

Berserk & Pyrrhia

Contemporary and medieval art

03.22-07.20.25

Press visit

Thursday 03.20.25 at 9:45 a.m.
(Plateau then Réserves)

Opening

Friday 03.21.25 at Plateau (5-8 p.m.),
then at Réserves (7-10 p.m.)

Curator

Céline Poulin

Associate curator

Camille Minh-Lan Gouin

Scientific advisor

Michel Huynh, general curator,
musée de Cluny - musée national du Moyen Âge

Scenography

AGATHE LABAYE · FLORIAN SUMI

Exhibition at **Plateau, Paris** and at **Réserves, Romainville**

With artworks from Nils Alix-Tabeling, Carlotta Bailly-Borg, Jacopo Belloni, Bernard Berthois-Rigal, Camille Bernard, Peter Briggs, Aëla Mai Cabel, Rose-Mahé Cabel, L. Camus-Govoroff, Pascal Convert, Mélanie Courtinat, Parvine Curie, Neïla Czermak Icti, Corentin Darré, Caroline Delieutraz, Mimosa Echard, Frederik Exner, Héloïse Farago, Teresa Fernandez-Pello, Alison Flora, Lucia Hadjam, Nicolas Kennett, Labaye-Sumi, Lou Le Forban, Liz Magor, Pauline Marx, Ibrahim Meïté Sikely, Philippe Mohlitz, Raphaël Moreira Gonçalves, Léo Penven, Théophile Peris, Jérémy Piningre, Agnes Scherer, Cecil Serres, François Stahly, Wolfgang Tillmans, Gérard Trignac, Clémence van Lunen, Xolo Cuintle and Radouan Zeghidour.

Réserves opening hours

From Wednesday to Saturday, 2pm to 7pm
Special opening on Sundays 04.13, 05.25 and 06.22.25
Free admission - Closed on public holidays

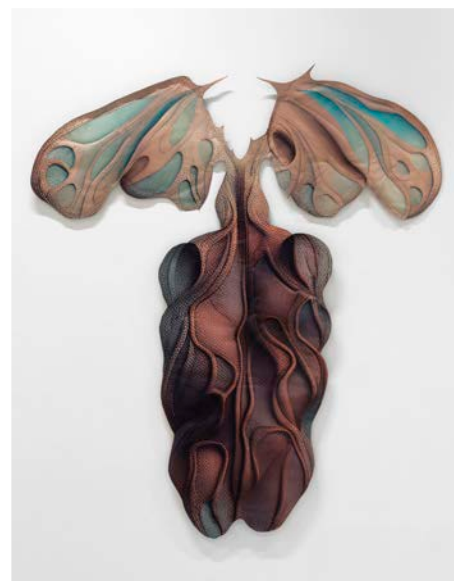
Plateau opening hours

Wednesday to Sunday, 2pm to 7pm Late
opening on the 1st Wednesday of the month,
until 9pm. Free admission - Closed May 1st

Ibrahim Meïté Sikely, *Shine and Struggle in Shirigami Realm*, 2021, Collection Frac Ile-de-France
© Ibrahim Meïté Sikely



Caroline Delieutraz, *Seed 267*, 2021, 22,48 m²
Gallery, © Caroline Delieutraz



The medieval heroic fantasy imagery of pop culture inhabits the worlds of today's artists, and the off-center view of the human that reigns there opens up a different approach to the future. The exhibition *Berserk & Pyrrhia*, presented at Le Plateau and Les Réserves from March 22 to July 20, highlights the circulation of medieval images and their subsequent appropriation, and brings together medieval and contemporary art.

This double exhibition is part of the territorial project of the same name, involving several partner venues in the Paris region.

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93230 Romainville
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Berserk & Pyrrhia

Contemporary and medieval art

Réserves opening hours

From Wednesday to Saturday, 2pm to 7pm
 Special opening on Sundays 13.04, 25.05 and 22.06.25
 Free admission - Closed on public holidays

Plateau opening hours

Wednesday to Sunday, 2pm to 7pm Late
 opening on the 1st Wednesday of the month,
 until 9pm. Free admission - Closed May 1st

The image of the legendary berserker warrior has inspired a multitude of offshoots in films, video games, manga and rap music. In many myths, the berserker is intricately linked to the earth, to animality, forging ahead without armour. In Kentarō Miura's work, Guts becomes a berserker through his armour. The powerful drawings that bring the story of this manga to life are brimming with European medieval references, both direct and inspired by 19th-century medievalist masterpieces, with their dark, shadowy tones. Pyrrhia is a butterfly that has given its name to an imaginary island, described in the series of books *Wings of Fire* (Tui T. Sutherland), where dragons with reason reign, devoid of humans, but where small beings walking on two legs with a tuft of hair on their heads, known as scavengers, can be found. More specifically, this Pyrrhia umbra butterfly is also known as 'The Chrysograph,' the name of the writers who created the illuminations in the grimoires.

This medieval heroic fantasy imagery of pop culture inhabits the worlds of today's artists. The off-kilter vision of the humans that rule provides them with a different approach to the future. In the contemporary works on show at Le Plateau and Les Réserves, a return to the land, magical parables or straw huts, enchanted or evil humanised animals and insects, appear in turn as fantasies or fears in a world drowning in uncertainty. Not to be outdone, the apocalypse, a recurring motif in medieval art, and its monstrous or dreamlike bestiary are also represented. Love, friendship and social interaction are imbued with these ancient models, which have been transformed by the contemporary gaze. The joy of recycling and the DIY approach are also evident in the use of less polluting and more sustainable materials.

