



PRESS
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La Vie matérielle

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CENTRALE
FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

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VILLE DE BRUXELLES
STAD BRUSSEL
CITY OF BRUSSELS



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One of my duties as Alderwoman for Culture, Tourism and Major Events is to follow and support the development of CENTRALE. I am, in fact, very proud to help create an artistic line that promotes the Brussels' arts and, above all, aims to lend it an international dimension. The exhibition *La Vie matérielle*, which features the work of Belgian and Italian artists, is part of this effort to open up and enhance each other's work.

In a dialogue between Italy and Belgium, contemporary artists explore the link between art and life, between the artistic path and personal experience. Their findings yield works of great diversity (assemblages, videos, drawings, sculptures, installations), which prove once again that women's art is multi-faceted and far from biased. These 12 female artists, and as many different artistic approaches, invite us to discover a non-gendered art, beyond stereotypes and any form of claim.

The gender gap and women's invisibility on the artistic scene is still a reality today. It is, therefore, with great passion that I will be opening this exhibition highlighting the work of these talented female artists. Twelve contemporary artists who invite us to look at the way we perceive women's art from a new perspective.

A great discovery!

Delphine Houba

Alderwoman for Culture, Tourism
and Major Events

In short

👉 **La Vie matérielle: a dialogue between 12 Italian and Belgian artists on the link between art and life:** Léa Beloussovitch, Chiara Camoni, Alice Cattaneo, Elena El Asmar, Serena Fineschi, Ludovica Gioscia, Loredana Longo, Claudia Losi, Sabrina Mezzaqui, Gwendoline Robin, Lieve Van Stappen, Arlette Vermeiren

👉 An exhibition that **dismantles the prejudices against 'feminine art'**. The exhibition - whose title is taken from a book by Marguerite Duras - highlights the work of 12 female artists nourished by a creative process that tends to tie artistic development to personal experience. The chapters of the exhibition open the comprehension and the gaze one can have on female art. And although there are sometimes feminist works, it is not in the traditional stereotyped and combative way or as a revendication, but rather in a more sensitive way. As such the narratives, sometimes provocative, are staged without denying their fragility and energy, revealing themselves in very diverse works (assemblages, videos, drawings, sculptures, installations) that mix the finished with the unfinished, the formal and the informal, the imagined and the experienced. The purpose is to reveal the link that unites art and life in all its complexity and richness. The key question "how does art allow to connect our body and our inner world" permits to dismantle the prejudices against "feminine art" as it transcends a gendered approach and doesn't imprison the creation of women artists.

👉 **A collaboration between Palazzo Magnani Foundation (Reggio Emilia) and CENTRALE for contemporary art:** this exhibition, proposed in 2018-2019 in its Italian version at the Palazzo da Mosto by the Palazzo Magnani Foundation in Reggio Emilia under the curatorship of Marina Dacci, has been redesigned for CENTRALE in collaboration with its artistic director Carine

Fol. The collaboration is part of an exchange through the presentation of Sophie Whettnall's exhibition *Universo Dentro* at the Chiostri di San Pietro from May to July 2021 for the festival *Fotografia Europea*.

👉 **A self-edited publication.** The 12 artists in the exhibition are given a free hand, an introduction by the Alderman for Culture Delphine Houba, texts by Marina Dacci and Carine Fol, an interview by Alice Ciresola with Marina Dacci and Carine Fol, curators of the exhibition.

👉 **A performance** by Gwendoline Robin.

👉 **A concert** of women voices in collaboration with a festival or a company

La Vita materiale / La Vie matérielle

This exhibition is a collaboration between Palazzo Magnani Foundation (Reggio Emilia) and CENTRALE for contemporary art. While the production of the project *Universo Dentro* by the Belgian artist Sophie Whettnall (created at CENTRALE in 2019 and duly revised and updated as part of this partnership) was presented at Palazzo Magnani on the occasion of the 2021 edition of the *Fotografia Europea* Festival, CENTRALE will be showing a new version of the Palazzo Magnani Foundation's exhibition *La Vita materiale*, which was held at Palazzo da Mosto in 2018-2019.

Indeed, the Italian edition of *La Vita materiale* will be partially integrated and updated for CENTRALE for contemporary art while keeping both its inspiring motifs and its purpose intact.

The project, conceived in Italy on the occasion of, and parallel with, the exhibition dedicated to Jean Dubuffet, offers interesting links with an "open" reading of art both in the process of creation and in its perception. By reusing, hybridizing, diverting or decontextualising organic materials and everyday objects, thus giving them a new lease of life that transcends their usual purpose, the exhibition *La Vita materiale* breaks down the boundaries between highbrow and lowbrow culture and fits perfectly into the billing of CENTRALE, a place where art meets life, overcoming the divisions between artistic disciplines. In this updated version for Brussels, the exhibition will host 12 artists. The eight Italian artists will be joined by four artists who live and work in Belgium, in order to anchor the exhibition to the territory in which it is presented.

CONCEPT AND ARTISTS

The exhibition - whose title is taken from a book by Marguerite Duras - highlights the work of 12 Italian and Belgian female artists whose creative processes are a bridge between their artistic path and their personal experience. The chapters of the exhibition broaden our understanding of female art and offer a more sensitive and non-stereotypical alternative to this art form, which is often associated with vindictiveness and protest.

The initiative for this exhibition, conceived by Marina Dacci (member of the Scientific Committee of Palazzo Magnani) includes an invitation to Chiara Camoni, Alice Cattaneo, Elena El Asmar, Serena Fineschi (who also lives and works in Brussels), Ludovica Gioscia, Loredana Longo, Claudia Losi and Sabrina Mezzaqui. Although trained in very different practices, all these Italian artists use materials that are often humble and traditionally associated with craftsmanship, but which occupy a considerable place in their artistic work. The four Belgian artists who will join them, selected by Carine Fol (artistic director of CENTRALE) are Léa Belouossovitch, Gwendoline Robin, Lieve Van Stappen and Arlette Vermeiren, whose practices and approaches are in perfect dialogue with those of their Italian counterparts.

