



GAUGUIN

L'ALCHIMISTE

GRAND PALAIS

11 October 2017 - 22 January 2018

"Gauguin the alchemist" aims to explore Gauguin's capacity to transform materials through his unrestrained and experimental approach to his disciplines. Although his work as a painter is well known, his other productions (ceramics, woodwork, engravings) have been seen less frequently and often been underappreciated. What Camille Pissaro described as his "bibelotage" reveals an important aspect of Gauguin's creative process: through the manipulation, alteration and association of materials and by accident, this self-taught artist travelled into uncharted territory. In 1889, he expressed in a letter to Émile Bernard his "terrible longing for the unknown that drives me to madness". His desire to explore the unknown is one of the directing attributes of his art and his life. Tirelessly searching for the place where his art could flourish and where he could find his identity, he became interested in non-western society and primitive art. As he shifted his places of residence (Brittany, Martinique, Arles, Tahiti, the Marquesas Islands), Gauguin pursued his quest for his savage and barbaric identity.

#ExpoGauguin

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1. A LABORATORY OF SHAPES

While working as a foreign exchange broker, Gauguin practised drawing and painting in his free time. When he made contact with the Impressionists through his friendship with Camille Pissarro, Gauguin began working with a wide variety of techniques. He copied motifs from Degas in some of his work: it was probably after seeing his *Petite danseuse de 14 ans* in wax at the Impressionist exhibition of 1881 that Gauguin made wax portraits of his own children.

He worked with wood, previously only used in crafts, notably with his carving *Dame en promenade* which shows a remarkable economy of technique.

Gauguin found his calling in such boundless research, always in search of new formats.

THE OBJECT CENTRE STAGE - From 1880, Gauguin painted works in which objects played a central role, genuine symbolic elements from the artist's personal world.

In *Intérieur du peintre, rue Carcel*, a bouquet of flowers obscures a genre scene in the background. A ceramic statuette in the Peruvian style positioned on the chest of drawers, the clogs hanging on the wall or the sketchbook lying on the table suggest a kind of self-portrait.

The inanimate prevails again in *Nature morte à la mandoline*: the musical instrument is reminiscent of one of Corot's paintings that belonged to his tutor Gustave Arosa, and the painting in the white frame is said to be an impressionist work by Armand Guillaumin that the artist had acquired.

Human activity was of increased importance in his paintings from the 1890s, particularly his *Portrait de femme à la nature morte de Cézanne*. Although, here again, the painting evokes a work from his own collection.

MONSTROSITIES - From 1886, Gauguin created stoneware that he hoped to sell in the Parisian workshop of ceramist Ernest Chaplet. He redefined the rules of collaboration between

ceramist and artist: he was adept at all of the stages in the process, from traditional throwing on a wheel through to firing, and invented the term "ceramic sculpture" for his new practice. Gauguin was fascinated by stoneware, a modest material transformed in the oven that he equated to the fires of hell.

His ceramics were often in the form of pots or vases, even if the strange complexity of the shapes would appear to make them unusable. The artist combined motifs that he took from Brittany, Martinique and Tahiti with other sources (pre-Columbian Andean, Japanese and even French ceramics).

2. THE GREAT STUDIO

The artist changed residence constantly between 1886 and 1889, moving from Paris to Brittany, from Martinique to Arles. Nevertheless, it was Brittany that provided the greatest source of inspiration of forms: the motifs of the leaning Breton girl, her arms crossed, or the rotund woman are constantly repainted, adapted and transformed.

Some principles of composition are also found in multiple works, from drawings to ceramics, from sculpted wood to painting. Gauguin stood out from the picturesque visions of his predecessors and progressively came to abandon outdoor impressionist painting to produce compositions which he himself defined as "synthetic". This research into synthesis was consolidated by the arrival of Émile Bernard in Pont-Aven in the middle of August 1888: the artists worked side by side and his experience with the young painter pushed Gauguin to take his creative audacity even further.

Simplification of forms and a distance with regard to the model allowed the artist to achieve his breakthrough from nature: "Art is an abstraction, unfortunately we are increasingly misunderstood," he confided to Vincent Van Gogh in July 1888. It was during his stay with Van Gogh in Arles the following autumn that his new aesthetic preoccupations became firmly established.

