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Transform the world. Change life: A Surrealist library

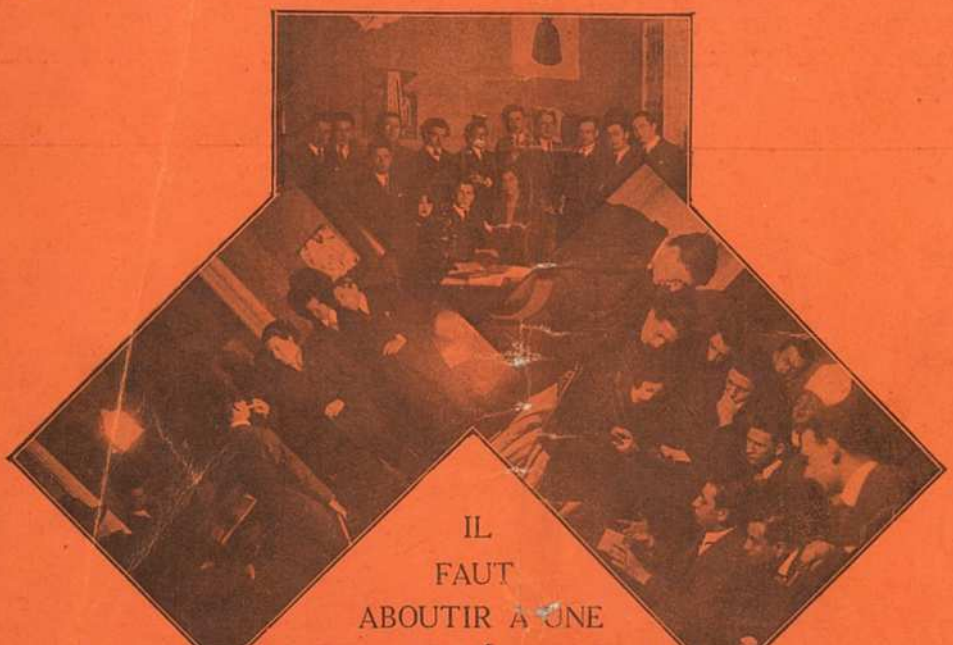
Curated by Emmanuel Tibloux

November 3rd - December 21st, 2024

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

N° 1 — Première année 1er Décembre 1924

LA RÉVOLUTION SURRÉALISTE



IL
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Transform the world, Change life: A Surrealist library

With a selection of works by:

Hans Bellmer, Diego Bianchi, Katinka Bock, Bruno Botella, Mélissa Boucher Morales, Miriam Cahn, Claude Cahun, Alfred Courmes, Arthur Cravan, Guillaume Dégé, André Derain, Monsu Desiderio, Oscar Dominguez, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Léonor Fini, Aline Gagnaire, René Magritte, Marcel Moore, Man Ray, Bona de Mandiargues, André Masson, Joan Miró, Max Morise, Santiago de Paoli, Francis Picabia, Prinz Gholam, Janine et Raymond Queneau, Valentin Ranger, Hugues Reip, Bernard Réquichot, Mathieu Rosianu, Émile Savitry, Lou Tchimoukow, Sarah Tritz, Francisco Tropa, Clovis Trouille, Jacques Vaché, Franz Erhard Walther

& the surrealist library of Simone Collinet



Man Ray, *La centrale surréaliste*, December 1924, photographie. From left to right: Morise, Vitrac, Boiffard, Eluard, Breton, Naville, De Chirico, Baron, Soupault, Simone Kahn, Desnos, Collection Simone Collinet

"Transform the world, said Marx. Change life, said Rimbaud. For us, these two imperatives are one and the same."[1]

Of these two ambitions of the Surrealist programme, only the second may have been realised. Yet, even if these might not have been achieved, or were only partially so, these two imperatives maintain and convey to us the vitality of a shared belief: the belief that language is capable of acting upon things - what one might call its *performativity*.

Pamphlets, appeals, addresses, posters, manifestos, letters, poetry and essays: surrealism is an active library, striving to engage with the clamour and chaos of the world. Open to all the winds of a life which one wishes to be denser and more intense - "a poetic life", wrote Aragon in *Le Paysan de Paris,* "a real life", declared Breton in the opening of the *Manifesto*.

