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# Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty

**Franck Balland:** I'd like to come back with you to the project's starting point: the meeting with the graphic designers Thomas Bizzarri and Alain Rodriguez who were interested in the fanzines you've produced at the studio, in a rather confidential way, for years now. What status do these fanzines have in your practice?

**DD:** I've done them for years, even before my time at art school, when I was doing graffiti in Perpignan then in Paris. In some ways it's the extension of the sketch book; a medium for encounters with other artists too. But for me, until recently, it was more of a research medium. The works I create and that are destined for display contain a certain internal defence; they don't reveal everything. There is a kind of instantaneousness in fanzines that, on the contrary, present an intimacy that I didn't necessarily want to be visible. Now, it has become a medium that interests me because it can take stock of what happens in the studio, encounters that occur there, the energy emanating from it.

**FB:** The work on fanzines introduces a collective dimension that is currently clearly being revealed — and that made us want to assign this new role to you as a curator at the Fondation. I wasn't expecting the intimate aspect of these productions to be so central in your eyes. How do you think this exhibition project extends this intimacy?

**DD:** I devised the invitations to the artists in the exhibition in the same way as I might envisage collaborations on the fanzines, as an extension, to some extent, of the proximity and energy of the moment. Also, the very first people that came to mind develop practices connected with intimacy, everyday life, and a certain form of introspection. I like artists leading us into that dimension, but without revealing everything. You discover what constitutes their inner worlds in an elliptic way, through all of the poetry and emotions that circulate in their work. When I was talking about the exhibition recently, I said that for me, it shows reality affected by the imagination, through artists' imaginaries. I'm fond of this statement, because it says something about the way in which they use a visual language to utter things that words don't always allow us to say.

**FB:** Besides the artists you're close to, the exhibition has a more recognisable figure, Isa Genzken, and another more marginal one perhaps, Pascal Doury. Why did you think of these practices, which might seem more far-removed from your own?

**DD:** Isa Genzken and Pascal Doury are people I don't know. But as with Tetsumi Kudo's work, which I wanted to show in my exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in 2014, Pascal Doury's work conveys a massive amount of energy. The lovely thing about these artists is that they give you the possibility of doing and unlocking things that are there, but that you don't always allow yourself to engage in. I discovered this work when I was young, through friends. Showing Pascal Doury now in this exhibition is also a way of paying homage to him, or putting the ball back in his court, since his work is hardly ever shown. It's very emotional, actually. It's a bit different with Isa Genzken because she's an established artist, unlike Pascal Doury, who is in some ways an "anti-professional". I discovered the artwork that's in the exhibition about ten years ago, at the Chantal Crousel gallery. When you see this kind of work, you understand that it's not necessary to provide everything in an artwork. Incidentally, Isa Genzken's work is an important starting point in the exhibition. In it, we see New York, Ground Zero, and the vulnerability of the invisibilised bodies that are rebuilding an "upright" world. The artist interferes with this moment of reconstruction to set up a composition with cellotape that is not so vertical, which is slightly at an angle. This idea is very important to me, we find it again in the work of Guillaume Dénervaud and Grichka Commaret, who reappropriate architecture to affect it with their imagination.

**FB:** The vulnerability you're talking about is represented in different ways in the exhibition, as is the figure of the witness, which recurs several times.

**DD:** In Gabriele Garavaglia's photography, we also discover the vulnerability of teenage bodies during a protest, which is a subject that moves me. As for the figure of the witness, that is also essential. On the hull of Marie Angeletti's boat, the word "témoin" [witness] is written, but in my eyes it refers less to the model serving the reproduction of this specific form, and is more a way of referring to the individual who has seen. In the same manner as Jacques-Elie Chabert — who took photos of Pascal Doury's apartment, which was a kind of total work of art — provides the most recent testimony of this place, before everything was put away into boxes. So artworks are also like witnesses. That of Morag Keil, for instance, shows what it means to be an artist, in the early 2010s, and live with a degree of precarity. The artists in the exhibition give me the possibility of engaging in thoughts that I don't feel I'm the author of, but that allow various emotions to be explored.

