

# Alchemy Surrealism & Glass Art Press kit



# Summary

Press release	3
Alchemy. Surrealism & Glass Art	4 - 8
Forge of the Angels	4 - 5
The Engelhorn patrons	6
Contemporary glass art	7
Scenography concept	8
Public programme	9 - 10
Surrealism season at Plateforme 10	11 - 12
Partners	13
Practical information	14



↑ ↗ View of the exhibition *Alchemy*, mudac, Plateforme 10.  
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**Cover**  
Graphic design © Neo Neo  
Photography © Daniela & Tonatiuh



# Alchemy Surrealism & Glass Art

## 08.03 – 04.08.2024

In 1924 André Breton published his *Manifesto of Surrealism*, initiating one of the major artistic movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2024 the three Plateforme 10 museums—MCBA, Photo Elysée and mudac—will join forces to mark this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a Surrealism season, featuring a wide-ranging collective reflection on one of the most fascinating and influential artistic movements of the last century. Starting on 7 March, mudac will start things off with the first two exhibitions: *Objects of Desire. Surrealism & Design* and *Alchemy. Surrealism & Glass Art*.

The *Alchemy* exhibition will take visitors back to the origins of mudac's contemporary glass art collection, now the largest in Europe. Glass works by Salvador Dalí, Marc Chagall, Jean Cocteau, and Max Ernst trace the links between the history of the collection and the surrealist movement. Alchemy will also bring together contemporary works—some displayed for the first time—that attest to the legacy of the movement among artists.

In the late 1950s, Venetian studio master Egidio Costantini submitted an ambitious project to the patron Peggy Guggenheim. Convinced that glass was an essential material of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Costantini sought to collaborate with artists to reveal the expressive potential of this material. He therefore invited Jean Arp, Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, and Marc Chagall, among others, to create sketches that the Italian master then brought to life in his Murano glass workshop, dubbed *La Fucina degli Angeli*—the Forge of the Angels—by Jean Cocteau. A collection of 36 works was created, thanks to which utilitarian glass took on a new dimension, becoming glass art. The *Alchemy* exhibition features a selection of these exceptional creations, as well as pieces in *pâte de cristal* produced by French firm Daum, in collaboration with Salvador Dalí.

Alongside these historic pieces, *Alchemy* also features contemporary glass art works that bear witness to the legacy of this century-old movement among contemporary artists. Surrealism never ceased to celebrate total freedom, and even today it continues to offer a form of escape from the real world. Finally, the exhibition pays tribute to two personalities who contributed significantly to mudac's contemporary glass art collection: Peter and Traudl Engelhorn. The Engelhorns, who were both art lovers and passionate about glassmaking, acquired a fine collection of works produced at the Fucina degli Angeli and donated them to mudac. This exhibition is a tribute to the memory and generosity of the late couple.

### Curators

Marco Costantini  
Amélie Bannwart

### Assistants

Anaëlle Hirschi  
Géraldine Desarzens

### Set design

Collectif GALTA

### Graphic design

Neo Neo

# The Forge of the Angels

The “Forge of the Angels” glass workshop owes its existence to one man, Egidio Costantini, whose atypical background did not predestine him to revolutionise the world of glass. Indeed, Costantini became familiar with the work of the Murano craftspeople late in life, after having worked in a number of different trades. Saddened by the mass production of glass objects for tourists visiting Venice, he sought to restore the material to its former glory by using it as an artistic medium.

From 1950 onwards, he produced over a hundred works in collaboration with artists from a wide range of backgrounds. Based on sketches imagined by these artists, the glassmaker gave life to sculptural creations which he infused with his own sensibility. Costantini went so far as to say: “[...] the drawing gradually disappears, and the new work brings out the soul of the artist and that of the glassmaker”.

