PRESS KIT

FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES

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EXHIBITION FROM 16.11.2019 TO 13.04.2020

... et labora

A THEMATIC EXHIBITION INCLUDING:

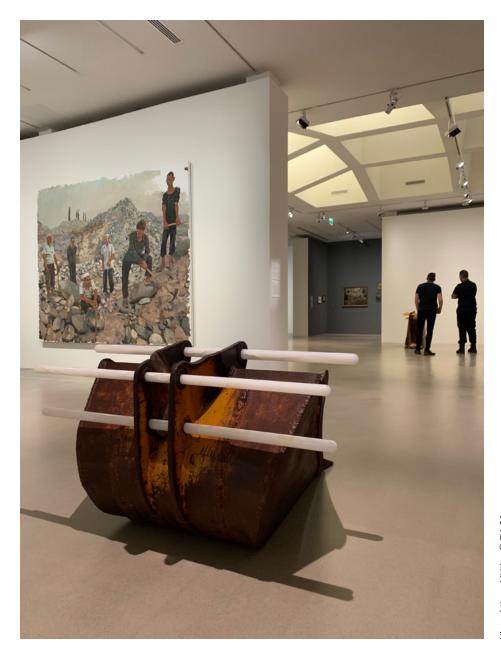
PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE RUTH AND PETER HERZOG COLLECTION WORKS BY CYPRIEN GAILLARD, ANDREAS GURSKY, MICHAEL HAKIMI, EMMANUELLE LAINÉ, YURI PATTISON, MIKA ROTTENBERG, THOMAS STRUTH, LIU XIAODONG

EX-VOTOS FROM PROVENCE

VINCENT VAN GOGH, FLYING FOX (1884)

Exhibition Curator: Bice Curiger





View of the exhibition © FVvGA

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The Vincent van Gogh Arles Foundation is grateful to the three institutions in which the Ruth + Peter Herzog collection is housed: the Herzog Foundation (Basel), the Jacques Herzog und Pierre de Meuron Kabinett (Basel) and the Swiss National Museum (Zurich). We warmly thank them for helping to make this exhibition possible.

FONDATION HERZOG

Jacques Herzog und Pierre de Meuron Kabinett Basel

SCHWEIZERISCHES NATIONALMUS EUM. MUSÉE NATIONAL SUISSE. MU SEO NAZIONALE SVIZZERO. MUSEU M NAZIUNAL SVIZZER.

EXHIBITION PRESENTATION

The thematic exhibition ...et labora starts from an exploration of the collection of Ruth and Peter Herzog, which comprises more than 600,000 photographs – some anonymous, others by renowned practitioners. The one hundred or so images presented here are a mixture of pioneer photographs from the nineteenth century and those dating from the first half of the twentieth century onwards, and interrogate work in its representation and daily execution. This selection is brought together with Provençal ex-voto paintings and the works of contemporary artists, capturing or sublimating the different realities of places of work. Their mutual encounter offers multiple points of entry into the theme of work.

Taking up the famous phrase *Ora et labora* ("Pray and work"), associated with the way of life followed by monks in the Benedictine Order, the exhibition evokes, in a roundabout way, the withdrawal of God's hand and of spiritual work in favour of the invisible market forces that have continuously reshaped our lives since the first industrial revolution.

The assembled images orchestrate a panorama of the technological developments of the century that saw the advent of photography: on the one hand, they bear witness to factories and major construction projects – metros, tunnels and railway networks – linked, among other things, to the rapid growth of the metropolises, and on the other document the mechanisation of agricultural labour. They also capture the fragile presence of the individual in these changing or closed environments.

In their large-scale photographs, Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth conduct their own investigation into the mechanisms of today's work. Represented with a surprising distance, the workplaces of a globalised and high-tech world are here brought into contemporary art. The emergence of the human cyborg, the exploitation of working-class minorities and the presence of street vendors are all subjects addressed by the contemporary artists presented at the Fondation.

Another specific look at human activities is found in Provençal ex-votos of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — votive paintings born of a simple and direct act of faith and depicting work-related accidents. Able to illustrate scenes that the photography of the era could not yet capture candidly on film, these objects of folk art also reflect the secularisation of attitudes, discernible through the evolution of their iconography.

