

EXHIBITION

Grand Curtius, Liège

16th May > 31st August 2025



FRANÇOISE SCHEIN AIPOTU

A PORTRAIT IN REVERSE

PRESS KIT

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Françoise Schein has been promoting Human Rights in the public arena for 35 years, developing a network of monumental artworks at the four corners of the earth.

The *FRANCOISE SCHEIN. AIPOTU. A Portrait in Reverse* exhibition offers a fresh perspective on her emblematic public works, paintings and many sculptures, some of which will be revealed for the first time. Via constant dialogue between the intimate and the collective, she puts the spotlight on the major themes that run through her work: the urban space as a laboratory, mapping as a way of thinking, placing remembrance in the public arena and civic commitment through art.

THE EXHIBITION

Françoise Schein has built a body of work in which urban design, mapping, remembrance and Human Rights intersect. From her meticulous drawings to her monumental interventions in the public arena, her work has many different facets but all of them follow a common thread: exploring our place in the world.

Her monumental interventions, which combine architecture and art, are sometimes spread over hundreds of metres. At the same time, more intimate, delicate and precious works contrast with this gigantism. For the first time, these two parts of Françoise Schein's work have been brought together, offering a fresh perspective on her career. This approach also sheds light on the deployment of an idea: one that the artist often depicts via the use of ceramic tiles, in the four corners of the earth. For some, this idea is tantamount to utopia but it is one that Françoise Schein tirelessly pursues: raising awareness of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by displaying it in urban spaces. The use of such a modest and durable material as ceramic tiles is emblematic of her methods. They are used as mediums for texts, drawings or patterns that blend into the architectural and social contexts of the sites, providing narrative or symbolic content that is accessible to all.

The *FRANCOISE SCHEIN. AIPOTU. A portrait in reverse* exhibition focuses on her iconic works through photographs, sketches, documents from her personal archives, documentaries, sculptures, drawings, paintings, textiles, etc. It sheds light on the major themes that run through her work: the urban space as a laboratory, mapping as a way of thinking, placing remembrance in the public arena and civic commitment through art.

This exhibition also places visitors in the heart of the artist's creative process and reveals the importance of collective participation in her work: many of her works have been achieved with the collaboration of citizens, young people and local associations, making art a channel for dialogue and transmission.

By presenting these different aspects of her work, the exhibition highlights the relevance and topicality of Françoise Schein's approach. It is more than just a retrospective and offers an immersion into a universe where art is a means for thinking and commitment. From Rio to Ramallah, from Paris to Port-au-Prince, from Fraipont to Lisbon, her projects are self-portraits of the artist in reverse, a certain utopia; or, in reverse: *aipotu*.

FRANCOISE SCHEIN

Françoise Schein (who was born in Brussels in 1953) stands out thanks to a career that transcends geographical and artistic boundaries. Her work, which is rooted in a profound commitment to human rights and culture, is positioned at a dynamic intersection of art, architecture and social commitment. The artist invites reflection, participation and celebration of diversity, creating spaces steeped in meaning and fundamental values.

After graduating in architecture and urban design, she gained international renown for her devotion to fundamental rights and local cultures, which she has integrated into the urban fabric through monumental works. Françoise Schein received recognition from the Royal Academy of Science, Literature and Fine Arts of Belgium in 2016 and has pursued a multi-disciplinary career including sculpture, drawing, photography, video and art installations. Her work stems from a humanist vision that flourishes within the specific architectural features of the major urban centres and small rural communities alike in which she works, enriching the landscape with artistic creations that question and inspire. In all four corners of the world, the artist is tirelessly committed to human rights, culture and ethics. Following the installation at the Concorde metro station in Paris, her work can be found in many places such as Lisbon, Brussels, Haifa, Berlin, Ramallah, Stockholm, Rio de Janeiro or also Haiti.

A participatory method at the heart of her approach

Françoise Schein seeks to actively involve citizens in the design and production of her works that take place in the public arena, in order to make it a place where local communities can express and recognise themselves.

