

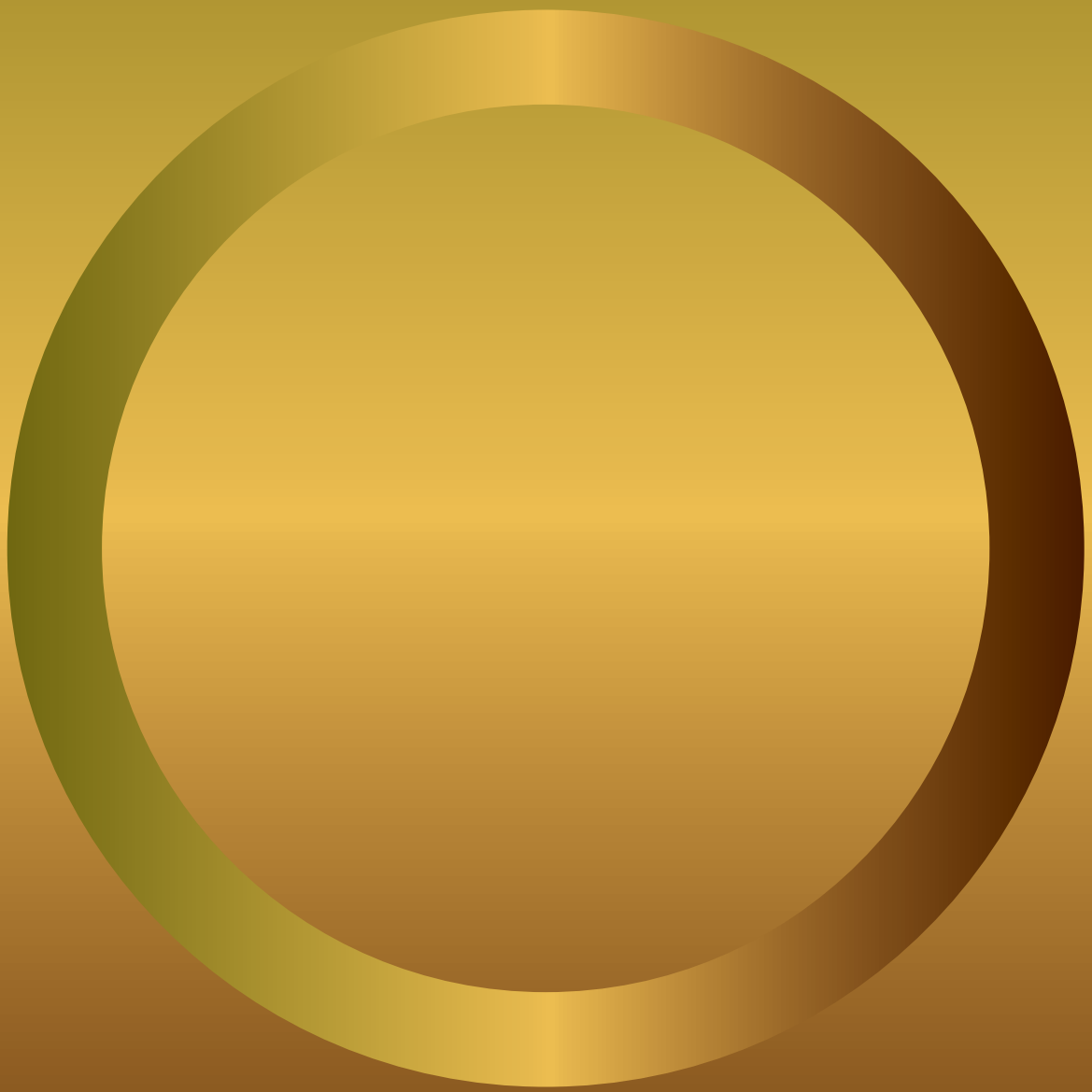
MonaVache



**The Laughing Cow®
Collector's Edition Boxes**

Edition #11: Cildo Meireles

Press kit - June 2024



CILDO MEIRELES, THE ARTIST BEHIND THE 2024 EDITION OF THE LAUGHING COW® COLLECTOR'S EDITION BOX

Since 2014, Lab'Bel – the artistic Laboratory of the Bel group – has developed a series of **special projects in collaboration with outstanding contemporary artists**, resulting in the creation of The Laughing Cow® *Collector's Edition Boxes*. These yearly editions represent as many opportunities to renew and update the connections that the brand has established with artists since its inception in 1921.

The *Collector's Edition Boxes* are designed as artworks in their own right by their creators. Each fall, anyone can purchase such artworks, before deciding whether its contents should be eaten or kept intact

as collectibles. Making contemporary art available to a larger audience has been the main mission of Lab'Bel since its creation in 2010, through original ideas and out-of-the-box approaches.

After Hans-Peter Feldmann, Thomas Bayrle, Jonathan Monk, Wim Delvoye, Karin Sander, Daniel Buren, Mel Bochner, Rosemarie Trockel, Franz Erhard Walther and Martha Wilson, **Lab'Bel is entrusting Cildo Meireles with designing the eleventh *Collector's Edition Box*.**

Cildo Meireles' *Collector's Edition Box* is curated by Silvia Guerra.



Cildo Meireles' *Collector's Edition Box* will be **premiered on the occasion of the Paris Internationale art fair, October 16-20, 2024 in Paris.**

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CILDO MEIRELES



Cildo Meireles ©Tiago Hespanha, 2024

Born in 1948 in Rio de Janeiro, Cildo Meireles belongs to a generation of Brazilian artists who came of age at the onset of the 1970s under the dual influence of conceptual art and the Brazilian Neo-Concrete Movement. Aiming to fully engage its audience, Meireles' work smartly plays with physicality and the senses. Although often directly inspired by specific news events and political contexts - especially in relation to censorship and the repression of individual freedoms -, his art addresses universal themes and issues.

