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Laura Mannelli awarded Indépendance Grant

Luxembourg, 21 June 2017: The judging panel unanimously chose Laura Mannelli as the winner of the Indépendance Grant. Her project, *The Promises of Monsters*, will be displayed at BIL's Galerie Indépendance from 19 October.

The judging panel, composed of representatives from the world of art (FOCUNA, Casino Luxembourg - Forum d'art contemporain, Rotondes) and innovation (Digital Lëtzebuerg), as well as the Fondation Indépendance and BIL, was unanimously won over by *The Promises of Monsters*. Based on an immersive world inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Laura Mannelli's project blends elements of plastic arts, video games, new forms of narrative and architecture.

The Luxembourg architect and artist, who graduated from the Ecole nationale supérieure d'architecture Paris-Malaquais, has been developing a concept based on virtual realities and their new paradigms for several years now, using digital art as an area of research. Co-founder of the *Human Atopic Space* (HAS), the group behind the *Atopic Festival*, which was one of the first in Europe dedicated to virtual realities and machinima, Laura Mannelli also unveiled her *Ech Sinn Melusine* project at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. She has taken part in a number of digital arts festivals, and also participated in the 2014 *Nuit Blanche* in Paris, where she exhibited her *Beyond Bitmaps* project, an interactive architectural work. More recently in 2017, she led and participated in several bold art projects. These include the *Near Dante Experience*, where she collaborated with Gérard Hourbette, one of the members of legendary band Art Zoyd and a big name in electro-acoustic music, as well as the City Film Fest's *Pavillon Réalité Virtuelle* at Casino Luxembourg - Forum d'art contemporain.

"Digital artists working with virtual realities – a very specific field – rarely have the opportunity to exclusively occupy an exhibition space. I am especially honoured to have been selected for this grant as my Luxembourgish identity is what inspired my thinking and led me to focus on virtual realities," explained Laura Mannelli.

She added that *"From being the home of the creator of a new genre of literature, Hugo Gernsback, said to have been born in Bonnevoie, who was the first to use the term 'science fiction' to describe fictitious worlds or societies that have been enhanced with science and new technologies, to the country's current ventures into asteroid mining, to me, Luxembourg has always been a natural breeding ground for new ideas and pioneering spirit. 'The Promises of Monsters', a title inspired by Donna Haraway's 'A Cyborg Manifesto', could be seen as a work of 'design fiction'. The exhibition will display an array of staged artefacts which the public will be able to interact with in order to explore the possible reality of a whole new world. What could these new technological paradigms have in store for us? To echo Hugo Gernsback, 'Extravagant Fiction Today – Cold Fact Tomorrow'."*



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The Promises of Monsters, a bold project in terms of both form and substance, will be exhibited in two parts. The first will be displayed from 30 June to 28 August at Rotondes. The Indépendance Grant will allow the artist to develop and display the second part of this protean creation in the spaces of the Galerie Indépendance.

Launched in February 2017 by the National Cultural Fund, the Fondation Indépendance and BIL, the aim of the Indépendance Grant is to support the creative process behind innovative works in the area of digital arts and new technologies. It is the only initiative of its kind in Luxembourg, and represents yet another example of BIL's drive for promoting the arts and innovation, which is at the heart of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy.

The Promises of Monsters, Laura Mannelli, from 19 October at the Galerie Indépendance, 69, route d'Esch, Luxembourg.

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About Banque Internationale à Luxembourg (BIL):

Founded in 1856, Banque Internationale à Luxembourg (BIL) is the oldest multi-business bank in the Grand Duchy. It has always played an active role in the main stages of the development of the Luxembourg economy. It currently operates in retail, private and corporate banking, as well as on capital markets. Employing more than 2,000 people, BIL is present in the financial centres of Luxembourg, Switzerland (since 1984), Denmark (since 2000), the Middle East (since 2005) and Sweden (since 2016).

www.bil.com

About the Fondation Indépendance

The Fondation Indépendance was established in 1999 by Banque Internationale à Luxembourg. Its aim is to promote art and culture, particularly of a contemporary nature, through its various forms of expression.

www.bil.com/fondation-independance

About the National Cultural Fund:

The National Cultural Fund is a public body governed by the law of 4 March 1982, as amended. Its mission is to receive, manage and use allocations and donations from public and private sources to promote and support artistic and cultural activities involving artists who are Luxembourg nationals or residents.

www.focuna.lu

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