

CAC Brétigny

Crazy Toads

15.01—01.04.23

Press file [1–26]

Contemporary Art Center of  
National Interest  
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Carlotta Bailly-Borg  
and Cécile Bouffard  
with l'École

Opening  
Sunday, January, 15th,  
2:30-6:30 p.m.

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Curator: Céline Poulin



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## Crazy Toads

Curator: Céline Poulin

Carlotta Bailly-Borg and Cécile Bouffard meet for the first time this winter in the art center. The invited artists share an amused pleasure of the pictorial matter and a desire for paint to overflow the frame becoming door, weapon or even organs. Belonging to the same generation of French artists (born in the 1980s and having studied in France), they also have an appetite for exchange and collaboration, juxtaposing their work with other disciplines such as architecture, dance or writing. One finds in their respective works incursions into forms of alternative rationalities, opposing that of modern thinking (the Cartesian thinking that dominates the 20th and 21st centuries), such as mysticism, spiritualism, or alternative medicine, as well as recurring references to the human body. Thus, bezoars, hermit frogs, copyist monks or intestinal knots will weave their way onto the walls of the art center. Their paintings, sculptures or bas-reliefs clinging to the space of the CAC will welcome the free artistic practices of l'École.

Interview—Carlotta Bailly-Borg, Cécile Bouffard and Céline Poulin

Céline Poulin: Could you tell us about the way in which you produce new work? How do your pieces come about—through an idea, through doing, through an accumulation of references? Do you begin with a drawing or construction, for example? Do you always use the same method or do different techniques influence your way of thinking about a piece?

Carlotta Bailly-Borg: At the studio, I'm surrounded by references, especially images. The process varies a bit depending on the medium. My paintings on canvas and glass are often born out of drawings, but it's still quite spontaneous. I don't do precise drawings in preparation, more like quick sketches. When it comes to my ceramic work, especially the work in bas-relief, it's a lot more intuitive: I have an initial idea and then the sketch is done on the clay.

CP: What form does this accumulation of iconography take? Are these images hung up around you in your studio or stored on your computer?

CBB: I have a huge number of them on my computer, but they're also there physically: both on the wall, where I hang up and take down images, but also in the books I have in the studio, which I'm constantly opening and closing.

CP: Cécile, you also use images as sources from which to start creating.

Cécile Bouffard: Yes, I have a massive bank of images, made up of images gleaned from all over the place. I have loads of screenshots, of things that I've looked at or researched, and that I put together all in one place on my computer: artworks from all periods, paintings,

illustrations from manuscripts, objects from folklore in general. Every time I start thinking about a new piece, I go back to look at this image bank. I also work from words or expressions I've picked up here and there. That's really important to me. I combine these elements of language with little drawings produced from my image bank. I make connections between the symbols that these forms contain and/or the expressions. Then I stretch the forms by making drawings on paper that I then hang up on the wall. These forms then become sculptures.

CP: If for the sculptures, the drawn form takes on volume with all the work of cutting and sanding down of the wood to give it substance, how do you work when you draw directly onto the wall?

CB: When I prepare an exhibition, I often make sketches of the space in perspective and then project the drawings into it. Most of the time, my pieces are very close to these drawings. I rarely consider my work outside of a context of presentation.

CP: Carlotta, it seems to me that this relationship to space differs according to the work you're producing. I get the impression that there are two different directions in your work: pieces that seem to stand alone and then pieces that have a very clear relationship with the architecture, particularly the paintings on glass or what you produce on the wall, like for this exhibition at CAC. Can we say that you produce differently within these two approaches?

CBB: I don't really think of it that way, but it's true that it's related to spaces. When I was putting together the exhibition "Poésie prolétaire" (Proletarian poetry) at the Fondation Pernod Ricard in 2019, the paintings on glass became perpendicular to the wall, it was my first attempt to take the works off the exhibition walls. Then, for "Futur, Ancien, Fugitif" (Future, Ancient, Fugitive) at the Palais de Tokyo in 2019, I thought that medium format paintings would be totally lost, so I made self-supporting forms, glass screens. I sort of work in phases. After doing a series of big, 2-metre-high paintings on glass, I want to go back to smaller formats, which I can move by myself! For the Fondation Pernod Ricard prize exhibition ["Bonaventure (Trafiquer les mondes)", 2021], it was a bit different again. I wanted to break the idea of one wall per artist, so I wanted to try to build architectural elements to modify the space, whereas I usually adapt to the space. At CAC, it's a bit of both: I'm presenting fairly classic formats of drawings under glass and a mural.

