

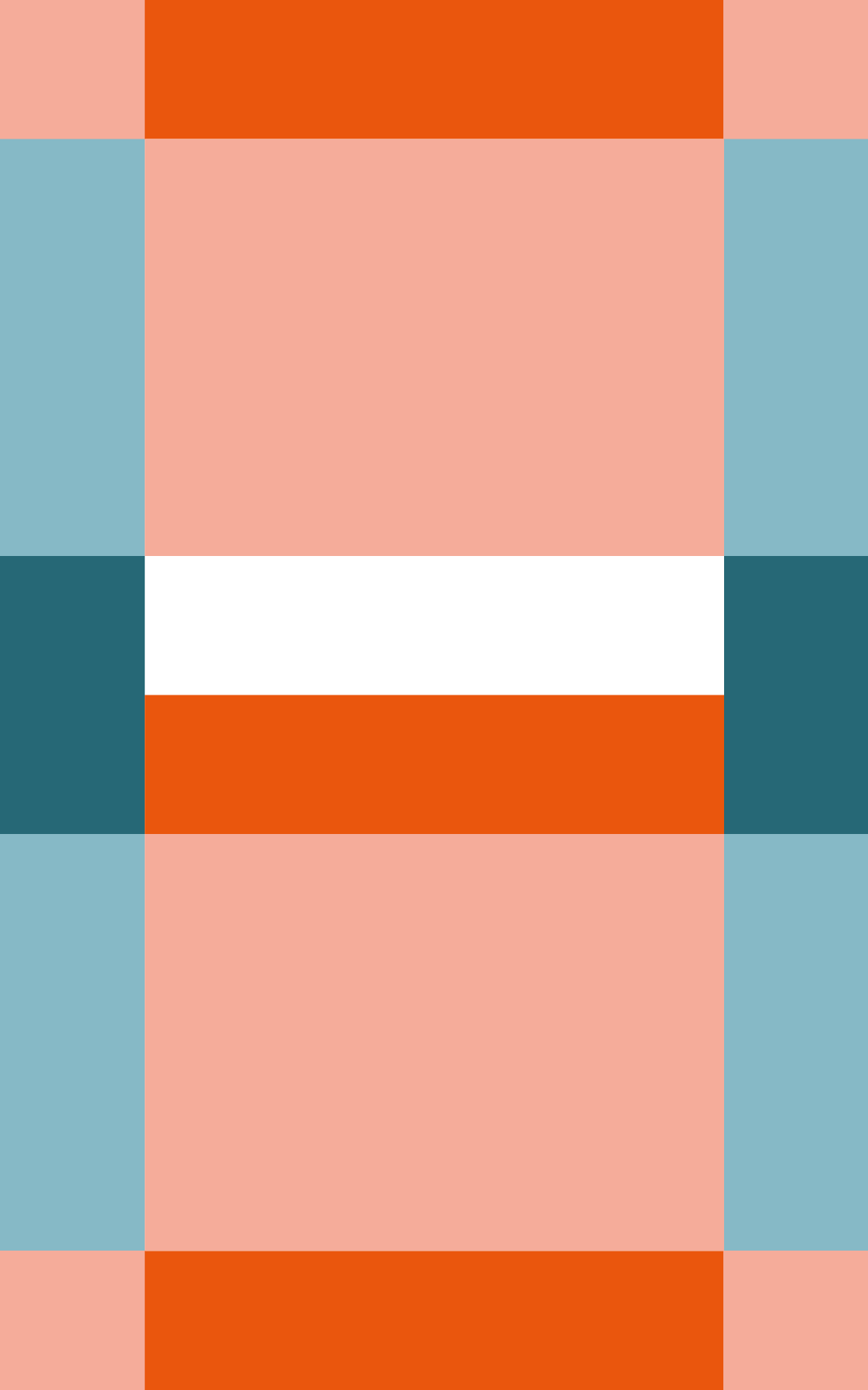
LIEU-DIT

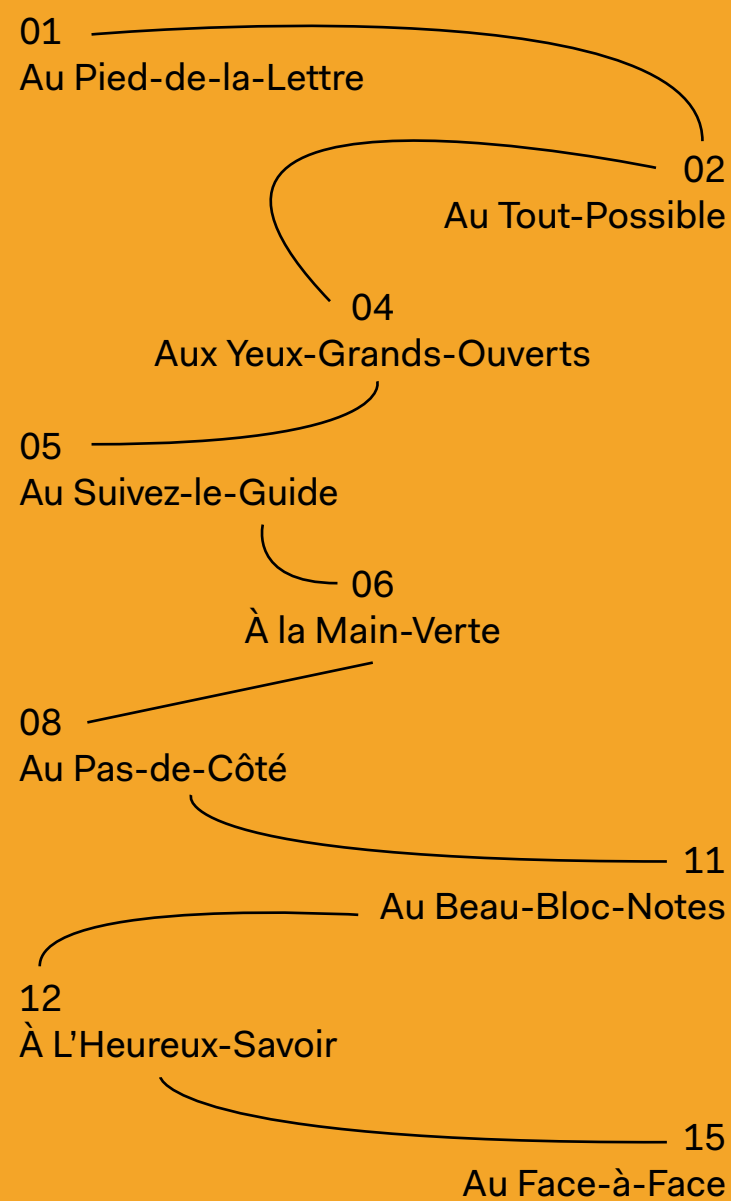
THE JOURNAL OF THE FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS



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LIEU-DIT is the journal of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. It is a mouthpiece for the communities the Foundation partners on the ground in the creation of new work across the arts, the transmission of skills and know-how, the preservation of biodiversity and the promotion of social solidarity. Since 2008, the Foundation has brought together a network of individuals committed to implementing diverse gestures of support at the local, national and international level.

INSPIRATIONAL GESTURES OF SOLIDARITY

Each edition of LIEU-DIT is an invitation to meet and listen to the people who embody the commitments of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in the areas of creativity, transmission, biodiversity protection and solidarity.

Focusing on news highlights for the second half of 2024, this issue features personal accounts of gestures of solidarity in response to the many challenges faced by society today. The humanist values of the house underpin everything we do at the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès across our range of programmes: whether it's support for initiatives to promote social inclusion, or for a young emerging artist, shared ecological resources, or a photographic series that stands as a sombre reminder of the drama of exile. The pages ahead are a testimony to the many ways our core values are present on the ground, and show how the gestures they evoke help to transform our world across different scales of society.

I invite you to read these stories of our partners who are supported by the Foundation, as well as those that benefit from our initiatives. They inspire us daily. Better yet, they drive us to go further with our commitment to work for the greatest common good.

Cover: Samuel Planas at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, 2022
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BESPOKE BREAKS TO PROVIDE RESPITE

By Chloé François,
Projects Manager,
Communications Direction,
Hermès International

The H³ programme allows house of Hermès team members to help a cause close to their heart, through funding disbursed by the Foundation. In 2024, Chloé François applied to support a respite centre designed to give differently-abled people and their families ‘time out’ from their daily challenges. Here, she tells us why and how she became an H³ ambassador for the inclusive and generous project Bobos* à la Ferme.

