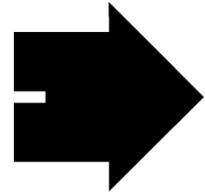


Maison d'Ailleurs – Museum of Science Fiction, Utopia and Extraordinary Journeys
Place Pestalozzi 14 – P.O. Box 945 - 1401 Yverdon-les-Bains – Switzerland
T : + 41 24 425 64 38 - F : + 41 24 425 65 75 - @ : www.ailleurs.ch



Superman, Batman & Co... mics !

PRESS KIT / Practical informations

Maison d'Ailleurs
Museum of Science Fiction,
Utopia and Extraordinary Journeys

Place Pestalozzi 14
P.O. Box 945
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Exhibition opened
from March 23 to September 21, 2014
Tue-Fr 2-6pm, Sa-Su 11am-6pm

Press conference
Thursday, March 20, 2014, at 10:30am

Opening ceremony
Saturday, March 22, 2014, from 3:30pm



© Mathias Schmied



© Audrey Piguet



© Adrian Tranquilli

SUMMARY

Project abstract	p. 3
The temporary exhibition : “Superman, Batman & Co... mics!” Exhibition, Catalogue, Thematic booklet, Mediation program, Side-program, Night of museums	p. 4
The semi-permanent exhibitions : “Memories from the Future” and “Jules Verne Space” Concept, « Memories from the Future », « Jules Verne Space »	p. 7
Yverdon-les-Bains, a SuperCity !	p. 8
Opening ceremony program	p. 9
Partners	p. 10

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the colourful universe of the superheroes' is well-known, especially in its cinematographic version: Superman, Batman, Spider-Man and other Avengers meet up on our cinema screen and never stop fighting for the first rank at the international Box-Office, season after season. It would really be necessary to keep away from the movie theatres not to acknowledge an unprecedented cultural phenomenon – a phenomenon which had already modified the contemporary cultural landscape as Jean-Marc Lainé reminds us (in *Super-héros! La Puissance des masques*, 2011): “No summer goes by without a blockbuster on superheroes nor a week without a broadcast on their adventures”.

Coming from the comic books' imagination, these stylish characters – at the crossroad of adventurers who made the glory of science fiction pulp magazines at the beginning of the 20th century, of freaks and of popular culture heroes – have seized the Hollywood blockbusters. However, if they are so present in our everyday life, if their distinctive attributes are used in so many different horizons (toys, advertisings, clothes, anthologies...) and if they became the source of inspiration for an increasing number of artists – let's think of Adrian Tranquilli (IT), Gilles Barbier (FR), Mathias Schmied (CH/FR), Alexandre Nicolas (FR) and Audrey Piguet (CH) –, it is because they seem to speak to – and about – our human nature.

The *Maison d'Ailleurs* decided to pay tribute to this “Comic Books Culture” and to explore its aesthetical ramifications through an exceptional and original exhibition. *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* features the Artworks of five European contemporary artists working on five classical artistic techniques (sculpture, painting, composition, inclusion, photography). Thus, museum's visitors are invited to enter the exhibition spaces in order to discover how, and for what purposes, contemporary art reinvests popular culture while understanding – with the help of the *Maison d'Ailleurs'* museographic device – that these heroic figures keep talking, today more than ever, about our humanity. It is obvious that the *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* exhibition was created to state the obvious: superheroes are only mirrors held in front of our faces and of our world.



© Alexandre Nicolas



© Alexandre Nicolas



© Gilles Barbier

THE TEMPORARY EXHIBITION « SUPERMAN, BATMAN & CO... MICS ! »

23.03.2014 – 21.09.2014

THE EXHIBITION

Noble Art is too often contrasted with Popular Art: the first one might speak about human condition, the second one about our consumerist world. However, since the works of Lichtenstein, Warhol and their illustrious successors, it is obvious that Popular Art – *Pop Art* – exhibits its multiple treasures: it certainly evokes the mediated structure of our societies but, behind them, it reminds us that human nature cannot be thought without the images in which this nature reflects and diffracts itself day after day. *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* is a reflection on the existing artistic poverty and the tendency to aesthetically compartmentalise the artistic world, not allowing diversity of art. However, this exhibition also underlines the fact that superheroes have become standards – models – helping us to assess our behaviours, our ambitions and our competitive strategies: they have turned into icons. The artists of *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* strive to lead astray those icons to remind us that individuals, even if they see themselves through fiction, are never abstractions.

