



View of the exhibition

Under Influences

Artists and Psychotropics

Curator: Antoine Perpère

The exhibition *Under Influences* sets out to give us a glimpse at how artists have related to psychotropics from the early 20th century to the present day. A vast subject!

Since artists are curious and always seeking intense new experiences to inspire, inform or enrich their creativity, it follows that they have been tempted to see what taking "drugs" can bring to their art. The curator of this exhibition, Antoine Perpère, is not only an artist, but an educator specialized in addictology. As such, he is well qualified to offer a personal take on the subject. In this show, he presents more than 250 works illustrating different ways in which artists have interpreted, simulated or represented the effects of psychotropic substances.

Most of us mere mortals don't take drugs on a daily basis, so a brief review of their effects is called for. Drugs fall into three categories,

depending on how they affect one's consciousness. Psychoanaleptics do not alter one's state of consciousness, but have an arousing effect via physical and psychological stimulation (e.g. cocaine, amphetamines, crack or coffee). Psycholeptics lower the level of one's consciousness and activity and also relieve sensations of pain (e.g. opium, morphine and heroin). Psychodysleptic drugs are virtually synonymous with hallucinogens, for they alter one's state of consciousness (e.g. LSD, acids, hallucinogenic plants/mushrooms and cannabis). The effect of these substances varies with the user's personality, physical condition and expectations. Alcohol or hashish can remove inhibitions, arouse, tranquilize or induce sleep, depending on the circumstances.

Artists have turned to these substances because they wish to experience their actual or presumed effects. What distinguishes the artist from the drug addict is a desire to communicate what s/he perceives "under the influence." For artists, the challenge resides in finding ways to use the language of art to communicate a very personal experience involving an "other-worldly" alteration of the senses.

Mankind has been using psychotropic plants since the days of Antiquity. In the Louvre, there is a poppy – referred to as "the flower of joy" – in the hand of a figure in a bas-relief from the royal palace at Khorsabad (7th century BCE). A copy of this work has been included in this show. It marks the entrance to *Swinging Corridor* by **Carsten Höller**, a sort of passageway between interior and exterior space that gives visitors an original sensory experience: sounds seem muffled and the long corridor seems to move imperceptibly... it's as if one were slightly intoxicated.

In other words, this art work acts directly on our physical and psychological sensations. And so does the opium-like scent given off by **Antoine Perpère's** incense burner at the entrance.

The corridor leads to the patio, where an installation by **Vincent Mauger** (see page 25) is placed opposite to *Listen*, a piece created *in situ* by the team of **Brevet** and **Rochette**. The treatment of the word CRACK, sawn into the wall, suggests the meanings of the word: a fissure in the wall, the sound of cracking and crack cocaine, which emerged in the United States in the 1980s.

The variety of substances sampled by the exhibitors is shown in a "table of contents" in the entrance to the show, which starts with a drawing made in 1853 by the scientist **Jean-Martin Charcot**, when stoned on hashish. It is characteristic not only of the "disordered ideas" induced by the drug, but also of the artistic style of the period. The exhibition looks at the full spectrum of psychotropic substances and the ways in which artists see them. The ways are many, as *Listing* by **Isabelle**

Le Minh, open to a page that enumerates cases of drug use by artists, humorously suggests. In this first room, the focus is on lawful household drugs. Alluding to the medicines that we take every day, **Jeanne Susplugas** has taken a pillbox and enlarged it to architectural proportions. Irving Penn considers the subject of tobacco. An anamorphic piece of sculpture by **Markus Raetz**, whose shape changes when the spectator moves around, recalls what overindulging in alcohol does to one's vision. As for **Raymond Hains**, he proposes a substitute, a way of altering one's vision without drugs: a pair of eyeglasses with distorted lenses that enable its wearer to see the world differently, in real time and for as long as s/he likes. Strange visions materialize in *Les sculptures inhumaines* by **Mathieu Briand**: the spectator is invited to look through the eye sockets of a human skull, where a hanging scene worthy of Jacques Callot is taking place. A piece of sculpture on the floor represents a little hunter figure on the alert, a syringe between his teeth, on his quest for sensations.

Herman de vries focuses on natural psychotropics, drawing up a personal inventory of those plants that he remembers having taken. **Jean-Louis Brau** calls the days when ether could be bought over the counter (*Ether était en vente libre*) and breaks down the word *haschich* into its component letters, as if seen under the influence. **Erró** offers an orientalized representation of the opium smoker whereas **Guy Limone** opts for a sociological approach, using little colored figures to "flesh out" the statistics concerning cocaine use in Brazil.