CP: When you decided to do the first series of copyist monks, did you already have the exhibition space in mind or did you have the idea because it corresponded with a desire you had at the time, disconnected from the exhibition?

CBB: I imagined this series separately from the exhibition platform, I could have presented it elsewhere. I had been thinking about it for a few months, but I didn't know where it was going to lead. For the past few years, I've been working more in series, which wasn't the case at all before. For the copyist monks, I knew I wanted to do a series and use this new technique of transferring photographs. So it became these sort of face-to-faces on canvas between the monks and the dried flowers, reenacting the format of an open book.

CP: You talk about series, and it seems to me that you, Cécile, prefer the term 'families'. I really get a feeling of intimacy between your pieces, a really organic side to their succession.

CB: When I'm invited to do a solo exhibition, I imagine a kind of stage. The works witness each other, they create a topography, at once vertical and horizontal, and a landscape emerges. This adapts itself each time, and I like producing new pieces for each exhibition. Similarly, whenever I'm invited to take part in a group exhibition, I try to tuck myself somewhere (in a corner, to the side...), taking into account the architecture. In any case, the works reach and affect each other, talk to each other, they're connected to each other. There are elements that slide from one to the other. In a sense, it's a language. For example, in the studio, to create a new piece I find it helpful to have a few older pieces around me.

CP: It seems to me that this intimate relationship with the works is something you have in common. Cécile, you harbour an affection for your pieces and you, Carlotta, I get the sense of something similar with your little characters. When I see your paintings, I get this feeling of closeness between you and them, as if you love them too.

CBB: It's true, it's a bit like family, and at the same time I feel that there is also something that doesn't quite belong to me, as if the works had a certain autonomy. Because these characters have become a pattern, almost a language, it's as if they exist independently from me. I'm straying from the subject a bit, but spending a couple of months with a community of monks in the studio really does create a bond [laughs]! I don't know if it's like that for every artist...

CP: I don't think so. Maybe it depends on the subject. Your works involve the body a lot, in a figurative way for you Carlotta and in a more abstract and segmented way for you Cécile, focusing on organs. The presence of desire, contact, relationships between the bodies is really significant.

CB: It's a way of having fun, of infiltrating...

CBB: Of becoming contaminated too.

CB: There's also something quite witty about the associations between the forms or the attitudes of your characters Carlotta.

CBB: It's true that it's an important factor: in my work, I show forms that make me laugh.

CP: Exactly, let's talk about the use of humour in your work. Carlotta, there's something grotesque about your characters, who do strange things (sniffing each other's bums, for example). In your work, Cécile, there are jokes hidden in some of the forms, or in how the pieces are positioned. I get the impression that this is connected to the fact that your works can be read on different levels. We get a sense of the humour, but also sometimes some things that are quite unnerving. Is it important to you both that there isn't one fixed message?

CBB: Yes, it's vital that there are lots of different layers.

CB: And that allows time. I love when things aren't direct, for the audience, but also for me. I enjoy starting from an idea, projecting it, then floating little by little adding understandable symbols, but that short-circuit themselves in a final form that we can still get to grips with.

CP: Do you mean there's a constant back-and-forth effect between a form that we understand and less obvious aspects that mix in the reading of a work?

CB: Yes, it's important to me that there's always a kind of short circuit, an in-between. If an element is too well-defined or too obvious, I try to put it to one side and take it to a different place.

CBB: Me too, I think. In form as much as content, it bothers me if it's too clear. I don't know if ambiguous is the right word, but I like it when it isn't obvious, when things are indistinct.

CP: It's a way of letting the spectators make their own projections too.

CB: Yes, allowing time, not rushing.

CP: At the same time, there are stories in your works, whether they be found in the form or in the representations. Could each of you tell us about these stories that inhabit your work or your exhibitions?

CB: I'm interested in characters or kinds of behaviours, that I then inject into the pieces and into these scenes that are the exhibitions. The titles are also really important and contribute to this narrative dimension. For example, an exhibition I'm presenting at La Salle de bains in Lyon is called "Basket Case". This expression was coined in the US at the end

of the first world war to describe amputee soldiers who had to be repatriated in baskets. Bodies basically considered to be useless. Today, it's used to talk about someone who society has judged useless, or even a 'parasite'. I built the exhibition around this idea of the transportation of marginal figures (the hermit, the mad man or woman, the parasite...), who are always liminal, on the threshold of something, constantly moving around society, whether they've been pushed to one side or have isolated themselves. The first room is called *colporte* (peddler), in reference to the book peddlers who were always moving, and the second is called *asile!* (asylum!), meaning both a place where we isolate mad people and a refuge. Each time, the pieces and the exhibitions contain these kinds of stories.

