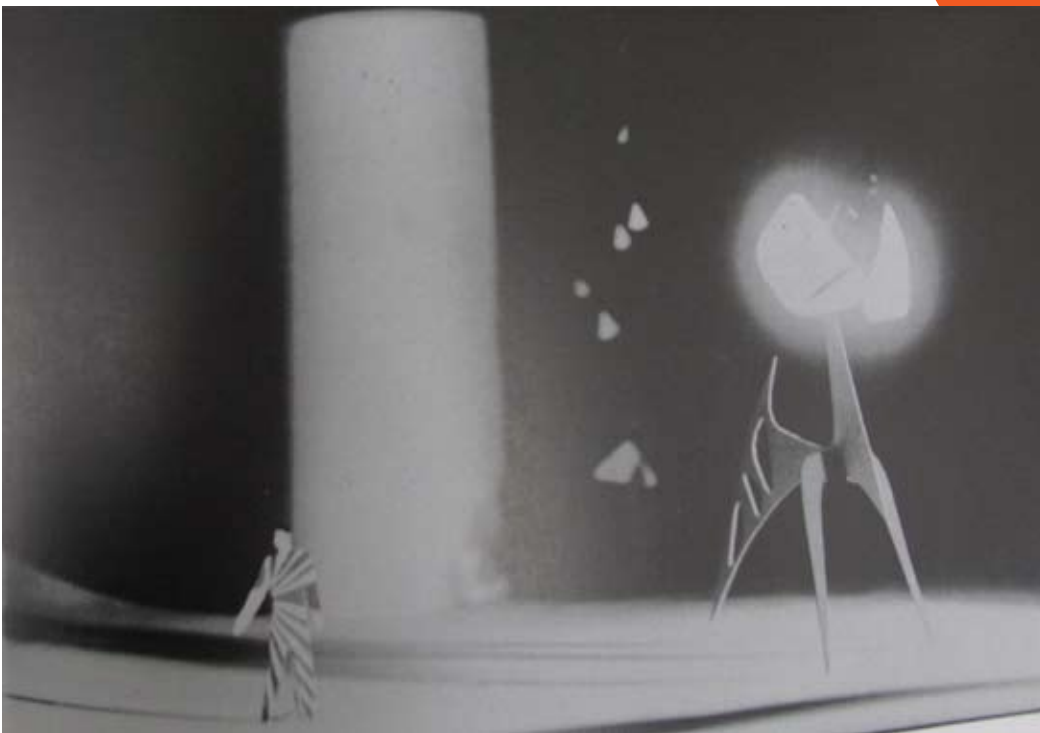


Jikken Kobo

実験工房

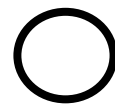
Kuniharu Akiyama
秋山邦晴
Hideko Fukushima
福島秀子
Kazuo Fukushima
福島 和夫
Noaji Imai
今井直次

Shozo Kitadai
北代省三
Tetsuro Komai
駒井哲郎
Kiyoji Otsuji
大辻清司
Keijiro Sato
佐藤慶次郎
Takahiro Sonoda
園田高弘
Hiroyoshi Suzuki
鈴木博義
Toru Takemitsu
武満 徹
Katsuhiro Yamaguchi
山口勝弘、
Hideo Yamazaki
山崎英夫、
Joji Yuasa
湯 浅讓二



Shozo Kitadai, Model for "The Joy of Life", 1951. Photograph: Shozo Kitadai. Courtesy Taro Okamoto Museum, Kawasaki.

From 9 September till 28 October 2011
Opening on Tuesday 8 September, 6pm to 9 pm



Curator: Mélanie Mermod

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Three group collaborations, in distant part of the world, set in motion changes of attitude whose influence still reverbrate. These were the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, the Independent Group in London, and the Experimental Workshop in Tokyo.

