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Portrait with *Hier à Sousse III*, 2022. Photo: Philip Frowein.



Great in the concrete. Photo: Sebastien Verdon.



Photo: Sébastien Verdon & marble statue of Louis Agassiz, Stanford University, California, April 1906. Photo: Stanford libraries.



Invitation à l'inauguration de *Great in the concrete*, sculpture de Mathias Pfund. Il s'agit de l'une des œuvres sélectionnées dans le cadre de l'appel à projets artistiques autour du monument de Pury, visant à susciter un dialogue et à questionner le passé colonial de Neuchâtel.

L'inauguration aura lieu le 27 Octobre 2022 à 5 heures 30 de l'après-midi sur la Place Pury, 2000 Neuchâtel, Suisse.

Image recto : montage d'après une lithographie d'Eugène Marc représentant la statue de David de Pury in *Oeuvres complètes de P.J. David d'Angers*, Haro Editeur, Paris, 1856 | Image verso : Ecusson d'après celui du comte Rodolphe V dit Raoul ou Rollin (1286-1342) représentant les deux tours du château de Neuchâtel séparées par une troisième sommée d'une flèche qui figurerait la Collégiale de Neuchâtel.

Invitation card for the inauguration (FR).

Patinated bronze, concrete, 35x25x25 cm, 1/5.

Great in the concrete proposes a tilting gesture: it consists of tipping a reduced version of the statue of David de Pury on its head, following the model of the marble sculpture representing the Swiss scientist Louis Agassiz during the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. The latter had fallen from the second floor facade of Stanford University and slammed head first into the ground in front of the institution. This spectacular fall is particularly ironic in view of some of his scientific theories steeped in racism.

The work thus superimposes the memory of two problematic personalities from Neuchâtel and plays with a certain iconoclastic spirit, immortalizing it in bronze. However, my intention is not so much to force a historical connection between the biographies of these two characters (one having become rich in Lisbon thanks to colonial exploitation, the other being a renowned scientist with racist theories having militated in the United States for eugenics, racial hygiene and segregation) as to highlight the underlying syntax of their sculpted representations, and by extension that of "great men" in general.

Great in the concrete takes as its model an anonymous miniature copy of the statue of David de Pury in the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Neuchâtel. If the project, by its modest dimensions, functions metaphorically as a footnote to the statue of David d'Angers, the text entitled [*Whitey on the Moon*](#) (FR) (available on the Place Pury via a QR-Code) constitutes its content.

The sculpture was realized with the help of David Chojnacki (SwissArt Edition Geneva), Juliette Colomb & Nessim Kaufmann and Marc Calame (Form|c).



Exhibition view. Photo: Greg Clément.



Exhibition views & developed cartel of the work (diagram) in front of my grandmother's house. Photos: Greg Clément.



Exhibition view. Photo: Greg Clément.

Powder coated bronze, steel & silver, concrete, ca. 160x50x75 cm

As it should be, the park la Grange has various links with antiquity: archaeological remains of a Roman villa from the first century AD, Villa La Grange (a neoclassical mansion built by the Lullin family, which was later modified by the Favre family: Empire-style decoration, addition of a low Italian-inspired annex housing Antonio Canova's *Adonis and Venus* sculpture between 1821 and 1998) and also the pergola overlooking the rose garden.

Caesarina is a throne dedicated to "Caesar", my Italian-born grandmother, who has lived near La Grange Park for over 50 years. I call her that with such familiarity that I almost never associate her diminutive with the Roman emperor. For the record, Julius Caesar himself came to Geneva in 58 BC to destroy a bridge over the Rhone and thus prevent the Helvetians from moving into Gallic territory.

It is a curule chair hybridized with a laurel wreath, carrying various symbolism: those of (patriarchal) power in ancient Rome, of the victorious Imperator in the Romans or of the poets in the Greeks. In addition, the seat is adorned with three medals, each of which explores, in an indexical mode, various narratives related to a specious European antiquity. The industrial and pop powder coating evokes the verdigris of a tired bronze.

Although a parody of an authoritarian language, the work remains a piece of street furniture, allowing anyone to sit on it.