**FB:** How did you find your experience of this shift in roles, from artist to curator?

**DD:** There has certainly been a shift, but it's a little sidestep, because I wasn't very far away. Overall, I operated in the same way as for my exhibitions. But that has only been possible because I maintain intense and honest relationships with the artists in the exhibition, or the artworks that I was able to borrow. The main difference is that I spent a huge amount of time chatting with the artists. Which was great!

**FB:** Can you say a bit about the exhibition title, which was borrowed from the English band Felt's album?

**DD:** *Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty*. It's a ready-made title. I'd noted it down somewhere, I don't really remember why, and it popped back into my mind, echoing a lot of things in the exhibition. The lovely part about this title is that it's hard to really understand what it means. For me, antiseptic beauty, after the Covid period, evokes a fantasy of purity — that is now crumbling, deteriorating. In the exhibition, that could be represented as a form of resistance to reality. I must say that I really like this notion of beauty, which is tricky to impart, but that I often think about in terms of "presence" or "gentleness". Naturally, the gentleness I'm evoking also conceals a lot of violence. Through their imagination, the artists brought together here alter the reality, authority, and order of the world. Clémentine Adou's clown's nose expresses this well, I think. It continuously spins and represents flux for me, the inner movement of something that is in the process of forming. It's like thought, or dreams, or any other form of resistance that's innate to us. There is a form of political commitment that emerges from the exhibition, via poetry, invisible movements, and a certain melancholy.

**FB:** The spatialisation that you designed, equally as much as the scenography that recalls your recent production, reinforces these sensations that you evoke. How did you approach the exhibition space?

**DD:** As always for me, the exhibition is intimately linked to the space that hosts it, its constraints, and the possibilities it offers. As my conversations with the artists progressed, I imagined articulations between their works, and the slat blinds that I use in my work enabled me to materialise these junctions. In my personal projects I sometimes seek to accentuate spatial clashes, to render somewhat unattractive things visible. In this case, I wanted it to be gentle, for the scenography to appear like a dance wrapping itself around the works and balancing out the energies.

*Conversation between David Douard, curator of the exhibition, and Franck Balland, cultural development manager at the Fondation, February 2024*

Clémentine Adou  
Marie Angeletti  
Grichka Commaret  
Guillaume Dénervaud  
Pascal Doury  
Garance Früh  
Gabriele Garavaglia  
Isa Genzken  
Morag Keil  
Benjamin Lallier  
Melody Lu  
James Richards  
Pascale Theodoly

Fondation  
c'entreprise  
Pernod  
Ricard

Exhibition  
5.07.24 → 7.13.24  
Curator  
David Douard

graphisme: Des Signes Paris

17 bis rue d'Amsterdam 75008, Paris  
(Access nearby the cours Paul Ricard  
direction Gare Saint-Lazare)

Aperto - Project Space  
June → July  
Residency of Zzz, publishing house  
founded by the graphic design  
duo Bizzarri-Rodriguez  
At Aperto, the design of David Douard's next  
book — Zzz's inaugural publication — will  
become a subject, revealing itself, mutating,  
stimulating discussions, exhibitions  
and readings.

Crumbling  
the  
Antiseptic  
Beauty

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(Gare Saint-Lazare)  
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Free entry  
Tuesday → Saturday  
11 am → 7 pm  
Nocturnal Wednesday → 9 pm  
Guided tours  
Wednesday → 12 pm  
Saturday → 12 pm and 4 pm  
Wednesday 19 June at 7 pm  
Carte blanche to Jonas Delaborde  
on Pascal Doury's work  
Saturday 29 June at 3:30 pm  
Fanzine workshop with Melody Lu  
Registration at:  
info@fondation-entreprise-pernod-ricard.com

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### Mélody Lu (1990)

"Starting out as a self-taught artist, I became interested in sculpture while working on engravings for tombstones. I wanted to reproduce figurines in marble – like the sculptures that adorn tombs, which I collect, so that I can later see them incarnated. I also collected little figurines, for which I created boxes, following the contours of their forms. I'd like them to leave behind a trace of their presence, if they were to absent themselves from it."

1. *JTM*, 2021, 17×23 cm, marble.  
*Gros câlin*, 2022, 45×30 cm, marble.  
*Je pense à toi*, 2021, 15×21 cm, marble.
15. *Casper*, 2023, 8×10×7.5 cm, mixed media  
*Panda Joyeux anniversaire + miroir rose*, 2023, 18×9×12 cm, mixed media.  
*Bonhomme jaune avec sourire rouge*, 2024, 7×6×5 cm, mixed media.  
Courtesy of the artist.

