

EN

l'idée des corps célestes

→ *group show*

centre
de
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l'idée des corps célestes

black gallery & nave

10.07.2026 — 03.01.2027

curators and texts : delphine masson and marine rochard

attila csörgő

jeppe hein

žilvinas kempinas

jaume plensa

valerie snobeck

francisco tropa

hema upadhyay

marc fornes

Marc Fornes's work is presented in the nave through September 13.

This exhibition has been made possible through the exceptional loans from the Centre Pompidou, Paris ; the Cnap and the Frac Centre-Val de Loire ; the Atelier Calder ; the Frac Bretagne ; the Frac des Pays de la Loire ; the Frac Picardie ; Les Abattoirs, Musée-Frac Occitanie Toulouse ; the Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne - Château de Rochechouart.

 **Centre Pompidou**

ATELIER
CALDER

'The first things I made were very simple combinations of forms in a limited number, and soon *the idea of celestial bodies*, atmospheric conditions, etc., in a very simple form, became the basis of my compositions. Then I thought that the laws of nature would be more closely respected if the interrelations between my elements were more general, so I articulated some of the supports in wire, thus allowing movement. This, in turn, suggested to me that movement itself could be used in composition, and I then began to make "mobiles" [...] Symmetry and order do not make a composition. It is the apparent accident to regularity which the artist actually controls, by which he makes or mars a work.'

01 Alexander Calder, handwritten text, 1943. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Agnes Rindge Claflin Papers. (Reproduced in Arnauld Pierre, *Calder, la sculpture en mouvement*, Paris: Gallimard, 1996, p. 96.)

In 2026, as part of the regional programme dedicated to Alexander Calder, the CCCOD is developing a preliminary programme that seeks to examine the persistence of the American artist's founding principles within contemporary practices. His studio in Saché, transformed in 1989 into a space dedicated to artistic residencies, has hosted more than seventy artists over the years. From this history, we have identified a number of figures, and above all certain practices, that resonate with the ever-renewed experimental spirit of Calder's work.

Influenced as much by the scientific discoveries and technological innovations of his time as by a pragmatic, everyday sensibility, Alexander Calder developed an approach whose apparent simplicity draws on the fleeting sense of lightness that daily life can sometimes afford. Expérimentant tout autant la Working across both sculpture and what might be termed an "anti-sculptural" mode, and engaging with physical principles such as gravity and balance, Calder produced works

situated at the threshold between sculpture and machine⁰². Through their lightness and mobility, these works assume shifting, transitory appearances, never settling into a fixed or definitive state of perception. From this constellation of concerns, we have brought together eight artists who, in the years after him, briefly stayed in Saché—creating within the environment and studio he had initially conceived for his own practice.

The works of seven of them will be presented in dialogue within the black gallery, while, in resonance, a monumental piece by Marc Fornes will occupy the nave, serving as a prefiguration of the installation of three large-scale Mobiles by Alexander Calder (from 16 October 2026).

From one work to another, the aim is to represent—or rather to experience—the invisible forces of nature, approached in a manner that is more pragmatic than scientific, and to bring to light the major abstract concepts that shape our transient existences, even as they remain interwoven

with a sense of continuity. 'I have always been fascinated by the way things connect to one another.'⁰³

This remark by Alexander Calder aptly illustrates the tenacity with which we strive to understand the world around us, even when it exceeds our capacity to fully grasp it⁰⁴.

The works in the exhibition propose a shared way of engaging with time and space. Temporality can be perceived as a repetitive cycle, as in the work of Valerie Snobeck, or through the prism of circularity, lightness, and the almost immaterial, as in the practices of Žilvinas Kempinas and Jeppe Hein. For his part, Attila Csörgő explores the infinite and uninterrupted progression of time, a reflection that may also echo theories of the continuous expansion of the universe, within which bodies are in constant motion and perpetual reconfiguration in relation to one another, as seen in the works of Francisco Tropa, Hema Upadhyay, and Marc Fornes.

