

OUR GESTURES DEFINE US AND SHOW WHO WE ARE

PRESS RELEASE — 26/02/24

ATELIER  
HERMÈS

Atelier Hermès presents "Beauty is a Ready-made", a solo exhibition by French artist collective Claire Fontaine from March 22 to June 9, 2024. One of the most controversial artists of our time, Claire Fontaine critically reflects on the artistic and political implications of the late capitalist era as a self-proclaimed ready-made artist. Instead of pretending to create new "original" works detached from her socio-historical context, she tackles the capitalist taboo of ownership by borrowing already existing references and artworks and giving them an existential use value, practicing an aesthetic of repetition and difference.

Claire Fontaine's name also suggests a unique female gendered artistic identity. Founded in Paris in 2004 by Fulvia Carnevale and James Thornhill, who appropriated the name from the famous stationery brand, Claire Fontaine is formed by two assistants who maintain an "empty center" that challenges hierarchy and the division of labor and is filled with possibility like a blank notebook. Adopting such a position entails an opening to change through discussion and interaction with others, rather than acting like a highly individualized and self-assertive figure: this transforms as much the nature as the effect of the work generating a relationship with the public that transcends mere visual seduction. The name Claire Fontaine, which means "Clear Fountain" in English, is also a direct homage to Marcel Duchamp and a new proposal to imagine the possibility of the ready-made, a space of freedom that rejects the prescribed role of subjectivity that isolates us from each other.

The artist's first solo show in Asia, this exhibition presents ten representative works that navigate an urgent political agenda as well as issues from contemporary visual culture. The neon sculptures from the series *Foreigners Everywhere*, which draw attention since their title was selected as the theme of the 60<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale to take place in 2024, conveys a simple yet powerful message about the still unresolved issue of the others among us, along with its new Korean translation. The work *Foreigners Everywhere* exists in several languages and translations to underline the relational nature of the notion of foreignness (each of us is a foreigner somewhere). Several works that enlarge images

viewed through broken liquid crystal screens placing them on light-boxes commonly used for advertising, offer insights into contemporary visual culture and reflections on other issues of our time including patriarchal protection, climate crisis, and our impotency in front of the global disaster. Notably, *Cut-up*, a new work premiering in this exhibition, is an immersive floor installation that explores the history and cultural complexity of migration in Palermo, Italy, where the artist is based, while the abundant lemons on top serve as a symbol of the economically impoverished European south and a metaphor for *Migrants* deemed useless and troublesome but in fact colorful and beautiful, capable of changing through their simple presence the energy of a space.

Based on the belief that “Art has become a place for political refugees,” Claire Fontaine's practice shares the ideas with thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben and even literary characters such as Scrivener Bartleby and Odradek, inspiring us to reflect on the current situation of political powerlessness. The powerful idealistic undertone inherent in her works presents us with the opportunity to face reality through art and possibly transform it.

## Claire Fontaine

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2024 "Left & Right", Hypermaremma, Pescia Fiorentina, Italy  
"Reproductions", Mennour Gallery, Paris, France
- 2023 "Cancel Patriarchy", Base, Milan, Italy  
"Readymade Emotions", T293, Rome, Italy  
"Protection", Novo, Secci Gallery, Milan, Italy  
"Become a Sea", Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany  
"Frequently Asked Questions", Unterhaller, Berlin, Germany  
"Il Personale", Site Specific Installation(the 21st Premio Ermanno Casoli prize),  
Elica, Fabriano, Italy
- 2022 "Mostly Sunny", Air de Paris, Romainville, France  
"Patriarchy = CO2", Planeta Buonivini, Noto, Italy
- 2021 "Star Reply Forward Copy Info Delete", Kaunstraum Memphis, Linz, Austria
- 2020 "I - We - Yes", studioconcreto, Lecce, Italy
- 2019 "Les printemps seront silencieux", Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France  
"a borsa e la vita" Palazzo Ducale di Genova, Genova, Italy  
"Claire Fontaine" Rolli Days, Strade e palazzo da vivere, Banca Carige, Sede Centrale,  
Genova, Italy  
"OK NO", Synnika, Frankfurt, Germany  
"Ettore Majorana", Viaggio in Sicilia, Planeta Sciaranuova, Castiglione di Sicilia, Italy  
"Too late to read.", Longtang, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2018 "Invisible receivers", Century Pictures, New York, United States  
"#displaced", Städtische Galerie Nordhorn, Nordheim, Germany  
"Same war time zone, Williamson | Knight, Portland, United States  
"Happy for no reason", Gaga & Reena Spaulings LA, Los Angeles, United States
- 2017 "The Crack-Up", N.B.K., Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany  
"I am your Voice", (We The People Are The Work), Karst, Plymouth, United Kingdom  
"Claire Fontaine", CODE Art Fair 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark  
"Tears", Billboard project, Blackwood Gallery Toronto, Canada
- 2016 "May our enemies not prosper", Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany  
"Claire Fontaine", Museo Pietro Canonica a Villa Borghese, Rome, Italy  
"Camp", Villa Medici, Rome, Italy
- 2015 "Stop seeking approval", Metro Pictures, New York, United States  
"Love is never enough", Air de Paris, Paris, France  
"The winter of our discontent", Carl Kostyál Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2014 "The Assistants", SIC Gallery / Urb Festival, Helsinki, Finland
- 2013 "Redemptions", CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco,  
United States