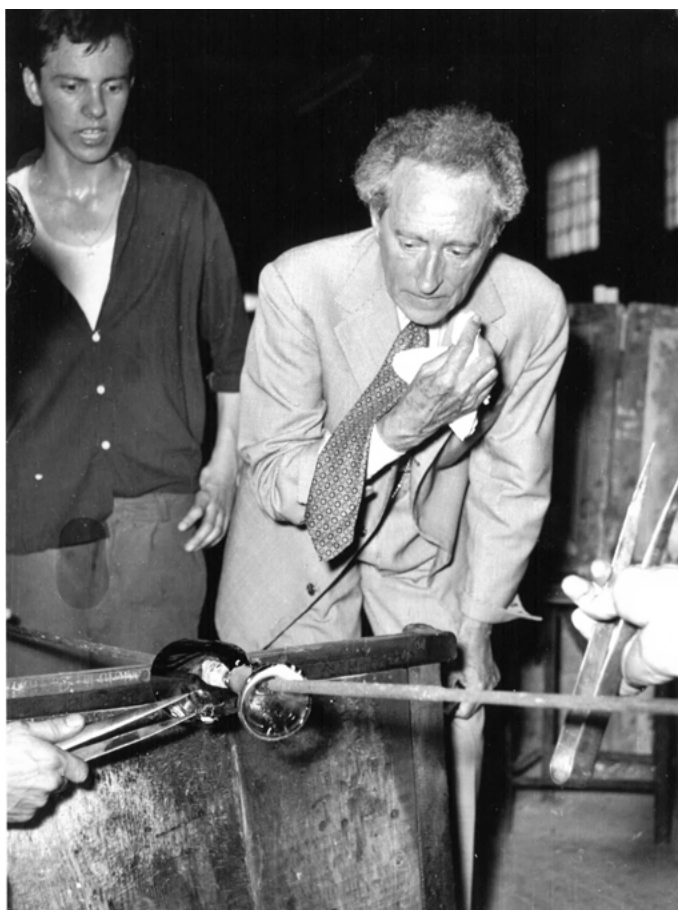
His many collaborations were hailed by the critics and, through American collector Peggy Guggenheim, aroused the interest of private art lovers around the world. The master of the Forge of the Angels is unique in that, over and above his creative work, he nurtured a genuine complicity with the greatest artists of his time.



**Pablo Picasso** gravitated towards the Surrealists, led by André Breton, although he never claimed to be a member of the movement. Nevertheless, the artist took part in the first surrealist exhibition in Paris in 1925, and his works were even reproduced in the group's journals. Already introducing a new way of apprehending reality, Picasso's cubist experiments of the early 20th century served as a reference for these avant-garde artists. The works by Costantini, based on drawings by Picasso, relate to two themes dear to the Spanish artist: the bull and the woman.

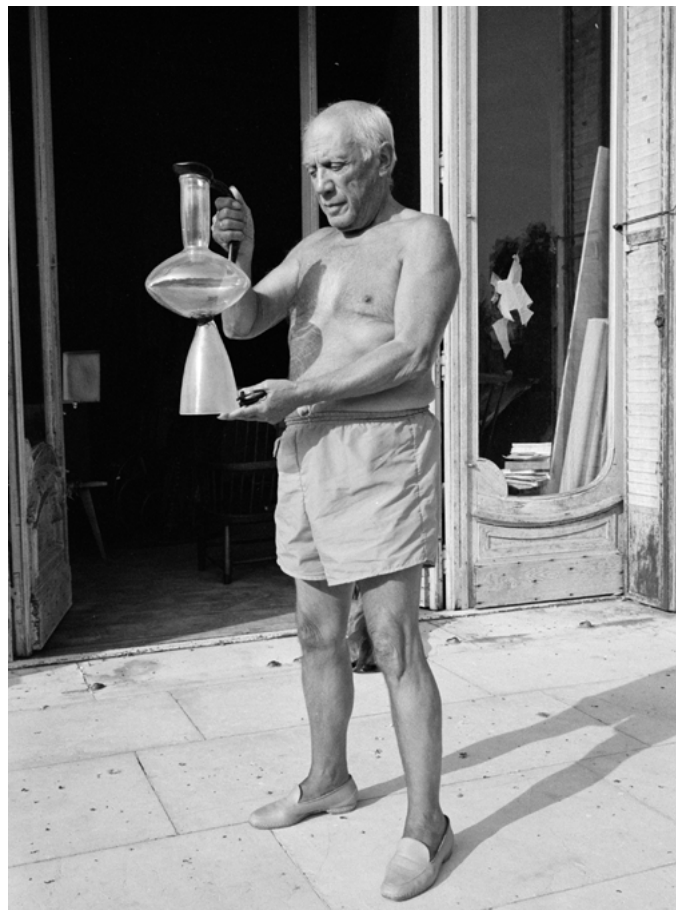
Costantini Egidio after a drawing by Pablo Picasso, *Figura*, 1963, mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne.

