



Events

Détail sur www.betonsalon.net

Saturday 5 April,
from 5 to 7 pm
Lecture by Joana Masó and talk
with Florian Fouché on François
Tosquelles and institutional
psychotherapy

Saturday 19 April,
from 5 to 6 pm
Talk with Florian Fouché,
Émilie Renard et Vincent Enjalbert

Workshops

Free, on registration:
publics@betonsalon.net

Wednesday 12 February,
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm
Close presences: Clay modeling
workshop, for families and children
aged 6 and over.

Wednesday 19 March,
from 10 to 11:30 pm
Cuddly-toy: Sensory visit,
for children aged 0 to 3.

Saturday 29 March,
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm
Â.M.E in Peace: Sculpture
workshop for adults.

Saturday 12 April,
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm
Medicine prelude: First aid kit
creation workshop, for children
aged 5 years and over.

Programmes parallèles

Fridays 31 January,
28 February et 28 March,
from 6:30 to 9 pm
Written with mittens
INFUNDIOSXS: Cycle of collective
writing for several voices and
hands. On registration:
publics@betonsalon.net

Friday 7 and Saturday 8
February, from 10 am to
5:30 pm and from 9:30 am
to 4:30 pm
At the Station d'écologie
forestière de l'Université
Paris Cité, Fontainebleau
Into The Woods: Research-creation
seminar with Phoebe Hadjimarkos
Clarke, Pablo Réol, David Posth-
Kohler, Clara Aubonnet, Guillaume
Larregle, and Baptiste Miremont.*

Fridays 14 February,
7 March and 4 April,
from 6 to 9 pm
and Saturdays 15 February,
8 March and 5 April,
from 11 am to 4 pm

Grieving-with: Collective writing
workshop with author Phoebe
Hadjimarkos Clarke* as part of her
research-creation residency "The
Thick Present" at Université Paris
Cité. On registration: 01.57.27.59.37
/ culture@u-paris.fr

Friday 14 February,
from 3 to 6 pm
Béton Book Club: collective reading
of Tal Piterbraut-Merx's,
La domination oubliée (2024),
Éditions Blast

Friday 7 March,
from 3 to 6 pm
Stakeholders: Retroperspectives
on the history of Villa Vassiliev
around the exhibition "Groupe
Mobile" (2016)

*in collaboration with the Centre
des Politiques de la Terre and the
Cultural Department of Université
Paris Cité

Tours

Tours are led by a mediator and
adapted to all audiences. Tours in
a foreign language or in LSF on
request, within 4 days.

Florian Fouché dedicates this exhibition to the memory of Henri Coulombié.

Bétonsalon team: Gabrielle Balagayrie, coordination assistant, internship; Camille Bouron, mediation and public outreach growth officer; Clara Darin, public outreach assistant, civic service; Vincent Enjalbert, head of exhibitions; Romain Grateau, stage manager; Maha Kays, administrator; Maya Krouk, coordination assistant, civic service; Zoé Lauberteaux, communications assistant, apprenticeship; Elena Lespes Muñoz, head of public outreach; Émilie Renard, director.

Florian Fouché and Bétonsalon would like to thank Sandra Alvarez de Toledo, Béryl Coulombié, Quentin Bouard, Yannik Denizart, Emmanuel Fouché, Philippe Fouché, Adrien Malcor, Anaïs Masson, Martín Molina-Gola, Marie-Christine Fouché, Mariette Cousty, Mariana Cobuci Schmidt Bastos, Fifi du Brésil, Jean-Robert Mazaud, Perwana Nazif, Yann Bréheret, Laurent Le Bon, Xavier Rey, Jérôme Sother, Étienne Bernard, Ioana Popescu, Marianne Mesnil, Suzy Plat, Jacques Plat, Marie Cozette - CRAC Occitanie, Alice Motard et Agnès Biro - CEAAC, Strasbourg, Achraf Touloub, Léonore Larrera - Parliament gallery (Paris); and the Bétonsalon team, with Camille Berthelin and Clément Gaillard. Last but not least, Joana Masó, Ariane Coulondre, Mica Gherghescu and Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov - Centre Pompidou, Johanna Hagège - ADAGP, Jean-François Chevrier and Élia Pijollet.

