

Benjamin Mouly



2026

Education

2013-15, Master 2, Contemporary Arts, Work.master, HEAD, Geneva (CH)
 2010-13, Master 2, Photography, ENSP, Arles (FR)
 2011, Erasmus (photo. dpt.), Aalto School of Art and Design, Helsinki (FI)

Residencies

2023-24, Les Tanneries - Contemporary Arts Center, Amilly (FR)
 2023, Xanadu Institute, Iméra, Marseille (FR)
 2020, Setu Festival, Elliant (FR)
 2019-20, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid (ES)
 2018, *A Host + A Guest = A Ghost*, Rennes - Clermont-Ferrand (FR)
 2017, 40mcube, with Jean Monnet middle school, Janzé (FR)
 2016-17, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (FR)
 2015, Alliance française, Bogotá (CO)

Distinctions

2019, Aide Individuelle Création (grant), DRAC Bretagne, Rennes (FR)
 2015, Finalist of Photo-Levallois prize, Levallois (FR)
 1st exhibition (grant), CNAP, Paris (FR)
 2014, Nominated for Plat(t)form, Fotomuseum, Winterthur (CH)

Books

2015, *Palomar Photographe* (thesis), tutor C. Kihm, HEAD, Geneva (CH)
 2014, *Index*, w/ Alexis Chrun, HEAD, Geneva (CH)
 2013, *Orange was the color of her dress, Then silk blues*, FP&CF, Paris (FR)
 2013, *Superficiel*, self-published, Arles (FR)
 2011, *This image as a title for the book*, self-published, Helsinki (FI)
 2009, *I'll See You There*, self-published, New York (USA)

Publications

2020, *Les vies minuscules* (cat.), *Viva Villa!*, txt. Cécile Debray, Paris (FR)
 Casa de Velázquez (cat.), text Julie Sas, Madrid (ES)
 2018, *A Guest + A Host = A Ghost* (cat.), texte Isabelle Henrion
 2017, *Fisheye 8* (mag.), n°27, Paris (FR)
 2016, *Fragments* (cat.), Red Lebanese, Paris (FR)
 2013, *Échappées belles* (book), Diaphane, Paris (FR)
 2012, *Infra-Mince n°7* (book), Acte Sud, Paris (FR)

Solo exhibitions

2024, *Toucher de bouche*, cur. Éric Degoutte, Les Tanneries, Amilly (FR)
 2015, *Hojas de Perro*, Alliance française, Bogotá (CO)
 Le jour sait, la nuit ignore, Silencio, Paris (FR)
 De concert, cur. Christine Ollier, Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR)
 2014, *Space Related*, cur. Anna Planas, galerie Temple, Paris (FR)

Group exhibitions

2026, *Pique-Assiette*, Languille, La Bifurk, Grenoble (FR)
 2023, *Lovelace*, cur. Jeff Guess and C. Bruno, Iméra, Marseille (FR)
 Bouquet final, cur. Victoire Barbot, Culot 13, Marseille (FR)
 2022, *Allusions perdues*, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid (ES)
 2021, *Itinérance*, w/ artists of Casa de Velázquez, Paris and Nantes (FR)
 Viva Villa!, cur. Cécile Debray, Collection Lambert, Avignon (FR)
 2020, *Setu*, 5th édition, performance art festival, Elliant (FR)
 Puertas Abiertas, w/ Huihui Cheng, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid (ES)
 2019, *Jamais sucre ne gâta viande*, Atelier Flamme, Montreuil (FR)
 2018, *Ton carrosse est le mien*, Astérismes, Sainte-Marine (FR)
 2017, *Amore d'un récit*, w/ Mathilde Geldhof, Rue des Arts, Toulon (FR)
 Periscope - Beyond Photography, MC2 Gallery, Milan (IT)
 À la recherche du coup de bol, atelier Vivarium, Rennes (FR)
 2016, *Fragments*, cur. Christine Ollier, Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR)
 Off the Wall, Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR)
 Jack Your Melon, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (FR)
 2015, *Get Out*, cur. Latifa Echakhch, Live In Your Head, Genève (CH)
 2014, 37°05'N/2°30'W, Villa du Parc, cur. Audrey Illouz, Annemasse (FR)

Events

2025, *Like a river, unafraid of becoming the sea* (conference performance), La grande fantaisie, Paris (FR)
 2023, *Nature humaine - Humaine nature* (screening), cur. Margaux Bonopera and Julia Marchand, Fondation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles (FR)
 2021, *Invisible string quartet* (concert/screening), w/ Huihui Cheng, Frac-naüm, Bellevaux cinema, Lausanne (CH)
 2016, *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* (performance), cur. by Grégory Castera, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (FR)
 2016, *Slideshow* (screening), Progress gallery, Paris (FR)



Toucher de bouche (solo exhibition), Les Tanneries - Contemporary Arts Center, Amilly (FR), 2024

Information

Born in 1987, lives and works Marseille

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Presentation

I've studied photography at the ENSP in Arles and Contemporary Arts at HEAD in Geneva. My work has been exhibited in France (CACIN Les Tanneries - 2024) and abroad (MC2 Gallery Milan - 2017, French Alliance of Bogotá - 2015) in solo exhibitions (Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire - 2017, 2015), group shows (Collection Lambert - 2021) and fairs (Paris Photo, Unseen Amsterdam, Art Bruxelles). In 2020, I was an artist-member of the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, and I've lived and worked in Marseille since then.