FEMMES FATALES - His visits to Panama then Martinique in 1887 mark his first foray into the tropics. Although his departure was primarily to flee from Paris, Gauguin also presented it as a search for new inspiration for his art: "I am off to Panama to live as a savage, I know a small island that is almost uninhabited, fertile and free. I am taking my paints and brushes and I am going to immerse myself far away from people."

In Martinique, Gauguin set up his studio in a hut. His palette was enriched with warm tones and a repertoire of motifs that he would later use during visits to Brittany: for Marie Henry's dining room in Le Pouldu, he combined Breton motifs (the goose keeper, Breton women in costume, animals) with an exotic female nude painted on a barrel.

We also find the figure of the seductress that prefigures his Tahitian Eve, on the painted décor of the *Femme Caraïbe* dining room or in the wood figurine entitled *La Luxure*.

3. FROM SUBJECT TO SYMBOL

Between 1886 and 1889, Gauguin's work acquired a highly symbolic dimension. Indeed in 1891, the critic Albert Aurier defined symbolism in painting using Gauguin's oeuvre: an idealist, symbolist, synthetic, subjective and decorative art.

Although the artist willingly reused the same motifs, their significance evolved over time. The naturalist studies and paintings of nude children he made in Pont-Aven from the summer of 1886 took on another dimension two years later. Androgynous male or female bathers could be found in various forms in different media (pastels, range project, ceramics) before reappearing as Leda as a swan seduced by Jupiter.

Another recurring motif in Gauguin's work is that of the woman in the waves, which he first sketched in 1885 in the painting *Les Baigneuses*. In *Dans les vagues*, she becomes a redhead animal icon, an enigmatic woman in his relief *Soyez mystérieuses*.

HUMAN SUFFERING - During his stay in Arles with Van Gogh, Gauguin extended his conception of symbolism. This quest for symbols is particularly noticeable in the motif of the prostrate woman that first appears in *La Vendange*. During the year 1889, this melancholy figure evolved: her attitude turned to one of despair rather than temptation, as with the Breton Eve. The same year, Gauguin created several painted and sculpted portraits of the Dutch artist Meijer de Haan in a melancholy pose. The figure of his friend would haunt Gauguin until the end of his life.

4. TROPICAL IMAGERY

Tahiti took Gauguin on a quest to find his true nature, an instinct suppressed by civilisation. On his first visit in 1891, Tahiti had only recently become a French colony and retained its reputation of an abundant and carefree paradise. Yet Gauguin was soon disappointed: the customs and traditions had already given way to Christian evangelism and only rare traces of traditional mythology remained. He thus turned his focus to what he found: books and photographs written by Europeans, everyday objects, Tahitian collections of art objects, from which Gauguin combined styles and motifs with no regard for their provenance, be it Tahiti, the Marquesas Islands or even Easter Island. He was attracted to the high level of abstraction and the decorative aspects of Oceanian art. Using his rudimentary Tahitian, Gauguin named his paintings in the native language, adding to their enigmatic dimension.

TAHITIAN ARCADIA - Gauguin was struck by the natural grace and androgynous morphology of the archipelago's inhabitants. He also found a combination of indolence and mystery that infused his work: the only subject seems to be the silent dialogue between two women, tainted with melancholy in an atmosphere of unreality.

It is an existence without impediment, simple but rich with meaning, that Gauguin tried to represent (*Sous les pandanus*). The bond

between the Tahitians and nature fascinated Gauguin. He saw his companion Tehamana as an Eve of freedom, nourishing and intimate (*Nave Nave Fenua* (Delightful Land); *Tehura*). After several months of observation, Gauguin imbued these landscapes with a spiritual and pantheistic dimension. From 1892, he translated Polynesian legends into a new type of visual art with works such as *Arearea* and *Pastorales tahitiennes*.

NOA NOA, TAHITIAN VOYAGE – From his arrival in Tahiti in 1891, Gauguin planned to write a book recounting his travel experiences. In 1893, he produced his first attempt under the title *Noa Noa*, meaning “fragrant” in Tahitian: “the breath that Tahiti exhales,” in his own words. To create this work that blended reality with fiction, Gauguin enlisted help from the poet Charles Morice: the artist copied the full text into a weighty tome, interspersed with some of the poet’s work. During his second stay in Tahiti, Gauguin completed the work and began to add watercolours, woodcuts and coloured engravings.

