

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Designboom

Nous les arbres at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain sheds new light on trees

Nina Azzarello

1 December 2019

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With the effects of deforestation — both human-driven and natural — being keenly felt around the world, an exhibition at fondation cartier pour l'art contemporain echoes the latest scientific research and seeks to shed new light on trees. Bringing together a community of artists, botanists, and philosophers, the exhibit — which is on view in paris until january 5, 2020 — is organized around several large ensembles of works, giving voice to numerous figures who, through their aesthetic or scientific journey, have developed a strong, intimate link with trees.



Designboom attended the exhibition, aptly titled 'trees', to discover more about the botanical species and their unexpected qualities.

Image: installation view of 'trees' at fondation cartier pour l'art contemporain image by luc boegly

The display at fondation cartier pour l'art contemporain, showcases the sensory and memory capacities of trees, as well as their communication skills — existing in symbiosis with other species and exerting a climatic influence. The

exhibition posits that these 'unexpected faculties' could be the answer to many of today's environmental problems. Punctuated by several large ensembles, the exhibit explores three narrative threads. Firstly, our knowledge of trees, from botany to new plant biology; secondly, aesthetics, from naturalistic contemplation to dreamlike transposition; and lastly, trees' current devastation recounted via documentary observations and pictorial testimonies.

Image: installation view | image by luc boegly

Orchestrated with anthropologist bruce albert, the project revolves around a number of individuals who have developed a unique relationship with trees, whether intellectual, scientific, or aesthetic. For example, the



botanist stefano mancuso, a pioneer of plant neurobiology and advocate of the concept of plant intelligence, has collaborated with artist [thijs biersteker](#) to create an installation that seeks to make the invisible, visible. Using sensors, mancuso and biersteker reveal plants' reaction to the environment and pollution, as well as the phenomenon of photosynthesis, root communication, and the idea of plant memory. Elsewhere, traveling botanist francis hallé presents a testimony of the encounter between science and sensibility.

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At the heart of the exhibition lies a reflection on the relationship between humans and trees, which is also the subject of raymond depardon's film. It paints the portrait of the trees that shade village squares through the words of those who are familiar with them. Artist and sower, fabrice hyber has planted some 300,000 tree seeds in his valley in vendée, and offers a poetic and personal observation of the plant world in his paintings, questioning the principles of rhizome growth, energy and mutation, mobility and metamorphosis.

Meanwhile, brazilian artist luiz zerbini composes lush landscapes, organizing the imaginary meeting of trees, borrowed from tropical botanical gardens, and the markers of urban modernity. Elsewhere, cesare leonardi, in collaboration with franca stagi, presents a typology of trees compiled for the purposes of the design of urban parks. Other highlights include the ghostly silhouettes of johanna calle's tall trees, the film exit by architects diller scofidio + renfro, and the dreamlike world of paraguayan film-maker paz encina, who offers an internalized image of the

tree as a refuge for memory and childhood.



Image: installation view | image by luc boegly

The garden of fondation cartier, a natural extension of the exhibition, was created in 1994 by artist lothar baumgarten. The public are invited to stroll through the trees which, like the majestic lebanese cedar planted by chateaubriand in 1823, inspired jean

nouvel to design the institution as 'an architecture of reflections and transparency'. Available by scanning qr codes, botanical factsheets are devoted to each of the 24 species of trees found in the garden. The setting also includes giuseppe penone's bronze tree sculpture, a piece by agnès varda, specially imagined for the project.

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Image: view of lagoon quadrado by luiz zerbini image by thibaut voisin

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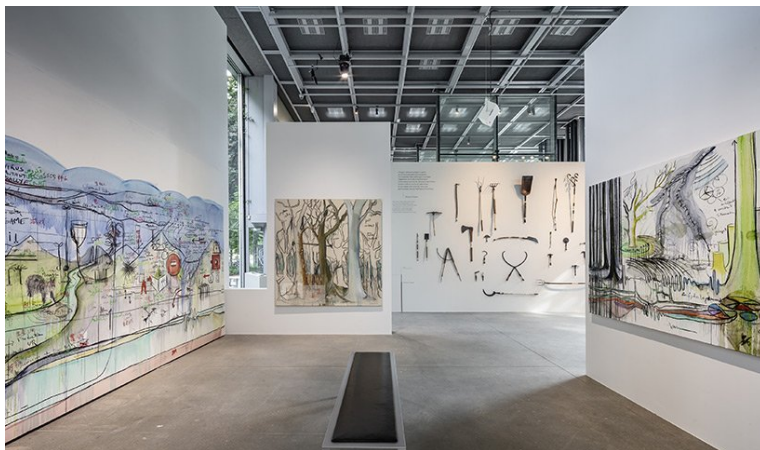


Image: installation view | image by luc boegly

available online, a five-part web-series reveals the relationships that six of the artists and scientists featured in the exhibition have with the plant world. by inviting us to consider trees as the essential actors in our world, the exhibition aims to restore the position that anthropocentrism and zoocentrism have taken from them. discover 'trees' at fondation cartier pour l'art contemporain in paris from now until january 5, 2020.

