

Entangled Others, (di)atomic garden (still preview)

The Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle - MBAL is participating in Art Genève for the second time, the international contemporary art fair bringing together galleries and institutions from Switzerland and around the world. For the occasion, the MBAL will unveil the fifth capsule of the ORBIT_E programme, curated by Marlène Wenger.

Launched in 2022, the digital platform ORBIT_E is a virtual extension of MBAL, designed to extend and complement the artistic programme presented at the museum. ORBIT_E, referencing both the eye's orbital cavity and planetary trajectories —the platform functions as an experimental and transdisciplinary laboratory exploring the scope of action and the energy of contemporary digital creation. Through ORBIT_E, MBAL continues its commitment to supporting artists by accompanying the production and dissemination of digital artworks. By promoting these practices, the museum aims to contribute to their institutional recognition and to take part in the broader movement exploring new voices within the field of contemporary art.

5th ORBIT_E Capsule : (di)atomic garden

By the artist duo Entangled Others (Feileacan McCormick and Sofia Crespo)

Curated by Marlène Wenger (HEK Basel)

The fifth capsule of the ORBIT_E project, developed by the duo *Entangled Others*, brings together historical archives, virtual data, and scientific research to imagine a fictional online garden.

(di)atomic garden examines the ways in which radioactivity alters natural environments and living organisms, simulating processes of virtual irradiation. Scenarios envisioning what might biologically occur when life forms are exposed to radioactivity intertwine with data drawn from agricultural history and Antarctic plankton.

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M B L A

The project draws on the little-known history of atomic gardens—experimental fields developed after the Second World War to explore so-called “peaceful” applications of nuclear energy. By exposing crops to cobalt-60, researchers induced mutations that sometimes resulted in higher yields, new colours, or unprecedented forms—varieties that can still be found in seed catalogues today. Although these open-air radioactive fields have largely disappeared, irradiation-induced mutagenesis continues to be practiced in laboratory settings.

At the same time, radionuclides originating from nuclear weapons tests, reactor accidents, and industrial discharges have entered the oceans over recent decades. Now present at low concentrations and mixed with natural background radiation, they do not render the seas uninhabitable. However, they create conditions in which organisms—from plankton to fish—live under chronic, low-level exposure. While the effects of high doses are well documented, the long-term ecological consequences of lower exposures remain uncertain, particularly when combined with warming, acidification, and other environmental disturbances.

These uncertainties form the conceptual backbone of **(di)atomic garden**

Entangled Others **Artists**

Entangled Others is an experimental artist duo composed of Feileacan Kirkbride McCormick and Sofia Crespo. In their practice, McCormick and Crespo explore the strange and unsettling spaces that lie between human technologies and non-human worlds, advocating for the dissolution of the distance we impose between ourselves and the richness of our interdependent existence. Their work questions notions of technological bias and the representation of natural species, proposing new ways of understanding the relationships between humans, technology, and more-than-human life.

Their work has been presented internationally at institutions and events including the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, NeueHouse LA in Los Angeles, Oxford University, and the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

Marlene Wenger **Curator**

Marlene Wenger is an art historian and curator specialising in digital and post-digital artistic practices. She studied at the University of Bern and the Freie Universität Berlin, earning her doctorate in 2021 with a thesis on post-digital exhibition strategies.

After completing her studies, she worked for Art Basel Unlimited, the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art in Zurich, and as an assistant at Stadtgalerie Bern, as well as curating a private video art collection in Bern. From 2020 to 2023 she served as a curatorial assistant in the Contemporary Art department at the Kunstmuseum Bern.

Since 2023, she has been Head of Programme and curator at the House of Electronic Arts (HEK) in Basel, where she co-curated projects including *Virtual Beauty* (2024) and *Other Intelligences* (2025). In her curatorial work, she develops long-term projects and programme strands focused on digital culture, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, gaming, and contemporary forms of online subjectivity.

