

Press kit

30.06-31.12.23

ALMA CONFÉRENCE

Designers'
Perspective on the
Resources of the
Charentes Region



FONDATION
D'ENTREPRISE
MARTELL



ALMANACH

Designers' Perspective on
the Resources of the Charentes
Region

Exhibition on display from
June 30 to December 31, 2023

*A research exhibition connecting
design and the region*

The Almanach exhibition is the inaugural research project of Fondation d'entreprise Martell which, since its inception five years ago, is now evolving into a research and experimentation platform for art and design, as well as a space for raising awareness and learning – with a focus on living things.

This experimental initiative – which takes the form of an exhibition, residencies, encounters, and a laboratory of living archives – emerged from a reflection on how a foundation located in a context that is rural yet industrial, prosperous yet remote, can establish itself as an agent for dynamism within its region and activate new potential for collective transformation. It soon became clear that the first step, before taking any action, would require the compilation of an inventory of the region's resources and issues.

A team of designers was assigned the investigative task, which involved meeting many different local people (institutions, businesses, networks, and residents of Charente and Charente Maritime), with a view to identifying local, natural, and industrial resources, both material and immaterial.

Led by Olivier Peyricot with Lola Carrel, Valentin Patis, and Mathilde Pellé, the team established an investigation methodology before commencing the collection and analysis work.

The subjective overview resulting from their observations is presented on the second floor of the Fondation d'entreprise Martell building, and offers an immersion into the samples collected, enabling the rediscovery of significant materials and neglected deposits, living techniques, and forgotten expertise.

The exhibition offers visitors a glimpse into the material and immaterial riches of the region, through a selection of samples in various forms (maps, objects, photos, videos, soundtracks, materials, substances, sketches, documents, installations, works of art, and so on). But the project is also primarily about sharing. As visitors wander around at their discretion, the designers take a didactic approach to presenting the process and methodology that they applied to this research work based in the region.

This multi-faceted and contributory project explores the processes of production and interdependence in order to better position itself as a tool and catalyst for transition enabling the development of unique creative practices that bring about change. Objective: to create new imaginaries and chart new ways for building a resilient and sustainable future.

Space I

The first part of the exhibition presents a multitude of points of view to define what constitutes a resource in a region – with the aim of encouraging debate. Taking the river as a starting point for exploration, the designers have composed a poetic, historical, material, and industrial evocation of the region, somewhat like an agora.

The visit begins with the team of designers' preliminary intuitions and observations as part of their sensitive exploration of the region. As a composite landscape materializes, encircled by an assembly of mismatched seats, the staging invites visitors to discuss the value, future, and use of resources. The objective is to multiply the points of view on the region and invite visitors to express their opinion.

Maps are displayed on the walls, depicting a wide variety of views and interpretations of the Charente and Charente Maritime departments. The designers used this as the basis for defining the scope of their research before exploring it in all its dimensions: material, social, environmental, productive, imaginary...

They also met with many historians, collectors, deep-sea divers, farmers, winegrowers, industrial experts, and artisans, each of whom talked about their work, the problems they face, and their expertise.

The history of the river Charente, through its use for food, energy, and navigation, acts as an important starting point for understanding this region. Represented by three connected water sources as well as fishing objects, the river naturally became the common thread of the exhibition.

It soon became clear that the river Charente contains many extraordinary historical objects, which speak volumes about the way in which it has been perceived: offerings, garbage, loot, lost cargo, traces of intensive activity, remnants of revolts, battles, cooking, industry...

In the center of the space, visitors can watch films by artists projected on the screens, such as the documentary *"La ligne de partage des eaux"* by Dominique Marchais or *"Leçon des Barrages"* by Suzanne Husky. Several works of art in the space put the themes into perspective: historic sundials of the Charentes region recreated by Raphaël Zarka, a reproduction of the tapestry *"La Noble Pastorale"* by Suzanne Husky, as well as *"Sablier III"*, an allegory of time and sedimentation by Alexandre Joly. Works of art sit alongside the productions of designers who have created objects that go beyond simple scenography, such as the collection of fishing stools, the soil erosion basin, the blurred representations of significant elements that are archetypal of the region's landscape, a military chief's table covered with multiple maps of the region.