Some of the key words that connect the different projects are:

What my shape says: Claudia Losi / Lieve Van Stappen

Discarded materials:
Serena Fineschi / Arlette Vermeiren

Psychic residue in another dimension:
Ludovica Gioscia / Gwendoline Robin

Mental Landscape:
Elena El Asmar / Alice Cattaneo

My hands, your hands: Sabrina Mezzaqui / Chiara Camoni

The aesthetics of destruction and reconstruction: Loredana Longo / Lea Belousovitch

Through a relationship consisting of distance and proximity, of contact and detachment, of manipulation between physicality and memory of the gesture, their research is like a polarisation of the self in relation to the world, favoured by the regeneration of objects and materials that are dear to them. The works embody visions and stories, capable of reinventing and sharing their existential experiences. The exhibition engages different senses, in particular sight and touch, to underline that their artistic experience is defined by a synesthetic dialogue between body, matter and environment. The narratives, sometimes provocative, are always staged without denying their fragility and energy. These are revealed in works and installations

that blend the finished with the unfinished, the formal and the informal, the imagined and the experienced. The public is invited to enter these worlds as in a domestic space, in a natural and protected way, wrapped in an emotional and mental web, in the hope that, at the end of the journey, we will have gained new perspectives on how we perceive and read our common "material lives" and on the link that art allows to create between our body and our inner world. This key question about the connection of our body and our inner world" allows us to dismantle the prejudices about "feminine art" as it transcends a gendered approach and liberates the creation of women artists.

Marina Dacci & Carine Fol,
Curators of the exhibition *La Vie matérielle*,
respectively
Member of the scientific committee of Palazzo
Magnani Foundation (Reggio Emilia)
and Artistic director of CENTRALE

Talk with Marina Dacci & Carine Fol

Interview July 2021 by Estelle Vandeweege (CENTRALE)

The Italian version of the exhibition *La Vita materiale* was presented in 2018-2019 at the Palazzo da Mosto by the Palazzo Magnani Foundation in Reggio Emilia under the curatorship of Marina Dacci. It is revisited here for CENTRALE, notably with the invitation of Belgian artists by Carine Fol. Apart from the fact that they are all women, what are the overlaps between these artists?

Marina Dacci: When I proposed the exhibition *La Vita materiale* to the Palazzo Magnani Foundation, I tried to conceive a new project that would break down the boundaries between popular art and fine art. This is the starting point. At CENTRALE, I wish to update the project with the current production by different artists on these broken down boundaries. I have selected artists of all ages with very different artistic practices and ways of sharing their art, but all of them use unusual, yet everyday materials and objects. All of them also involve the human body in their work. The way we worked together was also very special, because I was not your average curator in this exhibition: I really tried to create a collective curatorship, sharing with the invited artists each step of the exhibition and of the book. It was a real pleasure to create a strong network between the artists and myself and this experience has taught me so much. Many people wonder: why only women? In fact, I was interested in the sensitivity of women who are able to speak with a sense of intensity about certain social issues, always based on their personal experience. It is a different way of bringing the spectators into contact with art without fear, in a fluid and relaxed approach. When Carine Fol suggested that I include Belgian artists, I was very happy to find analogies between different realities and different artistic research.

“All the artists of the exhibition involve the body with unusual, yet everyday materials”

– Marina Dacci

Carine Fol: With the artists presented in the exhibition, we also want to deconstruct the stereotypical approach of women in art, supposedly working with poor methods and materials in an essentially aesthetic way. Some of the artworks look very aesthetic at first glance, but in reality, they are a gesture of violence. This kind of reversal is interesting, and I think this concept of duality is found in many of the works in the exhibition. The way you perceive the work initially can totally change by the end.

What guided your choices in selecting the Belgian artists?

Carine Fol: To select the Belgian artists, I immersed myself in Marina's project and I must say that we have a similar way of thinking about art and connecting with it and the artists. It all started when Marina visited Sophie Whettnall's exhibition here at CENTRALE. She had a very sensitive and accurate appreciation and analysis of it. She proposed to show Sophie's work in Italy and to present the exhibition *La Vita materiale* in CENTRALE. First of all, I discovered that the title of the exhibition, *La Vie matérielle* was taken from a book of Marguerite Duras, a writer that I really much appreciate. This book consists of a few short texts that she partly dictated to her assistant. It draws a very subjective and existential narrative of her life. As she wrote it at the end of her life, it comes across as some kind of retrospective reading on many aspects of her life as a writer and as a woman. The content is very diverse. She talks about her relationship to men, her sexuality, her parents, her house, her addiction to alcohol and so many things that make up life, in fact. When you hear that title, you wonder what it means: *La Vie matérielle*. In fact, *La Vie matérielle* is

linked to who we are, to the way we construct ourselves during our lifetime.

Then I dived into the different chapters of the exhibition and proposed four artists who could make an interesting contribution. For example, for the chapter What my shape tells, I suggested inviting Lieve van Stappen, whose work is about the body and its relationship to nature. Her work could be linked to the work of Claudia Losi, whose spectacular, yet intimate installations seem to be invitations to self-perception. Another dialogue will be established between Loredana Longo and Lea Bellooussovitch. Longo's installation is a gate made of a metal structure with a prison-like appearance and pieces of broken glass. The artist works on violence and offers a lecture that shows the reconstruction of a new reality after destruction. Léa Bellooussovitch's work on felt seems very aesthetic at first glance, but her very vibrant, impressionistic works are based on very violent images that she finds in magazines and on the Internet. She transforms images of strikes, terrorist attacks, murders in very aesthetic, almost abstract, patterns on felt.

“La Vie matérielle is linked to who we are, to the way we construct ourselves during our lifetime.”

– Carine Fol

Marina Dacci: Energy and its transformation are at the heart of the exhibition. Carine has selected Gwendoline Robin by comparing her work with that of Ludovica Gioscia's because she works on a particular perception of the cosmic energy of which we all form part. It accumulates in different layers of memories and perceptions that evolve with us. There is an interesting dialogue between many of the artistic productions in the exhibition, not in a direct but in an evocative way. This can be seen, for example, in the way the artists work on the topic of landscape, but not in the traditional way. For instance, Chiara Camoni

makes tapestries with flowers, but these define a scenario around her house in which she involves people to share moments of collective productions inspired by personal stories. It is a special landscape because it is made of relationships: a very important topic for the artist. Another example: Elena El Asmar's father is from Lebanon. She creates an imaginary landscape from glass, covered with black socks. It seems to have been created in a state of semi-sleep in which a new landscape is built, as if connected to our own DNA, a memory of what it could be. Alice Cattaneo produces abstract works in which she reconstructs a pure skyline of her personal landscape generated by the encounter between matter and her hands. Each landscape is linked to an intimate perception. In a synesthetic approach, the artist is not only guided by her eyes, but also by the echoes and memories of smells, touch and mouth.

