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**PRESS RELEASE**

**THE PLEASURE OF TEXT**  
**25.03 – 18.09.2023**



Sara Knelman, *Untitled* (undated), [Press photograph], *Lady Readers*. Collection Sara Knelman.

**M 7 MUSÉE DES  
B BEAUX-ARTS  
L A LE LOCLE**

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# THE PLEASURE OF TEXT

## 25.03.2022 – 18.09.2022

The Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle (MBAL) is delighted to present the group show *The Pleasure of text*, bringing together the creations of more than thirty Swiss and international artists on the relationship between images and words in art. The project is in line with the MBAL's policy, which aims to question societal issues by creating a dialogue between the masterpieces of the permanent collection and more contemporary creations. Faced with the continuous flow of images in our daily lives, are words doomed to disappear? What place does the emerging digital society have in store for them? The itinerary imagined by Federica Chiocchetti, director of the museum, reaffirms the strength and importance of writing in our lives. This rich and playful exhibition invites spectators – adults and children alike – to explore their imagination and rediscover the meaning and magic of the word.

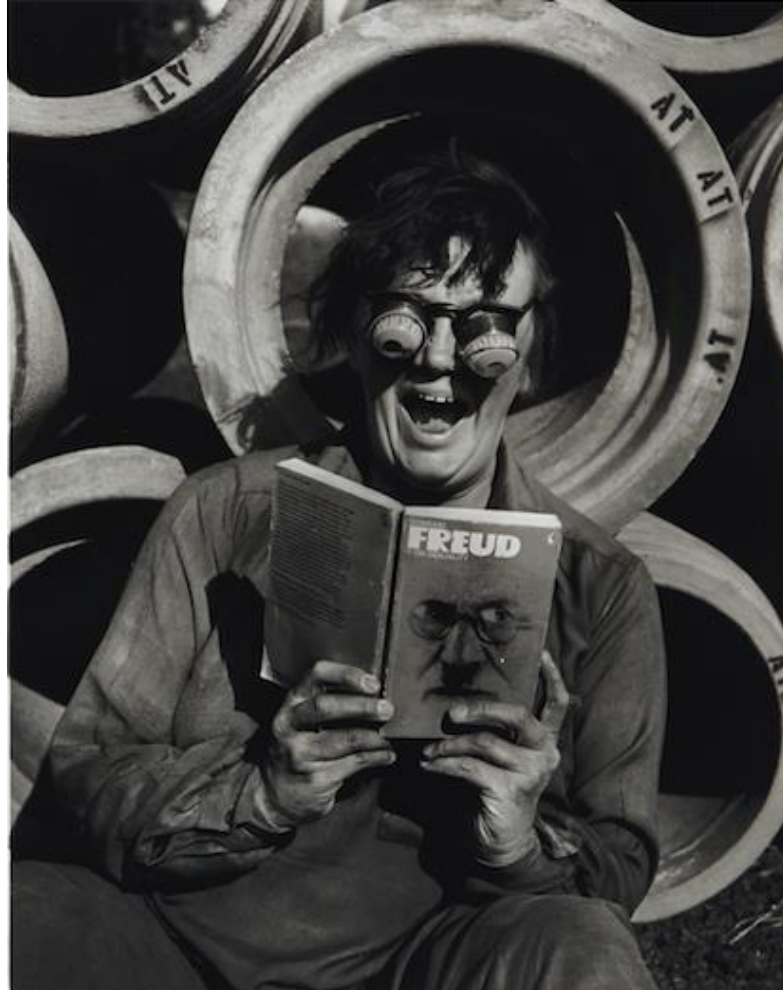


Albert Anker (1882-83) *La Liseuse* [Oil on canvas]. Deposit of the Confederation. Museum of Fine Arts, Le Locle. © Société des beaux-arts et du musée, Le Locle

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*"The pleasure of the text is that moment when my body will follow its own ideas — for my body has different ideas than me."*

- Roland Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte*



Jo Spence (1981-1982) *Remodelling Photo History: Revisualisation* [Gelatin silver print]. Collaboration with Terry Dennett, Courtesy Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome. Museum of Fine Arts, Le Locle. © Estate Jo Spence

The title, inspired by Roland Barthes' book of the same name (1973), suggests an intimate and visceral exploration of our relationship to words.

