



# Meat (on/off)

marc lathuillière



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marc lathuillière · 2022

Once at the heart of French gastronomy and social life, meat is no longer a sure thing: in ten years, its consumption has fallen by more than twelve per cent. The mainstay of meals during the boom years, meat is now at the crossroads of a number of planetary issues: globalisation of the meat trade, health and food safety, identity and slaughtering practices, relationships with animals, and the impact of livestock farming on climate and landscapes. The debates it has given rise to – meals with or without meat in school canteens, insect farming and the cultivation of cellular meat, etc. – reveal a divide between two extremes of Western societies: between those for whom inflation leaves only the most industrialised meats on the plate, and those who opt for reduced consumption, with more expensive and higher quality products, or even eliminate all meat from their diet.

Produced as part of *Radioscopy of France*, the post-covid Great photographic commission organized by the Ministry of Culture and the French National Library (BnF), the *Meat (on/off)* series aims to show how our dietary certainties are being torn apart. It is as much about tracing the manifestations of meat in our daily lives, the trades and rituals associated with it, as it is about the emergence of new habits that reject it. This research was carried out in twelve departments, from the north to the south of France: with the presidential candidates at the election campaign barbecues, with the radical animalist association L214 for an anti-farming action in front of the headquarters of European chicken giant LDC, at the slaughterhouse of Lyon as well as with the vegans in Le Marais, Paris, in the factory farms of Brittany, in the parched meadows of peasant farmers in Provence as well as in the food tech laboratories. Deliberately adopting an aesthetic of urgency, close to the body, cut through by framing and flash, this series is ultimately a personal interrogation on my omnivorous conscience.

<https://commande-photojournalisme.culture.gouv.fr/fr/marc-lathuilliere-viande-onoff>



## Exhibitions

- Top · *La France sous leurs yeux* (France in their Eyes)  
Great photographic commission, BnF (National Library of France), 2024  
Curators Héloïse Conesa and Emmanuelle Hascoët, catalogue
- Top right · *La France en Face* (Facing France)  
Hôtel Fontfreyde, Clermont-Ferrand photographic center, 2024  
Curator François-Nicolas L'Hardy
- Left · *Alors on danse* (So We Dance)  
CRP, Centre régional photographique Hauts-de-France, Douchy-les-Mines, 2024  
Curator Audrey Hoareau





**Meat #60**  
At Aujourd'hui  
Demain, vegan  
concept store,  
Paris, 11th district



**Meat #03** At Au bon boeuf, butcher, Montmartre, Paris



**Meat #23** Weekend in Drôme: Lolo, browning a Bresse chicken over a flame



**Meat #12 + #49**  
Aperitif barbecue between  
neighbours in Bron, on the  
outskirts of Lyon,  
during a heat wave



**Meat #45** Hakim on his lunch break,  
Durum Kebab, Marseille



**Meat #10**  
Véronique and her  
son Ulysse: Easter  
leg of lamb at Les  
Près d'Artemare farm,  
Normandy





*Meat #09* With the family at Chicken Palace, Barbès, Paris, 18th district



**Meat #40** Meat department, Leclerc hypermarket, Lannion, Brittany



**Meat #21**  
Helena, vegetarian family  
dinner, Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue,  
Ardèche



**Meat #56**  
Alexandre, vegan  
cheese and meat de-  
partment, Aujourd'hui  
Domain concept store,  
Paris, 11th district

**Meat #05** Ham department in the summertime, Leclerc hypermarket, Lannion



**Meat #72**

Industrial turkey farm,  
Saint-Jean-Brévelay,  
Britanny



**Meat #96**

Sébastien, veterinary  
surgeon, looking after a  
calf, Beau Chêne farm,  
Plouézec, Britanny

**Meat #19**

Sorting ducklings for  
sexing, Grimaud group  
hatchery, Roussay  
(Maine-et-Loire)



