

● Joël Harder - Portfolio 2026

Joël Harder born 1996 is a Swiss and French artist. Graduated simultaneously from Bunka Gakuen University (Tokyo) and EnsAD (Paris) in 202, he now lives and works in Ardèche, while maintaining a regular connection with the urban centers of contemporary art.

His artistic practice investigates the intimate appropriation of public space and the disturbance of social norms shaped by regulated, daytime environments. Drawing on material and immaterial elements from the living world, he develops work through the spaces of the studio and the exhibition, approaching matter from within. The tension between propriety and uncensored desire is translated into chemical processes, artworks, aesthetic situations, and curatorial projects that question bodily uses and propose alternative spaces.

His exhibitions in Europe include those at the Stedelijk Museum (NL), the C.M.C.S.S. of the University of Geneva (CH), the La Panera Art Center (ES), San Serriffe (NL), and the Crous Gallery in Paris (FR). In 2026, a solo exhibition will take place from April to June at La Serre, Saint-Etienne (FR), along with an artist residency at the Maubuisson Abbey (Paris).



Solo-show *Se peupler d'ombres*, at Galerie du Crous de Paris, curated by Daphné Brottet, april 2024.

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Joël Harder

Curriculum vitae

Solo shows:

- **La Serre**, Saint-Etienne (avril-mai 2026)
- **Open Studio**, Saint Didier sous Aubenas (july 2024)
- Galerie **du Crous de Paris**, *Se peupler d'ombres*, cur: Daphné Brottet (april 2024)
- **San Serriffe**, Amsterdam (october 2023)
- Galerie **C. Levèque** (Sète), *Esthétiques de l'herbe indigne*, cur: C. Levèque (july 2022)
- Galerie **Créneau Libre** (Aubenas), (augt 2021)
- **Rotonde Rosa Bonheur** (Paris), *Battue en cours* (july 2021)

Group shows:

- **Art Genève**, EnsAD booth (jan 2026)
- Galerie **Sabine Bayasli**, *Collection François Goulet* (dec 2025-jan 2026)
- **Chateau de Voguë**, Voguë craft Biennale (sept 2025)
- **Biennale de Lyon** Résonnance itinerary (oct 2024)
- **Maison Jean Ferrat** (Antraigues, july 2024)
- **C.M.C.S.S.** (Geneva), *LieuX*, cur: Ferdinando Miranda & Pauline Guex (nov 2023-march 2024)
- **La Panera Centre d'Art** (Lleida, Spain), *Queer Ecologies*, cur: Christian Alonso (oct 2023-jan 2024)
- Galerie **Dix9** (Paris), *Éditions Artaiis*, cur: Artaiis (jan 2024)
- **Stedelijk Museum** (Amsterdam), *The Best Dutch Book Designs* (oct-dec 2023)
- Galerie **du croux de Paris**, *Promesses*, cur: Florian Martin (2023)
- **Festival Everybody's Perfect** (Geneva) (2023)
- Galerie **Horae** (Paris), *Un nouveau regard sur la vigueur hybride*, (april-june 2023)
- **Grande Halle de la Villette** (Paris), *100% l'EXPO*, cur: Inès Geoffroy (april 2022)
- **C.N.A.M.** (Paris), *Mode & Sens* (2022)
- **Exposition Artaiis Partages**, (Paris), cur: Artaiis (oct 2022)
- Galerie **Mailyn Bruniquel** (Sète) (2022)
- **Paris Design Week**, *Vivement Demain*, Campus Mode & Métiers d'Art (2021)
- **Palais de la porte Dorée** - Musée de l'immigration (Paris), *L'envers du décor* (2019)
- **Musée d'Orsay** (Paris), *Curieuse Nocurne* (2018)

Press:

- RADIOTELEVISIÓN ESPAÑOLA: *Metrópolis aborda las relaciones entre identidad y medioambiente en 'Ecologías Queer'*, by Susana Blas / Emission TV METRÓPOLIS, (in Spanish).
- PRÉSENTE Podcast: *Joël Harder*, by Camille Bardin.
- NEZ Magazine: *Avec La Fabrica, IFF explore de nouvelles voies pour l'olfaction*.
- MANIFESTO 21: *8 Artistes à découvrir à 100% L'EXPO*.
- PROJET MEDIA: *Hors série 100% L'EXPO, 5 artistes*.
- MA BASTIDE: *Faits d'arts: Joël Harder*, by Bruno Aubiron.
- BEAUX ARTS MAGAZINE: *100 % à La Villette : 5 jeunes artistes qui nous ont tapé dans l'œil*.
- DIS - DIARI SEGRE *Reivindicar l'aberració com a exercici ètic i polític* (in Catalan).
- L'HEBDO DE L'ARDÈCHE: *Joël Harder sans limites*, by Frienne P.

Residencies/awards:

- **Abbaye de Maubuisson**, research residency, may-july 2026
- **Barcelona's Botanical Garden** research and creation residency, june 2025.
- **Best Dutch Book Designs award**, jury selection, Amsterdam, Oct 2023.
- **C.M.C.S.S. Geneva**, University of Geneva research and creation residency, june 2023.