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OUR INSTITUTIONAL LIVES, OUR ASSISTED LIVES

In this exhibition, Florian Fouché continues his vast investigation into “assisted life”¹, which he began in 2015. Its origins lie in the care of his father, Philippe Fouché, a wheelchair user living in an institution after suffering a stroke that left him hemiplegic. It is also informed by two previous enquiries, made up of encounters, visits, readings and long-term friendships. The first began in 2012 when Florian Fouché became interested in the “antidote museum”² developed by the ethnologist Irina Nicolau and the artist Horia Bernea at the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucarest. From 1990 onwards, they created a popular museum, activated by an open plan scenography offering direct access to the objects. Placing value on use, accepting wear and tear, their “voilà”³ museum is a rejection of at least two models that regulate the museum as an institution: the folklorist and nationalist model, maintained within this same museum by the communist regime before the 1989 revolution, and the “hospital-museum” model⁴, which freezes and holds the works in a sinister fiction that ensures their conservation, a principal that Florian Fouché feels is active in the reconstruction of Constantin Brâncuși’s studio. The second enquiry took place in 2019 when he began retracing the footsteps of Fernand Deligny (1913-1996)⁵ and the informal experiment of a network in the Cévennes region where nonverbal autistic children were cared for between 1967 and the end of the 1980s. The educator simultaneously created other forms of care and support and branched off from the institution of psychiatry, he also invented a language, ways of seeing, telling, sharing news... These two resources have the same capacity to find transformative potential where institutionalisation seemed to have everything wrapped up. While both provide impetus to Florian Fouché’s experiments, procedures, gestures and terms, they probably also supported the shift he experienced when he turned his devoted care of his father into a kind of “wild reeducation”. From this dramatic turn of events, whereby a son became a support to a father, they experiment together a dual relationship of “assistant-assisted” through which the roles of care and support are redistributed, opening up spaces that are both paramedical and outside of the artistic, one serving as an antidote to the other.

This exhibition at Bétonsalon is the latest iteration of “Assisted Manifesto” following the 2021 group exhibition “The body goes on strike”⁶ in which Philippe became the protagonist of “close actions”⁷, filmed both on location, in the artist’s studio and in the Robert Doisneau nursing home. Returning to Bétonsalon for this exhibition, entitled “UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE PRELUDE – Institutional Lives”, Florian Fouché continues his experiments in form and acknowledges the accelerated and simultaneous structural precariousness of public services in health and culture, a prelude to the social insecurity into which we are collectively plunging. In a highly elliptic “chronology of institutional lives”, from 1802 to the present day, he establishes formal, critical and historical correspondences, punctuated by the construction of two hospitals. In it, we find the various metamorphoses of Brâncuși’s studio, destroyed after the artist’s death in 1957 to make way for a new wing of the Necker – Enfants Malades Hospital, then reconstructed by Renzo Piano at the foot of the Centre Pompidou in 1997, only to be dismantled again today; the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, an antidote to museographic reconstruction; the biopolitics of the French state which, having single-handedly conceived of precocious delinquents⁸, destroys the universal

foundation of its social security schemes like the AME (*Aide Médicale d'Etat*), which the artist translates as *Â.M.E.*⁹

This arborescent and associative reflection finds forms that operate through sensory memory. In this way, the exhibition renders palpable the “institutional lives” of the people and works that populate these liminal spaces where the corridors of museums, hospitals and streets look alike. The lives of Philippe, *Children born delinquent* and the sculptures extracted from Brâncuși’s original studio find themselves confronted with a kind of translation of bodies, moving from one medical-museum-institutional treatment to another. Made from elements of urban furniture, hijacked street signs and salvaged objects, the artworks brought together here question the social norms brought about by ableist forms of mobility and uses¹⁰ of public spaces – whether they be medical, museum or urban spaces – and the way in which bodies constantly negotiate restrictions. Interacting with this collection of work, a new physiological, relational and even “orthopaedic” configuration of bodies in presence/absence emerges in the exhibition space. In the darkness of the projection space, in amongst an Assistance made up of seats, a dark, emaciated form seems to be slumped over the supporting structure of a chair, a posture modelled on many tired, weary, disarticulated bodies. A little more and it would drag us down with it.