**Meat #88**

Organic pig farming,  
Pleumeur-Boudou,  
Britanny



**Meat #20** Ludivine, peasant farmer, with one of her Maraîchine calves, Marais Breton (Vendée).



**Meat #16**  
Andréa, intensive pig  
farmer, Istres, Provence





**Meat #02 + #01**

Meat Pavilion,  
Rungis International wholesale Market

**Meat #15**

Swollen hands of Romanian skinner, temporary  
slaughterhouse for Aid El-kebir, Istres



**Meat #108**

Grégory and Baptiste, cutters at the Cibevial abattoir in Corbas (Lyon)







**Meat #04** Grégory, beef and veal cutter, night shift at the Cibeval abattoir in Corbas (Lyon)





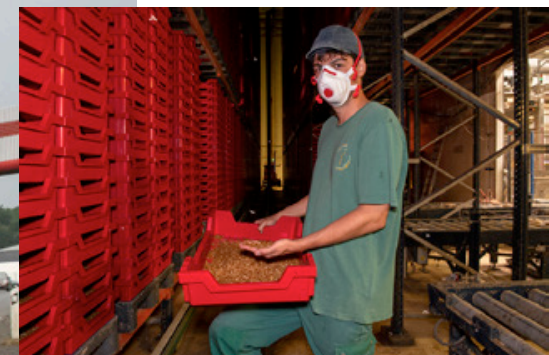
**Meat #128** Abden-  
nour and his Aïd El-ke-  
bir lamb, Massuguière  
Farm, Istres.



**Meat #118** Jean-Ludwig, a L214 activist, during an action of the  
association against the poultry giant LDC, Sablé-sur-Sarthe



**Meat #121** Communist candidate Fabien Rous-  
sel, last of his bbq aperitifs of the 2022 presiden-  
tial campaign, Paris, 20th district



**Meat #141** Cyrille, expert at Ynsect,  
a start-up worm farm in Dole (Jura)





**Meat #133**  
Drought,  
field of  
fodder corn  
(Maine-et-  
Loire)



**Meat #136** Armelle, sunbathing during the daily collection of green algae,  
Saint-Michel-en-Grève beach, Brittany



**Meat #55** Guilloux and his sister,  
Plestin-les-Grèves agricultural show,  
Britanny



## **captions**

Cover **Meat #109** · Sébastien Moreaud, a salesman with APA (Alpes Provence Agneaux), between veal carcasses at the Cibeveal abattoir in Corbas, south of Lyon. The abattoir, which employs 25 people, serves the capital of French gastronomy. The primary cutting and wholesale takes place between 3 a.m. and midday, in a refrigerated atmosphere. Recruitment is difficult, in view of the long hours and the dirty, physical nature of the work, which requires both a high rate of production and a mastery of cutting techniques. If there's a shortage of manpower, Sébastien, as well as receiving customers, sometimes takes on meat preparation tasks.

**Meat #60** · Lucile Noury, a sales assistant at Aujourd'hui Demain, Paris's 11th district vegan concept store, presents her favourite vegan meat, Planted shredded meat, for wraps and veggie burgers. The 11th district of Paris is home to the largest number of purely vegan shops in France, albeit still limited in number. Aujourd'hui Demain is a canteen, a grocery shop and a concept store selling vegan clothes, accessories and cosmetics.

**Meat #03 (flesh)** · Roy Walther Pelaez, a Colombian-born employee at the Au Bon Bœuf (The Good Beef) butcher's shop in Montmartre, Paris, holding a roast beef in the shop's cold room. Roy's arms are covered in tattoos representing animals that symbolise strength and virility: a bull, a tiger, a gorilla, etc.

**Meat #23 (thighs)** · Laurent, a building contractor, browns a free-range Bresse chicken on the barbecue during an evening with friends at their holiday home in Condorcet, in Drôme (Provence). Part of the French feminist left sees barbecuing not only as a harmful activity for the climate, but also, being very masculine, as an expression of patriarchy.

**Meat #10** · Veronique Follet and her son Ulysse enjoy an Easter lamb leg cooked in a casserole during a family meal at the Les Prés d'Artemare farm in Saint-Vaast Dieppedalle, Seine-Maritime, Normandy.

