

Florian Fouché, *The Janmari Manifesto*, 2020-2021, various materials, sculptures, videos. With the support of the Centre national des arts plastiques. ©Margot Montigny



## ***The body goes on strike***

**Babi Badalov, Amie Barouh,**

**Florian Fouché, Hedwig Houben**

From 20.05 to 24.07.2021

Bétonsalon – Centre of Art and Research

Curated by: Émilie Renard

Opening : Thursday 20 May from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Press breakfast : Thursday 20 May from 10 p.m. to 12 p.m.**

As a mutant virus clings to the pulmonary alveoli and slips unnoticed towards unknown mucus membranes, forcing bodies to keep a distance from one another, and as the State divides and separates us out according to obscure sanitary logics, a biological force reveals weaknesses, dependencies, and infinite reserves of patience. The ambient catastrophe of Covid forms the backdrop to this exhibition, which has taken shape over a painfully long year during which culture has been relegated to the regime of the non-essential.

This exhibition, the first in Émilie Renard's programme at Bétonsalon, brings together works by four artists that centre on the experiences of bodies that are weakened, hindered, marginalized, or overexposed: a solitary body gathering proofs of its legitimate existence for a bureaucratic administration (Babi Badalov); an ambiguous character, Body, who settles into a comfortable sofa and a world of idiosyncratic pleasures, who retakes control of wandering thoughts and alternates between free association and concentration (Hedwig Houben); bodies that pivot around a tipping point between assisting and assisted (Florian Fouché); the bodies of lovers and friends animated by the presence of an unflinching videocamera that captures, moves and separates them (Amie Barouh). This exhibition proposes to observe the unexplored, devalued and dormant forms of experiential knowledge that fatigue, weariness, and exhaustion might yet disclose. Bringing together representations of bodies that are described, perceived or identified as vulnerable, it looks to amplify the faint signals of their power.

The title of this exhibition is inspired by a fable by La Fontaine, "*Les Membres et l'Estomac*" ["*King Gaster and the Members*"], first published in 1668. In the story, the hands, the legs, and the feet have grown tired of working. They meet, discuss their shared condition, and decide to simply stop feeding the stomach. The fable describes a dissociated body, caught in a class conflict between the worker-limbs and the internal organs ruled over by the stomach, King Gaster, whose governance and administrative and political functions soon turn out to be vital for the 'kingdom' of the body as a whole. The political turmoil and the health crisis that ensues are brought to a close when the striking limbs are reminded of their reciprocal engagements and the body becomes fully operational once more.

*The body goes on strike* sets out the hypothesis of a mobilized and engaged body deliberately disloyal to its rational and biological functions. In this, the exhibition's title operates as a narrative fiction that precedes the experience of the works, gestures, words and texts of which it is composed, and opens up a space of speculation around a body struggling to free itself from the centrality of the stomach and the verticality of the head, a body uncoupled from its functionalism and open to the anthropolymorphous anatomies mutating within it.

BABI

BADALOV

Born in 1959 in Lerik (Azerbaïdjan), Babi Badalov lives and Works in Paris. His practice is a constant exploration of the limits of the language. He is particularly interesting in the way that language is able to isolate individuals from the people who don't share the same language. Thereby, the artist covers current geo-political topics that echoes his own personal experiences.

Great traveler and poet himself, Babi Badalov often introduces his own texts in his work : by combining it with manipulated political pictures, he creates installations, objects, paintings and happenings that he used to qualified as « visual poetry »

Several Babi Badalov's artworks are part of international public collections such as FRAC Ile-de-France (France), FRAC Midi-Pyrénées les Abattoirs de Toulouse (France), Russian Museum in St. Petersburg (Russia), MuHKA Museum Contemporary Art Antwerp (Belgium), Azerbaijan State Museum of Art in Baku (Azerbaijan), Kunstmuseum of Emden (Germany), Martigny Art Museum (Switzerland), Oetcker Collection in Bielefeld (Germany), Arina Kowner Collection in Zurich (Switzerland) and Zimmerli Art Museum (New Jersey, USA).



