

3—2026

GALERIE
INDÉPENDANCE
BY BIL

ERIC
MANGEN



By Jeffrey Dentzer - CEO, BIL

In a world increasingly shaped by immediacy and definitive answers, Eric Mangen's exhibition *A Place Where Questions Outnumber Answers* offers something different: a space for contemplation, imagination, and discovery.

Rooted in a deep connection with nature, Eric Mangen has developed a distinctive artistic language that moves between abstraction and landscape. Working across painting and ceramics, he embraces experimentation and allows unexpected forms and textures to emerge. This spirit of openness lies at the heart of the exhibition. The paintings and ceramic sculptures presented here engage in a dialogue that creates a rich and immersive environment. Together, they blur the boundaries between reality and imagination, offering viewers a place where reflection matters more than certainty and where questions remain intentionally unanswered.

AT BIL, WE ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT ARTISTS
WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THE VITALITY OF ARTISTIC
EXPRESSION IN LUXEMBOURG.

Through the Galerie Indépendance, we have sought for many years to create opportunities for dialogue between artists, audiences, and the wider community. We believe that art plays an essential role in fostering curiosity, encouraging diverse viewpoints, and helping us better understand the world around us.

Supporting local artists is therefore not only a cultural commitment but also an investment in the creativity and openness that help shape a vibrant society. Eric Mangen's work embodies these values through its sensitivity to the living world and its invitation to look beyond the obvious. We are delighted to welcome this exhibition to the Galerie Indépendance and invite visitors to explore a place where discovery begins with a question.



Jeffrey Dentzer, CEO, BIL



By Marie-Anne Lorgé for Galerie Nosbaum Reding

Bouferterhaff in Bertrange is a magical, inspiring place – a farm with horses, set in the midst of nature. It is here, overlooking a sandy paddock in a vast space where the horses can be watched moving freely at a gentle pace, that the studio of Luxembourgish artist Eric Mangen comes into view: a world unto itself, charged with a wild, infectious energy, but also tinged with melancholy.

A PLACE WHERE THE QUESTIONS OUTNUMBER THE ANSWERS

There is a deliberate, almost stubborn absence of white, the subdued palette of beiges underscoring the extent to which Mangen's creative space is rooted in the earth. It speaks to the earth's influence on his vision and gestures, revealing how deeply the landscape shapes the sensibility of this intuitive artist, attuned to the movements of living things.



And with Mangen, movement is, first and foremost, movement of the gesture – a sweeping gesture that refines and highlights whatever settles or takes shape on vast surfaces: old sheets salvaged from flea markets, still bearing the embroidery of a past life, hanging on the walls like memories.

What settles is the paint, dripping like water onto the sheets in a kind of makeshift batik process, from which unexpected forms emerge that could be described as ‘coincidences’ – a term the artist rejects or, rather, finds inappropriate. After all, it is he who sets everything in motion, who tips over the pot of paint and splashes it across the fabric. And he embraces this partnership – in his words, a dance – between the fabric, the paint and the intuition of the gesture. ‘I want to tell a story’, he says, ‘but it’s the water that takes on the enigmatic and poetic task of telling it’.

Be that as it may, once these colourful ‘appearances’ have dried, the artist intervenes with oil pastels, punctuating, enhancing and intensifying them or bringing forth, with small strokes, what might seem like an abstract suspension, yet is, in fact, part of a perfectly luminous environment. At times forest-like, mountainous or floral; at others aquatic, with a fjord floating like a ghost: ‘It’s my small interventions that change everything’, he explains. And so nature enters the picture – an obsession of the artist’s for the past four years – insinuating itself between the real and the imaginary.

From canvas to canvas, from triptychs to horizons or wide-angle views, the monumental pictorial ensemble envelops the gaze, and the body too, like an adventure ‘where the questions outnumber the answers’. And with good reason: the creative endeavour is deeply emotional. Mangen describes it as a journey.

