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PRESS RELEASE

# A SEASON DEDICATED TO WOMEN ARTISTS

16.02.2019 - 26.05.2019

**MUSÉE DES  
BEAUX-ARTS  
LE LOCLE**

Marie-Anne-Calame 6  
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mbal@ne.ch • www.mbal.ch



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## OPENING

Friday, February 15 at 6.30 PM

## CONTACT

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## FOREWORD

For much of history, women were excluded from artistic training and practice for cultural reasons, and movements to combat the invisibility of female creators and artists are no less relevant today.

Although there was a surge in group exhibitions by female artists in the 1970s, the women's liberation movement of the same period did not lead to their increased presence in galleries or to greater numbers of solo exhibitions by women.

Nothing like parity has yet to be achieved, even in the 21st century. Given this long period of invisibility, MBAL, like society at large, is working to correct the imbalance by including more pieces by women in the museum.

The six artists presented here – **VIVIANE SASSEN, SOPHIE BOUVIER AUSLÄNDER, SMITH, LAURA LETINSKY, LILI ERZINGER** and **SANDRINE PELLETIER** – all examine the world and its representations through the lens of gender.

Nathalie Herschdorfer  
Director

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**VIVIANE SASSEN  
HOT MIRROR**

© Viviane Sassen, *Belladonna*, from *Parasomnia*, 2010. Courtesy Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.

In fairy tales, the mirror often symbolizes a door to another world. Dutch artist Viviane Sassen (b. 1972) sees her photographic work as a mirror, a means of evoking the world of dreams and exploring the subconscious in everyday moments. The exhibition *Hot Mirror*, which includes pieces from the past ten years, weaves an astonishing narrative from the work of this internationally acclaimed artist: a sort of self-portrait. Sassen's photography captures the strange, the magical and the wondrous. *Hot Mirror* contains images from several of her past series: *Flamboya*, photographs taken in Kenya, where Sassen spent three years during her childhood; *Parasomnia*, which seeks to evoke the feeling of dislocation between waking and sleeping; and *UMBRA*, an exploration of shadow in both the physical and psychological sense. Also included are images from her most recent series, *Of Mud and Lotus*, in which photographs are transformed through collage and paint with a focus on two of the artist's recurring themes: maternity and fertility. Last but not least, Sassen invites us into her captivating world with *TOTEM* an immersive installation composed of mirrors and moving images. Here, visitors are plunged into an infinite landscape and transformed by cast shadows, their presence interacting with the artist's projection and adding to its disorienting effect. Sassen's visual poems themselves act as mirrors, reflecting viewers' questions back at them rather than providing answers.

The exhibition was produced by MBAL and The Hepworth Wakefield museum in Great Britain. It is accompanied by a book in English published by Prestel. The artist is represented by Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town.

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THE  
HEPWORTH  
WAKEFIELD

**SOPHIE BOUVIER AUSLÄNDER**  
**MARE VOSTRUM**



© Sophie Bouvier Ausländer, *Mare Vostrum*, exhibition view *Harnessing the Wind*, Beaconsfield Art Gallery, first commissioner of the work, London, 2015.

Sophie Bouvier Ausländer (b. 1970) takes over MBAL's historic exhibition space with *Mare Vostrum*. This monumental, in-situ installation by the Swiss artist was inspired by Marie NDiaye's novel *Three Strong Women* (winner of the 2009 Prix Goncourt). In a piece that combines drawing, painting and sculptural elements, kilometers of barbed wire are wound together as if in movement, gathering up dust and strips of paint along the way. One spherical form evokes tumbleweeds, those desert plants that break free from their roots when they dry and are sent whirling away by the wind. Migration is a dominant theme in this installation, and its title – 'your sea' in Latin – is a reference to the Italian government's Operation 'Mare Nostrum' ('our sea') carried out between 2013 and 2014 to rescue refugees crossing the Mediterranean. Formed from an accumulation of disparate elements collected along its path, *Mare Vostrum* represents peoples swept up by winds of change that have built into an unstoppable storm.

The artist is represented by Heinzer Reszler Gallery in Lausanne. The exhibition by Sophie Bouvier Ausländer has received the support of Arts Visuels Vaud and the Canton of Vaud.

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**LAURA LETINSKY**  
**L'EMPRISE DU TEMPS**



© Laura Letinsky, *Untitled*, from *Time's Assignment*, 2002.  
Courtesy galerie Yancey Richardson, New York.

