

PRESS RELEASE



Anu Bonheur

Group exhibition
01.10.2022–08.01.2023

Magasin Neunreiter, archival image, undated

Au Bonheur

**Julie Béna, Estelle Deschamp,
Poterie Friedmann, Walter Gürtler,
Sophie Irwin, La double clique,
Le Palais du Corbeau, Poterie Ludwig,
Marianne Marić, Alexandra Midal,
Flora Moscovici, Françoise Saur,
Poterie Schmitter, Camille Schpilberg,
Dominique Stutz, T R, Alban Turquois,
Nicholas Vargelis and Giom Von Birgitta
as well as historic objects on loan
from the Neunreiter family**

The exhibition *Au Bonheur* connects with the past of the Art Nouveau building that houses the CEAAC by revisiting the various types of objects that were sold there from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1960s, when it was home to a hardware store trading in earthenware, porcelain, glassware, light fittings and household articles. By reframing these commodities in a cultural context, the exhibition aims to explore the 'social life of things' (Arjun Appadurai).

The objects on display bear witness to the ways in which ideology is inscribed in form as well as to the agency of those who produce, choose and exhibit them. Within the show, they can be seen to move between different 'regimes of value' (use, exchange, cultural or surplus value). Decoration is thereby revealed as a carrier of authority, subversion and emancipation.

The project also provides an opportunity to put on sale a selection of utilitarian ceramics sourced as part of an extended research in independent potters' workshops across Alsace.

Curators: Alice Motard & Joël Riff

Au Bonheur is produced in collaboration with Moly-Sabata, France's oldest artists' residency, founded in 1927 in Sablons (Isère) by the artist couple Albert Gleizes and Juliette Roche. The Australian potter Anne Dangar, who lived and worked there for two decades, introduced a ceramic workshop that is active to this very day.

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Taking its title from Émile Zola's naturalistic novel set in the early days of department stores, and paying homage to William Morris (1834–1896), the founder of the Arts and Crafts movement in Victorian England, who advocated a revolution through happiness, the exhibition *Au Bonheur* summons the *genius loci*, or spirit of the place. For several months, the building that has been housing the CEAAC since the mid-1990s will regain its original function as a hardware store trading in porcelain, earthenware, pottery, glassware, crystalware, household items and light fittings.

A fine example of the Art Nouveau style, the architectural complex between Tränkgasse and Fritzgasse that housed the business opened in 1899 by the Neunreiter family was designed by the architect Ferdinand Kalweit. It catered to individual customers while also serving as a storage space for the company's wholesale activities. The exhibition *Au Bonheur* connects with this past through a selection of works that relate to the typologies of objects sold by this modern store of the Belle Époque. Its scenography takes inspiration from the way in which these objects were stored and displayed, in particular the accumulations, stacks and piles in its backroom.

A collective project, *Au Bonheur* brings together the works of more than twenty 'exhibitors' (for want of a better word that would reflect their diverse backgrounds) and aims to reconsider the notion of 'utility', that is, the functional potential – in turn assumed, exploited, exhibited, represented, obscured or even repressed – of each of the objects on display, whose status, oscillating between art, design and craftsmanship, remains deliberately ambiguous.

Besides the question of usage, the exhibition examines the concept of value by showing how the 'goods' on display ceaselessly move between different 'regimes of value'. Reframing them in a cultural context allows viewers to contemplate the 'social life of things' or question their sociality, to paraphrase the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, for whom the meaning of things lies not only in their forms and uses but also in what he calls their 'trajectories'.



Magasin Neunreiter, archival image, undated

About the Moly shop

Moly-Sabata is an artists' residency founded in 1927 in Sablons, on the banks of the river Rhône. Today it hosts nearly thirty artists every year who cultivate a specific interest in fired clay. On site, visitors will find an outlet that sells utilitarian ceramics produced in workshops across the country and beyond. It opened in response to the success of the exhibition-cum-sale *Aux foyers*, which was held in the fall of 2020 and revived a local tradition dating back to the days of the Australian artist and ceramicist Anne Dangar (1885–1951), when the villagers used to buy their tableware from Moly-Sabata. The income generated by the shop benefits its community of artists, as 25% of all profits are reinvested into production grants, the rest of the proceeds going to exhibitors. The Moly shop's display system consists of a simple board on trestles on which dozens of objects are exhibited in a grid-like arrangement.

