

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

Oscar Tuazon

REVUE DE PRESSE | SELECTED PRESS

Languin, Irène. « Quatorze sculptures aèrent leur gloire au parc », *Tribune de Genève*, June 11, 2018.
<https://www.tdg.ch/culture/quatorze-sculptures-aerent-gloire-parc/story/20253605>

Tribune
de Genève

Quatorze sculptures aèrent leur gloire au parc

Eaux-Vives Artgenève lance la première édition d'une exposition biennale, «Sculpture Garden», qui se tiendra tout l'été.



Sylvie Fleury, «Volvaria», soucoupe volante en résine synthétique peinte, 2008. Collection privée. Image: Georges Cabrera ([6 Images](#))



Ugo Rondinone, «Flower moon», arbre en aluminium moulé et peint, 2011.
Courtoisie des galeries Esther Schipper (Berlin) et Eva Presenhuber (Zurich)
Image: Georges Cabrera

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Elmgreen & Dragset, «Temporary art museum / Powerless structures fig. 110», acier, aluminium, plexiglas et bois, 2001. EFG art collection (Lugano).
Image: Georges Cabrera



Subodh Gupta, «Giant leap of faith», 2008, acier anodisé. Collection privée.
Image: Georges Cabrera

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Max Bill, «Pavillionskulptur II», 1969. Fondation Max, Binia + Jakob bill (Adligenswil). Image: Georges Cabrera



Carsten Höller, «Giant triple mushroom», polyester, résine, métal et peinture, 2018. Courtoisie galerie Continua (Italie/France/chine/Cuba). Image: Georges Cabrera



Son pilote aura sans doute pensé que le moelleux de la pelouse préserverait ses flancs iridescents des égratignures. Au parc des Eaux-Vives, une soucoupe volante a atterri au détour d'une futaie, le mufle enfoui dans l'herbe, comme pour en humer l'odeur. Tenant à la fois de l'ovni et de la raie manta qu'on aurait plongée dans du vernis à ongles, cette création en résine peinte a été conçue en 2008 par Sylvie Fleury. Avec treize autres sculptures monumentales tirées des collections institutionnelles genevoises ou prêtées par des privés, elle se prélassera tout l'été dans la verdure pour «Sculpture Garden».

La première édition de cette biennale en plein air fait suite à l'initiative de Thomas Hug, directeur d'Artgenève, de présenter des œuvres dans l'espace public – sur le quai Wilson pendant le salon, en hiver, et dans ce même parc à la belle saison. Pour piloter cette manifestation d'envergure, il a invité Lionel Bovier et Michèle Freiburghaus Lens, respectivement à la tête du Mamco (Musée d'art moderne et contemporain) et du Fmac (Fonds municipal d'art contemporain), à constituer une «trilogie organisatrice» stable qui demeurera le noyau créateur de l'événement.

Un surcroît de culture

«L'idée était de montrer des choses qu'on ne voit pas forcément, en insistant sur le rapport institutionnel et patrimonial, explique Lionel Bovier, commissaire général pour 2018. Le «Signal» de Takis, par exemple, fait partie de nos collections mais nous ne pouvons pas le montrer au Mamco en raison de sa taille.» Il fallait aussi un nombre juste de pièces, qui préserve le parc et ses usages. Pensée comme une invitation à la promenade, «Sculpture Garden» n'entrave pas les activités des familles, joggeurs ou sylvothérapeutes, mais propose, gratuitement, un surcroît de culture à cette splendide nature qui déploie ses atours face au lac.

L'équation a été soigneusement réfléchie. Ici, l'objet d'art converse idéalement avec le paysage ou instaure, là, une rupture avec lui, par l'irruption de thématiques urbaines. En bas du parc, «A Lamp» de l'Américain Oscar Tuazon dresse sa haute stature métallique sur le frais gazon. On dirait qu'un paquebot rouillé y a traîné sa carcasse pour offrir une parenthèse industrielle au flâneur. L'œuvre, produite pour la manifestation cousine et zurichoise «Art and the City», offre un clin d'œil de circonstance au chantier de la plage des Eaux-Vives qui se trame de l'autre côté de la route.

Star au milieu des essences

D'autres, en revanche, s'insèrent tout à fait dans le concept campagnard. Réalisé par le plasticien allemand Carsten Höller, un champignon géant attend le piéton en bordure de chemin, tandis qu'un arbre foudroyé en aluminium blanc d'Ugo Rondinone tend ses bras désolés contre le ciel, jouant la star immaculée au milieu des essences vénérables. «Ça donne un point de vue nouveau sur une nature très maîtrisée», souligne le curateur. Il trouve son acmé dans l'installation de la Genevoise Mai-Thu Perret: au creux d'un bosquet d'épineux, trois organes humains en bronze (cœur, poumon, utérus) sont suspendus dans les branches comme des cloches rituelles. Tout autour, le corps des arbres fait rempart à leur fragilité. Plus loin, le cube en bois de Max Bill ou l'élégant pavillon en terrazzo et acier de Sam Falls, muni de deux sièges propices à la conversation, proposent une halte contemplative bienvenue.

Outre des visites guidées les samedis à 16 h, plusieurs performances ponctueront la biennale. On y reverra notamment les montgolfières lumineuses du Vaudois Denis Savary, découvertes en décembre lors du festival Geneva Lux. La mise sur pied d'une telle proposition a nécessité des mois de travail et un grand esprit de concertation. Entre les divers services de la Ville et du Canton, les institutions culturelles et les mécènes, pas moins de dix-sept interlocuteurs ont dû s'entendre afin de conjuguer art contemporain avec espace public.

Les efforts consentis par ce partenariat très large ont payé. Le visiteur y gagne l'enchantement et certains artistes la réalisation d'un vieux rêve, à l'instar de Roman Signer, qui, à l'occasion de l'inauguration, le 8 juin, a propulsé une voile rouge dans les airs par la force du Jet d'eau. «C'est ce genre de rêve qui fait parler de Genève, argue Lionel Bovier. Quant à moi, je me prends à rêver que la biennale ne soit pas un hapax, une exception, mais un modèle.»



ART CONTEMPORAIN

Les sculptures vont au jardin

Champignon géant, soucoupe volante et voile propulsée par le Jet d'eau: la première biennale Sculpture Garden sera inaugurée vendredi dans le parc des Eaux-Vives à Genève

Des sculptures installées dans l'un des plus beaux parcs de Genève, et c'est la nature qui rencontre la culture. Cette promenade artistique, c'est la promesse de **Sculpture Garden**, première biennale du genre organisée à Genève, et qui prend ses quartiers d'été dans le parc des Eaux-Vives. Alors oui, le concept ressemble à Zurich in The City, mais en moins urbain et en plus bucolique. Quand une idée est bonne, autant s'en inspirer.

Cette grande manifestation en plein air, Thomas Hug, directeur du salon Artgenève l'avait depuis longtemps en tête. «J'imaginai une exposition pour le plaisir des promeneurs genevois et des touristes, qui fasse rayonner l'offre culturelle dans la région pendant l'été. Il était aussi très important que dans sa réalisation, elle soit conçue pour attirer un nouveau public, plus jeune, vers l'art contemporain.» Pour réussir son pari, Thomas Hug avance quelques solides arguments. Outre les quatorze œuvres exposées et les quatre performances programmées pendant cette biennale totalement gratuite, il rappelle que le parc des Eaux-Vives est l'un des plus beaux de la ville.

LE TEMPS

«Et deux mardis par mois, nous organisons des afterworks dans le restaurant du parc», continue le directeur qui inaugure son jardin de sculptures le 8 juin, soit quelques jours avant Art Basel, la grand-messe de l'art contemporain. «Bien sûr qu'on aimerait capter les visiteurs sur le chemin de la foire. Cela dit, même si Sculpture Garden est une émanation d'Artgenève, elle n'a aucune vocation commerciale. Les œuvres installées viennent de collections institutionnelles ou privées et ne sont pas à vendre. Il y a également quelques pièces que nous avons spécialement produites pour l'occasion grâce à la générosité de nos mécènes.»

Ménager les surprises

C'est le cas du champignon géant de l'artiste allemand Carsten Höller, l'une des treize sculptures que Lionel Bovier a inscrites dans son casting. «Les œuvres sont de deux types, explique le directeur du Mamco, curateur de cette première biennale dont il est également l'un des trois membres à siéger au comité d'organisation. Celles qui sont intégrées dans un parcours naturel, comme la sculpture d'Alexander Calder dont le titre, *Le soleil sur la montagne*, évoquent l'idée du paysage, ou les arbres moulés par le Zurichois Ugo Rondinone. Et celles qui sont de l'ordre de la construction humaine.» Comme la coque en acier et béton de l'Américain Oscar Tuazon que le promeneur découvre en pénétrant dans le parc depuis le lac.

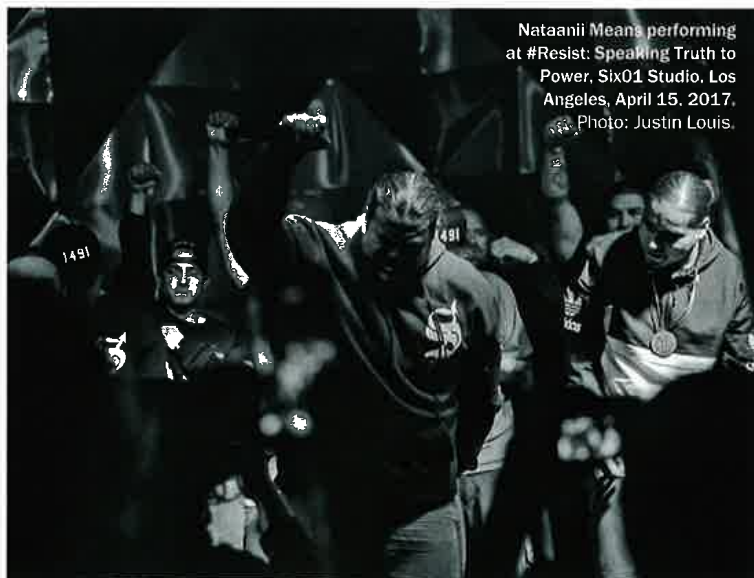
BEST OF 2017

THE ARTISTS' ARTISTS

TO TAKE STOCK OF THE PAST YEAR, *ARTFORUM* ASKED AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF ARTISTS TO SELECT A SINGLE EXHIBITION OR EVENT THAT MOST MEMORABLY CAPTURED THEIR EYE IN 2017.

OSCAR TUAZON

Wake Up the World Tour (various venues) In a year when public art feels urgent everywhere, its audience has proved in many cases more nuanced and challenging than the works themselves. Suddenly I found the discursive, imminent space of protest more engaging and more productive than working in my studio. You can't have a conversation alone. First at Standing Rock, then back home in Los Angeles, I spent time in crowds, listening to other people speak and being moved by music. The music of the movement is young and raw—the voice of indigenous teens maced by police—and was propelled by twenty-six-year-old rapper Nataanii Means, son of the late American Indian Movement leader Russell Means. On a tour sponsored by Winona LaDuke's organization, Honor the Earth, Means and hip-hop artist Witko freestyled over a Lil Wayne hook, re-creating the menace of the frontline camp at Standing Rock and the improbably joyous sounds of resistance. Nataanii—a rare, humble authority who knows how to throw his voice so that it seems to speak from his audience—raps with a disarming emotional openness.



