

19 Le

Centre régional
d'art contemporain
de Montbéliard



PRESS RELEASE

**Kelly
Weiss**

**Ricardo
Basbaum**

*À votre contact,
se confondre*

[At your contact, blending in]

AH! OH!

08-02 → 04-05-2025

Ricardo Basbaum, AH! OH!

Kelly Weiss, À votre contact, se confondre [At your contact, blending in]

Two personal exhibitions

from the 8th of February to the 4th of May 2025

Press release

“To start with, then, there isn’t very much: nothingness, the impalpable, the virtually immaterial; extension, the external, what is external to us, what we move about in the midst of, our ambient milieu, the space around us. Space. Not so much those infinite spaces [...] but spaces that are much closer to hand, in principle anyway: towns, for example, or the countryside, or the corridors of the Metro, or a public park.^[1]”

AH! OH! by Ricardo Basbaum and ***À votre contact, se confondre [At your contact, blending in]*** by Kelly Weiss are two exhibitions that share a certain ‘poetics of space^[2]’. Both explore plastic, conceptual and relational variations, resulting from a negotiation undertaken with the context of the art centre and its architecture. Based on a close observation of the ins and outs of the historic building, and of the movement and communication between its different parts, Kelly Weiss and Ricardo Basbaum took on the different types of space as playgrounds. She and he come then to certain kind of ‘agreements’.

AH! OH! and ***À votre contact, se confondre*** both respond to specific logics of scores and ‘mise en scène^[3]’. These are fluid, however, and open to the collaboration of the publics, who become the guarantors of the constant evolution and even reconstruction of the exhibitions themselves.

[1] Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, Penguin for English translation, 1974

[2] Reference to Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (Penguin for English translation), 1957. A classic of philosophy, Gaston Bachelard’s book uses literary images to explore the imaginary dimension of our relationship with space, focusing on intimate spaces. By focusing on the power of imagination and daydreaming, the author aims to explore other ways of ‘inhabiting the world’.

[3] As defined by Camilla Murgia in her book, *Staging and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century France: Appearing, Revealing, Disappearing*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023. This book brings together a number of texts dealing with ‘staging’ in the visual arts and the way in which it is historically linked to pedagogical logics, the affirmation of a certain political consciousness, and the emergence of principles of cultural consumption. ‘Staging’ also implies principles of visibility and invisibility, not only for works of art but also for individuals and for various positions and realities.



*“subhydroinfraentre
resonant aquatic vibrosiades
on the edge of intrusive vibrolution^[4]”.*

Ricardo Basbaum (b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil; lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) is an artist whose practice explores how art can serve as both a platform and an intermediary for articulating sensory experience, sociability and language. His works often invite viewers to act by responding to systems of symbols, rules embedded in scripts, the reading of scores and diagrams, or the activation of games.

Since the late 1980s, he has created a specific vocabulary for his work, which he applies in a particular way to each new project. NBP [New Basis for Personality] explores the full complexity of subjectivity^[5]. The beginning of this project coincided with the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil and the rise of globalisation. Made up of words and lines, his wall diagrams can be seen as drawings, visual poems that conjure up images, actions and relationships. The diagram is a connector, a mediator and an activator between the work, the space and the subjectivity of the public. NBP is also activated through the production of installations, videos, sound performances and urban interventions.

Ricardo Basbaum is a visual artist, author and teacher. He is, as he defines himself, an ‘artist-etc^[6]’. The plasticity of his posture is also reflected in his ability to produce relational objects. Continuing the explorations of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica on the effects of abandoning the idea of the work as a finished object, which must instead include the active presence of the viewer in order to open up the field of possible meanings, he contributes to the creation of a new system for exchanging information and experiences. “The artistic proposal [then becomes] the place where mediations are produced [...]”^[7].

“AH! OH! When one enters the gallery space two large words are immediately visible: the two interjections, with exclamation marks, project sound in the space when they are read. The presence of these two large words help to activate the installation at large^[8]”.

