



laurent gongora

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biography

Laurent Gongora is a visual artist born in 1978. He graduated in 2007 at the HEAR school from Strasbourg, and lives and works in Paris.

His work deals with a number of subjects using a wide range of materials. He creates site specific installations which respond to the site in which they are installed, for example the characteristics of its landscape, and the stories the site tells. Distorting the space and altering objects through minute gestures, he loves to present reality in a new way.

vanity of vanities...

What interests me above all in sculpture is its tangibility. We can perceive an art object as we perceive any object. It is potentially anchored in the real world. It is often said that Land Art is born out of the desire of artists to take art out of museums and experiment with new spaces. In relationship to my own practice, Land Art also creates experiences set in the real world. Through manipulation and exaltation, nature changes its status: from a simple represented subject it becomes the heart of the action. Representation gives way to the presentation of something new and even incongruous in reality itself.

«Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, said Ecclesiastes. I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.» Facing this sentence is not so easy for an artist who wishes to make his contribution to the real world. As a way out I chose to play. Construction games, hide-and-seeek games, fool's games and make-believe. Yet a sham can only work when rooted to reality.

Everyday things are my playground, and my mode of action extends from light modification to forgery. Interested as much in «nature» as in artifice, I like to play with the ambiguity between what's true and what's false, using humour to open new doors of perception on the absurd world around us. When I redraw the silhouette of a mountain, when I build a bridge on dry ground, or when I display an army of cuckoo-clocks in a woodland, I feel like an illusionist, spreading confusion.

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born the 20th of July 1978

training

- 2007 *MASTER 2 Fine arts, HEAR Strasbourg*
- 2006 *Erasmus exchange, UDK Berlin*
- 2005 *MASTER 1 Fine Arts, HEAR Strasbourg*
- 1998 *MASTER 1 Mechanics, ULP Strasbourg*
- 1996 *DUT Génie Civil - URS, Strasbourg*
Baccalauréat S

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collective exhibitions

- 2017 *Une Île, Le 6b, comm. Pauline Lisowski*
- 2017 *L'idiot II, Le 6b, comm. Eglantine Laval*
- 2016 *Opensites Art-Terre, Comines-Warneton, Belgique*
- 2015 *Remembrance of Nature, Yattoo, South Korea - curated by Clive Adams*
- 2015 *Le Domaine des Murmures, Château d'Avignon, France - curated by Véronique Baton*
- 2015 *Kayl Land-art Biennale, Luxembourg - curated by Katarzyna Kot*
- 2015 *Fabrique à Rêves, Le 6b, Saint-Denis, France*
- 2015 *Welcome in Joyland, Kids (Laughter Tracks), Le 6B, Saint-Denis, France*
- 2014 *Art, Villes & Paysage, Hortillonnages d'Amiens, France*
- 2014 *L'Art d'en Rire, Parc du Futuroscope, France*
- 2013 *Couleurs d'Automne, Annemasse, France*
- 2012 *Horizons, Rencontres Arts-Nature, Massif du Sancy, France*
- 2012 *Land Art à Riorges, Riorges, France*
- 2012 *Mine d'Art en Sentier, Parc de l'Escaut, France*
- 2011 *Horizons, Rencontres Arts-Nature, Massif du Sancy, France*
- 2008 *Biennale d'art contemporain «Itinéraires», Barr, France*
- 2008 *Festival international des jardins de Chaumont s/Loire, France*
- 2007 *Milano Salone di mobile, Salone Satellite, Milan, Italy*
- 2006 *Phaenomotion, Fondation Opel, Berlin, Germany*
- 2006 *Planets of Comparison, La Chau erie, Strasbourg, France - curated by Plamen Dejanov*

residencies

- 2016 *Voyons Voir, Art contemporain et territoire, Aix-en-Provence, France*
- 2015 *YATOO International Artists In Residence Program, South-Korea*

commissions

- 2017 *Villages Nature Paris - two permanent sculptures*
- 2015 *Reading garden, media library, Vannes, France (public commission)*
- 2014 *Public Sculpture, city hall, Voreppe, France (public commission)*
- 2012 *Public sculpture, Val d'Ille community focal, Montreuil-Le-Gast, France (public commission)*

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site-specific installations

Bohemian bourgeois 2016

synthetic leather, foam, upholstery nails
6 items, circa 150 x 80 cm each

Site specific artwork

Residency «Voyons Voir, Art contemporain et territoire».
Moulin de Vernègues, France

—

Before being a luxury hotel, The Moulin de Vernègues history has been related the royal way which crosses it for a while. Plane trees are more than three centuries old and their atypical relief looks almost animal. Thinking about all the horses which used this road long ago, one can see here a symbolic print of animal on vegetal. Therefore, like adventurous kids, one can easily imagine oneself settling on these trees as well as riding a horse.