Nataanii Means performing at #Resist: Speaking Truth to Power. Six01 Studio, Los Angeles, April 15, 2017. Photo: Justin Louis.

ARTFORUM



ANNE DRESSEN

ANNE DRESSEN IS A CURATOR AT ARC, THE CONTEMPORARY DEPARTMENT OF THE MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS. SHE RECENTLY CURATED "MEDUSA: JEWELRY AND TABOOS," WHICH APPROACHED JEWELRY THROUGH ITS RELATIONSHIP TO IDENTITY, VALUES, ART, AND RITUALS. SHE IS CURRENTLY PREPARING A CERAMICS EXHIBITION.

3. Oscar Tuazon, *Un pont* (A Bridge), 2016, wood. Installation view, Belfort, France.



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OSCAR TUAZON, *UN PONT* (A BRIDGE) (BELFORT, FRANCE)

Last November, I went to the formal opening of *Un Pont*, on a roundabout outside Belfort, France. A few years earlier, an association of World War II veterans lobbied for a memorial to the forgotten sacrifice of the Algerian commandos who fought against the Germans in 1944. Xavier Douroux, the passionate organizer behind the Nouveaux Commanditaires (New Patrons) project until he passed away last June, suggested Oscar Tuazon, who designed a wooden bridge with two crossing platforms oriented toward the Lion of Belfort in France and Staouéli in Algeria. It is the chasm in between that gives space for an urgent recognition of French colonial blind spots.

domus

A new environmental installation by Oscar Tuazon opened in Paris

Always interested in architectural systems, Oscar Tuazon brings to surface the pipelines and tree trunks from Paris undergrounds, celebrating water as a monument.



PHOTOGRAPHY
Marc Damage

PUBLISHED
23 October 2017

LOCATION
Paris

COMPLETION
2017

American artist Oscar Tuazon signs a new architectural piece for Place Vendôme, in Paris, created for contemporary art fair FIAC 2017. Marked by a typically strong materiality, his latest "inhabitable art" is an environmental sculpture that engages different methods of construction and allows visitors to walk through.

« A new environmental installation by Oscar Tuazon opened in Paris », *Domus*, October 23, 2017
<https://www.domusweb.it/en/art/2017/10/23/a-new-environmental-installation-by-oscar-tuazon-opened-in-paris.html>

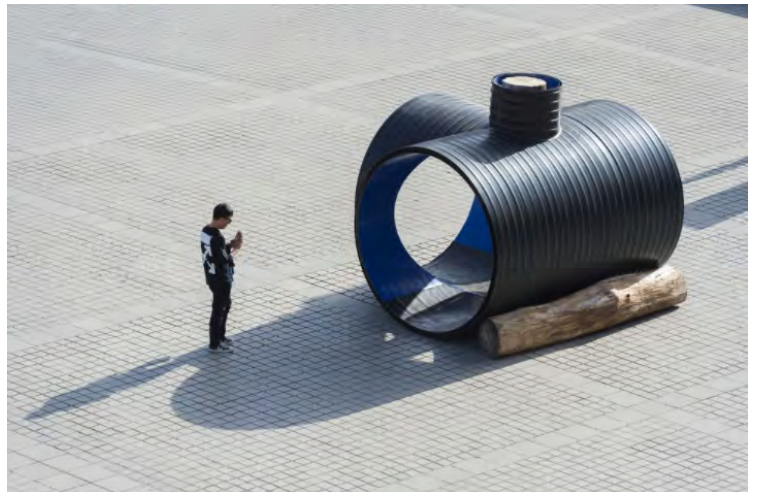
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Based in Los Angeles, Tuazon – who studied architecture and urbanism and who The installation, called *Une colonne d'eau* comprises four sculptures, each of which is constructed out of PVC pipe, originally used to transport water, and tree trunks cut from Paris' Bois de Vincennes. Stemming from Tuazon's interest in the municipal infrastructure of water, these recycled pipelines represent "an architecture of water made visible, a horizontal water monument." Viewers are able to enter the structure, which is bisected by the tree trunks, and experience the environment created by Tuazon both internally and externally.

worked side by side with Vito Acconci – is well known for his artistic contribution to architecture, space and design. He frequently uses wood, concrete, glass, steel, and piping as materials to create his structures and installations. His works have roots in minimalism, conceptualism, and architecture, and have a direct relationship with both the site in which they are presented, as well as with their viewer, often through physical engagement.

Artist: Oscar Tuazon Venue: FIAC 2017 Address: Place Vendôme, Paris Opening dates: until 9 November 2017
Title: *Une colonne d'eau*

Numéro

18

OCTOBRE

Qui est Oscar Tuazon, l'artiste qui a métamorphosé la place Vendôme?

ART

La FIAC ouvre ses portes au Grand Palais avec, dans son sillage, un foisonnement de projets artistiques. L'installation de sculptures monumentales de l'artiste Oscar Tuazon place Vendôme est, sans conteste, l'un des plus passionnants.

Par **Eric Troncy**



Oscar Tuazon, UNE COLONNE D'EAU 4 tuyaux thermoplastiques, troncs d'arbres / 4 thermoplastic pipes, tree trunks Life Prototype : 866 x 210Ø cm - Rainwater : 225 x 210Ø cm - Water Column : 800 x 210Ø cm - Sun Riot : 1025 x 210Ø cm Courtesy de l'artiste/of the artist et/and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Eva Presenhuber, Zürich/New-York; Luhring Augustine, New York

Numéro

Les probabilités sont minces, lorsqu'on naît en 1975 sous un dôme géodésique à Seattle, de se voir confier la place Vendôme à Paris en 2017 pour y créer une installation monumentale. Le scénario, à vrai dire, semble un peu tiré par les cheveux. C'est cependant l'histoire vraie d'Oscar Tuazon, artiste d'ailleurs très chevelu (réminiscence probable du choc que lui causa la rencontre, à la fin des années 80, avec la musique de Nirvana, groupe phare de la scène grunge de Seattle) qui naquit sous un dôme construit par ses parents hippies. *"Comme maison, c'était une catastrophe, mais en tant qu'objet, c'était fascinant"*, m'explique-t-il avec ce calme serein dont il semble ne jamais se départir. Et en effet, le voici aujourd'hui devant une tâche particulière : occuper, à l'occasion de la FIAC, l'une des places les plus spectaculaires de Paris avec l'une de ses sculptures monumentales.

Aujourd'hui, les artistes se définissent volontiers comme tout un tas de choses, sautant allègrement d'une discipline à une autre (comme si c'était possible). Pour Tuazon, c'est un peu plus simple : c'est un sculpteur. D'autant plus remarquable que ses œuvres savent s'imposer pour ce qu'elles sont : des constructions, avec une indiscutable évidence. Peu de bla-bla les sous-tendent, même si l'inspiration prend appui sur un récit, une situation, un contexte... Très vite, cela laisse place au langage propre à l'art et aux formes – il est vraisemblablement l'un des derniers à faire confiance à ce langage spécifique, et à le parler avec une curieuse grâce.



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Ceci pour dire que le projet qu'il dédie à la place

Vendôme, qui semble littéral et même bavard, saura probablement pulvériser le texte un peu scolaire de ses sources pour atteindre une dimension plus artistique. Les grands segments de canalisation en polyéthylène qu'il entend utiliser, d'un diamètre suffisant pour qu'un spectateur y pénètre et les traverse, servent d'ordinaire à l'alimentation des villes en eau. Ces canalisations forment un réseau sous-terrain qui permet la vie en surface. Tuazon transpercera ces segments de troncs d'arbres. Il affiche, via ce projet, son intérêt pour les problématiques environnementales en général, et la question de la raréfaction de l'eau en particulier. Mais il faut lui faire confiance pour que ce noble dessein ne se transforme pas en assommante leçon sur le sujet.

Il a déjà fait preuve de son étonnante capacité à transformer une idée en forme

et à faire que cette forme prenne le pas sur l'idée. Le monument qu'il réalisa l'an passé non loin de Belfort, à l'invitation du programme Nouveaux Commanditaires de la Fondation de France, en est la preuve éclatante. Il a été commandé par une association d'anciens combattants et des enseignants de collège pour célébrer la mémoire des combats meurtriers qui ont eu lieu dans le bois d'Arsot en novembre 1944 contre l'armée allemande. La sculpture prend la forme de deux pontons en bois imbriqués et qui se croisent. L'un regarde en direction du lion de Belfort, symbole de la résistance de la ville au cours de la guerre de 1870, premier épisode de l'engrenage qui a conduit aux deux conflits mondiaux du siècle suivant. L'autre, en direction de l'Algérie, d'où sont partis les mille deux cents soldats des commandos d'Afrique pour débarquer en Provence, où ils seront rejoints par d'autres volontaires. Mais ce dont on fait l'expérience, c'est une structure en bois de plusieurs dizaines de mètres, une construction extravagante, un réseau de poutres enchevêtrées soutenues par cent deux piliers fichés dans le sol, qui qualifie le paysage et défie l'entendement – une de ces

constructions humaines entre sculpture et architecture qui ne laissent pas l'esprit en paix, justement parce qu'elle savent s'émanciper de leur "texte" initial pour atteindre un "état de sculpture".

Le projet de Belfort et celui de Paris prennent

leur source, comme tout le travail d'Oscar Tuazon, dans la rencontre décisive qu'il fit en 2001 avec l'artiste-architecte américain Vito Acconci, auprès de qui il travailla pendant deux ans après l'avoir rencontré tandis qu'il était étudiant au Whitney Independent Study Program du Whitney Museum de New York. *"J'avais déjà 28 ans, mais j'étais encore novice. Pourtant, Acconci appréciait de débattre pendant des heures avec moi, comme il le faisait avec des architectes seniors du studio. Sa manière de tout questionner était passionnante : dès le début d'un projet, mais aussi à la fin. Il n'hésitait pas à abandonner un travail abouti pour mieux repartir sur une autre piste, c'était impressionnant"*, se souvient l'artiste. Ce qui laisse entendre que le projet pour la place Vendôme prendra peut-être une forme très différente de celle qu'il décrit aujourd'hui.

Tuazon travaille avec des ingénieurs, des

techniciens, des ouvriers, dont l'expertise enrichit sa pratique mais ne la contraint pas. Sculpteur, son rapport aux matériaux est presque charnel, et le recours à plusieurs corps de métier n'est en aucune manière une entrave à ce dialogue avec les formes, qui ne se fige jamais totalement. L'installation de la place Vendôme s'annonce, en somme, comme très éloignée d'une autre : la tristement littérale *"butt plug"* de Paul McCarthy [*Tree* étant son titre original] qui, elle, décrivait un rapport à l'art diamétralement opposé à celui d'Oscar Tuazon.

FIAC, du 19 au 22 octobre, Grand Palais, Paris.

Oscar Tuazon, FIAC 2017 hors les murs, place Vendôme, Paris.

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19 OCT. PARIS OSCAR
TUAZON,
DES HIPPIES DE
SEATTLE
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VENDÔME LA FIAC OUVRE SES
PORTES AU GRAND PALAIS AVEC, DANS SON
SILLAGE, UN FOISONNEMENT DE PROJETS
ARTISTIQUES. L'INSTALLATION D'UNE SCULPTURE
MONUMENTALE DE L'ARTISTE OSCAR TUAZON
PLACE VENDÔME EST, SANS CONTESTE, L'UN
DES PLUS PASSIONNANTS. PAR ERIC TRONCY

Numéro



Paris

OSCAR TUAZON: A SEATTLE HIPPIE AT THE PLACE VENDÔME

AS FIAC OPENS AT PARIS'S GRAND PALAIS, ALL SORTS OF COROLLARY ART PROJECTS ARE TAKING PLACE, INCLUDING OSCAR TUAZON'S MONUMENTAL TEMPORARY SCULPTURE IN PARIS'S FABLED PLACE VENDÔME.

