

Visitors' guide

# Violaine Lochu

## *Pharmakon / Reboot*

*Festina Lente*  
(Make haste slowly)  
2023–2025

05 june  
07 sept. 2025

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Exhibition curator: Sophie Kaplan

Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

Part of Exporama 2025

la criée

centre d'art contemporain / rennes

Exploring voice and language as well as notions of transformation and transposition, Violaine Lochu has developed an artistic practice at the crossroads of the visual arts, experimental music and sound poetry.

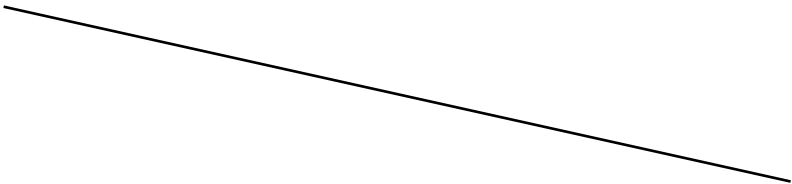
Her solo exhibition at La Criée, *Pharmakon / Reboot* unfolds around healing songs, gestures and thoughts. It is conceived as an ensemble in which video-performances, costume-partitions, drawing-writing, sound pieces and site-specific performances interact.

How does art help us to resonate with ourselves and others? And to take care of those, and everything, around us? These questions, which have underpinned Violaine Lochu's work in recent years, are at the heart of the *Pharmakon / Reboot* exhibition. *Pharmakon* comes from the Greek and refers to both remedy and poison; *Reboot* in English means the restarting of a story or system, and in French evokes the 'rebouteux', the healer.

To prepare her exhibition, Violaine Lochu conducted research in several stages. She is interested in the interactions between humans and plants and in ancestral healing practices - from animist rituals to the knowledge of plants at the origin of pharmacopoeia. She went to meet herbalists, ethnobotanists and magnetisers in Mayenne, her native region. She then gathered the views of people living in and around Rennes, asking them a simple, straightforward question: what would you like to be cured of? Based on these exchanges, Violaine Lochu has composed new graphic and musical writings that open up a world of fictional possibilities

## **The songs of plants**

These writings take shape in the *Pharmakon / Reboot* installation, comprising a video triptych and ten suspended textile works. Visitors are invited to take off their shoes and take a seat on the green carpet at the centre of the installation. The videos feature artist Violaine Lochu alongside two singer-performers, Yael Miller and Flor Paichard, dressed in costume-scores.



This vocal trio performs 'gestured songs', corresponding to the graphic scores embroidered on their capes, aprons and rugs. The titles of these textile works are the names of medicinal plants used in western France: mugwort, cabbage, St John's wort, plantain and elderberry. Violaine Lochu has studied their various properties: how they grow, their shapes, their colours, their therapeutic virtues and their symbolism, and transposed them into musical compositions. Flor Paichard wears and interprets the *Armoise* (Mugwort) cape (in red cotton), a plant recommended for blood circulation problems and whose symbolism is associated with fire and energy. Violaine Lochu, wearing the orange *Millepertuis* (St John's Wort) cape, vocally transcribes the air holes and bubbles of the plant, known for its antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and antidepressant properties.

The *Pharmakon / Reboot* exhibition borrows from local and distant indigenous knowledge, as well as being part of a recent history of performance art and ecofeminist practices<sup>✱</sup>. Violaine Lochu's work is also marked by her personal experiences, which have led her to study traditional songs in Bulgaria, Italy, Poland and Sweden, to live and work in Benin, and more recently to complete a residency in Vietnam. Encounters, exchanges and collaborations are at the heart of her creative process.

## Healing vows and associated rituals

The exhibition has a strong ritual dimension, exploring the power of voice and song as healing rituals. In the second room, wearing headphones, visitors listen to a sound piece entitled *chœur-corps-care*

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<sup>✱</sup> Violaine Lochu is particularly interested in the works of ecofeminist philosophers Emilie Hache and Jeanne Burgat-Goutal, and sociologist Fanny Charasse

