

Contemporary Art Center
of National Interest
Rue Henri Douard
F-91220 Brétigny-sur-Orge
+33 (0)1 60 85 20 76
info@cacbretigny.com
cacbretigny.com

Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin

From a proposal by
Marie Bechetoille

Scenography: Romain Guillet

Opening
Sunday, October 13th,
from 12 pm
Brunch 12:30 pm
Performance 2 pm

Press contact
Elena Lespes Muñoz
e.lespesmunoz@
cacbretigny.com
+33 (0)1 60 85 20 76

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Slash Universe, by Marie Bechetoille

Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin met about a dozen years ago in Montreal. It was the beginning of a deep connection based on art and friendship. Both have taken indirect paths to get to where they are today, practicing sports at an advanced level, for instance, while bonding over numerous references. In performance they have found a way of feeling, sparking, and sharing emotions by bringing in their own lived experiences. In her shows, the choreographer Dana Michel is able to summon on stage multiple identities that embody the relationship between fragility and violence, vulnerability and self-mockery, the grotesque and the sublime. Depending on the context, Yoan Sorin mixes and appropriates for his own ends artistic and cultural codes through drawing, installation, painting, and performance. His role as an art advisor for Dana Michel is a way for both of them to keep in touch and continue their discussion. Their family backgrounds link both to the Caribbean, they create a cartography that is eclectic, polysemic, and indistinct, one that resists being defined or pinned down. The presence of autobiographic elements is a chance to elude projections and deploy possibilities. The body sets in motion personal stories and daily gestures to speak about the margins, the issues that power raises, and connections with others. By their reversal of established hierarchies, the odd and the intimate are united.

At CAC Brétigny, Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin have been invited for the first time to work together with and on the things they have been thinking about and hungering after, their reflections and their dreams, in the form of a joint exhibition, offering assemblages, visits, and breaks from reality. Thanks to the designer Romain Guillet, the art center's space has been reimagined as a place for experimentation, something that is modular and evolving. At the start, midway through, and at the end of this project, performances will reactivate the installation. The works are at one and the same time sculptures, paintings, props, settings, pedestals, and bases. They seem to be hiding behind masks and are rediscovered, looming up transformed. These shifts and evolutions allow each visitor to imagine a subjective intuitive narrative. "Slash Universe" is an environment in which nothing is fixed so that improvisation can thrive. The show speaks of a friendship, an open correspondence between two artists who enjoy producing work together. Gradually a place forms and comes into focus, where one is constantly changing direction, boredom is never a bad experience, and failure is a rebound, where one parries and reappropriates expectation, and everything remains to be invented.

Marie Bechetoille
Guest curator

Aesthetics of use, uses of aesthetics: first movement, artifice, by Céline Poulin

Having been a stumbling block for two years, Alterism has become a methodology that we use in each of our projects, always working at the limits between disciplines, fields, registers, cultures, and subjectivities. Today at CAC we are blazing a new trail that we intend to follow for each of the upcoming projects, at the intersection of various reflections on the issues that art is currently dealing with and the uses to which an art center can be put precisely where it is located. Over the next few years, we shall be thinking about the esthetics of use and the uses of esthetics. While many are raising the question of art centers' societal responsibilities and their role in the city, it seems important to us to study the connections between the forms and uses they produce and vice versa. CAC Brétigny is joining with artists, researchers, curators, and art lovers to grapple with these questions. Tools and technological advances, but also culture in the broad sense of the term, are at the heart of thinking about our practices and art's place in customs, at work, or in daily life. The first movement of *Esthétiques de l'usage, usages de l'esthétique* (Esthetics of Use, Uses of Esthetics) will tackle the notion of artifice.

Artifice is often contrasted with nature, whereas it is an integral part of reality, "To sing about the world is to sing about its artifice... to give up artifice is to leave existence behind and die," Clément Rosset writes. And indeed, so-called natural laws are going to be used to legitimize ideological principles, summoned to naturalize singularities that are nevertheless cultural or lend support to power relationships and reject Otherness and difference. Championing artifice would thus consist of considering all the aspects of reality, which may seem bizarre, even irrational, rather than circumscribing it in a concept that is limited and often moralistic. Again, according to Clément Rosset, "We can distinguish three main ways of practicing artifice for an artist according to whether they want to be artificial because of disgust at a nature that is considered disappointing (naturalist practice); because of nostalgia for an absent nature (quasi-artificialist practice); or because of pleasure in the absence of nature (artificialist practice)... Through the different practices of artifice, generally it is reality that appears to be denied, tolerated, or embraced."