MBAL

SPRING 2026 AT MBAL

Pour tout faire, il faut une fleur

28 March – 6 September 2026

Collective Exhibition Curated by Nicolas Polli

The MBAL is pleased to present, as part of its Spring 2026 season, the exhibition *Pour faire toute chose, il faut une fleur* (to make anything, a flower is needed). Conceived by Swiss artist, graphic designer, publisher, and educator **Nicolas Polli**, the project offers an original reflection on the intersections between photography, graphic design, and hybrid artistic practices. The exhibition brings together a constellation of Swiss and international creators from diverse disciplines, united by a common desire to blur traditional boundaries between artistic fields. Upcycling and circularity are at the heart of this investigation, where raw materials and creative processes intermingle to generate new beginnings. *Pour faire toute chose, il faut une fleur* explores how different areas of the graphic arts connect and resonate, highlighting the dynamic interplay between disciplines and the ways in which artistic practices can transcend conventional classifications.



Per fare tutto ci vuole un fiore,
Nicolas Polli, 2025

The exhibition arises from a need to understand how different areas of graphic arts interconnect with one another. It explores particularly the ambivalence of an era marked both by professional hyper-specialization and by a growing demand for versatility — a tension reflected in **Nicolas Polli's** own career as a photographer, graphic designer, publisher, and educator.

Through a dynamic and immersive scenography, the exhibition highlights a generation of artists whose paths escape conventional classifications. It emphasizes stories of training, overlapping influences, the imagination of childhood, and contemporary forms of collaboration and transmission.

The selected artists dissect in depth the cycle of things: tools merge with final outcomes, behind-the-scenes processes become central pieces themselves, actions provoke reactions, and repetitions generate differences.

Recycling of materials is central to this process: for example, design elements created by one of the artists, originally made from materials salvaged from past exhibitions, are repurposed again as structures intended to host the works on display. In this way, the exhibition can be understood as an exploration of processes, where even mistakes become grounds for experimentation.

It is an ambitious project, deeply rooted in the Swiss context while remaining resolutely international, and it speaks as much to art lovers as to emerging creators in search of alternative models of practice.

MBAL

Conceived as a space for dialogue, the exhibition brings together photographic works as well as publications, graphic installations, editorial objects, personal archives, as well as painting and sculpture. It also features a participatory installation designed for children in the Salle Marie-Anne Calame and the adjacent space, offering young visitors an opportunity to engage directly with the themes of the exhibition.

Nicolas Polli Curator

As a professional in the field of graphic arts, **Nicolas Polli** is at the heart of these concerns. Born in 1989 in Brusino Arsizio, Switzerland, Polli is a Swiss photographer, graphic designer, editor, and educator. He studied Art Direction at ECAL (École cantonale d'art de Lausanne), where he received his Master's degree. Polli works fluidly between personal projects and commercial commissions. His photographic work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and he has published two monographs. Between 2012 and 2020, he co-founded and co-edited YET magazine, a publication devoted to contemporary photography that gained international recognition and received a Swiss Design Award. In 2018 and 2020 he was awarded the Swiss Design Award. In 2016, he began developing his independent studio, Atelier CIAO, specialising in editorial design and still life photography. After working with several publishers, he founded his own experimental editorial platform, CIAO Press, which focuses on contemporary photography, illustration, and design. Polli has taught photography and photobook design at various universities and, since 2021, has been a resident at Atelier Robert in Biel/Bienne.

Artists featured :

