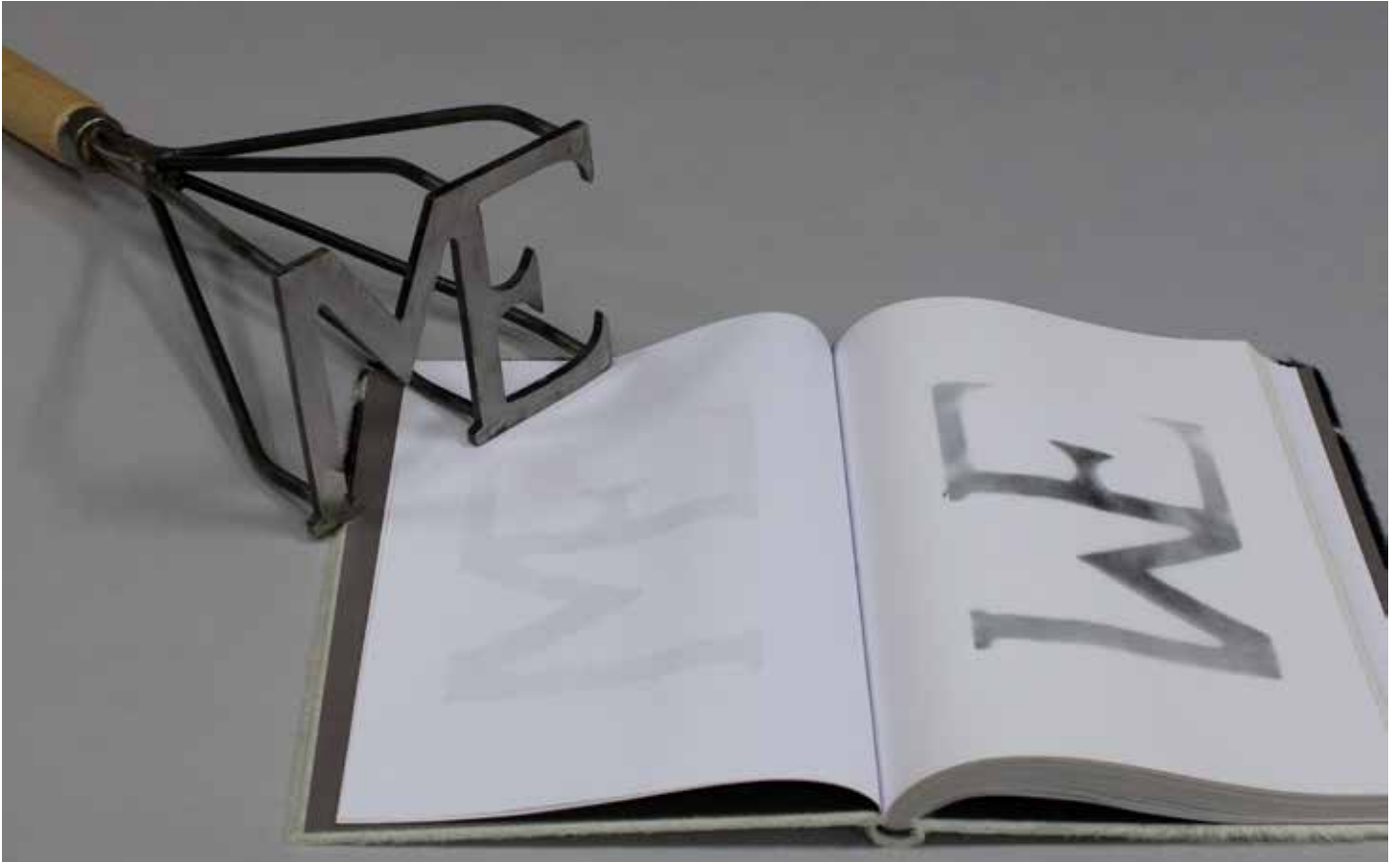




LA FERME DU BUISSON  
CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

press kit



# LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE GRISE

CH.4: « OBJETS PARLANTS » JÉRÔME DUPEYRAT  
AND LAURENT SFAR

EXHIBITION: 7 NOV - 28 FEB

PRESS PREVIEW: FRI 6 NOV 11 AM

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# The exhibition

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**Since its beginnings in 2015 *La Bibliothèque grise* [The Grey Library] has been a hub of resources and initiator for productions and cultural events exploring the circulation of knowledge and skills, with a view to testing out forms of transmission and sharing.**

The library comprises books, documentary material, films, images and other odds and ends collected or made by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar and arranged in five categories resulting from their intermeshing reading: “Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts”, “A History of Reading”, “A Room of One’s Own”, “How to Inhabit the Earth” and “La Parole mangée” [“Speech Eaten”]<sup>1</sup> – titles of books by, respectively, Robert Filliou, Alberto Manguel, Virginia Woolf, Yona Friedman and Louis Marin.

At La Ferme du Buisson the fourth chapter of *La Bibliothèque grise* brings together “speaking objects” bearing messages in text and image like the “speaking” plates, illustrated with captioned playlets or rebuses, that were common in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The connections between food and transmission are a particular field of interest for *La Bibliothèque grise*, tying in with earlier research into teaching methods, reading and publishing, and allowing for arrangement by free association: Renaissance knives serving as singing scores and illustrated handkerchiefs as textbooks, models of plants made for educational purposes by Dr Louis Auzoux in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the albums first put together by the collector Jules Maciet and followed up by the librarians of the Museum Of Decorative Arts in Paris, popular imagery in prints or on plates showing the world upside down (the husband doing the housework while the wife is out enjoying herself, an ox working as a butcher, a horse leading a man out to work in the fields) and the rag dolls recording the education of Marie-Jeanne Nouvellon and demanding women’s rights since the 1960s–1970s.

