

Au hasard Balthazar

*Benoît Doche de
Laquintane Collection*

PRESS RELEASE



EXHIBITION

06.23 — 08.20.2023

Opening on 06.22 at 5pm

Tour Jobin, 3rd floor,
Friche la Belle de Mai

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Curated by Thomas Boutoux

Au hasard Balthazar

“Au hasard Balthazar” offers the first spatial – and narrative – installation of Benoît Doche de Laquintane’s contemporary art collection. Started in the early 2000’s, in Bordeaux, it now counts nearly 150 artworks and constitutes a prominent corpus among the “young” French contemporary art collections. Built upon the interest of Benoît Doche de Laquintane in emerging artists working in France (Benoît Maire, Katinka Bock or Raphaël Zarka, for example, were at the start of the project during the 2000-2010 decades, while Chalisée Naamani, Mimosa Echard, Corentin Canesson or the mountaintcutters duo were included more recently), the collection quickly became international thanks to the acquisition of important bodies of works by artists such as Portuguese artist Francisco Tropa, Italian artist Francesco Gennari or Kosovan artist Blerta Hashani, among many others. Yet, rather than its geographic coordinates, it is the resonances between the works, considered as as many relations to the world, that characterize the Benoît Doche de Laquintane collection and make it a site in itself, where historic, artistic and anthropologic thoughts are articulated.

The “Au hasard Balthazar” exhibition therefore seeks to trace the course of the construction of the collection from its collector’s commitments, his taste for poetry, for the history of science and ideas, or for archeology. It follows the links that can be guessed between his professional activity – radiology, the reading and interpreting of medical imagery that he often describes as an “investigation, or a quest for the truth” – and the works of the artists of the collection who generally invite to observe the living or moving landscapes, and call for a renewed attention and a decided presence to the world. However, the exhibition does not forget the fact that collecting consists mostly in walking on side roads, and that a collection is first and foremost a series encounters and discoveries made *on the way*.

The masterpiece by Robert Bresson, *Au hasard Balthazar* (1966) is one of Benoît Doche de Laquintane’s favorite film. The exhibition draws its inspiration from it in many ways. An initiation story as much as a portrait, *Au hasard Balthazar* invented the genre of animal biography, while intertwining it with an autobiographical attempt by its director, and reflecting a life-story to each viewer. Balthazar, the donkey, is in almost every shot, in the foreground, in close-up, or in the background, to the point where it is present even when absent on the image, in the ellipsis of the film, which therefore considers all the events of an individual existence as a story and as the narrative on this story. It is obviously one of the important concerns of the exhibition: to show, or give a glimpse on, behind each drawing, each painting, sculpture, photograph or piece of the show, the silhouette and the traits, the passions and the convictions, of the collector who gathered them as many events in a lifetime. However, the movie by Robert Bresson, in its picaresque dimension, insists on the fact that real-life is always made of discontinuities, juxtapositions, rather than it is a process, a path towards an ending, as a term and a purpose. The strength of the movie lies in the fact that, in the story of the donkey Balthazar, scenes follow one another always in unexpected ways; the shots of the movies keep coming without the viewer being able to foresee anything. The exhibition “Au hazard Balthazar”, rather than seeking to give an intention or a governing principle to the project of the Benoît Doche de Laquintane’s collection at any price, invites to consider the part of fate or mishap which constitutes, *in reality*, its uniqueness and its richness. It aims at highlighting the encounters – here rather good than bad, unlike most of the encounters Balthazar

makes in Bresson’s movie –, the discussions and the friendships that have punctuated and guided the life of the collection until now.

A series of conversations recorded during the preparation of the exhibition with some of the artists of the collection, but also gallery owners, curators, fair directors, collector friends resonate within the artworks exhibited together here for the first time. Those recordings hope to foreground the fact that a collection is not merely a private matter, a subjective and idiosyncratic method, but that such a project, and Benoît Doche de Laquintane collection’s one in particular, is collectively made, and is before anything else (such as the desires to acquire or to possess that are often brought back to the act of collecting in a unique and naïve way) a knowledge approach.

