

CAC Brétigny

Off-site season
2025—2026

17.01—14.03.2026

Press release
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Contemporary Art Center of
National Interest
Cœur d'Essonne
Agglomération
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Exhibition "Lettres du
quotidien—Extraits, débuts,
jeux, traces"

Curator: Marion Vasseur Raluy

By Malak El Zanaty Varichon
and Mona Varichon

Espace de la Croix-Louis,
Brétigny-sur-Orge

Press contact

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Malak El Zanaty Varichon, "La baignade, mer jaune", 2017.

"Greffe d'Ouvert"

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The exhibition "Lettres du quotidien - Extraits, débuts, jeux, traces" offers visitors the opportunity to discover the work of artists Malak El Zanaty Varichon and her daughter Mona Varichon. Their practices are nourished by conversations and shared experiences of family and everyday life. The exhibition brings together a large body of work created by the two artists at different stages of their lives, between 1996 and 2025. Painted post-cards and letters, collages composed of bits of children's drawings, photographs of their living and working spaces, vlogs of everyday life and current events... creating is a way of discovering the world while shaping it, without hierarchy between child and adult and without any expectation of recognition.

An art workshop leader since the early 1990s, Malak has worked mostly at the Atelier des Enfants at the Centre Pompidou, as well as in schools and healthcare institutions in and around Paris. Both in her workshops and with her own children, cultural mediation and sharing creativity on a daily basis feed her own relationship with art and her way of being an artist. Malak talks about "accompanying the desire to make, and making together" in an approach that is playful and joyful. For more than forty years, in parallel with her work and family life, she has been creating collages, photographs, paintings and assemblages. For her part, Mona has been working for several years to gain recognition for her mother's work in the contemporary art world. Through studio visits, artists, gallery owners and exhibition curators close to Mona began discovering Malak's art folders filled with years of work. This led to invitations to exhibit from artists such as Louise Sartor, Asha Schechter, Cory Scozzari and Ethan Assouline, who were enthusiastic about both her career path and her formal creations. With this exhibition at CAC Brétigny, Malak will present her work in a French public institution for the first time.

While she was studying art in America, Mona worked as an archivist for contemporary artists such as Laura Owens and Diana Thater. Working with them, she learnt the importance of documenting and archiving traces of both their practices and their epoch. She decided to apply this method to both her mother's work and her own production. When they were living far apart and in regular contact, Mona also began recording their telephone conversations, which would later become material for her first films. In parallel, her photographs document daily life, in which Malak plays a major role: at home, in the workplace, at the market. She also looks at cities and their language, particularly through her series of photos of advertisements.

Malak and Mona blur the boundaries ordinarily drawn between amateur and professional practice, between private and urban space, between the art world and their free interpretation of it. This singular and disparate ensemble produces a perpetual exchange between the two women and the world, enabling the connection of life with what already belongs to yesterday, or what will happen in the future. Emotion nestles itself into these works when they capture this shared time that is already slipping away from them.

Mona Varichon (born in Paris in 1989) is an artist and translator. She studied sociology at the Université Paris Descartes and fine arts at the San Francisco Art Institute and the ArtCenter in Los Angeles. She creates videos, photographs and performances inspired by current events, social media, art history and popular art forms, to simultaneously recount and infiltrate the present. Her work circulates on YouTube, in shops, letterboxes, interiors, magazines, cinemas and art spaces. Alongside her brother Tymour, she runs the framing workshop Au Cadre d'or in Paris, founded by their father Jacques-Henry Varichon in 1979. Her work was recently exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Mécènes du Sud in Montpellier, Flumentum in Berlin, the gallery Air de Paris in Romainville, Fondation Van Gogh in Arles, Capc in Bordeaux, the Villa Arson in Nice, Bel Ami, The Vanity Gallery and Kristina Kite in Los Angeles and Les Chichas de la Pensée in Pantin. Her films have been shown at the festival Écrans Documentaires in Vitry-sur-Seine, Festival Move at the Centre Pompidou, the Etna cinema in Montreuil and the Egyptian Theatre and REDCAT in Los Angeles. She has translated, into French, texts for exhibition catalogues on Pippa Garner, Betye Saar, Christina Ramberg and Cécile B. Evans, as well as the memoirs of the American artists George and Mike Kuchar. She was awarded the Ricard Prize in 2024.

Malak El Zanaty Varichon (born in 1952 in Giza, Egypt) lives and works in Paris. From 1990 to 2021, she led visual art workshops with the non-profit organisation Art-Éveil in nursery and primary schools in and around Paris, for adults, marginalised populations and people with disabilities and at the Atelier des Enfants at the Centre Georges Pompidou. During all the years she spent in this much-loved workplace, she took advantage of her back-and-forths between the Atelier, the Centre's artworks and its windows overlooking the city to share with visitors from all walks of life an openness to knowledge of the world and of oneself through art, looking, talking and making. Through the years and various detours, she has developed her artistic practice in the folds of her professional and family life. Her work has recently been exhibited at Treize in Paris, Air de Paris in Romainville, Cocotte in Treignac, the art fairs Paris Internationale and Systema in Marseille and the Vanity Gallery in Los Angeles.



Mona Varichon, "Making of Malak El Zanaty Varichon, 'Oiseaux', Août 2013, 75011 Paris", 2013.

Programme

"Lettres du quotidien - Extraits, débuts, jeux, traces"

Opening

Saturday, January 17th, 2–5 p.m.

Espace de la Croix-Louis, Brétigny-sur-Orge. Free admission.

Free shuttle

Paris/Brétigny-sur-Orge: meeting at 2 p.m.

104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris (Bibliothèque François Mitterrand metro station).

Reservation required: reservation@cacbretigny.com

With

"Manger des histoires"

Culinary residency

Fanny Spano

The opening reception will feature a buffet prepared by the artist Fanny Spano, offering a tasting of her culinary creations.



Malak El Zanaty Varichon, "De l'autre côté du ciel avec eux sous les étoiles" Cocotte, Treignac, 2021.



Mona Varichon, "And What Made Me Think Of You", 2016. "All the messages are emotional", Fondation Ricard, Paris, 2024.



Mona Varichon. Portrait by Naoki Sutter-Shudo, 2022.



Malak El Zanaty Varichon. Portrait by Laura Stauth, 2025.



Malak El Zanaty Varichon, "Readymade to butterfly", 2009. "De l'autre côté du ciel avec eux sous les étoiles", Cocotte, Treignac, 2021.

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The exhibition "Lettres du quotidien - Extraits, débuts, jeux, traces"
will be open from Tuesday to Saturday, 2–6 p.m. at l'Espace de la Croix-Louis
in Brétigny-sur-Orge.

Press contact
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The CAC Brétigny is a cultural establishment of Cœur d'Essonne Agglomération. Labeled as a Contemporary Art Center of National Interest, it benefits from the support of the Ministère de la Culture—DRAC Île-de-France, Région Île-de-France and Conseil départemental de l'Essonne. CAC Brétigny is a member of DCA, TRAM and BLA!.