We will therefore focus particularly on artistic practices that celebrate or reflect the artificiality of the world. We posit that the use of art (to decorate a space, create clothing, point up a social situation, experiment with materials, produce new narratives, etc.) will make it possible to shed light on this part of artifice that is inseparable from reality. In "*Vie et mort des super-héros*" (Life and Death of Superheroes), which deals with Jon Favreau's Iron Man, Laurent de Sutter wrote that "the history of Western thought is indeed the history of being inasmuch as the latter can be presented as poor, i.e., being is what remains when the accessories that conceal or extend it are removed: being is nudity. What Stark's poseur attitude reveals is that the above is a mistake. If there is being, it only exists in the accessories equipping, supplementing and augmenting it, and without which it is nothing." No being without accessories, no use without esthetics, no identity without a costume.

CAC Brétigny has invited Marie Bechetoille for the opening show of its latest cycle, and her curatorial practice indeed resonates with these questions. From the 2012 show “*Les Innommables grotesques*” to Fanfiction 93 (a non-profit organization), her projects reflect among other things an intersectionnal feminist thinking located exactly in the places that she and her team of artists come to inhabit. The curator brings together artists, choreographers, actors, graphic and stage designers, and with them elaborates group projects that are stamped by a dynamics of conversation and sharing. When I invited Marie Bechetoille to come up with a show for CAC Brétigny and forwarded to her these excerpts and reflections, she immediately thought of the art duo Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin, whose work she has been following for several years now. She also thought of creating some kind of interaction with the CAC space in working alongside the designer Romain Guillet. The show’s title was inspired by several things but particularly *Steven Universe*, an animated film by Rebecca Sugar that clearly refers to this work logic and interweaving of identities through the contact with others, where each person is transformed and nourished by others in a colorful delirium, an embodied rainbow.

Céline Poulin
Director of the CAC Brétigny

Biographies

Dana Michel is a Montreal-based choreographer and performer. She earned a BFA in contemporary dance from Concordia University and in 2011 was the recipient of a “danceWeb” grant (Vienna). She was a resident of Usine C (Montreal) and the National Center for Dance in Ottawa. In 2014, Dana Michel was awarded the ImPuls Tanz Prize (Vienna). Her solo piece *Mercurial George* was performed at the Festival TransAmériques (Montreal) in 2016. In 2017, she was awarded the Silver Lion for innovative dance at the Venice Biennale. In 2018, she became the first artist in residence for dance at the National Arts Centre of Ottawa. Dana Michel is an associate artist with Par B.L.eux, a contemporary dance company founded and directed by Benoît Lachambre.

Yoan Sorin lives and works in Douarnenez, France. He is a graduate of the School of Fine Arts in Nantes and the universities of Montreal and Cuenca. His drawings, paintings, videos, and performances break down the distinctions between popular culture and art. His work has been featured at La Friche Belle de Mai (Marseille, 2015), Frac des Pays de la Loire (Nantes, 2016), A-Frame (La Courneuve, 2017), MNAC (Bucharest, 2016), Nada lokal (Vienna, 2018), Hunter East Harlem Gallery (New York, 2018) and 40mcube (Rennes, 2019). He joined the company nadaproductions as a dancer and designer in 2017, and collaborate with 14N61W Gallery in Fort-de-France (Haiti) since 2018.

Marie Bechetoille is a curator and art critic. She was interim director of the contemporary art center La Synagogue de Delme (2016-2017), project coordinator at Bétonsalon—art and research center in Paris (2012-2014), and exhibition assistant at the Swiss Institute in New York (2010), the Palais de Tokyo (2009), and MAMVP (2007). In her projects she has notably experimented with the relationships between curatorial and publishing formats in working with artists, curators, graphic designers and designers. She has put together shows at Bucharest’s National Museum of Contemporary Art, the Quartier in Quimper, 6b in Saint-Denis, and In extenso in Clermont-Ferrand. In 2013, she cofounded the association Fanfiction 93, which publishes works in Seine-Saint-Denis according to a collective collaborative approach. She is a member of C-E-A (a French association of exhibition curators), AICA (the International Association of Art Critics), and the editorial board of *La belle revue*.