The process gives her creations a collective dimension, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility for these shared spaces, as well as also strengthening links and solidarity between participants. By using a local



Portrait of Françoise during the workshops for the *Banquet de la Louve* (she-wolf's banquet), 2023, La Louvière, Belgium © Laeticia Descartes

focus to bring universal issues to the fore, her work builds a bridge between personal and collective perspectives, between the intimate and the monumental.

She tackles many themes in her works but they all converge towards a reflection on the interconnections between individuals, territories and the systems interweaving between them. Françoise Schein questions the notions of boundaries, networks and remembrance, while exploring the ways in which temporality and cultures intersect in the places that we share. These projects that involve inhabitants, especially young people from underprivileged neighbourhoods, are artistic manifestos committed to the creation of works that convey history and democracy.

The participatory art practised by the artist has proved to be a powerful catalyst for resilience within communities. At the heart of each work, the combination of individual contributions

creates a unique artistic landscape, representative of the many different experiences and perspectives. The diversity of styles, handiwork and interpretations are a harmonious rapport defining each new work that the artist herself calls “style without style”.

Through creation of an environment that encourages free expression, the artist offers participants a sanctuary in which to share their stories, visions and emotions. Each area of expression becomes a narrative canvas, an individual page of history in collective life. Françoise Schein founded the INSCRIRE association and has consequently produced hundreds of participative works on the theme of human rights, supported by UNESCO as well as ministries and local institutions in the countries concerned.

Public art

Françoise Schein embodies an artistic vision deeply rooted in social, urban, cultural and political realities. She trained as an architect and urban designer and centres her research on concepts of mapping territories, public spaces and communities, by examining the relationships between human systems and their environment. Françoise Schein’s artistic commitment is nourished by the conviction that public spaces can be dynamic forums and interactive canvases on which citizenship, culture and ethics are integrated into the daily lives of participants. The artist acts as a pioneer of social urban design, bringing a new dimension into urban life by connecting people to their environment, creating spaces that provoke reflection, participation and the celebration of diversity.

PARTNERS

THE GRAND CURTIUS

City of Liège Museums – Le Grand Curtius

The City of Liège's museums include the Grand Curtius, La Boverie, Mulum (the lighting museum), the Grétry Museum, the Ansembourg Museum (currently being renovated) and the heritage collections.

The Grand Curtius is an art and history museum with 5,000 m² of floor space that brings together collections divided into five departments: archaeology, religious art and Mosan art, weapons, glassware and decorative arts. During work on the tram system, the glassware museum has been stored in the reserves.

Within its walls, visitors can discover more than 7,000 years of Liège's history, in a remarkable architectural complex. The 17th-century Palis Curtius, the emblematic building of the museum, houses the weapons collection, which is internationally renowned for both the quantity and quality of its exhibits.

The Grand Curtius is a societal museum that links the past and the present, from prehistory to very recent times, as reflected in the programme of its temporary exhibitions and its partnership policy.

With the support of the City of Liège and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.



THE WALLONIA-BRUSSELS FEDERATION ARCHITECTURE UNIT

The Architecture Unit provides assistance to public contracting authorities, both for the operational departments of the Infrastructure Directorate of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (W-BF) and for Walloon local authorities who request it.

Its missions are to guarantee architectural quality in buildings and spaces open to the public and to promote architecture as a cultural discipline. It also ensures that the decree on the integration of artworks in public buildings (of 10th May 1984) is applied, whether in the infrastructures owned by the W-BF or in architectural service contracts it manages.

This exhibition helps to reaffirm the importance of public art in cultural policies, as well as in programmes for the construction of buildings, infrastructure and the development of public spaces. Through support for public and private clients in selecting artists and monitoring production of works in the W-BF, the architecture unit acts as a supportive operator, implementing an approach in which art is in dialogue with architecture, enriches community living spaces and offers the general public the opportunity to discover contemporary art. In this way, it is in line with the objectives of the decree on integration of works of art:

- Supporting artistic creation through the public commissioning of works from artists and promoting / publicising their work.
- Reinforcing access to culture via encounters between citizens and art in the public arena.
- Improving the spatial quality of built-up and open spaces.