The chances are slim, for a boy born under a geodesic dome in Seattle in 1975, that one day he'll be asked to create a monumental installation in Paris's mythic Place Vendôme. Indeed the whole scenario seems particularly far-fetched. Yet it's the true story of Oscar Tuazon, the American artist who was born in a dome built by his hippie parents. "As a home, it was a catastrophe, but as an object, it was fascinating," he explains with his habitual quiet serenity, when we talked to him about the giant sculpture he's been commissioned to create by FIAC for the chicest of Parisian squares.

His serenity extends to his vocation: he is a sculptor, nothing more nothing less. Moreover his works are constructions that convince the spectator without the slightest blah blah, even if they take inspiration from a story or a context. But what comes through loud and clear is a language that only art and forms can speak – and Tuazon is probably one of the last artists to trust in that language and to write it with such curious grace. At the Place Vendôme he plans on using a vocabulary of polyethylene pipes, big enough for the public to walk through, of the sort that allows life to exist in the city by channelling water or sewage. Tuazon intends to pierce his segments of pipe with tree trunks as a way of addressing environmental questions in general, and the increasing

PAGE PRÉCÉDENTE ET CI-DESSUS À GAUCHE BURN THE FORMWORK (FIRE BUILDING) (2017). BÉTON, PRÉFABRIQUE, CIMENT, RÉFRACTAIRE, ACIER, ACIER INOXYDABLE, BOIS, FEU, 350 x 350 x 500 CM. ŒUVRE PRÉSENTÉE DANS LE CADRE DE SKULPTUR PROJEKTE 2017, A MÜNSTER EN ALLEMAGNE (JUSQU'AU 10 OCTOBRE).

CI-DESSUS À DROITE ET CI-CONTRE DESSIN PRÉPARATOIRE POUR LE PROJET FIAC HORS-LES-MURS, PLACE VENDÔME, 2017.

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OSCAR TUAZON

19 OCT.

PARIS

CI-CONTRE VUE D'INSTALLATION À LA
KUNSTHALLE DE BERNE, EN SUISSE, 2010.

éclatante. Il a été commandé par une association d'anciens combattants et des enseignants de collège pour célébrer la mémoire des combats meurtriers qui ont eu lieu dans le bois d'Arsoy en novembre 1944 contre l'armée allemande. La sculpture prend la forme de deux pontons en bois imbriqués et qui se croisent. L'un regarde en direction du lion de Belfort, symbole de la résistance de la ville au cours de la guerre de 1870, premier épisode de l'engrenage qui a conduit aux deux conflits mondiaux du siècle suivant. L'autre, en direction de l'Algérie, d'où sont partis les mille deux cents soldats des commandos d'Afrique pour débarquer en Provence, où ils seront rejoints par d'autres volontaires. Mais ce dont on fait l'expérience, c'est une structure en bois de plusieurs dizaines de mètres, une construction extravagante, un réseau de poutres enchevêtrées soutenues par cent deux piliers fichés dans le sol, qui qualifie le paysage et défie l'entendement – une de ces constructions humaines entre sculpture et architecture qui ne laissent pas l'esprit en paix, justement parce qu'elle savent s'émanciper de leur "texte" initial pour atteindre un "état de sculpture".

Le projet de Belfort et celui de Paris prennent leur source, comme tout le travail d'Oscar Tuazon, dans la rencontre décisive qu'il fit en 2001 avec l'artiste-architecte américain Vito Acconci, auprès de qui il travailla pendant deux ans après l'avoir rencontré tandis qu'il était étudiant au Whitney Independent Study Program du Whitney Museum de New York. *"J'avais déjà 28 ans, mais j'étais encore novice. Pourtant, Acconci appréciait de débattre pendant des heures avec moi, comme il le faisait avec des architectes seniors du studio. Sa manière de tout questionner était passionnante : dès le début d'un projet, mais aussi à la fin. Il n'hésitait pas à abandonner un travail abouti pour mieux repartir sur une autre piste, c'était impressionnant"*, se souvient l'artiste. Ce qui laisse entendre que le projet pour la place Vendôme prendra peut-être une forme très différente de celle qu'il décrit aujourd'hui.

Tuazon travaille avec des ingénieurs, des techniciens, des ouvriers, dont l'expertise enrichit sa pratique mais ne la contraint pas. Sculpteur, son rapport aux matériaux est presque charnel, et le recours à plusieurs corps de métier n'est en aucune manière une entrave à ce dialogue avec les formes, qui ne se fige jamais totalement. L'installation de la place Vendôme s'annonce, en somme, comme très éloignée d'une autre : la tristement littérale *"butt plug"* de Paul McCarthy [*Tree* étant son titre original] qui, elle, décrivait un rapport à l'art diamétralement opposé à celui d'Oscar Tuazon.

FIAC, du 19 au 22 octobre, Grand Palais, Paris.

Oscar Tuazon, FIAC 2017 hors les murs, Place Vendôme, Paris.



Courtesy de l'artiste et de la galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

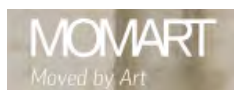
scarcity of water in particular. He has already shown a surprising capacity for transforming ideas into form and then allowing form to supersede the ideas, the monument he realized last year in the Bois d'Arsoy near Belfort being a brilliant example. Commissioned to commemorate the bloody battles against the German Army of November 1944, it consists in two interlocking wooden structures, one pointing towards the Lion de Belfort – a symbol of the city's resistance in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war (the mother of both the 20th century's world wars) – and the other towards Algeria, from where, in 1944, 200,000 soldiers left for France to fight the Nazi occupant. This tall, extravagant wooden structure, with its endless criss-crossing beams supported on 200 pillars, changes the landscape and defies understanding. It's one of those human creations somewhere between sculpture and architecture that troubles the spirit precisely because of its ability to emancipate itself from its original "text" and to attain a "state of sculpture."

The source of Tuazon's extraordinary art lies in his decisive 2001 encounter with the artist-architect Vito Acconci, who he worked for over a period of two years. "I was already 28, but I was still a novice. Yet Acconci liked to debate with me for hours, just as he did with the senior architects at the studio. His habit of questioning everything, from the beginning of a project to the end, was impressive." Today Tuazon employs engineers, technicians and builders to realize his work. For an artist whose relationship to materials is practically carnal, such recourse to several construction trades is in no way a hindrance to the creation of a rich and meaningful dialogue of forms.

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Oscar Tuazon in his
Los Angeles studio



INTERVIEW

LIVING AS A SCULPTURAL PROCESS

Oscar Tuazon, who made one of the standout works at this year's Skulptur Projekte Münster, is heading for the great outdoors.

Interview by Jonathan Griffin. Portraits by Julian Berman

The US artist Oscar Tuazon connects the functional possibilities of sculpture to the politics of public art, exploring the confrontation between industry and ecology, the urban and the natural.

Two events this year represented a clear synthesis of the various ideas Tuazon has developed in his work over the past decade. In April, he opened the gates to the yard next to his Los Angeles studio and hosted a hip-hop concert by musicians he had met several months earlier at Standing Rock, a camp set up in North Dakota by protesters against the Dakota Access Pipeline. By the entrance, he placed a section of pipe six feet in diameter, part of a previous work. A cast iron sculpture was filled with wood and lit,

making an improvised fire pit, and a stage was built for performers.

Around the same time, Tuazon was completing his sculpture *Burn the Formwork*, which was unveiled at Skulptur Projekte Münster in

June. The concrete structure—perhaps the most celebrated work of Tuazon's career—combines the interactivity of a stage with the comfort of a fireplace. The artist has also been converting a building in the far north-west of Washington state into a rural home.

THE ART NEWSPAPER: Tell us about your cabin in the woods.

OSCAR TUAZON: It's on the Hoh River, a very protected river in the Olympic Peninsula, about four hours from Seattle. It feels like the end of the Earth. When my wife Dorothée got it, six years ago, the house was a big shed. Whoever was building it died before doing anything to the interior. There was no road to the house, no electricity, no water. It's in a region where it rains 300 days a year, and it's right next to a river, but the previous owner had drilled a well and come up with nothing. So we installed a rainwater collection system. Now it's habitable, but it's still basically a big shed.

Is the house a work?

Well, it isn't really—it's a house. But it might become a work at a certain point. For me, a house is the ultimate sculpture. I think of trying to solve those problems of living as a sculptural process. Installing the water system was a big revelation for me. But I haven't shown it so I don't know if it's a work yet.

Is that what makes a work?

Yes, it is, kind of. The act of seeing is what completes the work. The moment when a work is given over to the public is really just the beginning. My work for

“The moment a work is given over to the public is really just the beginning”

© CONTINUED ON PAGE 22





Galerie Chantal Crousel



© CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

Skulptur Projekte Münster was maybe the most amazing experience of that I've ever had. When I opened the barrier around the sculpture, it was late at night. A couple of wandering ravers stopped by and, without speaking, they immediately started putting wood in the fire. It was euphoric, to feel that the work now belonged to someone else.

The confrontation that happens in public art is so unpredictable. You think you've imagined everything that could happen, and there's always a surprise. I designed the structure to be impervious to fire. It has a powerful rocket stove and an internal combustion system that burns really hot, with almost no smoke. That part is built out of refractory cement, which can withstand enormous heat. But, of course, people started a fire outside the stove, just on the floor in front of it. The chimney itself is made of normal concrete, and that area burned and started to crumble, so it had to be repaired.

Is there a difference between a straightforwardly functional work, like a fire pit or the stage in your yard, for example, and a sculpture that the public completes, as you say, through interaction?

There's space for both. Especially in Münster, there are many times when a piece recedes into the background. I think that's when it's most successful, when it disappears as sculpture and facilitates some other kind of activity.

How do those aspirations map on to your work in galleries?

For a long time, I thought that was inherently impossible in a gallery setting, because the gallery has already solved all the problems of function. But recently, I've started to think more pragmatically that the exhibition space is just the beginning of the work that can be done; it can facilitate the production of an object, but the object has to keep moving.

Above left: the artist in his studio. Top right and above right: Zome Alloy (2016), Tuzon's installation at Art Basel. Below: Burn the Formwork at Skulptur Projekte Münster

How does that relate to See Through, your recent exhibition of window sculptures at Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich?

I've done two shows now at Presenhuber based on this idea of the 1:1 model. I set out just to prototype a new set of windows for my house. But other things happen along the road. With these double-pane windows, I got stuck in that space between the glass. It's a space of reflection, literally. Texts and images and materials started accumulating there. It's like the space between the walls—an unseen and uninhabitable part of architecture.

It seems that many of the ideas in your work correspond to natural forces and phenomena.

Yes, it all comes back to trees. It comes back to the idea of the tree as a person, but also the tree as embodied water and embodied sun. It is both a living and a non-living material. I've been trying to make an artificial tree for years.





Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Why, then, do natural materials so rarely feature in your work?
I would say that the construction of an object should be a way to make natural forces visible. I recently developed a proposal for a submerged plinth in the Port of Sydney. I asked myself, what is there? There's the sun, the wind and the water. What I proposed was a huge weather wheel, with a wind turbine in the centre powering an outer water wheel, creating a cloud on some days, maybe nothing on others. It would be a way of seeing weather. I think artworks can play a really interesting role in the conversation around ecology because they are little systems, and you can model an ecology in an artwork.

Does that happen elsewhere in your work?
I'm working on a project based on the Zome, one of the first modern passive solar houses. It was built in New Mexico by Steve Baer in 1971-72. The façade is barrels of water, which

absorb heat during the day and then warm the house during the night. I reproduced its structural shell, which I titled *Zome Alloy* and showed at Art Basel in 2016. The house is very didactic. To me, ideally it should be a public space: it should be a school or a laboratory. I don't just want to make a replica, though; I want to update it.

What took you to Standing Rock?
I grew up on Squamish land near the Port Madison reservation in Washington state, and in my teens, I studied the Lushootseed language. I haven't been so deeply involved in politics, but this

“I think artworks can play a really interesting role in the conversation around ecology”

Above left: Tuazon's *Burn the Formwork* in Münster. **Top right:** *Protector Structure (Voices of Water)* at the Contemporary Art Museum St Louis earlier this year. **Above right:** *See Through*, an installation at Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

issue [Native American water rights] was something that really spoke to me; it was very clear that something should be done. I think about the camp at Standing Rock as this laboratory of architecture, combining traditional forms with improvisation and technology. It was amazing. Every object had a function—there was a total economy of purpose.

After Standing Rock, I made a couple of tent structures. One [was] in an exhibition at the Contemporary Art Museum in St Louis (*Urban Planning: Art and the City 1967-2017*). The idea is to donate that sculpture to the horse riders who are protesting along Line 3 [a section of oil pipeline that has prompted Native American protests]. I want to make an object multifunctional, so that it could actually slip between these contexts.

I'm so used to having things that engage in the space of art. To make something function outside that is challenging—to get it to function in an authentic way, to actually be useful. ■



L'œil MAGAZINE

LE GUIDE DE LA FIAC 2017

LE TOUT-PARIS SE MET À L'HEURE DE LA FIAC

Est-ce la Fiac qui tire profit de Paris ou la ville-musée qui se modernise grâce à la foire d'art contemporain, redevenue l'une des plus attirantes du monde ? Visiblement, les deux partenaires ont su se valoriser l'un l'autre au fil des ans.

PAR MARTINE ROBERT

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evenue à son meilleur niveau alors qu'elle semblait il y a dix ans, la Fiac attire large : avec une soixantaine de partenariats médias, une vingtaine d'entreprises sponsors, des liens étroits avec six institutions majeures voisines (la Mairie de Paris et son Petit Palais, mais aussi le Louvre et l'École du Louvre, la RMN-Grand Palais et le Palais de la découverte) et bien d'autres musées, fondations, maisons de ventes aux enchères, la foire sort le grand jeu.

En 2017, l'événement rassemble 192 galeries (dont 40 nouveaux exposants) issues de 29 pays (dont 6 entrants : Égypte, Kosovo, Norvège, Portugal, Suède et Tunisie). Plus du quart des stands arborent le pavillon français et plus des deux tiers le drapeau européen. Le contingent nord-américain est renforcé pour atteindre 20 % des exposants et tous les géants de ce marché leader sont là.



En parallèle, la Fiac s'étend également à l'Amérique du Sud, à l'Asie et aux Émirats arabes unis. À noter encore : pour sa 44^e édition, la foire réintroduit le design, un secteur où elle fit figure de pionnière en 2004 avant de jeter l'éponge, faute de place. Cinq galeries incontournables ont répondu présent : Jousse, Seguin, Downtown, Kreo et Éric Philippe.

METTRE EN RÉSEAU

De nouveau, et malgré une situation politique à hauts risques avec les multiples attentats en Europe, Jennifer Flay, soutenue par Anne Hidalgo et par la présidente de la RMN-Grand Palais, Sylvie Hubac, a obtenu l'autorisation de piétonner l'avenue Winston-Churchill transformée en une esplanade de l'art. Elle investit ainsi le parvis et quelques espaces prestigieux du Petit Palais situé face à la Fiac, de quoi présenter gratuitement au public une quarantaine de sculptures et installations. « L'an dernier, nous nous

sommes aperçus que ce partenariat engagé entre le Petit Palais et la Fiac plaisait à notre public traditionnel, comme à celui de la foire. Des galeries françaises et étrangères candidaient en fonction d'un cahier des charges mettant l'accent sur les projets d'artistes, et nous les sélectionnons conjointement. Cette initiative de la foire rejoint mon souci de travailler plus étroitement avec le Grand Palais et mon rêve de piétonner de manière permanente l'avenue », souligne Christophe Leribault, directeur du Petit Palais. Et, justement, pour Jennifer Flay, la Fiac doit aussi « servir à mettre en réseau ».

Preuve de l'aura retrouvée de la Fiac, le secteur du luxe est bien présent : le joaillier Van Cleef & Arpels mécène le festival de performances « Parades for Fiac », tandis que le Comité Colbert, rassemblant 81 maisons françaises de luxe et des institutions culturelles, expose à la foire trois lauréats de son concours « Rêver 2074 », mené en partenariat avec l'université des arts de Tokyo.



de sentir le dynamisme culturel de la cité, et il n'y a pas de bonne foire dans une ville morte», estime Pascale Cayla, fondatrice de L'Art en direct, agence de communication spécialisée.

LA LUNA FIAC

Depuis 2005, Jennifer Flay, directrice de la Fiac, d'abord en tandem avec Martin Bethenod, s'est employée à redresser une foire moribonde en misant sur l'art de vivre parisien. Cette année-là, alors que la manifestation était toujours expatriée porte de Versailles, le duo avait adressé un message fort de reconquête : dans le Grand Palais encore en travaux, il organisait une gigantesque fête avec l'aide du Baron, la boîte la plus branchée de la capitale. Une « Luna Fiac » avec trois jours de performances, de projections de films, d'installations, une piste de danse, des manèges forains, et la présence de Beyoncé et Jay Z. Une sorte de teasing pour annoncer brillamment son retour, pour l'édition suivante, au centre de la capitale. « Une fête qui a fait résonner le Tout-Paris. Reed, propriétaire de la Fiac, nous a suivis et a accepté de faire cet investissement. D'ailleurs, cette société a toujours accompagné nos dévelop-

pements : l'extension aux Tuileries en 2006 avait aussi un coût. Mais réancrer la Fiac à Paris et offrir une autre lecture de cette ville patrimoniale, telle était notre stratégie. Nous avons prouvé notre capacité à mettre la capitale en musique, à impressionner les visiteurs », se réjouit la directrice de la Fiac. Et d'ajouter : « Art Basel Miami a les palmiers, mais la Fiac a le Louvre, le Grand Palais, les Tuileries et tous ces magnifiques musées ! » Autant dire que la foire, obligée de quitter à nouveau sa superbe nef dans le triangle d'or en 2020 et 2021 pour cause de travaux supplémentaires, négocie ardemment avec la Ville de Paris et la RMN-Grand Palais pour ■

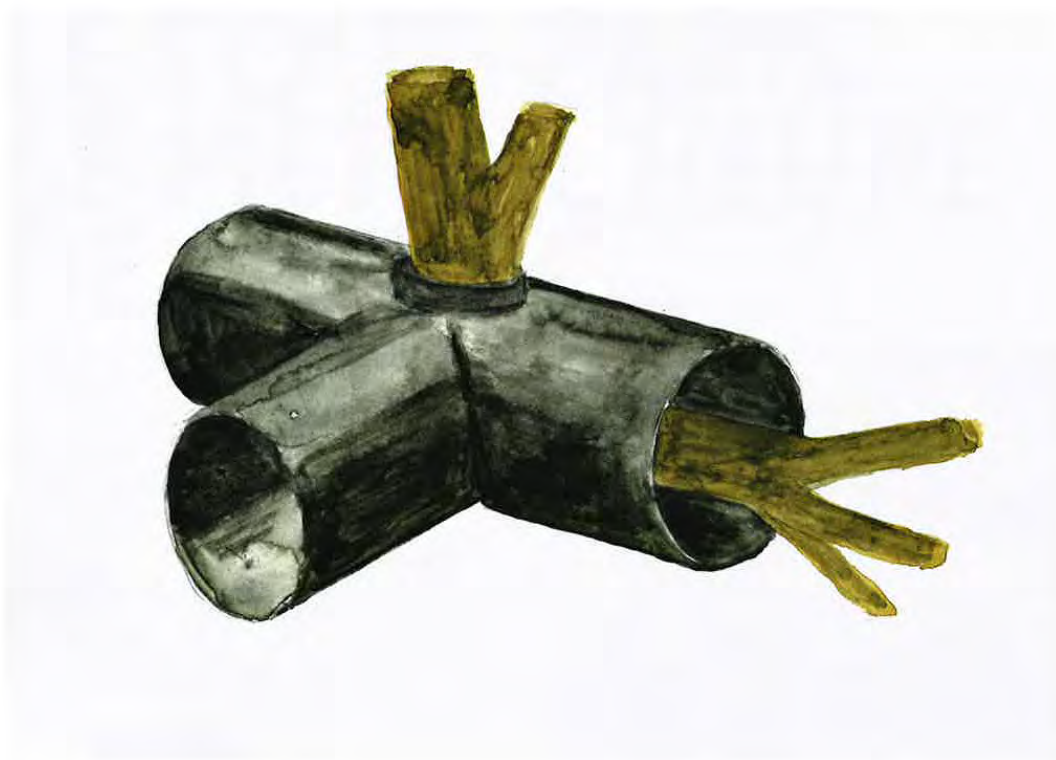
Nouveau venu, le banquier suisse Mirabaud soutient la carte blanche donnée à Oscar Tuazon place Vendôme. Lionel Aeschlimann, associé-gérant de Mirabaud, se dit « enthousiaste » au sujet de « cette rencontre entre la création contemporaine et ce lieu de classicisme et d'excellence ». Les fidèles Galeries Lafayette demeurent quant à elles le partenaire officiel de la manifestation, appréciant « la vraie complicité » et le « partage d'idées » qui se sont installés au fil des années. « Bref, la Fiac fait le happening *in et out*, Paris vibre pendant la Fiac et on peut l'expérimenter même sans billet pour la foire », se félicite Jennifer Flay. « Cette ébullition permet aux collectionneurs

2_Dans les allées du Grand Palais, lors de l'édition 2016 de la Fiac.
© Photo : Marc Domage.

3_Marta Pan, *Lentilles flottantes*, 1994. © Fondation Marta Pan Andre Wogenscky, courtesy Galerie Mitterrand.

4_Oscar Tuazon, *Dessin préparatoire pour le projet Fiac Hors les murs*, Place Vendôme, 2017. © Oscar Tuazon.





