



# From Reality to Wonder 2026 Programme

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|-------------|-----------------------|
| Page 3      | Jean Tschumi Designer |
| Pages 4-5   | Isao Takahata         |
| Pages 6-7   | What about us?        |
| Pages 8-9   | Hocus Pocus           |
| Pages 10-11 | Encontology           |
| Page 12     | RADDAR 3              |
| Page 13     | About mudac           |
| Page 14     | Partners              |
| Page 15     | Public programme      |
| Page 16     | Practical information |

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In 2026, mudac invites you to explore how design and the visual arts shape our representations of the world, from reality to wonder.

In spring, the exhibition devoted to Isao Takahata will celebrate one of the great masters of Studio Ghibli, whose work revolutionised animated cinema. The exhibition will not only trace the career of this remarkable director but also unveil a previously unseen section on the special ties Takahata maintained with Switzerland and the West, with particular emphasis on the Heidi series. At the same time, featuring nearly 350 pieces from the collection of Pierre Rosenberg – the distinguished art historian and Honorary Director of the Louvre – *What about us?* will highlight the technical virtuosity and formal beauty of Murano glass animals while exploring the complex and ambivalent relationship we maintain with living beings.

In autumn, two exhibitions open a season dedicated to magic: *Hocus Pocus* explores the links between magic and design from the late 19th century to the present day, showing how designers, true illusionists, rely on technical and scientific innovations to create wonder. *Encontology* presents devices conceived by designers to facilitate encounters with magical worlds and invites visitors to become, for the duration of the visit, a magician moving between several worlds.

Finally, 2026 will mark a new milestone with the opening of a 90 m<sup>2</sup> permanent space on mudac's exhibition floor: Le carré. Also accessible between temporary exhibition periods, this space will open in February with *Jean Tschumi Designer*, an exhibition devoted to the Swiss architect and the re-edition of his furniture designs.

27.02 — 26.04.2026

The mudac inaugurates its new exhibition space, *Le carré*, with *Jean Tschumi Designer*. This exhibition, created in collaboration with Vaudoise Insurance, focuses on a specific aspect of the great Swiss architect's work: his furniture design for *Le Cèdre*, the headquarters of Vaudoise Assurances in Lausanne.

### The Exhibition

With the headquarters of Vaudoise Assurances in Lausanne, Jean Tschumi created a true architectural masterpiece. His design, both rigorous and subtly nuanced, aspired to transparency, lightness and openness. It is a *Gesamtkunstwerk* – a total work of art – in which architecture, art and design come together to form an ensemble of rare harmony and exceptional quality.

As part of the restoration of this iconic building, Vaudoise Assurances entrusted the Swiss studio BIG-GAME with the task of reissuing the furniture Tschumi originally designed specifically for the site. The *Jean Tschumi Designer* exhibition showcases these re-editions – armless armchairs, a round marble and iron table, an office chair and a small side table – produced by the renowned Swiss furniture manufacturer Girsberger (founded in 1889), alongside the original pieces carefully preserved by Vaudoise Assurances.

These ensembles are accompanied by extensive documentation (photographs, films, archival material) tracing the genesis of the project and the designer's thought process.

Period archives place the furniture back in its original context, while contemporary documents shed light on the challenges involved in their re-edition: adapting them to current production methods, material and aesthetic requirements, as well as contemporary standards.

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Curators Jolanthe Kugler - mudac  
Nathalie Bender

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Scientific collaborator Diane Maechler - mudac  
Luisa Ferreira - mudac

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Scientific advisor Catherine Othenin-Girard

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Exhibition design Magali Conus - mudac  
Timo Walther - mudac

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Graphic design Notter + Vigne

### Le carré

*Le carré*, mudac's new exhibition space, covers roughly 90 m<sup>2</sup>. It offers the museum greater flexibility, allowing it, beyond its large-scale exhibitions that require lengthy preparation, to respond swiftly to current themes, to showcase works from its collection, to host external projects or to develop more intimate formats.

