

MUSÉE CANTONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS LAUSANNE Train Zug Treno Tren. Voyages imaginaires



18.6–25.9.2022

Press kit

Musée cantonal
des Beaux-Arts
Plateforme 10

Place de la Gare 16
1003 Lausanne
Suisse

mcba.ch



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1. Press release

Train imagery at MCBA

Over 60 masterpieces by a number of artists, from Giorgio de Chirico and Edward Hopper to Paul Delvaux and Leonor Fini, along with a novel approach to railroad imagery. MCBA is pleased to present *Voyages imaginaires* (18.6 – 25.9.2022), our museum's contribution to the *Train Zug Treno Tren* exhibition trilogy. Three shows, three museums, one theme in common – Plateforme 10, Lausanne's new arts district, is offering an intersection of viewpoints and approaches in its inaugural event.

To depict the train in the second half of the 19th century was to bear witness to the upheaval the appearance of stations, bridges, and rail track had wrought in the landscape. It also meant acknowledging with more than a touch of nostalgia the slow disappearance of ancestral means of locomotion.

In the early 20th century, the visual arts incorporated the simultaneity of sensory experiences that accompanied railroad travel at the time, the interpenetration of different spaces, and the relativity of points of view. Observers, outside the events and in a steady state, confront the spectacle of parallel tracks slicing through hilly landscapes, trains of railcars drawing clear lines through space, rail signs, and refracted lights. Travelers, both motionless and moving at the same time, record the same elements, but being one with the speed of the machine transmitting its fiery energy to them, they see the same landscapes differently.

The present show invites us to discover how artists tackled the train as motif in order to meet the challenge of reproducing a world in constant transformation. The railroad is inseparable from the ideology of progress in the Industrial Age. It heightens our perceptual experiences of universal dynamism as well as our emotions. It stimulates the imagination, generates strange associations, suggests odd inappropriate situations. The closed, even claustrophobic setting of the railcar fosters dark fantasies, with locomotives that reveal their erotic and poetic potential, stations suffused with mystery and solitude, a toy bringing back childhood... The train offers an endless invitation to imaginary journeys.

Train Zug Treno Tren, the trio of opening shows mounted by the three museums of Plateforme 10 (MCBA, Photo Elysée, and mudac), pays homage to the former vocation of this special venue, located beside Lausanne's main train station and historic stop along the mythic Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express. These new displays emphasize an intersection of viewpoints while breaking free of any literal or chronological approach.

Lausanne, June 2022

Curator of the exhibition

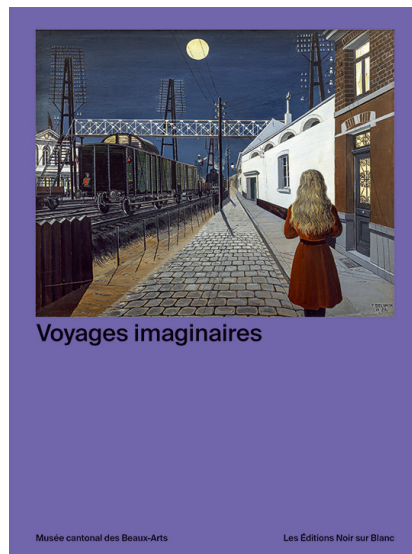
Camille Lévêque-Claudet, curator, MCBA
Display design: Raphaële Gygi

Publication

Camille Lévêque-Claudet (dir.), *Train Zug Treno Tren. Voyages imaginaires*, Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts and Les Éditions Noir sur Blanc, 2022, 176 pp. ill. (Fr.)
CHF 35.–

The three catalogues (MCBA, mudac and Photo Elysée) are available in a boxed set copublished by Les Éditions Noir sur Blanc for the French version and Scheidegger & Spiess for the German version
CHF 95.–

→ shop.mcba@plateforme10.ch



To listen to (in French)