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■ trouver un site temporaire toujours central : « J'ai besoin de 20 000 m², mais cela peut être sous la forme d'une structure en matériaux écoresponsables, en phase avec les préoccupations de l'époque et réutilisable pour les Jeux olympiques », commente Jennifer Flay, qui parle « d'échanges enthousiastes à ce sujet, encore avec Anne Hidalgo et Sylvie Hubac ». « Nous sommes toutes sur la même longueur d'onde : il y a une vraie prise de conscience maintenant que l'argent public ne peut tout prendre en charge et qu'il faut s'appuyer sur le privé pour faire rayonner Paris. »

LES EFFETS DE LA FIAC

La foire, qui représente un budget de 10 millions d'euros (dont 1 million de partenariats), a attiré 72 000 visiteurs en 2016 et sa base de 12 500 VIP s'enrichit d'année en année des noms des invités des galeries, alors que le fichier ne comptait que 300 convives en 2006. Le programme concocté pour ces hôtes de prestige se veut très pointu, car Jennifer Flay ne perd pas de vue le nécessaire retour sur investissement pour

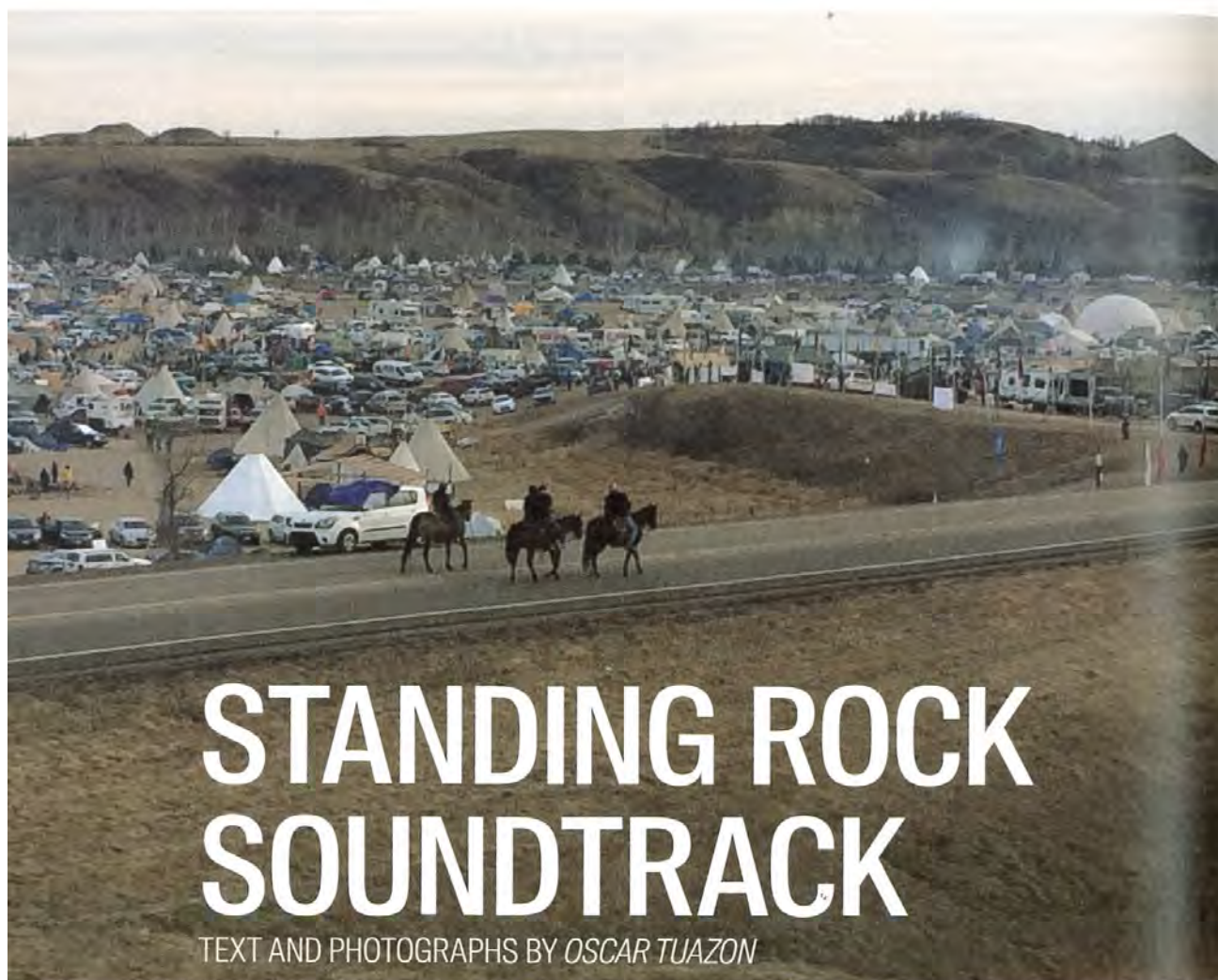
ses exposants : « J'ai été galeriste moi-même, alors j'y suis sensible, et je sais que cela conditionne l'envie de revenir. » Nadia Candet, dont le concept « Private Choice » (exposition-vente d'œuvres dans un appartement privé, sur invitation) a été lancé grâce au programme VIP de la foire, reconnaît « la grande qualité de la Fiac et sa capacité à faire émerger de nouveaux collectionneurs, notamment via le secteur des jeunes galeries ».

Pour la directrice de la foire, contrairement aux reproches récurrents qui lui sont faits de privilégier les galeries

internationales, la Fiac contribue « à renforcer la scène française », même s'il s'agit d'un « processus long » dans la mesure où l'on « revient de loin ». « J'ai redonné une légitimité à la Fiac, et cela rejaillit forcément sur nos artistes. D'ailleurs, la foire est à l'origine de la Nocturne des galeries qui se déroule en parallèle, montrant aux acheteurs du monde entier qu'il existe à Paris une sorte de Fiac permanente », insiste Jennifer Flay, qui se dit toujours partante pour « organiser une seconde foire française » malgré l'échec de son essaimage aux Docks en 2014 et 2015. —

PARISLA

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PARISLA

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I first learned of the protests at Standing Rock over the summer of 2016 reading *Nugquam*, the monthly newsletter of the Quinault Indian Nation, a reservation about the size of the city of Los Angeles on Washington's Pacific coast, near where I live in the summer. Quinault President Fawn Sharp, a visionary in the global fight against climate change, had led a delegation of twelve Quinault paddlers down the Missouri River in the elder Grandfather Canoe. The encampment of water protectors on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation had grown to become a tribal gathering of historic importance, uniting hundreds of nations around the common cause of protecting the water of Lake Oahe, the reservoir formed at the northern reaches of the Missouri River. In the state of Washington, tribal water rights have shaped environmental legal protections since their inception in the nineteenth century, and continue to play an instrumental role in the preservation of marine and river ecosystems today. Native leaders in the Northwest have been outspoken in their opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) since the permit notification process began in early 2015. Though thousands of miles away from the Washington coast, the DAPL would pass underneath the waters of Lake Oahe, which drain into the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico—a watershed that provides water for 18 million people. Water connects us all. As Sharp says, "All things are connected."

"FUCK DONALD TRUMP," YG AND NIPSEY HUSSLE (2016)

I had been teaching for a week at Washington State University, and after I sent a picture of the check through my phone, I had enough money in my account to rent a car for a few days and drive to Cannon Ball, North Dakota. After my talk to an audience at the School of Art that evening, I borrowed a couple hundred from my eldest daughter's bank account to buy some legal weed on my way out of state, just to be safe, and as I pulled off campus I plugged this in my phone: YG and Nipsey Hussle's election season Trump clapback, the opening credits of my road movie. I overlaid its languid anthem of voter enfranchisement onto the contours of the moment—

[Nipsey Hussle]:
*I'M FROM A PLACE WHERE YOU PROLLY CAN'T GO
SPEAKIN' FOR SOME PEOPLE THAT YOU PROLLY
AIN'T KNOW*

[YG]:
*IT WOULDN'T BE THE USA WITHOUT MEXICANS
AND IF IT'S TIME TO TEAM UP, SHIT LET'S BEGIN*

BLACK LOVE, BROWN PRIDE IN THE SETS AGAIN WHITE PEOPLE FEEL THE SAME AS MY NEXT OF KIN

The circumstances of my life led me to this scene, driving through Pullman with #FDT on the speakers and the windows down, leaving town. No, I'm not from Compton, but I feel I'm next of kin, YG and Nipsey are speaking for some people, some of us, me, *who you probably don't know*.

See, I'm from here, Palouse farming country or thereabouts, my grandfather Bill was a student at Washington State University for a while. He had raised the tuition fee himself, farming 40 acres of potatoes outside Yakima where he was raised. Going to college meant a chance at leaving that potato patch behind. A way off the farm.

"UNTOUCHABLE," PUSHA T, DARKEST BEFORE DAWN (2016)

LYRICALLY I'M,
*UNTOUCHABLE, UNCRUSHABLE
BLUNTED IN A 600
BLUNTED IN A 600*

A lost Notorious B.I.G. throwaway verse, deconstructed and rebuilt by Timbaland into the chorus of a highwayman's anthem, comes on resonant and menacing in full stereo, turning the car interior into an invincible blunt-smoke stealth fighter, and I'm flying high through night Idaho.

MY BREAKDOWN GAME BROUGHT ME 8 MILE FAME
SELLING M&MS TO HIM AND 'EM
WHITE TO THE BLACKS I'M A VILLAIN IN
THE ROLLS ROYCE, PLAYING PEEK-A-BOO
WITH THE EMBLEM
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT GENTLEMEN
MY BARCODE IS NETFLIX NARCOS
PART ON THE SIDE OF MY 'FRO LIKE I'M PABLO
NO HABLO, I SELL BLOW
LONE WOLF, NO TONTO, HEAD HONCHO

Biggie omnipresent like the solemn voice of some digitally revived God, what my voice sounds like when I speak to myself in my mind.

LYRICALLY I'M...

"WAR PIGS," BLACK SABBATH, PARANOID (1970)

I had left Pullman without eating, and as I drove north I'd watched the towns dim one by one as night surrounded them and shut them down. I was heading north on 95 toward the junction with I-90 east, but there was no way I was stop-

PARISLA

ping anywhere in the vicinity of Hayden Lake. When I was growing up in the '90s was the heyday of white nationalism in the Idaho panhandle. The Aryan Nations compound in Hayden Lake is gone now, replaced by a peace park, but this bad land makes me nervous and I want it behind me. I kept driving till Coeur d'Alene and stop at a gas station on the reservation, Warpath.

Warpath is a little shop with two totems outside, manned by a quiet, small bald man in camo. I refill my water from a dispenser for a quarter and buy enough mixed nuts and Red Bull to last till morning, smile, leave. As I turn east to climb the Rockies, lightning spits diagonally, outlining black clouds against a black sky. When I hear the air raid sirens of "War Pigs" come over the radio, I am driving straight into a halo of rain lit by lightning, and in a vivid moment I know exactly where I am going and why. I am going to the front lines.

**NOW IN DARKNESS, WORLD STOPS TURNING
ASHES WHERE THE BODIES BURNING
NO MORE WAR PIGS HAVE THE POWER
HAND OF GOD HAS STRUCK THE HOUR
DAY OF JUDGMENT, GOD IS CALLING
ON THEIR KNEES THE WAR PIG'S CRAWLING
BEGGING MERCY FOR THEIR SINS
SATAN LAUGHING, SPREADS HIS WINGS—
OH LORD YEAH!**

**FOCUS ON THE FAMILY, JIM DALY
AND JOHN FULLER, PODCAST
(1977-PRESENT)**

I rode the radio lightning as far as it took me and then began to glide as the night broke. I pulled off the 90 onto a dirt road on the Lolo, tried to find the end of it. I kept a creek on my right side, or thought I did, and pines on all sides. I kept ending up backing out of barn driveways until I got lost enough on a dirt spur in the foothills. I smoked a joint in the car with the windows open while a light rain fell and then built the tent while a family radio hour played out. A troupe of voice actors, crafted like automatons to resemble an ideally functioning nuclear family unit, solve a series of thefts using their Bible.