Cildo Meireles' recent exhibitions include *Cildo Meireles: Installations*, at HangarBiccocca in Milan (2014); *Cildo Meireles*, at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid (2013), then at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves in Porto (2013-2014); *Cildo Meireles*, at the MACBA in Barcelona (2009); *Cildo Meireles*, at the Tate Modern in London (2008); *Cildo Meireles*, at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Strasbourg (2003); and *Cildo Meireles – retrospective* at the New Museum in New York (1999).

Cildo Meireles was awarded the 2008 Velazquez Prize for Plastic Arts for his career achievements as well as the 2023 Roswitha Haftmann Prize.

MONAVACHE BY CILDO MEIRELES

By Silvia Guerra, curator of the project.

2024 marks the 11th edition of The Laughing Cow® *Collector's Edition Boxes*. A contribution by Cildo Meireles opens and celebrates the second decade of the series. The Brazilian artist's version of the iconic round box references the most famous painting of all time, one of the masterpieces of the history of art: the *Mona Lisa*, created by Leonardo da Vinci in the early 16th century. Meireles' project addresses several issues that he has explored throughout his career, such as the question of authorship, the relationship between original artworks and copies, the insertion of artistic objects in different networks and channels of society, and the symbolic dimension of images. I am pleased to present *Monavache* and the most iconic smile in the world: the real one.

Biographical information

Cildo Meireles was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1948. After spending his youth in Brasília, the modernist city designed by Niemeyer, he lived in New York before returning to Rio, where he currently lives and works. Active since the 1960s, he crossed paths during his studies (particularly during a brief two-month stint at the National School of Fine Arts in Rio) and the early days of his art career with Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, and the Brazilian neo-concrete movement and developed material, sensitive and intellectual relationship with them. Meireles' work explores the notion of units of measurement, spatial and temporal scales, but also the Earth, its geography, and the human beings who inhabit it. His oeuvre includes monumental works and installations that have marked the history of Brazilian art like *Desvio para o vermelho* (1967/1984), *Babel* (2001) and *Fontes* (1992), as well as tiny yet equally meaningful works such as *Cruzeiro do Sul* (1969/1970), *Bombanel*

(1970-1996) and *Deserto* (1970), all three from the *Condensados* series.

The artwork that inspired his *Collector's Edition Box* for The Laughing Cow® is the famous *Mona Lisa*, a portrait of a woman painted between 1503 and 1517 (over a period of three years, presumably) by Leonardo da Vinci, an Italian painter and inventor born near Florence, in Tuscany. Originally, the painting was probably commissioned by Francesco del Giocondo and meant to depict his wife, the Florentine Lisa Gherardini. It was later acquired by King Francis I of France. This painting is now exhibited at the Louvre, in Paris, welcoming about 25 000 visitors per day.

Mona Lisa has been the subject of hundreds of books, movies and artistic appropriations. One of its most famous reinterpretations is *L.H.O.O.Q.*, created in 1919 by Marcel Duchamp. This title is both a homophone of "look" and an allograph whose letters, when pronounced in French, sound like "*Elle a chaud au cul*" ("*Her ass feels hot*," literally, and "*She's horny*," figuratively).

The *Collector's Edition Boxes* series invites artists to create art objects in limited edition around The Laughing Cow®, a brand of creamy spreadable cheese industrially produced by Bel, originally created in 1921 by Léon Bel. The face of the brand, which has gone through the years with a handful of modifications, is the work of the illustrator Benjamin Rabier: an anthropomorphized cow with a wide smile and earrings on which the packaging is featured, in miniature. The red thread system that helps to open the box and the individual portions was invented by Yves Pin, initially to make postal envelopes easier to open. The Laughing Cow® is present in 120 countries around the world and is considered by many to be one of the products representing France internationally.

**Spatial circuits:
the practice of disseminating artistic
objects in society by Cildo Meireles**

Cildo Meireles does not present himself as a political or conceptual artist and doesn't identify with such labels, especially since he considers that an artwork doesn't need a text or explanations to be understood: for him, an artwork should primarily be felt. Nevertheless, several of the artist's projects have an eminently political dimension; indeed, he stated in 1975 that "art should strive to show what a world without dictators could be." At the time, Brazil was under the rule of a military regime, and the widespread censorship prompted the artist to begin *Inserções em circuitos ideológicos* (*Insertions into Ideological Circuits*, 1970-...). The aim of the series was to create a system for the circulation of information that could escape the control of the authorities.

For example, banknotes featuring instructions, political slogans, or questions related to state crimes. Meireles says he chose to work with money because it was the cheapest material at the time - a way to ironically highlight how little the Brazilian currency was then worth. This artwork is still being circulated today: in 2018, it was reactivated with bills featuring the portrait of Marielle Franco, a Rio de Janeiro city councilor who was assassinated earlier that year for her political commitment and activism. By paying homage to this LGBT woman who was born and raised in a favela then became an icon of the fight for equal rights, the artist underscores the importance of social and societal issues, once again making use of the state's economic system to disseminate his message and artwork on a large scale. This idea of (re)insertion can also be found in the *Projeto Coca-Cola* (*Inserções... series*, 1970). Coca-Cola® glass bottles - an emblematic object of capitalism - were

inscribed with various subversive messages, such as "what is the place of the work of art?" Using a special screen-printing technique, the text in white letters became easier to read when the bottles were still full of dark liquid. The artwork was shown at the MoMA in an exhibition about conceptual art, *Information* (New York, 1970). Back in Brazil, he made use of the deposit system for glass bottles in use at the time: by reinserting the bottles into the commercial circuit, Meireles' subversive objects could circulate widely throughout the country. Thus, the artwork's scope of intervention wasn't the exhibition space but rather the daily lives of individuals and the processes that organize life within society.