“The first time I came across Bobos was on a walk in the marshes at La Madelaine-sous-Montreuil, in the northern French department of Pas-de-Calais. I had heard about their work because my parents spoke about it in glowing terms: Bobos operates a respite centre on the Côte d’Opale in north-west France, designed to host families like mine. A haven of peace for differently-abled people, but also, and crucially, for their families too: the people who help and care for them day by day. For people like us, who spend weeks trying to find a holiday place adapted to our needs, but which doesn’t feel medicalised or ‘sanitised’, it’s paradise!

Élodie and Louis set up the centre after their daughter Andréa was born with a rare neurodegenerative condition. As they coped with the mental load of their new role as carers, they quickly identified the absence of specially adapted places for the parents and siblings of people with complex needs – places where they can feel ‘normal’ and free to enjoy themselves. And so they set themselves a goal: ‘to build a large space in an ordinary setting, for extraordinary people.’

Bobos à la Ferme was born. Today, thanks to Élodie and Louis’s love and support for Andréa, their immense determination, and the funds they’ve raised, the organisation operates four holiday cottages with France’s ‘Tourisme et handicap’ label. They also have day centres with specially adapted leisure facilities, six salaried staff and, soon, a new site in

Somme, in northern France. In parallel, they’re developing a hub where parent-carers can meet, make contacts, share their experiences and rediscover a sense of purpose and meaning in their everyday lives. Because being a carer means not only tackling all the complexities of life for disabled people, but also, and often, finding yourself socially and professionally isolated. Keeping up with your pre-existing, external relationships and activities is essential to avoid defining yourself and your world solely through the prism of disability; but spending time with other parents or sibling-carers can be an invaluable source of psychological support, too.

When I discovered the H³ programme and the opportunity it gives to Hermès staff members to support a project close to their heart, I immediately thought of the daily struggles faced by Élodie and Louis, and their dream of a better way forward. I wanted to try and help in whatever way I could. Consolidating and developing their project is a huge personal and financial challenge, and I hope that initiatives like H³ will allow them to continue to offer carers tailored holiday breaks, adapted to their individual needs: a bespoke service – which is a concept close to the heart of the house of Hermès, too.”