Space II

This second part presents the collective work carried out over the last few months, in all its diversity, taking into account the richness and the deposits of the region.

The visit continues with a systemic presentation of the selected resources. The inventory of materials on display, as if arranged on pallets stored in a hangar. The exhibited elements are the fruit of the designers' subjective perspective guided by the encounters, narratives, geographies...

The correlations between material deposits, instruments, and the development of expertise, industry, agriculture, and the economy emerge in light of the objects and materials collected. The investigative work uncovered histories and techniques, products of these ecologies and productive systems. Interrelations give rise to complex tensions between the different activities and lead to numerous questions: how to exploit the raw deposits, what to do with the material or waste that is produced as a result, how to fill the empty space left behind by their extraction and how to regenerate soils sustainably? Should we continue to source materials farther away and preserve expertise, or limit unnecessary movements without exhausting the materials that surround us?

This assembly of stock, at first glance without any apparent interrelationships, compels the designers to tackle locally anchored problems and to come up with new ways of transformation, based on the potential of the material and the elements recorded. An archetype of the region is created through these stacks of material and opens up the debate on its usage and evolution. In parallel, an ensemble of eight photographs taken by the duo Monnier-Tabuchi illustrates views of the region where the materials come from, inviting guests to contemplate the stratification of the landscape and its evolving characteristics over time.



Space III

A permanent living archive will remain in place after the exhibition, for the purpose of welcoming designers and artists through projects, residencies, and artistic interventions that will bring this archive to life – all centered around the region's resources.

This takes us into the final part with a structure made of wooden battens that is reminiscent of the architecture of local barns. This threshold to the “workshop” area brings together the exploration tools, typical objects from the collection of the designers seeking to understand the region: DIY canoe, bicycle, Revolvograph by Oscar Lhermitte, the exoskeleton by Didier Faustino... On the wall is a canoe designed by a local amateur, which Mathilde Pellé equipped to transform it into a boat for exploring. She traveled along the water by day and night in the apparent calmness of the river, spending a long period of time rowing, to discover sensitive resources that would have been missed by the everyday work of the team. This is where we find the river, the common thread, structuring the designers' research through its ecology and its social history. The focus is on a collection of four paintings by Bordeaux artist Simon Rayssac who invites us to reshape how we perceive what surrounds us.

Against the wall is a bookcase, a permanent living archive that will record the trace of all the work performed, summarizing the materials and contacts identified along the way. Evolving and contributory, this collection of knowledge is to be enriched through collaborations, investigatory work, encounters, and debates. Ultimately, it will conserve details of the experiments carried out within the framework of future residencies. On the shelves are boxes, organized according to a specific nomenclature, enabling the aggregation of data and research. This documentation is aimed at providing material for reflection, within a participatory process. It will also be made

accessible to designers in residence as well as the general public.

Finally, the workbenches arranged in different ways serve as areas where artists in residence can conduct their own research. This is a space where people can discover different design practices, such as the creation of water filters printed in ceramic 3D by Pjorkkala, the creation of “géoverrerie” glass by Lucile Viaud transforming local by-products and neglected resources into natural glass, or the reuse of industrial deposits (Jean-Baptiste Clavé and Robin Bourgeois). Over time, fifteen or so designers will be invited to make use of the resources presented at the exhibition.

The exhibition includes a focus on the experimental program initiated by ENSAD in 2021 in Nontron, Dordogne, not far from the Foundation. Titled Design des Mondes Ruraux, (Design of Rural Worlds), this post-graduate diploma focuses on the ability of design to tackle modern-day challenges and revitalize rural areas. This mechanism involves local public and private players and intends to train a generation of artists and designers who are mindful of redesigning how we live and reside, in a way that is more respectful to our environments, more durable, and more harmonious. This presentation allows a better understanding of the specific design applications in a rural space.



The residencies

This exhibition is centered around research and is aimed at providing a tool dedicated to the region (a living archive). It is also a starting point for establishing the new residency program at the Foundation, which will now focus on practices with a regenerative dimension.

From July and again in autumn, designers, artists, and thinkers will join the third part of the exhibition to develop the practical experimentation aspect based upon the resources identified.