With this project, the artist developed a strategy opposite to that of Duchampian ready-mades: instead of introducing manufactured goods into the art field by placing them on a museum plinth, he inserts artistic objects into the commercial realm. According to the artist, the process is based on an opposition between a form of «anesthesia» (specifically, the circulation of goods) and conscious, thoughtful interventions (the insertions).

Similarly, *Monavache* reactivates the idea of an artistic object being massively distributed on the market and within consumer society by appropriating the industrial production and distribution system itself, as the labels and packaging for the artist's take on The Laughing Cow® are printed in Bel's factories. Cildo Meireles's *Monavache* is also directly linked to another significant series of his, *Inserções em circuitos antropológicos* (*Insertions into Anthropological Circuits*, 1970-71), in which he (re)creates everyday objects using simple materials, before putting them into circulation, thus creating new circuits to question society. For example, the *Projeto Token* (1971) consisted of a manual containing instructions to produce

fake token coins out of clay that could be used to ride the subway or make phone calls from payphones for free. While the *Insertions into Ideological Circuits* series aims to parasitize existing circuits, the *Insertions into Anthropological Circuits* series functions as a string of pastiches, creating alternative, subversive circuits.

Monavache expounds on the generally free and always subversive actions of Cildo Meireles in his various *Inserções...* by inscribing them, this time, into the "normal" circuit of industrial production and commercial distribution. The fact that the *Collector's Edition Box* project is based on the principle of maintaining a "normal" retail price - whether the purchase is made at an art fair, by mail order, or in a local supermarket - preserves the democratic and participatory dimension of the artist's approach. If the value of an artwork is, today, most often determined by where it is exhibited and its worth within the commercial circuit (especially in regard to the art market and its speculative mechanisms), *Monavache* plays with its own economic and symbolic value by leaving the Louvre - the quintessential symbol of the heritage museum - and finding refuge in supermarket - the locales of everyday consumerism.

Temporal circuits: continuities in art history

During one of Cildo's visits to Paris, a friend of his suggested that the *Mona Lisa* on display might not be the original but a copy. The relationship between original artworks and copies directly ties into the question of authorship, which is central to the Brazilian's practice and to the history of art in general. Among several studies and artworks on this topic, we can cite *F for Fake* by Orson Welles, a filmmaker who Meireles

favors (Welles' masterpiece, *Citizen Kane*, ranks among his top three favorite artworks, alongside Piero Manzoni's *Merda d'artista* and Marcel Duchamp's readymades).

It's important to note that Meireles tackles this issue without value judgments, and even encourages reappropriations, aligning with the idea of creative circulation. In a way, he agrees with what the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges asserted in his famous short story *The Library of Babel* (1941): the history of literature is, essentially, the history of one single book, written over millennia. For Meireles, there is a creative continuity in the history of art, where models, copies, originals and reappropriations are part of the same process. His *Inserções...* series operates on the principle that anyone could reproduce the artist's gesture: not only do they challenge the "aura" of the artwork (echoing Walter Benjamin and *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1939) but they also make art accessible to everyone.

This idea connects to the widespread dissemination of images through mass media, which is even more prevalent in our digital age. Just as the thousands of versions of the *Mona Lisa*, created by countless artists and individuals, perpetuate its iconicity, the various artistic editions of The Laughing Cow®'s round box ceaselessly renew the same iconic image. These two emblematic images of contemporary consumer society are intelligently juxtaposed by the Brazilian artist, especially since they have largely transcended the codes of their respective contexts of creation and yet retained their exceptionality. Furthermore, another direct link between the two icons is their smile, which plays a crucial role in their respective successes. In the case of *Mona Lisa*, her faint smile has always been seen as a mystery, a smirk, almost a "non-smile." For The Laughing Cow®, its characteristic wide

smile, in a way, lends legitimacy to its name and a human dimension to the animal that contributes to its popularity.