The sculpture was created with the help of Robin Gabriel (Serruriers Noirs), David Chojnacki (SwissArt Edition Genève), Hugo Milan and Marc Calame (Form|c) and with the support of the FCAC Genève.



Instant Pleasure (Clitoris). Photos: Sebastien Verdon.



Photo: Sebastien Verdon.

Styrofoam, polyester resin, acrylic, latex, magnets, gorilla tape, ca. 180x80x70 cm

Modern abstract sculptures placed in public spaces are often massive, in perennial materials, and seem to claim a certain visibility. However, few people pay attention to them and even fewer know the names of the artists. On the other hand, the clitoris, in its complete anatomy, has long remained unrecognized and under-represented. The sculpture is treated with poor materials (it is indeed an ephemeral intervention of three weeks) and painted in verdigris, to evoke an oxidized bronze, a little tired, anonymous. Of course, this connection between the organ of pleasure and these forgotten sculptural forms is not insignificant and participates, on its own scale, in the visibilization of the clitoris.



Exhibition views. Photos: Philip Frowein.



Hier à Sousse I, II & III, 2022. Photos: Philip Frowein.



"Les Rayons X" (d'après Gabriele di Matteo), 2022 & Still Standing, 2021–2022. Photos: Philip Frowein.



National Museum (in compliance with ITPA), 2022. Photo: Philip Frowein.

“*That belongs in a museum!*” is the Indiana Jones motto used to legitimize his spoliation campaigns around the world. In this respect, the exhibition is quite literal as all the objects on display are reflections of artifacts held in various museums: a “cube to cube” recomposition of a mosaic discovered in Sousse representing the boat of Theseus, a fragment of which has been wrongly restored and is preserved at the Penn Museum in Philadelphia [*Hier à Sousse, I, II & III*, 2020] ; a reworked version of *Still Standing* [2021-2022] placed on a transport crate, a nod to the Musée d’art moderne - Département des Aigles and MOMAS [*For a Cycladic Museum*, 2022], or the radiographic resurgence of a fresco created in the stairwell of the Mamco and covered with a wooden board since 2016 [*“Les Rayons X” (after Gabriele di Matteo)*, 2022]. First and last piece of the exhibition: a doormat decorated with the motto in approximate Latin of the National Museum, the fictional museum for which Indiana Jones works [*National Museum (In compliance with the ITPA)*, 2022]. “The International Treaty for the Protection of Antiquities” (ITPA), a sort of code that is supposed to define a legal line of conduct in the acquisition of archaeological artifacts by museums, is however blithely transgressed in the first three movies. The ideal of deontology of this fictional museum, printed on a mat, is immediately trampled, and with it, human values and scientific credibility...

“(…) “*That belongs in a museum!*” [is] a work that, through a form of archaeological display, examines, questions and plays with the values of museum culture... The artist takes on multiple functions here: first, as demiurge, he invests the space, invents and creates a fictitious museum. Then, as a collector, he selects and appropriates the objects that are exhibited there. As a curator, he writes the narrative and imagines a finely studied display device. Finally, as a forger, he shapes the objects that make up the museum.”

[Text of the exhibition commissioned to Marie Gaitzsch](#)



Exhibition views. Photos: Annik Wetter.



You're Gonna Love Picasso (After Schomberg and Staparac), 2020. Photos: Annik Wetter.

PLVS VLTRA is an exhibition that examines objects that have a relationship to Greco-Roman antiquity and have trophy value: the famous *Rocky statue*, a film prop delegitimized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, placed on the same level as its copy, a real public monument in the city of Žitište in Serbia [*You're Gonna Love Picasso (after Schomberg & Staparac)*, 2020]; a series of melted down *Spirit of Ecstasy*, originally breathless sexist mascots of Rolls-Royce radiator caps [*After Ecstasy*, 2018]; an Olympic medal commemorating the brief participation of Fine Arts in the Olympics [*At Least we still have the Venice Biennale*, 2020]... and a brass plaque celebrating 10 years of a first love [*Mathias + Ella (10th Anniversary Remaster Edition)*, 2020].

