

Axel Gouala Portfolio 2025

Visual interference and hybrid correspondence: objects transform and yet remain the same through the artist's irony

Sculptor, designer, and engraver, Axel Gouala loves to use heterogeneous materials and techniques in his practice, giving life to creations that trigger a profound empathy in the viewer. Gouala's art starts from everyday life to lead us into a world made of possibilities, rarefied and full of symbols. The result is pieces that challenge conventions, inviting the audience to reflect on their essence; creations that convey messages full of meaning without putting aside irony and lightness. "An important component that runs through my work," says the artist, "is the desire to share ideas through mockery". Having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Strasbourg, Gouala's education was imbued with a deep bond with artisanal traditions. "I do not hesitate to refer to crafting but I have no intention of creating a dichotomy between artisanal and industrial practice". Indeed, these two souls coexist in his work which is often guided by the materials themselves, by their shapes and peculiarities, transforming both the aesthetic aspect and the practical function of the objects. The artist's creative process is divided into different phases. "I am moved by a creative gaze that contaminates the objects that surround me; I let myself be inspired by them as if they were my lifelong companions." Gouala tries to extract the object from its specific context, focusing on the most generic and often standardized characteristics, those which, as he states, "the observer keeps in his mind" as the most relevant peculiarities from an aes-thetic point of view. Gouala's work immerses us in an ephemeral and fantastic universe in which every element is reinterpreted and decontextualized. The wave is no longer in the sea just like the mountain is no longer in the range: through apparently simple interventions, the objects are profoundly modified while remaining completely recognizable. In Totem-Voyage, in a process similar to that of collage, a vacuum cleaner is transformed into a palm tree and the visual interferences between the two objects lead the audience's minds in very different directions, away from the objects' physicality if not for their location in space. "I enjoy exacerbating these links by applying them in hybrid drawings and sculptures in which worlds mix and where integrity merges." The artist emphasizes that his reference to everyday life does not simply aim to highlight its dramatic nature but rather to dismantle its predefined conventions and transform appearances through a playful artistic gesture. In his intent there is no pretense of outlining an exhaustive representation of human life: rather, Gouala directs his art to mirror everyday life, the anxieties and stress that permeate us all.

> **Sofia Di Gravio** InsideArt Magazine 129# October 2023





Lingua, concrete, $31,5 \times 90,7 \times 40$ cm, 2025

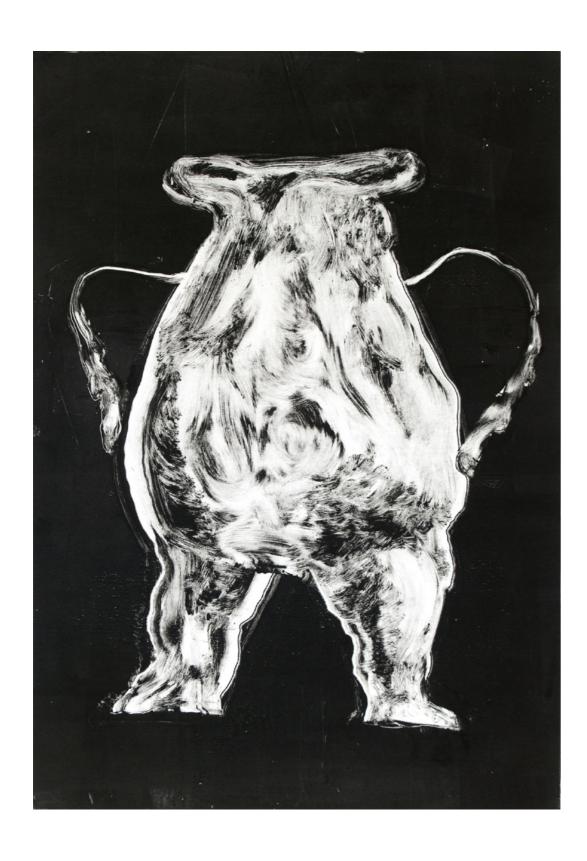


Banana Gloves

ceramic $7 \times 15 \times 26,6 \text{ cm } \& 6,3 \times 10,4 \times 26,3 \text{ cm}$ 2023



ceramic 6,9 × 11 × 22,5 cm 2023





monotype on paper Hahnemühle $49,4 \times 34,2$ cm printed on a 70×50 cm sheet 2023