CBB: I recognise myself a bit in Cécile's relationship with narration in the sense that it is present through branches, one story leads to another... You mentioned book peddlers, and at one point I became interested in the books they sold, notably the collection called the "blue library", which was published in France in the 17th century. It was the DIY manual of its day. The books are like guides on all kinds of subjects: beauty, how to repair things... These texts were anonymous, the printers recycling and modifying the stories, and the book peddlers bringing them to the countryside. It didn't feed into my work directly but rather into my fantasy about copying stories. I love the idea of anonymity too, the fact that we don't know who added which bit of the story or when. This might have led to the copyist monk series.

CP: Could you tell us what led you to this series of copyist monks, what story or stories do you tell yourself when you create these works, with these characters that are writing and sometimes doing other things, and the flowers associated with them?

CBB: I've had a herbarium since I was a child, and almost all of my books contain dried flowers I've collected when I'm out walking. I wasn't interested in painting these flowers, I wanted them to be bigger than nature, so I explored using the transfer technique: I take photos of the flowers, I enlarge them, and I reproduce them. These dried flowers (here *lunaria* or annual honesty) tell a story of reproduction, propagation, a kind of fertility of nature that clashes with the monks who have taken a vow of celibacy. The representation of monks is linked with my interest in ancient manuscripts, which I look at on library websites. I find iconographies there that inspire me, and that I use sometimes formally in my paintings, sort of like pieces of reference or narration. Until now, I've mostly represented non-binary bodies. What's different with the monks is that they are the bodies of lecherous, overweight old men, but they wear a tonsure, a symbol of their renunciation of seduction. I feel like they have an androgynous side, especially in the last series. They've become like a pattern, I've worn them down through representation. I like the parallel that's created between a kind of uniformity—through their clothes and especially their tonsures—and at the same time something unique, because these are people who copy things that already exist, but by hand. It's not so much the religious aspect that interests me but the copying,

wearing down, recopying. I enjoy staging it: they're really concentrating but they also let themselves get distracted, licking a toe or the page of a manuscript, for example. I also see a kind of ironic *mise en abyme* in this exercise: I represent monks curled up on the pages of books while myself being curled up in my studio.

CP: You share an interest in marginal figures and in alternatives to the modern, rational, Cartesian way of thinking. This could express itself through the organic, referring to mysticism or alternative forms of knowledge, like herbal medicine, witchcraft or even madness. I interpret this as sensitivity towards feminist knowledge, from the margins, which runs contrary to medical or scientific knowledge intensely connected to the patriarchy. What do you think?

CB: That's really well said. For example, when I talk about 'madness', I'm referring to marginalised people, not to madness as defined by norms, the bourgeoisie, the State. I'm interested in madness as a sum of strange behaviours, which are transgressive and resistant, and not in its medical or psychoanalytical diagnosis.

CP: At the art centre, we work a lot on the question of the commons. We think about our work process as a group, the mechanisms of circulation between us and the users of the space. Is collaboration important in your practices?

CBB: I don't collaborate for my studio work, but occasionally for specific projects and I like it. For example, as part of an invitation to take part in a *carte blanche*, I did a publishing project with my friend Margaux Schwarz, an artist and medium. Her work as a medium is a kind of wander through images, a bit like hypnosis. The final object, the book, contained transcriptions of a year's worth of sessions.

CB: Collaboration doesn't just happen in the work, it's also about how you consider your friends, for example. Earlier we used the word family, and for the exhibition at CAC we asked Yamil Farah, a friend, to make the floor cushions.

CP: Cécile, you don't collaborate for your sculptures, but you do have collective projects, like the collective lesbian kitchen *La Gousse* or the epic lesbian review *VNOUJE*. These are iterations of other working practices, which are collaborative, and your work can also be placed on this map of relations.

CB: Yes, I'm part of a queer, LGBTQIA+ community, which you're also a part of Carlotta. It might sound like a bit of a cliché, but we share a way of seeing things, a political vision, and that produces an emulation when we're together.



CP: I think it's important to say that we don't create alone in a bubble but that there's a whole network of relations—artistic, social, in educational workshops...—that nourish the work. You've already presented your work in a joint exhibition ("Your Friends and Neighbors" at High Art in Paris in 2020) but you had never really collaborated together. How did you find this shared experience? How do you think the presence of the other's work influences yours?

CB: It was like going camping together!