One hundred years after the publication of this seminal text, this exhibition seeks to unpack the Surrealist library by bringing it into dialogue with visual works from the past and the present, which share a commitment to the performativity of forms to act on our sensibilities and reinvent our presence in the world.

« We spend all our lives here doing Surrealism »[2]

The heart and origin of this project is a real library, that of Simone Collinet, to whom this exhibition pays tribute. Born Simone Kahn in 1897, the wife of André Breton from 1921 to 1929, a far-left political activist in the 1930s alongside Michel Collinet, whom she married in 1939, a gallery owner in Saint-Germain des Prés from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s; Simone Collinet embodied and traversed through the great Surrealist adventure in its three main aspects: poetic, political and visual.
This exhibition aims to retrace and revive this adventure, bringing together three types of works: a collection of artworks and documents from the Surrealist movement and its environs (its ancestry, margins and various offshoots); works by contemporary artists that echo Surrealism; and a production of takeaway ephemera, including pamphlets, flyers and leaflets, which reawaken the Surrealist corpus and project.
The show unfolds through a journey designed around five spaces, leading us from the public to the intimate, from the exterior to the interior, from lightness to obscurity. On the ground floor we find, *La Rue* and *La Galerie*; and on the upper floor, *La Bibliothèque, Le Musée* and *Le Cabinet*.

La Rue

La Rue, the street, functions as both a matrix and model for the Surrealist experience, as we have come to understand it from Dada to Situationism. It offers an abundance of signs, images and motifs: the image of the disembodied pointing hand of the Dadaists, sourced from advertisements of the time, the menus and logos reproduced in *Le Paysan de Paris,* the wandering imagery of *Nadja* and the Situationists' concept of dérive, or drift, the very principle of chance and accident, of the "fortuitous encounter" (Lautréamont) and the "bringing together of two more or less distant realities" (Pierre Reverdy), which are simultaneously models of life and of aesthetics.

1. André Breton, « Position politique de l'art d'aujourd'hui », conference in Prague on April 1st, 1935.
2. Simone Collinet, letter to Denise Levy on April 18th, 1924.

The Surrealist street has all the makings of a book or a library: a universe of signs made up of posters, leaflets, flyers, newspapers and magazines (Arthur Cravan sold the magazine *Maintenant* from a greengrocer's cart that he pushed through the streets of Paris). It was also the place where boundaries were overstepped, where demonstrations and adventures occurred, and where political activism (especially against fascism and colonialism) and poetic and existential experience, combined with the highest intensity.
This is the universe that has been reimagined here, through period documents as well as a number of contemporary works and graphic productions by students from the École des Arts Décoratifs - PSL, who remind us that "Surrealism was born to affirm unlimited faith in the *genius* of youth" (André Breton).


Arthur Cravan

1re ANNÉE N° 1 — Avril 1912

MAINTENANT

REVUE LITTÉRAIRE

DIRECTEUR : Arthur Cravan

PARIS — 67, Rue Saint-Jacques, 67 — PARIS

Le Numéro : 25 Centimes

SOMMAIRE

Sifflet : Poésie
Documents inédits sur Oscar Wilde
Différentes Choses

SIFFLET

Le rythme de l'océan berce les transatlantiques,
Et dans l'air où les gaz dansent tels des toupies,
Tandis que siffle le rapide héroïque qui arrive au Havre,
S'avançent comme des ours, les matelots athlétiques.
New-York ! New-York ! Je voudrais t'habiter !
J'y vois la science qui se marie

Maintenant, Arthur Cravan, N°1, April 1912
Galerie 1900 - 2000, Paris



Marcel Duchamp, *A GUEST + A HOST = A GHOST.*, 1953, mixed media, 10 x 10 cm, Galerie 1900 - 2000, Paris