THE INSCRIRE ASSOCIATION

The INSCRIRE association works with artists and local communities throughout the world to create participative works and artistic events that highlight fundamental rights, diversity and cultural heritage. It operates in a globalised context, marked by social and environmental divides, and seeks to reaffirm democratic principles by tackling urgent social and humanist issues. It was founded in 1991 by artist Françoise Schein following the construction of her work on human rights at the Concorde metro station in Paris, confirming the possibility to create transversal links between art, ethics, teaching, urban design and the civic spirit.

This initiative has developed into an international network of projects conducted by a multi-disciplinary team throughout the world. INSCRIRE proposes solidarity-focused and accessible projects, while encouraging the involvement of local populations.

The association strives to raise awareness of human rights, reinvent spaces and offer training in arts and crafts, promoting specific cultural characteristics and encouraging reflection on universal themes such as social justice and environmental conservation.

PUBLICATIONS

Two publications are available with the exhibition: a work called *Aipotu. Françoise Schein. Un portrait à rebours. A Portrait in Reverse*, published by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation's Architecture Unit, as well as a visitors' guide, *Exhibition Essentials*, available for free from the museum reception desk.

BOOK

Aipotu. Françoise Schein. Un portrait à rebours. A portrait in reverse.

Françoise Schein is renowned for her monumental interventions in metro stations in major cities as well as participatory projects involving citizens in transforming the urban arena. She also produces smaller works, such as drawings, paintings or sculptures, providing another perspective on her career and the deployment of her artistic thinking. This book explores the foundations of her work and the major themes that run through it: the urban space as a laboratory, mapping as a way of thinking, placing remembrance in the public arena and civic commitment through art.

This book in French and English has been published for the opening of the exhibition at the Grand Curtius: *Zalcborg, Betina, Aipotu. Françoise Schein. Un portrait à rebours. A portrait in reverse*, published by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation's Architecture Unit, Brussels, 2025, 176 pages – ISBN: 978-2-930705-53-8.

On sale from the shops at the Grand Curtius and La Boverie museums as well as all good bookshops: € 20.



VISITORS' GUIDE

Exhibition essentials: *Françoise Schein. Aipotu. A Portrait in Reverse.*

Exhibition Essentials focuses on ten of Françoise Schein's projects, produced between 1971 and 2024 and presented at the exhibition.

This free visitors' guide published in French, English, Dutch and German by the City of Liège is available on request from the museum's reception desk. A digital version can be downloaded from www.grandcurtius.be.



SELECTION OF EXHIBITED WORKS

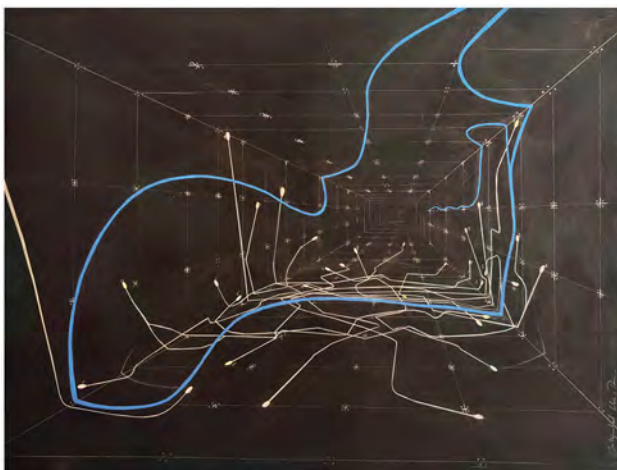
Self-portrait, 1971



The woman (self-portrait), oil on canvas, 32,8 x 52 cm, 1971 © Françoise Schein / ADAGP

It is in using her own body and her own experiences as a starting point that an artist broadens her horizons towards a universal world. In this early painting, the milestones of Françoise Schein's future work already seem to be inscribed: a split and plural 'I' as well as 'lianas', linear networks that are as much obstacles to be removed as links between people that need to be preserved.