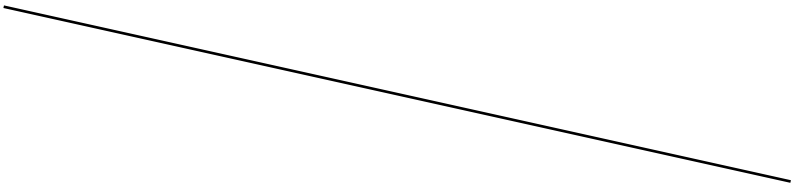
(choir-body-care), featuring the whispered and intertwined voices of dozens of people recounting their ailments, without any hierarchy (serious/benign) or categorisation (psychological/physical). Brought together in a single breath, these voices with their unique stories seem to form a whole. Violaine Lochu has made around forty sound recordings, which she has also transcribed into writing-drawings called *Pharmakon / Reboot #vœux de guérison*, playing on notions of exposure/protection, revelation/retention, and legibility/illegibility. For their composition, she drew inspiration from the microscopic views of medicinal plant cells.

The exhibition opens on a collaborative note, inviting visitors to write their own wishes for healing then place them in the *Meubles à vœux #1 (Wishing Furniture #1)*.

Every week, members of the reception and mediation team become *Rebooters*. During weekly performances, they gather the wishes according to a protocol handed down and shared by Violaine Lochu. The wishes are read, rolled up, then placed and covered with water in the fourteen vases of the *Meubles à vœux #2*, located in the main hall.

The artist and the art centre are working together to experiment with new ways of exhibiting and transmitting, using bodies, gestures and voices over different timeframes. For the opening and closing of the exhibition, Violaine Lochu will give performances based on healing songs.

At the end of the exhibition, she will pour the water from the vases back onto the plants at Montaignu, in a final ritual.



## Wishes addressed to plants

In *Pharmakon / Reboot #2*, Violaine Lochu invents a healing ritual by combining readings on ecofeminism<sup>✶</sup>, anthropology<sup>✶✶</sup> and philosophy<sup>✶✶✶</sup>, and her encounters with practitioners of both conventional and alternative medicine (magnetism, hypnosis, acupuncture).

This video-performance was filmed in Mayenne, at Montaigu, a hill where traces of rites practised since prehistoric times have been found. Three performers are engaged in an action related to plants: kneeling on coloured carpets (*Rebooters carpets*), embroidered with symbols inspired by floral diagrams<sup>✶✶✶✶</sup>, they read out healing wishes in a low voice. After dissolving the wishes in a vial of water, the three performers drink the contents before spitting them out onto the plants. The plants (holly, wild hyacinth, nettle, gorse, pine, etc.), chosen for their therapeutic virtues and symbolism, receive the wishes through the water on which they feed.

## Songs of the scientists

In the small room, Violaine Lochu presents an earlier work, *HypnaGround* (2024), which extends the question of listening and rituals to all living things. This video-performance was produced in collaboration with researchers from the Mappa Lab environmental archaeology laboratory at the University of Pisa in Italy and video artist Makoto C. Friedmann. Inspired by the work of the anthropologists Bruno Latour, Nastassja Martin and Jeanne Favret-Saada, Violaine

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<sup>✶</sup> *De la génération* (2024) by Emilie Hache, *Être écoféministe : théories et pratiques* (2020) by Jeanne Burgat-Goutal, *Caliban ou la sorcière* (2004) by Silvia Federeci

<sup>✶✶</sup> *Les mots, la mort, les sorts* (1977) by Jeanne Favret Saada, *Retour du monde magique* (2023) by Fanny Charasse, *Par-delà nature et culture* (2005)

by Philippe Descola, *Croire aux fauves* (2019) by Nastassja Martin...

<sup>✶✶✶</sup> *Autobiographie d'un poulpe* (2021) by Vinciane Despret, *Habiter le trouble* (2019) by Donna Haraway, *Une écologie décoloniale* (2019)

by Malcom Ferdinand, *La communauté terrestre* (2023) by Achille Mbembe

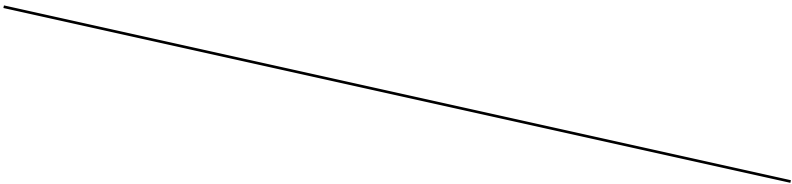
<sup>✶✶✶✶</sup> A floral diagram is a schematic representation of the organisation of the floral parts of a flower, used in botany.

