

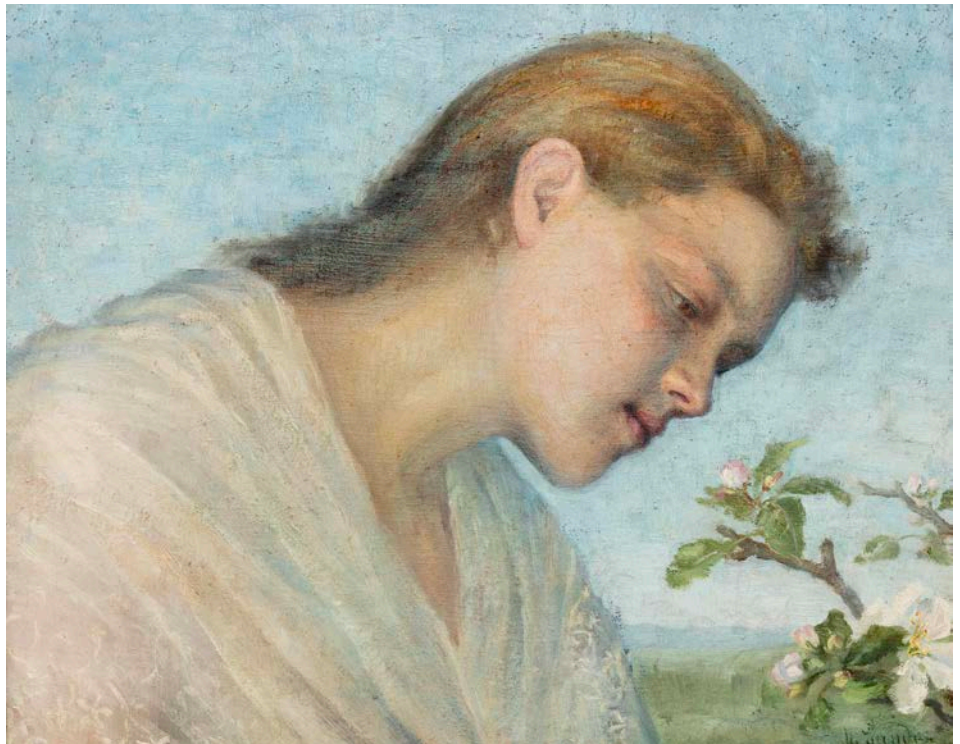
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PRESS RELEASE

SPRING AT MBAL

**APRIL EXHIBITIONS:
ATTENTION COLLECTION,
AUGUSTA LARDY MICHELI,
JONATHAN LLENSE,
CERCLE SCOLAIRE DU LOCLE**

12 APRIL – 14 SEPTEMBER 2025



Marguerite Sandoz-Jeanneret, *Le Printemps* (undated), Oil on canvas © Collection Museum of Fine Arts, Le Locle

This spring, the Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle will offer a sensitive and multifaceted tribute to the landscapes of its home region of Neuchâtel, with a selection of masterpieces from its permanent collection, rich in 5 000 objects, but also through the lively hymns of contemporary artists. A selection of works from different periods retraces the history of the collection of this museum, a renowned Swiss institution founded in 1862 with international reputation: from Swiss artists such as **Léopold Robert**, **Marguerite Sandoz-Jeanneret** and **Otto Tschumi**, to figures who have left their mark on the history of art and contemporary art: **Marc Chagall**, **Pierre-Auguste Renoir**, **Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**, **Léonor Fini**, **Anna Staritsky** and **Miriam Cahn**.

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MBAL

The MBAL will also be hosting the very first institutional exhibition by Swiss artist **Augusta Lardy Micheli**: *Metaxu* will honour the Swiss mountains and the landscapes of her native region through her experimental and oneiric paintings.

Photographer and visual artist **Joanthan Llense**, who exhibited at the last edition of Paris Photo, will present an original portrait of the city of Le Locle entitled *Par le biais*, curated by Sergio Valenzuela Escobedo. His own photographic archives will mingle with local histories, the city's fountains and busts from the museum's collection.

