



PRESS RELEASE

AUTUMN EXHIBITIONS AT THE MBAL

KOENRAAD DEDOBBELEER

KLODIN ERB

AGNÈS GEOFFRAY AND VANESSA DESCLAUX

URS LÜTHI

OCTOBER 11TH 2025 – MARCH 1ST 2026

From October 11 2025 to March 1 2026, the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) continues its ambitious programming by inviting four internationally renowned artists — working in diverse media such as sculpture, painting, photography, and design — to take over the museum's galleries with a series of solo exhibitions. By fostering a dialogue between technical experimentation, contemporary creation, critical reflection, and works from its own collection, the MBAL offers a rich and unique cultural experience for the autumn 2025 season.

Koenraad Dedobbeleer opens this exhibition cycle with a project first unveiled at the 13th edition of Art Genève in January 2025. For his exhibition at MBAL, *Decorative Chaos Dress, to impress*, the artist draws on a selection of anonymous works from the museum's collection, reinterpreting them to bring renewed visibility and offer a distinctly contemporary perspective.

With *Toutes le savent, même les anges* (*They All Know, Even the Angels*), Swiss artist **Klodin Erb**, winner of the prestigious Meret Oppenheim Prize (2022), presents a singular pictorial universe where expression, fantasy, and references to pop, digital, and artistic culture intertwine. Her experimental approach constantly pushes the boundaries of the media she works with.

The museum also presents the research-based work of French artist **Agnès Geoffray** and curator **Vanessa Desclaux**. Co-produced with the Rencontres d'Arles, where the exhibition is first shown, *Elles obliquent elles obstinent elles tempêtent* (*They Skew, They Persist, They Storm*) explores the experiences of young women labeled as «deviant» and how society has treated them — giving these voices both presence and a desire for emancipation.

Finally, Swiss conceptual artist **Urs Lüthi** takes over the museum with *L'une ou l'autre vérité* (*One or the Other Truth*). By creating a dialogue between some of his most iconic works and new, previously unseen pieces, the artist offers a fresh insight into his artistic reflections — exploring, with subtlety and irony, the notions of identity and self-representation.

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MBAL

KOENRAAD DEDOBBELEER *DECORATIVE CHAOS DRESS, TO IMPRESS*

Koenraad Dedobbeleer (born in 1975 in Halle, Belgium; lives and works in Brussels) develops a multifaceted artistic practice that spans sculpture, found objects, site-specific installations, and photography. His work teems with visual puns, ironic commentary, and references to art history. Winner of the *Mies van der Rohe* Prize in 2009, he is also an exhibition curator and co-editor of the fanzine *UP*. His work has been presented in institutions such as Kunst Museum Winterthur, Extra City Kunsthall (Antwerp, Belgium), and Crédac – Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry (France).



Koenraad Dedobbeleer,
Underground Disruption, 2018.
Spray-painted wood, stainless steel,
enamel on wood, 215 x 78 x 50 cm.

In preparation for his exhibition opening in October 2025, Dedobbeleer was invited for a short residency in Le Locle in 2024 to immerse himself in the MBAL collection. He was struck by the richness of the collection—its more than 5,000 pieces extend far beyond traditional techniques like painting or drawing, and include a significant number of applied arts objects.

He was particularly intrigued by the strong presence of anonymous works in the museum's holdings. This discovery inspired a potential alternate title for his exhibition: *The Graveyards Are Full of People the World Could Not Do Without*. As a nod to the sometimes chaotic complexity of collection management, his selection focuses on paintings, sculptures, and decorative objects created by unknown makers.

His long-standing interest in the functional and contextual nature of objects — where art ends and utility begins — permeates his entire practice. This attraction to (art) objects leads him to deconstruct, manipulate, and recontextualize them. By altering their function or environment, he invites viewers

to reconsider the nature and meaning of objects within new frames of reference. The artist describes his approach as a “multifaceted experience,” driven by an intuitive rather than systematic exploration of possibilities.

The first iteration of this exhibition took place as a carte blanche at the 13th edition of Art Genève (2025), where Dedobbeleer presented recent creations alongside a selection from the MBAL collection.