Yet it is always through an apparent simplicity that these artists engage with such complex notions. While some draw on the language of mathematics and the sciences, it is rather a form of empiricism that underpins their approach to the invisible forces governing the world and its mechanisms, which they seek to experience and articulate.

02 'Better a poor machine and a good sculpture.'
Alexander Calder, *A propos of Measuring a Mobile*, handwritten text, 7 October 1943, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Agnes Rindge Claflin Papers. (Reproduced in Arnauld Pierre, *Calder: Sculpture in Movement* (op. cit.), p. 96.)

03 Reported statements by Alexander Calder, in *Calder*, Maeght Éditeur, Galerie municipale de Prague, 1992, p. 74.

04 'The underlying formal sense of my work has been the system of the universe—or at least a part of it. For one must admit that the model is a little too large for anyone who would wish to base themselves upon it.'
(idem)

the artists →

attila csörgő

born in 1965 at Budapest (Hungary),
lives and works in Varsaw (Poland)
in residency at the Atelier Calder from March to
July 2011

Clock Work, 2011

metal, wood, projectors, motors
AM 2015-6, acquired in 2015
Centre Pompidou, Paris
Musée national d'art moderne /Centre de
création industrielle

Möbius Space

(Kerghéhenec-1), 2006

framed black and white photograph,
transparent film and light table. Inv. : 121495.
Collection Fonds régional d'art contemporain
Bretagne

The Hungarian artist Attila Csörgő is committed to giving form to the invisible laws and structures that govern the world. With a strong interest in cosmology, physics, mathematics, and geometry, he conceives his works as visual and playful resolutions to complex scientific problems. Drawing on highly elaborate calculations, his sculptures, installations, and photographs generate striking optical illusions involving movement and light. They unsettle habitual modes of perception and interrogate fundamental universal notions such as the relationship between time and space.

It is through simple means that Attila Csörgő engages with complex scientific phenomena. To generate his striking visual equations, he constructs his own devices, openly embracing their "makeshift" character in reference to the often rudimentary instruments that have accompanied major scientific discoveries. This approach shifts the aesthetic stakes of his work beyond its material presence, situating them instead within the conceptual, philosophical, and poetic dimensions of the optical phenomena he brings into being.

His mechanised devices function as machines for producing impossible images—such as transforming a circle into a square⁰⁵ or compressing all the dimensions of a space into a single photograph. In Attila Csörgő's work, the use of scientific methods and language is not intended to explain the physical and rational world, but rather to evoke astonishment and the form of perceptual disruption inherent to aesthetic experience.

⁰⁵ Attila Csörgő, *Squaring the circle*, 2013.

Clock Work, presented in the exhibition, was developed during the artist's residency at the Atelier Calder. It belongs to a body of work and research initiated in the early 1990s on the representation of time. *Clock Work* ingeniously combines a geometric structure with its luminous projection. At the centre of the installation, an apparently irregular volume is in fact the result of a complex reflection combining geometry and mathematics. When illuminated by two light sources reflected through telescope mirrors, the form is doubled on the surrounding walls into two distinct geometric figures. The shadows alternately trace a circle and a lemniscate—the elongated figure eight symbol of infinity.

From a single form, the artist thus intertwines two fundamental and opposing concepts of time: cyclical time and linear time. If the former corresponds to the archaic circularity of a repetitive temporality, folding back onto itself through the cycles of seasons and days, the latter refers to the modern conception of historical time, oriented toward infinite progression.

Möbius Space (Kerguéhennec-1) is part of a broader reflection on space and its representation through the photographic medium. During a residency at the Domaine de Kerguéhennec in Brittany, Attila Csörgő constructed a photographic device featuring a dual rotational movement. During the act of image-making—which does not occur instantaneously but unfolds over a duration—the apparatus records the landscape onto a Möbius strip. This geometric form, which twists back onto itself, has the property of possessing only one surface (unlike a conventional strip, which has two).

