

« Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans » Aesthetics of contingencies #2

Curated by Sébastien Pluot

Opening
Sunday 16 March 2025
2 pm - 7 pm

16 March - 15 May 2025

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

« Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans »
Aesthetics of contingencies #2

The works presented in this exhibition demonstrate **the unique ability of artists and artisans to negotiate with contingencies** (*Guzenzei*). They express a pleasure in the encounter (*Meguriai*) with the personality of materials. They invite us to pay close attention to the soul (Tamashii) of objects and their aging, to accidents, to the transformation of contexts, and to the unpredictability of living beings. These works were conceived **as processes, situations, and experiences whose trajectories are deliberately uncertain.**

This approach allows for a reinterpretation of **the processual works that punctuated the 20th century**: some, **produced on-site in real-time, involve principles of delegation**. Certain artists entrusted the realization of their works to third parties, aided by the expertise of Japanese artisans. These artists of contingency attach as much, if not more, importance to what happens by chance, to what is unpredictable and unexpected, as to their initial intentions.
The term "Contingency" comes from the Latin *contingere*, derived from *contingo, tactum*, meaning "to touch, to reach with the hand" but also "to happen," "to befall," "to occur"[1]. Sensitivity to contingencies is thus a way of maintaining sensitive relationships with what the present brings.

The multiple ecological, social, and attentional crises have their roots in a crisis of sensitivity to objects, to the environment, and to living beings. As a remedy to this indifference, we aim to highlight **this aesthetic of contingency, which involves paying attention to objects, the way they are made, repaired, accompanied in their aging, and accepting their wear and impermanence as essential qualities of their history**.

Presented for the first time at the Kyoto Art Center during the Nuit Blanche in 2024, this exhibition, conceived by Sébastien Pluot at Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, features new works and a program of conversations, performances, activations, tea ceremonies, and a banquet offering a return journey from Paris to Kyoto by savoring dumplings.

[1] *Le Gaffiot* Latin Dictionary. In Greek, *endechomeno*: "what may or may not happen, what can be received." To touch with the hand what happens, what befalls.

Mel Bochner, a major American artist since the 1960s, recently passed away. *Transduction*, one of his key works, is highlighted in this exhibition dedicated to him.



Time Box Project **by Stephen Antonakos**
1975-2000

With works by Richard Artschwager, Daniel Buren, Sol LeWitt and Robert Ryman

Image: Time Box by Robert Ryman

Artists & artisans

William Anastasi
Mel Bochner
Julien Bismuth
Katinka Bock
Fabiola Burgos Labra
John Cage
Marcel Duchamp
Céleste Gatier
Mark Geffriaud
Sadakishi Hartmann
David Horvitz
Eva Jospin
Tony Jouanneau
Toshikatsu Kiushi
Alison Knowles
Silvia Kolbowski
Irene Kopelman
Godelieve Keulen
Geraldine Longueville
Louise Lawler
J.N. Mellor Club
Isa Melsheimer
Mai Miura
Shuji Nakagawa
Pauline Oliveros
Kyuji Onari
Michael Parsons
Nam June Paik
Hiroshi Ueda
Nina Safainia
So Andrew Saito
Yann Serandour
Mieko Shiomi
Mathieu Steinberg
Yohko Toda
Christoph Weber
Franz Erhard Walther

Les intervenants pour le banquet

Tribute to Sadakishi Hartmann
Sébastien Pluot (Design and objects)
Fabien Vallos
So Andrew Saito & Sébastien Pluot (Ceramics)

Time Box Project by Stephen Antonakos, 1975-2000

Richard Artschwager
Daniel Buren
Sol LeWitt
Robert Ryman

Time Capsule, 2014-2025

Dominique Blais
Vincent Bonin
Dieudonné Cartier
Felix Gmelin
Nicolas Knight
Joachim Köster
Silvia Kolbowski
Mikko Kuorinki
Jacqueline Riva & Geoffrey Lowe
Roland Sabatier
Bettina Samson
Yann Sérandour
Lawrence Weiner