**Meat #12 + #49** · Caroline and Benoît Auguin, a psychiatrist and a video game entrepreneur, invited their neighbours to a bbq at their house in Bron, on the eastern outskirts of Lyon, during a heatwave in June. Kebabs, and saucisson - which remains the star of French aperitif - are offered among more plant-based snacks.

**Meat #45 (shawarma)** · Hakim Bouacha, motorbike repairer, eating a turkey shawarma with french fries at Durum Kebab, a fast food restaurant in Marseille, near the Canebière. Kebab restaurants focus on popular, everyday meat consumption, where satiety and the customer's budget take precedence over the quality of the meat, which comes from factory farms in France or abroad.

**Meat #09 (chicken palace)** · A meal of fried chicken and chicken burgers at the Chicken Palace fast food restaurant in the Barbès neighborhood of the 18th district of Paris, where the majority of customers are Afro-descendants. Snacking is a way of selling off a large proportion of the chicken that is industrially reared in France or imported from the major chicken-producing countries, Ukraine and Thailand. This type of consumption is favoured by families and working-class people, who are largely unaffected by current food trends such as organic food, frugality, localism and vegetarianism.

**Meat #40 + #05 (gondola)** · Grill and ham sections in summer at the Leclerc hypermarket in Lannion (Côtes d'Armor, Brittany). Supermarkets and hypermarkets account for the bulk of processed meat sales in France. This is particularly the case for pork, for which Brittany is the leading production region: more than one in two French pigs reared in France comes from a Breton farm.

**Meat #21 (vegetarian)** · Helena de Jong, manager of GAC, a contemporary art space in Annonay, Ardèche, at her home in Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue, enjoying a vegetarian dinner: courgettes with feta cheese, vegetable soup and homemade bread. Helena, like her husband and their three children, is a vegetarian out of a concern for animal suffering. She was a vegan for a while, but gave up her diet «because it's no fun for other people». Her daughter wanted to create a punk band called Vegan Zombie, for which Helena designed t-shirts.



**Meat #56 (vegan gondola)** · Vegan Alexandre Dang Van Thu is stocking up on veggie sausages at Aujourd'hui Demain, a vegan concept store in the heart of Paris's 11th district, ahead of a weekend at an electronic music festival. His shopping basket is worth over €60. Like animal meat, plant-based meat is overwhelmingly produced by large industrial groups, sometimes the same ones, with a brand name for each specific product.

**Meat #72** · Turkeys on the intensive farm run by Sylvaine Dano, a poultry farmer for over thirty years in Saint-Jean-Brévelay, Morbihan, one of the leading poultry-producing departments in France. At this stage of their growth, 130 to 140 days, when they weigh 15 kg and are ready for the slaughterhouse, the turkeys are reared in «Louisiana»-type buildings, with screened openings and natural ventilation from all four sides. According to Sylvaine, a poultry farmer's daughter and granddaughter and president of the Morbihan poultry section of the FNSEA (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles, the main farming union in France), the 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> building houses 3,500 turkeys, representing a density of almost three birds per m<sup>2</sup>, which complies with regulations. These conditions apply to 97% of turkeys reared in France.

**Meat #96** · Sébastien Oudot, veterinary surgeon, tries to save a calf from the Beau Chêne Farm, in Plouézec (Côtes d'Armor, Brittany), by placing it on a drip, with the help of the farmer, Mickaël Conan. Because of the difficulty of the job - long hours on the road, physical risks, dirty environment, lower income than in the towns, etc. - there is a vocational crisis in the profession of country vet. While they maintain a bond of care between farmers and their animals, they are also criticised for over-vaccinating and over-medicating their animals, with the medicines they use ending up in the milk or meat produced. However, Sébastien and the partners in his rural practice enjoy their work, meeting people on farms and working with farm animals. He says economic success is also there for the taking.