The exhibition *La Vita materiale* was first presented at the Palazzo da Mosto, a building dating from the end of the 15th century. Here, the architecture of CENTRALE, a former power station, is completely different. What impact has the building had on your thinking about the exhibition at CENTRALE?

Marina Dacci: We have a very special space at the Palazzo da Mosto. It is a labyrinth - like a labyrinth of the mind - of small spaces, which allows the spectator to move around without following any kind of specific directions. Spectators can choose many paths through the exhibition, according to their mood and how they feel. The idea was to allocate one room for each artist, in which they could create whatever they wanted, much like a laboratory, by linking their work to certain keywords: the perception of the body, the intelligence of the hands connected with matter, the topic of intellectual property in the collective work, psychic energy inherent in each object that can find new life, the aesthetics of destruction which, in reality, is a desire to build something new, the use of

discarded materials in our everyday life. The artists either brought existing work or they produced specific works for this exhibition. As a former factory, CENTRALE is a very raw and present space. It is very difficult to recreate an atmosphere in which it is possible – both for the artists and for the spectators – to live in a very intimate way as if in a cocoon. It is, in fact, the main challenge Carine and I are facing, namely to convey this idea within CENTRALE's open space. This is also the reason why we decided to change some of the works. Moreover, some artists produced specific works for this venue, mixed with earlier work, because they illustrate some key themes of the exhibition in this particular space.

Carine Fol: The space of CENTRALE is very present by its imposing architecture. What we always try to do when we organise exhibitions is to give visitors the impression that they enter a new space each time. So we had to rethink Marina Dacci's exhibition for this space. It has become a very different exhibition in which the dialogue between the works is important and the impression it gives the public is perhaps less intimate but more dynamic. So we are both concerned and aware of the need to create balance between the works. The chapters, conceived by Marina, will be present in a fluid way. In other words, we do not want to force the spectator through a strict path. Above all, the public must experience the works for themselves. We want them to connect with the forms and the materials and then to understand the chapters.

The exhibition consists of 6 chapters, including: *Aesthetics of Destruction and Reconstruction*, *What my Shape Tells*. Can you say a little more about these?

Marina Dacci: Yes, the chapters or themes that connect the research of the artists are: *What my Shape Tells: Discarded materials; Psychic residue in Another Dimension; Mental Landscape; My Hands, Your Hands; Aesthetics of Destruction and Reconstruction*.

However, in the course of developing the exhibition, Carine and I found many other links and we invite the spectators to discover them for themselves during their visit. As I said before, all the chapters evoke energies and the processes of their transformation: in our bodies, in our imagination, in the landscapes around us, in the relationships that we can form. There are a lot of "doors" you can open: from personal to social. For example, *Aesthetics of Destruction and Reconstruction* links Loredana Longo to Léa Belousovitch. The volcano landscape is Loredana's original landscape. She works with fire and explosion to evoke injustices, to rebuild different realities. Her installation Molotov and the broken glass on black sand symbolise a desire to move on ... Serena Fineschi is interested in recycling materials as a paradigm of the mental transformation that necessarily takes place. She links the use of some waste materials to thinking about what we as a society can ingest and digest. For example, she works with chewing gum and uses her own saliva as unconventional materials to express what cannot be ingested. Today, everything is consumed quickly, but nothing is metabolised. This is another aspect of material regeneration. *What my Shape Tells* links the works of Claudia Losi and Lieve Van Stappen. Claudia Losi chose to engage spectators with a public web call, asking them how they perceive their own bodies. She selected a few sentences and re-wrote them on strips of fabric which she integrated into her work. The installation is very interesting because it invites us to brainstorm collectively on our personal view of the body as a vector of identity. We added to this work three marble *bas-reliefs* representing butterflies. This relates to the idea of transformation, evokes a relationship with time, memories, what has happened before, how we can heal and adapt to "survive" and become "better". Change is a principle of life, as Lieve van Stappen illustrates in her work.

In this exhibition, you talk about a link between artistic development and personal experience, between art and life. How exactly does this materialise?

Carine Fol: When we talk about femininity in art, there is often a pejorative and narrow analysis, according to which women work with poor materials and craft techniques. What is interesting about this exhibition is that it goes far beyond this view of women's art. Both conceptual and very personal approaches are emphasised. The most personal elements sometimes become metaphorical. Talking about oneself is not done in a frontal way, and this way of working allows to transcend the personal elements and offers the spectators the possibility to project themselves in both the narrative and the more formal aspects of these works. Serena Finesci allows, in a more anecdotal way, to make the link between Italian and Belgian artists because she works and lives in Brussels. She is the most conceptual and minimalist artist. The exhibition starts with one of her installations, made with Ferrero Rocher wrappers. She transforms them into a monographic work, very aesthetic yet made with discarded materials. The connection is made here with Arlette Vermeiren, who transforms paper and other materials that she finds in a very compulsive way. Although the starting point – discarded materials – unites both artists, their approach is very different. Conceptual for Serena Fineschi and intuitive for Arlette Vermeiren. Arlette is in the gesture, in the moment, very generous in the way she creates, and in her relationship with the work and the spectator. This is also one of the reasons why we want to establish a connection with the public, as she has the ability to create a relationship with others through workshops.

Talking about the audience, can you explain how the public is concretely integrated into the exhibition *La Vie matérielle*?

Marina Dacci: You can see the exhibition as an invitation to look at everyday life through different spectacles, how it is possible to use our imagination, the ability to transform matter into something new, allowing us to see life in a new light. The idea is to open the mind, heart and body, to offer things to see and touch. It is an intimate and trusting exchange and sharing with spectators sensitivity and thoughts in an intimate way. Each spectator has a personal

conception of what it is possible to discover, fully free to enter into dialogue with the works on the basis of personal experiences and stories. In my opinion, the works on display are really "open" and evocative. Through them, the artists open their arms and expose themselves in a gesture of generosity. For some artists, like Sabrina Mezzaqui, have a strong link with literature, as an incipient of her creations. This privileged relationship with literature is transformed into a visual work and becomes a starting point for a collective narration. Handwritten language is transformed into oral language. Another level is the process itself. Alice Cattaneo questions not only the possibility of showing the finished work, but also her approach to the material itself. We decided to use a video showing her at work in her studio that shows the process of manipulation, starting with an idea in the mind being modulated as the material that reacts and responds in her hands.