So you will understand that *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* is not an exhibition that deals with the history of the *comic book*, but a project revealing the symbolism of the superheroes. This symbolism, exhibited in the different rooms of the *Maison d'Ailleurs*, illustrates that only Art is able to disclose in an emotional way: superheroes are figures of humanity. In a world tortured by foreseen obsolescence, identity troubles, difficulties to find our own place and an ever rising feeling of insecurity, the superhero seems to be our most-accurate mirror: far from the superhuman gifted with infinite powers he used to be, he shows more and more his uncertainties and his weaknesses. He does not stop trying to be – just as we are trying to be – and trying to believe in his actions and values – just as we do. This exhibition allows us to focalize our attention on a century of superheroes by means of five artists, whose talent succeeded in taking up the tragic part of these figures: the 20th century tried to fight against socio-political disaster, the 21st century discovers it deep in our hearts. Adrian Tranquilli, Gilles Barbier, Mathias Schmied, Alexandre Nicolas and Audrey Piguet look into our intimacies, sometimes gained by disarray, and invite us to understand with their artworks that these superheroes are in fact the distorted images of our individualities.



© Adrian Tranquilli



© Audrey Piguet

THE CATALOGUE

It's uncommon to see an exhibition opening at *Maison d'Ailleurs* with two catalogues: one bilingual exhibition catalogue (FR/EN) and a thematic booklet. The first one, called into being with the help of Urban Comics – French publisher specialized in Comic Books industry and official representative of the American DC Comics in France – and the *Maison d'Ailleurs*, articulates itself on exhibition artworks: we'll contemplate the *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* five artists' masterpieces and the original essays written for each of them.



Summary:

- "Foreword", by Marc Atallah
- "Preface", by David Lloyd
- "Gilles Barbier: Memories from the Bodies...", by Sarah Dirren
- "Alexandre Nicolas: Genesis of the Ordinary Heroes", by Agathe Chevalier
- "Audrey Piguet: The Emergence of an Artist", by Deganit Perez
- "Mathias Schmied: Superhero of the Scalpel", by Florian Schmied
- "Adrian Tranquilli: Dotted Heroes", by Laurent Delaloye
- "SHEBAM! POW! BLOP! WIZZ! Superheroes and Modern Art", by Jean-Marc Lainé
- "Afterword", by Urban Comics

Technical sheet:

22,8 x 29,5 cm

112 pages – 45 images

CHF 25.- / 20 €

THE THEMATIC BOOKLET

In order to continue its vulgarization work on the science fiction role in our everyday life, the *Maison d'Ailleurs* decided to publish short essays – "Les Collections de la Maison d'Ailleurs" – that offer several perspectives on the exhibition's main theme that one can see at a particular moment, and an exceptional iconographic selection.

Available from March 22, 2014, the second volume of this collection is based on the superheroes theme: it explores it by means of short essays, all illustrated by images that come from the documentary funds of the *Maison d'Ailleurs* – the funds where object for *Memories From The Future* come from – as well as from the "Cinémathèque suisse".



Summary:

- "De l'autre côté du miroir... ", by Marc Atallah
- "Les super-héros : histoire d'un renouvellement", by Frédéric Jaccaud
- "Itinéraire du super-héros", by Francis Valéry
- "Du papier à l'écran : la révolution numérique", by Frédéric Maire
- "Superman, Batman & Co... mics !", by Marc Atallah

Technical sheet:

12x17,5 cm – soft binding with square fold

96 pages – 40 pictures

CHF 9.- / 7,30 €

THE MEDIATION PROGRAM

The museum's team offers its different publics (families, schools and adults) some measures for visiting the *Maison d'Ailleurs* in an adapted way:

- A new interactive visit based on iPads and especially dedicated to families will be available from March 23, 2014 ;
- Three pedagogical files established in partnership with CIIP (7-10 y.o., 10-14 y.o. and 15-18 y.o.) can be found there : <http://www.ailleurs.ch/en/mediation-culturelle/dossiers-pedagogiques/> ;
- You can also find our brand new audio-guides: from March 23, 2014, visitors could discover the impressive history of the objects exhibited in the museum for free.