Lochu invited archaeologists to explore the emotional, micro-political and unconscious relationships they have with their territory. After a week of research and filming in the Apuan Alps - involving discussions, vocal practice and hypnosis exercises - the archaeologists performed choral and solo songs in their research environments.

Scientific knowledge mingles with a sensitive and physical approach to the elements, merging into a variety of shared songs.

With *Pharmakon / Reboot*, Violaine Lochu lays bare her own voice to recompose, to make heard and to accompany our ills. The central questions addressed by the artist in this exhibition prompt others: How can modern and vernacular gestures and knowledge merge and complement each other? How can an exhibition welcome and listen? Can a work of art be both intimate and collective, poetic and political?

*Pharmakon / Reboot* offers a reflection on the decompartmentalisation of forms and practices - artistic, medical, social - made possible by the pooling of knowledge and the (re)invention of healing gestures. It invites us to listen, to feel and to pay attention to our environment, by creating bridges between contemporary and ancient, learned and vernacular, human and non-human worlds.



## **production of the works**

- ✓ Performance: Violaine Lochu, Yael Miller and Flor Paichard
- ✓ Video images: Camille de Chenay
- ✓ Photography: Tadzio
- ✓ Technical assistance: Spero Djivo-Lochu
- ✓ Sewing assistance: Atelier Vy Phan, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- ✓ Title: Christophe Hamery
- ✓ Production manager of the company Archivox/  
Violaine Lochu: Aurélie Arnaud

## **Acknowledgements**

- ✓ Marie Cloteau-Girard (ethnobotanist),  
l'Herborigène (herbalist)
- ✓ Michel Pailleux and Philippe Latreille
- ✓ The 43 people who confided their healing wishes
- ✓ The health, training and socio-cultural structures  
which hosted the recording sessions
- ✓ Grégoire Guillard and the team of the Pôle Culturel  
des Coëvrans
- ✓ David Madiot and the Communauté de communes  
des Coëvrans
- ✓ Vy Phan, Pham Huế Tiên et Nguyễn Phước Hồng Ngọc
- ✓ La Villa Saigon, Hồ Chí Minh City
- ✓ Brigitte and Gervais Lochu, Julie Bonneau and  
Nidam
- Ridaoui, Florian Raymond, Marie-Suzanne de Loye
- ✓ The association Valentin Hauj



## **documentation**

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Educational resources are available on La Criée's website. The artist's bibliography and books related to the exhibition can be consulted at La Criée's documentation centre and borrowed from the Bibliothèque des Champs Libres (5th floor, Art section).

# Rendez-vous

june

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## **performances**

### ***Pharmakon / Reboot***

(Wednesday 04, 6.30pm and 7.30pm)

with Violaine Lochu, Yael Miller and Flor Paichard

Three performers interpret the scores embroidered on the capes in the *Pharmakon / Reboot* installation and perform healing rituals and songs.

At La Criée, free admission subject to availability

## **teacher visits**

(Wednesday 11, 2pm)

Presentation of the exhibition, school visits (for primary and secondary schools) and ideas for classroom workshops.

by reservation: 02 23 62 25 12

## **descriptive and tactile visit**

(Friday 27, 5.30pm)

for visually impaired adults

A visit accompanied by a mediator who offers a sensory approach to the works, through touch, the perception of sound in the space and a dialogue based on the participants' impressions.

At La Criée, on reservation by e-mail to [la-creee@ville-rennes.fr](mailto:la-creee@ville-rennes.fr)  
or by telephone at 02 23 62 25 10

## **throughout the summer**

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### ***Rebooters***

with Chloé Fourage, Clémence Santoni, Manon Delanoë, Carole Brulard, Amandine Braud, Juliette Hurel, Élodie Coulon

Once a week, on an impromptu basis, the reception and mediation team organise a ritual-performance in the exhibition based on healing wishes.

**performance**

***Hybird***

(Saturday 06, 4.30pm)

with Violaine Lochu

Continuing her research into bird song in France and Lapland, Violaine Lochu reinvents herself as a bird-woman in an exercise in hybridisation (much more than imitation) that involves not only her voice but her whole body. The accordion, played, scraped, scratched and struck, accompanies this metamorphosis.

