

« Rien n'est identique dans la Nature. Dans la masse, non plus. »

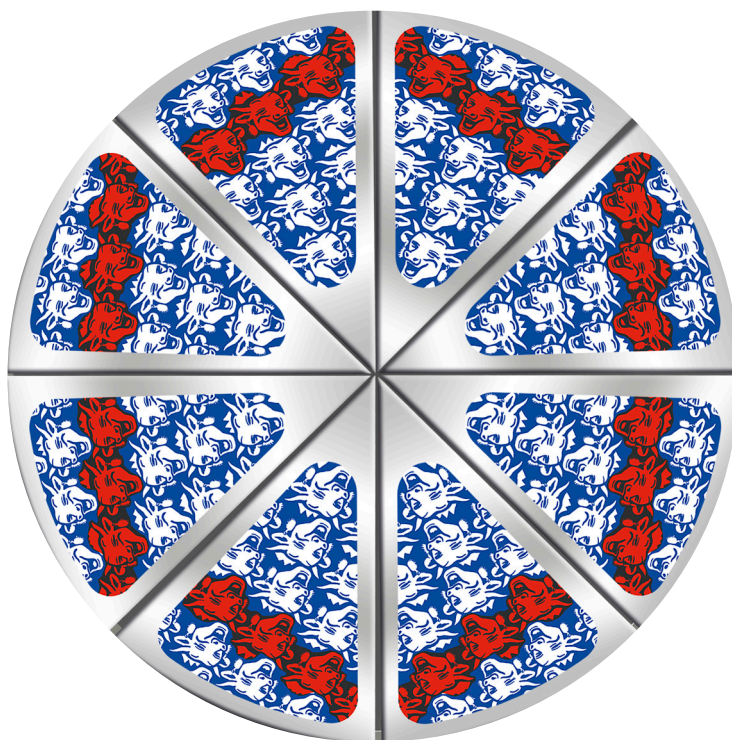


" In the mass, like in nature, no two things are ever alike. "

PRESS KIT

The Laughing Cow® continues to prepare for its 100th anniversary in 2021 with a second collector's edition box signed by artist **Thomas Bayrle**.

The *Collector's Edition Boxes*: Sharing Contemporary Art



The Laughing Cow® (La Vache qui rit®) is more than a smile and good humor: it's an incredible story of innovation and creativity. That's why, between now and 2021, the company has planned an impressive series of collaborations with major contemporary artists, each of whom will design a not-to-be-missed collector's edition box. These collaborations continue the special rapport that has always existed between The Laughing Cow® and the artists who have used this modern icon as a source of inspiration for nearly a century.

Each collector's edition box is an original work of art in its own right, made available to thousands of consumers and collectors at the standard retail price.

Following their appearance in supermarkets, the collector's edition boxes will present consumers with a choice: to eat their contents (the natural thing to do) or to leave them unopened, treating

each box as a work of contemporary art by an internationally renowned artist.

By bringing contemporary art to the broadest audience possible in a way that's both original and offbeat, the collector's edition box epitomizes the philosophy of Lab'Bel, the artistic laboratory of the Bel Group.



The Laughing Cow® won me over with its resolutely positive character.

Thomas Bayrle

Thomas Bayrle's collector's edition box



Following last year's collaboration with conceptual artist Hans-Peter Feldmann, and again under the curatorship of visual artist Michael Staab, Lab'Bel has entrusted the creation of its second collector's edition Laughing Cow® box to Thomas Bayrle - a pioneer of Pop Art in Europe and an artist who's used the Laughing Cow® logo in his work since 1967.

Bayrle's artistic approach is characterized by the use of what he calls *superforms* - composite images obtained by endlessly multiplying a single iconic motif. Originally produced with simple stamp pads, these collages are now the result of research performed using computer programs.

Thomas Bayrle's work has been exhibited in many international museums and institutions around the world, including Por-

tikus (1990, 1994) and the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2002, 2006); the Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2008); the Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona and the Musée d'art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva (2009).