Émilie Renard

with the assistance of Vincent Enjalbert

1 Many of the expressions in inverted commas are the artist’s own, inspired by the linguistic inventions of Fernand Deligny and Irina Nicolau. Sandra Alvarez de Toledo notes in Deligny’s work “an urgent necessity to alienate words or to reappropriate their meaning by passing via another linguistic channel”, in “Avant-propos”, *Camérier. À propos d’images*, Paris, éd. L’Arachnéen, 2021. p. 4

2-3 Irina Nicolau, “Le Musée antidote (M.A.): Mode d’emploi”, in “Moi et les musées du monde”, New Europe College Yearbook 1994, Bucarest, 1996, p. 38.

4 Florian Fouché’s expression adapted from the “*musée antidote*” (antidote museum) manifesto, written by Irina Nicolau for the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in the 1990s.

5 This relationship with Deligny was the subject of two simultaneous exhibitions at the art centre CRAC in Sète from 11 February to 29 May 2023: Florian Fouché, “Assisted manifesto”, cur. Marie Cozette, (in which Florian reintroduces the “Antidote museum”) and “Fernand Deligny, Legends of the Raft”, conception: Sandra Alvarez de Toledo, Anaïs Masson and Martín Molina Gola, with help from Gisèle Durand-Ruiz, Jacques Lin and Marina Vidal-Naquet. These individuals introduced Florian Fouché to Deligny’s work.

6 “The body goes on strike” with Babi Badalov, Amie Barouh, Florian Fouché and Hedwig Houben, 2021. The first exhibition I programmed for Bétonsalon, it marked the reopening of the art centre after significant internal difficulties as well as the Covid-19 lockdowns. It was an opportunity to identify and acknowledge the vulnerabilities that were being expressed on an individual, a collective and an institutional level and to experience the potential for reinvention that these shared dysfunctional states might hold. Vincent Enjalbert was at this time an intern and assistant to the then head of exhibitions Mathilde Belouali, a position he now holds.

7 The term “*actions proches*” (close actions) is a reference to “*présences proches*” (close presences), which, within the Cévennes network, took place decisively outside of language among the children.

8 A reference to a 2006 report by the French health and medical research institute Inserm on the detection of future delinquents, which served as the basis for a bill proposed by the then French minister for home affairs Nicolas Sarkozy. An example of the assimilation of extreme right ideas in French political discourse, this draft legislation comes as part of a long history of biological theories of heredity going back to the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso’s concept of the “born criminal” (1887).

9 Created by law 99-641 of 27 July 1999, the state medical support AME is a scheme through which undocumented foreign nationals, in France for at least three months, can benefit from free medical care and hospital treatment, without having to go through the process of paying upfront and being later reimbursed. By adding a circumflex accent to the letter *a* in AME, the artist changes the acronym to *ÂME*, meaning “soul” in French.

10 The term “Ableism” was born out of the disability studies and feminist movements of the 70’s-80s in the US. It describes a value system in which so-called “able-bodied” people are made the medical and social norm and, by extension, disabled people are discriminated against.