Continuity and vitality of art in society

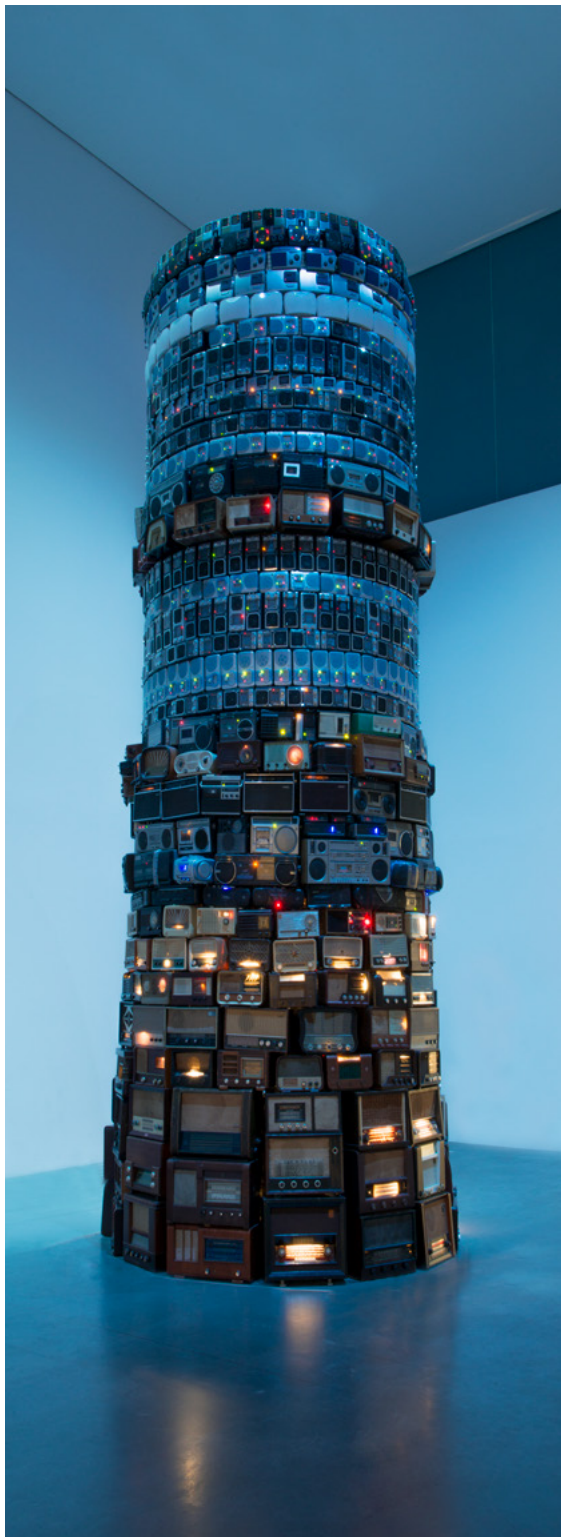
It is now the 11th edition of the *Collector's Edition Boxes*. The series started with a contribution by the late Hans-Peter Feldmann, a pioneer of "artistic appropriation" who, incidentally, didn't sign his artworks. Mona Lisa was, precisely, a reference for the German artist and, in a rather funny way, he featured her in a book to teach the alphabet and numbers to children (*ABC für Kinder mit der Kunst*, 2014), as the illustration for the number "9" because only nine of her fingers can be seen in the painting.

She can also be found in the association made by Mel Bochner, another participant in the project, between the *Mona Lisa* and The Laughing Cow®: "The Laughing Cow® is the Pop incarnation of the *Mona Lisa*." Pop Art artists appropriated everyday, banal objects from consumer society to compose their works, like in the case of Andy Warhol's Campbell®'s soup box. The *Collector's Edition Boxes*, in a way, reverse this process: an artist can be invited by a brand of industrial goods to create an artistic object using its product, at the heart of the industrial system. While similar collaborations are often aimed at an elite clientele, The Laughing Cow® chooses to keep its *Collector's Edition Box* at the same price as its traditional version to remain accessible to most.

While the smile of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is, on the contrary, relatively inaccessible because of the bulletproof glass, the security perimeter and the crowd of visitors at the Louvre, Cildo Meireles' *Monavache* smiles at us from the supermarket's dairy section. This reminds me of when Feldmann precisely told us that he'd rather see his

work chosen by someone on a grocery run rather than it being exhibited in the Louvre. Similarly, Meireles' proposal makes us question the status of the great icons of art, the relation between the past and the present, the link between simplicity and the evocative power of art. Furthermore, it prompts us to consider art as a sincere smile, as a pastiche, or as a great continuity of images that inhabit our minds.

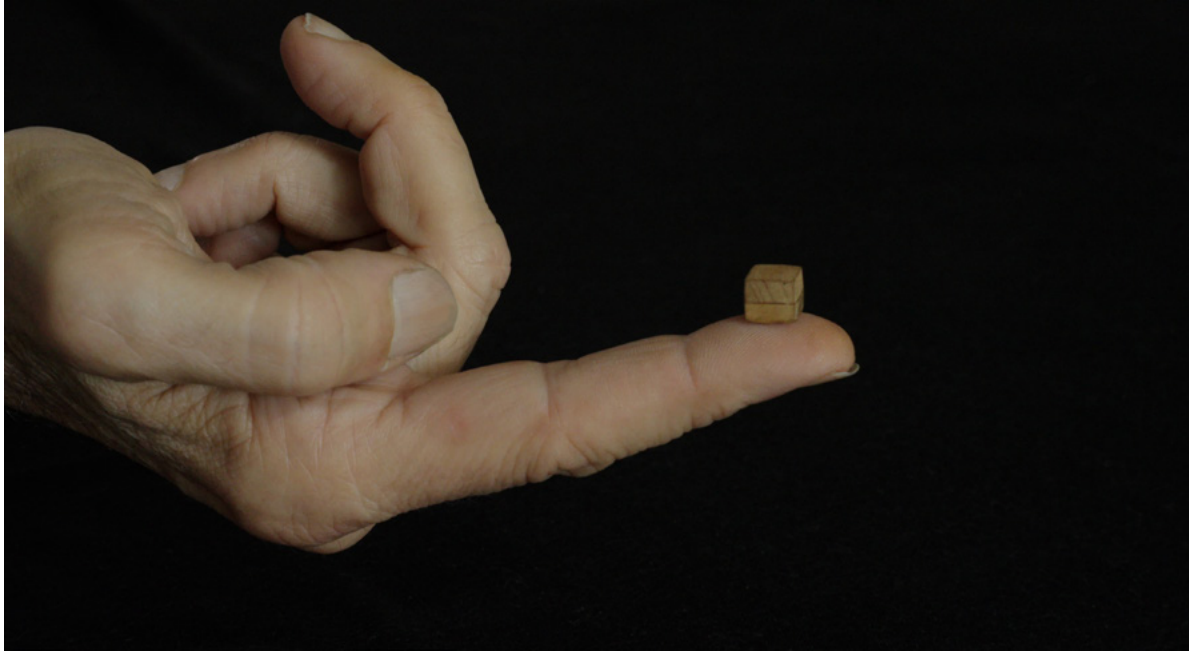
This new *Inserção* and edition of the *Collector's Edition Box* is neither *Mona Lisa* nor The Laughing Cow®, it is, thanks to Cildo Meireles' genuine smile, an artwork for the year 2024: the *Monavache*.