A former researcher in biology, **Herman de vries** has always been fascinated by the ancestral use of plants and, in the 1980s, compiled a herbarium containing more than 2,000 plants, a tribute to wise-women and their knowledge of remedies and poisons. The four plant species

presented here are known to have toxic or hallucinogenic effects. One is the ergot fungus, a parasite that grows on rye and other cereals and is used to synthesize the LSD molecule. Some say that it leads to an affliction causing involuntary movements of the limbs – called Saint Vitus' dance in the Middle Ages – to which the iconoclastic painting by **Francis Picabia** makes an enigmatic allusion.

From the early 19th century, hashish and opium consumption rose in Europe in all social classes, especially scientific and literary circles. The female morphine addict was a common figure in late 19th century literature and art. The perfect anti-heroine, she surrendered to her senses, depraved yet desirable, like the *fin de siècle* beauty painted by Santiago Rusiñol (1894), revisited as a *tableau vivant* and photographed by **Tania Brassesco** and **Lazlo Passi Norberto**.

Founded in 1844, *Le Club de Haschichins* held monthly meetings at which scientists, painters and poets experimented with the effects of drugs – not yet banned substances– on the body and mind. Baudelaire belonged to the club for some time and gave an account of his experiences in his essay *Les Paradis artificiels*, published in 1860. Asked to illustrate this text in 1949 for an edition that finally never saw the light of day, **Hans Bellmer** made nine plates (watercolor on paper) in which female figures, sometimes accompanied by monstrous shapes, emerged from swarms, clouds or smoke. In this respect, he was faithful to Baudelaire's text, who dedicated his essay to a woman that was "fatally suggestive" and "lived in spirit in the imaginations that she haunts and renders fertile".

The smoke surrounding the opium addicts in **Alberto Martini's** *Les opiomanes* contains many eyes, suggesting that their gaze is floating outside them and their beings are dissolving into the landscape, whereas *Têtes transparentes* by **Francis Picabia** superimposes different temporalities in a single image.

For **Antonin Artaud**, drug use was a far cry from being recreational or experimental. He used drugs to relieve the physical and mental suffering that had tortured him since youth. In *L'Ombilic des Limbes* (1925), he justified using opium to ease his pain, saying that "opium

is an imprescriptible substance that gives those unfortunates who have lost their soul the impression that they can revive it. There is one ill for which opium is a sovereign remedy and it is called Anxiety."

The playwright **Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz** took a great interest in psychoactive substances and their effects. In the 1930s, he carried out experimental sessions that he described in detail in *Les Narcotiques* (1932). In 1925, he set up a portrait business offering customers several types of portrait. The "Type C" was executed after he had taken drugs and, according to the price list, was the most expensive. The artist indicated the substance absorbed (C = alcohol, Co = cocaine, Cof = caffeine) directly on the portrait.

"Drugs bore us with their paradise. Let them give us a little knowledge instead. This century is not one for paradise." This quote prefacing the book *Connaissance par les gouffres* by **Henri Michaux**, writer and poet, indicates that he saw experimenting with drugs as a means of exploring the inner self, "the space inside." For a decade, he carried out experiments, usually with mescaline and hashish, with scientific precision. Between 1956 and 1966, he wrote five books about hallucinogenic drugs. After coming down from a trip, he would make drawings, attempting to capture its mind-altering effects: the fragmentation of perception, the unnatural speed and the frenetic level of activity. When he attempted to write under the influence, his words would be illegible and the pencil would slip from his fingers.

Like Michaux, **Jean-Jacques Lebel** treated his body like a "walking laboratory" to achieve a state of "temporary experimental schizophrenia to emerge from the self and break with coercive social customs and cultural codes." He tried to capture his experience with psilocybin or peyote in drawings and collages, sometimes in collaboration with others (here, with **Daniel Pommereulle**). *Le Bouquet* is also a collaborative artwork, produced by Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Peter Orlovsky and Ghérasim Luca during their stay in Paris in 1957 and 1958. **The Beat Generation** poets became the voice of experimentation, which was even more intense a few years later with the appearance of LSD.

During his short life, **John Batanne** (the twin brother of Gordon

Matta-Clark) consumed a number of psychotropic drugs, prescribed to soothe his anxiety and stabilize his precarious psychological state.