In joining bourgeois comfort to bohemian lifestyle, the artwork offers a mental escape and reveals a paradox of the modern world.



Break on through (to the other side) 2016

walnut tree recovered, 50T of mud
diameter 6m x ht. 5m

Site specific artwork

Art-Terre Exhibition, Comines-Warneton

—

This evolutive and experimental works shapes the idea of resilience. In terms of Psychology, resilience is the mental ability to recover quickly from illness or misfortune and go ahead. Projected on nature, this idea deals with climate and sustainability matters.

How can nature survive in this endless struggle forced by human activity? How can a tree behave after having been buried? Will it develop new survival mechanisms?



Paradise lost 2014

Cuckoo clocks, electronic coding
15 pieces, fixed to tree trunks

Site specific artwork

Event : «Art, Cities and Landscape» Hortillonnages of Amiens, France
Also exhibited at the exhibition «Le Domaine des Murmures #2», 2015

vidéo : <http://youtu.be/LkerYkHG7B0>

—

The expression «Paradise Lost» often comes up in descriptions of the Hortillonnages. My aim was to exacerbate the ambiguity of the man-made site of the Hortillonnages, between its natural appearance and its artificial reality.

Fixed to tree trunks, at the height of four meters, the cuckoo clocks chime twice every minute at unregular intervals. These alarms, although naturally inspired - by the song of the cuckoo - thus take on an urban dimension - through their number, their density and their frenetic rhythm. This variance is a metaphor for the Hortillonnages, a place which appears idyllic and embodies the perfect life for a large section of the population, a stone's throw away from the urban hustle and bustle.



Sex Appeal 2015

Elasthanne (Lycra®), various rounded objects
7x5x2m

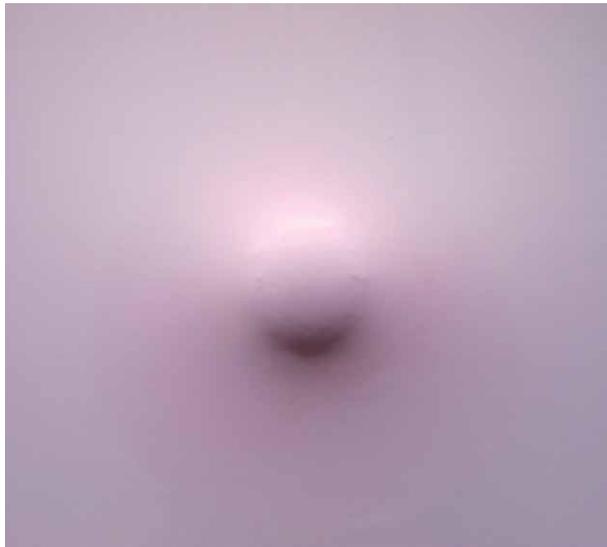
Site specific artwork

Temporary installation in Saint-Denis (93), France

—

Settled upon the pediment of the building, *Sex Appeal* is supposed to tease the visitors. Based on an anthropomorphism between the idea of a skin-tight cloth letting spring some parts of the body, and the idea of the skin, tensed over the muscles and bones. The hint process between what is hidden and what is visible is made possible thanks to a lycra textile.

This lycra is so tensed all over the pediment that it reveals all its edges. Also, some objects are placed between the lycra and the pediment, in order to increase the erotic dimension of the display.



Delusions of grandeur 2015

Painted wood, concrete base
Each 1,30 x 3 m

Site specific artwork
Biennale de la nature réinventée, Kayl, Luxembourg

—

Three wooden ladders put on a rounded concrete base. The culbuto effect.

Ladders are erected to the sky like allegories of the inebriation linked to the delusion of grandeurs. Climbing it is possible, but not without any risk.