THE SIDE-PROGRAM

Several activities for the different publics of the *Maison d'Ailleurs* are planned during the whole exhibition period. Here are some examples:

- From March 27 to March 28, 2014, an international symposium will be held at the University of Lausanne and will explore the reception of US comic books in the European world. This symposium organized by *Maison d'Ailleurs'* Director (Marc Atallah) is part of the exhibition program (www.unil.ch/fra);
- April 30, 2014, the University of Lausanne will organize inside its walls a « Public Lesson » on the superheroes' thematic, in partnership with the *Maison d'Ailleurs* (<http://www.unil.ch/courspublic>);
- From April 11 to April 27, 2014, the *Maison d'Ailleurs* will participate to « PaKôMUZé » and will offer free activities with the entrance fee;
- April 26, 2014, from 10:30am to 12:30pm, a "Stop-Motion" workshop will be organized;
- On May 17 and 24, two photography workshops animated by Audrey Piguet – one of the artists' exhibition – will be offered to children and teenagers;
- During the Night of museums at Yverdon-les-Bains, on June 7, 2014, David Boller, a Swiss scriptwriter and drawer of comics, will come to sign the two first volumes of his *Tell* comic book and will do, like last year, a speed painting demo in the *Jules Verne Space*;
- On June 21, during the Music Festival in Yverdon-les-Bains, an animation on the Moon theme will delight the visitors;
- On September 6, from 10:15am to 12:30pm, the children will be invited to create their own comic book.

NIGHTS OF MUSEUMS

The *Maison d'Ailleurs* will be partner with the Night of Museums in Geneva, a rare unique opportunity that needs to be highlighted: this Night will be organized on the theme of "Super-Museums" and will be adapted – with a specific graphic design – to the Night of Museum in Yverdon-les-Bains. Thus, an original and innovative synergy will be offered in the Roman part of Switzerland this year: Geneva and Yverdon-les-Bains will unite around superheroes' figures, showing hence a new way to think of cultural partnerships.

- Date of the Night in Geneva: Saturday and Sunday, May 17-18, 2014
- Date of the Night in Yverdon-les-Bains: Saturday, June 7, 2014

THE SEMI-PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS « MEMORIES FROM THE FUTURE » AND « JULES VERNE SPACE »

CONCEPT

The *Maison d'Ailleurs* relies on a particular museographic device: the museum uses its two semi-permanent exhibitions to contextualize – historically and aesthetically – the contemporary artists' artworks presented in the temporary space. However, such a contextualization means being able to replace – at each new exhibition – the 250 objects that constitute *Memories from the Future* and the *Jules Verne Space* in order to create an original dialogue with the exhibited theme at that time. This rotation is the strength of the museum: the visitors discover new exceptional archives at each visit and can better understand the origins and the originality of the artworks shown in the temporary area – and all that, independently of their knowledge of the science fiction genre!

“MEMORIES FROM THE FUTURE”

The ground floor and the first floor of the *Maison d'Ailleurs* are dedicated to the history of superheroes, i.e. the theme approached in *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* When the ground floor shows with the help of several objects a panoramic vision of this aesthetic throughout the 20th century, the first floor provides four perspectives: the “Literature” room presents novels based on superhero characters, the “Comic Book” room shows the three major ages of the comics tradition, the “Cinema” room exhibits superhero movies – especially through the special selection of films extracts made by the NIFFF –, and the “Music” room helps us to appreciate the acoustic dimension of these unlimited-power supermen. Thus, visitors can see the ancestors of superheroes (Le Nyctalope, Flash Gordon, The Shadow), a Superman's puzzle from the 1930s' and a kryptonite-gun from the 1940s', the first issue of Marvel Comics of 1961, lobby cards from the *Batman* series (1966) or contemporary movies posters, a role-playing game from Marvel (1986), some funny action puppets from MAD (2012) – and so many others things, well-known or not!

Surrounded by the museum heritage dedicated to superheroes, visitors will not enter the temporary space at the second floor as if they had not already seen a lot of these popular literature heroes. Indeed, *Memories from the Future* is a “matrix” which suggests to create some aesthetical parallels and to grasp the history of a culture.

“JULES VERNE SPACE”

Once *Memories from the Future* and the temporary space crossed, the bridge leads to the *Jules Verne Space*, a place dedicated to the “retro-futuristic” works of La Chaux-de-Fonds School of Applied Arts' students – and, particularly, those who work in the graphic design, jewelry, fashion and multimedia departments. Two more rooms complete the visit of the *Maison d'Ailleurs* by offering new outlooks on the main exhibition theme. The first one exhibits several artistic works created by La Chaux-de-Fonds School of Applied Arts' students: amazing second skins and costumes that would have been worn by 19th century heroes if they were superheroes. The second room – the pulps one – presents super-jewels and multimedia creations created by two other students groups from the same School. The “retro-futuristic” journey can finally begin!