Finally, MBAL is giving children from the **school district of Le Locle** carte blanche to imagine, through art, a better city. On the theme of *Bien vivre ensemble* (*Living happily together*), their collective creations will reflect a surge of creativity and shared hope.



Marc Chagall, *Adam et Eve chassés du Paradis*, undated. Lithography, 37 x 26 cm.
© Collection Museum of Fine Arts, Le Locle

ATTENTION, COLLECTION

The MBAL is unveiling a selection of treasures from its collection through a thematic exhibition that brings together different periods, leading figures, techniques and artistic movements. This multi-faceted approach explores themes as varied as the Swiss landscape, flowers, the human figure and nightmarish visions.

Works by Swiss artists such as **Félix Vallotton**, **Paul-Théophile Robert**, **Edmond Jean de Pury**, **Charles L'Eplattenier**, **Marguerite Sandoz-Jeanneret** and the more contemporary, **Jeanne-Odet Evard**, **Mai-Thu Perret**, **Sandrine Pelletier**... will be rubbing shoulders with other great names including **Salvador Dalí**, **Pablo Picasso**, **LIN PAN Yu**, **Suzanne Valadon**, as well as **Francisco de Goya**, **Pierre Bonnard** and also **Henri Matisse**.

The MBAL collection

Created by a group of passionate enthusiasts who founded the Société des Amis des arts du Locle in 1862, the collection is the fruit of over 150 years of enrichment through generous donations, purchases and prestigious long term loans from the Swiss Confederation and the Gottfried Keller Foundation.

From the 1950s onwards, the Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle showed a particular interest in prints, drawings and works on paper. The museum's acquisition policy focused on this medium, giving priority to engravings by the great masters of the 19th and early 20th centuries, while at the same time supporting contemporary Swiss artists.



Today, the museum's collection comprises more than 5,000 objects. It includes a remarkable number of paintings, sculptures and objects of applied art, as well as prints, posters, drawings, watercolours and photographs by Swiss and international artists from the 17th century to the present day.

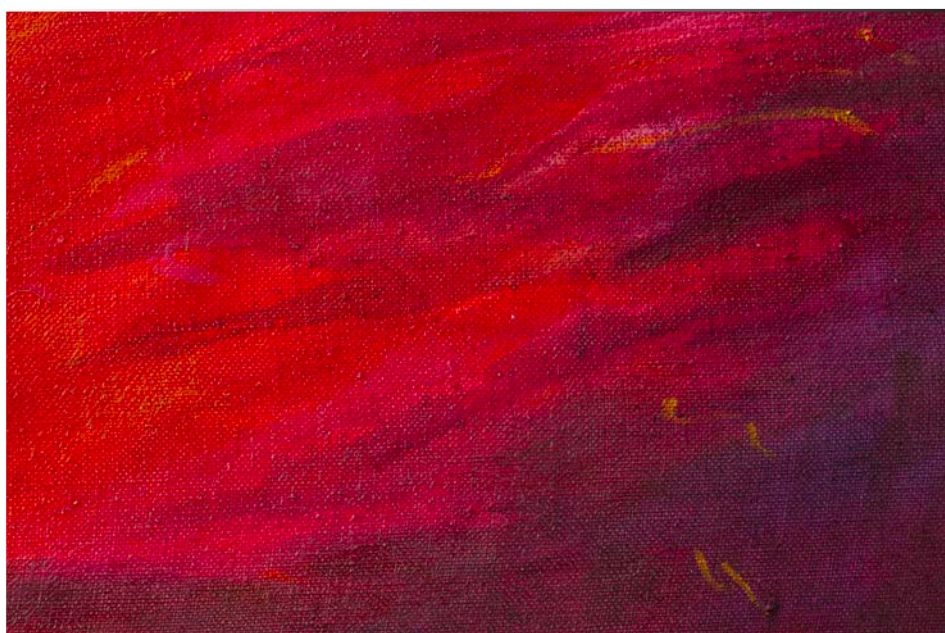
Félix Edouard Vallotton, *Le Mont Rose*, 1897. Xylography, 14 x 25,5 cm.
© Collection Museum of Fine Arts, Le Locle

MBAL

AUGUSTA LARDY MICHELI - *METAXU (LES RIVES OÙ VIVENT MES SONGES)* *Metals (the shores where my dreams live)*

The MBAL is hosting *Metaxu (les rives où vivent mes songes)*, the first institutional exhibition by Swiss artist Augusta Lardy Micheli in her native country.