Babel, 2001, © Sophie Mutterer



Inserções em circuitos ideológicos, 2018 © Silvia Guerra



Cruzeiro do Sul, 1969/1970 © Tiago Hespanha



Desvio para o Vermelho, 1967-84 © Eduardo Eckenfels

Monavache



Collector's Edition Box #11 by Cildo Meireles

The 11th installment in The Laughing Cow® *Collector's Edition Boxes* series has been christened *Monavache* by its creator, Cildo Meireles – a portmanteau of the first name of the *Gioconda's* protagonist and the French word for "cow".

WHERE TO FIND CILDO MEIRELES' THE LAUGHING COW® COLLECTOR'S EDITION BOX?

The *Collector's Edition Box* will be premiered by Lab'Bel at the **Paris Internationale** art fair (October 16-20, 2024).

As of 16 October 2024, while stocks last, online at www.boutique.lavachequirit.com

As of 16 October 2024, while stocks last, at the Maison de La Vache qui rit in Lons-le-Saunier (www.lamaisondelavachequirit.com)

Please see the updated list of retailers and outlets online at www.lab-bel.com/en.



LA MAISON DE 
LA VACHE QUI RIT



LA BOUTIQUE OFFICIELLE LA VACHE QUI RIT®

MONAVACHE, CILDO MEIRELES

A film portrait of the artist, directed by Tiago Hespanha



Scan QR code to watch the documentary film about the project

COLLECTOR'S EDITION BOXES: CONTEMPORARY ART TO BE SHARED

By Laurent Fiévet, Director of Lab'Bel

The Laughing Cow® *Collector's Edition Boxes* project was born out of a desire to open, thanks to a very affordable art edition, the ways in which contemporary art is perceived and understood, promoted and circulated, bought and sold. It is yet another step in the exceptional relationship that our famous brand has established with artists since the beginning of its centenarian history, in line with the values that its umbrella company, the Bel group, has always championed: enjoyment, sharing, innovation and excellence.

Since 2014, eleven artists have risen to the often arduous challenge of confronting their artistic practice with The Laughing Cow®'s identity and storied heritage, integrating them in their work to displace and renew the ways in which brand is perceived. Commissioned by the Bel group and its artistic laboratory, Lab'Bel, to create artworks that would thoughtfully address the long-established iconic status of the 24-portion box and its smiling cow figure, each and every artist brilliantly answered the call.

The first artist in the series was **Hans-Peter Feldmann**: he emphasized the facetiousness of the cow figure by giving her a red clown nose, bringing to the fore the very essence of her singular character. Second in line was **Thomas Bayrle**: while the artist highlighted the rural origins of the cow, he also turned its head into a motif, using it to compose a complex graphic pattern that resonated astutely with the popularity and virality of the brand in our society. The third artist, **Jonathan Monk**, played with the cow's smile, giving it a new orientation to reinforce the contrast with its origins and celebrate its uniqueness. For the fourth artist, **Wim Delvoye**, the brand's approach to advertising was both an inspiration and something that he contributed to: he designed a new collection of triangular tags. The fifth artist in the series, **Karin Sander**, deliberately blurred the cow's representation to point out how much the brand's visual identity



has become part of our daily lives. The sixth artist could have been the first, since Lab'Bel's team had approached **Daniel Buren** at the inception of the project: the artist produced four different versions of the 24-portion box—a first in the series—that functioned as modular elements, ready to be freely assembled in versatile installations all the way up to the skies. The seventh artist, **Mel Bochner**, amplified the laugh of The Laughing Cow® thanks to multiple onomatopoeias, whose presence not only heightened and problematized the laugh but also granted it a certain autonomy. A dimension that the eighth artist, **Rosemarie Trockel**, did not hesitate to do away with: she playfully, boldly and disconcertingly eclipsed the cow altogether, thus prompting collectors to summon it even more clearly in their mind's eye; the following year, the ninth artist, **Franz Erhard Walther**, adopted a similar approach in using a simple design that challenged and relied on the collectors' deductive abilities. The tenth artist, **Martha Wilson**, applied a blonde wig and red and blue make-up to the cow, freeing it from the constraints of public prejudice and normative femininity; in deconstructing beauty standards and so-called "ideals," Wilson successfully underlined the undeniable charm and the strong personality of a centenarian figure who, like the artist, has claimed the social recognition that it deserves. The eleventh artist, **Cildo Meireles**, is questioning these ideals further with his *Monavache*, a "Giocondaphiliac" (or maybe rather "Giocondaclastic"?) homage to the iconic figure that Marcel Duchamp would probably have liked.

