

## THROUGH THE MUSEE TRANSITOIRE

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- Transitory /'trɑnsɪ(ə)ri, 'trɑ:ns, -nz- / adj. not permanent; short-lived.
- Transitoire adj. 1. Qui dure peu de temps [...] 2. Qui sert de transition [...].

The first exhibition to be presented by the Musée Transitoire will indeed be short-lived yet offering for a few weeks the possibility to discover works by an impressive roster of artists: Lara Almarcegui, Olivier Bardin, Amandine Casadamont, Sebastien Gschwind, Will Insley, Alicja Kwade, Guillaume Maraud, David Miguel, Reto Pulfer, Reeve Schumacher, Philip Samartzis, Romina Shama, Fernando Vacas et l'Opéra Flamenco.

Before entering the exhibition space, our rational minds are disconcerted by the use of the term 'museum'. Unlike others, this museum does not store, categorise and present objects for their scientific or cultural value. It is not immutable; on the contrary, the building, an abandoned garage, will soon be destroyed and replaced. Therefore, the exhibition is nestled in a transitional period for the site itself. Can we therefore construe it as a museum? Can the exhibition itself erect the necessary walls?

The title of the inaugural exhibition, "I Would Prefer Not To" is derived from Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" in which the title character repeatedly gives this laconic refusal when his perplexed employer asks him to perform his duties. It is ironically on Wall Street, the famous street with its vanished wall, that are the offices where this invisible yet utterly present wall is built, a wall of passive resistance. It appears to be truly disruptive for the employer who goes from one emotion to the next even experiencing extreme ones such as a feeling of emasculation. The reader therefore not only witnesses Bartleby's obstinacy but the notary's transformation. The transition is symbolized by this sentence, this monotonously repeated dissent, "I would prefer not to".

What is at stake in the exhibition is the transition itself as suggested by the title. The Musée Transitoire adopts a Bergsonian approach<sup>1</sup>. Transition is not transitory. The invisibility of Time creates the urge to spatialise it and discuss it in terms of movement, an urge that has as a corollary the assumption that we are moving from one state to the next while we are in reality perpetually transitioning. This constant change makes the transition imperceptible. Yet, at the Musée Transitoire, the transition is felt by viewers confronted to artworks that defy their preconceptions. The exhibition is meant to evolve and change and be a repeatedly transformative experience thanks to its ability to encapsulate a transitional moment. "Real museums are places where Time is transformed into Space"<sup>2</sup> time and time again.

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<sup>1</sup> Riquier, Camille, and Adele Van Reeth. *Va, vis et deviens avec Bergson* (Paris, 2019), DOI: <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/les-chemins-de-la-philosophie/va-vis-et-deviens-avec-bergson> (accessed 21/09/2019).

<sup>2</sup> Pamuk, Orhan. *The Museum of Innocence* (London, 2010).

