

CRAC Alsace, Centre rhénan d'art contemporain, is located in Altkirch, France, at 18 rue du Château. Contact CRAC Alsace, at +33 (0)3 89 08 82 59 and info@cracalsace.com. Access the future, present and past of CRAC Alsace, via www.cracalsace.com.

Press release

From June 20 to September 21, 2025, *Layer of Wilderness*, a group exhibition with Caretto & Spagna, Seulgi Lee, Joshua Merchan Rodriguez, Mariana Murcia, Marie Raffn and Jessica Warboys, curated by Sandrine Desmoulin, Maria Claudia Gamboa, Sarah Menu and Richard Neyroud.

On Thursday June 19, 2025 at 7.30 pm, Opening Garden Party of the group exhibition *Layer of Wilderness*. On this occasion, a free shuttle will leave from Art Basel, departure from Bleichestrasse at 7 pm, return to Basel at 11 pm. Reservations at s.menu@cracalsace.com.

Layer of Wilderness is organized in the context of "I'll. A collaboration with the river between CEAAC, La Kunsthalle and CRAC Alsace". This cooperative project is supported by Mieux produire, mieux diffuser, a program created by Ministère de la Culture—DRAC Grand Est and endorsed by Région Grand Est.

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Exhibition

Begin at the source of the Ill, walk its course with the artists and rediscover a river that we cross every day without consideration. Where is it? Decide to cross through the bushes. A silver trickle runs through the daisies. *He's become a teenager!* exclaims a voice further down a meadow sweating from every pore in a glistening film. The water loses itself in the depths of the earth before emerging again through the marl soils, where it resurfaces. The artists needed to see these apparitions. Sometimes, the water was no longer there, it was somewhere else. The Ill disappears under a rock, above which a tree stands buzzing, like a hallucination guiding our steps towards other mirages.

How can we preserve the river's energy? Joshua Merchan Rodriguez accelerates the erosion of objects by capturing the force of the river's flow. Seulgi Lee encapsulates that flow in amulet flasks. Mariana Murcia transforms spring water into a living beverage. Marie Raffn reveals the waterway's body through textile stitches and knots. Caretto & Spagna transfuse energy by collecting fragments of soil. Jessica Warboys perceives Antigone through a statue of Joan of Arc hidden in the Ill River during the war. The water's memory overflows.

—Sandrine Desmoulin, Maria Claudia Gamboa, Sarah Menu and Richard Neyroud, May 2025.

Artists

CARETTO & SPAGNA

Caretto & Spagna explore the many faces of the river, from the Ill's source in Winkel to its confluence with the Rhine in Gamsheim, via the karst resurgence* in Ligsdorf and its symbiosis with the Rhine-Rhône canal in the town of Illfurth. The artists observe the mutations of the wild Ill, the adolescent Ill, the canalized Ill, reflecting on different aspects of its uses and the industrial history of Alsace. During their wanderings, they glean residues from the river's "layer of wildness"**, then take them to be combusted. Clay from a nearby quarry (Durlinsdorf) is used to care for and repair the river, helping to energize its banks.

* Where the Ill underground riverway resurfaces.

** Defined by the artists as the return—on the surface—of a river to its wild state.

Born in Italy, Andrea Caretto (1970) and Raffaella Spagna (1967) are based in Cambiano. Both artists have been working as a duo since 2022. They participated to *Friendship : That Mixer, That Asper*, a group exhibition organized between *ERAC Alsace* and Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry—le Crédac in 2024. The artists realized *Bright écologies—Experiences, Forms, Materials*, a monography published by Les Presses du Réel in 2024.

SEULGI LEE

Seulgi Lee captures river water in flasks whose shapes reflect the various places where the water was collected. Calling upon friends, family, or curators from different parts of the world, she offers to exchange flows, including that of the Ill. A section of the river located in Altkirch finds its place alongside other waters (from the Rhine, the Loire, the Durance, the Seine, the Huveaune, the Sankt Jørgens Sø, the Île aux Femmes, Ocean Beach in New York and the Tagus). These amulets, worn below the belt as pendants, stimulate the vibrations of each river carrying its share of micro-organisms—living particles in constant mutation. Each bottle generates its own affective territory, irrigating bodies and following the course of fluvial energy.

Born in Seoul (South Korea) in 1972, Seulgi Lee lives and works in Paris. She is represented by the galleries Jousse Entreprise (Paris) and Hyundai (Séoul). Her work forms part of several collections, including the Fonds d'art contemporain—Paris Collections, the Kadist Foundation, the Seoul Museum of Art, the Suwon Museum of Art, the FRAC Île-de-France, and the Centre national des arts plastiques (CNAP).



Caretto & Spagna, *Domande al Corpo Glaciale* [Questions to the Glacial Body] 2022. Bronze. 18 x 12 x 3 cm. Courtesy and photography of the artists.



Seulgi Lee, *FLUICE_VIII* (Altkirch), 2020. Glass pendant containing water from the Ill River. Variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist and Jousse Entreprise Gallery. Photography by Marc Damage.