Reichardt, Jasia, *Experimental Workshop*, London, Annely Juda Fine Art, 2009

The Jikken Kobo (実験工房Experimental Workshop) was a collective based in Tokyo which included visual artists, composers, photographers, a poet and music critic, a lighting designer, a pianist and an engineer. Active from 1951 to 1958 in Tokyo, the Experimental Workshop created atypical forms of performing art such as ballets, recitals, and environmental art, proposing a transdisciplinary vision, focusing on the issue of collaborative work, experimentation with new exhibition formats and a “sensory” experience of art. Through the multiple collaborations of this collective, a picture of an extremely rich Japanese artistic scene of the 1950s has emerged, which nonetheless was mostly eclipsed following the « discovery » of Gutai bijutsu kyokai (Association of Concrete Art) by Michel Tapié during his trip to Japan in 1957. Up until the 1990s, the Jikken Kobo, as was the case with many experimental forms from the 1950s, attracted little attention from historians of Japanese art and to this day remains little known.

On 24th November 1951, the Jikken Kobo presented its first collective work, a ballet entitled “The Joy of Life”, created to mark the first Pablo Picasso retrospective in Tokyo. Sixty years later, Bétonsalon presents research initiated by this transdisciplinary Japanese collective, whose experiments and practice relating to the questions of arts synthesis, of the spectator’s experience or of new technologies, largely still remain to be studied.

It seems necessary today to offer a wide perspective on the activities of the members of the Jikken Kobo by examining their links to other collectives and artists in Japan, in France and abroad. The exhibition will present artworks, films, slide shows, documents and photographs relating to the activities of the collective. Protean personal works such as a mobile by Shozo Kitadai, a vitrine by Katsuhiko Yamaguchi and a lithograph by Hideko Fukushima will enrich understanding of their work. Part of the correspondence between Kuniharu Akiyama, a member of The Jikken Kobo, and John Cage will be exhibited, emblematic of the numerous exchanges that the group was able to engage with various leading figures of the experimental music scene. Among the forms of presentation that the members of the Jikken Kobo invented, three “Autoslides” will be presented (the first ever example of an audio slideshow) made in 1953, then re-digitised in 1986 by Yamaguchi Katsuhiko. These various artefacts, borrowed from public and private collections in Japan, will serve to demonstrate the diverse displays used for exhibitions, ballets, music recitals and poetry readings which were created by the Experimental Workshop.

Mélanie Mermod, curator

Experimentation in Japan in the 1950s

Since the end of the Second World War, art groups that were more open and free than the powerful *dantai*, a kind of gentlemen's club for "rigid and hierarchical art clubs originating in the nineteenth century"¹, developed in Japan. Under the influence of Shuzo Takiguchi - very influential art critic in Japan - the Experimental Workshop was an important initiator of this new alternative scene: many artists, choreographers, directors or dancers collaborated on official projects by the Jikken Kobo; its members worked outside the group individually or collectively, on theatre, exhibition and film projects, painting salons and large associations, and they were connected to literature, cinema, music or visual art collectives such as Cinema 57, 20.5 Group, Graphic Shudan Group, The 650 Experience Group, Gendai Geijitsu Kenkyujo, Record Ongaku or Sogetsu Art Center. If this open-mindedness made it difficult to develop an orderly and efficient index of their creations, it also demonstrated a profound change in the nature and function of art collectives in Japan. Perceived by its members as "a powerful centrifugal force"², "a Bauhaus without a building"³, the Jikken Kobo was, according to Reiko Tomii, "the forerunner of collaborative collectivism". It prefigured the development of similar groups in the 1960s, such as Anti-Art, The Play, Group "I", Hi-Red Center, and in the 1970s such groups as the 1000-Yen-Note-Incident Discussion Group, Zero Dimension, Biyôtô or the Psychophysiology Research Institute.

Jikken Kobo

Several members of the Jikken Kobo now enjoy international recognition in their own artistic field, such as composer of contemporary art Tôru Takemitsu, who has also composed music for films such as "Ran" by Akira Kurosawa; multimedia artist Katsuhiko Yamaguchi, or the critic and composer Kuniharu Akiyama. The sum of a complex network between informal groups of friends and collectives of self-taught artists, the Jikken Kobo is first and foremost the gathering of a group of visual artists – Katsuhiko Yamaguchi, Shozo Kitadai, Hideko Fukushima, Hideo Yamazaki, Naoji Imai, Kiyoji Ohtsuji, Tetsurô Komai–, and of music composers –Toru Takemitsu, Hiroyoshi Suzuki, Kazuo Fukushima, Joji Yuasa, Kuniharu Akiyama, Takahiro Sonoda, Keijiro Satô. This separation between an "art section" and a "music section" is used in several writings of the period"⁴.