MBLA

KLODIN ERB

THEY ALL KNOW, EVEN THE ANGELS

Klodin Erb (born 1963 in Winterthur, Switzerland) lives and works in Zurich. Winner of the prestigious Meret Oppenheim Prize in 2022, she is one of Switzerland's most acclaimed contemporary artists. Her work has been shown at Kunst Museum Winterthur, Villa Medici, and the Istituto Svizzero in Rome, among others.

In her art, Klodin Erb creates inventive and vibrant visual worlds that reflect the emotional undercurrents of our time. Her sensitive response to her surroundings and to the constant transformation of contemporary life infuses her work with nuance and intensity.



While rooted in painting, Erb's practice continuously questions and redefines the medium itself. Techniques evolve according to content, generating a dynamic exchange between material and meaning. Drawing on art history, myth, pop culture, literature, and digital imagery, her work is driven by a deep curiosity and a fearless desire to experiment.

Embracing an open and exploratory approach, Erb also incorporates film, installation, and collage into her practice, expanding the scope of image-making. Spanning over three decades, her work initiates a dialogue across time, forging connections between past and present while continually offering fresh perspectives.

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Aargauer Kunsthaut in Aarau.

Klodin Erb, *Drunken Angel (Earth)*, 2023. Sewed fabrics, embroidered with wool, little bells, 220 x 104 cm.

MBAL

**AGNÈS GEOFFRAY
AND VANESSA DESCLAUX**
THEY SKEW, THEY PERSIST, THEY STORM

The MBAL hosts *They Skew, They Persist, They Storm*, a major project developed through the unique collaboration between artist Agnès Geoffray and curator and critic Vanessa Desclaux. The exhibition features a new body of photographic and textual works and is supported by the Research and Creation Grant of the Institut pour la photographie in Lille. It draws on institutional archives from three French public institutions for girls: the “preservation schools” of Cadillac, Doullens, and Clermont de l’Oise, which operated from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.

Premiering at the Rencontres de la photographie in Arles 2025 and co-produced with MBAL, the project explores the lives of young girls labeled as “deviant” or “uneducable,” who were institutionalized for transgressing social and moral norms of their time. Through the interplay of Geoffray’s visual works and archival materials — photographs, press clippings, administrative records — the exhibition seeks to give space to their resistance and desire for emancipation.



Agnès Geoffray, *Les échappées I*, 2023. Pigment print, mounted on 1mm aluminium, framed, 60 x 90 cm.

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Geoffray's photographs stage gestures of defiance, defense, rebellion, and escape. They portray fictional figures who confront or flee oppression, evoking the violence of institutional confinement. Short poetic texts, imagined by the artist, are inscribed directly on the walls or projected onto the images, lending voice to fictional who cry out or sing. Here, writing becomes a tool of liberation, reclaiming language and asserting subjectivity.

The exhibition is organised around themes of dissidence (*they skew*), revolt (*they storm*), and escape (*they fugitive*), encouraging viewers to reflect on the marginalized lives of these girls, whose bodies were subjected to a form of carceral control disguised as care. It poetically and politically reconsiders history through the lens of the present.

A publication with Éditions Textuels accompanies the exhibition: *Elles obliquent Elles obstinent Elles tempêtent*, 2025.

MBAL

URS LÜTHI *ONE OR THE OTHER TRUTH*

The MBAL presents a solo exhibition to German-Swiss artist Urs Lüthi entitled *One or the Other Truth*, featuring a selection of works spanning several decades. Lüthi represented Switzerland at the Venice Biennale in 2001.

Born in 1947 in Kriens, he now lives and works in Munich. His work is part of major public and private collections worldwide, including the Kunsthaus Zürich, the Hamburger Kunsthalle, Centre Pompidou (Paris), and MoMA (New York).

For this exhibition, Lüthi continues his exploration of identity and disappearance. Rejecting the notion of a fixed self-portrait, he declares: "It's all about vanishing."

Self-representation becomes a paradoxical act, each assertion of self leading to withdrawal, distance, or transformation. The contours of identity blur, and the self-image becomes unstable, a terrain of fiction and simulacra. Through this, Lüthi offers the viewer a quiet space of reflection in a disquieting world.

His work, often tinged with humour, takes the form of visual puzzles, surreal scenes, or performative acts. Autobiography and self-portraiture remain central to his practice, inviting questions such as: What does it mean to "show oneself"? Can one truly represent oneself? What remains of "the self" when images become volatile and performative?