Publications & catalogs:

- *Queer Ecologies, NATURALLY SUBVERSIVE ABERRATIONS*, catalog of the Queer Ecologies exhibition, Centre d'Art La Panera, 2023.
- *The Best Dutch Book Designs 2022*, catalog of the du Stedelijk Museum exhibition, 2023.
- *LieuX, géographie des sexualités*, catalog of the C.M.C.S.S. Genève exhibition, 2023.
- *Étude sensible de la disparition du lieu de drague gay dans la Ripisylve de St. Privat, une collection de 40 objets dénichés dans les bois par Joël Harder*, Olfactory self publication, 2022.
- *100% La Villette*, 100% l'expo exhibition catalog at Grande Halle de la Villette, 2022.
- *Artaïs Art Contemporain Magazine*, October 2022.
- *Mode & Sens*, C.N.A.M. Paris, exhibition catalog 2022.
- *Graduation catalog* by Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs of Paris, 2021.

Masterclass - workshops:

- *École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris*, masterclass 2h, Dec 2025.
- *Beaux Arts de Paris*, presenting the project *Battue en cours*, 2 x 3h, 2023 & 2024.
- *19M* (Chanel craft dpm, Paris), artist working on the development of a "camouflage" embroidery technique, 5 x 1h30, 2023, 2024.
- *A.B.R.A.L.* scenography & costume design for a theater play carried out through workshops with a group of asylum seekers, Lausanne, CH (Dec 2023 - Oct 2024).
- *Embroidery & craft 6 days ateliers* Art&Nature Camp, Vevey, CH, 2023, 2024, 2025.

Education:

- 2017/ Double master's at l'EnsAD (Arts Décoratifs de Paris) and Bunka Gakuen (Tokyo). 2021
- 2015/ BTS (technical degree) in textile design: La Martinière Diderot - Lyon. 2017
- 2014/ Gap year. 2011 (internships, humanitarian/educational interventions, visits to artisan workshops)

Collections:

Public:
- Geneva University (CH).

Private:
Germany, Switzerland, France & Austria.

- *Institutions having acquired the olfactory edition within their collections:*
Stedelijk Museum Archives (Amsterdam, NL), Werker Collective (NL), C.M.C.S.S. (University of Geneva, CH), Centre d'Art la Panera Documentation Center (Lleida, ES), www.artsdecoratifs.fr

YOU ARE ENTERING A ZONE OF EXCEPTION (2022 - 2023)

Like a *mahnmal*, the work explores the recent history of cruising in the city of Geneva. The frieze creates a dialogue between contemporary testimonies and excerpts from *GaiPied* travel guides from the 1980s–90s, drawn from the archives of the CMCSS. Objects and plants are collected from emblematic cruising spots in the city, both active and forgotten. Graffiti hidden in coffee cups serve to arrange discreet meetings; arborglyphs carve love and desire into the bark of trees. From contemporary cruising on dating apps to a nostalgic longing for overgrown paths of desire, now less frequented. From codified desirability to the strategies used to hide from aggressors. From cruising as a political choice to the necessity of anonymity. From instinctual pursuit to a broader understanding of male-to-male sexual relations.

Joël Harder's work invites visitors to engage in a sensitive exploration of private sexuality as it unfolds within public space, while preserving anonymity and chosen discretion.

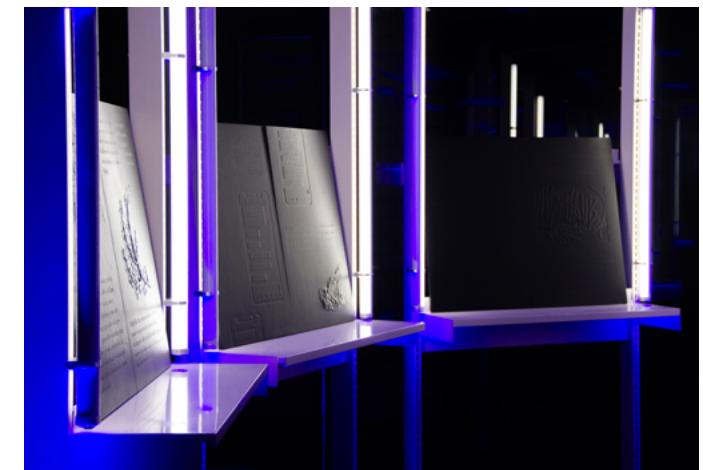
(Text by Ferdinando Miranda)

Commissioned by the University of Geneva (Maurice Chalumeau Centre for the Science of Sexualities)

[Interview \(video\)](#)