Carine Fol: The chapters of the exhibition offer a new understanding and look at women's art. The exhibition allows us to discover works that could be described as feminine, but not in a traditional stereotype way. They are not demanding or vindictive, but they are feminist in their sensitivity. Through the different chapters created by Marina, the spectators enjoy the freedom to look at a work as a connection to the intimate, the material, which transcends the very concept of existence.

The artists

Lea Belousovitch (1989, Paris) lives and works in Brussels. After obtaining a Master's degree in drawing at ENSAV La Cambre in 2014, she was nominated for the 2016 edition of the Emerige Revelations Prize. She is the 2018 winner of the Young Artists Prize of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Saint-Etienne recently dedicated a monographic exhibition to her. Through drawing, photography, video and installation, Léa Belousovitch veils and reveals reality in its most dramatic aspects. A saving and challenging *mise en abyme* at the same time. For inspiration, she draws on the numerous pieces of researches she does in the field of current affairs. For *La Vie matérielle*, Léa Belousovitch will work with images from the press or found on the Internet related to the pandemic and removes the immediacy of their dramatic character. The artist transforms this corpus of images, in particular by drawing with coloured pencils on felt-tip pens, an absorbent material par excellence. The choice of this material is, therefore, not insignificant; the artist transforms it thanks to shimmering colours into compositions of great aesthetics that soften the violence of the images, the abstraction of a reality with a sedative aim of evil and blindness.

Chiara Camoni (1974, Piacenza) lives and works in Fabbiano, Tuscany. She graduated in Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera (Milan). She worked for many years at the Institute of Natural Sciences in Naples and, together with other artists, founded the MAGRA (Contemporary Art Museum) of Granara and the Vladivostok group. For *La Vie matérielle*, Chiara Camoni will present a carpet of flowers woven on the loom, along with some sculptural elements, contrasted by a disturbing, stroboscopic light. This work draws on intimate and personal stories that the artist likes to share during and after the creative process. For the vegetal prints on silk, she uses flowers and leaves with

dyeing properties to make imprints on fabric. The process is long, involves several steps, and is largely unpredictable. It brings out real little miracles, which even surprise the artist. Flowers and plants used for these works are collected from Chiara Camoni's garden and the woods just near her home. They are allegories of the nature that surrounds her and that evolves with the seasons.

Alice Cattaneo (1976, Milan) lives and works in Milan. She graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 2001 and was awarded a Master's degree in Sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2004. For *La Vie matérielle*, she proposes a visual synthesis of several landscapes. The sculptures in the exhibition made of Murano glass, slate extracted from the quarries of Liguria, ceramics and raw iron, condense in geometric shapes that metaphorically refer to a "total" landscape. It synthesises both the internal space and the external environment, outlined by the traces of the places where these materials are extracted. The sculptures manifest a duality: the transparency and emptiness of glass, the stratification and weight of cement. Held together by fragile elements, such as cotton threads, which evoke the imaginary line of the drawn landscape, they embody the relationship between the gaze and matter, continuously looking for a balance, which is never definitive.

Elena El Asmar (1978, Firenze) lives and works in Milan. She grew up in an old house in the Siena countryside. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Perugia. She is one of the founders of the Madeinfilandia residence, created by artists for artists in Tuscany, and of Spazio C.O.S.M.O. in Milan. For *La Vie matérielle*, Elena El Asmar expresses the feeling of being like a sheet of paper pressed between two worlds, which she has felt throughout her life. On the one hand, outside, there are the Renaissance hills with their blue horizon, the embroidery

of the leaves of the trees and the constant rhythm of the chirping of the birds; on the other hand, inside, there is a succession of furniture, utensils, cups and embroideries imported from Lebanon that bear witness to journeys, distances, other dwellings, affections. If the daylight manages to recover the sometimes surreal contours of these two overlapping perspectives, at night, the subtleties blend into the darkness and distances are erased. The artist remains wandering, in the middle of this environment, as if in the centre of a sentimental game, continuously trying to reconstruct the matter of this universe that is so dear to her.

Serena Fineschi (1973, Siena) lives and works between Siena and Brussels. She studied at the Art Institute in Siena, and continued her training in graphic design in Siena, Florence and Milan. She attended Contemporary Art History at the University of Siena. She created the *Caveau*, a fortified building within the medieval walls of Siena that serves as a container of ideas. She is also one of the founders of Modo, a Brussels-based cultural association for the dissemination of contemporary Italian art and the creation of a dialogue between Brussels and Italy. For *La Vie matérielle*, Serena Fineschi will present *Maestà, Pala della Madonna della Neve*, a work with a gold background that pays tribute to the 14th-century Sienese school of painting, where the MDF board (a cheap, wood-derived material replacing the nobleness of the poplar that was generally used by ancient Italian painters) is primed with rabbit skin glue – according to Medieval tradition – on which the “gold leaf” of the gold foil wrappings of “Ferrero Rocher” chocolates is then placed. A carpet of chewing gum punctuates the floor: superficiality, appearance and decadence are the three concepts inherent in this work, as well as quoting, celebrating and desecrating the great history of painting, transformed by the body and reinvented with materials borrowed from our consumer society. For Serena Fineschi,

the relationship between the body and matter becomes a space of creation and transition, where freedom of movement embodies the rift, time, thought and matter itself. The body is solid matter, constantly poised to leave. It is movement, detachment, deviation, fall, circulation, contact.

Ludovica Gioscia (1977, Roma) lives and works in London. She graduated with an Master of Fine Art Media from the Slade School of Art in 2004 and has since developed an international career. For *La Vie matérielle*, she created a new large-scale installation, which is the result of an intimate and process-based journey. Suspended textile works portray the artist’s close relationship with her cat Arturo. Auras and psychic exchanges are enshrined between layers of translucent fabric. Arturo’s hair, meticulously collected during moments of emotional and spiritual exchange, is fused together with other materials, such as old magnetic tapes that the artist left on the shelves of her studio. The shadows cast on the walls by the hanging textiles is made up of countless small sculptures in various stages of completion. These shadows and fabrics are witnesses to the artist’s emotional sedimentations, enhanced in the alchemical laboratory that is the artist’s studio.