JOSHUA MERCHAN RODRIGUEZ

The Bureau de Trade Polymérique (B.T.P.) [Office of Polymeric Trade] collects technofossils along the Ill River: residues of the Anthropocene, remnants of an obsolete consumerist system. They are then placed on a piece of furniture that resembles a homemade gold panning device, where they will be bartered by a B.T.P. official—performed by Joshua Merchan Rodriguez. Selected with equal care, only a few objects have been transmuted into gold. The scale of value of these objects is short-circuited: is it their composition that gives them worth, or the time spent tracing their forgotten uses? Further on, a copper carcass lies stranded. Its iridescent surface bears witness to the passage of fire, awakening the dormant colors within the material. Guided by his philosophical quest, the official continues his search for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Born in Colombia in 1996, Joshua Merchan Rodriguez lives and works in Paris. He presented *Azul Quantum* [Quantum Blue], a solo show at Guadalajara90210 Gallery (Mexico City) in 2023 and *Рашметаллизм* at Ojalá artist-run-space (Paris) in 2025.

MARIANA MURCIA

Mariana Murcia drew water from the source of the Ill and mixed it with local honey. Every day, the art center team stirred the liquid, breathing oxygen into it and activating its fermentation. Through this slow alchemy, wild yeast and the energy of muscles combined to form mead. In a fountain-bathtub, this nectar in motion continues its metamorphosis. Elsewhere, hanging reeds vibrate to the rhythm of sounds. By inverting heaven and earth, the artist creates an elastic landscape, bending to recompose itself anew. Mariana Murcia reveals a flexible world-matter, an ecosystem in the making.

Born in Colombia in 1988, Mariana Murcia lives and works between Basel and Seydisfjördur (Iceland). In 2022, she presented *Appordances*, a solo show at Amore artist-run-space (Basel) as well as *Der corales, Madera y conchas* [To be corals, wood and shells] at the SGR Gallery (Bogotá).



Joshua Merchan Rodriguez, *Bureau de Trac Polymérique (B.T.P.) [Office of Polymeric Trade]*, installation activated during a performance as part of his solo show *Azul Quantum [Quantum Blue]* at the Guadalajara90210 Gallery (Mexico City) in January 2023. Photography and courtesy of the artist.



Mariana Murcia, still from the film *Everything from Hell*, 2021. Single channel video. Courtesy of the artist.

MARIE RAFFN

Marie Raffn explores the history of the local textile industry, closely tied to the Ill River. Walking along the banks, she observes the changing reflections, floating algae and shifting colors of its waters. She then transposes this fluid surface into a woven pattern, giving shape to the texture of marshy vegetation. Using clay harvested from the riverbanks, she creates an alphabet, echoing the embossing rolls that once imprinted patterns on fabric made in Mulhouse's factories. Punctuated by touches of colored plaster, a wave of metal seems to flow into the main gallery.

Born in Denmark in 1986, Marie Raffn lives and works in Copenhagen. She presented *an 6kal, a 66kel, an e*, solo show at Vestjyllands Kunstpavillon (Denmark) in 2021 and *Bladderhut Hul* at PRÂM Studio (Prague) in 2019. In 2024, she participated in *Les Phalènes* [The Moths], a group exhibition at @R@@ Alsace.

