

Direction des Affaires Culturelles



CHARLES FRÉGER  
**MONACO**  
PORTRAITS FILMÉS

16 OCTOBER 2020 – 3 JANUARY 2021  
SALLE D'EXPOSITION DU QUAI ANTOINE I<sup>ER</sup>

FREE ENTRANCE  
TUESDAY-SUNDAY  
1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
4, QUAI ANTOINE I<sup>ER</sup>  
MONACO

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[www.monacoportraitsfilmes.mc](http://www.monacoportraitsfilmes.mc)

 **Gouvernement Princier**  
PRINCIPAUTÉ DE MONACO



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# CHARLES FRÉGER

# MONACO

## PORTRAITS FILMÉS

**CURATED BY:  
BJÖRN DAHLSTRÖM**

From 16 October 2020 to 3 January 2021, the Direction des Affaires Culturelles de Monaco will present an exhibition of filmed portraits created in Monaco by Charles Fréger.

This exhibition project, produced and organised by the Direction des Affaires Culturelles, curated by Björn Dahlström, was developed during the particular context of deconfinement.

Artist Charles Fréger casts his eye over Monaco and the different groups or communities that make up the country's identity.

Workers, athletes, schoolchildren and artists were filmed at a time when social distancing became the norm. The artist chose to use moving images in order to create closer proximity between the subject of the film and the audience.

The exhibition will present these filmed portraits, projected and orchestrated by Charles Fréger, in the Salle d'Exposition du Quai Antoine 1<sup>er</sup>.

Since the early 2000s, Charles Fréger has worked on a project called "Portraits photographiques et uniformes". From all around the world he has produced a large set of images that follow in the line of the centuries-old history of portraiture. What interests him is clothing, uniforms and pageantry, and how, through these aspects, the individual photographed represents the group or community.

His working method is precise and inflexible: an unvarying combination of the pose, the framing, the light, and the frontality of the portraits. Paradoxically, it is these constraints, which he imposes himself, that more greatly reveal the identity of the subjects he photographs in this serial manner.

Over the years, Charles Fréger's practice has gradually taken more interest in the silhouette and its sculptural character than in the individuality of his subjects. His series on masquerades, such as "Wilder mann, ou la figure du sauvage", "Yokainoshima" and "Cimarron", bear witness to this shift: transcending identity, form and the sculpted body have also assumed a major dimension.

For Monaco, Charles Fréger has produced a set of portraits and different identities that personify the country. Going beyond the imagery usually promoted by the Principality, the artist chose to portray groups, some of which are famous, like the Prince's carabineers, others less known, such as associations, sportsmen and women, and even working-class communities, all of which are just as essential to the life of the country, but less visible, like construction workers and roadmenders.

Here in Monaco, the project struck a special chord. It is as though the artist, in spite of himself, had activated a relational aesthetic on a national scale: correspondingly, the community here was kept more informed than elsewhere, and has been more participative and active in the realization and execution of the project.

As regards the background of the Covid-19 pandemic, this played a major role. In fact, the health crisis and resulting social distancing made shooting less straightforward. The wearing of a mask - a veritable counter to characteristics of individuality - and the increased need to restore closeness with his subjects, led Charles Fréger to choose filmed rather than photographic portraits: the moving image and related sound endow the ensemble with an even more apparent closeness and sensuality.

The execution of this filmed technique remained faithful in all respects to the framework established by Charles Fréger in his photographic procedure. But the film captures "the moment when each one finds their place", when the subjects rally themselves to present and "deliver their posture". With these filmed portraits, the artist has taken the pulse of his subjects who, for a few seconds, hold and then release their breath to better express what they are. During that short moment, the artist melds the film and photographic practices, the second and the third dimensions.

Without making a direct connection to the pandemic, one cannot help but feel a sense of liberation in the breath of the images - conditional of course - but which occurred at that very moment of deconfinement as the shootings were taking place.

The languor of the images, and the soundtrack elaborated from *in situ* recordings that accompanies the 181 portraits presented here, together give the ensemble a special unity and poetry. The editing of the series, though minimal, suggests a narrative and tells a story of Monaco, and presents a portrait in the form of a mosaic of the actors in the Principality at a very particular moment. The subjects, identifiable by the uniforms of their community, but also as sculptural and choreographed as the dancers of the Ballets de Monte-Carlo, are like the synthesis of Charles Fréger's work, who here unites two major themes of his production. The portraits, projected monumentally on a wall 26 metres long, are, for the first time in the work of Charles Fréger, more an installation than an exhibition of photographs.