He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, including documenta Kassel (to which he's been invited three times, in 1964, 1977, 2012), and he's exhibited at many art biennials, including Venice (2003, 2009), Guangzhou (2005), Berlin (2006), Gwangju (2006, 2010), Tbilisi (2007), Sydney (2008) and Busan (2012). His 2013/14 retrospective *All-in-One* was shown at Wiels, Brussels, MADRE-Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead and Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes.

Thomas Bayrle in the spotlight

**October 22nd, 2015, at
12:30 p.m. On the opening
day of this year's FIAC**

Thomas Bayrle will present his collector's edition box at the headquarters of the Bel Group (14, boulevard de Malesherbes, Paris 8ème, Metro Madeleine) during the advanced screening of François Prodrômides' film dedicated to the project.

Exhibitions

Bayrle is also part of *The World Goes Pop* at London's Tate Modern (17 September 2015 - 24 January 2016). In the last room of the exhibition, the walls are covered with *Blue Cow Wallpaper* (1967), which reproduces the figure of The Laughing Cow® to infinity - today one of Bayrle's best known works and a part of the Bel Group's private collection. Meanwhile in

Paris, thanks to the financial support of the Bel Group, Andy Warhol's famous *Cow Wallpaper* - to which Bayrle's work is a wry homage - will form a giant display on the façade of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris to mark its retrospective exhibition *Warhol Unlimited* (2 October 2015 - 7 February 2016).



Thomas Bayrle in the spotlight

The same day, from 6 to 10 p.m.,

in the context of the Nocturne des Galeries de la FIAC, the gallery Air de Paris (32, rue Louise Weiss, Paris 13ème, Metro Chevaleret) will host a special event dedicated to the collector's edition box and Thomas Bayrle in the presence of the artist. The entire gallery-front will be covered with a wallpaper specially created for this occasion.

Une œuvre d'art chez vous

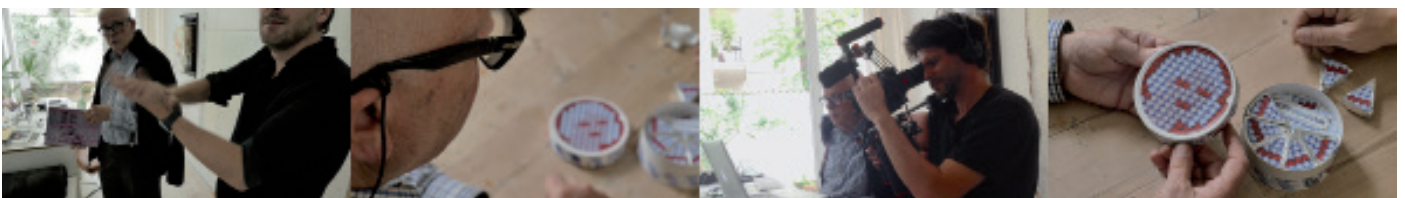
Coinciding with the October presentation of Bayrle's collector's edition box in Paris, La Maison de La Vache qui rit in Lons-le-Saunier (French Jura) will launch *Une œuvre d'art chez vous* («A work of art in your home»). Taking place over a period of several months, this project will stage a series of exhibitions of the collector's edition box in the homes of various residents from the region. This initiative, which embodies the values of sharing and artistic awareness promoted by the Bel Group and Lab'Bel, will be documented by a blog hosted on the website of La Maison de La Vache qui rit.