I am developing a multidisciplinary practice driven by the question of image and agentivity. It questions the relationship between humans and their environment by using images, objects or gestures, often brought into dialogue through installations or films. My work is about encounters, sensations and uncertainty, and for me, images are a means of apprehending the world without attempting to grasp it completely.

For roughly 8 years, I've been developing, nourishing and investigating two main projects: For the Birds and In Watermelon Sugar. For the Birds explores our relationship to birds through a series of co-animated videos and artefacts. The project digs into amateur strategies of building contact with animal by giving gifts, sharing meals, addressing images or mimicking mating choreography. With In Watermelon Sugar I also use video and sculpture, this time to delve into stories of consumption, edible images, and food production. Sugar is linked to conservation and conversely to ephemerality, it's everywhere in our diet and it has helped shaping capitalism. I like to play with multiple ambiguities carried by this ingredient and the infinite material possibility it has to offer, with sculptures that never go too far from the kitchen.

In my work, bodies and materials, human and non-human, become agents of relationships where the human presence is no longer central. I set up situations with often unpredictable outcomes, in which everyone's place is rendered blurred and unstable. I invest the complex relationships that bind us to our environment in order to speculate on new stories.



Le réverbère, 2024

Icing-sugar, brown oak pole, ebonized chestnut frame, 4 cast-sugar glasses (faces borrowed from film actors), royal icing cap (charcoal food coloring), half a jacket

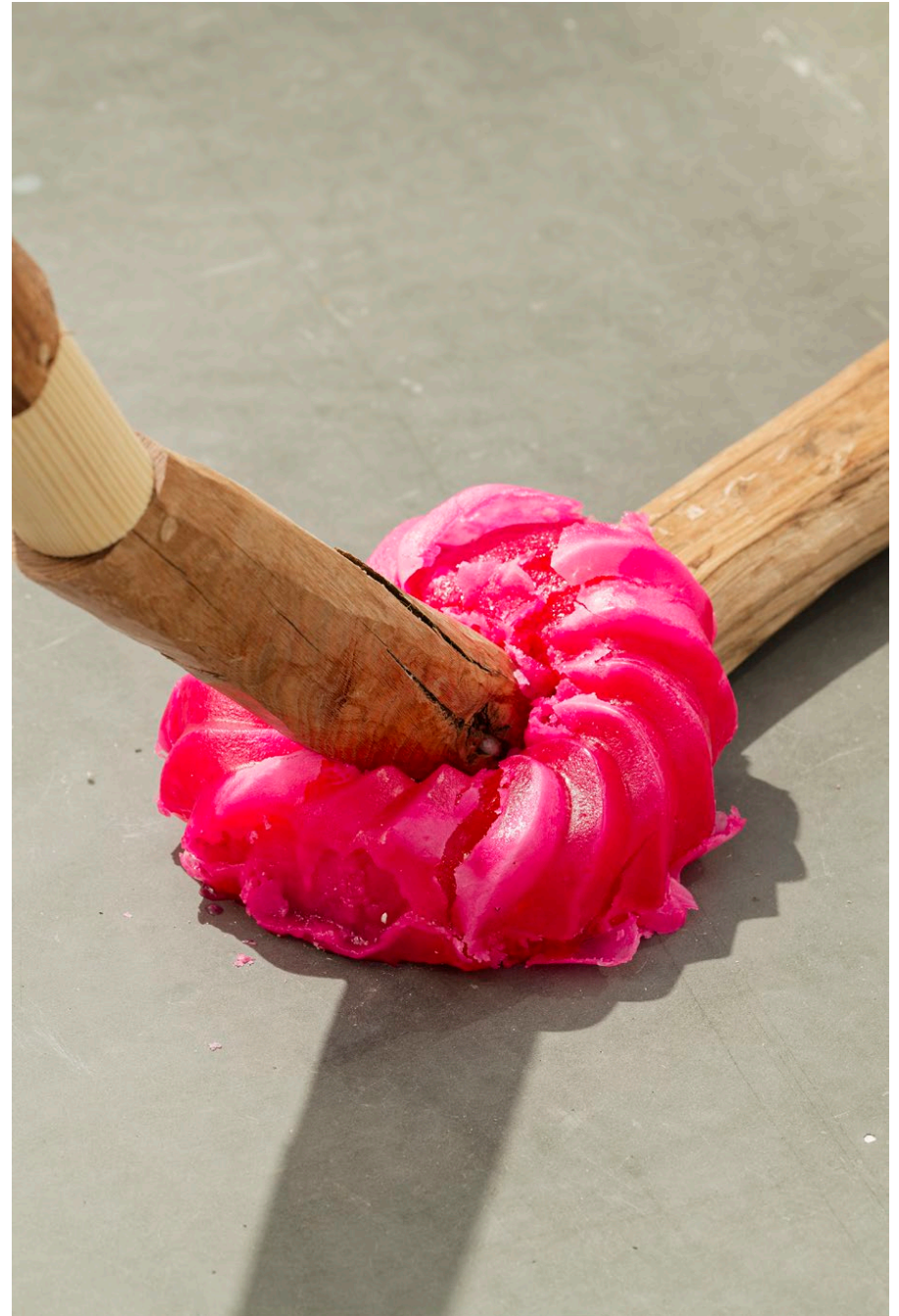
Séchoir #3, 2024 © photo Aurélien Mole

In *Toucher de bouche*, Les Tanneries - CACIN, Amilly (FR),
110 pastillage flowers, butcher twine