Some of these objects are put into perspective in two films which resituate them or, on the contrary, displace their history and customs. Shot in 2018, *La Réserve* [The Reserves] explores the reserve collection of the National Museum of Education in Rouen, while the second, scheduled to be finished during the exhibition, will combine various historical and contemporary figures of a world stood on its head.

The use value of the *La Bibliothèque grise* collection will be heightened throughout the exhibition by protocols of activation and utilisation: gathering and cooking mushrooms grown on structures inserted into the art centre building; enjoying a meal as you sum up a study of the agro-ecological transition; collectively working through a book about what this radically changed world is going to be like.

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1 - This is a literal translation. Louis Marin's *La Parole mangée* has been published in English as *Food for Thought*.

# Program of coming events

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## [sat 7 nov](#)

**9 am – 12 noon**

**mushrooming excursion** with Patrice Lainé (French Mycological Society) around La Ferme du Buisson  
info on the meeting point: when you book

**2 – 7:30 pm**

**opening of the exhibition and launch of *Digressions #9: Jérôme Dupeyrat et Laurent Sfar [ La Bibliothèque grise]***

## [sun 22 nov](#)

**3 pm**

**guided tour of the exhibition**

**4 pm**

**screening of François Bégaudeau's film *Autonomes***, followed by a discussion with the director and Laurent Sfar at the Cinéma de la Ferme du Buisson\*

## [sat 5 dec](#)

**1 – 6 pm**

**TaxiTram excursion**

– La Ferme du Buisson

– MAC VAL - Val-de-Marne Museum of Contemporary Art

Advance booking required:

01 53 34 64 43 / [taxitram@tram-idf.fr](mailto:taxitram@tram-idf.fr)

## [wed 9 dec](#)

**7:30 pm**

**meal and discussion: urban agriculture. With a special tablecloth publication.**

Guests: Christine Aubry (AgroParisTech), Julie Lou Dubreuilh & Guillaume Leterrier (Les Bergers Urbains/Urban Shepherds)  
5 € per person

## [sat 23 jan](#)

**2 – 6 pm**

**group reading** (survey) of James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). In partnership with La Ferme du Buisson media library.