Echoing the infinite figure of the lemniscate, the photographic image thus forms a loop, bringing together on a single plane the multiple dimensions of the landscape.

marc fornes

born in 1975 at Strasbourg (France),
lives and works in New York (United States)
in residency at the Atelier Calder from April to
July 2012

DAW / Double Agent White, 2012

Pavilion composed of nine openwork spheres assembled
together

Cut and riveted white lacquered aluminum

FNAC 2014-0348

Collection of the National Centre for Visual Arts (Cnap).

On deposit at Frac Centre-Val de Loire

Trained as an architect, Marc Fornes has, from early on in his career, developed an experimental practice rooted in computational design. His work is best understood as a hybrid field between architecture, design, and sculpture.

In the early 2000s, he founded in New York THEVERYMANY, a research-driven studio dedicated to expanding the structural possibilities of built form through lightweight materials and modular elements. These components are conceived using digital design and fabrication protocols, enabling highly precise yet adaptable systems of assembly.

The so-called “structural stripes” operate as both structure and skin, forming a construction system capable of generating complex, self-supporting curved surfaces with organic geometries. Contrary to common assumptions about experimental architecture, Fornes’s works are not confined to the realm of proposals: they are realised through commissions, most often installed in public space, and some have also entered museum collections.

During his residency at the Atelier Calder from April to July 2012, he developed *DAW/Double Agent White*, a sculpture now held in the Cnap collection, conceived as a space one can step into, almost like entering a room. The work encapsulates several key aspects of Marc Fornes’s practice. It is first and foremost intended as an immersive spatial experience, activated by those who temporarily inhabit it.

At the same time, it is shaped through a computational approach to form-making. Rather than simply using digital tools to assist architectural design, Fornes draws on generative systems in which multiple agents interact, producing evolving structures and unexpected formal hybrids.

Within his studio, Marc Fornes develops his own meta-programming platforms, built on self-generating genetic algorithms that incorporate elements of chance and operate through combinatorial logics. These processes give rise to modular systems whose complexity stems from the near-infinite variations enabled by the underlying computational protocol.

In the case of *DAW/Double Agent White*, the work begins with a simple structural sphere, progressively transformed through the intersection of additional spherical volumes. Its development responds not only to formal considerations but also to technical constraints: each component is cut from flat sheets of white aluminium and assembled by riveting. The finished piece takes the form of a self-supporting, biomorphic structure, standing 3.4 metres high and extending across a surface of 35 square metres. Yet once disassembled, its elements can be flattened and contained within a compact crate of less than one cubic metre.

This concern for efficient fabrication, along with the imperative of lightweight storage and transport, bear witness to a rationalization of the design and manufacturing process characteristic of Marc Fornes' prototypical practice. Each work is conceived as singular piece and yet remain grounded in processes that could just as readily lend themselves to serial production, governed by a clear and rational protocol. The lightness of the entire device gives an airy appearance to this installation, even though it was conceived as a monumental sculpture with strong structural roots.

Marc Fornes's work is presented in the nave
through September 13.

born in 1974 in Copenhagen (Denmark),
lives and works at Copenhagen and Berlin (Germany)
in residency at the Atelier Calder from September 2009
to January 2010

Moving Neon Cube, 2004

Neon tubes, electrical cables, timer,
transformers

AM 2005-195, Acquired in 2005.

Centre Pompidou, Paris

Musée national d'art moderne / Centre de
création industrielle

Time, as the fourth dimension of space, can be understood as much in terms of relativity as of illusion. Do the real and the present—the here and now—coincide? Can they truly be overlaid, or are they perceived differently by each observer?

With *Moving neon cube*⁰⁶, Jeppe Hein approaches these physical and philosophical questions through a language of apparent simplicity. The sculpture is composed of twelve cubes, outlined in neon and arranged

on the ground in a square formation. As the neon segments light up in sequence, they conjure the image of a single cube turning upon itself, tracing a continuous circular path—like a die set in motion.

Through installations and often simple, geometric sculptural forms, Jeppe Hein extends the legacy of 1960s Minimalism while subtly reconfiguring it—introducing play, a touch of humour, and, crucially, the viewer's perception as an active component. As with *Moving Neon Cube*, his works frequently reveal their own mechanics through processes of construction and deconstruction, making visible both their intrinsic modularity and, more broadly, that of the surrounding space. In doing so, they establish a dialogue between sculptural form and architecture.

