

# FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES

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EXHIBITION  
7.10.2017–2.4.2018

## LA VIE SIMPLE – SIMPLEMENT LA VIE

“The Simple Life – Simply Life”



David Claerbout, *The Pure Necessity*, 2016  
2D animation, colour, stereo sound, approx. 50 min.  
Courtesy the artist and galleries Sean Kelly, New York  
and Esther Schipper, Berlin



Juergen Teller, *Self-portrait, Plates/Teller No. 36*, 2016  
Unframed giclee print, 152.4 x 101.6 cm  
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Jean-François Millet, *The Diggers*, 1855  
Etching, 36 x 51 cm  
© Cherbourg-Octeville, musée d'Art Thomas Henry  
Photo: Daniel Sohler

## LA VIE SIMPLE – SIMPLEMENT LA VIE

### EDITORIAL

The Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles, which opened its doors in 2014, offers a resolutely contemporary perspective on the history of art. The collective exhibition *La Vie simple – Simplement la vie* ("The Simple Life – Simply Life") presents the works of young artists in dialogue with the work of Vincent van Gogh and with examples of popular and folk art, and thereby updates our fantasies and stereotypical notions of an alluring and romanticized style of living. The "simple life" in its most ideal and idealized form is a space that carries very positive connotations.

Given the loss of contact with the natural world caused by the advent and omnipresence of digital technologies, the desire to invoke the senses, to touch living matter and to grasp real space has never been more present.

When we look at Vincent, we discover his humanism and his almost ecstatic relationship with nature and the forces of the cosmos.

*Exhibition curator: Bice Curiger*

*In collaboration with Julia Marchand, assistant curator*

### LA VIE SIMPLE – SIMPLEMENT LA VIE

Bringing together a selection of works by contemporary and historical artists, this autumn's collective exhibition spotlights our conceptions of a life of simplicity. In a wealth of free associations, it explores the fantasies and waves of nostalgia conjured by its very title, *La Vie simple – Simplement la vie* ("The Simple Life – Simply Life").

The idealized notion of the simple life was born, for Van Gogh, out of his first-hand experiences as a young pastor in the Borinage, the coal-mining basin in Wallonia. The same ideal drew him to the works of Jean-François Millet, the painter of 19th-century French peasant life, for whose art and person he held an unwavering admiration. Millet and Van Gogh are the two historical anchors serving as a basis for the exhibition and at the same time sanction a cheerful and lively approach to its theme. Just as Van Gogh translates Millet's peasant scenes into movement and colour, so the majority of the works assembled here pursue the Dutch artist's wish "to show that one can be simple with something other than grey, white, black and brown."<sup>1</sup>

Conceived specially for the exhibition or rarely seen before in France, the works in *La Vie simple – Simplement la vie* evoke the different aspects covered under the term "simplicity" – such as alternative forms of living, for example, and humankind's relationship with nature and animals. The contributions by living artists also serve to deconstruct the myth of the simple life as one of calm and purification.

The film *The Pure Necessity* (2016) by David Claerbout is an astonishing adaptation of Disney's animated movie classic *The Jungle Book* of 1967. Pawel Althamer's installation sets the stage for a friendly encounter between visitors and feathered creatures, while the film *O Peixe (The Fish)* (2016) by Jonathas de Andrade, shot in Brazil, calls up ambiguous feelings as we watch an animal die. The series of photographs by Yto Barrada under the title *Iris Tingitana* (2007), the Latin species name of the Tangerian iris, refers us to the "botany of power" as well as to a flower very present in the iconography of Van Gogh, while the woodcuts by Andrea Büttner seem to offer a hymn to humility. The objects of religious devotion and the representation of local trades that we find in Van Gogh's paintings are interrogated, lastly, via a selection of Provençal figurines from the 18th and 19th century.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Vincent van Gogh to his sister Willemien, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 21 October 1889.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### PAWEL ALTHAMER

Born in 1967 in Warsaw, Poland, where he lives and works.