“(…) ready to discredit all victories starting with his own, [Mathias Pfund] relies on the edifying power of failure to rewrite the virilist lesson of the plus and the ultra.”

[Text of the exhibition commissioned to Marilou Thiébault](#)

Archive: [Text about *You're Gonna Love Picasso \(After Schomberg & Staparac\)* commissioned to Cédric Fauq](#)



Installation view. Photos: Stefan Rohner.



Installation views. Photos: Stefan Rohner.



Goodnight Sweet Prince, 2023 & A Show of Wealth and Worldliness, 2023. Photos: Stefan Rohner.



A Leak in the Ceiling (detail), 2023. Photo: Stefan Rohner.

“My installation investigates one of the possible origins of the City of St. Gallen’s collections: the acquisition of a stuffed Nile crocodile in 1623, whose skin had been brought back from Egypt by Ulrich Krumm. This crocodile (inventory number NMSG V0001) was on display in the basement of this building for a long time, until the Naturmuseum moved. My intervention consists in recalling its trace, this time on the floor of the Kunstmuseum. This gesture serves as a reminder that, in 17th-century Europe, the boundaries between knowledge disciplines were still fluid.

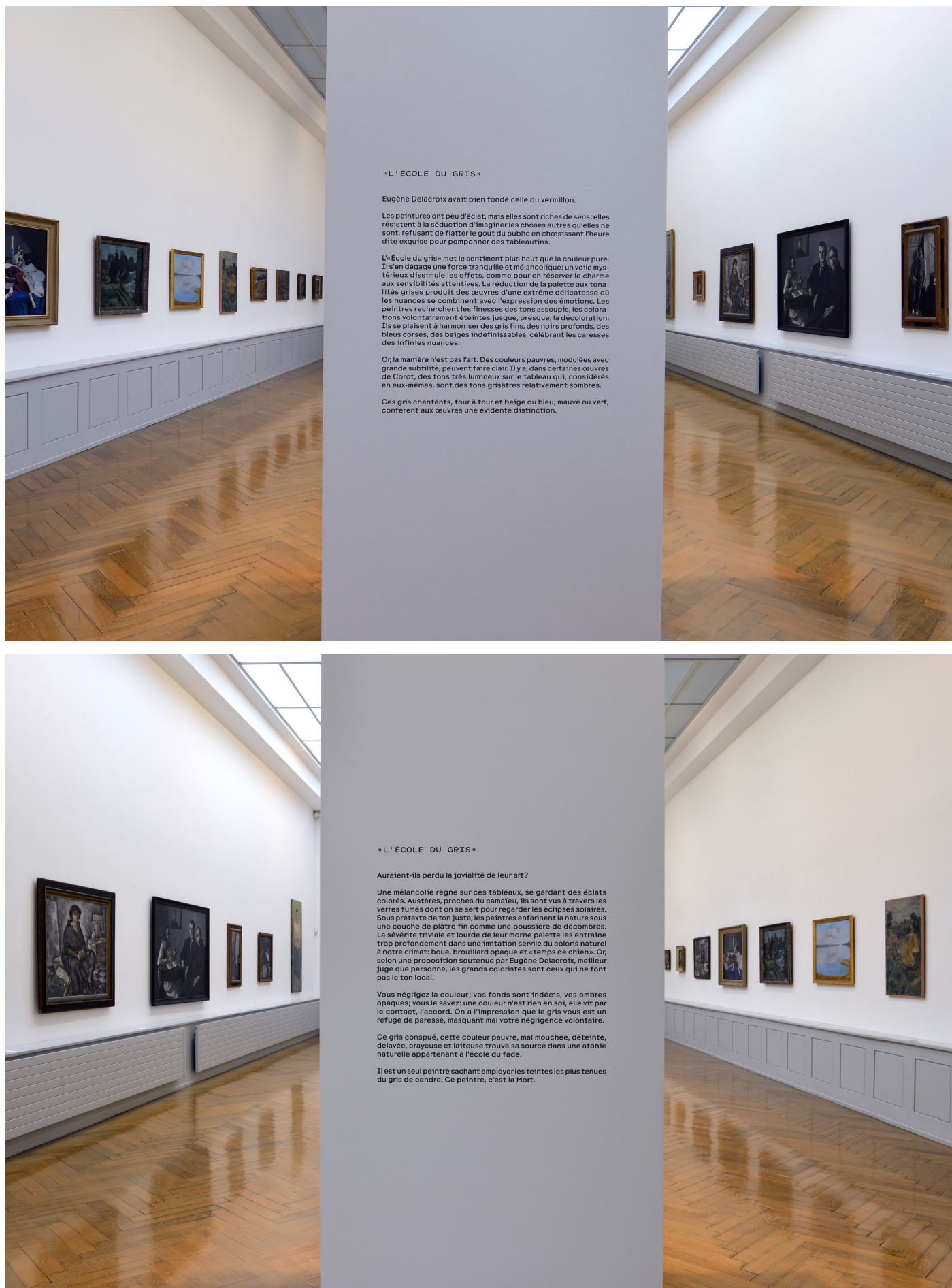
Nothing is effortless: for one crocodile to ascend, another must be put down. Museum machinery is old and worn out; once put in motion, it creaks and leaks. The friction of the coarse, distended strings flakes the imitation of life, blows out the seams and reveal the structures underneath. The fallen crumbs are inventoried and remain exhibited on the floor, masking all that had previously been hidden under the carpet.”