During the visit:
8 works with commentary
> mcba.ch/audioguide-voyages-imaginaires



Before, during or after the visit:
“En voix directe” podcast
Camille Lévêque-Claudet, curator of the exhibition, on the artists presented and railway imagery
> mcba.ch/podcast-voyages-imaginaires



2. The exhibition

8 themes to discover in the large exhibition room on the 2nd floor

Explosive speed

In Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's 1909 *Manifesto of Futurism*, published on the front page of *Le Figaro*, the advent of the modern world is symbolized by "barrel-chested locomotives, pawing the rails like enormous steel horses bridled with long pipes." Machines and speed lie at the heart of a discourse that extols bursts of energy against sleepy tradition and the withdraw into a glorious past. The machine, whose power is both destructive and productive, is the model for transforming the world and redefining artmaking.

Locomotives seem to contain an outsized power in Futurist works. Trains' arrival in a station becomes triumphant, heralding the victory of a new world that will arise, though not without a certain violence. The metal on the wheels of Pippo Rizzo's train glows red from its friction with the rails; the locomotive's gleaming axels are like steel jaws. In Gösta Adrian-Nilsson's work, the train cuts through the night like a flash of lightning and shreds layers of the atmosphere like an artillery shell.

Mysterious associations

The clash between the movement of the railroad and the immobility of the train station—with its austere inhuman geometry—contributes to the unsettling feeling, the uncanny, emanating from Giorgio de Chirico's works. The absence of any sign of life in a space that is usually synonymous with sociability adds greatly to the oppressive character of his paintings.

Mélancolie d'un après-midi, which brings together a locomotive, a red chimneystack and two gigantic metallic-looking artichokes, announce a turning point in de Chirico's painting. The Italian artist developed metaphors and produced images in which the objects are detached from their referents and become simple signs. Shorn of any expected link to their surroundings, they let loose their potential for allusion and associating ideas.

The French artist Pierre Roy and the American Joseph Cornell fashioned the mystery of their pieces by placing in the same frame "ingredients" that do not belong together on the face of it and making them exist side by side. But the most famous of these chance incongruous encounters is the one arranged by the Belgian René Magritte, who brought together through their secret affinities a fireplace and a locomotive in *La Durée poignardée*.

Dark fantasies

Abundantly covered and illustrated in the popular press, railroad disasters were a source of both fascination and terror. High bridges and dark tunnels stir up anxiety as much as they fuel the imagination. In his writings, Sigmund Freud confesses his fear of train travel, which he shared with some of his patients. Georges Méliès's images showing a locomotive and its railcars propelled beyond the clouds communicate a trancelike state that is midway between reverie and terror.

Once its doors are shut, however, the compartment offers a space that can easily unleash fits of claustrophobia and anxiety. And sheltered from the eyes of others, it is also a place that sees taboos lifted, the scene of crimes, a stage where sexual transgressions are played out. In Max Ernst's story-collages, the railway car welcomes monsters and violent acts that loom up from his unconscious. A passenger is gagged, a traveler tied up, another stripped of his belongings. All are subjugated by anthropomorphic animals.

Railroad eroticism

In 1923 with *Métaphore*, René Magritte offered an analogy between the formal beauty of machines and the sensual curves of the female nude. His fellow Belgian Paul Delvaux followed suit. In *L'Âge de fer*, a nude woman is posed before a view of a train station at night. She is both a goddess of the modern age and a *femme fatale*, her soft skin and the curves of her body brushing up against the hard metal and the straight lines of the train and the columns of the station's glass canopy. In Georges Hugnet's work, no connotations necessary, the allusion is obvious. The locomotive assumes a phallic shape, symbol of power and sexual attraction; racing along the rails at top speed, the machine is the expression of violence and domination. The same sexual allusion, although more cheerful, even comical, pervades Edward Hopper's print titled *Train and Bathers*.