Urs Lüthi, *Spazio Umano (the Enemy)*, 2018. Mixed Media (Detail), 2-tlg., ie, 190 x 150 x 150 cm.
© Urs Lüthi, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

Launch of the 4th ORBIT_E Capsule, the Museum's Digital Platform

Alongside its four exhibitions, MBAL will unveil the fourth capsule of its virtual platform, ORBIT_E, in 2025. Initiated in 2022 with the support of Pro Helvetia, ORBIT_E, serves as a digital extension of the museum and a laboratory for digital, experimental, and transdisciplinary creation. This new edition, titled *Doomscrolling with five international artists*, will be curated by artist Kika Nicolela, who is also curator at the Objkt gallery in Zurich.

Through ORBIT_E, MBAL continues to directly support artists by producing and distributing digital works, while also offering a space for inspiration and discovery around new artistic practices in the digital age.

This project will be officially launched in Paris on December 5 at the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles, as part of Immaterial Art in a Material World, an evening dedicated to digital art in partnership with the Swiss Cultural Center, the N mo Biennale at Centquatre-Paris, and the Nova Biennale of the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles.

Museum Library – News

The MBAL has invited Th ophile Calot, director of the delpire & co bookstore (Paris), to present the exhibition *Books and Bookends* in the museum's new library space. On this occasion, artisans and designers, such as Cl o Charuet, Atelier Jonathan Cohen, Sophie Dewez, Jeanne Tresvaux du Fraval and Atelier Laissez Passer, will showcase original bookends presented in dialogue with a selection of books from the MBAL's collection.



Atelier Jonathan Cohen



Talks and Events

The Metamorphoses of Collections

Panel discussion

September 11 at 5:00 p.m.

The MBAL is also a place for debate and conversation where ideas in the art world intersect. The museum will host a special panel discussion with directors of three Swiss institutions: Ann Demeester (Kunsthaus Zurich), Letizia Ragaglia (Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein), David Lemaire (Musée des Beaux-Arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds). *The Metamorphoses of Collections* will explore the dialogue between contemporary creation and museum collections. The event will take place on September 11, 2025, and will be open to the public.

Conversation between Jonathan LLense and Morgane Paillard

September 14 at 3:00 p.m.

To mark the closing of the four spring exhibitions, the museum invites artist Jonathan LLense — on view until September 14 with *Par le biais*, curated by Sergio Valenzuela-Escobedo — for a conversation with Morgane Paillard, director of the Alt+1000 festival. LLense will also present an exhibition during the festival, running from September 13 to October 5, 2025.

Performance and Dance

Marie-Madeleine Save Your Tears, by Anna Carraud

February 13, 2026

Marie-Madeleine Save Your Tears is a mirrored autobiography. The piece explores the encounter between two figures sharing the same name: Marie-Madeleine, the artist's mother, and Mary Magdalene, the popular biblical figure. Through this fusion, a third, hybrid and imaginary figure emerges, made up of fragments of reality and myth.

The performance explores the emotional and physical metamorphosis of the body through a live creation of a costume made of knots.

A constant dialogue is established between Léa Moreau's original soundtrack and the fragmented, redirected, and reinvented movements of the performer.

Workshops for Children

Throughout the exhibition, the museum will invite children and adults to explore different artistic practices and engage with the exhibitions.



MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS LE LOCLE (MBAL)

The Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) is a leading Swiss institution with an international reach thanks to its bold and accessible programming. The museum offers both monographic and thematic exhibitions that expand perspectives and bring together art from the past and present, from here and elsewhere, fostering a dialogue between works from its collection and contemporary Swiss and international creation.

Located in the centre of Le Locle and founded in 1862, MBAL is housed in a magnificent Art Nouveau building, which was renovated in 2014. It features 800 m² of exhibition space and a virtual platform for digital art: ORBIT_E. The collection includes around 5,000 works — paintings, sculptures, and works on paper — by Swiss and international artists from the 17th century to the present day, including prestigious deposits from the Swiss Confederation and the Gottfried Keller Foundation.

Under the direction of curator and writer Federica Chiocchetti (PhD) since 2022, and with a strong focus on gender equality, the museum's acquisition policy aims to achieve gender parity.



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Wednesday to Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
First Sunday of each month: free admission