

Press Release

**‘Charles Fréger. Memories of Alsace’
Exhibition
Alsatian Museum
9 June 2023 – 1st April 2024**

The exhibition ‘Memories of Alsace’ presents the result of an artist’s residency undertaken by Charles Fréger in Strasbourg between 2018 and 2022. During that period, the Alsatian Museum and La Chambre hosted this photographer of international renown in order to carry out a large-scale art project, the starting point of which was Alsace.

Exploring the picturesque iconography of Alsace, as it developed at the turn of the 20th century, Charles Fréger questions constructions of identity and their instrumentalization for nationalistic ends. Although starting with Alsace-Lorraine, as a point of tension between France and Germany, Fréger more broadly examines the vision of the Other, of the enemy or, at the very least, of the one designated as such. Illustrations, imagery, and especially caricature and propaganda provided the source of the artist’s considerations. He has combined these elements with Alsatian and Rhineland folklore. Carnival masks and floats, embroidery, blown glass and ceramics have been employed in order to generate, via the work produced by the artist, a poetic, nostalgic snapshot of Alsace, the formidable efficiency of which reminds us of the extent to which the question of identity and its instrumentalization remains topical.

Following "Bretonnes" (2011-2014) and "La Suite basque" (2015-2017), "Memories of Alsace" (2018-2022) is the third part of Charles Fréger's research into regional identities. For this project, he often chose to portray his subjects in silhouette, a technique he had already experimented with in previous projects. This approach lends the subject a specific discursive function; by removing it from an overly factual reality, it inscribes it in the sphere of narration, even of myth (in the sense that Roland Barthes understood it), thereby creating a salutary distancing.

The exhibition is presented in six rooms of the permanent exhibition space of the Alsatian Museum, and also extends into the new space adjoining the museum. Nearly 80 works produced by the artist for this project are being presented for the first time. Photographs, ceramics, glass pieces, illustrations, video and animated films testify to the close collaboration that Charles Fréger established with the hundred or more cultural actors from the Grand Est and Upper Rhine areas mobilized for this project. The contemporary artworks also interact with historical pieces from the the Alsatian Museum collection, other museums in the region and private collections, making it possible to convey both the artist's approach and the richness of the material culture of the region in which he immersed himself for four years.

Curation: Marie Pottecher, Chief Heritage Curator, Director of the Alsatian Museum.

The associated exhibition "Silhouettes" by Charles Fréger will be presented at La Chambre in the autumn of 2023.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Musée Alsacien

23-25, quai Saint-Nicolas, Strasbourg

Open daily from 10am to 1pm and from 2pm to 6pm / Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6pm / closed Tuesday