© Claude Bornand, Atelier de numérisation de la Ville de Lausanne



Jean Cocteau and a craftsman from the Forge of the Angels, ca. 1960.

© mudac collection



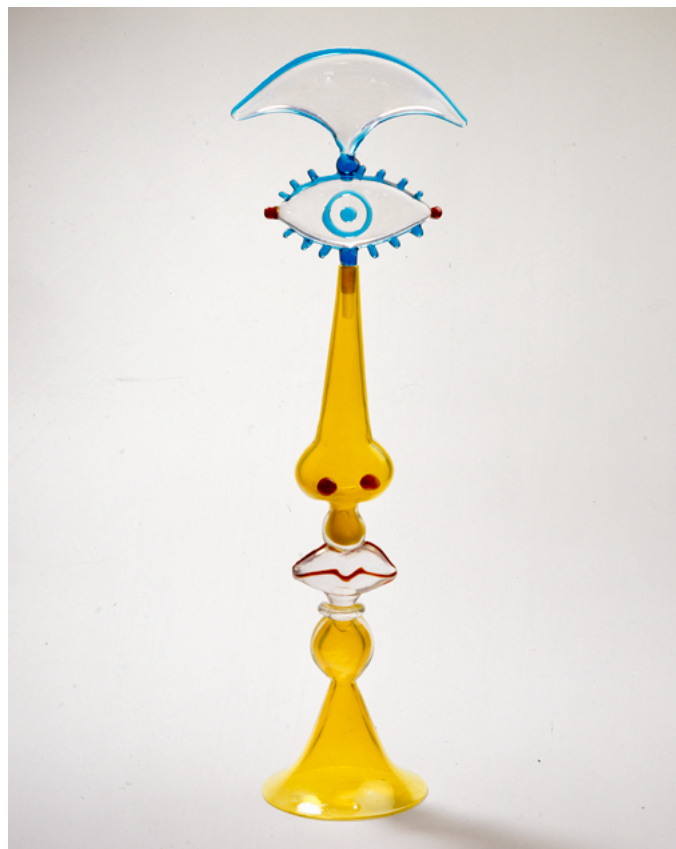
Pablo Picasso holding the work *Giamaica*, produced in 1959 at the Forge of the Angels.

Photo Edward Quinn, © edwardquinn.com



Marc Chagall/Egidio Costantini, *Colombe (Dove)*, 1970, mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne

© Atelier de numérisation de la Ville de Lausanne



Jean Cocteau, *Alabardia*, 1960, mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne.

© Atelier de numérisation de la Ville de Lausanne



# The Engelhorn patrons

Peter and Traudl Engelhorn were an art-loving couple living in the canton of Vaud who were fascinated by the artistic and technical potential of glass. They were both aware of a collection of glass sculptures, the result of an interesting collaboration between contemporary artists and the master craftsman Egidio Costantini. They acquired 36 of these pieces, created between 1959 and 1970, to which two were added in 1991.

In 1970 the Engelhorns decided to donate their contemporary glass art collection to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs de la Ville de Lausanne—now known as mudac, museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts. The donation agreement between Peter Engelhorn and the City of Lausanne was signed on 29 March 1971, with the pieces created at the Forge of the Angels joining the mudac collection. All were accompanied by certificates, signed and dated by Egidio Costantini and engraved with the artist's name and that of the *Fucina degli Angeli*.