Some artists in this list had already developed a close bond with The Laughing Cow® and its figure had found its way in some of their previous works (Thomas Bayrle, Wim Delvoye), whether as a topical subject or as multiple and significant occurrences throughout the years. Others

easily established a connection between the cow and their own formal vocabulary (Daniel Buren) or their aesthetical approach (Mel Bochner, Martha Wilson). Others still seized the opportunity offered by the commission to further their conceptual investigations (Hans-Peter Feldmann, Jonathan Monk, Karin Sander, Rosemarie Trockel, Franz Erhard Walther, Cildo Meireles), thus emphasizing the coherence between the task at hand and their own practice. Remarkably, some of the participating artist even satisfied their collector's instinct by appropriating the brand's history and offering a highly personal take on it, to the point of celebrating their own glory (Wim Delvoye) – but such a temptation was only logical given the very nature of this project, wasn't it?

The artists followed very different paths, committing to sometimes dizzying trajectories that broke new ground, all the more so because of the electrifying perspective of following suit in a series of remarkable artworks. Each artist emulated their brilliant predecessors in turn, taking to heart the challenge at hand: they are now part of the history of The Laughing Cow®, a brand that is anchored in history and tradition but also timeless and always-already contemporary, as evinced by this kind of endeavor. And it is safe for me to say that the Bel group, from its employees to its executive board – as well as the family that has been at the helm for five generations already – are extremely grateful to the artists for their work and, moreover, very proud of bearing witness to these consecutive partnerships. Allow me, on behalf of a great many collaborators, to extend our warmest thanks to all the artists on this occasion.

Soon after its inception, the series became a well-known and highly anticipated rendez-vous for the contemporary art world. From 2016 to 2021, each edition was launched within the prestigious walls of the Grand Palais at the FIAC, the Foire Internationale

d'Art Contemporain de Paris, on the invitation of its director Jennifer Flay; in 2023 and 2024, the reveal is taking place at the Paris Internationale art fair, on the invitation of Alix Dionot-Morani. Knowledgeable amateurs of art and fans of the brand alike seek out the box: it has proven to be an enticing first piece for new collectors and, at the same time, a logical purchase for the most experienced connoisseurs. The 24-portion box can be displayed on kitchen tables and bookcase shelves as well as preserved in the utmost secrecy of warehouses, protected from light and moisture, as an investment to be collected once the expiration date has passed. The first editions in the series have sold out and are now highly sought-after; speculation is booming, mirroring the trends of the art market.

The *Collector's Edition Boxes* used to be sold in supermarkets, they are now made available to all online: through the internet, the project has been able to reach new aficionados. There is no doubt whatsoever that The Laughing Cow® has become an ambassador of sorts for all the artists who have been involved in the project, which has undeniably fostered easier and broader interactions with the general public, all the while championing lesser-known conceptual practices.

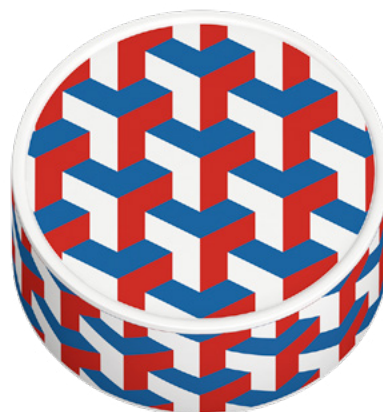
For the Bel group, these series quickly became a source of pride and an integral part of its culture; for people studying business and marketing, in France and abroad, it has been presented and taught as a crucial case study. Indeed, it can be used to show how to successfully develop a distinctive, differentiating strategy to establish a meaningful and engaging relationship between a brand and its customers - one of the secrets of The Laughing Cow®'s success as of the 1920s. Furthermore, edition after edition, the contemporary art world has also largely acknowledged the relevance and the quality of the different proposals, recognizing the



series as a fruitful and virtuous collaboration between the art world and that of business. The fact that the *Collector's Edition Boxes* have joined the collections of the MUCEM, the FRAC Picardie and Frankfurt's MMK, thanks to the genial enthusiasm of Édouard de Laubrie, Pascal Neveux and Susanne Pfeffer, is ample proof of this.

Today, you are welcome to follow the example of satisfied gourmands or that of enlightened collectors, or both. We gladly and joyfully invite you to partake in these editions yourself, whether to preserve them as precious treasures or to share them - and your love of art - with all your loved ones.

To access all the *Collector's Edition Boxes*, please visit www.lab-bel.com/en/box



THE LAUGHING COW® AND THE ARTS

By Laurent Fiévet, Director of Lab'Bel

When Léon Bel created The Laughing Cow® in 1921, he had yet to entrust the brand's visual identity to Benjamin Rabier. It was not until 1923, following a competition intended to give the brand more visibility and attractiveness, that Rabier's famous image began to appear on The Laughing Cow® labels.

From that point forward, the two men engaged in a collaboration that would continue until long after the artist's death in 1939, as evidenced by the publication, in the 1950s, of albums filled with his joyous images of animals.

Although this partnership remains the most famous of The Laughing Cow® collaborations, the creative advertising management of the Bel group has also called upon other illustrators. At various times, Luc-Marie Bayle, Corinne Baille, Hervé Baille, Paul Grimault and Albert Dubout have each brought their creativity to the conception of different gifts destined for young consumers. In 1954, Alain Saint-Ogan took The Laughing Cow® to an *animal's paradise* - *au Paradis des Animaux* - through both his famous illustrated albums and an eponymous radio show. This promotional tradition continued to evolve, taking on many different forms, as in the 1970s when Jacques Parnel infamously created a version of the cow who wore clothes and walked on her two hind legs. At the same time, the brand's image has been a continuous source of creative inspiration for numerous artists: already in 1929, painter Marcel Lenoir placed a box of The Laughing Cow® at the center of his *Still Life*.