The « Art section » and the « Music section »

The members of the music section were very up to date with musical experiments developing at the same time in Europe and the United States. Several events by the Jikken Kobo were conceived as platforms for the dissemination of musical creation, where the performance of works by Olivier Messiaen, Arnold Schönberg, André Jolivet, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Bela Bartok, Erik Satie, Darius Milhaud, Norman delo Joio and John Cage often took place in Japan for the first time⁵. The members of the group had very few records and arranged to find scores, sometimes by writing directly to composers like John Cage. The original compositions created by members of the Jikken Kobo reflected their interest in *musique concrète*, serial music and electroacoustic experiments⁶.

The influences of members of the art section were directed more towards pre-war European avant-garde. Shozo Kitadai began by constructing replicas of mobiles by Alexander Calder from photographs he found⁷. The scenic devices that

1 see TOMII Reiko, « After the 'Descent to the Everyday': Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1964-1973», in Blake Stimson et Gregory Sholette (éds.), *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2007, p. 45-76.

2 YAMAGUCHI, Katsuhiko, « The Experimental Workshop (Jikken Kobo) », in Jasia Reichardt (éd.), *op. cit.*, second page of the article.

3 YAMAGUCHI, Katsuhiko, « Katsuhiko Yamaguchi », in Haruo Fukuzumi (éd.), *op. cit.*, p. 89.

4 see for instance TAKIGUCHI Shūzō, « The Spirit of Experimentation—an anthology », in Haruo Fukuzumi (éd.), *Daijuikkai Homage Takiguchi Shūzō: Jikken Kobo to Takiguchi Shuzo* (Exposition en hommage à Shūzō Takiguchi : Le Jikken Kobo et Shūzō Takiguchi), cat. expo., Tokyo, Satani Gallery, 1991, p. 6-22.

5 AKIYAMA, Kuniharu, « Kuniharu Akiyama », in Haruo Fukuzumi (éd.), *op. cit.*, p. 94.

6 see BURT, Peter, « Experimental Workshop: the Years of Jikken Kobo », *The Music of Tôru Takemitsu*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p 39-49.

7 YAMAGUCHI Katsuhiko, « Experimental Workshop and the Deterritorialization of Art », in Haruo Fukuzumi (éd.), *op. cit.*, p. 24.

he created for the group's presentations are close to the aesthetic of Calder and Isamu Noguchi with a particular interest in the mechanisation of structures. According to Katsuhiko Yamaguchi, Kitadai's interest for developments in science, quantum physics, the theory of relativity, or science fiction novels enriched to a great extent the thoughts and productions of the group"⁸. Equally interested in the work of Alexander Calder, Katsuhiko Yamaguchi was passionate about Bauhaus and Constructivism through the ideas developed by László Moholy-Nagy in *Vision in Motion* and *The New Vision*. By the mid-1950s, Yamaguchi became interested in the works of Frederick Kiesler, whom he met in New York in 1961.

Transdisciplinarity

The members of the Experimental Workshop experimented with many forms of multidisciplinary presentation such as short films, theatre, recitals, slide shows, but also "unclassifiable activities" mixing poetry reading, music broadcast exhibitions of works and architecture. During the exhibition "Space and Design" at Wako Gallery in December 1956, Yamaguchi worked with architect Kiyoshi Seike to exhibit his *Vitrines* made of printed glass in space; the summer exhibition of Jikken Kobo members in August 1957 at Fugetsu-do in Tokyo combined exhibiting paintings and listening to vinyls; and *Poems / Objects* in October 1958 at the Hiroshi gallery in Tokyo proposed a dialogue between poems and works. From the third event of the group in 1952, they choose the term *happyōkai* (発表会 presentation, recital), independently of the form their events took⁹. If Reiko Tomii identifies their approach as " a modernist vision of *art total*"¹⁰, we can also link it to optical and kinetic art, and more particularly to the "spacio-dynamic" approach of Nicolas Schöffer and the auditory and visual research of Norman McLaren" [24], but also to the collective experiments of E.A.T (Experiments in Art and Technology).