This first donation by the Engelhorns was followed in 1971 by a set of 27 numbered and signed glass paste multiples produced in limited editions by Daum in Nancy, mostly between 1968 and 1971. These were commissioned from artists such as Salvador Dalí, Pierre Dmitrienko, and Claude Lhoste. The museum's collection now comprises 31 pieces, each with a Daum certificate certifying the number of copies and the edition number. Four of these pieces feature in the *Alchemy* exhibition.



In 1968 **Salvador Dalí** met Jacques Daum, director of the famous French glass manufactory, with whom he collaborated for more than twenty years. Daum produced limited editions of works in *pâte de cristal* created by renowned artists and designers. Dalí enjoyed working with this material, which combines elasticity with consistency, since it expressed the metamorphosis so dear to the creator. Influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, his iconography continually explored the mechanisms of his subconscious: anguish, obsessions, hallucinations, and delirium fed his phantasmagorical universe. Salvador Dalí, the icon of Surrealism, is the epitome of the movement's experimentation.

Salvador Dalí, *Porte-manteau-Montre*, Daum, 1970, mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne.  
© Atelier de numérisation de la Ville de Lausanne

# Contemporary Glass Art

The *Alchemy* exhibition also features a group of contemporary glass works from the mudac collection, some of which are being displayed for the first time. These pieces bear witness among today's artists in various ways, to the legacy of this century-old movement. They serve as a reminder that Surrealism has always celebrated total freedom, and that it continues to offer a form of escape from the real world.



This wall lamp in hand-blown Murano glass is the result of a collaboration between iconic design studio **Studio Job** and artisanal glass manufacturer Venini. Following the example of the Forge of the Angels, glassmakers and designers work together to create innovative and original projects. A pioneer of contemporary conceptual and sculptural design, Studio Job stands out for their freedom of expression, their acute sense of irony, and their blend of traditional and modern processes. Their pop spirit, nurtured by the world of visual art and comics, is always instinctive, in the manner of the Surrealists.



Interpreting everyday objects, glass artist **Tillie Burden** draws on surrealist and symbolist references to create sculptures halfway between reality and fiction. Tinged with poetry, humour, and frivolity, her work questions the absurdity of our psyche by offering new alternatives to the truth. Following in the footsteps of the Surrealists, she seeks to blur the opposition between reality and imagination, and to bring images together in unexpected ways.

↖ Studio Job / Venini, *Tit Lamp*, 2010, mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne.

© Atelier de numérisation de la Ville de Lausanne

← Tillie Burden, *Cactus Glove beige*, 2017, mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne.

© Margot Roth, Atelier de numérisation de la Ville de Lausanne

# Scenography concept

The scenography of the *Alchemy* exhibition, designed by mudac and developed by Geneva collective GALTA, immerses visitors in a fantasy workshop. It draws its references and inspiration from a variety of imageries, particularly in the field of glass art.

The entire installation is based on the chapter “L'Art du Verre” (The Art of Glass), taken from Diderot and d'Alembert's famous *Encyclopédie Universelle*. The collective came up with various scenographic elements inspired by the engravings that illustrate the work. The oven is represented in the exhibition by a sand volcano, from which works of art spring. The water used to cool the glass pieces appears here in the form of a fountain. Rails run through the centre of the exhibition, recalling the way in which the raw materials for making glass were transported.

Some references are more contemporary, highlighting the workshops of contemporary glass-makers and demonstrating the transmission of this technical know-how through the ages. Seats have been transformed into pedestals, a reference to the chairs used by craftspeople when hot-working the material. Glass-blowing canes, interpreted in a stylised way, are scattered throughout the scenography.

Finally, the set designers drew their inspiration from the surrealist exhibitions of the inter-war period. A metal shelf reproduces an emblematic device photographed by Man Ray in 1936 at the Charles Ratton gallery in Paris, displaying a range of surrealist objects.

As described by the GALTA collective, the scenography “shows the craftsman's workshop as a place where prophetic phenomena with secret correspondences occur 'by chance (or as if by chance)', to use a phrase from Max Ernst. Matter is perceived through its constant metamorphoses; it is dreamt of as flowing with forces, influxes, and currents”.