At La Criée, free admission subject to availability.

***encounter***

(Saturday 06, 5pm)

with Violaine Lochu and Vanessa Desclaux

On the occasion of the publication of Violaine Lochu's monograph, *Inventaire / Langage*, published by Paraguay Press, art critic Vanessa Desclaux will revisit the notions of ritual, care and combat present in the artist's work.

At La Criée, free admission subject to availability.

## **your visit**

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### **for individuals**

The reception staff at La Criée will be on hand to answer your questions and discuss the exhibition.

### **for groups**

The visitors service welcomes groups:

✓ Self-guided: Tuesday to Sunday, 1pm to 7pm

For partners of the 'ambassadeurs' scheme, visit resources are available on request.

✓ Guided tours: Tuesday to Friday, 9.30am to 12.30pm for groups of young people between 2pm and 7pm for groups of adults

Self-guided or accompanied, group visits are free on request and by prior arrangement only.

### **summer tours**

This summer, La Criée is offering visits and workshops for health, social and medico-social structures, in partnership with other cultural venues: the 40mcube art centre, the Champs Libres (focusing on objects from the Musée de Bretagne collection associated with healing rites) and the édulab-Pasteur.

free, on request and reservation.

### **contacts**

✓ Carole Brulard, public relations manager

02 23 62 25 11

c.brulard@ville-rennes.fr

✓ Amandine Braud, cultural mediator

02 23 62 25 12

a.braud@ville-rennes.fr

La Criée centre d'art contemporain is a cultural facility owned by the City of Rennes and supported by the Ministère de la Culture–Drac Bretagne, the Brittany Region and the Ille-et-Vilaine Department. La Criée is certified as a contemporary art centre of national interest.

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place Honoré Commeurec / Rennes

open Tuesday to Sunday from 1pm to 7pm, free admission

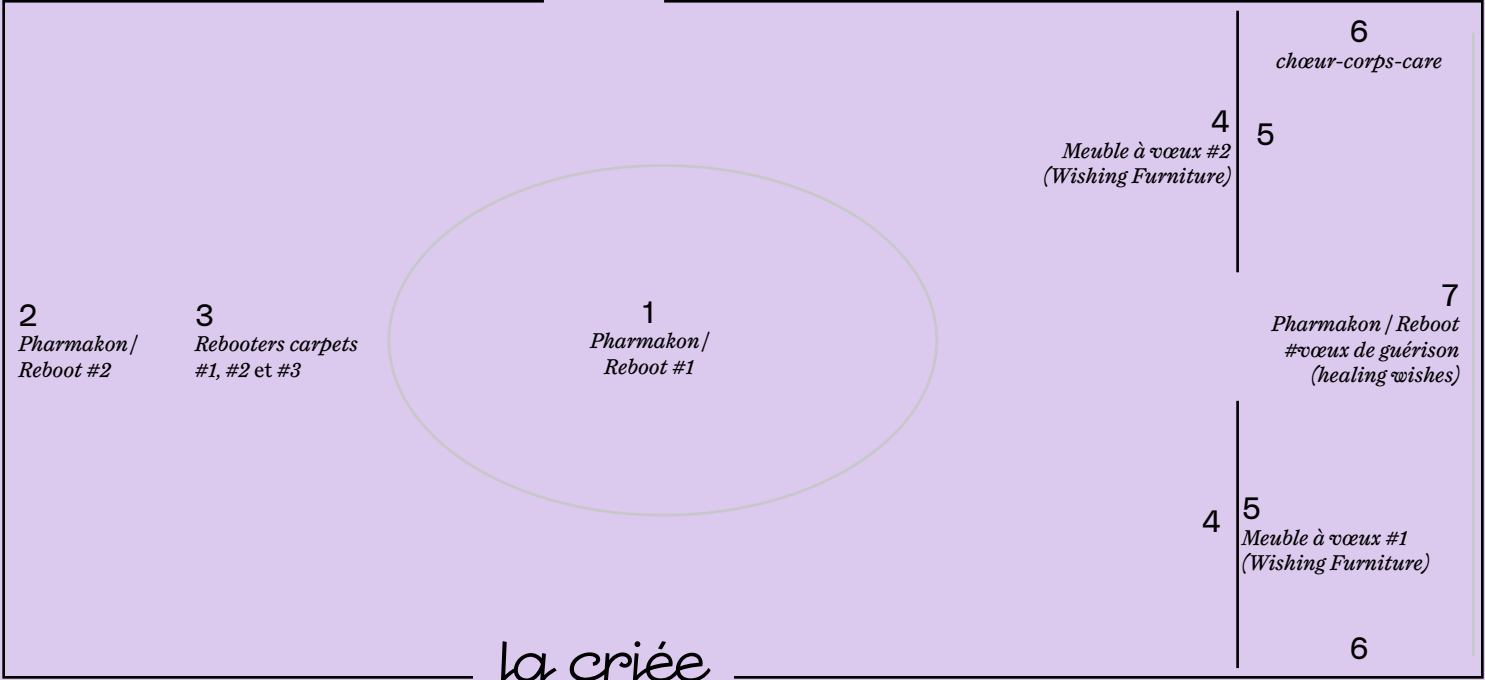
métro: République / bus: La Criée / tel.: 02 23 62 25 10 / [www.la-creee.org](http://www.la-creee.org)