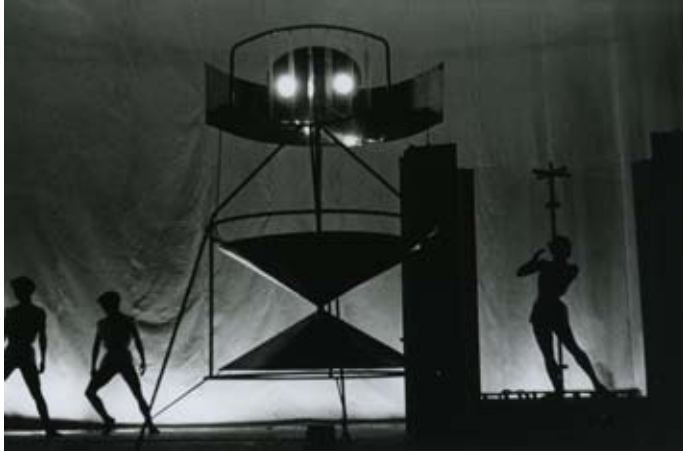
Mélanie Mermod, curator

⁸ *Ibid*

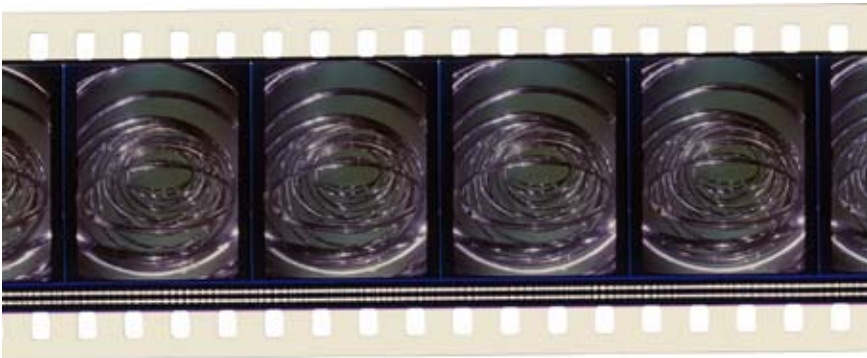
⁹ YAMAGUCHI, Katsuhiko, « The Experimental Workshop (Jikken Kobo) », in Jasia Reichardt (éd.), *op. cit.*, forth page of the article.

¹⁰ TOMII Reiko, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

VISUALS



Ballet Mirai no Eve (Eve Future), March 1955.
Choreography: Akemi Matsuo. Set design:
Shōzō Kitadai. Music: Toru Takemitsu and Toshiro
Mayuzumi, Light: Noaji Imai.
Photograph: Kiyoji Ohtsuji.
© 1955 Kiyoji Ohtsuji, courtesy Taka Ishii Gallery,
Tokyo



Ginrin, 1955, 12 min., directed by Toshio
Matsumoto in collaboration with Katsuhiko
Yamaguchi, Shozo Kitadai and Toru Takemitsu.
Collection National Film Center, The National
Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Copyright Tokuma
Shoten Publishing Co., Ltd.



Shozo Kitadai in his studio in 1959.
Photograph: Kioji Ohtsuji
© 1955 Kiyoji Ohtsuji, courtesy Taka Ishii
Gallery, Tokyo

To request high resolution images please contact :
florakatz@betonsalon.net

EVENTS

Betonsalon and CAC Bretigny link their exhibitions programmes to offer a unique connection between the first presentations of Jikken Kobo in France, sixty years after its creation, and that of contemporary artists influenced by their works. On this occasion, Japanese artist Ei Arakawa collaborates with American musician Sergei Tcherepnin and Georgian artist Gela Patashuri, who will suggest further links, from Tbilisi (Georgia) to Leuville (the neighbouring district to Bretigny) that are important to the understanding of their exchanges.

A series of events presented in partnership with a variety of institutions such as Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris (MCJP) or Les Instants Chavirés are linked through RER routes, shuttle buses and the Tram Taxi. "Be a Speaker. So be it..." by Ei Arakawa, Sergei Tcherepnin and Gela Patashuri is produced in association with The Showroom (London), Bétonsalon (Paris) and CAC Bretigny.