* In French, ‘bobos’ is a children’s word for ‘painful knocks and bumps’.

Since 2013, H³ – Heart, Head, Hand has encouraged action for solidarity by staff members at the house of Hermès, supporting works in the public interest.



CONTEMPORANEITY AS A COMMON THREAD

By Soyeon Ahn,
Artistic Director
of Atelier Hermès

At the heart of the Maison Hermès in Seoul, Atelier Hermès devotes most of its programming to Korean contemporary art, featuring the work of laureates of the Hermès Foundation Missulsang. Over the years, the prize has taken on a prospective dimension: many of the artists who have received it have gone on to achieve international recognition, such as the Venice Biennale. Soyeon Ahn, artistic director of Atelier Hermès, presents the exhibition of the 2023 winner, Heecheon Kim.



stimuli and information to the Korean art space. Without comparing, in any way, my work with that of major art museums, I strive to offer meaningful exhibitions that are based on the concept of contemporaneity.

Heecheon Kim was selected as the laureate of the 20th Hermès Foundation Missulsang, where international art professionals including Guillaume Désanges (president of Palais de Tokyo, Paris), Hou Hanru (former artistic director of MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome) and Sook-kyung Lee (director of Whitworth Art Gallery, part of Manchester University) participated as members of the jury. Since his first solo exhibition in 2015, Kim has garnered attention from numerous exhibitions, biennales, and film festivals at home and at large as a prominent emerging artist. Based on observation of the effect of the rapidly evolving technological environment on our perception of the world, Kim's works explore the body and memory, emotion and identity, and even our daily lives constructed and represented in the digital space.

"In the world of information," according to Kim, "the past does not exist in memory, but as an extension of the present that is available without any temporal gaps, and

"Atelier Hermès is a place to share the precious value of creativity that gives artists opportunities to produce new works and share them with the public. As part of this, I plan three exhibitions a year, the first is for rising stars who have emerged in the Korean art scene: these have featured the works of laureates of the Hermès Foundation Missulang, which has provided a springboard for visual artists since the early 2000s. The second exhibition is for mid-career artists, to help develop their practices; while the third is for international artists, bringing new

the future exists as a predictable, optimised output based on current inputs, where chances are overcome." His new production, to be premiered in the upcoming show, unravels his idea around temporality and memory via the methodology of Previs (Pre-Visualisation) – a technique used in sculpture and architecture – and sounds that effectively latch onto this system.

Although it may seem out of step with the latest technological advances in artificial intelligence, this ambitious project offers another level of vitality that appeals to our emotions and perceptions."

Exhibition by Heecheon Kim
Atelier Hermès, Seoul (South Korea)
26.07.2024 → 06.10.2024

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès has encouraged the making and staging of works of contemporary art since its inception, with the programming of exhibitions in four gallery spaces in Europe and Asia.



LA GRANDE PLACE
Saint-Louis-lès-Bitche
(France)

11.06.2024 → 29.12.2024
"Patrick Faigenbaum at
the Cristallerie Saint-Louis"

French photographer Patrick Faigenbaum was invited to immerse himself in the daily life and work of the Saint-Louis crystal workshops, in eastern France. Over several extended visits, he captures this exceptional world – a landscape all its own. Gestures, objects and workspaces unique to the making and shaping of crystal provide the raw material for his photographs, displayed in situ at the workshops' museum in a resonant, unprecedented dialogue with the heritage collections. Each piece is a testament to the glass-makers' ancestral skills, as depicted in Faigenbaum's images.

LE FORUM
Tokyo
(Japan)

06.09.2024 → 16.01.2025
Rei Nato
"Come and Live, Go and Live"

Japanese artist Rei Nato's exhibition opens at the Tokyo National Museum on June 25, an extended version of which comes to Le Forum in September. A series of paintings and three-dimensional works connect the two overlapping yet separate venues. They will stand as premonitions and memories for each viewer, a reminder of the ephemeral nature of human existence. Nato invites us to transcend time and space, to glimpse the invisible worlds that await us, as those who came before might have.

LA VERRIÈRE
Brussels
(Belgium)

13.09.2024 → 30.11.2024
Hélène Bertin
"Esperluette"

Representative of a basic connection between two people, the typographical figure known as an 'ampersand' becomes a title in its own right, reflecting the collaborative dynamic that motivates French artist Hélène Bertin: shared experiences, collective work, crossed disciplines. The latest in the series of 'augmented solo exhibitions' at La Verrière features complementary work by creative women practitioners in artisanship, horticulture and music. Bertin's work is the product of her residency at Villa Medici, as a fellow at the French Academy in Rome.

MAINTAINING SEEDS FROM HERITAGE VEGETABLE VARIETIES

Interview with Manuel Witt,
Fifth-year student at the École de
la Nature et du Paysage, Blois

Intelligence Verte promotes the cultivation of organic vegetables, and their enhanced nutritional benefits. Supported by the Foundation since 2023, as part of its Biodiversity & Ecosystems programme, the not-for-profit association researches, collects and distributes seeds from heritage vegetable varieties, conserving them for future generations. The collective 41 Patates applies their expertise, as custodians and cultivators of a vegetable garden that combines agro-ecology with social solidarity. Collective member Manuel Witt tells us how...



Tell us about the partnership between Intelligence Verte and 41 Patates?

