

The Monkey and the Clay

Press Kit

30 May 2026 – 3 January 2027

Exposition
Entrée Libre
16 avenue Paul Firino
Martell, 16100 Cognac

Fondation
d'entreprise
Martell

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Foreword

How might we live today, and what paths can we carve toward a future that is more harmonious, balanced, and attuned to all forms of life, both human and more-than-human?

At the Fondation d'entreprise Martell, we are steadfast in our belief that artists possess a unique capacity to reframe the critical challenges of our era, summoning fresh perspectives through their work. Whether through documentary or fictional lenses, poetic enquiry or practical problem-solving, utopian visions or speculative futures, it has never felt more vital to share these voices. In doing so, we sharpen our modes of perception and rediscover the breadth of our own sensibility.

Driven by this spirit, the Fondation is delighted to present two new projects from June 2026.

How do we coexist and cultivate more virtuous, reciprocal relationships with other species in the absence of a shared language? Art, in its inherent sensory power, articulates a space where such possibilities become tangible.

Curated by Émilie Villez, the thematic exhibition *The Monkey and the Clay* brings together nine international artists to explore the concept of interspecies collaboration. Grounded in the fundamental interconnectivity upon which our collective existence depends, this selection of works – viewed through the lens of the fable – investigates new hypotheses of kinship at the intersection of creative practice, narrative, and technology.

For this exhibition, Atelier CRAFT has designed a bespoke, sensory scenography crafted from organic materials (tree bark) and local resources. This non-linear circuit invites visitors to navigate their own path of discovery, sheltered beneath 'the skin of trees'. Evoking a forest that plays host to the artworks, the unbridled power of the living world extends even into the exhibition's visual identity. Inspired by Bjørn Karmann's typographic research into the healing of incised bark*, the graphic system 'Designed by a Tree' – conceived by Théo Génin – offers a fluid aesthetic based on the random hybridisation of forms generated by the tree and reinterpreted through AI.

Furthermore, we are delighted to inaugurate *The Planctonarium*. A dedicated space for public engagement and outreach that encourages visitors to extend their visit: to read, participate in creative workshops, experiment, or simply contemplate and unwind. This immersive installation, designed by Studio BehaghelFoiny, also invites us to reflect on interdependence through young designer Antoine Behaghel's research into 'chlorophyllian artifices'. Beneath hanging lights that echo the principles of bioluminescence, this exhibition delves into the microscopic world of phytoplankton blooms through a series of ornamental pieces crafted using traditional techniques, including porcelain, tapestry, paper, and 3D printing..



Robert Zhao Renhui - *A brahminy kite's feather I found on the river*, 2025

Throughout the exhibition's seven-month run, the Fondation will continue its rich cultural programming for all ages in Cognac, serving our local community while also reaching further afield through major national events such as France Design Week, of which we are a partner.

This spirit of collaborative enquiry permeates every aspect of the Fondation's work, reaching far beyond curatorial discourse. Our research and production residency grant programme will re-launch next spring with a new call for applications, welcoming a new cohort of fellows who will forge deep connections with the Charente region. Indeed, the local landscape has directly inspired two of the exhibiting artists: Jessica Warboys' *River Paintings* were created within the currents of the Charente River, while Trevor Yeung has produced a new iteration of the work he first presented at the 2024 Lahore Biennale, using tiles manufactured in Roumazières-Loubert.

Finally, the Almanach Lab continues its exploration of regional resources and will now be accessible to visitors by appointment beyond our usual residency showcases.

We hope these new developments offer ample opportunity to deepen your discovery of the Fondation and to enjoy its many facets over the coming months.

**Anne-Claire Duprat,
Director**

The Monkey and the Clay

'We must help one another; it is the law of nature.'
Jean de La Fontaine, *The Donkey and the Dog*

A collaboration of the living: this exhibition brings together nine international contemporary artists who explore interspecies relations to propose new frameworks of co-production.

In order to better coexist within a 'more-than-human' world, human beings are learning to redefine their place within the ecosystem. Drawing on both theoretical debates and practical experimentation, contemporary artists increasingly position themselves not as conquerors of nature, but as collaborators.

