

# Fondation François Schneider

## Press Kit



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# An art center on the theme of water

## The François Schneider Foundation



Unique in Europe for its theme, the François Schneider Foundation encourages creativity through various initiatives dedicated to the theme of water, including an international competition, the acquisition of works for its collection and the organization of exhibitions in its art center.

A philanthropic foundation created in 2000 and recognized as a public utility in 2005, the François Schneider Foundation has a dual commitment to education and culture. It supports contemporary artists in the development of their careers, and provides scholarships to enable young graduates to access higher education. Its activities are complemented by publications, loans, touring exhibitions and a residency program for young artists from schools along the Rhine. Numerous social projects (schools, prisons, hospitals, etc.) have also been developed since 2018.

*“Our aim is to bring contemporary art closer to the public. By choosing a unique theme for our site, we can more easily bring new emotions and perceptions to our contemporaries, especially the youngest among them. Water, the subject common to all the works on display, will be the Ariadne’s thread that guides visitors, helping them to better understand the diversity of views on the world around us, the richness of the sensibilities that make it up, and the infinite register of the imaginations of artists of all origins and cultures.”*

**François Schneider**

## The collection

The works acquired over the years bring together renowned figures but also young artists, with the theme of water providing the thread running through the collection.

So water is omnipresent, both in the works on display and in the architecture of the Art Centre itself.

Water has always been a source of artistic inspiration. Even in ancient Egypt, an image of undulating water was one of the most commonly used hieroglyphs.

Over the centuries, numerous poets and writers have put pen to paper to praise its virtues, whilst musicians have composed melodies fuelled by its inspiration, painters have discovered and captured the meanders of lakes, seas and rivers, and artists have used a profusion of techniques to translate its plastic power. Simultaneously sign and symbol, it lies at the heart of myths and religious, with its constantly changing form.

## The sculpture garden

The garden offers a delightful stroll through permanent works from the 20th and 21st centuries. Most are activated by water features, to the delight of visitors young and old.

### A stroll through the garden

Water cascades from Niki de Saint-Phalle's monumental *Star Fountain* and trickles from Ilana Isehayek's *Les Toupies d'eau*. Sylvie de Meurville's installation hugs the ridges of the Vosges and Pol Bury's steel spheres sparkle. Clément Borderie's pirate ring freezes or thaws with the seasons and is grafted onto the building. Lorella Abenavolli presents a minimalist cube where water flows in a perfect flat surface. Renaud Auguste-Dormeuil and Rachael Louise Bailey, both winners of Talents Contemporains (4th and 8th editions), have also installed their works here.

In Renaud Auguste-Dormeuil's *From Here to There*, water reflects the movement of clouds before being sent across the Pacific through an imaginary tunnel. Concerned by environmental issues, Rachael Louise Bailey has designed a large sphere of inner tubes, which visually responds to the vortex in Renaud Auguste-Dormeuil's neighboring basin.





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**Current special exhibition**  
***Confluences***  
**(26.04.-28.09.2025)**



## ***Confluences* – the new exhibition at the Fondation François Schneider**

**(26 April to 28 September 2025)**

The *Confluences* exhibition brings together the collections of the Fondation François Schneider, FRAC Alsace, FRAC Champagne-Ardenne and 49 Nord 6 Est – FRAC Lorraine. Inspired by the concept of “confluences”, it explores the interactions between different works, like rivers that meet.

The pieces, drawn from a variety of styles and cultures, highlight shared emotions around water. Although each is distinct, they respond to one another and weave invisible links. The exhibition features thirty artists working in a variety of media, including painting, video, photography, installation, sculpture and textiles. Through different themes, the works engage in a dialogue of forms, compositions, narratives and colors. Visitors are invited to imagine themselves in moments of life inspired by water, whether admiring a sparkling sea, exploring urban beaches or observing the harmony between body and water.

This exhibition offers a new perspective on the works while revealing the artists’ shared inspirations and thus showing the striking echoes between the pieces presented.