L'Oste

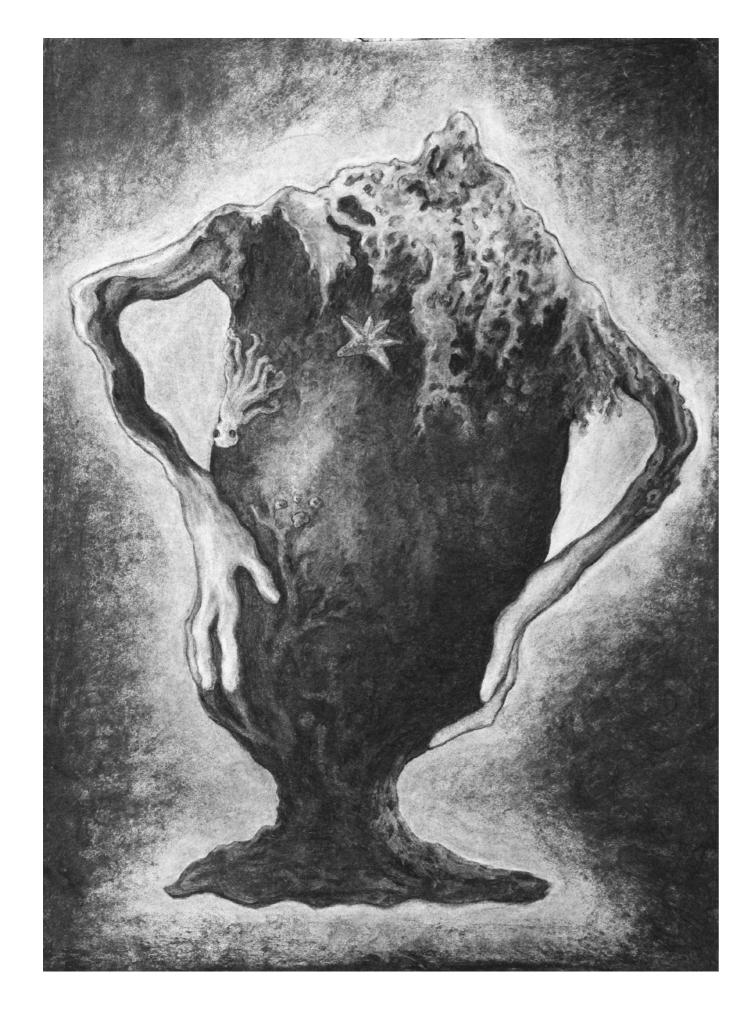
monotype on paper Hahnemühle $32,5 \times 24,5$ cm printed on a 50×35 cm sheet 2023

