



**CENTRE NATIONAL
DES ARTS PLASTIQUES**

—
**Supporting contemporary
art since 1791**



**Centre national
des arts plastiques**

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The Centre national des arts plastiques (National Centre for Visual Arts, Cnap) is a public institution attached to the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. It aims to support and promote artistic creation in France in all areas of the visual arts including painting, sculpture, photography, installation art, video, multimedia, design and graphic design.

On behalf of the French State, it acquires and preserves works for one of the largest French public collections, the Fonds national d'art contemporain (National Collection of Contemporary Art), loaning them to cultural institutions in France and abroad. Today the collection comprises over 100,000 works of art available for viewing online, presenting the diversity of artistic trends over the over the past 225 years and more.

It has introduced various support, coproduction and commissioning initiatives to assist artists and art professionals with their projects. As a resource centre, it produces and shares information to help artists and professionals pursue their activity.

The Cnap is a one of a kind institution that works closely with the contemporary art scene to keep it alive and fresh. The actions carried out by the Cnap are always forward-looking and reflect the Centre's objective to establish partnerships with cultural entities everywhere.

A COLLECTION ON THE MOVE

OVER TWO CENTURIES SUPPORTING LIVING ARTISTS

Collectively known as the Fonds national d'art contemporain, the State collection managed by the Cnap has a unique history. Dating back to the French Revolution, it was founded at a time when the seeds of a shared heritage were first planted and the Republic was forming.

In 1791, the government created its Fine Arts Division, endowed with its own budget, to encourage living artists and promote art to educate its citizens. Constantly reaffirmed and refined over the years, this mission was achieved through acquisitions and commissions. The objective was never to form a merely museum-oriented collection, but to put together a collection of works that accurately reflects the current contemporary art scene. The historic and modern collection comprises close to 60,000 pieces.

IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

The Cnap's acquisition policy, supported by professional expertise, is eclectic, geared towards emerging trends and forward-looking. It pays special attention to young artists as well as more seasoned artists not widely represented in France's public

collections. The collection is also very outward-looking and includes works from all over the world. Comprising nearly 40,000 pieces acquired since the 1980s, it testifies to the rich diversity of artistic practices and most recent artistic developments today.

SHARING AND PROMOTING THE COLLECTION

This 'collection without walls' is shared with the public through an active distribution policy, either through renewable five-year long-term loans or short-term loans arranged for the occasion of temporary exhibitions. We estimate that over 55,000 works have been loaned in France and overseas since the beginning of the 19th century. Supporting new and existing cultural institutions and enhancing the public space, long-term loans also serve to furnish and decorate the premises of many government administrations, local authorities and French

diplomatic bureaus abroad. Each year, the Cnap entrusts over 2,000 pieces from its collection to museums, Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain (Regional Collections of Contemporary Art or Frac), national monuments, art centres, associations, foundations, administrations and others. Concurrently, the Cnap encourages a new dynamic by establishing partnerships to organise monographic exhibitions of works from the public collections.

PROMOTING RESEARCH INTO THE COLLECTION

The Cnap has formed partnerships with scientific research and higher education institutions to examine the collection in relation to various fields such as sociology (the artist as a worker), economics, history (public acquisitions and commissioning policies), the history of art and of the creative process, and science and technology (materials used to restore contemporary works). The Cnap also awards research grants to explore new curatorial strategies and develop the collection's experimental dimensions, both historical and contemporary.

SUPPORTING THE PROJECTS OF ARTISTS AND ART PROFESSIONALS FROM THEIR INCEPTION TO THEIR DISTRIBUTION

ENCOURAGING ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION

The Cnap has introduced various initiatives designed to support artists, art restorers, theoreticians, art critics, and documentary photographers by providing assistance during the exploratory phase of their research

and, in some cases, right through to the production phase. Furthermore, the Cnap promotes some of these projects in partnership with other cultural institutions.



SUPPORTING AND ASSISTING ART PROFESSIONALS

One of the Cnap's missions is to encourage private cultural players to maintain their support to artistic creation. To this end, it offers financial backing to professionals in the private

contemporary art sector, such as gallery owners, publishers and film producers. In doing so, the Cnap shares the economic risk with them and contributes to promoting their projects.



COMMISSIONING ORIGINAL WORKS

Each year, the Cnap commissions artwork from artists to add to its collection. By promoting artistic and visual experimentation, the reinvention of traditional skills, or

perspectives that focus on contemporary society issues, the Cnap helps bring ambitious and innovative projects to fruition. These works are accessible to the public both physically (in the public space or exhibition venues) or in dematerialised form (online, radio broadcasting, etc.).

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO INSTITUTIONS, ARTISTS AND PROFESSIONALS

A COLLECTION FOR EVERYONE

The acquisitions database, online at www.cnap.fr, is accessible to all. A unique source of information about the

collection, it is complemented by a database of State-funded or co-funded commissions. The database presents all the finished works, as well as their preparatory stages. The Cnap has also assembled substantial documentation about the artwork, including iconographic resources, dossiers on works and artists, general and monographic publications, exhibition and contemporary art catalogues and periodicals, all accessible to institutions, researchers, and exhibition curators on request.

AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

With over 400 events posted weekly, www.cnap.fr is an important platform for information and the latest news on contemporary art. The 2,300 venues listed in the online directory are encouraged to promote their projects and accomplishments via a dedicated section. The Cnap's website and social media pages, which attract 80,000 monthly visitors, are essential resources for promoting the projects it supports.

KEEPING THE CONTEMPORARY ART WORLD INFORMED

The Cnap provides artists with the information they need to carry out their professional activity (status and copyright policies, social security, taxes, etc.) in the "Profession artiste" section (in French) of the website and publishes practical downloadable guides on visual arts residencies, prizes, financial support, and grants available in France. It also posts calls for applications and job opportunities in the sector.