A DANCE BETWEEN THE FABRIC, THE PAINT AND THE INTUITION OF THE GESTURE.



And the journey continues. Mangen loves to immerse himself in worlds. And so this romantic driven by challenge, this artist who refuses to be confined by repetition, is now changing his medium – or, as he puts it, his ‘skin’. And that skin is clay. A different material, with the physicality of terracotta; a different technique – or not quite, since ceramics extend the principles of his pictorial practice, establishing a relationship with gesture, with the greige palette of slip on raw clay and its matte, porous finish, and above all with accident: the unpredictable reaction, during firing, of a glaze whose tones seem to draw from the subsoil, bark, foliage, sea foam, rain...

So: a different material, a different technique (self-taught, for the past year), but also a different dimension – that of the object. Mangen presents a series of organic vessels, marked by drips and bulges, like geological concretions: irregularities born of invisible, if not subterranean, landscapes, in a process that bears the imprint of time. A process that transforms everyday utilitarian objects, stripping them of their function and propelling them into a parallel, improbable world – a metamorphosis only art can achieve.

There are also more sculptural works: assemblages of clay slabs paired with softer forms and rounded vessels, conceived as a sort of new habitat for plants.



With his ten or so canvases and some sixty ceramic pieces, and through his ability to bring together different languages – visual and otherwise – and create unexpected interactions between pictorial and mineral forms, Mangen, in keeping with his visceral call to nature, creates an ecosystem where art and life come together. His exhibition is a place in its own right, an unconventional, non-clichéd environment that celebrates life. More than anything, it is a space for interpretation – and for feeling. ‘We live in such an artificial world’, says this hyper-extroverted artist, as generous as he is exuberant, who always works to music and advocates ‘the disappearance of the self’.

CERAMICS EXTEND THE PRINCIPLES OF HIS PICTORIAL PRACTICE, ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GESTURE.



A PLACE WHERE QUESTIONS OUTNUMBER ANSWERS, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
180 x 450 cm

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIC MANGEN

The title of this exhibition, *A Place Where Questions Outnumber Answers*, suggests a space of uncertainty and interpretation. What kinds of questions are you inviting viewers to explore through these works?

In a world where everything is suggested, where everything is shown, told and said, I feel it is very important to create a place where questions are asked directly to the viewer.

I try to give hints in my paintings—something you might see, recognize or believe—but without giving a definite answer. It always comes back to the viewer and their

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own interpretation. Ideally, I want to engage the person enough for them to formulate their own opinion, or simply to find something personal within the paintings.

Your practice brings together abstract painting, ceramics, and vegetal elements. What draws you to these different mediums, and how do they dialogue with one another within the exhibition?

It is less about using different techniques than it is about trying to express myself in different ways. I have been painting for almost twenty years, and at some point I really needed a break. I wanted to learn something new, to be a



beginner again, to start from scratch. I had also always wanted to have a foot in sculpture, but sculpture itself somehow seemed impossible to me. Through my good friend Lisa, who introduced me to ceramics, I finally found a way to express myself in three dimensions instead of through flat paintings.

Once that step was overcome, I started to formulate my own language and explore ways of expressing myself that I didn't know before. Suddenly, the whole world of ceramics opened up to me. I started learning how to make vessels, and if you make a vessel, at some point you have to ask yourself what you want to fill it with.

I am a very passionate plant collector, and I devote a lot of time to cultivating and taking care of my plants, so it felt natural to start making vessels and pots to house them.

In a way, that is a little bit the summary of this exhibition. It is also the résumé of how the different parts of my practice have come together over the last few years.

Before becoming known for your ceramics, your work was primarily associated with painting. Did moving into a three-dimensional medium change the way you approach composition, space, or materiality?

I always secretly dreamed of being a sculptor. I always wanted to make things in three dimensions, but I simply didn't have the knowledge to do so. I didn't know how to get away from painting because, for almost twenty years, I just painted and painted and painted.