Designed as a genuine laboratory for experimentation, *Le carré* enables mudac to take a stand on contemporary issues while continuing its research work on the Archives of Design in French-speaking Switzerland. The *Jean Tschumi Designer* exhibition thus opens a new chapter in the history of mudac.



Henri Germond, Ground floor of the main building overlooking the park

© Archives de la Vaudoise Assurances, Lausanne  
Photo : Henri Germond

## Isao Takahata

### A Pioneer of Contemporary Animation, from the Post-war Era to Studio Ghibli 24.04 – 27.09.2026



*Pompoko*, 1994  
©1994 Isao Takahata/Studio Ghibli, NH

Isao Takahata (1935–2018) is regarded as one of the great masters of world animation. Co-founder of Studio Ghibli alongside Hayao Miyazaki in 1985, he had already, from the 1960s onwards, developed a body of work that is at once exacting, poetic and pioneering. Through his deeply humanistic vision, his narrative sensitivity and his daring formal approach, Takahata reinvented the language of animated film, liberating it from its traditional codes and turning it into an art form in its own right, recognised for what he himself called “the invention of animated reality”.

At mudac, the exhibition retraces the filmmaker’s career, from *Heidi, Girl of the Alps* to *Grave of the Fireflies* and *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*, through his notebooks and storyboards, original drawings, cels, film excerpts and audiovisual documents.

It also highlights an entirely new aspect: the special ties Takahata maintained with the West throughout his life, from his intellectual education to his role as a cultural bridge, and the accuracy of his depictions of the European world in landmark works such as *Heidi, Girl of the Alps*.

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Curator

Kazuyoshi Tanaka (Studio Ghibli)

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Scientific Advisory Team

Ilan Nguyễn (MEMA - Musée Européen du Manga et de l'Anime)

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Graphic design

Et d'eau fraîche

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## A Pioneer of Contemporary Animation, from the Post-war Era to Studio Ghibli 24.04 – 27.09.2026

### A Passion for Animated Film

In 1959, Isao Takahata joined Tōei's animation studio to become an animation director. *The Great Adventure of Horus, Prince of the Sun* (1968) was his first feature-length film. The first section of mudac's exhibition highlights the collaborative production methods he explored at the time, as well as the creative process behind developing a world that was less childlike and more complex.

### Everyday Pleasures

After leaving Tōei, Takahata revolutionised television animation with series such as *Girl of the Alps* (1974), *3000 Leagues in Search of Mother* (1976) and *Anne of Green Gables* (1979). Despite the demanding rhythm of producing one episode per week, he and his team succeeded in creating coherent, richly detailed worlds, portraying daily life with great precision across more than 50 episodes per series. Through storyboards, layouts and background art, a close examination of this collective work, carried out with collaborators including Hayao Miyazaki, reveals the filmmaking secrets behind Takahata's craft.

### Perspectives on Japanese Culture

From *Jarinko Chie* (1981) and *Gauche the Cellist* (1982) onwards, Takahata devoted himself to films set in Japan. This shift led to several feature films focusing on the archipelago's contemporary history, including *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988), *Only Yesterday* (1991) and *Pom Poko* (1994), all produced by Studio Ghibli, as well as the live-action documentary *The Story of Yanagawa's Canals* (1987).

### Sketches Full of Life

In the 1990s, Takahata divided his time between studying Japanese painted scrolls and exploring new forms of expression in animation, striving to integrate characters more fully into their backgrounds. *My Neighbours the Yamadas* (1999) and *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (2013) mark the culmination of this research. Takahata took on a genuine challenge: harnessing the transition to digital technology to create a graphic style based on sketching and water-colour, preserving on screen the vitality of the pencil line.

### A New Section at mudac: Isao Takahata – A Life and a Body of Work in Dialogue with the West

This part of the exhibition explores Isao Takahata's decisive relationship with the West, particularly the French-speaking world. It retraces his discovery of Prévert's poetic realism – a foundation of both his aesthetic and political engagement – and presents his in-depth research into *The Shepherdess and The Chimney-Sweep* (1953), through original documents that shed light on the origins of his vocation. It then examines the unprecedented challenge of adapting classic Western stories into animation (Heidi, Marco, Anne), combining ethnographic rigour with documentary ambition. Finally, it highlights Takahata's exchanges with Western artists (Grimault, Ocelot, Back, Norstein and many others), his influence on world animation and his major role in establishing animated film as a recognised art form. This journey illustrates the importance of sustained cultural exchange, portraying Takahata as a key figure in intercultural dialogue and a source of inspiration across borders.