*Björn Dahlström*

## THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT OF

Association des Guides et Scouts de Monaco  
 AS Monaco Natation  
 Centre Cardio-Thoracique de Monaco  
 Club des Supporters de Monaco  
 Club le Temps de Vivre  
 Compagnie des Carabiniers du Prince  
 Direction de l'Education Nationale de la Jeunesse et des Sports  
 Femina Sport de Monaco  
 Fondation Hector Otto  
 Hôtel Métropole Monte-Carlo  
 Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo  
 Les Petits Chanteurs de Monaco  
 Mairie de Monaco  
 Monte-Carlo SBM  
 Musée Océanographique de Monaco  
 Nouveau Musée National de Monaco  
 Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo  
 Palais Princier de Monaco  
 S.A.M. J.B. PASTOR et Fils  
 Société Monégasque d'Assainissement (S.M.A.)  
 Stade Louis II  
 Stade Nautique Rainier III  
 Yacht Club de Monaco



## CHARLES FRÉGER

French photographer born in 1975, Charles Fréger has developed an abundant and very individual *œuvre* over twenty-odd years, that is almost encyclopaedic in its ambition.

The extensive body of photographs that Charles Fréger has created to date reflects his insatiable artistic exploration: his interest in communities, whether sporting, military, festive or scholastic, his contemplation of the individuals that compose them, and his revelation of the bonds, rituals and forms that they share in common.

In each of these circles, Charles Fréger treats the body and its clothing as ambivalent territories: where the pose reveals an ideal identity, and when the formality of the clothing - uniform as it is - finds itself discomposed by mischievous adolescence. That is the image that the photographer searches for. Long grouped under the generic title "Portraits photographiques et uniformes", this production initially showed itself to be descended from a certain northern tradition. Complemented by performances and videos, it has evolved to finally achieve a fundamentally theatrical dimension, in places palpably baroque.

Moving away from the portrait as he had practised it until then, Charles Fréger has for several years focused his attention on the silhouette and its expressive potential. The faces and bodies have gradually disappeared, either behind masks and make-up or costumes that have increased in complexity and volume.

The exhibition *Fabula* retraced the major developments in this theatrical and symbolic shift, in the form of a retrospective that brought together works from twenty or so series that he produced between 1999 and 2018 across Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa.

Charles Fréger is based in Rouen, France. His work has been shown right around the world and published in over twenty books. Among his most recent productions are *Yokainoshima*, exhibited at the Rencontres d'Arles 2016 and the musée des Confluences in 2018, and *Cimarron*, published in 2019 and exhibited at the Musée d'histoire de Nantes.



## BJÖRN DAHLSTRÖM

Björn Dahlström (1975, Casablanca) is an art historian (École du Louvre, Paris) and museum director.

In 2000, while he was working on the inventory of artist Bob Wilson's collection at the Watermill Center (NY), Björn Dahlström met Marie-Claude Beaud, director of the Mudam (Luxembourg's modern art museum), who invited him to join her there. He was given the responsibilities of the conception and programming of the institution, which opened in 2006.

Together the pair organised and curated the show "Air Conditioned" by the artist Su-Mei Tse, for which Luxembourg was awarded with the Golden Lion for Best National Participant at the 50<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale in 2003.

In 2008, Björn Dahlström was a member of the international group of researchers and curators who worked with the sportswear brand PUMA on its international sponsorship of African contemporary art and on establishing a network between the players of the continent's contemporary art scene. This resulted in the creation of the ZEITZ MOCAA - Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town (SA), by Jochen Zeitz.

In 2010, the Fondation Jardin Majorelle invited Björn Dahlström to create the Musée Berbère in Marrakesh, where he holds the position of curator for nine years. Meanwhile, for Pierre Bergé, he coordinates the restoration of Émile Zola's House near Paris, and the opening of the Musée Dreyfus, planned for spring 2021, in the garden of the writer's house.

Beginning in 2015, Björn Dahlström, Pierre Bergé and Madison Cox were the contracting authority for the Musée Yves Saint Laurent in Marrakesh (architects: Studio KO), which opened in 2017 adjacent to the Jardin Majorelle, of which Björn Dahlström was the director.

In 2019, he was also appointed director of the Musée Yves Saint Laurent in Paris.

From April 2021, Björn Dahlström will succeed to Marie-Claude Beaud as director of the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco.

Photo - Majd Bazerji, 2020

## LA SALLE D'EXPOSITION DU QUAI ANTOINE 1<sup>er</sup>

The Salle d'Exposition du Quai Antoine 1<sup>er</sup>, managed by the Direction des Affaires Culturelles de Monaco, hosts exhibitions, salons and workshops of art in a space measuring 900 m<sup>2</sup>.

Since it was opened in 1997, it has been the setting for large, museum-type exhibitions of the work of Hans Hartung, Paul Delvaux, Marc Chagall, Kees Van Dongen, Albert Diato, Steve McCurry, Matthieu Ricard and the Pigozzi Collection.

Salle d'Exposition du Quai Antoine 1<sup>er</sup>  
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**FREE ENTRANCE**  
**TUESDAY - SUNDAY**  
**1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

Closed: 25.12.2020 and 01.01.2021



The Salle d'Exposition du Quai Antoine 1<sup>er</sup> received the *Monaco Safe* certification, designed to offer visitors to the Principality of Monaco the best possible welcome in sites that are open to the public, in accordance with the current health regulations to stop the spread of COVID-19.

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