Patapont III 2014

Wood, steel, yellow painting
L. 5,50m x l. 2,50m x H. 3,20m

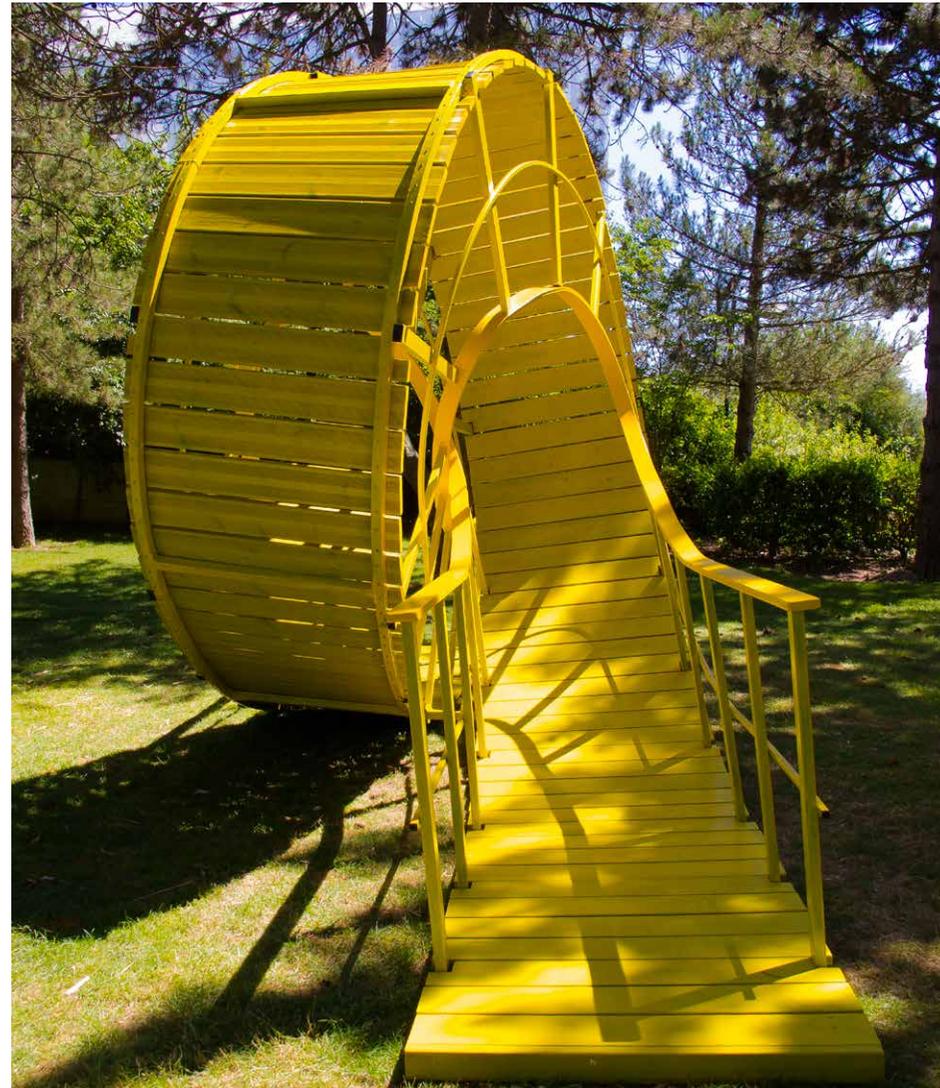
Site specific artwork

Event : «L'Art d'en Rire» - Futuroscope, Poitiers, France

—

'Pataphysics (French: 'pataphysique) is a philosophy or media theory dedicated to studying what lies beyond the realm of metaphysics. The concept was coined by French writer Alfred Jarry (1873–1907).

'Pataphysics «the science of the particular», does not, therefore, study the rules governing the general recurrence of a periodic incident (the expected case) so much as study the games governing the special occurrence of a sporadic accident (the expected case). In a 'Pataphysics mood, the 'Patapont chooses to redefine the territory and to discredit the idea of the obstacle. Inspired by the stunting loop, this bridge approaches with humor the gap between what is allowed and what is possible.