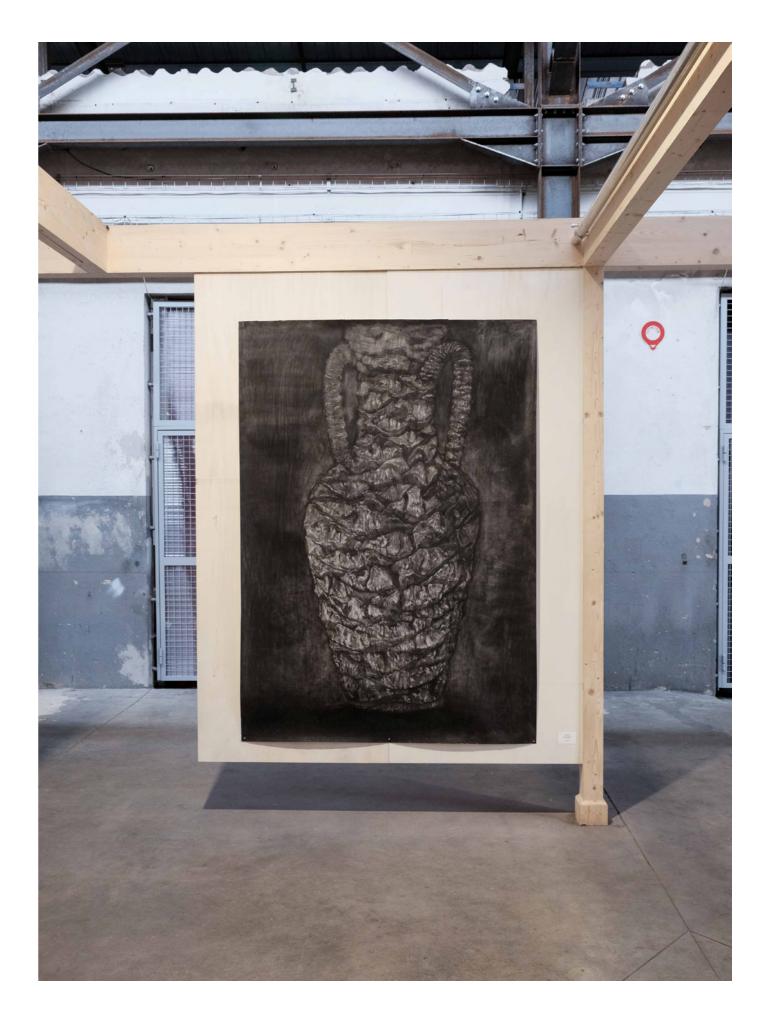


Stipe (2), ceramic, $49.6 \times 24 \times 23.6$ cm, 2023









Le Vase Aquatique (2), charcoal on paper, 90×65 cm, 2023

Estate, charcoal on paper, 244×150 cm, 2023





ceramic 23,5 × 27 × 21,3 cm 2023



Falaise (4) - *Cathédrale*, bricks, 225 × 301 × 138 cm, 2022

Metamorphic Parody

Hidden behind the three thick roots of the Aristotelian poetic genres' family tree; the tragedy, comedy and the epic, one finds their often-forgotten sibling, the parody.

Scarcely addressed by Aristotle himself, at least in the surviving literature, the French literary critic Gérard Genette sat out to reclaim the parody into the literary fold with his 1982 seminal work Palimpsests: La Littérature au second degré. Genette presupposes two modes of production that engenders parody, namely imitation and transformation, and it is the latter which seems to best describe the process behind Axel Gouala's metamorphic sculptural objects. Where Ulysses recalls the Odyssey, or plaster copies their marble originals, Gouala humorously transforms materials much more familiar to the denizens of the 21st century: Plungers playing palms, palms playing coatracks, a mop turned snake slithering away from its bucket. It is precisely the intimacy with which we greet these familiar materials and made-to-be-held design objects that makes the viewing of Gouala's works an almost haptic affair.

Here, one may paraphrase Walter Benjamin's Einbahnstraße (1928), that reading a text compared to copying it, is what flying over a landscape is to walking its streets. Gouala's transformative copying not only echoes the metaphor, but seemingly translates it into the literal in his exhibit Copyshop, Atlas Mnemosyne. For the polystyrene onto which Gouala has carved details from classical cast copies found in the Bode Museum and the Neues Museum, was collected from the streets by the artist, and subsequently returned to them in the window-display on Künstlerhaus Bethanien's ground floor. Since one must only have unpacked a television or stereo set to judge the weight and feel of the polystyrene replica, or what it would take to snap it in half for that matter, curious passersby walking down Kottbusser Straße during the latter months of 2020 were themselves invited to tactilely take part in an unfolding copying and transformation of classical sculpture and philistine design – freed from the vantage of the museum.

Gustav Elgin

Be Magazine #28 Berlin October 2021



Copyshop, Atlas Mnemosyne

Sculpted polystyrene packaging $165,5 \times 140 \times 140$ cm 2020



MIS, Estrait d'un Paysage-Écriture, stainless steel, $350 \times 246 \times 177$ cm, 2023

Unidentified Domestic Object (translated from french)

Axel Gouala comes from a dual culture that pushes him to take a dual view of things. The innocuous objects he presents in the exhibition are removed not only from their context of use but also from their setting. These installations reveal how much our minds associate an object with a universe and how fragile and superficial this determination is. By isolating objects, slightly repurposing them, or associating them differently, Axel Gouala opens new pages, glimpses new worlds in which work and travel coexist, bourgeois and exotic clichés blend, ethnic motifs and impersonal objects merge.

