



# LES TERRITOIRES DE L'ART MODESTE

**Press Kit**

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**MIAM Musée International des Arts Modestes**

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## MIAM is ten years old in Sète and elsewhere!

Inaugurated in 2000, the Musée International des Arts Modestes (MIAM) is celebrating its tenth birthday.

Ten years of passion and debate, but above all ten years of projects, more than thirty exhibitions and cultural events, publications and educational programmes.

MIAM is first and foremost an artist's project; it was born from the meeting of Hervé Di Rosa, a well-known contemporary artist, with Bernard Belluc an «artist-collector».

While the first of these men wanders the world to rub shoulders with all kinds of artistic expression, both fine art and popular art, the second lives in the midst of his vast and never-ending collections of everyday objects, midway between nostalgia and poetry.

Art Modeste would have been merely a pipedream if Hervé Di Rosa, supported by a handful of enthusiasts, had not managed to convince the town of Sète and the French Ministry of Culture and Communication to commit to the adventure.

In a former wine warehouse redesigned by architect Patrick Bouchain, a small team open to numerous guests, artists and curators, together with a host of cultural partners, has supported MIAM for the last ten years.

From the popular culture of Sète to popular culture around the world, memorable exhibits include 1000 Pavois? and Le manège enchanté.

Paradirama, terra incognita of artistic creation, and Bang! Bang!, where artists examined the relationship between objects and society, Narcochic Narcochoc looking at the nature of narcoculture, and @ Table ! which examined the relationship between food, art and culture, and Coquillages & Crustacés, an exhibition recently re-shown by the Musée des beaux-arts in Brest, are just some of the other exhibits that will be remembered as highlights of MIAM programming.

Also engraved in the memory are the exhibit Graffiti Stories, l'Art modeste sous les bombes, where artists sprayed every single bit of the Museum, from floor to ceiling, and the giant tagine created by Nicolas Simarik for the 2007 edition of MiamMiam Glou-Glou.

Finally, we should also mention the two inaugural exhibitions Mexico Mexico! and Fait Maison which set out the infinite and ever-shifting roots of Art Modeste, lying as it does between Art Brut, Art Singulier, the popular arts and contemporary art.

All of these projects, exhibits and events have been made possible thanks to the commitment of artists, many of whom have produced works for MIAM.

All of our cultural partners, the Haitian Alliance in Miami, the Maison Folie Wazemmes and the Gammelle Publique in Lille, the Musée d'art et d'industrie in Saint-Etienne, the Musée de l'abbaye Sainte-Croix in Sables d'Olonne, and the Musée d'Art moderne Lille-Métropole have expanded the spirit and audience of Art Modeste through joint curation of exhibits with MIAM.

In 2000, at the opening of MIAM, Hervé Di Rosa wrote: «Art Modeste belongs to no era and to no nation, and yet to all of them at once».

Ten years later, MIAM, faithful to its origins, continues and is committed to its work: bringing together unlikely confrontations between contemporary art, the popular arts and Arts Singuliers from France and elsewhere, questioning the relationships between the work of art and the collection and the collection and the exhibition, blurring the boundaries between artists and curators, and finally embracing the generous appreciation of all its visitors.

Today, the wager made by Art Modeste has been won and major cultural institutions no longer hesitate to take the paths cleared by MIAM.

In ten years, the world has profoundly changed and MIAM's sole ambition is to act as a «modest» witness to these new developments.

With other artists, other lands and other stories, the adventure of Art Modeste is set to continue, in Sète and elsewhere.

**Norbert Duffort**

**“Art Modeste exists throughout the planet, is a worldwide phenomenon.**

**It takes its inspiration from native cultures and the geographical and historical sensibilities in the places it originates from. It is deeply rooted in its own context but also, more often than not, allows itself to be carried along by foreign influences.**

**Art Modeste is the unmocking examination by the collector or artist of everyday objects and creations without a specific function, usually anonymous or collective in nature».**

**Hervé Di Rosa**

Founded by the artists **Hervé Di Rosa** and **Bernard Belluc** in 2000, the Musée International des Arts Modestes is a laboratory open to artists of all generations and from all backgrounds. MIAM has placed marginal or peripheral creative works at the heart of its mission and promoted interchange between high culture and popular culture. In ten years, MIAM has presented the work of more than 300 artists from around the world in exhibits that are always surprising and unexpected, with more than 250,000 visitors passing through its doors.