For Montbéliard, Ricardo Basbaum has devised an overall artistic project that unfolds over two different timeframes. This new proposal contains several elements already present in his work in recent years, such as the use of text in space as a strategy for encouraging



Ricardo Basbaum, *FORA* [Out], 2020. Outdoor billboard installed in the city of Quaiabá, Brazil. Projeto M.A.P.A. (Modos de Ação para Propagar Arte). Photo: Junior Silgueiro

orality, visual repetition, and the installation of sculptural elements structuring the space to invite participation. *AH! OH!* will be first a collaborative performance space, then an exhibition.

When it opens in February, the ground floor of the art centre is first and foremost a space for ‘doing’ and collecting, where the public can move around and develop relationships; produce sound works in which the spoken voice and words are put into action. Through a variety of activatable devices, each person contributes to the eventual creation of a common work. The installation is made up of relational objects designed or chosen by Ricardo Basbaum as a result of his own understanding of the architectural space of the venue. But it is also a question for him, through this collaborative experience and according to recording principles, of understanding the presence of the people in the art centre, the agents who bring the whole thing to life, by moving around the works, coming into contact with the devices, generating images through their bodies in the space and sounds by playing the various scores left for them by the artist.

While one room is transformed into a real-time projection space, broadcasting images captured live from the other rooms by eight cameras, another offers a recording studio that itself transmits the voices and sounds produced in the adjoining room. This last room, inhabited by a diagram and sculptural elements to be physically invested, is the place for bodily experimentation.

After closing for a few days, from 7th to 11th April, this performance space will give way to the exhibition, where the rooms have been remodeled to include the projection of a film, a new work based on the actions of the public. “The film will function as a kind of documentation of the first phase of the exhibition, generating a second layer in which the exhibition of the exhibition is the main subject to be viewed.^[9]”. The artist’s impulse to document the exhibition itself refers to a general posture in his practice that considers the exhibition form as artwork.

[4] Ricardo Basbaum, *ACCORDS – sub hydro infra entre*, 19, Crac editions, 2024.

[5] In the philosophical sense of the term.

[6] The notion of ‘artist-etc’, much used today by young Brazilian artists, was originally developed in a text published in English in 2002 as part of the project *The next Documenta Should be curated by an artist*, which was subsequently turned into a book (Frankfurt, Revolver Books, 2004). Organised by curator Jens Hoffmann, 31 artists were invited to comment on his proposal to study the relationship between artistic and curatorial practices. The original is still available online at http://projects.e-flux.com/next_doc/ricardo_basbaum.html.