Patapont II 2013

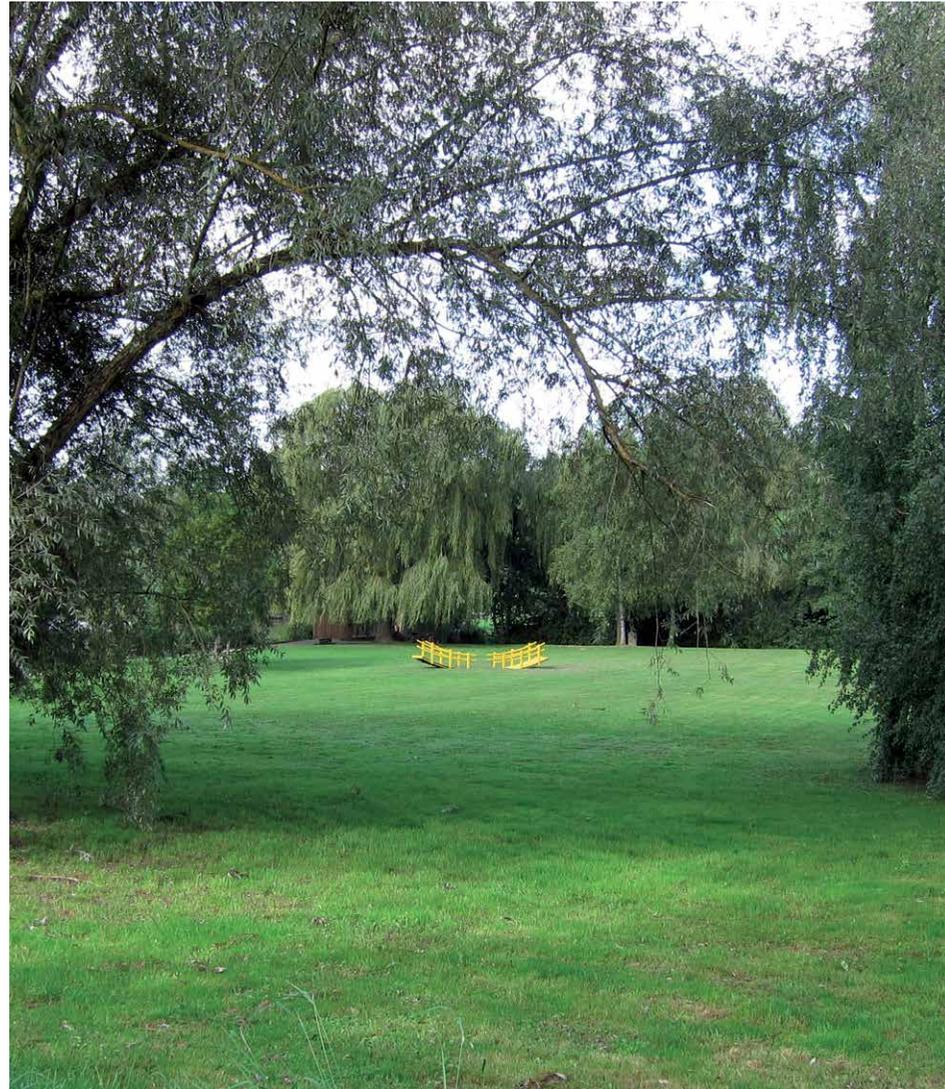
Industrial wooden bridge, put up upside down yellow painting
L. 6m x l. 1m x H. 1m

Site specific artwork

Event : «Couleurs d'Automne» - Annemasse, France

—

'Pataphysics (French: 'pataphysique) is a philosophy or media theory dedicated to studying what lies beyond the realm of metaphysics. The concept was coined by French writer Alfred Jarry (1873–1907). 'Pataphysics «the science of the particular», does not, therefore, study the rules governing the general recurrence of a periodic incident (the expected case) so much as study the games governing the special occurrence of a sporadic accident (the excepted case). In a 'Pataphysics mood, the 'Patapont chooses to redefine the territory and to discredit the idea of the obstacle. Inspired by the stunting loop, this bridge approaches with humor the gap between what is allowed and what is possible.



