
LES YEUX SANS VISAGE (EYES WITOUHT A FACE)
CURATED BY MATHIEU BUARD AND CORENTIN HAMEL
(LA)HORDE, HANS BELLMER, CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI, CLAUDE CAHUN, SALOMÉ CHATRIOT,
DANIEL CHERUZEL, VICTOR CLAVELY, MÉLANIE COURTINAT, HOËL DURET, RAPHAËL EVERDEEN,
MIA GOSSET, PETER HUJAR, EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE, MARIUS PERRAUD, CAROLINE POGGI AND
JONATHAN VINEL, EMMA STERN, JOSEF STRAU, DANH VO, WITKACY, DAVID WOJNAROWICZ

The exhibition *Les yeux sans visage* asserts associations that unfold in the form of a vast surreal tracking shot, and quite openly copy-pastes its title from the film by Georges Franju. Beneath these surgical auspices, the issues of montage, collage, and assemblage across different media assume a citational heterogeneity, the grotesque trivialities of formalist juxtapositions, and above all non-conceptual but distinctly material dialogues between these different regimes of representation.

The exhibition brings together items produced by contemporary artisans, designers, and jewelers from the French contemporary scene, modern vintage analog photographs, and works by contemporary artists. As a Larsen effect, or as ethnographic notation: Muybridge's decomposed gestures of flight freeze into a silver bird. A printed skull, topped with a capillary coat of chainmail, stares viciously. A shot Bambi, dissolving in oxides, tattoos itself in loops, knots itself with favors, lifts a mouth, plugs hands like flowers... presses the monetizable.

Extracted from the catalogue of the world, the represented subjects have undergone chimerical modifications, hypertrophied cut-ups, paradoxical homotheties, suffocated shards—literally. The artifacts reassembled here, opposed by nature, resemble a vast exquisite corpse of the logics of appearance. The operative gesture belongs to modding.

The artifact is understood as “the maker's engagement with the material itself,” as anthropologist Tim Ingold tells us—that is, the evident bond, encoded though it may be, of relation and the very present expression of the act of making, its technicality and the form achieved. From these intersecting practices emerge and merge explicit traces, where nothing remains discreet; particularly in adornment—props, skins, jewelry—and their formalization, expression is baroque, referential, verbose. If not alien.

By capillarity, everything becomes the modding of the other. The practice of styling consists, through such proximities, in modifying an existing state in order to change both its functioning and its appearance. Beyond aesthetic adjustments, a complete overhaul. What, in this sense, is a jewel?

A dungeon of lore, a substructure, a piece of cardboard on a carpet, a dislocated beach, an extraterrestrial shell, luminescent eggs, a fresco-necklace, a canine frontispiece. A narrative abduction or borrowing takes place, whose visuality is savagely explicit. Without detour, pop references aim to renegotiate the question of detail, ornament, decoration, and the inherent values embedded between these signs.

Representations and care of the self: the exhibition outlines the question of the gaze cast upon the strangeness or queerness of the body itself—this thing that escapes the subject, resists, flees, and which one might spend one's time trying, through rags, tattoos, trinkets, decorations, favors, and handguns, to save or to stabilize in appearance. Allures, portraits and self-portraits, narratives of the self, and cyborg skins evoke a substraction, a failed hold on time, the quasi-cinematic drama of a taste for eternity—impossible. Like the missing face of the young girl in Franju. Those eyes, only those eyes, what remains of the symmetrical adornment of the injured face. Like the hardcore laconicism of an angry baby.

From the earliest photographic portraits, which fixed the margins in vanity, through looped video and new media—and the challenge of sustaining layered and meticulously detailed dimensions of reality—there emerge temporal doses of style, snapshots in which the logics of beings, societies, vernacular fashions, and ensembles of characters carried into the image appear. From medium to medium, the fiction of appearance continues, fixing its in & out, its sumptuary rules, and its palace revolutions.

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The subject, the character coexists with the represented figure, conflating *caractère* (personality) and character. Let us also say that what is carried here is the expression of the self as a total ornamental fact, in the sense of Marcel Mauss, where theatricality prevails. Nothing immaterial or discreet: the expression of a culture of appearances and of its mediations, in the fashion-related terms described by Daniel Roche, is massive. The whole is adjusted with a metallic patina, a uniform silver salt, tied with a favor at the surface.

Through plays of breaches and fissures, with the ellipsis of a fashion editorial line, the proximity of so-called art objects with those of decorative culture—design objects, jewelry, and accessories—flirt together. The provocation of symbolic inversions, carnivalesque reversals, cultural reappropriations, or the circulation of signifiers freed from the obligation of proof authorizes every fantasy. Values as well as signs circulate, gravitate, and are exchanged. In currencies.

To seize the eyes, in flashes.

To canonize bodies, re-membered.

To assemble portraits, in refined superimposition.

Mathieu Buard, January 2026