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Three exhibition spaces, twelve rooms showing twelve standpoints on a fundamental topic of our society: the thematic of superheroes should not be considered as a simple word or reduced to some movies, but it can eventually be accepted as an important tradition, whose quality can be seen in the *Superman, Batman & Co... mics!* Artworks.



© School of Applied Arts

YVERDON-LES-BAINS, A SUPERCITY !

The City of Yverdon-les-Bains resonates this year with *Superman, Batman & Co...mics !* - the new *Maison d'Ailleurs'* exhibition - through the original urban concept of « SuperCity ». This latter is used on several areas between March and September 2014.

First, it was necessary to prove oneself worthy of all the superheroes that will be met at the *Maison d'Ailleurs'* as off March 23, 2014. To do this, Yverdon-les-Bains signed a twinning programme with *Gotham City* during an official ceremony that took place on March 5 and in which a charter of friendship was signed between the two cities.

On March 22, Yverdon-les-Bains also joins the opening ceremony of the *Superman, Batman & Co ... mics !* exhibition. For the first time in Switzerland, the City will host the Batmobile from the Tim Burton movie of 1989 on Place Pestalozzi. It can also briefly be seen driving through the Thermal City's streets the same day on the opening ceremony day...

Finally, that same day, Yverdon-les-Bains will inaugurate the super-roundabouts: available throughout the entire territory of the Nord vaudois municipality, eight roundabouts have been dressed in the colours of a mythical superhero. Each roundabout will be equipped with QR-Codes (in which anecdotes about their official hero are integrated) and, thus, will create an urban journey for population and tourists. This journey, somehow, is an extension of the *Maison d'Ailleurs'* exhibition and an original and funny way to discover Yverdon-les-Bains !

All the informations on SuperCity are available on www.ylb.ch/supercity



OPENING CEREMONY PROGRAM

The Maison d'Ailleurs Foundation – Museum of science fiction, utopia and extraordinary journeys – is pleased to invite you to the opening of its new exhibition on Saturday, March 22, 2014, from 10 a.m. The formal part will take place at 6 p.m. in the tent that will be set up for that occasion on Place Pestalozzi in Yverdon-les-Bains.

PROGRAM

10 a.m. | Place Pestalozzi
Brunch served by superheroes
Partners: Le Trèfle Gourmand
Gonflable-events.ch

3.30 p.m. | Place Pestalozzi
Departure of the parade for children in costumes

4 p.m. | Maison d'Ailleurs
Official opening of the museum doors

4 p.m. | Caves du Château
Interactive projections for children
Partner: Fit SA

4 p.m. | Maison d'Ailleurs
Photo session with Batman and the Batmobile
Partner: Movie Cars Central

4.30 p.m. | Downtown
Artistic performance by Massimo Furlan
Partner: Théâtre de l'Echandole

5.45 p.m. | Place Pestalozzi
"Couleur3" Photo session
Partner: Couleur3

6 p.m. | Place Pestalozzi
Formal part and Costumes awards

7 p.m. | Caves du Château
Cocktail

9 p.m. | Maison d'Ailleurs
End of the opening ceremony

PARTNERS

Project management

Maison d'Ailleurs

Director:	Marc Atallah
Administrator:	Marie DuPasquier
Curator in charge of the Collec.	Frédéric Jaccaud
Coordinator:	Patricia Valceschini
Communication Manager:	Mona Juillard
Research Assistant:	Julien Gardon

Scenography

Serge Perret (CH)

Graphic design

Notter+Vigne (CH)

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Partners of the exhibition

Main partners

SPECo	Loterie romande
City of Yverdon-les-Bains	Nord Vaudois Development Association
	La Chaux-de-Fonds' Applied Arts School

Official partners

Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (BCV)	Urban Comics
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Partners

Ernst Göhner Stiftung	Sandoz Family Office
City of Geneva's Night of museums	French Embassy in Switzerland
RailAway	CIIP
NIFFF	Cinémathèque suisse
AMDA	

Economic partners

Payot Libraire	World Art Design
Winegrowers of Bonvillars	Artgraphic Cavin SA
Ilford	Ted Support
Herren	Ernest Gabella SA

Media partners

Couleur3	La Région
Actu SF	

Events partners

UNIL	EPFL
Théâtre de l'Echandole	Fit SA
Movie Cars Central	Gonflable-events.ch
Le Trèfle Gourmand	

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Catalogue *Superman, Batman & Co... mics !*

Our thanks go to

Urban Comics

-

Thematic booklet *Les Super-héros*

Our thanks go to

ActuSF	Friends of the Maison d'Ailleurs Association
ADNV	Ernest Gabella SA