On the occasion of its tenth anniversary, MIAM is putting on an exceptional exhibit: “Les Territoires de l’Art Modeste”. Twelve exhibits in one, giving an overview of almost all the fields of creativity explored by MIAM over the last 10 years, with works by established or emerging, anonymous or famous contemporary artists, self-taught or unconventional artists, from the street or Art Brut, from popular arts and underground culture.

Hervé Di Rosa, the inventor of Art Modeste and Head Curator of the exhibition, has invited several well-known artists who share this vision to celebrate the occasion. They will unveil their collections, stage the artists they admire and initiate dialogue between their works and Art Modeste. Once again, MIAM offers a meeting place for diverse artistic approaches, in highly differing contexts (prison, the street, the rural world, from Brazil to India, Africa and Europe) and in all disciplines (music, graphic arts, cinema, digital arts, architecture, etc.).

The public will therefore have the opportunity of discovering original comic strips created by a self-taught artist in the 1940s that were rediscovered by **Robert Combas**, the Catalan composer **Pascal Comelade** and his mechanical orchestra, the “**Frédéric Magazine**” collective and its graphic cabinet, the freely creative works of the Argentine painter **Antonio Seguí** around Bamoun drawings from Cameroon, the museum home of **Bernard Belluc**, co-founder of MIAM, the art of “paños”, the collection of the Pop Galerie, staged by artist **Stéphane Pencreac’h**, an installation by film director **Michel Gondry** based on the set from the film *La science des rêves*, as well as *Aux marges de l’art brut* presented by writer **Laurent Danchin**, the digital creations of designer **Etienne Mineur** and his associate **Bertrand Duplat**, the installation of patuas from Bengal by travelling artist **NG** and the collection of Brazilian cordeis of **Monsieur Chevrot**, given a new twist by the collector **Philippe Artaud**, with author-curator **Philippe Saulle**, writer and publisher **Robert Gordienne** and printer and engraver **François Dezeuze**.

Staging of the exhibit has been entrusted to **Isabelle Allégret**, theatre and interior designer, and a regular collaborator with the MIAM architect, **Patrick Bouchain**, most notably for artistic events such as «Aux portes de l’An 2000», on the Champs-Élysées, «Des bêtes et des hommes» in 2007 in the Parc de la Villette in Paris and currently the staging for the «Les goûts uniques» festival at Lieu Unique in Nantes.

# On the programme:

## “Les Territoires de l’Art Modeste”

### 1- *Vitrines (Showcases)*

«**Frédéric Magazine**» is a collective specialising in drawing and devoted to making the work of graphic artists from widely varying backgrounds better known. For the tenth birthday of MIAM, Frédéric Magazine has designed a mobile graphics cabinet. The project, created as a public commission, will be constructed by the five founding members of the collective: **Isabelle Boinot / Frédéric Fleury / Emmanuelle Pidoux / Frédéric Poincelet / Stéphane Prigent** (aka kerozen) and supplied with works from artists and regular contributors to the website and the works of “Frédéric magazine”.

### 2- *Chez Bernard (At home with Bernard)*

The co-founder of MIAM with Hervé Di Rosa, and a passionate collector of Art Modeste, Bernard Belluc will recreate part of his museum home for MIAM’s tenth birthday.

### 3- *La bande dessinée retrouvée (The comic strip rediscovered)*

**Robert Combas** will stage an astonishing series of plates drawn in Paris in the 1940s by **Maurice Chot**, a self-taught teenager who in the midst of the war armed himself with pencils and penholders to reinvent the comic strips that were unavailable in those troubled times. A unique collection of hundreds of drawings miraculously discovered by the artist. Popular heroes remixed in revised and amended stories, a moving slice of life that will elicit admiration.

**Curator: Pascal Saumade**

### 4- *Bamoun Picasso*

An exceptional example of graphic art from sub-Saharan Africa, the drawing tradition of the Bamoun from Cameroon has been passed down from the late 19th century in a highly strict style, repeating the same themes and the same drawings. But for some time now, several young Bamoun artists have broken with tradition and are starting to draw scenes from contemporary life.

MIAM will present a collection of Bamoun drawings staged by the Argentinian artist Antonio Segui.

**Curator: Jean Seisser**

### 5- *Les cordeis & collections Artaud la nuit*

Sold in the streets of Brazil, the cordel is a small booklet containing several sheets of poetry or popular song printed on low-quality paper, the cover of which is usually illustrated with a woodcut or linocut. Art Modeste par excellence, the cordeis contain treasu-

res of marvellous graphic and literary invention. The collector **Philippe Artaud** will present the Cordeis in the midst of his iconoclastic collections and will lead a workshop on printing with the assistance of author **Philippe Saulle**, writer and publisher **Robert Gordienne** printer and engraver **François Dezeuze**.