CBB: You could say we're part of the same family but we didn't really know each other through our work.

CP: It's true that when I invited you both I didn't know you were both part of the same friendship group, but I could see the very clear links between your ways of working, it made sense to me to bring them together.

CB: We speak the same language outside of work too even though our work is very different. We've known each other for a while, we get on well, but now we're really meeting through our work, which allows us to have other discussions, and realise that we make the same jokes, that we have references and interests in common... It's nice, the communication and sharing of ideas happens naturally. We also have similar processes of working so we can understand each other quite quickly. In the space, I think our pieces will welcome each other, project onto each other, our work allows that, they're already compatible.

CP: Can you tell us about the title of the exhibition, "Crazy Toads"?

CB: I'm really interested in toads, and in batrachians in general. They're ugly creatures but fascinating at the same time. Their skin is disgusting, they drool, they're slimy, have big eyes... they're figures that watch, they're like witnesses. The figure of the toad is associated with so many symbols and myths. It's no coincidence that it has been associated with witches and magic: it's a strange creature that we can't quite comprehend, it can be poisonous, dangerous, or a lifesaver. As for the word 'crazy', it refers to a behaviour, which could correspond with the actions of Carlotta's characters, but also with my sculptures, which are transformed objects playing with anthropomorphism.

CP: The toad is also a figure of male impotence, it's the anti-prince. He was transformed by a witch, who is the opposite of the princess.

CB: If we have an opportunity to challenge the stereotypical image of virility, why not!  
[laughs]

CP: In the invitation, there was also this request to think of a space for l'École. It's the first time you had to think of a specific piece of furniture. How did you take this request?

CB: We said straight away that it had to be cosy. Both of us pay particular attention to space, to place. It was important that the vision not be horizontal. There would be floor cushions made by Yamil Farah, quilts and pillows that create the hills of a cosy landscape.

CBB: There's something formless about these elements too, which is linked to both of our practices.

CP: You also chose tables that were a bit monastic too.

CB: Yes, but at the same time they're a bit like socks, it's a bit like monks in socks and sandals. There's something ridiculous about these tables, by Robin Nicolas. It could be the whiplash in an otherwise slack landscape.

CP: The exhibition will also host educational and amateur artistic activities, free-form practices that are based on personal experimentation but that will build on your techniques and subjects from your work. Did the integration of these issues of alternative pedagogy and community experimentation feel natural to you?

CBB: I went to school at l'École Decroly, an active learning school in Paris, so I grew up with these ideas of sharing, autonomy, exchanging knowledge and inclusion. These are concepts that speak to me and seem natural to me. The invitation to integrate this dimension was an open one. If you had proposed something more authoritarian, it might have bothered me, but it is perfectly in line with our ways of working and seeing art!

Retranscription and editing: Anne-Charlotte Michaut

Translation: Annie-Rose Dunn

## Biographies

Carlotta Bailly-Borg, born in 1984, lives and works in Brussels. She graduated from the École nationale supérieure d'arts de Paris-Cergy in 2010 and was in residence at the Pavillon du Palais de Tokyo between 2012 and 2013. The artist alternates between different mediums, without hierarchizing them. Drawing, painting on canvas, ceramics, frescoes, and reverse glass painting are all media in which she deploys a pictorial and fictional space made up of a set of re-appropriated references. In a facetious relationship with art history and its chronology, Carlotta Bailly-Borg mixes Greek and Hindu mythological sources, medieval manuscripts, and Japanese erotic representations. She draws, paints, and sculpts "free, fluid, flexible" bodies that "adapt, bend and curve with an almost disconcerting lightness" to the constraints of their different contexts of appearance. Carlotta Bailly-Borg has been nominated for the 22nd Pernod Ricard Foundation Prize in 2021 and has exhibited among others at the Praz Delavallade Gallery in Paris and the Vitrine Gallery in Basel in 2022; at the Fondation Van Gogh in Arles, at the Friche la Belle de Mai and the Traverse in Marseille in 2021; at Goldsmiths CCA in London, Efremidis Gallery in Berlin and Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2020; at Fondation Ricard in Paris in 2019; in the setting of the Baltic Triennia, at Attic in Brussels and CNEAI in Chatou in 2018.