In a series of paintings done between 1965 and 1968, Leonor Fini depicts two young women meeting, seated face to face in a railcar. The narrowness of the compartment and the window almost completely covered by a window shade encourage the proximity of the bodies.

Outside the line: the train is no longer on track

In the second half of the 19th century, the train was the very symbol of the conquest of vast unknown territories in the collective imagination of Americans. Like a spiderweb, colonization advanced in step with the laying of new track linking the center with the most distant regions.

Running counter to this idea of civilization rapidly expanding, the landscapes of the painters Emlen Etting and Edward Hopper are pervaded with a feeling of solitude, remoteness, and immobility. The infrastructure of the railroad is a familiar presence but the new horizons the rails lead to remain forever unknown. The train no longer serves as a vector of communication, like the unstrung telegraph poles we see lining the track into the distance. When Hopper depicts rails running beside a house, paradoxically the impression that predominates is that of being stuck in one place.

Hopper undermines our mental representations with the titles of his paintings. *Approaching a City* suggests trains and travelers, movement, feverish activity. Yet he shows us only railroad tracks and the entrance of a tunnel – black and yawning – which a high gray wall separates from the promised city's dwellings.

Rails in the night

At the turn of the 20th century, Pictorialists sought to imbue photography with the expressive qualities of painting. The technical processes that had been developed by then allowed these photographers to achieve delicate blurring effects and subtle gradations of stippled gray, especially suited to capturing the smoke pouring from locomotives.

Alfred Stieglitz's images published in the magazine *Camera Work* inspired a whole generation of artists who made rail yards and siding their favorite motifs. Here the formal connections between vertical and horizontal elements making up railroad infrastructure are fascinating. Thanks to a subtle use of light – the backlighting of the railcar, the glinting shine of the curving railway tracks, the diffuse lighting of the overhead lamps filtered through the mist – the compositions are touched with magic, poetry, and emotion. The trains invite viewers on improbable journeys, open up virtual destinations, and suggest possible fates. Victor Servranckx reduces a nighttime railroad landscape to its geometrical essence, calling us to imagine the passage of a train breaking the stillness of the night.

Station dreams

Although they are not completely empty of human figures, the stations Paul Delvaux started painting in the mid-1940s seem filled with silence and solitude. To dress his works in mystery, the painter turned to a theatrical, even contradictory lighting that is natural and artificial, an unreal lighting that is kept in a balance of clarity and half-darkness, dawn and twilight. Delvaux's stations are those of dreams and illusions. His trains have neither timetables nor destinations. We will know nothing about the figures haunting his paintings; and although they are sharply depicted, they still elude our grasp. Often they turn their backs to us. They never seek to look us in the eyes, plunged as they are in their own thoughts and dreams.

By making elements of the railroad infrastructure she photographs practically disappear beneath layers of paint, Sophie Ristelhueber imagines the landscape becoming wild once again. Isabel Skinner dreams of discovering proof of the existence of the abandoned locomotive overrun by the primeval forest that the Surrealists André Breton and Benjamin Péret once conjured up.

Where do we come from ? Where are we going ?

Paul Delvaux's trains are there before our eyes, but where do they come from and where are they going? The same questions arise when we look at Jean-Frédéric Schnyder's painted miniature train, seemingly left behind at the foot of a tree; or when facing the toy train Jannis Kounellis has posed in an endless spiral. Are we meant to see in these unlikely journeys an allegory of our own fate?

With Chris Burden, railcars seem stuck in the surrounding mix of cement and cinder while the tracks weave and twist around each other to the point of looking like a railroad knot that can never be untangled. They are metaphors of a world bogged down in its own technology; their suspended state embodies the dizzying present, the loss of direction. Meanwhile, in the works of Edward Hopper and Charles E. Burchfield the absolute symbol of predictability, the straight line, becomes the promise of adventure or a journey towards the unknown. From a distance, Fiona Tan's miniaturized landscape looks like any track laid out by a model-train enthusiast; upon closer inspection, it's a vast world turned topsy-turvy. In the imagination of contemporary artists, the railroad, symbol of communication and conquest, is paradoxically transformed into a vector of dread and foreboding for our directionless world, forced to face its limits.