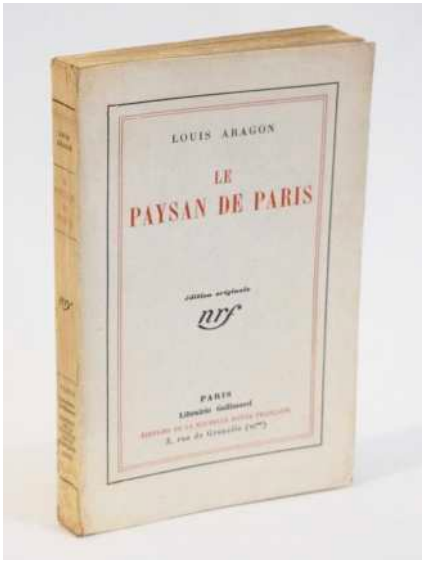
La Galerie

Under the sign of Capricorn, in homage to the Surrealists' fascination with astrology and the figures of the zodiac, La *Galerie,* the gallery, celebrates Simone Collinet's passion for images, a passion that played a decisive role in shaping André Breton's vision. His dedication to her at the beginning of *Surrealism and Painting* (1928) is as much a mark of gratitude as it is a declaration of love: "You are so clear, so just, so young, so true, Simone, my darling, you."
Constantly alert to the work of her contemporaries, which she would often acquire or bring to the attention of those closest to her - in particular her cousin and correspondent Denise Lévy - as they left the studio or went up for sale, Simone Collinet opened two galleries in Paris: Artistes et Artisans in 1948, then the Galerie Furstenberg, which she ran from 1954 to 1965.
The Galerie du Capricorne, with its tightly packed diverse display of older Surrealist works alongside contemporary works, masterpieces and anonymous creations, honours the visual richness, taste for heterogeneity and temporal breadth of the Surrealist movement, articulating what has been called historical and eternal Surrealism.

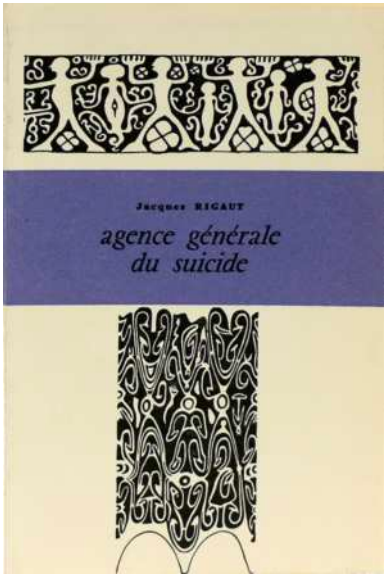
La Bibliothèque

Conceived of as both a condensed and an expanded version of Simone Collinet's library, *La Bibliothèque,* the library, aims to provide access to the great Surrealist publishing adventure, in both its textual and graphic dimensions. As André Breton's wife in the 1920s, Simone Collinet personified the ambivalent role of women within the movement and in society at the time: both central (as objects) and relegated to the periphery (as subjects). At the heart of the group's activity during its heroic period, immortalised by Man Ray's famous photograph showing her seated at a typewriter and surrounded by the movement's key male figures who are leaning over her, Simone Breton only appeared under her initials "SB" in the first issue of *La Révolution surréaliste,* as the signatory of a piece of automatic writing.

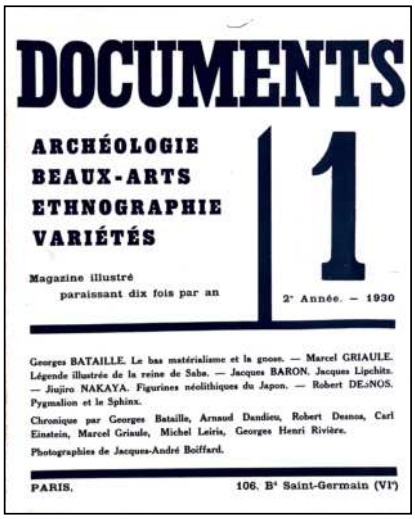
Alongside rare editions for bibliophiles, we find contemporary artworks in the form of books, notebooks, and works to be consulted in boxes, based on the two-column "Lisez/Ne lisez pas" ("Read/Do not Read") table drawn up by a movement which was as quick to prescribe as to proscribe, reminding us that the book is both an object of contemplation and of activation, an everyday commodity and a fetish, between use value and exchange value.