View of the exhibition *Alchemy*, mudac, Plateforme 10.  
© Etienne Malapert / mudac



# Public programme

## **A SURREALIST SUNDAY AT PLATEFORME 10**

**19 May 2024**

The three Plateforme 10 museums will join forces to celebrate Surrealism on a special day that will feature workshops, games, and other surprises.

## **LECTURE – FABRICATING DESIRE: THE SURREALIST JOURNALS**

**Lecture by Julia Gelshorn and Thomas Hunkeler**

**21 March at 6 p.m.**

Julia Gelshorn and Thomas Hunkeler, teachers of art history and French literature at the University of Fribourg, will discuss the importance of surrealist journals. These collective works were one of the Surrealists' favourite forms of expression. The speakers will relate these to the "objects of desire" on display at mudac and will seek to highlight that it is in the leaflets, poetry, and puns of these surrealist journals that this desire was written and created. In this way, the journals themselves become objects of desire through their design.

## **FAMILY WORKSHOP – SURREAL STAINED GLASS**

**For children 6+, with artist Bérénice Blois**

**13 April at 2.30 p.m.**

Discover surrealist motifs in the mudac exhibition and create your own using collage, decals, engraving, and painting. You will then be able to take the stained-glass windows you have created home with you.

## **CREATIVE WORKSHOP – SURREALIST MISHMASH**

**17 April at 2 p.m.**

As part of the BDFIL festival, discover Surrealism in the mudac exhibitions. Drawing inspiration from what you have seen, create your own surrealist work and leave with a collectively created notebook. All ages 6+, children under 8 must be accompanied. Free workshop, registration required.

## **SURREALIST COLLAGE WORKSHOP – DREAM-OBJECT**

**For children 6+, with artist Anne-Marie Lendi**

**27 March and 24 April at 2 p.m.**

André Breton suggested creating objects that reflected our dreams. You too can play with the fantastic, the strange, and the unexpected. Imagine objects straight out of your dreams, with useful or futile design, and infuse them with a new poetic or eccentric function.

## **GLASS ART DAY – IN THE GLASS ART BUBBLE**

**8 June from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

For the first time at Plateforme 10, mudac invites you to a day devoted to glass art, to discover or rediscover its magnificent collection. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Swiss studio Niesenglass will be offering glass-blowing demonstrations, followed by guided tours at set times (10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 noon, 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m., 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.) of the glass art on display in our two exhibitions. Snacks and refreshments available on site.



## **GUIDED TOUR – OBJECTS OF DESIRE EXHIBITION\***

**Visit in English by Mateo Kries, Director of the Vitra Design Museum**

**30 May at 6 p.m.**

Mateo Kries, Director of the Vitra Design Museum, offers a guided tour in English to help you better understand the exhibition he curated and the influence of Surrealism on design. The tour will be followed by an aperitif.

## **GUIDED TOUR – ALCHEMY EXHIBITION\***

**Visit given by Amélie Bannwart, curator of the exhibition**

**2 May at 6 p.m.**

Amélie Bannwart, curator at mudac, will introduce you to a hidden facet of the collection and, above all, will share her love of curating.

## **GUIDED TOUR – SURREALISM, DESIGN & GLASS ART\***

**10, 17 and 24 March, 7, 14 and 21 April, 5 and 12 May, 9 and 16 June, 7 July and 4 August at 2.30 p.m.**

Accompanied by a guide, discover the two exhibitions, *Objects of Desire* and *Alchemy*, and gain valuable insights into the movement.

## **FAMILY TOUR – SURREALISM, DESIGN & GLASS ART**

**31 March, 28 April and 26 May at 2 p.m.**

This tour, specially adapted for families and children, takes visitors on a journey of discovery through the two exhibitions *Objects of Desire* and *Alchemy*. A children's route is available for further exploration. For children aged 6+, accompanied by an adult. Duration 1 hour. Free with admission ticket.

## **CHILDREN'S ROUTE**

A tailor-made itinerary is available to accompany the youngest visitors to mudac's exhibitions.

## **BROCHURE IN SIMPLIFIED FRENCH**

To discover Surrealism through photography and design, a brochure in simplified French will take you through the exhibitions at Photo Elysée and mudac.

