ALMINE RECH

Oli's Imaginary Museum

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Les Abattoirs, Musée - Frac Occitanie Toulouse are inviting the rapper Oli, from the iconic Toulouse duo Bigflo and Oli, to take a fresh look at the institution's collections. The Oli's Imaginary Museum showcases works chosen according to Oli's sensibilities, personal history and rap practice, creating new encounters while inviting visitors to rethink the role of the museum, its spaces and their relationship with works of art.

This exhibition reflects the personal choice of a musical artist who was introduced to the different forms of modern and contemporary art at a very early age through his many visits to the Abattoirs. Key encounters - with Joël Hubaut, Yayoi Kusama and a piano catapulting performance by Compagnie Royal Deluxe - have nurtured Oli's intuition about the museum as a place where artists and audiences share emotions and a varied perception of their surroundings. These representations of a real or imaginary world form the basis of an approach to art that is open to all views and interpretations. They embody a non-uniform vision of art.

By browsing through the digital catalogue of the Abattoirs' collections, Oli is updating the notion of the “imaginary museum”, defined in the eponymous book by André Malraux (1901-1976) in the 1950s. Long before smartphones and Instagram, Malraux revealed the growing role of photography in providing access to all the works of humanity. To design his own museum, Oli selects and brings together works of art, combining different artists and media. He proposes a personal reading of the history of art, to which his own story responds, like an artistic autobiography. By freeing himself from codes, his own staging and words reveal him in a different light to audiences. By telling his own story, Oli is challenging the very notion of accessibility to art, so dear to Les Abattoirs, which, like other cultural institutions, has made it one of its core missions.

At the crossroads of art and rap, the exhibition unfolds a personal score. Each room invites visitors to come and meet the artists, through memories, textual creations and invitations to other artists. The themes that are dear to the duo, and regularly evoked in their songs, rhyme with family, childhood and attachment to Toulouse, multiculturalism, the power of the spoken word and art for all. This new closeness to the works invites visitors to imagine their own ideal museum.

Designed to be lively and open to all, the exhibition will be punctuated by events, concerts, workshops, performances, lectures and open stages. The guests will come from different worlds, such as music and art, whose histories intersect and bear witness to shared relationships and influences.

Oli's Imaginary Museum is the first in a series of invitations to artists, curators, designers and creators from a wide range of backgrounds to come and take over the collections at Les Abattoirs, offering a surprising and rich immersion, and opening up the programme to other fields of creation.

Curated by
Olivio Ordonez, artist with Bigflo & Oli
Lauriane Gricourt, Director of Les Abattoirs