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Curators for the new section  
at mudac

Xavier Kawa-Topor (NEF-Animation)  
Ilan Nguyễn (MEMA)

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## What about us?

# Glass Animals from the Pierre Rosenberg Collection

### 24.04 – 27.09.2026



Seguso Vetri d'Arte, fox-terrier, circa 1947

Courtesy LE STANZE DEL VETRO © Enrico Fiorese

With nearly 350 glass animals, from the collection of distinguished art historian and Honorary Director of the Louvre Pierre Rosenberg, and pieces from his donation to the Musée du Grand Siècle, the exhibition sheds light on this fascinating world, questioning our complex and ambivalent relationship with living beings. The diversity of forms, expressions and behaviours attributed to the animals reflects both our curiosity and desire to understand our environment, and our wish to master its representation and domestication.

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Curator Amélie Bannwart - mudac

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Scientific collaborator Diane Maechler - mudac

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Exhibition design Nathalie Opris

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Graphic design Enen Studio

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## Glass Animals from the Pierre Rosenberg Collection 24.04 – 27.09.2026



Bruno Amadi, *scorpio*, circa 1980

Courtesy LE STANZE DEL VETRO © Enrico Fiorese

Collected by Pierre Rosenberg since the 1960s through a deliberately intuitive and subjective approach, these pieces bear witness to a fascination with glass animals and to the legacy of three generations of Venetian artists. They exemplify a creative freedom oscillating between extreme stylisation and meticulous naturalism. Felines, birds, insects and fish appear stylised, frozen in glass, yet always imbued with a strong and distinctive personality.

Through their countless postures, these works reveal less about the animals themselves than about the way we perceive them, how we capture their defining features and shape their image. Filtered through the prism of our imagination, these animals move away from their original form to inhabit our interiors and become part of our everyday domestic lives.

A film revealing Pierre Rosenberg's *palazzo* in Venice has been specially produced for the occasion. The glass animals appear there in the environment they inhabit, that of their collector, who has taken care to position them in every corner of the architecture, so that they permeate the atmosphere of the place entirely.



Seguso Vetri d'Arte, *fish*, circa 1950

Courtesy LE STANZE DEL VETRO © Enrico Fiorese

It is within this zone of tension that Murano's glass animals reside. Far from being anecdotal, these works distil far deeper questions: contemplation of the living world or a projection of ourselves? Fascination or domestication? By multiplying forms, distinctive features and postures, these pieces do not offer a definitive truth about our relationship with animals but instead stage the cultural imagination through which that relationship is shaped. Through the sheer abundance of these animal figures, the exhibition reveals just how far this ordering of the living world is from being neutral. It reflects a gaze that relocates living beings into a framework that is no longer theirs, but ours.

By placing this bestiary within the museum – a space dedicated to preserving, classifying and exhibiting objects – *mudac* reinterprets the conventions of the display case in order to subvert them. The gaze shifts from the animal being observed to the human who observes it, revealing the very mechanisms that underpin our ambiguous relationship.



© Senate House Library, University of London

The exhibition *Hocus Pocus*, conceived by renowned design historian, critic and curator Alexandra Midal, explores how design has been shaped by popular and material culture, drawing not only on technology but also on magic and the occult. *Hocus Pocus* revisits the enchantment of everyday life through design from the Anthropocene Industrial Revolution onwards. It begins by dismantling the traditional prerogatives of the conjuror, showing how Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin, the first modern magician, originally trained as a clockmaker, invented automata and clocks, filed patents and created an early form of a smart home whose approaches, objects and aims were in no way different from those pursued by designers.