Perhaps the most notable representation of The Laughing Cow® is that of Bernard Rancillac, who in his 1966 painting *Our Holy Mother The Cow* depicted the brand's

famous icon as the sun in the sky. In his own words, this emblematic artist of the Narrative Figuration movement had wanted to portray an image that was at once a symbol of Western consumerism and a reminder of the restrictions of Hinduism. In 2005, Belgian artist Wim Delvoye returned to this theme with his impressive collection of The Laughing Cow® labels, which he submitted to the Lyon Biennale. The reference to Darwin in the title of Delvoye's submission - *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* - is an audacious comment on the association between art history and marketing strategies.

In keeping with this two-directional movement of collaboration and appropriation, it is only natural that the brand's image should continue to be revisited and reinterpreted by artists. And this is exactly what The Laughing Cow® proposes in its series of *Collector's Edition Boxes*: year after year, leading artists are given complete creative freedom to transform the look of the classic 24-portion box - an homage to the brand's playful, offbeat image.

TIMELINE

1921

Léon Bel founded the Laughing Cow® brand.

1923

The illustrator Benjamin Rabier showed his new take on The Laughing Cow® design to Léon Bel, which was featured on all of the brand's boxes as of the following year. The label included the same characteristics that still ensure the brand's success to this day: the famous laughing smile, certainly, but also the cow's earrings, the color red, and the animal's mischievous gaze. The design was chosen over that of Francisque Poulbot, whose work had also been solicited by Léon Bel. Still, both artists continued to work with the Bel group in the following years, and their designs can be found on numerous newsletters and advertisements from the era.

C. 1929

Still Life, a painting by Marcel Lenoir, featured a Laughing Cow® box at its center, an early example of the brand's recognition among artists. The painting later joined the collections of La Maison de la Vache qui rit in Lons-le-Saunier.

1950

The Bel group began its collaboration with Alain Saint-Ogan. The artist created numerous advertisements in partnership with the brand, from notebook covers to blotting paper, and even a series of ten comic books for children, under the title *La Vache qui rit au Paradis des Animaux*.

1966

Bernard Rancillac, a leading figure of the Narrative Figuration movement, created *Our Holy Mother the Cow*, a painting that featured a woman, a child and a donkey carrying jars in a parched desert beneath a burning sun, which features, at its center, a box of The Laughing Cow®. In 1985, Rancillac designed

a version of this work that was meant to be glued directly onto the box.

1967

Thomas Bayrle created several "superforms" based on The Laughing Cow® logo. The first of these, *Mädchen/Fille/Girl*, inspired the 2015 *Collector's Edition Box*, more than half a century later.

1968

The Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers included The Laughing Cow® in one of the series of art objects and prints that he created with the Wide White Space gallery in Antwerp. Broodthaers' The Laughing Cow® is composed of eight boxes that bore inscriptions by the hand of the artist: "*I love you, a little, a lot, passionately, madly, not at all.*"

1971

For its new advertising campaign, Bel group called upon Jacques Parnel, who accepted the challenge of creating a more down-to-earth Laughing Cow® and depicted her wearing a dress, blue jeans, or regional costumes.

1975

The graphic designer and typographer Albert Hollenstein created a round-shaped greetings card that was directly inspired by The Laughing Cow®, although it featured a *Laughing Lady*. The card echoed the shape of the box, and featured the brand's iconic blue background and white stars in addition to a red face and white horns.

1985

To promote the brand, the Bel group asked André Franquin to create a promotional album. The album's cover featured Franquin's famous character, Gaston Lagaffe, wearing two earrings identical to those worn by The Laughing Cow®.

2005

Belgian artist Wim Delvoye, a long-time collector of Laughing Cow®-themed objects, presented his installation *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* at the International Biennale of Contemporary Art in Lyon. The work comprised more than 4,000 Laughing Cow® labels.

2009

At the initiative of Catherine Sauvin, Léon Bel's granddaughter, La Maison de la Vache qui rit was founded in Lons-le-Saunier, at the very same location where the brand was created, in 1921. The House preserves and showcases both the history and the heritage of the brand.

2010

Lab'Bel, the artistic laboratory of the Bel group, was created, at the initiative of Laurent Fiévet, Léon Bel's great-grandson. *Rewind*, Lab'Bel's first exhibition, opened in the spring of 2010 at La Maison de la Vache qui rit.

2014

Lab'Bel and the Bel group launched the series of *Collector's Edition Boxes*. The German artist Hans-Peter Feldmann was entrusted with designing the very first edition.

2015

The second *Collector's Edition Box* was designed by Thomas Bayrle, drawing inspiration from *Mädchen/Fille/Girl*, his 1967 "superform" that prominently featured The Laughing Cow® logo.

2016

The British artist Jonathan Monk was entrusted with designing the third *Collector's Edition Box*. For the first time, the *Collector's Edition Box* was presented at a booth that was specially dedicated to the project, at Paris' international contemporary art fair, the FIAC.

2017

The Belgian artist Wim Delvoye designed the fourth *Collector's Edition Box*.

In her first solo exhibition at Galerie Almine Rech in Paris, the artist Chloe Wise presented The Laughing Cow® using various forms and mediums, including sculptures, installations, and figurative paintings.

2018

The German artist Karin Sander designed the fifth *Collector's Edition Box*.