Reflecting its title which embodies an interaction between the animal and the mineral, *The Monkey and the Clay*, which is permeated by the concept of interspecies interdependence, following ecological currents of thought that decentre the human. Challenging the notion of human exceptionalism and dominance over non-human species, the term 'more-than-human' is used across the humanities and social sciences to mark a rupture with hierarchical understandings of life.

This entanglement - animal, vegetable, mineral, atmospheric - describes a complex web of relations where no entity exists in isolation, and where every action ripples through a multitude of interconnected beings. The evolution of the word 'ecology' itself reveals this shift: while scientists originally defined the term as the study of interactions between living organisms and their environment, it gradually morphed into a commitment to the conservation of territories and species, before becoming a political necessity in the 1970s.

1 .The term first appeared in David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (1996), Ed. La Découverte, 2013

Influenced by the avant-garde positions of Land Art, environmental activism, and non-Western holistic thought, contemporary artists are pursuing more horizontal relationships, even envisioning co-creation with the non-human. Yet these collaborative bonds are complex, often unpredictable, and occasionally verge on instrumentalisation. How can we be certain of their reciprocity?

The exhibition explores these questions through artistic practices that reframe, and even bring a sense of play to, our modes of production and coexistence.

The works on display defy traditional representations of nature; rather than offering solutions, they seek to foster alternative ways of thinking. To mend fractured links, these artists engage in a process of immersion and listening, raising questions of proximity and kinship (Tania Candiani, Shimabuku) and the role of chance within the co-creative process (AKI INOMATA, Jessica Warboys, Trevor Yeung). Striving to counter fatalism, the exhibition highlights practices that cultivate a political and ecological imagination: some offer counter-narratives (Robert Zhao Renhui, Lin May Saeed), while others construct speculative fictions through technological tools (Agnieszka Polska, Bagus Pandega).

By combining natural, human, and technological production, these works serve as hybrid models within a broader conversation regarding the necessity of collective transformation, invoking concepts ranging from ecological compensation to eco-futurism.

Emilie Villez
Guest curator

Participating artists

Tania Candiani (Mexico), AKI INOMATA (Japan), Bagus Pandega (Indonesia), Agnieszka Polska (Poland), Lin May Saeed (Iraq-Germany), Shimabuku (Japan), Jessica Warboys (United Kingdom), Trevor Yeung (Hong Kong), Robert Zhao Renhui (Singapore).

Curation

Emilie Villez

Thematic directions

Transformation and chance within co-creation



AKI INOMATA, *Passing her a piece of cloth*, 2022.
Courtesy of the artist and of Maho Kubota Gallery.

AKI INOMATA'S practice directly engages with the concept of 'collaboration' with the non-human world. For several years, she has developed works in co-creation with hermit crabs, beavers, and pearl oysters. For the video installation *Passing her a piece of cloth* (2022), the artist worked with a traditional shibori-dyeing studio in Arimatsu, Japan, to produce a hybrid work. This piece combines the heritage of tie-dyeing with the instinctive techniques used by *Psychidae larvae* (commonly known as 'bagworms') to construct their cocoons. Drawn to the formal similarity between the transformative chrysalis and the knotted fabric - which reveals unique patterns and colours once unfurled - the artist commissioned master drapers to produce fragments of dyed cloth, which she then presented to the larvae as raw material for their protective cocoons.



Jessica Warboys, *River Painting*, Fossbekken, 2021.

Jessica Warboys' practice operates on the threshold between painting, printmaking, performance, and the moving image. Her methodology draws from landscapes and mythical histories while remaining firmly anchored in the present, integrating the immediacy of gesture and site into the very surfaces of her work. Warboys seeks to articulate a pictorial language that is both malleable and permeable, maintaining a continuous dialogue with the elements. She consigns her canvases to the sea or the river, allowing the innate intelligence of the natural world to animate their surfaces. Produced specifically for this exhibition, the artist's new *River Painting* was created in situ on the banks of the Charente.