In spite of his wanderings and many stays in psychiatric hospitals, he authored this original work, part diary and part graphic book, in which reality is perceived through the filter of his tormented sensitivity. Abstract and figurative shapes co-exist in these sketches, which remain mysterious despite the texts accompanying them.

Bernard Saby used drugs in much the same way as his friend Henri Michaux, who included a short text by Saby entitled *L'image privilégiée* at the end of his book *Miserable Miracle* (1956). The idea was to use drugs to vary one's perceptions, capture one's inner depths and produce drawings, watercolors and paintings that would give a visual transcription of "the microbiological, cellular and molecular processes at work in the artist's body as accurately as possible" and provide "a primordial space" in which spectators would lose themselves.

As for **Bruno Botella**, he literally explored the depths of his materials. One of the rare sculptors to work in a drugged state, he established a specific protocol for doing so. He would mix a hallucinogenic substance with clay and, as he kneaded it, the drug would enter his body through the pores of his skin. *Oog onder de put* is a plaster cast of a shape that he produced after working the clay for several hours under the influence.

A great admirer of Henri Michaux, **Arnulf Rainer** was marked by surrealism and the idea of the "automatic psychic reflex." In the early Fifties, he experimented for the purpose of creating art "beyond the control of the consciousness" by drawing with his eyes closed, and continued in the sixties with hallucinogenic substances. He took part in experiments at the clinic at the University of Lausanne and at the Max Planck Institute in Munich on the induction of psychotic states using drugs (psilocybin and LSD). In the spring of 1970, he experienced a hallucination – "an intense vision of colored spots and touched-up photographic portraits scattered all over the room" that gave him the idea for his series of *Face Farces*, photographic self-portraits that he would draw over (*Pfff!!!*).

Retracing our steps, we come to selected drawings by **Jean Cocteau**, a great artist and opium addict. In 1928, he made his second attempt to be cured of his addiction and began to write *Opium*, an account of his consumption accompanied by tormented drawings. In this work, he attempted to develop the graphic equivalent of opiate-altered perception. He began to create tube figures inspired by the shape of the pipe that "cannibalized" any attempt to represent reality. The motif of the opium smoker reappears several times in the work of the poet, who tried again to get off the drug two more times, in 1933 and 1944. Located opposite from the Cocteau drawings, a sketch by **Martine Balata** and **René Jullien** takes a surrealistic approach infused with humor.

An ether-sniffing member of the Letterism movement, **Gabriel Pomerand** produced this enigmatic painting, a meditation on the similarities between the influence of ether and that of the performance arts. Pomerand transcribed his meditation into a secret alphabet, then broke it up and painted it over the entire surface of the canvas. While the medium increases visibility, the format reduces intelligibility: only true devotees can grasp the meaning.

Ashes of Joy by **Herman de vries** is like a private diary, a delicate shade chart whose palette is influenced by the ashes of the hash pipes that the artist smoked, day after day. With *Bola* and *Poumon*, **Edson Barrus** also "documents" his consumption: *Bola* is composed of papers from smoked "weed" joints and *Poumon* is pierced in several places by still-smoldering butts. The former is made by accumulating material and the latter by withdrawing it, but both are like trophies in a process of ongoing destruction. The razor blade in **Pommereulle's** painting also comes across as a trophy, recalling a performance that he gave in 1966: he had covered several tables with drug paraphernalia, so that visitors could experience heightened states of mind for themselves. By the end of the show, everything had disappeared... However, everything changed with the French law of December 31, 1970 on public health measures to fight drug addiction, drug trafficking and the unlawful use of drugs. Obviously, it would be unthinkable to give the same sort of performance today. While psychotropic substances are literally present in the work of the **Chapuisat brothers** or **Adel Abdessemed**, they are under glass and inaccessible.

Oui, a star made of cannabis resin, has lost its market value measured by weight, but retains its value as a work of art.

Undertaken in 2005, the film *Trypps #7* is the last in a series by **Ben Russell** that he described as a study of the psychedelic trance, tripping and ethnography. The film uses a fixed-camera shot to track LSD's effects in real time on the face of a young woman. The spectator cannot see the real action, which is going on into her head, but the smile on her face indicates that she is having a happy trip. When the images of the surrounding landscape are reversed and reflected in a rotating mirror and the fixed-camera shot changes, becoming a formal abstraction, the effect is to draw spectators in and make them feel involved in what the drug is doing to the young girl's senses and perceptions.