INSTITUTIONAL LIVES

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1802 Creation of the world's first paediatric hospital, at 149 rue de Sèvres (Paris, 15th arrondissement), near to the Necker hospital on rue de Vaugirard.
- ca 1890 The sculptor Alfred Boucher (1850-1934) built a series of artist studios at 11 impasse Ronsin, next to the children's hospital..
- 1916 The Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957) moves into 8 impasse Ronsin. He lives and works there.
- 1927 Brâncuși moves to 11 impasse Ronsin. His studio would then be made of five studios in the artists' neighborhood.
- 1942 The artists at impasse Ronsin are informed of plans to extend the Necker children's hospital – which will require the gradual demolition of their studios.
- 1954 On 29th October, the painter Alfred Manessier writes to Jean Cassou, head curator at the French national museum of modern art to tell him about Brâncuși's distress following a recent visit from “a committee of about ten people who came to tell him that he would be moved very quickly to a garage. They included Madame Boijé [...], the chief architect for the hospitals of Greater Paris [...], and the director of their garages. It was quite an aggressive scene, where, without any concern for this old man, they made threats against him.” Brâncuși, 81 years old at the time, was facing eviction.
- 1957 On 16th March, Constantin Brâncuși dies at his home on impasse Ronsin, a few months after bequeathing his entire studio (artworks, archives, tools, personal belongings) to the French state.
- 1990 Creation of the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucarest. The museum team, led by the artist Horia Bernea (1938-2000) and the ethnologist Irina Nicolau (1946-2002), invent an experimental museography from the relics of the peasant art that had profoundly influenced Brâncuși. Horia Bernea contrasts his “negative museography” with the principle of dioramic replication.
- 1994 Irina Nicolau writes (in French) “*Le musée antidote*” (The antidote museum), a manifesto inspired by her experiences at the Romanian peasant museum: “We don't go to the M.A. as we would to church, school, court, hospital or a cemetery, but as we would go to a museum.”
- 1997 Inauguration of the “Atelier Brancusi” in a building designed by Renzo Piano and built in the square in front of the Centre Pompidou. The building uses the floorplans and dimensions of the studio at impasse Ronsin. The sculptures are laid out according to the last photos of the studio taken by the artist himself.
- 2005 The then minister for home affairs Nicolas Sarkozy proposes legislation on the prevention of delinquency that recommends “early screening of children with behavioural difficulties” and that “behaviour logbooks” be kept by the French child protection services, the PMI. The proposal is founded on a report by the French health and medical research institute Inserm, which considers children's “anger and acts of disobedience” as “predictive” of later acts of delinquency.
- 2017 The Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucarest closes for work. This includes the destruction of the “Time room”, designed about twenty years earlier by Irina Nicolau. In this space,

the ethnographer set out what she called “dead objects”, “in a very advanced state of decay”: “We tried to represent the idea of assisted dying.”

- 2024 Closure of the reconstructed Brâncuși studio as part of renovation work on the Centre Pompidou. All the artworks presented in the studio will be integrated into the museum and its reserves.
- 2024 On 2nd December, “the Senate votes to reform the state medical support scheme AME and reduce its budget by 200 million euros” (source: Public Sénat).
- 2025 Inauguration of the site of the future Grand Paris Nord hospital, designed by the Groupement Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Brunet Saunier & Associés. The architect Renzo Piano tells the radio station France Inter that he wants to “restore the human dimension of the hospital”: “We’ve forgotten true beauty, the light, the spaces for people.”

Chronology produced with the assistance of Adrien Malcor.

Postscript to an assisted chronology

Things could have gone differently. If the members of the Greater Paris hospitals’ administration had come to see the old sculptor in person, not to threaten him with eviction but to ask him formally to take part in an unprecedented project. Brâncuși’s studio – that one at least – would have been conserved and integrated into the future extension of the Necker children’s hospital. Preserved in its state like an old tooth, mysteriously resistant in the jaw of the new hospital buildings. This would have required the invention of connections and interfaces between the clearly heterogeneous worlds: passageways and thresholds, brutal or smooth and magic transitions. Imagine the studio preserved in this way. The children being treated there would have special access to it, a privilege of their hospitalised condition. The staff could go there to rest in comfortable armchairs, bench-beds conducive to rambling and contemplation. So could the loved ones of patients, during the private time of examinations and treatment. And since the hospital would absorb, contain and protect the studio, a passageway would also be created for art lovers from outside of the hospital.

We would have to think about parking. We could dig one out from under the mortuary. Places reserved for all the people who come neither by bus nor bike. Every year, we would repaint the building with lime, just like in the Romanian countryside of the artist’s childhood, it would be a festive occasion. In the long and winding corridors, all of Brâncuși’s archives, his photos of his studio, under soft lighting, a few well-chosen letters in the lifts or near the emergency exits. But, above all, corridors, corridors in addition to the emergency corridors that let through the transfer nurses, the carers-cared for, loved ones and the maintenance staff... Extra corridors, slower and quieter, for a parallel institutional life.

We would call this atypical heterotopic two-headed institution “Necker–Enfants Malades Hospital–Brâncuși studio”.