EXHIBITION PRESENTATION (CONTINUED)

The development of industrial society was accompanied not only by the emergence of new activities, but also by the profound transformation of socio-cultural categories.

The beginning of the twentieth century thus saw the unionisation of the new proletarian class. The demands made by the workers would enable subsequent generations to benefit from unprecedented social rights, allowing them to go on vacation, enjoy entertainment and recreation, and travel around more easily. These moments of leisure would be continually documented thanks to the new medium of photography, which had become more democratic.

The dynamism experienced by Europe at this time went hand in hand with a striking evolution in living environments. As a consequence of the rural exodus, cities abounded in small trades and businesses, of which various representations have come down to us. It was also the era of the rise of the tertiary sector: the professions of catering, services and communication flourished and, in the eyes of the young people of this first half of the twentieth century, were seen as the jobs of the future.

Industrial development did not exclude the world of agriculture, however. On the contrary, it led to farming's intensive modernisation and restructuring.

If the machine, ever more present, seems to be the powerful symbol of this evolution, the human being, an essential cog in production in pre- and post-industrial times, remains at the heart of the implementation of these changes. Our body is our first tool, as attested not only by *Incremental Self Transparent Bodies* (2017), Emmanuelle Lainé's film about the interdependence of humans and their mechanical prostheses, but also by all the anonymous photographs immortalising manual workers posing in their workplace.

Today, the economic and technological materiality of late capitalism is gradually giving way to a dematerialised and deterritorialised economy, the most accomplished form of which could be cryptocurrency. With his work *The Ideal* (2015), Yuri Pattison nevertheless reveals to us the rudimentary and eminently political aspect behind the development of the most famous of these digital assets, bitcoin.

Exhibition Curator: Bice Curiger with Julia Marchand, associate curator and Margaux Bonopera, curatorial assistant

CYPRIEN GAILLARD

Born 1980 in Paris; lives and works in Berlin

Placed directly on the museum floor, the works by Cyprien Gaillard oscillate between sculpture and readymade. These massive metal excavator heads evoke the imagery of construction sites in our contemporary cities, doomed to be enlarged and modified endlessly. They prove more ambiguous than they appear at first sight, however, thanks to the precious stones integrated into their upper section. Springing from this unexpected association of materials is the tension inherent in any transformation of our megalopolises: a tension between disaster and the sublime.

Through the figure of the "Romantic Vandal" often associated with him, Cyprien Gaillard interrogates the outright destruction of what our societies have previously applied themselves to building. In the artist's work, architecture generally appears at the moment of its collapse, or just afterwards; ruins occupy an important place. Gaillard thus becomes a child of the eighteenth century, seeking piece by piece, journey by journey, to define a new urban form of Romanticism.

His practice is also influenced by Robert Smithson, the leading exponent of land art. By questioning head-on what remains of the great modern utopias, Cyprien Gaillard creates works that are often monumental, using materials that are poor as well as prestigious, rare as well as common, thus exploring a form of archaeology of the future.

ANDREAS GURSKY

Born 1955 in Leipzig; lives and works in Düsseldorf

In setting out to represent the spaces specific to our contemporary societies, Andreas Gursky creates works in which the human being is reduced to a detail, disembodied and swarming *en masse* – as can be seen in *Tokyo Stock Exchange* (1990), the first in his series of photographs devoted to the world's major stock exchanges. In photographing these trading floors, Gursky seeks to highlight the globalisation of the contemporary world economy.

Affiliated with the objective movement in photography that emerged in Europe in the 1980s, Gursky wants to erase from his works the subjective conditions of their shooting, in order to concentrate on the visual force of the image and its capacity for abstraction. Thus, the work *Qatar* (2012) captivates us with its beauty, while remaining ambiguous. Our eye is initially deceived; it is a while before we make out the presence of a man, who is in the process of cleaning what is in fact a massive container used for storing liquid gas.