Integrated city



I/C Paris Blues, 2006, pastel and Indian ink on paper, 80 x 60 cm © Françoise Schein / ADAGP

It was on looking out of an aircraft window on landing in New York, where she lived from 1978 to 1988, that Françoise Schein noticed for the first

time that the city resembled a computer chip, a tiny plate only recently entered into the collective imagination, characterised by a network of lines and connections. The result was the creation of the series *I/C (Integrated cities)*, in which the title recalls both the integrated circuit that they evoke and the way we perceive it (*I/C, I see*).

A set of European Dyads, 1989



A set of European Dyads, 1989, Aluminium, acrylic, pencil lead in lables, 24 x 38 cm © Françoise Schein

The word *dyad* means the combination of two philosophical principles which complement each other. Françoise Schein adopted this notion to highlight the relationship between human rights and European borders.

The artist uses movable hinges to join carefully cut stainless steel lines to symbolise a moving map of European borders.

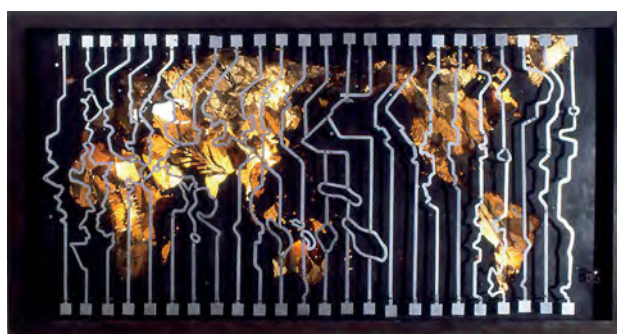
Station Concorde, 1990



Concorde Station, 1990, dry pastel study on paper, 60 x 109,5 cm © Françoise Schein / ADAGP

Dry pastel study on paper (60 x 109,5 cm) - Françoise Schein's first urban ceramic project, created in the Paris metro to mark the bicentenary of the French Revolution.

Time zone (Nature and artifacts), 1993



Nature and artifact, 1993, Aluminium, wood, Plexiglas, dried leaves, lighting, in a wooden box, 69 x 136 x 15 cm © Françoise Schein,

A sculpture made up of cut metal, wood, Plexiglas, acrylic and dried tree leaves, depicting the lines of the time zones which twist and turn to follow the lines of borders, ignoring meridians to better respond to political decisions.

