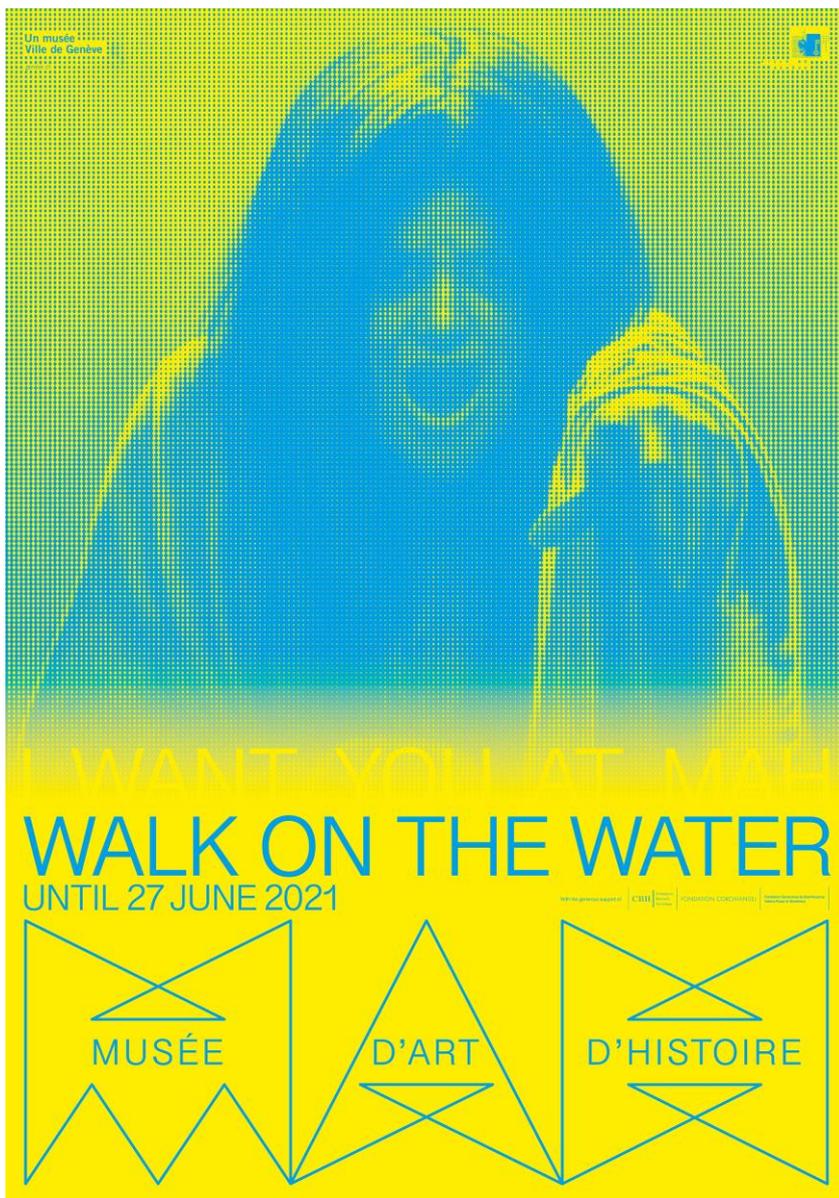


PRESS RELEASE

WALK ON THE WATER – UNTIL 27 JUNE 2021



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Geneva, November 2020

The MAH like you've never seen it before

As 2021 begins, the MAH is off to a running start with a project by Austrian artist Jakob Lena Knebl, who was asked to revisit the museum's collections. *Walk on the Water* is the opening event of director Marc-Olivier Wahler's new exhibition program. For six months, the temporary exhibition spaces and the permanent collection halls will be home to a series of installations drawing from a variety of art forms. At times obvious, at times unexpected, these confrontations produce brand new perspectives in which to view the pieces.

Walk on the Water is a trailblazing event: until today, no artist had ever been invited to take over the museum's halls and express her creative vision through the collections they house. Born in Baden (Austria) in 1970, the artist Jakob Lena Knebl was given free rein to transform the museum in the way she imagined it. Through elaborate displays that articulate objects and pieces in a variety of media and from different periods, the artist who specialises in design and fashion wishes to engage with visitors — particularly those that have little interest in art and visiting museums.

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The choice for the exhibition's name derives from two pillars of the cultural life around Lake Geneva: a panel from the altarpiece by Konrad Witz held at the MAH, which depicts Christ walking across the waters of Geneva's harbour, and the song *Smoke on the Water*, written by Deep Purple during a stay in Montreux. This unorthodox mix of pop culture and art history has been the foundation of Jakob Lena Knebl's work, which draws on familiar references she associates to create bewildering imaginary worlds. By sharing her vision, the artist attempts to change the way we usually look at bodies and objects, turning the former into works of art and vice versa.

This play of identity and perception is a consistent aspect of her work: Jakob Lena Knebl likes to topple hierarchies and create new dynamics to connect pieces together. For her intervention at the MAH, she places the colossal statue of Ramses II in bed inside a luxurious Hollywood-style bedroom, she plants nude statues of Venus inside shower cubicles and has exquisite silk shoes going round in circles on the kind of conveyor belts you usually see in Japanese restaurants serving sushi... The visitor's physical presence and engagement are also cornerstones of her approach: visitors are pushed to interact with the installation, thereby bringing it to life.

The pieces were selected both from among those currently on display and from the storerooms, with the input of the Conservation team. This deliberate choice of an interdisciplinary approach echoes the MAH's resolution to break down barriers within the collection to reveal the structural tensions within it.

Heralding the MAH's new exhibition program, *Walk on the Water* can therefore be seen as the launching of a thought process on the notion of programming, where each exhibition draws its coherence from the extraordinary collection held at the museum



Curator	Jakob Lena Knebl, artist
Shop	A dress, especially designed by the artist, along with vintage clothes of her choosing are available for purchase in the shop set in the palatine rooms
Catalogue	The publication <i>Walk on the Water</i> , published by the Museum of Art and History, will be available in Spring 2021
Sponsors	CBH - Compagnie Bancaire Helvétique Fondation Coromandel Fondation genevoise de bienfaisance Valeria Rossi di Montelera
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Useful Information	Museum of Art and History 2, rue Charles-Galland – 1206 Geneva Open 11am-6pm, Thursdays 12pm-9pm Closed on Mondays Free admission to the permanent collections Website: mahmah.ch Ticket booking: billetterie.mahmah.ch Blog: mahmah.ch/blog Online collection: mahmah.ch/collection Facebook: facebook.com/mahgeneve Twitter: @mahgeneve