Part of the Düsseldorf School, the generation of photographers who studied under Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, Andreas Gursky pursues a practice that falls within a conceptual and formal heritage derived from the history of painting and Minimal Art. He creates very large-format photographs, often with the aid of multiple images skilfully enhanced and assembled, giving the viewer a feeling of ultra-lucidity. This enormous technical sophistication reveals the sublime as well as the terrible emanating from the contemporary world and its workplaces.

MICHAEL HAKIMI

Born 1968 in Eutin; lives and works in Berlin

This series devoted to street vendors stems from Michael Hakimi's desire to reinvest in the practice of drawing, in order to document reality.

In front of a more or less figurative background, each drawing depicts a street scene revealing various economic problems, including the existence of parallel traders and the omnipresence of poverty. The artist reproduces urban elements such as signs, cash machines and posters on the basis of images taken from the internet, while the characters are drawn from memory.

It is the temporary, illegal and invisible nature of these street-sellers that calls out to the artist. Their desperate waiting within urban territories underlines the fragility and precarious nature of their freelance or marginal work, which Hakimi associates with the situation of artists, torn between the need to have time to produce a work and the need to respond to an ever more voracious art market.

EMMANUELLE LAINÉ

Born 1973 in Paris; lives and works in Marseille and Geneva

On the occasion of the exhibition ... et labora, Emmanuelle Lainé presents a second version of her film *Incremental Self – Transparent Bodies*, first produced in 2017 for Bétonsalon – Centre d'art et de recherche.

The artist here reflects on the cyborg future of humanity, but without offering us a tale of science fiction. Forecast since the second half of the twentieth century, the fusion between human and machine is palpable in particular through the use of tools specific to each profession. Whether hammers, brushes, violins, or industrial equipment, for centuries tools have populated our lives and influenced our understanding of space and our own bodies.

These theories, advanced by cognitive scientist Andy Clark, are invested investigated by Emmanuelle Lainé in this hybrid film about the professions. Following artists living in a retirement home, and describing the emotional relationship they maintain with their tools, and also looking at a worker from SCOP-TI, a cooperative in the Bouches-du-Rhône region specialising in the production of tea and tisanes, Lainé establishes an open narrative that leaves room for misunderstandings, anecdote and the simultaneous appearance of disparate elements (the voice of the interviewee, images of a report broadcast on television during the interview).

In *Incremental Self*, Emmanuelle Lainé, based in Marseille since 2014, explores and extends her interest in cognitive science and parallel narratives.

YURI PATTISON

Born 1986 in Dublin; lives and works in London

transparent form (for user, space) questions the protection of our digital data and the ideology of transparency that governs our contemporary ways of working.

This interior filmed upside down is a co-working space in London. We discover a place with no distinctive characteristics, which could be located in any metropolis or financial centre, open to the outside world and devoid of human presence.

The camera alone draws us into a movement that transforms this standardised space into a hypnotic place. The speed at which it travels along is not unlike that of the escalators or production lines of the industrial world, which here seems far away... Yuri Pattison's sculptural installation *the ideal (v.O.2)* is akin to a Bitcoin miner a machine involved in generating the virtual currency, resolutely international and decentralised, that operates through a network of users and producers.

Integrating an Antminer (a user-friendly piece of hardware employed in cryptocurrency mining) and a water-based cooling system housed within a Buddhist fountain, the installation takes the form of a miniaturised industrial shelving system. It also incorporates a video presenting a Bitcoin "mine", i.e. a facility housing large numbers of computer servers. This particularly energy-intensive mine is located next to a hydroelectric dam built by the Chinese government in Tibet, which provides a low-cost supply of electricity.

The artist asked Chinese entrepreneur Eric Mu to film inside the mine. Transported by land on account of the "Great Firewall of China" (put in place by the government in order to censor and monitor the internet), the footage takes us behind the scenes of an opaque and nevertheless fairly rudimentary activity, contrary to the mystique that surrounds cryptocurrency.

If these networked systems rely on human and personal labour, the dissolution of national borders and the convergence of data production and exchange, what are the consequences for our current economic system and our social relations?