Sandrine Wymann

Director and head curator of La Kunsthalle, CAC
Mulhouse
November 2018

Le Grand Tour | Totem-Voyages

«In my serie of work Le Grand Tour / Totem-Voyages I am trying to bring romanticism back in the fitness room, to make Dresden closer to Miami, to use any object with wheels to really move. Some pieces are inspired by personal story, other not. I am interested by our spaces of work and leisure that are everywhere and nowhere: a palm tree or an office chair belong to two stereotypic places. They could be in any country and are two icons of a global world. Each one need the other to exist: we accept to suffer at work to go in holidays. Work is where space and time are controlled by rules, holidays is supposed to be the opposite. I am merging this two ruled spaces creating new lives for these objects, giving them a second chance to be better.»

Axel Gouala
Artline Kunstmagazin
Basel
November 2018



Totem-Voyage 10, Palmo

mixed materials $123 \times 99 \times 89,7$ cm 2020





The Snake a.k.a. the_geat_escape

mixed materials $71 \times 45 \times 245$ cm 2020



Totem-Voyage 12, Aspiration Vacances

mixed materials $267 \times 63,5 \times 120$ cm 2020

Totem-Voyage 07

mixed materials $207 \times 103 \times 110$ cm 2018

Axel Gouala CURRICULUM VITAE

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Bio

Axel Gouala (b. 1987 Paris) is a French artist based in Rome. He graduated with a MFA from the Haute École des Arts du Rhin in Strasbourg in 2014 and lives between France and Italy. His work has been recognized with several Prizes in France, Switzerland and Italy, including recently the Kunst Preis Riehen (City of Riehen Art Prize, Switzerland 2022) and the prize Premio Fondazione Cultura e Arte, Sezione Internazionale (Italy, 2023), Special Prize of the InsideArt Talent Prize 2023. He has received support from recognized cultural institutions such as the French Ministry of Culture, the Goethe Institut, the Institut Français and has exhibited in several Biennales and Art centers in Europe including Selest'art 2019, the Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris, the CEAAC (France), the Kunsthalle Basel, the Kunsthalle Palazzo (Switzerland), the Casino Luxembourg, the Kunstverein Freiburg, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien Galerie (Germany), the Meetfactory (Czech Republic), and the Mattatoio Roma (Italy).

GRANTS AND PRIZES

Talent Prize 2023 Premio Fondazione Arte e Cultura / Sezione Internationale – IT	2023	Special Prize of the Jury Rome – IT
Kunst Preis Riehen – CH Kunst-Raum Riehen	2022	1st Prize Bâle – CH
Soutient à un projet de résidence DRAC Grand Est	2021	Grant French Ministry of Culture – FR
Signature Concours pour une sculpture publique	2020	1er Prix Eurométropole Strasbourg – FR
Aide à l'installation d'Atelier DRAC Grand Est	2019	Grant French Ministry of Culture – FR
Aide à la Recherche et Création Région Grand Est	2019	Grant Région Grand Est – FR
Contemporary Art Prize 2018 Rotary club de Bonn, Novara et Strasbourg	2018	1st Prize Bonn, Novara, Strasbourg
Soutien à l'Exposition C.Rockefeller Center, Villes de Strasbourg et Dresde	2018	Grant Strasbourg & Dresde – FR / DE
<i>Kunstart</i> Fondation François Schneider – FR	2018	1st Prize Wattwiller – FR
Aide à la Création Anciens Diplomés Haute École des Arts du Rhin (HEAR)	2017	Grant Strasbourg – FR
Prix Théophile Schuler Prix Spécial de la Société des Amis des Arts et des Musées de Strasbourg	2014	2nd Prize Strasbourg – FR