Loredana Longo (1967, Catania) lives and works in Milan. She graduated in Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Catania. For *La Vie matérielle*, Loredana Longo will present an installation: a broken metal gate, interspersed with glass from broken and melted bottles collected over the past year. Taking them to her studio, breaking them, then taking the bottlenecks and throwing the rest away. Such a long and repetitive process is similar to that of everyday life. Waking up, having breakfast, washing, cleaning, eating. The artist integrates the violent gesture of breaking bottles into her daily routine. The finished work becomes art.

The artist's life, the ordinary life is "art". Other bottles, such as Molotovs or just broken bottles, baked to reveal the cracks that crystallise, Loredana Longo then dresses them in metal mesh and turns them into walking weapons. The artist's work is physically demanding. When she shapes and manipulates the metal, her fingers bleed with the cuts, but this is about beauty, and for her, there is no beauty without suffering.

Claudia Losi (1971, Piacenza) lives and works in Piacenza. She is graduated from the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. For *La Vie matérielle*, Claudia Losi will present *What My Shape Says*, a title that sounds like a credo and affirmation that the artist has chosen as the title of the installation she is proposing in a new version. Her work has been inspired by a call (commissioned by an Italian plus size clothing brand) that led her to collect thousands of responses, quite different from one another, about the relationship that (mainly) women have with their bodies. A body one sometimes struggles to accept, a body that one may be proud of. Altogether, those answers emphasise the contradiction that women live in, and the relationship they have with their bodies. What they are and what they would like to be, the way they would like to be seen or the way they are told they should be seen, which are often at odds with each other. It is a never-ending metamorphosis, an adjustment to be made, "an education to appear" that is, no matter what, which is always difficult. Like a butterfly that changes shape in the course of its life. It is a complete metamorphosis that the artist has symbolically engraved in the marble.

Sabrina Mezzaqui (1964, Bologna) lives and works in Marzabotto (Bologna). Mezzaqui graduated from the National Institute of Arts in Bologna and the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. She has experimented with collective working methods, entitled *Work Table* (Tavolo di

lavoro) of Marzabotto, Parma, San Gimignano and Cesena. Her relationship with literature is strong and often serves as a source of inspiration for her work. She uses writing itself as iconography. For *La Vie matérielle*, Sabrina Mezzaqui has created light, soft and delicate works made of different materials, including paper, ceramics, metal, fabric, lace, sewing threads, etc., all underpinned by a painstaking pursuit of accuracy, silence, grace and discretion. A quote from Simone Weil's first notebook highlights this "discipline of attention" that characterises Mezzaqui's working method in other works, such as *Fiori minuti and Della salvezza con le opere*.

Gwendoline Robin (1968, Brussels) lives and works in Brussels. She graduated from La Cambre – École Nationale Supérieure Des Arts Visuels in Urban and Rural Space Planning. For more than 20 years, Gwendoline Robin has been working with elementary materials (fire, sand, water, earth, ice, glass...) to orchestrate their metamorphoses in the form of installations, performances or videos. She has forged a singular place for herself in the field of contemporary art in Brussels, Belgium and internationally and presents her performances at international performance and dance festivals in Europe, Canada, Chile, Australia and Asia. Through her collaborations with Ida De Vos for the movement and Simon Siegmann for the scenography, the desire to weave her performative vocabulary into a structure that is more open to multidisciplinary is more present and encourages her to think of spaces as active devices that are shared between the performer and the public. For *La Vie matérielle*, Gwendoline Robin will present the large-scale installation *Sous les lunes de Jupiter* (under the moons of Jupiter), composed of circular glass and metal that she will activate during the performance.

Lieve Van Stappen (1958, Wilrijk) lives and works in Ghent. She studied monumental arts (painting) and sculpture at the LUCA School of Arts

(formerly St Lucas), but soon realised that this training would not be enough. She continued her education in various types of evening classes, workshops and adult education. She has developed a very varied body of work in terms of medium, technique and content. In recent years, Lieve Van Stappen's work has been exhibited at the Flanders Fields Museum, as well as in the Netherlands, the United States, Germany, Cuba, Argentina and Brazil. Following personal events, she has been developing a kaleidoscopic and multimedia "work in progress" for several years now, in which she shows the bruised body and challenges the codes of the gaze on both illness and art, and probes the dominant visions in a personal, as well as historical and socio-political context. Her work reveals what is hidden and becomes a credo for survival in the face of disease, celebrating life. For *La Vie matérielle*, she will present a series of works dedicated to the gesture of women and the intense link between humans and nature.

Arlette Vermeiren (1937, Brussels) lives and works in Brussels. She graduated in silk-screen printing with the highest distinction at La Cambre. She was a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tournai from 1968 to 1998 and artistic director of the Textile Research Centre of the Centre de la Tapisserie, Arts Textile et Arts Muraux (TAMAT) in Tournai from 1998 to 2017. She was a textile designer for the Belgian and Italian Jacquard industries. Her work is exhibited in private collections and in several museums, including the Museum of Tapestry in Tournai, the Museum of Modern Art in Luxembourg, the Museum of Haute Provence in Gap or at the Boghossian Foundation. An unparalleled gleaner, she recovers, collects and amasses paper, translucent silk from orange packaging, cardboard and plastic. Each material, cut into petal shapes or strips, is stored in boxes. Then she knots these small, seemingly worthless elements into immense pieces of textile. She will present one of these creations for *La Vie matérielle*.