www.lamaisondelavachequirit.com

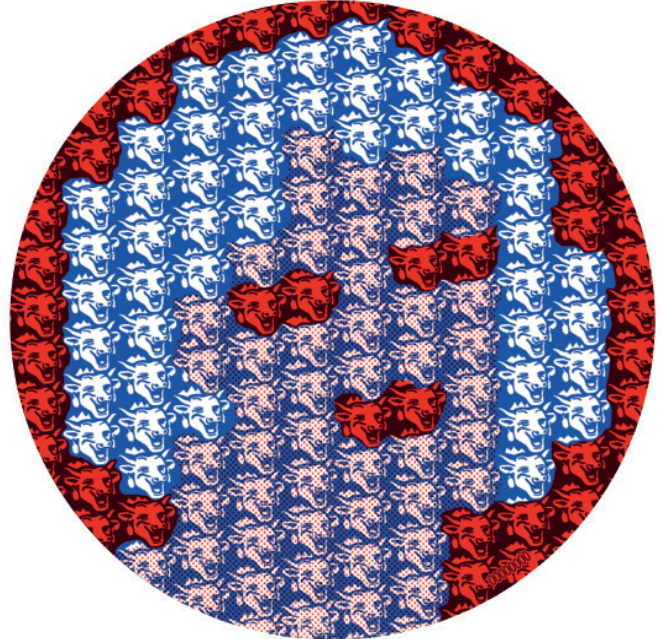
The film

As for Feldmann's collector's edition box in 2014, Lab'Bel has commissioned a film to be produced by François Prodromidès in order to preserve a record of this unique artistic collaboration. It will be available for viewing at Lab'Bel's website.

www.lab-bel.com



Thomas Bayrle and the Laughing Cow®: a long-standing collaboration



From very early in his career, Thomas Bayrle has used the brand logo of The Laughing Cow® in his work. He found the popular trademark, with its cheese-box earrings and original artistic design, to be a sufficiently effective basis for some of his first *superform* collages.

Among Bayrle's first rubber-stamp motifs was *Mädchen / Girl* (1967), a little girl's laughing face, consisting of some 150 repetitions of the Laughing Cow® logo. The work uses the very last logo designed for the brand by legendary illustrator Benjamin Rabier.

This design is also the basis of the motif for the collector's edition box: rather brighter, in red and blue, but deliberately keeping to the 1960s aesthetics, with a wide red grid giving the peasant girl in the picture a rosy complexion.

By playing off the qualities Rabier's 1921 logo, Bayrle has above all wanted to evoke

the charm and appeal of the original Laughing Cow®, with its tapered horns and intrepid smile. When first created, the Laughing Cow® was seen as an ironic deformation of a Valkyrie. With the young peasant girl's face gracing the inner labels of each portion in the shape of a rosette, Thomas Bayrle builds a bridge between the long artistic tradition of Fromageries Bel and the brand's evolution in recent decades, a bridge that naturally leads to contemporary art.

As is invariably the case in the artist's work, Bayrle's collector's edition box plays with our visual perception. The mass of cows on the box's cover – a whole herd, really – is far more individualized than it might seem at first glance: some are blue, some red, some spotted. The same is true for the face that they comprise: it's not a drawing, it's a creation of the viewer's eye. Some people will see the cow's face, others that of the young girl; and one can in fact alternate between the two perceptions.

Thomas Bayrle by Michael Staab, Curator

Thomas Bayrle is a German artist, born in Berlin in 1937. He lives and works in Frankfurt. Considered along with Sigmar Polke to be one of the pioneers of Pop Art in Germany, Bayrle has gathered worldwide fame. His œuvre comprises installations, animations, films, photography, graphic works, sculptures and objects.

Before studying commercial art and later graphic reproduction at the Offenbach School of Arts and Crafts (1958 -1961), Thomas Bayrle (b. 1937 in Berlin) trained as an industrial weaver at Jacquard (1957-1959) - an essential influence on his artistic practice. Even if he no longer works directly at a loom, he's transferred the technical and creative *modus operandi* of weaving to his artistic approach and method. Associations from weaving, such as warp and weft and the relation to surface, to horizontal reality, are important in his work - in contrast to verticality, which, as he says, means little to him.

Through Jacquard weaving, he came to understand the programming of machines; this was to become extremely important for his artistic work and is evident in many of his fabric collages and objects.