Bouquet N°1, California poppy made of sugar, water green vase, 2024



Sautoir, 2024 © photo Aurélien Mole
Pine wood, sugar pearls, bird food on a raw branch (outside)





Cuccagna tree, 2024
Sugar citrus, bottles, calf femur, rainbow trout. Pine wood
(tawny dye, linseed oil), cotton mesh bag, dried sugar beets,
cotton cords



Le bureau de la direction, 2024 © photo Aurélien Mole
Wooden desk, sugar beet in sugar (metal pedestal), chair, computer, 2
video screens: *Le Directeur* (video) and *L'arrachage des betteraves* (video), two
bottles

In Watermelon Sugar brings together films and sugar sculptures to question our bodily relationship to images and objects through gastronomy, literature and cinema. In this project, I explore sugar both as a material with very specific properties and as a controversial ingredient at the core of our civilisation. My sculptures have a dual existence: they are used in videos as props or set pieces, and in installations as edible, evolving sculptures. The videos allow these ephemeral objects to be inscribed in the long term, giving them form and agentivity.

During a 6-month residency at the Contemporary Arts Center Les Tanneries, I developed a new piece in this project. Entitled *Toucher de bouche*, it explores the theme of sugar production. Firstly, sugar production linked to beet crops and refining process which are widespread in the Loiret region. Secondly, the production of new narratives rooted in our collective histories and based on encounters with farmers, pastry chefs, students in the area.

Eaux-Douces (film), 12 min, <https://vimeo.com/928688950/7b61324896>

Le directeur (film), 4 min, <https://vimeo.com/931973945/559025fb2f>

Messe basse (film), 11 min, <https://vimeo.com/928026052/cccec0c9846>

La Manufacture de Pastèques (video), 8 min, <https://vimeo.com/929459186/9b738da8f5>

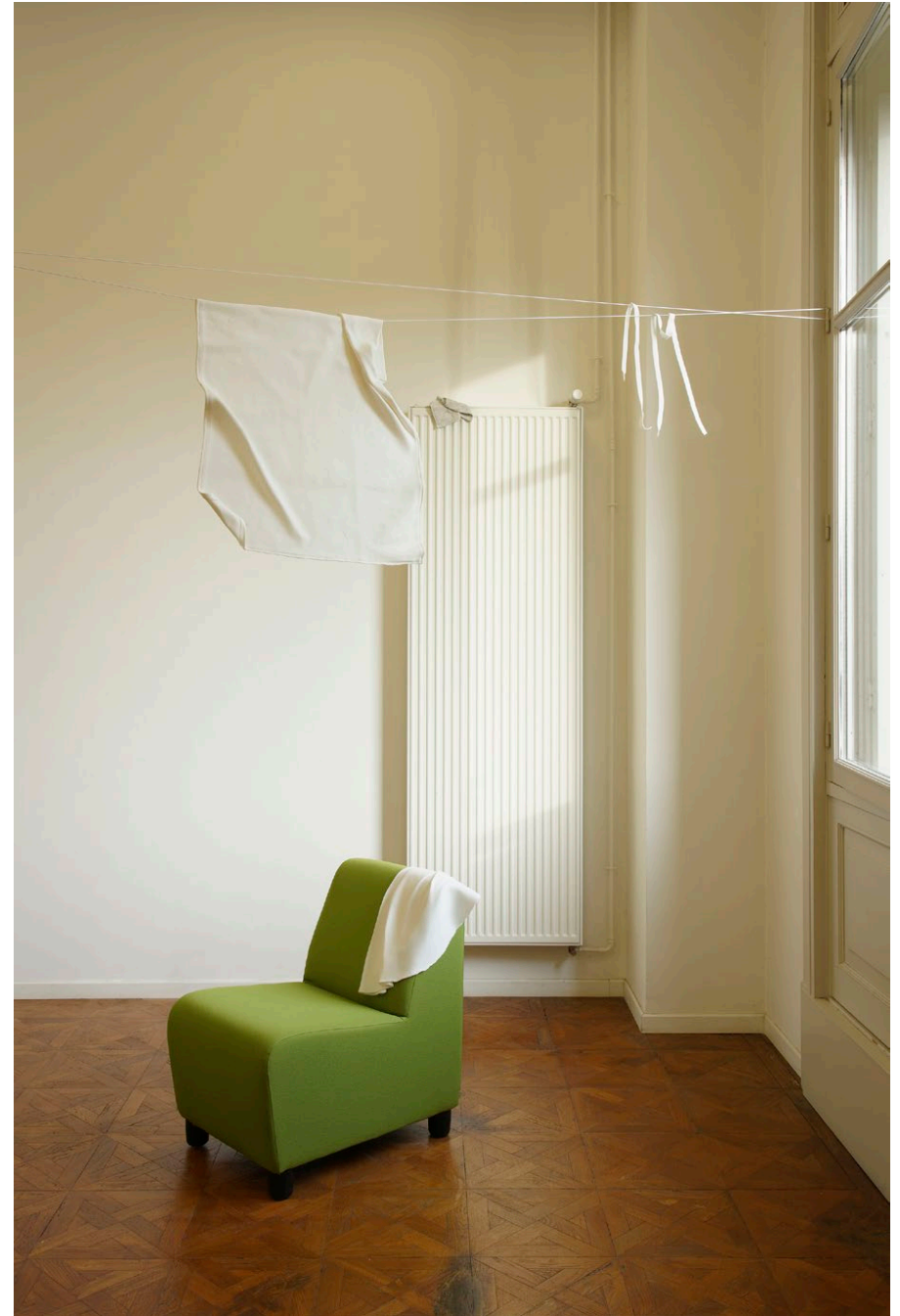
L'arrachage des betteraves (video), 6 min 30