Manuel Witt Intelligence Verte is a not-for-profit association based at the Ferme Sainte-Marthe, in Sologne, just south of the Loire in western France. It was created

in 1999 by Philippe Desbrosses, one of the pioneers of 'organic' certification and labelling for food. By distributing seeds from heritage vegetable varieties, Intelligence Verte revitalises and redeploys a genetic diversity that has disappeared from conventional agriculture since the



we either leave certain plots fallow, with varieties that regenerate the nutrients in the soil, or we cover the ground with a textile to prevent weeds. The aim is to keep the soil alive, with the minimum of digging or hoeing. We hold group work sessions, open to all, roughly every two weeks.

How does the association's work respond to major ecological issues?

Biodiversity is collapsing – we see the decline in the numbers of species all around us, and our increasingly impoverished gene bank. Addressing this is central to our project. Genetic selection, driven by profit, is a major cause of this phenomenon. The process weakens vegetables and diminishes their nutritional value, so that most supermarket

vegetables are highly dependent on fertilisers and other inputs. Chemical products have become indispensable to protect conventionally-grown vegetables, whose seeds can't be reproduced, thereby ensuring that agriculturalists remain dependent on the industrial seed producers – who also make and supply the fertilisers. For this reason, cultivating the seeds of heritage vegetable varieties is vitally important as a way to propound their rich genetic diversity and grow really high-quality produce.

introduction of industrial seed varieties. In 2019, another not-for-profit organisation, 41 Patates, was set up by students at the École de la Nature et du Paysage in Blois, to think about the ways we source and grow our food, from a consciously eco-responsible perspective. The initial aim was to grow one tonne of potatoes. Members of Intelligence Verte offered to help us design an agro-ecological vegetable garden, and provided us with 'old' seeds. The harvest was so successful that we were able to distribute the produce on campus, delivering top-quality vegetable boxes to the students.

How does a cooperative vegetable garden work in practice?

We grow a wide range of vegetables in a small area, together with a few fruit trees whose deep roots pump moisture and benefit plants with shallower root systems. We aim for a 'no dig' approach as far as possible, and to maximise the organic plant content in the soil by adding shredded material, compost, etc, and mulch, to retain water. In the autumn, after harvesting,

Support disbursed through the Foundation's Biodiversity & Ecosystems programme includes initiatives aimed at protecting the living world.

PERMISSION FOR WORKS TO EXIST

By Arthur Nauzyciel,
Director of the Théâtre National
de Bretagne

In May 2024, the Théâtre National de Bretagne (TNB) in Rennes was the last stop for the first edition of the festival Transforme. TNB director Arthur Nauzyciel reflects on the unique character of a festival devised by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès with other partner institutions – the Théâtre de la Cité Internationale in Paris, La Comédie in Clermont-Ferrand, Les SUBS in Lyon, and the TNB in Rennes – and looks ahead to the core topics and prospects for the 2025 edition.



"The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès and Transforme's partners united to focus on our shared values, and our desire to work together to promote the cause of the contemporary creative arts. On this basis, our co-construction of the first festival programme went extremely smoothly. It was a fascinating, inspiring, ambitious project to develop. Transforme was born out of discussions fuelled by our respective visions, and our alliance in the service of audiences and the creative arts. We devised the

programme together, but each institution retained its own personality and particularities. A fun challenge!

Key points for a 'collective' festival

Beyond the nuts and bolts of programme planning, the different teams met to explore questions of identity, communication and our relationships with our core audiences. It was interesting to share our skills and experience, and to harness these to a collective project. Another, centrally important aspect, it seems to me, is the emphasis on touring: by enabling the works to go on tour, we are giving them permission, in a way, to exist out there in the world. We are four very different institutions, and the works' reception at each venue was never the same. As an artist, actor and director myself, it's something I experience each time I go on tour.

Transforme in Rennes, May 2024: a look back

Transforme gave us the opportunity to present new works which we would never have been able to stage without the support of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. In the first week, we put on *Pinocchio(live)#3* by Alice Laloy and *Skatepark* by Mette Ingvarsten: two works that explore the potential of hybrid artistic forms and push the boundaries of possibility, each in its own way. The second week centred around the history of struggle and women's rights, with directors Émilie Rousset and Maya Boquet's work *Reconstitution: le Procès de Bobigny*,

and choreographer Mathilde Monnier's *Black Lights*. In the third and final week, the TNB hosted Tiphaine Raffier with *Némésis*, and Xavier Veilhan (our associate artist), Alexis Bertrand, Jérôme Tuncer and Ève Risser with *Tout l'Univers*. The latter received funding upstream of its performance as a creative residency at TNB.

"Going Further" in Rennes

The TNB's mission is expressed in just three words: "Transmit, share, encounter." The conversation between the audience, the works, and our regional and neighbourhood setting lies at the heart of our project. Beyond the performances, a festival is a unique moment in any theatrical season. Of course, it allows the public to enjoy several different productions within a short space of time, but also and above it's a chance to come together, exchange and share ideas. Activities under the "Going Further" umbrella are designed to extend and encourage this. The team explored three key areas: reaching out to young people through workshops for school pupils aged 12 to 18 (not least the skateboarders invited onto the Vilar stage by Mette Ingvarsten, who shared an unforgettable experience); accessibility, with a 'relaxed' performance of *Skatepark*, designed to allow differently abled audiences to enjoy the show in specially-adapted conditions, and a performance of *Reconstitution: le Procès de Bobigny* for blind and visually impaired spectators; lastly, we have been especially keen to celebrate our regional partners and audiences with a series of festive events, guided visits (around Rennes, or backstage at the TNB) and practical workshop sessions. Mathilde Monnier's *Grand Échauffement*, with two dancers from *Black Lights*, drew almost fifty people. Our Rennes audience showed up with tremendous enthusiasm.