⁰⁶ This work belongs to the *Enlightments* series, a group of neon pieces.

The work presented in *The Idea of Celestial Bodies* more specifically engages with the tension between materialisation and dematerialisation, and with the way the artwork relates to reality through the viewer's gaze. The sculpture is activated in light: the viewer perceives a cube

moving through space, while simultaneously witnessing a form that is in a constant state of assembly and disassembly. When the light goes out, however, does the inert structure still persist as an artwork?

The relationship Jeppe Hein establishes between his work and kinetic art witnesses movement and time are considered as inherent and primordial materials for his sculptural practice. During his residency at the Atelier Calder in 2009–2010, the Danish artist goes further by proposing an artistic event *Circus Hein*, based on art and the circus. Jeppe Hein invited on this occasion a wide range of participants—visual artists, circus performers, and performers more broadly—to create a collective piece, produced in partnership with the Frac Centre–Val de Loire.

Within the exhibition, *Moving Neon Cube*, through its continuous motion and sense of play, enters a direct dialogue with the work of Žilvinas Kempinas, who creates sculptures out of almost nothing, relying on the physical properties of his materials and, with a certain wit, making the existence of the work contingent upon the viewer's gaze and experience.

žilvinas kempinas

born in 1969 in Plungė (Lithuania),
lives and works in New York (United States)
in residency at the Atelier Calder from
January to June 2008

Flux, 2009

Fan, MiniDV magnetic tape, painted wooden plinth

AM 2010-257

gift of the artist, with the support of the Calder
Foundation, the Galerija Vartai and Yvon Lambert,
2010

Centre Pompidou, Paris

Musée national d'art moderne /Centre de création
industrielle

Žilvinas Kempinas explores the possibilities of movement in sculpture through a language of striking formal simplicity, extending the legacy of kinetic art and Op Art. Since the 1990s, he has focused in particular on the plastic and vibratory qualities of magnetic tape from video cassettes, which has become his material of choice.

Created a year after the artist's residency at the Atelier Calder, *Flux* presented in the exhibition, is emblematic of the living, kinetic sculptures that brought Žilvinas Kempinas to international prominence in the early 2000s. It belongs to a series of aerial works that combine the lightness of magnetic tape with the airflow of fans that shape and animate it. The fine black ribbons hover in suspension, drawn into a hypnotic dance that seems to defy gravity.

Suspended by nothing more than air currents and their electrified source, these fragile forms drawn in space seem perpetually on the verge of unravelling and dissolving, yet they hold together with striking persistence. They resist disappearance with a quiet insistence, continually resolving into the same minimal figures—circles, loops, or lemniscates—no matter how unstable they appear.

Working with immaterial, elemental forces such as air and light, the artist is less interested in producing objects than in setting up perceptual situations. While his practice resonates with an infra-thin sensibility, it nonetheless generates poetic events that occupy space with a strong, almost physical intensity.

Now obsolete, though once widely used at the time he began working with it, magnetic videotape is not approached for its original purpose of recording image or sound. Instead, Žilvinas Kempinas draws on its material qualities—its lightness, flexibility, and reflective surface, which catches and modulates any available light. At the same time, the residual memory embedded in the medium lends the works an added depth, a form of “latent energy⁰⁷” offered up to the viewer’s imagination.

07 According to Žilvinas Kempinas, the videotape ‘is a potential energy. [...] It’s all the stuff of your imagination, with what you want to see. So there is always this potential grouping of images, sounds, movements.’ ‘Paroles d’artiste: Žilvinas Kempinas’, interview with Frédéric Bonnet, *Journal des arts*, 2 July 2008.

