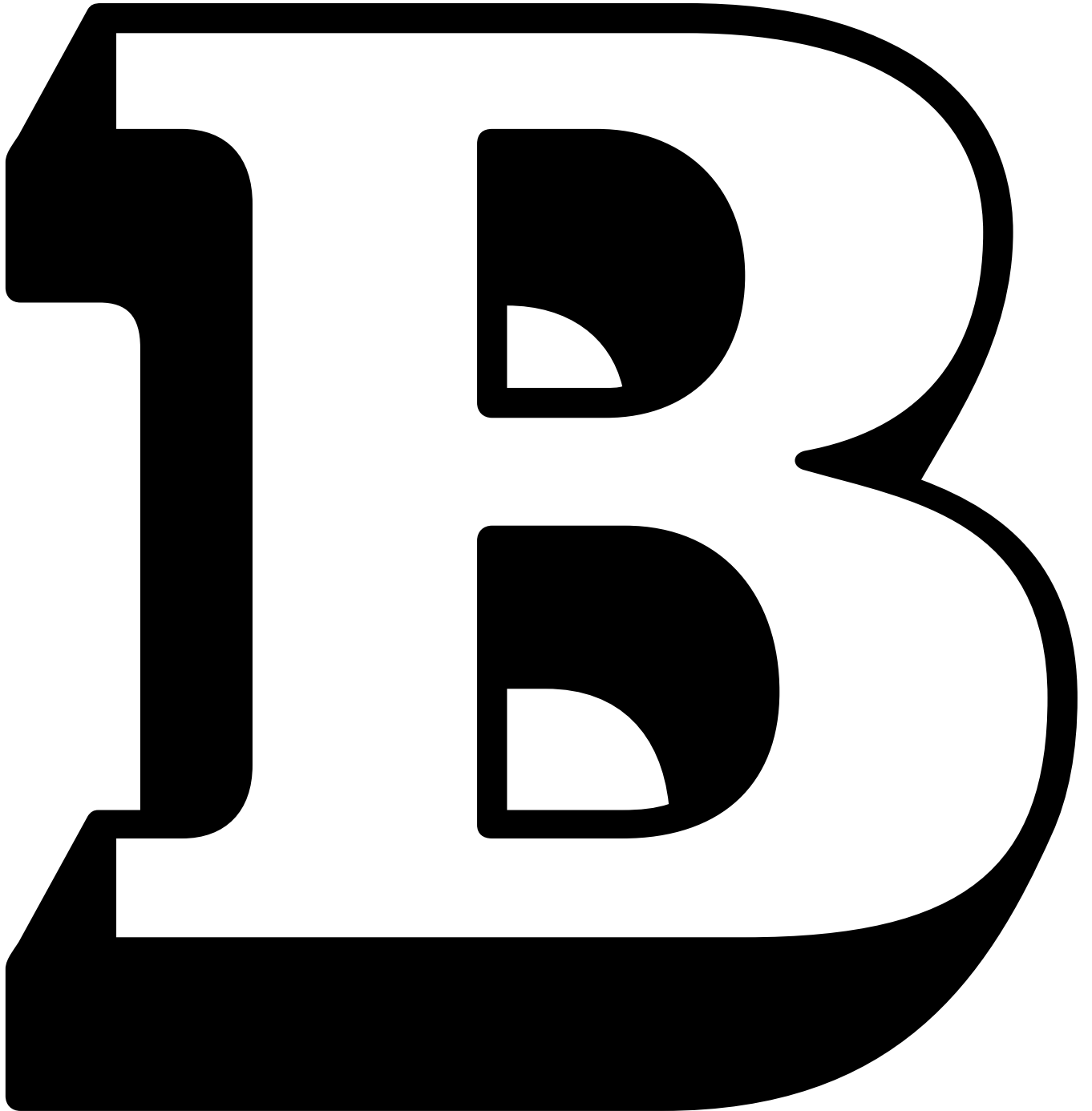


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From CCCB to CACB (2) 1991–2002, by Manon Prigent  
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## From CCCB to CACB (2) 1991–2002

Following the transfer of the city's Department of Culture from the Centre Gérard Philipe to the Espace Jules Verne in 1988, Jean-Michel Espinasse, the then-Secretary of the Municipal Visual Arts Program, took over the central space of the new venue—it was initially designed as a vast reception hall between the multimedia library and the theater—and transformed it into an exhibition venue.

