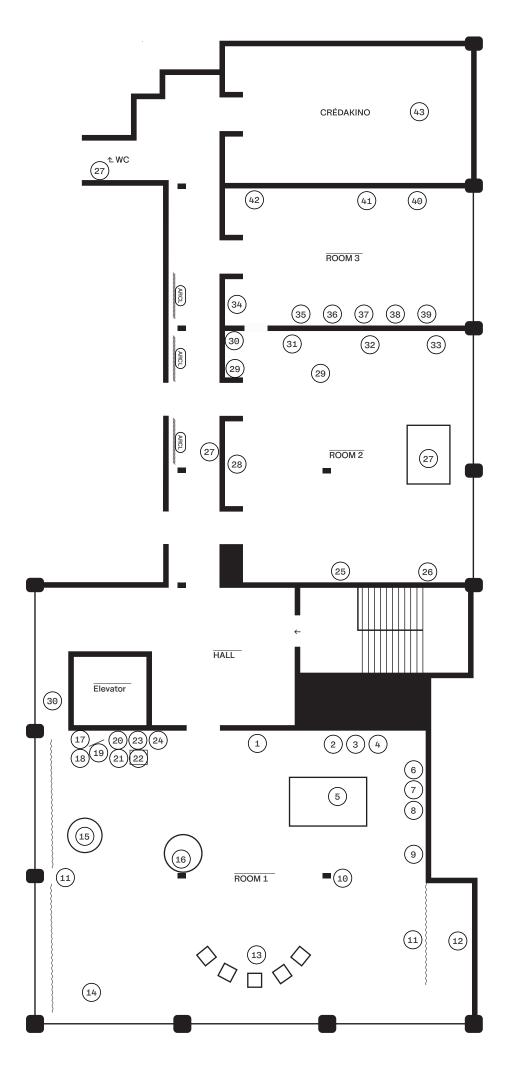
She seldom speaks in this narrative, yet remains her own woman, the owner of her actions. Throughout the novel her appearances shed more mystery than light on her motivations and personality. We learn enough about her to character to understand that it's complex, but nevertheless it remains fundamentally a secret.

As the narrative progresses it becomes clear that Albertine loves women and the narrator becomes obsessed with this sexuality.

Many artists, in their practice, have addressed or touched on issues related to her figure in Proust's novel and the stubborn refusal of many literary critics to see her as anything but a fictional stand-in for men in the author's real, closeted life. From challenging the visual culture inherited from the male gaze and rejecting the immutability of forms to foregrounding the stories of queer people, these interrogations are part of the formulation of a perhaps more nuanced and polysemic way to see things and the world.

The exhibition *La Fugitive* (taken from the title of the sixth volume of Proust's masterwork examines these issues and, from various angles, Albertine herself, through the work of forty three symbolic pieces by contemporary artists, some specifically produced for this event. They constitute a journey of exploration that ranges from the young woman's domestic space to the real and fantasized social spaces that in this novel constantly elude the narrator's voyeuristic and inquisitorial stare.

Ana Mendoza Aldana Curator of the exhibition and head of communication, curatorial research, and publishing



#### ROOM 1

- Zoe Williams, Silver OI, 2017.
   Silver.
   Courtesy of the Ciaccia Levi gallery, Paris - Milan.
- 2 G.B. Jones, *Cruising #2*, 1988. Graphite pencil on paper.
- 3 G.B. Jones, Motorcycle girls, 1987.
  Graphite pencil on paper.
- 4 G.B. Jones, Stop! Don't miss this, 1990. Graphite pencil on paper. All works by G.B Jones are courtesy of Cooper Cole, Toronto.
- Marc Camille Chaimowicz,
   A Partial Vocabulary,
   1984-2008.
   Plywood, fabric, hand
   tufted Tisca rug. Courtesy
   of FRAC Nouvelle Aquitaine MÉCA.
- 6 Marie Laurencin, La vie de château, (n.d.). Print.
- 7 Marie Laurencin, La vie de château, (n.d.). Print.
- 8 Marie Laurencin, La vie de château, (n.d.). Print.
- Marie Laurencin, Femmes à une fenêtre, (n.d.).
   Print.
   All works by Marie
   Laurencin are courtesy of the City of Paris Museum of Modern Art.
- 10 Mélissa Boucher et Adèle de Keyzer, Mauvais genre, 2022. Cyanotypes on silk, cotton mesh.
- Courtesy of the artists.