Humour is always close to the surface in Althamer's works, which take the form of projects and which the artist rarely produces alone. Using participation as a medium, he invites friends, family, visitors and neighbours to be involved in the creative process, in an attempt to shift spectator perceptions of what makes art. Among the recurring themes of his work is decontextualisation, through which Althamer calls into question not only his status as author-artist but also the ecology of art itself.

#### Previous exhibitions (selection)

- *Mama, neugerriemschneider*, Berlin, 2016
- *The Neighbors*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2014
- *Il Palazzo Enciclopedico/The Encyclopedic Palace*, Venice Biennale, Venice, 2013
- *One of Many*, Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan, 2007

### YTO BARRADA

Born in 1971 in Paris, France, currently divides her time between New York and Tangier. She is the founder and director of the Cinémathèque de Tanger.

Barrada reflects, from a non-Western perspective, upon current geopolitical changes, post-colonial history and the local challenges of globalisation. Her photographs, films, sculptures, installations and publications together make up a singular practice that marries documentary strategies with a meditative approach to images.

#### Previous exhibitions (selection)

- *A Life Full of Holes*, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2016
- *Faux Guide*, Carré d'Art, Nîmes, 2015
- *Here and Elsewhere*, New Museum, New York, 2014
- *Before Our Eyes: Other Cartographies of the Rif*, MACBA, Barcelona, 2014
- *Riffs*, MACRO, Rome, 2012

### ANDREA BÜTTNER

Born in 1972 in Stuttgart, Germany, currently divides her time between Frankfurt and London.

The works of Andrea Büttner – who holds a PhD from the Royal College of Art, with a thesis on the relationships between art and shame – reflect her interest in the history of art and in ethical and social issues. Büttner explores themes such as poverty, shame and vulnerability in order to question our system of beliefs. Deliberately working with premodern techniques such as woodcut, weaving and glass painting, she underlines the direct materiality of these methods by placing them in dialogue and contrast with videos, performances and installations.

Her work has been shown internationally at numerous biennials and collective exhibitions, including documenta 13 in Kassel and the 29th São Paulo Biennial. She was recently nominated for the Turner Prize.

**Previous exhibitions (selection)**

- *Gesamtzusammenhang*, Kunsthalle St. Gallen, 2017
- *Beggars and iPhones*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2016
- *Piano Destructions et Alle Bilder*, CRAC, Sérignan, 2016
- *Andrea Büttner*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2015
- *Piano Destructions*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2014

**DAVID CLAERBOUT**

Born in 1969 in Kortrijk, Belgium, lives and works in Anvers and Berlin.

Primarily known for his work in the media of photography, video, sound and digital technology, David Claerbout also expresses himself through painting and drawing. His practice articulates itself around the concepts of temporality and duration, where images are suspended in a tension between stillness and movement, as well as the experience of memory and dilated time. In 2007 he was awarded the Will Grohman Prize from the Berlin Akademie der Künste and the Peill Prize from the Günther-Peill-Stiftung.

**Previous exhibitions (selection)**

- *Olympia*, Schaulager, Basel, 2017
- *Olympia*, KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2016
- *Future*, De Pont Museum, Tilburg, 2016
- *Die reine Notwendigkeit*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt, 2016
- *David Claerbout: Architecture of Narrative*, SFMOMA, San Francisco, 2011

**SANYA KANTAROVSKY**

Born in 1982 in Moscow, Russia, lives and works in New York.

Sanya Kantarovsky's practice embraces drawing, painting, sculpture and, occasionally, film. His paintings offer an array of "scenes" from daily life, visited by our dreams and reminiscences of art history. While the poses of his figures are often obscure, Kantarovsky's compositions emanate a certain candour – probably due to his palette, whose saturated colours evoke the Fauves and other modern painters. A retrospective of Kantarovsky's work is being held this autumn at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin.

