

GALERIE DIX9 Hélène Lacharmoise

Is pleased to introduce

THE THEATRE OF POSSIBILITIES –

The mask in all its states



Masque de prière, Yasmina Benabderrahmane, silver print, 90x100cm, 2010

**Yasmina Benabderrahmane, Shiva Lynn Burgos, Benoit Huot,
Smail Kanouté, Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos, Dmitry Kostyukov,
Peter Lökös, Jorge Rosano Gamboa, Sebastian Riemer,
Anila Rubiku, Louis Salkind, Julien Vignikin et Yang Yi**

Exhibition from 10 October to 21 November 2026

Opening Saturday 10 October — 5 pm–9 pm

THE THEATER OF POSSIBILITIES –

The mask in all its states

Whether it conceals, reveals or transforms, the mask possesses a singular power : that of making possible what reality does not allow. It is not merely a form of protection or an artifice, but a means of crossing the boundaries of reality, opening up other spaces of representation and bringing forth other identities, temporalities or narratives.

This exhibition brings together artists from diverse backgrounds to explore the mask “in all its states”, at the intersection of two dimensions :

Its physical and material states : through a plurality of media — sculpture, painting, photo-graphy, drawing and installation — the mask unfolds in a diversity of forms and materials. Each work reinvents its plasticity and shifts its function.

Its symbolic, social and conceptual aspects : beyond the object itself, the exhibition explores what the mask makes possible. It can shift time, transform matter, reveal social structures, bring cultures into dialogue, give form to memory or mourning, and enable metamorphosis. Each work thus opens up a possibility of its own.

Used as a meaningful accessory in **Yang Yi**'s work, the mask makes it possible to represent what has not yet happened. In his photographs of traditional scenes, figures wear masks and snorkels, while water, added to the image in place of the sky, evokes a coming flood. Several temporalities thus coexist within the scene: a world before its disappearance, the present of the photograph, and a future linked to the opening of the Three Gorges Dam in China. The mask thus makes possible a paradoxical image: that of a future event already viewed as a memory.



Yang Yi, *Uprooted #14*, lambda print, 100x70 cm

In *Masque de prière*, **Yasmina Benabderrahmane** photographs her grandmother concealing her face behind both hands. Here, the mask emerges from an intimate, protective and modest gesture, charged with a spiritual dimension. The hands become a form of veil, while simultaneously revealing the presence of the person behind them. The photograph thus makes a familial and cultural presence visible without fully exposing it to the gaze : the mask becomes a way of appearing while preserving what cannot be fully revealed.

With **Jorge Rosano Gamboa**, the mask makes possible the transformation of an abandoned material into a new presence. The artist reactivates contemporary vernacular masks left abandoned in the craftsman's workshop and brings them back to life through the presence of a piercing obsidian gaze. In his mask-tiles, elements taken from the roof of his childhood home, the tile, weathered by time and covered in lichen, becomes a figure through glass eyes that reveal a fragment of text about magical realism inscribed on the reverse. The mask therefore does not reveal a hidden presence: it brings that presence into being..



Jorge Rosano Gamboa, *Sikuamecha 5*, 2024
avocado wood, obsidian, 21x17x12 cm

By its very presence, the mask conceals. It is not necessarily an object, but can also be an act of covering and subtraction. To assert his rights over images he has produced, **Dmitry Kostyukov** covers nearly 70% of his own photographs with black paint, in a gesture that evokes Malevich's radical abstraction. What remains of the image is what has escaped the mask. Within the portion that remains visible, the artist brings out the details that are essential to him in the construction of the image.



Dmitry Kostyukov, *Untitled (market Kaboul)*, series Reappropriation, 2023
Paint on photograph, 60x90 cm

Made from bread, **Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos**'s masks take the form of a paradoxical body. By baking this material, intended to be consumed, the artist makes it enduring. Born out of mourning for her father, the masks express pain through tears whose forms often resemble breasts. The mask thus shifts from the face to the body and becomes a place where pain, nourishment, memory and persistence meet.



Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos, *A chaque jour sa peine*, bread, varnish

In the Handtraits series, **Anila Rubiku** shifts the portrait from the face to the hands. By masking facial features, she removes from the representation the usual signs of identity — age, appearance, expression and codes of beauty — in order to focus attention on what the hands do and express. Instruments of work, creation, contact and communication, they become a form of bodily signature. The mask thus makes possible another kind of portrait, one that reveals a person through their gestures and relationship to the wordl.



Anila Rubiku, *HandTraits 40*, 2025
lithography and oil on silver plate, frame

The mask can also reveal a social identity. Drawing on African ritual masks, **Louis Salkind** transposes the mask into Western society and places it on contemporary bodies — often associated with a social function. By replacing the face, the individual disappears in favour of the function they embody. The mask thus highlights the persistence of social structures and their visual markers from one civilisation to another.



Louis Salkind, *masque justicier Kram*, 2015, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 cm

The mask can make possible what reality does not allow, by allowing a functional or social object to appear under a new identity. This is the case with sculptures by **Shiva Lynn Burgos**, which may evoke masks through their frontal, symmetrical and sometimes anthropomorphic forms. Yet they are not masks: they are cast from prehistoric stone tools — axes and adzes — as well as prestige objects and traditional currencies from Papua New Guinea. By transposing them into bronze or iron — materials anachronistic to the history of this country — the artist does not reproduce ritual masks. She shifts these lithic forms into the field of contemporary sculpture, where they become autonomous presences while retaining the memory of their function, circulation and social value.



Shiva Lynn Burgos, bronze and iron

The mask can also become a space where cultures and memories meet. Inspired by the tradition of the Black Indians of New Orleans, **Smaïl Kanouté**'s masks, in painting and sculpture, bring into dialogue ancestral Beninese cultures and those of Indigenous peoples of the Americas. The mask bears witness to a syncretism that remains alive in carnival parades.



Smaïl Kanouté, *Chief - Egun*, 2024
acrylic, serigraphy and Indian ink on canvas, 100x80 cm

In *Le Cycle du silence*, **Peter Lökös** creates a mask from coral, a stone, an oxygen tube and half of a pair of headphones, forming a hybrid anatomy at the boundary between the human, the mineral and the living. Coral bleaching echoes the whitening of human hair and places the work within a reflection on time, finitude and the decline of living things.

With *À l'envers* and *L'envers du couple*, the artist also reverses the function of the oxygen mask: candles, which produce carbon dioxide, replace the device associated with the supply of life-giving oxygen. The mask then becomes a transitional form, suspended between breathing and extinction, union and fragility.



Peter Lökös, *Le cycle du silence*, 2026
coral, oxygen tube, headphones, stone, 24x21cm

In **Sebastian Riemer's** work, the mask acts directly upon the image. The artist works from old press photographs, some of which had been retouched with paint before the emergence of digital tools. By considerably enlarging these images, he brings out the traces of these interventions: flat areas of colour, brushstrokes, erasures and corrections. What initially appeared to be an objective image thus reveals its construction. Here, the mask becomes an operation that transforms reality, concealing as much as it reveals, and questioning the supposed truth of the photographic image.



Sebastian Riemer, *Miss Franco* (detail)- series press paintings, 2014
pigment print, 180 x 100 cm

In **Benoît Huot**'s animal works, the mask does not merely cover a head: it transforms the animal itself. His taxidermied deer heads are "dressed" in fabrics, charms and various ornaments that cover their original appearance without completely erasing what lies beneath. The mask thus produces a strange presence, at once animal and human, familiar and unsettling. It shifts the animal's identity and opens up a space of metamorphosis, in which the taxidermied object seems to regain a form of life or become a character.



Benoît Huot, *Apparition*, 2025
taxidermy, cotton, synthetic fibres, glass, 37 x 20 x 28 cm

Present in **Julien Vignikin**'s work for many years, the mask becomes a form emerging from matter. Based in Burgundy, the artist salvages wine-barrel staves whose curves, cuts, inscriptions and traces of use already constitute a visual vocabulary. Through minimal intervention, he assembles them into wall sculptures, masks or totemic figures. The mask does not conceal the material: it reveals a latent possibility within it, without erasing the memory of its original function.



Julien Vignikin, *Tetrux*, 2024
wine-barrel staves, acrylic