  11 Anne Bourse, Rage, 2022.
  Ink and pencil on silk.
  Courtesy of the artist and
  Crèvecœur, Paris.
- 12 Series of anonymous analog photographs (from left to right):

  Jeux à trois, 1925/30;

  Enlacées, 1920; Douce étreinte, 1920; Baiser, 1920; Tendresse, 1920.

  Courtesy of the Au Bonheur du Jour Nicole Canet gallery, Paris.
- 13 Chantal Akerman,
  La Chambre, 2012
  Video installation, 5
  monitors, 16mm
  digitalized film, color, 10
  min, 26s, on a loop.
  Courtesy of the Chantal
  Akerman Foundation and
  Marian Goodman Gallery.

- 14 Zoe Williams, Piss in Boots (Living Currency Parlour set), 2022. Enamelled ceramic.
- 15 Zoe Williams, Carol Rama
- shoe, 2019. Ceramic, fur.
- 16 Zoe Williams, Salmon Heel, 2019. Ceramic, fur. All works by Zoe Williams are courtesy of the artist and Ciaccia Levi, Paris - Milan.
- 17 Lena Vandrey, Persona I, Cycle Cut-Outs, 1983-2013. Mixed media, wood frame, cardboard, pencils, oil pastels, acrylic, gouache
- 18 Lena Vandrey, Persona II, Cycle Cut-Outs, 1983-2013. Mixed media, wood frame, cardboard, pencils, oil pastels, acrylic, gouache
- 19 Lena Vandrey,
  Construction, 2007,
  Sculpture sur ChevaletBois, Cycle Cut-Outs,
  1983-2013.
  Mixed media, wood frame,
  cardboard, pencils, oil
  pastels, acrylic, gouache.
- 20 Lena Vandrey, Tête de Pierre, 2008, Cycle Cut-Outs, 1983-2013. Mixed media, wood frame, cardboard, pencils, oil pastels, acrylic, gouache.
- 21 Lena Vandrey, Les
  inessentiels II, 2006, Cycle
  Dessins, 2005-2015.
  Mixed media, wood frame,
  cardboard, pencils, oil
  pastels, acrylic, gouache.
- 22 Lena Vandrey, Prie-Dieu, Cycle Installations Muséales, 1968-2018. Wooden structure, braided rope, provencial craftsmanship of the early twentieth century.
- 23 Lena Vandrey, Persona III, Cycle Cut-Outs, 1983-2013. Mixed media, wood frame, cardboard, pencils, oil pastels, acrylic, gouache.
- 24 Lena Vandrey, Persona IV,
  Cycle Cut-Outs, 19832013.
  Mixed media, wood frame,
  cardboard, pencils, oil
  pastels, acrylic, gouache.
  All works by Lena Vandrey
  are courtesy of Musée des
  Anges Léna Vandrey,
  Bourg-Saint-Andéol.