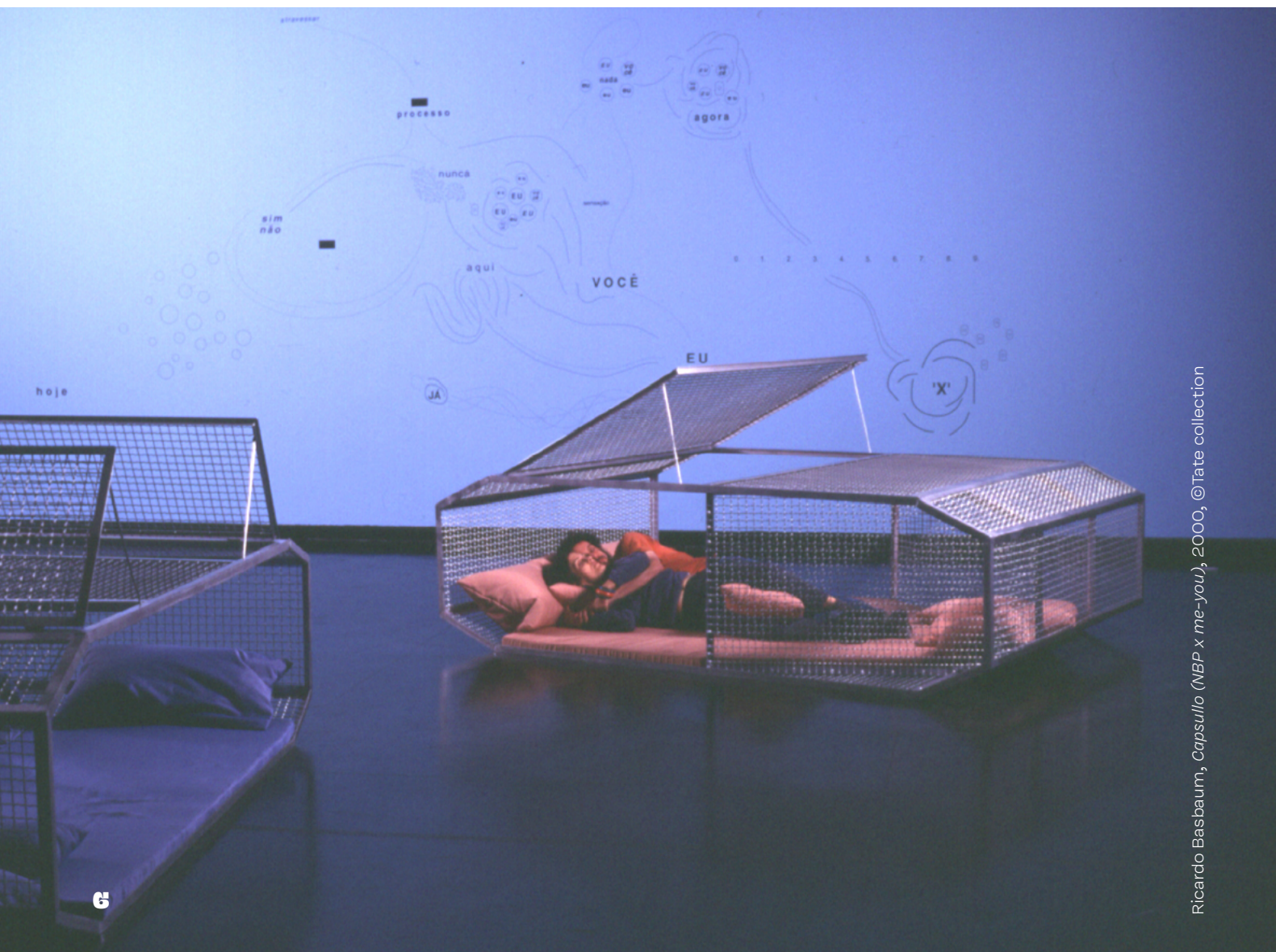
[7] Ricardo Basbaum, *the Production of the Artist as a Collective Conversation*, SFU 15th of october 2014.

[8] Ricardo Basbaum, note of intent for *Ah! Oh!*, June 2024.

[9] Ricardo Basbaum, *Op. Cit.*

AH! OH! is built around a collaborative and relational structure that Ricardo Basbaum sees as drawing on the Brazilian tradition of sensory and experimental art. It allows visitors to react to the art centre's environment in real time, by entering a relationship with the works. Ricardo Basbaum interprets "Brazil's radical heritage as a set of principles, or generative seeds^[10]", from which he aims to capture various gestures and voices that will feed into the reflection on artistic practices that generate new forms of shared and common spaces.

[10] Guy Brett, 'Art in the Plura' in *Novas Direções* do Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 2002.



Ricardo Basbaum, *Capsullo (NBP x me-you)*, 2000, © Tate collection

“I like to experiment with materials. I began to develop my work by observing urban and industrial spaces. I try to reproduce surfaces, take materials in hand and translate gestures seen elsewhere. If I had to talk about a method, I would say that I try to move and replace. My conception of painting is above all a matter of reframing^[11].”

Kelly Weiss (b. 1996, Belfort, France; lives and works in Lyon, France) is a painter whose practice extends to sculpture, space, installation and performance. In her work, she incorporates reclaimed industrial materials such as lorry tarpaulins, sheets, pallets and even rust, which she extracts from altered metal elements, creating site-specific pictorial projects that engage in a dialogue with the place in which they are deployed.

Kelly Weiss considers that her artistic approach and her specific interest in the peripheries^[12] are linked to the industrial context of the area where she grew up. This influences in part the type of materials she uses, but also her creative process, which is strongly driven by the logic of wandering and collecting. The latter imbues the works with the vibrancy of memories of fragments collected or situations observed. The artist believes that her practice can only develop from this mutual contribution between her painterly gesture and the new elements that present themselves to her when she crosses spaces and territories. The allusive dimension of her work resists an approach based on meaning, in favor of one based on sensation, vibration and even diversion^[13].