Florian Fouché, 8th January 2025

Ameli.fr, Passageway of soul Â.M.E,
Hospital parking

Designed in 1987, the logo for the French social security system, l'Assurance Maladie, uses the image of the cycle of life to symbolise the life-long access to health care it has guaranteed since its creation in 1945 and the creation of its digital platform ameli.fr in 2007. While the logo retains from Matisse's *La Ronde* (1909) a certain vital dynamic of human solidarity that characterises the institution's origins, Florian Fouché's interpretation in the form of a banner seems to deviate from this ideal. Flying from the facade of Bétonsalon, it subtly signals, through the formal dissolution of the figures and their stalling movements, the crisis of two public services: health and culture. These correspondences can be found in the textured and semantic landscape of the different elements of *Passage de l'Â.M.E*: rough stripes of a pedestrian crossing made vertical, a press release from the French Academy of Medicine defending the *Aide Médicale d'État* (AME)¹ against the threat of a new law on immigration in 2023, fake leaflets that combine a slightly distorted cross (reminiscent as much of the medical symbol as Malevitch's suprematism), the homonyms A.M.E, ÂME and HAMM² and acronyms like ALD (*Affection Longue Durée*), a scheme which entitles people to full healthcare cover, or not, depending on the seriousness of their long-term illness. While these relics set the scene for a likely silent protest against the degradation of these health care services, the "close actions" filmed in the streets of Paris at night bear witness to the violence and invisibilisation that bodies and lives considered "invalid" or "unequal" are subjected to. After these incursions into the public space comes another threshold in the exhibition, represented through a theatre curtain (Parking de l'hôpital), upon which parking spaces are distributed and moved around, associated with different hospital staff roles. Bringing to mind a muralist work through its stylised form, it reveals how the logic of managerial rationality and prioritisation of both staff and patients has gradually crept into hospitals to the point of weakening the social architecture that underpins them.

Vincent Enjalbert

¹ See note 7 on page 4

² Hamm is a character from Samuel Beckett's play *Endgame* (1957), who Philippe Fouché embodies through "Hamm-Clov", both "assistant and assisted", in a film presented in the exhibition "FIN DE PARTIE PRÉLUDE" at the art centre GwinZegal in Guingamp in 2024.

Children Born Delinquent,
Undeclared Sculpture,
Assisted Sculpture

At the end of 2005, in his draft bill on the prevention of delinquency, the no-less delinquent Nicolas Sarkozy, then minister of home affairs, put forward the idea of "early screening of children with behavioural difficulties". Left out of the final version of the text voted in 2007, the proposition was founded on a report by Inserm that recommended "the identification of behavioural problems from daycare and nursery school onwards". In the report "anger and acts of disobedience" were described as "predictive" of later acts of delinquency. The result of a campaign as moralising as it was pernicious, Florian Fouché has picked up this draft legislation and used it to name a series of sculptures. Moulded, bowed and gutted road markers with sharp tongue-plates hanging from them, Children Born Delinquent has all the markings of Deligny's beloved band of maladapted misfits. The roadside posts, meant to remind our bodies of the line to follow, are found here violently stuffed, twisted and split. These "chavs [in plaster] (...) crime, ungrate, publicassist, and masturbethemselves into existence"¹, they rage against the straight line as well as the monotonous and docile gray. Disparate and reckless, they make up a dirty-white, sulky-grey, tender-pink mix with mouths both laughing and sharp. As is often the case in his work, through his way of working with the material, Florian Fouché allows himself to be absorbed by a drift that puts him in a posture of research. Foraging the form, he shocks and cares for it, hollows it out and fills it in, accidentally bestows it other lives. The same goes for the road markers, those small posts within urban spaces that our eyes soon forget are there, but which, when struck, our bodies often painfully remind us of. Other pieces of urban furniture which, insidiously direct and control our bodies and our movements. As if pulled

by the neck, *Undeclared Sculpture* looks like a spinal column straightened more than is necessary. Stretched between floor and ceiling, it is the same line through which the plans are built and installed.

Here (again) is moral uprightness, this little “bit of who knows what, straight for some, twisted for others, and that we fashioned into a curved backbone... striking little examples, using little butter biscuits on days of visits or big celebrations”². But whoever said behaving well meant sitting up straight? Made vertical by a pulley, the taut line of the post moves discretely like a mobile. Through its wavering, it resists the position it has been assigned and calls to mind the first fragile steps of Giacometti’s walkers. Those for whom the path is made as they go along, through falls, interruptions, attempts and detours, lines broken and thresholds crossed.