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|-------------------|----------------------|
| Curator           | Alexandra Midal      |
| Exhibition design | Adrien Rovero Studio |
| Graphic design    | To be determined     |

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*Hocus Pocus* draws on specific case studies, notably that of Henry Brown who, in 1848, while enslaved in Virginia and after seeing his wife and children sold by their master, resolved to escape his fate by sending himself through the postal service, hidden in a simple wooden box, to the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. Later becoming a hypnotist, he performed as a magician and came to embody the experience of African Americans subjected to slavery. His strategy belongs to a history of ingenuity shared both by stage conjuring and by the history of design.

Another case explored in the exhibition is that of the Davenport brothers, who devised a sealed Spirit Cabinet in which spirits appeared to make hands and musical instruments float in the air, a variation on Brown's vanishing act.

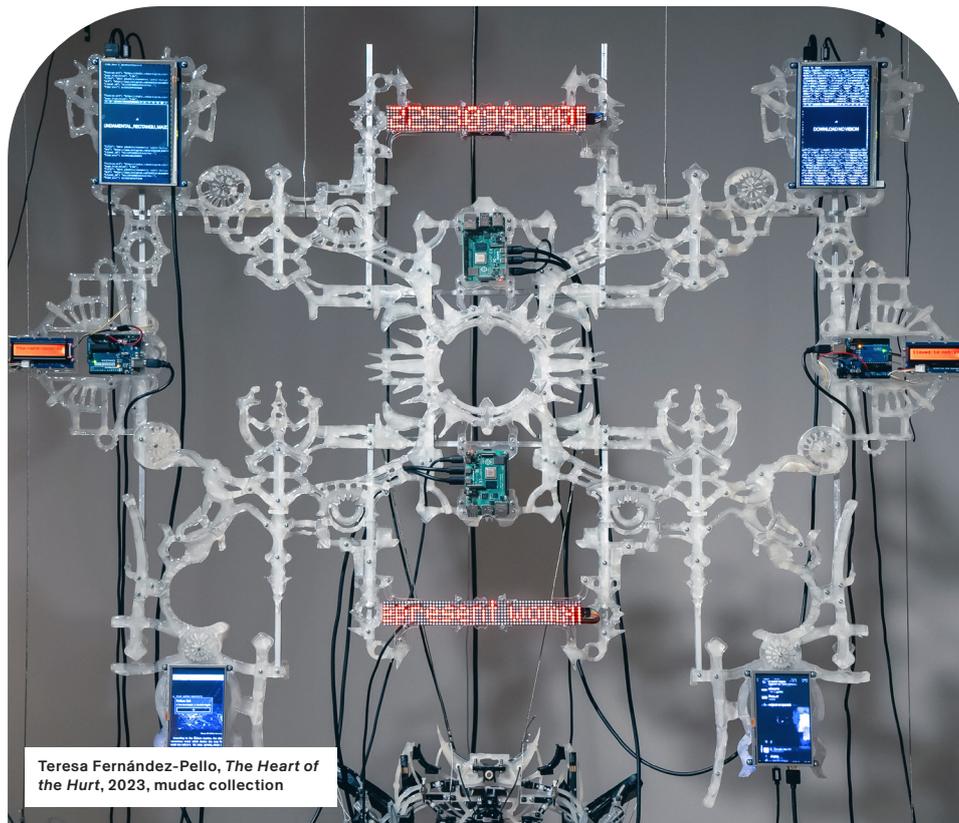
Harry Houdini, for his part, whose family immigrated to the United States in 1878, staged spectacular escapes. Having begun his career as a medium, he later turned against his former colleagues, notably accusing them of fraud.

Spiritualists and magicians perform the same sleights of hand, using the same objects to delight, entertain or deceive their audiences. When confronted with new technologies, spectators often assume they are being fooled by a conjuring trick. Upon first hearing Edison's phonograph, for instance, many believed a ventriloquist was hidden inside the mechanism. Technical innovation challenges the primacy of rationality.

In this sense, the aim of the exhibition is to question the role of the occult and of magic today in a context where the functional narratives of modernity are failing. It brings together artefacts, inventions, automata, posters, objects, photographs, notebooks and period documents, alongside works and projects created by contemporary designers, artists and filmmakers.