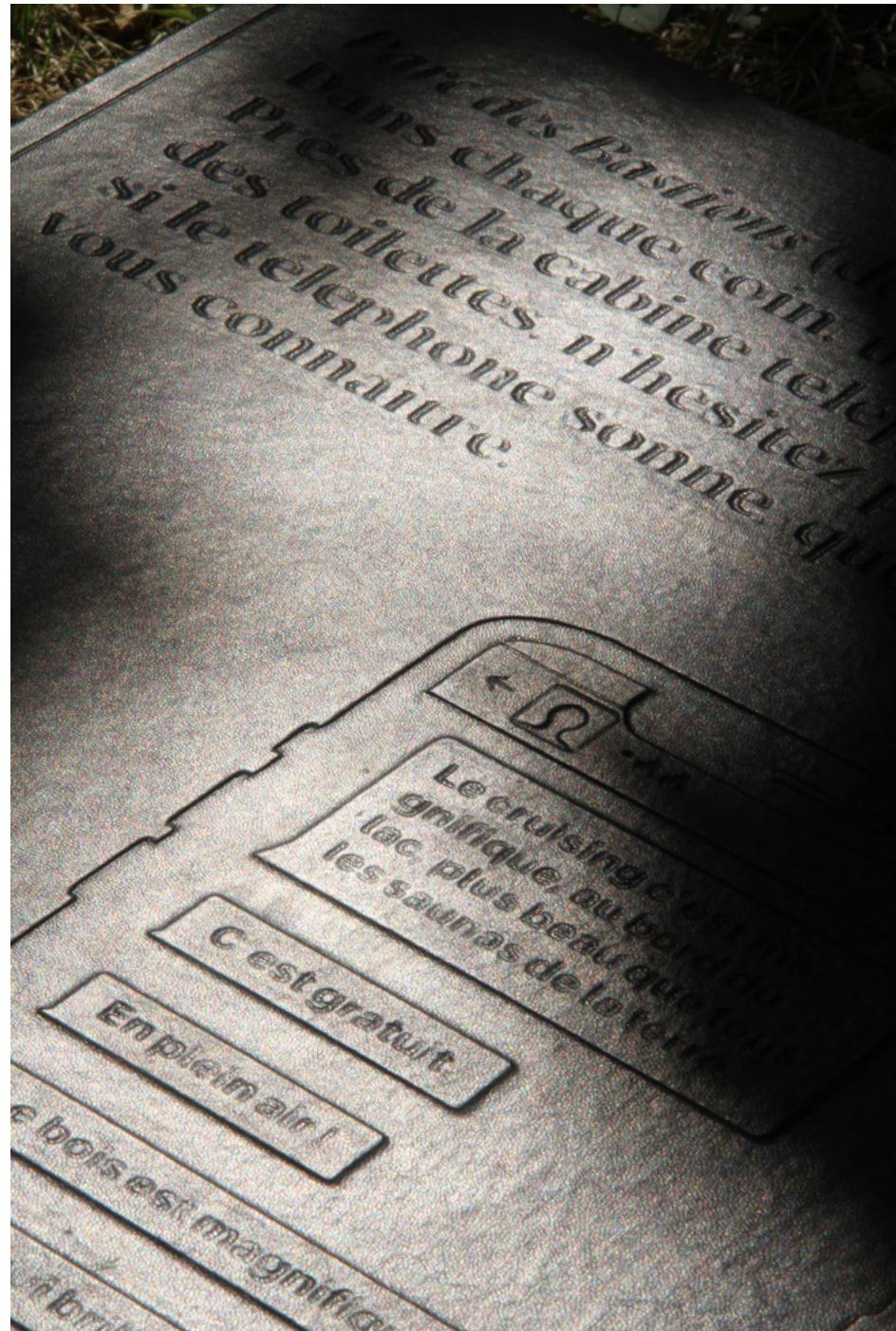
You are entering a zone of exception, 50cm x 4.80m, leather, wood, collected objects , studio view, Lyon, 2023.



Group show *LieuX, une géographie des sexualités*, curated by Ferdinando Miranda & Pauline Guex, C.M.C.S.S., Geneva, November 2023.



You are entering a zone of exception, 50cm x 4.80m, leather, wood, collected objects, installation view to be explored by headlamp during the open studio, Saint-Didier-sous-Aubenas, July 2024.



You are entering a zone of exception, details, july 2024.

BATTUE EN COURS (2020 - 2022)

Near the house where I grew up, there is a cruising spot frequented by gay men. It's a riparian forest, nestled between a municipal football field and the Ardèche river. In this territory, men cross paths, pursue one another, and nest their anonymous desires at the base of the trees. When I was younger, I often observed this place from the opposite riverbank. The fantasies and fears evoked by the imagination of this site have deeply shaped me since childhood and profoundly influenced the way I experience my homosexuality.

On the verge of being radically transformed, I decided to focus my work on this space before it begins to be redeveloped and gentrified by local authorities. This rupture will bring about a loss of reference points within the secret life of a small group of living beings—yet it will remain invisible to the wider public.