Revisiting Processual Works Through Contingency

From a historical perspective, the notion of contingency allows us to revisit the work of Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, as well as certain productions from the 1960s and 1970s (including William Anastasi, Michael Asher, Daniel Buren, Mel Bochner, Franz Erhard Walther, Alison Knowles, Louise Lawler, Sol LeWitt, Robert Ryman, Mieko Shiomi, along with others). This examination goes beyond considering chance or indeterminacy in the production and evolution of artworks. It includes other parameters, such as **sensitivity to materials, economic constraints, the influence of surroundings and contexts, and the evolution of environmental circumstances (natural, political, material, etc.).**

Presented for the first time in this exhibition, **Marcel Duchamp**'s unpublished manuscript—a speech given on August 30, 1952, at the New York State Chess Association—reveals his conception of chess as a work of art in itself: a continuously transforming process combining the aesthetics of poetry, the indeterminacy of a musical score whose interpretation is always unique, and the evolving form of a drawing composed by the movement of pawns on the chessboard.

Between 1965 and 1975, Fluxus **artist Mieko Shiomi** created *Spatial Poems* as invitations to her acquaintances around the world to observe random events: what is in front of them, what sound is heard at a precise moment, something that disappears, something that falls without the ability to predict the shapes resulting from its drop.

With *Transduction* (1969), **Mel Bochner** initiated an uncertain process of translating a text through five languages, transmitted over the phone, giving equal importance to "success" and "failures." In the 1990s, **Silvia Kolbowski** created a work based on a 1970s piece by Michael Asher that was reproduced in a book. The reproduction of the Asher work was then enlarged and framed by her for a group exhibition. Forty years later, she made a film about the astonishing journey of her work, which was resold multiple times by collectors, investment funds, and banks before eventually making its way back to us.

Art History has attempted to avoid contingencies, considering them as constraining hazards to be concealed in order to preserve heroic and pure figures corresponding to homogeneous and autonomous conceptions of the artwork, or to perfectly align them with the artistic movements to which they were associated or assimilated. Conversely, the artists featured in this exhibition regarded contingencies as supplements, as decisive elements of their practices. It becomes evident that many of their works took paths that, from their conception and along the way, evolved in response to contingencies.

In 1975, as if to challenge and celebrate the contingent relationships between works and their contexts, **Stephen Antonakos** invited four friends—**Richard Artschwager, Daniel Buren, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Ryman**—to each create a work, known only to them, in a sealed box, to be opened 25 years later. These *Time Boxes* were opened in 2000. Another *Time Capsule* was produced in 2015 during the exhibition *"A Letter Always Arrives at Its Destination"*, intended to be opened in 2025. It would be revealed to the public at the start of the exhibition in the presence of the artists.

Text by Sébastien Pluot

About the exhibition

Saturday March 15th - Preview by invitation

2pm - Introduction by Sébastien Pluot

2.30pm - Performance *Longueurs d'âmes* by **Céleste Gatier**

3.30pm - Opening of the *Time Capsule* (2014-2025) by Sébastien Pluot

4.30pm - Performance-reading & edible of *Nukapot,* **Géraldine Longueville**, 2025

6pm - Onigiri cocktail reception

Sunday March 16th - Opening 2pm-7pm

2pm - Round table ***Contingence*** with Fabiola Burgos Labra & Irene Kopelman

4pm - Performance-reading & edible of *Nukapot,* **Géraldine Longueville**

4.30pm - Mieko Shiomi: Activation of *Spatial Poem n°3*

5pm - Performance *Longueurs d'âmes* by **Céleste Gatier**

Saturday March 29th

12:30pm - Round table **Architecture of contingency** with Toshikatsu Kiushi, Benoit Jacquet, 2m26. Moderated by Sébastien Pluot,

accompanied by Onigiri and miso soup

2pm - Performance: **Michael Parsons**, *Walk*

2.30pm - Performance: **Pauline Oliveros**

3pm - **Workshop Creation & Activation of works**:

- **Fabiola Burgos Labra**, *Untitled,* 2024, reclaimed branches
- **Katinka Bock**, *Zollstock,* 2024, oak wood - 10 pieces, more a less 1 m x 10 cm x 1 cm
- **Christoph Weber**, *Tataki Protocol,* wood, burnt limestone, soil

About the exhibition

Saturday April 5th

3pm - **Workshop Creation & Activation of works**:

- **Fabiola Burgos Labra**, *Untitled,* 2024, reclaimed branches
- **Katinka Bock**, *Zollstock,* 2024, oak wood - 10 pieces, more a less 1 m x 10 cm x 1 cm
- **Christoph Weber**, *Tataki Protocol,* wood, burnt limestone, soil

2pm - Round table ***Cérémonie, rituels et Tamashii***

with **Celeste Gatier, Sohmi Sahoyama** and **Yohko Toda**. Moderated by Sébastien Pluot

Lien Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86745646977?pwd=vv1QukpV0pfBCEQTMkuxwdWD9BPZ27.1

4.30pm - Conference on the work *Transduction* by **Mel Bochner** (1940-2025)

Thursday May 15th

8pm - Banquet **Matsutake, ya shiranu, ki no ha no, hebari tsuku** *(Mushroom does not know, That leaf is Sticking on it / Le champignon ignore qu'une feuille est collée sur lui).*

Journey from Kyoto to Paris by Sébastien Pluot and Fabien Vallos

Participation: 50 euros

Banquet *Matsutake, ya shiranu, ki no ha no, hebari tsuku*

The ravioli is a small travel bag filled with ingredients encountered by chance in every context along the Silk Road.

As well as the tasting, you'll have the opportunity to take home ceramics created by So Andrew Saito and Sébastien Pluot, made with the help of Mai Miura.
You'll also receive a menu made of Washi paper and Tenugui, designed by Sébastien Pluot in collaboration with Tony Jouanneau.

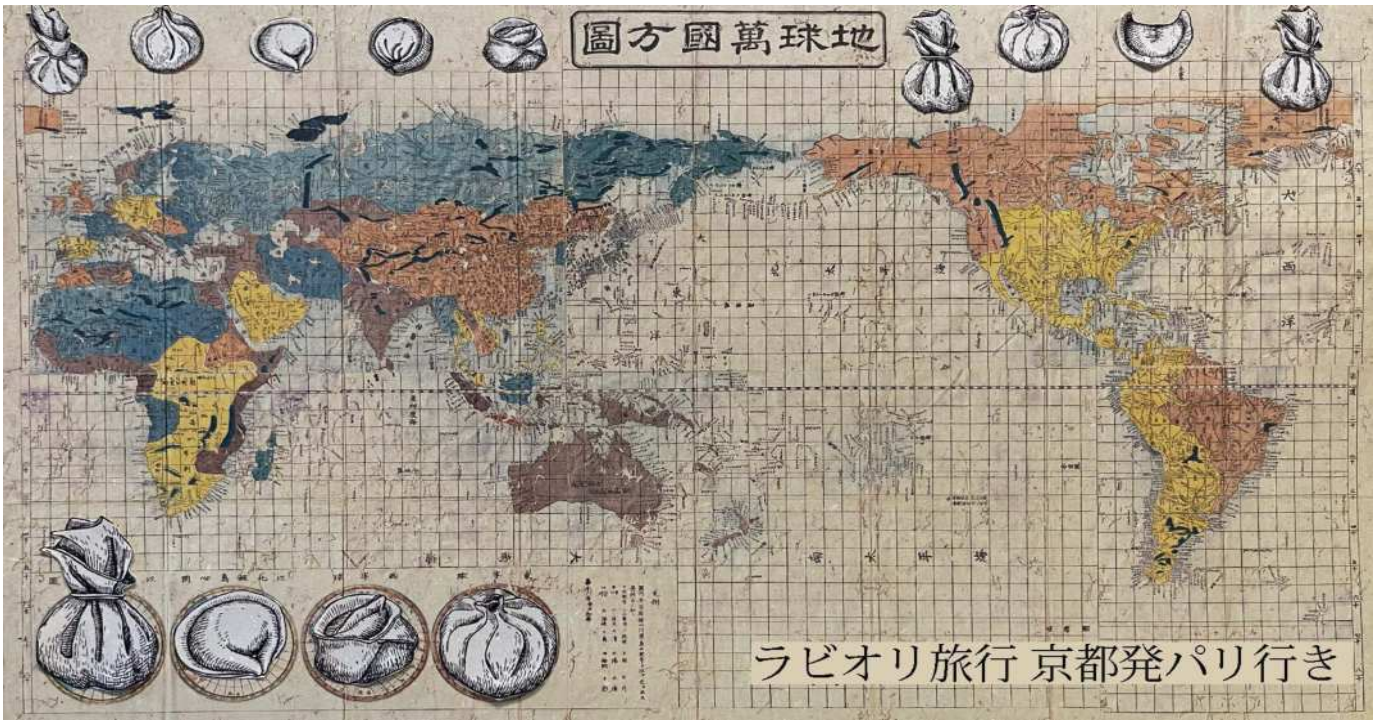
This seated journey is freely inspired by the olfactory show imagined in 1902 by the artist, poet, writer, dancer and storyteller Sadakichi Hartmann. A first version took place on 4 October 2024 at the Institut Français du Kansai, Kyoto, Japan.