This video serves as a transition to a darker part of the exhibition concentrating on the human and social consequences of using psychotropic drugs, both at the level of the individual and of the state.

In a room on the left, a documentary by **Gianfranco Rosi** looks at the dark side of drugs from the standpoint of drug dealers and traffickers, not consumers. He confronts us with the violence inherent to the cocaine trade. In *El Sicario*, a foot soldier for a cartel wearing a ski mask to hide his face talks without interruption, with chilling explanations of the methods that he has used for more than twenty years to kidnap, torture and murder. In *Guernarco*, **Hervé di Rosa** comes to grips with the same harsh reality: his bright colors and exaggerated silhouettes inspired by Mexican visual pop culture and comic books do not conceal the violence of scenes in which drug barons settle their scores. **Jean-Baptiste Audat** creates his works from articles on narcotics or stimulants appearing in *Le Monde*. By dint of redacting, cutting out and folding, the artist eliminates all other articles, highlighting the omnipresence of this subject in our daily life.

Jean-Michel Basquiat, who died at age 27 of a heroin overdose, went on to become an iconic figure, cast as the genius cut down in the prime of life by drugs. In this drawing from 1988, schematic sketches, stickers, logos and texts intermingle in a vast collage governed by a principle of repetition

and dislocation that, for some, is tied to "the mechanization of the body, which is what using hard drugs represents" (Frédéric Valabrègue).

In this part of the exhibition, the images of photographers like **Larry Clark**, **Alberto García-Alix** and **Antoine d'Agata** –witnesses as well as consumers – are far removed from any Romantic vision of an "artificial paradise" yet neither remote nor moralistic. Without sensationalism, their pictures record the daily life of drug addicts and the members of their entourage that also take, and often die from, drugs. More like reportage, the photographs by **Eugene Richards** and **Luc Delahaye** and the video by **De Rijke & De Rooij** take an uncompromising look at drug addiction and the misery, illness and solitude that it brings.

Dependence on hard drugs is at the heart of the works by **The Plug** and **Stéphanie Rollin** in 2011. Through neon enlargements of images showing hard-drug users, *Ligne de destinée présente dans la main de consommateurs de drogues dures: Fate will Tear us Apart* questions whether drug addiction is preordained.

The Plug also presents a table and a screen from one of Luxembourg's "official" drug-use rooms. This is a timely issue here in France, given the current debate over the possible introduction of such facilities. These two components are adorned with golden spider webs, symbolizing the state of addiction in which people find themselves trapped.

Drug paraphernalia includes syringes, burned spoons, baggies, sheets of pharmaceutical drugs and so forth. **Erró** turns a syringe into a threatening weapon in a painting inspired by American comic books. **Aurèle** transforms them into a reliquary in *Portrait d'un ami*, a tribute to artist **Tony Bouilhet**, who died of an overdose. He also documents a performance by Bouilhet in his video *01254*.

In the next room, visitors find themselves amid an exceptional book collection compiled by Julio Mario Santo Domingo Braga Jr., a businessman and member of the jet set, who has a passion for works about marginality of any kind. A large portion of the collection is devoted to the subject of drugs, ranging from 16th-century botany textbooks to contemporary publications. Harvard University is the custodian of this collection of nearly 25,000 works, which inspired

Frédéric Post's installation. Post sheds light on this center of knowledge about psychotropic substances using a drugstore sign, a prosaic emblem of places where contemporary man enters into lawful contact with these substances.

In 2004, several psychiatrists founded a group called **Les Iconoblastes**. Deploring the fact that psychiatrists have "abandoned the pencil," they proposed new plastic representations of psychiatric illness. One of its propositions, *Traitement chromatique destiné à Sophie Calle*, relies exclusively on colored drugs prescribed in psychiatry, a facetious twist on the *Régime chromatique* that Calle invented in 1997, dictated by Paul Auster.

The works around the patio adopt a light or humorous tone in addressing the subject of alcohol, the most common psychotropic substance of all. In **Robert Filliou**'s assemblage, the wine bottle aspires to the innocence and purity of a milk bottle. The sentence written in LED lights by **Jeanne Susplugas** suggests that one active principle will always be the antidote to another and transforms the cycle of drug-taking in our daily life into a sparkling slogan. An amusing drawing "resized to mural format" by **François Curlet** shows the archetypal drunk Parisian, slumped against a streetlight and seeing things. **Pierre Leguillon** concentrates on other effects of wine, like those associated with the name of *Chasse-Spleen*, the name for a vineyard said to have been suggested by the artist Odilon Redon in an allusion to Baudelaire. *Prises de sang* by **Esther Ferrer** seems to designate alcoholism as a typically French affection that occurs at all levels of society. As for **Daniel Spoerri**, he keeps his own antidote in little bottles in a wardrobe: miracle water from Brittany, good for curing almost anything.