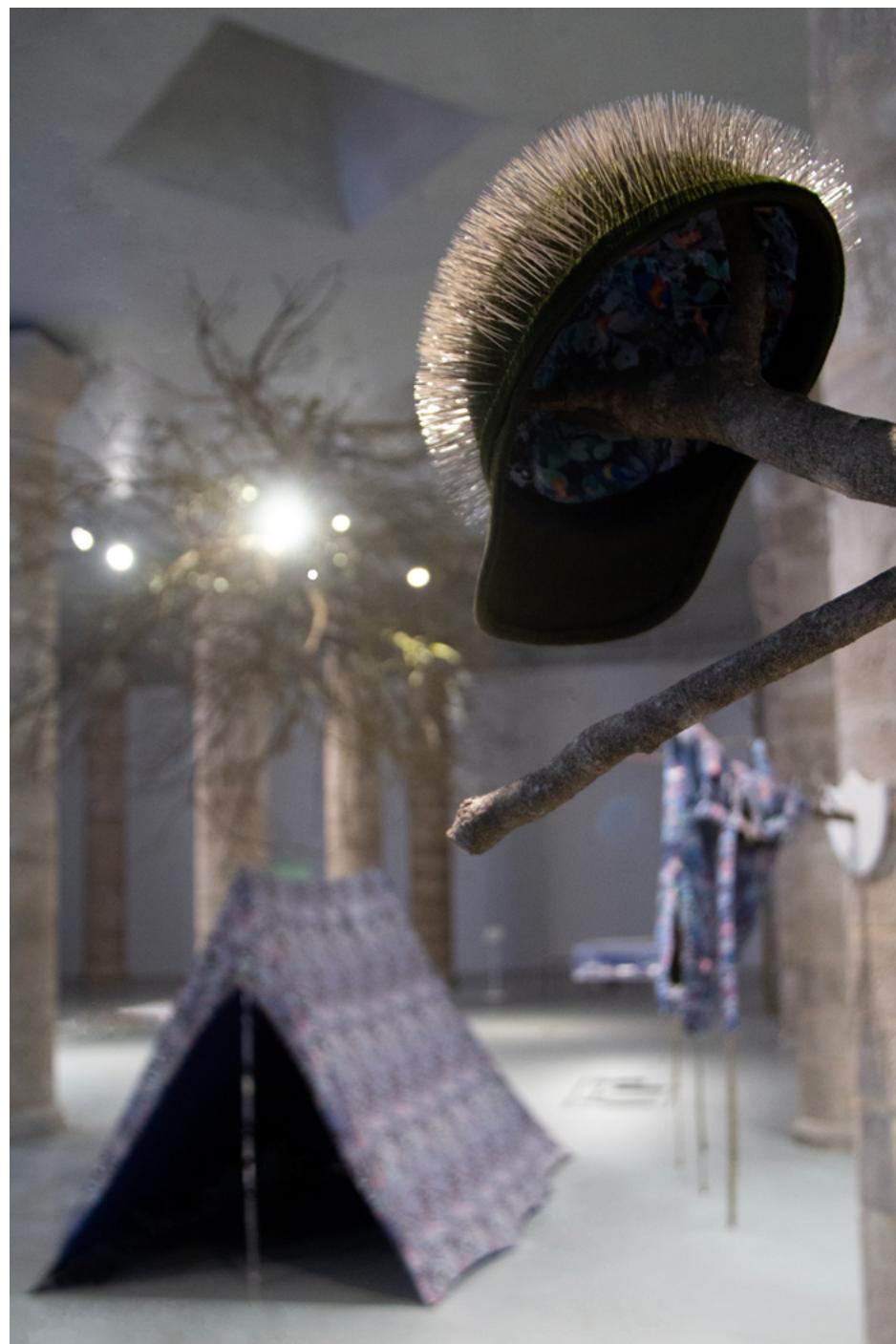
My work involves observing and archiving the stories that unfold there, and bringing to light the visual and aesthetic dialogues that emerge from the interactions between men and this landscape. My approach is to reach the site on my own, blend into the surroundings with discretion, and document the place as it is, without seeking to alter or distort it.

In response to the discoveries and needs I encounter during this research-collection process, I create functional and poetic objects. Appealing to the senses, my work produces a set of artefacts that equip the figure of the hunter-gatherer I embody.

[Installation at La Villette \(video\)](#)



Partial installation of *Battue en cours* at the Grande Halle de la Villette, 100% L'Expo, curated by Inès Geoffroy, April 2022.
Co-produced with La Villette.



Battue en cours at group show *Queer Ecologies*, at Centre d'Art La Panera, Catalunya, curated by Christian Alonso, november 2023.



Solo-show *Se peupler d'ombres*, at Galerie du Crous de Paris, curated by Daphné Brottet, april 2024.

[Exhibition \(video\)](#)

EM-PREINTES (ADVENTICES SERIE, 2021-2024)

The *Em-preintes* (the series of adventices) presents works that archive and document the nostalgic feeling of disappearance. Plants and objects are collected near cruising sites before they are redeveloped, and are preserved through a meticulous molding technique using animal skin. The result is a shroud that envelops the plant and allows it to slowly die. Throughout the gradual drying of both skin and plant, the molding continues and is refined until the plant takes on a lasting form. In collaboration with skilled upholsterers and leatherworkers, the leather is worked to an extreme fineness, pushing the material to the limits of its physicality. These herbariums are inspired by the technique of *oshibana*, the Japanese art of pressed flowers.



Solo-show *Se peupler d'ombres*, at Galerie du Crous de Paris, curated by Daphné Brottet, april 2024.
240 x 180 cm.



Solo-show *Esthétiques de l'herbe indigne*, at San Serriffe, october 2023, Amsterdam.