Eaux-Douces (film) and *Messe basse* (film), in *Toucher de bouche* (solo exhibition), Les Tanneries - CACIN, Amilly (FR), 2024 © photo Aurélien Mole



Eaux-Douces (film), *In Watermelon Sugar*, 2024



Finissime Piegature (sugar sculptures), in *Lovelace* (group exhibit.), Xanadu Institute, Iméra, Marseille (FR), 2023



An apple is looking at, One shoe (video sculpture) in Bouquet final (group exhibition), Culot I3, Marseille (FR), 2023 © Nassimo Berthommé
Party shoe holding the door to the exhibition, Iphone, video loop (6 min)



Le beurre (film), *For the Birds*, 2020

Shot in Spain between Madrid et Cuenca, « [...] *For the Birds* is a film made up of a collection of sketches (saynètes) presenting a multiple character, seeking to forge a relationship with the birds by means of unusual materials — sugar, fat — or poetic approach techniques — idle waiting, choreography of gestures, amateur art practice. The uncharacter in this film — an illusionist dandy, a lard sculptor, a painter of the insides of jackets, a living statue, a lover of fights but also of naps — is an experimenter. Inventor of multiple meanings and of composite, mobile modes of action derived from opportunities, he avoids the seriousness of a scientific approach by being burlesque and thus allows the emergence of another modality to be present in the world, in relation to nature and birds. The result is the creation of an ecosystem of forms whose natural or artificial qualities are captured in a comic game of reversing values ».

Excerpt of a text by Julie Sas

La sieste (film), 15 min, <https://vimeo.com/809365045> (password: meridienne)

An apple is looking at (film), 6 min, <https://vimeo.com/630180573> (password: essai2020)

Le beurre (film), 20 min, <https://vimeo.com/496411858> (password: rodinsaindoux)

The kitchen (film), 14 min, <https://vimeo.com/513019214> (password: Losbichos)

Les vestes (film), (à venir)





Le beurre (film), *For the Birds*, 2020



Les vies minuscules (group exhibition), ¡Viva Villa!, cur. Cécile Debray, Collection Lambert, Avignon (FR), 2021 © Louise Quignon
Le beurre, An apple is looking at (films) *For the Birds*



An apple is looking at (film), For the Birds, in Les vies minuscules (group exhibition), Collection Lambert, 2021



The kitchen (film), *For the Birds*, 2020



Puertas abiertas (performance), Casa de Velázquez, Madrid (ES), 2020

Duration 1 h 30

Musical improvisation, Huihui Cheng

Video (loop, 20 min), Benjamin Mouly

2 pianos, mallet, stainless steel bowl, scotch tape, rubber apple

The inauguration of the film *Le beurre, For the Birds* was accompanied by a musical improvisation by composer Huihui Cheng. Using two pianos - one tuned, the other untuned - we established a protocol that enabled Huihui to navigate between several types of sound, with a desire to disrupt the conventional relationship between image and sound. Music can confer a color or a mood to a film, but it can also disorient the viewing experience with sound effects, for the example.





La sieste (film), *For the Birds*, 2020



Les vestes (film), *For the Birds* (soon)



Nature humaine - Humaine nature (screening), Fondation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles (FR), 2023 © Grégoire d'Ablon

Fiasco (performance), Setu Festival, Elliant (FR), 2020

Duration 40 min

Mercedes 350 Slc

Remains of sugar props (bottles, shoes, etc.)

In an old cream-colored Mercedes 350 Slc parked in a barn, I'm showing the raw footage from a film I've just shot in the village of Elliant, in Brittany. I talk about the invisible part of the film. How I went to meet people living in Elliant. How I talked them into taking part in a movie-like fight scene that would take place in a disused bar filled with sugar objects. I speak about this moment, which is not yet the film, and which stands between the still vivid experience of the movie set and the post-production work to come.





In Watermelon Sugar, Fiasco, 2020

With Christophe Estorgues and the residents of Elliant

The first chapter of *In Watermelon Sugar* explores the question of destruction at the heart of the act of consuming. In *Fiasco*, a human bulb-eater is plagued by confused memories of a surreal barroom brawl. By choosing to collaborate with local residents, almost all of them amateurs, I wanted to focus less on violence than on the creation of a shared space, through play, dance, humor and listening, with a desire to leave room for the unpredictable.