The wall of the café features a selection of **psychedelic posters** from the collection of Frédéric Jaïs Elalouf. In the 1960s, drug use was associated with young people rejecting middle-class values. The psychedelic movement (psychedelic literally means "manifesting the soul") started in the United States in 1965. Contemporary with the hippy movement, it was characterized by the consumption of hallucinogenic drugs, especially LSD. The chemist Augustus Owsley Stanley III and the psychologist Timothy Leary, both members of the movement, carried out many experiments and popularized LSD, which was banned in the United States in 1966. They were convinced that this substance provided a

formidable vector for exploring the possibilities of the human brain, because it pushed back psychic barriers and freed the mind from behavioral contingencies. With its bright hues, deformed typographies (sometimes impossible to read) and saturated surfaces, the psychedelic style was mostly used for posters and LP record jackets.

It depicted the world as seen under LSD. Light years away from the visual communication of today, the psychedelic style was more about effect than content.

Le Voyage en Iboga is a global project by a pair of artists, Marion Laval-Jeantet and Benoît Mangin, who work under the name of **Art Orienté Objet**. This art work was created following a rite of initiation into the Bwiti, a secret shamanistic society in Gabon. The iboga, a sacred plant that induces visions and expands one's consciousness, is central to the ritual. The photograph and the hypnotic installation shaped like a magic lantern (*Bwiti Turning*) function both as an ethnological testimonial and a "pagan reinterpretation of sacred Christian iconography." During the initiation, Marion Laval-Jeantet had experienced a feeling of "imminent death" followed by a vision of her own physiology: she saw herself as pure energy emerging from her body. The installation is her attempt to express that vision.

When visitors look at the reverse mirror effects of **Yayoi Kusama's** installation, their perceptions will be thrown off. These effects recall the visual hallucinations experienced after taking psychotropic substances. The Japanese artist created her first environments in the mid Sixties in New York at the height of the psychedelic period and indulged in the various and sundry excesses of the New York underground. She often used the repetition of simple shapes and mirror reflections to create a feeling of total immersion.

After this experience in visual saturation, the visitor moves on to the next room, an invitation to contemplation. In a video by **Henri Foucault**, a succession of colored screens produces a soothing hypnotic effect. The message of *TV Buddha* by **Nam June Paik** seems to be that psychotropic substances are not needed to achieve "inner awareness." A more recent version of the famous 1974 installation, this work can be interpreted

as a reflection on the hypnotic powers of television, the "opium of the people" in the 20th century. This work may also be seen as an update – via the closed-circuit video system – of the concept of infinite, fixed contemplation of the Self, which defines the Buddhist state of inner awareness.

With a dose of humor, **Arnaud Labelle-Rojoux** revisits the Sixties and the need for spirituality felt by young people at the time. He presents a proverb that does not deliver a moral, but offers commentary on the excesses of the "psychedelism" on the west coast of the United States in a comic vein.

Mati Klarwein's paintings have become emblematic of the psychedelic design code, primarily used to decorate the jackets of LP records, e.g. those of Jimi Hendrix and Santana. The five panels presented here were originally from the Aleph Sanctuary, a cube containing more than sixty works dedicated to the "undefined religion of everything" created by the artist in the New York of the 1960s. Classic execution and references to religious iconography also characterize the *Portrait de Pommereule* by **Frédéric Pardo**. The artist appears as a Christ-like figure on a raging sea but with "a monkey on his shoulder," the expression used by William Burroughs to designate the craving for drugs. Atop the same wall, the sentence by **Claude Lévêque**, written in neon, expresses the aspiration to well-being that we all have, although some prefer to seek it in *paradis artificiels*.

The installation by **David Kramer** reveals the gap between reality and its perception. A poolside party decked out in the mod colors of Sixties America is undermined by the caption, full of disillusionment: "I have drugs and alcohol to thank for some of the greatest moments of my life."