Jean-Baptiste Clavé – DTER – Limoges, FR
Collectif Pjorkkalla – Ljubljana, Slovenia
Ernesto Oroza, Cuba – FR
Florence Wuillai, FR
Daniel Garber & Amalia Magril – Netherlands
Lola Carrel, FR
Valentin Patis, FR
Ludovic Duhem, FR
Jules Levasseur, FR
Raphaël Zarka, FR
Workshop with students studying for a master's in art and geomaterials – Le Mans School of Art (TALM), with Natsuko Uchino and Ludovic Duhem, FR
Workshop with third-year students from Design des Mondes Ruraux, ENSAD, Nontron – with Nicolas Verschaeve, FR
Lucile Viaud, FR
Amy Massias, FR

Launch of new call for applications

As a continuation of this project, the Foundation will launch a new call for applications for “Almanach residencies”, welcoming residencies from January 2024 with individuals who wish to join the dynamism inspired by the exhibition and explore the initial paths identified.

This international call is aimed at designers, researchers, artists, thinkers, collectives, and scientists who are committed to regenerative, creative practices.



Collectif Pjorkkalla, *Dodola: filtres à eaux*, 2022

Program

As part of the exhibition – the first part of which is much like a public agora – a rich cultural program will punctuate the exhibition and give rise to a series of public workshops, conferences, debates, and projections.

– Launch of France Design Week Nouvelle Aquitaine
→ September 14

– 2nd edition of Campagne Première
→ end of November

– Conference on beavers by Suzanne Husky
→ date to be confirmed

– Projection and presentation by Dominique Marchais of his film *La ligne de partage des eaux*
→ date to be confirmed

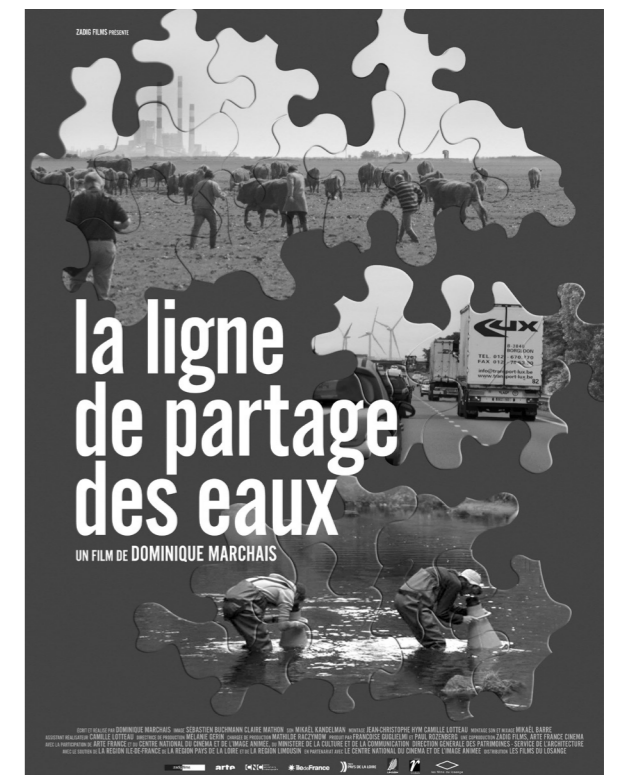
– Conference by Ludovic Duhem on ecotechnologies and bioregionalism
→ date to be confirmed



© France Design Week



Campagne Première © David Betzinger



Lola Carrel

Lola Carrel is an art and design historian who completed a master's in museology and the history of art at the Ecole du Louvre in 2017, then a master's in design research at ENS Paris-Saclay in 2019.

Through her research, she has touched upon subjects such as the history of design collections in France as well as photography at Ettore Sottsass. She has published articles in the Centre Pompidou editions for the exhibition catalog *Ettore Sottsass, The Magical Object* and in the magazine *Transbordeur #5 Photography and Design*. These research subjects have led her to question more widely the role that archives play in creation from a design perspective.

In parallel, she has worked on various exhibitions and cultural projects. In 2019, she was assistant curator at the French pavilion at the Design Triennale in Milan, then from 2021 to 2022 she was in charge of the installation and management of an artistic residency in Lyon.



Valentin Patis

Valentin Patis graduated in object and space design from Reims School of Art and Design and with a master's in social design from Eindhoven Design Academy. At first, he was interested in the development of materials and shapes inspired by natural processes. Through his research, he develops materials based on the resources of a region.

As a result of this, his work tackles social and environmental challenges from the agricultural and rural world. Convinced of design's important role as a tool for transformation and mediation, his work aims to contribute towards helping evolve practices and generational dogmas. In 2022, he founded a collective of Champagne winemakers (Val Ross) whose aim was to develop sustainable practices for commons (shared resources) and to promote the regeneration of ecosystems.

A selection of these works was presented at Dutch Design Week, WaterSchool M4H+, and was published in issue number 14 of *Design Unlimited* and the 2022 edition of *Graduation Show*.



Kiösk

Kiösk - (Elsa Aupetit & Martin Plagnol) is a graphic design studio founded in 2015. The duo designs visual identities, websites, posters, editions, signage, for both public and private commissions.

Elsa Aupetit & Martin Plagnol share their professional practice with that of teaching. Elsa Aupetit teaches at the Arts Décoratifs (Paris) and is the teaching advisor for the Mastère Direction de Création en Design Graphique at the Campus de la Fonderie de l'Image (Bagnolef). Martin Plagnol also teaches at Campus de la fonderie de l'image. They regularly run workshops at art schools.

Elsa Aupetit & Martin Plagnol founded the independent publishing house *Dumpling Books* in 2019. As part of this project, they lead the *Composite* magazine project, an annual publication devoted to the tools, techniques and technologies that cross graphic design and image practices, with Christophe Lemaitre.



Mathilde Pellé

Mathilde Pellé is a French designer. In parallel with the production of forms (objects, spaces, installations), since 2016 she has managed the "Soustraire" (Subtract) research project which poses the question "Why is there something rather than less?". Through diverse means including experiments, workshops, texts, images, and studies, she questions material environments and lifestyles.

After graduating from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in 2012, she continued her studies at ENSADlab until 2015. In 2019, she worked with Deep Design Lab - the research center at Cité du Design Saint-Étienne. Her work has been showcased by Paris Design Week, D'days, Venice Design, Galerie du VIA, ToolsGalerie, Center for Innovation and Design in Grand-Hornu, and the X and XII editions of the Biennale Internationale Design Saint-Étienne.

She has published her work in leading magazines such as *Décor* (ENSAD & Presses du Réel), *A°2021* (École Urbaine de Lyon) and led workshops for design school students.



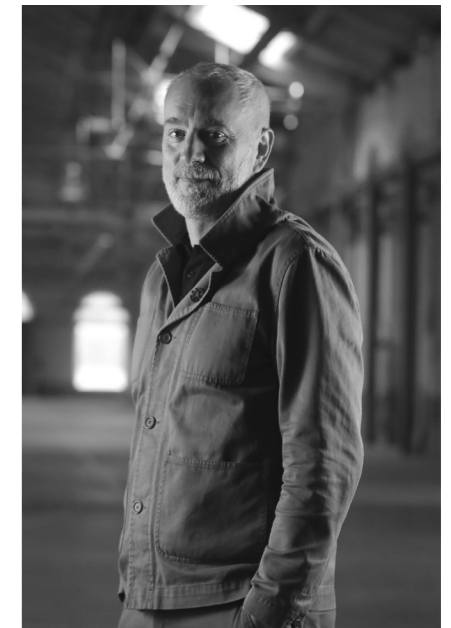
Olivier Peyricot

Olivier Peyricot is a designer-researcher and an independent curator.

After leading the agency IDSland for 15 years and working with galleries Néotu Gallery, Tools Galerie, and Mercier & Associés, he was Research Director at Cité du Design and Director of the Biennale Internationale Design Saint-Etienne from 2015 to 2022. Heading multi-disciplinary teams, Olivier Peyricot develops research projects in the form of exhibitions, books, and devices (objects, displays, filmed surveys, etc.) that question the capacities of design in fields that are as vital as they are structuring, such as ecology, work, transport, and social change.

After starting out as a teacher, he has since pursued the role of designer-researcher for 25 years, developing several methodologies for exploring materialities. His research then focused on themes relating to deconstructing technical discourse through design, and on what he calls the design of instances.

His work is included in the collections at MoMA in the USA and the National Foundation for Contemporary Art (FNAC).



Fondation d'entreprise Martell

Fondation d'entreprise Martell is a research and experimentation platform for designers, artists, and researchers, as well as a public space for raising awareness and learning – with a focus on living things.

Its program of exhibitions, residencies, conferences, and workshops is intended to support, first and foremost, the emergence of innovative projects with a regenerative dimension. Aimed at paving new tangible ways to build a future that is resilient and sustainable, the Foundation's projects encourage people to think about the region and the local resources and to explore the vernacular expertise – in a collective intelligence dynamic.

Anne-claire Duprat Director

Anne-Claire Duprat is an art historian and specialist in cultural policy. She has 15 years of experience in the contemporary art world and is an expert in cultural policy and diplomacy as well as international cooperation.

Since completing a master's in the management of cultural projects at the IEP of Grenoble and obtaining a joint degree in history and the history of art, she worked with many institutions such as Palais de Tokyo, Institut Français, FRAC Ile- de-France, Jeu de Paume, and Musée de Grenoble, before taking up the position of General Secretary of Platform (2014-2017). Here she was in charge of promoting the national grouping of 23 regional contemporary art funds (FRACs) and she launched the first edition of Week-End National des FRAC. She worked on the international distribution of the FRAC collections by organizing large-scale exhibitions overseas, from the Netherlands (VanAbbe Museum in Eindhoven) to Southeast Asia (National Museum in Singapore, SongEun ArtSpace in Korea, BACC in Thailand).

In 2017, Anne-Claire Duprat joined the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States where she was responsible for promoting the French artistic scene at a national level. In charge of visual arts in NYC, she initiated influential campaigns and programs encouraging professional French-American collaboration through tools such as the "Etant donnés" program and "Oui Design" as well as by contributing towards the prefiguration of Villa Albertine. This assignment enabled her to roll out projects that encourage diversity and innovation, in collaboration with high-profile partners for the creation of grants, prizes, and professional programs. She stepped into the role of Director of Fondation d'entreprise Martell in 2022.



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ALMANACH

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Curatorial and scenography

Project management

Olivier Peyricot, designer-researcher
Designer-researcher team
Lola Carrel, Valentin Patis, Mathilde Pellé
Graphic design
Kiösk (Elsa Aupetit & Martin Plagnol)

Artists and designers

Manon Alves, Léon Bernard, Robin Bourgeois, Lola Carrel, Jean-Baptiste Clavé (DTER), Studio d-o-t-s (Laura Drouet & Olivier Lacrouts), Ludovic Duhem, Nina Durel, Didier Faustino, Thomas Ferrand, Suzanne Husky, Marine Lerazavet & Clémence Germain, Alexandre Joly, Oscar Lhermitte, Jules Lévasseur, Emmie Massias, Dominique Marchais, Mathias Mareschal, Nelly Monnier & Éric Tabuchi, Ernesto Oroza, Valentin Patis, Pjörkkala (Žan Girandon, Pia Groleger, Luka Pleskovič), Arthur Pocheron, Raccogliere (Sigrid Schmeisser, Daniel Garber, Amalia Magril), Simon Rayssac, Natsuko Uchino and ESAD TALM-Le Mans, Nicolas Verschaeve and the designers of l'ENSAD Design des mondes ruraux, Lucile Viaud, Florence Wuillai, Raphaël Zarka...

Production

Scenography, exhibition management,
transportation

Cobble
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Heather Cook

Glass artisans

Laëtitia Andrighetto and Jean-Charles Miot

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Studio Ludo

Press relations

L'art en plus

Partners

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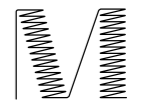
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And to all those who accompanied us on this exploration of the Charentes region.

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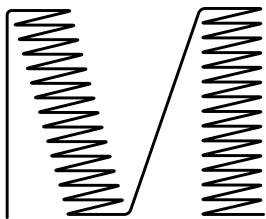
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