

# UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE PRELUDE

Institutional Lives

## FLORIAN FOUCHÉ

Exhibition:

from 24 January to 19 April 2025

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

Press opening: Thursday, 23 January, from 10 am to 12 am

Curator: Émilie Renard

## PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday to Friday, from 11am to 7pm

Saturday, from 2pm to 7pm · Free entrance

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A new iteration of *UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE PRELUDE* activated in March in Florian Fouché's studio in Paris and at GwinZegal art center in Guingamp in October 2024, this exhibition follows on from the *Assisted Manifesto*, a vast survey of both perception and documentation on 'assisted life' begun in 2015 and presented at Bétonsalon in 2021, as part of the group exhibition "The body goes on strike". It is rooted in the care path taken by Philippe Fouché, the artist's father, who became a hemiplegic following a stroke. Since then, he has been accompanied by his son on a daily basis and has become the protagonist of 'close actions' in which the roles of care and assistance are redistributed.

Taking into account the almost simultaneous closures of the care home (EHPAD) Robert Doisneau in Paris, which was home to Philippe, and the Centre Pompidou in 2025, Florian Fouché identifies critical correspondences and common failings between two systems of the French public sector, health and art. In the exhibition at Bétonsalon, Florian Fouché explores the relationship between the body and the medical and museum space, in the face of the gradual dismantling of the care systems for the most vulnerable, such as the A.M.E<sup>1</sup> (State Medical Assistance), the gradual erosion of the universal health care and the precariousness of public cultural institutions. The story of Constantin Brâncuși's studio provides the backdrop for this exploration: originally located at Impasse Ronsin in Paris, it was demolished after the artist's death to make way for an additional wing of the Necker - Enfants malades hospital, and was then rebuilt in its current location, next to the Centre Pompidou, by Renzo Piano in 1997. Filmed in this reconstructed version of the Brâncuși's studio in 2022 and featured in the exhibition, the film *Institutional Life* draws a parallel between the architecture of the hospital and the scenography designed by Renzo Piano, highlighting how body motricity is regulated by the corridors. A mobility, sometimes prevented, sometimes desired or forced, which echoes the positioning of certain sculptures by Brâncuși, which themselves lie, stand or sit.

This reflection on the relationship between biopolitics and museography stems from the concept of the 'antidote museum' developed by the ethnologist Irina Nicolau at the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest, which served as the framework for a photographic and visual investigation begun by the artist in 2012. In contrast to the 'hospital museum', in which the works are static and kept at a distance from the public in order to guarantee their proper conservation, the scenography designed by Irina Nicolau encouraged a form of popular education through unique spatial arrangements, shattering the folkloric and nationalistic view of vernacular cultures and Brâncuși's work promoted by the Romanian Communist regime before the 1989 revolution. In a similar vein, this exhibition aims to make tangible the 'institutional lives' of the people and works

1 In November 2023, the Aide Médicale d'Etat (translated in Â.M.E. [*Soul*] by the artist), a national scheme set up in 2000 to enable illegal foreign-born people on French territory for at least 3 months to benefit from access to healthcare without prior contribution, is being called into question as part of the Immigration bill. In a press release dated November 28, 2023, the National Academy of Medicine points out that this decision contravenes a founding ethical principle of medicine, which is to care for "all patients, regardless of their legal or illegal status".

that inhabit and navigate these liminal and interstitial spaces, and which are confronted, in the case of Philippe as of the sculptures extracted from Brâncuși's studio, with a form of displacement of bodies, from one medical-museum-institutional context to another.

While childhood already plays a crucial role in Florian Fouché's research into the educational experiments carried out by Fernand Deligny in the Cévennes with autistic and marginalized children, it finds an even more significant and political expression in this exhibition. Indeed, a new series of sculptures (*Children born delinquent*, 2024), refers directly to the much-criticised 2006 report from the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) - aimed at detecting future delinquents among very young children through biased behavioural analysis. This report served as the basis for a bill (not voted on) put forward the same year by Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister of the Interior, which is part of a long genealogy of biological theories of crime going back to the concept of the 'born criminal' by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso (1887), expressions of an extreme right-winging tendency in French political discourse.