Speech given at the opening of the exhibition on August 26, 2023

“The exhibition [Sammlungsfieber] opens with a newly-commissioned work by artist Mathias C. Pfund (b. 1992). His work focuses on the first object to enter the collection of the city of St. Gallen: the crocodile donated to the Abbey Library St. Gall by merchant Daniel Studer in 1623. The installation is comprised of a hanging structure (similar to those used to display such crocodiles in museums, but in Pfund’s work the structure is empty), an engraving of a dead Nile crocodile by Carel van Mallery from the 16th century, and a collage of a 2nd-century mosaic, showing the remains of a lavish banquet scattered on the floor. Pfund’s installation is about luxury and exoticism, and he poses the question of which objects we consider valuable and how these values live on in the museum context.”

Melanie Bühler, Senior Curator at Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

Archive: [Through the Looking Glass/Hinter den Spiegel \(+ floorplan\)](#), text of the exhibition



Exhibition views. Photos: Aline Henchoz.



Exhibition view. Photo: Aline Henchoz.

Laughing Stock consists of a carte blanche with the collections of the Musée des beaux-arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds occupying the second room of the second floor.

It consists of a double wall system framing a display of paintings exploring the “grey school” in La Chaux-de-Fonds during the interwar period. Even if this entity is mentioned in various sources, its historical existence is not established: it is often clothed with ambiguous intentions betraying more the aesthetic and moralist presuppositions of critics than revealing its own qualities. The history of art would know besides other schools of the gray with the similar rhetorics...

The intervention is camouflaged in the museography of the institution and borrows the authority to propose a narrative engaging the image and the values of art.

Each wall presents a partisan text, the result of a cut-up operation based on various historiographic sources. The exhibition is accompanied by a text entitled *“Beau comme un crépi”, L’Ecole du gris de la Chaux-de-Fonds* (FR), which offers a point of view on the question and is available at the museum reception desk.

With paintings by Charles, Aimé, Aurèle and François Barraud, Pierre-Eugène Bouvier, Georges Dessouslavy, Charles Humbert, Pierre Jeanneret, Guido and Albert Locca, Jeanne Pellet, Lucien Schwob, Madeleine Woog and Philippe Zysset.