## **On mudac.ch**

Find all the events and lectures around the exhibitions, as well as practical information, prices, and registration.

\*All guided tours are accessible to the hearing impaired thanks to the magnetic loop system (on request from reception). Free with admission ticket.

# Surrealism season at Plateforme 10

In 1924 André Breton published his *Manifesto of Surrealism*, initiating one of the major artistic movements of the 20th century. In 2024 the three Plateforme 10 museums, MCBA – Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Photo Elysée and mudac – museum of Contemporary design and Applied Arts, will join in the celebrations to mark this 100th anniversary and will offer a Surrealism season featuring a wide-ranging collective reflection on one of the most fascinating and influential artistic movements of the last century.



Poster of the exhibition *Objects of Desire. Surrealism & Design*.  
Graphic design © Neo Neo

## mudac

### **Objects of Desire. Surrealism & Design**

Alongside the *Alchemy* exhibition, mudac presents *Objects of Desire*, an exhibition by the Vitra Design Museum. *Objects of Desire* explores the close dialogue between Surrealism and design over the last hundred years. From Salvador Dalí to Meret Oppenheim and Iris van Herpen, the exhibition presents both pioneering works from the 1930s and contemporary projects. Even today, Surrealism provides designers with a wealth of inspiration, whether through the motifs of its fantastic universe, its subversive approach, or its interest in the human psyche. *Objects of Desire* showcases this abundant diversity, bringing together design furniture as well as graphic design, fashion, decoration, and photography.

## **Curator**

Mateo Kries, Director of Vitra Design Museum

Press kit and HD visuals available for download on [mudac.ch/presse](https://mudac.ch/presse)





Marion Adnams, *Emperor Moths / Thunder On the Left*, 1963.  
Oil on panel, 56 x 45 cm © Raw collection

## MCBA

### Surréalisme. Le Grand Jeu

**12.4.2024 – 25.8.2024**

MCBA will stage its first thematic exhibition devoted to this movement since 1987, exploring its unprecedented topicality through the lens of play. *Surréalisme. Le Grand Jeu* brings together more than sixty historical and contemporary artists.

### Curators

Juri Steiner, director, MCBA

Pierre-Henri Foulon, contemporary art curator, MCBA

assisted by Paolo Baggi, external scientific collaborator, and Eleonora Del Duca, scientific collaborator, MCBA

More information on [mcba.ch](https://mcba.ch)



Man Ray, *Jacqueline Goddard*, vers 1932  
© Man Ray 2015 Trust / 2024, ProLitteris, Zurich

## Photo Elysée

### Man Ray. Liberating Photography

**29.3.2024 – 4.8.2024**

Photo Elysée presents an exhibition devoted to Man Ray entitled *Liberating Photography*. The exhibition will show the extent of the creativity of this renowned photographer, who belongs in the pantheon of twentieth-century artists.

### Curator

Nathalie Herschdorfer, director

More information on [elysee.ch](https://elysee.ch)

# Partners

Main partner of mudac

## Julius Bär

The Surrealism season is supported by Loterie Romande and the Leenaards Foundation, a partner in the *Résonances* project, which brings together the three museums through thematic commissions for local artists.



# Practical information

## Press tour at mudac

→ Wednesday 6 March 2024 at 10.30 a.m.

## Opening of the two surrealist exhibitions at mudac

→ Thursday 7 March 2024

## Opening times

- Monday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Closed on Tuesdays
- Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Thursday: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Friday to Sunday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Free admission on the first Saturday of the month

## Rates

- Visitors are invited to take advantage of the “1 ticket-3 museums” offer to visit all the Surrealism exhibitions at Plateforme 10. Valid for 3 months.
- Full price: CHF 25
- Reduced price: CHF 19
- Duo (visit for two): CHF 38
- Free for under-26s

## Media contact

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## HD Visuals

[mudac.ch/press](https://mudac.ch/press)

## mudac – museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts

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#mudaclausanne  
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f @mudac.design.museum  
@ @mudaclausanne

mudac, museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts, is a museum of the State of Vaud managed by the Plateforme 10 Foundation.