Trevor Yeung deploys botanical ecology, horticulture, and aquatic systems as metaphorical frameworks to examine the logics of control, interdependence, and vulnerability that shape our social and emotional structures. Created for this exhibition, the installation *Earth to Earth (Terres-de-Haute-Charente)* (2026) consists of two identical sets of unfired clay objects. Retaining its malleability, the clay acts as a sensitive barometer recording fluctuations in humidity and atmospheric pressure. With one set housed within the gallery and the other exposed to the elements outdoors, their divergent evolution serves as a real-time observation of environmental entropy and the inevitable return of all matter to the earth.

Modes of address: creation and awareness



Shimabuku, *The Snow Monkeys of Texas : Do snow monkeys remember snow mountains ?*, 2016. Collection Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris. Courtesy of the artist.

Shimabuku's work is underpinned by a deep empathy for his environment, often centring on encounters with people and animal species. Through performative actions, he reveals the absurdity of human behaviour with a blend of humour and tenderness.

The Snow Monkeys of Texas: Do snow monkeys remember snow mountains? (2016) is an iconic work of the Japanese artist documenting the acclimatisation of Kyoto's 'snow monkeys' to an animal sanctuary in the Texan desert. Visiting them in 2016, Shimabuku conducted an experiment to see if these displaced creatures - now 'Americanised', roaming a desert landscape and eating cactus flowers - retained any memory of snow. He introduced a mountain of crushed ice into their habitat; driven by curiosity, the monkeys approach, touch, and taste the ice, suggesting a poignant reminiscence of a vanished past. Through this simple gesture, the artist explores memory and the adaptability of living species, while highlighting the shared traits between primates and humans.



Tania Candiani, *Coyote, For the Animals*,
Photo : Pedro Cañas et Héctor Acosta.

Tania Candiani operates at the intersection of language, sound, and technology, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations between art, literature, music, and science. The artist perceives her practice as an act of translation; a central tenet is the juxtaposition of ancestral craft with contemporary systems, exploring their frictions and transformative potential. Candiani has a long-standing interest in acoustic ecology: the study of the relationship between humans and their environment mediated through sound. The project *For the Animals* (2020) is a multi-stage body of work for which the artist recorded atmospheric data using scientific instruments at Hole-in-the-Rock, Arizona. The gathered data - relating to structure, density, and spatial conditions - is translated into sound, transforming the geological formation into a resonant, musical map. Among the works presented, the coati, peccary, wolf, bobcat, fox, and coyote are portrayed in a series of drawings, embodying species whose migratory paths are disrupted by the same mechanisms of control that restrict human movement. The artist returned to the desert to perform a concert for these animals, offering a moment of sonic communion recorded in the accompanying video.

Speculative fictions



Bagus Pandega, *Hyperpnea Green*, 2024, Photography by Daniel Pérez. Courtesy of the Swiss Institute.

Bagus Pandega's work offers new perspectives on the relationship between technology and the environment, addressing the extraction of natural resources in Indonesia. Adopting the ethos of a 'hacker', Pandega constructs modular systems from everyday electronics, natural materials such as rare plants and minerals, and musical instruments. These reactive installations are programmed to trigger mechanical and chemical reactions that generate sound or movement. The installation *Hyperpnea Green* (2024) is a machine that produces and releases oxygen in response to the carbon dioxide exhaled by visitors. It underscores our absolute dependence on a natural world, the resources of which we are simultaneously exhausting.



In her practice, **Agnieszka Polska** employs cinematic narrative and affective technologies to explore the perpetually negotiated relationship between humans and technology, seeking new formats that respond to the ever-evolving demands of information-driven societies. A vital aspect of her current practice involves constructing a prehistory of an emergent global cybernetic consciousness. The animated film *The Book of Flowers* (2023), dedicated to gendered reproductive labour, depicts a patently fictional past. The work unfolds as a speculative fable exploring the millennia-old symbiotic relationship between humans and flowering plants. Polska thus conjures a wondrous and unsettling flora, immersing the viewer in a 'paracosm' - an intricate imaginary universe typically originating in childhood. Leveraging artificial intelligence tools informed by archival footage from the 1940s and 50s, the film generates surreal blooms often imbued with animalistic or mechanical textures.



Agnieszka Polska, *The Book of Flowers*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist.

Counter-narratives



Alfil Relief/Elephant Relief (V04), 2021. Photo: Wolfgang Günzel.
Courtesy: Lin May Saeed Estate; Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles;
Jacky Strenz, Frankfurt/Main © Lin May Saeed Estate.