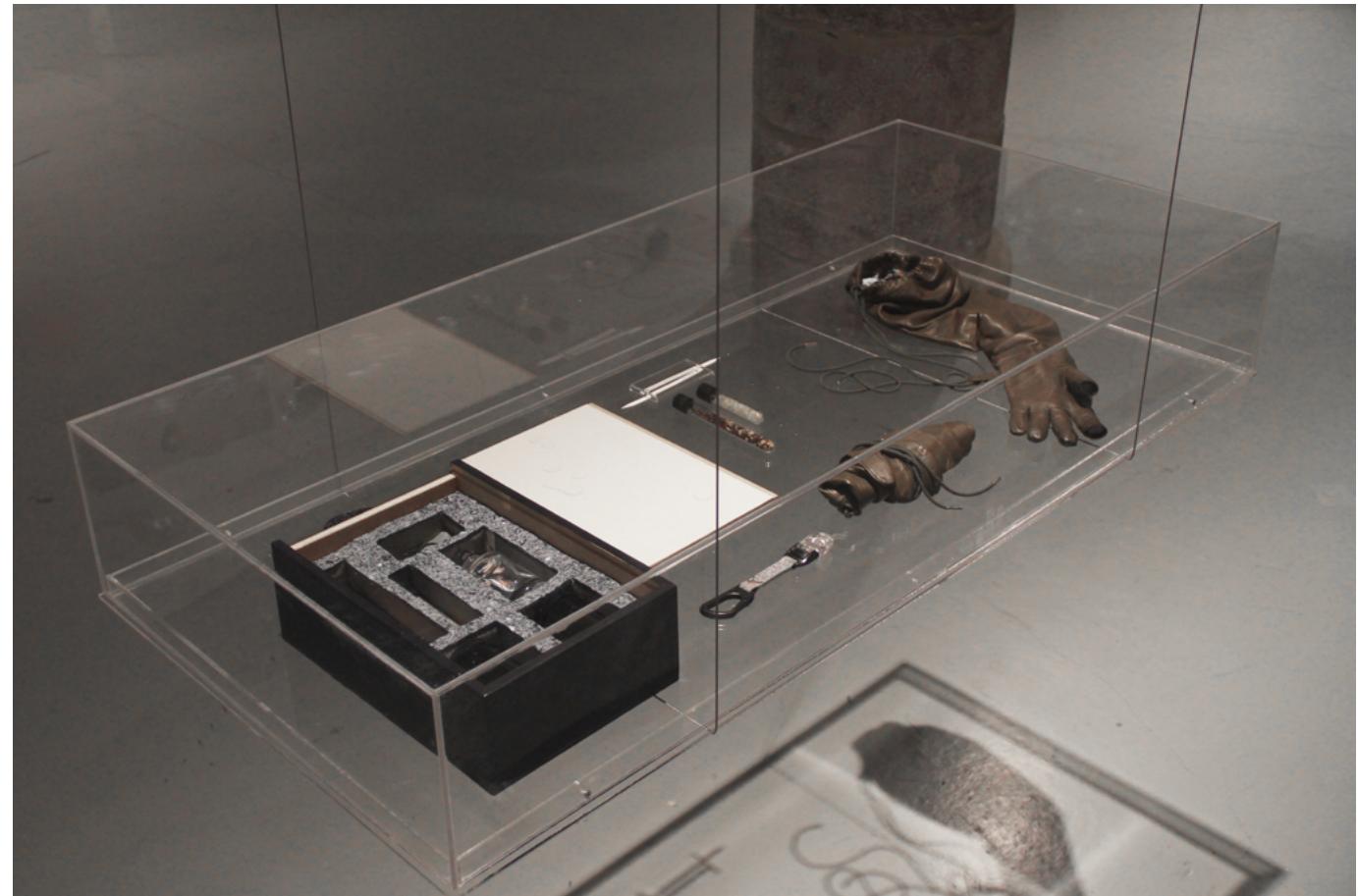


Studio view, Saint-Didier-sous-Aubenas, april 2025.
51 x 124 x 1 cm

TASTE POEMS (2021)

The series of boxes containing taste-based poems explores a more intimate connection to the site through the ingestion of elements sourced from the forest. They are created in collaboration with specific individuals whose experiences and areas of expertise have enriched the reading of the forest. Together, we imagined stories to be lived through the body—such as **Esprit de ripisylve** (a spirit made from wild forest plants, in collaboration with Distillerie Helvia), **Last Spring Honey** (with beekeeper Laurent Pailhès), or a scent memory of sex in the forest (by master perfumer Anne Flipo, assisted by Shin Oba and Tanguy Gesnet, made possible through a partnership with I.F.F.).

These works serve as an archive of the forest in the face of its disappearance, capturing its final state of life—its *Nagori*, the lingering trace—before transformation. The cardboard making up the inner structure of the boxes is crafted from clothing unearthed in the woods, ground down and dried into sheets.



Group show *Queer Ecologies*, curated by Christian Alonso, Centre d'Art la Panera, Lleida, Catalunya, October 2023.
Co-produced with Centre d'Art La Panera, Distillerie Helvia & Maison Fabre.



Taste Poems, studio views, Lyon, 2023.

DIRECT CAST-MOLDINGS (2023-2024)

Through acts of seizing and releasing, capturing objects and collecting remnants of the living, there remains one territory unexplored: transformation through substitution.