Le paysan de Paris, Louis Aragon, 1926, print on paper, 19 x 12,2 cm



Agence générale du suicide, Jacques Rigaut, 1959, print on paper, 43 pages, 19 x 12 cm



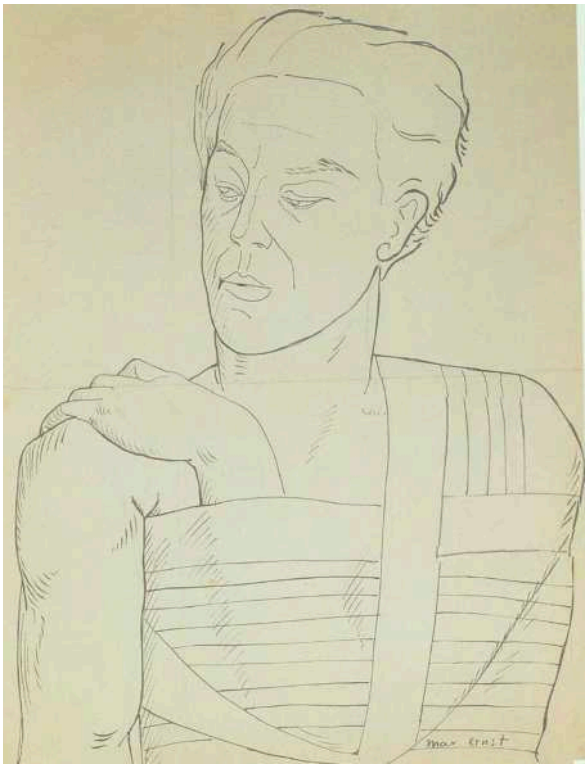
Documents, print on paper, 1930, 27,5 x 22 cm, Collection Simone Collinet

Le Musée

Pointing ironically towards the inevitable museumification of Surrealism and tenderly acknowledging the role of the homage, *Le Musée,* the museum, is modestly placed between *La Bibliothèque* and *Le Cabinet,* the cabinet, extending both and allowing them to spill over into one another. Devoted to Simone Collinet, it completes the portrait sketched out in the dedications and the lines from Aragon's *Une Vague de rêve*: "Simone comes from the land of hummingbirds, those little flashes of music, she resembles the time of the lindens." Alongside works depicting her and objects that once belonged to her, *Le Musée* displays a unique and previously unpublished document recounting the whimsical story of a character called *Petit Rouquin*. Made up of 25 drawings, each paired with a quatrain on their reverse sides, this work is the product of a collective creation by Raymond and Janine Queneau, Max Morise and Simone Collinet, created using the *cadavre exquis* (exquisite corpse) method. The four of them spent several weeks together in La Ciotat between August and September 1928. Janine, who was Simone's younger sister, was also Max's lover: even life itself resembled an exquisite corpse.



Portrait de Simone Breton, Francis Picabia, *Watercolour and ink on paper*, 53 x 40,5 cm, Dédicacé, signé, situé et daté 4 septembre 1922 en bas à gauche, Collection Simone Collinet



Max Ernst, *André Breton*, 1923, 39,5 x 30,5 cm, ink and pencil on cardboard, Collection Simone Collinet



Leonor Fini, *Histoire d'O*, ca. 1960, ink and watercolour on paper, 42 x 31 cm



Bruno Botella, *Sans titre*, 2019, calligraphy brush on paper, 36 x 25,5 cm

Le Cabinet

Originally referring to a "small, secluded room used as an annex to a larger room," *Le Cabinet,* the cabinet, concludes the exhibition by opening onto the imaginary world of interior spaces, both domestic and psychological. Designed as both a psychoanalyst's office - echoing that of Simone Collinet's daughter, the psychoanalyst Sylvie Sator-Collinet, who managed her mother's archives for many years - and a cabinet of curiosities, it brings the Surrealist concept of the unconscious to life: the unconscious as a buried treasure to be discovered and shared by poets, artists and dreamers.

Blending faithful reconstruction with freedom of association, *Le Cabinet* celebrates Hugol's "mouth of darkness" and Rimbaud's "derangement of all the senses," expressed by the Surrealists as a "wave of dreams" (Aragon), "the mediums' entrance" (Breton) or the "stupefying image" (Aragon). Resolutely anachronistic yet literally contemporary, bringing together different eras, *Le Cabinet* juxtaposes works and objects from the past and the present, reflecting a shared taste for psychedelia and erotica, the exploration of hidden realms and the interplay of chimeras and ghosts.