The work of **Lin May Saeed** bears witness to her long-standing commitment to the animal rights movement, offering a radical reformulation of the relationship between humans and animals. Adopting the narrative device of the fable, her work proposes acts of kindness that are seemingly ordinary yet profoundly transformative. Her sculptures, reliefs, grilles, and installations address themes of animal exploitation and liberation, envisaging a utopia of peaceful coexistence between species.

Saeed's works are primarily hewn from so-called 'poor' materials, such as polystyrene, cardboard, and steel. Her iconography draws upon Egyptian statuary, Greco-Roman sculpture, and the displays of natural history museums. She has reclaimed polystyrene, utilising it extensively to rehabilitate the material aesthetically - both despite and because of its inherent environmental toxicity. Her practice finds profound resonance within the context of the Anthropocene, which re-evaluates the relationship between the so-called natural world and humanity. Nevertheless, Saeed's works eschew the doctrinal or the moralising, remaining fundamentally narrative and suffused with a subtle sense of humour.



Robert Zhao Renhui, *A frigatebird drinking in an abandoned pool on Christmas Island*, 2018.

Robert Zhao Renhui critically examines the preconceived ideas of what he calls the 'zoological gaze' - the frameworks through which humans perceive animals and nature. This perspective rejects the dualistic separation of human and non-human spheres, challenging the accepted parameters of objectivity and the modes of scientific classification. Zhao appropriates the conventions of documentary photography and museum displays to compose narratives that reflect his long-term research projects, based on field observations and collaborations with scientists. His new installation takes the form of a visual essay, in which he revisits several projects investigating ecological disturbances and imbalances, the porous boundaries between human settlements and the occupation of land by wildlife, and the behavioural reorganisation that occurs within modified landscapes.

Biographies

Artists

Tania Candiani

Born in 1974, Tania Candiani lives and works in Mexico City.

Her practice expands the idea of translation across visual, sonic, textual, and symbolic languages, with a sustained focus on sound and the politics of listening as tools for re-attuning human and more-than-human perception to the histories, ecologies, and technologies of communication.

Grounded in community-based, embodied processes, her work mobilizes collective and ritual experience while engaging histories of making and fabrication—bringing together craft traditions, oral knowledge, and interdisciplinary collaborations across art, literature, music, architecture and science. Through installations, performances, and research-driven projects that often take the form of interlaced, assembled, and sonified systems, she juxtaposes ancestral techniques with contemporary technologies to challenge linear narratives of progress and to surface overlooked epistemologies.

Candiani represented Mexico at the 56th Venice Biennale and has recently realized commissioned projects for major international biennials, including the 15th Shanghai Biennale and Helsinki Biennial (both 2025), and PAAD/Public Art Abu Dhabi Biennial (2024).

Her work is held in collections such as Tate, SFMOMA, LACMA, Pérez Art Museum Miami, and MUAC, and she has received fellowships including Guggenheim, Smithsonian Artist Research, and Arts at CERN.

AKI INOMATA

Born in 1983 in Tokyo, Japan; AKI INOMATA lives and works in Tokyo.

Graduated with an M.F.A. from Tokyo University of the Arts, Department of Inter-Media Art, 2008, her works focus on how the act of “making” is not exclusive to mankind. She develops the process of collaboration between living and non-human creatures into artworks.

Recent exhibitions include “Bangkok Art Biennale 2024” (BACC, 2024), “Aichi Triennale 2022” (House of Oka, 2022), “Broken Nature” (MoMA, 2020), “The XXII Triennale di Milano” (Triennale Design Museum, 2019), “Thailand Biennale Krabi 2018” (Krabi city, 2018), “AKI INOMATA, Why Not Hand Over ‘Shelter’ to Hermit Crabs?” (Musée d’arts de Nantes, 2018).

Her works are in the collections of MoMA, AGSA (the Art Gallery of South Australia), Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, and the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art etc.

Bagus Pandega

Born in 1985 in Jakarta, Bagus Pandega lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia where he received his Bachelor of Arts, majoring in sculpture and his Master of Fine Arts from the Faculty of Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology in 2008 and 2015 respectively.

