



MUSÉE BARBIER-MUELLER  
GENÈVE

## Press release

### PLEASING THE SPIRITS

From 29 October 2025 to 31 May 2026

Opening Tuesday, 28 October 2025

Entitled *Pleasing the Spirits*, the Barbier-Mueller Museum's upcoming exhibition offers a (re)discovery of works from the Barbier-Mueller Collection from a new perspective. Pieces from Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania, and Europe were selected by Séverine Fromaigeat, director of the museum, and Paul Maheke, French artist and performer. Their fresh perspectives on this century-old collection promise a visit full of surprises. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog featuring an essay, a conversation, and artwork descriptions.

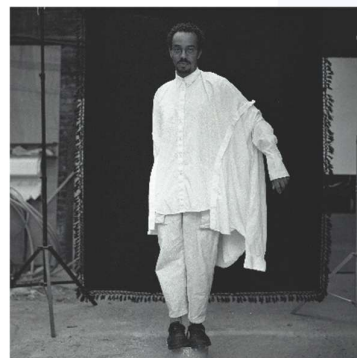
#### The exhibition

Inaugurating a new exhibition cycle, *Pleasing the Spirits* showcases the Barbier-Mueller Collection. With artist Paul Maheke invited to design the museum's new scenography, the aim is to tell a moving story in space, based on objects from this exceptional collection which contains several thousand works. In a unique staging, playing in particular with volumes and spaces, light and shadow, pauses and accumulations, the objects in the Barbier-Mueller Collection come alive with a breath of fresh air and open up to new narratives. Masks, figurines, spears, and ritual objects are reinterpreted to reveal their symbolic power and ceremonial aura in a different light, in order to construct and dance together reinvented cosmogonies.

The exhibition is divided into several sections corresponding to the different rooms of the museum. It stages the objects as characters in a narrative, interacting with one another. In this imaginary play, the spirits of the place, those inhabiting the objects, those of the museum, those of the forefathers and ancestors, engage in a conversation across time and space. The objects are grouped according to visual, symbolic, or thematic criteria and presented from a transcultural perspective.

#### The artist

Paul Maheke (1985, Brive-la-Gaillarde) has developed a multifaceted artistic practice that combines performance, drawing, video, sound, and dance. His work questions the way in which bodies, narratives, and presences appear or elude representation. Shifting the norms of the visible with his works, Paul Maheke summons spectral figures, poetic voices, and immaterial elements to open up other forms of





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perception. Each project creates a fluid space, permeated with esoteric, spiritual, and sometimes mystical references. The artist thus constructs a body of work in which the intimate is linked to the collective and bodies compose new narratives. He is a resident at the Villa Medici in Rome for the 2025-2026 academic year. He has presented his work in institutions such as the Tate Modern (London), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the High Line (New York), and the Fondazione Pomodoro (Milan).

### **The publication**

An eponymous catalog extends the exhibition: its design, inspired by the museum's historical catalogs, continues the tribute to the museum's collection and history presented in *Pleasing the Spirits*. Published in French and English (64 p., 16 pl.), it includes a preface by Séverine Fromaigeat, director of the museum, a conversation between the curators, a poetic essay by Quinn Latimer, and artwork descriptions written by various specialists.

### **The Barbier-Mueller Museum**

#### **Treasures from around the world nestled in an intimate museum with international appeal**

Located in the heart of Geneva's Old Town, the Barbier-Mueller Museum preserves, exhibits, and studies a collection of art objects of immense variety. Today, it has several thousand works ranging from antiquity to the present day and includes objects from every continent. Every two years, the Barbier-Mueller Museum offers new presentations of its collection and temporary exhibitions. It regularly invites contemporary artists to take a look at the pieces in the collection and rethink the layout of the rooms, thus changing our understanding of the works on display. Conferences, talks, readings, and performances accompany this exhibition program.

#### **Practical information**

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**The Museum is open every day from 11 am to 5 pm.**

Paul Maheke, photo by Tina Rowe