Graffiti was my access to the art world: loud, bold, from top to bottom, left to right. Every single centimetre

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had to be painted. So trying to become more minimalistic was already an ambition in itself. Formulating a practice that could move into three dimensions, that could leave the wall and exist within the space, seemed almost impossible to me. Ceramics finally gave me a way to make that step.

Both your paintings and ceramics seem to embrace chance, imperfections, and unexpected outcomes. What role do accidents and unpredictability play in your creative process?

This is an eternal discussion for me, and something I have been exploring for more than ten years. In the beginning, I used to play a lot with accident and chance. Today, I have more difficulty accepting the idea that all the credit belongs to chance. I feel there is a responsibility within spontaneity. There is always a question of who is responsible for what.

In my work, I think I will always be the person who pushes the pot over the edge of the table. I create the conditions for something to happen, but I don't necessarily control what happens next. And what comes out of that is what we can finally talk about.

I understand that you also enjoy cooking. Cooking and ceramics both involve transformation through heat, experimentation, intuition, and a close relationship with materials. Do you see any connections between your artistic practice and your time in the kitchen?

For me, cooking and painting have somehow always been the same. I make almost no difference between ingredients and colours, literally speaking.

It is about passion. It is about knowing your shit, so to say, but also daring to try something new—to mix ingredients, to experiment, and to see what happens. They somehow share the same journey, the same kind of skill, and the same openness to not completely knowing the outcome. Barbecuing, grilling, cooking, frying—it all comes very close to creating something in the studio. Or maybe it is the other way around: creating something in the studio feels very close to creating something in the kitchen.

I guess the main difference is that if you paint a bad picture, you can't food-poison anyone.

Looking at the works in this exhibition, what would you hope visitors feel, discover, or perhaps question after spending time in the space?

Generally, I don't ask myself what I want visitors to feel because, to be honest, when I am making these paintings, it is not that much about the visitor. It is really about me and the journey I go through with each and every painting.

But once you come to the hanging of the exhibition, of course that changes. Suddenly there is someone else looking at these paintings, and questions arise about what they might see or feel.

For me, it is much more important to engage with what people feel than with what they see—or with what I want them to see—because I don't see what you see. I hope visiting the exhibition can be a very personal experience. I hope the paintings may connect with people, or that people may connect with the paintings. Not all of them, of course. But if a visitor connects with just one, that is already enough for me.