Recognised for an approach that synthesises sculpture, light, and technology, Pandega assembles diverse 'modules' that challenge the pre-established relationships between the object and the observer. His works frequently come to life through the interplay of motion, sound, and light, transforming static materials into vital, dynamic systems.

Pandega's selected solo exhibitions include *Daya Benda* at Swiss Institute, New York, US (2025); *Sumber Alam* at Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2025); *O* at ROH, Jakarta, Indonesia (2024); *A Pervasive Rhythm* at Yamamoto Gendai, Tokyo, Japan (2018).

His latest group exhibitions include *Poets of Physics at Museum of Contemporary Art and Design*, Manila, Philippines (2026); *Nafasan Bumi* at Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2026).

Pandega frequently collaborates with Kei Imazu, previous exhibitions including *Alien Shores*, White Cube Bermondsey, London, UK (2025); Bangkok Art Biennale: *Nurture Gaia* at Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (2024); *WAGIWAGI* at documenta fifteen, Hübner areal, Kassel, Germany (2022); and *Declaring Distance: Bandung — Leiden* at Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia (2022).

Agnieszka Polska

Born in 1985 in Lublin, Poland, Agnieszka Polska is a visual artist and film director who lives and works in Berlin.

She uses computer-generated media to reflect on individuals and their social responsibility in the context of environments driven by the flow of information. She renders the ethical, political and societal challenges of our time into immersive, meditative films and installations, using cinematic storytelling and affective technologies to address the perpetual negotiation between humans and technology. Often constructed from affective sound and visual stimuli, Polska's works examine processes of influence and legitimation in the fields of language, consciousness and history.

She presented her works in international venues, including the New Museum and the MoMA in New York, Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Tate Modern in London, and Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC. Her solo exhibitions were organised by Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Nottingham Contemporary, Salzburger Kunstverein, among others. She also took part in the 57th Venice Biennale, 11th Gwangju Biennale, 19th and 24th Biennale of Sydney, 14th Shanghai Biennale, and 13th Istanbul Biennial. In 2018, she was awarded German Preis der Nationalgalerie.

Lin May Saeed

(German-Iraqi, 1973 – 2023)

Lin May Saeed was born in 1973 in Würzburg, Germany. She grew up in Wiesbaden within a multicultural family, with a German background on her mother's side and an Iraqi background on her father's side.

She studied sculpture at the Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1995 to 2001. It was there that she became interested in animal rights and took part in corresponding actions (e.g. protests against the fur trade). She has lived vegan ever since. Lin May Saeed has been dealing for almost two decades with the relationship between humans and animals, the destruction of the habitat of the animal world by humans, beginning with the settling down in the Neolithic period.

Her sculptures, reliefs, gates and installations with silhouette deal with the exploitation of animals, their liberation, the utopia of a peaceful coexistence between animals and humans, and the self-seeking meanness of the latter.

Shimabuku

Born in 1969 in Kobe, Japan, Shimabuku currently lives in Naha, Okinawa and works around the world.

Since the early 1990s, he has traveled to many places, both in Japan and abroad, and his site-specific works are related to the places and the lives and cultures of the people living there. He produces performances, films, sculptures and installation works related to new forms of communication. His work sometimes extends to the relationship between creatures and humans. His style, which is full of poetic sentiment and humour, provokes us in a metaphorical way, and has been acquiring international acclaim.

Shimabuku has participated in many major international exhibitions, including the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), 14th Lyon Biennale (2017), 12th Havana Biennale (2015), 9th Taipei Biennale (2014), 11th Sharjah Biennial (2013), the 27th São Paulo Biennial (2006), the Liverpool Biennial (2006) and the 11th Biennial of Sydney (1998).

Major recent solo exhibitions include Centro Botín, Santander, Spain (2024); Museion: Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Bolzano, Italy (2023); Wiels Centre for Contemporary Art, Brussels, Belgium (2022); National New Museum of Monaco, Monaco (2021); Credac Contemporary Art Centre of Ivry, France (2018), Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (2014) and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, U.K. (2013).

Jessica Warboys

Born in 1977, Jessica Warboys works in Suffolk (UK) and on the island of Radøy (NO).