**Previous exhibitions (selection)**

- *The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin*, Jewish Museum, New York, 2017
- *In the Gutter*, Tanya Leighton, Berlin, 2016
- *Gushers*, Marc Foxx, Los Angeles, 2015
- *Allergies*, Casey Kaplan, New York 2014

## JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET

French Realist painter of peasant subjects, Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) was born in Gruchy in Normandy.

He retained his links with Normandy all his life, even if he spent most of his career in Barbizon, near Fontainebleau. Turning his back on the city and its oppressive social injustices, he settled in the French countryside. Here he abandoned the painting of biblical themes and devoted himself to peasant figures: winnowers, diggers, gleaners, shepherdesses, haymakers, sowers, vineyard labourers, churners... In their ensemble, his pictures form a portrait gallery of typical representatives of the 19th-century French peasantry, whose subjects are set within skilfully crafted landscapes. Paintings by Jean-François Millet are housed in museums across Europe and in the USA.

## NICOLAS PARTY

Born in 1980 in Switzerland, lives in Brussels.

Nicolas Party's signature aesthetic is inspired by contemporary visual culture and by the works of late 19th and early 20th-century painters such as Ferdinand Hodler, Félix Vallotton and Giorgio Morandi. Party thereby takes up the traditional subjects of art: still lifes, portraits and landscapes. Highly stylized, his murals deliberately create a certain ambiguity as to the "decorative" aspect of his work.

### Previous exhibitions (selection)

- *Three Cats*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, 2016
- *Hammer Projects: Nicolas Party*, The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2016
- *Pastel et Nu*, Centre culturel suisse, Paris, 2015
- *Still Life, Stones and Elephants*, Swiss Institute, New York, 2012

## DAN PERJOVSCHI

Born in 1961 in Sibiu, Romania, where he lives and works today.

Artist, author and draughtsman, since the early 1990s Dan Perjovschi has been creating satirical drawings in a cartoon style that comes close to caricature and graffiti. He executes these drawings directly onto the walls of the galleries and museums hosting his shows. Their walls thus become amplified echoes of the notebooks in which Perjovschi sketches the excesses and absurdities of today's world. The simplicity of his cartoon drawings contrasts with the gravity of their subjects, which are extracted from international news stories. The artist has exhibited in numerous institutions around the world, including the San Francisco Art Institute, the Centre Georges-Pompidou, MOMA and Tate Modern.

### Previous exhibitions (selection)

- *Meanwhile, what about Socialism?*, NewBridge Project Space, Newcastle, 2016
- *Imagined Communities, Personal Imaginations, Private Nationalism* Budapest, Gallery of Budapest, 2015
- *Food. Produire – Manger – Consommer*, MuCEM, Marseille, 2015
- *Drawing Protest: From Museum Walls to Facebook Walls and Back*, Shedhalle, Rote Fabrik, Zurich, 2014
- *Unframed*, Kiasma / Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, 2013
- *Postcard from the World*, Lombard-Freid Projects, New York City, 2010

## JUERGEN TELLER

Born in 1964 in Erlangen, Germany, lives and works in London.

Juergen Teller, made famous in the 1990s by his portraits of Kurt Cobain and Morrissey, has revolutionized our vision of photography. His grunge aesthetic evolved into a style based on the principal of “imperfect beauty”, far removed from the codes of advertising. He delights in shooting from unflattering and surprising angles and never retouches the results, so that his models (celebrities, friends, students...) are seen in all their spontaneity and authenticity. His photos have appeared in top fashion magazines, such as *Vogue*, *W Magazine* and *The Face*, and have been the subject of publications and exhibitions around the world.

Teller has also produced short films such as *Can I Own Myself* (1998), in which he appears alongside Kate Moss. He represented Ukraine at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007 and took part in the Venice Biennale again in 2017.