Cécile Bouffard, born in 1987, lives and works in Paris. She graduated from the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon in 2014 and has since co-founded the artist-run-space Pauline Perplexe in Arcueil. In 2015 and 2021, she was in residence at the Cité internationale des arts, and in 2020 at the Villa Belleville. In her sculptural practice, she gives life to a repertoire of objects borrowed from the vernacular, bodies, and sensual gestures. Alternating between the familiar and the strange, softness and incision, suggestion and advocacy, her creations are not to be defined. She cultivates an ambiguity so that one cannot assign categories, identities or uses to her work: for Cécile Bouffard "just as words can make the tongue fork, gestures and shapes have a double meaning and play a game of make-believe even in their composition" The artist exposed her work in solo exhibitions at the Centre d'art contemporain Les Capucins in Embrun in 2019, at the guadalajara90210 gallery in Mexico, at Rond-Point Projects in Marseille and at La Salle de Bains in Lyon in 2022. She has participated in group exhibitions, including "La fugitive" at Crédac in 2022, "Ricochette" at Le Berceau in 2021, "Your friends and neighbours" at High Art and "Sâr Dubnotal" at CAC Brétigny in 2020. Since 2021 she has been collaborating with the dancer and choreographer Ruth Childs in the *Delicate people* project and has been leading since 2018 several lesbian collective projects such as *VNOUJE* with Clara Pacotte and Roxanne Maillet and *La Gousse* with Barberin Quintin and Roxanne Maillet. Her works have been included in the collections of the Cnap, the Fonds d'art contemporain-Paris Collections, the artothèques of the City of Strasbourg and of the Maison des arts de Grand Quevilly.

Céline Poulin has served as the director of CAC Brétigny since June 2016. Her vision for the art center, like her earlier programs and exhibitions, evinces her focus on reception as well as collaboration, information and communications arrangements. In this regard, she has mounted, for example, the group shows “Vocales” and “Desk Set,” as well as the first solo shows in France of Liz Magic Laser, Núria Güell and and recently the first institutional monograph of Sara Sadik. Before starting her activity as an independent curator in 2004, she was head of the youth program of BD BOUM, a comic strip festival affiliated with the Ligue de l’enseignement, a french national network of popular education. She has also worked in institutions as Parc Saint Léger (Pougues-les-Eaux) or Crédac (Ivry-sur-Seine). From 2015 to 2018 she codirected with Marie Preston (with the assistance of Stéphanie Airaud) the traveling seminar “Legacies and modalities of co-creation practices”. This work was an extension of *Micro-Séminaire*, which was published in 2013 and theorized curatorial practices occurring outside of the usual designated spaces. That gave rise to *Co-Création*, which was jointly published by Empire and CAC Brétigny. In 2021, the CAC Brétigny and Tombolo Presses published *Inventer l’école, penser la co-création* [Inventing the school, thinking co-creation] of Marie Preston, of which she is the editorial director with the artist. Céline Poulin is a cofounder and member of the curatorial collective Bureau/, which is behind a dozen exhibitions. She is also a member of IKT.

## L'École

L'École is a space for discussion and experimentation, for thinking together about the uses of an alternative school of practices and knowledge within the visual arts. Started in October 2020 at CAC Brétigny, l'École has brought together people from different backgrounds but with a shared desire to learn and do things differently.

True research in action, l'École is co-constructed by its participants over the course of their discussions. How do we create a school within which the means of transmission are neither top-down nor authoritarian? Reflections on the pedagogical contents and structure of l'École are shared: who teaches what and how? These considerations are nourished by the intersecting histories of popular education and the visual arts and meet with questions around amateur and professional art (often considered as contrasting practices) and the notion of work more generally.

During Camille Bernard's exhibition "Nid" ("Nest"), l'École took up residence in the exhibition space for two months with an open practical space where you could dress up fruit, pieces of wood and theoretical texts, take part in workshops on demand mixing sewing, knitting and stamp making and attend events with readings, translation and invitations. L'École continues its experimentations in dialogue with Carlotta Bailly-Borg and Cécile Bouffard's exhibition. An open practical space invites everyone to get creative and collaborative, by making an amulet with clay, fabric and plants, or by sharing a moment around games designed by artists: *L'Art et ma carrière* by Olivia Hernaiz, *Chaud Bouillon* by Line Hachem and Raphaël Serres, and *"Eux" et "nous": ce qui nous rassemble, ce qui nous sépare* by Clémence de Montgolfier (The Big Conversation Space).

