

Matthias Odin  
Entre le coeur et les murs  
Frac Ile De France  
Curated by Maëlle Dault

Images : Martin Argyroglo

Born in Lyon in 1995, Matthias Odin lives and works in Paris. He graduated from the École Nationale des Beaux-arts de Cergy in 2023, and is a member of the Ygreves collective, which takes over vacant spaces to present exhibitions. Matthias Odin thrives on encounters and chance encounters that set his work in a wandering movement of both random and chosen constructions. The sculptures he creates come to life through his own everyday experiences: discovering objects, places or situations by wandering city, through friendships and/or collective experiences. Each encounter retains a material or immaterial and emotional memory that feeds his composite installations, witnesses to his mobility.

I contacted Matthias Odin in November 2024 and we planned to meet in his studio in early January 2025. His e-mail read: «I've found a space that seems interesting for presenting my work. It's currently a secret space, but I can inform you that it's located at the Front Populaire stop. An image of a gleaming, immaculate white space was included in the correspondence. A few days before, I received confirmation of the appointment at the Front Populaire metro station at 4pm, and a poem to read on the way, which now features in the exhibition. One of the sentences I was able to read on the metro, Entre le coeur et les murs, is its title.

It was a particularly cold day. We crossed a vast mineral square backed by shops and a large building constructed for the organization of the Olympic Games. We walked along a street with wholesale trucks and delivery men sitting on their goods. Then, lifting a large curtain gate with an ordinary padlock opened onto a long, totally empty concrete industrial building. A huge glass roof allowed unsuspected light to reach the ground as if by magic. We passed through a second, almost identical hangar and passed through a white door into a corridor, next to which was a staircase. We descended a few steps into a totally flooded basement, a stagnant, oily pool of floating objects that seemed infinite in extent. Like a flash from a Tarkovsky film combined with a video game scene. As we ascended, we were confronted by a white door. The door opened with a key, and I recovered the image of white space I'd sent by e-mail.

This sort of White Cube within the vast warehouse was a real surprise. «This is my studio, but it's only temporary. To recount this discovery is to convey the precariousness of working spaces for artists. (The LA gallery was evacuated less than two months after my visit for a group show<sup>1</sup>.) But it's also about the practice of Matthias Odin who, thanks to the occupation of this site, has designed a series of sculptures that he presented to me that day. They all had the particularity of having been composed by gleaning objects found on site. It was a very special kind of in situ work, accompanied by the fear and urgency of taking over and occupying the space, and of not being spotted or even discovered.

A few days later, still soaking up the experience of my visit, I suggested to Matthias Odin that he give another reality to this place. The idea was to bring together some of the sculptures seen there to create an equivalence, a translation of this temporarily occupied space in the Plateau's Project Room. This is the exercise we've been working on together to celebrate this studio located "between the heart and the walls", and this in-between posture, at once aesthetic, affective and spatial.

The sculptures gathered for the exhibition proceed like the snowball described by Bergson in L'évolution créatrice, which swells as it rolls downhill. Like our perceptions and moods, their assemblages thicken as they absorb time





and take on multiple layers. What we believe to be stable is in fact already in transformation, and the site itself acts upon each sculpture with its minute, everyday changes. There is no break between one state and another, but rather a kind of continuum of absorption of space. The collecting gestures are modest but precise, the materials are poor but the choices are right: filming, photographing, connecting a light bulb, placing a fake flower, observing the movement of an object, the recurrence of a 77/60 graffiti. It is the dramaturgy of these minor gestures of patient harvesting that translates the different states of the place.

By compiling signs of life in this building, by searching for traces of it, the question of its legibility is raised. The omnipresent architecture disappears in places, only to reappear in others: a wooden door, another made of glass, a window through which you can see a film, partitions that you cross like the character in *Le Passe-Muraille*, chairs that have been knocked over. And there's always the presence of the hand - hyperrealistic, ghostly or mechanical - opening doors, providing access, triggering photos or videos, and assembling and fabricating these little luminous theaters of drawers.

Light becomes an almost palpable material, sculpting space, revealing the invisible, and creating thresholds between the real and the imaginary. In its dialogue with darkness, light is a source of reflection on zones of oblivion and on what escapes control. It is an act of reappropriation, a way of restoring visibility to what is supposed to remain hidden, ephemeral and illegal. It integrates the scars of the place, the forgotten potentialities, and sometimes even the silent narratives of the people who lived there or passed through it.

The exhibition *Entre le coeur et les murs* (Between the Heart and the Walls) functions a little like a nesting doll, with its layered structure, its reflexivity and its mise en abyme of a place whose withdrawn presence remains an enigma, as well as the prospecting movement of those who discover it. Through this attempt to exhaust the memory of a Parisian place, the exhibition offers a space for questioning our relationship to property and the right to exist poetically in the interstices of the city.

Maëlle Dault