Drawing of the façade of the IPPJ in Fraipont

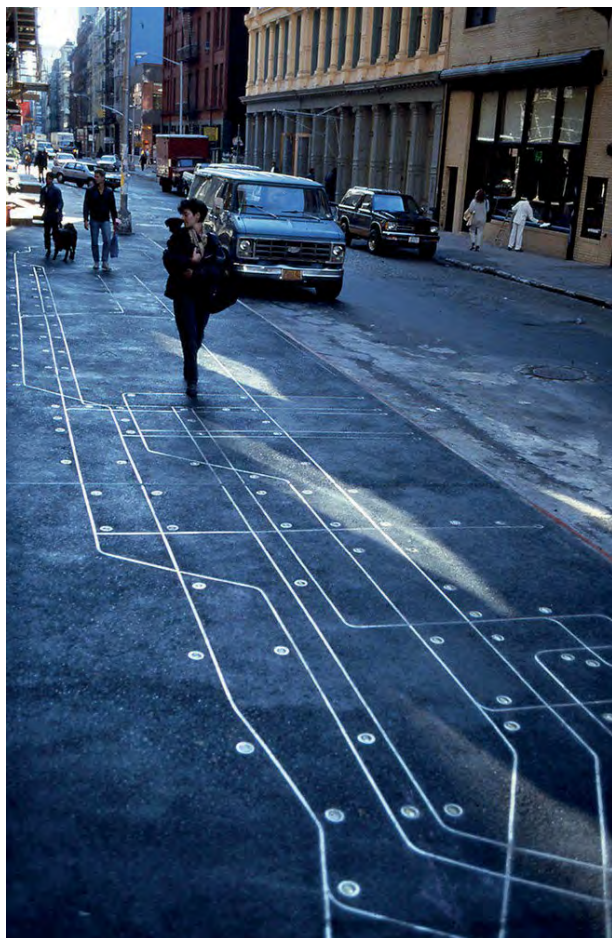


Life(s), IPPJ in Fraipont, 2016, study in graphite on paper, preparatory work, 102 x 64 cm © Françoise Schein

A photo illustrating the preparatory work of Françoise Schein as part of the *LIFE[S]* project at the IPPJ in Fraipont.

SÉLECTION D'ŒUVRES D'ART PUBLIC

1985



Subway Map Floating on a New York Sidewalk, 1985, metal, glass, lighting, inserted in cement, 4 x 12 m © Françoise Schein

Subway Map Floating on a New York Sidewalk
Built using steel, concrete and lights, Françoise Schein's work became part of New York's heritage in 1985 and won her the Prize of Excellence in Design. Drawing her inspiration from the graffiti of young people in the Bronx, the artist saw the subway as a place of expression and resistance. This observation led her to inscribe human rights in the world's metros, with the participation of disadvantaged young people.

1989



Concorde Station, 1989-1991, Paris, France © Jean Louis Colot, © Françoise Schein / ADAGP

Concorde Metro in Paris is the first public artwork in an international network of artworks on human rights.

The station is entirely covered by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen from the French Revolution in 1789.

44,000 letters on the same number of tiles cover 1,000 m² of walls, without punctuation, like a large puzzle of randomly placed letters. Recognition of the words progressively appears in the mind of the readers, as they develop their own meaning and understanding of the text, as if they themselves were writing these concepts.

1992



Dyads, Parvis de St-Gilles, 1992, Brussels, Belgium, © Stib-mivb © Françoise Schein

Dyads, Parvis de Saint-Gilles metro station in Brussels. This work expresses human rights and European borders through a series of intertwined lines and continuous writing that reflect the tensions and interactions between these two notions. The station is made up of 1,600 m² ceramic tiles on which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is written in white letters, without spaces or accents. A long line runs through the station several times, symbolising European Borders.

1994



Borders are the Scars of History, 1994, Haifa, Israel © Françoise Schein

Borders are the Scars of History, Haifa. A change in the original project at the Parvis de Saint-Gilles station in Brussels resulted in a surplus of tiles. The artist used these elements to come up with the design for another project in Israel, a region of the world in which the issues of borders is currently especially thorny. In Haifa, a city in the north of the country known for the good relations between its Jewish and Arab inhabitants, she came up with the idea of a fresco based on Michel Butor's poem about peace, translated by the Palestinian poet Emile Habibi and Israeli writer Yehuda Lancry. Tiles in Arabic and Hebrew were manufactured to complete the stock required to accomplish the project.

1994



The Discoveries, 1992-1994, Lisbon, Portugal © Françoise Schein

Parque, The Discoveries, Parque metro station, Lisbon. This work is the largest produced by Françoise Schein. It confronts the history of Portuguese maritime discoveries with the principles of human rights, underlining the paradoxes of colonial expansion. Fifty monumental maps recalling the Portuguese maritime voyages cover an immense 20-metre diameter vault, covered with 450,000 14 cm by 14 cm azulejo tiles, each one hand-painted.

1996-1998



Carl von Linné or the art of looking, 1996-1998, Stockholm, Sweden © Françoise Schein

Carl von Linné or the art of looking, Universitetet metro station, Stockholm
The life and works of Swedish botanist Carl von Linné are at the root of this permanent Installation. The scientist's journey through Lapland is developed as a metaphor of awareness of global ecological realities.