### Previous exhibitions (selection)

- *Enjoy Your Life!*, Martin-Gropius, Berlin, 2017
- *Kanye, Juergen & Kim*, Phillips, London, 2015
- *I am Fifty*, Galerie Suzanne Tarasieve, Paris, 2014
- *Woo!*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 2013

## OSCAR TUAZON

Born in 1975 in Seattle, USA, lives and works in Los Angeles.

If Tuazon’s works bear an architectural stamp, it is because they address an imperative challenge: “How to live?” A long way from conventional architecture and its scale models, his minimalist forms evoke both survivalist architecture and utopian constructions. The artist himself experienced unusually shaped dwellings very early on, since he was born in a geodesic dome built by his parents. He creates his installations, structures and functional objects using natural and industrial materials. Oscar Tuazon was also a co-founder of Castillo/Corrales, a non-profit art venue that included a bookshop, publishing house and exhibition space, which operated from 2007 to 2016 in Paris.

### Previous exhibitions (selection)

- *Skulptur Projekte Münster*, Münster, 2017
- *Hammer Project: Oscar Tuazon*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2016
- *Public Space*, Modern Art Gallery, London, 2016
- *Alone in an Empty Room*, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, 2015
- *Tools for Conviviality*, The Power Plant, Toronto, 2012

## VINCENT VAN GOGH

Vincent van Gogh is born on 30 March 1853 in Groot-Zundert in the Netherlands.

At the age of 16 he joins Goupil & C<sup>e</sup>, a firm of art dealers in The Hague, and subsequently works in the company's offices in Brussels, London and finally Paris. He gradually loses interest in the commercial art world and grows ever more religious. After being dismissed by Goupil in early 1876, he tries his hand at several jobs. Eventually, in 1878–79, he becomes a lay preacher in a mining community in the Borinage area of Belgium.

In August 1880 Van Gogh decides to become an artist. He wants to be a painter of everyday life, and, above all, of peasant life, following in the footsteps of artists such as Jean-François Millet and Jules Breton. Landscapes and still lifes, too, become an important part of his oeuvre. Van Gogh chooses Eugène Delacroix as his guide in the use of colour. In 1886 in Paris he discovers Japanese prints and Impressionism and meets Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Camille Pissarro, Paul Signac, John Peter Russell, Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard, among others.

Convinced that colour is the key to modernity, Van Gogh leaves for Provence in search of bright light and vibrant colours. Dreaming of establishing a community of artists, in February 1888 he settles in Arles. Here, he further develops his style and technique. Gauguin joins him in October, but their collaboration proves unworkable and ends abruptly in late December 1888. Disappointed and ill, in May 1889 Van Gogh has himself admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Saint-Rémy, where he remains for a whole year. He continues with his search for an expressive art based on colour and brush strokes, creating more than 500 paintings and drawings during his 27 months in Provence.

In May 1890 Van Gogh moves to Auvers-sur-Oise, where in just over two months he produces the final 70 paintings of an oeuvre that comprises more than 2,000 works. He dies on 29 July 1890 at the age of 37. Van Gogh's artistic genius and the poignant story of his life transform him into a veritable international icon.

### Previous exhibitions at the Fondation

- *Calm and Exaltation: Van Gogh in the Bührle Collection*, 2017
- *Van Gogh in Provence: Modernizing Tradition*, 2016
- *Van Gogh Drawings: Influences and Innovations*, 2015
- *Colours of the North, Colours of the South*, 2014



### SANTON FIGURINES FROM THE MUSEON ARLATEN

Founded by the French poet Frédéric Mistral (1830–1914), the Museon Arlaten ethnographic museum in Arles offers a panorama of Provençal life in the lower Rhône valley from the end of the 18th century right up to the present. It houses, among other things, a collection of *santons* – hand-painted pottery figurines of people and animals – dating from the 18th and 19th century. *Santons* are directly associated with Christmas cribs and with the shift of religious worship to the domestic sphere following the French Revolution of 1789. Issuing from the 19th-century tradition, local to the Provence region, of the *Pastorale* nativity play, the individual characters acquired a Provençal identity. In addition to the traditional biblical figurines, nativities are made up of representatives of rural life (shepherds, peasants, local village trades) and townsfolk. The *santons* on display at the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles are “secular” figures and include tradespeople and the tambourine player.