Have participated to one or several session(s) of l'École: Hervé Ardisson, Mamadou Balde, Juliette Beau Denès, Camille Bernard, Laura Buruoca, Morgane Brien-Hamdane, Margaux Carvalho, Jérôme Colin, Mathis Collins, Mélissa Colombani, Thomas Conchou, Étienne de France, Camille Duval, Milène Denécheau, Domitille Guilé, Ariane Guyon, Celine Drouin Laroche, Victorine Grataloup, Loïc Hornecker, Elisa Klein, Daisy F. Lambert, Louise Ledour, Juliette Lefebvre, Elena Lespes Muñoz, Fanny Lallart, Thomas Maestro, Vinciane Mandrin, Camille Martin, Lou Masduraud, Gayta Mervil, Anne-Charlotte Michaut, Marie-Françoise Millon, Céline Millot, Mathilde Moreau, Anna Pericchi, Coraline Perrin, Zoé Philibert, Marie Plagnol, Mélanie Pobiedonoscew, Céline Poulin, Marie Preston, Dina Ravalitera, Sébastien Rémy, sophie rogg, Katia Schneller, Ana Tamayo, Rébecca Théagène, Emilie Tournellec, Valentina Ulisse, Juliette Valenti, Nathalie Valenti and Gaël Vince.

## Images



Carlotta Bailly-Borg, exhibition view «Futur, ancien, fugitif», Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019. *A Liquid Company*, 2019. © Photos: Romain Darnaud.



Carlotta Bailly-Borg, *Trouble and trouble*, 2022. ©Photos: Rebecca Fanuele.



Carlotta Bailly-Borg, *MONK (4)*, 2022. ©Photos: Rebecca Fanuele.





Cécile Bouffard, *Babosa babosa*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.



Cécile Bouffard, *Enthousiasme I*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.



Cécile Bouffard, *...je vous donne encore ma Baguette*, 2022. © Jean-Christophe Lett.

## Agenda

Sunday, January 15th, 2:30-6:30 p.m.  
Opening

Open to all. Free entrance. Refreshments and snacks will be offered.

Free shuttle Paris-Brétigny available: Pick up at 1:45pm at 104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris (the Bibliothèque François Mitterrand metro stop).

Mandatory booking for the shuttle at [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com)

Thursday, January 19th 2023, 5 p.m.  
Educational visit

You are invited to discover the activities that we offer to groups through a visit of the exhibition "Crazy Toads".

For kindergarten, elementary and secondary school teachers, animators, educators, and associations. Registration: [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com) or +33 (0)1 60 85 20 76.

Thursday, February 2nd 2023, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Teen visit  
"CAC, tomatoes, onions"

Specially addressed to high and middle school students, "CAC, tomatoes, onions" is a visit taking place during the lunch break, between two lessons. After a tour of the exhibition accompanied by the CAC team, participants are invited to share their impressions over a snack. Free admission.

Wednesdays, January 25th and February 15th 2023, 4:30-6:00 p.m.  
Artistic workshop  
"Maxi Mix"

During this workshop, children experiment modeling techniques using simple materials such as rope and modeling dough. By manipulating, assembling, intertwining, and knotting, the children model their own colorful bas-relief.

3 years and up. Registration: [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com) or +33 (0)1 60 85 20 76.

Saturday, February 4th 2023, 4:15-5:45 p.m., before the show "Promise me" at Théâtre Brétigny  
Artistic workshop for families  
"Sacagris Herbalis"

Inspired by the works in the exhibition and the artists' interest in botany and ancestral knowledges, families create lucky charms. They personalize a little pouch made of fabric

using vegetable printing technique. Then, they put into the bag some natural elements picked for their magical properties along with encouraging formulas. The participants can then keep this lucky charm to protect themselves.

For families, 3 years and up. Registration: [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com) or +33 (0)1 60 85 20 76.

Saturday, February 11th  
Guided tour  
TaxiTram

Guided tour of the exhibition on the occasion of a TaxiTram.

Information on the [tram-idf.fr](http://tram-idf.fr) website, or by email and phone at [taxitram@tram-idf.fr](mailto:taxitram@tram-idf.fr) / +33 (0)1 53 34 64 43

Saturday, February 18th 2023, 3:00-4:30 p.m.  
Artistic workshop  
“Sink ink”

After observing the works in the exhibition, everyone imagines fantastic plants and animals and incorporates them into an engraving. We explore this ancient print process and reproduce our drawings over and over with the help of different tools.

8 years and up. Registration: [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com) or +33 (0)1 60 85 20 76.

Saturday, March 11th 2023, 2:00-6:00 p.m.  
A playful and artistic afternoon  
A Saturday with l'École

The École, the CAC Brétigny's visual arts practice and knowledge experimentation group, proposes an afternoon of playful learning for young and old alike. Games, workshops, discussions, and performances will allow the participants to discover different ways of creating and learning together.