Transforme as part of the contemporary performing arts scene

For me, the Foundation's support for new work in the contemporary performing arts, through Transforme, is something completely unprecedented. Beyond basic project funding, the Foundation works with its partners to define and craft an entire, themed programme of productions. Transforme is highly innovative in the context of the performing arts as

a whole, because it offers carefully-planned, sustained support: a global approach that combines staging and touring with an understanding of the time that artists need upstream in the creative process, and the possibility for further productions over the long term – as seen, for example, with Alice Laloy's *Pinocchio(live)#3*, first performed in 2017. As producer and director at the TNB, I'm a profound believer in the importance of repertory, and a strong supporter of revivals over the long term. This is vital for performing artists, and a great way to transmit skills and know-how to the younger generation.

Looking ahead to 2024-2025

Transforme's second edition will present seven theatrical offerings in Rennes, with continued emphasis on artists who seek to challenge conventional performance spaces and disciplines. The exceptional productions include *Bérénice* with Romeo Castellucci and Isabelle Huppert, which opens the festival, plus TNB first-timers – choreographer Vania Vaneau with *Heliosfera*; musician and dancer NSDOS with *DDOS*; and duo Marlène Saldana and Jonathan Drillet with *Les Chats ou ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés* – and the return of several Rennes and TNB favourites: acrobat Valia Beauvieux, who joins actor Emmanuelle Hiron in a new work, *Derby*; and duo Marcus Lindeen and Marianne Ségol with their new piece *Memory of Mankind*. Lastly, Transforme will stage extramural events with choreographer Olivia Grandville and her *Unité Mobile d'Action Artistique*."

Transforme
Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon and Rennes
01.10.2024 → 28.05.2025

Festival launched by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2023, Transforme presents a programme of performances encompassing a range of artistic disciplines and engaging with the contemporary world.



TRANSFORME

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

THÉÂTRE DE LA CITÉ INTERNATIONALE

17, boulevard Jourdan – Paris 14th

01 → 03.10.2024	Euripides Laskaridis, <i>LAPIS LAZULI</i> *
04 → 06.10.2024	Steven Cohen, <i>BOUDOIR</i> (with Festival d'Automne à Paris)
07 & 08.10.2024	Vania Vaneau, <i>HELIOSFERA</i>
08 → 12.10.2024	Olivia Grandville, <i>L'UMAA</i> *
11 & 12.10.2024	NSDOS, <i>DDOS</i> *
15 & 16.10.2024	Aurélie Charon & Amélie Bonin, <i>RADIO LIVE: LA RELÈVE Récits croisés</i>
17 & 18.10.2024	Aurélie Charon & Amélie Bonin, <i>RADIO LIVE: LA RELÈVE Portraits</i>
17 → 19.10.2024	Cie UNA – a collective production, <i>DERBY</i> *

LA COMÉDIE DE CLERMONT-FERRAND

69, boulevard François-Mitterrand – Clermont-Ferrand

08 & 09.01.2025	Vania Vaneau, <i>HELIOSFERA</i>
11 & 12.01.2025	Romeo Castellucci, Isabelle Huppert, <i>BÉRÉNICE</i> * (after Jean Racine)
13 & 14.01.2025	Marion Siéfert, <i>_JEANNE_ DARK_</i>
15 → 22.01.2025	Olivia Grandville, <i>L'UMAA</i> *
17 & 18.01.2025	Marlène Saldana & Jonathan Drillet, <i>LES CHATS ou ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés</i> *
18 & 19.01.2025	Steven Cohen, <i>BOUDOIR</i>
22 → 24.01.2025	Marcus Lindeen & Marianne Ségol, <i>MEMORY OF MANKIND</i> *

LES SUBS

8 bis, quai Saint-Vincent – Lyon 1st

12 → 15.03.2025	Aurélia Lüscher, <i>LES CORPS INCORRUPTIBLES</i> *
14 → 16.03.2025	Steven Cohen, <i>BOUDOIR</i>
19 → 21.03.2025	Marion Siéfert, <i>_JEANNE_ DARK_</i>
22 → 29.03.2025	Olivia Grandville, <i>L'UMAA</i> *
02 & 03.04.2025	Marlène Saldana & Jonathan Drillet, <i>LES CHATS ou ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés</i> * (extramural performance at Maison de la Danse)
03 → 05.04.2025	Théo Mercier, <i>SKINLESS</i> *

THÉÂTRE NATIONAL DE BRETAGNE

1, rue Saint-Hélier – Rennes

15 & 16.05.2025	Marcus Lindeen & Marianne Ségol, <i>MEMORY OF MANKIND</i> *
15 → 17.05.2025	Romeo Castellucci, Isabelle Huppert, <i>BÉRÉNICE</i> * (after Jean Racine)
17 → 24.05.2025	Olivia Grandville, <i>L'UMAA</i> *
21 → 23.05.2025	Cie UNA – a collective production, <i>DERBY</i> *
21 → 23.05.2025	Vania Vaneau, <i>HELIOSFERA</i>
27 & 28.05.2025	Marlène Saldana & Jonathan Drillet, <i>LES CHATS ou ceux qui frappent et ceux qui sont frappés</i> *
27 & 28.05.2025	NSDOS, <i>DDOS</i> *

* Produced with creative support from the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2024

Interview with Samuel Planas,
dancer, recipient of an Artists in
the Community study grant

OUT IN THE WORLD, EVERY DAY

Samuel Planas is a Master's student at France's Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP). Since September 2022, he's been a grantee of the Artists in the Community bursary scheme, from the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. In June 2024, he reached the finals of Danse élargie, which the Foundation is also co-organising. On the threshold of his dance career, Samuel talks to LIEU-DIT about this pivotal moment and his professional prospects.