The exhibition begins with the theme of the pleasure of reading and writing, with the exhilarating frenzy of the imaginary library of the Swiss duo Lutz & Guggisberg. It continues with a dialogue between paintings and drawings from the MBAL collection, and projects by invited contemporary artists photographers mostly representing women reading. The collection of captivating vernacular and vintage photographs from Sara Knelman's *Lady Readers* project, the video by Melissa Catanese based on her book *Voyagers*, and the iconic shot by

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the English Jo Spence where the artist stages herself as a worker reading, hilarious and perplexed, *On Sexuality* by Sigmund Freud, echo to classical representations. Other memorial objects join along this journey through imagination, including a book gathering visuals of the Simpsons characters reading. From the eighteenth century to the present day, from painting to moving images, the artworks presented attempt to unravel the unfathomable mystery of readers' thought. This first chapter closes with a masterful drawing by Pierre Bonnard representing a woman writing, evoking the notion of an act of liberation and knowledge, operating as a transition to the language games in the rest of the exhibition.



Melissa Catanese, *Montage with eyes*, Voyagers, 2023 © Melissa Catanese

*"The word can be erotic in two opposite conditions, both excessive: when repeated to the extreme, or on the contrary, when unexpected, succulent in its novelty."*

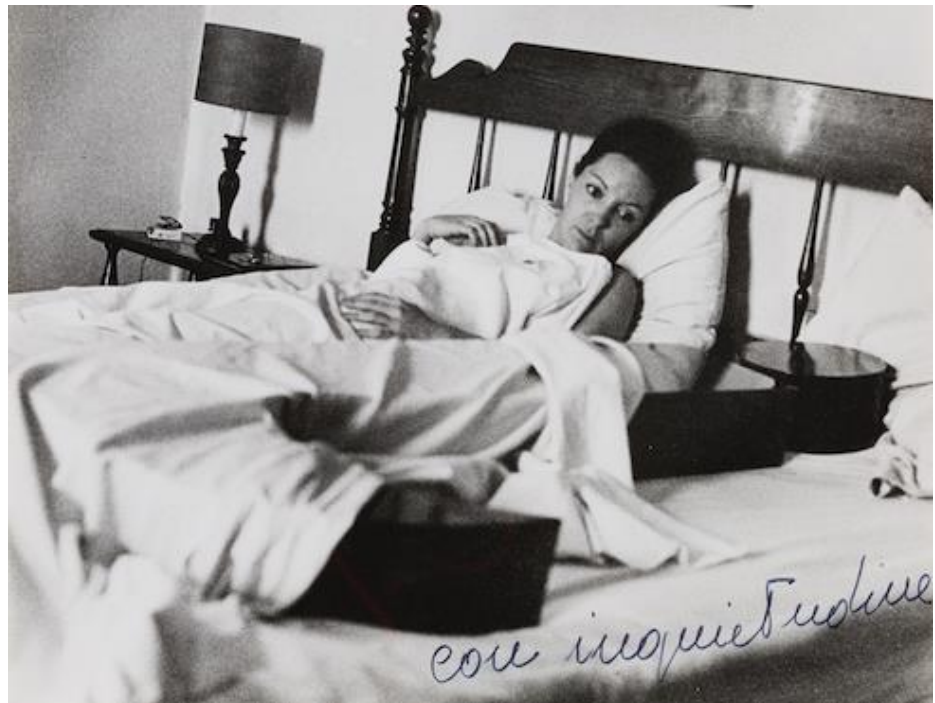
- Roland Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte*

The journey into the pleasures of language continues with a slow and gradual verbal invasion of the image. The poem breaks free from conventions in the room dedicated to concrete and visual poetry. Guest curator Alex Balgiu, author of *Women in Concrete Poetry: 1959-1979* (2020), presents a series of works from this artistic movement that experiences writing made of matter and time, body and space. The endless possibilities offered by the typewriter are explored by the artists Lenora de Barros, Françoise Mairey and Carla Demierre, from its carnal physicality to its graphic potentials and its games of repetition.