Romain Guillet is a Paris-based designer developing his work in a range of contexts, including set design, furniture, the living arts, and CGI. Between 2008 and 2010, he was part of the team put together by Mathieu Lehanneur, and during the same period cofounded *Statue*, a studio specialized in the design of objects, and later the residency and publishing house *Dixjours* in 2016. In 2018, in Paris, he opened a project space called *Confort Mental* that is dedicated to collaborative production modes and ways of working. At the same time he has designed furniture and interiors for the Pompidou Center in Paris and Malaga, the Beaux Arts of Paris, the Palais de Tokyo, and Toulouse’s Printemps de septembre, and regularly collaborates with Lafayette Anticipations.

A Choreographer's Handbook, Jonathan Burrows (Excerpts)

During our first collaboration, Dana recommended me this book. She had just read it and found that the way in which the world of the British choreographer was described was very funny, and at the same time very precise. This book became an important piece in the construction of our work: it calls for a similar methodology and the different statements could be applied to our work. By translating emotions and intentions by short sentences, Jonathan Burrows concisely develops the activities and questions to work in the creative process. This book also translates a non-narrative way of approaching a theme. We can open the book page 20 and go back without losing the sense. Here are some excerpts.

Yoan Sorin

*Collaboration/Audience*¹

Collaboration:

Collaboration is about choosing the right people to work with, and then trusting them. You don't, however, have to agree about everything. Collaboration is sometimes about finding the right way to disagree.

In the gap between what you each agree with, and what you disagree with, is a place where you might discover something new. It will most likely be something you recognise when you see it, but didn't know that you knew. This is the reason to collaborate.

When you allow yourself to make a discovery, then there's something for the audience to discover. When you try to agree too much with your collaborators then there's nothing new to discover, either for you or for the audience.

Audience:

The audience like to have a job to do.

Collaboration:

From the writer Adrian Heathfield: “It’s not as if, in a collaboration, you’re moving towards what that other person has said, you’re moving towards what they haven’t said.”

From “The Frequently Asked”, a durational lecture performance organised by Tim Etchells and Adrian Heathfield, Tanzquartier Vienna, November 24th 2007.

From the writer Joe Kelleher: “Collaborating is like two people banging their heads against each other, and the collaboration is the bruises that are left behind.”

Joe Kelleher, Ibid.

Collaboration:

Talking is only one way to collaborate.

Talking shouldn’t become an easy escape from the frustrations which might, eventually, lead you somewhere.

Try also not talking too much.

Collaboration:

There are not many people in this world who you can collaborate with successfully, and when you find one you should treasure them. Sometimes, however, being alone for a while might be the best way to treasure them.

Collaboration:

With a bit of luck, your collaborator can lift you out of those occasional moments of despair when one wrong turn causes you to believe that everything is lost. You in turn might offer them, from time to time, a little more perspective than they can manage alone.

[...]

*Keeping it going / Pacing*²

Keeping it going:

You've found some movement, or words, or other material that shows something of the quality you're looking for.
How long can you keep it going for and still hold the attention of the audience?

This is another possible definition of choreography: "A way to keep things going" (see also "Rate of change").

The paradox is that you have to make the right next move, but when you do it's not that important; sometimes it only becomes visible when it's wrong. Sometimes the right next move slots into place like a jigsaw piece, and then disappears.

Keeping it going:

The most ideal choreography needs no choreography. In this ideal choreography one thing follows another and all the choices arise from concentration alone (see also "Principles").

Choreography is what you do when you get stuck.

Notes

[1] Jonathan Burrows, *A choreographer's handbook*, Routledge, 2010. p. 58-60

[2] *ibid*, p.83

Images



Dana Michel, *Territoires Extra* residency, 2018, Domaine du Dourven, Trédrez-Locquémeau, France. Residency organized by Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, France. Photo: Fanny Trichet.