Metaxu represents the link between objects and the physical world, where paint becomes an intermediary between dreams and places, between the inside and the outside, between inner images and those perceived through experience. The artist is inspired by the shores of Lake Neuchâtel, which have nourished her imagination since childhood. These hills, banks, skies and forests, which sometimes appear veiled in her canvases, become a prism between thought and experience, expressed through monumental paintings in movement and small, intimate formats.



‘The shores where my dreams live seduce me with their beauty, but a hot wind pierces the surface of the canvas. What is this excessively hot summer night that wakes me from a summery slumber? Should I fear it? This feeling of anguish is inexhaustible, and nothing will prevent its vivid expression through the Metals that is the act of painting. We will not give in to solastalgia.’

Augusta Lardy Micheli

Augusta Lardy, *Le temps n'a point de rive*, 2022 © Augusta Lardy



© Gian Andrea Diana

Augusta Lardy Micheli, born in Geneva in 1994, is a Swiss artist. She graduated from Kings College London in Philosophy and from the City and Guilds of London Art School in Fine Art. She is the winner of the 2021 Freelands Foundation Painting Prize. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in Madrid (Galeria Belmonte), Paris (Galerie DS) and Mexico City (Karen Huber).

In April, she will be presenting her first institutional exhibition in Switzerland at the Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle.

Augusta Lardy Micheli explores a ‘**living painting**’ in which matter and pigments invite her to abandon control and allow the essence of the work to emerge. Her approach, rooted in the body and somatic memory, can lead her to radically transform her techniques, moving from painting to sculpture, engraving or oxidation. With her experimental approach, she questions the essence of the image, seeking to reduce it until only the essential remains.

MBAL

JONATHAN LLENSE - *PAR LE BIAIS* (*Through*) An exhibition curated by Sergio Valenzuela Escobedo

Jonathan LLenSe (1984) is a photographer with a sculptor's eye, a collector's obsession and a comical wit. His photographs feature creations born of the union or reconstruction of everyday objects. These 'lost & found objects' recall the humour of Marcel Duchamp and his urinal transformed into a work of art under the title *Fontaine*.

Llense's photographs capture fragments, gestures and the activation of places from his travels or everyday life, in order to extract a symbolic poetry from them. Rather than depicting the world as it is, he creates a light-hearted, ironical universe, a utopia where precariously balanced objects take on their full meaning in a snapshot – there is no sculpture without photography. His images, complex but playful, are serious jokes that defy gravity and challenge the established order. Llense plays with cameras rather than against them.

In this exhibition, Llense draws on his photographic archives and, commissioned by the museum, creates an original portrait of the town of Le Locle (Llense au Lloclle). He combines photography and local history, experimenting with busts from the MBAL collection. In the background, water becomes a common thread, evoking a history deeply rooted in this region. In a bold scenographic gesture, twenty-eight 'fountains' are staged, inviting us to an unexpected exploration.

Whether it's humour or absurdity, LLenSe likes to surprise and make people smile. Inspired by Duchamp's irony, his fountains from Le Locle offer a subtle interplay between purity and confusion, an invitation to look beyond appearances.

Exhibition text by **Sergio Valenzuela Escobedo**



Clementine (with statue), Le Locle 2024
© Jonathan LLenSe



JMW, 2022 Courtesy Espace Jörg Brockmann

'My work takes shape through my wanderings around the city and my daily peregrinations. Guided by an initial intuition, I play with my environment by composing or re-composing with the elements at hand, disregarding any spatio-temporal relationship in order to construct a new and playful perception. I cast an amused eye on the things that surround us, on these everyday sketches, and reveal the potential for playful experimentation that they have to offer.'