This is what is at work with Direct Cast-Molding. These brambles, leaves, branches, flowers, a pack of cigarettes, and other cigarette butts have undergone a transubstantiation through a complex, laborious, delicate, and hazardous process using Direct Casting techniques. It was in this way that Joël Harder, alongside Paula Castro, began creating exceptional works made from the ashes of these collected elements combined with a metal alloy (zinc + copper), through combustion at extremely high temperatures.

A sort of *Oeuvre au noir*—without modeling or the possibility of reproduction—these pieces, though fragile and requiring careful handling, result from an exact, faithful, and irreversible transubstantiation, a true transmutation. Following *Em-prises*, which are genuine mummifications aimed at preserving soul and body, these small treasures, Direct Cast-Molding works, reveal another characteristic of sculpture: it is no longer a representation of reality but becomes reality itself. Particles unite on a plane of immanence; an effective organicity fosters the development of desire's process.

(Text by Daphné Brottet)



Solo-show *Se peupler d'ombres*, at Galerie du Crous de Paris,
curated by Daphné Brottet, april 2024.



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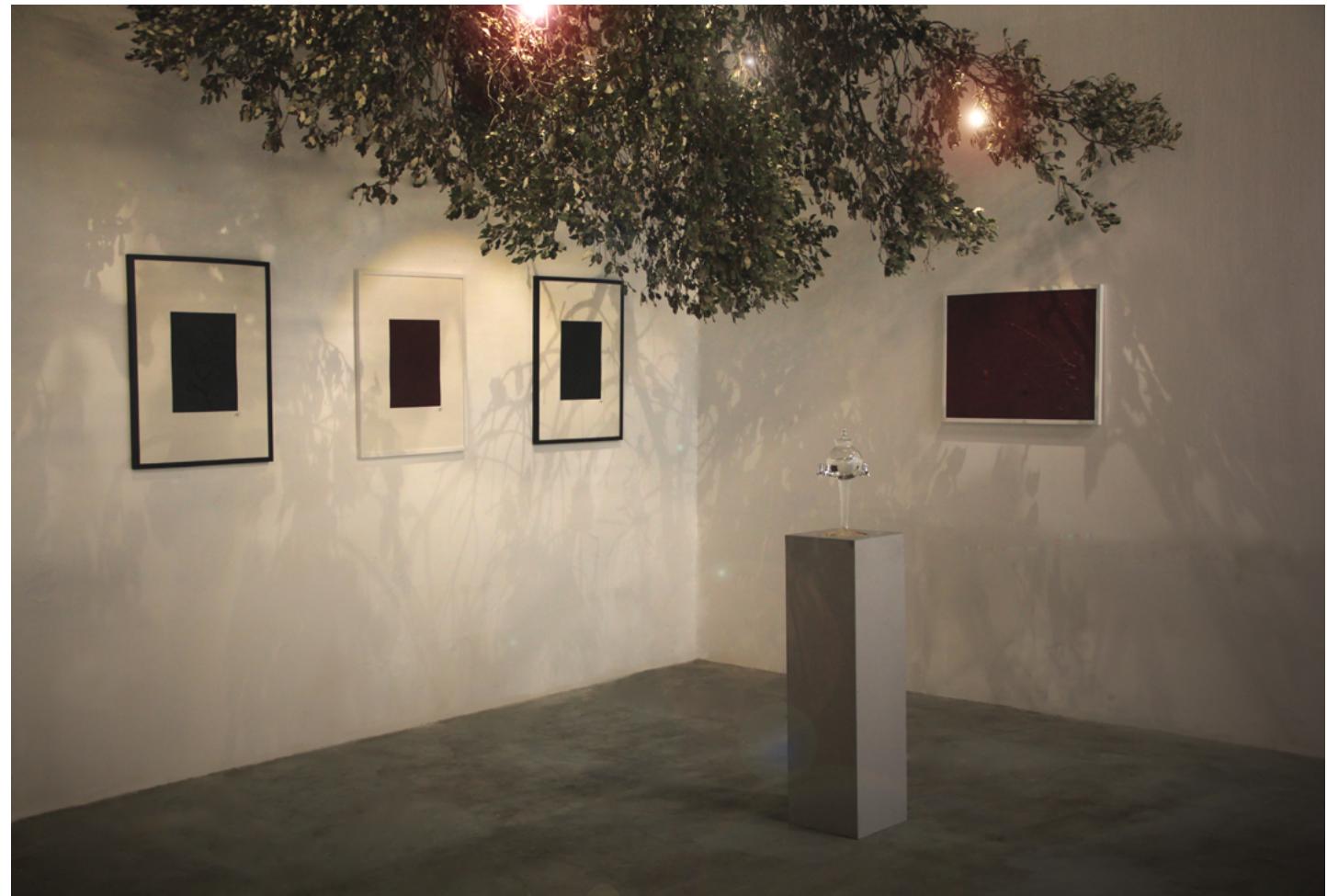


CRUISING FOUNTAIN (2021 - 2022)

An invitation to tasting around a convivial fountain. From the plants embedded in leather to those infused in the ceremoniously poured spirit, Joël Harder brings a concentrated essence of a forest-refuge for encounters into the exhibition space. By seducing our taste buds, the artist shares the intimacy of a secret cruising spot that has fueled a significant cycle of his work. Before being collectively savored, the drink is crafted in collaboration with Distillerie Helvia, using plants harvested from a threatened ecosystem—spared from wildfires only to fall to gentrification.