2019

After having been scrapped in 2012 due to technical difficulties related to its production, the project that Daniel Buren had conceived for the inaugural edition of the *Collector's Edition Boxes* project finally became a reality. For the first time in its history, the *Collector's Edition Box* was produced in four different colors (blue, yellow, red, green), which were simultaneously made available to collectors. Collectors were able to preview them at the FIAC in an installation that was specially designed by Buren.

2020

Mel Bochner was the seventh artist to create a *Collector's Edition Box*. Two versions were available, playing on an alternating color effect.

The *Collector's Edition Boxes* entered the MUCEM Collection.

2021

A pop-up gallery opened in the Marais district of Paris to sell Mel Bochner's *Collector's Edition Boxes*.

Presentation of the first seven *Collector's Edition Boxes* at the Ljubljana Municipal Museum, as part of the *When in Doubt, Go to a Museum* exhibition.

For the one hundredth anniversary of the brand, the German artist Rosemarie Trockel created three versions of the Boxes, including one without the iconic cow's head that was exclusively offered to collectors.

At Paris' Palais de Tokyo, the *Elle rit ! (She Laughs!)* exhibition presented the collected works of the first eight artists who have taken part in the *Collector's Edition Boxes* series, on the occasion of The Laughing Cow's centenary.

2022

The German artist Franz Erhard Walther created two versions for his 2022 *Collector's Edition Box*. They were premiered as part of an exhibition that brought together other productions by the artist and was held in rue du Marché Saint-Honoré, in Paris.

2023

In the Middle East, some people boycotted The Laughing Cow® following public comments by the French President Emmanuel Macron about cartoons caricaturing Mohammed that were reprinted in *Charlie Hebdo*: the affair shone through in the work of the Iranian visual artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian. The trio used and reframed bits and pieces of news media in their compositionist sculptures, which feature myriads of printed discs attached to aluminum rods.

The first nine editions of the *Collector's Edition Boxes* joined the collections of the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt.

The Bel group bought one of two existing versions of Bernard Rancillac's *Our Holy Mother the Cow*. The painting can be seen in the collections of La Maison de la Vache qui rit in Lons-le-Saunier.

The US artist Martha Wilson created the tenth edition of The Laughing Cow® *Collector's Edition Boxes*. It was launched at the Paris Internationale art fair, an event that also marked the beginning of a collaboration between the fair and the Bel group and Lab'Bel.

At the initiative of Pascal Neveux, the *Collector's Edition Boxes* series joined the collections of the FRAC Picardie.

Sophie Calle included her 2017 rejected proposal for a *Collector's Edition Box* in *À toi de faire ma Mignonne (It's up to you, cutie)*, her retrospective exhibition at the Musée Picasso in Paris. In the accompanying label, the artist wondered about the possibility of having faced a form of censorship.

The Bel group purchased a tapestry work by Thomas Bayrle, *Artistinnen* (2022), in which he uses motifs and patterns inspired by The Laughing Cow® to represent three Chinese gymnasts performing acrobatics on a bicycle. Nearly three meters tall and wide, this was Bayrle's first attempt at working with a Jacquard loom - a turning point in his approach.

2024

The Laughing Cow® found its way into Bertille Bak's exhibition, *Abus de souffle (Out of Breath)* at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, showing its face in the artist's collection of templates for bellows.

The Laughing Cow® was featured alongside Mickey Mouse on a poster that aimed to bring attention to all the treasures in the collections of the MUCEM in Marseille.

The Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles was chosen for the 11th edition of the *Collector's Edition Box*.

THE LAUGHING COW® KEY FIGURES

The Laughing Cow® is sold in 136 countries across five continents.

6 billion portions of The Laughing Cow® are made around the world every year.

In 1921, Fromageries Bel produced 12,000 portions per day. The Bel group now produces 20 million on a daily basis.

2,000 portions of The Laughing Cow® are consumed in the world every 10 seconds.

In June 2023, The Laughing Cow® had more than 1,5M fans on Facebook.

The highest summit of the Himalayas, Mount Everest, culminates at 8,848m. In 1962, it took two days for workers of the Bel factories to make enough boxes to reach this height. Today, thanks to technological advances, the same process only takes six hours.

LAB'BEL

Created in the spring of 2010, Lab'Bel is an endowment fund aiming at supporting artistic creation and contributing to its development. The activities of this laboratory of ideas and impertinent innovation are two-fold: developing a contemporary art collection—now on long-term loan at the Musée des Beaux Arts in Dole—and organizing exhibitions and artistic events throughout France and Europe.

Lab'Bel also supports a series of performative multidisciplinary projects ranging from modernist architecture to poetry or music.



LAB'BEL'S FALL 2024 PROGRAMMING

> **Until September 2024**

Five Radio Stations

A curatorial project composed of sonic contributions by Keren Cytter, Benedikt H. Hermannsson, Daniel John Jones & Seb Emina, Emeka Ogboh and Hylozoic/Desires, available online at www.fiveradiostations.com and in designated listening locations all over the world.

The updated list of these anchor points is available online at www.fiveradiostations.com and www.lab-bel.com.

Curators: Silvia Guerra and Seb Emina

> **From 16 to 20 October 2024**

At the Paris Internationale art fair
Exclusive launch of Cildo Meireles' *Collector's Edition Box*.

> **Fourth trimester 2024 (TBD)**

Five Radio Stations - Second season

The radio project continues with a second season, with five new international artists
Discover the project at www.fiveradiostations.com

Curators: Silvia Guerra and Seb Emina

 @Lab'Bel

 @laboratoire_artistique_bel

 <https://www.lab-bel.com>

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