Exhibition curator: Sarah Guilain, Head of Artistic Projects and Collection

### **Artists:**

**Claude BATHO • Mégane BRAUER • Pat BRUDER • Cécile CARRIERE • Julie CHAFFORT • Gigi CIFALI • Collectif SANDRA & RICARDO • Olivier CROUZEL • Céline DIAIS • Marcel DINAHET • Jennifer DOUZENEL • Linda FREGNI NAGLER • Harald HUND • Michel KRIEGER, Sylvia LACAISSE • Miller LEVY • Rahshia LINENDOLL-SAWYER • Arno Rafael MINKKINEN • Bernard MONINOT • Hélène MUGOT • Eva NIELSEN • Uriel ORLOW • Emma PERROCHON • Philippe RAMETTE • Hans Peter REUTER • Jean-Michel SANEJOUAND • Sandy SKOGLUND • Uri TZAIG • Massimo VITALI • Jenny YMKER.**

In partnership with:

FRAC Alsace      FRAC Champagne-Ardenne      49 Nord 6 Est      Frac Lorraine





© Céline Diais, Voir la mer, 2015, Photographies 9 x (90 x 90) cm, Collection Fondation François Schneider



© Jenny Ymker. Mopping, 2016 Tapisserie laine et coton, 119 x 198 cm, Collection Fondation François Schneider





© Massimo Vitali, Torbole, Urban Beach 1, août 1996 Photographie, tirage couleur contrecollé sur aluminium 180 x 220 cm, Collection FRAC Alsace, Sélestat



© Rahshia Linendoll-Sawyer, We are not made of wood, 2012, 3 photographies 2 x (152 x 101) cm et 101 x 152 cm, Collection Fondation François Schneider



## **Past exhibitions - a selection**

**„Territoires mouvants – Talents Contemporains 12th edition“ and „Un regard sur l'impermanence“ (26 October 2024 to 23 March 2025)**



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The exhibition ***Territoires mouvants*** highlights the work of the six laureates of the 12th edition of the Talents Contemporains competition: Aurélien Mauplot, Bilal Hamdad, Ugo Schiavi, Manon Lanjouère, Noemi Sjöberg, and Ulysse Bordarias. Through various media, the creations explore the theme of water, addressing issues related to immigration, geopolitical identity, and environmental and social crises.

**Aurélien Mauplot's** *Les Possessions* questions the concepts of territory and borders by using maps of countries and islands printed on the pages of Jules Verne's *Le Tour du Monde en 80 jours* (Around the World in Eighty Days) to represent unstable geographies. In contrast, Bilal Hamdad's work *Nuit égarée* (Lost night) tackles immigration by reinterpreting John Everett Millais's famous painting *Ophelia*, where a man in stagnant waters embodies the dangers that immigrants face.



**Manon Lanjouère**, with her installation *Les Particules, le conte humain d'une eau qui meurt* (Particles, the Human Tale of a Dying Water), illuminates the dangers of marine pollution through cyanotypes. Using plastic materials collected from beaches, she represents endangered marine species. Ugo Schiavi introduces us to *Léviathan*, a hybrid fountain-sculpture made from recycled materials that evokes the contemporary ecological crisis.

Finally, **Noemi Sjöberg**'s video *One euro to jump now* raises awareness of the detrimental effects of mass tourism on our environment. Her divers face those depicted in Ulysse Bordarias' drawing *Il pleuvait sur l'Agora* (It Was Raining on the Agora), where fragments of swimmers struggle against a tumultuous landscape set within the democratic space of the Agora's amphitheater.

In these uncertain spaces, the theme *Moving Territoires* presents water as a tool revealing ongoing environmental and societal transformations.

**Capucine Vandebrouck**, winner of the 8th edition of the Talents Contemporains contest with her work *Puddle 3*, unveils a personal exhibition titled ***Un regard sur l'impermanence* (A glimpse of impermanence)**.

For the past few years, Capucine Vandebrouck has been working with natural materials that are inherently moving and ephemeral. This inconsistency feeds her creative process, making impermanence the common thread linking her works. Through her artistic practice, she invites the spectator to question temporality and contemplate transitional moments, unveiling the hidden beauty of our daily lives. Thus, temporality lies at the core of her work, as she seeks to capture these fleeting moments. Capucine Vandebrouck shines a light on her artistic production while adding a new series of creations.