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### Pascale Theodoly (1983)

"The furniture works are like bollards that are found throughout the exhibition. They are called *supports* because they have no precise destination and can be used as a support as much for the artworks as for a body. These works were made from wood offcuts from other projects. There is a protocol – two feet connected by a central part – thanks to which I intervene as little as possible."

2. *Support 81, 82, 83, 84, 85*, 2024, variable dimensions, oiled particle board.
9. *Support 34, 35, 38, 43, 47, 60, 61, 66*, 2023, variable dimensions, solid spruce oiled.  
*Support 67*, 2023, 18×17×22.5 cm, laminated particle board.
21. *Support 88, 89, 90, 91*, 2024, variable dimensions, oiled particle board.  
Courtesy of the artist.

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### Clémentine Adou (1988)

"In 2019, I filmed the window displays of department stores, and particularly their animations, their sets, and the manufacturing of desire that's derived from them. That then spread to the practice of string puppeteering and its technique. There is a vocabulary that is very specific to this discipline of the popular arts. The act of animating the puppet interested me: it's an extension of the hand, I wanted to mix all of that up. They're moving sculptures that feel as they go."

3. *Red nose, red dot*, 2023, 5×5×5 cm, clown nose, motor. Courtesy of the artist.
11. *Daddy's long legs' hand*, 2023-2024, variable dimensions, umbrella structure, aluminum, stainless steel, steel, wire.  
Courtesy of the artist.

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### Isa Genzken (1948)

Isa Genzken is an emblematic artist of the contemporary German scene. Emerging in the minimalist movement of the 1970s, she developed an original approach to sculpture by manipulating a plethora of techniques: paintings, collages, and installations, or ready-made objects and photographs. On the left side of this large mixed-media composition, *Mona Isa V (Ground Zero Arbeiter)* integrates a photograph of anonymous workers labouring on the construction site of the collapsed twin towers, after the 11 September attack.

4. *Mona Isa V (Ground Zero Arbeiter)*, 2010, 192×186.5 cm, various materials. Collection Niklas Svennung, Paris. Courtesy of the artist © ADAGP, Paris, 2024.

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### Morag Keil (1985)

"The video *Potpourri* plays on the monitor displaying fake paparazzi images interspersed with high-definition footage of private scenes all driven by a disjointed narrative. The video is informed by developments in pornography, social media, and tabloid press during the early 2010s."

5. *Potpourri*, 2013, 7'14", digital video, website, desk, chair, computer, screen, speakers. Courtesy of the artist and Project Native Informant Gallery, London.

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### Pascal Doury (1956-2001)

Illustrator, publisher, and artist, Pascal Doury coedited the subversive magazine *Elles sont de sorties* with Bruno Richard in the 1980s. Close to the Bazooka collective, Doury collaborated with *Libération* and founded *Patate* magazine, dedicated to poetry and graphic design. He was an obsessive collector of images, but also VHS tapes, children's toys, and objects of all kinds. His graphic work translates these imaginaries. Photographs of Pascal Doury's home, documented by Jacques-Elie Chabert, attest to the analogy drawn between his apartment in Bagneux and his art, which he saw as an indistinguishable continuum.

6. Jacques-Elie Chabert, views from Pascal Doury, Eugénie Lavenant, and Dora Diamant's apartment, Prunier Hardy Street, Bagneux, 2001, 35mm color photographs, digital prints. Courtesy of the artist and Antoine Trapp. The Foundation extends its thanks to Jonas Delaborde and cneai=

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### Guillaume Dénervaud (1987)

"David and I had noticed the view from the window onto the rail tracks of the Gare Saint-Lazare. It reminded him of trips to Normandy, and I thought of Claude Monet's paintings series from 1877. I love how the smoke is depicted, the micro-particles of coal mingling with the steam and light, softening the industrial architecture of the station. I structured the two

images shown in the exhibition by first establishing a rigid structure, which is then challenged and deactivated, by an interconnection of more flexible elements until it mutates into a new entity.”

