

ZERO1

FESTIVAL OF HYBRID ARTS
& DIGITAL CULTURES

2026 OPEN CALL

CAMPUS

FESTIVAL ZERØ1

11th EDITION

What if we pressed the Reset button?

After slowing down during the 2025 edition, we've chosen to hit **Reset**; not as a mere return to zero, but as an act of rupture, reinvention, and reopening.

To open the way for new scenarios, explore different temporalities, and envision tomorrow: that is the promise of the 11th edition of the ZERØ1, taking place **from March 30 to April 6, 2026**.

"Reset" is a computing term that refers to restoring a system to its initial state: a way to fix errors or technical malfunctions. Beyond this technical meaning, Reset also belongs to the realms of **imagination**, society, and sensitivity: creating bifurcations, alternative futures. It questions our ability to reimagine history, to uncover censored narratives...

To reset, is it really to erase? Some Resets aim to delete: damnatio memoriae, manipulated archives, erased memories. Yet every attempt at erasure leaves a trace. Art can reveal these absences, these silences, these fractures.

And what if the environment could benefit from a Reset? In the face of planetary exhaustion, it has become urgent to reinvent our relationship with the living. Hybrid arts within digital environments can become tools for reconnection, for paying attention to the invisible.

In fiction, Reset often takes the form of a time jump, a loop to be replayed. **And what if it were all a matter of time?** We could then explore other narrative structures: cyclical, suspended, divergent... Each new beginning becomes a space for experimentation.

Reset carries the risk of **repetition**, but also the chance to **invent** or to **pick up the story where it once went astray**.

RESET

THEME 1/2

A true meeting point for hybrid arts and digital cultures in France, the **ZERØ1 Festival** has, for **11 years** now, affirmed its role in supporting creation and dissemination for all audiences. Each edition highlights artistic projects that question our relationship with technology and its repercussions on contemporary societies. Led by **ten students** from the Master 2 DPAN program at La Rochelle Université, the festival forms a space where art, research society intertwine.

Confronted with the systemic tensions of our time — ecological crisis, technological saturation, social upheavals, political fatigue — we want the 11th edition of the ZERØ1 Festival to become fertile ground where **other possibilities** can take root: an **invitation** to imagine and to experiment.

The rise of fascism around the world, in Europe, and in France, is a striking example. Despite the mistakes of the past, we seem trapped in an **infernal loop** with fewer and fewer exits, as if caught in a funnel leading only to one outcome: the repetition of history. **How can we break this cycle?** How can we create a breach to escape this eternal recurrence? This is where we propose to approach Reset not as a solution, but as a working hypothesis.

What if our cultures could be resituated? What if the rules of the game could be changed or reinvented?

Reset **does not oppose** past and present: it reframes, shifts contexts and reopens possibilities.

In Ancient Rome, **damnatio memoriae** was a political practice that consisted in erasing every trace of a person deemed unworthy or treacherous. Their name, carved in stone, was chiseled out; their statues destroyed or reassigned to others; their memory forbidden. It was a radical form of Reset: not merely the denial of a person, but the attempt to erase the very idea that they ever had existed.

RESET

THEME 2/2

This practice is far from purely ancient: it runs throughout history. It reappears in the totalitarian regimes of the **20th century**, where photographs were retouched to make disgraced opponents disappear. Erasure becomes a political weapon, a means of controlling not only the present, but also the past.

Literature has long warned us of this danger: George Orwell's **1984** is a **dystopia** that perfectly illustrates the risk of an authoritarian Reset exploited by propaganda: a world in which nothing remains, where truth is malleable, and where the individual loses their grip on reality.

But *damnatio memoriae* raises a central question: **can one truly erase?** Every attempt at suppression leaves a **scar**. Every defaced statue tells a story, not of forgetting, but of the conflicts surrounding memory. And this is precisely why it is such a compelling artistic theme: to shed light on these absences, these voids, these ghostly traces that speak as loudly as official narratives.

In the context of the ZERØ1 Festival, this theme resonates deeply with the issues of the **digital age**. Today, erasure is both easier and more illusory than ever. One can delete data with a single click, remove a profile, rewrite a Wikipedia page, but each act leaves a trace somewhere, in archives, caches, or decentralized memories. The digital realm **multiplies** the possibility of a **contemporary damnatio memoriae**.

