

Layer of Milduess

Begin at the source of the III, 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. Dhe'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 III 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 III River during the war. The water's memory overflows.

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

Caretto & √pagua

Caretto & Spagna explore the many faces of the river, from the III's source in Winkel to its confluence with the Rhine in Gambsheim, via the karat reaurgeace* in Ligsdorf and its symbiosis with the Rhine-Rhône canal in the town of IIIfurth. The artists observe the mutations of the wild III, the adolescent III, the canalized III, 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 III underground riverway resurfaces.
- ** Defined by the artists as the return—to the surface—of a river to its wild state.

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Deulgi 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 III. 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.

Vernam Merchan Redrigues

The Bureau de Troc Polymériaue (B.T.P.) [Office of Polymeric Trade] collects technofossils along the III 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.

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Mariana Murcia

Mariana Murcia drew water from the source of the III 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.

Marie Raffu

Marie Raffn explores the history of the local textile industry, closely tied to the III 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.

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Versica Marbons

In her film antigone net, 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 Riker Paintinas, a series of three works created at the Ligsdorf resurgence, near the source. The artist turns the landscape into an openair studio, where pigments and wax take shape on the canvas.

This leporello is published on the occasion of Layer of Milduess, 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. The exhibition is open from June 20 to September 21, 2025, Tuesday to Sunday, from 2 to 6 pm. Guided tours are organized every Saturday and Sunday at 3 pm only by reservation. Free entrance.

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This leporello is designed by Charles Mazé & Coline Sunier. Texts are written by the curators and translated by Thomas Patier. The image is a fragment of the A8th-century "Map of the course of the Isle River, from its source to Mulhausen" from the Mulhouse Municipal Archives.

eRae alsace team includes Sandrine Desmoulin, Head of Administration; Maria Claudia Gamboa, Head of Mediation and Communication; Sarah Menu, Head of Education; Richard Neyroud, Head of Exhibitions; Elsa Vettier, Director; Zoë June Grant, Victor Rochette and Noémie Vidonne, artists; Mélina De Sousa Barros, Intern.

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eRae alsace, Centre rhénan d'art contemporain, is located in Altkirch, France, at 48 rue du Château. Contact eRae alsace at +33 (0)3 89 08 82 59. Access the future, present and past of eRae alsace via www.cracalsace.com.