His works are often based on images and icons from industrial mass production and the world of consumer brands that he calls *superforms*. He uses clear, almost garish colors, with cheerful or humorous motifs, so that at first glance the works appear to focus on formal and aesthetic appeal.

Accordingly, since 1966 he has used the resources of artistic collage to weave individual images into an overall picture. Hundreds of tiny airplanes make up one gigantic airplane picture; hundreds of individual flowers form a dancer; and a collage of many tiny beer glasses reveals one large beer glass.

Within his œuvre, the consistent development of his collages - initially with simple rubber stamps, and later using computer programs - reveals a content-based dimension that goes beyond the common boundaries of Pop Art, generally seen as apolitical because of its references to advertising, the media, and consumer society.



Thomas Bayrle's Focus: Society



In Nature, no two things are alike. The same is true for 'mass'. Each thing has a life of its own. Individuality and mass do not stand in contradiction. Nature produces both mass and individuality. And we are part of Nature.

Thomas Bayrle, 2015

Bayrle's major topic is society: its manifestations and the principles by which it functions, its repetitions and variations, the individual and people in the mass – and the wide variety of possible relationships.

To return to the weaving image, one could see the textile as an analogy to society in all its broad horizontality and interrelationships.

As Bayrle sees it, Nature and its concomitant society produce both – mass and individual. But within this there is nothing identical, whether in the mass of society or in the mass production of Nature. Each thing is unique, with a life of its own. Thus his interest in mass production, mass consumption and mass communication differs from that of most ideological or economic concepts of mass, where the value of a living being is often determined by its rarity or its capacity for reproduction.

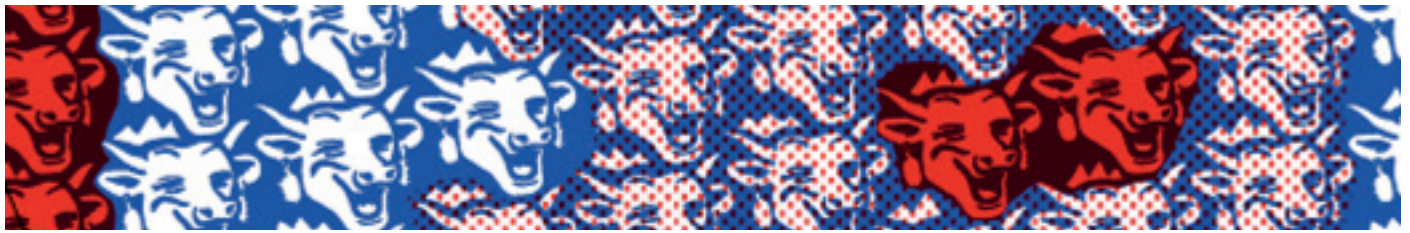
Using simple, direct artistic resources, Bayrle manages to open up new perspectives on social developments and structures, without himself having to react politically. Not without reason has the attention of the art world once again focused on his work in recent years, as the effects of globalized society become increasingly evident. He provides us with metaphors for social and cultural developments and conditions which – without being subject to any propaganda – enable us to reflect on them for ourselves. Thus he fulfills one of art's important social missions.

If we consider the almost 50-year period of Bayrle's artistic work, his *œuvre* includes far more than the *superform* collages that made him famous. His early work shows painted machine sculptures that addressed the mass movements of National Socialism, communism, capitalism, and the role of the individual. Later, he made series of sculptures out of woven *Autobahnen* («motorways», with *Bahn* also referring to a length of fabric) as symbols of mass transport, with automatically praying machines, engines and car tires. In his latest group of works, *Gerani/Pavesi*, the icons of mass transport are linked with religious motifs.

In his works, Bayrle deliberately uses techniques and aesthetic approaches taken from production processes in industry and the media, and he was one of the first artists to use digital media for image design – which explains why we find these works so familiar and accessible. Moreover, he sees himself as a participant in the social system, not as an impartial observer. This involvement, perceptible in his works, brings them closer to us.

