

MAC

Press release

VAL

TRANS/HUMANCE

**Nil Yalter exhibition from
5 October 2019 to 9 February
2020**

**Opening 4 October 2019,
6.30 pm**

**Curated by Fabienne Dumont
and Frank Lamy, assisted by
Julien Blanpied and Ninon
Duhamel**

MAC VAL is inaugurating an original exhibition by Nil Yalter, an artist internationally recognised for the engagement and “multistylistic” nature of her art, ranging from video to painting, from collage to photography, from performance to installation. Of this militant artist born in 1938, art critic Georges Boudaille wrote in 1979: “Nil Yalter sees herself as an instrument, an amplifier, in favour of almost obsessional themes: the situation of all immigrant workers and the position of women in all societies.”

Her works, her forms derive from her documentary or sociological material. She explores the conditions of excluded populations or individuals – immigrant male and female workers, exiled communities, women prisoners – by means of investigations and interviews. Nil Yalter gives a voice to individuals who express the difficulty of their everyday life in their quarter, town, country, or society.

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“**TRANS/HUMANCE**” is the first major museum exhibition devoted to Yalter’s work. It follows the one organised by FRAC Lorraine in 2016 and is designed to be complimentary to the one organised at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne and at the Hessel Museum of Art in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. From the constructivist paintings of the 1960s to the most recent developments, it offers a retrospective of this body of work which takes a feminist and Marxist perspective on such issues as immigration, gender and class.

Discrimination is the driving theme of this multimedia body of work combining drawing, video, painting, performance, text, photography and objects. This exhibition is also accompanied by the first monograph on the artist’s work to be published in French.

Nil Yalter won the **AWARE** prize in 2018. Exhibition catalogue available at the opening.



1

“A photograph of the carer of Nil Yalter, a Franco-Turkish artist born in 1938, the exhibition “**TRANS/HUMANCE**” sets up connections between her different periods, from the constructivist paintings of the 1960s to two new works conceived for **MAC VAL** (*Niqab Blues*, 2018-19 and *Gitane*, 1980-2019), via the socio-critical projects of the 1970s and 1980s. The displays includes the first recreation of Yalter’s crucial 1983 exhibition at the ARC “*C’est un dur métier que l’exil*,” in which men and women speak of their living and working conditions in the secret workshops of the Faubourg Saint-Denis. Many of her works are shown here in their full form, like the video *Katran* (1978), in which a union activist explains workplace bullying. The works examine the new towns, home to factory workers (*Chicago*, 1975) whose struggles to improve their existences

are depicted along with the effects of their beliefs. The exhibition takes in the set of works which constitute an important record of immigration in France in the 1970s and 80s, but also reflect the artist’s feminist and Marxist positions. Her feminist engagements are to the fore in *La Femme sans tête ou La Danse du ventre* (1974) and *Lapidation* (2009), as well as in the interactive video *Histoire de peau* (2003).

“**TRANS/HUMANCE**” immerses visitors in a powerful discourse, with words that speak both to our sensibility and to our desire for rational knowledge. These pieces are emblematic of the struggles and desires of a given period yet resonate powerfully with our own, even if the influence of ethnography and political and social events place them within specific places and histories. In this multimedia ensemble, moving images are associated with drawings, gelatin silver photographs and Polaroid, paintings and collages of materials and texts, adapted to the new computer-based technologies of the 1990s–2000s. “**TRANS/HUMANCE**” offers a magnificent panorama of sixty years of work by a major international artist.”

Text by Fabienne Dumont,
co-curator of the exhibition

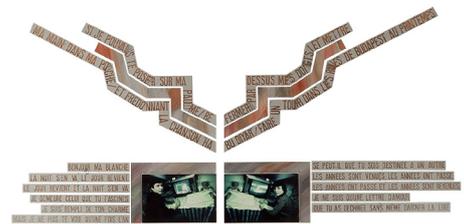
Art historian and critic Fabienne Dumont teaches at ENSAD-Nancy. Specialist on feminism, masculinities and queer and gender studies in contemporary art, her thesis was published as *Des sorcières comme les autres – Artistes et féministes dans la France des années 1970* in 2014 (PUR). She is also the editor of an anthology of Anglo-American texts, *La rébellion du Deuxième Sexe – L’histoire de l’art au crible des théories féministes anglo-américaines (1970-2000)* (Les Presses du Réel, 2011) and co-editor of two other books, *L’histoire n’est pas donnée – Art contemporain et postcolonialité en France* (PUR, 2016) and *À l’Ouest toute ! Travailleuses de Bretagne et d’ailleurs* (Les Presses du Réel, 2017).



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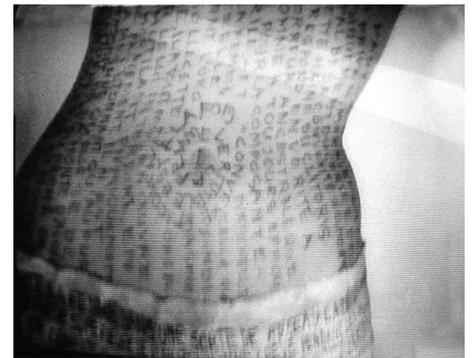
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1 Nil Yalter, *Histoire de Peau*, 2003. Digital video, sound, interactive computer-readable disc. Collection Espace multimédia Gantner, Département du Territoire de Belfort.

2 Nil Yalter, *C'est un dur métier que l'exil*, 1983 - 2012. Poster, digital print from photographs. Courtesy Nil Yalter.

3 Nil Yalter, *Pixelismus*, 1996. Installation, 24 paintings, acrylic on canvas, 47 x 42 cm each, interactive computer-readable disc, produced with David Apikian and Nicole Croiset. Courtesy Nil Yalter.

4 et 9 Nil Yalter, *La Communauté des travailleurs turcs à Paris*, détail, 1976-1977. Drawings, pen and pencil on paper, photographs, variable dimensions. Collection Reydan Weiss.

5 et 6 Nil Yalter, *Niqab Blues*, détail, 2018-2019. Digital video, sound, color, duration 7 :07. Courtesy Nil Yalter.

7 Nil Yalter, *C'est un dur métier que l'exil*, détail, 1983. Installation, photographs, oil painting on canvas, pencil and rubber stamps on cardboard, variable dimensions. Courtesy Nil Yalter.

8 Nil Yalter, *Niqab Blues*, détail, 2018-2019. Sculpture, polyester piece of fabric, print on dibond, 175 x 140 cm. Courtesy Galerist, Istanbul.

10 Nil Yalter, *Chicago*, détail, 1975. Installation, 55 photographs, oil painting on canvas, collages on cardboard, digital video, variable dimensions. Courtesy Nil Yalter.

11, 12, 13, 14 et 15 Nil Yalter, *La Femme sans tête ou la Danse du ventre*, 1974. Black and white video, sound, duration 24 :47. Collection Centre National des Arts Plastiques Paris.