Patapont I 2012

Industrial wooden bridge, put up upside down yellow painting
540 x 130 x 146 cm

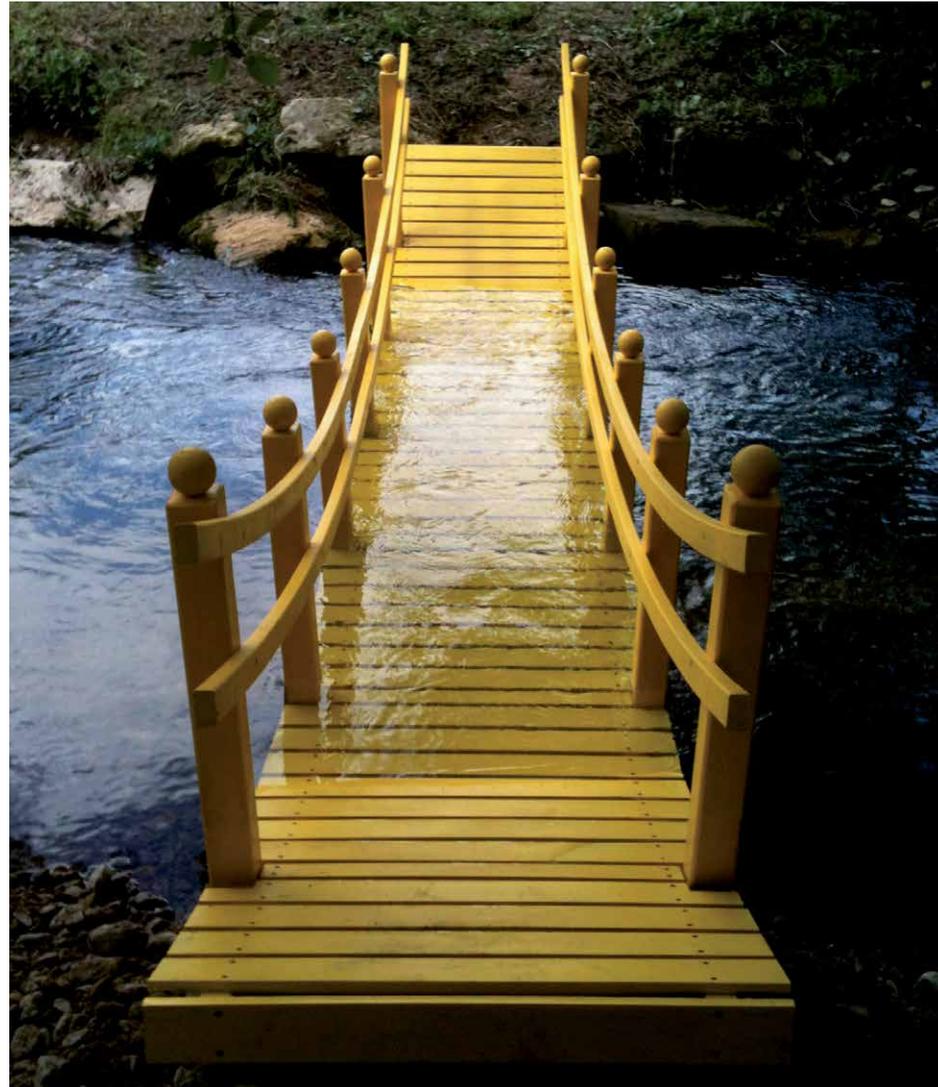
Site specific artwork

Event : «Land Art à Riorges» - Riorges, France

—

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Les cascadeurs (the stuntbirds) 2012

Steel

Dimensions : 8 x 6 x 1 m

Site-specific artwork.

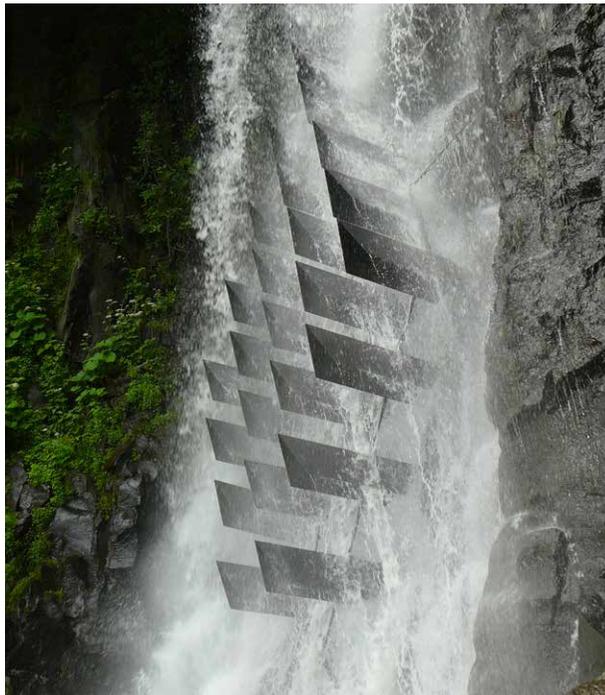
Event : HORIZONS SANCY - Cascade de Vaucoux, Besse, France

—

Halfway between a stepped cascade and a school game, the installation tries to challenge the natural way of the waterfall. 24 sheet-steel roofs are fixed on a steel baseframe, which is hidden by the water.

For the record, there is a small wooden perch under each roof, in case a «stunt bird» would like to come and shelter.