Michael Staab, Curator of the collector's edition box project by Lab'Bel

The Laughing Cow® and the Arts



In 1921, when Léon Bel patented the brand name 'The Laughing Cow®', it had not yet occurred to him to entrust the creation of its visual identity to Benjamin Rabier. It was only in 1923, following a competition aimed at making the brand more appealing, that the famous design finally appeared on the product's packaging. Subsequently the two men began a collaboration that would last well beyond the death of Rabier in 1939, as evidenced by the publication in the 1950s of albums filled with cheerful pictures of animals.

Although Rabier's design is the best known today, the inventive advertising policy of Fromageries Bel has led it to call upon the talents of many other illustrators as well. Luc-Marie Bayle, Corinne Baille, Hervé Baille, Paul Grimault and Albert Dubout have each lent their talents to the design of numerous gifts and surprises for young consumers. In 1954, the illustrator and radio presenter Alain Saint-Ogan propelled The Laughing Cow® into his *Animal Paradise*. With this began a promotional legacy that would later assume many other forms, including in the 1970s, when Jacques Parnel instigated a veritable revolution in the brand's history by making the cow stand up and walk on its hind legs.

Parallel to its industrial activity, The Laughing Cow® has inspired many artists. Already in 1924, the painter Marcel Lenoir represented it in a still-life (which may still be seen in the Jura at La Maison de La Vache qui rit®). The most famous re-appropriation is probably Bernard Rancillac's, who in 1966 depicted The Lau-

ghing Cow® as a sun in his canvas *Our Blessed Mother Cow* ('Notre-Sainte-Mère La Vache'). By his own admission, this leader of the 'Narrative Figuration' movement employed the image as a symbol of western consumerist society while at the same time recalling the Hindu prohibition. More recently, Wim Delvoye redeployed The Laughing Cow® as part of an impressive collection of labels during the 2005 Biennale de Lyon. The Darwinian reference in his work's title, *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favored races in the struggle for life*, boldly associates art history with the world of marketing.

In continuity with this double movement of collaboration and re-appropriation, it seemed only natural that the brand's imagery be revisited by artists. And this is precisely what the collector's edition series offers, asking each artist to interpret the box of 24 portions according to his or her own irreverent and offbeat manner.



Laurent Fiévet, Artistic director, Lab'Bel, Artistic Laboratory of the Bel Group

A Chronology of The Laughing Cow®

1923

Illustrator Benjamin Rabier offers Léon Bel his drawing of a Laughing Cow®. The following year the image appears on all packaging. It contains most of the characteristics that make the brand so recognizable to this day: humor of course, but also the color red, the earrings and the mischievous eyes. Rabier's design was chosen over that of Francisque Poulbot, who had also been consulted by Bel. Nonetheless, the two artists would work together with Bel Cheese for many years, which is why one finds the drawings of Rabier and Poulbot on so many invoices and advertisements from the period.

c.1929

In a sign of the brand's early recognition, Marcel Lenoir paints a still-life featuring a box of The Laughing Cow® in its center. La Maison de La Vache qui rit®, still grateful to this now-forgotten artist, displays the original work in its permanent exhibition.

1950

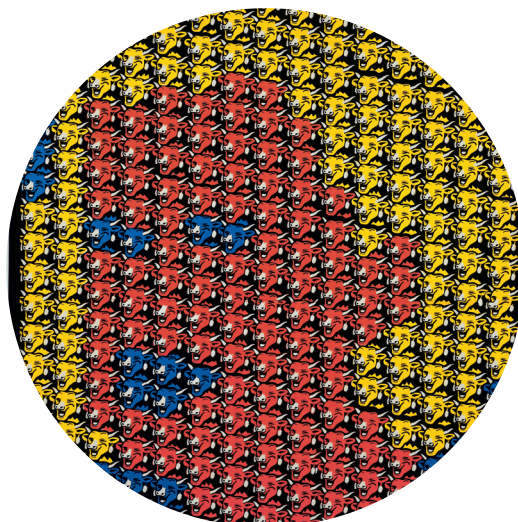
Bel Cheese collaborates with Alain Saint-Ogan. The partnership results in the publication of numerous advertising media created and signed by the artist: blotters, notebook covers, and a series of 10 children's books entitled *La Vache qui rit® au paradis des animaux* («The Laughing Cow® in Animal Paradise»).

