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Schedule:
Doors opening: 7:00 p.m.
Performance: 7:30 p.m.
April 25, 2024

Performance by
XAVIER MICHEL

Inviting Xavier Michel for a residency represents a certain risk. He's one of those do-it-yourself artists who can't go anywhere without their arsenal of objects, tools, crates and trunks of stuff[1]. To put it crudely, Xavier Michel transforms the spaces he inhabits with his work into a sweet, messy capharnaüm - something between workshop and laboratory, in which he acts as a mad inventor, or as a lover of serendipity who experiments and tests, fails, tries again, fails better[2]. Driven by an irresistible need to understand how things work, he dismantles and reassembles them, reproduces or makes them himself, modifies them, arranges them, makes them resonate in concert. Everything holds together in a precarious, fragile balance, maintained and activated by the artist's hands and body, string games and juggling tricks. He creates ingenious systems in which everything is linked by a joyful interdependence, and in which he too seems to be seeking his place also. His gestures and sensibility borrow from the burlesque spectacle, in which he plays the role of a romantic Buster Keaton, eternally confronted with the risk of catastrophe. Like a prestidigitator in training, he creates magical illusions in which he always ends up irretrievably naked[3], a melancholy portrait of the artist as saltimbanco[4].

Isabelle Henrion, 2024

1 See the concept of bricolage developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The savage mind*, 1962.
2 based on Samuel Beckett, in *Worstward Ho*, 1983.
3 Xavier Michel, *Rap à poil*, 2023.
4 Jean Starobinski, *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque*, 1970.

Xavier MICHEL (1990) is a French visual and performance artist. After a master's degree in engineering (embedded systems) he studied art at Pavillon Bosio (Monaco) and at Villa Arson (Nice) where he graduated with a master's degree in 2017. For several years, he has been developing performance work in which he manipulates tool-sculptures in absurd and poetic ways. This practice picks from object theater, circus, dance, and music, and create a polysemic and sensitive language. In 2019, he participated in the residency Le Pavillon directed by Ange Leccia, and then exhibited in various collective projects such as "In (En)Acting Roles" (SB34, Brussels), "Histoire d'un ciel en creux" (Brasserie Atlas, Brussels), and collaborated with Konstantinos Kyriakopoulos for the exhibition "Felicità Milieu des choses" at Poush Manifesto. In 2023, Le Shed art center of Normandy invited him for his first solo show, entitled "Performance en permanence".

In collaboration with Artistes en Résidence - Clermont-Ferrand and Institut Français de España

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