Additional material (FR): [Video presentation](#), [interview on the radio suisse romande](#) & [texts on the walls](#)



ALBERT LOCCA

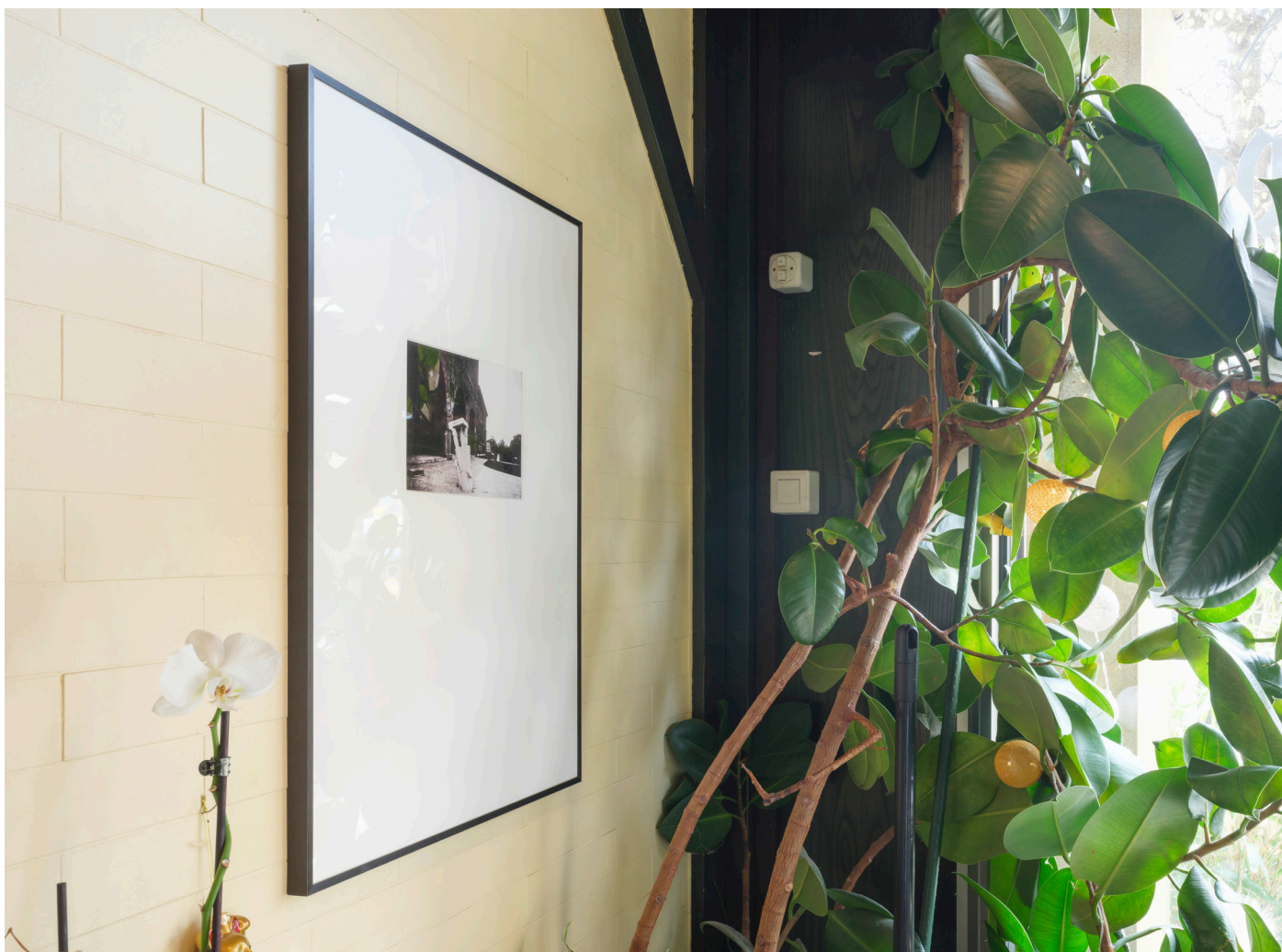
LES GLAÏEULS, NON DATÉ

Huile sur toile, 90x67 cm

Collection de Mathias Pfund

Toile d'Albert Locca achetée sur "anibis.ch" à un couple chaux-de-fonnier pour 400 CHF lors du montage de l'exposition "Laughing Stock" au MBA en février 2020.

In "La peinture des autres", Mathias Pfund, 2021.
Collection de peintures/images réalisées par d'autres et commissionnées, acquises ou simplement empruntées au détour de projets.