Babi Badalov, *Bureaucratic Diaries*, 2010-2014, FNAC 2020-0350  
(1 à 13), Centre national des arts plastiques  
©Margot Montigny

Babi Badalov

*Bureaucratic Diaries*, 2010 - 2014

Ephemera and administrative documents in thirteen plastic display folders

31.5 x 24 cm each

Collections of the Centre national des arts plastiques

In 2010, as Babi Badalov embarked upon the process of claiming political asylum in France after having lived in Paris for two years, he began to systematically collect and file all of the paper documents that surrounded him on a daily basis. Alongside administrative correspondence, bank statements, contracts, bills, medical prescriptions and train tickets, Badalov kept all of the junk mail, flyers, business cards, restaurant menus and labels that he accumulated in his everyday life. Four years' worth of material is carefully displayed here in a series of thirteen display folders. Together, these documents attest to Badalov's precarity over this period as he negotiated the complicated and painfully slow process of regularizing his immigration status, at the same time as they chart his increasing critical recognition as an artist. The collection retraces his trajectory, providing material access to the artist's private life as well as to the social and political landscape of the period. Badalov was born in 1959 in Azerbaijan but was eventually forced to leave his home country due to the persecution faced by sexual and gender minorities there. He lived between Russia and Great Britain before settling in France, where he has since developed an artistic practice around a poetic calligraphy that blends Latin, Cyrillic and Arabic alphabets and which recalls both graffiti and illuminated manuscripts. His installation work integrates numerous documents drawn from the multicultural, urban reality of the Parisian neighbourhood in which lives, Barbès. Developed alongside his artistic production, the *Bureaucratic Diaries* constitute a personal and political portrait of Badalov as well as a meticulous and obsessional archive of an individual attempting to assert their fundamental rights in the face of a rigid and complex administration.



Amie Barouh was born in Tokyo in 1993. She settled in Paris in 2011 and entered the Fine Arts School, where she studied in Clément Cogitore and Jean-Charles Hue's classes. She then met a Roma man for the first time and learned to speak Romany alongside him. One day, a friend of hers offered her a camera for her to record a wedding, and it led her to a regular video practice from then on. *I Can Change, but Not 100%* is her first film.

*I can change but not 100%*, 2019  
Colour video, 40'24"  
Production Amok Films

The tinny sound of a couple's voices as they speak over the phone serves as the entry point into this documentary fiction. Amie Barouh's film recounts her intimate relationship with Bobby, a young Roma man whose voice we hear as he calls her from prison, promising her that he can change. On the other end of the line, Barouh's weariness and bitterness are palpable. As the dynamic linking the two lovers reaches this tipping point, the camera serves as a mirror of their relationship, the montage of sequences a form of catharsis. Barouh narrates their story, their promises and their mistakes. Filming in close quarters, she records the lives of Bobby and his friends from the "Pickpockets' Parking Garage". Together they struggle with and contemplate one another, push each other away and make up the rules of a game that unfolds in a closed-circuit. Whether immersed in the intimacy of a hotel room or exploring an underground Paris deep beneath the Gare de Lyon, Barouh's camera wanders through the hidden spaces of a marginal life.

Amie Barouh was born in Tokyo in 1993. She was 'adopted' by a Roma family whilst still a teenager, and came to share their life and their language. Her film is in part a testimony to her experience within this ostracized and underrepresented community, with which she established a particularly close bond that grounds her uniquely intuitive and embodied aesthetic. A graduate of the Beaux-Arts de Paris, Barouh presented *I can change but not 100%* for the first time in the medium-length and short film category at the Visions du Réel festival in 2019.



Florian Fouché was born in 1983 in Lyon (France). He currently lives and works in Paris.