5. MYTHS AND REINVENTIONS

In *Noa Noa*, Gauguin claimed to have unearthed the ancient knowledge of Tahiti from his vahine (Tahitian companion). These legends had in fact been lost for the most part, and Gauguin gained his mythological knowledge from the work *Voyages aux îles du Grand Océan* by Jacques-Antoine Moerenhout (1837). He copied extracts into his *Ancien culte mahorie* manuscript, and created his own personal pantheon from wood, engravings, paintings and ceramics. He gave great importance to the character of Hina. This free-form approach to Tahitian mythology was linked to his interest in contemporary theories such as diffusionism and theosophy, advocating a universal truth shared by all religions. He was an admirer of the Buddha, whose poses he evoked in works such as *Tii à la perle* and *Tii à la coquille*, sculptures of deities in wood and other materials.

SPIRITS – Starting in 1892, Gauguin gave a visual identity to the spirit of the Maori dead. Tahitians believed that these *tupapau* moved among the living and could be encountered, particularly at night.

Gauguin’s *tupapau* take the form of an elderly woman that recalls an ancestral figure, enveloped in a cape. This introduced an unsettling and otherworldly dimension to the land of the living, as in *Manaò Tupapaú*, or *Bé Bé*, where the *tupapau* becomes a Madonna with child, introducing a feeling of menace into the Nativity scene.

These Maori legends remained with Gauguin until his demise.

6. IN HIS OWN ENVIRONMENT

Gauguin’s work reached its conclusion in the Tahitian environment, then subsequently in the Marquesas Islands. This setting fully suited the metaphysical quest that underpins his decorative paintings: “All of this sings mournfully in my soul and my environment, painting and dreaming at the same time,” he wrote in 1899. In *Te Rerioa* (The Dream), Gauguin reveals an imaginary world entirely removed from reality: the women appear sculpted and the décor that surrounds them seems to come to life. In this imaginary world, relationships of scale are sometimes inverted, as with *Parahi Te Marae* (The Sacred Mountain), the artist magnifies a *taiana*, a Marquesan ear decoration, out of all proportions, to create a barrier motif. The evocation of a sacred place comes from the mountain, a monumental statue and the enclosure. The décor is thus sufficient unto itself.

THE HOUSE OF PLEASURE – In 1901, Gauguin made his dreams of settling in the remote archipelago of the Marquesas Islands a reality, moving to Atuona where he set about building a home and studio named the “House of Pleasure”. The upper part of the entrance to the house is framed by five multicoloured sculpted panels. His installation was completed

by two satirical sculpted figures at the base of the stepladder: the horned *Père Paillard*, a caricature of the bishop, and *Thérèse*, his servant.

FRIEZES - Gauguin's fascination for the horizontal. The cylindrical wood pieces from his early voyages are a succession of enigmatic scenes that are all interconnected.

The horizontal format of certain paintings is reminiscent of decorative friezes. *Rupe Rupe* (Fruit Picking) is an exercise in pure decoration, evoking an idyllic paradise. Towards the end of his life, Gauguin increasingly produced work that could be classified into coherent groups. Gauguin passed away in his final home on 8 May 1903.

Curators:

Claire Bernardi, painting curator, Musée d'Orsay.

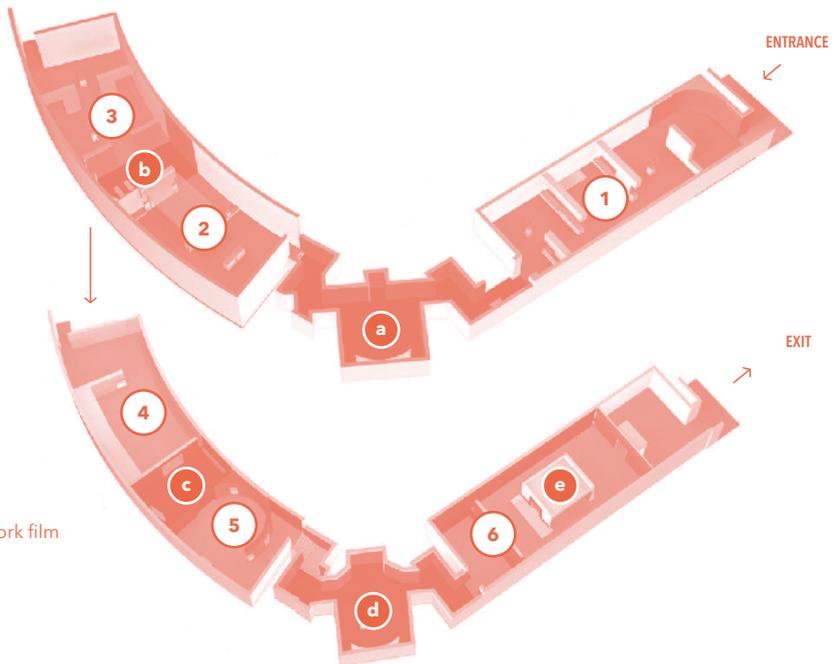
Ophélie Ferlier-Bouat, sculpture curator, Musée d'Orsay.