In works conceived in the spirit of *Flux*, the artist engages the kinetic properties of magnetic tape, experimenting with the many ways it can be set into motion. In other configurations, he turns more specifically to its optical potential. The strips of tape become networks of suspended lines stretched through space, vibrating, shimmering, and seemingly dissolving as light shifts and the viewer moves around them. It was in this vein that Žilvinas Kempinas created the monumental installation *TUBE* during his residency at the Atelier Calder. Designed as an immersive passage that redefined the surrounding space, the work was later presented at the Lithuanian Pavilion of the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009.

jaume plensa

born in 1955 in Barcelone (Spain),
lives and works in Barcelone
in residency at the Atelier Calder
from March to August 1996

Blind, Mute, Deaf, Suite Saché II, 1996

three drawings, acrylic, cellulose glue, acrylic resin and
tracing paper
Collection Frac Picardie

Since his first exhibitions in the 1980s, the Catalan sculptor Jaume Plensa has developed a wide range of techniques and aesthetic languages, marking distinct phases within his practice. While his early work favoured a more abstract and conceptual approach to sculpture, it has gradually evolved towards figurative research centred on the representation of the human body. Recurring figures in his recent work, the hieratic female portraits he creates in a variety of materials and scales have played a key role in his international recognition, as well as in the numerous monumental projects he has realised around the world.

Deeply inspired by poetry, the artist gives a central place to language and writing, which take on physical form within the material and spatial presence of his sculptures. Paradoxically, words become part of a silent, introspective and meditative practice that also extends into drawing.

Across the various paths he explores, a continuous reflection on the human condition runs through Jaume Plensa's work. His anthropomorphic figures present the body's outer shell as a way of probing its interiority and questioning the enigmatic nature of existence. The contradictions inherent in the human being—caught between an inexpressible inner space and the reverberations of the surrounding world—find expression in the ongoing dialogue Jaume Plensa establishes between opacity and transparency.

During his residency at the Atelier Calder in 1996, any form of figuration explored in the 1980s gave way to investigations into spatial structures and light-sensitive materials such as resin and glass.

On this occasion, Jaume Plensa produced a series of cabins made of translucent resin panels^{o8}, conceived as metaphorical spaces for thought. In parallel, he created large-scale geometric and abstract drawings, from which the three works *Blind, Mute, Deaf (Suite Saché II)*, presented in the exhibition, are drawn.

These works reflect the sculptural approach through which Plensa engages with drawing, testing it through materiality and volume.

Combining glue, acrylic resin and tracing paper, the series plays with layers of transparency and translucency inherent to each medium, echoing the artist's enduring interest in light and its circulation.

^{o8} This sculptures set was presented during the same year at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris.

The recurring appearance of geometric forms in his graphic works reflects a search for universal modes of representation through which to address fundamental notions such as time and space. Alluding to the cycle of the clock, the circles in these drawings suggest a frozen, suspended temporality—time crystallised within the resin.

The human scale of the three circles, recalling the *Vitruvian Man* and its ideal relationship to space, points to a particular way of being in the world. Giving each drawing its title, four-letter words are likewise encapsulated within the resin. They belong to a vocabulary of the body and of impaired perception, cut off from the outside world.

Rather than simple disabilities, *Blind, Mute, and Deaf* here evoke an inward-looking world, closed in on itself. This trilogy recurs throughout the artist's practice, whether in his crouching scribes covering their eyes, mouth, or ears, or in the faces of young girls with closed eyes and a finger pressed to the lips in a gesture of silence. More than expressions of fragility, these figures seem to point toward the intimate space of thought. Within these three luminous circles, the themes that run through Jaume Plensa's work are distilled here into the pared-down, airy forms that define the exhibition as a whole.

valerie snobeck

born in 1980 in Wadena (United States),
lives and works in New York (United States)
in residency at the Atelier Calder
from May to July 2018

Go Soft, 2014

color video, sound, 60'38

Inv : 2015.1.8

Collection les Abattoirs,

Musée- Frac Occitanie Toulouse

During her residency at the Atelier Calder in 2018, Valerie Snobeck developed a research-based practice centred on neoclassical architectural elements, which she deconstructs and reinterprets (*A Daisy with Two Leaves*). This approach, grounded in analytical fragmentation, recurs throughout her work.