This is why the ZERØ1 Festival seeks to **reclaim** the term. For us, Reset is not synonymous with erasure, but with **lucidity**. It means facing reality, illuminating, questioning. In art as in politics, the true critical gesture lies in exposing cracks, opening dialogue, and creating spaces where plurality can exist. Where some regimes impose an **authoritarian** and **violent Reset**, we propose a **collective** and **conscious** one.

RESET

THOUGHT STARTERS 1/2

Our relationship with the living world may call for a Reset. Not to erase, but to resituate ourselves.

We **exploit** the planet's resources as if they were inexhaustible, rarely measuring the true **consequences**. Yet the climate is not merely a backdrop: it is the very condition of our survival. It regulates our environments, nourishes us, shelters immense biodiversity, and still holds mysteries that science struggles to grasp.

What if, with full awareness, we recalibrated our ways of inhabiting the world? Perhaps we would learn to listen to **warning signs**, to **limit** our footprint, to reintegrate ourselves into the **living** rather than setting ourselves apart from it. Or perhaps we would continue exploiting its resources as if they were **infinite**, consciously **risking** our own future.

In this context, hybrid and digital arts can become tools for awareness and imagination: alternative scenarios, ecological utopias... Yet these narratives may also reveal a harsher truth: that the Earth might thrive without humanity.

And what if art were not meant to be consumed?

Many thinkers and designers have long opened paths toward rupture. **Victor Papanek**, for instance, in **Design for the Real World** (1970), denounced wasteful and polluting design practices, advocating instead for a responsible, life-centered approach.

Just like the thinkers of the **Bauhaus** who, in **1919**, initiated a Reset of architectural and design codes, the ZERØ1 Festival seeks to show that other paths are possible. At a time when ornament, gilding and where excess were the norm, the Bauhaus **broke conventions** by introducing new ideas: using raw materials, prioritizing the function of spaces and objects over their form.

In architecture, Reset takes on a material dimension: transforming built environments, reusing structures, and embracing simpler, more contemporary forms.

RESET

THOUGHT STARTERS 2/2

What if design were not solely at the service of efficiency and consumption, but a means to transform our **environments** and **ways of living**?

What if we rethought time itself?

In fiction, Reset often means rewinding the thread, erasing the mistake, starting over: a familiar gesture of the time traveler. As in **Groundhog Day** (1993) or **Looper** (2012), Reset becomes an experience of repetition: a loop that doesn't simply aim to go back, but to understand what unfolds through **iteration**, to observe the subtle variations that alter the course of events. Each new beginning carries the memory of the one before, like a persistent echo of the past within the present.

What remains when we start over? And if each scenario were not merely a return, but a variation of the story, shaped by the experience accumulated along the way?

Reset thus opens a narrative field where linearity falters. It allows the exploration of **alternative futures**, of parallel versions of reality, and invites us to see time as a malleable substance.

A festival as a field of experimentation

ZERØ1 holds neither final **questions** nor definitive **answers**. It opens a **space** for collective exploration.

Reset is an invitation.

To **unplug**.

To **subvert** the scripts.

To **short-circuit** established narratives.

To **rewrite**, together, **new beginnings**.

FESTIVAL ZERØ1

OUR GOALS

Each year, French and international artists gather in La Rochelle to celebrate digital art at ZERØ1, a festival that is accessible, free, and open to everyone.

As part of a broader commitment to cultural democratization, we create opportunities for artistic mediation and organize moments of exchange between artists and the general public. We also develop dedicated programs for school audiences, aiming to foster a critical understanding of art from an early age.

A major new feature of this edition is the introduction of the Campus program, a key focus of the festival. Inspired by the creativity of emerging young artists from around the world, the initiative seeks to encourage dialogue and collaboration across cultures and generations.

The festival's exhibition path brings together artists from all kinds of backgrounds, training paths, and cultures, resulting in a lively mix of styles, practices, and stories.

The ZERØ1Festival also takes over Le Chantier des Francofolies, a local stage for emerging creation, for one unique night: Dockyard. On the program: artists, visual performances, and a vibrant, festive atmosphere.

FESTIVAL ZERØ1

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