### THE GOUPIL COLLECTIONS

An international print publishing firm active from 1827 to 1920, Goupil was representative of the new culture of images which established itself in the second half of the 19th century. Goupil – for which Vincent and Theo van Gogh both worked – published hundreds of thousands of prints, which were sold around the world. They ranged from small photographs to lavish colour engravings and from originals to illustrations and reproductions – as witnessed by the prints and chromotypes after Millet on show in *La Vie simple – Simplement la vie*. These prints are on loan from the Goupil Collections, a vast body of photographs, negatives, prints, printing plates and books which is today housed as a separate department at the Musée d’Aquitaine and which functions as a graphic arts resource accessible to students and researchers. After Goupil’s liquidation, its collections were purchased by the Bordeaux art dealer Vincent Imberti and have remained in Bordeaux ever since.

### COLLECTION OF THE FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES, CALLED THE YOLANDE CLERGUE COLLECTION

In the 1980s, with the approach of the centenary of Van Gogh’s stay in Arles, a growing number of local residents condemned the absence of any tribute to the city’s most famous adoptive citizen and discussed ways in which the situation might be rectified. It was this that prompted Yolande Clergue to found the “Association for the Creation of the Fondation Vincent van Gogh – Arles” in 1983. She set about assembling, in Arles, a collection of contemporary art whose works were conceived by their respective makers as a personal homage to the universal art of Vincent van Gogh.

The collection comprises works by major artists of the 20th and 21st century, including Lucien Clergue (1934–2014), Robert Durand (1927–2015), Hans Namuth (1915–1990), Erró (b. 1932), Frank Horvat (b. 1928), Jasper Johns (b. 1930), Candida Höfer (b. 1944), Izis (1911–1980), Christo (b. 1935), John Rewald (1912–1994), Yasuhiro Ishimoto (1921–2012), Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004), Hiroki Kamizono, Alex Katz (b. 1927), Herlinde Koelbl (b. 1939) and Marc Riboud (1923–2016), which also form part of the exhibition at the Fondation this autumn.

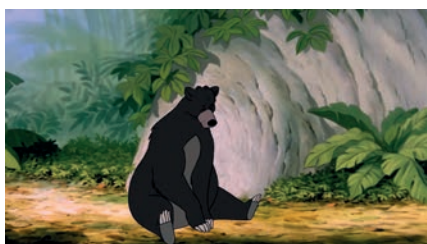


A SELECTION OF IMAGES CAN BE DOWNLOADED  
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[www.fondation-vincentvangogh-arles.org](http://www.fondation-vincentvangogh-arles.org)

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## SELECTION OF WORKS ON SHOW



DAVID CLAERBOUT

*The Pure Necessity*, 2016

2D animation, colour, stereo sound, approx. 50 min.

Courtesy the artist and galleries Sean Kelly, New York  
and Esther Schipper, Berlin



JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET

*The Diggers*, 1855

Etching, 36 x 51 cm

© Cherbourg-Octeville, musée d'Art Thomas Henry

Photo: Daniel Sohler



LUCIEN CLERGUE

Kirk Douglas in the role of Vincent van Gogh during the filming of  
*Lust for Life*, directed by Vincente Minnelli, 1953

B/w photograph, 50.5 x 40.5 cm

Collection of the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles,  
called the Yolande Clergue Collection



JUERGEN TELLER

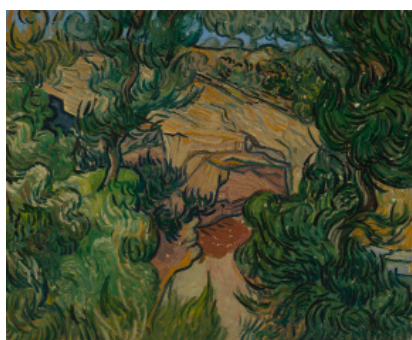
*Self-portrait, Plates/Teller No. 36*, 2016