Formal inquiry is never separated from structural, and even political, questioning—one that engages with, and often unsettles, the dominant logics of productive systems.

The Idea of Celestial Bodies turns to another work by the artist, held in the collection of museum Les Abattoirs in Toulouse (France), titled *Go Soft*⁰⁹. This hour-long video presents a tight, fixed shot of a watchmaker's hands as he completely dismantles and then reassembles a wristwatch. The model in question was a special edition produced by Shell from the 1940s onwards, used to promote and legitimise its offshore drilling activities.

⁰⁹ This film was screened alongside the series of works produced at the Atelier Calder in 2018 as part of the solo exhibition dedicated to the artist in Marseille (France) in 2019.

Through the slow, extended dismantling of the object, the artist reveals a working method grounded in the analytical deconstruction of dominant social norms. Without a single word being spoken, the film quietly calls into question the productive and economic activities driven by a handful of powerful corporations, often at the expense of the environment and the wider human community.

It also runs counter to the speed that defines contemporary society and its underlying economic and structural logics, instead foregrounding slowness, along with the calm precision of the watchmaker's gestures.

The formal constraints the artist sets for the film—a sustained fixed close-up and a tightly focused, almost subjective framing—draw the viewer into a heightened state of attention. Its extended duration, as gestures unfold and components are gradually taken apart, fosters a relationship based less on constraint than on attention willingly granted, on time given to the work.

What emerges is a shared space between viewer and image in which time seems to loosen and expand, opening a form of deceleration and suspension. In doing so, the film offers a quiet counterpoint to the watch.

With *Go Soft*, Valerie Snobeck proposes a more sensitive and liberated understanding of space-time¹⁰, one measured by the human gesture rather than by the mechanical ticking of seconds unfolding with relentless regularity. As the watch is reassembled, the artist also brings forward a cyclical conception of time. 'The universe described by these mechanical objects, unlike that of free mobiles, is a clockwork universe in which all movements proceed from external forces applied inexorably and immutably, setting off, like a chain reaction, a sequence of events in which the same outcome inevitably, at some point, returns.'¹¹

¹⁰ On the subject of a sensitive and relative conception of time, Élie During refers to 'kaleidoscopic time', « La relativité comme accélérateur de métaphysiques », Palais de Tokyo (éd.), *Du yodel à la physique quantique...*, vol.1, Paris, Palais de Tokyo / Archibooks, 2007, pp.A2-A8 (p.A5).

¹¹ Arnauld Pierre, *Calder, la sculpture en mouvement*, Paris, Gallimard, 1996, p.40.

francisco tropa

born in 1968 in Lisbon (Portugal),
lives and works in Lisbon
in residency at the Atelier Calder
from March to May 2015

Quad, 2008

installation; four stone cubes, sand, black
surface
40 x 300 x 500 cm
Collection du Frac des Pays de la Loire

La Terre, 2015

métal, oil painting, motor
84 x 71,5 x 15 cm
Collection Musée d'art contemporain de la
Haute-Vienne - Château de Rochechouart

Created shortly before his residency at the Atelier Calder, which began in spring 2015, *La Terre* functions both as a catalyst and as one component within a broader ensemble developed in Saché, titled *The Dream of Scipio*. The installation also brings into play the sun and the moon.

The artist draws on the title of a poetic and mystical text written by Cicero in the 1st century BCE, which stages Scipio Aemilianus in the context of the Third Punic War. The narrative revolves around a dream in which several eminent historical figures reveal the cosmic order of the world to Scipio, teaching him that immortality of the soul is granted to those who have acted virtuously.

If Francisco Tropa's *La Terre* is indeed blue, it is not round. The sculpture takes the form of a cube without ever adopting its volume or contour. It is, in fact, a three-dimensional rendering of the two-dimensional representation of a cube.

Suspended from the ceiling and driven by a motor, the work performs a slow, almost imperceptible rotation, producing the illusion of a cube that flickers in and out of existence. Alternating between flatness and volume, this Earth takes on varying contours according to the viewer's point of view, appearing successively in two or three dimensions. With a subtle sense of absurdity, it also gestures toward the lingering debates that still occasionally attribute flatness and immobility to the Earth today. In doing so, Francisco Tropa questions the very notion of reality—its shifting perceptions as much as its blind spots.