MIKA ROTTENBERG

Born 1976 in Buenos Aires; lives and works in New York

Mika Rottenberg locates the action of her work *NoNoseKnows* (50 kilos variant) in a pearl-making facility, where the relations between a formidable European manageress and Chinese female workers give rise to situations as absurd as they are poetic. Readily citing Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* as a reference, Mika Rottenberg has set out to transcribe her experience of a visit to a pearl manufacturer in Zhuji, south of Shanghai.

The distinction between two social classes is illustrated in this film at a physical level: the manageress seems to be on the surface, while the employees are underground – a spatial difference that highlights the existing relationship of domination.

With its surprising images, not devoid of humour, this work – which falls into the grotesque tradition of art – magnifies the features of the alienating relationship resulting from the globalisation of labour in the secondary sector. Filming real women working in the cultured pearl industry, in which China holds the monopoly, the artist nevertheless avoids a simple documentary by introducing quasi-supernatural elements. The interdependencies existing between the protagonists reveal a surrealist universe, the heir to magic realism.

THOMAS STRUTH

Born 1954 in Geldern; lives and works in Berlin

In 2019 Thomas Struth embarked on a series of photographs at CERN (European Council for Nuclear Research), located a few kilometres from Geneva on the French-Swiss border. The photographer thereby explores some of the emblematic spaces in which CERN's experiments are conducted, such as the underground chamber housing ALICE, the acronym for "A Large Ion Collider Experiment", which is aimed at studying the mechanisms and physical properties of the matter that makes up our universe.

The artist's fascination with technical architectures, and with places of technological and scientific experimentation, can also be detected in his other two works on display at the Fondation. The influence of Bernd and Hilla Becher, and their particular interest in the industrial world of the early twentieth century, can be seen in *Hot Rolling Mill, ThyssenKrupp Steel, Duisburg* (2010). The photograph was taken at ThyssenKrupp's Duisburg mill, a steel processing plant characteristic of German industry.

Struth studied painting under Gerhard Richter before devoting himself to photography in the 1980s as part of the Düsseldorf School. Seeking to adopt a certain objectivity towards the subjects he photographs, he operates in terms of series and thereby inventories different aspects of our contemporary societies. His work is intended to reveal social, economic or political structures more than to spotlight specific identities. The visual power of his images is born from a supreme mastery of photographic technique as well as from the importance Struth awards to prints, which are often issued in large formats and which possess a sharpness that lends full presence to details.

LIU XIAODONG

Born 1963 in Liaoning; lives and works in Beijing

Liu Xiaodong belongs to a generation of Chinese painters, called the "New Generation", who use a figurative style to represent different facets of contemporary Chinese society. The works presented in the exhibition are part of his *Hotan Project*, for which he went to northwest China to meet the Uyghur people. The Uyghurs, who are mainly Muslim and suffer much regularly denounced persecution, provide some of the low-paid workforce extracting white jade in the former bed of the Hotan River. Xiaodong commenced the project on 5 July 2012, thus commemorating the outbreak of a violent Uyghur riot in 2009.

To produce these works, the artist and his team installed a fully equipped temporary studio on the edge of the Taklamakan desert, where members of the Uyghur community labour as jade-pickers. The artist also kept a journal in which he documented the studies made during the project.

The small-format photographs provide an insight into Liu Xiaodong's creative process, which starts from photographic images. The paintings *North* and *South* form part of an ensemble of four works, also comprising *East* and *West*.

Appropriating the spontaneity and on-the-spot immediacy of photography, Liu Xiaodong's painting subtly interrogates the world of work of a country embracing a forced-march capitalism — a world of work which inevitably proves to have violent consequences for certain categories of contemporary Chinese society.

PROVENÇAL EX-VOTOS

Produced between 1825 and 1970 in Provence by itinerant ex-voto artists, the votive paintings of dangerous incidents presented here complement the social and poetic imagery of the exhibition. They reflect an epoch in which these objects of popular devotion played an important role in the lives of the people who testified, through them, to their faith. The modest pictures celebrate and give thanks for the miracle that saved the life of the offeror or someone close to them, typically from the middle, lower middle or working classes.