Fiasco was first shown as a performance, but it is also a film to come.



Setu (performance art festival), 5th edition, Elliant (FR), 2020 © Clément Harpillard



Jamais sucre ne gâta viande (performance), Atelier Flamme (FR), 2019

Duration 24 h

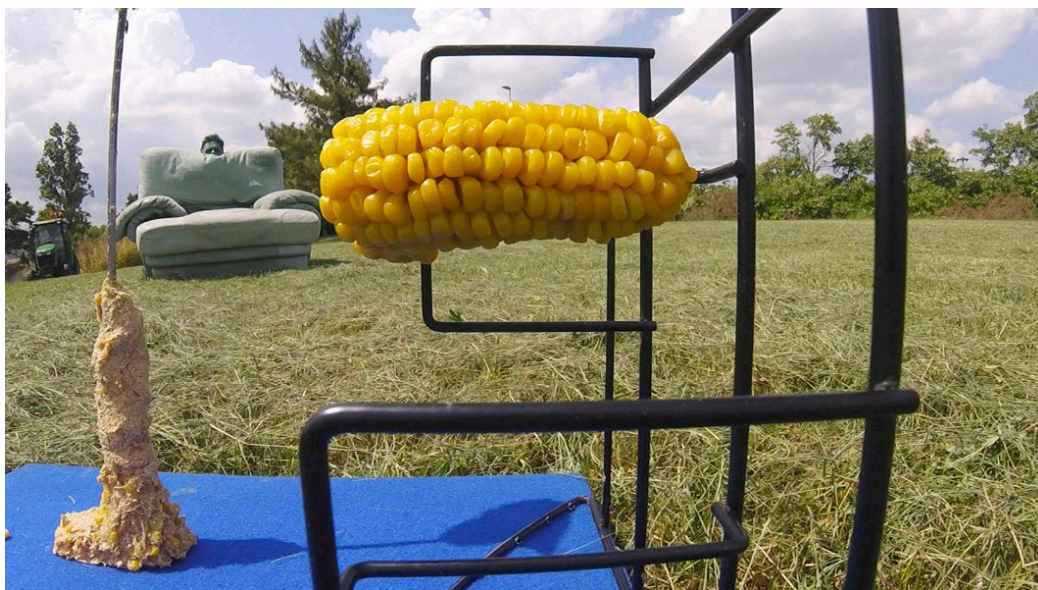
Scenography and costumes, Claire Chassot

Sugar cooking, Benjamin Mouly

Drinks and rituals, Miel Villemot

To stay up means not to sleep. But it's also the action of looking after someone or something, taking care of it. *Jamais sucre ne gâta viande* is a nocturnal gathering, a time spent collectively with the audience. Together we talk, we search, we drink, we learn, we welcome, we even surpass ourselves a little. It's a time when festivity mingles with ritual, against the backdrop of a task to be accomplished: building a sugar arch.





Lunch Break (video), 2018

Duration 60 min

Makeup, Clélia Barthelon

Leather Armchair, black anodized metal rack, corn cob reconstituted from a can

Lunch Break is a performance made for the birds of a roadside on the outskirts of Clermont-Ferrand. It is lunchtime, I am wearing verdigris make-up to look just like the armchair I dragged myself into. For an hour my body remains motionless. The camera is perched on a supermarket display rack. I appear in its field between a funny corncob and a crown of trees. We are here waiting for birds to come.

