



Mirage Duo Y

22.03.
07.09.25

An exhibition that crystallises the research of Duo -Y- around energetic hotspots in Alsace, the Vosges and Moselle since 2023 thanks to a residency in the framework of the 'mission de territoire - arts visuels' programme of the Région Grand Est.



English version



Centre Européen d'Actions Artistiques Contemporaines

7 rue de l'Abreuvoir
67000 Strasbourg - France
+33 (0)3 88 25 69 70
www.ceaac.org

Contact:
communication@ceaac.org



The artists

Duo -Ÿ-

-Ÿ- is a curator-artist duo formed by Julie Laymond (founder of the contemporary art association co-op) and Ilazki de Portuondo (artist). Their work explores the relationship between contemporary art and ancestral practices of magic in order to imagine and give shape to stories that have been obscured by official historic accounts.

Julie Laymond and Ilazki de Portuondo consider legendary events and figures as a living substance whose emotional reality transcends the ages. Their research incorporates the techniques of rhabdomancy and radiesthesia, divinatory methods based on the ability of objects such as wands and pendulums to register the radiation emitted by certain bodies. In their joint work, historical facts and emotional affects collide and materialise through creative practice.

The letter Ÿ, from which the duo takes its name, is the ideogram for the divining rod.

Works by Duo -Ÿ- have recently been shown in solo and group exhibitions, and as part of residency projects at Le Bel Ordinaire, Billère (2023); Memento, Auch (2022); and the art centre image/imatge, Orthez (2021).



Julie Laymond

B. 1978 in Bayonne, France
Lives and works in Pau, France

A graduate of the École supérieure des beaux-arts de Bordeaux, Julie Laymond co-founded Éditions Hybrid in 2007, an imprint specialising in museum promotion. In 2011, she set up an artist-run exhibition space in Bidart (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), which hosted a series of exhibitions showcasing the work of both young and established artists, as well as a programme of lectures by artists and other protagonists of the contemporary art world. As an initiator of cross-border cultural exchanges with museums, art centres and residencies from Bordeaux to Bilbao, she has extensive experience in working with public institutions and overseeing the development of projects benefitting from the support of local authorities and private partners. As the founder of the La Communale studios, she partnered with the city of Bidart to support 37 emerging artists by making available studio spaces and promoting their work. Her current work as a curator with the non-profit organisation co-op, which she co-founded in 2013, involves research into Basque intangible heritage and magic. The creative residency she set up as part of this research led to her collaboration with Ilazki de Portuondo, with whom she formed Duo -Ÿ- in 2019.

Ilazki de Portuondo

B. 1988 in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, France
Lives and works between Saint-Jean-De-Luz and Mexico City

Ilazki de Portuondo's artistic practice is grounded in feminist theory, which she studied among others with Giovanna Zapperi and Nathalie Magnan at the École nationale supérieure d'art de Bourges, and Paul B. Preciado in the Somateca research programme of Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. Her studies in art complemented a curriculum of 15 years of dance and music training at the Bayonne Conservatoire. Combining sculpture, drawing, performance and music, her work looks at the sensitive nature of the body. In 2013/14, she completed a post-graduate course in Shanghai in which she examined the question of creation in the context of globalisation. Since 2016, she has been collaborating with people who devote themselves to paranormal practices, working alongside them to understand the invisible dimension of matter. It was in this context that she travelled to Mexico for the first time to learn from shamans and healers, as part of a cross-residency organised by the Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, the Institut français d'Amérique Latine (IFAL) and SOMA, whose academic programme she attended between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, after a residency in the Basque Country on invitation by co-op, she formed Duo -Ÿ- with Julie Laymond.

Mirage

22.03.
07.09.25

Curator : Alice Motard
Opening : 21.03.2025

Duo Y



Invited by the CEAAC as part of a 'Mission de territoire - arts visuels' residency supported by the Région Grand Est from 2023 to 2025, Duo -Y- undertook an exploration of votive sources and telluric hotspots in Alsace, the Vosges and Moselle.

During several extended stays over a period of two years, Julie Laymond and Ilazki de Portuondo travelled from Strasbourg and Meisenthal to various regional sites with high energetic potential, following the itineraries found in the books of a reputed Alsatian dowser.

Informed by a shared passion for the intangible heritage of places steeped in history, particularly those linked to conflicting belief systems (such as sites of Celtic or Roman pagan rites that were consecrated in the Christian era), their research in the Grand Est relied on a methodology the artists had tried and tested during a previous project in the Basque Country, where they both hail from. The results of that project - *Sourcière (Dowser, 2019-2021)* - are on display on the first floor of the CEAAC.