The work of Laura Letinsky (b. 1962) sends us back in time. Shooting with Polaroid Type 55 film – the famous instant-development process that creates a single image – Letinsky photographs fruit, flowers, food, cutlery, and other everyday objects. Those familiar with the Canadian artist's work will recognize her still lifes, a genre in which she has stood out since the 1990s. Like many photographers working prior to the digital age, Letinsky used a Polaroid for tests. But just as she was about to throw away these test images, she became intrigued by how they had deteriorated. The material had changed in unexpected ways and offered a lesson on the vulnerability of life. Digital technology has made much of contemporary photography immaterial and, in many ways, sharp and bright – there is something gripping, therefore, about Letinsky's Polaroids, degraded as they are by the development process, chance, and the passage of time. They have an air of mystery, of strangeness: a metaphor for life itself.

The exhibition is accompanied by a book in English from Radius Books, with a text by Nathalie Herschdorfer. The artist is represented by Yancey Richardson Gallery in New York.

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**SMITH  
SPECTROGRAPHIES**

© SMITH, *Spectrographies 010*, 2014. Courtesy galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris.

Self-metamorphosis plays a central role in the artistic practice of French artist SMITH (b. 1985), whose poetic images invite reflection and evoke the memory of absent bodies. The *Spectrographies* resemble laboratory images and reference new technologies that allow us to see, touch and communicate with physically absent beings through the screen. SMITH uses an infrared camera to explore and transform anatomy, and to seek to represent what lies beyond the body. The resulting thermographic images, or thermographs, are specters conjured from absence. In an accompanying film, a figure walks alone in the night. Here, too, the body becomes phantom; absence becomes a material force that affirms its presence through an excess of light. In this tête-à-tête with the invisible, what has disappeared reappears. For the artist, it is a means of bringing together philosophy, literature, cinema, science and psychoanalysis into a body of work that shines a spotlight on the invisible.

The exhibition was produced in collaboration with Les Filles du Calvaire Gallery in Paris. Joël Vacheron's interview with SMITH appears in 'Could you talk about...', a triannual series published by MBAL.

The exhibition *Trace(s)* at Galerie C in Neuchâtel also presents a series of images of SMITH until 23 February 2019.

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## LILI ERZINGER DE LA COLLECTION



© Lili Erzinger, *Autoportrait*, 1934.  
EBEL Deposit, Musée des beaux-arts, Le Locle.

MBAL holds a large collection of works by the artist Lili Erzinger (1908-1964). Although Erzinger was an early pioneer of abstractionism in Switzerland, her work remains relatively unknown. We hope to change that by presenting a selection of her paintings alongside recently acquired archival material that documents her fascinating life spent between Zurich, where she was born, Paris, where she earned her artistic stripes under Fernand Léger in the 1930s, and Neuchâtel, which she long called home.

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**SANDRINE PELLETIER**  
**2019 EDITION**



© Sandrine Pelletier, *Last Sunset*, MBAL Edition, 2019. Photo : Lionel Henriod.

MBAL wants the experience of art to extend beyond the museum's walls. That is why each year we host the sale of a work by an acclaimed Swiss artist. In 2019, you have the chance to add a piece by Sandrine Pelletier (b. 1976) to your collection. In this three-dimensional piece, Pelletier brings together several elements that are characteristic of her work. Made from burned wood digitally engraved with the phrase 'LAST SUNSET', it is a reminder of the finite nature of humanity, and of the world.

Sandrine Pelletier, *Last Sunset*, 2019  
CNC engraved, burned and varnished wood  
18 x 25 x 1.6 cm  
20 copies signed by the artist  
Price: 450.-

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## EVENTS

**OPENING : FRIDAY FEBRUARY 15 AT 6.30 PM**

### GUIDED TOUR OF THE EXHIBITIONS

Sunday February 24th, March 24th, April 28th, May 19th & 26 at 2:30 PM  
Included in the entrance ticket of the museum

### WORKSHOPS

Saturday, March 16th & April 13th from 1:00 to 5:00 PM  
Cyanotype, life in blue! Discover this former photographic method that allow you to create pictures thanks to contact with greens and negative accompanied by the photographer Nicole Chuard. Introduction courses for adults only. Reservations required. Price: 45.- equipment and café gourmand included

### MUSICAL WEEK-END

From Friday the 22th to Sunday the 24th of March  
Among performances, concerts, conference and free improvisation, follow the musicians and artists invited to occupy all the floors of the museum!

