

CAC Brétigny

Contemporary Art Center of
National Interest
Cœur d'Essonne
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Off-site season
2024—2025

Exhibition «Witches confused
by their own magic»
Curators: The CAC Brétigny
team

05.11—07.12.24

Olivier Léonhardt library
in Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois

Press release [1–7]

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Cyclone


Tapisserie

Bridget Low
Coton, laine acrylique,
63 x 68 cm

a house is not a woof (recto)
2023

“Bascules”

Off-site season 2024—2025

Curators: The CAC Brétigny team (Zélia Bajaj, Milène Denécheau, Léana Doualot, Esther Gobin-Brassart, Elisa Klein, Danaé Leroy, Coraline Perrin, Marie Plagnol, Ekaterina Tsyrlina)

“Witches confused by their own magic”

With Bridget Low

CAC Brétigny presents a two-part solo exhibition by Bridget Low in collaboration with the Olivier Léonhardt and Simone Veil libraries in Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois and Ollainville, respectively. The artist draws inspiration from popular American imagery: stories, cartoons and fantasy literature transport us into a childlike world. Using bright colours from children’s furniture, she revives traditional techniques, such as tapestry making, which were historically passed down between women and practised in a domestic setting.

Users of the libraries are invited to try their hand at weaving techniques in a free-practice space designed by the artist and the art centre’s team. Looms of varying sizes and different materials are made available to everyone. Children and adults alike are welcome to come and use them independently, trying without fear of getting it wrong, learning by doing or interacting with others.

The two chapters of Bridget’s project for CAC Brétigny’s season entitled “Bascules” (“Seesawing”) work in dialogue: hanging from mezzanines or ceilings, the artist’s textile creations transform the spaces they inhabit. Presented like boxes of comic strips woven from colourful threads, her works invite the readers to lift their heads and immerse themselves in the everyday life of a witch troubled by little to nothing.

The first exhibition in Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois is entitled “Witches confused by their own magic” and the second, in Ollainville, is entitled “Witches displeased by their own perfume”. Borrowed from the lyrics of the song *Lost Girls* written by the duo CocoRosie, these two titles are a nod to the witches that populate Bridget Low’s tapestries. The song uses this mystical figure to call for an end to the objectification of so-called feminine bodies.

Once custodians of ancestral knowledge passed down orally by women, witches were violently hunted down from the 15th to the 18th century. As the feminist historian Silvia Federici writes: “At the stakes not only were the bodies of the ‘witches’ destroyed, so was a whole world of social relations that had been the basis of women’s social power and a vast body of knowledge that women had transmitted from mother to daughter over the generations—knowledge of herbs, of the means of contraception or abortion, of what magic to use to obtain the love of men.[1]” Since depicted as a dangerous and immoral creature in Western culture, the witch became a feminist icon in Europe and the US in the 1970s, as demonstrated by the name of the group W.I.T.C.H. (Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) formed in New York in 1968 as part of the women’s liberation movement.

In Bridget's work, the witch appears repeatedly as a free spirit, uninhibited by gender norms (of beauty, gentleness, elegance, modesty...) In the company of curious domestic furniture, she goes happily about her idle business, with no concern for how she is perceived or about being productive. Her power perhaps lies in this unselfconsciousness. She only concerns herself with her own affairs: her own magical powers and her perfume.

[1] Silvia Federici, "Witch-Hunting and the Fear of the Power of Women" in *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women*, New York, PM Press, 2018, p. 33.

Bridget Low (born in 1995) lives and works in Marseille where she co-manages Atelier Vé. She is a 2017 graduate of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond. She mainly works on tapestry weaving in a lively, colorful universe. She takes inspiration from reality TV, films, and music in American pop culture, which is the source of her characters. She participated in creating the Monstera collective in 2021 alongside artists Delphine Dénéreaz, Léna Gayaud and Opale Mirman. She has exhibited at the Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille (2022) and Carré d'Art—Musée d'art contemporain in Nîmes (2024).

Images



Bridget Low, *Don't drug dolls*, 2021. View of the exhibition "MONSTERA". Collectif Monstera. Hangar Belle de Mai, Marseille. 2021. Photo: Enzo Arrus.



Bridget Low, *Good Soup*, 2023. Photo: Mathilde Grenet.



Bridget Low, *A house is not a roof*, 2023. Photo: Théo Eschenauer.

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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, and has the complicity of the Brétigny-sur-Orge's municipality. CAC Brétigny is a member of DCA, TRAM and BLA!.