My grandfather Bill made himself a cowboy, starting early. Born Paul Hansen, he renamed himself by the time he was ten. Bill is an American name, a crude approximation of some older name, but born here. Bill like a dollar. In Chinook Jargon—the fading lingua franca of Washington territory at the time when Bill's parents settled there—*tala*, like dollar, means "money." Like Bill, *tala* is just a rough concept, close enough. (Much of Chinook is like that, a

blunt trading instrument, all business.) It's a crude term that replaced the earlier term *hiixwa*, from the Nootka word for dentalia shells, just as the dollar replaced indigenous systems of exchange designed over thousands of years, based on an understanding of economics in ecological terms. These mollusk shells were a water-based currency that contained the potency of the sea, and connected the dynamic marine trade networks of the Pacific Coast to inland trade routes up the Columbia River to the interior Great Basin and Northern Plateau. Because the salmon runs on which indigenous economies depended were irregular—producing bountiful spawning seasons every two (or four) years, followed by years when few salmon run—networks of exchange, particularly the potlatch tradition, were used in part to distribute and manage these fluctuations of resource availability in the broad Salish economy, across a vast geographical area connected by water. *Hiixwa* was a monetary instrument in the potlatch economy. It was a form of currency recognized from California to Alaska and across the Great Plains, and it was jewelry—a precious shell, harvested only by the Nuu-chah-nulth people of Vancouver Island, an organic gem used to make elaborate bridal headdresses. *Tala*, by contrast, is just money, a four letter word in a language poorly understood by most who spoke it, the kind of currency we use today.

**"RETRIBUTION," PUSHA T,
DARKEST BEFORE DAWN (2016)**

I awake in the darkness before dawn feeling strong, and rise repeating the words of Low Dog, a young Oglala warrior who fought with Sitting Bull in 1876 against the relocation of their people to the Standing Rock reservation. Their camp was ambushed by Custer's soldiers on all sides, and Low Dog massed his men together to ride directly into the rifle fire of the 7th Cavalry Regiment, a desperate bid to protect their women and children from certain slaughter. With each warrior whipping the horse of another, Low Dog led his men into battle with his famous call to arms:

THIS IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE. FOLLOW ME.

Maybe the poetry of it is that Low Dog did not die that day. A great orator, Low Dog's story of the Battle of the Little Bighorn first articulates the sovereignty of the Lakota people as innately tied to the land where they lived. Low Dog refused the government order to relocate his people to the Standing Rock reservation on the principle that a free man has the right to move across and use his land as he wishes, a

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right that a warrior guarantees by his pledge to die free. The story turns on an unspoken irony—it was not Low Dog who died that day but Custer. Determined to sacrifice himself to keep his land free, Low Dog ends his story with a declaration of peace, a warrior who had laid down his weapons.

And here I am, a naked white man talking to myself on a hillside. My native friends call me trans-Indian, but you can call me "pastəd," Chinnook for white man ("of Boston"). I laugh at myself and put on my underwear.

"AMERICA," WAYLON JENNINGS, WAYLON'S GREATEST HITS, VOL. 2 (1984)

The 90 brings me through the mountains and onto the plains while I scan the local dial between Missoula and Bozeman, hearing Waylon Jennings' 1984 "America" right where I expected to find it:

AND MY BROTHERS ARE ALL BLACK AND WHITE, YELLOW TOO
AND THE RED MAN IS RIGHT,
TO EXPECT A LITTLE FROM YOU
PROMISE AND THEN FOLLOW THROUGH AMERICA

"ECO-SOCIALISM," CHRIS WILLIAMS, ALTERNATIVE RADIO PODCAST (2016)

We've come to a point in 2016 where we are facing a global crisis, both social and ecologically, one helping to codetermine the other, and this is a crisis for the system itself. There's not enough food, not enough houses, there's not enough schools, there's not enough healthcare for everybody. Why do people talk about a shortage of food when we know that actually we grow enough food currently today to feed 10 billion people?

Before he finished his first year of college, Bill's father called him home: the Depression had struck and they were losing the farm. Washington State University refunded Bill's entire tuition fee and he went back with it to help save the farm. In broad economic terms, the transition from an indigenous economy responsive to ecological fluctuations to an agriculture-based settler economy depending on regular returns was ill-prepared for natural events like the Dust Bowl, let alone the currency fluctuations of a global economy. In spite of their efforts, the Hansens lost the farm. It was the end of Bill the cowboy, the loss that marked his life—but it did force him off the farm, so least he made it out at last. Bill never went back to WSU, he went on to something new, and ended up selling advertising, working in radio.

It is well known that a woman doing the same job as a man will make 74 cents for every dollar a man makes. Women are responsible for two-thirds of all working hours, produce 50–90% of all the world's food, and obviously 100% of the world's children, but they only get 10% of the world's income, and only own 1% of the world's property. Which means that 70% of the world's poor are women. If you thought about whether could you make women equal to men in this society, and certainly some strides have been made, is it possible under capitalism? I would argue, no: sexism and racism are intrinsic, along with class exploitation, to the capitalist system. The UN essentially agrees with me. They found that the three thousand largest corporations on the planet caused over 2.2 trillion in environmental costs. So when we say that we're all equally responsible, that is not actually accurate.

"I BELIEVE IN YOU," DON WILLIAMS, ESPECIALLY FOR YOU / I BELIEVE IN YOU (1980)

I DON'T BELIEVE THE PRICE OF GOLD
THE CERTAINTY OF GROWING OLD
THAT RIGHT IS RIGHT AND LEFT IS WRONG
THAT NORTH AND SOUTH CAN'T GET ALONG
THAT EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST
AND BEIN' FIRST IS ALWAYS BEST.

BUT I BELIEVE IN LOVE
I BELIEVE IN BABIES
I BELIEVE IN MOM AND DAD
AND I BELIEVE IN YOU.

I saw the sign for Sacred Stone camp painted on a sheet of plywood by the roadside. I turn and drive slow through Cannon Ball, the small reservation town overlooking Lake Oahe. The town runs out and the rutted road keeps going over a bluff towards the river. At the entrance to the camp a young man waves me to a stop in front of a large black tent. He tells me the rules of the camp, "No alcohol or drugs. No photos in camp. No firearms. There is hot coffee at the fire, welcome."

I look for his eyes in a face hidden by a black bandana, behind black glasses in a black hoodie a few inches from mine, and tears stream from my eyes. I cry silently, wide-eyed, knowing I've arrived. Home, if there is such a thing, is here.

From the camp I climbed back up the bluff, wanting to take a look at the camp for the first time. Camp of the Sacred Stones was established in April of 2016 by LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, on her own land, and takes its name from the boulders intermittently strewn through the grasslands around Lake Oahe. I had stumbled on one of them on the bluff above

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camp. Poking vertically out of the dirt like a grave marker, the granite stone was shaped like a warhead, a missile ready to launch. Someone had left a prayer bundle there.

On the other side of the Cannonball River I could see the Oceti Sakowin camp spread lightly like a bloom of wildflowers on the prairie where it is met by the high waters of the Missouri. The whole camp seemed to be made of flags flying in the wind, tipis rising over a sea of brightly colored camp tents, moving and breathing like a living thing.

I walked into camp behind a log truck and followed it, figuring I would find my way. As the truck unloaded, a few of us gathered around the cab and spoke to the driver as he dropped the logs at the end of the flag road. With him was a representative from the Kootenai Tribe in Idaho, who were donating the logs for firewood. I put my things down and started to look around for a chainsaw or a splitting maul, knowing I could be useful here.

The camp nearest the logs was a cluster of yurts and low tents turned towards a central court, and from the group that had begun to congregate here, a young woman approached me, smiling.

"Hi," I said, "I'm here to help."
"Who do you know here?" she asked.
"Nobody yet, I just got here. I can cut wood, though."
"Well actually, this is a closed camp," she smiled gently. "You need an invitation from someone in the Red Warrior Society to be here."
I excused myself, feeling sheepish.

BREAKDANCES WITH WOLVES, GYASI ROSS, WESLEY ROACH, MINTY LONGEARTH, PODCAST

[HTTPS://SOUNDCLOUD.COM/BREAKDANCESWITHWOLVES](https://soundcloud.com/breakdanceswithwolves)

I walked back through camp toward the sacred fire, following the voice of Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux, David Archambault II, until I saw him, standing under one of several open tents facing the fire, holding a microphone. As I arrived, one of the fire tenders was complaining they were running low on wood.

"How can I help?" I asked and began.

I worked under Lucy, alongside a changing cast of novices like me, first finding the woodpile, then learning the coffee process. Cycling around three pit fires, we heated water in pots

till boiling, adding two cups of Folgers to each pot at a rolling boil till black, about 15 minutes. The grounds were saved and cycled through with some new grounds, then emptied regularly as we filled one Gatorade cooler after another with hot black coffee. Lucy talked little, working with determination and patience as we struggled to keep up. She gave me her plate to eat while she worked, told us where not to walk, and I watched. Lucy had been at camp for five weeks working the fires around the clock, and didn't show it but she must have been tired. Running the fire crew was Clint, a man almost my father's age, who had left his house and job three months before.

"I don't know if there'll be a home for me when I get back," he told me. "But I knew they needed me here, so I came here."

In a moment of quiet after the mealtime surge, as I sat waiting for water to boil again, Chairman Archambault took the microphone and announced he needed ten young backs to buck firewood. I jumped up and walked to his tent to volunteer. He looked at me with mild surprise, and then behind me to Lucy, who let me go.

"REPARATION," VYBZ KARTEL, MENTALLY FREE (2012)

Half an hour later, in a utility van with six guys. We were going to the house of a Standing Rock elder, who had some trees he had gifted to the cookfire. Julius pulled on an electronic cigarette the size of a small pistol while he drove, filling the van with a sweet white vapor and the voice of Jamaican superstar, imprisoned dancehall poet Vybz Kartel, as loud as it would go. Nobody spoke.

**YOU MISA BIG MISTA YOU A DI PRIME MINISTER
COLLEGE MI WAH SEND MI SISTA
YOU SAY EDUCATION A DI KEY
MI A BEG YUH NUH TEK MI TING SAH**

Out by Sitting Bull Community College, we arrived at a tidy brown ranch house with a stand of twenty mature locusts along one edge of the property. The trees were likely planted by the owner decades ago, for two obvious reasons: the trees make a good windbreak against the Dakota winds, and adjoining his property was an electrical power station, transformers ringed with razor wire only partially obscured by the two rows of locust. The locust plant is sculptural, strangely stone-like, and the wood is extremely hard, hard to work with, hard on saws, but it makes the hottest burning firewood there is, too hot for most stoves.

STANDING ROCK SOUNDTRACK

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Julius asked, "Which one of you knows how to fall a tree?"

Sammy and I raised our hands and he gave us a couple of spent Black & Decker chainsaws. We dropped the trees away from the fence, limbing what we could as we went. Julius followed me and watched what I did wrong till he took my saw away. I bucked brush for a while until I earned the saw back at the end of the afternoon to drop a leader leaning on the chain-link.