Within the exhibition *The Idea of Celestial Bodies*, *La Terre* is set in relation to *Quad*, an earlier work by the artist, which unfolds in space in the form of actual cubes. Initially, the installation of *Quad* is conceived

as a fifteen-minute choreographic activation that unfolds in parallel with the construction of the drawing. Heavy stone cubes are moved through a gesture that tips them from one face to another across the ground, recalling the illuminated, scripted movement of Jeppe Hein's *Moving Neon Cube*. The protocol requires that each cube be repositioned four times. The final state of the work bears the traces of its earlier configurations, visible in the imprints left by the cubes in the sand that is sprinkled over them between each stage of movement.

The title is borrowed from Samuel Beckett's television piece of the same name, in which four performers move along the virtual diagonal of a square¹². In Francisco Tropa's work, the displacement of the heavy stone cubes echoes the actors' trajectories while introducing a very different sense of weight—one that stands in stark contrast to the lightness of Beckett's original staging.

'In my work, the opposite gesture is just as compelling as the affirmative one. It carries the same force. This is a recurring thread throughout my practice. I do something, then I try its opposite—and it works just as well. Opposites are true engines of artistic composition.'¹³

¹⁰ Samuel Beckett, *Quad* (written in English in 1982), first published in *Collected Shorter Plays*, London, Faber and Faber, 1984. Produced by Süddeutscher Rundfunk, it was first broadcast in Germany in 1983, and subsequently in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

¹³ Statements by Francisco Tropa, recorded by Isabelle Reiher in an interview on 8 October 2025.

hema upadhyay

1972, Baroda (Inde) - 2015, Mumbai (Inde)
in residency at the Atelier Calder
from September 2010 to January 2011

Sans titre, 2010

printed lexiglas, nylon threads.

Work produced with the support of
the Atelier Calder, as part of Hema Upadhyay's
residency in 2010.

Hema Upadhyay belonged to a generation of Indian artists that emerged in the 1990s, at a time when India was undergoing a major economic transition towards globalisation. Responding to the profound transformations shaping their country, these artists contributed to the development of a contemporary Indian art that moved away from tradition to engage more directly with lived realities.

Working across a wide range of media—including painting, drawing, photography, and installation—Hema Upadhyay came to international prominence in the early 2000s. Her work was presented at venues such as the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (2008), the MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome (2009), and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, where she took part in the group exhibition *Paris–Bombay–Delhi* (2011).

Prematurely deceased in 2015, the artist was deeply engaged with questions of migration and demographic flows. While rooted in the broader history of India, these concerns also resonated on a more personal level for Hema Upadhyay. Born into a Pakistani family that migrated to India at the time of Partition¹⁴, she herself had to come to terms with the vast scale of Mumbai after growing up and studying in a much smaller city. From that point on, India's largest megacity became a recurring source of inspiration for the artist, who gained recognition through large-scale installations rooted in specific areas of Mumbai, such as the Dharavi slum¹⁵. These works unfold as large-scale maquettes that recreate the organic

¹⁴ The Partition of India in 1947 refers to the division of the former British colonial empire into India and Pakistan. It led to one of the largest mass migrations in history, with an estimated 15 million people displaced.

¹⁵ Considered a true "city within a city," Dharavi is the second-largest slum in Asia.

growth of ever-expanding urban landscapes—at once vibrant and chaotic, shaped by processes of evolution and destruction, invention and precarity. By immersing the viewer in densely packed environments of countless multi-coloured dwellings, the artist questioned the nature of the external gaze, often voyeuristic and elevated, directed at developing countries. She sought instead to shift this perspective, guiding it inward toward a more nuanced and less familiar reality. In Hema Upadhyay's work, form and space emerge through the accumulation and multiplication of small elements, evoking a metaphor for the individual lives that together compose the urban fabric.