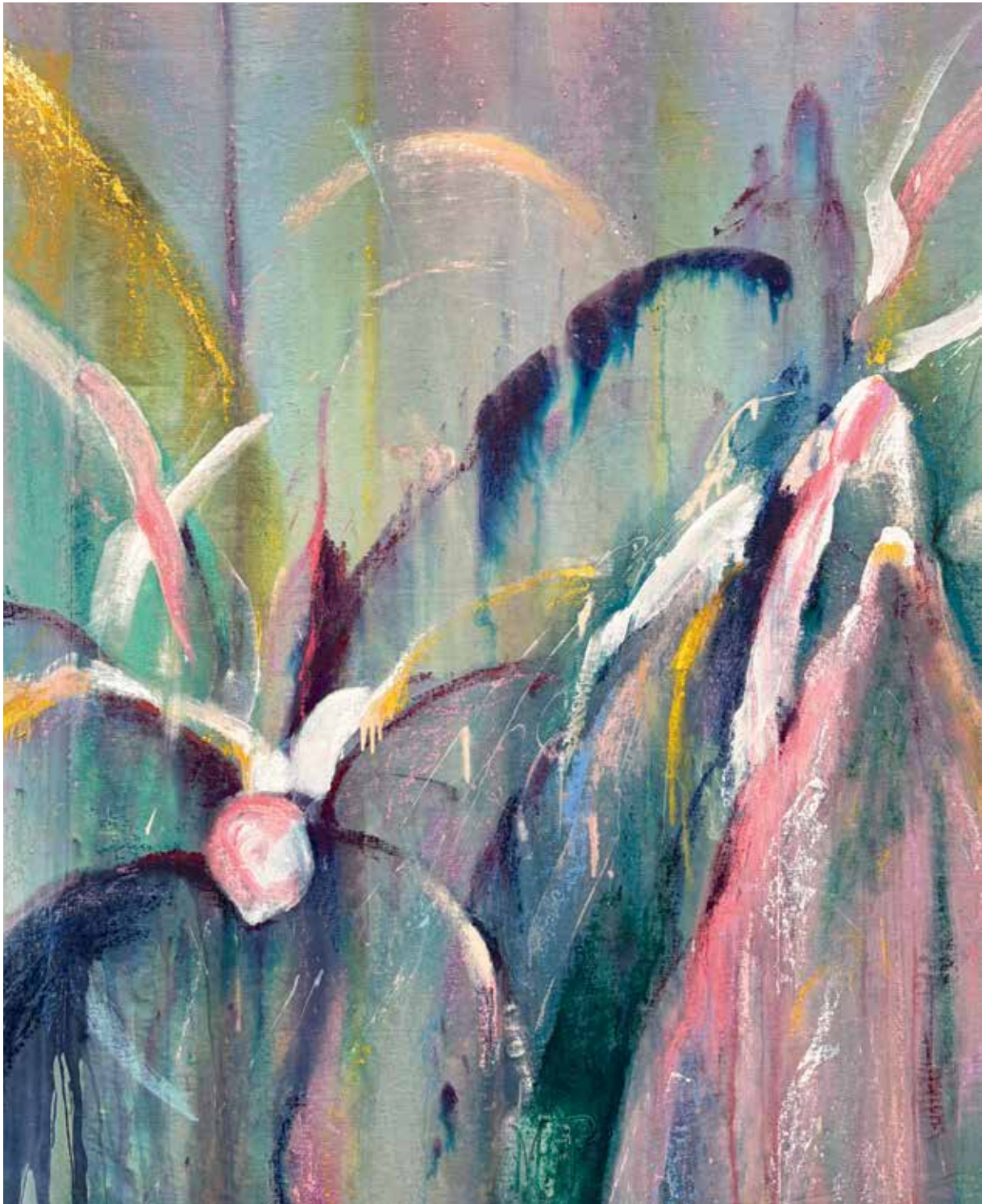
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The title of the exhibition is *A Place Where Questions Outnumber Answers*, so this uncertainty is something I want people to experience, but not in a negative way. A painting might be a landscape. It might be fireworks, a forest or mountains. These possibilities are not answers; they are more like an entrance ticket into the painting.

I guess, in the end, I want people to go on a journey too, just as I do when I'm cooking or painting. I hope they can have their own journey, and that one of these paintings can be the entrance ticket for it.



LAGO, 2026
Acrylic, oil and spraypaint on canvas
240 x 200 cm
(EM.NR.22)



MOUNTAIN DEW, 2025
Printer ink, acrylic & oil stick on linen bedsheet
210 x 170 cm



WHEN THE WATER REFLECTS THE SKY AND YOU REFLECT ME, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
145 x 230 cm

POPPIES&LILLY'S, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
250 x 140 cm





THE POND LOOKS FANTASTIC TODAY, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
260 x 140 cm



FREEDFEIER, 2025
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
200 x 130 cm



NO GROUND FOR HORIZONS, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
230 x 240 cm



NO COUNTRY FOR CANDYMEN, 2025
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
160 x 220 cm

PAGES 26 - 27, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

CANDY MOUNTAIN 2, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
220 x 160 cm

CANDY MOUNTAIN 1, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
220 x 160 cm

CANDY MOUNTAIN 4, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
220 x 160 cm

CANDY MOUNTAIN 3, 2026
Acrylic-spraypaint and oil stick on canvas
220 x 160 cm



HELIUM, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.20)





