

MAC

Press Release

VAL

Faits-divers A hypothesis in 26 letters, 5 equations and no answers

An exhibition recognised as
being of national interest by
the Ministry of Culture

From 15 November 2024 to
13 April 2025

Under the curatorship of director Nicolas Surlapierre and Vincent Lavoie, an art historian and professor at the Université du Québec in Montréal, the Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne has undertaken a major investigation into the subject of the *fait-divers*, resulting, this autumn, in a major exhibition bringing together no fewer than 80 artists from a wide range of backgrounds and formal practices. "Faits divers" has been awarded the "national interest" label, not only for the originality of its content, but also for the museum's strong commitment to reaching out to all kinds of audiences, from experienced viewers to newcomers. Visitors will be able to decipher the workings of the genre through an innovative scenography that provides interpretative keys to the many artistic proposals that explore the *fait-divers*. And as is suggested by the exhibition's subtitle, "A hypothesis in 26 letters, 5 equations and no answers," here each visitor can give free rein to their imagination and personal judgement.

This group show marks the 20th twentieth anniversary of the founding of MAC VAL, an event that will be celebrated throughout 2025. The inspiration for the theme came from Roland Barthes' essay "Structure of the *Fait-Divers*" (1964). Described by the semiologist as the "unorganised discard of news," the *fait-divers* helps us to name and identify the aberrant causalities and coincidental relationships that disrupt everyday life. This exhibition offers a broad and comprehensive overview, allowing for comparison, and plays on the principles of enigma and trickery. The *fait-divers* is the revelation of the unfathomable mystery of banality. It is the grain of sand that causes dull routine to seize up, brutal anomie, the explosion of violence beneath still waters, the cruelty of good honest folk. It is also the revenge of the obscure, of the nobodies.

“Faits-divers”

A hypothesis in 26 letters, 5 equations and no answers

Because the *faits-divers* is often linked to the world of investigation, to a certain form of enigma and to the desire of artists to elucidate their mysterious side, the exhibition is built around the poetry of equations with several unknowns, which are conceived as a cross between parameters and a register of “indexicality.” Each of the equations will be introduced by “exhibits” of the kind presented in court, underpinning the legitimate metaphor of investigation and hinting at the miscarriage of justice or human error at the root of many *faits-divers*. The present exhibition is as much a universe of forms as it is a vast lexical field. The thematic guide, which refers to Didier Decoin’s *Dictionnaire amoureux du faits divers* (Éditions Plon, 2022), aims to show the diversity of artists and forms that have taken a close interest in these singular events, with their indefinable and indecisive intimations. It will also highlight the impact of the visual culture of the *faits-divers* on contemporary art. In 26 letters and 5 equations, the exhibition will present a hypothesis of what a *fait-divers* is, but will be careful not to impose an answer. It will leave everyone free to make up their own minds, to have their own doubts, or simply to let themselves be carried away by the delights of fabrication and speculation.

Five equations structure the exhibition

In the mathematical sciences, they are variables and correspond quite neatly with the world of enigmas to be solved. They sum up artists’ desire to elucidate the enigmas that are sometimes or often subjacent to a *fait-divers* and transform the museum’s temporary exhibition rooms into a vast board game. Each equation brings together 5 or 6 letters from the alphabet. They break with alphabetical order, so that visitors can grasp the lexical field of “diversified facts,” the main themes, the diversity of responses proposed by the artists and the issues of reception. The equations describe broad categories or archetypes: “In the name of

the law” (equation with one unknown), «Disaster scenario” (equation with two unknowns), «Doing violence” (equation with three unknowns), “Open your eyes” (equation with four unknowns), “The shadow of a doubt” (equation with five unknowns).

26 alphabetical hypotheses

Beyond the illustrative nature of the alphabetical guide, the *fait-divers* is also an excellent vehicle for questioning certain protocols and *modus operandi* in contemporary art. The “fictionalisation” of the so-called minor event, the resonance of the indexical model, the artistic transposition of investigative protocols: reconstitution, inventory and collection, the play of differing temporalities in representations of events, the ethics of testimony and evidentiary discourse, sensationalism and regimes of affect, and finally the effects of authenticity and clashes of opinion will all be evoked in each of the five equations that structure the exhibition. Despite the undeniable interest in the subject, to date no exhibition in France has really been devoted to an artistic analysis of the *fait-divers*. A powerful catalyst for emotions (compassion, pleasure, curiosity, identification), the *fait-divers* has a fantasy value that plays a part in dramaturgy and contemporary art.

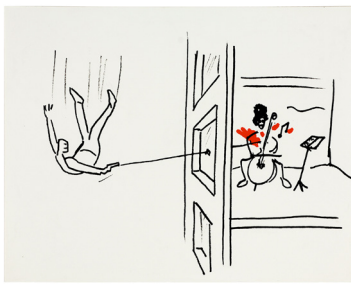
Nicolas Surlapierre
Vincent Lavoie

Curator: Nicolas Surlapierre
Associate curator: Vincent Lavoie
Coordinator Julien Blanpied, assisted by Marzia Ferri

This exhibition is recognised as being of national interest by the Ministry of Culture, which is providing exceptional financial support.

