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## Events

Free entrance, full program on [www.betonsalon.net](http://www.betonsalon.net)

- Wednesday 7 May,  
at 7 pm  
*The Untamable Hand*, performance  
by Hedwig Houben (in English).
- Wednesday 14 May,  
at 7 pm  
*Hand Hand Polish*, performance  
by Hedwig Houben (in English).
- Thursday 19 and Friday 20 June,  
Workshop with Hedwig Houben  
and Rob Leijdekkers. Registration  
at: [public@betonsalon.net](mailto:public@betonsalon.net)
- Friday 27 June,  
from 6 to 7 pm  
Exhibition visit with Bétonsalon's  
team. As part of the Treize'Estival.
- Saturday 5 July,  
from 5 to 6 pm  
Talk with Hedwig Houben,  
Émilie Renard and Vincent  
Enjalbert.

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## Parallel programs

- Fridays 16 May  
13 June et 4 July,  
from 6:30 to 9 pm  
*Written with mittens*  
*INFUNDIOSXS*: Cycle of collective  
writing for several voices and  
hands. On registration:  
[publics@betonsalon.net](mailto:publics@betonsalon.net)

- Monday 26 May,  
from 7 to 9pm  
*How the Ocean lit up*: Closing event  
of the "The Tick Present" writing  
residency of Phoebe Hadjimarkos  
Clarke with participants of the  
"Grieving-With" writing workshop".  
In collaboration with \*Duuu Radio,  
the Centre des Politiques de la  
Terre and Université Paris Cité.
- Wednesday 28 May,  
from 3 to 9 pm  
*Salonbéton*: Public Presentation  
of the Project "A Year in the Life  
of an Art Center" carried out with  
students from University Paris 8  
Vincennes–Saint-Denis.
- at 7 pm  
"Anti-Ableist Struggles and  
Working Methodologies in Art  
Centers", a collective talk with  
Coline Ardouin, Lucas Fritz and  
guests.
- Friday 13 June,  
from 3 to 6 pm  
*Stakeholders*: Retroperspectives  
on the history of Bétonsalon  
around the exhibition "The Half  
of Things" (2010).

- Friday 27 June,  
de 14h30 à 18h  
*Béton Book Club*: collective reading  
of Emma Bigé's *Mouvementements*  
(La Découverte, 2023).

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## Workshops

Free, on registration:  
[publics@betonsalon.net](mailto:publics@betonsalon.net)

- Wednesday 4 June,  
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm  
*The I*: self-portrait & short  
films workshop, for families  
and children aged 6 and over.
- Saturday 2 June,  
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm  
*The Fugitive Hand*: Writing and  
zine-making workshop, for adults.  
As part of the Treize'Estival.
- Wednesday 25 June  
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm  
*Fingers Fools*: Bionic hand  
workshop, for children aged 5 and  
over. As part of the Treize'Estival.
- Saturday 5 July,  
from 2:30 to 4:30 pm  
*The Fugitive Hand*: Writing  
and zine-making workshop,  
for families and children aged  
8 and over.

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## Tours

Tours are led by a mediator and  
adapted to all audiences. Tours  
in a foreign language or in LSF  
on request, within 4 days.

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Bétonsalon's team: Camille Berthelin, stage manager; Camille Bouron, mediation and public outreach growth officer; Clara Darin, public outreach assistant, civic service; Vincent Enjalbert, head of exhibitions; Romain Grateau, stage manager; Maha Kays, administrator; Maya Krouk, coordination assistant, civic service; Zoé Lauberteaux, communications assistant, apprenticeship; Elena Lespes Muñoz, head of public outreach; Émilie Renard, director; Sofia Robineau, public outreach assistant, internship.

This exhibition is supported by the Mondriaan Fonds, the Embassy of Netherlands in Paris.  
Thanks to CARADT – Centre of Applied Research for Art, Design and Technology in the Netherlands.

# THE UNTAMABLE HAND

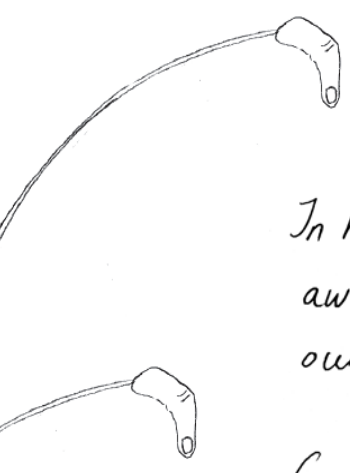
For the past fifteen years, Hedwig Houben has been reflecting on production in a dialogue that initially involves two protagonists: the figure of the artist and the sculptures she produces. This dialogue between an omniscient narrator or unwilling spokesperson of the identities she creates has often taken the form of a lecture-performance, recorded and then broadcast on site alongside sculptures, in an exhibition. Using manipulable forms in plasticine or plaster, she has created a vast gallery of characters endowed with transitional identities. Occasionally, the artist allows others – family, students, institutional staff, collectors – to play the role of guide-interpreters of her work, offering their expert perspectives as people involved in the various processes of making, transforming, mediating or maintaining her works.