The title «les cascadeurs» means «the stunt men». The word cascade in french language denotes both a stunt and a waterfall.



Cardinal 2011

Polypropylen straps, steel mast
D. 25 m x H. 7 m

Site-specific artwork
Peak of the Capucin, Sancy (63), France

—

This basic work consists of extending the lines of the mountain with red straps in order to draw a new silhouette to the peak of the Capucin, so that it can deserve its name of peak. Viewed from inside the installation, the landscape is cut into many sequences.



Le diamant noir (black diamond) 2012

Pollarded ash tree trunk, punched steel plates
180 x180 cm

Site specific artwork

Event: Mine d'Art en Sentier PNR Scarpe-Escaut, France

—

The event takes place in a mineral field, where nature slowly recovers after the end of the mining activity.

Built around a pollarded tree trunk, the evolutive sculpture allows branches from the tree to grow slowly through the holes of the punched steel.

The diamond symbolizes the coal (coal and diamond are both pure carbon) letting itself cover by the nature, which takes its course.



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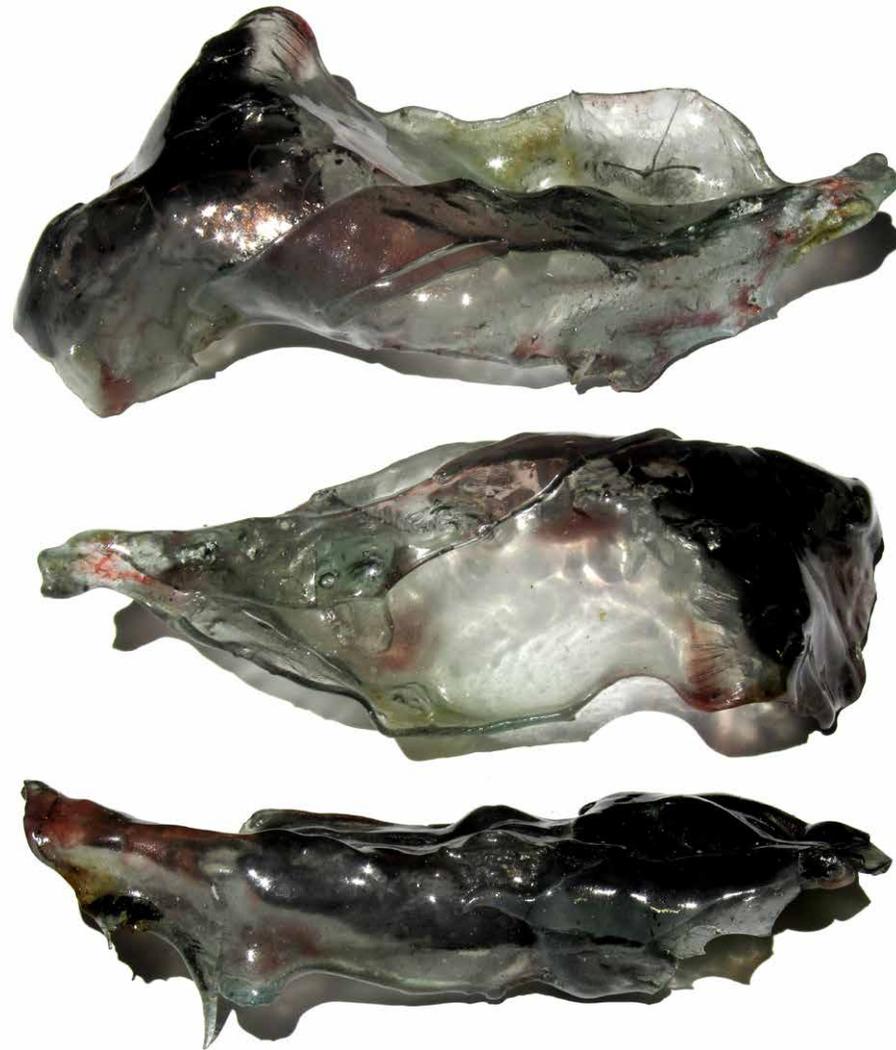
unidentified objects

Ostria clio IV 2017

safety glass
25 cm x 10 cm

Series : FAKE NATURE
«Une Île» exhibition, specific works
Le 6b, Saint-Denis, France

—
Presented in the cabinet of curiosity of the exhibition, Ostria Clio IV is a set of «shells» stemmed from melting of the windshield of a burnt car. The high temperature melted the glass on the dashboard and the paint fumes colored the glass.