1966

Painter Bernard Rancillac, a representative of the Narrative Figuration movement, composes a work entitled *Our Blessed Mother Cow*, depicting a woman and a child in the desert carrying a jar (probably filled with water), beneath a sun that has been replaced by a box of The Laughing Cow®. A reproduction of the work would subsequently appear on a box of The Laughing Cow® in 1985 to mark Rancillac's participation in that year's FIAC.

1967

Thomas Bayrle creates his initial series of *superforms* based on the Laughing Cow® logo. The first of these, *Mädchen/Fille/Girl* will serve as the basis for the brand's second collector's edition box in 2015.



1971

Bel Cheese invites Jacques Parnel to participate in its new advertising campaign. Parnel 'dares' to represent The Laughing Cow® standing upright and clothed differently: in regional costumes, in a dress, in blue jeans, etc.

1975

Albert Hollenstein, a graphic designer and typographer, composes a round greeting card to send to his friends and customers. The card is directly inspired by The Laughing Cow® but replaces the cow with a laughing woman. The design outlines the shape of the individual portions and includes the well-known blue background, white stars, red face and white horns.

1985

To promote the brand, the Bel Group commissions Franquin to create a promotional album. On the cover of this album one finds the famous Gaston Lagaffe sporting earrings identical to those worn by The Laughing Cow®.

2005

During the International Biennale for Contemporary Art in Lyon, Belgian artist Wim Delvoye presents an installation composed of 4,000 Laughing Cow® labels.

2010

Creation of Lab'Bel, the artistic laboratory of the Bel Group. *Rewind*, the laboratory's first exhibition, opens at La Maison de La Vache qui rit® (Lons-le-Saunier, Jura) in the spring of that year.

2014

At the initiative of Lab'Bel, the Bel Group inaugurates its collector's edition box series with a design by German conceptual artist Hans-Peter Feldmann.

2015

The second installment in the collector's edition box series, created by Thomas Bayrle on the basis of his 1967 work *Mädchen/Fille/Girl* - the artist's first *superform* to make use of the Laughing Cow® logo.

Lab'Bel, the Artistic Laboratory of the Bel Group



Lab'Bel, the Artistic Laboratory of the Bel Group, is behind the initiative to mark the brand's 2021 centenary with a series of collector's edition boxes.

Lab'Bel was born in spring 2010 out of the keen desire to engage the Bel Group in a broad policy of support for contemporary art. Led by director Laurent Fiévet and artistic director Silvia Guerra, Lab'Bel works with visual artists and actors from the world of contemporary art on projects that combine humor, impertinence, and the unconventional—the three themes on which the Bel Group bases its identity.

By virtue of its creative orientation and its association with the popular food brand, Lab'Bel's unique position in the world of French cultural patronage quickly became the object of significant attention. An itinerant platform, it has focused on 'decen-

tralized' projects in the regions of France, as well as in Spain, Portugal and Greece. The Jura region of France, the historic cradle of the family business, was the natural choice as the principal site of its operations, primarily through the organization of events in collaboration with La Maison de La vache qui rit® in Lons-le-Saunier. These have included *Rewind* in 2010, *Même pas vieille!* in 2011, *Au Lait!* in 2012, and *Un œil dans la maison*, commissioned by Lab'Bel in 2013.