La peinture des autres (Photographie de presse anonyme montrant la statue de Louis Agassiz renversé sur sa tête, université de Stanford, 1906), Café le Baron, Place Pury, 2022.

Presentation of a fragment of a collection of paintings/images made by others and commissioned, acquired or simply lent in the course of specific projects. All of them are accompanied by a label briefly telling their stories.

In the context of the 74^{ème} *Biennale d'art contemporain*, the three proposed images have a link with the MBAC and in particular with the exhibition *Laughing Stock*. They can be hung together or scattered throughout the museum. The labels that accompany them follow the format, layout and typography of those in the museum. Winning project of the “young talent” prize.

At the café le Baron, Place pury, Neuchâtel, the framed press image replaces a high-relief ceramic reproduction of the statue of David de Pury by David d'Angers.

Archive: [SaMba press release announcing the winners \(19-08-2021\).](#)



Footnote sculptures. Photos: Gina Folly.



Dropping the other shoe. Photo: Gina Folly, model: Paolo Baggi.

Mathias C. Pfund *1992, Geneva
lives and works between Brussels and Geneva

Footnotes Sculptures
2023 Exhibition, 300x600x300 cm.
Four sculptures and a micro-edition

1

2 & 3

4

5

1- You're gonna love Picasso (after Schomberg & Staparac), 2020

Two versions of the *Rocky Statue* share the same base: one made in 1980 by Thomas A. Schomberg at the request of Sylvester Stallone for *Rocky III* (not recognized as art by the Philadelphia Museum) and the other, a copy of the first and a monument in the Serbian public space made in 2007 by Boris Staparac following the initiative of inhabitants of the city of Žitište. Courtesy of Schomberg Studios and Boris Staparac. Made with the help of Atelier VOX.A, Clarens.

2 - Still standing, 3/11, 2021-2022

Tilting of a replica of a cycladic statuette (*Dokathismata* type) and its exhibition display using a new base. Made with the help of Robin Keller.

3 - For a cycladic museum, 1/4, 2022

Plinth in the form of a transport crate : fictitious work for an artist's museum.

4 - Great in the concrete, 2/5, 2022

A miniature version of the David de Pury statue (by David D'Angers) is turned upside down, head in the ground/plinth, taking as its model the Louis Agassiz statue (by Antonio Frilli) at Stanford, which fell from its pedestal following the 1906 earthquake. This work was conceived as part of a public commission around the David de Pury monument, aiming to provoke a dialogue and to question the colonial past of Neuchâtel. The 1/5 cast was inaugurated on September 27, 2022 on the Place Pury. Made with the help of Juliette Colomb and Swiss Art Edition, Jussy.

5 - Dropping the other shoe, 2023

Poster with a text by Marilou Thiébault translated by Tarik Lazouni.
Offset print on 170g/m² paper, 500 copies.

Paratext elements of the exhibition.



Art and Criticality, a conversation with Pável Aguilar & Melanie Bühler, 13.06.2023.

Footnote sculptures: exhibition project presenting a corpus of three works (and a plinth):

You're Gonna Love Picasso (after Schomberg and Staparac), 2020.

Still Standing (4/11), 2021-2022 + *For a cycladic Museum* (1/4), 2022.

Great in the concrete (2/5), 2022.

In addition, a poster edition entitled *Dropping the other shoe* contains a text by Marilou Thiébault, introducing the projects and speculating on the format of the footnote as a possible site for an artwork.

“(…) the *Footnote sculptures* could be either very small or very large, as long as they also unbolt the various symbolisms attributed to sculpture in general: an attribute of power that is erected here and there in a peremptory manner, an overbearing way of appropriating space, consciousness and History in one gesture. The footnote slips like a banana skin under the heroic narrative of monuments.”

[Text of the exhibition commissioned to Marilou Thiébault.](#)



Nostalgia and Bombast, exhibition view & *Nero Burning Rom*, 2020. Photos: Greg Clément.



The World is Yours & Nero Burning Rom, 2020. Photos: Greg Clément.



Still Standing (prototype), 2020. Photo: Greg Clément.