3. Press images

Available at → mcba.ch/presse

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1.
Edward Hopper
Hills, South Truro, 1930
Oil on canvas, 69,5 × 109,5 cm
Cleveland (Ohio), The Cleveland Museum of Art,
Hinman B. Hurlbut Collection
© Heirs of Josephine Hopper / 2022, ProLitteris,
Zurich
Photo: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art



2.
Paul Delvaux
Solitude, 1955
Oil on panel, 99,5 × 124 cm
Collection of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation
© Paul Delvaux Foundation - St. Idesbald / 2022,
ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles



3.
Paul Delvaux
L'Âge de fer, 1951
Oil on wood, 153 × 241 cm
Oostende, Collection Mu.ZEE - Stad Oostende
© Paul Delvaux Foundation - St. Idesbald / 2022,
ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Mu.ZEE, www.artinflanders.be, photo
Steven Decroos



4.
Gösta Adrian-Nilsson
Snälltåg II, 1916
Oil on cardboard, 39,5 × 45 cm
Malmö, Malmö Konstmuseum / Malmö Art
Museum
© 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Gösta Adrian-Nilsson / reproduced by
Jenny Thornell / Malmö Art Museum



5.
Fiona Tan
1 to 87 (détail), 2014
Model railways, various materials,
260 × 700 × 140 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery,
London
© Fiona Tan
Photo: Axel Schneider, Frankfurt am Main



6.
Max Ernst
Une semaine de bonté ou Les sept éléments capitaux, Paris, J. Bucher, 1934
Second notebook, Monday, Element: Water,
Example: Water
Basel, Paul Sacher Collection, Paul Sacher
Foundation
© 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Courtesy Paul Sacher Foundation



7.
Max Ernst
Une semaine de bonté ou Les sept éléments capitaux, Paris, J. Bucher, 1934
First notebook, Sunday, Element:
Mud, Example: The Lion of Belfort
Basel, Paul Sacher Collection, Paul Sacher
Foundation
© 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Courtesy Paul Sacher Foundation



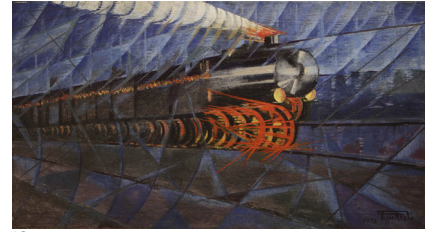
8.
Edward Hopper
Approaching a City, 1946
Oil on canvas, 68,9 × 91,4 cm
Washington D.C., The Phillips Collection,
acquired 1947
© Heirs of Josephine Hopper / 2022, ProLitteris,
Zurich
Photo: The Phillips Collection



9.
René Magritte
Métaphore, 1923
Oil on canvas, 40 × 50,2 cm
Alexander Wood & Danielle Knight
© 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Sotheby's



11.
Benedetta Cappa Marinetti
Luce + rumori di treno notturno, vers 1924
Oil and collage on canvas, 36 × 53 cm
Piazzoni Marinetti Collection
© Benedetta Cappa Marinetti
Photo: Studio Fotografico Luca Carrà



10.
Pippo Rizzo
Treno notturno in corsa, 1926
Oil on canvas, 57 × 107 cm
Private collection, courtesy of Pippo Rizzo
Archives
© Pippo Rizzo
Photo: Pippo Rizzo, APR, 2022



12.
Gino Severini
Souvenirs de voyage, vers 1911
Oil on canvas, 80 × 100 cm
Private collection, courtesy IMAGO Art Gallery,
Lugano
© 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Fotografia Carlo Pedrolì,
Mendrisio – Chiasso