Dana Michel, *Territoires Extra* residency, 2018, Domaine du Douven, Trédrez-Locquémeau, France. Residency organized by Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, France. Photo: Fanny Trichet.



Yoan Sorin, *Territoires Extra* residency, 2018, Domaine du Dourven, Trédrez-Locquémeau, France. Residency organized by Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, France. Photo: Fanny Trichet.



Yoan Sorin, in the foreground. *Ear, handle, handle*, 2016. View of the exhibition "*Helter Skelter, une copie sans modèle*", Frac Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France, 2017. Photo: Fanny Trichet.

Agenda

Sunday, October 13th, from 12 pm
Opening

Opening of “Slash Universe” at CAC Brétigny and “Don’t be a stranger!” at the Théâtre Brétigny, with a special performance by Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin.
Brunch open to all starting at 12:30 pm.

Free shuttle is available. Pick up at 11:30 am at 104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris (the Bibliothèque François Mitterrand metro stop). Request at reservation@cacbretigny.com

Saturday, November 9, 4 pm
Performance by Yoan Sorin

The art center’s space has been reimagined as a place for experimentation, something that is modular and evolving. At the start, midway through, and at the end of this project, performances will reactivate the installation.

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Sunday, December 15th, 4 pm
Official closing of the exhibition with a special performance by Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin

The art center’s space has been reimagined as a place for experimentation, something that is modular and evolving. At the start, midway through, and at the end of this project, performances will reactivate the installation.

Free shuttle is available. Pick up at 104 avenue de France, 75013 Paris (the Bibliothèque François Mitterrand metro stop). Request at reservation@cacbretigny.com

The ABCC of CACB, Charles Mazé & Coline Sunier

For the “Slash Universe” exhibition, artists Dana Michel and Yoan Sorin have created a series of 14 drawings illustrating upcoming actions during the exhibition:

BOIRE SES LARMES 🥹👄, 🔄🌱 SE CACHER SOUS UN ROCHER, SOURIRE AVEC UNE ALLURE DE COWBOY EN RETIRANT SES LUNETTES 😊🕶️, 🦵🦵 _ ÊTRE AU DESSUS DU SOL, S’HABILLER EN RAMPANT 🐛👕🦵, FRAPPER DES MAINS ET DES PIEDS 🖐️👉👉 🦵🔄🦵, Rouler dans un trou 🧑🔄👤, MARCHER EN ZIGZAG 🧑🏃, SE CACHER À DEUX LES CHEVEUX NOUÉS 🧑🧑 AVEC DEUX GRANDS BRAS 💪💪🌻 RAMASSER DES OBJETS, SE REGARDER PENDANT QUE DES OBJETS TOMBENT 👁️👁️👁️📦👤🍎👤, METTRE DES CLOPES DANS 🖐️👤 UN VERRE À BALLON EN 🍷 ÉQUILIBRE, ⚖️🧑🦵🦵👤 DONNER L’IMPRESSION DE DANSER AVEC DES JAMBES MOLLES SUR UNE VALISE, FAIRE DU YO-YO AVEC UNE PERSONNE ENROULÉE DANS UN FIL 🧑🎈🔄🧑, 🧑🧑🕶️ PARTAGER UNE PERRUQUE ET DES LUNETTES.

These drawings, which contain both the representation of the action and its textual description, were made spontaneously on a tactile tablet by Yoan Sorin and then patiently redesigned to be integrated into the LARA typography as emoji.

As part of their residency, Coline Sunier & Charles Mazé create an alphabet based on a collection of letters, signs, and symbols from a variety of contexts and time frames involving both CAC Brétigny and the larger territory covered by the art center, as well as artists invited to exhibit their work. This corpus is now embodied in a new typography called LARA. LARA has been activated on each communication supports, which are considered publication and dissemination points for the collection. By associating multiple voices within the same typography whose glyphs continue to grow in number, with writings that are by turns vernacular, institutional, personal, and public, the ABCC of CACB is an attempt to publish the geographic, political and artistic context in which CAC Brétigny is found. The alphabet is online at www.cacbretigny.com/en/lara.

