



PRESS RELEASE

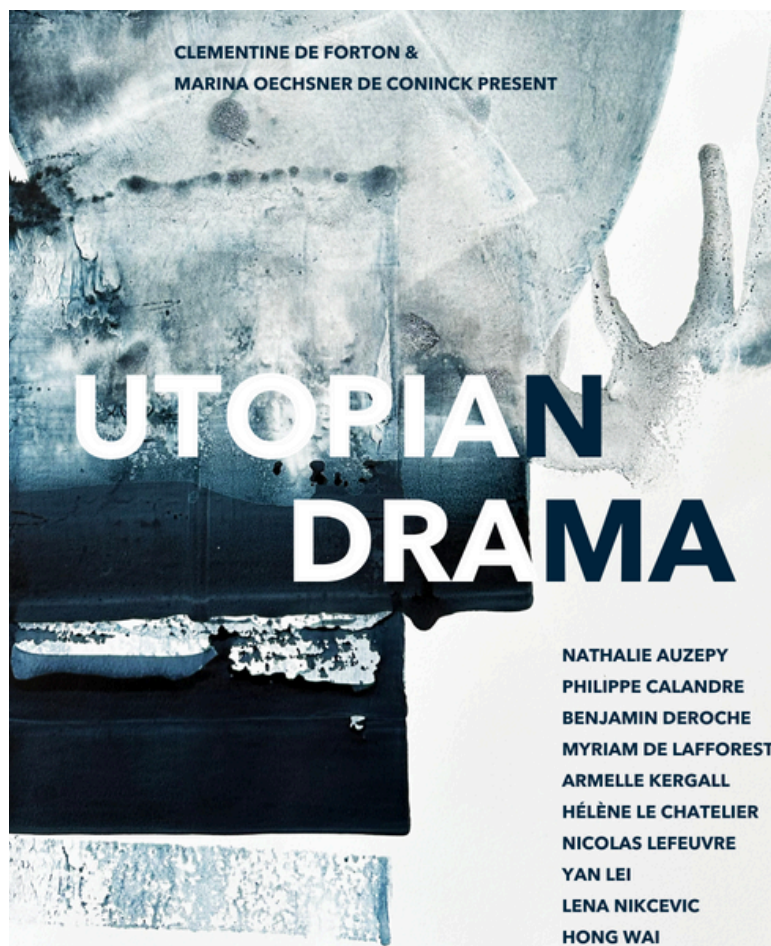
Singapore 24 March 2025, for immediate release

UTOPIAN DRAMA 01 | 05 | 25 > 16 | 05 | 25

A JOURNEY THROUGH ART AND ENVIRONMENTAL SURREALISM, Singapore

An immersive and theatrical experience that unites international actors from the European and Asian contemporary art scene, photographers, painters, and sculptors, with the utopian environment serving as a stage set for their creative inspiration.

An **art exhibition (2-16 May)** co-curated by **Marina Oechsner de Coninck** and **Clementine de Forton** in collaboration with the **French Embassy of Singapore** during the **Voilà! Festival**.



May 2-16 2025

JW PROJECTS GALLERY - 01-01 3 Kim Yam Road - 23 93 21 Singapore

More than 30 works will be **exhibited for the first time in Singapore**, offering visitors a **sensory experience that transcends all disciplines and cultures**, centered around **environmental surrealism and abstract exploration**.

This expression of surrealism aims to be plural, like a **floating world between reality and utopia**, playing with **forms, perspectives, and transparencies**. The artists present us with **breathtaking creativity, staging cities, landscapes, and humanity**.

At the time of **green-tech** and **fast-pace evolution**, we will discover how the artists connect with the environnement and engage with eco-humaniste values.

ARTISTS: **NATHALIE AUZEPY – PHILIPPE CALANDRE – BENJAMIN DEROCHE – MYRIAM DE LAFFOREST – ARMELLE KERGALL – HELENE LE CHATELIER – NICOLAS LEFEUVRE – YAN LEI – LENA NIKCEVIC – HONG WAI**

A LABORATORY OF UTOPIA

Bringing together **10 visionary artists**, UTOPIAN DRAMA immerses the viewer in an **environmental fiction**, where **art, urbanism, architecture, and nature interact** to push the boundaries of reality and open the way to a new perception of the world.

At a time when smart cities are evolving at an unprecedented pace and where nature is not experienced the same way by all, UTOPIAN DRAMA blurs the lines between the tangible and the invisible, the present and utopia.

More than an exhibition, **UTOPIAN DRAMA is a language of emotions and sensations**, a space where utopia takes shape at the intersection of environment, architecture, and eco-humanist values, redefining our perception of space, nature, and identity.

Art has the power to create a universal dialogue, expand the imagination, and transform our perception of reality.

The exhibition's **scenography unfolds like a narrative journey**, treating each chapter as a specific universe, transporting the visitor through different symbolic realms. Vibrant and colorful works give way to darker, more introspective pieces, transparent sculptures, and curiosity cabinets, creating a multi-layered, immersive experience.

From the very entrance, visitors are met with a **surreal cultural contrast**. **Yan Lei's** bronze astronauts stand in stark opposition to **Benjamin Deroche's** floating worlds and the reimagined landscapes of Franco-Chinese artist **Hong Wai**.



Yan Lei is a **singular and unconventional figure in contemporary Chinese art**, known for his **dystopian astronaut sculptures** that express a whimsical vision of the child-hero confronted with a disorienting world. Our sincere gratitude to *Olal Art Gallery* for generously lending Yan Lei's sculptures for UTOPIAN DRAMA in Singapore.

Benjamin Deroche's celestial photographs, presented in large format, depict **nature as both spirit and culture**. They invite the viewer into a **contemplation on the universe and its elemental forces—earth, water, fire, and air**. In his Land Art perspective photography, the interaction between the environment and its artistic intervention creates a narrative. An important aspect for the artist who is also a semiologist and a novelist. His works become **portals—gateways to another dimension of reality—where contemplation and imagination merge**. His ability to combine visual beauty and with intellectual depth makes him a rare and compelling figure in contemporary photography.

Meanwhile, **Hong Wai's captivating landscapes**, created in **Chinese ink painting**, immediately draw the viewer into a journey of discovery where sensual bodies, clothed in delicate lace, emerge from her majestic mountain scenes. The **lacework**, painted with meticulous precision, **humanizes and enlivens nature**, creating a **fascinating and poetic dialogue**. This interplay of strength and delicacy, grandeur and finesse, anchoring and fluidity offers a breathtaking visual analogy—an exquisite balance between the **ephemeral and the eternal**.

The Second Room: The Interconnection Between Nature and Sensory Memory

This space explores the deep bond between nature and memory, seen through the lens of three emotionally resonant artists: Lena Nikcevic, H  l  ne Le Chatelier, and Armelle Kergall.



Hélène Le Chatelier: Memory, Identity, and the Intimate Space

The artist Helene Le Chatelier lives and works between Asia and Europe.

Graduated in Fine Arts and with a master in aesthetic philosophy from Paul Valéry University in Montpellier, her multidisciplinary artistic practice explores the influence of memory and social context in intimate spaces. Social interaction and the condition of women are at the heart of her research and artistic practice. Known primarily for her *"abstract body landscapes"* and paper sculptures that engaged collaborative writing, Helene is exhibiting her series *"What Will Be Left From Us"* for the first time in Singapore.

This collaborative project explores our *intimate connection and fragile interdependence with nature and our identity*, giving rise to a series of portraits reworked in photo composition. This experience was carried out in interaction with a group of teenagers from different nationalities in Singapore as part of an installation at Sea Focus in 2019. She questions and highlights our reshaped identity in a multicultural and constantly changing world.

Lena Nikcevic: A Poetic Search for Existence in a Changing World

French-Montenegrin artist Lena Nikcevic is primarily a painter, illustrator, and visual artist, widely recognized for her double-sided engraved acrylic paintings, *"In Search of Happiness"*.

Her artistic vision transforms the relationship between humans and their environment into poetic and sensitive pictorial spaces, posing fundamental questions about our existential presence in a world of perpetual change.

As co-founder of *L'Atelier de la Morinerie* in France, she has been commissioned for community-based projects in Munich, France, and Montenegro. This exhibition marks her first showcase in Singapore, presenting *In Search of Happiness*, a series deeply rooted in her travel journals from a study trip through remote regions of India.

Through intricate engravings and layered compositions, Nikcevic's work invites viewers into a space of reflection, contemplation, and a poetic search for meaning in an ever-evolving world.

Armelle Kergall: Folding Time, Weaving Memories

Armelle Kergall is a photographer and visual artist who lived for many years in Japan before settling in Singapore. Her collage and paper-folding works express a poetic nostalgia, deeply influenced by her life between Japan and France.

Much like a "Madeleine de Proust", her series *"Natsukashii"* (a Japanese term evoking nostalgic longing) invites viewers to reconnect with their memories—whether from childhood, past travels, or the collective history that shapes us all.

Kergall's work intertwines pristine landscapes, photographs of children, ancient ruins, trees, and personal travel memories, layering them into sculptural hybrid images that blur the boundaries between reality and recollection.

Her work has been exhibited in Tokyo and Singapore with Olal Art Gallery, offering a deeply personal yet universal meditation on time, memory, and belonging.

The Third Room: From Nature to the City – A Journey Through Urban Utopia



The exploration continues into the urban realm, where architecture and utopia intertwine.

Philippe Calandre reinterprets **Singapore's iconic buildings**—a series commissioned by the Alliance Française before the pandemic and unveiled for the first time here—by deconstructing their forms through photography. Among them, *The Concourse by Paul Rudolph Foundation* and *The Duo Twin Towers by Ole Scheeren*.

His **minimalist, raw, and powerful photographs reveal the architectural heritage of the city-state**, capturing the balance between modernity and experimentation. Through his lens, the city of the future is no longer just about infrastructure and technology; it becomes a living organism shaped by social life, connectivity, and governance. His works strip urbanity of its artificial layers, offering a dystopian yet deeply aesthetic vision of ever-evolving metropolises.

Through her **“Feuilles de Ville” (City Leaves) sculptures**, **Nathalie Auzepy** reinterprets the urban journey by shifting scale, taking us on a voyage through cities dear to her heart—Singapore, New York, and Paris. These emblematic sculptures, playing with light and transparency, reflect the surrounding environment and urban landscape, transforming familiar spaces into poetic reveries.

Her work invites us to see the city as a work of art, evoking personal journeys, both lived and imagined. Expanding her concept into Land Art and monumental scale, she will present the extraordinary journey of her City Leaves, permanently installed in three municipalities in Brussels.

For the first time exhibited in Singapore, **Myriam de Lafforest's bronze sculptures** play a key role in the immersive and theatrical narrative of UTOPIAN DRAMA. Human presence emerges within these environments—her **unique bronze sculptures, both intense and delicate, interplay with transparency and light**, naturally resonating with the idea of a world suspended between reality and utopia. The human form and its gracious movement seem to materialize from a mysterious elsewhere, bridging the tangible and the dreamlike.

In this visual theater, Myriam's works connect humanity and emotions to the concept of poetic and sensory urbanism. Reminiscent of Wim Wenders' cinematic universes, they provide a luminous counterpoint to urban dystopias.

Oscillating between the tangible and the intangible, her sculptures create suspended moments of contemplation, as if floating in time, in a world constantly in motion.

A Grand Finale: Nicolas Lefeuve's Kimono



At the far end of the exhibition, a monumental fabric kimono by French artist **Nicolas Lefeuve** brings this utopian experience to a powerful and poetic conclusion. A strong spiritual symbol, the kimono represents the delicate balance between humanity and its environment, an essential condition for a sustainable world.

Through his abstract landscapes and his work on recycling and memory, Nicolas Lefeuve incorporates a reflection on neuroscience and the imprints we leave on the places and moments we pass through. The exhibition unveils his new series inspired by Iceland, "Somewhere Between Now and Before", where fabric, ink, and paint intertwine to create meditative and atmospheric compositions.

At the center of the space, a work table displays his tools, sketches, and fabric pieces, offering visitors an intimate glimpse into his creative process.

Like human evolution, from ignorance we become more and more aware of our place in the world and within environment and our identity.

In this fluid, sequential scenography, the visitor feels as if embarking on a boat, drifting through a landscape of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and objects, navigating between exploration and discovery.

For further information and digital materials:

“UTOPIAN DRAMA” GROUP ART EXHIBITION (May 2-16)

Co-curated by **Marina Oechsner de Coninck** and **Clémentine de Forton**, as part of **Voilah! French Festival** and in partnership with the **French Embassy in Singapore**.

 Venue: JW PROJECTS GALLERY, Singapore

Practical Information:


- **Location:** JW Projects, Singapour, Kim Yam Rd, 03号SG#01-01 邮政编码: 239321
- **Dates:** MAY 2-16 2025
- **Opening Hours:**
 - Every day (except Mondays) from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- **Website:** www.clementinedefortongallery.com/utopian-drama-art-exhibition/

EVENTS IN MAY 2025 during Voilah Festival:

- 2 MAY | 6-9 PM | UTOPIAN DRAMA OPENING | JW PROJECTS GALLERY
- 8 MAY | 6.30 PM | ART TALK “ ART & ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCE’ | ALLIANCE FRANCAISE SG
- 9 MAY | 6 -9 PM | UTOPIAN DRAMA EVENING WITH THE ARTISTS | JW PROJECTS GALLERY

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