# Violaine Lochu

## *Pharmakon/Reboot*

library and documentation

8  
*HypnaGround*



(1) *Pharmakon / Reboot #1*, 2025  
Installation: video triptych, textile works,  
carpets (insulating foam with cotton  
covers)  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

*Pharmakon / Reboot*, 2025  
video triptych, approx. 20 min  
With Yael Miller and Flor Paichard  
Images: Camille de Chenay  
With the support of Pôle Culturel d'Évron

*Armoise (Mugwort) #1 and #2*, 2025  
Cape-partition (red)  
Tablier-partition (rose)

*Chou (Cabbage)*, 2025  
Cape-partition (purple)

*Millepertuis (St. John's Wort)*  
#1, #2 and #3, 2025  
2 capes-partitions (orange and  
mauve)

*Plantain*, 2025  
Cape-partition (mint green)

*Sureau (Elderberry) #1 and #2*, 2025  
Cape-partition (lilac)  
Apron-partition (dark orange)

*Verveine (Verbena)*, 2025  
Carpet-partition (apple green)

Black cotton applied on colored cotton (tech-  
nique inspired by l'avotita), silver insulating  
paper  
Technical assistance: Spero Djivo-Lochu and  
Atelier Vy Phan, Hôchi minh-Ville (Vietnam)  
Co-production: Institut français, Villa Saigon,  
Hôchi minh-Ville (Vietnam)

(2) *Pharmakon / Reboot #2*, 2025  
Vidéo-performance, approx. 20 min  
With Yael Miller and Flor Paichard  
Images: Camille de Chenay  
With the support of the communauté de  
communes des Coévrans  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

(3) *Rebooters carpets #1, #2 et #3*, 2025  
Series of 3 textile works, 60 x 60 cm  
each, orange, coral and pink cotton, silver  
insulating paper  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

(4) *Meubles à vœux (Wishing  
Furniture) #2*, 2025  
14 glass vases, 60 x 10 cm  
2 wooden pieces of furniture,  
159 x 30 x 90 cm, lumière colorée,  
visitors' wishes (ink on paper strips),  
7 x 29.7 cm  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

(5) *Meubles à vœux (Wishing  
Furniture) #1*, 2025  
2 benches, 307 x 50 x 48 cm each  
Wish-writing material to be activated  
(strips of paper, writing surface and  
felt-tip pens)  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

(6) *chœur-corps-care*, 2025  
Stereo sound piece, approx. 16 min  
With the voices of 43 participants,  
collected from health, training and so-  
cio-cultural structures.  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

(7) *Pharmakon / Reboot #vœux de  
guérison (healing wishes)*, 2025  
series of 39 healing wishes, ink  
drawings on paper, 12 x 7 cm  
Production: La Criée centre d'art contemporain

(8) *HypnaGround*, 2024  
Vidéo-performance, 18 min 30  
Artistic direction: Violaine Lochu  
Images: Makoto C. Friedmann  
A collaboration with Mappa Lab Université  
de Pise, Italy, With the support of Culture Moves  
Europe  
Production: Université de Pise