While originally centred on water and its healing powers, the residency project of Duo -Y- (whose name is based on the ideogram of the dowsing rod) gradually shifted to other elements such as earth and fire. But its core objective remained the same, namely, to investigate the invisible memory inscribed in matter and space.

With the means of divination techniques known as 'dowsing', 'water divining' or 'radiesthesia', they explored the different strata - geological, historical, energetic or even symbolic - that make a given site a place of pilgrimage, devotion or miraculous healing.



The exhibition attempts to give form to the symbolic and lexical apparatus of so-called 'alternative therapists', such as magnetisers, energy healers or geobiologists, with whom the artists collaborated during their residency, materialising the way in which these 'fire-carriers', as most of them call themselves, structure their 'treatments'. Their 'circles' regularly gather in the ruins of places of worship, seeking to boost their powers by harnessing the energetic currents of these so-called 'telluric' sites.

The artists' works, which were produced specifically for the exhibition, allude to the particular mindset of these communities through the figures or forms that populate their imagination (snakes, wells, ruins or temples), their distinct terminology (terms like '*the Divine Chariot*' or '*Merkabah*'), and their metaphors or mental images (such as the '*spiritual journey of the soul*').

A landscape of ruins or a kingdom of illusion, Mirage conjures several representative and interpretative systems at once, combining varied elements from both the dowsers' and the artists' world, whether artistic (drawings, sculptures and installations), utilitarian (functional tools), esoteric (artefacts and votive or magical objects), rhetorical (a specific vocabulary), symbolic (meaningful images) and historical (obsolete objects that can no longer be used) in nature.

Drawing on the resources and expertise of a network of exceptional craftspeople, the exhibition consists of objects and installations made using materials, techniques or tools related to fire or hydromancy (salt-glazed stoneware rod handles with cobalt decoration, doors of baking ovens made of blown and cold-cut glass, glass paste dragon-shaped ridge tiles, scale-shaped tiles made of enamelled brickwork, capitals adorned with palmettes carved from blocks of salt, a cape made of basalt fabric), or found readymades (brass fireplace guards, a refractory earth crucible, a cast iron cannonball, metal table legs in the shape of hooked paws, etc.).

Mirage crystallises the research that concludes Duo -Y-'s ten-month-long residency in the Région Grand Est, which aimed to give material form to the spiritual practices of the region with the help of numerous 'artisans of the invisible' and transform the CEAAC into a place of somatic, magical or aesthetic experiences.

1- Guy Ledig and Christine Port of the Manufacture Saint-Louis, Saint-Louis-lès-Bitche; Sébastien Maurer, Thomas Schilt and Jacky Fauster of the Centre International d'Art Verrier (CIAV), Meisenthal; Bruno and Mathieu Lanter, and Alain Creutz of Tuilerie Briqueterie Lanter, Hochfelden; Thomas Vetter and Pierre Holveck of Atelier Thomas Vetter, Neuwiller-lès-Saverne; Marie-Line and Vincent Remmy of the pottery Les Grès de Remmy, Betschdorf; Geoffrey Weibel of the contemporary forge and metalwork studio Masseur de Métal, collectif CRIC, Strasbourg; Valentine Cotte, Zoé Joliclercq and Alban Turquois of Bastion 14, Strasbourg; Marianne Cresson, textile designer, and Simon Michot of Atelier des soufflants, La Bastide-Clairence.

Acknowledgements:

Duo -Y-'s residency was supported by the 'Mission de territoire - arts visuels' programme of the Région Grand Est.

The exhibition is co-produced with the association co-op, Uhart-Cize, and the art centre image/imatge, Orthez, which will present a new version of the exhibition from 7 November 2025 to 7 February 2026.

The exhibition is part of the project *l'Ill - A collaboration with the river between CRAC Alsace, Altkirch, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, and CEAAC, Strasbourg*, made possible thanks to the 'Mieux produire, mieux diffuser' scheme of the Ministry of Culture - Drac Grand Est and supported by the Région Grand Est.

With the support of:

Manufacture and Musée Saint-Louis.

In collaboration with:

Centre International d'Art Verrier (CIAV), Meisenthal

Tuilerie Briqueterie Lanter, Hochfelden

Atelier Thomas Vetter, Neuwiller-lès-Saverne

Poterie Les Grès de Remmy, Betschdorf

Masseur de Métal, Collectif CRIC, and Artistes-auteur-ices, Bastion 14, Strasbourg

Marianne Cresson, textile designer, and Atelier des soufflants, La Bastide-Clairence.