**Meat #19 (sexing)** · Employees sorting ducklings just after birth at the Grimaud group hatchery in Roussay (Maine et Loire). Originally founded by duck breeders, the Grimaud group specialises in genetic selection, particularly of breeding stock and young animals, and the production of vaccines for breeding. Just after they hatch, they are sorted according to sex. In the industry, this stage is called «sexing». Only males are kept if the customer, individual or industrial breeder, does not want females. This is generally the case in foie gras production, where females are considered less productive.

**Meat #88** · Pigs on Antoine Person's organic farm in Pleumeur-Boudou (Côtes d'Armor, Brittany). Compared with intensive conventional farms, the organic specifications significantly improve the quality of life for the animals: lower stocking density in the pens, outdoor 'exercise' areas, plant litter, mainly straw, which responds to the pigs' natural need to search the ground with their snouts, thus reducing aggression between fellow pigs. Antoine, who describes himself as an «early environmentalist» and saw for himself the economic hardship of his parents' conventional farming, convinced them to start converting to organic farming before taking over the farm in 2020. The herd has been reduced to 112 breeding sows, compared with an average of around 600 on farms in Brittany, France's leading pig-producing region. With an irregularly growing market, and despite an increase in conversions, only 4% of French pig farmers were certified organic in 2020.

**Meat #20 (animal)** · Ludivine Cosson with one of her calves at her La Barge (Godwit) farm in the the Marais Breton marshes at Notre-Dame-de-Monts (Vendée). With her husband Fred Signoret, a former manager at the LPO (League for the Protection of Birds), Ludivine, who used to run a conservatory of old breeds, has now taken up the challenge of breeding maraîchines. She appreciates these hardy cows from the west of France for their maternal qualities and their ability to graze in the meadow, without any additional feed. Ludivine and Fred are very concerned about their environment - in particular the symbiosis between farming and marshland birdlife - as well as animal welfare, and raise their calves until they are 7 or 8 months old, allowing them to be easily weaned from their mothers. «Just because the calves are destined for slaughter doesn't mean we can't give them the best, love and cuddle them, and enjoy taking them out to pasture» says Ludivine. The couple sell the meat they produce in a short cycle via neighbouring Biocoops, under the Nature et progrès label, which promotes organic farming that takes account of the human and non-human environment



**Meat #16** · Andréa Moretti, a pig farmer in Istres, poses with one of his young piglets. Andréa is doing factory farming on slatted floor, a widely used technique in which the animals are kept in indoor pens, in dim light, and tend to bite each other because of the density. Less than a year ago, he took over his father's traditional farm, which was small (64 breeding sows) by national standards, but he has already reduced the density of the animals and production, while making higher margins thanks to direct sales at the farm. The visits he organises have made him aware of the poor image of indoor factory farming, and he is considering developing a straw bedding rearing system, in which the pigs have access to outdoor pens.

**Meat #01 + #02** · Billboard and beef wholesale at the Meat Pavilion of Rungis, with Vianov, one of the French leaders in the sector with 10,000 tonnes of meat sold per year. In 2021, Rungis International Market, to the south of Paris, generated sales of over 10 billion euros, maintaining its leading position as the world's largest fresh produce market. This 234-hectare city comes alive at night and trades 90,000 tonnes of meat every year, plus 15,000 tonnes of tripe products.

**Meat #108** · Grégory Sabatier and Baptiste Leifer (left to right), cutters at APA (Alpes Provence Agneaux), between beef carcasses at the Cibevial abattoir in Corbas. The abattoir, which serves the capital of French gastronomy and employs 25 people, is located in this town south of Lyon. APA is one of the two cutting and wholesale companies at the abattoir, separate from the slaughtering section itself. The work takes place between 3 a.m. and midday, in a refrigerated atmosphere and under strict hygiene conditions. Recruitment is difficult, in view of the long hours and the dirty, physical nature of the work. The tasks require both a high rate of production and a mastery of cutting techniques, a source of pride for Grégory and Baptiste.