Her series, *Puddles*, depicts several puddles of water drawn on the ground using a hydrophobic system. Some of these are disrupted by the fall of a water droplet. Other works are shaped using photograms: water, illuminated, captures fleeting moments and leaves its mark on photosensitive paper. The artist captures the fluid movements of water and the waves on its surface to depict passing states and brief flows. Worthy of a camera obscura, a crystal lens is positioned at a distance from the wall to create

a focus and project an inverted image of the room. This lens reveals the dialogue between light, water, and perception, highlighting the richness of the invisible obvious that our senses tend to neglect.

This is a poetic and sensory exhibition where impermanence becomes a source of inspiration and wonder.

Exhibition curator of both exhibitions: Sarah Guilain



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## **Contemporary ceramics: *Aqua Terra* (20 April to 22 September 2024) at the Fondation François Schneider**

For the summer season, the François Schneider Foundation presented a temporary exhibition entitled *Aqua Terra*, showcasing contemporary ceramics through the sculptural work of some thirty ceramic artists. *Aqua Terra* offered the opportunity to plunge into a world both tangible and fantastic, where the imagination is set free through the magic of ceramics. Structured in six parts, the exhibition unveiled different universes linked to the aquatic world, transporting visitors from the sunny beach to the marine horizon, from the polar regions to the depths of the ocean. The artists explored all manifestations of water, from the beauty of icebergs floating in the oceans to underwater life with its colorful corals and marine animals. The ceramic sculptures provide a striking representation of these different sources of inspiration around water, while conveying its fragility and delicacy as a precious ecosystem.

Exhibition curator: Sarah Guilain, in charge of artistic projects and the collection

**Artists : Jeanne Andrieu • Agathe Brahami-Ferron • Mélanie Broglio • Mathilde Cochapin • Rose-Marie Crespín • Johan Creten • Cordina & Mérovée Dubois • Alexandra Engelfriet • Cécile Fouillade • Jean-François Fouilhoux • Sébastien Gouju • Elsa Guillaume • Leïla Helmstetter • Marie Heughebaert • Safia Hijos • Romuald Jandolo • Alexandre et Florentine Lamarche-Ovize • Claire Lindner • Cat Loray • Weronika Lucinska • Petra Marianne Meier • Aline Morvan • Le Palais du Corbeau • Lisa Pelisson • Muriel Persil • Clément Petibon • Sarah Pschorn • Grégoire Scalabre • Aline Schmitt • Kartini Thomas • Félicien Umbreit • Bénédicte Vallet**



© FFS – Agathe Brahami



© FFS – Marie Heughebaert



© FFS – Muriel Persil



## Special exhibitions to mark the tenth anniversary of the Foundation



Ten years of the art foundation deserve to be celebrated: In October 2023, the Fondation François Schneider invited to three new exhibitions. Two exhibitions opened on site in Wattwiller (21 October 2023 to 10 March 2024), accompanied by a cultural programme with guided tours, lectures, workshops, concerts and performances.

- ***“Illusions – Talents contemporains 11<sup>e</sup> édition”***
- ***“La mécanique de l’eau”***

The third exhibition started on 18 October 2023 (until 10 March 2024) as a co-curated exhibition at the Fondation Boghossian in Brussels:

- **Travelling exhibition** with works by Olivier Leroi, Jenny Ymker, Bianca Bondi and Benjamin Rossi, among others.

## ***Illusions – Talents contemporains 11<sup>e</sup> édition***



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In ***Illusions – Talents Contemporains 11<sup>e</sup> édition***, dried-up oases, laboratory waves, imaginary waterscapes and fantastic creatures appeared and disappeared as the artists' photographs, paintings and videos question metamorphosis and rarefaction in the works of Marie-Anita Gaube, M'Hammed Kilito, Eva Medin and Sarah Ritter.

### ***La mécanique de l'eau***



©Salim Santa Lucia

©Steeve Constanty

The mechanics of water, drawing on the works in the collection, the link to movement, machines and flow. For the occasion, works by artists in the collection were brought out of storage and placed in dialogue with other projects by each artist. The result were water mirrors, rain machines, sound waves, stroboscopic showers and frosted icicles!

