

Living as Lichens

group exhibition
15 March - 5 May 2024
La Traverse, Marseille



a symbiopolitical manifesto

The exhibition *Living as Lichens* aims to explore the phenomenon of symbiosis as an artistic and political manifesto, through works of artists who collaborate with living organisms and with each other.

As we are taking part in an irreversible ecological crisis, it is urgent to find other ways to cohabit and work with the non-human. It is difficult to deconstruct capitalist ideology, which since Darwin's time has made individual adaptation to a competitive environment its scientific justification. Symbiosis provides an answer: this long-term coexistence between two organisms of different species replaces competition as an evolutionary factor and undermines the very notion of biological and sociological individuality. Just like the lichen, a symbiotic organism composed of algae and fungi, all living beings, including ourselves, are made up of beneficial interactions. Let us learn from this organism, as little-known as it is omnipresent, and from its ethos of cooperation, plurality, and resilience.

In this group show, artists and their works exchange, collaborate, contaminate, and mutually enrich each other. The evolving installations populated by bacteria, fungi, and other microorganisms or so-called «pests» question the possibility of an egalitarian co-creation between partners, far from the competitive logic to which the art world is not immune. By weaving such a network, the exhibition functions as a living organism that transforms the mutualism and commensalism of biological interactions into an artistic working method, and finally into a societal model.

Artists: Yolenn Farges, Charlotte Gautier van Tour, Adriana Knouf, Niccolò Moscatelli, Laure Vigna
Curated by: Colette Angeli

Colette Angeli is an independent curator and critic. She lives and works in Marseille, navigating between various projects. She is the co-founder of the art workers collective Polynome, with which she leads projects of exhibitions, events, and texts. Her reflections are driven by an ever-present political and intersectional commitment. The research she conducts with Polynome mainly focuses on the commons and issues related to property. Through this lens, the collective explores social and democratic practices that emerge in contemporary creation in response to late capitalism. In parallel, she is particularly interested in the connections between human and non-human living beings, gestures and know-hows, and countercultural movements.

La Traverse is an independent art space located in a house of a southern character overlooking the cove of Malmousque, in Marseille. Built in the early 20th century and renovated in 2020 by Marion Bernard Architects on an initiative by Catherine Bastide, it now houses a contemporary art and design space as well as an associative curatorial platform that promotes international cultural exchanges. La Traverse explores contemporary issues through an unconventional lens, attentive to ecological and responsible economic practices.

www.latraversemarseille.fr

Practical information

Address: La Traverse, 16 traverse Sainte Hélène, 13007 Marseille

Opening hours: Fridays 3 to 7 PM, Saturdays & Sundays 12 to 7 PM

Admission: Free entry

Guided tours upon reservation: office@catherinebastide.com | co.angeli@hotmail.com

Program

Friday, 15 March - 6 PM: Opening at La Traverse, with the artists and the curator (and drinks!)

Wednesday, 27 March (tbc): Discussion on Symbiosis with scientists from IMBE (Mediterranean Institute of marine and terrestrial Biodiversity and Ecology), the curator and the artists

Saturday, 20 April: Human-Lichen symbiosis workshop with Amsterdam-based artist Adriana Knouf. Limited access, by reservation (women, trans and/or BIPOC only)

Wednesday, 24 April (tbc): Arts & Science workshop for children of Maisons Pour Tous, in collaboration with scientists from IMBE

Sunday, 5 May: Closing day and evening in the context of the PAC Festival (Printemps de l'Art Contemporain) - buffet, guided tours, drinks

... and other events to come !