**Meat #15 (Skinners)** · Romanian slaughterhouse workers with hands swollen from assembly-line work. Every day, they cut up several hundred lambs over the 48 hours of the Eid El-Kebir festival, in a temporary abattoir set up at the Massuguière farm in Istres (Provence), one of the largest sheep farms in France. Poorly regarded, slaughterhouse work is increasingly performed by workers of immigrant origin.

**Meat #04 (Cutting)** · Grégory Sabatier, beef and veal cutter, separating a beef carcass in two using an electric butcher's saw at the Cibevial abattoirs in Corbas (Lyon). The primary cutting and sale - wholesale and semi-wholesale - takes place at night and in the morning, between 3 a.m. and midday, in a refrigerated atmosphere. The abattoir, which serves the capital of French gastronomy, is located in Corbas, south of Lyon. Employing 25 people, it processed 7,000 tonnes of beef, veal and lamb in 2021, a slight increase due to the return of the French to their stoves during the confinement period. However, 2022 saw a return to the pre-pandemic trend of lower meat consumption.

**Meat #118** · Jean-Ludwig Malard, L214 activist, during an action of the animalist association in Sablé-sur-Sarthe in front of the headquarters of the LDC group, the French leader in poultry: 40% of the market with brands such as Le Gaulois, Loué, Maître Coq and Marie. Jean-Ludwig, 38, vegetarian and hoping to become vegan, has been a member since 2015 and a volunteer for a year. L214's action is part of a campaign against LDC, denouncing the conditions under which factory chicken is reared by poultry farmers under contract to Le Gaulois. Through its hard-hitting actions and its digital communication based on images of animal suffering, L214 has become the most high-profile animal rights organisation in France: it has helped to change the practices of slaughterhouses and farms, forcing some to close. It actively campaigns for veganism and receives funding from American tech investors committed to industrial alternatives to meat.

**Meat #128** · Abdenmour Moussi taking the lamb he has just had sacrificed at La Massuguière Farm (Istres), one of the largest sheep farms in France, with a flock of 12,000 ewes. Every year, a temporary slaughterhouse is set up there for the Aïd El-Kébir sacrifices. According to Muslim tradition, families choose the lamb themselves and sacrifice it at home. As this is forbidden in France, the farm allows customers to come and make their choice in the sheepfold a few days before the slaughter. During the festival itself, three state-approved Muslim sacrificers take it in turns to ritually slaughter several hundred lambs, chosen by customers and, after being butchered and gutted by temporary workers, taken away immediately by the families for their festive meal. During Aïd El-Kébir, 11 slaughterhouses of this type are authorised in Bouches-du-Rhône, France's second-largest sheep-breeding department, which, with Marseille, also has a large Muslim population.



**Meat #121 (power)** · Fabien Roussel, the French Communist Party's candidate in the 2022 presidential election, in front of a merguez barbecue on the last day of his campaign, at the last of his so called «Apé'Roussel» (aperitif type campaign gatherings), here in the courtyard of the PCF offices in the 20th district of Paris. The Communist leader has made meat a campaign theme in a number of high-profile appearances. In January 2022, he tweeted: «Good wine, good meat, good cheese: that's French gastronomy», asserting the need to make it available to everyone - quality meat in particular.

**Meat #141** · Cyrille Canitrot, a breeding expert from the French start-up Ÿnsect, checks a crate of mealworms at the factory farm where they are produced in Dole (Jura). The farm is home to several million mealworms, larvae of the «Tenebrio molitor», a small beetle that usually lives in cereal flour. The farm is 16 m high and is referred to as 'vertical', with a robot (in the background) moving the crates to sort the droppings or kill the worms. Fed on wheat bran from agriculture, the worms are killed by steam baths and then processed into both powder and oil, animal proteins intended as an alternative to meat, currently used in animal feed. The aim of Ÿnsect, already a leader in its sector, is to extend its activity to human food.

**Meat #133** · A field of fodder maize, intended for animal feed, burnt by drought in the Maine-et-Loire countryside in western France (Pays-de-Loire region) in August 2022. This summer was the second hottest on record after the major heatwave of 2003. Three heat waves hit France in three months, with temperatures 2.3 degrees above seasonal normals. This was also a record for the Pays de Loire region, where cattle, pig and poultry farmers were particularly hard hit when it came to feeding their livestock.