Far from being something easy to do, photography in the nineteenth century was still fairly primitive and did not allow the photographer to move around freely outside the studio and capture scenes in mid-action. The parts of real life and its events that the camera could not show – someone falling out of a cart, for example could thus be portrayed by means of an exvoto.

Ex-votos painted in the wake of life-threatening episodes featured prominently and continued to proliferate during the nineteenth century. They regularly represented traffic accidents involving carts or carriages, seafaring disasters such as storms and shipwrecks, as well as fires, lightning strikes and mishaps in the bullfighting ring.

The evolution of ex-voto iconography paradoxically reflects the progressive secularisation of attitudes in Provence. One character in particular gains in importance: the doctor, portrayed here in the guise of a surgeon. He appears as the pendant to the divine image, often embodied by the Virgin Mary or by a saint.

The priest, on the other hand, is rarely featured, which affirms unequivocally that the ex-voto is not a clerical practice, but a simple and direct gesture of faith.

THE FONDATION VINCENT VAN GOGH ARLES

FULFILLING VINCENT'S WISH

"And I hope that later on, other artists will emerge in this beautiful part of the country." Letter from Vincent to his brother Theo (Arles, 7 May 1888).

The Fondation offers a unique approach to Vincent van Gogh in exploring the resonance of his art and thinking with the work of artists today.

Vincent's art reached its pinnacle during his stay in Arles from February 1888 to May 1889. Beginning in 1983, likewise in Arles, Yolande Clergue invited contemporary artists to donate a work to pay homage to Van Gogh. Thanks to patron Luc Hoffmann, in 2010 a public utility foundation was established. The City of Arles placed at its disposal the Hôtel Léautaud de Donines, a prestigious fifteenth-century residence which, following its renovation by the architectural agency Fluor, opened in 2014 with over 1,000m2 of exhibition space. The Fondation's resolutely contemporary bias is underscored by the integration within the complex of two permanent artworks by Raphael Hefti and Bertrand Lavier.

All year round, thanks to partnerships established with public and private collections, the Fondation presents one or more original canvases by Vincent van Gogh, in company with works by leading contemporary artists such as Yan Pei-Ming, Roni Horn, David Hockney, Urs Fischer, Alice Neel and Niko Pirosmani. Also on display are works by the nineteenthcentury masters who inspired Vincent, primarily Jean-François Millet and Adolphe Monticelli. In addition to monographic and thematic exhibitions, the Fondation hosts extramural symposia, which examine changes and developments in the arts and artistic techniques in Van Gogh's own day, as well as Vincent's affinities with other artists and forms of artistic expression. Art mediation and educational programmes are also key areas of focus for the Fondation, which seeks to bring visitors even closer to the artists and themes presented, for example through guided tours and activities tailored to different publics, as well as through workshops held in schools in Arles and the surrounding area. The Fondation shop, conceived as a luminous, colourful and iridescent link between the original building and its contemporary interiors, welcomes visitors in the bright and clear light so dear to Van Gogh.

The Fondation fulfils Vincent's wish 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 (Arles, 18 February 1889).



The Fondation, Vincent (2014) and Fontaine (2014) by Bertrand Lavier © Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles
/ FLUOR architecture

PRESS PHOTOS CONTACT: ALICE.PROUVE@AEC-IMAGINE.COM



Collection Ruth and Peter Herzog Carpenters, c.1890 Albumen print, 17,7 × 23,2 cm © Collection Ruth + Peter Herzog, Bâle



Collection Ruth and Peter Herzog Theo Ballmer, *Manufacture of an automobile*, Basel, c. 1933 © Swiss National Museum, Zurich



Collection Ruth and Peter Herzog Unknown photographer, *Man in front of a turbine*, c. 1915-1920 © Swiss National Museum, Zurich



Andreas Gursky, *Tokyo Stock Exchange*, 1990 Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland C-Print / Diasec, framed 170 × 205 × 5 cm © Andreas Gursky / Adagp, Paris, 2019

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Liu Xiaodong, *Mining Jade I*, 2012 Acrylic on photo paper, 41,5 × 54,5 cm Courtesy of Liu Xiaodong Studio © Adagp, Paris, 2019





Mika Rottenberg, *NoNoseKnows (50 kilos variant)*, 2015 Film, 22 min.