Visuals



Léa Belousovitch, Serie « Processions », « Katmandou, Népal, 12 février 2021 », drawing with color pencils on felt, 2021 © Ph: Gilles Ribero



Serena Fineschi, *Maestà (Pala della Madonna della Neve di Stefano di Giovanni - Trash series)*, 2021 © Serena Fineschi



Alice Cattaneo, *Untitled*, 2019 © Courtesy of the artist and Marie-Laure Fleisch Gallery Brussels



Chiara Camoni, *Owl (detail from Living Room)*, 2019 © Courtesy the artist and Arcade, London & Brussels



Elena El Asmar, *L'esercizio del lontano and in the back Arioso - Operoso*, 2018 (detail of the installation), © Courtesy of the artist; Ph. Elena Foresto



Ludovica Gioscia, *Psychic Residue (detail of the installation)*, 2018 © Courtesy of the artist and Vitrine, London/Basel, Ph. Elena Foresto



Loredana Longo, *Tirapugni # champagne*, 2017
 © Courtesy of the artist and Francesco Pantaleone, Milan



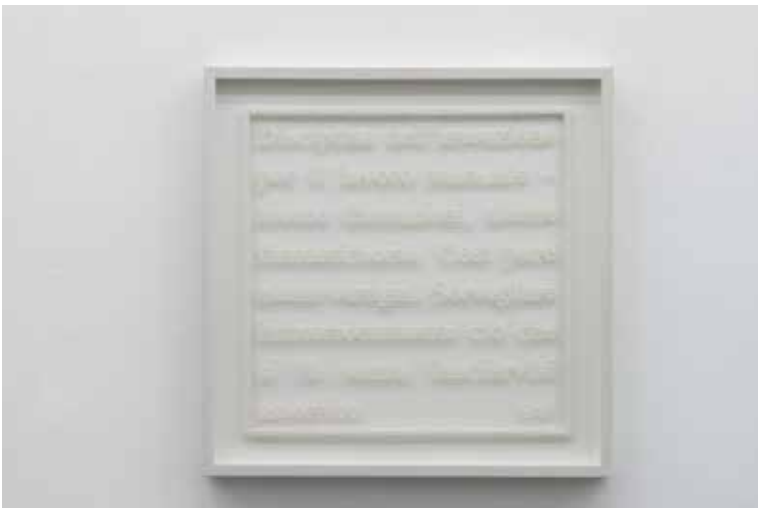
Claudia Losi, *Beating Wings, Making Words*, 2014-2017, screenshot from the video *Shape producing other shapes* © Courtesy of the artist



Gwendoline Robin, *ReadyMaking3*, photograph of the performance, Berlin 2021
 © Ph: Julia Cremers



Arlette Vermeiren, mixed media, 2018-2021 © Ph: Vincen Beekman



Sabrina Mezzaqui, *Disciplina dell'attenzione (S.W.)*, 2016, © Courtesy galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia



Lieve Van Stappen, *'Ariadnes' yarn'*, crystal cast from the hands of retired textile workers, wool, 2003 - 2005
 © Lieve Van Stappen

Publication

An exhibition that dismantles the prejudices against 'feminine art'. The exhibition - whose title is taken from a book by Marguerite Duras - highlights the work of 12 female artists nourished by a creative process that tends to tie artistic development to personal experience. The chapters of the exhibition open the comprehension and the gaze one can have on female art. And although there are sometimes feminist works, it is not in the traditional stereotype and combative way or as a revendication, but rather in a more sensitive way. The purpose is to reveal the link that unites art and life in all its complexity and richness. The key question "how does art allow to connect our body and our inner world" permits to dismantle the prejudices against "feminine art" as it transcends a gendered approach and doesn't imprison the creation of women artists.

TITEL *La Vie matérielle*

AUTHORS

- Foreword : Delphine Houba, Alderwoman of Culture
- Davide Zachinelli, Director of Palazzo Magnani Foundation & Pascale Salesse, Director of CENTRALE
- Interview with the curators Marina Dacci & Carine Fol by Alice Ciresola
- Carte blanche to all the artists that presents their research for this exhibition
- Photos of the installations of the artists in CENTRALE

PUBLISHER CENTRALE for contemporary art

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OBJECT Contemporary art

LANGUAGES FR, NL, EN

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PRICE 20 EUR

Emerging artists

CURATOR

Tania Nasielski

During the exhibition *La Vie matérielle*, emerging artists will come to the fore at CENTRALE | box, CENTRALE | lab and CENTRALE | vitrine.

CENTRALE | box FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

A space for exhibition projects by laureates of City of Brussels awards, in collaboration with partner-institutions

*cinquante
nord*

Laureate Watch this space Prize 2021



© David Ayoun

09.12.2021 > 13.03.2022

David Ayoun

fold

As a child of “creolisation”, David Ayoun develops work that questions the transformation of the body and its perceptions in its relationship to technique and memory. His practice is situated at the crossroads of image and dance, language and the unconscious, ritual and dream. Through a principle of sensitive and burlesque displacement, he deploys the fragility of simple or virtuoso, informal or archaic gestures.

His installations are designed to inhabit architectures. The spectator’s attention, perceptions, bodily awareness and mobility are called upon. He pays particular attention to the frame, the space, the temporality, and the sound. His various collaborations with artists, researchers, choreographers, composers or programmers contribute to the construction of his mixed artistic project.

CENTRALE | lab FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

A space for exhibition projects, research and process-based work



Augenmusik by Katya Ev at Palais de Tokyo © Ayka Lux

09.12.2021 > 13.03.2022

Katya Ev

Katya Ev (1983, Moscow) lives and works in Brussels. She recently completed the postgraduate residency at HISK (Ghent), after graduating from Beaux-Arts de Paris and completing an MA in Political Science at Lomonosov University of Moscow. Her work has been exhibited at Netwerk Aalst (2021), MHKA (Antwerp, 2020), Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2018), the 6th Thessaloniki Biennial (2017, parallel programme), Winzavod Art Center (Moscow, 2015, 6th Moscow Biennial special project) among others.

Katya Ev’s time-based, performative practice explores institutional critique, issues of power and control, and the potential for individual agency within dominant power structures in relation to specific political situations or events.

A showcase for in-situ projects by Brussels-based artists, selected upon open-call



Alfonse, Paul et les autres, Vivarium, installation detail, mixed media, variable dimensions, 2021 © Ph: Regular studio

09.12.2021 > 13.03.2022

Alfonse, Paul et les autres -

Vivarium

Vivarium is a space that confronts commercial staging and spectacular presentation of nature. The project aims to appeal to passers-by from the street, making the relationship between the window/showcase and the viewer a significant element of the installation. A polite universe of bourgeois decoration will be shaken up by the presence of disproportionate representations of plants drawn on the scale of the space, recreating an artificial jungle. Halfway between girly decoration and prostitutional staging, these elements will contribute to establishing an underlying sexual tension in this “vivarium” crossed by contradictory energies.