**Meat #136** · Armelle Granie, a property executive in Paris, on the beach at Saint-Michel-en-Grève (Côtes d'Armor, Brittany). She is disturbed by the green algae deposited by the tractors that clean the beach every day in the summer. This 4 km long beach has historically been one of the most affected by green tides, the proliferation of which is due to the discharge of nitrates into the sea, mainly from pig manure spread on crops. The accumulation of nitrates can lead to rotting, producing a deadly gas called hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S). In 2009, a horse died as a result of these fumes, and its unconscious rider was hospitalised. This pollution, linked to industrial pig farming, for which Finistère and Côtes d'Armor are the national champions, is a source of great tension between the farming community, a very powerful lobby in Brittany, and the residents living along the northern coast of the region.

**Meat #55** · Guilloux Aedan and his foster sister play on a little train of pigs made from diesel drums at the agricultural show of Plestin-les-Grèves, in the Côtes d'Armor, the second largest pork-producing department in France after Finistère, both being in Brittany

Back cover **Meat #24 (in vitro)** · Spoonful of pan-fried cellular chicken meat held in the photographer's hand before tasting, in the laboratory of the start-up Vital Meat, which produces it in Nuillé (Maine-et-Loire). Vital Meat, a subsidiary of the Grimaud group, a specialist in animal biotechnology, was founded in 2018 to try to find an alternative to industrial animal meat by growing cellular meat, also known as cultured meat. It is one of two French start-ups in this branch, which is dominated by the United States, the Netherlands and Israel, and its production is still at the experimental stage.





**Meat #31** Gilles Dumesnil's butcher's block at his «boucherie charcuterie» in Yvetot, Normandy



## biography

Since 2004 Marc Lathuillière has developed a participative and critical approach to photography. Shaped by his studies in Political Sciences, his works explores the representation of globalized societies in their relationship to time and environment. Interventions in the image, installations and performances are used to probe cultural boundaries as well as the limits of representation. At the origin of this approach, his main series *Musée national*, has seen him taking the portrait of a thousand French people wearing the same mask over 15 years.

Winner of the Forest Ecosystem/Earth Photo 2024 award, represented by Galerie Binome (Paris), his work has been extensively shown internationally: Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), Paris Photo and Royal Geographical Society in London (2024), Rencontres d'Arles and Foundation Iberê Camaego for FestFoto in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2023), FRAC Auvergne in Clermont-Ferrand (2022), Sorbonne ArtGallery (2020), Bangkok Photo and Photoszene Cologne (2018), Le Creux de l'enfer art center (Thiers) at the Lyon Biennale, La Friche La Belle de Mai in Marseille, and Strasbourg Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (2017), Museum Siam in Bangkok (2011) and Palais de Tokyo (2004). He was awarded the Support for documentary photography by Cnap (Center for national for visual arts), the Innovation grant by Diagonale Paris-Saclay, and was selected into the Great national commission of the BnF. His series have also been published in the international press: South China Morning Post, Le Point, Corriere della Sera, Neue Zürcher Zeitung...

Also involved in writing, Marc Lathuillière enjoys collaborating with researchers and authors. He has organized exhibitions with Michel Houellebecq and Marc Augé, both having written on his work, and has started a collaboration with British anthropologist Tim Ingold. His work is featured in collections such as those of the BnF, the Neufilze OBC Bank, the French Museum of Photography, the Vera Michalski collection and the FRAC Auvergne.

### CV and portfolio

<https://www.lathuilliere.com/en/about/>

« **Border Dancer** », vidéo portrait, Amaury Voslion

<https://www.amartfilms.com/fr/films/tandem/border-dancer-1542.html>

**instagram** lathuillieremarc





**marc lathuillière**  
189 rue Ordener  
75018 Paris · France  
Tél +33 (0)6 26 91 32 03  
marc@lathuilliere.com  
www.lathuillière.com