

CAC Brétigny

Contemporary Art Center
of National Interest
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Sâr Dubnotal

co-curated by
Damien Delille and
Céline Poulin,
with the assistance of
Céline Gatel

19.09—05.12.20

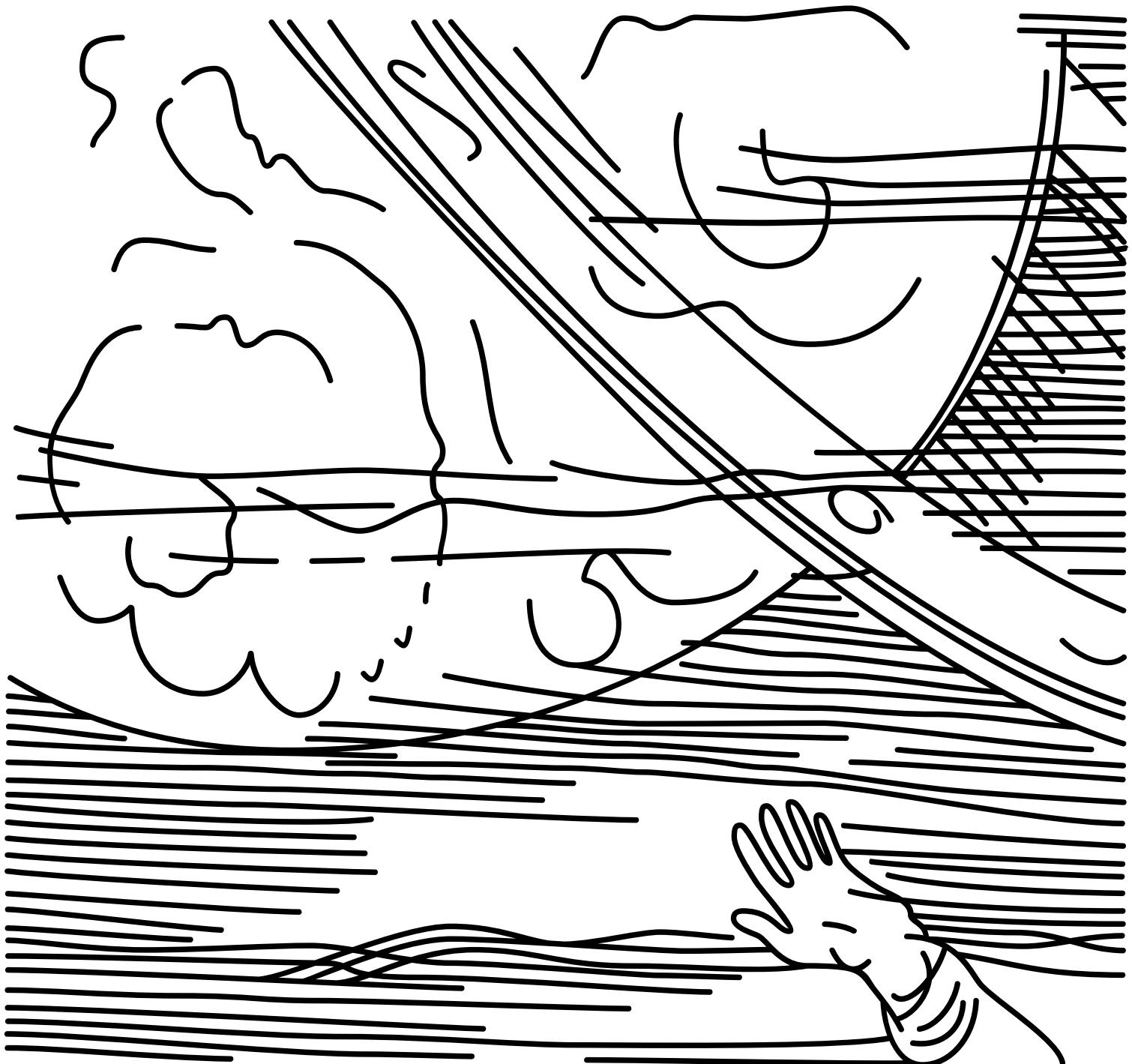
Opening
Saturday, September 19th
3 pm—7 pm

Press release [1–3]

Free shuttle Paris-Brétigny
available. All requests at:
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Sâr Dubnatal, inquiry into the queer

Sâr Dubnatal is the principal character of a series of pulp novels published anonymously (probably by Norbert Sevestre) in 1909–10. The series would eventually comprise twenty episodes. One of the first “detectives of the strange” in the history of superheroes was inspired by the art critic and organizer of Symbolist exhibitions Joséphin Péladan, who adopted the name Sâr. Considered in his day an eccentric and a danger to the rules of propriety, Péladan was a great fan of the poses and posturings of artists who were extravagant and mystics. Able to levitate, communicate telepathically, and hypnotize his enemies, Péladan’s alter ego Sâr Dubnatal is a hybrid many-sided character in search of a murky, surprising world. In light of rational modern man, Sâr Dubnatal/Péladan exalted lifestyles and ways of social interaction that fell outside the norms. Artifice and trickery were an integral part of his identity. Clothes, superpowers, individual or communal rituals, and fetish pieces of furniture and objects are artifices that have been dear to artists from the late-19th century on.