2001



The Garden of Human Rights, 2001, Bremen, Germany © Françoise Schein,

The Garden of Human Rights, Rhododendrons Park, Bremen.

Throughout the entire park, human rights, written on bronze strips alongside the paths, can be read whilst walking, like poetic and philosophical reflections linking nature and plants with human mobility.

1998-2004



The time zone clock, 1998-2005, Coventry, England © Mondo*ARC

The time zone clock, Millenium Plaza, Coventry
Created in aluminium incrustated with LEDs, the Time Zone Clock depicts the international time zones, embedded in the ground of the Millennium Plaza in the city centre of Coventry. The work was part of a large-scale project aimed at restructuring the entire city centre, which was destroyed during the Second World War. The work has since been dismantled.

2008-2018



Luz, 2008-2018, São Paulo, Brazil © Inscire Association

Luz metro Station, São Paulo

On 20 parapets dotted with the words *Solidarity, Fraternity, Citizenship and Equality*, Françoise Schein takes a look at the city's history, from the culture of its indigenous people and the arrival of the Portuguese up to the present day, including the workers' right movements in the 1930s, the military dictatorship in the 1960s and the sporting and democratic alliance encapsulated by the Corinthians football club. Here and there, walls covered with "bubbles" drawn by children stem from the artist's first participatory project developed with pupils from several of the city's schools.

2016-2021



Life(s), 2016 - 2021, IPPJ in Fraipont, Belgium © Alain Janssens/ Daniel Delgoffe Architecture Firm

LIFE[S], IPPJ de Fraipont

In 2016, as part of the renovation of the IPPJ public youth protection institution in Fraipont, led by the Daniel Delgoffe architecture firm, Françoise Schein was designated by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation's Commission for

the Integration of Works of Art to produce an artistic intervention.

The work is made of stoneware tiles and is incorporated into different areas of the site attended daily by young people.

The artist was accompanied by the institution's instructors and set up brainstorming workshops with the adolescents in order to encourage them to express themselves about their lives and respective issues. Each of the works produced is the reflection of a striking personal story, often steeped in difficulty but also with a positive outcome. Drawing became a means of exchange, communication and sharing between the young people and the educational teams.

2018



The Way to Human Rights, 2018, Brasília, Brazil © Association Inscire,

The Way to Human Rights, Galeria dos Estados metro station, Brasília.

Following years of success in artistic creation and urban education focused on human rights, the INSCRIRE association was called upon by UNESCO and appointed by the PNUD in Brazil to produce, with the support of the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, a monumental public work to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

2018



The Vienna Human Rights banquet and its guardians, 2018, Vienna, Austria © Iris Ranzinger / KÖR GmbH

The Vienna Human Rights Banquet and its Guardians, Vienna. The banquet imagined by Françoise Schein raises public awareness of fundamental human rights issues and has created a venue for exchange and dialogue on the eponymous square. The table's centre devoted to a map of the River Danube: it traces the long and varied history of reflection on Human Rights, from the philosophers and writers of the Antiquity to the present day, in a metaphor for the constant flow of ideas, goods and people.

Françoise Schein has produced five other table works for civic banquets: The Friendship Banquet in the Parc des Marronniers, Les Mureaux, France (2012); The Great Banquet, Place Sainte-Catherine, Brussels (2016); The Vienna Human Rights Banquet and its Guardians for Museum-splatz - Mariahilfer Straße, Vienna (2018); Eat the Museum, Musée des Arts et Métiers, Paris (2018) and The Banquet of La Louve and the Mystery of the Dowry, La Louvière, Belgium (2023).