All pushed the limits of water and rely on its force to set it in motion, the machine arousing fascination and wonder in the artists, mechanics also being the art of building.

**Artists: Erik Samakh, Laurent Faulon Erik Samakh, Laurent Faulon, Johan Parent, Jérémy Laffon, Thomas Teurlai, Arthur Hoffner, Valère Costes**

In the **travelling exhibition** of the Brussels-based Fondation Boghossian, the works of the Korean artist Kim Tschang Yeul – famous for his work with water droplets – entered into a relationship with the installations and sculptures of the artists Patrick Bailly- Maître-Grand, Bianca Bondi, Yves Chaudouët, Elizaveta Konovalova, Olivier Leroi, Benjamin Rossi and Jenny Ymker. At the invitation and joint curation of the Brussels Fondation, the Fondation François Schneider was presenting a selection of artists from its own collection in the magnificent villa Empain.

The **Boghossian Foundation** was established in 1992 by Robert Boghossian and his two sons Jean and Albert, jewellers of Armenian origin. The foundation focuses on the education and upbringing of children and young people and supports numerous social, educational and artistic projects in Belgium, Lebanon and Armenia. It promotes dialogue between the cultures of the East and the West by supporting artistic creation through the awarding of several prizes and by hosting artists in residence at Villa Empain, a centre for art and culture (Fondation Boghossian, Av. Franklin Roosevelt 67, 1050 Bruxelles T. +32 2 627 52 30 E. [info@boghossianfoundation.be](mailto:info@boghossianfoundation.be)).

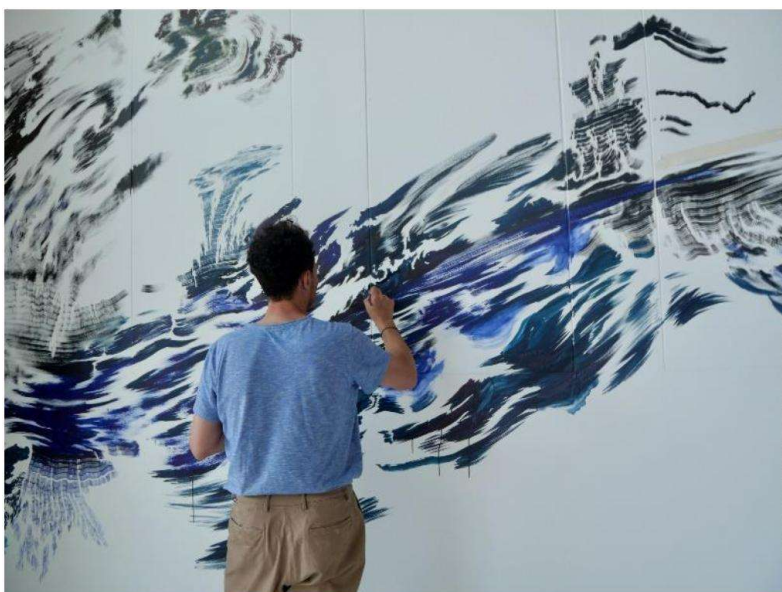


## ***Géologie des déluges – Geology of Floods***

The François Schneider Foundation invited Abdelkader Benchamma to take over the 1200m<sup>2</sup> of the art centre in Wattwiller. The artist proposes an exhibition conceived especially for the place, guided by the theme of water, which is dear to the Foundation. Around the theme of the flood, A. Benchamma questioned this universal myth, the collective psyche that is attached to it and conceives a fragmented territory.

Between heaven and earth is water. Or rather, water is in the heavens, under and on the earth. Water has always nourished the founding myths of the different civilisations and great religions. According to the Koran, it is through water that God created and it is through water that he will raise the dead. Water is also one of the plagues of Egypt and the punishment of the Flood... In Genesis, on the second day, God separates the waters above and the waters below in order to create a dry land... a little later, wanting to come back on his creation, he releases the waters above to send a flood and punish the men... Water is here the chaos

Between science and belief, the *Geology of Floods* is a strange quest, which tracks down hypothetical shorelines throughout the world, traces that water would have left over the centuries, as possible witnesses of disasters, rising waters that would emerge from the depths as in this enigmatic extract from the Koran “and we made the earth gush forth into springs. “Or, on the contrary, from the heavens: “on that day all the springs of the immense abyss of water were split open and the sluices of the heavens were opened”.