❋ **Matsutake ya shiranu ki no ha no hebari tsuku**, by Basho. Literal translation: Pine mushroom, ignorance, Leaf of tree, Adhesiveness / Usual translation: The leaf of some unknown tree, Sticking on a mushroom / Translation by Ishiyanagi Toshi: Mushroom does not know, That leaf is Sticking on it / Translation by John Cage: That that's unknown, Brings mushroom and leaf together / Second version by John Cage: What Leaf? What Mushroom?

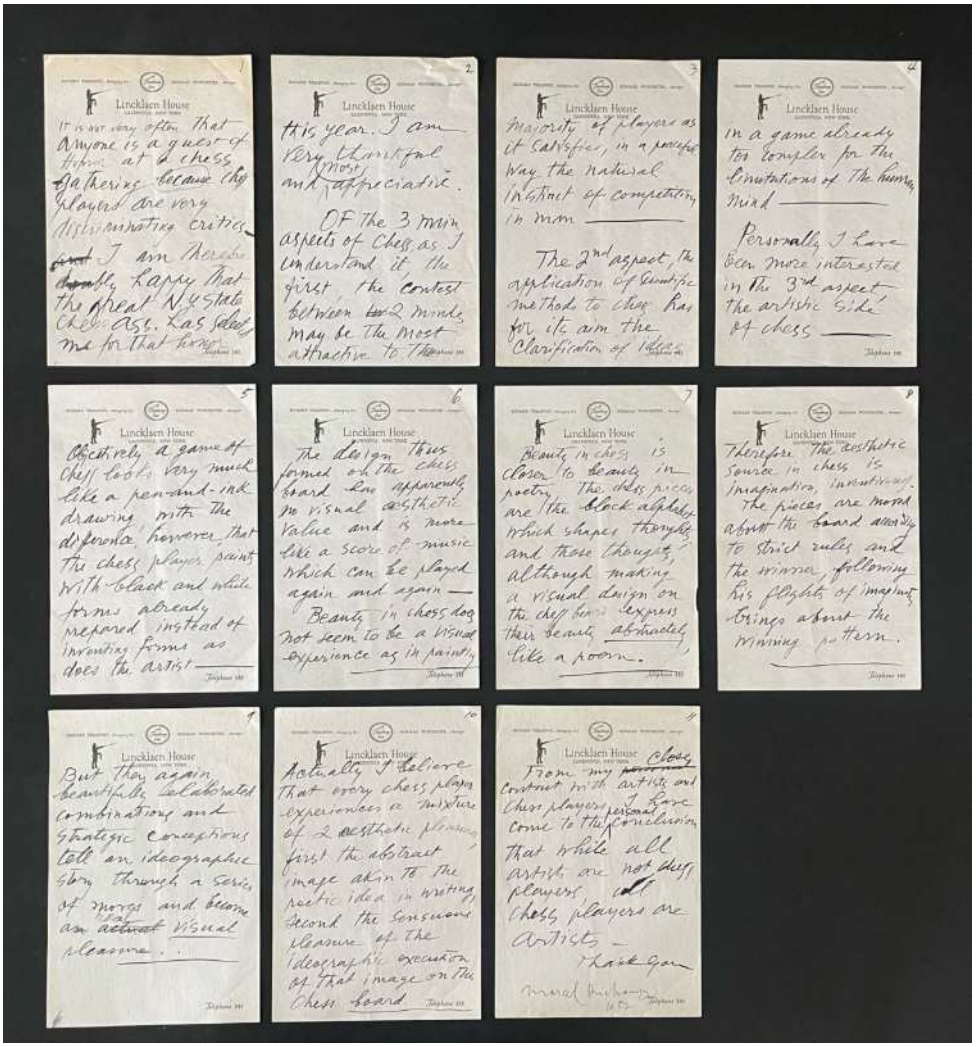
This banquet will take place on Thursday May 15th, 2025, 8pm at the Galerie Jocelyn Wolff.

