

**SWEET CRIP**

**10.11.2023 - 10.12.2023**

PANTEHA ABARESHI



**KOURONNE**  
**KRONE**

KRONE COURONNE Kunstzentrum/Centre pour l'art

Adresse Obergasse 1, 2502 Biel/Bienne Trägerschaft Verein ROUGE, Biel/Bienne Ausstellungsfläche 150 m2

# SWEET CRIP

## 10.11.2023 - 10.12.2023

*about sweet dreams, time, food and beautiful nightmares*

Panteha Abareshi, Sahara Azzeg, Criptonite, Benoît Piéron, Sabrina Röthlisberger Belkacem

With the participation of Sam Musy, Flor Méchain, Camille Cornu, Olga Madjinodji

*Sweet Crip* is about identities, love, pleasure and care. The exhibition is inspired by crip and queer culture and brings together artists that articulate their own contexts, objects and thoughts. They invite you to linger in a space full of pillows and beds, prostheses and blankets, books and chocolate, pills and marshmallows, wheelchairs and crutches, tea and nap times.

*Sweet Crip* questions and contextualises the notion of ableism in a world where the queer and crip body is becoming the norm of representation. Curator Lari Medawar has invited artists to contribute to the exhibition, resulting in a space where discussions, readings, screenings and naps intertwine. Highlighting the ways in which people with disabilities, chronic illnesses and neurodivergences experience affection, pleasure, temporalities and spaces, this forum-like project raises awareness on the efforts needed by arts institutions to fully and genuinely accommodate all artists.

Proposed by Lari Medawar

Invited by Camille Regli, Kristina Grigorjeva

### Programme

Vernissage

FR, 10.11.2023

17:00 Pre-opening for reduced mobility

18:00 Public opening

19:00 Reading Flor Méchain & Sam Musy

Workshop & Nap time

SUN, 12.11.2023

15:00-18:00 Nap time

15:00 Workshop Olga Madjinodji

Special visit

FR 17.11.2023

15:00-16:00 Visit with protective masks

Reading & Nap time

SUN, 19.11.2023

15:00-18:00 Nap time

17:00 Reading Camille Cornu

Visit & Nap time

SUN, 26.11.2023

15:00-18:00 Nap time

Special visit

FR, 1.12.2023

15:00-16:00 Visit with protective masks

Reading & Nap time

SUN, 3.12.2023

15:00-18:00 Nap time

17:00 Reading artist to confirm

Finissage & Bingo

SUN, 10.12.2023

18:00 BINGO! Event

Press kit: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/m4j6v3o1a5eqazow0bdhn/h?rlkey=dqushmk13tjuvrw90ksdsi9nc&dl=0>

Contact:

Camille Regli, Kristina Grigorjeva

Curators and directors KRONE COURONNE

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# TEXT BY LARI MEDAWAR

Here we come, for a month, without codes, appearances or expected performances.

Here we sleep, share our stories, our poetry, our operas or our silences. We knit, we draw, we drink herbal tea and water, we sleep again, we touch and play with materials and objects, we stare into space or into the reflections of lights, and we eat sweets to make the pills go down.

When we name our conditions and our diagnoses, we realise that both in the public and in the professional spheres, we are asked to be gentle and discreet, not to show ourselves too much, except for when we are useful to their image and consciousness. We are asked not to put our exhaustion on display and not to awaken the beautiful nightmares of those with 'good' health. The troubles we are attributed with trouble others.

If the contemporary art world makes these conditions taboo, or relegates them to the so-called Art Brut or hobby art, it's because it's built around a class elitism that is validist\* and discriminatory. If art spaces suffer from a persistent abulia\* when it comes to adaptation, it's because they lack the capacity for it. And while some institutions - in Biel, Switzerland or and internationally - question our abilities as a result of our diagnosis, others use us for their quotas.

Sweet Crip is not a freak show. It has no spectacular or miserabilist aim, nor does it objectify artists.

Naming Crip\* is a reminder that people exist outside the validist and ableist\* norm and that they can appropriate their stigma. It's a reminder that, whether we are said to be able-bodied or not, we have primary needs and states that are neither frozen nor always effective.

Panteha Abareshi, Sahara Azzeg, Crip-tonite, Benoît Piéron, Sabrina Röthlisberger-Belkacem surround the exhibition with themselves and their pieces. Camille Cornu, Olga Madjinodji, Flor Méchain and Sam Musy will be reading, talking and drawing on rainy Sundays. Others, such as Noa Winter, Kamran Behrouz, Ursula Egli and Mylène Silva, may or may not be there but the desire is there, and the exhibition will also be about them.

With love and tender anger.

Lari Medawar

\*Abulia is a motivational disorder. The word abulia means lack of willpower. It refers to a psychological disorder in which the sufferer wants to do things but is unable to act on them. In practice, they are unable to make decisions and carry them out. This distinguishes the disorder from apathy, because an apathetic person has no initiative. Abulia is not an illness, but a disorder found in many psychiatric illnesses: depression, schizophrenia, etc. It can also be seen in people with chronic fatigue syndrome or burn-out ([www.passeportsante.net](http://www.passeportsante.net)).