Local and international collaborations and public-space installations



les yeux-voix (do.space) © davanacker

02.03 > 30.04.2022

Carte Blanche – *Traces de l'invisible*

Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles (Paris)

CURATORSHIP

Carine Fol – Artistic director of CENTRALE for contemporary art, Brussels

ARTISTS

Marcel Broodthaers, Pélagie Gbaguidi, Guy-Marc Hinant, Fabrice Samyn, Emmanuel Van der Auwera, Angel Vergara, Dominique Vermeesch (do-space), Sophie Whettnall

Performance Angel Vergara

Music & films Guy-Marc Hinant (Subrosa)

A poem that fades away under a downpour (Marcel Broodthaers), a painting that takes shape under a sheet (Angel Vergara), an empty plinth, reminiscent or becoming of an artwork (Fabrice Samyn), automatic drawings like so many traces of trauma and creed against the forgotten colonial history (Pélagie Gbaguidi), the drawn shadow of an invisible tree (Sophie Whettnall), elements of a forgotten Merzbau (Guy-Marc

Hinant), receptacle artworks of the beyond (do-space), CCTV images that question the boundary between visibility and invisibility (Emmanuel Van der Auwera) ...

The exhibition *Traces of the Invisible* plunges the viewer into the depths of the human soul, activating areas of inactive sensibilities. It unveils works by seven Belgian artists and invites visitors to discover their unique approaches between mystery and fascination, traces of psycho-sensory experiences, transparency and opacity, presence and absence. By revealing the multiple temporalities of the work from its creation to its observation, the hegemony of the conscious and the everyday is transcended. Proof of this is that the form of the contemporary work of art extends beyond its material form. It is a connecting element, a principle of dynamic agglutination. Like a point on a line more or less visible to the naked eye.¹

The paradoxical title *Traces of the invisible* questions the very genesis of art: would this make the invisible visible? Although this question will remain open, the exhibition bases and paraphrases the precepts of the phenomenology of perception and refutes the prejudice of the objective world and objective reality.² In other words, it is not the visible that is decisive in a work, but rather the form of the connections that the artist and the viewer make. This approach considers perception in terms of the viewer's communication or communion with the work.³ It is this experience of "seeing as a feeling" that is offered to the visitor of *Traces of the Invisible*.

¹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle*, Les presses du réel, 2001, p.21.

² Carine Fol, *Distant proximity*, CENTRALE for contemporary art, Bruxelles, 2014

³ *Ibidem*

Agenda

07.12.2021, 11:00

Press conference with the curators & artists

CENTRALE | hall, CENTRALE | box, CENTRALE | lab &
CENTRALE | vitrine

08.12.2021, 18:00 > 20:30

**Vernissage of the exhibitions *La Vie matérielle*,
David Ayoun, Katya Ev & Alfonse, Paul et les
autres**

CENTRALE | hall, CENTRALE | box, CENTRALE | lab &
CENTRALE | vitrine

09.12.2021, 10:30 > 18:00

**Public opening of the exhibitions *La Vie
matérielle*, David Ayoun, Katya Ev & Alfonse,
Paul et les autres**

CENTRALE | hall, CENTRALE | box, CENTRALE | lab &
CENTRALE | vitrine

12.12.2021, 15:00 > 16:30

**Conversation with curators Marina Dacci &
Carine Fol by Alice Ciresola**

CENTRALE | hall

19.01.2022 & 16.02.2022

**CENTRALE Cinema in partnership with
Centre du Film sur l'Art**

Program TBC

CENTRALE | atelier

05.02.2022, 17:00

Performance Gwendoline Robin

CENTRALE | hall

21 > 27.02.2022

Brussels Videonline Festival

Online

13.03.2022, 15:00

Concert (artists to be confirmed)

CENTRALE | hall

SUNDAY @ CENTRALE

Every first Sunday of the month, free guided tour
(FR or NL) included in the entrance ticket.

Sunday, 11:30

CENTRALE | hall

12 & 26.01, 09 & 23.02, 09.03.2022

Workshops @ CENTRALE

Twice a month, artists explain their practice,
offering the audience an opportunity to explore
new techniques and forms of artistic expression
(sculpture, engraving, writing, sound creation,
illustration, ceramics etc.) inspired by the
exhibition.

Workshops steered by artists

Wednesday, 14:00 > 16:00

Booking: info@centrale.brussels

CENTRALE | atelier



Nestled in a former power station in the heart of Brussels, CENTRALE for contemporary art is the contemporary art centre of the City of Brussels. It develops a committed vision of art, beyond boundaries, and connected to the city and to society.

Each year it collaborates with confirmed and emerging artists from Brussels and the international scene to produce exhibitions and multidisciplinary projects housed in its various premises.

CENTRALE | hall presents exhibitions where confirmed visual artists based in Brussels enter into dialogue with the artists of their choice, along with group exhibitions showcasing a variety of approaches.

CENTRALE | box and **CENTRALE | lab** host emerging artists and assist them in developing their projects.

Starting in 2021, **CENTRALE | vitrine**, at 13 rue Sainte-Catherine, showcases the projects of four artists chosen through an annual open call.

CENTRALE also works with Brussels' art schools. Since 2017 it has offered residencies to students enrolled in the **CARE** Master – exploring the plural practices of exhibition making – initiated with the Académie royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles. In July 2020 the first edition of the **Brussels Videonline Festival**, organised in partnership with seven art schools, broadcast the films of twenty-one recently graduated art students. The festival is now held in February every year.