In 2011, Lab'Bel took its first steps on an international level. Chosen as curator for the SWAB art fair in Barcelona, it organized *ART FOR LIFE / ART FOR A LIVING*, a collective exhibition that juxtaposed the work of the winning artists with artists-in-residence at other international centers of creation (Gasworks in London, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, and Hangar in Barcelona), in order to raise ques-



tions about the status of the artist today and the relationship between an artist's mobility and his work. In collaboration with the Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Lab'Bel also invited artist Stefan Brüggenmann to create an installation for the pavilion that bears the name of the famous modernist architect. The resulting exhibition, *THE WORLD TRAPPED IN THE SELF*, was the first in a series of dialogues between contemporary art and architecture. This series continued in the spring of 2014 with *The Light Hours: Haroon Mirza*, an exhibition presented at Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in Poissy (Yvelines), France.

Lab'Bel has also been present in Portugal, as part of Guimarães, European Capital of Culture, with the exhibition *Metaphoria I* in the autumn of 2012. Born out of a dialogue on the idea of metaphor— a primordial stylistic figure that has the power to transport perception from one reality to ano-

ther, and ultimately from reality to thought— *Metaphoria I* established a bridge between poetry, music and the visual arts. It was followed in the autumn of 2013 by *Metaphoria II*, staged in Athens in the context of the Biennale REMAP, Contemporary Art Platform.

Lab'Bel is also the driving force behind a corporate art collection currently housed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts [Fine Arts Museum] in Dôle.

In 2015 Lab'Bel was the impetus behind *Concertino Unisono*, a performance conceptualized by German artist Michael Staab that took place in the Piazza San Marco during the opening of the 56th Venice Biennale. Commissioned by Lab'Bel, *Concertino Unisono* was the first of 3 Easy Pieces, a series of performances destined for public spaces and commissioned to international artists.

The Laughing Cow® by the numbers:

The Laughing Cow® in France:

For generations, The Laughing Cow® has been the number one cheese among children

(source Nielsen / sales volume)

97% of children aged 7 to 12 and 96% of mothers know the brand

(source : Tracking Enfants IFOP Novembre 2014 / Tracking Millward Brown 2014)

1 of every 2 families with children under 15 buy The Laughing Cow®

(source Nielsen / CAM P6 2015)

1,100,000 fans on Facebook

The Laughing Cow® around the world:

Number 3 among cheese brands worldwide

(Étude Zénith International - Source Bel Global Cheese 2012)

400 million consumers across the globe

(source Bel)

240 servings consumed per second

(source Bel)

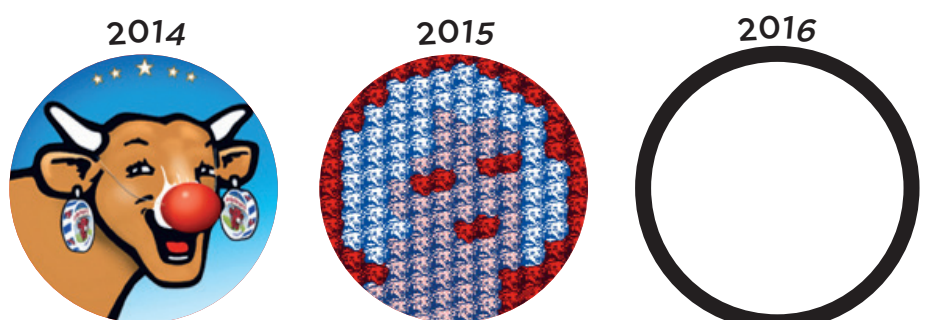
Where to find the collector's edition Laughing Cow® box?

Les Editions Dilecta in Paris, along with La Maison de La vache qui rit in Lons-le-Saunier, will cooperate in distributing Thomas Bayrle's collector's edition box until the end of 2015.

Average retail price: 2.71 € (source Nielsen - regular individual price 24 servings / HMSM / P6 2015).

Les Editions Dilecta - 49, rue Notre Dame de Nazareth, 75003 Paris

La Maison de La vache qui rit - 25, rue de Richebourg, 39 000 Lons-le-Saunier.