#### ROOM 2

- 25 Mélissa Boucher, Scrolling, 2021–2022. Silver photographs, inkjet prints of varying sizes, dielectric glass, steel frame. Courtesy of the artist.
- 26 Autumn Ramsey,
  A bloom, 2020.
  Oil painting on canvas.
  Courtesy of the artist and
  Crèvecœur, Paris.
- 27 Marcel Devillers, Je suis
  Jessica, dis-je, 2022.
  Installation. Wood, lacquer,
  light bulbs, headphones,
  sound recording, sheets of
  paper, tape.
  Courtesy of the artist.
- 28 Autumn Ramsey,
  Seized, 2017.
  Oil paint on canvas
  Courtesy of the artist and
  Crèvecœur, Paris.
- 29 Cécile Bouffard, Smothered Good, 2022. Wood, acrylic paint, latex, iron wire, silicone. Courtesy of the artist.
- 30 Cécile Bouffard, ...still baffled, 2022. Wood, acrylic paint, iron wire, textile. Courtesy of the artist.
- 31 Cécile Bouffard, fugitive, 2022. Wood, acrylic paint, textile, iron wire, adhesive. Courtesy of the artist.
- 32 Autumn Ramsey,
  Venus, 2022.
  Oil paint on canvas.
  Courtesy of the artist and
  Crèvecœur, Paris.
- 33 Cécile Bouffard, pursuit of Happiness, 2022. Wood, acrylic paint, iron wire. Courtesy of the artist.

## ROOM 3

- 34 Tirdad Hashemi et Soufia Erfanian, Your memory stays in my heart like blood stains, 2021. Mixed media on paper.
- 35 Tirdad Hashemi et Soufia Erfanian, The safest place to find is behind your hair, 2021. Mixed media on paper.
- 36 Tirdad Hashemi et Soufia Erfanian, Every day and night the sound of my trauma is deafening my ears, 2021.

Mixed media on paper.
Private collection

- 37 Tirdad Hashemi et Soufia Erfanian, Kissing you is like jumping in a pool of cream, 2021. Mixed media on paper. Private collection.
- 38 Tirdad Hashemi et Soufia Erfanian, Now I'm stuck again in the room of your memories, 2021. Mixed media on paper.
- 39 Tirdad Hashemi et
  Soufia Erfanian, I have never
  spoken my truth, 2021.
  Mixed media on paper.
  All works by Tirdad
  Hashemi and Soufia
  Erfanian are courtesy of
  the artists and, unless
  otherwise indicated, of gb
  agency, Paris.
- 40 Jean de Sagazan, The Last dance 6.5, 2020. Acrylic, dye on cotton Courtesy of the artist.
- 41 Jean de Sagazan, The Last dance 6.4, 2020. Acrylic, dye on cotton. Courtesy of the artist.
- 42 Pauline Boudry /
  Renate Lorenz, Wig Piece
  (Entangled Phenomena
  VI), 2019.
  Felt, artificial hair, metal.
  Courtesy of the artists,
  Marcelle Alix, Paris
  and Ellen de Bruijne
  Projects, Amsterdam.

# **CRÉDAKINO**

Pauline Boudry /
Renate Lorenz, Opaque,
2014
Film Super 16mm. HD
Video.
Courtesy of the artists,
Marcelle Alix, Paris,
et Ellen de Bruijne Projects,
Amsterdam.

#### **HALLWAY**

Brief and personal selection of magazines from the Lesbian Research and Cultures Archives in Paris, for consultation.

### ROOM 1 - THE BEDROOM

Bedrooms occupy a central place in À la recherche du temps perdu. Proust wrote much of it in bed.

In the novel, the narrator returns from Balbec with Albertine, for whom he is inflamed by a possessive and jealous love, and offers her lodging in one of the rooms of his family's home in Paris. This room, converted into a bedroom, is where he holds Albertine "prisoner", keeping her under close watch and questioning her slightest movements.