7. *Les blés sédatifs*, 2024, 6 × 26 cm, ink on Arches aquarelle paper.
8. *La gare Saint-Lazare*, 2024, 135 × 210 × 3.5 cm, oil, tempera, pencil on linen.

Courtesy of the artist and Bel Ami, Los Angeles.

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### **Benjamin Lallier (1985)**

French artist based in Berlin, Benjamin Lallier develops a multifaceted body of work influenced by popular culture and the mythologies emerging from it. The two couches presented in the exhibition, cut up and reassembled in such a way as to form hybrid seats, appear unified by the layers of black varnish that coat them. The public is invited to sit on these familiar elements, with their ambiguous sheen, thus modifying the body's support.

10. *Untitled*, 2023, 90 × 220 × 90 cm, leather sofa, acrylic paint, and varnish.
- Untitled*, 2023, 90 × 235 × 90 cm, leather sofa, acrylic paint, and varnish.

Courtesy of the artist and Heidi, Berlin.

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### **Garance Früh (1992)**

“These are three works on different scales, with different materials and techniques, but all are pervaded by the same sensations. Welcoming in terms of their curves and hostile with their spikes, they reverse the meaning of the object's primary usage. I wanted to produce armour with objects that evoke fragility and transform them into potentially defensive tools, and also work with objects that evoke power, making them more vulnerable, sensitive, and open.”

12. *Dente Traps*, 2023, 24 × 24.5 × 10 cm, textile, plastic flower, magnets, ribbon.
13. *Please Remove Your Spurs Before Getting In Bed*, 2023, 86 × 23 × 20 cm, ceramic, mesh, headband, metal protective grille, textile, sewing needle, magnets.
16. *Sing Me To Sleep*, 2024, 80 × 44 × 66 cm, metal, textile, plastic, leather.

Courtesy of the artist © ADAGP, Paris, 2024

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### **Grichka Commaret (1987)**

“It is in the residual spaces that architecture ‘forgets’ that my work begins. I invest these places with affects and project onto them fictions of which my paintings are a translation. Drawing and writing allow me to crystallise these observations intuitively, and painting to synthesise them.”

14. from left to right

*Assemblage en sous-sol*, 2024, 18 × 37 cm, lead mine on paper, color cardboard mounting, blister.

*Additive Organ*, 2024, 13.5 × 36.5 cm, acrylic on canvas.

*Grande tour (éveil en progrès)*, 2024, 19 × 38 cm, acrylic on canvas, black frame.

*Mélopée au 15*, 2024, 18 × 42 cm, acrylic on canvas, white frame.

Courtesy of the artist

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### **Marie Angeletti (1984)**

*Polished Balls* is an artwork in motion that evolves depending on the exhibitions and the increase in the number of balls polished by Marie Angeletti. Each piece of the ready-made set is transformed by the artist like a mirror and hammered with word-poems. Next to it is the work *Témoin* [Witness], which has two meanings in French. It is both the spectator of an event, but it can also be a prototype that prefigures future models. The hull of a boat takes the form of an enigmatic and incomplete model.

17. *Témoin*, 2024, 77 × 109 × 110 cm, gelcoat, glass fiber, wood. Courtesy of the artist and Lars Friedrich, Berlin.

18. *Polished Balls*, 2023, variable dimensions, polished pétanque balls. Courtesy of the artist and Edouard Montassut, Paris.
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### **Gabriele Garavaglia (1981)**

“It's because he is interested in the question of masks and monsters that David noticed this image. Different layers compose it. The first is the mask and the second, the person's skin. But if you look closely, there are also the character's contact lenses that produce yet another transformation. This portrait is that of a performer at the Kunsthalle in Zurich. The transformed face is what remains of this performance.”

19. *SOS Ground Service*, 2021, 168 × 120 cm, digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.
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### **James Richards (1983)**

*Migratory Motor Complex* is a sound installation by James Richards comprising a collage of eclectic sources. A harmonic musical composition combined with fragments of sung voices, bits of writing, and melodies mixed with field recordings and electronic noises. Each sound is amplified by the listening apparatus that, due to its circularity, creates a surround sound effect.

20. *Migratory Motor Complex*, 2017, 16' 4" six-channel audio, variable dimensions installation, speakers, benches. Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo Gallery, Berlin.