For *Au Bonheur*, the Moly shop will open a temporary branch in Strasbourg with products from artisan potters based in Alsace. This off-site project is in line with Moly-Sabata's aim to source and distribute locally sourced and environmentally responsible functional objects.

– www.moly-sabata.com/about/moly-shop

With the participation of:

Poterie Friedmann

– www.poteriefriedmann.fr

Sophie Irwin

– www.atelierkylix.com

Le Palais du Corbeau

– lepalaisducorbeau.fr

Poterie Ludwig

– [Page Facebook](#)

Marianne Marić

– marianne-maric.com

Poterie Fortuné Schmitter

– www.poterie-schmitter.com

Camille Schpilberg

– www.faireargile.fr

Dominique Stutz

– www.dominiquestutz.com

T R

– www.ladoubleclique.com

Alban Turquois

– www.albanturquois.com

Giom Von Birgitta

– www.giomvonbirgitta.com

...and the co-curator Joël Riff

Joël Riff is an exhibition curator. In 2014 he joined the team of Moly-Sabata, where he curated several projects a year and invited artists for production residencies. Born in Alsace in 1984, he trained in applied arts in Bischheim and at the École Duperré in Paris, where he also teaches today. In 2008, he launched *Curiosité*, a blog published every Monday morning. A regular contributor to the *Revue de la Céramique et du Verre* since 2017, he is also a prolific freelance writer for other specialist publications. In 2022, he was a member of the jury of the International Ceramics Competition of Carouge, Switzerland, and joined the acquisition commission of the Decorative Arts, Design and Crafts department of the Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap). In addition to *Au Bonheur*, this year he will be curating the exhibitions *Tarasque et silures* at Art-o-rama in Marseille, and *Millefleurs* at Moly-Sabata, to coincide with the Biennale de Lyon.

– joelriff.wordpress.com



Moly shop, October 2021 © Moly-Sabata

Within the exhibition

Julie Béna

Julie Béna's site-specific practice is marked by her childhood in a traveling theatre troupe. Inspired by an eclectic range of literary and cultural references, she seizes on the complex issues related to her status as woman, artist and mother. Her work is based on tragic-burlesque performances in which she embodies avatars that also populate her films and installations, which combine objects and texts.

In the exhibition *Au Bonheur*, which considers the question of utility in both art and life, Béna presents a series of variously anthropomorphised lamps.

Julie Béna (b. 1982) lives and works in Prague. She is represented by Polansky Gallery and Nicoletti Contemporary in London.

— juliebena.com



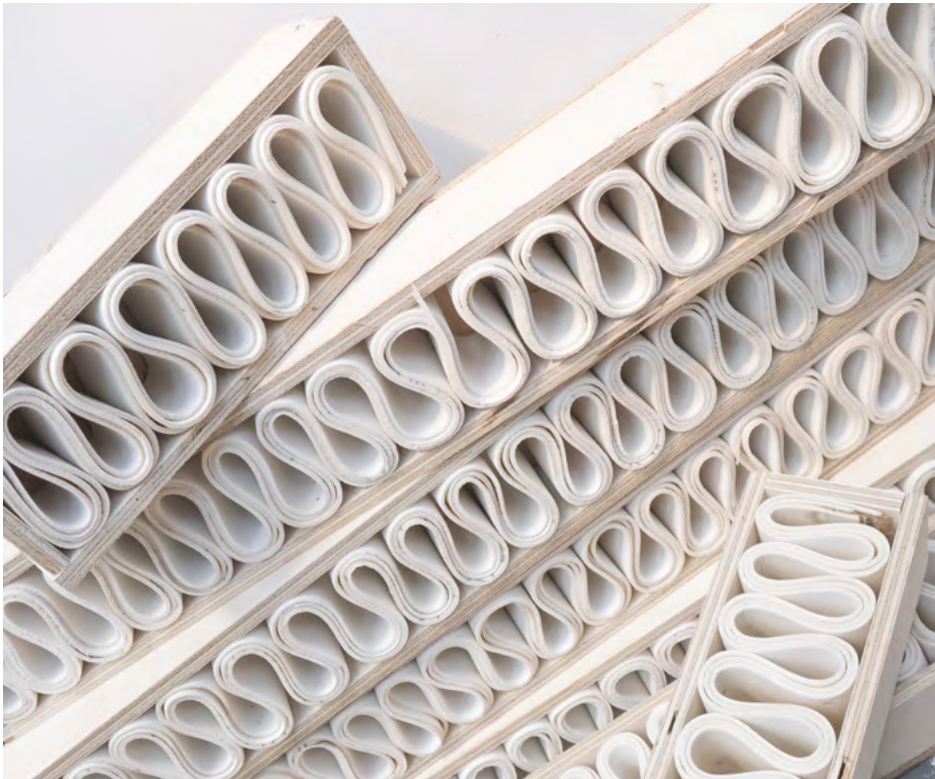
Julie Béna, *Drippy Mouth 2*, 2021, photo: Théo Christelis © Adagp, Paris, 2022