Sedimentation 2017

polystyrene
around 5 cm each

Series : FAKE NATURE
«Une Île» exhibition, specific works
Le 6b, Saint-Denis, France

Presented in the cabinet of curiosity of the exhibition, these pebbles have been found next to the Seine, on a bank polluted by waste and rubbish. The pebbles are pieces of polystyrene rolled by the surf of the Seine due to the passage of boats.



The progress lament 2017

plane tree leaf, Verbascum thapsus leaf, flintstone, glass panel,
synthetic rubbish (polystyren, glass wool, plastic sheet)
35 x 35 x 35 cm

Series : FAKE NATURE

«Une Île» exhibition, specific works
Le 6b, Saint-Denis, France

—

Waste materials, found within a limited area in a wasteland in the district of Seine-Saint-Denis are displayed, and using a mirror-effect gives the sensation that waste mimics nature.



Equus platanoïdes 2016

plane tree trunk segment, cowhide
H. 200 cm x 130 cm x 80 cm

Series : FAKE NATURE

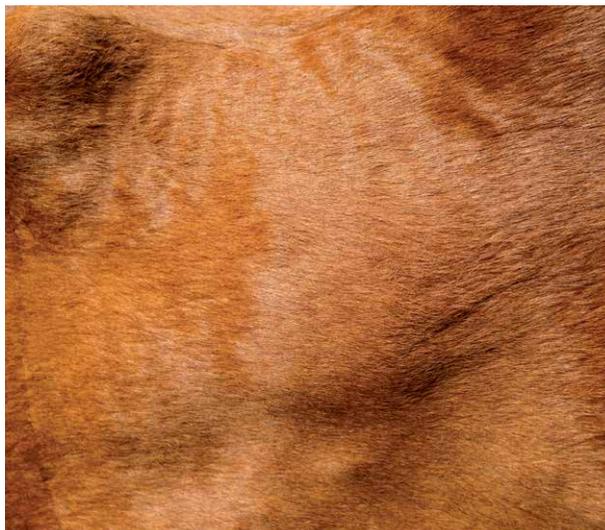
Residency «Voyons Voir, Art contemporain et territoire».
Moulin de Vernègues, France

—

Looking at a plane tree trunk one can see humps, lumps, cysts, as if an animal would try to extract from the wood. The relationship with animal body is obvious at different scales. The relationship with the sculptures questions too. Because a plane tree trunk is a tense place of bony areas, level breakpoints and undulations of the surface.

By isolating a trunk segment at a human scale I plan to highlight a compilation of inner pressures that come to the surface. The nooks and crannies take on their full importance and reveal their animal side.

By covering this segment with animal skin I play with ambiguity between plant and animal body. The resulting work is as confusing as an unidentified object from a curiosity cabinet.



Castanea kaolinite 2015

clay, chestnut burs
Various sizes - cc. 7 cm

Series : FAKE NATURE
Yatoo AIR Residency, South-Korea

—
I wanted these items to look like they have been picked up in nature. Forger gave a name to this ambiguous work : *Castanea kaolinite*



In limbo 2015

concrete, seashell
9 x 9 cm

—

Mysterious object of desire, playing with the ambiguity between nature and artifice, between opacity and obviousness, between brutalism and erotism. The seashell does only show its usually hidden face and the vacuum it creates sucks the eyes up.



Fossils 2011
series of concrete mouldings

left picture : THOMSON Rk100cd : 32 x 25 x 17 cm
below : SINGER confidence7463 : 44 x 32 x 20 cm

—
These concrete blocks have been directly moulded from household packagings.

Considering the void as a negative mould, the final result is a positive reproduction of the ghost object, on the same principle as the fossilization.

The resulting shapes look like micro- architectures, strangely familiar to the strictly technically designed bunkers from the war.



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other sculptures

Peer-to-peer 2015

wood, mirror tiles
120 x 90 x 9 cm

vidéo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46Q3aE799iA>

—

Welcome in joyland, with or without joystick...

P2P in 8bits VGA.

Welcome within the decaying yourself.

Reminding the shape of an old cathode-ray tube, this nod to the prehistory of computing and videogames is interactive and allows people to watch their own real-time pixelised image.

Exhibition «Welcome in Joyland, kids», cur. Emilie Schalck,



Irony of history 2013

steel falsework
15 x 70 x 91 cm

—

Subsidiary argument :
When capital capitulate.