- The filmmaker Chantal Akerman (1950-2015) made a feature film in 2000 called *La Captive* based on La recherche's fifth volume of the same name (often translated in English as *The Prisoner*). Lesbian jealousy and desire figure largely in Akerman's film, as in her others such as *Je, tu, il, elle* (1974) and *Les rendezvous d'Anna* (1978). In this exhibition we are screening *La Chambre* (1972), made in the New York apartment where the Belgian filmmaker was then living, comprised of a circular, continuous panorama shot showing the entry, kitchen, bedroom and office. We find Akerman lying in bed with every sweep of the camera. The film is centred on the bed, bedroom and her daily routine.
- Marc Camille Chaimowicz (1947)'s tilted wooden bedframe, topped with a rug and decorative cushions, sits on the floor. As minimalist as it is, it clearly represents a personal space for rest and privacy, the essence of a bed and the room defined by that piece of furniture. This French artist, an aesthete and admirer of literary figures like Cocteau, Flaubert and Proust, operates at the crossroads of design, painting and installation. His typically bourgeois but often slightly quirky furniture celebrates major movements in art and design, and above all constitutes a history of personal spaces where total-art environments and life are coterminous
- The silk curtains of Anne Bourse (1982) covering a whole wall also impart a domestic aspect to the space where they are installed. This French artist compulsively draws on cloth, paper and Plexiglas, often while in her own bed. These refined, fragile veils evoke a certain vulnerability, like when you invite someone into your bedroom. Just by letting them see the objects that inhabit it and that you've chosen to surround yourself with, you unveil a glimpse of who you are.
- The diaphanous corset-cloak made by Mélissa Boucher (1986) and the fabric designer Adèle de Keyzer seems meant to reveal more than it conceals of Albertine's body. Mixing and matching different styles and periods, as well as images and texts taken from photos of the book's pages and stills from Akerman's film adaptation of *La Captive*, and other more personal details like pictures of Boucher's own mouth and excerpts from her own reading, this peignoir is like a moving portrait of Albertine, in that sense similar to the blue waves with which the film begins.
- Art historians have long disdained the painter Marie Laurencin's (1883-1956) portraits of ultra-feminine (like Proust's young lesbians) and sometimes androgynes girls with black, almond-shaped eyes. With her distinct style, this lesbian artist played a significant role in early twentieth- century Parisian artistic and literary movements, especially Cubism, Fauvism and Dadaism.
- The Canadian musician and artist G.B. Jones (1965) is one of the two pillars of the Toronto Homocore/Queercore scene. A drummer, backup singer and guitarist in the all-woman band Fifth Column, she has put out several fanzines, including J.D.s with Bruce Labruce (1964), in order to construct, from scratch, an all-out queer punk scene in defiance of the homophobia of some bands and audiences. Her Tom Girls drawings, originally published in the fanzine and here shown for the first time in France, are ironic retakes on the ultra-virile characters drawn by the artist Tom of Finland (1920-91), with his men's-men representations replaced by women.

- Behind one of Anne Bourse's curtains is hidden a selection of anonymous photos taken in the 1920s and '30s, curated and lent by Nicole Canet, whose gallery Au Bonheur du Jour regularly does exhibitions and publications featuring early twentieth-century erotic drawings, paintings, objects and photos, with emphasis on nudes and gay and lesbian art. These five photos construct a fictional narrative of Albertine's liaisons as fantasized by Marcel, the narrator.
- The exuberant and hyper-sexualized work of Zoe Williams (1983) suggests a contemporary postlude to the styles of the Baroque and Rococo epochs. Influenced by the Italian Carol Rama (1918–2015) to whom she pays homage, the British artist also offers a vision of desire from the female point of view. Breasts, vulvas and anuses constitute the vocabulary of her sculptures, drawings and installations, projecting a lifestyle devoted to opulence and luxury.
- A declassée aristocrat, child of wartime Poland and Germany, model and interpreter for Interpol in Paris where she frequented high society, and then a mason in southern France, Lena Vandrey (1941–2018) was inexhaustible in her artistic production. Yet she has been somewhat forgotten. She was involved in the French Women's Liberation Movement (MLF) alongside its leaders, such as the theoretician Monique Wittig (1935-2003), for whose play The Constant Journey she designed the costumes. In her last years she and her partner, Mina Noubadji-Huttenlocher, founded a museum dedicated to her work in a villa they restored in Bourg-Saint-Andéol. Vandrey's pieces chosen for the exhibition La Fugitive come from an installation in her museum she called "Le Cabinet de Curiosités", here presented in the backright corner of the room.