His sculpture practice evolves both through documentary forms (field investigation, photography, video, drawing) and “close actions”:

*La petite fille punie* (2013)

*Dans le train Lyon-Bucarest* (2013)

*Cabinet d'étude à propos du musée du Paysan roumain* (2014)

*Le musée antidote* (2012-2014)

*ASSASINS. L'atelier Brâncuși recomposé* (2015)

*Hémiplégie* (2015)

*Brâncuși juxta-poisons* (2014-2018)

*Lumières pendues* (2013)

*La plate-forme multimodale. Installation politique* (2013-2014, with Adrien Malcor and Antoine Yoseph)

*Transport en commun* (2015)

*La chaise d'A.W.* (2016)

*Pour La Ribot* (2018)

*SAFFAdo* (2018-2020)

*Manifeste Janmari* (2019-2021)

*La vaisselle* (2020)

*Objets repères ?* (2020)

*Vie (ré)éduquée* (2020)

*L'incontinent* (2020)

*Sculptures assistées* (2021)

Since 2019, he's been co-working in L'Arachnéen Editions' studio at 10, rue Saint-Luc, with Sandra Alvarez de Toledo, Violette A and Anaïs Masson.

He graduated the Fine Arts School in 2009, and has shown his works at the Palais de Tokyo, at l'Ensb, at the CAC Passerelle (Brest), at the Carré d'art (Nîmes), at the Unterlinden Museum (Colmar), at the CIAP (Vassivière), at the SKC (Belgrade), Eustache Kossakowski's studio at Anka Ptazkowska's (Paris)... He will soon take part in collective exhibitions at Bétonsalon (Paris), at the Centre Pompidou (Metz), at the Moma (New York), at the Muzeum sztuki nowoczesnej (Varsovie)...

Florian Fouché, *The Janmari Manifesto*, 2020-2021, various materials, sculptures, videos. With the support of the Centre national des arts plastiques. ©Margot Montigny



Florian Fouché  
*Manifeste Janmari [Janmari Manifesto], 2020-2021*  
Various materials, sculptures, videos  
Variable dimensions

First presented in 2020, Florian Fouché's *Manifeste Janmari* will be restaged within Bétonsalon's exhibition space following a long phase of experimentation. Escaping easy definition, the work consists of a protean environment featuring objects that have undergone processes of transformation, and which possess different statuses and fulfil various functions according to their interactions and their topographies. At once accessories, prosthetics, and spatial markers, these objects suggest rich symbolic universes from the domestic and the medical to the pedagogical and the erotic.

This complex configuration gives rise to strange combinations of objects, whose precarious balance adds to the space's latent tensions. Though these objects seem wholly immobile, in reality some of them bear the traces of "close actions" – past and future – carried out by Florian Fouché, the actors and actresses who assist him, and by his father, Philippe Fouché. *Manifeste Janmari* indeed draws its inspiration from two sources: Philippe, who became paralyzed on one side following a stroke in 2015, and Janmari, an autistic child who was placed in the care of the educator Fernand Deligny in 1966, just prior to the creation of the Cévennes network which welcomed autistic and mute people from 1969 until the end of the 1980s. As part of Deligny's attempt to operate outside of language, the interactions of Janmari and the educators – referred to as "close presences" – with their environment and the "wander lines" traced out by their movements became powerful indicators of the transversal and reciprocal dynamics that they shared. On another, related level, Florian Fouché experiments with "assistant/assisted relationships" through "close actions", wherein a camera is fixed to prosthetic objects, whose movements are limited in turn. In this way, the "close actions" produce shaky images that offer a different "point of seeing" for the gestures and movements of the assisting and assisted bodies and their interactions with the objects.

*Manifeste Janmari* could be envisaged as a kind of 'improvised re-education' that is more experimental than therapeutic. It aims simultaneously to test the physical constraints to which educated, educating and re-educating bodies are subject, to question the social norms that shape their representations, and above all to reaffirm their mutual dependency on one another.