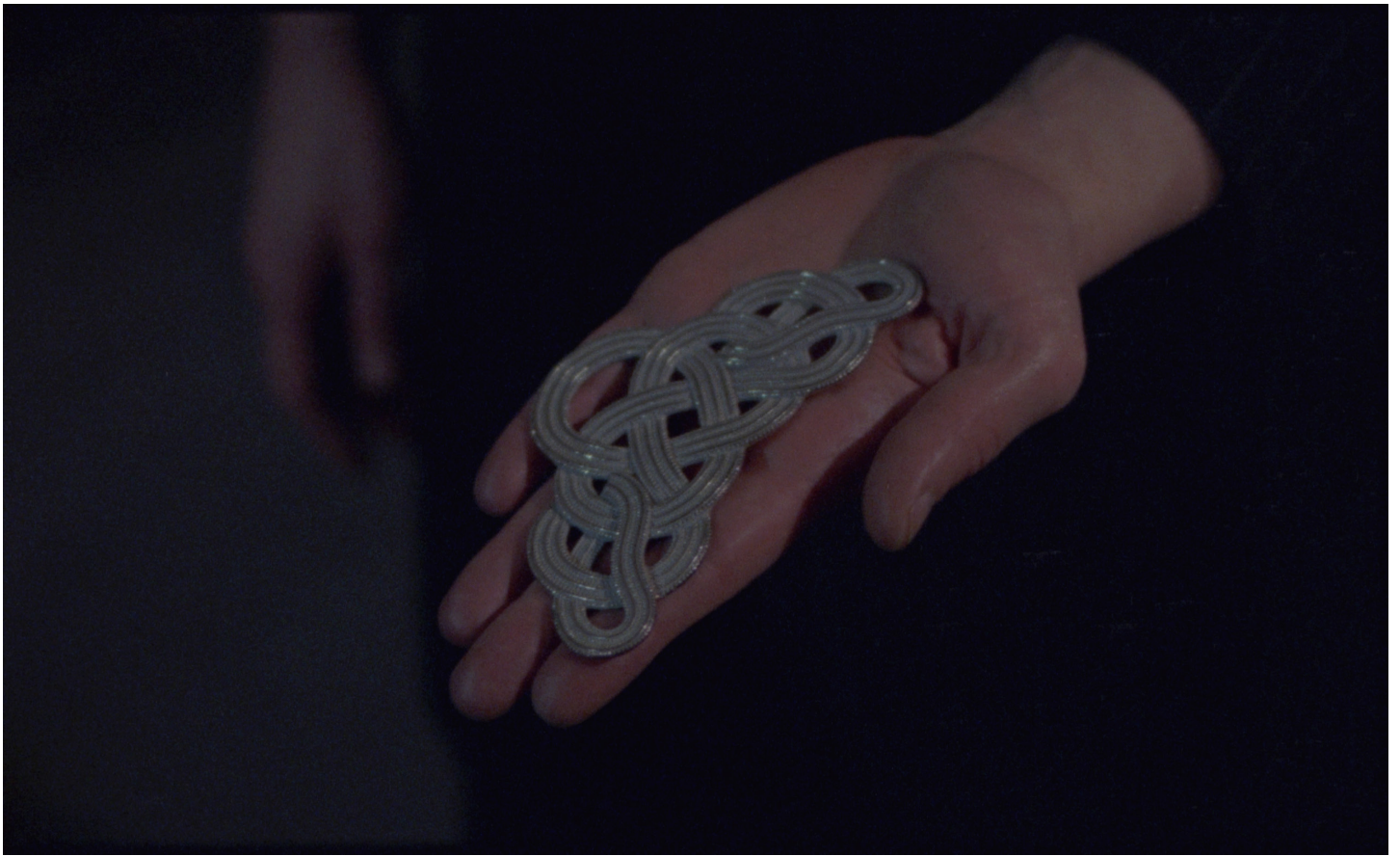
JESSICA WARBOYS

In her film *ANTIGONE MÊT*, Jessica Warboys turns Antigone into a reflection of the statue of Joan of Arc in Waldighoffen, which villagers immersed in the river to protect from enemy threats. Through these figures from Greek tragedy and medieval history, the artist unearths sacrificial narratives of rebellion, emancipation and disobedience to the yoke of male domination. The result is a sculpture formed from the accumulation of all the costumes worn in the film, while chain mail loops become motifs for the *River Paintings*, a series of three works created at the Ligsdorf resurgence, near the source. The artist turns the landscape into an open-air studio, where pigments and wax take shape on the canvas.

Born in the United Kingdom in 1977, Jessica Warboys lives and works between Berlin and Bergen (Norway). She is represented by Gaudel de Stampa Gallery (Paris). The artist presented *ANTIGONE MÊT*, a solo show at Hordaland Kunstsenter (Bergen) in 2024 and *This Tail Grows Among Ruins* at Chapelle des Petits-Augustins (Paris) in 2023.



View of the series *an e*, *a e*, *e* by Marie Raffn (2021). Steel and stained plaster. Variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist. Photography by Aurélien Mole.



Jessica Warboys, still from the film *STORY ARMOIR*, 2025. Courtesy of the artist.

The art center

@Rd@ Alsace is a contemporary art center dedicated to experimentation and creation. Through exhibitions, residencies, publications, and outreach programmes, @Rd@ Alsace supports artistic production by promoting the encounter between artists, publics and works of art.

Access and practical information

@Rd@ Alsace is open from Tuesday to Sunday, from 2 to 6 pm. Guided tours are organized every Saturday and Sunday at 3 pm by reservation. Free entrance.

@Rd@ Alsace, Centre rhénan d'art contemporain, is located in Altkirch, France, at 18 rue du Château. Contact @Rd@ Alsace at +33 (0)3 89 08 82 59 and info@cracalsace.com. Access the future, present and past of @Rd@ Alsace via www.cracalsace.com.

Partners

Layer of Mildness is organized in the context of "I'll. A collaboration with the river between CEAAC, La Kunsthalle and @Rd@ Alsace". This cooperative project is supported by Mieux produire, mieux diffuser, a program created by Ministère de la Culture—DRAC Grand Est and endorsed by Région Grand Est.

This exhibition receives funding from the Danish Arts Foundation.

@Rd@ Alsace is supported by Ville d'Altkirch, Collectivité européenne d'Alsace, Région Grand Est, DRAC Grand Est—Ministère de la Culture and Club d'entreprises partenaires. @Rd@ Alsace is a member of DCA, Plan d'Est and BLA!. @Rd@ Alsace is certified as a Contemporary Art Center of National Interest by the French Ministry of Culture.

The creation of the @Rd@ Alsace artist residency was supported by the European Union through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (LEADER program).