A version of "Be a Speaker. So be it..." deemed "aberrant" according by the artists will be performed at Bétonsalon, in the form of a performance during the Jikken Kobo exhibition and as a première to the version installed in Bretigny.

CALENDAR

Thursday 8 September 2011

Bétonsalon – Opening and performance

- :: 6pm - Opening of the exhibition Jikken Kobo 実験工房 Experimental Workshop / L'Atelier Expérimental
- :: 8pm - Performance "Be a Speaker. So be it..." Ei Arakawa, Sergei Tcherepnin, Gela Patashuri

Thursday 22 September 2011

CAC Bretigny – Opening

- :: 6pm - bus departs from Paris Bibliothèque, 104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris (booking necessary)
- :: 7pm - Opening of the exhibition "Be a Speaker. So be it..." Ei Arakawa, Sergei Tcherepnin, Gela Patashuri

Saturday 24 September 2011

CAC Bretigny / Bétonsalon – Lecture and Tour

- :: 2pm - bus departs from Paris Bibliothèque, 104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris (booking necessary)
- :: 3.30pm - Lecture at CAC Bretigny : « Broken Mirror. Propos sur la musique japonaise dans ses marges de 1945 à aujourd'hui » by Michel Henritzi
- :: 6.30pm - Visit of the exhibition at Bétonsalon by Mélanie Mermod

Saturday 8 October 2011

CAC Bretigny / Bétonsalon by RER C – Performance and Concert

- :: 5pm - Concert-performance by Sergei Tcherepnin at CAC Bretigny
- :: 8pm - Concert by Aki Takahashi, with the participation of Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherepnin at Bétonsalon

Saturday 15 October 2011

CAC Bretigny / Bétonsalon / Maison de la culture du Japon.

By Taxi Tram: edition "Hospitalités" – Performance, visit, cinema

- :: 12am - departure from Paris Bibliothèque, 104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris*
- :: 1pm - Performance by Ei Arakawa at CAC Bretigny
- :: 4pm - Visit of the exhibition Jikken Kobo at Bétonsalon
- :: 5.30pm - « Autour de Ginrin », experimental film screening at Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris

*Reservation for the bus : taxitram@tram-idf.fr

Wednesday 19 October 2011

Bétonsalon – Conférence

- :: 7pm to 9pm - Conference with Reiko Tomii (art historian, NYC) and Joji Yuasa (composer, Japan, member of Jikken Kobo)

Friday 28 October 2011

Maison de la culture du Japon – Cinéma

- :: 7pm - « Autour de Kiné calligraph », experimental film screenings

Ei Arakawa

Born in 1977 in Iwaki, Japan, lives and works in New York. His work, never shown in France since 2011, has been presented at many international art events and venues, such as Frieze Projects (London, 2010), The Power Plant (Toronto, 2008), The Yokohama Triennial of 2008, the New Museum (New York, 2008), MUMOK (Vienna, 2008). Ei Arakawa stages culturally investigative group performances, standing on the brink of random chaos. His choreographed actions have included semi-improvised shows including the rapid construction and deconstruction of a stage, a performance or an artwork.

Sergei Tcherepnin

Sergei Tcherepnin, born in 1981, is a composer and performer based in Brooklyn, New York. His music has been played in the USA and abroad in venues such as Merkin Concert Hall, Chelsea Art Museum, Dia Beacon, National Olympic Stadium (Tokyo), and at festivals such as the Look and Listen Festival in St. Petersburg, the Moscow Autumn Festival. Tcherepnin recently held a residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts where he worked with Master George Lewis, focusing in particular on the theory and practice of improvisation. He performs regularly as a member of the synthesizer collective *Analogos*.

Gela Patashuri

Gela Patashuri, born in 1973 is a Georgian artist who lives in Tbilisi. In 2006, he met Daniel Baumann and participated in the Tbilisi Biennale. He has participated several times in projects by Ei Arakawa, such as the Chalet de Tokyo in Edinburgh (2008); MAVOE/Shindisi Autocenter in New Jersey (Basel, 2009) and also during the Hurt Locker Instruments at Casco in Utrecht in June 2010. In 2011, he organized and collaborated to the exhibitions *Gastmahl Zweyer Berge* and *Without Wall* at Contemporary Art Space Center of Shindisi.