#### Off-site exhibitions

■ A fugitive from all sorts of artistic confines and labels, Ana Jotta's protean practice explores every medium as well as techniques traditionally associated with the so-called minor (mostly female) arts. She appropriates objects, iconographies and titles and redefines her own work for every exhibition. In the Chambre en ville (A room in town), her artist-in-residence flat open to the public from 15 October through 27 November at the Cité internationale des arts as part of the Festival d'Automne (Paris arts festival), she put up a note left behind by the fugitive: "She left me a closed notebook, with pages assembled by a discrete gold painted lining that she sewed with a yellow thread spelling out the word < DORMIR > (< SLEEP >). On the back: < Pour Toi , de Moi > (< For You, from Me >).

#### ROOM 2 — THE MIRROR

In La recherche, the portrait of Albertine painted by the narrator is unstable: When he feels she's slipping away from him, he finds her beautiful and desirable; when he suspects her of lying to him or has the impression that she is within his grasp, he finds her repellent. At times an elegant and intelligent woman, at others vulgar, stupid and not at all his type, the image readers have of Albertine is like a reflection in a broken mirror, her identity constantly shattered into pieces and then reassembled, always self-contradictory. Her Sapphic love affairs make her seem all the more complex because the narrator is incapable of understanding how the pleasure two women feel together is different from that experienced with a man. The narrator is never able to fully apprehend this young woman's multiplicity. This unbreachable exteriority turns him into a voyeur, and makes him all the more obsessive and jealous.

- Scrolling is a selection of a set of images by Mélissa Boucher (1986); they seem to be screenshots but are actually silver-print photos of porno videos scrolling on her computer. This Franco-Bolivian artist is inspired by the political and artistic movement called postporn, which aims to free sexuality from the private sphere and its hetero-normative and patriarchal gaze, and instead bring out its political potential. Her work shows women filming their own bodies and giving or receiving pleasure. If these pictures can make viewers feel like voyeurs (a role that the narrator so often finds himself playing in Proust's novel), this effect is intensified by a highly reflective glass that covers the visuals and incites us to move around to see them better.
- The French artist and poet Marcel Devillers (1991) is fascinated by nightlife. His sculptures and installations borrow from the vocabulary of Minimal and Conceptual art while referencing popular culture and literature. Interspersed among his pop icons from the worlds of fashion, movies and music are personal stories of friendly, romantic and sensual encounters. The body and its absence are central elements in this artist's writings.

For La Fugitive, Devillers wrote a fragmented and multifold portrait of Albertine. Excerpts from the poem, printed and stuck up with silver tape, appear here and there throughout the Crédac, including some directly on the podium, as if his words were an echo or reflection.

- The American artist Autumn Ramsey (1976) paints animals, flowers and femme or androgynous characters. Her work reveals a taste for mythology, dreams, ornament and the esoterism of artists like Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon. Like Albertine herself, the creatures who inhabit her canvases appear elusive and inaccessible, constantly in a state of metamorphosis. There is a certain gentleness as well as violence and latent menace.
- The sculptures in the installations of Cécile Bouffard (1987) oscillate between anthropomorphism, zoomorphism and everyday objects without ever fulling resolving into any of these categories. These essentially haptic pieces seem to recall certain positions taken by hands, legs, feet and mouths. For *La Fugitive*, this French artist conceived a new ensemble of works that have in common some form of constraint. Like Albertine in *La Recherche*, these sculptures, apparently, at least, seem to voluntarily submit to masochistic domination.

# ROOM 3 & CRÉDAKINO - HETEROTOPIES

The narrator's obsession leads him to see "bad" girls everywhere. In La Recherche, Albertine finally flees Marcel's hold on her. The secret of the young woman's sexuality and her world will elude the narrator forever.

While "Lesbian Paris" today feels less need to hide itself, in every era and country LGBTQI+ people are marginalized and persecuted, and can flourish only by creating heterotopies. Techno parties are safe spaces where people can make themselves at home, where together they prepare to confront their enemies, and where their bodies merge into one. These sites are pieces of the puzzle of contemporary Lesbos.