Starting in the mid-Sixties, **Isaac Abrams** sets out to communicate "the splendid and sacred nature of things" revealed to him when he took LSD in paintings and drawings. In a style that was precise yet exuberant, he transcribed his vision of a world populated by fauna, flora and decorative motifs, a world that seems to continue off the canvas. In the mid-Seventies, **Pablo Amaringo** also tried to paint his visions, triggered

by *ayahuasca*, a beverage used in South American shamanistic practices. A practitioner of traditional medicine (*curandero*) before turning to painting, Pablo Amaringo ingested the *planta maestra* in ritual fashion to gain awareness of the self, the world and a reality populated by spirits, magical creatures – diabolical or angelic – that he proceeded to render in a primitive style.

In 1968, the ethnomycologist Robert Gordon Wasson announced that the sacred mushroom used in Hindu Vedic rites (the *Soma*), was actually the hallucinogenic *amanita muscaria*. This made him one of the cult authors of the psychedelic years. **Carsten Höller**, who had studied entomology and phytopathology before becoming an artist, is very familiar with this mushroom, a leitmotif in his work since 1995. His fascination springs from his interest in psychotropic effects and in magic, because the mushroom is used in certain shamanistic rites. Inspired by the graphics from an advertising poster, the mushroom in *Alice Travel Compagnie* by **Philippe Mayaux** seems to proclaim the merits of a psychedelic trip to Lewis Carroll's Wonderland.

If the mushroom motif in **Takashi Murakami's** work has sometimes been compared to the cloud formed by the atomic bomb, like that in *L'explosion* by **Frédéric Pardo**, it is also a humanized figure that seems harmless and cute (*kawai*), although its sexual connotations make it appealingly subversive. After developing ties to the *Nouveaux Réalistes*, in 1969 **Martial Rayse** put the brakes on his career and moved to the country, where he produced small objects made of trivial materials that "reveal the urge to return to the roots of knowledge" (Didier Semin), whether Buddhist (*Sage à la rose*, exhibited farther on) or shamanistic, imparted by hallucinogenic mushrooms and cacti in acidic colors.

Robert Malaval's canvas seems to depict a young woman floating on an all-body trip. A beam of light is striking her silhouette. The contours of her body seem to blur and its substance seems to be "leaking" in places to form cloudlike shapes. The title, *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, is an explicit allusion to the Beatles song released that same year on their LP album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The initials of the song title are LSD, a reference to the hallucinogen.

Although John Lennon would never officially admit this, Robert Malaval seems to have no problem doing so.

In 1966, at the height of the psychedelic era, the satirical publication *Le Crapouillot* devoted a special issue to LSD and its dangers for young people. The cover photograph by **Jean-Michel Charbonnier** was for a feature article entitled: "Hélène and Jean, a six-hour trip of ecstasy and anxiety." Two volunteers had agreed to test LSD and have a photographer take pictures of them during their trip. Jean tried to withstand the effects of the drug. The photograph shows Hélène, eyes wide open and staring, in the grip of her ecstatic visions.

Since March 1995, the artist **Bryan Lewis Saunders** has done at least one self-portrait a day on notebook pages that are identical in format. He now has nearly 9,000. He backs up this self-imposed daily exercise with experimental research observing how certain situations (e.g. prolonged exposure to colored neon lights) or feelings (e.g. anxiety, love or pain) affect how he represents himself. During a few weeks in 2001, he produced a series of portraits of himself under the influence, trying a new drug every day and noting the type of drug and the quantity taken on each drawing. A brilliant exercise in style, this series explores variations in perceptions of being, ranging from feelings of peace and tranquility to those of completely falling apart.

Most of the psychoactive substances taken by members of the general public are medicines. The active principles in pharmaceuticals are the same as those used to prepare "drugs." In other words, prescription medicines can be hijacked for recreational instead of therapeutic purposes, like the amphetamines prescribed to reduce the appetite in the 1990s. Prescription medicines can also be used in a malicious way, such as rohypnol, prescribed for acute insomnia but used to obtain the "chemical submission" of targeted victims, who remember nothing about the acts to which they have been subjected. For *Résistance au Rohypnol*, **Fiorenza Menini** had a volunteer take a dose of the drug. The volunteer, a porno actor and gogo dancer by night and a sports coach by day, claimed to have an extraordinary resistance to sleep. The artist recorded his struggle to resist the powerful sleep-inducing drug and his moments of "absence" are both tragic and comic.

