In 2007 the Frac gave carte blanche to the École nationale supérieure de la photographie in the framework of Frac presents! Why did it seem important to undertake a collaboration with these two schools?

Since I arrived as head of the Frac in 2006, it seemed obvious that the École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts Visuels de la photographie and the école normale supérieure de la photographie should be interlaced in a productive and stimulating way. Not only do the Fondation Frac and the Frac have an interest in being a part of a network of contemporary art, but what is more, the two institutions are a part of the same ecosystem and it makes sense to work together.

The title Historiography signifies an evocative word. How then do these stories meet up?

The adventure of contemporary art should not itself be confused only to a unique story. Each book, each body of work, each artist, each event, each exhibition, each collaboration, is part of a larger narrative. The question is: How do we make sense of this larger narrative? How do we interpret the past to make sense of the present? How do we engage with the present to imagine the future?

What are the primary definitions of a collective commis- sion? How does it derive from your familiarity with the contemporary art scene? How do you or does this collaborative decision-making process lead you to a specific outcome or solution?

This is the result of an ambitious collective’s work. After many years of preparation, the Frac and the Frac presents! have decided to share this commission with the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie. This collaboration involves the creation of an exhibition of video pieces, something that complicated an exhibition which had not been conceived of by the Frac at the outset.

You participated in the curatorial process of the Firac presents! 2012 exhibition? What was the starting premise of the initial commission? Moreover spanning a ten-year period of Frac activities, there were several goals:

- To extend the notion of exhibitions. It was important to us that the exhibition should be a place for reflective dialogue, a scenario for encounters, a space for shared research, a place of experimentation. The exhibition, via its conception and participation, should become an archive, for example, giving information about the projects. This ten-year feedback allows us to understand the creative nature.
- To present a ten-year partnership especially for this exhibition. There was also the question of living creation, more than that of an era. A relationship with the world, quite simply:

Thus the École Supérieure de la photographie and the École normale supérieure de la photographie and Jean-Yves Dhôte, poet and professor researcher who was director of photographic studies at the École supérieure de la photographie, united by a passion for photography and the history of photography and a long friendship.

The École Supérieure de la photographie and the École normale supérieure de la photographie, international schools of art devoted to training and experimental proposals. This ten-year feedback allows us to understand the creative nature.

Ten years for this type of device is undeniably a turning point! By aligning 2012-2013 with the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie, we are not only extending the horizon of our research but also opening the door to a new dialogue with other schools and work stemming from a public collection of contemporary art. It was important to us that the exhibition should be a place for reflective dialogue, a scenario for encounters, a space for shared research, a place of experimentation.

On Stage 2 we find work spawned by a collaboration of artists from student to young artist, artist to teacher, student to young artist, artist to teacher, student to young artist...

The theme of the exhibition is "evocative words." Why was this theme chosen? What was the starting premise of the initial exhibition? Moreover spanning a ten-year period of Frac activities, there were several goals:

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This is the first time that archives from these years of research, at the students’ universities and institutions in laboratory as well, through the Frac opens its doors to transversal and experimental proposals.

Making one’s way through the exhibition, the visitor can clearly see the differences between the floors because certain pieces in the Frac’s collection derive into the questions of represen- tation via use of diverse techniques, from felt (Ben [Felt] and Higher [RIGHT]) to canvas (Enrique Ramirez’s collages) or graphite (John Voight) there are so many different medium the artists used, like in Why. Furthermore, certain techniques evoke writing, either directly, for instance the inscription evoked in the card in Susan Salom’s installation, or the marble in Davide Balula’s wall, the tree in the paper’s raw material, writing’s thousand-year- old script.

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How do we understand the representation of the co- ntext as an engine for the image?

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“Fondation Frac presents!” is an annual feature of the Frac presents! project, which is a collaborative project between the Frac, the Frac presents! and the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie. The purpose of this project is to create conditions for an encounter outside the Frac, to present work that is not exhibited in the Frac, and to provide the visitors with a chance to think about the relationship between the Frac and the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie.

How do you describe the relationship between the two artists?

In this exhibition, the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie and the École normale supérieure de la photographie work together to create an exhibition that explores the relationship between the Frac and the Frac presents! project. The exhibition is a platform for the Frac to present its work to the public and to the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie to present its work to the public. This exhibition is a way for the Frac and the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts Visuels de la photographie to share ideas and work together on a project.

How would you describe the nature of the collaboration between the two artists?

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Histoires parallèles (Parallel Stories)

This exhibit, shown across four floors, is the fruit of a collegial committee regrouping four student curators from the École nationale supérieure de la photographie, Aix and the École normale supérieure d’Aix-en-Provence — Sylvaine Garnier, Giles Paquet, Marie Quelus, Vincent Zanca — in addition to Muriel Touati-Moneta, Marie Pelletier-Rybak, Paul Pronayou, Jérôme Signor, David Gauthier, Eric Bayne, Fabienne Clerin and Pascal Revaux.

Designed as a work in progress, via work sessions and numerous exchanges and reflection shared throughout the year 2015, the show is plural in nature: this collective committee has thus built up a series of works from the Frac’s acquisitions during the period spanning 2005-2015 (Stage 1 and Multimedia Stage), deciding to present work created by eight two-person student teams from two schools depicting the years 2013-2015 under the title Why? (Stage 2).

In the continuity of the Davis exhibition presented at the Frac in 2007, Histoires parallèles hence feature ten years of partnership, without nostalgia or melancholy, but rather with an ideal to deflect the portrait of a ten-year collective adventure that allowed students from Ens and Ens Lyon to maintain a healthy dialogue based on the relationship between textilography. Archives shown in the Documentation Center likewise give witness to the richness of such exchanges and the diversity of fine art and textual approaches.

Histoires parallèles is also a manifestation, the political and artistic need and desire to reaffirm a teaching method around the experimentation and merging of artists and researchers collaborating and offering a vision of their work within an institution devoted to contemporary creation. Fruit of a unique and novel collaboration between two national schools and the Frac, this exhibit operates as a revelation and end result of work blending writing and photography, all while questioning practices and assigned roles. Finally, it’s a possibility to discover works delivering a broad contemporary, uncompromising world-view as crucial parallel stories whose meaning cannot be denied.

Pascal Revaux,
Directeur of the Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur

Concerning the exhibit
— A dozen available for three accompanying groups — A tour for high school students and youth available at the Frac’s welcome desk
The Documentation Center
— Books about the exhibit available at the welcome desk
— A dossier available for those accompanying groups
— Resources about the exhibited artists at the Documentation Center
— A tool for high school students and youth available
— Minimalist exhibition

The Frac is open Tuesday to Saturday from 12pm to 7pm and Sunday from 2pm to 6pm. For more information: www.fracpaca.org

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