Participation: 50 euros

To attend this banquet, please reserve your place by e-mail at c.bondis@galeriewolff.com



Œuvres présentées



Marcel Duchamp
Manuscript of the speech given on 30 August 1952 to the New York State Chess Association
1952
pen on paper

SPATIAL POEM NO. 3

The phenomenon of a fall could be described as a segment of a movement towards the center of the earth. This very moment countless objects on the earth are taking part in this centripetal event.
SPATIAL POEM NO. 3 will be the record of your intentional effort to make something fall, occuring as it would, simultaneously with all the countless and incessant falling events.
Please write to me how and when you performed it, as we are going to edit them chronologically.
You could participate as many times as you want untill Angust 31, 1966.

Chieko Shiomi
7 – 1 Mizuho – juza
Kitanagase
Okayama – shi
Japan

Mieko Shiomi
Spatial Poem no.3
Invitation printed on paper



JN Mellor Club
N_VK-001
2024-2025
Leather, unknown objects



Franz Erhard Walther
Find a purpose for a pocket
1969
Tinted sewn canvas



Katinka Bock
One Meter Space - Zollstock
2024
Wood





Fabiola Burgos Labra, *Copper Cups #1,* 2023, bronze leaf



Yohko Toda
Tea Containers - CONTINGENCY
2024
Lacquered wood, wooden box, Kintsugi

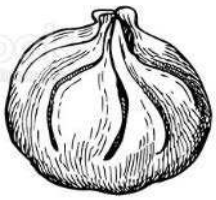


Mathieu Steinberg
Signifiants flottants
2024
Wood, leather



Christoph Weber
Burst
2022
calcaire, béton

Le voyage du ravioli de Paris à Kyoto
Un Banquet à la Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Romainville
Le jeudi 15 mai 2025



野菜とハーブの餃子
Gyoza au gingembre
日本
Japon

広東焼売
Siu Mai de Canton, cochon crevettes
中国
Chine

豚肉と黒キノコのバインクオン
Banh Cuōn au porc et aux champignons noirs de Camille Le
ベトナム
Vietnam

スパイシー野菜のサモサ
Samosa aux légumes épicés
インド
Inde

澄んだスープのマンティ
Mantis de Karine Arabian
アルメニア
Arménie

ラザニア・ダスティパラヤ
Lazania d'Astipalaya
ギリシャ
Grèce

リコッタとほうれん草のトルテッローニ
Tortelloni Ricotta Epinards, beurre de sauge
イタリア
Italie

ニソワーズのラビオリ
Raviolis à la Niçoise
フランス
France

シャトー・ド・モンフラン 白、ロゼ、赤ワイン
Les vins blancs, rosés et rouges proviennent du Château de Montfrin

Sébastien Pluot

Sébastien Pluot is an art historian, researcher and curator, and co-director of Art by Translation.

He has curated numerous exhibitions and colloquia on the work of Alison Knowles, Mel Bochner and Christopher D'Arcangelo, as well as group shows such as Worldlines (HISK), Art by Telephone Recalled, Time Capsules 2045, The Intolerable Straight Line, Dernières nouvelles de l'Ether, Une lettre arrive toujours à destinations, Double Bind, Arrêtez d'essayer de me comprendre., et Affaires Etrangères, You may add or subtract from the work, on C. D'arcangelo and M. Asher.

He has taught as a visiting professor at Barnard College, CalArts, CUNY, Terra Foundation Summer Residency, SFAI, Université Sorbonne, ESAD TALM, ENSAPC and has organised and presented lectures at Columbia University, University of Florida, NYU, Princeton University, RedCat, LACMA, Centre Georges Pompidou, Jeu de Paume, INHA, HEAD, etc.

He is currently a doctoral student at the Centre André Chastel and resident researcher at the Centre d'Astroparticules & de Physique Cosmologique in Paris.