Set design: Scenografia

This exhibition is organised by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux - Grand Palais in partnership with the Musée d'Orsay and the Orangerie and The Art Institute of Chicago.



EXHIBITION MAP



- a - Ceramic and woodwork film
- b - Engraving film
- c - Focus on Noa Noa
- d - Painting film
- e - House of Pleasure

AROUND THE EXHIBITION

HERITAGE
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Admission to the Grand Palais auditorium is free with an invitation, which can be downloaded from grandpalais.fr

WEDNESDAY MEETINGS, 6.30 PM

Opening conference

Wednesday 18 October: **Gauguin the alchemist**
Presentation of the exhibition by Claire Bernardi and Ophélie Ferlier-Bouat, curators at the Musée d'Orsay and exhibition curators. Introduced by Sylvie Hubac, President of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux - Grand Palais.

Gauguin, the Legend season

Wednesday 25 October: **Paul Gauguin, a painter's life**
Conference by Vincent Gille, Heritage Curator, Maison de Victor Hugo.

Wednesday 22 November: **Gauguin and Tahitian mythology**
Conference by Philippe Peltier, General Heritage Curator, manager of the Oceania - Insulinidia heritage section at the Musée du quai Branly.

Wednesday 6 December: **Garden of Eden or Tropical tristesse?**
Conference by Philippe Dagen, Professor, art critic and author.

Inspiration Gauguin

Wednesday 13 December: **Et la terre de leur corps**
Guest: Zoé Valdés, author. In conversation with Caroline Broué, journalist, producer of "La Matinale du samedi" on France Inter.
Interview and book signing.

Wednesday 10 January: **What are we, where do we come from, where are we going?**

Guest: Damien Deroubaix, artist. In conversation with Claire Bernardi, co-curator of the exhibition.

Gauguin, the film

Wednesday 29 November: **Gauguin - Voyage de Tahiti**
Directed by Édouard Deluc, 2017, with Vincent Cassel, Tuhei Adams and Malik Zidi, 1h40

Gauguin, the music

Wednesday 20 December: **Debussy, Ravel and Caplet**
Musical evening with students from the Philippe Ferro chamber music class and the higher department of young singers. Coordinated by Florence Guignolet, Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris.

Wednesday 17 January: **L'Esprit du Feu / Te Vārua o te Auahii**
Recital of extracts from the contemporary operatic work in Tahitian language, by Geoffroy Colson, libretto by Gaby Cavallo. Featuring soloists, choirs and instrumentalists from the lyrical repertoire departments of the Conservatoires de Paris, directed by Jean-Marc Pont-Marchesi.

FAMILY DAY

Sunday 26 November
at 2.30 pm: Enter the picture! **Nave Nave Moe** by Paul Gauguin, conference-concert by Delphine Grivel and Jean-Marc Leone.

at 4 pm: **Moana**, animated feature film directed by John Musker and Ron Clements, 2016, 1h47

(for ages 7 and over)

Preceded by: **1 minute at the musée Le cheval blanc. Paul Gauguin (1898)**

MONDAY MEETINGS, 6.30 PM

Gauguin in words

Drama students from the Conservatoire national supérieur d'Art dramatique present readings from Gauguin's written works.