Jonathan LLenSe

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© Jonathan Llense



Jonathan Llense

Jonathan Llense, born in 1984, is a photographer and visual artist based in Paris. A graduate of the Valenciennes fine arts school and the Arles photography school, he exhibited at the IFAL gallery in Mexico City in 2014 after a residency in Mexico. The same year, he took part in the 'Inside/Outside Territory' exhibition in Amsterdam. In 2016, he published *L'Heure du Tigre*, a work born out of a residency in Le Paradou. He continued his career with several residencies and exhibitions,

including at the UNSEEN Photo Fair and at the Imago Lisboa festival in 2019. In 2021, he publishes *Uncertain Life & Sure Death*, and in 2023, his third book in Louis Vuitton's Fashion Eye collection. Llense collaborates with international magazines and prestigious brands and has been working with Espace Jörg Brockmann gallery and TheLink Mgmt agency since 2018.

Sergio Valenzuela Escobedo

Sergio Valenzuela-Escobedo, a Chilean researcher and PhD in photography, explores the genesis of the camera in South America. He has curated exhibitions such as *Mapuche* at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (2017), as well as *Monsanto: Une enquête photographique* (2017) and *Forêts géométriques* (2022), both of which premiered at Les Rencontres d'Arles. In 2025 he will be guest curator of the Ci.CLO Bienal Fotografia do Porto. He runs DoubleDummy and mentoring programmes.

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Margaux et Soulayma (9FR1), *L'empathie*, 2024. Gouache, 29,7 x 42 cm. © Cercle scolaire du Locle



Malou (10FR2), *Le respect*, 2024. Gouache, 21 x 29,7 cm. © Cercle scolaire du Locle

CERCLE SCOLAIRE DU LOCLE - *BIEN VIVRE ENSEMBLE (Living happily together)*

The City of Le Locle has put quality of life at the heart of its concerns, and through a joint project between the town's various institutions, the students explored the issue of 'living well together'. Living well together means being able to learn, grow and interact in harmony.

The students worked with their teachers on this theme and identified values to support 'living well together'. Working in groups, the children expressed these shared values through drawings, posters, crafts, sound pieces and other productions, according to their inspiration. For the first time, they will be exhibited at the MBAL as real artists in two rooms

of the museum: the Salle Marie-Anne Calame, dedicated to the young public, and the adjoining room.

This project was set up by the CSLL's Youth Health Promotion Service and Socio-Educational Service, with the support of the Direction.



Lucie (11FR3), *La persévérance*, 2024. Gouache, 21 x 29,7 cm. © Cercle scolaire du Locle

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS LE LOCLE

The Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle (MBAL) is a prominent institution in Switzerland with an international reputation thanks to its bold and accessible programming. The museum offers monographic and thematic exhibitions that broaden viewpoints by bringing together art from the past and the present, from different places, and by creating a dialogue between works in its collection and contemporary Swiss and international artists.

Located in the centre of Le Locle and founded in 1862, the MBAL, with its magnificent Art Nouveau building renovated in 2014, offers 800 m² of exhibition space and a virtual platform for digital art, ORBIT_E. The collection comprises some 5,000 works, including paintings, sculptures and works on paper by Swiss and international artists from the 17th century to the present day, and includes prestigious long-term loans such as those from the Swiss Confederation and the Gottfried Keller Foundation.

Under the direction of curator and writer Federica Chiocchetti (PhD) since 2022, who is sensitive to gender equality, the collection's acquisition policy aims to achieve parity.



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OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

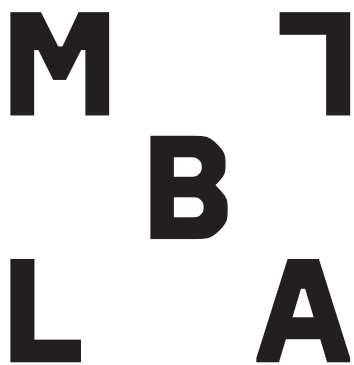
Printemps Culturel Neuchâtelois

As part of the Printemps Culturel Neuchâtelois, the MBAL has put together a selection of contemporary Korean artist books.

Let yourself be surprised by the ingenuity and sensitivity of these books, which reinvent the way we tell stories and feel.

MBAL library

For the first time, MBAL is installing a new library in its café area to share its collection of artists' books with the public.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Locle

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Wednesday - Sunday: 11h00 - 17h00

First Sunday of the month: free entry

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