In dialogue with this historical context, works based on elements of street furniture and signage question the social norms that induce certain forms of movement and determine how public space is used, often from an ableist perspective, that frequently results in the exclusion of mobility that cannot or refuses to conform. Through the interaction of this group of works, a new physiological, relational and even 'orthopedic' configuration of the bodies present/absent in the exhibition space takes shape, in the face of societal changes that affect them concretely, both at the individual and collective level.

Vincent Enjalbert

↳ The exhibition is supported by ADAGP - société française des auteurs des arts visuels as part of the ADAGP / Bétonsalon research and production grant, of which the Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Pompidou is a partner.

### Biography

Florian Fouché was born in 1983 in Lyon. He lives and works in Paris and teaches at the École des Beaux-Arts de Lyon. His sculptural practice involves both documentary forms (fieldwork, photography, video, drawing) and performative work with different collaborators. After several years of investigation into the museography of the Romanian Peasant Museum in Bucharest (*Le Musée antidote*, 2010-2014), Florian Fouché initiated the *Assisted Manifesto* cycle in 2015, which he developed in the form of a series of “close actions”. In so doing, he hijacked the term “close presences” which was coined by educator Fernand Deligny (1913-1993) to describe the adults who organised the “living areas” of the experimental network for autistic children in the Cévennes.

His work has been shown at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Palais des Beaux-Arts (Paris), CAC Passerelle (Brest), Carré d'art (Nîmes), Musée Unterlinden (Colmar), CIAP (Vassivière), SKC (Belgrade), the studio of Eustache Kossakowski at Anka Ptazkowska (Paris), 10-rue-Saint-Luc – atelier des éditions L'Arachnéen (Paris), Centre Pompidou (Metz), Bétonsalon (Paris), MoMA Virtual Cinema (New York), CAPC (Bordeaux), Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie (Warsaw), CRAC Occitanie (Sète), and GwinZegal (Guingamp). He is represented by Galerie Parliament in Paris.



Florian Fouché, Institutional Life, 2022  
Video. Courtesy: Florian Fouché and galerie Parliament, Paris.



Florian Fouché, Institutional Life, 2022

Exhibition view "Manifeste assisté", Crac Occitanie, Sète, 2023.