“Don’t be a stranger!”, Antoine Medes and Louise Aleksiejew

Cycle 1, 20.09—15.12.19

Exhibition at Théâtre Brétigny

September 20th to December, 15th 2019

A joint project with Théâtre Brétigny

Antoine Medes and Louise Aleksiejew were invited to produce a three-part exhibition, evolving around the programming cycles of the Théâtre Brétigny: "Si loin si proche" (So far so close, September—December 2019), "La loi du plus fort" (The law of the strongest, January—March 2020) and "Rien ne va plus" (April—June 2020).

“The voice is emotional, filled with sham confidence: <Don’t be a stranger!> And another promises in the same tone to do their best to stay in touch so that their friendship will not wither away.

Steeped in an outdated romanticism, the vintage popular expression in English demanding that you promise to meet again in the future is troubling all the same. A connection that has to be revived by such a warning, to what sort of longevity can it lay claim?

Here is a warning that goes beyond the private sphere and subtly recalls those whom the vagaries of life uproot from their home environment. What personal development, or even what survival can you hope for when you are isolated from any and all social contract, on the margins of material, psychological and emotional support which the social contract procures for all members of your community?

Beyond our domestic networks, each person is a stranger to others in the end. This fate points to two solutions. The first consists in slipping into the whole of human relations in order to become known to one and all, this ubiquity guaranteeing forever the security of body and soul. The second, more likely, lies in the word <solidarity>.”

Antoine Medes and Louise Aleksiejew

The visual artists Antoine Medes (born in 1994 in Mont-Saint-Aignan) and Louise Aleksiejew (born in 1994 in Caen) have been developing a collaborative body of work since 2014 along with their individual output. Grounded in a reflection on the history of pictorial or narrative representations, in which art history, comic strips, and animation are blended, the work of this artist duo is guided by the drawing they do together. It is a ravenous practice that absorbs, digests, and transforms shared references and mutual borrowings, allowing the two to question the status of the author while renewing the conditions for her or his existence in the era of the digital reproduction of images and their untrammelled circulation on the internet. This graphic output sometimes gives rise to an edition in textile or ceramics, or an installation, in a way of imagining staged displays and presentations that is akin to a page layout. This is seen in solo shows (“Le lac avec des muscles”, Les Capucins, Embrun, 2018), group exhibitions (“Huit heures ne font pas un jour”, Sumo, Lyon, 2018; “Camembert Papanache”, Spatiu Intact, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2019; “Le paradigme de l’oasis”, Villa Belleville, 2019), and art festivals and fairs (the Mulhouse Biennial, 2017; “Le 6b dessine son salon”, Saint-Denis, 2017; “Une partie de campagne”, Château d’Esquelbecq, with the OSP Gallery, 2019).

General informations

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Free admission, from Tuesday to Saturday, 2 pm–6 pm.
Late openings during evening performances at Théâtre Brétigny. (Sunday 11 November included). Closed on November 1st.

By RER C:

Brétigny stop. From Paris, train BALI, DEBA, DEBO, ELBA direction Dourdan, Saint-Martin d'Étampes. From Dourdan and Saint-Martin d'Étampes, trains LARA, PARI, DEBO direction Saint-Quentin en Yvelines, Gare d'Austerlitz, Invalides.

From Brétigny station, follow the direction of Espace Jules Verne, take boulevard de la République, continue on Pl. Chevrier, take slightly to the right on rue Danielle Casanova, and at the rotary take left to rue Henri Douard.

By car:

From Paris, A6 direction Lyon, exit Viry-Châtillon, Fleury-Mérogis, then Brétigny center. From Évry, Francilienne direction Versailles, exit 39B direction Brétigny. From Versailles, Francilienne direction Evry, exit Brétigny center. From Étampes, RN20 direction Paris, exit Arpajon-Égry-Brétigny-sur-Orge-Saint-Vrain.

For car-sharing, join the group BLABLACAC(B) on Facebook

CAC Brétigny, Contemporary Art Center of National Interest, is a facility of Cœur d'Essonne Agglomération and enjoys the support of the Ministry of Culture—Drac Île-de-France, the Île-de-France Region, and the Departmental Council of the Essonne, with additional support by the Ville de Brétigny-sur-Orge. It is a member of the TRAM and d.c.a networks. Yoan Sorin benefited the support of the Cité Internationale des Arts.