The materials, whatever their origin, are approached pictorially and as surfaces, explored according to their different states and/or through various plays on

scale. Their installation highlights the interplay of light and shadow, and echoes the context in which they are displayed. It encourages the bodies to move, then sometimes to stop or slow down. To describe Kelly Weiss’s artistic work, we could quote Manny Farber on what he calls ‘termite’ art: ‘an ambulatory creation which is an act both of observing and being in the world, a journeying in which the artist seems to be ingesting both the material of his art and the outside world through a horizontal coverage^[14]’.

“My environment and my practice infiltrate each other; most of my pieces are intended to fit into the context in which they are installed, or at least to reflect it. It is in a dialogue with the site that they unfold part of their meaning. Through discreet interventions full of minute details, and tangible images/modules, I seek to give my work a presence and a troubled consistency, which questions its framework.^[15]”

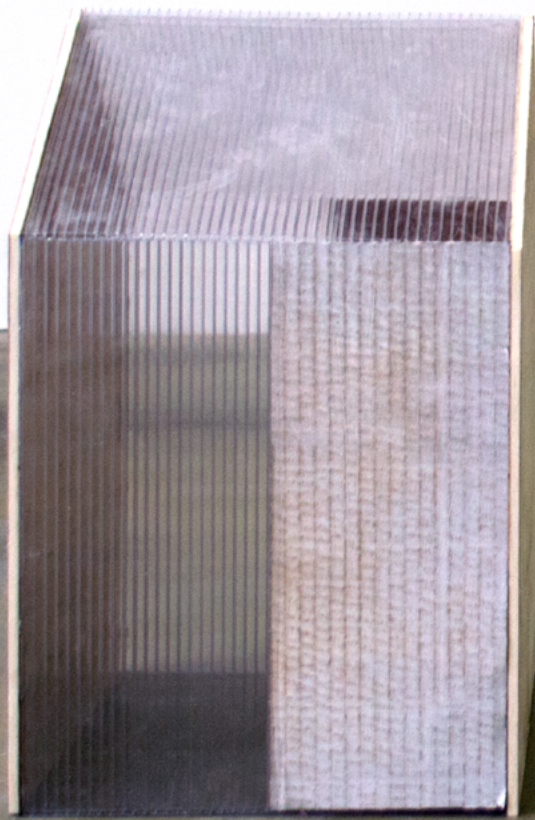
[11] Kelly Weiss, preliminary notes to the invitation to 19, Crac.

[12] We could also have used the term ‘banlieue’ here, which also contains a strong evocative potential that is widely used in artistic creation, particularly poetry and literature. The word ‘banlieue’ is polysemous and a vector of imaginary worlds. Thierry Paquot defines it as a ‘singular plural’ (*Banlieues, une anthologie*, EPFL Press, Espace en société collection, 2008).

[13] The artist mentions, for example, “attempts and abandonments of paintings in the public space in 2018 (where there is more to see around than on the canvases)” during an interview in June 2024. Dissemination may be another factor in the reception of his work.

[14] Manny Farber, *Negative Space: Manny Farber on the Movies*, New York: Praeger, 1971, p. 10.

[15] Kelly Weiss, *Op. Cit.*



For the exhibition at 19, Crac, the artist's initial interest was in the architectural features of the exhibition rooms on the mezzanine floor. In addition, and in connection with the local industrial history, Kelly Weiss began a general reflection on the materials she could collect in the area, following on from some of her experiments with iron filings, salt water and domestic textiles.

During her visits and wanderings, both inside and outside the art center, Kelly Weiss developed a body of objects resembling flat surfaces or models. Architectural elements are replayed through different scales and materials to become sculptures, paintings and installations. The surfaces and objects become architectural elements in the context of the exhibition. The ensemble is based on the measurements of the exhibition rooms, taking visitors on a physical and sensory experience of the space.