Monday 27 November: **A pieds joints sur les règles**

Monday 4 December: **Un art simple, tout simple**

Monday 11 December: **Pour eux aussi j'étais le sauvage**

FRIDAY FILM SCREENINGS, 12 NOON

Early images of Polynesia season

Friday 8 December: **Le Voyage cinématographique de Gaston Méliès à Tahiti** by Raphaël Millet, 2014, 52 mins

Friday 15 December: **White Shadows in the South Seas**

by W.S. Van Dyke, 1928, with Monte Blue and Raquel Torres, silent original version, 1h25

Friday 12 January: **Tabu - A Story of the South Seas**

by Friedrich W. Murnau and Robert J. Flaherty, 1931, silent with subtitles, 1h30

DOCUMENTARIES

Gauguin, je suis un sauvage

By Marie-Christine Courtès, 2017, 52 mins
at 12 noon Thursday: 12 and 19 October, 16, 23 and 30 November, 7, 14 and 21 December, 11 and 18 January
at 2 pm Friday: 8 and 11 December, 12 January
at 2 pm Wednesday: 27 December and 3 January
at 3 pm Wednesday: 11, 18 and 25 October, 8, 15, 22 and 29 November, 6 and 13 December, 10 January
at 4.30 pm Wednesday: 11, 18 and 25 October, 22 and 29 November, 6 and 13 December, 10 January

Les Petits Secrets des grands tableaux (The little secrets behind great paintings): Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?

by Carlos Franklin, 2017, 26 mins
at 4 pm Wednesday: 11, 18 and 25 October, 22 and 29 November, 6 and 13 December, 10 January

Paul Gauguin, Le paradis toujours plus loin

by Laurence Thiriart, 2015, 1h
at 4 pm Monday 4 December
at 1 pm Friday 8 December
at 5 pm on Wednesday 27 December

Gauguin, À la recherche des paradis perdus

by Dominik Rimmbault, 2003, 52 mins
at 4 pm Monday 4 December
at 5 pm on Wednesday 3 January

THE SYMPOSIUM

Gauguin, le droit de tout oser

Musée d'Orsay Auditorium
Thursday 19 and Friday 20 October
Free entry, subject to availability

AUDIOGUIDES

In situ, in French, English and Spanish, €5

Tour for young people in French

From the app, €2.29 in French and English

Tour for young people in French

On Google Play and Appstore: <http://tinyurl.com/appgauguin>

GUIDED TOURS book on grandpalais.fr**Adults**

Duration: 90 mins Price: €24 Concessions: €17

Tribe ticket (for a group of 4 paying visitors, including 2 young people aged 16 to 25): €65

Children & families (from 5 years)

Duration: 1 hour Price: €22 Concessions: €15

Family ticket (2 adults and 2 young people aged 16 and under):

€49

Tribe ticket (2 adults and 2 young people aged 16 to 25): €59

LSF (French Sign Language)

Duration: 2 hours Price: €7 for disabled card holders

Assistant price: €10

Audio description tour for the blind and partially sighted

Discover the exhibition through a selection of translated works on embossed boards with adapted commentaries. Followed by

a tour into the galleries.

Duration: 2 hours (1 hour in room, plus 1 hour for the exhibition)

Price: €10 for each disabled person & €10 for their assistant

WORKSHOP-TOURS**Adults, Dessins en promenade**

Fill the pages of a sketchbook with creations inspired by Gauguin's travels to Brittany and the Marquesas Islands.

Drawing equipment not provided.

Duration: 2 hours Price: €30 Concessions: €22

Families (5 years and over), Illustrating Tahiti

Following a guided tour of the exhibition, participants illustrate and bind a booklet for a Tahitian tale.

Duration: 2 hours (1 hour tour, plus 1 hour workshop)

Prices 1 adult + 1 child under 16 years: full price €31 + concessions €24 Additional adults: €24 Additional children under 16 years: €7

5 to 7 years, Encre tes rêves

Following a guided tour of the exhibition, participants create a print that evokes one of the stories being told.

Duration: 90 mins Price: €8

8 to 11 years, Impressions de voyage

Following a guided tour of the exhibition, participants can experiment with different engraving techniques and produce a booklet of their travel engravings. Duration: 2 hours Price: €10

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE a joint publication by the Rmn - Grand Palais and the Musée d'Orsay, 2017.

24.5 x 29 cm, 320 pages, 350 illustrations, € 45

EXHIBITION ALBUM a joint publication by the Rmn - Grand Palais and the Musée d'Orsay, 2017. By Stéphane Guégan.