The promise 2012

linoleum
44 x 39 x 97 cm

—

Subsidiary argument :
This chair has been produced from a linoleum roll. Is this soft and fragile object still a chair or only its representation?



Goodminton 2011

cork, peacock feathers
12 x 7 cm

—

Subsidiary argument :

About sport, competition and the relentless pursuit of performance.

«Le sport est sorti du sport, il est devenu un état d'esprit, un mode de formation du lien social, du rapport à soi et à autrui pour l'homme compétitif que nous sommes tous enjoint de devenir au sein d'une société de compétition généralisée.»

Alain Ehrenberg, 'Le culte de la performance'



Maoa 2012

Magic lantern, plastic leaf, soundtrack
18 x 18 x 20 cm

video : <http://youtu.be/dU9EvuuZONM>

–

Subsidiary argument :

A controversial scientific study from «New Scientist» journal states that male people who have a mutant form of the MAOA gene have twice more chances to become offenders than the sane people.

The magic lantern is diverted from its lullaby role, to finally become a police siren.



Last-ditch attempt 2012

galvanized steel security fence , terracotta bricks
200 x 40 x 110 cm

-

Subsidiary argument :

The security fence is a familiar object. Light and removable, it places however a limit that one cannot cross. Here lightness is annihilated and one can cross it more easily.



Song to the auvergnats 2012

doormat, steel nails
63 x 38 cm

—

Subsidiary argument :

Reference is made to Georges Brassens' song : «Chanson pour l'auvergnat», which is a tribute to hospitality, and also to the famous sentence of Brice Hortefeux (former french Minister of Interior) about Arabs : «One is ok, problems come when they are numerous». This one defended himself pretending he was talking about the Auvergnats and not the Arabs.



Arguably 2006
printing on T-shirts

—

The silk-screened logo looks like what one can see in the TV broadcasts, when the brands are blurred in order to avoid free advertising. Are these T-shirts counterfeits? Arguably...



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commissions

Flame-turner 2017

merry-go-round basis, steel structure, transparent pmma, stickers
d. 170 x H. 250 cm

Interactive sculpture, realised for Extraordinary Gardens, on the theme of the Four Elements.

Villages Nature Paris, Villeneuve-le-Comte

—

Specifically designed for the Fire Garden, this flame-shaped sculpture evokes the fire element as the sunlight dances off the structure. By turning the structure with your hands, the colours blend and their coloured shapes are animated on the ground.



Head wind 2017

rotating panels, mirror-films
9 pieces, 200 x 50 x 50 cm each

Permanent installation realised for Extraordinary Gardens, on the theme of the Four Elements.
Villages Nature Paris, Villeneuve-le-Comte

—

Designed like a gallery of living mirrors, this installation has been specifically designed for the Air Garden. Nine double-faced mirrors turn like vanes in the wind, creating sunlight and reflections of the environment. One can enjoy the installation, whose fleeting rotation creates reflections, from afar or by walking around the mirror gallery.



Reading garden 2015

Public commission for a reading garden in a media library, Vannes, France.
250 sqm.

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Planning of the public commission : Beaupré-Tohannic's library aims to promote new medias through digital hardware. In this garden, people can go and settle with a pad and have access to many different digital contents.

Project : Re-materialize the concept of forum (ancient forum / internet forum), et fit the physical space to virtual practice. Inspired by the sylvan theater as a place of exchange and participation, the shape of the garden embodies the wave of transmission of the information. A connected center ideal for direct exchange and a disconnected outskirts suitable to solitary reading.



Supernature 2014

Reinforced concrete, mirror-polished cast-iron tiles
6 x 4 x 0,70 m

Public sculpture in Voreppe (38), France

—

Planning of the public commission : Symbolize the particular presence of water in the area and mark the social cohesion strengthened by the fabric of community life in this new village hall.

Project : It's a user-friendly public furniture, which represents a water drop split on the ground.

When sparkling like the water, the mirror facets also remind us the famous disco ball.



Gloria 2012

Oakwood, climbing plant (clématite)
330 x 350 cm

Public sculpture : Montreuil-le-Gast (35), France

—

Program of the Public commission : Deal with the sustainable development questions and highlight the presence of a strong timber-industry in the area.

Project : A signaletic and evolutive wooden sculpture, as a tribute to the wood cycle.

The sculpture is the support of a climbing plant, whose wood becomes entangled with the oakwood of the sculpture.