Graduated with a Master of Fine Art in Sculpture from the Slade School of Fine Art in London, her practice exists in the space between ritual, painting, performance and film. Working with pigments, beeswax, and costume, Warboys' materials and methods are shaped by bodies of water, landscape, histories and myth, whilst pertaining to the present. The immediacy of gesture and the place of making are inscribed into the surfaces of her work, exploring themes of nature, identity and the poetic.

Recent group exhibitions include *Layers of Wildness*, Centre Rhéan d'Art Contemporain, Altkirch, France (2025); *Dialogues with Turner: Evoking the Sublime*, Museum of Art Pudong, Shanghai, China (2024); and the solo exhibition *ANTIGONES NET*, Kunstnersenter Bergen, Norway (2024).

Trevor Yeung

Born in 1988 in Guangdong Province in China, Trevor Yeung graduated from the Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2010. Yeung currently lives and works in Hong Kong.

In his work, Trevor Yeung uses botanic ecology, horticulture, aquarium systems and installations as metaphors that reference the emancipation of everyday aspirations towards human relationships. Yeung draws inspiration from intimate and personal experiences, culminating in works that range from image-based works to large-scale installations. Obsessed with structures, he creates different scales of systems which allow him to exert control upon living beings, including plants, animals, as well as spectators.

In 2024, he represented Hong Kong at the Venice Biennale. He recently presented solo exhibitions at M+ in Hong Kong and at the Kestner Gesellschaft in Hanover. In 2026, for his first museum exhibition in Europe, Trevor Yeung has been invited to take over the nave of the CAPC Bordeaux to unfold his magical and mysterious universe

His artwork is held in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Stiftung Skulpturenpark Köln, Cologne; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris and San Francisco and FRAC Alsace.

Robert Zhao Renhui

Born in 1983, Robert Zhao Renhui is a Singapore-based artist whose practice examines the shifting relationships between humans and non-human species across altered landscapes.

Working primarily with photography, video, and long-term ecological observation, he investigates how ecosystems absorb disturbance and reorganise around human infrastructure, abandonment, and classification. His projects often unfold over several years and across multiple sites, tracing patterns of adaptation rather than singular events. Recent bodies of work have focused on secondary forests in Singapore, the red crab migration on Christmas Island, deer populations in the United Kingdom and Japan, and sloth bears in Hampi, India.

In 2024, he represented Singapore at the Venice Biennale with *Seeing Forest*, a project centred on long-term observation of urban forest ecologies. His practice continues to explore how ecological systems persist, mutate, and stabilise within landscapes shaped by extraction, urbanisation, and neglect.

The Artistic Team

Emilie Villez – Curator

Emilie Villez is a curator based in Paris. Her projects explore the entanglement of historical narratives with current socio-political issues. For over fifteen years, she has been supporting and mediating decolonial practices, by working with practitioners of different generations and geographies. She has recently curated projects about the traces of war in landscapes and memory, and is developing research around interspecies relations as an entry point into environmental issues in contemporary art.

In 2026, she curates an exhibition at Fondation Martell in Cognac (France), bringing together international artists reflecting on the interdependence of species, and providing hybrid models of production, to contribute to a broader conversation around ecological compensation and eco-futurism. In addition, she also opened two exhibitions at Frac Ile-de-France (Paris) in 2026 : *Le Syndrome de Bonnard*, a group exhibition in two venues curated with Le Bureau/, and a solo exhibition of artist Chloé Quenum.

Emilie Villez is an advisor to the KADIST collection, after directing the Paris space from 2013 to 2023, where she developed a local program and international institutional collaborations. In particular, she presented the first exhibitions in France of Zhou Tao, Shooshie Sulaiman, Haig Aivazian, Aslı Çavuşoğlu and Xaviera Simmons.

Emilie Villez has curated exhibitions at Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius (Lithuania), KADIST Paris, Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Beaux-arts de Paris, V-A-C Foundation and Museum of Modern Art Moscow, Clark House Initiative, Bombay (India).

Atelier Craft - Scenography

Based in a repurposed industrial hall in Saint-Ouen, Atelier CRAFT maintains a hybrid practice as both designers and makers. The studio is dedicated to creating sustainable visions in design and architecture by challenging our perceptions of materials, gestures, and production processes.