## [sun 24 jan](#)

**4:30 pm**

**performance-reading and gathering and tasting of oyster mushrooms** with author Ryōko Sekiguchi and cutler Glenn Guillou

**advance booking essential for all events**

*numbers restricted; compliance with current health measures observed*

\* admission: 7.50€

Concessions: 6€

Buissonnier: 4.50€

# Selected works

## Jérôme Dupeyrat, Sandra Foltz and Laurent Sfar, *Plans de table* [Seating plan], 2019–2020

2 printed tablecloths (150 x 290 cm) and illustrated, chromolithographed plates for 20 place settings.

With the backing of the Ile-de-France Region Cultural Affairs Office, a branch of the Ministry of Culture.

*Plans de table* [Seating plan] uses tablecloths and plates to recreate research into food and today's agricultural scene. The original project was carried out in 2019–2020 via a series of interviews with market gardeners, livestock breeders, winegrowers, agronomists and geographers.

The first tablecloth addresses the issue of the agro-ecological transition, drawing notably on the comments of farmers from France's Morvan, Dordogne, Anjou and Occitanie regions who have opted for small-scale modes of production, either from the outset or after having practised large-scale intensive agriculture. The survey also looks into matters of apprenticeship and the transmission and sharing of knowledge and practices in these regions. It is then extended into the Ile-de-France, with the second tablecloth dedicated to today's many forms of urban and periurban agriculture. Eventually, a third tablecloth will record points of view and commentaries on the concepts of transmission and commonality in the agricultural domain.

On each tablecloth the speakers' observations are summed up and dialogues recreated in speech bubbles overlaid on a lucerne pattern designed by artist Sandra Foltz. This motif was based on entwinings of the plant at different stages of its growth. Lucerne – also known as alfalfa – is a legume which, in addition to being cultivated for animal fodder, fixes nitrogen from the air, thus contributing to soil preservation and regeneration.

The arrangement of the different clusters of speech bubbles interconnects the subjects treated on the tablecloth according to a table plan for some ten guests. The plates make up an image system that complements the tablecloth with statistical diagrams borrowed from specialist food and agriculture publications. In both its design and use this table setting sees mealtime as an occasion for discussion and sharing. From the philosophical banquets of old through to modern domestic life, culinary practices provide informal situations conducive to the circulation and transmission of ideas.



## **La Réserve [The Reserves], 2018**

Film, 13 min

Originated by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar.

Directed by Jérôme Dupeyrat, Jean Guillaud and Laurent Sfar

Coproduction: La Bibliothèque grise, the BBB art centre in Toulouse, assisted by the National Museum of Education (MUNAE) in Rouen and the National Institute of Arts, Toulouse

This docufiction takes a trip through a museum reserve area. School furniture, teaching and learning materials, games and toys, educational publications and pupils' work fill the shelves and flat drawers in an arrangement reflecting the typology of the objects and the constraints of preservation. Here the history of education and teaching practice, both in and out of school, is illustrated by the random juxtaposition of highly traditional approaches and the methods described as "activity-based" and "alternative".

In the course of the visit the camera comes upon museum staff going about their work and children, looking as though they've broken in, reading, playing and eating – thus restoring the objects to their original, pre-museum functions. It might initially seem that these children are avoiding the personnel, who in turn seem aware of their presence without actually seeing them; but as the film moves on, actions and behaviour on both sides become mutually contagious.