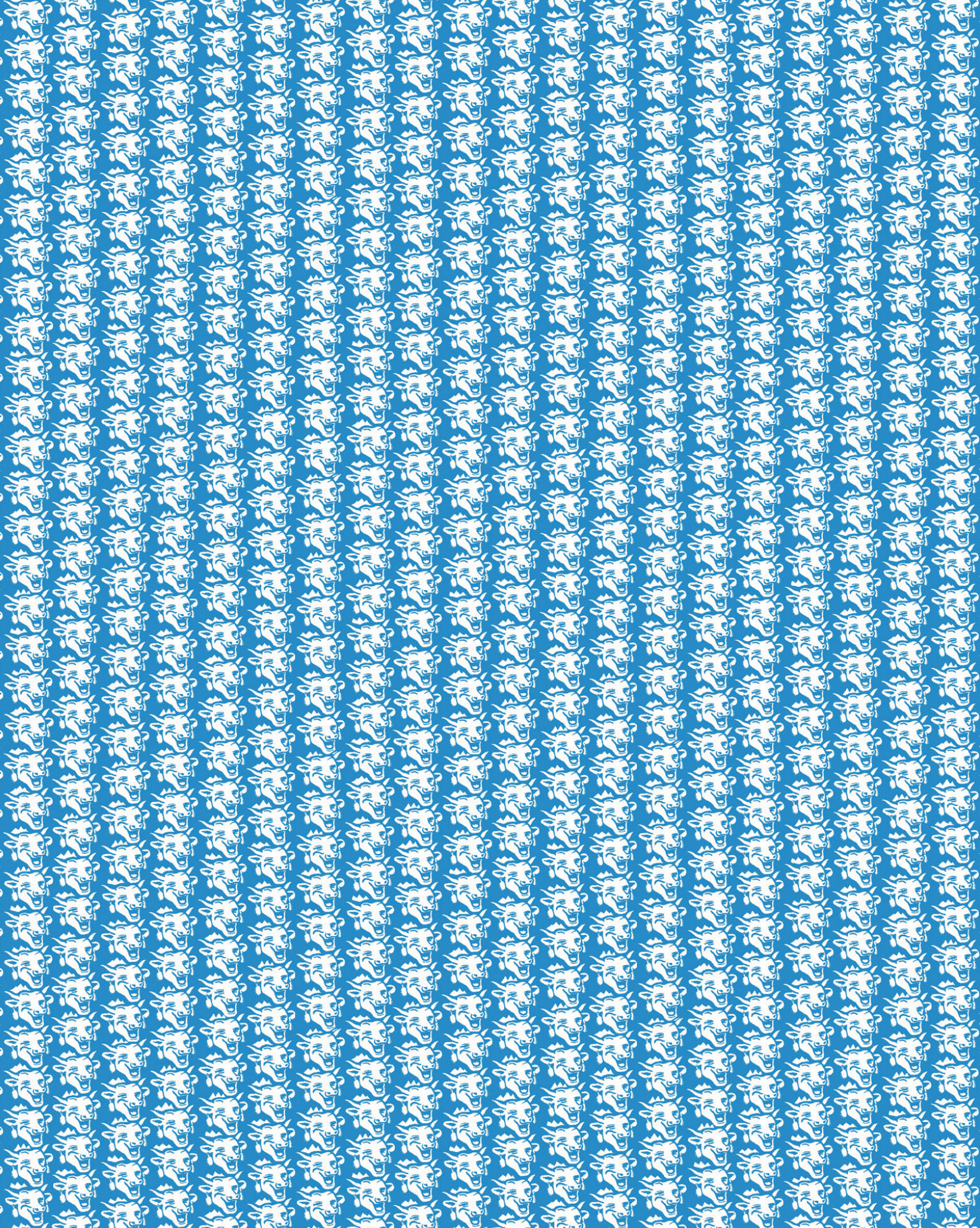


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Sharing smiles



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DU GROUPE BEL