By integrating design offices with construction workshops, the studio ensures comprehensive management of each project, with a clear objective: breaking down barriers between disciplines. Every project becomes an opportunity to craft a shared narrative and pioneer innovative collective approaches.

Committed to experimenting with circular economies, the studio places a strong emphasis on the materials used and their potential for reuse.

Théo David Gehin – Graphic Design

Théo David Gehin, an independent graphic designer based in Paris, navigates the multidisciplinary realm of graphic design, seamlessly blending visual identity creation, publishing, imagery, and signage.

Regularly collaborating with cultural institutions, artists, and scenographers, Gehin strives to transcend traditional design by embedding it into the physical world. Driven by the belief that production processes themselves generate meaning, he pushes the boundaries of printing techniques, repurposes materials, and meticulously attends to shaping methods, infusing his work with genuine materiality.

From overarching artistic direction to the design of editorial works, each project breaks free from the conventional confines of graphic design. Gehin is dedicated to imbuing the visual narratives he crafts with a tangible, artisanal, and sensitive dimension.

The Fondation d'entreprise Martell would like to thank

Galleries and institutional lenders

Estate of Lin May Saeed & Jacky Strenz Gallery
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The Planktonarium

A new space for engagement by BehaghelFoiny



Vase, *Artifices Chlorophylliens* © Antoine Behaghel.

As an extension of the exhibition *The Monkey and the Clay* - dedicated to interspecies relations - the Fondation has invited Studio BehaghelFoiny to conceive a hybrid space: *The Planktonarium*.

Designed as a dedicated hub for public engagement and situated at the end of the exhibition circuit, this immersive environment invites visitors to embrace a slower pace and extend their visit. Comfortably appointed, the space fosters a spirit of reading and relaxation, while simultaneously providing a dedicated setting for participation in artistic workshops.

This multifaceted space showcases the work of emerging designer Antoine Behaghel and his ongoing research into 'Chlorophyllian Artifices': a dive into the microscopic world of phytoplankton blooms. This vernal biological phenomenon is characterised by the sudden proliferation of phytoplankton in the ocean, regenerating the atmosphere we breathe through the photosynthesis performed by these microorganisms. Within this installation, the silhouettes of phytoplankton are reinterpreted and magnified, embodied as objects levitating within a chromatic atmosphere; the work submerges us in the oceanic 'water column', a space where above and below, the intimate and the distant, begin to dissolve.

The exhibition presents a series of ornamental pieces crafted by the designer using a wide array of artisanal techniques, including porcelain, tapestry, paper, and 3D printing. Beneath these suspended, luminous forms, the 'Microscopists' Table' invites visitors to observe phytoplankton through a microscope and take part in hands-on artistic workshops.

Antoine Behaghel - recipient of the 2024 COAL Student Prize for Art and Environment - will undertake a production residency at the Fondation in the autumn of 2026. Continuing his research in collaboration with the Marais d'Yves nature reserve (Charente-Maritime), he will develop a new series of glass works within the Fondation's workshops. These pieces will be integrated into the exhibition upon their completion. Finally, he will lead a signature artistic workshop, 'Ordinaire Extra!', toward the end of the year.

Biography

Born in 1998 in Saint-Herblain (France), Antoine Behaghel graduated in 2024 from the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs. In his design practice, he explores the narrative, performative, and speculative potential of objects. By combining digital media with traditional craft techniques, he creates narrative worlds that weave links between the real and the virtual.

In 2020, he founded his own studio, BehaghelFoiny, in collaboration with Alexis Foiny. Together, they develop a transdisciplinary design practice ranging from high-end furniture making to spatial design. The duo collaborates with several cultural institutions, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris (FR).



Performance, *Artifices Chlorophylliens* © Antoine Behaghel.

**The Fondation d'entreprise Martell
would like to thank its partners**

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Beyond the Exhibition

The Fondation presents a diverse cultural programme driven by a core mission: to make contemporary creation and urgent societal themes accessible to the widest possible audience. Designed to foster exchange, discovery, and first-hand familiarity with the creative process in collaboration with the artists themselves, our programming offers a rich spectrum of events tailored to a broad range of visitors through varied formats.