The Berserk & Pyrrhia* exhibition illustrates the influence of medieval images and their subsequent appropriation, as well as forging links between medieval art and contemporary art. Medieval works will be on display at Le Plateau and Les Réserves, thanks to loans from the region's rich heritage collections**, while works by contemporary artists will, in turn, engage with medieval heritage by appearing in the region's historic monuments, continuing this intergenerational and transhistorical dialogue.

In a diptych spanning Le Plateau and Les Réserves, the exhibition explores various forms of hybridisation. At Le Plateau, in the spirit of Berserk, and regarding the more mystical and romantic nineteenth-century interpretation of the medieval period, the works take us on an obscure and dark journey. At Les Réserves, their references are rooted in fantasy, anthropomorphic creatures and medieval bestiary, transporting us into the world of Pyrrhia and emphasising the importance of artisanship and links with the community.

A separate off-site programme draws on the dense web of ideas that make up the themes presented at the Frac: rethinking the relationship with nature and the non-human through the revival of medieval bestiary; valuing or rediscovering pre-modern knowledge and production methods, with an autonomy of production, etc.; rethinking social relations concerning the community; exploring the future of our world and our imaginations in the context of apocalypse and the marvellous; or analysing the flow of images between contemporary pop culture, medieval sources and reinterpretations across the centuries, particularly in the 19th century.

Exhibition produced in collaboration with the Musée de Cluny - Musée national du Moyen Âge.



* The title refers to the *Berserk* manga by Kentarō Miura and the *Wings of Fire* books by Tui T. Sutherland.

** Loans from Île-de-France heritage collections

ARCHÉA Collection, Louvres, 95 / Collection of the Department of History of Architecture and Archaeology of the City of Paris, 75 / Collection of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Melun, 77 / Collection of the Musée Bossuet - Cité épiscopale de Meaux, 77 / Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris collection, 75 / Departmental collections of the Musée archéologique du Val d'Oise, Guiry-en-Vexin, 95...

Berserk & Pyrrhia

Contemporary and medieval art

Press release

Reserves opening hours
From Wednesday to Saturday, 2pm to 7pm
Special opening on Sundays 13.04, 25.05 and 22.06.25 Free admission - Closed on public holidays

Plateau opening hours
Wednesday to Sunday, 2pm to 7pm Late opening on the 1st Wednesday of the month, until 9pm Free admission - Closed May 1st

Off-site programming

Curator: Rémi Enguehard, in collaboration with the Frac Île-de-France's public service, and teams from partner venues

The works of contemporary artists are being shown across the Île-de-France region, in direct contact with its rich medieval heritage and a wider audience. This off-site programme broadens the horizons opened by Berserk & Pyrrhia in terms of the history of the region and the traces of medieval societies that have survived to the present day. Entering into a dialogue with historic monuments and the motifs and uses of objects from leading museum collections, contemporary works express a sense of personal reappropriation of the great narratives or bear witness to the transhistorical circulation of images and references, as well as occasionally supporting scientific research, such as that on the nomadism of medieval courts (Château-Musée de Nemours). Exhibitions and workshops with secondary school pupils, students and the elderly also embrace this concept to conduct the fundamental task of educating and raising awareness of art and contemporary thinking, which is an essential part of the Frac Île-de-France's role in the Ile-de-France region.

A program based on works from the Frac Île-de-France collection, with invitations to contemporary artists at a number of partner venues :

Exhibitions in dialogue with the medieval heritage of the Ile-de-France region

- Musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge, Paris, 75 > from 03.25.25
Co-curated by Michel Huynh, general curator, musée de Cluny
- Musée ARCHÉA, Louvres, 95 > 06.14 - 09.21.25
- Domaine régional de Villarceaux, Chaussy, > 04.05 - 11.02.25
avec l'association La Source Garouste - Villarceaux, 95 > 05.17 - 09.21.25
- Château-Musée de Nemours, Nemours, 77 > 03.22-03.23.25
- Médiathèque Luxembourg, Meaux, 77 > 06.18.06 - 09.21.25
- Musée Bossuet – Cité épiscopale de Meaux, 77

Co-curated exhibitions

- Conservatoire Jacques Higelin, Pantin, 93 > 05.07 - 05.28.25
- Centre culturel Jean Cocteau avec le Lycée Paul Robert, Les Lilas, 93 > 06.19 - 08.30.25

Expositions, workshop et ateliers avec les publics

- Collège Les Aulnes, Combs-la-Ville, 77 > 04.09 - 05.21.25
- Résidence médicalisée Léopold Bellan, Romainville, 93 > 04.12 - 05.25.25
- Lycée Isaac Newton, Clichy, 92 > 04.3 - 06.04.25

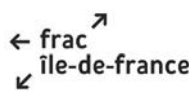
Exhibitions, workshops and workshops with the public

- La Crypte d'Orsay, Orsay, 91 > 03.29 - 06.01.25
- Le Château du Val Fleury, Gif-sur-Yvette, > 04.28 - 07.06.25
avec le Fonds départemental d'art contemporain de l'Essonne (FDAC 91), 91

Deposit

- Maison Jean Cocteau, Milly-la-Forêt, 91 > from 05.03.25

Frac Île-de-France is supported by the Île-de-France Region, the Ministry of Culture - Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles d'Île-de-France and the Paris City Council. An associated organization of the Île-de-France Region, governed by the 2016 law on creative freedom, and by the 2017 decree and order on the Frac label, it is a member of the TRAM network, Platform, a group of Fracs and Grand Belleville.



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