Tell us about your life as a dancer so far.

Samuel Planas I began dancing aged 14, at the Conservatoire in Toulouse, where I'd been studying the violin since the age of 6. After my *baccalauréat* [France's school diploma, taken at age 17-18], I got a place at Paris Dauphine University to study for a degree in Organisational Science. But I was also advised to try for a place at the Paris Conservatoire, and I got fast-track entry to the third year! So I had just two years to complete [the degree]. I had no idea where it might lead, but I wanted to carry on dancing, and best of all, Dauphine confirmed that they would take me in their 'Talents' section, so that I could follow both courses at once. In that year, we took part in a performance at the Grand Palais Éphémère in Paris with Boris Charmatz, after which he offered me an understudy part in his piece *10,000 Gestes*. I was also accepted at audition for a new project by Wim Vandekeybus. Once I discovered Boris's and Wim's work, I saw infinite possibilities for innovation and exploration in dance, and my own place in that world. So I applied for the Master's degree at CNSMDP, to take my training to the next stage and focus my energies on choreography.

What does the Artists in the Community study grant mean to you?

My parents weren't able to support me financially when I got my place at CNSMDP, and I had no other resources, so I didn't know how I would cope. I applied for the

study grant, and the Foundation's support came through straightaway. Perfect timing! It took the weight of financial worries off my shoulders, leaving me free to get started on my own projects. Without the grant, I would have had to find work in addition to my course. The grant allows me to pay my rent and focus on my studies, stress-free.

So the grant fulfilled a genuine need for you?

Yes, I know quite a few people who are being helped by the Foundation, and that support is vital. It's very hard to flourish as a student in Paris, getting accepted on a course is a tremendous opportunity, but if you can't make the most of everything that's going on, it can be hard to progress and develop. You need to go to exhibitions and performances to sharpen your critical faculties, and that takes time and money. If I didn't have the grant, I'd definitely have to stop doing all of those things. Unlike some others, I don't think I would have had the strength to believe in myself, to convince myself that dance was really what I wanted to do. But now I feel validated, supported. I was able to tell myself: 'OK, go for it.' It covers my basic needs, and gives me the chance to see as much theatre as I can. It gives me peace of mind: for two years, I've been able to really grow as an artist, instead of just 'surviving'.

What made you want to compete in Danse élargie?

Boris Charmatz encouraged me to put some ideas together. When you're studying,

working to develop your skills and knowledge, it's not always easy to say 'I'm going to do that'. At the Conservatoire, I never authored a piece of dance. I improvised, I would get up on stage with nothing prepared at all, to be as authentic and true as possible. I would work on small, solo projects, so that if it went wrong, it affected no one but me. I found it very hard to say 'I'm a choreographer'. I just wanted to open up new creative spaces. And that's exactly what Danse élargie does: it enables young and not-so-young dancers to expand the world of dance. I love that idea: we don't know where we're headed, but we put ourselves at the heart of the action. I wanted to work with my friends in the studio, to make something with them before we all left the school. The key objective with Danse élargie is to challenge yourself, and situate yourself in the choreographic landscape, and find out where you want to go. It's the first brick in the edifice. If it doesn't stand up on its own, it doesn't matter. But one thing is certain: we are there at the heart of the action, taking things forward.

What does it mean to be a finalist in Danse élargie?

It's fantastic to have come this far. It's a well-known, high profile competition that has grown and grown since it was first launched. I worked with my friends and fellow dancers Adam Fontaine, Suzanne Henry and Margot Jude, and we're really happy to perform together. It's wonderful to be dancing together for the first time on the stage of the Théâtre de la Ville, in the heart of Paris, just before the Olympics. It's a real opportunity in terms of visibility – especially because we really want to take the project forward. For now, all I want to do is share as much as I can with all the other artists taking part, from all over. In fact, Boris Charmatz has a plan to get everyone together on the second day, to perform all at once, in the same space. I like that concept of precise, organised chaos. We've put our hearts and souls into our projects, and we're all going to dance and share the moment, together.

What are your next moves, professionally?

There's the premiere of Wim Vandekeybus's project *Infamous Offspring*, and I'll be going on tour with that. With Boris Charmatz,

Launched in 2018, Artists in the Community is a programme steered by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, to promote the transmission of skills in the performing arts, for the emerging talents of tomorrow.

there's *10,000 Gestes*, which premiered in 2017. I joined the cast in 2022, and it's still being shown. Then there's *Close Up* by Noé Soulier, which will premiere at the Avignon Festival. I'll be quite busy next year, but I hope I'll be able to work on my own projects, do my own thing, too. I'd love to travel. I'd like to work outside the studio, with my friend Léo Merrien, along the Camino to Santiago de Compostela – to see if we can create a duo around the concept of long-distance walking.