"GHETTO LIFE," VYBZ KARTEL, KARTEL FOREVER: TRILOGY (2013)

COLONIAL BRUTALITY
INNOCENT YOUTH GET SHOOT ADDI SI
SOCIETY NO DO NOTHING FI ME
CAW MI SCHEME NEVER BENEFIT
THROUGH CHARITY
GHETTO YOUTH HAVE DI TRUE QUALITY
MARCUS GARVEY PHILOSOPHY
SOMETHING A GO HAPPEN IN A DI INNER CITY
AND MI GRANNY SEH DI LONGEST LIVER HAFI SI

EVERY GHETTO YOUTH WAAN MONEY YEH
AN DEM WAAN BUY A HOUSE FOR MOMMY YEH
IN DI STREETS EVERYDAY DON'T FUNNY YEH
MI NO KNOW WHEN DI HEARSE COMING FOR ME YEH

KIOWA FLAG SONG, (TRADITIONAL, EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

As night fell the MC announced that there were two flag ceremonies to present. A Korean man, born 1938, spoke of his childhood as an immigrant and the debt that this country owes those who protect the land. The crowd welcomed him warmly as he presented a small Korean flag. Next, a strong-chested man wearing a turquoise Western shirt, crisp jeans, and a white straw Stetson stood before the fire with his wife and spoke. When he arrived, he did not see the Kiowa flag along the Flag Road, and he brought it now to Oceti Sakowin. "I am proud to be Kiowa," he said, not on the tribal council, just an ordinary man who had brought his trailer from Oklahoma to donate supplies. He and his wife unfurled the sky blue flag of the Kiowa nation between them. He then sat and led the drummers in the Kiowa Flag Song.

DAW KIAH KHOIHYE BAY-HAW AH-OIYE-MAY
DAY-OWN-DAY POUIE HEHN TDAW

RAISE OUR FLAG MOST REVERENT
BECAUSE A GREAT THING HAPPENED
THE WAR ENDED

According to Kiowa elder Evans Ray Satepah-hoodle, the song was written by a Kiowa soldier on his return home after the end of the First World War. In charge of an empire that ruled the Great Plains from Colorado to Texas well into the nineteenth century, the Kiowa military hierarchy consisted of five warrior societies, led by the ten decorated warriors of the *Koitsenko*, warriors known to execute the greatest act of bravery in close combat battle: not to kill but to touch an enemy warrior. Warriors of the Black Legs carried a staff with them into battle which, when planted in the ground, staked its owner down in battle and required him to hold his ground until victory or death. Not a weapon, the staff carried by the men of the Black Legs Society is a marker of the social responsibility of the warrior to literally defend the land he stands on with his life. The Black Legs Society, or *Tökögäut*, composed of the most decorated among Kiowa military and religious men, dates from at least 1834 and is the oldest Southern Plains military society operating today—many members of the Black Legs Society are active duty, or are retired armed services veterans. A flag song, like our national anthem, tells you something about a nation. The great warrior societies of the Kiowa nation have produced generations of soldiers fighting American wars, but they don't use a victory song as their flag song, they use this, a warrior's song of peace.

"SOLDIER BOY," (TRADITIONAL VETERAN'S SONG), PERFORMED BY BLACK LODGE SINGERS (2008)

SOLDIER BOY

SOLDIER BOY

The melancholy chorus of this circle drum song, chanted by the drummers together in English, resounds twice before the verse is sung high and plaintive in Lakota.

"CROW HOP," BLACK LODGE SINGERS, POW-WOW SONGS RECORDED LIVE IN ARIZONA (1995)

Night has closed in and the elder veterans begin the circle dance slowly, shuffling alone or with a young relative. Three young boys my daughters' age come out spinning in circles to the singing, playing at fancy dancing, one of them with a stick that he struck to the ground before him on the downbeats, a dance staff he pivoted around. Then came a few fancy dancers in

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full regalia as the circle grew, new arrivals announced by the MC and joyously received into the circle. One of them, a young man wearing an eagle-feather war bonnet that fell, moved with noble elegance around the circle as the MC announced that the bonnet he was wearing was nearly one hundred years old, handed down from his grandfathers.

**"WATCH YOUR WIVES,"
NORTHERN CREE SINGERS,
IT'S A CREE THING – CREE ROUND
DANCE SONGS (2016)**

**JOHN TRUDELL,
PACIFICA RADIO ARCHIVES**

I woke and packed my tent before dawn. I was standing in the predawn chill when I saw Nick coming my way, stopping to yell good morning into tents as he walked, waking up the camp. The direct action was starting at 8 a.m., and Nick needed a ride, I had a car, we got going. Nick was looking for a friend, so we crossed the bridge back to Sacred Stone Camp and drove slow though the ruts along the river, Nick leaning out his window, talking to people as we went by. Nick came from Southern California, and had been in camp during the violent clashes with police in the days before I had arrived. The direct actions haven't been aggressive enough, Nick insisted, the leadership was dragging their feet, making symbolic gestures, while we could be out there now shutting down the pipeline. We circled back to his camp, a few tents and a tipi next to the water of the Cannonball. Coming out of the tipi was the warrior with the eagle bonnet from the night before, Benjamin Conrad of the Wind River Arapaho, Wyoming, or as he introduced himself with a smile, Benny Many Wives. Ben was hoping to make some DAPL babies, he said, many DAPL babies, and everyone laughed. A crowd of relatives had gathered, people jumped in and out of cars, Beth jumped in mine, and we drove in a line toward the pipeline site, a convoy that stretched ahead and behind as far as I could see, rolling slow on dirt roads around the work sites. I told her what I do, and Beth reminded me to listen to the words of the great John Trudell. Before Standing Rock, one of the largest gatherings of indigenous peoples took place not far from here, in the Paha Sapa (Black Hills) of South Dakota in the summer of 1980. The Survival Gathering, as it was known, brought ranchers, environmentalists, and rednecks together with native people to think and practice sustainable land use. Trudell spoke here on these lands, he

envisioned this scene in a vision and we're living it out. He's still here.

I would like to talk in honor of the wind, one of the natural elements. This is a survival gathering and one of the things you all learn while you're here is to appreciate the energy and power that the elements are, that of the sun, the rain and the wind. I hope you go away from here understanding that this is power, the only real, true power. This is the only true connection we will ever have to power, our relationship to Mother Earth.

There is a new Indian this time. The new Indian is white. They don't need you anymore because they've got an entire potential world market with millions and millions of consumers. So, all the lies they've dangled in front of your faces, well, they're going to start pulling back on these lies a bit, and they're going to start slapping you all with a bit of reality: the reality that there are not political freedoms in America; the reality that there is not religious freedom in America. You all are going to have to deal with reality and stop making excuses for America.

We Indians are going to have to act as runners and messengers. We are going to have to run and act as teachers. We are going to have to talk to all the people who will listen to us about what we believe, what it is that we know to be right. We're going to have to find ways to become a communication of ourselves. They are afraid of us.

**"SUNSHINE," PUSHA T, FEATURING JILL
SCOTT, DARKEST BEFORE DAWN (2016)**

Pusha spits in a hurry, angry, rhyming on all hard consonants, as if disgusted, and the words come out attenuated and clipped. He uses his all-purpose catchphrase, YEUUCK, like a percussive instrument. His voice sounds sped up, urgent, too intense to listen to on its own. He knows this, and though this is his second full-length album as a solo artist, Pusha remains a consummate collaborator, using his voice as the dark atmosphere against which his guest stars, women mostly, shine in sustained moments of poignant emotion. On this album he lets Jill Scott have the last word:

[Pusha T]:
**BUILDING PRISONS WHERE THE MOUNTAINS IS
LAPTOPS IS FOR THE COUNTY KIDS
METAL DETECTORS IS WHERE OURS IS
THEY'LL NEVER RE-WRITE THIS, LIKE THEY RE-WROTE
HISTORY
THE FACT THAT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY WAS BLACK IS A
GODDAMN MYSTERY**

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Chorus [Jill Scott]:
IT'S MORE AND MORE AND MORE THAN BALTIMORE
FROM SHORE TO SHORE, OH LORD
PATIENCE TORN, PATIENCE GONE, OH LORD

I SAY HEY, SUNSHINE
OH HOW THE DAY CAN BE SO LONG
I SAY HEY, SUNSHINE
OH HOW THE DAY CAN BE SO LONG

"SLAPPING MEDICINE MAN,"
1491S – TITO YBARRA, DALLAS
GOLDTOOTH, RYAN RED CORN (2011)

After the convoy returned to camp victorious, we congregated at media hill. The art committee unfurled bright painted banners lettered by hand as the leaders of the day's action began to speak. Dallas Goldtooth, an irrepressible comedian and organizer of the Indigenous Environmental Network, first clowning for selfies in a glamour pose, and when he took the megaphone, I heard a gentle echo of the words of Low Dog:

Relatives, today is a good day. Today's action was a demonstration of our power as oyâte, as people, to shut the pipeline down with our numbers. They see our strength, our prayers, that's our strength and it put fear in them. I'm seeing all of this unity, non-native and native Indigenous nations from across Turtle Island united with one purpose, and that's what put fear in them. We had our scouts out there this morning, and as soon as they saw us coming they fled. The work crews all went back up to Mandan today. Today is a beautiful day.

"WOMEN WARRIOR'S SONG,"
MARTINA PIERRE, LIL'WAT

Xhopakelxhit, a Nuu-chah-nulth land defender from Ahousat territory on Vancouver Island, spoke passionately in English and Nootka of the central rôle of Indigenous sovereignty in the fight for clean water, linking the noDAPL fight with the struggle to stop the Trans Mountain Pipeline terminal on Vancouver Island, a direct threat to indigenous water rights of tribal nations throughout the Salish Sea. Her young son sat next to me, bravely trying to contain his hyper energy, both of us, all of us, rapt and alive to it. Then, standing shoulder to shoulder with the women leaders of the movement, she led us all in the "Women Warrior's Song," a solemn song of mourning written by Lil'wat elder Martina Pierre in honor of the many murdered and missing Indigenous women in Canada, a song that was gifted by Pierre to all women fighting for justice, a power song.

WEY HEY HEY ... HO KEY YO HO, HO KEY YO HO

WEY HEY HO KEY YO, HO KEY YO HO WEY HEY

HO KEY YO

(4 rounds; 3 × with drum, 1 × no drum, hands up last round)

Scribed by Rhyannon Alexander

I left Oceti Sakowin on an electric high, a witness to history, overwhelmed by the knowledge that I was part of a profound transformation in consciousness reverberating through the minds around me. In the brief time that I was there, the dedication and creativity of the people I encountered had a profound effect on me. There was a sense of shared purpose among all of us, much of it unspoken and articulated through actions, gestures, and work. But words are very powerful here, revealing unexpected meanings, and there are some things I won't share here, words spoken to me that I won't repeat. I will tell you this, though: Oceti Sakowin has a few rules, and I have lived by those rules since. With a few exceptions, I drank every day for twenty years, enthusiastically, so taking a day off was a novelty in itself. I thought it might be hard but it hasn't been. I didn't do it alone.

No alcohol or drugs. No photos in camp. No firearms. There is hot coffee at the fire, welcome.