Talks and Screenings

Throughout the year, the Fondation hosts a series of events that echo the themes of its exhibitions. Lectures, panel discussions, and screenings offer opportunities to delve deeper into the works on display, bringing together the perspectives of artists, researchers, and industry professionals.

ORDINAIRE EXTRA ! For young audiences

Aligned with the academic calendar, this playful and creative programme is an annual staple of the Fondation. It offers families the opportunity to extend their visit and to immerse themselves in new artistic practices and savoir-faire under the guidance of specialists.

Guided Tours

The Fondation offers several guided tour formats, available by reservation. Our engagement team is on hand to answer questions and facilitate dialogue around the works. A bilingual visitor guide for both adults and children is also available.

Particular attention has been paid to accessibility for visitors with disabilities; new adapted formats have been developed in collaboration with local medico-social organisations. The Fondation is accredited with the French 'Tourisme & Handicap' label, recognising its commitment to accessibility.

School and Group Visits

Every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the Fondation offers tours and workshops for teachers, partners, and social outreach coordinators. By encouraging artistic discovery and exchange between participants and our engagement team, we offer several approaches to meet specific educational needs. Tours can be tailored upon request. While pupils and students are invited to explore the exhibitions through guided walkthroughs, primary and secondary schools can also benefit from our integrated visit-workshops.

Off-site Initiatives

The Fondation organises 'hors les murs' events to promote its initiatives both in France and internationally, particularly during major events in the art and design calendar.

Join us throughout the year for residency showcases and introductory workshops.

Residency Showcases

These showcases facilitate direct encounters with the artists, designers, and researchers hosted in residence. These sessions offer a didactic window into their creative processes and work-in-progress.

Introductory Workshops

The Fondation occasionally opens the doors of its glass, textile, ceramic, and wood studios for discovery sessions. Led by local artisans, these workshops offer an apprenticeship in both ancestral savoir-faire and innovative contemporary techniques.

The Shop

The Fondation shop offers a curated selection of books and objects reflecting the year's exhibitions and residencies. It exclusively features unique pieces and limited editions created by designers and collectives close to the Fondation. This unique, ethical selection is designed to showcase functional pieces produced through short supply chains, highlighting both local and international creators.

Full programme available at:
Fondationdentreprisemartell.com

About the Foundation

Created in 2017, the Fondation d'entreprise Martell, located in the heart of Cognac, is a unique venue dedicated to contemporary creation and innovation. It empowers designers, artists, and researchers engaged in reflecting on the major issues of our time. Through its residencies, workshops, exhibitions, and cultural programs, the Foundation fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and encourages experimentation. Grounded in Cognac's rich ancestral heritage, it aims at connecting local roots with a global perspective, creating ripples of change that extend far beyond the region.

Open to everyone, the Foundation invites visitors to discover original works, participate in workshops, and explore a space where creativity and dialogue shape the future.

Through its commitment to free admission and local outreach, the Fondation seeks to serve as a vital cultural anchor, dedicated to invigorating the regional landscape.

Anne-Claire Duprat **Director**

Anne-Claire Duprat is an art historian and specialist in cultural policy, with twenty years of experience in the field of contemporary art. Her career has seen her hold positions at institutions including the Palais de Tokyo, Jeu de Paume, and Frac Île-de-France, as well as within the cultural services of the French Embassy in the United States. She possesses extensive expertise in cultural policy and diplomacy, with a particular focus on international cooperation and professional networking. Since assuming the directorship of the Fondation d'entreprise Martell in April 2022, she has spearheaded a new strategic direction for the institution, oriented towards the most pressing challenges of our time.

Practical information

Fondation d'entreprise Martell

16 avenue Paul Firino Martell
16100 Cognac, France

Press Trip May 28, 2026

Opening Event May 29, 2026

Exhibition Dates May 30, 2026 - January 3, 2027

Opening Hours Wednesday to Sunday, 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm

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#interspecies #resources #territory
#TheMonkeyandtheClay #Planctonarium

Instagram : @fondationmartell

Linkedin : Fondation d'entreprise Martell

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