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Image: installation view |
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Image: view of work from quasi oasis series by sebastián
mejía



Image: installation view of work by joseca
image by luc boegly

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Image: work by clemente juliuz



Image: installation view | image by thibaut voisin



Image: view of cadernos de viagem: yãkoana by adriana varejão

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Image: view of charles gaines, tree #2, michael, series 'tiergarten', 2018 image by designboom

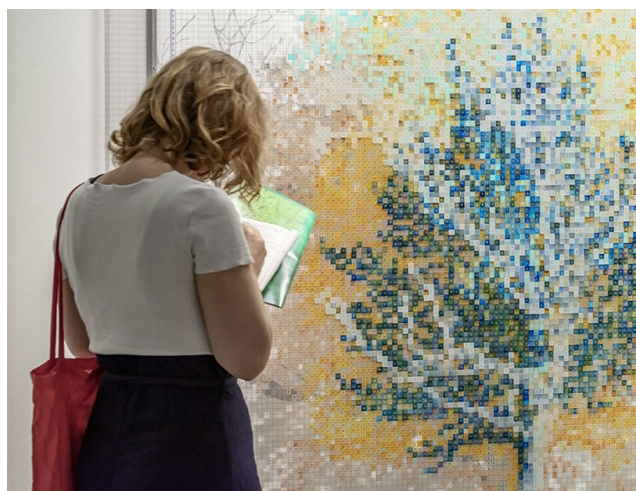


Image: view of charles gaines, tree #2, michael, series 'tiergarten', 2018 image by luc boegly



Image: view of work by afonso tostes image by thibaut voisin

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Image: view of work by afonso tostes image by designboom

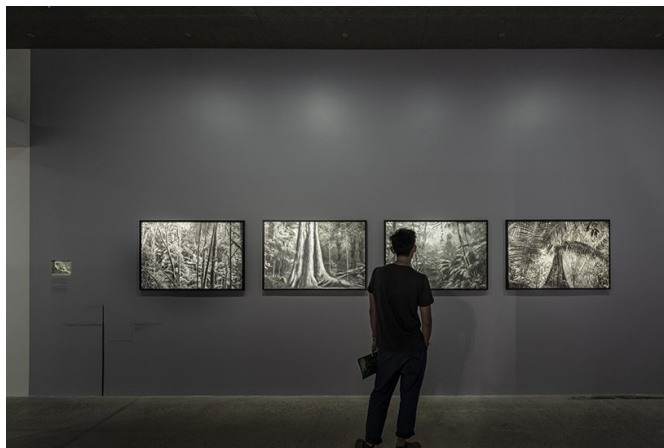


Image: view of work by cássio vasconcellos image by luc boegly



Image: view of work by cássio vasconcellos image by designboom



Image: view of the garden at fondation cartier pour l'art contemporain image by thibaut voisin

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Project info:

Exhibition: nous les arbres / trees

venue: fondation cartier pour l'art contemporain, paris
dates: july 12, 2019 – january 5, 2020

curators: bruce albert, hervé chandès, isabelle gaudefroy
associate curators: hélène kelmachter, marie perennes

project officer: juliette lecorne
artists and contributors of the exhibition:

efacio álvarez, herman álvarez, fernando allen, fredy casco, claudia andujar, eurides asque gómez, thijs biersteker, jake bryant, josé cabral, johanna calle, jorge carema, alex cerveny, raymond depardon, claudine nougaret, diller scofidio + renfro, mark hansen, laura kurgan, ben rubin, robert gerard pietrusko, ehua yaira, paz encina, charles gaines, francis hallé, fabrice hyber, joseca, clemente juliuz, kalepi, salim karami, mahmoud khan, angélica klassen, esteban klassen, george leary love, cesare leonardi, franca stagi, stefano mancuso, sebastián mejía, ógwa, marcos ortiz, tony oursler, giuseppe penone, santidio pereira, nilson pimenta, osvaldo pitoe, miguel rio branco, afonso tostes, agnès varda, adriana varejão, cássio vasconcellos, luiz zerbini