PUBLICART COLLECTION

Falaise (6) Sculpture en briques, installation extérieure pérenne		2024	Jardin Botanique Carlo Ruggiero Cittanova, Reggio Calabria – IT
M.I.S. Extrait d'une Écriture paysage Sculpture Inox, installation extérieure pérenne		2023	Eurométropole de Strasbourg Quartier des Écrivains – FR
RESIDENCIES			
Signature - résidence de recherche et création		2022	Résidence de Territoire, DRAC
DRAC Grand Est, French Ministery of Culture			Schiltigheim – FR`
2-12 Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris		2021	Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris Paris – FR`
Ouest-Ost // Aller and Zürück Künstlerhaus Bethanien avec le soutien du Bureau des Arts Plastiques, Goethe Institut et de la DRAC Grand Est		2020	Künstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin –DE
Kunstart Fondation François Schneider		2018	Fondation François Schneider Wattwiller – FR
Per la Stessa Ragione del Viaggio Matrice Aperte avec le soutien de la Regione Veneto		2018	Matrice Aperte Brescia – IT
Residence Croisée Villes de Strasbourg et Dresde		2017	Grafikwerkstatt Dresden Dresden – DE
Ateliers de la Ville de Strasbourg Département Arts Visuels de la ville de Strasbourg		2017-2021	Bastion XIV Strasbourg - FR
Résidence du CEAAC Meetfactory Prague, avec le soutien du CEAAC et de l'Institut Français de Prague		2015	Meetfactory Prague – CZ
SOLOSHOW			
Dancefloor curated by Emmanuelle Potier	2021		Conservatoire de Thionville Thionville – FR
Carte Blanche curated by Accélérateur de particules	2019		La Virgule, Garage Coop Strasbourg – FR
Contemporary Art Prize 18' Rotary Club de Bonn, Novara & Strasbourg	2019		Aedaen Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Geometrie du Feu Residency restitution	2017		C.E.A.A.C. Espace International Strasbourg – FR
Fumées curated by Le point Fort	2017		Le point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Derrière les Fagots curated by Lézard	2017		Espace d'art communal Lézard Colmar – FR
Phragma curated by Le point Fort	2016		Le point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Inner than the Bone curated by Zuzana Jakalova	2015		Kostka Gallery - Meetfactory Prague - CZ

GROUP SHOWS (SÉLECTION)

Materials and Motions curated by Eugenia Delfini	2025	Galleria Eugenia Delfini Rome – IT
Lezioni di Resistenza curated by pianobi & spazio Y	2024	Offlc1na (officina 11) Rome – IT
Talent Prize 2023 curated by Inside Art	2023	Mattatoio Roma Rome – IT
Panorama curated by collectif CRIC	2023	Garage Coop Strasbourg – FR
Deep Moments curated by Kiki Seiler-Michalitsi	2022	Kunst-Raum Reihen Riehen – CH
Nos Îles curated by Marie Terrieux	2022	Fondation François Schneider Wattwiller – FR
Looking at the Black Bird curated by Nelly Kuch	2021	Kunstverein Freiburg Freiburg-im Breisgau – DE
Im Wartesaal der Zeit curated by Michael Babics	2021	Kunsthalle Palazzo Liestal – CH
We Proudly Present curated by Kiki Seiler	2021	Kunst Raum Reihen Riehen – CH
Świat wyszedł z orbit curated by Aleksandra Wałaszek	2021	Forma Otwarta Oleśnica – PL
Brave New World Order curated by Kevin Mulhen	2021	Casino Luxembourg & Rotondes Luxembourg Ville-LU
Ne Télétravaillez Jamais A. Gouala, M. Gyger, J.Li & A. Sparta	2021	Cité Internationale des Arts Paris Paris – FR
Full Ornemental A. Gouala, PL. Peny	2021	Bastion XIV Strasbourg – FR
Nothing Compares curated by Open Windows	2020	Kunstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin – DE
Regionale 21, Le Monde Après curated by Atelier Mondial	2020	Salon Mondial, Fond. C. Merian Basel – CH
Selest'art, 23rd Biennale of Selestat curated by Jury de la Biennale	2019	Biennale d'Art de Selestat Selestat – FR
À Base de Pipiping-Pong curated by des artistes	2019	Bastion XIV Strasbourg – FR
A Tooth for and Eye curated by E. Filipovic, R. Wagner & C. Vogt	2018	Kunshtalle de Bâle Basel – CH
O.D.N.I. / U.D.O. curated by Sandrine Wymann	2018	La Kunsthalle Mulhouse – FR
Good News curated by Katrin Neidermeier	2018	Kunstverein Stapflehus Weil-am-Rhein – DE
Klischee / CLICHE curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2018	Alte Feuerwache Galerie, Kunstverein Dresden – DE
Eternal Applications curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2018	C. Rockefeller Art Center Dresden – DE
FAIL / Verfehlt curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2017	Alte Feuerwache Galerie Kunstverein Dresden – DE
<i>April Dapsilis #2</i> curated by A.V. Hoey, avec prêts du FRAC Alsace	2017	Le Point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Biennale Européenne de la Jeune Création Mulhouse 015 curated by Ville de Mulhouse	2015	Parc des Expositions Mulhouse – FR
Faux Lumes curated by Option Objet	2014	C.E.A.A.C. Strasbourg – FR