## Design for Magical Worlds

06.11.2026 — 11.04.2027



© Jin Byun

What if magical practices – rituals involving miraculous waters, mysterious communications with animals, states of trance or whispered secrets with healing powers – were not simply remnants of a distant and murky past, but gateways to broader realities? What if they were relational technologies far more sophisticated than our algorithms? And what if these marginalised forms of knowledge, whose effects are sometimes acknowledged by science even when their causes remain unexplained, held the keys to reinventing our relationship with the worlds around us? What if, far from being mere superstitions, they offered concrete tools for enabling the ecological, social and mental transitions we so urgently need?

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Curator

Scott Longfellow - mudac

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Exhibition design

Adrien Rovero Studio

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Graphic design

To be determined

**Design for Magical Worlds****06.11.2026 — 11.04.2027**

*Encontology: Design for Magical Worlds* explores this hypothesis. The exhibition focuses on practices that fiercely resist the modern worldview, one that dismisses them because it cannot explain their causes. These forms of knowledge – magnetism, rituals, dialogues with invisible entities – rest on radically different worldviews, or ontologies, in which humans are not the only actors: rivers have voices, forests think, energy is considered agentive and objects themselves become mediators between worlds.

Organised around encounters with non-humans (spirits, elements, entities and more), the exhibition presents devices created by designers to facilitate these exchanges. Objects that do not merely represent the invisible, but make it tangible, and even political.

Here, magic is not a step backwards, but a force for divergence: these “a-causal” practices, which reductive science struggles to grasp, point towards ways of resisting and transforming our relationships with

our environments, ways of escaping the extractivist dead end into which modernity has confined us, by relearning how to negotiate, listen and coexist with those who escape us.

Through immersive installations, contemporary rituals and speculative works, *Encontology* invites visitors to experience a world in which design becomes a tool for inhabiting the world differently – a world where the boundaries between rationality and enchantment blur, where technologies converse with the spiritual and where every visitor is invited, for the duration of the exhibition, to become a magician moving between multiple worlds.



Dunne & Raby, *Design for a World of Many Worlds*, 2023, collection mudac

© NGVTriennial\_KateShanasy

## Design Witches

### Design, trances, cults and feminism

#### RADDAR 3 explores the revolt of Shaker women

The collection RADDAR presents a bold third issue: *Design Witches. Design, trances, cults and feminism*. This new instalment explores the encounter between design and the seditious figure of the witch — one who rejects any domestic, sexual or social assignment in order to claim her autonomy.

Through the history of the Shakers, a socialist-utopian messianic movement founded in the 18th century by Ann Lee, RADDAR 3 sheds light on “the era of manifestations”, a decade of women’s revolts in which trance, song and creation became forms of expression and resistance. Caught between egalitarian utopia and the rise of industrial capitalism, these women reinvented the relationship between spirituality, the body and the production of objects — notably chairs, rocking chairs and flat brooms.

Armed with their brooms — meant to purify both souls and surfaces — the movement’s witches confronted patriarchal absolutism. *Design Witches* thus reveals another history of design: one of rebellious gestures, inhabited objects and long-silenced voices that return to haunt our contemporary practices.

#### About the author

Professor in design at HEAD – Geneva, film essayist and independant curator, Alexandra Midal combines a practice- and theory-based research in design theory and visual culture with exhibitions, films, and books

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|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Author               | Alexandra Midal       |
| Editorial management | Marie Taillan - mudac |
| Graphic design       | Chris Gautschi        |
| Editor               | mudac éditions        |
| Release              | 8 March 2026          |



Shakers near Lebanon, State of New York, ca 1829

© Communal Societies Collection, Hamilton



Ceiling broom, Church Family, Mount Lebanon, NY, 1961

© Shaker Museum



© Khashayar Javanmardi

The mudac - Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts is a Swiss institution dedicated to global and contemporary design, located in the Plateforme 10 arts district in Lausanne. Known for its bold exhibitions and commitment to applied research, the museum acts as a laboratory where scientific methods and creativity converge to address pressing societal topics. Housed in an iconic building designed by the Aires Mateus studio, mudac highlights the transformative potential of design through exhibitions, public programs, and research projects spanning applied arts, product design, architecture, and urban planning. Its mission is to explore desirable futures, making design accessible and relevant to all.