*These events are organized in common with the Concerts of Contemporary Music of La Chaux-de-Fonds*

### CONCERT

Saturday, April 6th at 5:00 PM  
*Traces*

Musician and actress Manon Pierrehumbert flood the rooms of the museum with a serie of musical poems from Agota Kristof's short stories collection *Clous* and offer a journey marked out by living pictures. Price: 15.-

*This event is organized in common with the Théâtre populaire romand of La Chaux-de-Fonds.*

### MUSEUM NIGHT

Saturday, May 18th  
Free entry from 5:00 PM to midnight  
Studio photo  
From 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM

By yourself, with your family or your friends, have your picture taken by photographer from Neuchâtel Matthieu Spohn!  
Limited number of places. Reservations are recommended. Digital photography offered. Printed photography on request: 30.-

### INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

Sunday, May 19th  
Free entry  
Brunch at the Museum  
From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
Among two mouthfuls, the elders visit the exhibitions and the little ones are welcomed by our mediator for a creative break  
For kids of all ages. Reservations are recommended. Adult: 18.- / Kids: 12.-

### LA GRANDE TABLE

Sunday, May 26th at 11:00 AM  
Festivals and cultural events: which strength for a district, a city or a region? The Museum is welcoming several specialists of the cultural world for a moment of exchange about the issues of theses manifestations on a local and regional level. Free entry followed by a brunch

*This event is programed within the scope of the Printemps culturel and is organized in common with Galerie C, Neuchâtel*

## PRESS PICTURES

Pictures cannot be retouched or reframed. Each picture must go with their proper legend and courtesy.



© Viviane Sassen, *Ra*, from *Of Mud and Lotus*, 2017. Courtesy Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.



© Viviane Sassen, *Untitled 086*, from *Roxanne II*, 2017. Courtesy Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.



© Viviane Sassen, *Marte #02*, from *UMBRA*, 2014. Courtesy Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.



© Viviane Sassen, *X* from *Of Mud and Lotus*, 2017. Courtesy Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.



© Viviane Sassen, *Belladonna*, from *Parasomnia*, 2010. Courtesy Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town.

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© Sophie Bouvier Ausländer, *Mare Vostrum*, exhibition view *Harnessing the Wind*, Beaconsfield Art Gallery, first commissioner of the work, London, 2015.



© Laura Letinsky, *Untitled*, from *Time's Assignment*, 2002. Courtesy galerie Yancey Richardson, New York.



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© Laura Letinsky, *Untitled*, from *Time's Assignment*, 2002. Courtesy galerie Yancey Richardson, New York.



© Laura Letinsky, *Untitled*, from *Time's Assignment*, 2003. Courtesy galerie Yancey Richardson, New York.



© Laura Letinsky, *Untitled*, from *Time's Assignment*, 2017. Courtesy galerie Yancey Richardson, New York.

# IMAGES DE PRESSE

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© SMITH, *Spectrographies 001*, 2014.  
Courtesy galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris.



© SMITH, *Spectrographies 005*, 2014.  
Courtesy galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris.

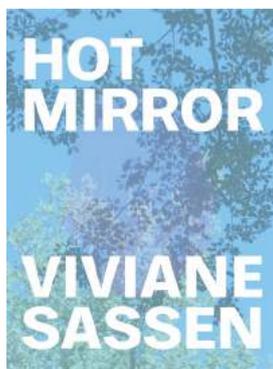


© SMITH, *Spectrographies 008*, 2014.  
Courtesy galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris.



© SMITH, *Spectrographies 009*, 2014.  
Courtesy galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris.

## PUBLICATIONS



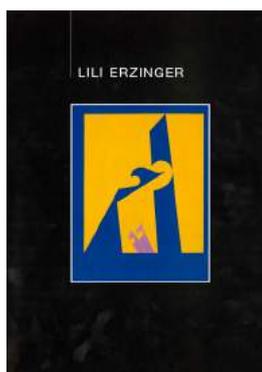
*Hot Mirror, Viviane Sassen*

Texts written by Eleanor Clayton, Nathalie Herschdorfer et Viviane Sassen  
Published by Prestel Publishing, Munich  
Pages : 160  
Publication date : 2018  
Published on partnership with the Hepworth Wakefield Museum and the Musée des beaux-arts, Le Locle  
ISBN : 9783791384764