“To show a collection is, in a certain way, always a rather narcissist and self-centered exercise, Benoît Doche de Laquintane explains during one of these conversations that visitors can listen to at the center of the exhibition. However, the idea of presenting the collection in Marseille was widely determined by the fact that I wanted to show my attachment to the Art-o-rama fair, because I bought artworks there each year, and because it is an important fair to me where I was introduced to emerging artists and young galleries. Hence, I was willing to show that thanks to this ecosystem, one could build a collection at a human scale, step by step, without it being a company collection or without having unlimited means. It is precisely what a fair like Art-o-rama allows. The goal is thus to show that this is an adventure, both individual and collective, based on encounters, with artists, gallery owners, environments like a contemporary art fair. And therefore, to unveil a stage of the collection as well as the way this collection is made, like many others.”

These interviews, made with gallery owners Jocelyn Wolff (to whom Benoît Doche de Laquintane acquired the works of Francisco Tropa, Katinka Bock, Colette Brunschwig Franz Erhard Walther and William Anastasi presented in the exhibition), Philippe Manzone from Chantal Crousel gallery (for the works of Danh Vō, Mimosa Echard, Wolfgang Tillmans and Wang Bing), artists Francesco Gennari and Benoît Maire, both represented here through important bodies of works, curators Nina Le Cocq and Thomas Boutoux, collector Edgard F. Grima, and Jérôme Pantalacci, founder and director of Art-o-rama, tell how the project of this first exhibition of Benoît Doche de Laquintane’s collection was thought and comprehended: less as a celebration of sorts than as a case-study, or, to use a notion mentioned above, as an investigation.

Thomas Boutoux

Au hasard Balthazar

COLLECTION BENOIT
DOCHE DE LAQUINTANE

A curatorial and editorial
proposal by Thomas Boutoux

Works by

Nikita Alexeev (1953, Moscow, Russia)
William Anastasi (1933, Philadelphia, United States)
Ziad Antar (1978, SSaida, Libanon)
Abdelmalek Berhiss (1971, Essaouira, Morocco)
Wang Bing (1967, Xi'an, China)
Katinka Bock (1976, Francfort-am-Main, Germany)
Colette Brunschwig (1927, Le Havre, France)
Corentin Canesson (1988, Brest, France)
Mimosa Echard (1986, Alès, France)
Haris Epaminonda (1980, Nicosia, Cyprus)
Aurélien Froment (1976, Angers, France)
Cristina Garrido (1986, Madrid, Spain)
Francesco Gennari (1973, Fano, Italy)
Ion Grigorescu (1945, Bucharest, Romania)
Blerta Hashani (1997, Ferizaj, Kosovo)
Alexandre Hollan (1933, Budapest, Hungary)
David Horváth (1998, Baia Mare, Romania)
Nona Inescu (1991, Bucharest, Romania)
Christian Jankowski (1968, Göttingen, Germany)
Jochen Lempert (1958, Moers, Germany)
Benoît Maire (1978, Pessac, France)
Jonas Mekas (1922, Semeniškiai, Lithuania – 2019, New York, United States)
mountaincutters (hybrid identity of an artist duo born in 1990, France)
Chalisée Naamani (1995, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France)
Damir Očko (1977, Zagreb, Croatia)
Jean Painlevé (1902, Paris, France – 1989, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France)
Santiago de Paoli (1978, Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa (1978, Guatemala City, Guatemala)
Wolfgang Tillmans (1968, Remscheid, Germany)
Francisco Tropa (1968, Lisbon, Portugal)
Danh Võ (1975, Bà Rịa, Vietnam)
Herman de Vries (1931, Alkmaar, The Netherlands)
Franz Erhard Walther (1939, Fulda, Germany)
Raphaël Zarka (1977, Montpellier, France)

And extracts from interviews conducted by Thomas Boutoux
during the preparation of the exhibition with (in order of appearance):

Benoît Doche de Laquintane

Jérôme Pantalacci, director of Art-o-rama, Marseille
Nina Le Cocq, curator and director of The Film Gallery, Paris
Edgard F. Grima, collector
Track 1 : 43'31

Benoît Maire, artist

Jocelyn Wolff, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Romainville
Francesco Gennari, artist
Philippe Manzone, director of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
Track 2 : 35'24

(extracts also on www.fraeme.art)

