

Elsa Brès

Connivência

07.09–03.12.23

EN

La Loge

Kluisstraat 86 - rue de l'Ermitage
B-1050 Brussels

Elsa Brès' films and installations highlight forces of resistance at work in the contemporary socio-natural landscape. At the crossroads of research, storytelling, and experimentation, her work, which is often collaborative, takes root in "frictional" terrains like the rural, mountainous Cévennes region in southern France where the artist lives and works. *Connivência* at La Loge is her first exhibition in Belgium, and brings together works produced as part of a film project that began in 2020. Entitled *Les Sanglières*, a neologism that feminises the term "wild boar", the unreleased feature film—and the chapters that follow from it—turn to the forest mammal as an ally in the antipatriarchal, anticapitalist struggle. The exhibition is conceived as a prologue to the film. It expands its content by playing with codes of cinema and the status of images—from nature documentary to vernacular film by way of the costume drama—through different systems of monstration. The artist, trained in architecture and inspired by ethology, examines the birth and persistence of systems of territorial appropriation and control through the lens of human and nonhuman relationships. In the Cévennes forest, the fiction she and her accomplices propose opens a breach: a space for speculation

and interspecies communication that shifts the gaze and accentuates the imaginary.

The heart of many stories and legends, the wild boar embodies the duality of a species feared yet admired for its strength. Many heroes of antiquity, like Hercules in The 12 Labours, hunted down the “wild” animal to prove their bravery. On the other hand, **Lorenz Frølich’s illustration (1895)** of a famous 14th-century Norse poem illustrates the alliance between gods and animals. The goddess Freyja rides on the boar Hildisvini, her protégé Ottar’s avatar, to go to the giantess Hyndla to convince her to recount her ancestors’ story. Despite the mythological infatuation with the wild boar, a combination of factors linked to modernity, like its ever-increasing demographic population, has contributed to the animal’s association with danger. Perceived as game, a “nuisance”, and an invasive species, it causes agricultural and urban damage through its incursions into private property. On a vertical screen, an **Instagram feed** created by the artist scrolls images as funny as they are tragic of the animal trapped outside its natural environment. They evoke an abundance of clichés and misunderstandings surrounding its “wild” representation fuelled by the media. The confusion with its cousin, the domestic pig, reminds us that the biological construct surrounding the animal is as much cultural as it is political.

Echoing the historical and international context surrounding the wild boar, the **digital map at the entrance**—with its slow, colourful movements—repositions *Connivência* in the more specific territory of the Cévennes, “a [mountain] country like no other”. The map was produced using new cartographic technologies like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in partnership with the geographer Gherardo Chirici, and its purpose is to determine habitable zones for the species. Developed from the animal’s point of view according to environmental variables such as distance from buildings and water points, the calculation tool cross-references data to generate pixels indicating areas suitable for its evolution. By combining geography, technology, and art, Elsa Brès proposes a new approach to the forest and its inhabitants. This interface embodies the search for a common language and possibilities of cohabitation, and also writes the fiction of *Les Sanglières* in the exhibition and for the characters we discover in the film. It is used for the tracking operations that appear in the next room, and then again in the work on the 2nd floor.

On one of the **temple walls**, infrared surveillance camera monitors show black-and-white, close-up images of the animals, whose eyes seem to glow in the dark. In the interstitial spaces between the forest and construction or shopping areas, the images are a reminder that wild boars are often active at dusk or night, resulting in accidental encounters with humans as they are pushed out of their habitat zones.

1. “The paradox of the forest here in the Cévennes is that it is not ‘virgin nature’, but rather that it is undergoing a process of rewilding where it is no longer clear who—animals, plants, or humans—have any claim to these places.”, writes in Jean-Baptiste Vidalou, *Etre forêts*, 2017, Zones, p.39.

The idea of captivity is turned on its head when one of them suddenly engulfs the camera. The animal, disregarding the object that seeks to control it, annihilates the idea of private property that the camera symbolises. The synchronisation with the images projected onto the central canopy takes us subjectively through the animal's eyes (forming the term "boar-centrism"), which is nearsighted with poor colour perception. The raw sound is a mix of hissing and huffing, creating a disconcerting closeness between the group of walkers, visitors, and the animal.

The **second floor installation** forms a diptych, weaving a temporal link between the histories of the Peasant Revolts, the appropriation of the communal properties, and contemporary interspecies alliances attacking private property. In a future close yet indeterminate, the group decides to join forces with wild boars to organise an uprising. The drums of Meryll Ampe's music lend an epic yet sensual dimension to the action. The parallel sequence takes place in the 16th century, a period that resonates with today's political and ecological struggles. In these scenes shot on 16mm film, Elsa Brès imagines a coalition between two characters who left northeastern Europe after the failure of the Bunschuh revolt (the German Peasants' War started in 1524) and peasants preparing a rebellion in the Cévennes. They read an Occitan version of the *Twelve Articles*; the original version translated here is said to have been supported by Thomas Munzer (1489–1525), a politician and preacher who contributed to the uprising against enclosures and the private use of land. Fencing off plots of land and hindering their open use meant the end of the communal system, which was responsible for the impoverishment and marginalisation of the workforce, particularly women, as Silvia Federici recalls in *Caliban et la Sorcière*.

In the **triangular space on the first floor**, posters created in collaboration with Brussels graphic design studio La Villa Hermosa present 8 of the *Twelve articles* in Occitan. The Akzidentée typeface design, with its stamp-like effect inspired by collections of peasant pamphlets, retains the roughness of the original translation, as the artist imagines the geographic and linguistic wanderings between Germany and the Cévennes. Interviewed through the prism of gender, the Sanglières transcend the generational and historical divides of capitalism to consider the interdependence of minority histories that are often silenced or forgotten. The very title "Connivència", the translation of connivance in Occitan, calls to mind the tacit understanding and signs (in the landscape, through footprints or burn marks in the landscape; through tattoos on bodies) of recognition at the origin of the new alphabet that connects the Sanglières community. In the valley where the artist lives, and in collaboration with all the nonprofessional actors in the film, their language has gradually seeped into reality and tinged the future with a coming insurrection, like an activist orientation guide:

"They say they've learned to rely on their own strength. They say they know what they stand for. They say that those who claim a new language first learn violence. They say that those who want to transform the world first seize the guns. They say they start from zero. They say that a new world is beginning."

- *Les Guérillères*, Monique Wittig

Elsa Brès was born in 1985 and lives in Bréau, France in the Cévennes. She graduated from Le Fresnoy – studio national d’arts contemporains in 2017 and from the Paris-Belleville architecture school in 2012 where she taught architectural and landscape theory. Recent exhibitions and screenings include: Salon de Montrouge (2022); FID Marseille (2020, 2016), transmediale (2022, 2021), Vdrome (2022), Cincinnati Contemporary art center (2022), MO. CO Panacée (2021), Manifesta 13 (2021), CRAC Occitanie (2020), LOOP Barcelona (2017), Palais de Tokyo (2017), Tënk (2021), Hong-Kong University (2021), Haus der Kulturen der Welt anthropocene curriculum (2019). Her films are produced by the Elinka films and Parkadia films production collectives.

The exhibition is supported by the Fondation d’entreprise Pernod Ricard and receives additional support from the Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP).

WORKS

Lobby

Connivência (maps), 2023

HD video loop, metal structure

4'57 minutes

In collaboration with Gherardo Chirici, and Noir Metal for the structure

Temple

Connivência, 2023

Projection HD, 8 screens, quadraphonic sound, veil, aluminium bars

13'30 minutes

Triangle

Connivência (feed), 2023

Found footage video loop

10'20 minutes

Den Ældre Eddas Gudesange, 1895

Author : Karl Gjellerup,

Illustrations: Lorenz Frølich

Published by Copenhagen: P.G. Philipsens

1st floor

Connivência (articles), 2023

8 digital color prints on Cycles paper, Akzidentée typeface design

84x59cm

In collaboration with La Villa Hermosa (Raphaëlle Lasausse) and Antoine Gelgon

2nd floor

Connivência, 2023

2 synchronized HD video loop with stereo sounds

10'22 minutes

Film credits

With: Abel, Amandine, Annie, Cathy, Diane, Dayan, Deborah, Chloé, Elsa, Éole, Eva, Gaëlle, Judith, Petit, Silviana.

Images: Sarah Blum (assisted by Hélios Fortin), Elsa Brès, Victor Zebo (assisted by Iris Ibanez and Flora Dezotti Caroul).

First assistants : Gaëlle Boucand, Charlotte Buonomo.

Script: Gaëlle Boucand.

Sound: Eric Aurégan, Elsa Brès, Valentine Gelin,.

16th century costume designer: Christiane Vervandier

Props and fireworks designer: Jean-Dominique Scheer.

Editing: Elsa Brès, Gaëlle Boucand, Théophile Gay-Mazas.

Sound editing and soundmix: Maxence Ciekawy

Original music: Méryll Ampe

VFX : Philippe Cuxac

Colourgrading: Thibault Solinhac

Film Production: Elsa Brès and Gaëlle Boucand - Elinka films

Translation in occitan: Clément Chauvet

All the works are courtesy of the artist.

PUBLIC PROGRAMME

Architecture Days: Heritage Days

16-17.09.23, 10:00-13:00

La Loge is part of the 35th edition of Heritage Days. A former Masonic temple built in the 1930s, La Loge is a singular modernist building that retains traces of its past. You can book your slot for tours in french, dutch and english

Practical information

FR : 10:00; NL : 11:00, and EN :12:00

Duration: 45 minutes

Limited capacity

By reservation via urban.brussels website

Online events : Screening of *Sweat* (2020); *Love Canal* (2017) by Elsa Brès

25.09-01.10.23

For the occasion of Elsa Brès' first presentation in Belgium, we offer the opportunity to discover two of her other films, available free of charge on our online platform from September 25 to October 1.

Sweat, 2020, 30 minutes

The first attempts to map the Mississippi Delta date back to the early 18th century. Since then, it has been constantly transformed to be exploited.

Meandering between times and spaces, *Sweat* gradually immerses us between the lines of the maps, in the fluctuating and insubordinate part of the Mississippi delta, by following human and more-than-human living beings that inhabit it toward another story.

Love Canal, 2017, 18 minutes

300 million years ago, the north of France was a wetland. 140 years ago, a canal was dug and never filled with water. One day, vagabonds decide to go down an invisible river and pick débris up along the way to start a new world.

Practical information

Free entry

Link: <https://www.la-loge.be/en/broadcasts>

Satellite Event : Elsa Brès at CINEMATEK

14.10.23, 17:00

Elsa Brès takes part in a roundtable discussion on the work of French documentary pioneer Catherine Pozzo di Borgo at CINEMATEK in Brussels.

Catherine Pozzo di Borgo (1944–2022) made a series of films exploring the impact of environmental and social issues in the workplace. This discussion, alongside Michelle Gales (director), Nora Räthzel (sociology professor), Stephen Bouquin (sociologist), Donald Nicholson-Smith (translator), Phil Cohen (cultural theorist) will put Pozzo di Borgo's work into perspective with contemporary practices such as those of Elsa Brès.

Practical information

Offsite event at CINEMATEK

In French, with some presentations in English

Visit cinematek.be for more details

Museum Night Fever with ugne&maria

21.10.23, 20:00–00 :00

Sound performance

For Museum Night Fever, the duo ugne&maria imagine a sonic immersion in the exhibition by Elsa Brès.

Bio

ugne&maria is the electroacoustic music duo project of Ugnė Vyliudaitė and Marija Rasa Kudabaitė. Their musical output began in 2016 with a live debut in Brussels and continued with various experimentations using violin, synthesizers, sampling techniques, and voice. Their music is made from a mosaic of samples and carefully triggered field recordings. Intricate and calming but far from ambient, in that where ambient music recedes ugne&maria's music sounds always close to the skin. Their music has been released on Interior Insula, Gems Under The Horizon, Rocket Recordings, and Futura Resistenza labels.

More than meets the human eye by Kyveli Mavrokordopoulou

25.10.23, 18:30

Lecture

In 1911, Franz Marc daringly asked: How does a horse see the world? More than a century later, his question resonates far beyond the records of modernism. Recent media and artistic depictions routinely represent horses, boars, foxes, and other critters as unwanted wanderers: peeping into trash bins, looting abandoned homes, roaming in exclusion zones. What are the limits of such inquiries? Where, if anywhere, is the animal's gaze in these images? And is it even possible to apprehend them without objectifying or humanizing them?

Elsa Brès' *Sanglières* provide ample space to chart these timely questions.

In this lecture, Kyveli Mavrokordopoulou builds on a forthcoming essay about *Les Sanglières*, toxic zones, illusions of purity and ways to disturb the human gaze.

Bio

Kyveli Mavrokordopoulou is a historian of modern and contemporary art, specializing in the relationship between art and science with an emphasis on nuclear technologies. She was awarded her PhD from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, in 2021, supported by an Onassis Foundation scholarship. Her current research centers on the visual culture of resource extraction with a focus on uranium mining. In 2022, she curated Elsa Brès' *Notes for Les Sanglières* at State of Concept, Athens and is currently at work on *...that creeps from the earth* a group exhibition at TAVROS, Athens (January 2024) and a survey exhibition on the atomic age at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, as scientific advisor (fall 2024). She is a postdoctoral researcher, funded by the Dutch research council, at the VU University Amsterdam, where she also lectures.

Practical information

Language: English

Free admission, on reservation

www.la-loge.be

Sabir et Les Sanglières

10.11.23, 20:00

Collective and performative reading night

La Loge is giving carte blanche to the feminist collective Sabir for a night of readings and performances based on *Les Sanglières* and its actresses.

Bio

Sabir is a magazine of contemporary literature and a collective of four authors active in various artistic fields. The magazine, which is multidisciplinary but radically textual, brings together poetry, theatre, short stories, essays, artists' writings and experimental forms. In parallel, the collective regularly organises the "Sabir La Nuit" evenings, during which authors are invited to perform readings.

Practical information

Free admission on reservation

Language: French

Through the Eyes: Sofia Dati

16.11.23, 18:30

Subjective tour of the exhibition with curator Sofia Dati.

Bio

Sofia Dati is visual and audiovisual arts programmer at Beursschouwburg, Brussels, where she curated exhibitions by Ève Gabriel Chabanon, Sina Hensel, Hoda Siahtiri, and the collective Black(s) to the Future; as well as film programs with Maxime Jean-Baptiste, Stéphane Gérard, Eden Tinto Collins, Filipa César and Onyeka Igwe, among others. She was part of the curatorial team in WIELS, Brussels, from 2019–2021. Sofia studied Literature at La Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, Cultural Studies at KU Leuven and Curatorial Studies at the Fine Arts Academy in Rome, and has written for magazines such as Po&Sie, Arshake and Conceptual Fine Arts.

Practical information

Free entrance

Language : English

Finissage with Liew Niyomkarn

01.12.23, 20:00

Music performance

Bio

Liew Niyomkarn is a sound artist and musician whose background lies in experimental sound practice and performance. Her work primarily explores echoes and sustained sounds achieved through acoustic instruments and Supercollider, a coding language employed to craft various tuning systems. She integrates field recordings to capture the essence of time and everyday routines, immersing herself in the sounds of the wilderness, archival recordings, and the ambient music culture. These elements are amalgamated with her sonic palette and the intrinsic properties of sound, such as spatial characteristics, feedback loops, and the manipulation of extended decays and harmonics. She presents her work through live performances and sound installations.

Practical information

Tickets: 8/5euro

Doors open at 19:30

Thank you

Connivència would not have been possible without the engaged collaboration with the artist Elsa Brès

The exhibition is organised in partnership with the Fondation d'entreprise Pernod Ricard and its team, thanks in particular to its director Antonia Scintilla, Franck Balland and Inés Huergo. *Connivència* receives additional support from the Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP), thanks to its director Béatrice Salmon, Marc Vaudey and Estelle Kesztenbaum. La Loge would also like to thank Guillaume Désanges and Coline Davenne, curators of Work Method and the 2022 edition of the Salon de Montrouge, who worked on a companionship programme at the start of the collaboration between Wim Waelput and Elsa Brès.

The production of this exhibition was made possible thanks to the professional and devoted work of Arthur Jules, Leonor Gomez and, as well as the technical assistance of Ludo Engels.

Additional thank to Raphaëlle Lasausse, Noir Metal and all the artists and guests of the public programme.

Elsa Brès would like to thank Les Sanglières, Gaëlle Boucand, Victor Vaysse, Deborah Levy, Elise Florenty, transmediale, MO.CO Panacée, Mécènes du Sud Montpellier-Sète, CAC Chanot, CNC-DICRÉAM, CNAP, DRAC Occitanie.

The exhibition receives the support of Brussels-Capital Region and COCOF.

The opening is kindly supported by Lillet.

The team of La Loge

Director and curator: Wim Waelput

Communication and curator of public programmes: Antoinette Jattiot

Intern: Thibaud Leplat

Visual identity: Antoine Begon, Boy Vereecken

Production: Léonor Gomez, Arthur Jules

Audio & vidéo: Ludo Engels

Photography: Lola Pertsowsky

Exhibition video: Anais Chabeur

Translations and proofreadings: BLURBS, Martine Wezenbeek, Marianne Doyen

First Sight ambassador: Johan Larsen

Volunteers: Ina Ciumakova, Marie-lou Laforest, Shankar Lestrehan, Lila Poimboeuf-Mahieu, Sepehr Sharifzadeh.

Opening hours

From Thursday to Sunday

13:00 - 18:00

Free entrance.

Visit our website for more details about our programme and events.

www.la-loge.be

La Loge is a non-profit association. La Loge is supported by the Flemish Government, the French Community (FWB), the Flemish Community Commission (Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie - VGC) and First Sight, La Loge's community of engaged individuals and organizations. La Loge receives additional support from the Municipality of Ixelles, COCOF and National Lottery of Belgium. La Loge is a member of 50° NORD-3° EST and Brussels Museums.

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