With a program of events and partnerships with designers, historians, and researchers, the museum offers innovative narratives on a local and international scale, inviting visitors to discover how design can help to shape and to understand the contemporary world.

### Plateforme 10

Inaugurated in June 2022, Plateforme 10 is a cultural venue and multidisciplinary arts district unlike any other in Europe. Strategically located a stone's throw from Lausanne railway station, the site brings together three museums, the MCBA - Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, the mudac - Musée cantonal de design et d'arts appliqués contemporains and Photo Elysée - Musée cantonal pour la photographie, respectively dedicated to fine art, design and photography, in two iconic, ultra-modern buildings. Set on an esplanade, the district totals more than 25,000 square meters entirely dedicated to culture in the heart of the city.

## Sponsors



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## Institutional partner

 **cinémathèque suisse**

## Members

LES AMI·E·S DU  
**mudac**

Find all the events and conferences, as well as practical information, prices and registration details at [mudac.ch](http://mudac.ch).

### Highlights

#### Fashion cycle at the Cinémathèque suisse Opening night: Wednesday 14 January

In collaboration with mudac, the Cinémathèque suisse presents an extensive series devoted to the links between fashion and cinema. A veritable parade of stars in 40 films, from the 1930s to the present day, and three special evenings with *Prêt-à-porter*, *Phantom Thread* in 70mm, and *The Devil Wears Prada*.

#### Talk - The Revolutions of Flemish Tapestry in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Thursday 29 January

Art historian Jan Blanc, Doctor in Early Modern Art History, will explore the redefinition of Flemish tapestry's status within the visual arts during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

- Free admission, no registration required

#### Inclusive Fashion Day Saturday 28 February

The Tu es canon collective from the ASA-HM Association and mudac invite you to a day of events and discussions exploring different ways to make fashion more accessible to everyone.

- Registration required

#### Talk - Magical practices: political and ecological levers? Saturday 21 March

What if contemporary magical practices transformed our relationship to the world? By acknowledging the influence of invisible forces, spirits, or even natural elements, these practices challenge our usual way of understanding reality. In partnership with the Histoire et Cité Festival

- Free admission, no registration required

#### Talk - The Vanishing of Alice Guy: Magic, Cinema, and Feminism Saturday, March 21

What is the connection between illusion and forgetting in the history of cinema? While Georges Méliès embraced visual magic, Alice Guy, the first fiction filmmaker and author of feminist satires, was erased from official narratives. This conference seeks to shed light on this unjustly forgotten pioneer. In partnership with the Histoire et Cité Festival

- Free admission, no registration required

#### Fête de la Musique Sunday 21 June

For the second time, the mudac is hosting the Fête de la Musique! Come and enjoy the excitement and discover sounds from Japan.

- Free admission, no registration required

#### Halloween at Plateforme 10 Saturday 31 October

Halloween is coming to Platform 10 as part of the season dedicated to magic, that will create some spine-tingling magic!

- Free admission, no registration required

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### Exhibitions openings

- Jean Tschumi Designer : Thursday 26 February 2026
  - Isao Takahata : Thursday 23 April 2026
  - What about us? : Thursday 23 April 2026
  - Hocus Pocus : Thursday 5 November 2026
  - Encontology : Thursday 5 November 2026
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### Media contact

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### Press

Press release and HD visuals available for download at the address:  
[mudac.ch/press](http://mudac.ch/press)

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#### mudac

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@mudaclausanne  
 #mudaclausanne

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#### Opening hours

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|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Monday    | 10 h - 18 h |
| Tuesday   | Closed      |
| Wednesday | 10 h - 18 h |
| Thursday  | 10 h - 20 h |
| Friday    | 10 h - 18 h |
| Saturday  | 10 h - 18 h |
| Sunday    | 10 h - 18 h |

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Cover visual: *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*  
 © 2013 Isao Takahata, Riko Sakaguchi / Studio Ghibli, NDHDMTK

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