© Moran Remaud

Géologie Abdelkader Benchamma  
des déluges (*Géologie der Stoffe*)  
13. Mai - 24. September 2023



© Moran Remaud

For the past twenty years, Abdelkader Benchamma has been revisiting and investigating the origins of the universe in its morphological and symbolic components. He formalises his research and interest in the strata of the world by inscribing signs and reliefs on various surfaces. The artist infuses his ensembles with vibrations and rhythms. Mineral, vegetal and cosmic forms are revealed, which powerfully spill out into the spaces, heckling the viewer and taking the form of unstable worlds. We then cross the Foundation's art centre like a fragmented territory that is as much geological as mythological. A cavern with tenebrous spurts and an aquatic atlas guides us towards a karst plain, it is erected on the edge of dried-up planets, comet tails flood the territory with extraterrestrial water. Through the prism of drawn sculptures, coloured incursions on paper, bi-chromatic lithographs and animations revealing trickling, tormented worlds with incessant flows, the artist composes a fantastic cartography where invasive drawing rubs shoulders with breathing. The layers of ink in his drawings are superimposed and slowly agglomerate, like the many sediments that shape the macrocosm. A telluric world emerges, water and mineral cohabit. Abdelkader Benchamma reveals his own images of these waters that flood the world and leave visible impacts, grooves on the rocks.

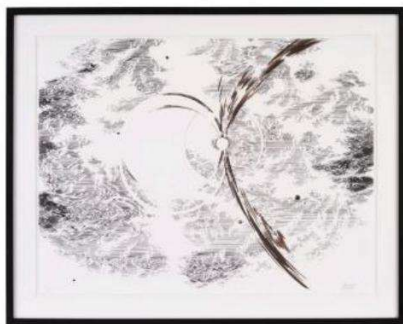


© Tonia Duttler

**Abdelkader Benchamma** completed his studies at in 2003 at the École des Beaux Arts in Montpellier and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 2015, he was the winner of the Drawing Now prize and in the same year was invited by the Drawing Center in New York to open its mural drawing programme with Representation of Dark Matter (2015-2016). In recent years, he has realised numerous solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions. His work will be shown 2023 in solo exhibitions at the Fondation François Schneider (Wattwiller), Het Noordbrabants Museum (HNBM) in the Netherlands and the Power Plant in Toronto, Canada. He is also taking part in the group exhibition Immortelle at MO.CO Montpellier Contemporain.



Abdelkader Benchamma, Blick auf die Installation *Body of Ghosts* au Pola Museum of Art, Hakone (Japan) en 2019 © Keizo Kioku



Abdelkader Benchamma, *Et le soleil disparaissait et luisait dans la journée* („Und die Sonne verschwand und schien in den Tag hinein“) 2018 © Bertrand Huet Tutti  
Mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Künstlers und der Galerie Templon, Paris-Brüssel-New York



Abdelkader Benchamma, *Engramme-Ressac* („Unendliches Engramm“) © Sebastiano Pellion di Persano  
Mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Künstlers und der Galerie Templon, Paris-Brüssel-New York



The **Fondation François Schneider** (founded in 2000) is a recognised charitable foundation. It awards study grants and supports contemporary artists in the development of their careers – some of them can even live and work in one of the foundation's own artist residences. Every year, several artists are honoured in a competition for their works or projects on the theme of water. The foundation now owns a unique collection of contemporary works on this theme. Every year, the Fondation François Schneider organises three exhibitions on the theme of water in all its facets. Workshops, conferences, concerts, discussions and live performances are organised in conjunction with these exhibitions.

**We will be happy to send you further media information about the Fondation and the exhibition on request.**

**Please contact us if you would like to get to know the Fondation François Schneider and attend the press preview. We will be happy to organise an interview with Sarah Guilain, head of artistic projects and exhibition curator.**