How do you see the contemporary choreographic scene?

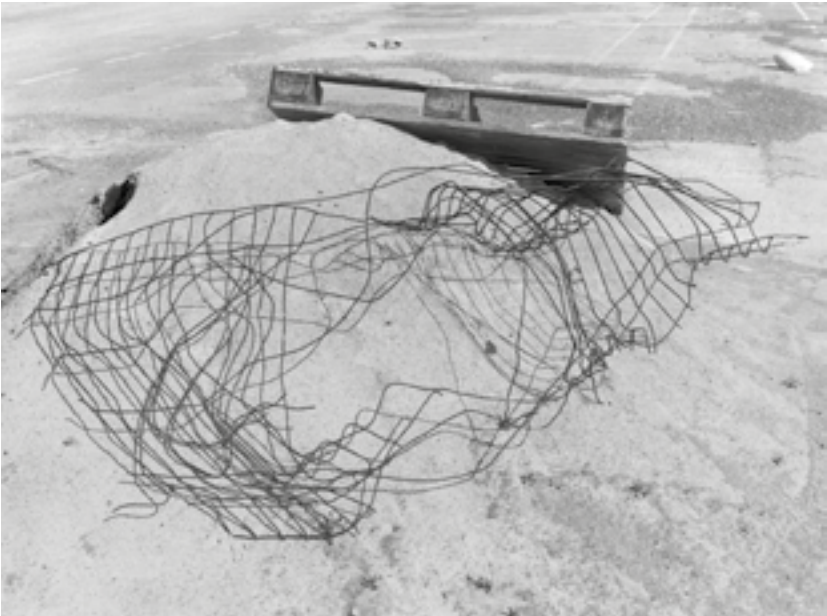
I think the art scene is saturated when it comes to dance, for dancers and choreographers alike. That can make it hard to find work, but there's a rich array of productions on offer. That's what you feel, especially when you look at the directorial line taken by the different National Choreographic Centres in France. There are so many, diverse styles represented, but they all cohere around the spirit of dance and sharing. Dance institutions are celebrating diversity, and that's because everyone involved in the sector is helping to push back the frontiers of dance, day by day. I think that's a good thing!

What do you want to do next?

I'm inspired by choreographers who get into the studio every day, who are there at the heart of the action, who don't give in to the absurdity of today's world. Looking ahead, my idea is to be out there in the world, every day: to start with a warm-up and then to propose new ideas, to explore, sometimes to fall flat on my face! The creative process is never smooth, it's not always enjoyable. The fun comes later, when we dance, when we've made something that's wholly ours. But when you're working towards that goal, there's always a moment, a place, when things drag, when you feel stretched to the limit. And that's what interests me, because there are other ways of being, precisely there, when things get rough. Every creative person is a chameleon. I want to experiment with all the colours, all the shades and nuances!

5 QUESTIONS
FOR RAYMOND MEEKS

Interview by David Campany,
Curator-at-large of the International
Center of Photography, New York