Since the late 1980s, **Damien Hirst** has been interested in medicines, i.e. the shapes and colors of pills or capsules and how they are packaged for sale. In *The Last Supper*, Hirst puts medicine, art and religion on the same footing: they all require non-rational belief. He replaces the thirteen figures at the Last Supper with the visual identities of medicines, changing their names to those of typical British culinary dishes. In this way, the artist is telling us that these substances play a key role in our daily lives. Of course, the process and technique used (silk screening) recall the approach taken by Andy Warhol. In an ironic twist, Damien Hirst puts himself in the same position as the pharmaceutical industry, signs the work in logo form and trying to sell his "product" – a work of art – in the same way that a vendor would sell a pharmaceutical product.

On the wall to the right, a series of portraits shows consumers of various substances. In **Michel François's** photographs of children, one face is concealed by a datura flower and the other by a bottle of wine. Visitors cannot help but mentally juxtapose the damage done by early addiction and the innocence of the young faces. Remaining true to his distinctive technique of hand-coloring silver gelatin photographs, **Nabil Youssef** had the singer Natacha Atlas pose as an oriental *odalisque* (virgin slave girl), revisiting the association made between psychoactive substances and sensual abandon. "At age 18, I began to take drugs... and photographs. That saved my life!" Since the 1970s, **Nan Goldin** has been taking pictures of her entourage and friends, the world of nocturnal life, art and addiction. Often shooting in artificial light, her subjects look ill at ease with the light of day. Her self-portrait is a good example. For her, daylight is what wakes bleary-eyed lovers in the morning.

At basement level, the installation by **Francis Alÿs** takes a look back at a performance that he did in 1996. Having resided in Mexico since 1986, the artist was invited to create a work for an exhibition in Copenhagen. Seeking to be "physically present but mentally absent," he proposed to continue his practice of "taking walks" while recording his impressions. For a week, he strolled through Copenhagen under the influence of various psychotropic substances, taking notes, taking photographs and making drawings (like the one on the postcard available to visitors).

The host institution found itself in a paradoxical position: it had commissioned an action involving the consumption of illicit substances.

1938 by **Mathieu Briand** commemorates the invention of LSD by the Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann. The parasite fungus used to synthesize LSD is presented here in an old jar, along with a vial of Delysid, the name under which LSD was marketed in the United States until 1966. LSD was one of the materials used to make the *LSD Paintings*. But the artist likes to say that art, *cosa mentale*, can rival any chemical in its power to liberate the imagination.

Joris Lacoste has created a work that is invisible. The short text on display is simply the synopsis of a "prepared dream," a story told to individuals under hypnosis, who then appropriate the dream and make it their own. For access to the creative work, one must contact the "recipients" of the dream (via Anne Chaniolleau 06 18 92 09 95).

In the alcove, visitors can watch a "filmed lecture" on LSD by **Gary Hill**, during which the artist constructs a large model of the molecule. His technique involves reversing words and gestures that were originally performed backwards, in order to make them intelligible. This creates a disconcerting feeling of strangeness and being out of phase. The artist takes us on a 3D exploration of a mental space reconfigured to challenge the stability of our awareness of the world, in the tradition of Timothy Leary's writings and psychedelism.

What **Hélène Delprat** calls a pseudo-lecture is based on scientific research as well as her own associations and intuitions. Her work started with the Spanish fly (*Lytta vesicatoria*) – which, in powder form, is thought to be an aphrodisiac – and caused her own addiction "to fantasies, images and mechanisms."

In the last room of the exhibition, visitors will find a few documentary films and videos by artists.

The film *Images du Monde visionnaire* by **Henri Michaux** and **Eric Duvivier** (1963) was commissioned by the pharmaceuticals company

Sandoz to report on the altered perceptions occurring in the brain during hallucinations. Scientific in intent, the film proposes a real "visual score" that has much in common with experimental film-making.

In *Camembert Martial Extra Doux*, a short film by **Martial Raysse**, people at a table share a camembert with hallucinogenic properties. Logic and restraint fly out the window. Images combine, succeed each other and collide. Printover effects and bright, saturated colors recall the psychedelic design code, which also inspired **Henri Foucault's** video, with its kaleidoscopic motifs forming hypnotic mandalas.

Kusama's Self-Obliteration (1968) documents a series of performances by **Yayoi Kusama** in the suburbs of New York. The series evoked all kinds of things that she came across in her life (from naked models to animals, landscapes or dots), following a quasi-magical ritual that she has always applied to her work.