Emmanuel Tibloux

Emmanuel Tibloux

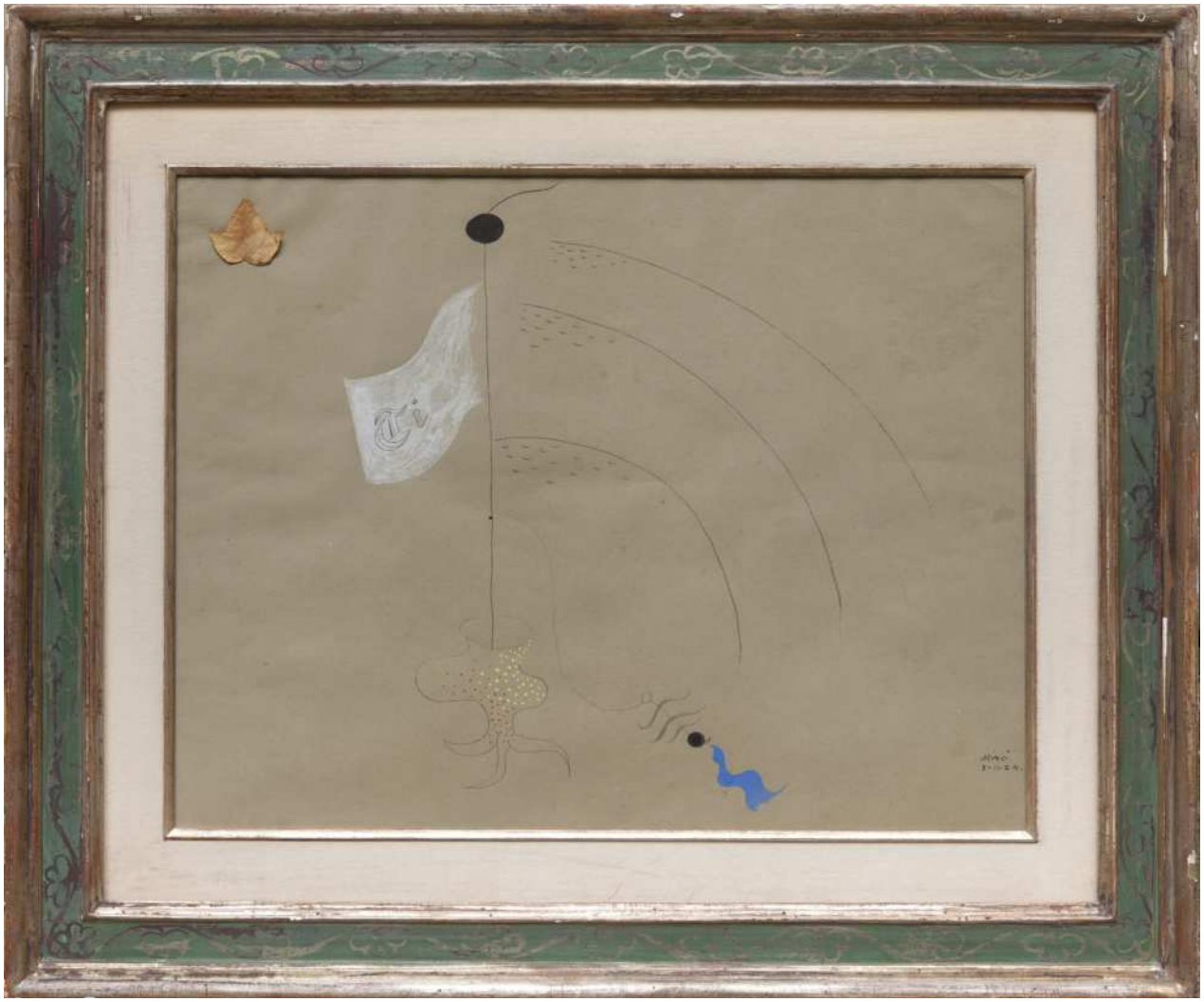
Emmanuel Tibloux has been the Director of the École des Arts Décoratifs - PSL since 2018. Prior to this, he was a teacher and researcher in literature at the University of Rennes 2, Director of the Institut Français in Bilbao, and Director of the art schools in Valence, Saint-Etienne, and Lyon. He also served as President of the National Association of Higher Art Schools (ANdEA) from 2009 to 2017. In conjunction with or alongside his professional activities, he has curated several exhibitions and organized in-person and conferences, while also maintaining an active editorial and publishing career.
He co-founded the journal Initiales at the Beaux-Arts de Lyon in 2013 and the journal DECOR at the École des Arts Décoratifs - PSL in 2021. Additionally, he co-directs the «Icônes» collection at Les Pérégrines publishing house. Tibloux is also the author of several critical texts, particularly concerning Georges Bataille and the 20th-century avant-gardes, as well as a novel, Le Déclin de la beauté, published under the pseudonym Virgile Tavernier. He frequently contributes to the press with op-eds, articles, and interviews on art, design, culture, and education.



