

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot

French Pavilion at the Venice Biennale



Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, experiment for transHumUs / the *révolutions* project for the French Pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2015.*

April 17, 2015

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot

révolutions

May 9–November 22, 2015

www.institutfrancais.com

Curator: Emma Lavigne

The **project *révolutions*** by artist Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, accompanied by curator Emma Lavigne, will transform the French Pavilion into an oneiric and organic island. The inauguration will be held during the preview days from 6 to 8 May.

“The French pavilion at the Venice Biennale is open to the elements, conjuring up in the Giardini the “follies” of the romantic parks of the 18th

century. Now it has become the theatre of an apparition, of an experimental ecosystem that reveals a state of nature unlike any other. Under the skylight stripped of its glass and in its wooded walkways, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot offers the choreographic alchemy of three trees moving in time with their metabolism, variations in their sap flow and their sensitivity to light and shade. Behind these chimeras—these machine/nature hybrids—lies an animist vision of trees. As in Francesco Colonna's enigmatic novel *The Dream of Poliphilus* and Primo Levi's short story *Dysphylaxis*, we see trees metamorphosing into transhuman creatures suddenly liberated from their rootedness to the ground. While rekindling the aspiration to the marvellous and the sense of wonder of Italian Mannerist gardens, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot lets his underlying political thrust filter through. His intention here is to commandeer systems used for controlling living beings and their movements and compose a poetic work offering humanity living spaces marked by liberty and unconventional beauty. Surrounded by trees whose electric rustling generates a real-time sound environment based on differential low-voltage current, the French pavilion is transformed into an open-air theatre: a refuge where the visitor can find a place to relax—to float, as it were, on the semicircle of the steps which imitate those of the portico but adapt to the shape of the body—in a harmonious continuum conducive to reverie and reflection."

—Emma Lavigne, curator of the French pavilion, director of the Centre-Pompidou-Metz

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot was born in 1961 in Nice and currently lives and works in Sète. Internationally recognized for a number of years, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot was the first French prize-winner of the International Studio Program (PS1) in New York, from 1998–99. He is currently represented by the Paula Cooper Gallery (New York), the Galerie Xippas (Paris, Geneva, Montevideo, and Athens) and the Galerie Mario Mazzoli (Berlin). His work was recently on show at the National Gallery Victoria in Melbourne (2013), Barbican Centre in London (2010) and the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2009). 2015 promises to be an exceptional year for the artist: after the Venice Biennale, he will present *acquaalta*, a landscape installation especially designed for the Palais de Tokyo (June 24–September 13). He has also been invited to the Biennale d'Art Contemporain in Lyon in September, the Centre-Pompidou-Metz and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Montreal in November.

During the Biennale, a catalogue accompanying the exhibition will be co-edited by the publishing house Analogues and the Institut français.

The Institut français oversees French cultural action at large international events, outside of France, and is responsible for the general commissioning of the French contribution to the Venice Biennale 56 International Art Exhibition, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Communication / General Directorate of Artistic Creation (DGCA).

Special sponsor: Museum of Old and New Art (Hobart, Australia)

With support for the production of the works from: Galerie Xippas (Paris), Paula Cooper Gallery (New York), Galerie Mario Mazzoli (Berlin), Galeria Mazzoli (Modena)

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