The Espace Jules Verne was headed at the time by Dominique Goudal, who also served as the director of the theater. With the departure of Jean-Michel Espinasse (appointed in 1986), Goudal put Xavier Franceschi in charge of programming for the visual arts. Franceschi was working on his PhD in the visual arts at Université de Paris 1 when he took up his duties in late 1991. This was his very first official post. Although he continued in part with the concept of a laboratory—which his predecessor had embraced—by coming up with an initiative that was largely focused on experimentation and production, he also thought it necessary to work at the same time towards firmly anchoring the new venue by creating strong ties with the public.

### *A program focused on production*

The year 1992 witnessed the founding of the “Association of Art Center Directors” (Association des directeurs de centre d'art, known as d.c.a. afterwards). This represented a significant moment of reinforced support for contemporary art entities at the national level (the creation of the IAPIF in Île-de-France in the 1970s is another example), giving exhibition venues greater visibility, recognition and the chance to work in a network.

Given the context, Franceschi's first priority was to assert contemporary art's place within this multidisciplinary cultural venue. He did so first by setting up an ambitious program that was made up of solo shows essentially. These helped to reveal a whole new generation of artists who were often mounting their first large-scale projects.

One of the main characteristics of the project involved offering guest artists the means to produce new works, devised in keeping with the specific context of the venue, especially its spatial aspect. To accomplish this goal, he developed ties with the city's industrial workshops, which boasted at the time considerable expertise and knowhow in several fields (carpentry, metalworking, etc.), in order to realize many major works. There were, for instance, projects done with Philippe Ramette, Carsten Höller (*Le Saut Méduse*, acquired by Cnap), Franck Scurti (*Mobilis in Mobili* acquired by Frac Aquitaine), and Maurizio Cattelan. Cattelan notably proposed to produce and install on the roof of the Espace Jules Verne a replica of the roof of the Church of Saint Peter located on a hill overlooking the culture center. The artist had in fact noticed a surprising similarity between the buildings architecturally.

Franceschi also implemented a sustained publishing policy that brought out with an almost systematic regularity catalogues in close collaboration with the guest artists. Many of them were thus able to publish their first monographs, including Patrick Corillon, Franck Scurti, Michel Blazy, Richard Fauguet, Alain Bernardini, Luc Deleu, Bruno Perramant, and Florence Paradeis.

### *Captain Pip's Club*

Facing the need to develop new generations of museum goers and turn them into regular visitors to their local institution, in a general context in which institutions and other contemporary art venues (galleries, etc.) did very little to offer a friendly welcome to the general public, Franceschi set up an original initiative, the Club du Capitaine Pip (Captain Pip's Club).<sup>1</sup>

Cofounded with Francis Bentolila, who had only recently been taken on by the Center to rethink the institution's relationship with the general public,<sup>2</sup> the club brought together curious local inhabitants with art amateurs and professionals in the convivial atmosphere of monthly evening meetings.

Designed for a cabaret format, this spoken review comprised a variety of "columns" that included a regular update on what was going on in contemporary art, special reports, Q&As with artists, and performances. From 1992 to 2002, the Club du Capitaine Pip hosted over a hundred artists as well as many other special guests (art historians, directors of various art institutions, critics, etc.),<sup>3</sup> in order to develop and nurture a different relationship with the broader public.

Founded on the principle of making visitors loyal repeat visitors, the Club du Capitaine Pip enabled the art center to develop its audience and reach an unprecedented number of people.

### *Extensions*

In the late '90s, Xavier Franceschi put before city officials a proposal to expand the building to be able to mount more ambitious exhibitions. The aim here was to establish even more solidly the notion of a true art center within the cultural center, and reinforce its national and international standing.

There was an initial proposal that Atelier Van Lieshout came up with,<sup>4</sup> but it was a design by the architect Nicolas Michelin, in harmony with the architects Badia/Berger's original design of the Espace Jules Verne, that was selected. The completion of this extension—which entailed destroying an unused ramp and moving and rebuilding the glass façade—enabled the center to double its exhibition surface area and create office space.

The new Contemporary Art Center, designated as such by the Minister of Culture and Drac Île-de-France, was inaugurated with the show *Be Seeing You* in November 2000. This show was developed in particular around pieces commissioned from the artists. These were considered as permanent works in this case, with meaning vis-à-vis the function of the space and its recent transformations. A new version of Xavier Veilhan's *Le Feu*, a module especially designed by Atelier Van Lieshout and grafted onto the façade, a set of Afghan rugs and a reception office by Michel Aubry, and a commemorative plaque by Patrick Corillon were added to the venue for the occasion. It is these pieces, which became the property of the City and later the Urban Community of Brétigny,<sup>5</sup> that form the basis of subsequent on-site projects.