- The four-handed drawings of Tirdad Hashemi (1991) and Soufia Erfanian (1990) are a poetic narrative recounting their everyday lives as a couple and those of their friends since they met: the construction of a home of their own despite the many necessary comings-and-goings over the years. For these Iranian artists, art is all they really need, the place where they live, the only place where they can fully express themselves and where they can be both themselves and other people at the same time..
- In the series *The Last dance*, Jean de Sagazan (1988) reiterates a single motif in a variety of colours and canvas formats. For La Fugitive, a pair of two large paintings from this series hanging side by side serve as a kind of entrance to the exhibition, creating a festive air as strobe lights and pulsating music enhance the effect of dancing bodies intermingling until they merge into one. Nocturnal spaces can become sites of pleasure and freedom where friends and lonely hearts can meet and find one another.
- Wigs, fingernails, leather, chains and sportswear become the vocabulary of the construction of a self that interrogates or reinvents genders. Hung on the wall like a painting or a fetish object, Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's black and platinum blonde wig recalls queer history and its figures forgotten by mainstream history.

While this duo's most recent videos explore the political potential of dancing bodies, *Opaque* is a call for war against an invisible enemy. This joyous cry, amid sequins and billowing coloured smoke, defends Albertine's right to be opaque and the same for all young "girls in flower", the right not to be understood or grasped but simply to exist.

This declaration in English combines an excerpt from the documentary film *Underground* (1976, French translation available to visitors) and an extract from Jean Genet's book *L'Ennemi déclaré* (1970).

#### **EVENTS**

#### ■ Saturday, september 17 ■ 18:00 OPENING READING

Marcel Devillers reads Je suis Jessica, dis-je, a new text written for La Fugitive

INTERPRETED READING

■ Friday, september 30 ■ 19:00 ■ 1h10 « Monsieur Proust » by Ivan Morane et Céline Samie.

Event in partnership with the lvry Mediathèque. By reservation on site or by email: mediathequereservations@ivry94.fr

■ Sunday, october 9 ■ 16:00

MEETING

With Marie Canet, contemporary art critic and curator, on the occasion of the publication of her book on the artist Marc Camille Chaimowicz.

MEETING

■ Sunday, november 20 ■ 16:00 MEETING
With Martina Panelli, Doctor in film studies and director of the Jocelyn Wolff Gallery, on the question of the self representation in the artworks and films of Barbara Hamme and Chantal Akerman.

MEETING

■ Sunday, november 27 ■16:00 MEETII
With Etienne Dobenesque, editor of the complete works of Djuna Barnes, on the life and work of the american author.

■ November

FILM CYCLE

At Ivry's cinema, The Luxy, a specific program will accompany the exhibition. Further information and fairs coming soon at www. luxy.ivry94.fr

■ Sunday, december 4. ■16:00

READING

Elodie Petit, poet and artist, reads with four performers some extracts from her most recent book, Fiévreuse plébéienne (Edition du Commun, 2022).

Unless otherwise stated, all events are free and by reservation. Further information will be coming soon in our newsletters and at www.credac.fr

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A huge thank you to Claire Le Restif for her support, her encouragement and her excellent advice, as well as to Jean-Denis Frater, Julia Leclerc, Virginie Lyobard, Sébastien Martins, Lucia Zapparoli and Clotilde Beautru, for their friendly support. Thanks to Sebastián Quevedo and Ilena Viollet for their help.

A warm thank you to the technical team for their efficiency and reactivity: Christian Giordano and Josselin Vidalenc.

Thanks to Marie Collin, Francesca Corona and Pierre Gendronneau for their precious collaboration, as well as to all the team of the Festival d'Automne à Paris. Thanks to Elsa Aupetit and Martin Plagnol (Studio Kiösk) for giving its colors to La Fugitive.