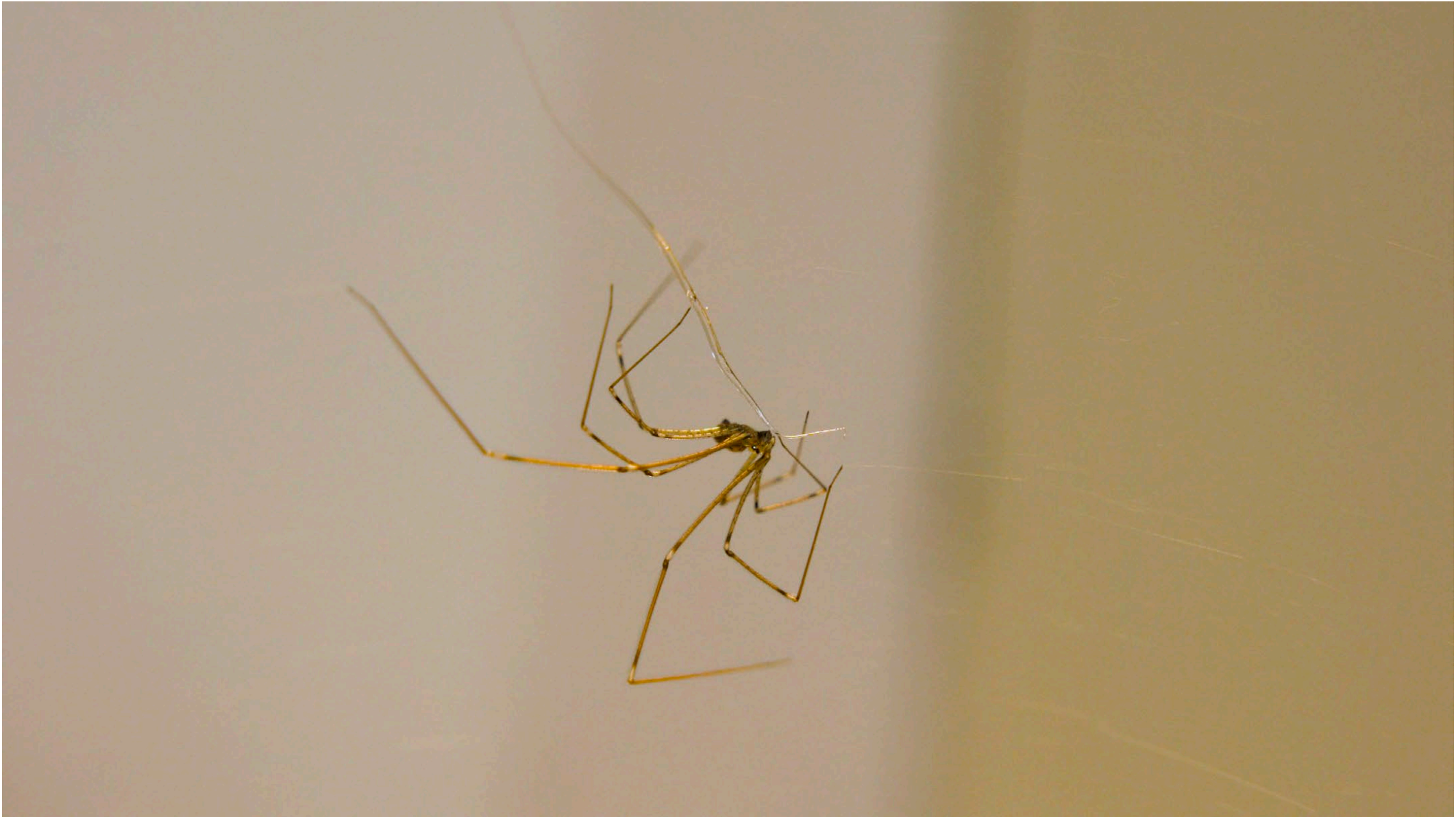
Lunch Break (vidéo), 88 min, <https://vimeo.com/304891538> (excerpt)



Foot shell (sugar sculpture), in *Ton carrosse est le mien* (exposition collective), Astérismes, Sainte-Marine (FR), 2018



A Chair for Richard (ephemeral sculpture), in *Ton carrosse est le mien*, Astérismes, Sainte-Marine (FR), 2018
Sugar, chair, driftwood, a tribute to Richard Brautigan, <https://vimeo.com/265982108>



In-visible strings (concert/screening), with Huihui Cheng, Fracanaüm, Cinéma Bellevaux, Lausanne (CH), 2021
Pulled-sugar strings, spider (opiliones)



In-visible strings (concert/screening), Fracanaüm, Lausanne (CH), 2021

Duration 30 min

Music, Huihui Cheng

Performance, Camerata Ataremac (string quartet)

Video, Benjamin Mouly

In-visible strings is my 2nd collaboration with composer Huihui Cheng. A string quartet is performing her piece on stage behind a translucent cinema screen. On this screen, the video shows the vibrations of elementary surfaces, insects and kitchen tools. A string made of sugar is woven into a spider web. The spider web itself is connected to a radiator and another string is linking a piece of red furniture to a knife, seemingly connecting all these various elements together. A whole is emerging, in resonance with the musical vibrations.

In-visible strings (video), 30min, <https://vimeo.com/809577541> (excerpt)



Amorce d'un récit (collective exhibition), w/ Mathilde Geldhof, cur. Christian Gattinoni and Anne Cartier-Bresson, Toulon (FR), 2017
Store (photograph), inkjet print on Dibond, 214 x 210 cm, 2015-17
Aquarium (photograph), inkjet print on Dibond, 214 x 210cm, 2016-17