Florian Fouché, Philippe, Janmari Manifesto, 2020-2021, video, 11'12. With the support of the Centre national des arts plastiques



Hedwig Houben (The Netherlands, 1983) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. She was involved in many collective exhibitions and projects including: *SWEEP, TAP, SWOOOOOP* (MHKA, Antwerp, 2019); *You and I* (Spike Island, Bristol, 2016); *UnScene* (Wiels, Brussels, 2015); *Don't You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics* (MHKA, Antwerp, 2014); and *Six Possibilities for a Sculpture* (La Loge, Brussels, 2013); *The Hand, the Eye and It* (1646, The Hague, 2013).

She's been taking part in a collective since 2019, alongside with Rob Leijdekkers and Brenda Tempelaar, that focuses on alternative exhibition models within the cultural field. She currently teaches in the "Art and Research department" of the St. Joost Academy, Breda, The Netherlands.

Hedwig Houben, *Phewzlopfffff*; 2019, video, 19'; *Homer*, 2019, plaster bench; *Finger Tool*, 2019, aluminium sculpture. Collection Frac Ile-de-France. ©Margot Montigny





## Hedwig Houben

*Phewzlopffffff*, 2019, video, 19'

*Homer*, 2019, plaster bench, 180 x 96 x 45 cm

*Finger Tool*, 2019, aluminium sculpture, 120 cm

Collections of the Frac Île-de-France

First presented at an exhibition at M HKA in Antwerp in 2019, the performance *Phewzlopffffff* unveils a new chapter in the stories that Hedwig Houben continuously weaves using the entities that have become recurring protagonists in her works. Here it takes the form of a monologue featuring three characters that the artist will embody one after the other: '*Homer*', a bench covered in plaster cushions, '*Body*', and '*X*', a mysterious factor who seems to exert an influence over '*Homer*'.

Removed from the incessant and frenetic rhythm of everyday gestures, the artist's body lets go and gives itself over to *Homer* who, like a character who enjoys being leant on by others, listens carefully to complaints, empathizes and soothes inner pain. Modulations in breathing and various tones of voice respond to the poses adopted by each of the different characters, acting like a form of guided meditation to plunge the body into a trance-like state between sleep and waking that brings together physical well-being and mental relaxation.

With the body freed at last from its constraints, the mind can wander, leaving the way clear for free associations of ideas. Language breaks down and veers into onomatopoeia, like the titular "*Phewzlopffffff*", a sound which recurs throughout the dialogue. Referencing sources of distraction both internal (murmurings) and external (music) that unsettle our attention spans, Houben uses the "*Finger Tool*" – a digit-shaped accessory featuring an oversized outgrowth – to scratch the surface of the plaster sofa cushions and produce a grating sound.

Through this staging of herself and perhaps of her own weariness, Houben interrogates the relationships of dependence – of domination – that link the body and the mind. At the same time, she explores the subjective and emancipatory potential of parasitic objects, distractions and words, and their capacity to generate new narratives at the intersection of the real and the imaginary.



Hedwig Houben, *Homer*, 2019, plaster bench; *Finger Tool*, 2019, aluminium sculpture. Collection Frac Île-de-France. ©Margot Montigny