- "Etrangers partout", La Bouilladisse, FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France  
 "Tears", The Jewish Museum, New York, United States
- 2012 "M-A-C-C-H-I-N-A-Z-I-O-N-I", Museion, Bolzano, Italy  
 "Équivalences", Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France  
 "La Chiave", Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Rome, Italy  
 "Breakfast starts at midnight", Index, The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation  
 Stockholm, Sweden
- 2011 "P.I.G.S.", MUSAC Contemporary Art Museum, Castilla y León, Spain  
 "The Assistants", Petra, Mexico D.F., Mexico
- 2010 "Future Tense", El Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico D.F., Mexico  
 "Economies", Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, United States  
 "Unbuilding", Caterina Tognon Arte Contemporanea, Venezia, Italy
- 2009 "After Marx April, After Mao June", Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, United States  
 "Defend Yourself", Art Perform, Art Basel, Miami, Florida, United States  
 "Claire Fontaine", The Exhibition Formerly Known as Passengers, CCA Wattis Institute  
 for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, United States  
 "Call + 972 2 5 839 749", Galería Perdida at Project Row House, Houston, Texas,  
 United States
- 2008 "Feux de Détresse", Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France  
 "Lucky In The Misfortune", Masion Descartes, Institut Français des Pays-Bas,  
 Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 "They Hate Us For Our Freedom", Contemporary Art Museum St.Louis, Missouri,  
 United States  
 "Change", Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany  
 "Claire Fontaine", Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam,  
 The Netherlands
- 2007 "Équivalences", Le Centre d'Art Villa Arson, Nice, France  
 "Get Lost", Module, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France  
 "How to?", Kunsthalle Zurich, Switzerland
- 2006 "Siamo tutti singolarità qualunque", Il piccolo Museion, progetto Garutti, Museion  
 Bolzano, Bolzano, Italy
- 2005 "Foreigners Everywhere", Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, United States  
 "Claire Fontaine", Galerie Meerrettich im Glaspavillon an der Volksbühne,  
 Berlin, Germany

### **Selected Group Exhibitions**

- 2024 "Foreigners Everywhere", Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
- 2023 "Someone is getting rich", Troppenmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 "Wer wir sind / Who We", Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn, Germany  
 "Scenes from the collection", The Jewish Museum, New York, United States

- 2022 "The Future Behind Us", Villa Arson, Nice, France  
 "Libero Spazio Libero", Fondazione del Monte, Bologna, Italy  
 "Pier Paolo Pasolini Tutto è santo. The political body", MAXXI Rome, Italy  
 "Church for Sale: Works from the Haubrok Collection and the Nationalgalerie Collection",  
 Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany  
 "Mothering. Between Stockholm Syndrome and Acts of Production, MUAC,  
 Mexico DF, Mexico  
 "Les Flammes", MAM, Paris, France
- 2020 "Retail Apocalypse", gta exhibitions, ETH Zurich, Switzerland  
 "Power! Light!", Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany  
 "Alien vs. Citizen", Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, United States
- 2019 "Persona grata?", Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne MAC/Val Vitry-sur-Seine,  
 France  
 "Political Affairs", Hamburg Kunstverien, Hamburg, Germany
- 2018 "Scenes from the Collection", Jewish Museum, New York, United States  
 "Readymade", Swiss Institute Contemporary Art, New York, United States  
 "Peindre la nuit", Centre Pompidou-Metz, France
- 2017 "Sensibile Comune", GNAM La Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome Italy  
 "Please Come Back. Il Mondo Come Prigione?", MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle arti del  
 XXI secolo, Rome, Italy  
 "The Fruit of Sleep", Sharjah Biennial 13, Beirut, Lebanon  
 "The Upset Bucket", ISelf Collection, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2016 "I have left you the mountain", Albanian Pavilion, 15th International Architecture  
 Exhibition Architecture Biennale 2016, Venice, Italy  
 "Punk - Its Traces In Contemporary Art", Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona -  
 MACBA, Barcelona, Spain  
 "This Is Your Replacement", Sies + Höke, Dusseldorf, Germany  
 "Cher(e)s Ami(e)s : Hommage aux donateurs des collections contemporaines",  
 Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France  
 "The Revolution Will Not Be Gray", Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, United States  
 "The House of Commons", Portikus, Frankfurt Am Main, Germany
- 2015 "Thief Among Thieves", Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver, United States  
 "A Republic of Art: French Regional Collections of contemporary Art. From the 80's  
 to Today", Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands  
 "Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner", Whitney Museum of  
 American Art, New York, United States
- 2014 "The crime was almost perfect", Witte de With, Centre for Contemporary Art,  
 Rotterdam, The Netherlands  
 "Attention Economy", Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria  
 "Neue Wege nichts zu tun", Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria

- “20 years Galerie Neu”, Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany
- “Performance Now”, Delaware Art Museum, Delaware, United States
- “Future abandonats”, Fabra I Coats, Centre d’art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
- “Fighting gravity”, Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany
- 2013 “Zizhiqu 自治區(Autonomous Regions)”, Times Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou, China
- “When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes”, MOCAD, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, United States
- “Every Day Matters”, Fauschou Foundation, Copenhagen, Denmark
- “Ten Years of the One Minute Film Festival”, Mass MoCA, Massachusetts, United States
- “Prix Marcel Duchamp”, Beaux Arts de Libourne, Libourne, France
- “Reinventing the Wheel: the Readymade Century”, Monash University of Art (MUMA), Melbourne, Austria
- 2012 “The Road We’ve Traveled”, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- “It is what it is. Or is it?”, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, Houston, Texas, United States
- “K”, Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, United States
- “NEON. La materia luminosa dell’arte”, MACRO, Rome, Italy
- “Prestige”, Klaipėda Culture Communication Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania
- “9th Shanghai Biennale”, Shanghai, China
- 2011 “Where Do We Migrate to?”, Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture, Baltimore, United States
- “Terrible Beauty - Art, Crisis, Change & The Office of Non-Compliance”, Dublin Contemporary 2011, Dublin, Ireland
- “Linde Family Wing”, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, United States
- 2010 “Fax”, Torrance Art Museum, California, United States
- “Geography of Trans-territories”, San Francisco Art Institute, California, United States
- “Seconde Main”, Musee d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
- “It is written”, Centre Pompidou Metz, Metz, France
- “Uncertain Spectator”, Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), Troy, New York, United States
- 2009 “Audio, Video, Disco”, Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
- “Fax”, The Drawing Center, New York, United States
- “Untitled (Take the Money and Run)”, De Appel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- “Contemplating the Void : Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, United States
- “Variety evening at the New Museum”, New Museum, New York, United States
- 2008 All’s Fair in Art and War : Envisioning Conflict, 21c Museum, Louisville, United States
- “Passengers : Round 2”, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco,

United States

- 2007 "Unmonumental – the object in the 21st century", New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, United States  
"Pawnshop", e-flux, New York, United States  
"The Irresistible Force", Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom  
"Beneath the Underdog", Gagosian Gallery, New York, United States
- 2006 "Drapeaux Gris", Musée d'Art Contemporain CAPC, Bordeaux, France  
"Group Therapy", Museo d'arte moderna e contemporanea Bolzano, Italy
- 2005 "Etrangers Partout", Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France



*Foreigners Everywhere* (English), 2005  
Green neon, 8mm glass, back-painted, framework, electronic transformer, cables, 110x2,150x50 mm  
© Studio Claire Fontaine, Photo Julie Joubert / Courtesy of Claire Fontaine and Mennour, Paris



*Untitled (It's only 4 degrees)*, 2018  
Industrial frameless LED lightbox with pearl vinyl digital print, 277x156x10 cm  
© Claire Fontaine, Photo Aurélien Mole / Courtesy of Claire Fontaine





*Untitled (Lost & Found)*, 2011

Modified street bollard, sleeve, bolt and child's coat, dimensions variables

© Claire Fontaine, Photo Marc Damage / Courtesy of Claire Fontaine and Mennour, Paris and Air de Paris, Paris

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“Our gestures define us and show who we are.” A commitment to this unifying statement drives everything we do at the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. Put another way, individual actions nurture growth and well-being for us all. The Foundation puts in place the necessary conditions for the transmission of skills and know-how, the creation of new work across the arts, the protection of our environment, and the encouragement of social solidarity, through several programmes designed to accompany its beneficiaries as they build tomorrow's world.

Together, these actions reflect our fundamental aims: to cultivate shared intelligence, harness progress for the greater good, and enshrine humanitarian values at the heart of today's society. Established in 2008, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès is directed by Laurent Pejoux, and presided by Olivier Fournier.

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