Nostalgia and Bombast is a duoshow with artist [Marine Kaiser](#) in the neo-renaissant palace of the Athénée, in Geneva.

Inspired by the grandiloquence of the place, a papier-mâché sculpture takes up the central part of a monument erected in Gibraltar celebrating the passage -eurocentric- from the ancient world to the modern world and glorifying the colonial conquests in the process [*The World is Yours*, 2021], a prehistoric Cycladic statuette placed horizontally in accordance with the position of its feet questions our obsession with presenting them vertically [*Still Standing (Prototype)*, 2020] and a thunderous soundtrack is punctually broadcast from the horn of an antique gramophone [*Nero Burning Rom*, 2020].

“In the manner of its soundtrack, made of triumphalist and testosterone-filled pieces that have lost their superbness by dint of repetition (and the revival of feminism), *Nostalgia and Bombast* cultivates the lost art of the medley, in an era where brass bands have almost disappeared.”

[Text of the exhibition commissioned to Jill Gasparina \(+ floorplan\)](#)



Exhibition views, photos: Constance Brosse.



Natural History (1%). Photos: Constance Brosse.

Fossilized vertebrae (plesiosaur & ichthyosaur).

The intervention consists in adding two handles on the sliding doors of the pavilion. Instead of allowing an easier opening, they are positioned in such a way as to become stoppers that block access. However, the doors are not entirely closed, since a gap in the door allows us to see the interior architecture. The handles are two fossilized vertebrae from a plesiosaur and an ichthyosaur, both about 150 million years old.

The Traverse Pavilion is an educational project of the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne led by the architects Anja & Martin Fröhlich and students of *Laboratory of Elementary Architecture and Studies of Type* together with the association for contemporary art Le Cabanon. It is a pavilion designed to be an open-air art space made from recycled elements on the recently demolished brutalist Elanco site in Saint-Aubin (in the canton of Fribourg). This complex originally belonged to Novartis and was dedicated to the “veterinary branch”: a theater for animal experimentation.

Starting from the statement of the project (a collaboration between architects and artists), the proposal is thought as a critical intervention on the architecture of the pavilion, replaying with distance a strategy of the *Kunst am Bau*. The perverted functionality of the handles and their hanging device provided by the tamper-proof screws support their decorative charge, and they become salient elements that affect the visual economy of the pavilion’s exterior. The use of fossilized vertebrae opens up certain narrative avenues: on a formal level first, the mineral quality of these artifacts is in dialogue with that of the concrete doors. The vertebrae can resonate with the animal experimentation practiced on the original site or be understood as vanities: the antiquity of the fossils is suddenly contrasted with concrete.

Archive: [poster commissioned to Paul Lannes announcing a round table](#)



Verso Oltremare (Screwed and Chopped). Photo: Christelle Jornod.



Exhibition view, photos: Christelle Jorod.

In 2016, while a museum keeper at Mamco, I witnessed an accident involving Giovanni Anselmo's work *Verso Oltremare* (1984): a visitor caught her feet in the wire rope and the piece of granite shattered on her head. Fortunately, the person's life was saved, despite her injuries. The Centre d'art contemporain is an institution housed in the same building as the Mamco, and thus was an appropriate place for a distorted resurgence of my memory of the accident. Installation for the 2017 City of Geneva grants; winning project of the "Berthoud" prize.

The sculptures were created with the help of Daniel Maszkowicz.

Archive: [text published in the exhibition booklet.](#)



Exhibition views. Photo: Roxane Bovet.



Exhibition view. Photo: Roxane Bovet.

Papier mâché, styrofoam, acrylic paints, ca. 35x77x43 cm.

Painted papier-mâché copy of the suitcase that is part of the bronze sculpture representing “Michel Butor waiting for his cab” by Gérard Ducimetière (aka John Aldus). This sculpture is one of the elements of his public work entitled *Alter Ego 1905 - 1982 - 3000...* located on the Rond-Point de Plainpalais since 1982.

The suitcase is placed on the floor of Zabriskie Point, a former waiting room of a bus shelter now closed to the public and turned into an artist-run space since 2011.

Archive: [poster commissioned to Tayeb Kendouci.](#)