13.
Jean-Frédéric Schnyder
Lory, 1983
Oil on canvas, 51 × 36 cm
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts.
Acquisition, 2000
© Jean-Frédéric Schnyder
Photo: MCBA



14.
Pierre Roy
Le Cabinet du naturaliste, 1928
Oil on canvas, 92,1 × 65,4 cm
London, Tate, Bequeathed Boris Anrep, 1969
Photo: Tate



15.
Fernand Léger
Le Passage à niveau, 1912
Oil on canvas, 94 × 81 cm
Riehen/Basel, Fondation Beyeler, acquired with
a donation from Kurt Schwank, Riehen
© 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich
Photo: Cantz Medienmanagement, Ostfildern

Views of the exhibition



Caption to be reproduced:
View of the exhibition *Train Zug Treno Tren. Voyages imaginaires* at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne, 2022
Photo: MCBA

4. Public engagement– Public outreach services

Events

Limited capacity.
Register online → www.mcba.ch

Guided tours (in French):
Thursday 14 July and 11 August at 6:30pm
Sunday 3, 17 and 31 July, 14 and 28 August, and 11 and 25 September, at 11am

Guided tour (in English):
Sunday 4 September at 2pm

Guided tours by the exhibition curator (in French):
Thursday 14 July at 6:30pm, Sunday 28 August and 25 September at 3pm
By Camille Lévêque-Claudet

Guided tours for the Ami-e-s du Musée (in French):
Tuesday 21 June at 12:30pm, Thursday 30 June at 6pm,
and Thursday 8 September at 6pm
By Camille Lévêque-Claudet

Family tours (in French):
“Voyages dessinés”
Sunday 10 July, 14 August and 11 September, 3pm–4:30pm
The whole family will discover a few selected works from the show
and explore, through drawing, different ways of depicting movement.
Free for 7-year-olds and up and accompanied by an adult
Entrance fee for adults

Adults workshop (in French):
“Vitesse et perspective dans l’univers ferroviaire”
Saturday 3 September, 2pm–5pm
Explore various techniques for depicting reality through drawing
and color.
With Sébastien Mettraux, artist
CHF 70.– / 50.–

Card games:
To visit the various parts of the *Train Zug Treno Tren* show while playing
a game, don't forget to pick up the “Cartes en main, cartes en train”
game and solve several mysteries as you go along! You can play with
the whole family or with your friends.
The game is available at the reception desk of the three museums
For the general public, free

Program for schools and private tours → mcba.ch

5. Information and contact

Florence Dizdari
Service presse et communication
florence.dizdari@plateforme10.ch
T +41 79 232 40 06

Press conference:
14 June at 1:30 pm
On registration → presse.mcba@plateforme10.ch

Hours:
Tuesday – Sunday: 10am – 6pm
Thursday: 10am – 8pm
Monday: closed
August 1st: open

Admission:
Plateforme 10 – 3 museums: CHF 15.–
(special rate for the inaugural period; gives access to all exhibitions at the MCBA, mudac and Photo Elysée)
1st Saturday of the month: free
Up to 25 years old: free

Online Tickets → mcba.ch/billetterie

Access:
SBB Lausanne train station, 3 minutes on foot
Bus: 85, 3, 20, 21, 60, Gare stop
Bus: 6, Cecil stop
Metro: m2, Gare stop
Car: Montbenon parking, Reduced fee

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 @mcba.lausanne

6. Partners and sponsors

The MCBA building was inaugurated on 5 April 2019. The museum's new premises were built by the canton of Vaud with the generous support of the City of Lausanne and the following private partnerships:

Fondation
Les Mûrons



Fondation
Art et Vie

Fondation
Anita et Werner Damm-Etienne



Abakanowicz Arts and
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Le Brassus



Madame
Alice Pauli

Association rétrospective
Pierrette Gonseth-Favre

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