## **Marie-Jeanne Nouvellon, (IPSOS survey August 2006) Boys get more pocket money than their sisters. Girls are protesting, 2006**

Figurines, various materials, 50 x 36 x 9.5 cm

Marie-Jeanne Nouvellon is the creator of almost 200 dolls – she calls them "figurines" – making up two series titled *The Life of Suzy B...* and *The Second Life of Suzy B...* All these items were made between 1978 and 2015, using a combination of sewing and knitting. Intended as instructive or "speaking" objects, they enable her to address women's liberation with the same blend of wit andchutzpah she brings to education and, more broadly, to a vision of society based on her own experience. This review of the social and political issues of her time is, as she herself puts it, the work of a "silent activist". Her ideas and convictions find expression in the opinions she lends to her figurines via the captioned playlets she organises both at home and in public.

Brought together and arranged by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar, Marie-Jeanne Nouvellon's figurines will be presented among a group of objects with a shared capacity to transmit or disseminate knowledge, ideas and narratives whose relevance extends beyond their historical diversity (16<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> century) and their differences of status (instructive objects, popular imagery, works of art, etc.).



# Biographies

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**Since 2015, Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar have been working on a joint art project titled *La Bibliothèque grise* [The Grey Library]. At the same time each has been following up personal projects that fuel their collaborative interests.**

**Laurent Sfar's** practice has two main focuses: publication of the *Ex-libris* series of artist's books offering visualisations of such literary texts as George Perec's *La disparition* [A Void], Charles Nodier's *Moi-même* [I Myself] and Edwin Abbott Abbott's *Flatland*; and installations in public spaces including the forest of Sénart, the National Theatre in Belfort and the Palace of Versailles gardens.

Initially a researcher, art critic and exhibition curator, **Jérôme Dupeyrat** has a particular interest in the connections between art, publishing, the media and education. Since 2010 he has also worked on numerous projects with artists and graphic designers like Laurence Cathala, David Coste, officeabc (Brice Domingues and Catherine Guiral) and Laurent Sfar.



Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar: interview with Richard Leroy and Étienne Davodeau in Leroy's vineyard in 2019. This was the initial encounter for the *Plans de table* [Seating plan] project.

# Excerpt of *Digressions* #9

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## **Digressions #9: La Bibliothèque grise** **[Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar]**

With Michel Duru, Sandra Foltz, Nathalie Leleu, Lise Lerichomme, Cécile Poblou, Yvan Poulain and Marie-Hélène Robin

Publishers: Captures Éditions/La Ferme du Buisson, 2020

To mark the exhibition *La Bibliothèque grise – ch. 4, “Objets parlants”*, the *Digressions* series is welcoming a presentation of *La Bibliothèque grise* via transcription of a conversation between researchers, art critics, educationalists, agronomists and artists. This is a record of the discussions during a meal organised by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar in response to a tablecloth-survey made public during the exhibition at La Ferme du Buisson. Among the topics were books and reading, education and teaching methods, food and culinary practices, and agriculture and ecology – a range of interests *La Bibliothèque grise* is exploring through the rationale of differing interpretations and “neighbourliness”.

### Excerpt

**La Bibliothèque grise:** They’re what we call “speaking objects”, [a](#) borrowing from the term “speaking plates” – the illustrated plates made between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and notably captioned with rebuses.

**Yvan** [*trying to decipher the rebuses on his plate*]: Or even real stories told in numbered sketches.

**LBG:** We also classify as speaking objects the works of Marie-Jeanne Nouvellon, which we’re interested in as part of a film we’re currently making. This is an 87-year-old woman who has devoted a substantial part of her life to creating knitted and sewn dolls, part Barbie and part miniature sculptures, which she calls “figurines” and which carry biographical and political messages. She initially intended them as didactic, with a view to educating her own children and grandchildren.

**Yvan:** What led her to that?

**LBG:** Ignoring her own wishes, her parents saddled her with a Catholic education and vocational training as a dressmaker. Above all they wanted her to marry, which she did – but to a man whose secular and political commitments she shared. Combining reaction against her upbringing with assiduous reading of the press, she developed a critical awareness of her own and became what she calls a “silent activist”. It’s her figurines, systematically accompanied by a caption and sometimes by signs or placards, that speak for her.