# Two new *in situ* works

ROMAIN

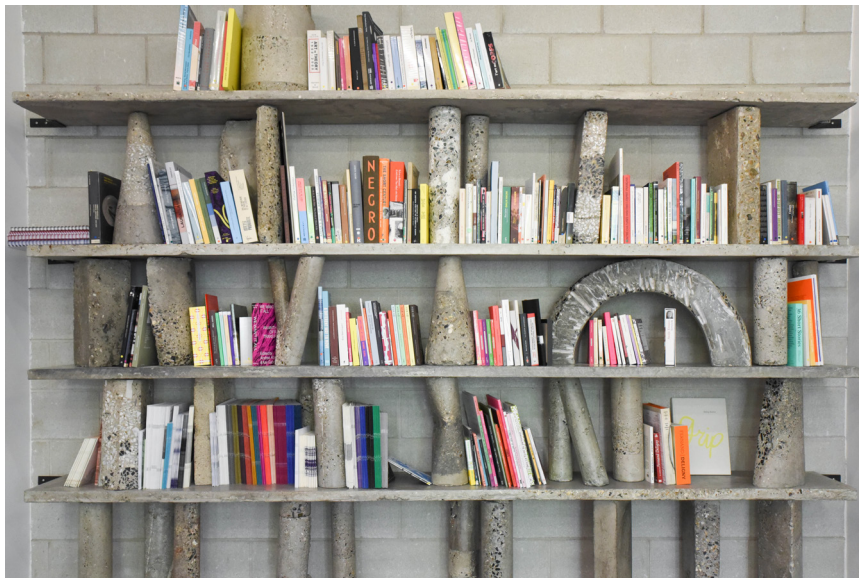
GRATEAU

*Grand tourisme à injection*, 2021

Reinforced concrete bookcase: Portland cement, sand, mineral fillers, steel, oxides and pigments, encaustic, c. 300 x 215 x 35 cm

An *in situ* work that will store the collection of books and documents of Bétonsalon, this bookcase by Romain Grateau is a knowing pun on the art centre's name, a literalized vision of the form that *un salon en béton* [a concrete living-room] might take. A self-supporting structure, the bookcase extends and appropriates the functional architecture of the space through its modulation of horizontal lines and support modules. Combining tapered and squat columns with slightly skewed modules whose forms are at once rough and delicate, the different processes used to create this unit are clearly visible in the finished piece, offering a multiplicity of possible variations upon a material that is usually synonymous with standardized industrial production. Grateau plays with numerous densities, colourings, finishes and embedded elements, challenging our perception and our ability to separate rubble from art object. By combining careful touches of ornamentation with the heavy-duty techniques of construction, he blends genres and registers from masonry to self-build and from Rocaille to brutalism. The title of the work, drawn from the world of automobiles, refers to a technology that allows vehicles to travel long distances at high speeds. Grateau's bookcase invokes this mixture of poetry, precision, power and mechanics, whilst subverting a form of masculinity anchored in bodily exertion and physical feats.

Romain Grateau, *Grand tourisme à injection*, 2021, reinforced concrete bookcase: Portland cement, sand, mineral fillers, steel, oxides and pigments, encaustic, c. 300 x 215 x 35 cm.  
©Margot Montigny



*BONJOURSINOUSDISCUSSIONS, 2021*

Series of 10 sentences in whitewash on windows  
440 x 221 cm

Daubed in whitewash, the four windows at one end of Bétonsalon's glass façade are transformed into a pictorial surface. One after another, ten enigmatic phrases will be etched out within the whitewash in a standard font, devoid of any punctuation and rendered in tightly packed lettering. Over the course of the exhibition, Bétonsalon's team will trace out a new phrase as each previous one is worn away. The short affirmations that make up this work by painter Sylvie Fanchon are uttered by Cortana, an intelligent voice assistant developed by Microsoft in the 2010s that is still in use despite already having been made obsolete.

Toeing the line between politeness and pushiness, invitation and imperative, Cortana attempts to make itself useful (*IMHERETOHELPPDOYOU NEED ANYTHING*), to engage users in conversation (*HELLOHOWABOUTACHAT*) or to improve their productivity (*ICANREMINDEYOUOFIMPORTANTTHINGSANDMUCHMORE*), whilst at the same time warning them not to get too familiar (*PLEASEDONTPROVIDEANYPRIVATEINFORMATIO*). Its limitations nonetheless soon become apparent (*IMSORRYIDONTUNDERSTAND*). This simple yet already unintelligible language is characteristic of the straightforward and one-dimensional relationships offered by artificial intelligence assistants, which, beneath a helpful and servile veneer, gather information to increase technology companies' profits and power. Fanchon's pictorial production is based on pre-existing elements drawn from language and visual culture. Here she uses Cortana, a device at once intrusive, dystopian and comical, as a source of motifs for her paintings and in situ interventions. Facing out over the esplanade in front of Bétonsalon, eliciting questions and curiosity, Cortana's invitations and their apparent authority are contrasted with the fragility and transparency of the surface on which they are inscribed.