21.6 x 28.8 cm, 48 pages, 45 illustrations, € 10

THE EXHIBITION E-ALBUM

Available for iPad and Android tablets

ebook edition available from digital booksellers

Adaptation of the exhibition album in tablet format, with added 3D objects, €4.49

GAUGUIN L'EXPO a joint publication by the Rmn - Grand Palais and the Musée d'Orsay, 2017. By Claire Bernardi and Ophélie Ferlier-Bouat.

15 x 20 cm, 300 pages, 280 illustrations, € 18.50

ET LA TERRE DE LEUR CORPS, "Cartels" collection, Rmn - Grand Palais publications, 2017. By Zoé Valdès.

12.5 x 19 cm, 64 pages, € 14.90

GAUGUIN, "CE MALGRÉ MOI SAUVAGE", reprint, Découvertes Gallimard - Rmn - Grand Palais publications. By François Cachin.

18 x 13 cm, 196 pages, € 14

GAUGUIN COLORIAGE - JEUNESSE (6-9 ANS), a joint publication by the Rmn - Grand Palais and the Musée d'Orsay, 2017. By Joëlle Jolivet.

18 x 22 cm, 64 pages, 30 illustrations, € 9.90

THE EXHIBITION FILM

Gauguin, « je suis un sauvage » Broadcast on Arte on 29

October 2017. Available on DVD (Bonus: *Petits Secrets des Grands Tableaux* episode), a joint release by Rmn - Grand Palais and Arte (€19,90). Also available on VOD (ArteVod and iTunes).

MULTIMEDIA

**THE EXHIBITION APP**

Tickets, exhibition texts, an exhibition timeline, cultural programming around the exhibition and audioguides (**€2.29**), Parcours découverte **Les animaux de Gauguin** (free) and

Les éditions augmentées (free) featuring some of Gauguin's works in 3D from Google Play and the Appstore:

<http://tinyurl.com/appgauguin>

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AUTUMN 2017

GRAND PALAIS

IRVING PENN

21 September 2017 - 29 January 2018

2017 celebrates the centenary of the birth of Irving Penn, one of the greatest photographers of the 20th century. In partnership with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Grand Palais is paying tribute to this talented artist, famous for his photographs of celebrities like Pablo Picasso, Yves Saint Laurent, Audrey Hepburn, Alfred Hitchcock, etc. His work is defined by an elegant simplicity and remarkable rigour, from the studio to the darkroom, where Penn took meticulous care developing his own prints. Staying true to studio photography, he created true intimacy with his model in each portrait, which is the signature of Irving Penn.

MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG

RUBENS. ROYAL PORTRAITS

04 October 2017 - 14 January 2018

Rubens was, somewhat unwittingly, a great portraitist of the court. Although he primarily viewed himself as a painter of great historical subjects, he excelled in the realm of formal portraiture, visiting the grandest courts of Europe. In demand for his conversation and erudition, he also played an important diplomatic role, enjoying an unequalled social position among the artists of his time. Around portraits of Philip IV, Louis XIII or even Marie de' Medici painted by Rubens and a number of celebrated contemporaries (Pourbus, Champagne, Velázquez, Van Dyck, etc.), the exhibition plunges visitors into a palatial atmosphere at the heart of the diplomatic intrigues of the 17th century.

GAUGUIN

OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS:

OPEN EVERY DAY, EXCEPT TUESDAYS, FROM 10 AM TO 8 PM

LATE-NIGHT OPENING ON WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS UNTIL 10 PM

DURING THE AUTUMN HALF TERM HOLIDAYS (FROM 21 OCTOBER TO 5 NOVEMBER):

OPEN EVERY DAY, EXCEPT TUESDAYS, FROM 10 AM TO 10 PM

(EXCEPT 5 NOVEMBER, CLOSING AT 8 PM)

DURING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS (FROM 23 DECEMBER TO 7 JANUARY):

OPEN EVERY DAY, INCLUDING TUESDAYS, FROM 9 AM TO 10 PM

(EXCEPT 7 JANUARY, CLOSING AT 8 PM)

PLANNED EARLY CLOSURE AT 6 PM ON 11, 12, 20 OCTOBER AND

24 AND 31 DECEMBER

CLOSED ON MONDAY 25 DECEMBER

This exhibition is organized with the support of Mazars, Nexity and the Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne.



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