Michel Henritzi

The musician and critic Michel Henritzi will give a lecture titled "Broken Mirror. Propos sur la musique japonaise dans ses marges de 1945 à aujourd'hui". It is part of a lecture cycle on experimental music entitled "The experience of experimentation" organised by Les Instants Chavirés, in partnership with IDEAT, the Institut d'Esthétique des Arts et Technologies (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, CNRS UMR 8153) and the Music department of Paris 8 University. This cycle is directed by Matthieu Saladin (a researcher attached to IDEAT).

Aki Takahashi

A pianist celebrated worldwide, especially for her interpretations of Morton Feldman et Iannis Xenakis, she will perform in Paris a recital of compositions by the Jikken Kobo, as well as works by composers close to their research such as Arnold Schönberg and John Cage. This concert will take place in the exhibition space, since Aki Takahashi wishes to extend the spirit of experimentation desired by the collective, by using some of their works as musical scores.

Reiko Tomii

Reiko Tomii is an art historian, researcher and curator, whose area of specialisation is the history of post-war Japanese art. She was notably the co-curator of the exhibitions *Global Conceptualism* (Queens Museum of Art, 1999) and *Century City* (Tate Modern, 2001). She co-wrote with Eric C. Shiner *Making a Home: Japanese Contemporary Artists in New York* (Japan Society, 2007) and is the co-founder of PoNJA-GenKon, a network and distribution mediator of a research group specialised in contemporary Japanese art.

Joji Yuasa

Born in 1929 in Koriyama, Joji Yuasa is a composer based in Tokyo. He began his career with the group Jikken Kobo, which included four other composers: Kazuo Fukushima, Toru Takemitsu, Hiroyoshi Suzuki, Keiji Sato. Self-taught, Joji Yuasa became, as Toru Takemitsu, one of Japan's most important composer of contemporary music in the second half of the twentieth century. He received numerous awards, commissions and fellowships from institutions such as the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Canada Council, IRCAM (1987) or Experimental Music Center of the University of San Diego (1976).

Around Ginrin and Kiné calligraph

On the occasion of the first Jikken Kobo retrospective, Maison de la culture de Japon à Paris is hosting two screenings of experimental films, most of which have never been shown in France before. Each screening is articulated around one of the two surviving films by Jikken kobo, *Ginrin* (1955) and *Kiné calligraph* (1955) and presents several films, documentaries and experimental animations linked to the activities and collaborations of the members of the Jikken Kobo. The second screening will present two experimental films from the 1930s by Ogino Shigezi, the reels of which were found in 2010 in Japan.

Be a speaker. So be it...

The route for Hospitalités begins at CAC Brétigny with a performance by Ei Arakawa followed by a visit of the historical part of the exhibition on Jikken kobo at Bétonsalon. The route entitled *Be a speaker. So be it...* provides an occasion to extend the journey to the Maison de la culture du Japon in Paris where a screening of experimental films will be presented, programmed in collaboration with Fabrice Arduini, director of the cinema programme at the Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris.

Mélanie Mermod is an independent curator and researcher who graduated from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) in Art History. In parallel to her activity as a research manager for various exhibition projects, Mélanie Mermod has developed curatorial projects such as « Shoot and Run Film Contest » (2004), « Curating Degree Zero Archive » (Paris, 2007 with Celia Cretien and Marie de Bouard) or « Raise the Crowd » (2008), prompting various investigations surrounding the questions of process in artistic practices, or participation and of the history of museography. She currently is Research Manager for exhibition projects at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris and Centre Pompidou-Metz.

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Coordination managers: Raphaële Coutant, Hiromi Kayahara

Construction: jayo_goettgens, Aurélie Mermod, Lila Bargain

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PRACTICAL INFO ON OUR PARTNERS

CAC Brétigny

The contemporary art center of Brétigny is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 2pm to 6pm and the nights before shows at Brétigny Theatre. Free entry.

Access by RER C from Paris (35 min): Direction Dourdan, Etampes, stop Brétigny. Train ELBA, DUBA, DEBA, ELAC.