© Mika Rottenberg



Anonymous ex-voto, Marseille, c. 1901 Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée



Emmanuelle Lainé, *Incremental Self: transparent bodies*, 2017 Film, 20 min.
Courtesy of the Artist © Adagp, Paris, 2019

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Michael Hakimi, Why can't I B U?, 2019 Pencil on paper, 21×14.8 cm Courtesy of the Artist



Michael Hakimi, *Abfall*, 2019 Pencil on paper, 21 × 14,8 cm Courtesy of the Artist

... et labora

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE RUTH AND PETER HERZOG COLLECTION

WORKS BY CYPRIEN GAILLARD, ANDREAS GURSKY, MICHAEL HAKIMI, EMMANUELLE LAINÉ, YURI PATTISON, MIKA ROTTENBERG, THOMAS STRUTH, LIU XIAODONG

EX-VOTOS FROM PROVENCE

VINCENT VAN GOGH, Flying Fox (1884)

16.11.2019 - 13.04.2020

On 16 November 2019, the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles opens its new thematic exhibition titled ... et labora. Around one hundred photographs dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the spectacular collection of Ruth and Peter Herzog, constitute the starting point for this exploration of the theme of work. These rare images, assiduously collected over the years, bear powerful witness to Van Gogh's epoch as well as to the roots of the social realities at the start of the 1900s, a period of booming industrialisation.

The black and white analogue photographs — prints and postcards, some anonymous, others by celebrated photographers — document, among other things, the transformation of Europe's major cities into megalopolises, the mechanisation of agriculture, the objectification of the worker in service to the factory, and also the development of tourism and leisure. This selection of photographs thus sketches the outlines of an entire bygone era.

These are complex documents, capturing fragments of realities while at the same time revealing the different facets of the contemporary lens trained upon a rapidly mutating world. These images are joined in the exhibition by other modes of representation of labour. Borrowing from the codes of the burlesque and docufiction, the works of contemporary artists such as Mika Rottenberg, Yuri Pattison and Emmanuelle Lainé transpose the theme into a more dreamlike and speculative space. Photographers Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth confront us with images whose transcription of reality fascinates us as much as it escapes us: appealing both to our reason and to our sensibility, these pictures thus forcefully interrogate our perception.

Thanks to their proximity to history photography, the works of Liu Xiaodong, Gursky and Struth explore the transformation of activities and workspaces, resulting from the globalisation of services that is drastically changing the value of employment. Cyprien Gaillard's excavator heads evoke the persistence of our relationship towards the earth as one of domination and exploitation, as well as the ceaseless transformation of cities.

As in the exhibition La Vie Simple – Simplement la Vie / Songs of Alienation (01.10.17–02.04.18) presented previously at the Fondation, ... et labora includes works of folk art in the shape of votive paintings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Representations of accidents – whether in relation to transport, work, or seafaring – made up a considerable proportion of these, and increased steadily during the nineteenth century. Arising out of a simple and direct act of faith, these ex-votos nevertheless reflect the secularisation of mentalities, discernible through the evolution in their iconography. This movement away from the religious sphere echoes in the title of the exhibition, an updated variant of the phrase "Ora et labora" ("Pray and Work").

Exhibition curator: Bice Curiger

The Vincent van Gogh Arles Foundation is grateful to the three institutions in which the Ruth + Peter Herzog collection is housed: the Herzog Foundation (Basel), the Jacques Herzog und Pierre de Meuron Kabinett (Basel) and the Swiss National Museum (Zurich). We warmly thank them for helping to make this exhibition possible.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

«... et labora »: exhibition from 16 November 2019 until 13 April 2020

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OPENING HOURS
From 16 November 2019 until 13 April 2020:
Fondation and bookshop open
from Tuesday to Sunday, from 11am to 6pm
Exceptional opening on Monday 13 April 2020.

ADMISSION

journalists

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

12-18 & students: **€** Family pass: 15€

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