**Yvan:** And what do they talk about?

**LBG:** The education of young women in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, criticism of the Catholic Church, and women’s liberation in the 1960s–1970s. Repeatedly the figurines express themselves in domestic terms: a woman is shown saying to her male partner, “The dishes first, the revolution afterwards” or “Darling, I’m counting on you to make the dinner.”

**Lise:** From the Middle Ages to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was the popular imagery of a world stood on its head: the husband doing the housework while the wife is out enjoying herself (or sometimes, even, beating her man), an ox working as a butcher and a horse leading its owner out to work in the fields.

**LBG:** For the exhibition at La Ferme du Buisson we’ve brought together images relating to this theme, on both “speaking plates” and printed fabrics. This kind of motif also has a typically carnival side to it. James C. Scott points up the “infra-politics”<sup>1</sup> of these representations and the way – like other narratives and recurring behaviour patterns in the everyday culture of dominated groups – they enabled more or less clandestine circulation of subversive ideas. This kind of role reversal between men and women or between humans and animals is frequent in Goya’s work too, and for the film we’re currently working on we plan to reactivate his *El Pelele*: four women bouncing a male puppet up and down on a sheet.<sup>2</sup>

2 - James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 189

2 - Francisco de Goya, *El Pelele*, 1791–1792, oil on canvas, 267 × 160 cm.



# Publications

## Digressions series

Launched in 2017, *Digressions* is a series of interviews with artists published in association with Éditions Captures: group conversations bearing on the Art Centre's programme that take the reader behind the scenes with accounts of the thinking, research and methodology underpinning specific projects, and sometimes the doubts and the trial and error that fuel creative work. Handsomely printed on fine, distinctively coloured papers, these bilingual booklets are accompanied by postcards documenting the various completed projects. Claire Moreux's elegantly dynamic layout mirrors the intricacies of the ideas by inviting the reader to literally navigate through the text. In letting artists have their say, the series brings us voices which, while retaining their singularity, intermingle in explorations of shared concerns with performance, exhibition styles, physical and political commitment and the opening up of artistic disciplines.

Published:

*Digressions #1: Kapwani Kiwanga*

*Digressions #2: Benjamin Seror*

*Digressions #3: Alex Cecchetti*

*Digressions #4: Virginie Yassef*

*Digressions #5: Céline Ahond*

*Digressions #6: Béatrice Balcou*

*Digressions #7: Myriam Lefkowitz*

*Digressions #8: Marie Preston*

*Digressions #5 : Céline Ahond © Marie Madonna*



# Press visuals



*La Bibliothèque grise – ch. 2 : La Réserve, a hands-on collection curated by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar, 2018, BBB art centre - Toulouse, photo © Yohann Gozard.*



*La Bibliothèque grise – ch. 2 : La Réserve, a hands-on collection curated by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar, 2018, with the figurines of Marie-Jeanne Nouvellon, BBB art centre - Toulouse, photo © Yohann Gozard.*

*La Bibliothèque grise – ch. 2 : La Réserve, a hands-on collection curated by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar, 2018, with Sandra Foltz's Digna Robert #6 (1565), 2018, BBB art centre - Toulouse, photo © Yohann Gozard.*





Jérôme Dupeyrat, Sandra Foltz and Laurent Sfar, *Plans de table* [Seating plan], 2019–2020, printed tablecloths and illustrated plates. With the backing of the Ministry of Culture's Ile-de-France Region Cultural Affairs Office.



*La Bibliothèque grise – ch. 2 : La Réserve*, a hands-on collection curated by Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar, 2018, BBB art centre - Toulouse, photo © Yohann Gozard.