Particular thanks to all the artists who accepted to accompany us in this adventure: to Carole Billy (Marian Goodman gallery, Paris) and to Claire Atherton; to Mina Noubadji-Huttenlocher and Frédéric Legros for the discovery of the Musée des Anges; to Nicole Canet - Au Bonheur du Jour gallery for her generous welcome; Jessica Castex and Fabrice Hergott (Museum of Modern Art in Paris); Anne-Cécile Maddedu and the team of the FRAC Nouvelle Aquitaine MÉCA; to Caroline Bourgeois, Catherine Facerias and Olivier Renaud-Clément: to Claire Fougerol and Michèle Larrouy for having opened the doors of the Archives Recherches et Cultures Lesbiennes in Paris; Elsa Delage and the Cooper Cole Gallery (Toronto), Antoine Levi, Nerina Ciaccia, Alessia Volpe and Ilaria Salaiolo (Ciaccia Levi, Paris - Milan); to Anastasia Križanovska and the Crèvecœur gallery (Paris), to Nathalie Boutin and Solène Guillier (gb agency, Paris) as well as to Renato Casciani and Olivier Diaz; to Isabelle Alfonsi, Cécilia Bécanovic and Sarah Lévénès (Marcelle

Thanks to Elisabeth Ladenson and Suzette Robichon, and to all those, who search, read, write and publish to keep the memories alive. Finally, thanks to Mirna, Luis, Laura, Isabel, Sese, Élise, Tino, Émilie, Martina, Kuralai,

Jaufré, Eva, Étienne, Adé, Gloria, Manon, Nolwenn, Julie, Jess, and Comil, for their encouragement and unwavering support, and for having lent a distracted or attentive ear to my Proustian obsessions.

CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN D'IVRY — LE CRÉDAC La Manufacture des Œillets 1, place Free admission

Wednesday to friday: 14:00-18:00 Week-end: 14:00-19:00 Closed on public holidays Métro 7, Mairie d'Ivry RER C, Ivry-sur-Seine Vélib', station n°42021 Raspail -Manufacture des Œillets

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Production: Centre d'art contemporain

d'Ivry - le Crédac

Coproduction: Festival d'Automne à Paris

■ Sunday, september 18 ■ 14:30 et 16:30\*

JOURNÉES EUROPÉENNES

DU PATRIMOINE

Presentation of the Manufacture des Œillets, followed by a visit of the exhibition

**BUREAU DES PUBLICS** 

■ Thursday, september 22 ■ 17:00 - 19:00\*

VISITE ENSEIGNANTE

Teachers discover the exhibition with the Bureau des publics team, then, they schedule a visit and a workshop for their group.

■ Saturday, october 1 ■ 15:00 - 18:00\*

ATELIER-VÉLO

As a wink to the character of Albertine, inseparable to her bike, the lvry Cyclofficine organizes a bike repair workshop in the Credac, taught by women for women, trans and non binary people in order to learn about bike mechanics with total confidence and

■ Sunday, october 9 & december 4 ■ 16:00\* Guided tour of the exhibition.

VISITE DU DIMANCHE

■ Thursday, october 6 october ■ 12:00 - 14:00

CRÉDACANTINE

Guided tour of the exhibition by the curator Ana Mendoza Aldana, followed by a lunch. Admission 7 € / Subscribers 4 €

■ Sunday october 16 & december 11 ■ 15:00 - 17:00\*

ATELIER-GOÛTER

Big and small discover the exhibition together. Then, as they enjoy a snack, the families participate in a workshop that, sensitively and playfully, extends the visit The workshop was conceived for kids from 6 to 12 but it's nevertheless open to all!

■ November 2, 3, 4 ■ 15:00 - 17:00\*

ATELIER-VACANCES

Creative workshops destined for kids from 6 to 12 during school break...

■ Thursday, november 24 ■ 16:00 - 17:30\*

ART-THÉ

Guided tour of the exhibition by Lucia Zapparoli (Crédac) and Clement Vacqué (Médiathèque d'Ivry), followed by a discussion around the resources of the mediathèque. Tea and pastries are offered.

Unless otherwise stated, all events are free and by reservation. Further information will be coming soon in our newsletters and at www.credac.fr

#### **PARTNERSHIP**





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