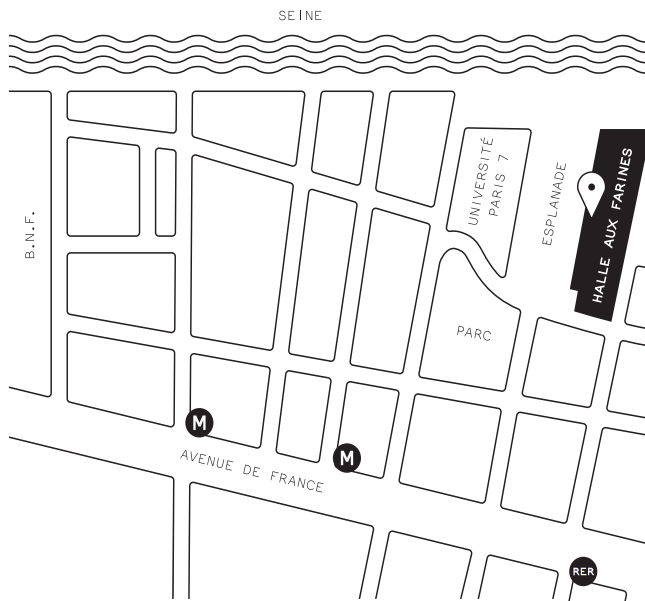


Sylvie Fanchon, *BONJOURSINOUSDISCUSSIONS*, 2021,  
10 phrases inscrites successivement au blanc de Meudon  
sur vitres, 440 x 221 cm

ABOUT BÉTONSALON - CENTRE  
OF ART AND RESEARCH

Bétonsalon develops activities in collaborative ways, with local, national and international organisations. Our program includes solo or collective exhibitions, with emerging, reemerging, confirmed or forgotten artists, multidisciplinary events with the best exchange quality, actions and research focused on mediation and experimental pedagogy, research and creation residencies, outdoor projects engaged with local visitors and structures, and other actions which are yet to be defined.

Bétonsalon is a nonprofit organisation established in 2003. Inserted within the Université de Paris campus, 13th arrondissement since 2007, Bétonsalon is the only Centre of art under convention to be located inside a French University.



**Bétonsalon - centre d'art et de recherche**

9 Esplanade Pierre Vidal-Naquet 75013 Paris

tel. : +33.1.45.84.17.56

info@betonsalon.net

Free entrance from Wednesday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Group visits are free of charge with advanced booking.

Every activity held in Bétonsalon is free of charge.

Access :

Metro 14 & RER C : Bibliothèque - François Mitterrand

Please check our program on social media.



Bétonsalon - Centre for Art and Research is supported by the City of Paris, the Île-de-France Regional Board of Cultural Affairs – Ministry of Culture, the Île-de-France Region, and the Université de Paris.

Bétonsalon is cultural institution of the City of Paris, certified institution of national interest by the Ministry of Culture.

Bétonsalon develops partnerships with the Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso, the ADAGP – Société des Auteurs dans les Arts Graphiques et Plastiques and the Danish Arts Foundation.

Bétonsalon is member of d.c.a. / association for the development of art centers in France, of Tram, réseau art contemporain Paris / Île-de-France, of Arts en résidence - Réseau national, and of BLA!, association nationale des professionnel-le-s de la médiation en art contemporain.

BÉTONSALON  
CENTRE D'ART  
ET DE RECHERCHE



îledeFrance



With the support of:



Press officer :

Mathilde Assier  
communication and outreach officer  
Bétonsalon – Centre of Art and  
Research  
tel. : +33.1.45.84.17.56  
mathildeassier@betonsalon.net