The photographed performance of Ketty La Rocca lying in bed with a giant sculpture of the letter “J” maliciously questions the meaning of the I [je] and the game [jeu]. Mirella Bentivoglio gardens a book with plants. Elisabeth Lebon uses the dimensions and properties of paper to create small books akin to portable performances. A play of blanks, letters and punctuation animate the pages of Suzanne Bernard, a figure of French Lettrism, with sublime graphics.

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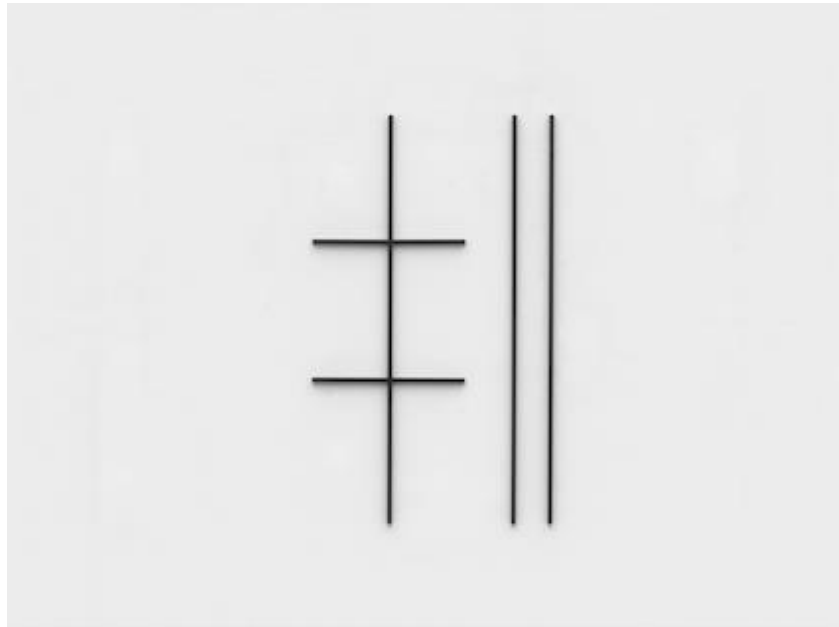
Ketty La Rocca (1971) *Con inquietudine et Con tenerezza* [Gelatin-silver print with felt pen] Florence: The Estate of Ketty La Rocca/Michelangelo Vasta

The imaginary world of the algorithm is invited into the photographic practice of Nelis Franken. In his project *Perfect Forest*, the artist chose to accompany his series of urban images with texts created by an artificial intelligence based on a few keywords. The combination of aphorisms and images re-enchants the visual universe through a poetic narrative about the city.

Slogans and signs in the urban space inhabit the reflections of Luca Massaro, Nora Turato and Philippe Decrauzat. The textual traces of the city are listed by Massaro in an encyclopaedic project ranging from photography to sculpture. With a devastating sense of humour, Nora Turato diverts slogans in her graphic creations. Philippe Decrauzat deploys his geometric wall sculptures that retrace and reinterpret the graphic orthogonal lines of books, playing with the orientation of reading in the illusion of an editorial layout.

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The MBAL inaugurates a new permanent space dedicated to children in which exhibitions, workshops and meetings will take place on a regular basis. Federica Chiocchetti asked artist Anne Turyn to dress up the room with her photographic project *Lessons & Notes*, featuring children in a classroom. For the exhibition, the walls transformed into blackboards will allow the youngest to learn and explore their creativity.



Philippe Decrauzat , *THE VIBRATIO FADES*, Fragment of a script, 2019-2020.© Philippe Decrauzat

The experience ends with the pleasure of reading the landscape with Chloe Dewe Mathews' project conceived during her residency at the Verbier 3-D Foundation in 2016 and presented at the MBAL as part of the Alt+1000 festival. Inspired by Marey Shelly's 1816 trip to the same region, where the writer was stranded by weather conditions during that "year without a summer" and during which she conceived the first manuscript of *Frankenstein* (1818), the photographic series *In Search of Frankenstein* juxtaposes snow-capped mountains with a network of strange underground bunkers built in the 1960s to shelter the entire Swiss population in the event of a nuclear disaster. Dewe Mathews photographed the area that inspired the eighteen-year-old author, exploring miles of underground corridors and vast melting glaciers that seem to offer parallels between Shelley's prophetic socio-environmental concerns and the anxieties of our time.

While Philippe Decrauzat's parentheses punctuate the exhibition spaces, each room in the museum is animated by textual, visual and typographical games, including the facade with *Title Tourist/Yellow Pages*, an installation by Triin Tamm and Rollo Press.

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Chloe Dewe Mathews, *In Search of Frankenstein*, 2016 © Chloe Dewe Mathews

Artists

Collection MBAL

Suzanne Bernard

Mirella Bentivoglio

Melissa Catanese

Lenora de Barros

Philippe Decrauzat

Carla Demierre

Chloe Dewe Mathews

Nelis Franken

Les Girardet

Sara Knelman

Ketty La Rocca

Elizabeth Lebon

Olivier Lebrun

Lutz & Guggisberg

Françoise Mairey

Luca Massaro

Jo Spence

Triin Tamm & Rollo Press

Gisela Torres

Nora Turato

Anne Turyn

Vieceli & Cremers

Book



*L\* plaisir du texte*, collective,  
edited by Federica  
Chiocchetti, Museum of Fine  
Arts Le Locle

Design: Nicolas Polli  
ISBN 9782839938631  
128 pages, 25 illustrations

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## AGENDA “THE PLEASURE OF TEXT”

Friday 24 March

### **OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION & THE PLEASURE OF APERITIF**

*6 pm - 11 pm - Free admission*

Tour of the exhibition with the artists and curators, followed by the pleasure of aperitif and DJ set with Thom-Hash while tasting the culinary creations by Maison DuBois and the mythical La Locloise absinthe from Association Loclathon.

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April

### **CONCRETE POETRY WORKSHOP WITH DAMIEN CONRAD**

*2.30 pm - 3.30 pm - Registration required*

In collaboration with Printemps de la Poésie

Friday 28 and Saturday 29 April

### **SYMPOSIUM ON THE MAGAZINE**

*Friday from 6.15 pm - Club 44, La Chaux-de-Fonds*

Opening of Laure Marville's exhibition curated by MBAL and encounters with notably Julien Perrot (*La Salamandre*) and Ariane



Dayer (*Tamedia* and *Matin Dimanche*).

*Saturday at 3.30 pm – MBAL - Registration required*

In a radically reconfigured media landscape, the magazine now faces endless questioning. Yet it remains a key object of everyday life, anchored in our society and witness to its evolutions. To consider its role today and its future perspectives, the MBAL invites personalities for a series of three discussions on the fields of art, fashion, culture, and political life. With Adrien Chevrot (*PALM*), Claudia Jolles (*Kunstbulletin*), Emanuela Mirabelli (*Marie Claire*), Alexandre Lanz (*Femina*), Francesca Spiller (*Reading Room*), Lucy Conticello (*M Le Monde*), Stéphane Régy (*Society*).

Saturday 13 May

### **SLAM**

*2.30 pm 4 pm - Registration required*

Writing and drawing workshop for children (9 to 13 y-o)

Sunday 14 May

### **BIBLIOMANIA + FLASH GUIDED TOURS**

*From 11 am to noon, and from 1.30 pm - Free admission*

Performance by Alex Balgiu and Olivier Lebrun (as part of Museums Day)

Sunday 21 May

### **THE PLEASURE OF THE BOOK + BRUNCH**

*11 am - 2 pm - Registration required*

Presentation of the publishing houses Rollo Press, Yellow Pages (Zurich) and Boabooks (Geneva), with Urs Lehni and Izet Sheshivari, followed by a performance by Elizabeth Lebon, and brunch

Friday 2 June

### **BORN TO READ**

*9 am - 11 am - Free admission*

A moment of reading for babies and toddlers, in collaboration with La Bibliothèque des Jeunes du Locle

Sunday 11 June

### **LATEST NEWS FROM THE NIGHT**

*11 am - 12.30 pm - Free admission*

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Reading with poet and writer Carla Demierre, followed by a discussion with Cléa Chopard (*L'Ours Blanc Magazine*)

Sunday 18 June

**ART AND LITTÉRATURE**

*11 am - 12.30 pm - Free admission*

Round table moderated by Federica Chiocchetti, director, MBAL

SUNDAY 25 June

**BIND ME: BINDING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS**

*2 pm - 3.30 pm - Registration required*

Saturday 26 August

**OPENING ALT +1000**

*2 pm - 6.30 pm – Lac des Taillères*

*2406 La Brévine*

Saturday 2 September

**MONSTRUOUSLY YOURS**

*2.30 pm - 4 pm - Registration required*

Creation workshop for children (age 6 to 9)

Saturday 9 September

**A LITERARY VISIT OF LE LOCLE + MBAL BOOK SALE**

*2 pm - 5 pm - Free admission*

In the context of the European Heritage Days, in collaboration with Le Locle Book Fair

Sunday 10 September

**ROUND TABLE ALT +1000 X MBAL**

*11 am - 2 pm - MBAL*

With Morgane Paillard (director Alt +1000), Federica Chiocchetti (director MBAL) and the artistes exhibited during the Alt +1000 festival

Monday 18 September

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**

*From 3 pm*

Guided tour of the exhibition, drinks

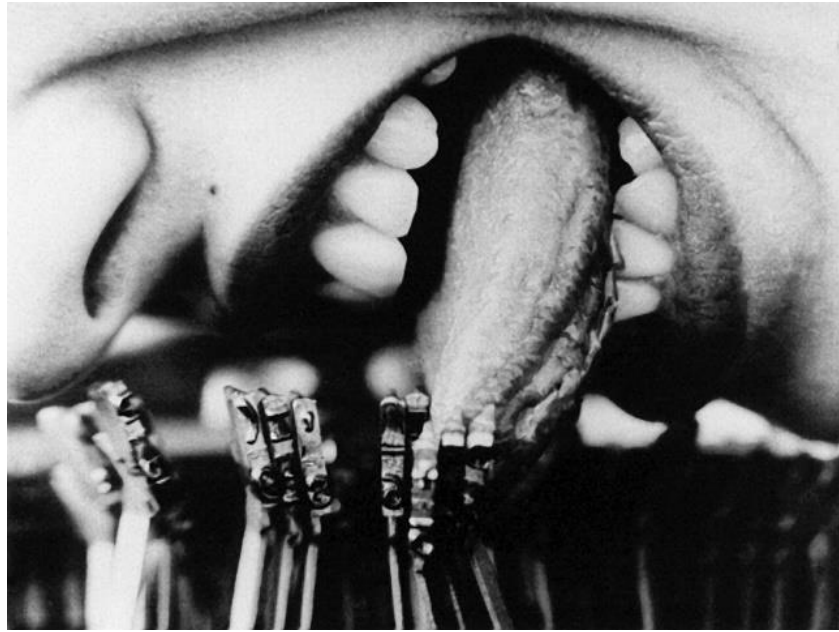
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## 1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

*2 pm - 5 pm - Free admission*

Guided tour + concert MBAL x Higher School of Music Neuchâtel and Geneva

Sundays 2 April, 7 May, 4 June, 2 July, 6 August, 3 September



Lenora De Barros (1979) *Poema* (detail) [Photograph]. Photo by Fabiana de Barros.  
Vienna: Georg Kargl Fine Arts

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# PARTNERS

The Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle relies on public funding from the City of Le Locle and from funding from the Société des Beaux-Arts et du Musée, Le Locle and Loterie Romande.

With support from and in collaboration with our partners.



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# VISIT US

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## OPENING HOURS

Wednesday-Sunday: 11 am - 5 pm

First Sunday of the month: free admission

## TICKETS

Adults: CHF. 8.-

AVS, students, apprentices and unemployed: CHF. 5.-

Children up to 16 y-o, art students: free admission

# CONTACTS

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