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Kanal opens 28.11.26

KANAL | Centre Pompidou

KANAL ARCHITECTURE

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Introduction

Yves Goldstein – Director-general Kanal-Centre Pompidou

304 days.

In 304 days, Kanal will open its doors to the public.

3 314 days.

That is how many days have passed since I took up my post, tasked by the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region with transforming the Citroën garage and creating a museum of modern and contemporary art and architecture for the capital of Europe.

It has rarely been smooth sailing – it still isn't – but here we are.

In 304 days, Kanal will cease to be a (pipe) dream, a mirage, a utopia. It will reveal itself in all its dimensions – those of an extraordinary museum for an extraordinary city, those of an ambitious museum in a city too often lacking in ambition.

In 304 days, a museum opens whose centre of gravity will be the public spaces, this city within a city, dedicated – even devoted – to the universality of art, architecture and culture. A museum with streets and corners, a bakery, a playground, a library and research centre, workshops, spaces to study and work ...

In 304 days, Brussels will finally get the museum of modern and contemporary art it deserves. And so will its artists and creators, its residents, and everyone who loves this city. It will be theirs to discover and appropriate.

In 304 days, Kanal-Centre Pompidou will fling open the doors to the city and its nine inaugural exhibitions, plus the major opening exhibition of Kanal Architecture.

Ten exhibitions to open Kanal. Ten exhibitions to provide a first answer to an open-ended question: what is the role of a museum of art and architecture in the 21st century? What is the purpose of Kanal at a time when the spectre of extremism and dreams of empire are returning? What is the use of Kanal when human intelligence is being challenged by machines? What is the point of Kanal at a time of increasingly polarised identity politics? What is the meaning of Kanal in a world that is simultaneously burning and drowning?

Everything and nothing at the same time.

Everything, because art is the most exceptional force of emancipation.

Everything, because architecture is about building the city of tomorrow.

Everything, because art is a powerful catalyst for living together in Brussels.

Everything, because the world needs imagination, dreams and escape, now more than ever.

Nothing... if all this is not defended.

Nothing, if the public authorities do not allow the development of this creative space, which should be protected against the stifling pressures of the marketplace and the breakneck tempo of the media.

Nothing, if the museum is not also a place to reflect on the future of humanity.

Nothing, if the museum does not lead the way in circularity and sustainability.

Nothing, if the museum is not democratic, open, universal and inclusive.

And even if Kanal manages to achieve all this ... it is still only a museum. One that must stay in its place – essential though that place may be – with grace, humility and clarity of mind.

It is with great emotion that I write these lines.

Brussels is a city I have loved since I was born there, 48 years ago.

Brussels is a complex and difficult city, buzzing and stimulating, paradoxical and exciting, surreal and absurd, fascinating and disorienting; Brussels is a wholeness made from a singular diversity, one of a kind in Europe.

Today, Brussels is one of many hubs for contemporary artistic creation in Europe. Tomorrow, with Kanal, Brussels has the potential to become *the* hub for contemporary European creation. We are adding a missing yet undoubtedly essential piece to this city's wholly unique artistic ecosystem.

Kanal stands as a radically optimistic affirmation of the future, even when shadows loom large over the horizon. Art and culture must be rays of hope in an increasingly anxious and divided world – a world that is perhaps facing its greatest challenge in 80 years.

Kanal will be a place for contemplation, emancipation, relaxation, strolling, artists, dreams, life, living together, debate, listening, expression, meeting, study, learning, reading, disconnecting, recharging, enthusiasm, ambition, discovery, pleasure, freeze frames, pauses, life, life, life ...

In 304 days, Kanal will open its doors to the public.

There is currently no other project like it in Belgium or Europe. Opening a 40 000 m2 public museum in the heart of the European capital.

The opening of Kanal makes a clear statement: without culture, without museums, without artists, there is no future for humanity.

Long live Brussels! Love live Kanal!

A place for all people

Laurent Le Bon – President of the Centre Pompidou

"A place for all people" was the founding vision of the Centre Pompidou, articulated by its architects Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano. This ambition now guides the renovation of the historic building which, while remaining faithful to its original purpose, looks decisively towards the 21st century. When it reopens in 2030 – unchanged on the outside yet completely remodelled within – the Centre Pompidou will offer even greater transparency and fluidity through redesigned circulation routes shaped by the visitor's experience.

During this period of renovation, the Centre Pompidou, a multidisciplinary institution, is undergoing a profound metamorphosis, continuing its activities in partner venues across France and internationally. Its collection of modern and contemporary art is reaching new audiences through nearly 9 000 loans each year. From Málaga to Shanghai, via Brussels, international projects are multiplying, making the Centre Pompidou one of the world's most active cultural operators. Beyond the lending of works or the development of cultural programmes, it is the spirit of the institution that is shared with partners – the desire to establish meaningful dialogue and respond to the specific ambitions and contexts of each collaboration. These projects are, above all, exceptional opportunities for exchange.

In 2017, a partnership agreement between the Brussels-Capital Region, the Kanal Foundation and the Centre Pompidou laid the foundations for a new multidisciplinary cultural hub. In dialogue with Brussels' vibrant cultural landscape, Kanal-Centre Pompidou is now developing a programme that resonates deeply with the Centre's DNA, mirroring its multidisciplinary approach, iconic architecture, strong social engagement and generous openness to all audiences.

Throughout the partnership, which runs until 2031, Kanal and the Centre Pompidou will co-produce long-term exhibitions drawn from the collection of the Musée national d'art moderne. The first of these, *A truly immense journey*, will open in November 2026. In parallel, Centre Pompidou teams will present two temporary exhibitions each year dedicated to major figures in Modern art.

I would like to thank all the teams whose daily commitment makes this wonderful project possible.

Towards a new institution

Kasia Redzisz – Artistic director Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Kanal opens a new chapter in the cultural history of Brussels and beyond. Conceived as a museum from the outset, the institution emerges in a city marked by artistic intensity and institutional absence: a place where contemporary practices have long flourished without a museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art. Kanal is founded in response to this condition – not as a corrective, but as a proposition.

As an institution opening at a moment when museum structures are often called into question, Kanal does not seek to stabilise meaning or consolidate authority. Instead, it understands the museum as a site of inquiry, where histories are revisited, narratives remain open, and the conditions of display, collection and participation are continuously questioned. In and from Brussels, a city shaped by cultural plurality and political negotiation, the museum engages with art as a field of relations rather than as a closed discipline.

The inaugural programme establishes Kanal as a place where exhibitions, collections, live practices and participatory processes are inseparable. The museum positions itself between permanence and experimentation, between inherited histories and future imaginaries. Rather than present a singular vision, Kanal proposes a framework: one that allows for complexity, contradiction and transformation, acknowledging the museum not as an endpoint, but as a process that evolves with audiences and reflects ever-changing societies.

Kanal comes into being not as an answer to an absence, but as a way of inhabiting it. In a city where artistic practices have long preceded their institutional framing, the museum is conceived as a space of testing – of how histories are written, unlearned, and made available to the present.

The vision for Kanal is based on four key elements: its role as a museum; participation as the driving force for its societal mission; the collection and facilitation of new artistic production; and the partnership with the Centre Pompidou.

A museum for Brussels

Kanal defines itself as a museum, assuming the responsibility of institution-making in a city that has long lacked a museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art. Its point of departure is Brussels: a city as artistically dense as it is politically complex, where local practices are intrinsically connected to international trajectories.

Using its location, in the centre of the hyper-diverse city of Brussels and at the heart of the European Union, the institution engages with transnational dialogues while remaining attentive to local artistic communities and contexts. The museum approaches art history from perspectives reflecting the complexity of its environment as something to be continuously re-read and reconfigured. Rather than affirm established canons, Kanal foregrounds narratives that are partial, contested and situated.

Kanal-Centre Pompidou's programme unfolds through a sustained rhythm of exhibitions accompanied by live arts and practices, time-based media and participatory forms. It puts the focus on interdisciplinarity, taking as point of departure the pioneering, experimental practices that have been developing in Belgium since the mid-1970s. These elements are conceived as interdependent, allowing the museum to test exhibition formats and to reflect on how artworks circulate, persist and are reactivated over time. Through restaging, reconstruction and reinterpretation, Kanal engages critically with the past while remaining oriented toward the future.

To establish a museum today is to enter into a set of unresolved questions: who speaks, from where, and under what conditions? Rather than consolidate a narrative, Kanal-Centre Pompidou proposes a set of relations between artworks and bodies, between local urgencies and transnational histories, between attention and participation.

Participation

Participation is a central condition of Kanal's practice and identity, understood not as an instrument of outreach but as a method for rethinking the museum's role within society. Working with and for its audiences, the institution considers participation an artistic, social and political proposition.

In the context of Brussels – a city defined by linguistic, cultural and historical multiplicity – participatory practices become a means of producing dialogue and shared experience. Kanal traces the histories of socially engaged and collective practices while supporting contemporary forms of collaboration and audience engagement across its programme.

The museum's architectural openness enables forms of gathering and usage that transcend conventional spectatorship. Participation takes shape through shared authorship, co-presence and the redistribution of agency, inviting a shift from audience to user. Artists and communities are supported in developing works that evolve through contributions and encounters, allowing participation to function as both a curatorial approach and an institutional ethic.

Heritage in the making: the Kanal collection and future masterpieces

The Kanal collection is rooted in Brussels – a city that is home to hundreds of local and international artists. Established in 2018, the collection reflects the diversity and international connectivity of the city's art scene.

Focusing on contemporary practices by artists working in Brussels and across Belgium, the collection also includes key international works that mark significant moments in the institution's development. Spanning multiple media and models of ownership, it is shaped by an emphasis on representation, plurality and contextual resonance.

The collection positions works by local practitioners within wider art-historical and international frameworks, while remaining mindful of the specific social, political and artistic conditions of their production. Highlighted in Kanal's inaugural programme, it seeks to capture the dynamic and evolving character of Brussels as a site of artistic production.

Conceived as an institution dedicated to contemporary heritage, Kanal takes this responsibility beyond its mandate to acquire, care for and preserve art of its time by supporting the creation of new works through commissions, collaborations and long-term artistic partnerships. In this sense, the museum functions not only as a space for display and conservation, but as a site where future heritage is actively produced, negotiated and transmitted in the present.

When we speak of contemporary heritage, we are not only referring to what is collected and cared for, but also to what is actively produced in the present. Kanal is building its collection to capture, preserve and support the creative momentum in Brussels' history. We are also constructing our programme in a way that offers space for experimentation and risk-taking. Kanal is a museum committed as much to the past as to the future.

Partnership with the Centre Pompidou

The partnership with the Centre Pompidou provides Kanal with sustained access to one of the most significant collections of modern and contemporary art. Conceived as a dialogue rather than as a transfer of authority, the collaboration is shaped by differences in context, perspective and institutional history.

Works from the Centre Pompidou collection are presented in Brussels as an integral part of Kanal's programme and remain open to reinterpretation. Many are shown in the city for the first time, allowing new readings to emerge in relation to contemporary social and political questions. The collection forms the foundation of Kanal's long-term displays, developed collaboratively by the curatorial teams of Kanal and the Centre Pompidou.

Through sustained curatorial exchange, the partnership becomes a means to reflect on how collections circulate, how art histories are mediated, and how a museum in Brussels can engage with global narratives while maintaining a distinct institutional position.

Opening exhibitions

An infinite woman

Black archives in two acts

28.11.2026—26.04.2027
Room 12

In 1925, a Mangbetu woman from north-eastern Congo became the viral campaign image of *La Croisière Noire*, a colonial propaganda expedition across the African continent, sponsored by Citroën. In 1934, construction began on Citroën's flagship garage in Brussels, marketing cars as much as the idea of imperial conquest. Converted into the museum Kanal, the building reopens with the exhibition *An infinite woman,* revisiting in two parts how the Mangbetu women functioned as a colonial symbol and how artists of African descent have reclaimed and subverted this imagery until the present day.

The first act is an archival investigation that traces how Mangbetus went viral as an "ethnographic fetish" consumed in the West as a pre-internet meme, through magazines, exhibitions and films. The second act shows how artists from the African diaspora – such as Raphaël Barontini, Sonia Barrett, Roméo Mivekannin, Faith Ringgold, Barbara Walker and Carrie Mae Weems – break the algorithm, reappropriating images and archives that generate new forms of knowledge and visibility.

The subtitle of the exhibition refers to cultural historian Saidiya Hartman's essay *Venus in Two Acts* (2008). Inspired by this influential work about post-slavery society, it celebrates the limitless Black female imagination in resisting the toxicity of colonial imagery. Ultimately, *An infinite woman* is an exercise in defying gravity: recognising the full weight of the colonial past while refusing to let it continue defining our society today.

Artists

Agneskena, Raphaël Barontini, Sonia Barrett, Agnes Lalau, Simone Leigh, Roméo Mivekannin, Nontsikelelo Mutiti, Lorraine O'Grady, Magdalene Odundo, Temitayo Ogunbiyi, J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, Mimi Ọnụọha, Frida Orupabo, Faith Ringgold, Ethel Tawe, Carrie Mae Weems, Barbara Walker.

Roméo Mivekannin. Photo: Galerie Eric Dupont

Frida Orubapo, ***Untitled*** (2018).

Raphaël Barontini, ***The Golden Ladies*** (2026).

Curators Sandrine Colard, Curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou and Sina Salah, Assistant curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

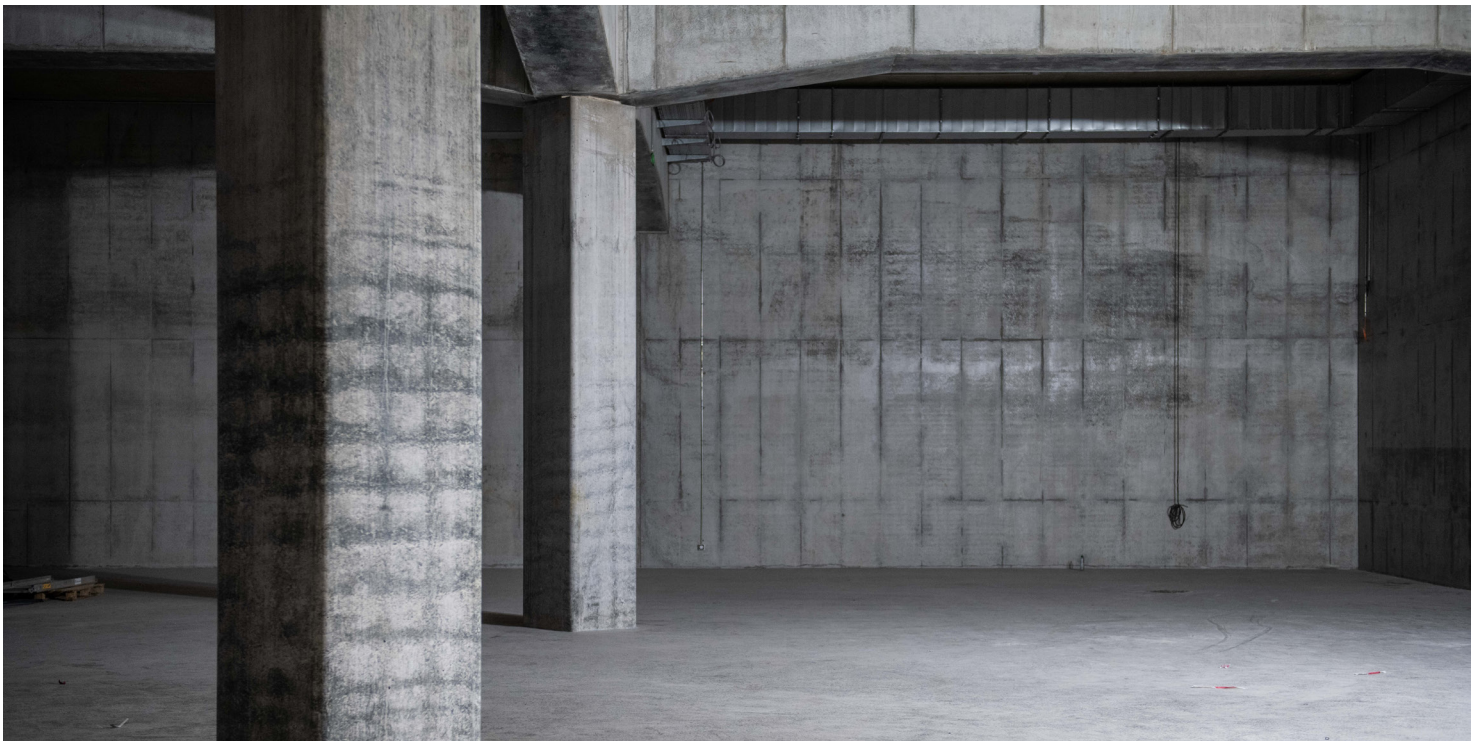
Carrie Mae Weems, ***From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*** (1995-1996). Courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, Brussels

Barbara Walker, ***The Sitter*** (2002). © Barbara Walker

Joëlle Tuerlinckx

La première fois

28.11.2026—29.03.2027
Lower room



Lower room
Photo: Bart Grietens

For the opening of Kanal, Joëlle Tuerlinckx personally picked an exhibition space: the most underground, deep in the foundations of the museum. For several years, she kept a close eye on the building works: the pumping of groundwater into the canal, the construction of the walls, the pounding of hammers on site. In this way, she saw the space unfold for “the first time”. Now, she shares those first impressions with the public. Through “Light figures” that weave a universe of real and false time, and a sound composition co-created with artist Christoph Fink, she sends visitors through the room’s emptiness.

Two different lighting systems reveal the cavernous space: one casts a conventional museum light, while the other is more theatrical and plays with atmosphere, time and rhythm. Sometimes they overlap unexpectedly – like a solar eclipse – creating a choreography that summons, often with humour, the past and possible future of the space.

The silence is broken by announcements, alarms and other sounds: noises from the building site, or disorienting room descriptions and texts by Tuerlinckx, read by different voices in various languages. This polyphony transports visitors through the museum’s underground and the invisible foundations of Tuerlinckx’s art, as if under hypnosis. Meanwhile, the sound of water evokes the Brussels marshes, the proximity of the canal and the porous nature of this subterranean space.

This sense of permeability also blurs the boundaries between inside and outside, and between the artwork and what it relates. The soundtrack addresses the public directly: “That’s where I’ll take you, Visitor”.

Since the 1980s, Joëlle Tuerlinckx has been developing a body of work that is grounded in light and mutable materials. Her work is always deeply connected to the time and space in which it is realised and how visitors might experience them.

About the artist

The work of Joëlle Tuerlinckx consists of installations, drawings and video, but also performances and improvisations. She creates subtle interventions in the exhibition space to explore new ways of perceiving and attributing meaning. Since her inaugural exhibition *No Story, No History* in 1994 at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (presently Kunstinstituut Melly) in Rotterdam, Tuerlinckx’s work has been exhibited internationally with solo exhibitions at the DIA Art Foundation in New York, the Centre International d’Art et du Paysage in Vassivière, Kunstmuseum Basel/Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Basel, Haus der Kunst in Munich, Arnolfini in Bristol, WIELS in Brussels, the Reina Sofía in Madrid, MAMCO in Geneva, The Drawing Center in New York, The Power Plant in Toronto, The Renaissance Society in Chicago and recently also at the Artium Museo in Vitoria-Gasteiz. She also participated in Skulptur Projekte in Münster, Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg and documenta 11 in Kassel. Her work is part of numerous collections, including those of the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, FNAC in Paris, Generali Foundation/Museum der Moderne in Salzburg, MoMA in New York, Reina Sofía in Madrid and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

Curators

Devrim Bayar, Senior curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou and Pietro Scammacca, Assistant curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Photo: Joëlle Tuerlinckx

Manon de Boer
Blindsight

in dialogue with Latifa Laâbissi and Laszlo Umbreit

28.11.2026—29.03.2027
Room 7

Amidst the bustle of the new museum, *Blindsight* invites you to slow down. Take a seat in a cinema chair and dive into the soundtrack of a film you can feel rather than see. This installation by artist Manon de Boer, collaborating with choreographer Latifa Laâbissi and sound designer Laszlo Umbreit, is the final part of a trilogy that began with the performance *Ghost Party 1* (2022) and the film *Ghost Party 2* (2022). In that film, de Boer and Laâbissi lend their voices to artists and writers who inspired them, from Chantal Akerman and Beyoncé to Anne Carson and Marguerite Duras. The dialogues and soundscapes were later translated into a sound installation, now reimagined for Kanal.

Blindsight immerses you in a carefully composed sensory environment. Sound emanates from speakers concealed inside vases – a nod to the ones featured in *Ghost Party 2* – which are dispersed throughout the space. Each vase corresponds to one of the "ghosts" to whom the artists give their voices. Here, the ear takes precedence over the eye. In a world saturated with stimuli, the installation creates an interval of stillness, a near-meditative space in which the whispers of forgotten voices resurface.

Manon de Boer is a central figure in the Belgian art scene, known for her video work that brings together music, dance and film. Through her filmed portraits, she explores the perception of time and space.

This work is part of the Kanal collection.

Manon de Boer, ***Blindsight*** (2022)
Photo: Rik Vannevel

About the artist

Manon de Boer studied at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam and at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, and in 1997 won the Young Belgian Art Prize. In 2006, together with Herman Asselberghs, Sven Augustijnen and Anouck De Clercq, she founded Auguste Orts, a platform for the production and distribution of films and videos. She also teaches at the erg in Brussels. In her films, she portrays people she is personally interested in and investigates the experience of time and space. Her work has been shown at the Venice, Berlin, São Paulo and Taipei biennials and at documenta (13). She has had solo exhibitions at Witte de With in Rotterdam, the Frankfurter Kunstverein, the South London Gallery, the Contemporary Art Museum of St. Louis, the Museum of Art Philadelphia, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Secession in Vienna, the Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle and the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen. It is part of the collections of MoMA in New York, MACBA in Barcelona, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Mudam in Luxembourg, M HKA in Antwerp and S.M.A.K. in Ghent, among others.

Curator

Jennifer Beauloye, Head of collections, archives and library, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Joshua Serafin

28.11.2026—29.03.2027
Room 1

In 1909, Joshua Serafin's Japanese great-great-grandfather migrated to the Philippines. Commissioned by Kanal-Centre Pompidou, the film installation *Whispering pleas of the eternal echoes* invites you to join the search for ancestry and belonging. Motivated by a desire for connection and knowledge of the past, Serafin brings together multiple characters and entities across regions and eras. Footage from the Philippines flows into scenes filmed in Belgium. In a universe of Serafin's own making, past and present generations converse as if across a cosmic threshold.

Joshua Serafin's practice centres on choreography and queerness, exploring how body, space and audience co-produce meaning. Serafin's personal journey – from Manila to Hong Kong and now Brussels – fuels their ongoing inquiry into how migration and displacement impact identity and resilience. In their performances, Serafin brings together alter egos and fictional characters within "speculative cosmologies". These spaces for imagination, liberation and transformation challenge systems that control and constrain bodies, as in the performance *VOID* (2023).

About the artist

Joshua Serafin lives and works in Brussels and studied at the Philippine High School for the Arts, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, KASK in Ghent, and P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels. Recently, their work was shown at the 60th Venice Biennale in 2024 and the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai in 2025. Their performance *VOID* (2023) received international acclaim and went on tour to venues like CAPC in Bordeaux, Amant in New York, Dark Mofo in Australia and Tono Festival in Mexico. *VOID* has also been performed in Belgium several times, notably at Campo and the Wintercircus (VIERNULVIER) in Ghent, as well as at the Halles de Schaerbeek.

Curator

Bas Hendrikx, Participation curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Joshua Serafin, ***Creation Paradigm*** (2023).
Photo: AMANT Foundation

Relics, Joshua Serafin (2025).
Photo: Michiel Devijver

Département des Pièges
Metabolic Museum-University

28.11.2026—31.05.2027
Room 9

With *Département des Pièges*, curator Clémentine Deliss invites you to closely study an unusual assembly of objects and paintings. These nets, snares, decoys and visual illusions all play on the concept of the trap or the lure. Rarely exhibited, they are loaned from the collections of eleven Brussels museums, from the Design Museum Brussels and AfricaMuseum to the National Museum of Resistance and the Museum of Medicine. The motley pieces are displayed alongside works by contemporary artists such as Guillaume Bijl, Kasper Bosmans, Laurent Dupont, Aline Bouvy, Pélagie Gbaguidi, Valérie Mannaerts, Miao Miao and many others whose practice also reflects on the idea of the trap.

The title pays tribute to the *Département des Aigles*, the fictional museum of Marcel Broodthaers, one of the leading surrealists and conceptual artists of the 1960s in Brussels and beyond. The mise-en-scène of the exhibition similarly invokes the merging of a museum and university into a "department" or faculty for visual thinking. At the centre of the room is a large table in the shape of a lung. Here, historical artefacts and contemporary works appear side by side, while paintings by Belgian and international artists from the 17th to the 21st century line the walls. An accompanying booklet provides additional information about the context of each exhibit. Take a seat in this *Département des Pièges* to create your own stories and connections, which might reveal something about the world at large.

Clémentine Deliss,
Diagramme de recherche.
Photo: Département des Pièges – Metabolic Museum-University.

Andrzej Steinbach, ***Untitled (AK)*** (2024).
Photo: Andrzej Steinbach

Artists

Saâdane Afif, Yesim Akdeniz, Raymond W. Barion, Nick Bastis, Guillaume Bijl, Kévin Blinderman, Kasper Bosmans, Aline Bouvy, Jakob Brugge, Wim Delvoye, Laurent Dupont, Pélagie Gbaguidi, Valérie Mannaerts, Miao Miao, Otobong Nkanga, Rokko Miyoshi, Douglas Park, Marina Pinsky, Andrzej Steinbach, Luke Willis Thompson, Oscar Tuazon and Didier Vervaeren.

Curator

Clémentine Deliss, Curator-at-large, Kanal-Centre Pompidou and visiting professor at ArBA-EsA and Pietro Scammacca, Assistant curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Collections

The AfricaMuseum, the Archive and Museum of Flemish Life in Brussels, the Brussels Museum of the Mill and Food, the Design Museum Brussels, Documenta Archive Kassel, the Horta Museum, the Institute of Natural Sciences, La Fonderie – the Brussels Museum of Industry and Labour, the MoMuse Museum Molenbeek, the Museum of Ixelles, the Museum of Medicine and the National Museum of the Resistance.

In collaboration with the ArBA-EsA Academie royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles.

Marc Cram, De Echte Kinneklopper (1991).
Collection of the Archive and Museum of Flemish Life in Brussels. Photo: Clémentine Deliss

NO SHOW

28.11.2026—18.01.2027
Room 3

Deborah Bowmann and Maoupa Mazzocchetti, ***NO SHOW*** (2026). Photo: Emile Rubino

Can a museum entertain? On the site of Brussels' first luna park, artist duo Deborah Bowmann, musician Maoupa Mazzocchetti and twenty Brussels artists ask this question with a hint of irony. Their provisional answer is *NO SHOW*, an exhibition in which art, light, sound and live performance come together in a fully immersive experience across five rooms. Guided by an unreliable narrator, visitors move between front and backstage, fact and fabrication – humour functioning as both lure and critique.

Much like Deborah Bowmann's former artist-run space in the Brussels borough of Saint-Gilles – which continually reinvented itself, from a shoe shop to a parking lot to their own living quarters – this exhibition also refuses easy definition. The twenty artists inhabit Deborah Bowmann's scenography and Mazzocchetti's soundscape. In a time where art has to vie for attention amid relentless spectacle, the artists confront the expectation to entertain. They both embrace and reject the consumption of their identities, works and narratives. Using humour and seriousness in equal measure, *NO SHOW* explores how an exhibition might perform itself, subtly unsettling the boundaries and expectations of the museum.

Deborah Bowmann consists of Amaury Daurel and Victor Delestre. In this project, their largest undertaking to date, the duo and Mazzocchetti call attention to the vital role artist-run initiatives play in Brussels' cultural landscape.

Artists

Simon Asencio, Christianne Blattman, Marc Buchy, Camille Orso Cael, Ryan Cullen, Jot Fau, Mona Filleul, Luna Mahoux, Sandrine Morgante, Shaun Motsi, Vica Pacheco, Shervin/e Sheikh Rezaei, Emile Rubino, Sarah & Charles, Margaux Schwarz, AMARI and Kajol Singh, Mira Maria Studer, The LetterS pace Department, Yemo Park and Eleanor Ivory Weber.

About the artists / curators

Deborah Bowmann

The artist duo Deborah Bowmann consists of Amaury Daurel and Victor Delestre and was established in Amsterdam in 2014. Since 2015 they have been based in Brussels. Their activities comprise curating exhibitions and producing sculptures, installations and set designs. As artists-entrepreneurs, they continue to invent models for presenting both their own work and that of others. This novelty was on full display in projects at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2021–2023 and at M Leuven in 2024.

Maoupa Mazzocchetti

Maoupa Mazzocchetti is a musician and sound artist whose practice spans composition, live performance and installation. Grounded in exploration and transformation, he moves fluidly across styles. His multi-genre albums from the past decade showcase these chameleon-like qualities and include collaborations with artists like Clara!, Beau Wanzer, ZULI, Safety Trance and Leïla Bordreuil. He has performed worldwide on some of the biggest stages in electronic music, including renowned venues and festivals like Ancienne Belgique, Berghain, Mutek Festival, Oil Shenzhen and Rewire Festival. His research also extends into the visual field through multiple, often satirical alter egos that critically engage with pop and mainstream culture, notably the character Snippet Boy (2018).

Curators

Deborah Bowmann + Maoupa Mazzocchetti, Eliel Jones, Performance and time-based media curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou and Claire Contamine, Assistant curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Deborah Bowmann and Maoupa Mazzocchetti.
Photo: Sepideh Farvardin

Banu Cennetoğlu
right?

28.11.2026—24.05.2027
Showroom
Free

With *right?*, Banu Cennetoğlu presents the articles of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) in bouquets of gold letter balloons in Kanal's showroom. Each bundle represents one of the 30 articles of the Declaration. Proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris on 10 December 1948, three years after the end of the Second World War, the UDHR sets out, for the first time, the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. Translated into over 500 languages, it is one of the most widely circulated documents in existence. But what do these rights really mean in a world where they are still and persistently violated?

For Kanal's opening, the artist – who lives and works in Istanbul – presents all 30 articles together for the very first time. Brussels is a fitting place for this gathering: it is home to the European institutions and NATO headquarters, organisations that claim to protect peace and democracy.

As the days pass, the balloons deflate and lose their sheen. The letters progressively deform and potentially transform. This gradual collapse exposes the vulnerability of human rights: they exist only as long as they are actively upheld, defended and reimagined. *right?* is both a testament and a warning – a reminder that human rights are never permanently secured.

Banu Cennetoğlu's work investigates how narratives, data and documents circulate in public space and how they shape collective understanding.

Banu Cennetoğlu, ***right?*** (2022). Courtesy of the artist and Sylvia Kouvali, London/Piraeus. Photo: Sean Eaton

About the artist

Banu Cennetoğlu studied psychology in Istanbul and photography in Paris and attended the artist-in-residence programmes at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam and the DAAD in Berlin. She is the founder of BAS, an artist-run space in Istanbul dedicated to artists' books and printed matter. Her practice incorporates methods of collecting and archiving, and gauges the politics of the production, classification and distribution of knowledge. She contemplates the impossibility of giving form to absence and how the process of attempting to do so deepens our understanding of loss. Between 2007 and 2020, in collaboration with art workers and institutions, she produced up-to-date and translated versions of *The List* in several countries, using public structures. Compiled by UNITED for Intercultural Action, *The List* is a growing document that traces information related to the deaths of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants within or on the borders of Europe since 1993.

Cennetoğlu has had solo exhibitions at institutions including Void in Derry, K21 Ständehaus and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf, Sculpture Center in New York, Chisenhale Gallery in London and Kunsthalle Basel. In addition to many group shows, she has participated in the Berlin, Istanbul, Liverpool, Gwangju, Athens and Venice Biennials, as well as Manifesta 8 in Murcia and documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel.

Curator

Devrim Bayar, Senior curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Banu Cennetoğlu

Otobong Nkanga

28.11.2026—19.04.2027
Hall 2
Free

Commissioned by Kanal-Centre Pompidou, Otobong Nkanga transforms one of the vast open spaces into an intimate site for encounter and co-creation. At the heart of the installation are wooden looms where participants, who have received prior training, work side by side. Skills and experiences are exchanged. Threads are woven, and personal and collective stories become interlaced. Weaving turns into a “social act”, a joint endeavour that contributes to the evolving artwork.

In the setting of the new museum – formerly a car garage and large-scale production site – the installation invites you to reflect on the labour and the economic structures that underpin cultural institutions and the world at large. In her work, Otobong Nkanga examines how these systems and processes shape relationships between people, materials and spaces. By redistributing work and resources across a network of partners and participants, the social responsibilities of the museum and its commitments to community-building, sustainability and shared authorship are highlighted.

Otobong Nkanga lives and works in Antwerp and is recognised as one of the most influential artists working today. She received a Special Mention at the 58th Venice Biennale and she was commissioned by MoMA in New York in 2024 to create a work for their Atrium. Among her many accolades are the Yanghyun Prize, the Belgian Art Prize and the Nasher Art Prize.

Otobong Nkanga, ***Awaiting Pleasure—The Workstation*** (2003-2004).
Photo: Ami Weic kaane Sarr

Otobong Nkanga
Photo: Wim van Dongen

About the artist

Otobong Nkanga studied at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Rijksakademie and DasArts in Amsterdam. Her work explores the complex social, political and material relationships between bodies, territories, minerals and the Earth. It has been featured in numerous exhibitions, including at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, MoMA in New York, Kunsthaus Bregenz, MCA Chicago, Kunsthal Aarhus, Beirut Art Center, Tate Modern in London, M HKA in Antwerp and L'appartement 22 in Rabat. She also took part in documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel, as well as the Venice, Sharjah, Taipei, Sydney, São Paulo and Dakar Biennales. She received a Special Mention at the 58th Venice Biennale and was awarded the Yanghyun Prize in 2015 and the Belgian Art Prize in 2017. In 2018, she was the recipient of the Flemish Government's Ultima Prize for Visual Arts and in 2023 she was the laureate of the Nasher Art Prize. Her work is held in the collections of the Centre Pompidou and the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, the Fondation Sindika Dokolo, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht, Tate in London, Mu.ZEE in Ostend, M HKA in Antwerp and others.

Curators

Kasia Redzisz, Artistic director, Kanal-Centre Pompidou, Stefaan Willems, Audience engagement manager, Kanal-Centre Pompidou and Sina Salah, Assistant curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

Right to the city – Right to the future

28.11.2026—14.03.2027
Room 4, 5, 6
Institution:
Kanal Architecture

"Brussels" is blamed for everything. The city has become a symbol of dysfunction, bureaucracy and fragmentation. The exhibition *Right to the city* presents a different view: a critical homage that positions Brussels as a pioneering laboratory for a new spatial practice. A practice that is based less on the linear logic of a masterplan than on conflictual, antagonistic and participatory processes that define, renegotiate and reinvent our ways of living together in the city.

The exhibition pays tribute to a transversal approach to architecture: it foregrounds a practice that hybridises the expertise of architects, landscape architects and urban planners with the civic engagement of associations, activists and citizens. *Right to the city* brings together "militant archives" (Isabelle Doucet), the Archives d'architecture moderne (AAM) and the Sint-Lukasarchief – both rooted in the late 1960s and integral to Kanal Architecture's DNA – alongside contemporary initiatives such as Filter Café Filtré's *Open Streets* and the decolonial projects of the Laboratory of Mixed Realities.

Brussels has a particular and often traumatic relationship with modernity and modernisation – commonly and mockingly referred to as "Brusselisation". This "peacetime demolition" has left deep scars on the urban fabric, most notably through the transformation of the Quartier Nord, located directly next to Kanal, through its Manhattan Plan. *Right to the city* situates itself within this history, linking the memory of surrounding neighbourhoods to urgent contemporary issues – the climate crisis, circularity, gender and postcolonialism.

The exhibition and its accompanying programme follow a dual logic. On the one hand, they position Kanal Architecture as a new forum for spatial debate, bringing together experts and residents. On the other hand, they affirm the institution's DNA as a site of cross-disciplinary practice that focuses on architecture, landscape and urban ecosystems.

Right to the city brings together documents from the historical collections of CIVA, new research covering the period 1970–2010, and eight contemporary commissions. The opening exhibition is supported by a public programme of some 50 events for both specialist audiences and the wider public. A series of workshops will provide additional context for audiences of all ages, and the exhibition will also be accompanied by a guide.

Curators
Assistant curator
Public programme curators

Silvia Franceschini, Eric Hennaut, Nikolaus Hirsch, Yaron Pesztat
Clara Manigne
Stéphane Damsin, Nicolas Hemeleers

With

51N4E / Track / LabNorth, AAM, ARAU, A+ / Geert Bekaert / Maurice Culot / Jos Vandenbreeden, Association des Comités de Quartier Ucclois, Pierre Bismuth / Nicolas Firket, Oana Bogdan, Gideon Boie / Lieven De Cauter, Bruxelles Inter-Environnement, Brussels Youth Coalition, Brusselse Raad voor het Leefmilieu, CEBE, Cinema Legumen, Cinema Nova, CityMined,

Communa, Brussels West Environment Commission, Marolles General Action Committee, Luigi Coppola / Kobe Matthys / Zenne Garden, Stéphane Damsin (West), Wouter De Raeve, Xaveer de Geyter, Disturb, Paul Duvigneaud, Filter Café Filtré, Freetown Brussels, Common Front of Nature Conservation Groups, Groupe Structure, HouseEurope, Hôtel Centrale, Adelita Husni-Bey, Aglaia Konrad, Léon Krier, Lucien & Simone Kroll, Le Début des Haricots, Louis Le Roy, Ligue des Amis de la Forêt de Soignes / Ligue des Amis du Kauwberg, MAPRAC, Molenbeek2030, Pétitions-Patrimoine, Picnic the Streets, Plein-OPEN Air, Recyclart, Joanna Salles, Françoise Schein, Sint-Lukasarchief, Studio 012 / Karbon, Studio Open City, The Kitchen, The Laboratory of Mixed Realities (Sammy Baloji, Katrien Reist, Jasper Walgrave and others), Toestand, Universal Embassy / Hito Steyerl, V+, Paola Viganò, Jozef Wouters, and others.

Academic collaborations

ETH Zurich, KU Leuven, La Cambre, RWTH Aachen, Sandberg Instituut / Rietveld Academie, TU Delft, UC Louvain, UGent, University of Luxembourg, University of Sheffield, VUB.

External researchers

Koenraad Daneels, Isabelle Doucet, Johan Lagae, Bruno Notteboom, Elisabeth Peeters, Markus Miessen, Sven Sterken, Martino Tattara and others, partly within CIVA's Research in Residence programme.

City Mine(d), ***Bal*** (1998). Courtesy of the artist

A truly immense journey

28.11.2026—10.01.2028
Room 2, 8, 11

A truly immense journey invites you on a voyage without a fixed destination – an exploration of the forces that propel people, ideas and artistic practices across geographies and histories, from the early 1900s to the present. More than 350 major works, predominantly from the Centre Pompidou and Kanal, but also from other Belgian public and private collections, are gathered within the exhibition. Visitors are invited to drift between places and movements, encountering modern art icons such as Lygia Clark, Sonia Delaunay, Natalia Goncharova, Henri Matisse, Wifredo Lam, Katarzyna Kobro, Pablo Picasso and Alberto Giacometti alongside contemporary international and Brussels-based artists including Sammy Baloji, Edith Dekyndt, Aglaia Konrad and Hana Miletić. The juxtaposition of historical and contemporary works creates unexpected constellations that shed new light on pertinent debates in relation to the city of Brussels and art histories.

Inspired by the museum's location along the Charleroi-Brussels canal – a historical conduit of trade, exchange and migration – *A truly immense journey* unfolds in three movements. The first examines stories of circulation, tracing how people around the world, including in Belgium, are displaced for political, social or environmental reasons. Another floor situates early 20th-century European Modernism within its colonial entanglements with Africa, Oceania and the Caribbean, and highlights the role of travelling and migrating artists in disseminating new artistic languages. The final section places the visitor in motion, showing how artists across geographies and generations – from Constructivism, De Stijl and Bauhaus to Minimalism and Kinetic art – moved beyond traditional static forms to embrace chance and participation.

The title echoes writer Franz Kafka's *My Destination* (1935), which evokes a world defined by restlessness and continual transformation, a vision strikingly resonant in a moment of global instability.

A truly immense journey inaugurates a series of long-term exhibitions in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

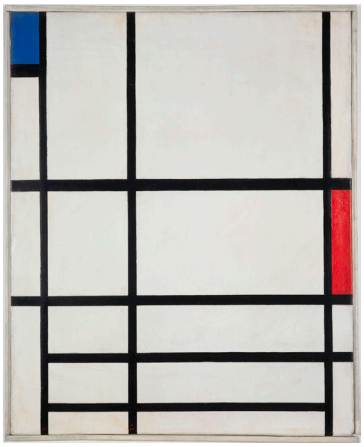
Artists

Berenice Abbott, Josef Albers, Pierre Alechinsky, Francis Alÿs, Ambassade Universelle, Hélène Amouzou, El Anatsui, Leonor Antunes, Karel Appel, Rasheed Araeen, Jean Atlan, Kader Attia, Marcos Avila Forero, Belkis Ayon, Sammy Baloji, James Barnor, Yto Barrada, Judith Barry, Lothar Baumgarten, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Maurice Béjart, Charif Benhelima, Ella Bergmann-Michel, Henryk Berlewi, Max Bill, Alighiero Boetti, Martha Boto, M'barek Bouhchichi, Mohamed Bourouissa, Constantin Brancusi, Georges Braque, Marcel Broodthaers, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Pol Bury, André Cadere, Marcelle Cahn, Miriam Cahn, Alexander Calder, Ivan Cardoso, Aimé Césaire, Saloua Raouda Choucair, Lygia Clark, Constant, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Merce Cunningham, Bady Dalloul, Thierry De Mey and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Edith Dekyndt, Sonia Delaunay, André Derain, Marthe Donas, Roland Dorcély, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Marcel Duchamp,

Anna Maria Maiolino
Entrevidas (1981).
Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/ Laboratoire photographique/ Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

Anonyme (film)
Danse serpentine [II] (Cat. Lumière N°765-I), [1897 - 19 juin 1899]. Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle.

Henri Cartier-Bresson,
Giacometti à la galerie Maeght, Paris, 1961 (1961). Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle.



Piet Mondriaan,
Composition en rouge, bleu et blanc II
(1937). Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle.

Nesa Paripovic, ***N.P. 1977 (***1977)
© Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Service de la documentation photographique du MNAM/ Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

Germaine Dulac, Marlene Dumas, Wojciech Fangor, Sonja Ferlov Mancoba, Dan Flavin, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Loïe Fuller , Naum Gabo, Ellen Gallagher, Mekhitar Garabedian, Alberto Giacometti, Natalia Gontcharova, Roberta González, Melissa Gordon, Jane Graverol, Marie Hadad, Rula Halawani, Raoul Hausmann, Sheila Hicks, Thomas Hirschhorn, Nicholas Hlobo, Alexej von Jawlensky, Donald Judd, Melike Kara, Ellsworth Kelly, Bouchra Khalili, Paul Klee, Julije Knifer, Katarzyna Kobro, Běla Kolářová, François Kollar, Aglaia Konrad, Gyula Košice, Jannis Kounellis, Edward Krasiński, Wifredo Lam, Mikhail F. Larionov, Henri Laurens, Julio Le Parc, Walter Leblanc, Fernand Léger, Glenn Ligon, Bertina Lopes, Ibrahim Mahama, Anna Maria Maiolino, Sarah Maldoror, Kasimir Malévitch, Man Ray, Babette Mangolte, Agnès Martin, Henri Matisse, Julie Mehretu, Ana Mendieta, Hana Miletić, Amedeo Modigliani, László Moholy-Nagy, Vera Molnar, Piet Mondrian , François Morellet, Chrystel Mukeba, Bruno Munari, Deimantas Narkevičius, Aurélie Nemours, Louise Nevelson, Otobong Nkanga, Meret Oppenheim, Gabriel Orozco, Oseloka Osadebe, Neša Paripović, Constant Permeke, Antoine Pevsner, Pablo Picasso, Sigmar Polke, William Pope.L, Charlotte Posenenske, Ernest Procter, Marwan Rechmaoui, Sophie Ristelhueber, Juliette Roche, Nicolas Schöffer, Victor Servranckx, Lucy Skaer and Rosalind Nashashibi, Jesús Rafael Soto, Henryk Stażewski, Frank Stella, Ceija Stojka, André Sureda, Maurice Tabard, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Rufino Tamayo, Tanbak, Wolfgang Tillmans, Jean Tinguely, Ana Torfs, Joaquín Torres-García, Luc Tuymans , Henry Valensi, Rubem Valentim, Theo van Doesburg, Georges Vantongerloo, Agnès Varda, Grazia Varisco, Victor Vasarely, Véronique Vercheval, Danh Vo, Nil Yalter, Artur Żmijewski

Archival material

Chantal Akerman, Guy Debord, Samuel Feijóo, G.R.A.V. (Groupe de recherche d'art visuel), L'Internationale Situationiste, Jacqueline de Jong, Asger Jorn, Diego Rivera

Curators

This exhibition is jointly curated by the teams of Kanal and the Centre-Pompidou: Kasia Redzisz, Artistic director, Kanal, Centre Pompidou with Marta Dziewańska, Curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou and Devrim Bayar, Senior curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou, Aurelien Bernard, Attaché conservation, contemporary and future creations collections Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou, Sandrine Colard, Curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou, Claire Contamine, Assistant curator, Kanal Centre-Pompidou, Anne Foucault, Attaché conservation, modern collections Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou, Justine McKenna, Assistant curator, Kanal Centre-Pompidou, Kanal-Centre Pompidou, Pietro Scamacca, Assistant curator, Kanal Centre Pompidou, Aurélie Verdier, Conservator, modern collections Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou

Kanal collection

The ten exhibitions that inaugurate Kanal-Centre Pompidou also draw inspiration from the museum's incipient collection of contemporary art. Established in 2018, the Kanal collection focuses on contemporary practices by artists working in Brussels and across Belgium. It reflects the diversity and international connectivity of the city's art scene. Kanal is the only public institution in Brussels dedicated to acquiring and caring for a contemporary art collection and sharing it with audiences in Brussels and beyond.

Encompassing media from painting, sculpture and installation to photography, film, and performance, the Kanal collection celebrates the plurality of contemporary artistic practice. Kanal's programming places these works within wider art-historical and international perspectives, while remaining sensitive to the social, political and artistic conditions that shape their production.

The collection represents key historical figures from the Brussels art scene such as Jacqueline Mesmaeker and Walter Swennen, internationally established artists such as Francis Alÿs, Sammy Baloji, Ann Veronica Janssens, Lucy McKenzie, Otobong Nkanga, and prominent younger generation artists including Kasper Bosmans and Luna Mahoux.

In addition to an extensive archive of documents from local art organisations, artists and collectors, the Kanal collection also includes artists' editions. These range from artists' books to fanzines – a distinctive yet still underrepresented medium within Belgian institutions.

All acquisitions are subject to a rigorous procedure, in which an acquisition committee of experts carefully reviews the work of Kanal's curatorial team. External members of the committee include: Daniel Blanga-Gubbay (artistic director, kunstenfestivaldesarts), Karima Boudou (art historian, curator), Diana Campbell (artistic director, Samdani Art Foundation; director of global initiatives, Hartwig Art Foundation), Barbara Cuglietta (director, Jewish Museum of Belgium), Ayoko Mensah (curator, House of European History), Lucy Pereira (collector), Raphaël Pirenne (professor, erg), Xavier Rey (director, Centre Pompidou) Maria Inès Rodriguez (director, Nicole and Walter Leblanc Foundation).

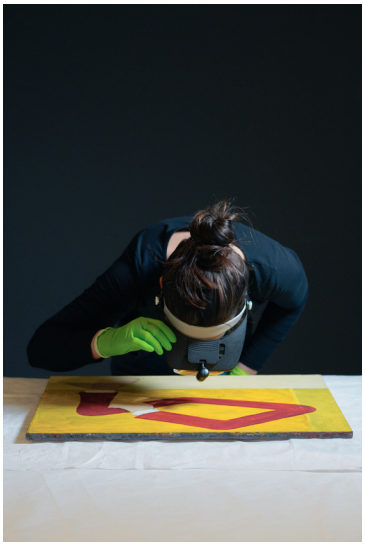


Photo: Sepideh Farvardin

Playground
Assemble

On the first floor, away from the hustle and bustle of the main circulation routes, the collective Assemble creates a 700 m2 playground for ages four and up, commissioned by Kanal. The main space takes the form of an imaginary landscape of hills, recalling the piles of coal once transported along the canal, as well as volcanoes and distant planets. Ropes, tyres, masks and other loose elements encourage children to experiment freely. The landscape extends into a workshop space dedicated to play, movement and intergenerational encounters.

The design draws inspiration from the world of children and was developed in close collaboration with schools from the surrounding neighbourhoods. It draws on the legacy of British and Scandinavian post-war adventure playgrounds, often designed and shaped by children themselves, as well as on 'playscapes' imagined by 20th-century artists and architects. At its core, the project affirms play as a fundamental source of freedom, imagination and transformation – within society at large and within Kanal.

The project is a collaboration between Kanal-Centre Pompidou and Kanal Architecture.

About the artists

Assemble is a collective of architects and artists whose practice spans urban regeneration, cultural spaces and participatory design. Working closely with local communities, they are recognised for their experimental approach, sensitivity to context and commitment to rethinking architectural practice. Together with their sister project, PlayWorkStudio, they investigate the design of environments and methods for free play. In 2015, they received the Turner Prize for their work with the Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust in Liverpool.

Curators

Gregory Castera, Curator-at-large and Learning from the Commons project lead at Kanal-Centre Pompidou with Nikolaus Hirsh, Artistic director, Kanal Architecture

Play sessions by Assemble.
Photo: Jan Locus

Loose elements for the playground.
Photo: Assemble

Community print room

WERKER Collective

28.11.2026—31.12.2028
Atelier 2

From the opening until the end of 2028, WERKER Collective hosts a cooperative print room at Kanal, next to the iconic showroom. It will be a space for collaboration and co-creation that doubles as a meeting place, library and workshop for risography, woodcut and screen printing.

WERKER's print room wants to establish a cooperative publishing platform to support independent initiatives, embrace collective authorship and self-representation, and promote the fair distribution of resources and revenue. Through self-publishing and collective study, it aims to stimulate a political imagination that emancipates, inviting local organisations and groups to work, think and produce together. Social solidarity, housing justice, (domestic) worker rights, queer emancipation and the rights of non-normative families are among the many potential topics to be explored.

About the collective

WERKER Collective operates at the intersection of labour, ecofeminism and the LGBTQIA+ movements. It advocates an image-based critique of daily life to examine what becomes visible and what remains hidden in different political contexts. The art collective was set up by Marc Roig Blesa and Rogier Delfos in Amsterdam in 2009. It has since published ten issues of its *WERKER MAGAZINE* and explored a diverse range of media, including installation, performance, video, sound, textile and digital publishing. WERKER also develops and organises community projects, such as reading groups, films nights, radio podcasts and workshops around publishing. WERKER has collaborated with numerous institutions and museums, including Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Gropius Bau in Berlin, Tate Modern and The Showroom in London. They took part in biennials and manifestations such as Manifesta 14 in Prishtina and Sonsbeek 20–24 in Arnhem.

Curator

Bas Hendrikx, Participation curator, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

WERKER Collective, ***Amator Archives: On Queer Reproduction*** (2022).
Rijksakademie Open Studios, Amsterdam.
Photo: Sander van Wettum

WERKER Collective, ***A Gestural History of the Young Worker*** (2023).
General Idea Retrospective, Gropius Bau, Berlin.
Photo: Luca Giardini

Live arts

Kanal positions itself as a museum where live moments are not an exception, but a core part of its identity. Not just an addition to exhibitions, then, but a fully-fledged artistic dimension that gives the museum rhythm, breath and friction. Live arts operates at the intersection of performance, dance, participatory practices, music and sound – disciplines that not only activate the museum, but also challenge it.

The live arts team conceives the opening of Kanal as a collective encounter with the building's possibilities and with the museum as a place for experimentation, gathering and co-creation.

The full live programme for the opening months will be announced later in 2026. What is shared today is a preview: a small selection of partnerships and projects to illustrate how live arts is embedded within Kanal – locally rooted, internationally connected, and reaching across disciplines.

MolenFest 2025
YouYou Group
Photo: Veerle Vercauteren

MolenFest 2025
Seppe Baeyens - Atelier Leon
Photo: Veerle Vercauteren

Partnerships

In recent years, Kanal-Centre Pompidou has developed strong and sustained collaborations through its live programme, teaming up with artists and art organisations in Brussels, Belgium and internationally. These include recurring partnerships with Kunstenfestivaldesarts and the performance festival TROUBLE, both of which will continue in the coming years. Kanal-Centre Pompidou fosters long-term connections with the Brussels local scene, focusing on socially engaged and community-driven art.

Projects such as Anna Rispoli's *Struggle Care Joy* and collaborations with Seppe Baeyens' collective Leon reflect this commitment. Kanal-Centre Pompidou has also partnered with Maria Lucia Cruz Correia to explore the river Zenne, a hidden yet vital part of the city. To mark the opening, she will perform a ritual in Parc Maximilien, a site linked to the Zenne's possible re-emergence. Following several years of close collaboration with Kanal (*Mars*, *Segen* and *Jubel*) the Brussels-based vocal collective YouYou Group is developing *Titans*, a new performance for the opening. The work is created together with Glossa, a Cologne-based collective.

This dedication to community engagement was also evident during the 2024 and 2025 editions of MolenFest, a festival that reactivated public spaces in Molenbeek with more than 80 activities, including dance, music and social interventions. Kanal played a key role in financing and coordinating the festival, highlighting Molenbeek's ambitions as a candidate for European Capital of Culture 2030. These initiatives go beyond temporary events and presentations, nurturing long-term community narratives and presenting Brussels' rich cultural landscape to a wider European audience.

As part of its international engagements, Kanal-Centre Pompidou is a partner and co-producer of Miet Warlop's project for the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2026, which will be presented at Kanal-Centre Pompidou in spring 2027.

It is also actively involved in 25AV, a European collaboration uniting five community radio stations.

Miet Warlop and Caroline Dumalin,
IT NEVER SSST (2027).
Photos: Dries Van den Brande

It Never SSST
Miet Warlop

It Never SSST is a living sculpture conceived by performance artist Miet Warlop to represent Belgium at the 2026 Venice Biennale. The work unfolds as a script combining live action, large- and small-scale interventions, and static presentation, within an experimental, time-based exhibition format that evolves throughout the biennale.
In collaboration with the Antwerp-based organisation Morpho, Kanal-Centre Pompidou is organising the Venice presentation and will host a Brussels iteration in its spaces in spring 2027.

Miet Warlop is known for her energetic and absurd artistic language, which dissolves boundaries between theatre, dance and visual art. Before becoming the first performance artist selected for the Belgian Pavilion, she gained international recognition with works such as *Mystery Magnet* and the physical concert-ritual *One Song*. *It Never SSST* is her most ambitious project to date, translating her distinctive mix of chaos and care into a monumental, site-specific reflection on collective human presence.

Belgian Pavilion, 61st Venice Biennale, 9 May–22 November 2026
Kanal-Centre Pompidou, March 2027

Curator Caroline Dumalin, Morpho

Project manager Guy Gypens, Head of live arts, Kanal-Centre Pompidou

25AV Festival

April 2027

Kanal will host the inaugural edition of the 25AV Festival, a European platform for audiovisual art and performance initiated by five community radio stations: Kiosk Radio (Brussels), Radio Raheem (Milan), Radio 80000 (Munich), Stegi Radio (Athens) and Infame Radio (Brno).

At the core of the project is a residency programme hosted by partner institutions in these five cities, supporting experimentation, cross-cultural exchange and the development of new audiovisual practices. The programme culminates in a multidisciplinary festival, where 15 projects – selected from more than 500 submissions in 2025 – will premiere over two days of live presentations combining visual and sonic arts.

Kosmos

April 2027

Seppe Baeyens / Leon

Choreographer Seppe Baeyens has spent more than twenty years exploring intergenerational relationships and social connections through movement. After a long career as a performer and creator with Ultima Vez, the company of Wim Vandekeybus, he founded Leon, a nomadic workspace and dance community based in Brussels.

This practice centres around Atelier Leon, an open, multi-generational workshop that invites participants aged 3 to 99 to engage in collective choreography, regardless of prior experience. By bringing together professional and non-professional dancers, Baeyens uses movement as a tool for social interaction.

Kanal-Centre Pompidou has been working with Baeyens since 2021, regularly presenting his work in public spaces, including performances such as *Mariage*. Together with KVS, Kanal-Centre Pompidou is co-producing *Kosmos*, a new creation set to premiere in 2027.

Film

Artist film and moving image form an important part of Kanal-Centre Pompidou year-round live programme, activated across screening rooms, exhibition spaces and public spaces in the form of commissions, curated screenings, installation-based exhibitions, discursive events and film festivals. Through this variety of formats, Kanal-Centre Pompidou offers audiences multiple entry points into the moving image, foregrounding artistic experimentation, collective experience and contemporary debate.

Film klub

Film klub is a new community-led programme that treats film as a social and participatory practice. Following a period of consultation, in 2026 Kanal-Centre Pompidou will begin recruiting members and host the programme's first assembly, inviting participants to collectively shape future activities. Open to anyone with an interest in film, Film Klub creates a space for shared learning, discussion and co-creation, fostering long-term engagement with diverse audiences.

Film: Expanded

Film: Expanded presents film in installation form across Kanal-Centre Pompidou's exhibition and public spaces. In 2027, Kanal-Centre Pompidou will present a new work by Eglė Budvytytė commissioned by the Lithuanian National Museum of Art for the Lithuanian Pavilion at the 61st Venice Biennale and co-produced by Kanal-Centre Pompidou. Conceived as a three-channel moving image installation, the work will premiere in Belgium at Kanal in May 2027, marking its first showcase since Venice, where the presentation was curated by Louise O'Kelly. Drawing on the research of the 20th century anthropologist and archaeologist Marija Gimbutas into Neolithic spirituality, the film translates archaeological materials into animist prayers through voice, song and movement.

Film as told by...

Film as told by ... is a monthly series offering alternative perspectives on the history and future of the moving image. This programme invites artists and filmmakers to present premieres, works-in-progress, landmark films, and hybrid formats such as lectures, performances, live music and readings. Bringing together emerging voices and established figures, the series explores how film continues to evolve across disciplines, technologies and generations. The first programme in the series will be presented by the Oscar-nominated artist and filmmaker Johan Grimonprez in January 2027

Alongside these core strands, Kanal will collaborate with film festivals across Brussels and work closely with artists to develop screenings for children and families, ensuring that the moving image programme reaches audiences of all ages and continues to grow through dialogue, partnership and shared experience.

Audience engagement

Kanal is committed to being inclusive, accessible and deeply connected to its local context. Grounded in the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of Brussels, the museum embraces the specific needs of its audiences – from regular cultural participants to those who have yet to experience a museum. Kanal develops a wide range of engagement tools, activities and programmes for schools, families, artists, professionals and others. Its approach focuses on co-creation, participation and dynamic visitor experiences. Audiences are actively invited to take part, contribute and inhabit Kanal's spaces in different ways. Through partnerships, off-site projects and digital initiatives, Kanal continues to reach out to new and diverse audiences.

Schools, children, families and young people

Kanal is committed to growing alongside its audiences, with a strong focus on young people. The museum aims to engage approximately 50 000 children and youngsters every year, positioning itself as a long-term partner for schools in Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia.

Over the past year, Kanal has rolled out an extensive outreach programme, building relationships with the local educational network. A total of 27 schools from the immediate vicinity of the museum, ranging from nursery schools to higher and specialised education, have been introduced to the project. To date, around 5 000 school children have already participated in Kanal's creative activities and workshops.

On 25 November 2026, three days before the museum opens to the general public, those thousands of pupils will be the very first visitors to discover Kanal, previewing the artworks across the exhibition rooms and public spaces. In the weeks, months and years afterwards, they will encounter a wide range of learning and play formats for schools, children and families, including guided tours, workshops, training sessions and long-term educational opportunities.

Spaces for play, learning and slowing down

Kanal offers numerous spaces dedicated to learning, creativity and relaxation for visitors of all ages. These environments provide space and opportunity to pause inside the museum, while remaining closely connected to the exhibitions and artistic programme.

Three workshop spaces: environments for hands-on artistic creation, experimentation and exploration for school groups, families and intergenerational audiences.

Rest and break areas: designated spaces allowing children and families to slow down and explore the museum at their own pace.

Indoor playground: a play area built around experimentation and autonomy, promoting a playful and sensory approach to museum discovery.

Students and academic partnerships

Brussels benefits from an exceptionally dense academic ecosystem. The city is home to around ten recognised post-secondary art schools – covering visual arts, design, fashion, architecture, performing arts, film and music. In addition, it has approximately twenty higher education institutions that are active in artistic, cultural, social and pedagogical fields, welcoming thousands of Belgian and international students each year. This landscape is further strengthened by major universities such as ULB, VUB, and UCLouvain.

Students are considered a key audience and active contributors to the museum's intellectual life. Several collaborations are already underway to co-create specific programming aligned with partner institutions' curricula and pedagogical practices. Ongoing collaborations include Brussels-based institutions such as ULB, VUB, ArBA-EsA, La Cambre, l'École de Recherche Graphique (erg) and Saint-Luc. These partnerships aim to position Kanal as an essential site for experimentation, research and production, where students can test ideas, methods and formats in dialogue with artistic and institutional practices.

Homework support

Kanal will also host an after-school support programme in partnership with Université des Familles, a Brussels-based educational support organisation that helps children and young people build their learning skills, personal development and motivation to prevent school failure and dropout. Artistic encounters are integrated into the programme as spaces for expression, curiosity and empowerment, complementing more formal avenues of learning.

In addition, one day per week will be dedicated to digital support for adults experiencing digital exclusion, with the aim of reducing inequalities related to access to new technologies. Through this initiative, Kanal aims to welcome approximately 3 000 children and adults per year, with activities taking place three times per week.

Kanal Generation

In March, the museum will launch Kanal Generation, an initiative designed to open pathways into cultural professions for young people. Each year, 12 participants aged 16 to 24 are selected through an open call to take part in a programme of workshops, masterclasses and professional encounters, both within Kanal and in external settings.

Working alongside Kanal staff and external mentors, participants collaboratively design and produce a recurring event for their peers, gaining hands-on experience in cultural production, mediation and programming, while developing a professional network and critical skills.

Participatory mediation and interpretation

The exhibitions and programmes at Kanal are always accompanied by thoughtfully developed interpretative tools, ensuring profound and accessible engagement with the artworks. Wall texts and visitor guides are written by the Kanal team in clear, precise and inclusive language and adapted for different audiences, including children, school groups and visitors with specific access needs.

Kanal's specially trained guides and mediators – reflecting the diversity of Brussels – are present throughout the museum to inform, guide and engage visitors. Their work ranges from answering questions to conducting guided tours and sparking discussions around individual artworks. Many mediation tools are developed collaboratively with artists, educators and community partners, thereby incorporating multiple perspectives into the interpretation process.

In preparation for the opening, the audience engagement team has initiated collaborations with local cultural actors, including:

Habitant·es des Images, an artist collective deeply rooted in participatory practices in Molenbeek and the Quartier Nord. As part of Molenbeek's bid to become European Capital of Culture 2030, the collective organised artistic walks along the canal, inspired by works from the Pompidou collection and the exhibition *A truly immense journey*.

Ras El Hanout, a theatre company based in Molenbeek, which invited young creators aged 18 to 30 to embody and reinterpret key works from the collection through performance.

Bruxelles Nous Appartient / Brussel Behoort Ons Toe, a sound-archive project dedicated to recording and preserving Brussels' collective memory, in collaboration with audience engagement expert Julie Rodeyns (Visual Dialogues), fostering dialogue between the Kanal collection and Brussels residents using accessible interpretative methods.

Peer reviews and proofreading together

Kanal actively involves its audiences and partners in the making of exhibitions. To improve the accessibility of exhibition texts, Kanal mediators worked with 200 students from four nearby Brussels schools. In the classroom, they discussed selected artworks and reviewed exhibition texts from *A truly immense journey* to identify elements that might be difficult to understand.

Participating schools include Athenée Royal Toots Thielemans, Collège de la Fraternité, Institut Bischoffsheim, and Institut Saint-Boniface Parnasse.

In collaboration with Amnesty International Belgium, Kanal has also inroduced a human rights and international law perspective into interpretative texts for contemporary works featured in the exhibition *A truly immense journey*. In the framework of *An infinite woman*, Kanal collaborates with the erg and more specifically with professor Peggy Pierrot in exploring the theory of *critical fabulation* – a key concept in the exhibition – working with students on archives based on narrative speculation.

At a more general level, a series of lexicons and writing guides is being produced to advocate the use of 'Common languages', addressing key societal issues. These interpretation tools, developed in collaboration with French- and Dutch-speaking associations in Brussels, are intended for museum teams as well as cultural, social and educational organisations who want to use inclusive and precise language to address diverse audiences. Three lexicons have already been produced, focusing on gender and sexual diversity, migration and anti-ableism respectively. They were co-written with numerous partner organisations, including Genres pluriels, Troebel, MatchBelgium, Rainbow Nation, Sophia, Tels Quels, Musée des Migrations, la Voix des Sans Papiers, Exil·s et Création·s, le Foyer Selah, le Centre Bruxellois d'Action Interculturelle, RABKO, Eqla, Frida, Arts et Marges, Ateliers Indigo, Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, Pigment and Kuumba. As part of the project, a wiki is currently under development with Open Source Publishing, slated for launch in 2026. The wiki aims to ensure free and open access to these language tools, while driving the collaborative editing process forward. Public discussions around the terms in the lexicons will take place at the museum, in collaboration with partner organisations and the exhibiting artists. During these events, live editing sessions will be held with Open Source Publishing.

Communities in residence

Kanal also develops structural collaborations with local associations through grassroots work and dialogue. The museum aims to set up a co-programming framework by establishing three-year partnerships with selected organisations, providing production and infrastructural resources and expertise tailored to their practices and needs. These partners are chosen for their socio-artistic approaches, creating meaningful synergies between artistic creation and social engagement while fostering spaces for encounter, experimentation and mutual learning.

Currently, Kanal works closely with two associations:

La Voix des Sans Papiers, within the programme *Exil·s et Création·s*, in partnership with the erg and Saint-Luc. This collaboration started more than two years ago and had since developed into a strong partnership.

Samusocial, in collaboration with artist Vincen Beeckman. For the second year running, Kanal supports and amplifies Beeckman's important work raising awareness around homelessness.

Highlights for the opening

In the run-up to the opening, Kanal is assembling a collective choir of 200 to 300 singers, reflecting the polyphonic character of Brussels. Led by Brussels-based musician and choir director François Vaiana and supported by four additional choir leaders with distinct musical practices, dozens of amateur choirs and singers will join forces to celebrate the museum's opening.

With Museum in the making, Kanal questions from its very opening the role of a modern and contemporary art museum within the city. Through

a series of workshops organised in collaboration with Brussels community and cultural centres, residents are invited to share their perceptions, expectations, and narratives surrounding the museum and collective memory. The project is being developed together with numerous partners including Les Ateliers des Tropiques, N22 and La concertation.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a core priority at Kanal. Everyone is welcome. The museum has adopted a long-term strategy ensuring continuity, evolution and regular evaluation, embedding accessibility and inclusion across all areas of its work. This approach is guided by four principles: representation, human-centred design, anti-ableist practices and cultural relevance within the diverse, multilingual and intersectional context of Brussels.

In 2023, Kanal partnered with Access-i, the official accessibility certification body in francophone Belgium, to ensure compliance with accessibility standards ahead of the opening. Going beyond standard compliances, the museum also established an external accessibility board in 2025, composed of members with lived experience of disability. The board advises on architecture, wayfinding, furnishings and programming, contributing critical expertise and ensuring that accessibility is understood not as an add-on, but as a foundational dimension of the museum. It balances French- and Dutch-speaking members and brings together diverse perspectives, including disability advocacy, crip activism and legal expertise.

The current accessibility board members are Cléon Angelo, Xander Berbé, Fien Criel and Laurent Duquesne, as well as the non-profit organisations Créahmbxl and Symfoon.

Kanal in the classroom.
Photo: Veerle Vercauteren

Workshop with Exil·s et Création·s
Photo: Veerle Vercauteren

CIVA becomes Kanal Architecture

CIVA is becoming the museum of architecture, landscape and urban ecosystems at Kanal, under the name Kanal Architecture.
This name change is accompanied by CIVA's relocation to Kanal, marking a watershed moment in the life of the foundation. More than an administrative or symbolic transition, it represents a significant change in scale and visibility, which opens a new chapter in CIVA's history.

Since 2016, CIVA has established itself as a leading scientific and cultural institution, recognised for its groundbreaking exhibitions and public programmes, its unique collections, and its prolific research and publications. By joining the fold of Kanal, CIVA will be able to amplify its impact and reach a broader and more diverse audience in Brussels, Belgium and internationally.

A major opportunity: changing location, broadening audiences

The move to Kanal offers momentous opportunities to further develop the museum's mission. In this iconic, central and easily accessible location, Kanal Architecture becomes part of a large international cultural project at the crossroads of disciplines and audiences.

This new context allows the museum to engage more fully with the general public, while continuing its dialogue with architects, landscape architects, researchers and activists. The relocation to Kanal not only bolsters the museum's capacity to disseminate knowledge and fuel debate, but also to place architecture at the very heart of contemporary societal issues.

Kanal Architecture collections

POOL IS COOL, Decoratelier Jozef Wouters (2024). Open Air Swimming Pool

Kanal Architecture: a museum for understanding how we live together

Under the name Kanal Architecture, the museum clearly affirms its field of action and approach: architecture, landscape architecture and urban ecosystems, viewed through a transdisciplinary lens. Architecture is always understood as a cultural, social and environmental phenomenon, one that is inextricably linked to the major transformations shaping our world today.

Through exhibitions, public programmes, research, publications and outreach initiatives, Kanal Architecture explores the relationships between built environments, ecosystems, society and ways of living. The museum positions itself as a space for critical reflection and dialogue, attentive to the diversity of perspectives and the challenges of the 21st century, particularly the climate and environmental, social and cultural issues.

Dynamic collections focused on the future

The CIVA collections are the foundation of Kanal Architecture. At Kanal, they become more visible and accessible, ready to be examined in a new light. Archives and historical documents are re-read through the prism of contemporary debates and treated as living resources, capable of illuminating the present while opening new perspectives on the future.

Continuity and ambition

The evolution of CIVA into Kanal Architecture does not change the institution's fundamental missions, but rather makes them clearer, stronger and more accessible. It reaffirms the ambition to shore and strengthen the role of the museum of architecture, landscape and urban ecosystems as an institution at the service of society – open, inclusive and actively engaged in debates taking place in the city and beyond.

With Kanal Architecture, Brussels gains a museum that imagines and approaches architecture and landscape as collective concerns, in constant dialogue with its audiences.

The public utility foundation CIVA was created in 2016 at the initiative of the Brussels-Capital Region, through the merger of five organisations: CIVA asbl, the Archives of Modern Architecture, the René Pechère Library, the Paul Duvigneaud Documentation Centre and the Foundation for Architecture. In 2017, the Sint-Lukasarchief was also integrated.

Kanal Architecture's artistic vision

Kanal Architecture is a museum that explores the ways in which we live together – in a region as diverse as Brussels and within a global context. Through a distinctly transdisciplinary approach, the museum brings together modern and contemporary architecture, landscape architecture and urban ecosystems, highlighting how these practices impact and transform our society.

Kanal Architecture becomes the new forum for the debate on the city. Through an ambitious exhibition programme and engaging public programme with talks and workshops, the museum fosters research, reflection and dialogue with diverse audiences. The museum also develops publications that help deepen and disseminate these insights. Kanal Architecture's renowned collections – comprising more than 500 archival fonds and 65 000 publications – form an essential resource for research, exhibitions and public engagement activities.

Always curious and forward-looking, Kanal Architecture examines how architecture shapes – and will potentially reshape – contemporary life.

The Kanal Architecture collections

Kanal Architecture holds extensive collections in its archives and library, including more than 500 archival fonds that reflect the richness and diversity of architectural, urban and landscape design in Brussels and Belgium. These collections bring together the visions and vestiges of architects, landscape architects, urban planners, interior designers and engineers, including luminaries like Jos Bascourt, Victor Bourgeois, Renaat Braem, the Brunfaut family, Jules Buyssens, Alban Chambon, Antoine Courtens, Jacques Cuisinier, Paul Duvigneaud, Jean-Jules Eggericx, Simone Guillissen-Hoa, Eliane Havenith, Louis Herman De Koninck, Huib Hoste, Henry Lacoste, René Pechère, the Polak family, Robert Puttemans , Simone and Lucien Kroll and many others.

Among the many treasures preserved in the collections are the archives of dancer and choreographer Akarova.

The library houses a rich and varied collection of nearly 65 000 historical and contemporary works, as well as several hundred magazines and documentary files devoted to architecture, landscape architecture, urban ecosystems, built heritage, interior design, gardens and urban planning.

Kanal Architecture actively collects new archives and books and offers a range of services to ensure these resources are widely accessible.

A great good place

Atelier Kanal
(EM2N, Zurich, noAarchitecten, Brussels and Sergison Bates architects, London)

Kanal, a third place

The former Citroën car factory (built 1933-34), composed of an iconic showroom and a large factory space behind it, will be transformed into Kanal: a generous public interior focusing on cultural production, housing visual arts and architecture, dance, drama, film, and music. Kanal will be a meeting place for the diverse neighbourhood and wider city of which it is a part. We might call it a Third Place as was originally formulated by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his 1989 book The Great Good Place to refer to public spaces where people spend time other than home (the first place) and work or school (the second place), a familiar place without the necessity of consumption. This Third Place invites citizens, organisations, collectives and communities to appropriate and inhabit large parts of the building; for production, performances, events or informal gatherings. The "museum" no longer belongs only to curated art but becomes part of the city and its fabric. In this sense, Kanal departs from the traditional museum and instead offers a place of civic gathering responding to an increasing absence of shared public spaces in our cities today.

Kanal, trust in what is already there

Kanal is an exemplar of reuse. The former Citroën car factory has been our starting point as found. Located alongside the canal and in walking distance of Brussels' city centre, a building of this scale (100 × 200 metres) offers unmatched opportunities that would be difficult to achieve with a new building. Rather than a spectacular gesture, our proposal offers an attitude of Radical Optimism – open and nonprescriptive, spontaneous and instinctive – much like the spirit of modern progress in which it was created. In so doing we allow the original building to become once again a key protagonist in the city.

The interior is a fine example of elegant industrial engineering, while the glass façades are a clear expression of early modernism. Our ambition has been to trust the building as we found it, to embrace its industrial character and its many layers of use. We are transforming it with a light touch and a deliberate economy of means, while also adding new architectural elements that transform the existing to provide new and varied spaces within and between. This attitude has led both conceptual strategy and detail and has influenced all decisions from working methods to material choices.

Kanal, a horizontal “museum”

The existing cross axis of 18-meter-wide streets that cut through the former factory and showroom complex have entrances at each of their four ends, connecting all the activities of Kanal and reaching out to the city beyond. Together with the piano nobile, a long-stretched collection of spaces at first floor level, they cover nearly half of the total area of the building offering unclaimed public space that institutions, artists, and citizens can appropriate. Kanal is a horizontal space that promises unlimited access and walks throughout its public domain with niches and pockets to hang out, think or play, work or wander.

Oriented towards the city centre, the iconic former showroom, a 24-metre-high glass and steel structure and symbol of Citroën, acts as Kanal’s public image. As a new Stage for Brussels the showroom is restored and transformed to become the grand urban interior that it once was. Large sections of the ground floor façade can be opened to connect the interior with the newly refurbished Sainctelette Square. Most of the time unprogrammed, it is a covered public square, that can accommodate installations, performances and concerts and on the upper floors houses a restaurant and a large freely accessible roof terrace with a bar and views over Brussels.

Kanal, three tailored houses

As the existing car factory with its thin shell cannot meet the structural, climatic or acoustic performance criteria required for high-end exhibition space, three new houses are inserted within the expansive volume providing environmentally controlled spaces. One accommodates the shared uses such as auditorium and offices, the other Kanal Architecture (formerly CIVA) and the third the new museum of modern and contemporary art. The five levels of the museum offer a column-free gallery space of 725 m2 per floor, each with different ceiling heights, allowing many scenographies, configurations and connections. A 7-metre-high basement gallery is also provided with separate access available directly from the outside so that it can be used as an underground venue in its own right. Some galleries allow direct connections to adjoining workshop spaces. Others are self-contained and can benefit from direct or indirect natural light with views of the canal and the city beyond. The new architecture centre contains exhibition spaces on the ground floor, the very valuable archives on different floorsv with consultation centre and a silent library next to a study space and a bookshop.

Kanal, a seasonal organism

Complementing the vast industrial roof with state-of-the-art insulation and a 4 000 m2 solar array, the factory’s 425-metre-long glass and steel façade has been meticulously restored and optimised with vacuum glazing and opening windows providing natural ventilation. The energy strategy developed with Buro Happold and Bureau Greisch establishes three climatic

zones: a large public interior (54% of the area) offering seasonal comfort as an unprogrammed space flooded with daylight and fresh air, and two new monolithic exhibition houses (21% of the area) providing high-end climate performance for world-class art. Connecting these extremes are intermediate glazed gallery spaces that act as thermal buffers, ensuring maximum energy efficiency across the entire building.

Kanal, shared authorship

With Kanal the conventions of the signature building by one celebrity architect have been challenged. As an architectural practice founded by three offices - EM2N, noAarchitecten and Sergison Bates architects - working together under one name, Atelier Kanal, the architecture and interiors have been designed and delivered with shared authorship. Atelier Kanal has always been located in Brussels, working the first two years from within the Citroën factory itself in close collaboration with the client Fondation Kanal.

This open-ended collaborative design process has continued with the design and development of the bespoke Kanal furniture system, compatible with the Open Structures dimension system and the paint colour concept, collaborating with artist Sarah Smolders. Atelier Kanal also invited Chevalier Masson to design special curtains, Jan Minne for the inner mist garden and Cartlidge Levene for the wayfinding and signage. The building as a forum for ideas and shared ambitions has been extended by the commissioning of other designers for the interior installations of the reading room and bookshop, the restaurant, the brasserie, the cultural market and a children's playground. Kanal, the art and architecture museum of the 21st century, is therefore no longer the work of "one hand" but by definition by "several hands" guided by the combined vision of Atelier Kanal and the Kanal Foundation. This process of creation is explicitly meant to continue after the designers have left the stage.

Kanal is an invitation for all artists, curators, citizens, visitors and staff to continue to reprogram, rethink and redevelop Kanal to the needs of all the futures to come.

Kanal reveals how architecture can reinvent the museum typology, not only as a place for art, but as a stage for the city and its citizens – A great good place.

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