### Manon Prigent, from an interview with Xavier Franceschi.

- 1 The name comes from the room/gallery in the Espace Jules Verne where the first meeting was held.
- 2 Initially managing the art center's various functions alone (programming, communications, public outreach, administration, publishing), Xavier Franceschi convinced the city's elected officials to appoint Bentolila, the former director of Le Creux de l'Enfer, to put together an initiative vis-à-vis the center's potential audience. They were fully supported by Marie-Pierre Le Jeanne, the City of Brétigny's cultural attaché, and Jean de Boishue, the mayor of Brétigny from 1984 to 2001; and later by the Département of l'Essonne thanks to Act 19.
- 3 For the record, these names include Pierrick Sorin, Maurice Blaussyld, Roman Signer, Matthieu Laurette, Jochen Gerz, Ernest T, Pierre Huyghe, Richard Kern, Nicolas Frize, Fabrice Hybert, Yan Duyvendak, Valérie Mréjen, Erwin Wurm, Viktor et Rolf, Arnaud Labelle-Rojoux, Charlemagne Palestine, Dominique Noguez, Valère Novarina, etc.
- 4 The Atelier Van Lieshout design notably included a "plug-in" with a truck transformed into a circulating exhibition gallery that would have moved around the surrounding region.
- 5 This was how Xavier Franceschi imagined a different acquisitions policy from the center's earlier approach. In the new approach, an artist invited to exhibit leaves an artwork to the city in return.

## Chronology

### 2002

- Bojan Šarčević
- Alain Declercq
- Frédéric Vaësen
- Paola Pivi
- Florence Paradeis

### 2001

- Alain Bernardini
- Luc Deleu
- Pierre Bismuth
- Bruno Perramant

### 2000

- «Be seeing you»: Atelier Van Lieshout, Xavier Veilhan, Richard Fauguet, David Renaud, Svetlana Heger et Plamen Dejanov, Kristina Soloumoukha, Franck Scurti, Michel Blazy, Pierre Bismuth, Michel Aubry

### 1999

- Atelier Van Lieshout
- Christophe Touzot

### 1998

- Guillaume Janot
- Roman Signer
- Xavier Veilhan
- Bertrand Lamarche

### 1997

- Liza May Post
- David Renaud
- Michel Blazy
- Maurizio Cattelan

### 1996

- «Traits révélateurs» (organisée par IAPIF): Stéphane Calais, Bernard Tran, Jean-Luc Verna/Bruno Pelassy
- Didier Trenet
- Carsten Höller
- Franck Scurti

## 1995

- Richard Fauguet
- Philippe Ramette
- Jacques Julien
- Philippe Mayaux

## 1994

- «Autres directions»: Joël Bartolomeo, Alain Bernardini, Marie-Ange Guillemot, Philippe Mairesse, Florence Paradeis
- Ghada Amer
- Edmund Kuppel
- Georges Rousse (exposition organisée par IAPIF)

## 1993

- Gotscho
- Éric Rondepierre, Udo Koch
- Olivier Nottellet, Philippe Perrot
- Claude Closky

## 1992

- «Inédits de Séjour, 9 artistes d'Europe, 9 centres d'art d'Ile-de-France» (organisée par IAPIF): Timo Kellaranta, Sharon Kivland, Philippe de Luyck, Wolfgang Nieblich, Renato Ranaldi, Lon Robbe, Rudi Stanzel, Susan Trangmar, Henk Visch
- Olivier Andrès, José-Manuel Goday, Hélène Mermet/Bernard Tran
- Thomas Florschuetz
- Patrick Corillon
- Jean Le Gac

## 1991

- «Dedans/Dehors»: Cécile Bart, François Deck, Jean-François Grand (commissaire: Francis Bentolila)
- Bernard Quesniaux

## Images



Atelier van Lieshout, *Annexe*, 2000. Resin, various materials. Production CAC Brétigny—under the direction of Xavier Franceschi.





Exhibition view of "Be Seeing You", Curator: Xavier Franceschi. CAC Brétigny, France, 2000.



Exhibition view of "Be Seeing You", Curator: Xavier Franceschi. CAC Brétigny, France, 2000.



Exhibition view of "Be Seeing You", Curator: Xavier Franceschi. CAC Brétigny, France, 2000.



Opening of "Be Seeing You", Curator: Xavier Franceschi. CAC Brétigny, France, 2000.



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