CANDYCRUSH, 2024
 Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
 105 x 75 cm
 (EM.NR.09)



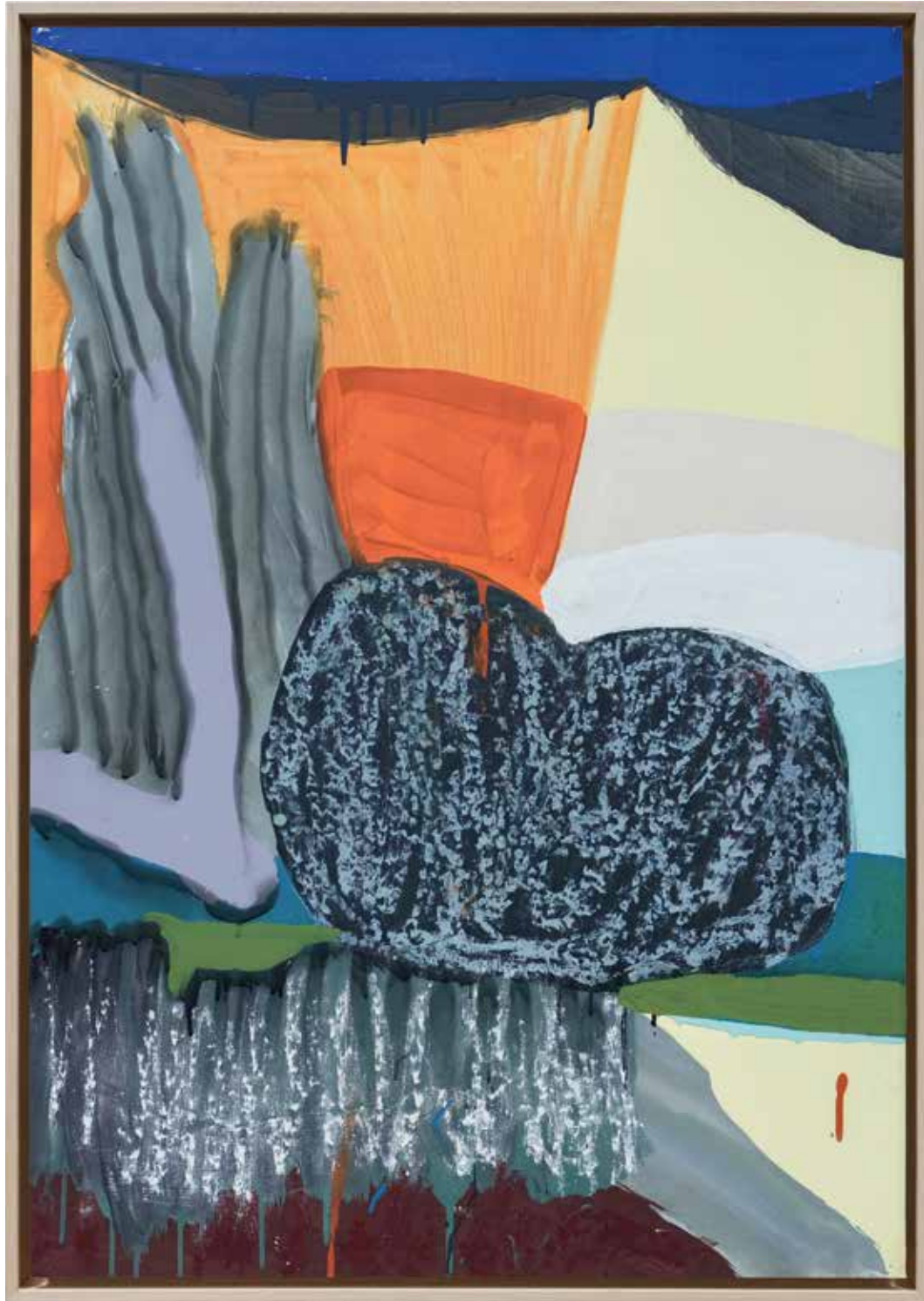
FRAGILE, 2024
 Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
 105 x 75 cm
 (EM.NR.10)



