

The exhibition title, *Phénomène du dortoir* - which translates as dormitory phenomenon, also known as the McClintock effect — is used to describe a controversial hypothesis whereby the menstrual cycles of women who live together become synchronized. This menstrual-related analogy is appropriate for our current exhibition; Isabelle Guimond and Carolyne Scenna define their collaboration as a natural cycle. This presumed phenomenon describes the creative synchrony the artists share and exchange through their regular studio collaboration. The duo’s practice is characterized by genuine regards for the imperatives of exploration and the importance of *the whole*. It comes down to equality, half-and-half, and shared authority. Individuality is absent, or at least, it no longer is. The artists are interrelated.

In *Phénomène du dortoir*, Guimond and Scenna reinterpret the period when young girls become women: adolescence. The undisciplined imagery of this transitional phase is represented materially: the outlandish—or foolish—experiments and grandiose expectations that come with the end of childhood. Puberty’s impulsive — and hormonal — energy is channelled through spontaneous actions, vernacular experimentation, and the excessive — and uncompromising — accumulation of colourful trinkets. The artists use this moment of existence as the junction of all possible things, and thus, as a way to bring into play the competing forces of their mediums: drawing, painting, sculpture, installation, sound, and video. Each of their works expresses the metaphorical language of forms, the disproportion of careful or eruptive gestures, and the invocation of closeness.

Skol now becomes the site of this delicate union; the dormitory in which the artists awaken in complete communion, confident and trusting. They influence each other; they think and act mutually. In this sense, the flip side of their proposed processual installation, by its very structure, is the culmination of their respective practices through conjunction and opposition. Their evolving exhibition welcomes continuous dialogue. In this endless pandemic crisis, it shows us how we can communicate with others without using words. The modularity and variable compositions of their two- and three-dimensional works heighten the desire to come nearer and reduce the physical distance between viewers and the artists’ work.

Despite the challenges and chances they have taken with this large-scale installation, Isabelle Guimond and Carolyne Scenna, like mutually loyal adolescents, have made a formal, material, textual, and sensorial promise of a long-lasting friendship and a perpetual creative consensus. Despite the current context, *Phénomène du dortoir* proposes an open-ended, formal language that provides alternative ways of meeting; the need to come together and to synchronize our interactions.

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Translated from French by Jo-Anne Balcaen

ISABELLE GUIMOND AND  
CAROLYNE SCENNA (MONTREAL)

## PHÉNOMÈNE DU DORTOIR

March 6th - April 10th, 2021  
Installation and Fanzine



*Phénomène du dortoir* is the charming name given to the natural synchronisation of women's menstruations. Not without humour, this term represents, for the two artists, what should be the ideal collaboration, one that influences cycles, moods, and work methods.

As Guimond works mainly in painting and Scenna mostly in installation, the two artists have made the pact, when embarking in this project, to let go of their comfort zone and to push their limits. This project represents, for both of these Montreal artists, a first official collaboration.

The process leading to this reformulation of their practices echoes their reflections about originality, as they approach common themes together. Notably, the teenage years, this key period of existence when, filled with both hopes and constraints, one builds his/her social identity. As the artists perceive this theme as an open junction of possibilities, *Phénomène du dortoir* becomes a performative space, unfolding as an installation comprised of drawing, painting, sculpture, video and sound.

As the project evolves in the gallery, the public is invited to regularly visit the exhibition, and to follow it via Instagram. The gaps between the real exhibition and its virtual representation online are therefore highlighted and tackled by the artists. This is coherent with their practices, as for both Guimond and Scenna, images and/or documentation are always subject to manipulation, generating new meanings, sometimes poetic and often contradictory.

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