The exhibition as a whole is conceived as a variation on the 'box' or 'white cube' form, which multiplies the projections of real and potential spaces in the exhibition by placing the mezzanine in a mise en abyme. The artist's appropriation of an impersonal place as her own opens other possible outcomes for visitors, while playing on the ambiguity of 'the concept of threshold [which] is broader than that of the door. It can refer to mental thresholds, to the idea of establishing connections in one's brain, in one's dreams. "The in-between is also a metaphor : you can get lost. [...] The threshold is the element of depth - the infinity of the ground you are standing on^[16]". Everyone is thus placed in a position of waiting and observation, like the artist before them. Is it then an enigma to be solved based on personal analogies: "ruins, twilight undergrowth, boundless beaches, deserted stadiums, abandoned gardens [...] These places only opened onto other similar places, always leaving the dreamer's anxiety or wonder in suspense - and it was this very extension that had to be suggested.^[17]".

[16] Quote from Cristina Iglesias in her interview with Jan Garden Castro 'Place as Threshold: A Conversation with Cristina Iglesias' in *Sculpture*, 1 October 2018.

[17] André Hardellet, *Le seuil du jardin*, Julliard, 1958. Edition consulted: Gallimard, 'L'Imaginaire' series, 1993. English translation suggested by the author of the press release.

AH! OH! and À votre contact, se confondre are two exhibitions that aim to move the uses of the art center by generating, through different forms and devices, situations of hospitality and action, ‘capable of stimulating new relationships [and] allowing hospitality to be interpreted in such a way as to create new terrains^[18]’. Each of them, in their own way, adopts a well-established position as observer and creator of situations. They draw on the artistic experiments that may have gone before them, aware of the fertility of the avant-garde, while leaving room for the spontaneous and inescapable upheavals of the relationship that is being written in the present.

“The world needs new trends in ‘poeting’ and ‘painty’ [...] because we see with our ears and hear with our eyes.^[19]”

Adeline Lépine
Exhibitions curator

Ricardo Basbaum’s exhibition is supported by the Marli Matsumoto Arte Contemporânea gallery (São Paulo), the Brazilian Ministry of Culture, FUNARTE and the National Fund for Culture, the Emmaüs association in Montbéliard and is entitled Saison Croisée Brésil-France 2025. The artist would particularly like to thank Luanda Francisco, Marli Matsumoto, Miguel Leal, Márcio Doctors, Julia da Mota, Romy Pocztaruk, Universidade Federal Fluminense. The 19, Crac team warmly thanks the Brazilian Embassy in Paris, Antoine Elias, High school Georges Cuvier, middle school Lou Blazer, High school des Huisselets and primary school des Autos.

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Kelly Weiss would particularly like to thank Adeline Lépine, Joffrey Guillon, the entire team at 19, CRAC, Jules Maillot, Anne Bertrand, Alexandre Caretti, Agathe Berthou, Iwan Warnet, Ugo Sebastiao and the Archives of the City of Montbéliard.

[18] Maja Ćirić, “the unspoken abuse” in *Hospitality, Hosting relations in exhibitions*. Direction d’ouvrage : Beatrice von Bismarck, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, Sternberg Press, 2016.

[19] Raoul Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters, Preface-Manifesto for the PIN magazine project, 27 December 1946.





Kelly Weiss, *Sur la grève*, oil, acrylic, iron powder on canvas, 2024. *Peripherals*, plasterboard, balsa, spruce, plastic, cardboard, variable dimensions, 2024. Exhibition view *A sort of a song*, CAP - Art center of Saint-Fons. Photo Blaise Adilon.



Kelly Weiss, *Périphériques* serie, plasterboard, balsa, spruce, plastic, cardboard, 2024.



Would you like to participate in an artistic experience?, work in progress since 1994. painted steel object, experience. 125 x 80 x 18cm. participation Institute for Contemporary Art , Dept Architecture, TU Graz, Andreas Rauch, Magdalena Brunner, Johannes Kerschner, Christof Krusch and Alexander Leitenbauer Graz, Austria, 2007. photo courtesy participant.



View of the exhibition *O que é...?*, at the Marli Matsumoto Arte Contemporânea gallery, August. October. 2024

Press tour

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La Kunsthalle at Mulhouse
www.kunsthallemulhouse.com

Le Crac Alsace at Altkirch
<https://www.cracalsace.com/fr>

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Cover page : (Left) Kelly Weiss, Workshop views/ (Right) Ricardo Basbaum, Would you like to participate in an artistic experience?, work in progress since 1994, painted steel object, experience. 125 x 80 x 18cm, participation Karin Schneider, New York, USA, 2010. Photo courtesy participant.