FRAGILE, 2024
 Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
 105 x 75 cm
 (EM.NR.18)

LIMBO, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.08)





AL MONTE, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.05)



FRAGILE, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.17)



FRAGILE, 2024
 Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
 105 x 75 cm
 (EM.NR.13)

LAGRIMA DE ORO, 2024
 Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
 105 x 75 cm
 (EM.NR.04)





FRAGILE, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.11)



CRUMBLING, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.03)



FRAGILE, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.07)



FRAGILE, 2024
Spraycan paint, acrylic & oil stick on paper
105 x 75 cm
(EM.NR.16)

THE GALERIE INDÉPENDANCE, OUR COMMITMENT TO ART

Since 1995, BIL has exhibited the greatest artists of the Luxembourg art scene in the Galerie Indépendance. Located at the heart of the Bank's headquarters at 69 route d'Esch in Luxembourg city, this exhibition space dedicated to art reflects our commitment to promoting and making culture accessible.

It is a source of pride to support Luxembourg artists by giving them a place to showcase their work and reach a large audience.

Supporting the diversity of Luxembourg art scene

Since April 10, 1995, the Galerie Indépendance has hosted more than 80 exhibitions, an average of about three exhibitions per year. The majority of the artists presented are Luxembourgish or have a close connection to the country. Established artists or those at the beginning of their careers, self-taught or trained in the greatest art schools, the diversity of the exhibitions highlights the vitality of the local art scene. Occasionally, international artists are included in the program.

BIL also created a foundation in 1999 whose mission is to promote art and culture, particularly contemporary creation and young creators. The Fondation Indépendance provides financial support to specific projects selected who make up its board of directors.

Having an impact beyond the banking world

BIL's support for art is part of a broader sponsorship and patronage strategy, structured around four themes:

Culture, by facilitating access to artistic events and supporting local creation.

Sport, by supporting athletes and encouraging sports practice as a vector of cohesion and health.

Education, by supporting educational projects and initiatives that contribute to the development of younger generations.

Entrepreneurship, by encouraging innovative projects with a positive impact on the national economy and supporting entrepreneurs.

A HISTORY OF ARTISTS

At Galerie Indépendance

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Ouverture du Parc Heintz le 22 juin 2000 rebaptisé « les Jardins l'Indépendance » en 2006

CAMBRAGES - WERCOLLIER LUCIEN • 1985 - *TAICHI SINGLE WHIP* - JU MING • 1997 - *LA BALANCE* - NEY BERTRAND • 2001 - *MUR EN PIERRE BLEUE SANS TITRE* - CULOT PIERRE • 2000 - *LA PIPE* - VAN WETERING HAN • 1995 - *HIVERNAGE* - HEIDELBERGER LILIANE • *VACHE N°35* - *LA VACHE RÊVEUSE* - LUTZ ISABELLE • *VACHE N°84* - *CHIGASCHOB*A - BRANDY ROBERT • *VACHE N°37* - *SIGHT SEEING I* - MICHELS GAST • *ARGUS III* - STREBELLE OLIVIER • 1999 - *SPHÈRE COUPÉE* - MARTA PAN • 2003 - *GROWING IDEAS* - WEIS TRIXI • 2003 - *R(ÊV)ÉALITÉ* - WALLACH PAUL • 1995 - *HIGH WIND IV* - CHADWICK LYNN • 2006 - *ADAM ET EVE* - MASSINON JEAN- CHRISTOPHE

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Contacts :
BIL, 69, route d'Esch, L-2953 Luxembourg, info@bil.com, www.bil.com

Nosbaum Reding Gallery, +352 28 11 25 1, contact@nosbaumreding.com

Nosbaum Reding
Luxembourg | Bruxelles