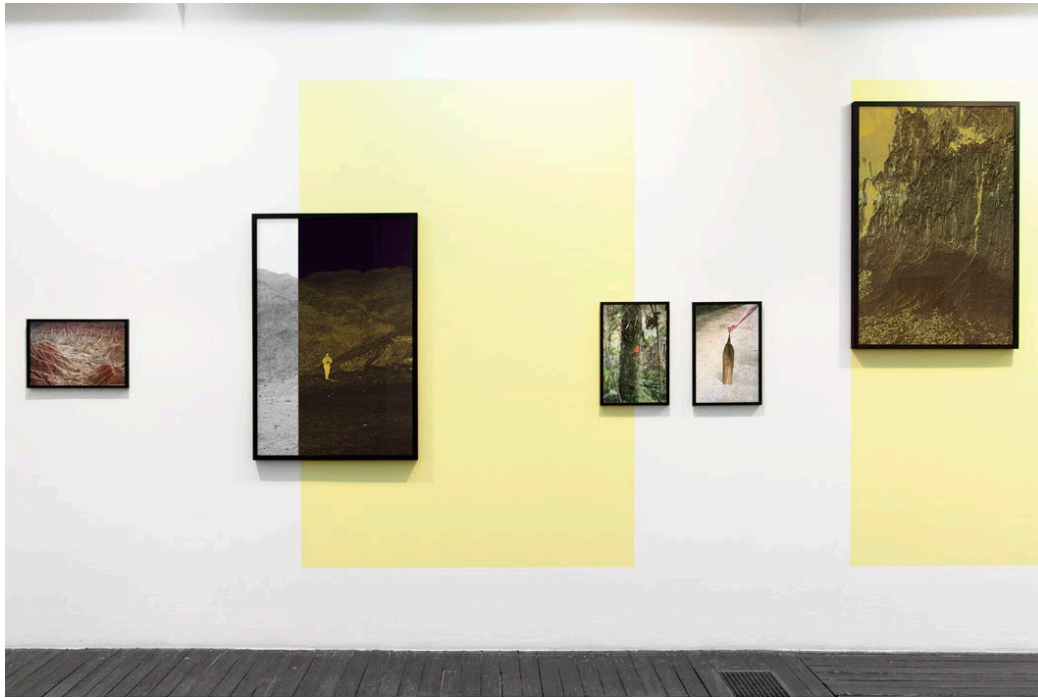


Gauche, *Hojas de perro* (photograph), inkjet print, 50 x 75 cm, 2015

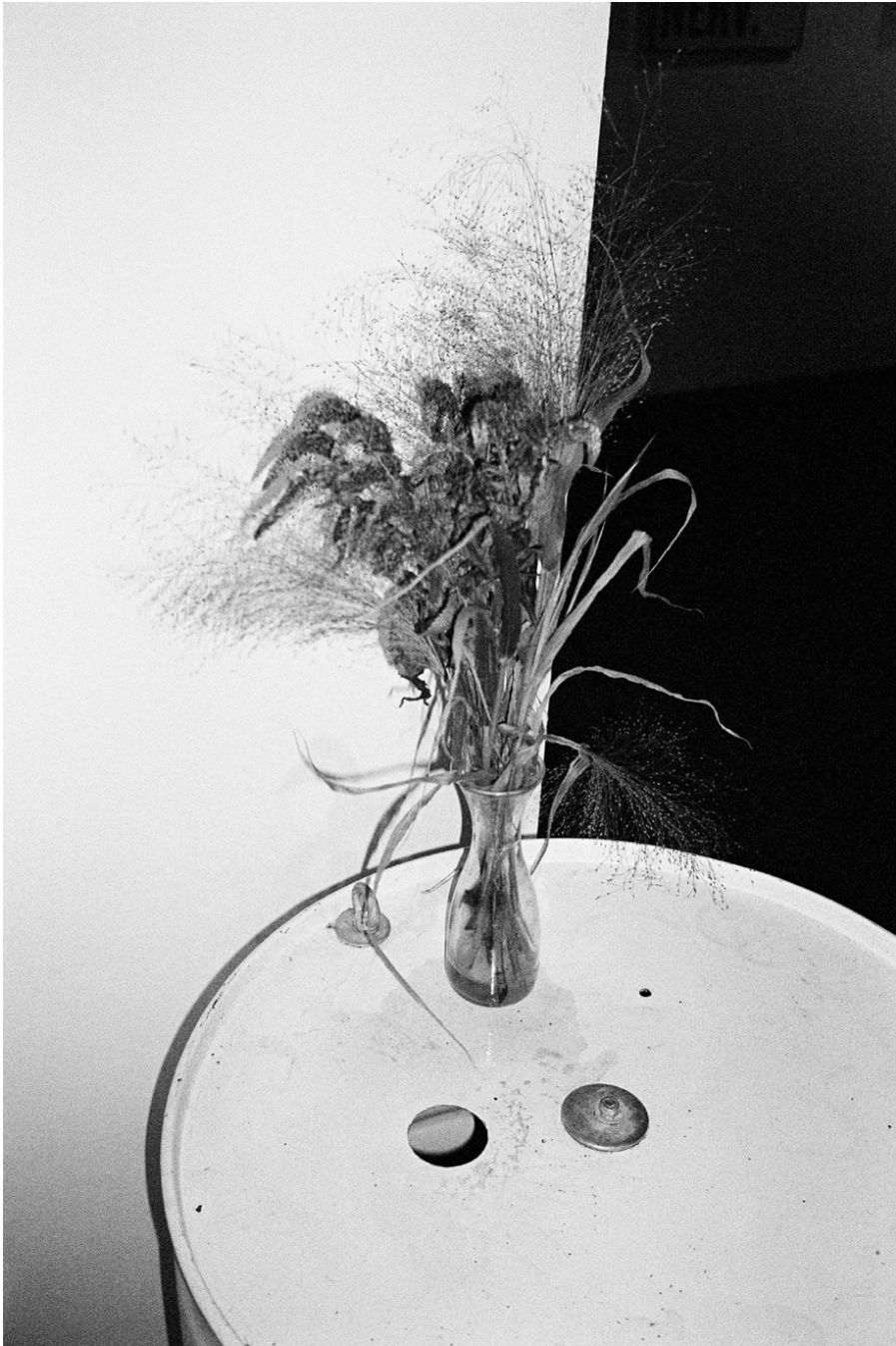
Droite, *Cocktail* (photograph), with the birds of the Cité Internationale des Arts, inkjet print, 50 x 75 cm, 2017