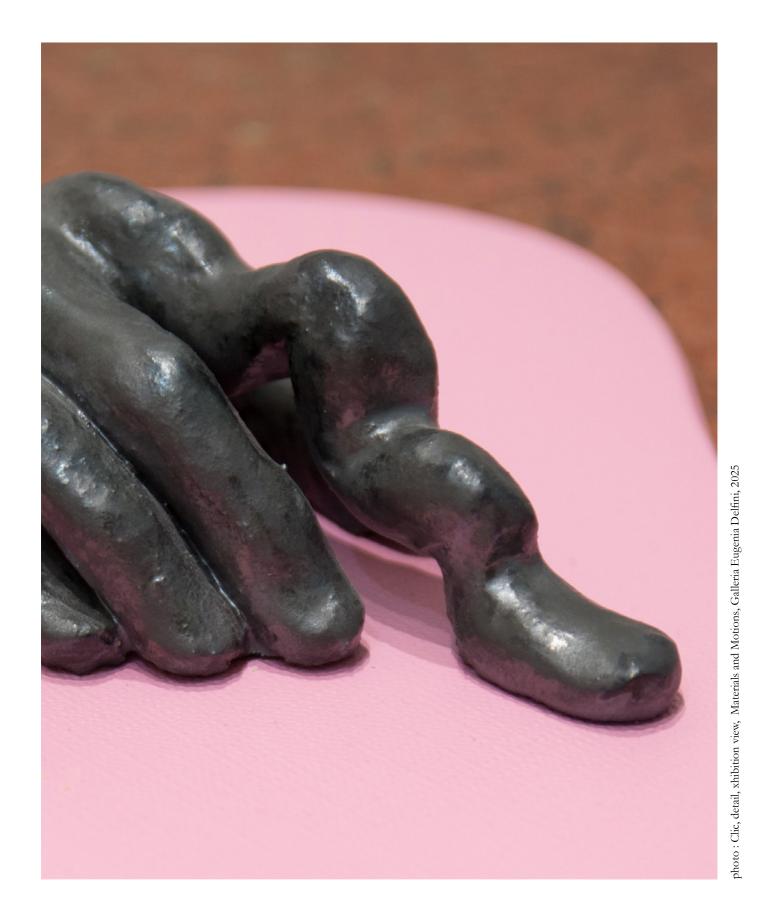
EDUCATION

Diplôme National d'Expression Plastique Art- MFA - degré master	2014	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
Biennio Art - Erasmus - Sculpture et Gravure	2013	Academia Belle Arti di Bologna Bologna – IT
Diplôme National d'Art Plastique Art - degré licence	2012	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
DEUG Sciences Économiques et Scoiales, Antropologie	2008	La Sorbonne Paris – FR

PUBLICATIONS & CATALOGUES (SELECTION RÉCENTE)

	made out with the support of the City of Rome
2024	Praha - Strasbourg, 10 ans de résidences artistiques, Institut Français Prague, CEAAC, Meetfactory made with the support of la Fabrique des Résidences de l'Institut Français Paris
2023	Inside Art 129 #, article of Sofia Di Gravio, Talent Prize 2023, Premio Fondazione Cultura e Arte
2023	FOOD, the collective book, published by DITO Publishing, Roma - IT
2022	CATS, the collective book, published by DITO Publishing, Roma - IT
2021	Be Magazine 28#, catalog, text by Gustav Elgin, published by Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin - DE
2021	Brave New World Order, catalog, Rotondes and Casino Luxembourg - LU
2021	1 jour/1 œuvre, Strasbourg Culture, Eurométropole de Strasbourg – parution web–FR
2020	Jahres-ausstellungen 2020/2021, Artline, December 2020 - DE
2019	Une idée de Nature, Axel Gouala with Karin Graff, 23rd Biennale de Selestat, Selestat - FR
2019	Axel Gouala Carte Blanche, itw with Sophie Kauffenstein, Accélérateur de Particules, Garage Coop - Fl
2018	À Strasbourg, la culture c'est partout et tout le temps! film, filmmaking by 128db, Strasbourg Culture – FR

2025 Lezioni di Resistenza, catalog, graphic design by DITO Publishing, text of Isabella Vitale



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