*Laura Letinsky: Time's Assignation, The Polaroids*

Texts written by Nathalie Herschdorfer  
Published by Radius Book  
Pages : 180  
Publication date : 2017  
ISBN : 9781942185222



*Lili Erzinger (1908-1964), Collection EBEL*

Texts written by Isabelle Aeby, foreword by Pierre-Alain Blum  
Published by Glasnost, La Chaux-de-Fonds  
Pages : 88  
Publication date : 1988  
ISBN : 2882750064



*Pouvez-vous nous parler... SMITH*

Interview : Joël Vacheron  
Published in french and english by the Musée des beaux-arts, Le Locle  
Pages : 24  
Publication date : 2019

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© Henry Leutwyler, J-229 Lac des Taillères, 2019.

Thanks to its ambitious range of exhibitions, the MBAL has made a name for itself not only within Neuchâtel Canton but also on the national and international stages. With 2,000 square meters of space spread over four floors, we can exhibit numerous artists and techniques simultaneously. Our 2019 program will feature 12 different shows. The artistic diversity as well as the array of activities scheduled throughout the year – including free guided tours, brunches, round tables, creative workshops for adults, school visits, concerts and photo studios – will offer something for everyone.

**22 JUNE – 13 OCTOBER 2019**

Summer will be dedicated to the landscape, dovetailing with the **ALT. +1000** photography festival set to take place at the MBAL and in La Brévine valley throughout the month of September. As the primary partner of Alt. +1000, we will put on four exhibitions.

The work of two artists – one a painter from the early 20th century, the other a contemporary photographer – will create an intriguing dialogue. By juxtaposing the landscape paintings of the celebrated artist **CHARLES L'EPLATTENIER**, a native of Neuchâtel, and the landscape photography of the German artist **HENRIK SPOHLER**, an artist in residence for this project, the MBAL aims to provide a fresh perspective on the landscapes that surround us, from the natural to the man-made. This novel project was organized in partnership with the Doubs Regional Nature Park.

# MBAL

The MBAL will put on an important exhibition in close collaboration with world-renowned photo agency **MAGNUM PHOTOS** and Forte di Bard, a historic fortress in the Italian Alps. Its focus: the mountain. Whether as a majestic landscape, tourist destination, site of sacred rituals or backdrop to daily life, the mountain looms large in the human imagination and is a major subject in the history of photography. In the 20th and 21st centuries, the mountain has served as a challenge to be conquered – often to excess, revealing its fragility. The exhibition will feature some of Magnum’s top photographers, including Werner Bischof, the Swiss mountain enthusiast whose life was cut short by a car accident in the Andes.

Rounding out our summer schedule, French artist **NOÉMIE GOUDAL** will take over the MBAL’s exhibition spaces with her photography and sculpture, treating visitors to other landscapes and reflections on the mountain and its myths.

## 1 NOVEMBER 2019 – 26 JANUARY 2020

Starting in late autumn, the MBAL will host an exhibition of work by French artist **JÉRÔME ZONDER**. Two floors of the museum will be entirely transformed by an installation of Zonder’s drawings.

We will also showcase the work of **ZOË AUBRY**, the first recipient of the MBAL Emerging Talent Award. Aubry’s project was selected by a jury of specialists, and the artist has nine months to complete it. The MBAL created the Emerging Talent Award as part of the Triennial of Contemporary Prints. Her project, named *Nom inconnus*, highlights the recurrence and the brutality of domestic violence that occurred in France between January 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30 2018. The result will be a publication and big size printings that will be exhibited at MBAL in november 2019.

## MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS LE LOCLE

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© Henrik Spohler, 2018.

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## PARTNERS

The Musée des beaux-arts, Le Locle is based on public funding from the city of Le Locle, Switzerland, and is supported by the Société des Beaux-Arts et du Musée, Le Locle, at the origin of the museum's foundation in 1864. All exhibitions benefit from the support of the Loterie Romande. The exhibition by Sophie Bouvier Ausländer has received the support of Arts Visuels Vaud and the Canton of Vaud.



## ADMISSIONS

### CONTACT

Musée des beaux-arts  
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### HOURS

Wed – Sun, 11.00 AM – 5.00 PM

### PRICES

Adults: CHF. 8.-  
Senior citizens, students, apprentices, unemployed: CHF. 5.-  
Children and young people under 16: free  
Art students: free  
Members of the museum: free  
First Sunday of the month: free

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