Elsewhere, you’ll probably have to wander a little further afield, to the Pierre Vidal-Naquet esplanade, to discover a supermarket trolley mounted on a child-road marker, whose triumphant pride brings back memories of the pleasure of being wheeled around in a pushchair or wheelbarrow. Each morning, the piece *Sculpture assistée* takes its place in the front courtyard, according to the wishes of the team who push and manoeuvre it to offer it up for all to see for the day. As ordinary as it is extraordinary, the artwork is met with as much surprise as indifference, blending into the blur of passing days and bodies, waiting for its next move. As yet unknown.

Elena Lespes Muñoz

1 Original quote in French: “*racailles [de plâtre] (...) criement, ingratent, assistancepubliquent, et se masturbent l’existence*” Fernand Deligny, *Les vagabonds efficaces* (1947), in *Fernand Deligny, Œuvres*, Paris, éd. L’Arachnéen, 2017, p. 165.

2 Original quote in French: “*morceau d’on ne sait quoi, bien droit chez les uns, tordu chez les autres, et qu’on façonnerait en forme d’échine courbée à petits coups d’exemples, à petits coups de trois petits-beurre les jours de visites ou de grande fête.*” *Ibid.*, p.163.

Institutional Life, Assistance

The film *Institutional life* was filmed in one day (17.05.2022), and in one take, within the reconstructed Brâncuși studio, and more specifically, within a corridor that runs around the studio, which is as spacious, as light, as institutional and as under panoptic control as a hospital corridor. Philippe and Florian Fouché, father and son, move around together, without a thought for the studio. Philippe, equipped with his electric wheelchair, sets Florian in motion. Florian is naked, eyes closed, crouched precariously on an office chair with wheels probably

borrowed from the front desk. With gentleness and tact, in a harmony that needs no words, Philippe guides Florian, pushes him, pulls him, drags him, leaves him and returns to him. When Florian grabs a chair and brings it with them in what seems like a dance, they form a kind of trio. From the other side, behind the glass barrier, other “mobile groups” stand definitively frozen. There were three of them at first, in about 1910, in Brâncuși’s studio, when he would make new combinations of these sculptures each day, making mobility, and not productivity, the central activity of his studio.

This film is part of the “close actions” that Florian has been conducting since 2020, which now number nearly four hundred. In these filmed short performances, Florian and Philippe Fouché are the main characters and are often accompanied by other “assisted-assistants” who, as in the “close presences” of Deligny’s Cévennes network, pay a kind of silent attention to others.

After defining a space, laying down a few open principles, weakening any narrative intention or temptation, they improvise gestures of “wild reeducation”, making functional objects – forks, plates, chairs, tables, and also bodies, sculptures and cameras... – their props in a game about their living, care and work spaces. In this way, they endlessly renegotiate their roles of “assisted-assistant” with actions that serve as fragile and joyful escapes from the “institutional lives” they endure. Here it is Philippe who guides Florian in an equally joyful and necessary way out of this fictional space, the reconstructed studio. Together, they put forward a counter proposition to the reconstruction project that prioritises conservation over mobility. In their own way, they propose an antidote to the “hospital museum” – no mean feat when so many museums don’t even know they’re sick.

Florian Fouché also finds an antidote in Deligny, for whom nothing is transparent, neither words nor the “*point de voir*” (point of seeing) and who sees in the misaligned eyes an access to the unexpected, to that which has been cast aside, to “*l’invu*” (the unlooked): “Wall-eyed is a lovely word. It’s like there are two oculars, and not for seeing in three dimension, two oculars, just as there are two memories, so that the us that turns around has an eye that loiters in search of something that might be simply human, even if only in snatches, other than and beyond the scripted scene”¹ imagined by Deligny that follows their movements, two synchronised cameras, carried at arm’s length by Martín Molina Gola.

