

Maty Biayenda

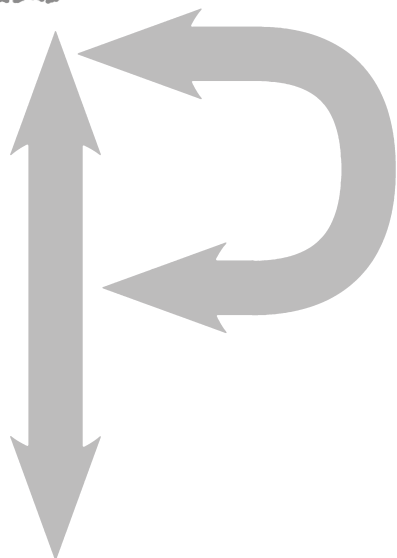
Le carrousel

25.09 - 02.11.25

Presse guided tour
Opening
Artist/curator tour
Curator

Tuesday 23.09.2025, 5:30 pm
 Wednesday 24.09.25, 6-9 pm
 Wednesday 01.10.25, 7:30 pm
 Maëlle Dault

PROJECT ROOM, LE PLATEAU, Paris



Maty Biayenda, *Angie Stardust*, 2023
 © Maty Biayenda



From September 25 to November 2, the Frac Île-de-France will present an exhibition by Maty Biayenda titled *Le carrousel* in the Project Room at Le Plateau. For this Project Room, Maty Biayenda engages in a series of aesthetic experiments with different mediums: paintings on canvas or wood, drawings on paper or prints on fabrics, drawing on metal around the figures of the cabaret Le Carrousel.

Contacts :

Isabelle Fabre, Head of communication
 Lorraine Hussenot, Press relations

+33 1 76 21 13 26 ifabre@fraciledefrance.com
 +33 1 48 78 92 20/+33 6 74 53 74 17 lohussenot@hotmail.com

Le Plateau
22 rue des Alouettes 75019 Paris
+33 1 76 21 13 25

The Frac Île-de-France receives support from Région Île-de-France, ministère de la Culture-Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles d'Île-de-France and Mairie de Paris. Member of the networks Tram, Platform, association of all the Fracs and of The Grande Belleville.

Late opening each first Wednesday
 of the month until 9pm

Open from Wednesday
 to Sunday, 2-7 pm

Free admission

There was a night when Maty Biayenda was born in Namibia in 1998.

There was a night when she lived and worked in Paris.

There was a night when, after training at the Ateliers de Sèvres, she graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris in 2023.

There was a night when she was currently in residence at Artagon in Pantin.

There was a night when Maty Biayenda, of Franco-Congolese origin, was conducting research on the liberation of black female bodies and the history of nightlife communities.

There was a night when his work constituted a visual archive of iconic nocturnal figures:

from New York beauty queens of the 1980s to drag artists from Parisian cabarets

like Madame Arthur or Le Carrousel, not to mention images from glamour magazines.

There was a night when intimate memory and collective imagination mingled, between real and fictional figures, blurring the boundaries between past and present, reality and representation.

There was a night when, referring to a popular culture of intimacy, Maty Biayenda invited us to rethink the norms that shape our societies.

There was a night when, while exploring the archives of transgender sisterhood, Maty Biayenda began to integrate into her work the many figures of cabarets from post-war France to the present day, as well as those from the United States in the 1980s-2000s, in reference to the film *Paris is Burning* (1990).

There was a night when Maty Biayenda saw this film documenting the Ballroom, a scene in New York in the 1980s where the African American and Latino LGBTQ+ communities asserted themselves through dance and fashion competitions.

There was a night when, following LaBeija and Octavia St. Laurent to the Ballroom, this film questioned racism, poverty, transgender identity, and the quest for dignity.

There was a night when the Ballroom's performances showcased the resilience and creativity that would have a lasting influence on queer and pop culture.

There was a night when, long before the 1980s, Le Carrousel, a cabaret created in 1926 in Paris for Josephine Baker, was a landmark venue hosting performers such as Galia Gazelle, Stella Patchouli, Suzy Wong, Pepa Darena, Hula, and Nancy Baker.

There was a night when these artists, hailing from diverse backgrounds (Africa, the Caribbean, Japan, Brazil, Reunion Island), although in the minority, nevertheless contributed to shaping shows marked by transgression and diversity.

There was a night when Maty Biayenda chose precisely to highlight the few Afro-descendant figures of this cabaret.

There was a night when the film *Bambi* depicted the journey of the eponymous drag artist born in Algeria, highlighting the story of a trans person shaped both in the spotlight of Le Carrousel and in the anonymity of a teaching career.

There was a night when all these stories opened doors to current drag practices, with the French reality TV show *Drag Race*, created in 2022, a revival of the legendary show *RuPaul's Drag Race*, which aired in the United States since 2009.

There was a night when, across all eras, the relative gentleness of these performance spaces, as spaces of non-discriminatory freedoms not subject to any type of normativity, allowed the affirmation of a multiple self.

There was a night when living fully as one felt became possible.

There was a night when the exhibition *The Carousel* of Maty Biayenda was built from these archives.

There was a night when the range of media that characterize his work—drawing, painting, prints of the toile de Jouy motif on silk, cotton, silhouettes cut out of metal or Plexiglas, patchworks—offered combinatory possibilities that encountered these icons of the night.

There was a night when opening the doors and curtains of these closed and joyful interiors offered a passage.

There was a night when spectacle and sisterhood mingled with sequins, pearls, platform shoes, exuberant hairstyles, and the curves of tiny waists, creating a universe where every detail exuded freedom and confidence.

There was a night when garters, corsets, slender legs, and the trappings of show business femininity organized a community whose singular identities could be emancipated.

There was a night when borders were redefined, when identity was no longer a constraint, but a fluid and liberating experience.

There was a night when social invisibility could reinvent itself in the excess of the spectacle.

There was a night when she said: *Today, I won't perform, I promise.*

There was a night when the preparation sessions and the injunction to be sexy and put on a show didn't take place.

There was a night when the shimmering, the brilliance of the dresses, the transparency of the fabrics from Maty Biayenda's imagination supplanted the objectification and sexualization from the archival images that punctuated his research.

Maëlle Dault



Project Room

The Project Room is the Frac's new prospective and experimental space, located in the last room of the Plateau. It offers the possibility of returning research projects, diplomas, scholarships or residencies to French or foreign artists, preferably living in Île-de-France. This responsive and flexible programming is also built in dialogue with the essential structures supporting creation, and particularly young creation, but also with art schools and universities in the Paris region or internationally.

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