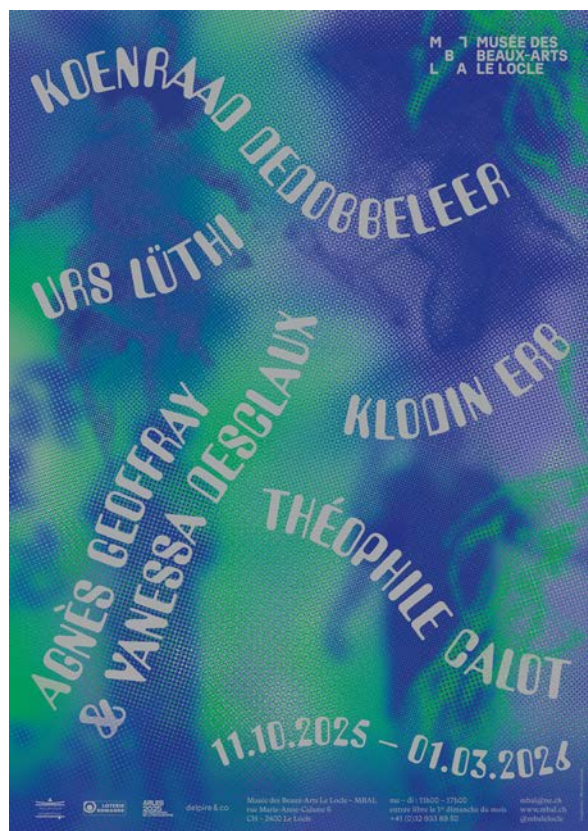
- Ayed Arafah
- Ruth van Beek
- Linus Bill & Adrien Horni
- Alina Frieske
- Sabine Hess
- Jeanne Jacob
- Enzo Mari
- Aldo Mozzini
- Nicolas Polli
- Olga Prader
- Erin O'Keefe
- Peter Fischli & David Weiss

Highlights of the Spring 2026 season

- **Opening reception of the exhibition**
27 March 2026
In the presence of the artists and curator Nicolas Polli
DJ set with Beatrice Beispiel
- **Conversation on the legendary figure of Enzo Mari**
Date to be confirmed
Discussion with Emanuele Quinz (art and design historian, Paris 8), Barbara Casavecchia (editor-in-chief, Mousse magazine), and Nicolas Polli
- **Conversation on artist book publishing**
Date to be confirmed
Discussion with Bruno Ceschel (Founder of Self Publish Be Happy), Urs Lehni (Founder of Rollo Press), and Nicolas Polli (CIAO Press)
- **Creative workshops**
April, May, and June 2026
For adults and children with the MBAL mediation team
- **Closing concert**
6 September 2026
With Swiss musician Leoni Leoni

TO (RE)DISCOVER UNTIL 1 MARCH 2026

EXHIBITION | AUTUMN CYCLE



Until 1 March 2026, MBAL presents an autumn cycle composed of five exhibitions. Spanning sculpture, painting, photography and design, four internationally renowned artists and two curators joyfully take over the museum's galleries.

Koenraad Dedobbeleer opens this cycle of exhibitions with a project first shown at the 13th edition of Art Genève in January 2025. The artist pursues a diverse artistic approach that combines sculpture, objects, site-specific installations and photography. After immersing himself in the MBAL collection, he was struck by its richness and by the presence of numerous works whose creators are anonymous. For his exhibition *Decorative Chaos Dress, to Impress*, he chose anonymity as a unifying theme. By transforming the use or environment of the works, he reinterprets and recontextualises them, giving them new visibility and offering a resolutely contemporary reading. In this way, Dedobbeleer blurs the boundaries between everyday use and contemplation, everyday life and art, history and the present, constructing a subtle network of correspondences and tensions.

With *Toutes le savent, même les anges*, Swiss artist **Klodin Erb**, winner of the 2022 Meret Oppenheim Prize, reveals a unique pictorial universe where expression, fantasy, and references to popular and digital culture intertwine. Erb's artistic approach is open and experimental, and she employs a variety of techniques that evolve according to the content. The exhibition is a visual reflection that questions the fragile balance of our world between essential polarities such as sky and earth, knowledge and belief, play and gravity. Inspired by horoscopes and astrological charts, Erb sees in them the expression of a deep desire to seek something greater than oneself and that provides a sense of belonging. This exhibition enters into a dialogue with *Vorhang fällt Hund bellt*, presented at the Aargauer Kunsthaus in Aarau.

