

The Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître collection of video artworks donated to macLYON

macLYON



Evangelia Kranióti, *Ecstasy Must Be Forgotten* [film still], 2016 -2017

Video, colour, sound - Duration: 31'46" — Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître Collection - © Adagp, Paris, 2026

Over the last 30 years, Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître have built up the largest privately-owned collection of video art in France. They have decided to donate the whole collection to the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon (macLYON). So, in 2026, macLYON will be adding 170 new films to its already extensive collection of video art. From 6 March, a selection of the works from this donation will be on show at macLYON as part of the exhibition *Regards Sensibles*, curated by Tasja Langenbach.

macLYON is delighted to accept the entirety of Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître's outstanding collection of video art into the museum's own collection, which now numbers some 2,000 works. The donation comprises a unique collection of 170 films made between 1984 and 2025 and includes works by artists of over forty different nationalities – a reflection of the Lemaîtres' commitment to a wide diversity of artistic approaches, aesthetic sensibilities and geopolitical contexts. Their collection amounts to a global overview of contemporary video creation, encompassing both established artists and emerging talents: Steve McQueen, Clément Cogitore, Allora & Calzadilla, Yto Barrada, Katinka Bock, Zineb Sedira, to name only some. The collection reflects the distinctive vision of its owners. The Lemaîtres are curious, intuitive travellers. Not surprising, then, that their choices have generally been driven by personal, subjective criteria. They fell in love with Gillian Wearing's video *Boy Time*, their first video acquisition, exactly 30 years ago, in 1996.

The collection was exhibited for the first time at the Maison Rouge – Fondation Antoine de Galbert in Paris in 2006. Since then it has been the subject of some twenty exhibitions all over the world.

The donation

The idea for the donation was the result of a meeting of minds between the collectors and the macLYON team. Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître wanted to pass on their collection to a leading public art institution in France, one that was committed to presenting its works to a wide national and international audience.

Since its creation in 1984, macLYON has been open and attentive to video art; it was obviously the natural choice to house the Lemaître collection.

In 1995, at the third Biennale of Contemporary Art – Installation, Cinema, Video, Computing – the museum consolidated its trailblazing role when it presented a series of pioneering works incorporating video among other media. In its 40 years of existence, the museum has been tireless in exploring cutting-edge video art, both in its exhibitions and in the development of its collection - a collection that includes major international artists such as Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Gary Hill, Bruce Nauman, Tony Oursler and Bill Viola, as well as a number of emerging artists. In recent years, in fact, the development of video art has led to an acceleration in acquisitions and production, with works by artists such as Jasmina Cibic, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Jesper Just, Ange Leccia and many others entering the museum's collection.

macLYON has a solid track record and a wealth of know-how in managing multimedia collections, both technically and museologically, which was a significant argument in favour of macLYON receiving this major donation. The museum is in a position to ensure the digitalisation, documentation and accessibility of the works, while at the same time conserving them as physical objects and protecting their long-term survival.

The enthusiasm generated by this exceptional donation, and our eagerness for the public to get to know the collection as soon as possible, prompted us to plan an exhibition at the museum in early 2026. Working in close collaboration with Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître, Tasja Langenbach, a leading figure in European video art and head of Videonale - Festival for Video and Time-Based Arts in Bonn (Germany), will curate it. The title of the exhibition is *Regards sensibles*, and it will also feature a programme of screenings running throughout the exhibition.

What it means

The acquisition of the entire Lemaître collection means that macLYON becomes one of the leading centres for video art, with a total of around 350 video works in its collection. It also brings new opportunities for collaborations with institutions, artists and researchers on a worldwide scale. Not only that; it provides considerable potential for loans, co-productions and touring exhibitions, at a time when video has become an essential part of the contemporary art scene, and its popularity with the public beyond question. At a local level, the arrival of the collection in Lyon, the birthplace of the Lumière brothers, will enable us to develop a whole set of new collaborative ventures with the film, teaching and research communities.

Our 30-year commitment to the moving image has been a deeply personal adventure. We are delighted that the collection is to remain intact and that it will continue to be displayed. We are thrilled that macLYON has taken on responsibility for the collection. We are happy for the artists, knowing that this fine institution will continue to nurture the collection we built together. What was a private passion will now pass into the public domain. **Isabelle et Jean-Conrad Lemaître**

The Lemaître collection – some key statistics

- 170 works of video art spanning 40 years of activity in the medium
- 155 artists; almost 50% of them women
- 43 nationalities
- 11 publications devoted to the collection
- 20 exhibitions worldwide since 2006