The figure of Sâr Dubnatal/Péladan is the starting point for this transhistorical show. The several generations of artists invited to take part have constructed stories of fantastic epics, symbolist artifacts, and recreations of the self, giving expression to the fluidity of genders and norms. All of the works on display fall under the banner of the “disidentification” conceptualized by the Cuban-American theoretician José Esteban Muñoz; the term was an emblem of the rejection of stable categories. But whatever the period, the invention of new visual idioms pushes political strategies towards an attractive poetic language that is equal to the task of complexifying the circulation of pleasure and affects. The invited artists have sought to imagine new chimeras that are in constant dialogue with the survival of ghosts of the past.

“Sâr Dubnatal” brings together a multiplicity of works of art, some of which were especially produced for the show. They include different mediums and artistic fields, as well as archival documents, historical works, and original reproductions. Conceived as a moment of research and work in progress “Sâr Dubnatal” incorporates several different timeframes and spaces. The show will also feature a booklet that will go over the historical and theoretical issues that are in play; a research-action section will give rise to performances¹ and workshops, notably at the Classe Préparatoire Arts Visuels Grand Paris Sud (Evry) and the Fleury-Mérogis detention center²; finally the CAC Revue will provide a forum for the writing of certain researchers who are taking part in these reflections³.

Damien Delille and Céline Poulin

Notes

- 1 In dialogue with Thomas Conchou's "NO NO DESIRE DESIRE" cycle at the Maison populaire of Montreuil.
- 2 Workshops designed with the assistance of Elena Lespes Muñoz, Communication and Public Outreach Manager, and co-editor of the *Revue*.
- 3 Camille Back, Clovis Maillet and others.

Damien Delille is a lecturer in contemporary art history at Université Lumière Lyon 2. His publications deal with the history of art and fashion at the turn of the century, focusing on the intersections of gender and masculinity studies, queer theory, and the history of sexuality (articles in scholarly reviews and exhibition catalogues on Jean Delville, Charles Filiger, and Elisàr von Kupffer). He was a research fellow at the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), where he curated the exhibition "Christian Lacroix et les arts de la scène" (2014), and worked on art programing at the Nouveaux commanditaires de la Fondation de France and for a range of television programs (Canal + and Paris Première). Brepols Publishers is scheduled to publish his doctoral thesis, which he defended in 2015 at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. This study examines the artistic sources of androgynous masculine identities in their relations with turn-of-the-century queer cultures. Also slated for joint publication with INHA-Les arts décoratifs, an anthology on the history of fashion from the 10th to the 21st century featuring some thirty contributors.

Céline Poulin has served as the director of CAC Brétigny since June 2016. Her vision for the art center, like her earlier programs and exhibitions, evinces her focus on reception as well as collaboration, information and communications arrangements. In this regard, she has mounted, for example, the group shows "Vocales" and "Desk Set," as well as the first solo shows in France of Liz Magic Laser and Núria Güell. Céline Poulin has also curated a number of programs of exhibitions and events, including notably "Les Incessants" at La Villa du Parc in Annemasse in 2016; "A SPACE IS A SPACE IS A SPACE" at DAZ in Berlin in 2015 in partnership with BDAP of the Institut français; "Traucum" at Parc Saint Léger in 2014; "Brigadoon" at La Tôlerie in 2013; and "Les belles images" at La Box in 2009-2010. From 2015 to 2018 she codirected with Marie Preston (with the assistance of Stéphanie Airaud) the seminar "Legacies and modalities of co-creation practices," produced by Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis, CAC Brétigny, and MAC VAL, in partnership with La Villa Vassilieff. This work was an extension of *Micro-Séminaire*, which was published in 2013 and theorized curatorial practices occurring outside of the usual designated spaces. That gave rise to *Co-Création*, which was jointly published by Empire and CAC Brétigny. Ms. Poulin is a cofounder and member of the curatorial collective Bureau/, which is behind a dozen exhibitions. She is also a member of IKT and C-E-A.

A public service of Cœur d'Essonne Agglomération, CAC Brétigny, Contemporary art center of national interest, benefits from the support of Ministère de la Culture—DRAC Île-de-France, Région Île-de-France and Conseil départemental de l'Essonne, and with the complicity of the Brétigny-sur-Orge's municipality. CAC Brétigny is a member of TRAM and d.c.a. The exhibition «Sâr Dubnotal» will feature loans from the City of Angers—Public Library, the Lyon Public Library, the Bibliothèque de Rennes Métropole—Champs Libres (City of Rennes Library—Champs Libres), the Anger University Library—Belle Beille, the Ville de Paris—Bibliothèque des littératures policières (City of Paris—Crime Literature Library), the Nantes Museum of Arts—Nantes Métropole, the Jersey Heritage Collections, the Centre national des arts plastiques (National Centre for Visual Arts, France), the Bureau Gallery (New York), the Crèvecœur Gallery (Paris), the Christophe Gaillard Gallery (Paris), the Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi (Berlin), the Edouard Montassut Gallery (Paris), the Esther Shipper Gallery (Berlin), the Galerie Marcelle Alix (Paris); benefits from the support of the Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris) and the Mégisserie Alric.