With works of Absalon, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Mac Adams, David Ancelin, Eduardo Arroyo, Julien Audebert, Delphine Balley, Lewis Baltz, Ben, Carole Benzaken, Pascal Bernier, Ode Bertrand, Maurice Blin, Samuel Bollendorff, Christian Boltanski, Corinne May Botz, Véronique Boudier, Halida Boughriet, Mohamed Bourouissa, Xavier Boussiron, Joël Brisse, La Brodeuse masquée, Brognon Rollin, Benoît Broisat, Bureau of Inverse Technology, Sophie Calle, Jérôme Cavalière et Stéphane Déplan, Stephen Chalmers, Grégory Chatonsky, Nicolas Cilins, Claude Closky, Julien Creuzet, Claire Dantzer, Nicolas Daubanes, Nicolas Descottes, Éric Dubuc, Michel François, Sylvain Fraysse, Agnès Geoffray, Camille

Gharbi, John Giorno, Ana Maria Gomes, Pierre Huyghe, Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis, Michel Journiac, Nina Laisné, Abigail Lane & Mathew Weir, Jean Le Gac, David Levinthal, Caroline Macdonald, Marko Mäetamm, Teresa Margolles, Pascale Mijares, Joachim Mogarra, Sabine Monirys, Jacques Monory, Yan Morvan, Natascha Niederstrass, Didier Paquignon, Christian Patterson, Éric Pougau, Alain Pratte, Lidwine Prolonge, André Raffray, Philippe Ramette, Virginie Rebetez, Antonio Recalcati, Jason et Carlos Sanchez, Alain Séchas, Bruno Serralongue, Nancy Spero, Angela Strassheim, Kiran Subbaiah, Taroop & Glabel, Julien Tiberi, Yann Toma, Nils Vandevenne, Cecilia Vicuña, Bob Watts...



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13

Captions

- 1 Alain Séchas, *Suicide* (detail), 1991. Silkscreen on PVC, 32 x 45 cm. Collection IAC, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes. Adagp, Paris 2024. Photo © Blaise Adilon.
- 2 Éric Dubuc, *L'accident*, 1984. Glycerophtalic paint on canvas, 168 x 217 cm. Collection MAC VAL - Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne. Photo © Aurélien Mole.
- 3 Eduardo Arroyo, *Heureux qui comme Ulysse...* [Happy the man who, like Ulysses...], 1977. Oil on canvas, 180 x 220 cm. Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn. Adagp, Paris 2024. Photo © Bertrand Prévost.
- 4 Christian Boltanski, *Tout ce dont je me souviens* [Everything I remember], 1969. 16 mm film, colour, sound, 0'24". Adagp, Paris 2024. Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn/ image Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI.
- 5 Sophie Calle, *On a trop déconné - Cul de sac* [We've screwed up too much], 2023. Framed text, framed lyrics. Claire Dorn © Adagp, Paris 2024.
- 6 Michel Journiac, *Dispositif meurtre et inauguration* [Murder Device and Inauguration], 1985. Digital Beta video, colour, sound, 12'12". Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn/Service Audiovisuel du Centre Pompidou. Adagp, Paris 2024.
- 7 Éric Pougeau, *Mes chéris*, 2004. Ink on paper, 21.5 x 14.5 cm. Antoine de Galbert Collection, Paris. Photo © Célia Pernot.
- 8 Absalon, *Assassinats*, 1993. Video film, colour, sound, 23'. Musée d'Art Contemporain de Marseille collection. Photo © Vincent Ecochard.

9 Philippe Ramette, *Le suicide des objets : le fauteuil* [The Suicide of Objects: the Armchair], 2001. Installation: wooden stool and armchair, rope, dimensions variable. Collection Frac Grand Large - Hauts-de-France. Adagp, Paris 2024. Photo © DR.

10 Ben, *A Flux Suicide Kit*, 1966. Collection macLYON. Adagp, Paris, 2024. Ben Vautier. Photo © Blaise Adilon.

11 Claude Closky, *Soucoupe volante, rue Pierre Dupont (6)* [Flying Saucer, rue Pierre Dupont (6)], 1996. Colour photograph, digital photomontage, 30.2 x 20.2 cm. Collection MAC VAL - Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne. Claude Closky.

12 Stephen Chalmers, *Connie Elis*, 2009. "Unmarked" series Photograph, 60 x 75 cm. Stephen Chalmers.

13 Jacques Monory, *Énigme n°26*, 1996. Oil on canvas, 195 x 520 cm. Collection MAC VAL - Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne. Adagp, Paris 2024. Photo © Jacques Faujour. Adagp, Paris 2024.

"Some or all of the works in this press kit are protected by copyright. ADAGP works (www.adagp.fr) may be published under the following conditions:

- For publications in the press for which there is a signed agreement with ADAGP: refer to the stipulations of the agreement.

- For other press publications:

- Exemption for the first two works illustrating an article devoted to a fait-divers directly related to them and in a maximum format of 1/4 page.

- Reproductions beyond this number or format will be subject to reproduction/representation fees.

- Any reproduction on the cover or front page must be authorised by the ADAGP press department.

- The copyright to feature alongside any reproduction will comprise: name of the author, title and date of the work followed by © Adagp, Paris 2024, and this, whatever the origin of the image or the place of conservation of the work."

These conditions apply to websites with online press status, on the understanding that for online press publications, file definition is limited to 1,600 pixels (length and width combined).

Press contacts: anne samson communications

Morgane Barraud +33 (01) 40 36 84 34 morgane@annesamson.com

MAC VAL - Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne

Opening hours

Museum

Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays from 11 am to 6 pm.

Last tickets sold 30 minutes before closing time.

Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 15 August and 25 December.

Garden Michel Germa

Free acces

Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 6pm.