Nagori. The resulting taste-poems are steeped in the Japanese concept that binds desire to the fleeting savor of what is passing—just like the ephemeral encounters once shared in this place. On the walls, wild weeds infiltrate the gaps of soft leather panels, now frozen and preserved. The fleshy, sensual material safeguards the memory of forms, the expressiveness of the plants. Young shoots and ancient roots become metaphors for a community rendered invisible, yet marked by an extraordinary capacity for adaptation.

(Text by Alexia Pierre)



Group show *Partages*, Artaïs, curated by Sylvie Fontaine & Maya Sachweh, october2022, Paris.
Co-production with Artaïs Art Contemporain (Paris) & Distillerie Helvia.



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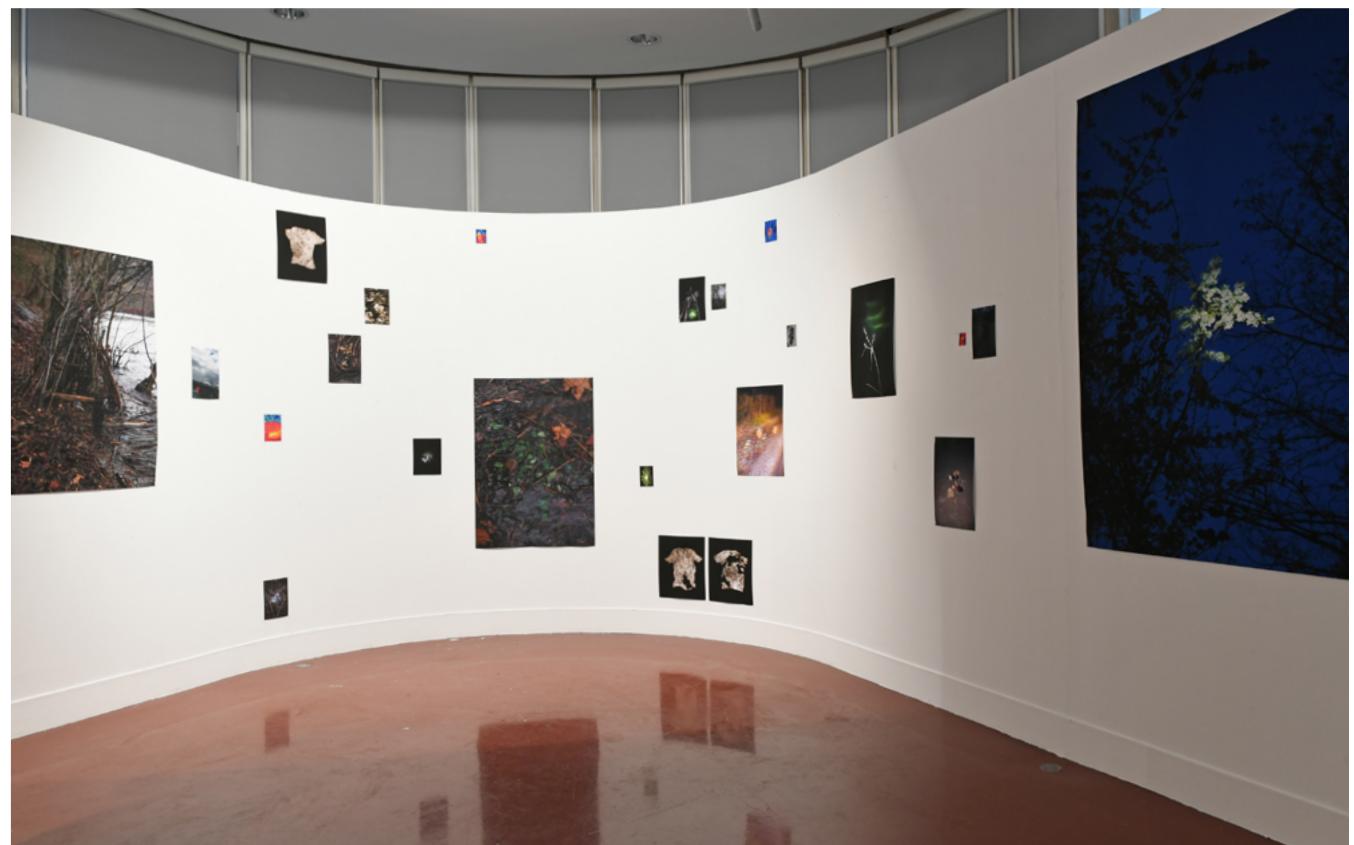
FLORAL HUNT (2020 - 2022)

Excerpts from the photographic work on the daytime and nighttime context of cruising in the riparian forest.

Photography and thermal imaging (individuals encountered during interviews—including cruisers and other users of the site—were photographed using a thermal camera in order to respect their desire for anonymity and to avoid presenting a voyeuristic perspective).