Jérôme Dupeyrat and Laurent Sfar, *La Réserve* [The Reserves], 2018, film co-directed with Jean Guillaud, co-production: La Bibliothèque grise and BBB art centre - Toulouse. Made with the assistance of the National Museum of Education (MUNAE) and the National Institute of the Arts, Toulouse.



# The Art centre

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## Centre for Contemporary Art of National Interest

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 2020 La Ferme du Buisson Centre for Contemporary Art was granted certification as a «Centre for Contemporary Art of National Interest» in recognition of its aid to artists and its overall commitment to experimentation.

Created in 2017 for venues practising “exhibitions, production of artworks and dissemination of visual and contemporary art”, certification CACIN (Centre for Contemporary Art of National Interest) testifies to official recognition and support for an arts centre’s commitment to the visual arts and involvement with the public. It highlights the quality of the help given to artists and an overall spirit of experimentation, with an emphasis on creativity and its transmission. As of February 2020, twenty-seven art centres had been granted certification.

An integral part of the Ferme du Buisson’s multidisciplinary project, since 1991 the Centre for Contemporary Art has been supporting artistic creation through its activities in the fields of production, diffusion and publishing. Placing the emphasis on emerging artists or international artists little known in France, the Centre specialises in performance, multidisciplinary and experimental approaches to exhibiting.

## Exhibitions

One aim of the Centre’s programme is interaction between Contemporary art and other disciplines, notably the theatre, dance and cinema, and also the social sciences: economics, philosophy, anthropology, etc. Envisaging the art scene as an essential part of the broader social, political and cultural context, the programme includes solo and group shows, publications, encounters, screenings and performances. Adamantly forward-looking, it hinges on a performative view of art that gives pride of place to process and experimentation.

## Not just exhibitions

In addition to its exhibition programme, the Centre for Contemporary Art promotes rapprochement between the visual and performing arts with its performance festival and an artist’s residency. It designs projects in tandem with National Theatre and Movie Theatre, and with numerous local and international partners. It also develops editions in relation with the artists and provides innovative guided tours of its exhibitions devised by cultural mediators or artists.

## An atypical venue

The Centre’s events take place in 7 exhibition rooms – a total area of 600 m<sup>2</sup> – in the oldest section of the site: a mid-18th century Brie region farmhouse whose spectacular framing still remains in place. Sometimes the events also find their way into the Ferme du Buisson’s theatre, its cinema, its outdoor spaces, and various off-site venues.

# VISITOR INFORMATION

La Ferme du Buisson  
Centre for Contemporary Art  
allée de la Ferme  
77186 Noisiel  
France

## infos

+33 (0)1 64 62 77 00  
contact@lafermedubuisson.com  
lafermedubuisson.com

## how to get here

— by train  
RER A towards Marne-La-Vallée, get off  
at Noisiel (20 mins from Paris)  
— by car  
A4 towards Marne-la-Vallée  
exit Noisiel-Torcy, take the Noisiel- Lizard road

## opening hours

Wednesday – Sunday, 2 – 7:30 pm  
until 9 pm performance evenings

## admission

free

## guided tours for the family

— workshops for parents and children aged 5+  
Every second Wednesday and during school  
holidays  
5 € per child, book ahead  
— story time visit  
December 27th and February 21st  
aged 3+  
5 € per child, book ahead  
— exhibition with a snack, 1st Sunday of the  
month, 4 pm  
general public  
— «new style» visits every Saturday at 6 pm  
— guided tours on request groups  
— book ahead:  
rp@lafermedubuisson.com

La Ferme du Buisson Centre for Contemporary Art is supported by the Ile-de-France Region Cultural Affairs Office/Ministry of Culture and Communication; the Communauté d'Agglomération de Paris - Vallée de la Marne ; the Seine-et-Marne Département; and the Ile-de-France Region. It is a member of the Relais network of art centres in Seine-et-Marne, the Ile-de-France contemporary art network Tram, and d.c.a., the French Association for the Development of Art Centres.



d.c.a