Estelle Deschamp

Consisting of arrangements of construction materials whose aesthetic potential she unlocks through repetition, stacking and stratification, Estelle Deschamp's sculptures resemble slices of landscape.

Deschamp's installation at the CEAAC takes the form of a large architectural frieze. Both disconcertingly simple and deceptively skilful, it offers a perfect example of the artist's erudite attention to decoration and geology, while sublimating the richly decorated Art Nouveau space in which it is set.

Estelle Deschamp (b. 1984) lives and works in Bordeaux.
– estelledeschamp.com



Estelle Deschamp, studio view (detail), 2022, courtesy of the artist

Walter Gürtler

For over six decades, Walter Gürtler pursued a sculptural practice informed by his numerous travels as a young man. Working with various species of wood and types of stone, he created several pieces of furniture, among which the stool and the bench presented in the exhibition. Carved directly into the wood, the two elements combine radical geometry with Brancusian reminiscences.

Walter Gürtler (b. 1931; d. 2012) worked in Hégenheim until his death. A well-known figure in this village of the Haut-Rhin, he even called himself *Walthari* for a while.
– walterguertler.ch



Walter Gürtler in his studio, Hégenheim, 2011, photo : Jeanne Schneeberger

La double clique

La double clique celebrates the possibilities of digital tools as a new form of craftsmanship. Combining antique forms with new technologies, merging archaeology and computer science, the designer duo uses non-toxic materials of vegetal origin to ensure their production is environmentally responsible.

Their collections are all designed, manufactured and assembled at Motoco in Mulhouse.

La double clique is a design studio founded in 2018 by Thomas Roger and Trystan Zigmann.

— ladoubleclique.com



La double clique, *Coupe Mirabilia no.3_1*, 2021, courtesy studio La double clique

Marianne Marić

Marianne Marić is a photographer whose projects occasionally cross over into sculpture, choreography and video, prompting numerous collaborations.

The artist turns into a conductor when she brings her objects to life as part of joyful events. This is the case with her *Lamp-girls*, a group of young women performers wearing lampshades who mingle with the audience. Subverting the myth of the woman-object, the artist reverses traditional power relations and gives back agency to her models.

Marianne Marić (b. 1982) lives and works in Mulhouse.

— mariannemaric.com



Marianne Marić, *Lamp-girls*, 2007-2014, courtesy of the artist

Alexandra Midal

USA, 1837. Rumour has it that during daily prayers, young Shaker girls whirl around the room as if possessed, speaking and singing in unknown languages and drawing cosmogonies. This episode, which is the starting point of Alexandra Midal's speculative video essay, is considered the beginning of a ten-year period referred to as the Era of Manifestations.

In *Au Bonheur*, Midal presents two films, *Heaven is a State of Mind* and *Shake, Shake, Shakers*, as well as a series of utilitarian and decorative objects in a simultaneous homage to the Shaker sect and the 'noodle style', as Art Nouveau was derisively called by its contemporary critics.

Alexandra Midal (b. 1969), lives and works in Paris
— alexandramidal.com



Alexandra Midal, *Shake, Shake, Shakers* (film still), 2022, courtesy Alexandra Midal

Flora Moscovici

Revolving around the relationship between colour and light, the site-specific work of Flora Moscovici is always conceived in relation to a specific medium and its history.

