

The screenshot shows the website 'ÉCLAIRS' with a navigation bar containing 'ACTUALITÉS', 'ENTRETIENS', 'DOSSIERS', 'LE LABO', 'DÉCOUVERTES', and 'NOUS ÉCRIRE'. The main header features the word 'DOSSIERS' in large, outlined letters. The article title is 'L'art du portrait : de l'intime au collectif' with a sub-headline 'Se mettre à nu'. A video player shows a person in a blue jacket and dark pants performing a dance move. Below the video, it says 'Paris-moi DEL - Un film de Benoît Labourdette'. To the right, a 'DOSSIERS' sidebar lists various topics, with 'Se mettre à nu' highlighted. At the bottom, there is a search bar and a 'Partager nos articles' link.

## Lightnings Journal : “Get naked” (interview with Benoît Labourdette)

17 April 2016, by [Benoît Labourdette](#).

Interview with Benoît Labourdette about self-portrait, in “Lightnings”, the Digital Magazine of [Écla](#) (avril 2016).

Link to the article on the website of the lightnings Journal : <http://eclairs.aquitaine.fr/se-mett...>

### “Get naked” (interview with Benoît Labourdette)

*Lightnings - the digital magazine of Ecla*

**The art of the portrait : from intimate to collective  
Get naked**

*Interview by Catherine Lefort*

**Benoît Labourdette writes and direct films of fiction, documentary, experimental and participative. He likes to explore and renew writing and creation in multidisciplinary practices. In his multiple experiences, he queries much youth including practices in the use of digital tools. Furthermore, he founded Quidam production company in 1999, and in 2005 the Pocket Films festival. Interview about portrait and self-portrait.**

**Catherine Lefort** - *What attracts you in the portrait and self-portrait ?*

**Benoît Labourdette** - I'll speak of the self-portrait because in my opinion it is a broader topic than it seems. The self-portrait is much more present in the creation than we imagine it. There are explicit self-portraits - presenting themselves as such - but there are also ways that do not seem to be but are yet. To extend this idea, we should ask the question : what is an artistic work ? Why are we attracted to artistic works ?

Through a work that moves us, we discover a universe. We are enriched by this creation.

In reality, we will go to meet an "other", a human being that is revealed to us. There's not anything other than this in an artistic work. We do not receive the same things when for example we admire nature... But a creation made by the hand of man speaks of its creator.

An artist cannot create a work from something he doesn't know. He plans his own look, his subjectivity in his work. Ultimately, it is a projection of himself since he only can create from which he is. It is in this sense that I believe that any work is a form of self-portrait because it offers us the subjective gaze of its author, and the discovery of his look, it's the discovery of the creator himself. This assumption is the base of my personal work and workshops that I put up with youth, including to try to pretend to do anything other than what one is doing in real... I.e., very concretely, put naked oneself against the other through an object that is created.

**C.L.** - *Digital and social networks have become playgrounds of self-representation. What analysis do you practices related to these tools ?*

**B.L.** - If we take the example of a person who often change Facebook profile : he produces a representation of himself, often he photography himself is staging - front of a mirror, in a context or a posture he has chosen an environment. For me, this practice is not at all of the self-portrait. It rather depends on the makeup, clothing...

When you go out your home - in real world - to meet other human beings, you dress, make-up... It produces an image that will model our relationships to others.

On the Internet, we are connected to others via social networks. Profile photos that are published are a way of dressing. It produces an image of ourselves and this image will interact with other images - because everyone is doing such - this image of ourselves will model the relationship to others. There, it is absolutely not self expression, we only make representations of self to social needs. We manufacture an superficial image for the purpose of communication.

While when working on the portrait or self-portrait, we don't work on image but on what there is behind, it exceeds.

Facebook and social networks in general have profoundly transformed social relations. Communities grow there - which are not physical - people who share the same interests. And we stage to be simply in relation to others. This is what I found in my very regular meetings with young people.

**C.L.** - *Precisely, how do you use the portrait and self-portrait in your workshop practice ?*

**B.L.** - The workshop approach - which is not different from my personal creative work - for me things are linked - is to share something of themselves with others, offer a part of himself. We are really in the self-portrait or portrait. Which has nothing to do with a representation of oneself.

To give a concrete example of this approach to the self-portrait in my workshops, I can offer to a group of people - who know each other and work in a space of trust - the day before for the next day, to make a film individually with constraint of filming a window from indoors at home to give to see outside. I also ask them to tell, live, in voice-over, a memory that is important to them. The purpose of this experiment is to choose what you are going to tell - an experience which marked us - and enrich the

audience of this experience.

These intimate films somehow are then shared collectively. When we thus relate this personal history and how has lived it, it is obvious that delivered a little self-esteem : it is his self-portrait. The Viewer on his side is free in the reception of this story, there's not an intermediary or mediation as in journalism for example.

The image doesn't really exists at the end of the day. It fades to the benefit of the narrative that generally has no links with the filmed images. It is the voice that will produce mental images and guide the imagination. To preserve the spontaneity of the exercise, I ask people not to write their text in advance and engage in the narrative. The essential is to know why they choose the topic, why they want to share it and what it brings them. If there are silent moments, they are part of the film, they express something of the person that reveals himself. The Viewer follows the movement of a thought, this represents strongly someone and says much about him. It is not on the screen, and yet it is in the self-portrait. When a single person speaks, it is in the register of the diary. One is in sharing an interiority, it is far from images made of self-representation in social or community space.

*To make more acquainted with the work of Benoît Labourdette :*

- [www.benoitlabourdette.com](http://www.benoitlabourdette.com)
- [www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/la-fenetre](http://www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/la-fenetre)
- [www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/longs-metrages/parle-moi-del-film-entier](http://www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/longs-metrages/parle-moi-del-film-entier)
- [www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/courts-metrages/serie-noire](http://www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/courts-metrages/serie-noire)
- [www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/courts-metrages/hotel-des-sables](http://www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/courts-metrages/hotel-des-sables)
- [www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/courts-metrages/le-sac-a-dos-de-brahim](http://www.benoitlabourdette.com/creation/films/courts-metrages/le-sac-a-dos-de-brahim)

## **About “Lightnings” of spring 2016**

### **The art of the portrait : from intimate to collective**

This number, associated with the Forum of look 2016 organized by Ecla, shows that the portrait and self-portrait are ubiquitous, for humans and citizens that we, as artists, designers and researchers. In support of many looks and experiences, lighting 5 demonstrates that the portrait and self-portrait, in the centre of artistic movements since the dawn of time, may be rich for a showdown in the world. Sandrine Revel is the guest artist.

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[Link to article online. :](https://www.benoitlabourdette.com/ressources/revue-de-presse/revue-eclairs-se-mettre-a-nu-interview-de-benoit-labourdette)

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