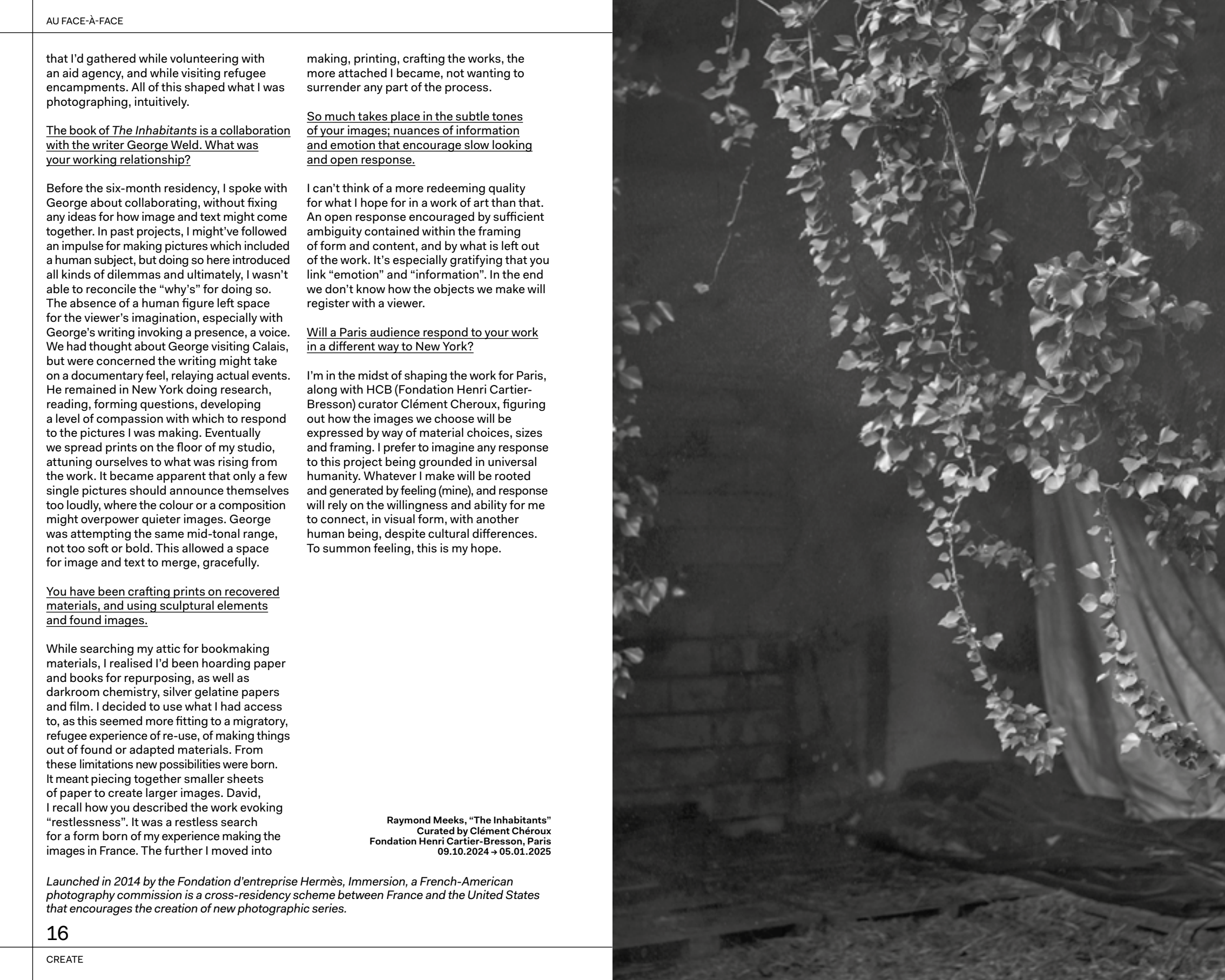


Immersion 2021 laureate Raymond Meeks spent several weeks in France in 2022, exploring the Calais region and the Basque country – on the Spanish border – to capture the things left behind by people crossing these landscapes in search of a better future. In conversation with his residency mentor David Campany, curator-at-large at New York's International Center of Photography, the American photographer describes how his series “The Inhabitants” took shape.

David Campany Raymond, you are known for working in American places familiar to you. With your Immersion project “The Inhabitants” you entered landscapes of migrant movement into and out of France. What adjustments did you need to make?

Raymond Meeks This was likely the most pressing concern for me. I followed instinct and eventually landed in a corner of France that offered some measure of familiarity. The London plane trees near the border with

Spain recalled Ohio forests and rivers I played in as a boy. From this, I began working my way outward, finding a visual rapport with what was new, recognising forms and transitory patterns in a landscape that reflected upon the migratory presence of others. I sought places that offered an inherent tension, or where a residue of movement was still present. Places where not much of anything was happening, became a receptive backdrop for inner projections of emotional states. I was carrying stories from asylum seekers



that I'd gathered while volunteering with an aid agency, and while visiting refugee encampments. All of this shaped what I was photographing, intuitively.

The book of *The Inhabitants* is a collaboration with the writer George Weld. What was your working relationship?

Before the six-month residency, I spoke with George about collaborating, without fixing any ideas for how image and text might come together. In past projects, I might've followed an impulse for making pictures which included a human subject, but doing so here introduced all kinds of dilemmas and ultimately, I wasn't able to reconcile the "why's" for doing so. The absence of a human figure left space for the viewer's imagination, especially with George's writing invoking a presence, a voice. We had thought about George visiting Calais, but were concerned the writing might take on a documentary feel, relaying actual events. He remained in New York doing research, reading, forming questions, developing a level of compassion with which to respond to the pictures I was making. Eventually we spread prints on the floor of my studio, attuning ourselves to what was rising from the work. It became apparent that only a few single pictures should announce themselves too loudly, where the colour or a composition might overpower quieter images. George was attempting the same mid-tonal range, not too soft or bold. This allowed a space for image and text to merge, gracefully.

You have been crafting prints on recovered materials, and using sculptural elements and found images.

While searching my attic for bookmaking materials, I realised I'd been hoarding paper and books for repurposing, as well as darkroom chemistry, silver gelatine papers and film. I decided to use what I had access to, as this seemed more fitting to a migratory, refugee experience of re-use, of making things out of found or adapted materials. From these limitations new possibilities were born. It meant piecing together smaller sheets of paper to create larger images. David, I recall how you described the work evoking "restlessness". It was a restless search for a form born of my experience making the images in France. The further I moved into

making, printing, crafting the works, the more attached I became, not wanting to surrender any part of the process.

So much takes place in the subtle tones of your images; nuances of information and emotion that encourage slow looking and open response.

I can't think of a more redeeming quality for what I hope for in a work of art than that. An open response encouraged by sufficient ambiguity contained within the framing of form and content, and by what is left out of the work. It's especially gratifying that you link "emotion" and "information". In the end we don't know how the objects we make will register with a viewer.

Will a Paris audience respond to your work in a different way to New York?

I'm in the midst of shaping the work for Paris, along with HCB (Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson) curator Clément Chéroux, figuring out how the images we choose will be expressed by way of material choices, sizes and framing. I prefer to imagine any response to this project being grounded in universal humanity. Whatever I make will be rooted and generated by feeling (mine), and response will rely on the willingness and ability for me to connect, in visual form, with another human being, despite cultural differences. To summon feeling, this is my hope.

Raymond Meeks, "The Inhabitants"
Curated by Clément Chéroux
Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris
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Launched in 2014 by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Immersion, a French-American photography commission is a cross-residency scheme between France and the United States that encourages the creation of new photographic series.