*It had started very subtly, with some slight nervous twitches in her pinkie and index finger, like an inconvenience looking for the nearest exit. Unannounced and always at the wrong time. Since then, the Hand felt her control slip from between her fingers more and more frequently. Unwillingly shaking, shivering, trembling ... Rrrrrrr...*

As is often the case with Houben, this exhibition at Bétonsalon originates from a real-life experience that is interwoven with other accounts of similar situations and the concepts they convey. It all began with the artist's hand suddenly shaking uncontrollably during a public speech. From this patent dysfunction, Houben draws several consequences, notably the representation of an independence of the members of her body from her own will, the manifestation of an open conflict. She also notices how reflexes, emotions and gestures are much faster than any articulated language and outpace it. From this physiological experience and inverted rhythm, Hedwig Houben draws a broader reflection on the agentivity of a hand that does not obey the subject's intentions, places them in an uncomfortable situation. Frees itself from any injunction to be productive, the Hand prefers instead improvisation and rambling. Beyond the discomfort generated by this loss of control, this situation raises the question of the real or presumed vulnerability of the unity of a self, manifesting a split through the simple resistance of a body part who no longer conforms either to the expectations of a subject or to the social conventions.

Although the Hand is a recurring character in Hedwig Houben's performances, here it acquires a new independence: it acts first as an entity with a dual personality, whose duality is highlighted by the impossibility of superimposing the right and left hands. In massive, stable forms, two outstretched hands oppose each other: one palmar, open, hollow and helpful, collects and distributes; the other dorsal, also flat but full, is available to no one. What she calls the 'Pleasant hand'

and the 'Unreliable hand' are two sides of the same hand, the right. While coordination between the two hands is generally a sign of good cooperation, Hedwig Houben likes to undo any directive body schema to imagine their conflicts, with one seeking to gain the upper hand over the other, and the other ignoring the first. In this scenario, left-handedness is a guarantee of emancipation from the cultural habitus that hinders their agentivity, leading her towards a form of regressive idleness, a salvific surrender. Elsewhere, the Hand is broken down into several protruding fingers, fixed on extra-flexible rods and equipped with cameras that can be manipulated to point and film from a non-optical point of view. With this visual device live streaming disordered interactions of images, Hedwig Houben seeks to decentre herself from the narrative scheme generated by the perspective of a single person, preferring instead the visual cacophony of an incomplete, unprogrammed, spontaneous multitude.

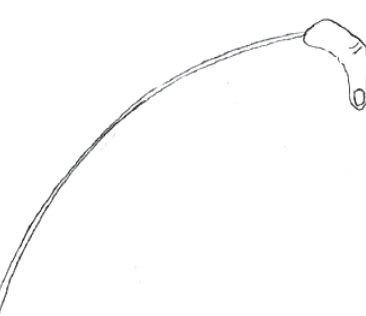


*In hand, out of hand, to have, to give, or to keep. Somewhat awkwardly, Hand searches for her position. Pocket in, pocket out, fidgeting with a piece of paper, a nail, in an ear...*

*Garish, evil, lying... yes, no. Erratic. Who's brave enough? Give it space. Yes, yes! But ohhh, ahhh... if it fails, boy-oh-boy... Soon, everything derails, ai, ai, ai. Scurried off, I bet. Hands, flop, reflex, gone. Your own house clean, I'm sure. Not me, definitely not. Fool, what do you think? I'm no coward.*

The issues of interdependence that run through this exhibition are questions that Hedwig Houben addresses to herself and, more broadly, to her status as an artist and polyactive worker, but also to her dependence on and attempts at autonomy from the art world, a world that, moreover, knows how to plead collective causes while perpetuating the atomization of authorship within its own organizational structures. Without seeking to theoretically resolve these dilemmas common to many artists, the primary purpose of this exhibition would be to collectively formulate these questions, to find public forms that can be shared, and to engage with them in their most unresolved aspects.

Émilie Renard and Vincent Enjalbert



Excerpts from the script of Hedwig Houben's performance *The Untamable Hand*, presented at Bétonsalon on May 7, 2025. The full script, as well as that of the performance *Hand Hand Polish*, are available for consultation within the exhibition and for purchase at the art center's reception desk.





# THE UNTAMABLE HAND

## HEDWIG HOUBEN

Exhibition:

from 15 May to 26 July 2025

Opening:

Wednesday 14 May, from 6pm to 9pm

Curators: Émilie Renard

Wednesday to Friday, from 11am to 7pm  
Saturday, from 2pm to 7pm • Free entrance  
9 esplanade Pierre Vidal-Naquet 75013 Paris  
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## BÉTONSALON CENTRE FOR ART & RESEARCH