Franz Erhard Walther, *Handlungsbuch II (Handling Book II)*, 1969, sewn canvas, 48.9 x 39.4 x 10.2 cm, Ed. of 80

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

A study and activation day will be held on **Saturday 7 December 2024.**
More information to follow.



Sans titre, Joan Miró, 1924, Pencil, pastel, watercolour and collage on paper, 45 x 56 cm, Courtesy of Galerie 1900-2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Camille Baudelaire and Bye Bye Binary (Marie-Mam Sai Bellier and Clara Sambot) organised **a workshop to create ephemera (leaflets, appeals, addresses, manifestos, mailings, poetry and essays) for Graphic Design students at the École des Arts Décoratifs - PSL**.
Together, they explored and re-examined the concepts of the performativity of language (i.e. its capacity to act on things) in graphic, typographic and print terms. The limits of the extreme and the possible, of the legible and the illegible, of the printed and the unprinted or overprinted have guided the research.
We would like to thank Faustine Duval, Eve Briand, Marie-Julie Tang-Tardieux, Pauline Mészáros, Charles Buyens , Mélissa Carène, Justine Boulon, Sami Jemlim, Coralie Depiole, Chloe Delahaye, Julie Boddin, Léa Djedje, Flore Laissus, Nicolas Bertrand, Caroline Perrotte, Maryline Verron, Lelia Crastucci, Gerrit Ludwig, Emma Watson, Paul Guarrigues, Alaïa Etchegoin, Nicolas Criseo, Sushant Shinde, Bidisha Sahoo.

We would also like to thank **Brice Domingues and Catherine Guiral** for their important contribution to the 'Rue' section of the exhibition. For Brice Domingues and Catherine Guiral, who founded the officeabc studio in 2008, form is research and research is form. Graphic designers, critics and teachers, officeabc launched the agence du doute with publisher Jérôme Dupeyrat and the online journal *Tombolo* with theorist Thierry Chancogne. The two partners question and activate the links that can be made between different fields of artistic, scenographic and editorial practice. Catherine and Brice regularly collaborate with type designers Thomas Bouville and Sarah Kremer.

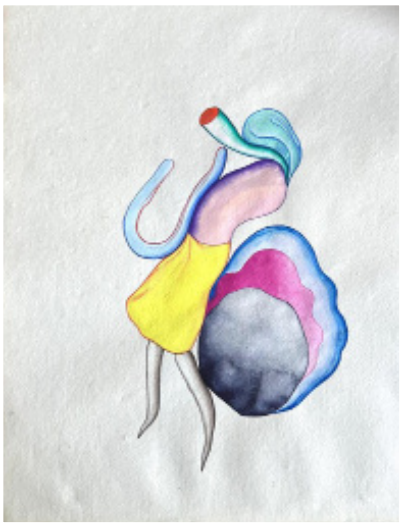
We would like to express our gratitude to **Vincent Sator and his brother, Simone Collinet's grandsons**, who enabled us to imagine and carry out this ambitious project, and to Hélène Meisel, who is in charge of the inventory of the Simone Collinet Collection archives, for her invaluable work.



Sarah Tritz, *Horloge n°2*, 2022, maple, white veneer, black walnut veneer, graphite, clock mechanism, 26 x 27 x 2,5 cm



Francisco Tropa, *Lampe à pétrole*, 2023, screen-printed acrylic, cardboard, cardboard box : 63.5 x 32.5 x 1.5 cm, acrylic lamp : 50.5 x 14 x 0.5 cm



Guillaume Dégé, *Sans titre*, n.d., ink, watercolour and ink on paper, 25 x 20,5 cm



Guillaume Dégé, *Sans titre*, n.d., ink, watercolour and collage on paper, 39,5 x 28 cm

CONTACT & INFORMATIONS

Preview upon invitation | Saturday 2 November 2024 | 12.30 pm

Opening | Sunday 3 November 2024 | 3-7 pm

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