The last space is devoted to a 1994 video by **Rodney Graham** in which the artist appears for the first time. We see him stretched out in the backseat of a car, asleep, wearing his pyjamas. He sleeps for 26 minutes under the influence of Halcion, a hypnotic medication known for its powerful effects. To make the video, he took it and went to sleep in a hotel outside Vancouver. His body was moved and put in the back of a car, then brought back to his home downtown. Like Alÿs, Graham is physically present but mentally absent, blissfully unaware, like a child asleep on the back seat of the family car.

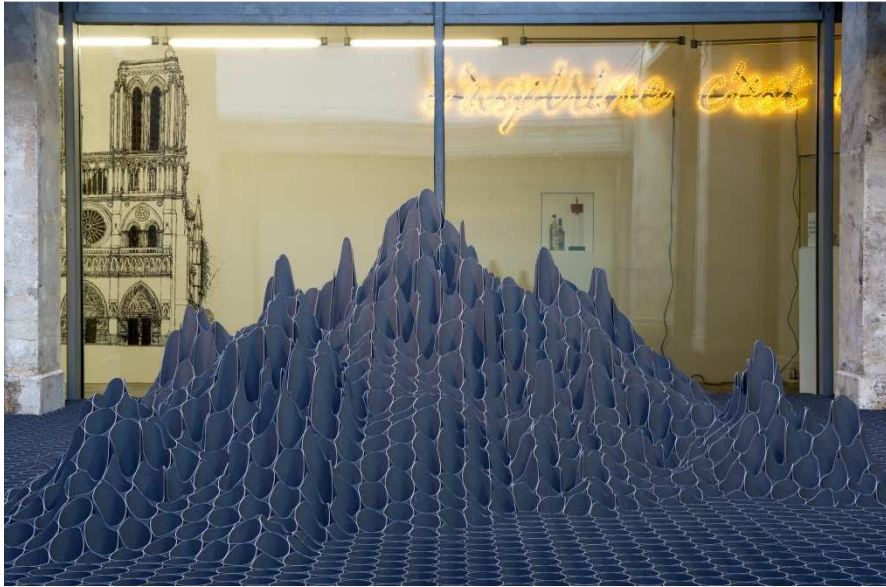
The wall is hung with fragrance posters. Here, the curator takes a critical look at the way in which advertising exploits the language of addiction to sell and create "dependence" on luxury products.

Returning towards the entrance to La maison rouge, the visitor will see the last two pieces in the exhibition. **Fred Tomaselli** presents a decorative composition using unusual materials: cannabis leaves, capsules, tablets, cut-outs from magazines or books, and paints. It's as if they were suspended at various depths in a clear resin that unifies the composition while rendering the substances unsuitable for consumption.

Even so, the hypnotic and psychostimulating properties of these "pieces of eye candy" remain potent.

The power of images enters into resonance with that of words. In *Écrire les drogues*, a salute to Burroughs, the only typewriter keys that work are the ones used to write the names of drug substances; when one presses any other key, the result is a cross-out. In this way, artist and curator **Antoine Perpère** reinforces the message that drugs interfere with communication and brings the exhibition to a close with the most powerful of all psychotropics: language.

Copy for *Le Petit Journal* by Stéphanie Molinard, based on catalogue texts by Sophie Delpoux and Guitemie Maldonado.



View of the exhibition

Vincent Mauger ***Adequate system***

Each winter, les amis de la maison rouge produces a work specifically for the foundation's patio. This year, members have chosen Vincent Mauger to interpret the theme of Under Influences

In order to create an installation, Vincent Mauger had makes an exacting preliminary inspection to determine the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed exhibition space. The artist then imagines a topography to energize and transform that space.

The result is this complex structure developed using 3D models and the artist's preferred materials: wood, brick, polystyrene and PVC. For *Adequate System*, Mauger took PVC tubes, sliced them up and carefully sculpted each one to form a piece of a landscape with areas in high relief rising from a floor divided into cells. The repetition of a single component

and the alternation of solids and voids, in conjunction with the graphic effect of the circle pattern on the surface, produce an unsettling optical illusion.

His installation combines the digital technologies used by engineers and architects with the building materials familiar to construction workers and do-it-yourselfers. It is an extraordinary environment built from ordinary, rudimentary materials. The patio layout at La maison rouge allows visitors to look at this work from different vantage points. The installation looks like the view of cells through a microscope...or perhaps the fantastic setting of a dream.