The installation *Untitled*, presented in the exhibition, was created during the artist's residency at the Atelier Calder in 2010–2011. The expanses of meadows and forests surrounding the studio in Saché made a strong impression on her, as someone living in Mumbai and more accustomed to urban environments entirely shaped by human activity. Turning her attention to nature, she conceived a work that stands apart within her practice, proposing an encounter with the sense of the sublime emanating from the wild landscape.

As if to bring the forest into the exhibition space, the installation unfolds as a constellation of transparent medallions engraved with drawings of trees and plant species from the Touraine region. These suspended elements form a fragmented, almost nebulous volume that hovers in space. The slightest movement of air sets them in motion, scattering light into a delicate shimmer that borders on the magical.

To create this poetic evocation—defined by lightness, transparency, and luminosity—the artist chose plexiglass: an industrial, synthetic, non-biodegradable material through which Hema Upadhyay subtly underscores the contradictions of the modern urban condition, estranged from both memory and an embodied awareness of being in the world.

the atelier calder

Since 1989, the Atelier Calder has been dedicated to artistic research and production. Located in Saché, in France's Loire Valley, this former studio of American sculptor Alexander Calder (1898-1976) continues a longstanding commitment to supporting artists in the development of new projects, fostering experimentation, and providing the conditions necessary for sustained creative inquiry. Unique in France, the Atelier Calder offers artists a three-month residency that combines accommodation, studio facilities, and technical and financial support.

More than seventy artists have undertaken residencies at Saché, engaging with the site in singular and often transformative ways. The works conceived and produced there have established original dialogues with both the surrounding landscape and the studio's distinctive architecture.

Each residency has generated a unique relationship to the creative process, whether by opening new directions of research, enabling experimentation with unfamiliar materials and methods, or providing the conditions necessary to bring long-term investigations to fruition. Numerous projects developed in Saché have subsequently been presented at major international exhibitions and institutions, underscoring the significance of the residency programme and its global reach.

The Atelier Calder is supported by the French Ministry of Culture (DRAC Centre-Val de Loire), the Centre-Val de Loire Regional Council, and the Calder Foundation.

related events

projection (up-coming programme)

> A proposal by Sans Canal Fixe (an organisation dedicated to documentary film based in Tours)

Thursday 17 December at 6 pm | auditorium CCC OD - Tours
free entrance | booking required

the ccc od team

president

Patrice Debré

general director

Alexandra Baudelot

general deputy

Cécile Rogel

administration and finances

Isabelle Chrétien

exhibitions

Delphine Masson

Marine Rochard

registrar

Nacera Bouché

Alexandre Guy

Thierry Mercier

communication

Léna Loizon

public department

Aurélien Debris

Mailys Goupil

Isaac Grange

Barbara Marion

Jean-François Pérona

Noémie Thibault

civic service volunteers

Émilie Biguet

Sarah Blain

Salomé Millet

students in training

Jeanne Miet

Hélène Vaucelle

The Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, a non-profit organisation, is a contemporary art centre with national interest, whose building has been rewarded as "remarkable contemporary architecture".

ccc od bookshop's selection

- › Samuel Beckett, *Quad et autres pièces pour la télévision*, éd. de Minuit, 2024
- › Marie-Ange Brayer, *La maquette, un objet modèle ? Entre art et architecture*, éd. HXX, 2025
- › Marie-Ange Brayer, Frédéric Migarou, *Architectures expérimentales, 1950-2012*, Collection du Frac Centre, éd. HXX, 2013
- › Michel Serres, *Les origines de la géométrie*, éd. Flammarion, 2011
- › *Calder rêver en équilibre*, catalogue d'exposition de la Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris du 15 avril au 16 août 2026, éd. Hazan, 2026

tours

> flash visit in **French** (in July and August)
every day, 3 pm (15 min.)

> guided in **French** (except in July and August)
every Saturday, 4:30 pm (1 hour)

all dates and themes of guided tours, [available online](#)

access

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opening

from Wednesday to Sunday
from 11am to 6pm
Saturday until 7pm



www.ccc-od.fr