With: Bye Bye Binary, Line Hachem and Raphaël Serres, Olivia Hernáiz, Tilhenn Klapper, Jul Maroh. A more detailed program will be announced here soon on [cacbretigny.com](http://cacbretigny.com)

Open to all.

Saturday, March 25th 2023, 3:30-4:30 p.m.  
Sensory visit for toddlers, as part of the Semaine Nationale de la Petite Enfance.  
“Nose, hands, eyes”

The little ones discover the world of “Crazy Toads” at their pace, in an active and playful way. They are stimulated by the smells, textures and colors that live within the exhibition. The visit is rhythmmed by active workshop moment, for a gentle discovery of the works.

From 6 to 36 months old. Registration: [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com) or +33 (0)1 60 85 20 76.

Wednesday, March 29th 2023, 4-5:30 p.m.

Book reading and artistic workshop

In collaboration with the Jules Verne library

Véronique Guillaume, librarian, will perform a reading of the book “Strongboy” by Ilya Green which will be followed by an artistic workshop proposed by the CAC Brétigny team.

3 years and up. Registration: [reservation@cacbretigny.com](mailto:reservation@cacbretigny.com) or +33 (0)1 60 85 20 76.

## *The ABCC of CACB*, Charles Mazé & Coline Sunier

For Carlotta Bailly-Borg and Cécile Bouffard’s exhibition “Crazy Toads”, we scoured maps of the Essonne region in search of bodies of water that provide a habitat for frogs and toads. The Carpe d’or lake, the Morsang reservoir, the Salmouille, the Brûle-Doux lake, the Mauvais Temps stream, the Sangliers pond, the Misery marsh, etc.: medieval-named living environments for these batrachians, often associated with magic and all sorts of other beliefs.

Removed from their cartographic context, these wetlands become viscous, soft, intestinal and uterine, and may echo some of the artists’ works. Abstract and strange, they are forms onto which we can project others, like a Rorschach test. This collection of 16 symbols integrates the LARA typeface into the emoji Hole 🕒, a cartoon-like round black hole evoking a burrow as much as a sewer manhole or a bottomless pit.

### Coline Sunier & Charles Mazé

Throughout their residency at CAC Brétigny, Charles Mazé & Coline Sunier are in charge of the art center’s visual identity, which is conceived as a long-term research. The ABCC of CACB is a collection of letters, signs, and symbols made in Brétigny-sur-Orge and the department of Essonne, or selected in relation to the art center, its program, and the artists invited to exhibit their work. This corpus is now embodied in a new typeface called LARA, activated one letter at a time on communication materials, which are all considered as spaces for publication and distribution of the collection. By associating multiple voices within the same typeface whose glyphs continue to grow in number, with writings that are alternately vernacular, institutional, personal, and public, The ABCC of CACB is an attempt to edit the geographic, political and artistic context in which CAC Brétigny is found. The abécédaire is [available online](#).

Læ collectif<sup>1</sup>  
Bye Bye Binary

07.01—01.04.23  
Exhibition at Théâtre Brétigny

Curator: Céline Poulin

Axelle Neveu  
Camille°Circlude  
Enza Le Garrec  
Eugénie Bidaut  
H. Alix Sanyas (Mourrier)  
Léna Salabert Triby  
Ludi Loiseau  
Roxanne Maillet  
Tif\*Félix Kazi-Tani

Bye Bye Binary (BBB) is both an educational space and a community. It brings together a set of people (29!), mainly graphic designers, who experiment with and study inclusive and non-binary language and ways of writing. As such, BBB has created the first library of inclusive typefaces.

BBB is particularly interested in ligatures (when two or three graphemes are joined to form a new one), such as ae and vf. Ligatures are “based on connection and transitions rather than separation,” the collective writes. An observation that sounds like a statement and that embodies an artistic commitment close to practices in popular education and co-creation.

That is what it’s all about, in their methods in general and for this exhibition: creating together. For the exhibition at the Phare, the group has decided to select the pieces to be shown together and to collectively produce a large flag by appropriating the themes of the plays presented as part of the theatre’s season “Un pas de côté” (One step aside). This shared production follows very precise rules established by the group. As Marie Preston wrote: “To exist as a collective force, each group needs to decide on founding motions specific to its functioning. This supposes that “artifices”, “institutions” are employed. The artifice “tries to make the arrangements run away which, in a set situation, block, lock our capacity of action.” It consists of inventing new habits and believing in their potentially transformative effect. It forces “shifts” and obliges us to think of what seems “natural.”<sup>2</sup>

1 As the french language is so gendered, BBB is working with ligatures (such as ae & vf) to un-binarise and un-masculinise language.