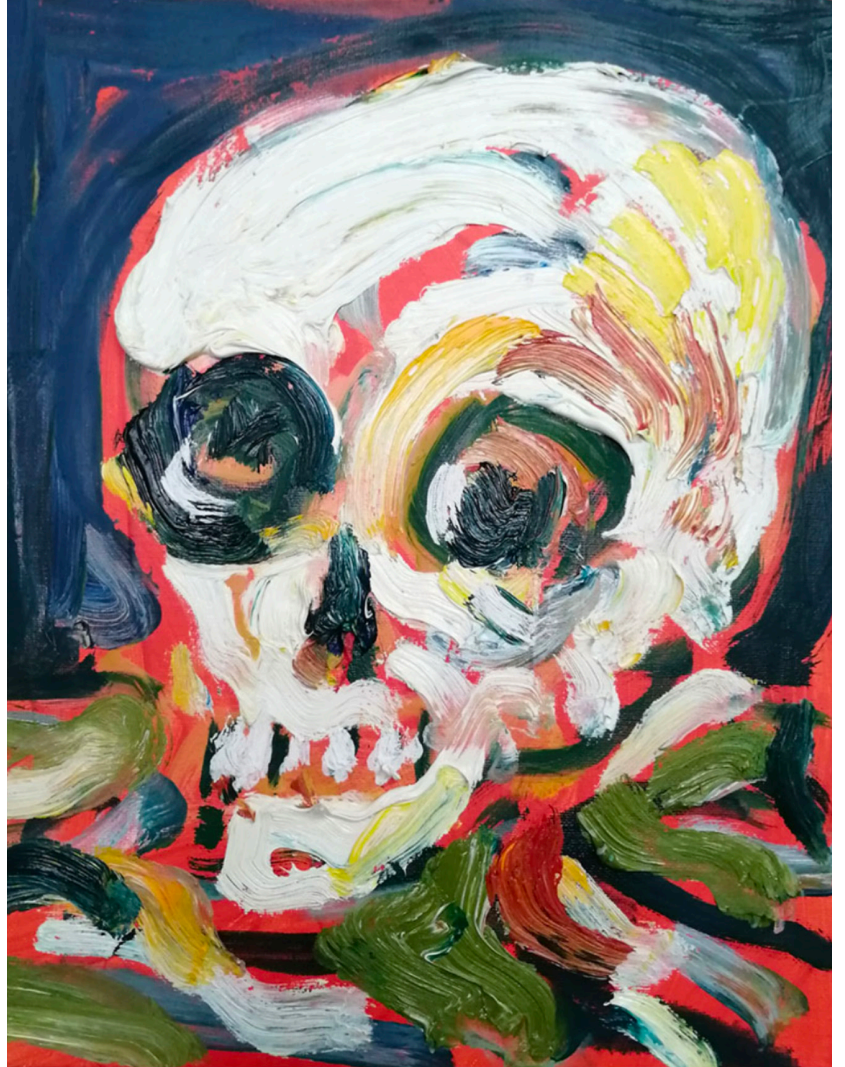
Selected works



↑ Jean Painlevé, *Hippocampes mâles de face*, 1931,
silver gelatine print (circa 1970), frame, 40.2 x 28.5 cm
Courtesy Jean Painlevé and Air de Paris



↑ Wolfgang Tillmans, *Love (hands praying)*,
1989, C-print framed, 30,5 x 40,6 cm
Courtesy Wolfgang Tillmans and Galerie Chantal Crousel



→ Corentin Canesson, *Sans titre*, 2020,
acrylic and oil on canvas, 30 x 24 cm
Courtesy Corentin Canesson and Galerie Sator

→ Ziad Antar, *Yellow Mountain*,
photography, 120 x 120 cm
Courtesy Ziad Antar and SUPRAINFINIT



↓ MOUNTAINCUTTERS, *Objet incomplet (Les indices de la respiration primitive)*, 2021,
blown glass, industrial lamp elements, 40 x 40 x 50 cm, unique piece
Courtesy MOUNTAINCUTTERS



↓ Francesco Gennari, Untitled, 2016,
sanguine on paper, 21 x 29,7 cm
Courtesy Francesco Gennari and Ciaccia Levi



Since 2001 as a resident of la Friche la Belle de Mai, Fræme creates, develops, and implements contemporary art production and distribution systems. By articulating its activities around two dynamics, the professional career of artists as well as the exploration of the different meeting points between artwork and audience, Fræme initiates several experiments led by artists and the public, so many projects in which creation is part of a vector of individual and collective expressions. The association deals with the production of exhibitions, events, and artwork, nationally and internationally while engaging with the regional scenes, it is also a major actor of the art market with the international contemporary art fair Art-o-rama. Fræme is supporting artists through a multi-partner residency program, the publication of monographic books, and has been undertaking an active approach in cultural rights for many years, deploying a wide range of arts outreach activities and cultural projects for all.

Fræme is a member of PAC-Provence Art
Contem-porain and Plein Sud

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For more information,
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