Her work on the façade of the CEAAC evidences her conviction that the inner life of a space is reflected on its outside. Inside the CEAAC, scraps of painted tarpaulin skilfully underline the architecture and the furniture, applying the logics of recycling to painting as a 'utilitarian' item that visitors read, walk or sit it or even buy by the meter at the end of the exhibition.

Flora Moscovici (b. 1985) lives and works in Paris
— floramoscovici.com



Flora Moscovici, *Revêtement, cicatrices polychromes*, 2022, exhibition view, Ateliers Vortex, photo : Siouzi Albiach

Françoise Saur

Françoise Saur develops sentimental projects in which she shares her vision of the world as she sees it. When her mother died, the artist discovered that she had amassed countless objects during her life. From the feeling of existential violence triggered by this futile hoard, which was further heightened by the knowledge that it was soon bound to be dispersed, Saur produced the series entitled *Accumulations*, from which the images in the exhibition are taken.

Far from snapshots, all her compositions are carefully constructed in the studio. The unadorned frontality of Saur's mise-en-scènes nods to the pictorial tradition of the still life, while possibly suggesting connections to advertising photography.

Françoise Saur (b. 1949) lives and works in Wintzenheim.
— francoise-saur.com



Françoise Saur, *Les nacres*, 2018, courtesy of the artist

Nicholas Vargelis

Fascinated by incandescent light bulbs, which enable the human eye to perceive a wider spectrum of colours than LEDs, Nicholas Vargelis approaches light as a fundamental element of architecture, an infrastructure in its own right.

For *Au Bonheur*, he presents a threefold project consisting of an intervention on the CEAAC's electrical network that allows visitors to choose the lighting of the exhibition; an artist's book that inventories all the models of filament bulbs that were marketed until recently; and, finally, a performed lecture in which he revisits the history of this outdated technology.

Nicholas Vargelis (b. 1979) lives and works in Aubervilliers and New York.
— vargelis.com



Nicholas Vargelis, *Bright Colorful Lights and Other Attractions*, 2022, light installation and performance, courtesy of the artist

Information & contacts

CEAAC – Centre Européen
d'Actions Artistiques Contemporaines

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www.ceaac.org

Wed–Sun: 2pm > 6pm
(except on public holidays)

Free entrance

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Press relations | communication@ceaac.org

The Ceaac

Founded in 1987, the Centre européen d'actions artistiques contemporaines (CEAAC) aims to support, produce and promote contemporary creation for all audiences. Since 1995, it has been housed in the former Neunreiter glassware and porcelain store, an Art Nouveau building in the heart of the historic Krutenau district in Strasbourg. The CEAAC is a unique place for exhibitions and experimental practices, whose artistic and cultural events testify to the wealth and diversity of the regional, national and international contemporary art scene. Since 2001, it has also been running a far-reaching international exchange and residency programme with German, Hungarian, Czech, Canadian and Korean institutions.

After more than 30 years of activity, the CEAAC has arrived at a turning point in its history. Building on its vast experience and its privileged location within the university district of a city that is both one of the four official European capitals and the capital of the Grand Est Region (5.5 million inhabitants), the CEAAC has renewed its Board of Directors in November 2020. The Board is chaired by Anne Wachsmann Guigon, barrister and President of the Linklaters Foundation.

In September 2021, Alice Motard was named the new Director of the CEAAC. Her artistic and cultural vision aims to strengthen the European character of the CEAAC while working towards meeting the requirements to obtain certification as a Contemporary Art Centre of National Interest (C.A.C.I.N.). Her project for the future art centre pursues two lines of artistic research: on the one hand, a reflection on the modes of production, reproduction and circulation of images with regard to the history of Alsace as one of the birthplaces of the printing industry; on the other hand, an exploration of vernacular, local and popular knowledge and knowhow.

The CEAAC is an association under the local law of 1908 and benefits from the support of the Grand Est Region, the City of Strasbourg, the DRAC Grand Est and the European Collectivity of Alsace. The CEAAC is also part of the Plan d'Est and Arts en résidence networks.