2 Céline Poulin and Marie Preston (dir.), Marie Preston, *Inventer l'école, penser la co-création*, CAC Brétigny-Tombolo Presses, 2021.



At BBB, members of the group are randomly assigned a number from 1 to X, depending on the number of members involved in the creation or the project (9 for Brétigny). Then, each person adds to, modifies and transforms the proposal of the previous person, like a game of exquisite corpse. Well, not exactly... Exquisite corpse is a group game “in which different people compose a sentence, or a drawing, without any of them being able to consider the collaboration or previous collaborations”. Here, each co-creator knows what has been produced and creates from previous creations, with the last person getting the last word. There is something very random about this process, but it is also about encounters between people and worlds. Nobody creates without taking the other creators into account, on the contrary.

Writing about BBB’s ligatures, curator Karin Schlageter said that “their intertwined lines produce an aesthetic of love”, so true it is that intertwining letters generate a tender and affectionate image. The philosopher Alain Badiou defines love as a meeting of differences that, together, will “experience the world in a new way”<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, love can only take on a “random form”. “In reality it’s just a strange adventure,” says graphic novel author Liv Strömquist, quoting Lou Andréas-Salomé<sup>4</sup>. This is precisely the work of Bye Bye Binary, as typographers, graphic designers, artists, which is built this way. They take us with them off the beaten track of language, to give form to other relationships with the self and with others. Strömquist, following in the footsteps of the philosopher Eva Illouz, says emotional commitment is intuitive and “rational decision-making hinders our ability to commit emotionally”. bell hooks put it differently: “Awakening to love can happen only as we let go of our obsession with power and domination.”<sup>5</sup> The collective work of BBB requires a relinquishment of authority since everyone is author collectively, without individual participation being visually identifiable. With BBB, the group becomes one in a logic of power sharing and fusion of identities.

Bye Bye Binary (BBB) is a Franco-Belgian collective, an educational experiment, a community, a variable typo-graphic workshop, a network, an alliance. The collective, formed in November 2018 during a joint workshop of the typography workshops of the École de Recherche Graphique (erg) and La Cambre (Brussels), proposes to explore new graphic and typographic forms adapted to the French language, in particular the creation of glyphs (letters, ligatures, median points, linking or symbiotic elements) taking as a starting point, field of experimentation and research subject inclusive and non-binary oral and written language.

3 Alain Badiou with Nicolas Truong, *Eloge de l’amour*, Champs Essais, Flammarion, 2021.

4 Liv Strömquist, *La Rose la plus rouge s’épanouit*, Rackham, 2019

5 bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*, Harper, 2000.

## General information

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Free admission. Open from Tuesday to Saturday, 2pm–6pm.  
Openings during evening and Sunday performances at Théâtre Brétigny.

### By RER C:

Brétigny stop. From Paris, train BALI, DEBA, DEBO, ELBA direction Dourdan, Saint-Martin d'Étampes. From Dourdan and Saint-Martin d'Étampes, trains LARA, PARI, DEBO direction Saint-Quentin en Yvelines, Gare d'Austerlitz, Invalides.

From Brétigny station, follow the direction of Espace Jules Verne, take boulevard de la République, continue on Pl. Chevrier, take slightly to the right on rue Danielle Casanova, and at the rotary take left to rue Henri Douard.

### By car:

From Paris, A6 direction Lyon, exit Viry-Châtillon, Fleury-Mérogis, then Brétigny center. From Évry, Francilienne direction Versailles, exit 39B direction Brétigny. From Versailles, Francilienne direction Evry, exit Brétigny center. From Étampes, RN20 direction Paris, exit Arpajon-Égly-Brétigny-sur-Orge-Saint-Vrain.

For car-sharing, join the group BLABLACAC(B) on Facebook

“Læ collectif” is part of the cycle “Un pas de côté [One step aside]” of the Théâtre Brétigny, which is co-producer of the exhibition. L'École is part of the “Contrat d'Éducation Artistique et Culturelle” (CTEAC) of Cœur d'Essonne Agglomération with the DRAC Île-de-France and the Academy of Versailles. The CAC Brétigny is a cultural establishment of Cœur d'Essonne Agglomération. Labeled as a Contemporary Art Center of National Interest, it benefits from the support of the Ministère de la Culture—DRAC Île-de-France, Région Île-de-France and Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, with the complicity of the Brétigny-sur-Orge's municipality. CAC Brétigny is a member of TRAM and d.c.a.