Ardèche: September 2020 – June 2022.

[Geolocation of the photographs \(video\)](#)



Solo show *Battue en cours*, at Rotonde Rosa Bonheur (Ensad), July 2021, Paris.



Olfactory Book (2022)

“Sensitive study of the disappearance of the gay cruising scene in the riparian forest of St Privat. A collection of 40 objects unearthed from the woods.”

Olfactory self-publication, combining theoretical writings, photographed elements, and references.

Spring 2022, 50 pages.

Distributed in bookstores:

Yvon Lambert (Paris)
After 8 Books (Paris)
SanSeriffe (Amsterdam)
Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam)
Eisenherz (Berlin)

Art direction by Alyson Sillon, produced in collaboration with IFF and Anne Flipo (master perfumer, assisted by Shinichiro Oba and Tanguy Guesnet).

Awarded the 2022 Dutch Prize for Best Book Designs (selected by the professional jury).



Ce corridor biologique riparien est un lieu excentré, sauvage, propice à des rencontres anonymes. Diurnes ou nocturnes, les rencontres qui permettent ce lieu ont pour but la drague et dans la plupart des cas aboutit pour les deux sexes à une séance de préliminaires de la séparation des plages horaires hebdomadaires, saisonniers (hiver) et sanitaires (pandémie mondiale due à la présence du virus Covid-19) de mon investigation, les interactions que je peux observer ne sont pas les mêmes. La saison touristique étant l'été, les dragueurs étrangers de passages dans la région sont rares. Ce sont principalement des hommes habitués à leur lieu de passage et des hommes qui rendent sur place la fréquentation augmente aux heures de pause déjeuner (sortie de travail, ou en fin de semaine). Les températures basses ne permettent que des rares rencontres en extérieur, et laissent donc agir la voiture en tant que signe pour indiquer la présence de dragueurs. L'espace présente une segmentation significative qui divise les deux zones (le parking, le parking et les voitures signalant la présence d'humains, la forêt basse qui l'entoure) est une nouvelle inscription spatiale réservée aux lieux de présentation ou de conversation (lieu d'homosocialité)

Une éventuelle relation sexuelle est réservée une fois au-delà de la frontière subtilement marquée par le début de la forêt. Une parade d'intention, une présentation de soi axée sur l'accessibilité et l'absence de regard, se déroule alors entre deux arbres ayant un diamètre suffisant pour se cacher derrière son tronc au sein d'une végétation balayée et fréquemment déracinée par les intempéries. Ils représentent des repères visuels distincts et durables pour les homosexuels en recherche d'un lieu plus privatif mais jouent aussi un rôle fondamental pour la faune, notamment pour les oiseaux qui souhaitent établir un nid dans l'arbre.

Bien que les lieux de drague physiques soient une pratique qui se délite doucement depuis l'introduction d'applications de rencontres dématérialisées, telles que Grindr, Tinder, Gay Romeo etc. ces lieux de rencontres anonymes restent des acteurs importants dans la socialisation gay en milieux ruraux, notamment pour les personnes qui n'osent pas afficher leurs préférences sexuelles auprès de leur famille, entourage, travail etc. Dans un contexte urbain aller drague en plein air relève plus d'un choix conscient, associé au fantasme de trahir quelqu'un ou d'être la proie d'un autre, en tout anonymat.

Lieu de drague /Cruising

This Riparian biological corridor is a wild, out of the way place for anonymous meetings, and in the majority of cases, the meetings that take place here have the goal to find, and in the majority of cases, to result in a sexual relation. Taking into account the specificity of the time, seasonal (winter) and sanitary context (worldwide pandemic due to the presence of the Covid-19 virus of my investigation), the interactions I can observe are not the same. The tourist season being mostly in the summer, the foreign cruisers passing by the area are rare. It is mainly men living in the surrounding towns and villages who visit the area (the number of visitors is decreasing during winter, with more visitors on weekends). The low temperatures allow only rare outdoor meetings, and therefore let the car act as a sign to indicate the presence of cruisers. The space presents a meaningful segmentation, which divides the areas for their functions. The parking lot and the cars signal the presence of humans, the low forest that surrounds it is a new spatial inscription reserved for places of presentation or conversation (place of homosociality). A possible

sexual relation is reserved once passed the border subtly marked by the beginning of the forest. A performance of intention, a presentation of self focused on accessibility and absence of regard, takes place between two trees of sufficient diameter to hide in a vegetation swept and frequently uprooted by the weather. They represent distinct and enduring visual cues for gay men seeking a more private place, but also play a fundamental role for wildlife, especially for birds wishing to establish a permanent habitat.

Although cruising in physical areas is a practice that is slowly going down since the introduction of dematerialized dating applications such as Grindr, Tinder, Gay Romeo, etc. these anonymous meeting places remain important actors in the socialization of gays in rural areas, especially for people who have not asserted their sexual preferences to their family, entourage, work, etc. In an urban context, going out to cruise in the open air is more of a conscious choice, associated with the fantasy of stalking someone or being preyed upon by someone else, in complete anonymity.





Group show *The Best Dutch Book Designs of 2022*, at Stedelijk Museum, october 2023, Amsterdam.