These sequences are literally wall-eyed, creating gaps and instability between them. In the exhibition, they take on the scale of a double-angled projection, adjusted to ground level. Level with the image, *l’Assistance* offers the audience members

twenty-odd chairs and wheelchairs meaning those who momentarily make up the audience are constantly negotiating their place both with each other and these images. Each of these reactive Assistance(s) becomes more unpredictable, more impermanent.

Through these experiences of instability and incompleteness, each brings into existence more indeterminate, fundamentally non-authoritarian forms of “institutional lives” without plan or programme.

Émilie Renard

¹ Original quote in French: “*C’est un bien joli verbe que bigler. Il y aurait comme deux oculaire, deux oculaires, et non point pour voir en relief, deux oculaires, comme il y a deux mémoires, si bien que le on qui tourne aurait comme un œil qui traîne en quête de ce qu’il pourrait bien y avoir de simplement humain, ne serait-ce que des bribes, outre et par-delà la scène scénarisée.*” Fernand Deligny, *Camérez. À propos d’images*, Paris, éd. L’Arachnéen, 2021, p. 21.

Assistant-assisted display case:
Institutional lives (Brâncuși /
Necker – Enfants Malades Hospital /
Antidote museum)

The artworks and documents brought together within and around this display case form the conceptual foundation that enables Florian Fouché to trace the historical and fictional entanglements between Brâncuși’s studio in Paris and the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest. Founded just after the fall of the communist dictatorship in 1989, the museum underwent significant changes under the direction of Horia Bernea and the impetus of Irina Nicolau.

Imagined like an “antidote museum”, it is part of a profound break with the vision of a mortal hospital-institution within which the artworks, frozen in the stereotypical and ideologically biased reconstructions, do not engage in any significant way with the public. This is demonstrated by the pillars of an Oltenia peasant house, crowned with blocks of white wood that indicate where the wood framework is, which through their isolation on an abstract level and the purity of their staging, call to mind the forms of the Caryatid or Brâncuși’s Endless Column, and thus express, without folklorist clichés, a formal and cultural continuum, from vernacular architecture to modernist sculpture.

This same game of repetition connects the three photos of Brâncuși’s original studio, on impasse Ronsin, which becomes a theatre of work in constant mutation as the sculptures that populate it, nicknamed “mobile groups”, are rearranged in the space. Although Renzo Piano said he didn’t want to “fall into the trap”¹ of an exact reconstruction when

he created his project at the foot of the Centre Pompidou in 1997, he paradoxically chose to reinforce the panoptic view with a corridor that encircles the studio space. This design is reinforced in the photomontage *ASSASINS the Brâncuși studio* recomposed through the merging of a corridor of the Val Rosay follow-up care and functional rehabilitation centre, at Saint-Didier au Mont-d’Or – where Philippe Fouché lives – and a partial view of the reconstructed studio, thus creating the idea of continuation between the museum and the medical spaces. The proximity of the horizontal medical bed and the Brâncuși sculpture *Figure* (1920-1930) resting vertically on the wall raises questions about how we treat the bodies and artworks that pass through these spaces. The artist places these photos alongside a letter, dated 1954, from the painter Alfred Manessier to Jean Cassou, a curator at the French Musée national d’Art Moderne. In it, Manessier describes a turbulent visit to Brâncuși’s studio from a committee for the Greater Paris University Hospitals (AP-HP), who urged Brâncuși to move out quickly so they could build a new wing of the Necker children’s hospital.

In 1956, Constantin Brâncuși left his entire studio to the French state. Later the Centre Pompidou would oversee the studio’s replication, risking the creation of a “*blasé museum*”², famous foil to the “antidote museum”.

Vincent Enjalbert

¹ Interview with Renzo Piano, press release on the inauguration of the Brancusi studio, 28 January 1997, Centre Pompidou.

² Irina Nicolau, “*Le Musée antidote (M.A.): Mode d’emploi*”, *op. cit.*

Translation from French: Annie-Rose Harrison-Dunn.

UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE PRÉLUDE

Institutional Lives

FLORIAN FOUCHÉ

Exhibition:

from 24 January to 19 April 2025

Opening: Thursday 23 January, from 4pm to 9pm

Curator: Émilie Renard

Wednesday to Friday, from 11am to 7pm
Saturday, from 2pm to 7pm · Free entrance
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