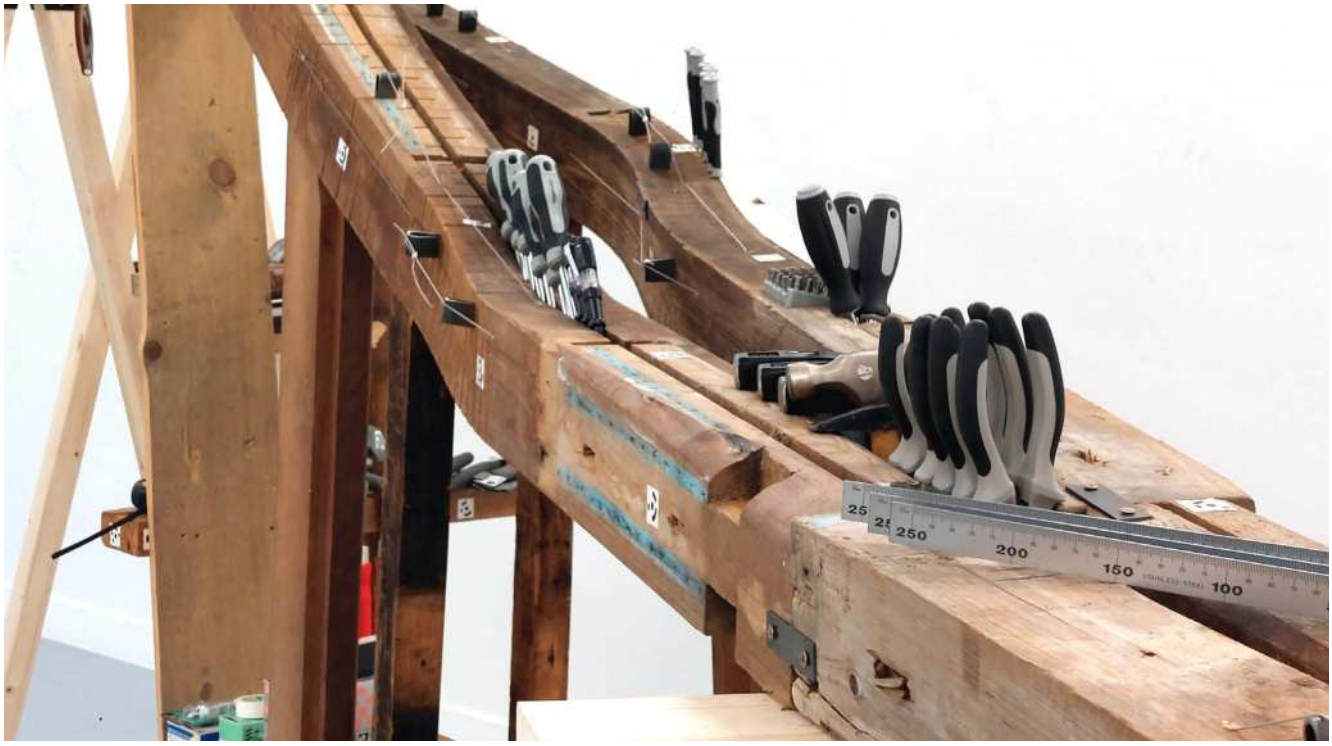
Winner of the Villa Kujoyama in 2023, his research focuses on the aesthetics of contingencies in traditional Japanese culture.

Coexisting with extreme modernity, traditional Japanese culture has a singular aesthetic disposition to contingency, a capacity to deal with the unexpected, the uncontrollable and the indeterminate. The research focuses on different symbiotic relationships with living things and objects that involve negotiating with contingencies rather than domesticating and controlling phenomena. These arrangements are present in the artisanal practices of the Boro, Kintsugi and in the culinary practices of selective fermentation by micro-organisms. The aim of this approach is to identify ways of dealing with the ecological and climatic crises that coincide with a crisis of sensitivity and a deficit of attention and empathy towards places, objects and living things.

This project was developed during Sébastien Pluot's residency at Villa Kujoyama in 2023, with the support of the Institut français, the Institut français du Japon and the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation.

Nuit Blanche KYOTO 2024
"Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans"
The aesthetics of contingency #1





Set design by Toshikatsu Kiuchi

Nuit Blanche KYOTO 2024
"Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans"
The aesthetics of contingency #1





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