Fragments (group exhibition), curated by Christine Ollier, Les Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR), 2016



Fragments (group exhibition), curated by Christine Ollier, Les Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR), 2016
Covering (photograph), inkjet print, 40 x 50 cm, 2016

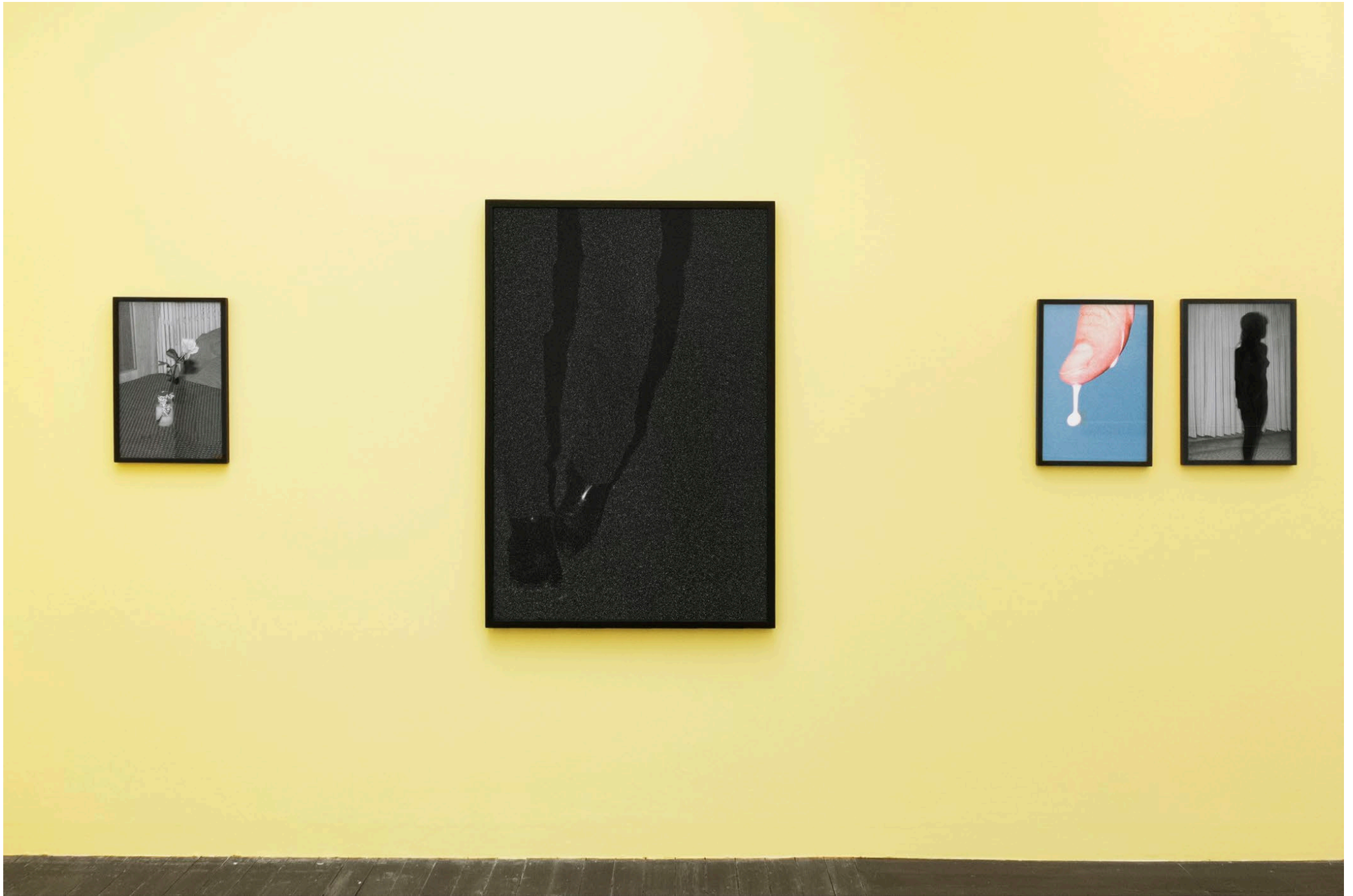


Flowers (photograph), inkjet print, 33,3 x 50 cm, 2011
Melon and Ham (photograph), inkjet print, 33,3 x 50 cm, 2012





De concert (solo exhibition), Les Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR), 2015



De concert (solo exhibition), Les Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR), 2015



Grapes (photograph), inkjet print, 33,3 x 50 cm, 2012

De concert (solo exhibition), Les Filles du Calvaire gallery, Paris (FR), 2015





Et Felix (photograph), inkjet print, 90 x 135 cm, 2012

Space Related (solo exhibition), cur. Anna Planas and Pierre Hourquet, galerie Temple, Paris (FR), 2014





Fragment #5 (photographic object), inkjet prints mounted on aluminium, yellow patch, 50 x 80 cm, 2015