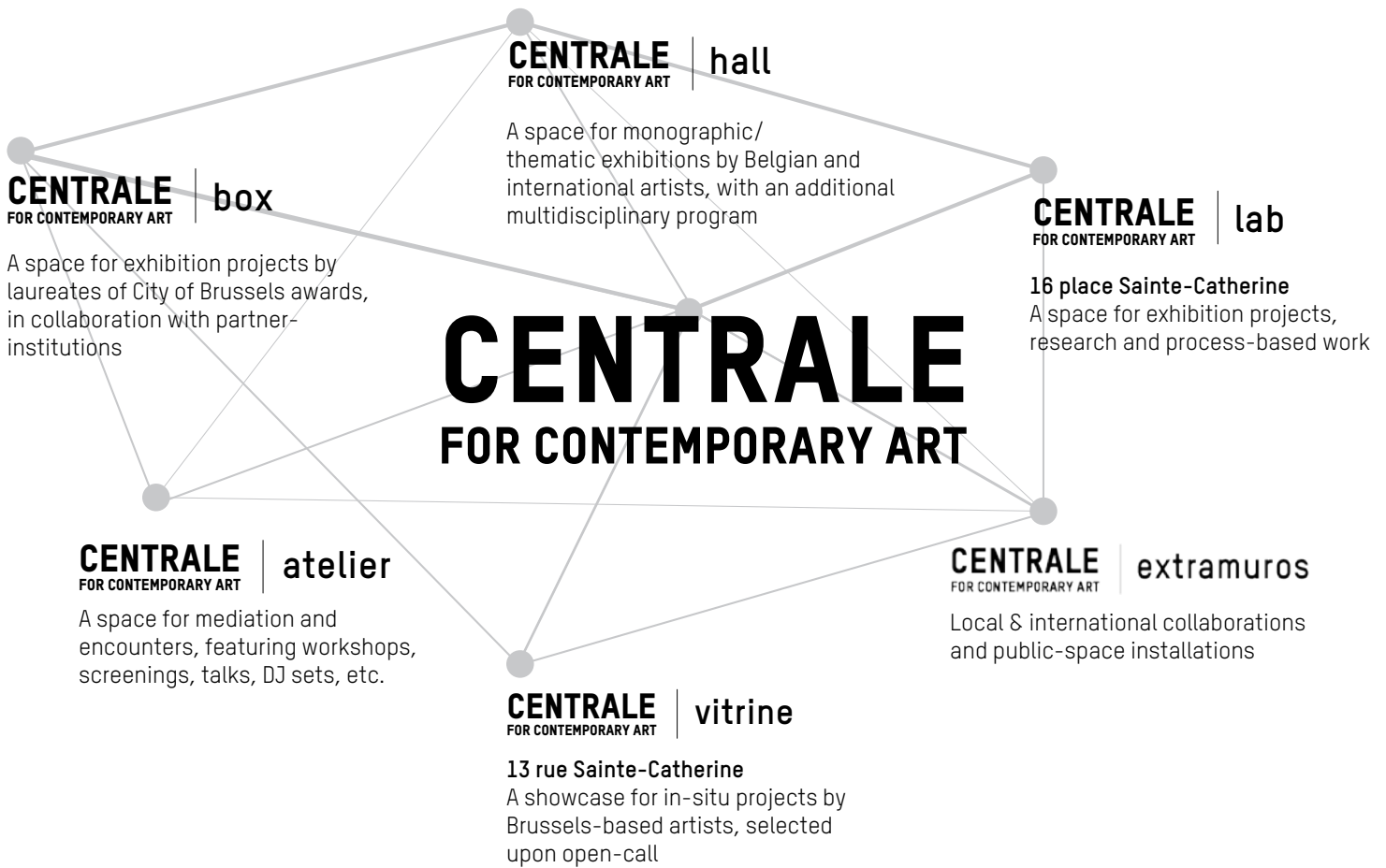
Stemming from the visual arts, CENTRALE expands its programming with performances, concerts, art film screenings, meetings, debates, and much more. Priority is given to partnering with other local and international cultural institutions.

2020 also marks the start of another new angle: *piKuur*, an exhibition area set up in hôpital Saint-Pierre, in Brussels. With its first photographic exhibition in situ, CENTRALE is ushering art into hospitals.

People, audiences, are at the heart of CENTRALE's missions: everyone – art lover or neophyte, individually or in school groups, with associations or with the family – can discover a work of art or an activity that suits them, be it a guided tour, a workshop, or participation in a work in progress, etc.

CENTRALE's mediation team offers specific attention to the needs of organisations and school groups in order to create tailor-made actions in relation to the exhibitions.

CENTRALE is ultimately a comprehensive cultural project, the project of a capital city, a project for everyone, a place where art meets life.



Practical information

OPENING TIMES

CENTRALE | hall & CENTRALE | box

Wednesday > Sunday 10:30 > 18:00

Closed on: 01.01, 01.05, 01.11, 11.11, 25.12

CENTRALE | lab

Wednesday > Sunday

10:30 > 13:00 - 13:30 > 18:00

Closed on: 01.01, 01.05, 01.11, 11.11, 25.12

ADMISSION

Bancontact, VISA, Mastercard, cash.

American Express not allowed.

8 € Normal rate

6 € Group (min. 10 pers.)

4 € 65+; Studentcard adult; Studentcard (18-26); Teacher Card; Residents City of Brussels (1000-1020-1130-1120)

2,50 € Arts students (18-26); Job seeker (attestation); Recipients of social benefits

1,25 € > Art. 27

FREE - 18 y.o ; Group leader; ICOM; AICA; Brussels Card ; MuseumPassMusées ; Press (card); disabled person; accompanying disabled person; European Disability Card
CENTRALE | box, CENTRALE | lab & CENTRALE | vitrine

Guided tour at CENTRALE

Reservation is necessary, minimum 3 weeks in advance.

T.+32 (0)2 279 64 44 - info@centrale.brussels

80 € > Per guide + **6 €** per person (min. 10 pers.-max.20 pers.)

School groups and social purpose association:

50 € > Per guide(max. 20 pers.)

First Sunday of the month 11:30 : free guided tour (included in the ticket)

Kids: A free game-itinerary for children will be provided at the reception on request. Volty, the mascot of CENTRALE, accompanies children during the exhibition with a fun notebook and invites them to observe and interpret the works exhibited according to their sensitivities.

Info: <https://www.centrale.brussels/en/mediation/teachers-room/>

ACCESS

Subway: Bourse - De Brouckère -

Sainte-Catherine

Train : Gare Centrale

CENTRALE | hall & CENTRALE | box

Place Sainte-Catherine 44
1000 Brussels

CENTRALE | lab

Place Sainte-Catherine 16
1000 Brussels

CENTRALE | vitrine

Rue Sainte-Catherine 13
1000 Brussels

www.centrale.brussels

CENTRALE

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Under the aegis of the Aldermanship for Cultural Affairs of the City of Brussels.

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CULTURAL PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS