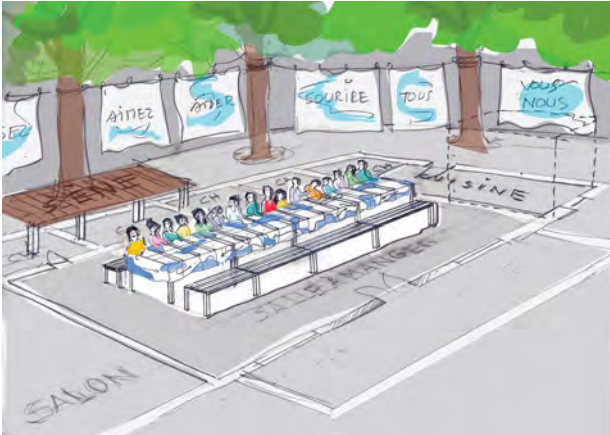
2021-2024



I dream my life, inauguration, 2023, Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium © Photo by Veerle Vercauteren - KANAL-Centre Pompidou

Under the same sky, Molenbeek-Saint-Jean. For three years in a row, Françoise Schein held workshops on civic themes and people's dreams of life. The resulting works have been installed in the town. 'Passports' were printed telling the story of the young people holding it who explored their lives and neighbourhoods from a new perspective, thanks to collaboration with Athénée Royal Toots Thielemans and Kanal-Centre Pompidou.

2024



Welcome Home, preparatory drawing, 2024, Liège, Belgium
© Françoise Schein,

Welcome Home

Participatory work on textile.

This work was presented to the public during an artistic performance that took place on Place Xavier Neujean in Liège on 5th May 2024, enriched with the committed and poetic texts of Catherine Wilkin, an author and playwright, thanks to a collaboration with the Résidences Ateliers Vivegnis International and the Interra association, in partnership with Manifestations Liégeoises ASBL.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The *FRANCOISE SCHEIN. AIPOTU. A Portrait in Reverse* exhibition

From 16th May to 31st August 2025

Exhibition curators

Bétina Zalcborg et Lohana Schein

Grand Curtius

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www.grandcurtius.be

Facebook: Legrandcurtius

Opening times

From Monday to Sunday: 10.00 > 18.00, closed on Tuesday

Admission price

Includes entrance to the permanent collections

Adults: € 10

Groups: € 8

Seniors: € 6

Article 27 concessions: € 1.25

Free admission

- For people under 26 years.
- For MuseumPassMusée holders.
- For all on the 1st Sunday of the month.
- For school establishments located in the City of Liège urban area and for students at the Saint-Luc and Academy of Liège schools.

The Grand Curtius is accessible to persons with reduced mobility.

Shop

Cafeteria with terraces

ACTIVITIES

Cinémusée: Les Nouveaux Commanditaires de Flandre

Film by François Hers & Jérôme Poggi

Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 12.30 - € 3

Créamusée. Françoise Schein style tiling

Creation of a 10 x 10 metre ceramic tiled décor in posca inspired by the exhibition's keywords.

For children accompanied by an adult, on

Sunday 1st June from 14.00 to 17.00 - Free.

Saturday workshops

Through artistic expression, discover the major themes, materials and graphics that run through the work of Françoise Schein. Each workshop covers a theme close to the heart of the artist, from the universal values of the Charter of Human Rights to the boundaries of public and private spaces and the notion of rhizomes and networks.

Price per workshop: exhibition admission + € 5, from 14 to 99 years

24th May, from 16.00 to 17.30: Schein and Human Rights - written forms and posca.

28th June from 16.00 to 17.30: Schein between public and private spaces - India ink and kraft paper.

23rd August from 16.00 to 17.30: Schein's rhizomes - blueprints and tracing paper.

Words in Music - I invite you to the museum

Reading and performance evening. Catherine Wilkin, an artist with many talents: actress, director, presenter and author, who qualified from the Conservatoire de Liège (ESACT) academy, will be performing readings of texts created as part of the "Welcome Home" intervention produced by Françoise Schein in Liège on 5th October last year, in the company of project participants and saxophonist Clément Dechambre. She will be offering a stroll in words through the values of Françoise Schein's artistic universe.

Price: exhibition admission + € 5 - General public
In June - news to follow on our networks.

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