### 6- *De l’intérieur! (From the inside!) Paños, Chicano prison art*

The art of paños and pañuelos, the word for handkerchief in Spanish, first appeared in the 1940s in the prisons of Texas, New Mexico and Southern California. By drawing with ink, wax or coffee on cotton handkerchiefs, prisoners could pass messages to their loved ones outside the prison. This technique was passed down from one generation of prisoners to the next with its own codes and style. MIAM has asked **Stéphane Pencreac’h** to stage these fabrics diverted from their original purpose and collected by La Pop Galerie.

**Curator: Pascal Saumade**

### 7- *NG et les patuas*

Like the minstrel, the patua goes from village to village carrying a shoulder bag filled with rolled up paintings. In front of the villagers gathered around him, he unrolls one of his paintings and sings its story. The subjects painted by the patuas of Western Bengal are extremely varied (sacred texts, history and politics). This art is a living tradition constantly enriched with new stories.

The exhibit of roll paintings will be staged by contemporary artist **NG** who will also present his audiovisual installation «Limits of paradise». Through his nomadic artistic projects, **NG** explores all kinds of collective life and work situations, coming up against a wide range of customs and habitats.

**Curator: Hervé Perdriolle**

### 8- *Aux marges de l’Art brut (Cinq outsiders singuliers) On the fringes of Art Brut (Five unconventional outsiders)*

Art Brut has always occupied an important position in MIAM programming. For its second birthday, the Museum asked **Laurent Danchin**, writer, art critic, exhibit organiser, well-known personality and tireless promoter of this unconventional art, to offer an original selection of artists on the fringes of Art Brut.

## 9- **Street Art**

In 2007, MIAM presented "L'Art Modeste sous les bombes", an exhibition bringing together 12 artists from planet graffiti to provide an inventory of street art. Three years later, the Museum is handing over its main wall to **Rostarr**, co-founder with Doze Green, David Ellis, Maya Hayuk and Swoon, of the New York collective Barnstormers, the explosive new guard of the young Brooklyn scene.

**Curator: Pascal Saumade**

## 10- **Le livre qui voulait être un jeu vidéo (The book that wanted to be a videogame)**

**Etienne Mineur** and his associate **Bertrand Duplat** are working on the future of the book and how it is read in the 21st century, in the wake of the great digital and web media revolution. Interactivity, and videogames in particular, are leading to new concepts in terms of narration and the role of the reader. At a time when books are entering the computer in various ways (online press, ebooks, etc.) why not imagine the reverse and bring the computer into real-life books?

## Practical information:

MIAM Musée International des Arts Modestes  
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## Opening hours

October 1 - March 31 : Open daily from 10.00 to 12.00 and 14.00 to 18.00 except Mondays .  
April 1 - September 30 : Open every day from 9.30 to 19.00  
Annual shutdowns: January 1, May 1, November 1 and December 25.  
Free tour from Tuesday to Saturday at 14:30

## Admission

Adults : 5 €  
Groups of 10 and more : 3 €  
Students, 10-18 years old and School groups : 2 €  
Children under 10, seeking work, school groups from Sète, First Sunday in the month : free

For one year, a monthly event will be organised by MIAM around each of the 12 exhibitions.

Preview on Friday 26 November 2010 at 6 pm: "Original cocktail by Dorothee Selz" specially created for MIAM.

Catalogue: a box set containing twelve 34-page catalogues for each exhibition.  
Publisher: INVENIT.

Head Curator: Hervé Di Rosa assisted by Pascal Saumade.

## Press Contact

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## 11- **PQ Ville**

**Michel Gondry**, film and video director, but also musician, and **Sylvain Arnoux**, architect and designer will stage for MIAM's tenth birthday party the original set from the film «La science des rêves». For this film, in which actual filming is mixed with animation, **Gondry** has invented his own work tools. The set has been entirely designed from cardboard boxes and plastic packaging film.

## 12- **Rocanrolorama**

**Pascal Comelade** is a Catalan musician and composer born in 1955 in Montpellier, who has created a very special musical world, in particular through the use of toy musical instruments: toy pianos, electric organs, accordions, percussion, etc. After composing the Museum's anthem with Général Alcazar in 2000, for MIAM's tenth birthday **Pascal Comelade** will present his miniature mechanical orchestra jointly produced with **Christian Laporte**.