In co-production with the Rencontres d'Arles festival, French artist **Agnès Geoffray** and curator **Vanessa Desclaux** present *Elles obliquent elles obstinent elles tempêtent*. This project was developed from institutional archives concerning the "preservation schools" of Cadillac, Doullens, and Clermont de l'Oise, public institutions for the placement of underage girls in France from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. The exploration of the lives of young girls labeled as "deviant" or "uneducable" and confined for several years has given rise to an installation that celebrates their forms of rebellion and their aspirations to emancipation. The exhibition is both poetic and political, creating a dialogue between archival documents and Agnès Geoffray's photographs based on motifs of dissent, revolt, and escape.

Both poetic and political, the exhibition brings together archival documents with the photographs of Agnès Geoffray, exploring themes of dissent, rebellion, and escape through *Elles obliquent elles obstinent elles tempêtent*. This project was developed in co-production with the Rencontres d'Arles festival from institutional archives relating to "preservation schools" for girls in France, revealing forms of resistance and aspirations to emancipation through immersive installation and imagery.

With *L'une ou l'autre vérité*, Urs Lüthi weaves a visual narrative around his legendary series and invites audiences to engage with the intimate and universal contradictions of human emotions. The exhibition spans 55 years of creation, from the artist's very first self-portrait during an existential crisis in Ibiza in 1969 to his more recent reflections on constant self-effacement, including the sensual and ironic multiplicity of The Numbergirl Seen Through the Pink Glasses of Desire, his iconic 1973 series. By playing with the ambiguities of emotion, the body, and the image, the artist highlights the complexity of what is considered "true," asserting that objectivity does not exist and that personal truth filters our experience of the world. He encourages visitors to find a sense of solace in a world marked by discomfort.

Théophile Calot, director of the delpire & co bookshop in Paris, transforms the museum's new library space with the exhibition *Books and Bookends*, which pays homage to a fascinating object: the bookend. On this occasion, artisans and designers including **Elvire Bonduelle**, **Dieudonné Cartier**, **Atelier Jonathan Cohen**, **Cléo Charuet**, **Nathalie Dewez**, **Atelier Laisser Passer**, **Louis Lefebvre**, **Jeanne Tresvaux Du Fraval**, and **Laure Gremion** present original creations in dialogue with a selection of books from the MBAL collection. Each piece is unique or produced in very small artisanal series using a wide variety of materials such as ceramic, metal, stone, or repurposed materials, and while many function in pairs, they can also stand alone as sculptural objects.

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Highlights of the Autumn 2026 cycle

- Performed reading with **Agnès Geoffray** and **Vanessa Desclaux** around the exhibition *Elles obliquent elles obstinent elles tempêtent*, **30 January 2026** at 5:30 pm, preceded by a presentation by Veronique Terrier Hermann, Head of the Grant Programme, Research/Creation Support at the Institut Photo de Lille.
- Urs Lüthi in conversation with Fanni Fetzler, Director of the Kunstmuseum Luzern, **6 February 2026** at 5:30 pm.
- Performance Marie-Madeleine Save Your Tears by Anna Carraud **13 February 2026** at 5:30 pm

More information about the museum's agenda : <https://www.mbal.ch/agenda/>

MBAL

THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF LOCLE - MBAL

The Fine Arts Museum of Le Locle – MBAL is a leading institution in Switzerland with an international reputation, thanks to programming that is both bold and accessible. The museum offers monographic and thematic exhibitions that broaden perspectives and bring together art from yesterday and today, from here and elsewhere, creating a dialogue between works from its collection and contemporary Swiss and international creation. Located in the city centre of Le Locle and established in 1862, the MBAL occupies a magnificent Art Nouveau building renovated in 2014. It features 800 m² of exhibition space as well as a virtual platform dedicated to digital art, ORBIT_E. The collection, comprising around 5,000 pieces – paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by Swiss and international artists from the 17th century to today – also includes prestigious deposits such as those from the Swiss Confederation and the Gottfried Keller Foundation.

Under the direction of curator and writer Federica Chiocchetti (PhD) since 2022, MBAL pursues an inclusive programming and an acquisition policy committed to gender equality, with the goal of achieving parity.



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Mercredi - dimanche : 11h00 - 17h00
Premier dimanche du mois : Free admission