Unframed giclee print, 152.4 x 101.6 cm

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ANNUAL LOAN FROM THE VAN GOGH MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

**VINCENT VAN GOGH, ENTRANCE TO A QUARRY, MID-JULY 1889**



Vincent van Gogh, *Entrance to a Quarry, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, mid-July 1889*  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 74.5 cm  
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam  
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

*Loan 2017–2018*

During his stay at the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole psychiatric hospital in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, Van Gogh turns to the surrounding countryside to enrich his geography as an artist. He tirelessly paints and draws new Provençal motifs: cypress trees, olive groves and hills.

The low Alpilles range rising behind the hospital buildings provides Vincent with an opportunity to paint the rugged massif as well as the quarry located nearby. In 1889 he treats this latter in two canvases, of which he executes the first in mid-July – just after suffering a fresh health crisis – and the second in October.

Writing to his brother Theo on 22 August 1889, Vincent says of *Entrance to a Quarry*: “And it was precisely a more sober attempt, matt in colour without looking impressive, broken greens, reds and rusty ochre yellows, as I told you that from time to time I felt a desire to begin again with a palette like the one in the north.”<sup>2</sup> This palette of the North is that of the earth, made up of ochres and dark greens.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo, 22 August 1889, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence: <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let797/letter.html>

## THE FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES

### **FULFILLING VINCENT'S WISH**

The Fondation offers a unique approach to Vincent van Gogh, namely by exploring, through the medium of temporary exhibitions, the resonance of his art and thinking with international artistic production today. Thanks to partnerships established with public and private collections, the Fondation presents one or more original canvases by Vincent van Gogh all year round, in company with a changing selection of works by contemporary artists such as Yan Pei-Ming, Roni Horn, David Hockney and Urs Fischer, among others.

It was in Arles, where Vincent lived and worked from February 1888 to May 1889, that his art reached its pinnacle. As from 1983, with the centenary of this stay in mind, Yolande Clergue invited contemporary artists to present a work in homage to Van Gogh. Thanks to patron Luc Hoffmann, in 2010 the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles was created as a public utility foundation. The City of Arles placed at its disposal the hôtel Léautaud-de-Donines, a prestigious residence dating back to the 15th century. Renovated and transformed by the architectural agency Fluor, the building was inaugurated in 2014 and offers over 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space. The Fondation's resolutely contemporary bias is underscored by the integration within the museum complex of two permanent artworks by Raphael Hefti and Bertrand Lavier.

The Fondation also offers a wide range of in-house and extramural cultural events and activities: artist talks and podium discussions, symposia, film screenings, creative workshops and courses, performances and concerts, as well as guided tours and educational activities tailored to different publics. Our art education programme focuses in particular upon children and young people, with special tours of the exhibitions as well as workshops held in schools in Arles and the surrounding area.

The shop is conceived as a colourful link between the Fondation's historical and contemporary architecture. It offers exhibition catalogues, art books, limited-edition prints, fine-art reproductions, handcrafted products and other items, and also includes a children's section.

The Fondation fulfils the wish, cherished by one of the world's most famous painters, to create in Arles a place of reflection, fertile production and stimulating dialogue between artists.

*"Then, as you well know, I love Arles so much, [...]"*  
Letter from Vincent to Theo (18 February 1889).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Press preview: Friday 6 October 2017 at 1pm  
Public opening: Saturday 7 October 2017 at 11am

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ADMISSION  
Full rate: €9  
Reduced rate: €7  
Free admission: children under 12, disabled visitors,  
ICOM members, press card, tour guides, curators,  
journalists

OPENING HOURS

Fondation and bookshop open Tuesday through  
Sunday from 11am to 6pm.  
Last admission 45 minutes before closing.

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