\*validist: Relating to validism. A person who discriminates against people with disabilities (definition in Le Robert Dictionnaire).

\*Crip, slang for cripple, is a term in the process of being reclaimed by disabled people. Wright State University suggests that the current community definition of crip includes people who experience any form of disability, such as one or more physical, mental, learning, and sensory impairments, though the term primarily targets physical and mobility impairment. Extract from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crip\\_\(disability\\_term\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crip_(disability_term))

\*Ableism, similar to racism, sexism or ageism, whereby a person with a disability or illness is less worthy of being treated with respect and consideration, less able to contribute to and participate in society, or less intrinsically important than others. Excerpt from Ontario Human Rights Commission, [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).



# ARTISTS

**CRIPTONITE (COLLECTIVE, Zürich)**  
(EDWIN RAMIREZ + NINA MÜHLEMANN)

“We descend into a night of pleasure” – Criptonite is a crip-queer theatre project founded in 2020 by Zurich-based artists Edwin Ramirez and Nina Mühlemann, which aims to centre and promote disabled artists. In their most recent work “Pleasure”, as Dionysos and Medusa, they invite the audience into the underworld. Surrounded by the rivers of hatred, wailing, fire and oblivion, they find themselves on the islands of pleasure, celebrating the intersection of pain, pleasure and kink. What does it mean to negotiate consensual giving and receiving together in a pleasurable way, through movement and care? Where to find moments of pleasure despite pain or exhaustion? On a big soft bed, Criptonite interweave Greek mythology with their own experiences and blur the boundaries between mythical creatures and self, lust and shame and sensuality and monstrosity (with sensual guest performances by Lovis Heuss aka Justin Bellini Case and Sofiyan Junis Merzougue). Criptonite use queerness, dark humour and an aesthetic of access to create hot crip magic!



**PANTEHA ABARESHI**  
(1999, Los Angeles, USA)

Panteha Abareshi's artistic practice is rooted in their existence as a chronically ill/disabled body contending with multiple medical illnesses, at the foundation of which is sickle cell zero beta thalassemia- a genetic blood disorder that causes debilitating pain and bodily deterioration, both of which increase with age. Their work explores the complexities of living within a body that is highly monitored, constantly examined, and made to feel like a specimen, critically interrogating the sick/disabled body's place within medical institutions. Through performance, they push their body to, and often beyond, the limits of its ability. In their work, Abareshi confronts the able-bodied gaze, and questions notions of consent within the dynamics of power, control and objectification between viewer and disabled body as subject. The radicalized abjection of the normative corporeal form allows for a rigorous examination of the complexities and hierarchies within loss of ability, and its connection to a larger context of universal fragility, fear, pain and mortality.



**BENOÎT PIÉRON**  
(1983, Paris)

Benoît Piéron describes his work as a "sacrificial practice of time" forged by a lifetime's experience with and alongside illness. His practice draws on the experience of waiting and meditations on the ambiguous boundaries between health and illness, presence and absence, inside and outside, the body and the architectural, temporal and medical structures that shape it.

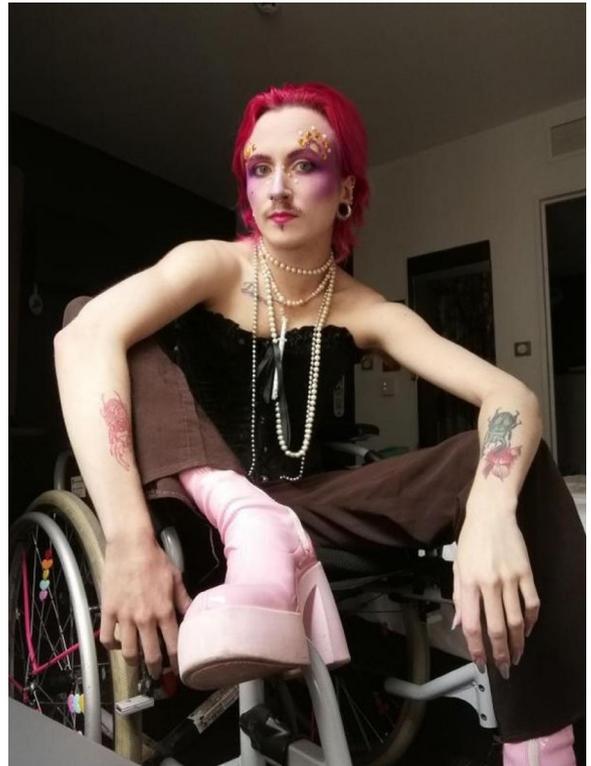
Marked by the phenomenon of transformation yet to come, Piéron's work offers a framework for approaching the phenomenon of illness in a way that highlights the positive elements that arise from it: the lived experience of alternative temporalities, emerging forms of radical care and intimacy, and an expanded understanding of identity as something non-essentialist and always evolving.