On foot : 1 km (10 min) from the RER station to CAC Brétigny, Espace Jules Verne : exit at Place de la Gare, take a left and go up the avenue de la République until the street Danielle Casanova on the right then first to the left, rue Henri Henri Douard.

Access by car:

From Evry: francilienne direction Versailles, exit 39B, dir. Brétigny.

From Versailles: Francilienne direction Evry, exit Brétigny centre.

From Paris: A6 direction Lyon, exit Viry-Châtillon, Fleury-Mérogis, then Brétigny Centre.

CAC Brétigny

Centre d'art contemporain de Brétigny

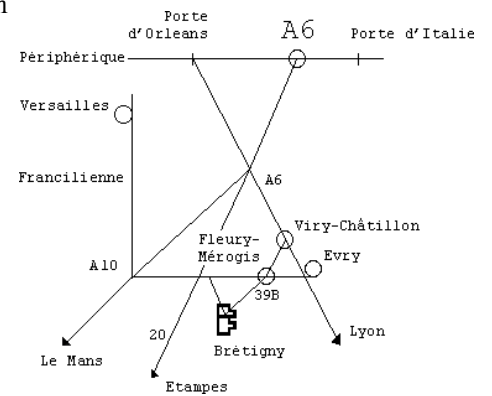
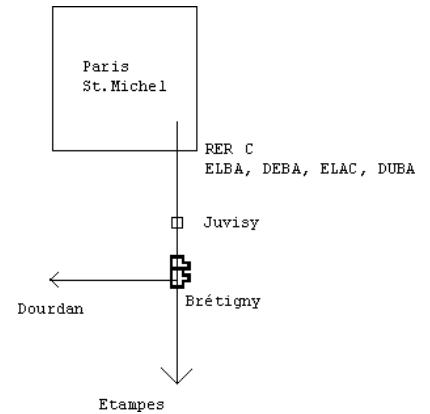
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91220 Brétigny-sur-Orge France

Tel. 0033160852076

info@cacbrétigny.com

www.cacbrétigny.com



Maison de la Culture du Japon à Paris

101 bis, quai Branly 75015 Paris

Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 12am to 7pm, and on Thursday to 8pm.

Closed on Sundays, Mondays and national holidays.

Access by RER C stop Champs de Mars / Tour Eiffel or by metro line 6 stop Bir Hakeim.

Information : 01 44 37 95 01

www.mcjp.fr



ABOUT BÉTONSALON

Bétonsalon is a non-profit organisation created in 2003 and turned into a centre for art and research in 2007. Located within the premises of Paris 7 university at the heart of a neighbourhood currently undergoing reconstruction, Paris Left Bank Development Zone in the 13th arrondissement, Bétonsalon proposes a programme that is context-sensitive and engages the daily meeting between cultural practitioners, researchers, students, teachers, locals and the general public.

Bétonsalon has been particularly committed to developing a space of reflection and confrontation at the confluence of art and academic research, giving expression to various discourses – whether aesthetic, cultural, political, social or economic. Over the years, Bétonsalon has experimented with various formats including exhibitions, workshops, lectures, seminars, publications, neighbourhood tours, festivals and residencies developed on processual, collaborative and discursive levels according to different time scales and in cooperation with a variety of local, national and international organisations.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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Mélanie Bouteloup, director
 Anna Colin, associate director
 Flora Katz, external relations
 Agnès Noël, educational projects



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Opening hours: from Tuesday to Saturday
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 FREE ENTRY

Access : Métro line 14 or RER ligne C
 stop Bibliothèque François Mitterrand

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 Association Bétonsalon,
 37 boulevard Ornano, F-75018 Paris

OUR PARTNERS

Bétonsalon is supported by the City of Paris, the Department of Paris, the Université Paris - Diderot, the Île-de France Regional Board of Cultural Affairs – Ministry of Culture and Communication, Conseil régional d'Ile-de-France, Hiscox and Leroy Merlin (quai d'Ivry)



Exhibition supported by Japan Foundation and the Franco-Japanese Sasakawa Foundation.



Exhibition developed in partnership with CAC Brétigny and in collaboration with Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris, Bienvenue à Paris, Atelier S.K.H and hoa*hoa, japonese cuisine:

