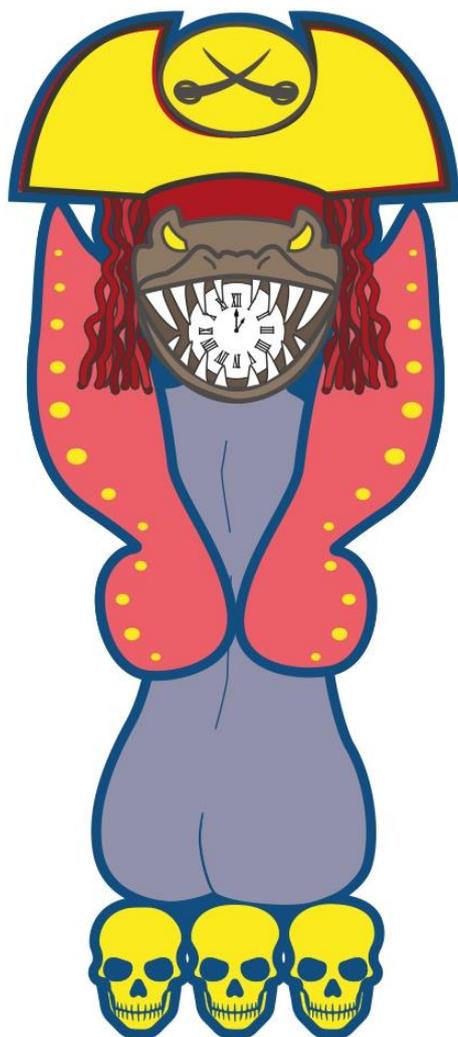


Press Release
May 2022




VALMONT

presents

BLESSING IN DISGUISE

by Valentine and
Didier Guillon

01.06.22-31.07.22

Contemporary art exhibition



Historical Archives
Museum of Hydra

From 9:00 am-4:00 pm / 7:30-9:30 pm

*In summer Hydra is glam!
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#whenartmeetsbeauty #lesresidencesvalmont #blessingindisguise2022

BLESSING IN DISGUISE FOR PETER PAN. LA NÉCESSITÉ DU RÊVE

Born as one of the four installations presented for the international exhibition *Peter Pan. La nécessité du rêve* currently on show at Palazzo Bonvicini in Venice, *Blessing in Disguise* takes his independence and flies to its motherland, **Hydra**, where the original concept was born.

THE WORKSHOP



Didier Guillon's moodboard for *Blessing in Disguise*

In June 2021, four artists and two curators met at **Villa Valentine**¹ in Hydra, Greece, as the protagonists of an artistic summer workshop. The goal of that week was to conceive the major exhibition that Fondation Valmont would present in 2022. Didier Guillon, Silvano Rubino, Isao and Stephanie Blake, guided by Francesca Giubilei and Luca Berta, gave birth to a unitary projet made of moving pictures interpreting in a contemporary way the main themes found in *Peter and Wendy*, the novel written in 1911 by J.M. Barrie.

Didier Guillon was assigned to the theme of **binary oppositions**, a concept for which he prepared a specific moodboard: black and white pictures of war associated to blooming colourful flowers. The translation into the historical context happened naturally: **Flower Power** was a slogan used during the late 1960s and early 1970s as a symbol of passive resistance and nonviolence against the **Vietnam War**. The expression was coined by the American Beat poet Allen Ginsberg as a means to transform war protests into peaceful affirmative spectacles.

THE CONCEPT

On this evening the chief forces of the island were disposed as follows. The lost boys were out looking for Peter, the pirates were out looking for the lost boys, the redskins were out looking for the pirates, and the beasts were out looking for the redskins. They were going round and round the island, but they did not meet because all were going at the same rate. (Barrie, 1911)

Neverland is a non-place, in which different environments interpenetrate and the various characters who live there confront each other. The prairies where the Indians live extend seamlessly to the tropical bay where the pirate ship is moored and the mermaids swim. The

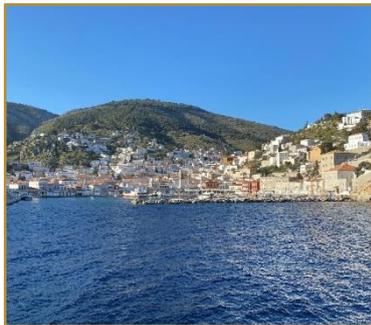
¹ Villa Valentine belongs to Les Résidences Valmont

temperate woods where Peter Pan's children sleep in underground burrows extend to the peaks of high mountains. The cycles of nature regulate everything, the rituals of different social groups and their relationships. This imaginary world, like the real one, is pervaded by conflict and disorder, which find a counterweight only in the beauty and regularity of nature.

In *Blessing in Disguise*, Didier Guillon, in collaboration with his daughter Valentine, recomposes this duality through a video montage of old black and white images of past conflicts. Metaphorically alluding to the imagery of Flower Power, the artists identify **nature**, in its beauty and creative strength, as the tool through which to build an earthly "paradise" to counter the unreasonableness and brutality of conflict.

The artist does not flee to a non-existent island but, through his work, helps to imagine and build possible new real worlds. Mixing archive images of wars in black and white with accelerated videos of flower blossoms in bright colours, the two artists question **the cyclical aspect of history** and contrast human foolishness, violent and destructive, with nature's fascinating and instinctive drive for life.

WHY HYDRA?



Hydra, view of the port

A main place happens to be the common ground of our artists: **Hydra**. This Greek Island, having being forever the refuge for the artists in search of inspiration, hosted the creative workshop which gave birth to the exhibition. **Neverland**, *Le pays imaginaire*, *L'isola che non c'è*: many names to describe this almost sacred destination, cradle of the Western culture.

A HISTORY TO BE PROUD OF: HISTORICAL ARCHIVES – MUSEUM OF HYDRA

A common ground lies together the core concept of *Blessing in Disguise* and the **Historical Archives - Museum of Hydra** where the exhibition takes place: **History** as the key word.

Placing historical memory on display is the most effective means of communicating with visitors. The goal of HAMH is to locate, gather, classify, index and publish every kind of archive material related to Hydra, its local history, tradition and culture. The Museum, founded in 1918, displays among others the cultural treasures related to the **Greek War of Independence** started in 1821, for which both Greek and Hydriot victory is still object of wide celebrations such as the *Miaoulia*.



Historical Archives – Museum of Hydra

DIDIER & VALENTINE GUILLON

Didier Guillon comes from a long line of artists and collectors, whence the irresistible compulsion that has always inspired him to create, fostered by his insatiable curiosity and energy. He explores a wide variety of techniques, ranging from silk-screening printing, drawing, cardboard and glass sculptures to large-scale installations. His artistic work allows him to reflect on important topics.



Valentine and Didier Guillon

In the Guillon family, art is a family story. From an early age **Valentine** inspired her father, as in the story of Ivo the gorilla, which became one of the artist's icons. With *Blessing in Disguise*, Didier challenges his youngest daughter, sharing with her his perception and leaving space to the teenager's imagination. The Guillon combo exchanges under Didier's impulsion. Valentine brings her young touch to the sequence of images.... giving birth to an imaginary world, yet so real.

LES RÉSIDENCE VALMONT IN HYDRA : VILLA VALENTINE



Villa Valentine

As creative venue for the artistic workshops, Villa Valentine was created as a place of resourcefulness in the preserved environment of Hydra, a place of encounters and inspiration for the artists since the 1960s.

Representing the Hospitality pillar of the Valmont Group, *Les Résidences Valmont*, **Villa Valentine** is a typical Greek house located at 1,5 hours from Athens. The influence of art has been central to the design of the villa for Didier

Guillon, making the audacious choice of selecting the artworks, the color palette of the furniture and the upholstery fabrics. The bright family living room, furnished with designer pieces, opens onto a magnificent terrace on the water's edge, where you can watch the sunset over the Aegean Sea: the perfect place for creation and relaxation.

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