**SAHARA AZZEG**  
(he/they, Geneva)

Sahara Azzeg's works look at queer visibility, often using queer codes such as pink boots and jewellery, which are directly linked to handi identity. In the exhibition, one painting refers to one of the artist's close friends, who passed away during the covid pandemic, as a systematic failure to wear a mask, leading to trivialised violence.

Another work portrays the artist's autoportraits on medicine tablets: on the one hand, the artist's everyday life, and on the other, the dragqueen performer. The last piece in the exhibition alludes to the artist's long periods in hospital as a child, where the flames (a recurring motif in Azzeg's work that is inspired by car tuning) and the pearl necklace with the 'faggot' pendant recall queer identities mixed with handi identities.



**SABRINA RÖTHLISBERGER BELKACEM**  
(1988, Genève)

From sculpture to poetry, performance to video, music and painting, Sabrina Röthlisberger-Belkacem's practice keeps expanding and renewing itself. Hence, the question of transformation is central to her work, that is inhabited by characters whose extraordinary gifts are equalled only by the curses that afflict them. The glamour of witches, the gift of metamorphosis, is seen through the prism of monstrosity as an emancipating force. The artist is interested in the multiplicity of identities, healing and transformation, and a more inclusive rewriting of art history. Her most recent works explore the tension between the initiate and the profane, as well as the dualities between healthy and sick bodies, life and death, science and magic.



**FLOR MECHAIN & SAM MUSY (CH)**  
Readings (Vernissage, 10.11.2023)

For *Sweet Crip*, Flor and Sam are proposing a collage of short texts, somewhere between the personal and the theoretical. They slip into the interstices of relationships: to oneself, to others, to illness, to neurodivergence. Sam draws on their queer & crip experience in performances combining drag, dance and slam. They loves zines and soft textures. Flor transforms their experience through writing and translation (English and Spanish), performance, and sometimes object-making. They spend half their time working as a paid employee to afford expensive medical bills without freaking out (too much).

**OLGA MADJINODJI**  
Workshop (12.11.2023)

Olga Madjinodji prepares an intimate Workshop for *Sweet Crip* - "Come and release your anxieties in an embroidery and drawing workshop. Using thread and colour, take the time to slow down and concentrate on simple gestures, creating a moment of healing and well-being."

**CAMILLE CORNU**  
Reading (19.11.2023)

Camille Cornu is a disabled author and translator. They contributed to the collection "Lettres aux jeunes poétesses" published by Editions de l'Arche. Their last novel, "Habilités Sociales" was published by Flammarion and the next novel is due in Winter 2024 in the Sorcières collection published by Cambourakis. For *Sweet Crip*, they imagine reading Ursula Eggli's texts and their unpublished translation into French. Ursula Eggli (1944-2008) was a Swiss author active in the disability and LGBT rights movements, who regularly addressed the themes of love and sexuality for people with disabilities.

# KRONE COURONNE

Lari Medawar (he/they) (1993, Beirut) is a trans, non-binary, autistic and racialized curator based between Biel/Bienne and Geneva, Switzerland

Arriving in 1998 as an asylum seeker, Medawar grew up in Moutier, studied in Delémont and then at the School of Visual Arts in Bienne. He completed his post-graduate studies at Head Genève (Haute école d'arts et de design, Geneva). For the past ten years, Lari has divided his time between Biel and Geneva (and a few outside projects), developing a cultural network that spans the globe.

Lari's curatorial experience began with the Casual Friday collective, which developed several exhibitions in Geneva linking illustration and the visual arts. From 2016 to 2018, he and his collective Cockpit were awarded a curatorial residency at Topic art space, Geneva. With strong specific interests in art, culture and politics, he is also interested in teaching. After a few substitutes in the Bernese Jura region and a spell at the HEP (Haute Ecole Pédagogique, Lausanne), he began teaching at the Berne and Biel School of Visual Arts in 2018, and will become director of the specialized Maturity program in 2021. He also co-founded the Fesses-tival (Geneva) in 2018 and has been co-directing the festival and association dedicated to bodies, identities and sexualities for nearly six years. As a member of the allocation committee for Le Commun (a cultural space run by the City of Geneva), Lari also has the chance to get to know many of Geneva's leading artists.

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KRONE COURONNE is a contemporary art centre founded in 2021 in Biel/Bienne, where Switzerland's French and German regions meet.

KRONE COURONNE is a platform to support new artistic production, with a focus on the local art scene.

KRONE COURONNE is a space for collaboration, and nurtures critical dialogue between artists and cultural practitioners from all corners of the country – and beyond.

KRONE COURONNE cultivates cross-disciplinarity, addresses contemporary discourse and stands for openness and transparency.

KRONE COURONNE is founded by Kristina Grigorjeva and Camille Regli in 2021, who co-run it up to this day.

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Lari Medawar, portrait



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