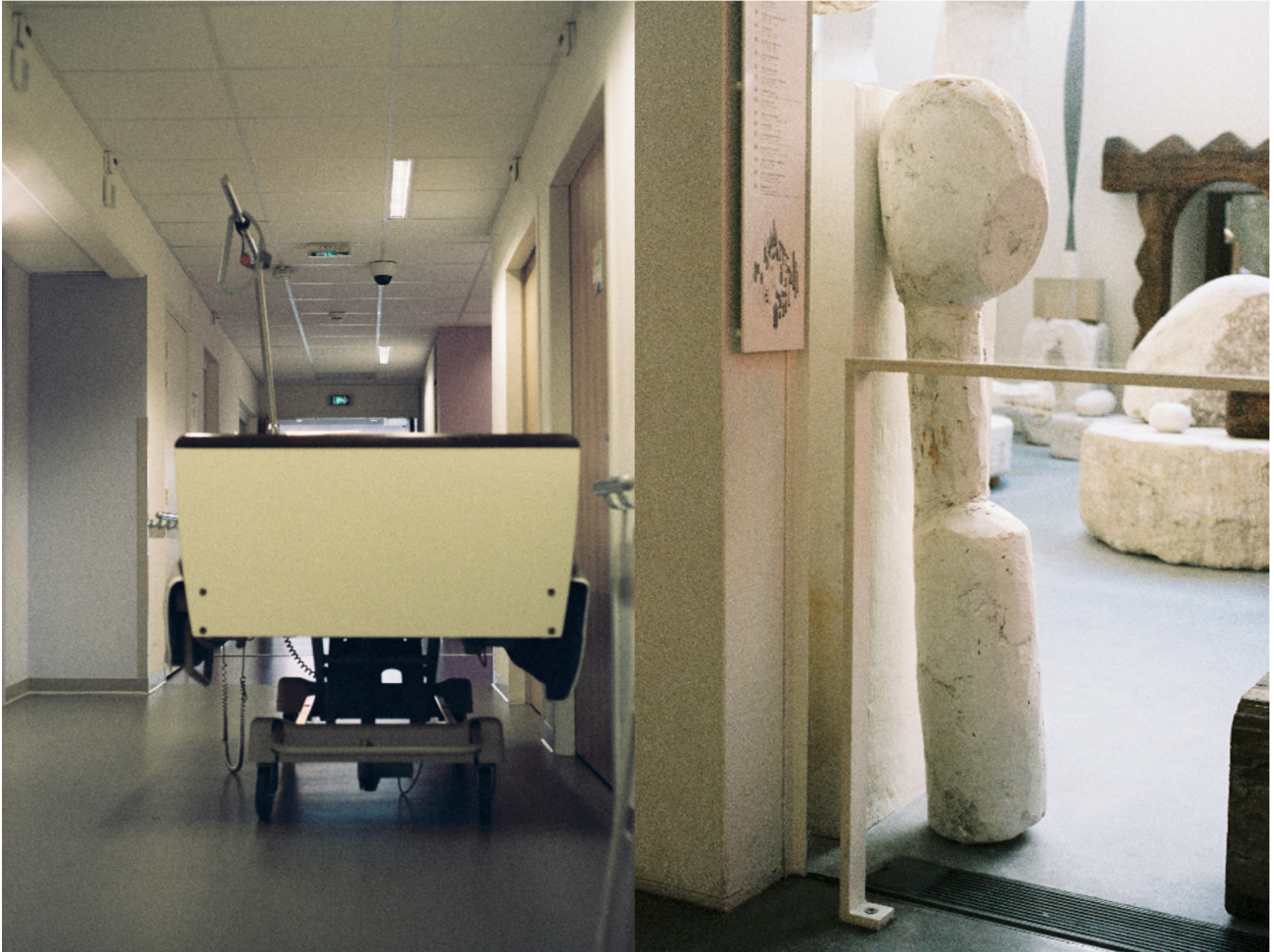
Courtesy: Florian Fouché and galerie Parliament, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole.



Florian Fouché, Passage de l'Â.M.E.(detail), 2024

Cotton canvas, adhesive strips of studded passageway, paint, fine particles, leaflets.





Florian Fouché, *ASSASINS l'atelier Brâncuși recomposé*, 2016

Photomontage

Left: Neurological hospital, Bron, November 2015

Right: South corridor of Constantin Brâncuși's reconstructed studio, November 2015



Florian Fouché, Papa et moi [Daddy and me], 2022  
Courtesy: Florian Fouché and galerie Parliament, Paris.



View of Florian Fouché's exhibition "FIN DE PARTIE PRÉLUDE", GwinZegal, Guingamp, 2024.  
Courtesy: Florian Fouché and galerie Parliament, Paris.

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Upcoming

Hedwig Houben  
"The Untamable Hand"  
From 9 May to 19 July  
Opening : 7 May

Orla Barry  
"Spin Spin Scheherazade"  
From 17 October to 20 December  
Opening : 16 October

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Practical  
information

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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, and the Île-de-France Region, with the collaboration of Université Paris Cité.

Bétonsalon – Centre for Art and Research is a cultural institution of the City of Paris, certified institution of national interest by the Ministry of Culture.

This exhibition is supported by ADAGP - société française des auteurs des arts visuels as part of the ADAGP / Bétonsalon research and production grant, of which the Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Pompidou is a partner. The CEAC will present a new version of this exhibition by Florian Fouché in 2026.

Bétonsalon – Centre for Art and Research is member of DCA / association for the development of art centers in France, Tram, réseau art contemporain Paris/Île-de-France, and Arts en résidence - Réseau national and BLA! - national association of mediation professionals in contemporary art, as well as a partner of the Souffleurs d'Images service for access to culture for blind and visually impaired people.