KLND 89.5 FM, LITTLE EAGLE, S.D.,
THE LODGE OF GOOD VOICES

I drove back to Pullman feeling a sense of incredible empowerment—in the context of this movement, art is a very powerful tool. Ceremony and performance are omnipresent within the camps and broadcast immediately by independent filmmakers, journalists, photographers, and artists producing live from Oceti Sakowin. Generations of architectural knowledge are being shared as traditional building techniques are revived and hybridized with contemporary technology. The camp itself seems to sing continuously, songs coming from the speakers around the sacred fire and in fire circles throughout the camp. Without even knowing yet how my own work could contribute, I understood something with a clarity that I experienced for the first time. I knew: this is what art is for. Art has a function here. This is what it can do. I had to go back.

The camp was a flurry of activity that day, moving the kitchen and implementing a winterization plan as temperatures fell. I had arrived during a period of quiet after a week of

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mass arrests, but the threat from militarized police was present and real, with armed security checkpoints on the county highway and helicopters overhead. The pipeline construction was approaching Lake Oahe, and tensions were mounting as winter approached, building towards what seemed to be an inevitable climax, when ETP would begin drilling under the Lake.

Shortly after I left, police aggression escalated, and on October 27, Nick was shot in the face by a rubber bullet, one among 160 injured that night including children and elders in a police attack using water cannons in sub-zero conditions, and live ammunition on peaceful water protectors. After the shock of the Trump election I felt an acute responsibility to my own family, and an urgent need to act. I needed to do something as a father to protect the future for my daughters, simple as that, and Standing Rock was the place to do it. My dad took care of our girls while Dorothy and I packed my Land Cruiser with camping gear (the girls donated their sleeping bags:)), and we drove across California, Nevada, Utah, Montana and the Dakotas.

"STATE TROOPER," BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, *NEBRASKA* (1982)

On our way across the plains we listen to *Nebraska*, Bruce Springsteen's virtuoso performance as a Midwestern desperado, as good a cowboy as Eastwood in his prime, a threat veiled behind a plea:

*MAYBE YOU GOT A KID, MAYBE YOU GOT A PRETTY WIFE
THE ONLY THING THAT I GOT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME MY
WHOLE LIFE
MISTER STATE TROOPER, PLEASE DON'T STOP ME
PLEASE DON'T YOU STOP ME, PLEASE DON'T YOU STOP ME*

This album is Springsteen at his best, embodying the voices he writes about, but it is also clearly that: a cast of characters, played with aplomb by a professional actor. I discovered this album as a teenager and loved it; still do. But is it true? Today I listen to it with the top-requested song on tribal radio, Keith Secola's 1992 classic "NDN Kars," depicting another scene between a desperado and an officer, this one funnier, truer to life:

"NDN KARS," KEITH SECOLA, *CIRCLE* (1992)

*I'VE BEEN DRIVING IN MY INDIAN CAR,
TO THE POUND OF THE WHEELS DRUMMING IN MY BRAIN,
MY DASH IS DUSTY, MY PLATES ARE EXPIRED,*

*PLEASE MR. OFFICER, LET ME EXPLAIN,
I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT TO A POW-WOW TONIGHT,
I'LL BE SINGING 49, DOWN BY THE RIVER SIDE,
LOOKING FOR A SUGAR, RIDING IN MY INDIAN CAR*

KILI RADIO 90.1 FM, THE VOICE OF THE LAKOTA NATION

We spent Thanksgiving night sleeping together in the back of the truck by the highway, and arrived the next morning for orientation. Ocelt Sakowin had grown exponentially, from a camp of less than three thousand people in late September to more than 10,000 when we arrived. A crowd of hundreds of new arrivals assembled for the orientation, and cars continued to stream in. The camp was denser, active, with buildings going up on all sides. The kitchen where I had worked was gone, and in its place carpenters were literally assembling beams around Chairman Archambault as he spoke.

Lydia Sigo, a friend of mine from childhood, was camped at the end of Flag Road with her friend Shar, and she invited us to join them, offering smoked salmon. The Trump election haunted all of us. Lydia pointed out that the religious tests being proposed for Muslims echo a lesser-known restriction on religious liberties: Native American religion was illegal in this country until 1975. Let your mind boggle a moment. Now we cannot deny that we are all in this fight together.

We set up camp nearby and walked to Turtle Island. A sacred burial site of the Standing Rock people, where LaDonna Brave Bull Allard's son is buried, Turtle Island overlooks the drill pad where vertical drilling had already begun. Turtle Island had been the site of peaceful prayer since the beginning of the gathering, and at one point protectors in canoes had built an ingenious floating footbridge to the Island. Now Turtle Island was under siege, with paramilitary officers in armored Humvees stationed on top, the whole island ringed with spools of concertina wire and blasted with high-powered light. We were able to walk to the water's edge, where canoes, shot full of holes by police, were beached among the razor wire on the frozen shoreline. A small crowd had gathered in the dusk, and a man waved an enormous inverted American flag up towards the soldiers, his legs spread wide with the effort, Lydia was near tears, yelling up to the officers. "Are any of you veterans? This is a burial ground! Imagine that those are your grandfathers buried here, aren't you ashamed?"

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Across the frozen water of the Cannonball, we could see a lone tipi on the icy shore of Turtle Island under the lights and weapons trained down on it, isolated and surrounded. The sound of drumming and singing rose from the tipi and carried clear across the ice, a lone voice rising, and then repeated by a chorus of warriors. The situation was desperate, asymmetrical, dire, and yet this image of indelible resistance was heartening: it made my heart feel stronger.

One of the things that is so remarkable about Oceti Sakowin is how peaceful it is, maybe loving would be an even better word to describe it. Being there you feel loved. I'm not a religious person, but I understand faith can be a transformative force. Faith in others, this feeling of love, is the most basic power that people have, life power. As a young artist, I had tried to look outside the world of art for ideas of performance and action in the world, and the almost mythological founding of the American Indian Movement during the occupation of Alcatraz Island for 18 months in 1969 was, to me, one of the greatest acts of political theater in modern times. The occupation of the former high-security prison became a foundational moment in Native activism, and its young leaders, including Wilma Mankiller, Richard Oakes, LaNada Means, and John Trudell, were provocative, funny, and inventive. It was like they were doing performance art in real life.

After the Alcatraz occupation ended, the young pan-Indian movement to protect native treaty rights moved to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where it was tested and nearly destroyed by the FBI and National Guard in 1973. In the siege that ended AIM's occupation of the small town of Wounded Knee, the federal government employed armored personnel carriers, rifles, grenade launchers, and 130,000 rounds of ammunition in a series of firefights that left Leonard Peltier in prison for crimes he did not commit and several people dead. During the 71-day occupation of the town, as federal agents blockaded the area to prevent food and medical supplies from reaching them, the occupiers survived on what they had, sustained by this obstinate faith in their love for one another. A photo taken during the armed standoff shows the interior of the AIM Medical Clinic, as they called it. An empty room, devoid of supplies, with a painted message on the wall:

Bleeding stops if you press on it hard enough.

I was struck by the blunt fatalism, like the words of Low Dog. There is something funny about laughing at death; I like that. But it is also a serious expression of faith in the power of

words to protect you, if that's all you have. I had Bea tattoo the words on my forearm in New York City in 2001, and they have protected me ever since. As Dorothee and I stood there under the lights of our brutal new America, I took strength from those words and what they mean today. Under any other circumstances, families camping through winter storm conditions with only limited resources, under threat by the most powerful military in the world, would be a humanitarian crisis. And yet it feels safe here, joyful even. Native people have been doing this for thousands of years, and it shows. This fragile settlement provides medical services, food, and shelter to all who come, and people are healing here. What is most surprising, though, is that Standing Rock is a place where new art is being made, constantly. I heard it. Around us we could hear songs rising from the fires of the camp, singing coming from all sides as night set in. This will not be another Wounded Knee, it won't be because this time none of us are alone, this is all our home. We live here.

Image credits: Overlooking Oceti Sakowin camp on the day after Trumpsgiving (p. 98). Flags along a fence in the path of the Dakota Access Pipeline (p. 101). Behind me, land clearance on the pipeline has damaged and destroyed sacred Lakota archeological resources and burial sites (which I did not photograph). Wood for the Oceti Sakowin sacred fire, donated from all over (p. 104). Benjamin Conrad, Wind River Arapaho (p. 107). A lone tipi at the base of Turtle Island (p. 110).

The Oceti Sakowin fire was allowed to burn to ashes on January 12, 2017, but the struggle to defeat the Dakota Access Pipeline continues and now needs our help more urgently than ever. Nearly two thousand people are still camped in subzero conditions, and supplies, donations, and support are all greatly appreciated.

For more information and to give donations:

Oceti Sakowin Camp
<http://www.ocetisakowincamp.org>

Sacred Stone Camp
<http://sacredstonecamp.org>

Honor the Earth
<http://www.honorearth.org>

Indigenous Environmental Network
<http://www.ienearth.org>

PURPLE FASHION

OSCAR TUAZON

on art and political resistance

DAKOTA ACCESS OIL PIPELINE

interview by CAROLINE GAIMARI

photography by INÈS MANAI



CAROLINE GAIMARI — What is happening at Standing Rock, the Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp where the Cannonball and Missouri rivers meet in North Dakota?

OSCAR TUAZON — It's an organized action to stop the continuation of the Dakota Access Pipeline. There were two proposed pipelines routes: one to the north, which would avoid the water of the Missouri River, but pass near the city of Bismarck. The current route chosen by Energy Transfer Partners was diverted around Bismarck and directly under the Missouri at a point on the treaty lands of the Standing Rock Sioux. The Native Americans objected to it from the very beginning, in 2014. The ETP has gone ahead with the plans, backed by the Bismarck police force via the Army Corps of Engineers, which are supporting this oil pipeline that would go under the Missouri River — which drains all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico. This river provides water for drinking and farming for 18 million people. The idea of putting an oil pipeline under that is unacceptable, especially when it goes through sovereign tribal land. The broader issue here is maintaining the treaties that have been established and are in the process of being broken, and respecting the sovereignty of these tribal nations.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — This situation is also putting the question of clean drinking water at the forefront.

OSCAR TUAZON — Yes. Instead of providing the infrastructure for people to have clean drinking water in cities, our government is putting its resources behind oil companies, or becoming an oil company. We can't trust big oil to essentially determine what clean drinking is going to be for the rest of us. So far, they have a terrible record, with hundreds of burst pipelines all over the country.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — The main fear is that the pipelines will burst?

OSCAR TUAZON — It's not a fear! It's now basically a fact. In California, just up the coast above Malibu, at Refugio State Beach, there was a pipeline that burst offshore and polluted sea birds and destroyed beach environments all the way down to San Diego. That was two years ago. Environmental regulations in the US are already pretty low to begin with, so there is not too much stopping these projects. In regards to North Dakota, at this time

of exceptionally low gas prices, it's obvious that this pipeline is not needed. There is already an over-production of oil on the market.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Tell me about your first trip to Standing Rock.

OSCAR TUAZON — I went there first at the end of September. I had a couple of days during a break from a teaching assignment in Washington to go over there and volunteer. At that point, things were already heating up; there had already been 40 arrests, and this was after the Labor Day attacks with the German shepherds being sicced on protestors. The pipeline was a little bit further back from the camp. People were chaining themselves to the construction equipment and getting arrested. While I was there, we did a direct action with about 100 cars. We left camp and drove through the pipeline area and managed to shut down the work on the pipeline that day. At that point, there were 2,000 or 3,000 at the camp, and now it's over 10,000.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — You stayed overnight?

OSCAR TUAZON — Yes, I camped by the river. I had to go back the next day, but already in a very short time I saw some of the incredible leaders of the movement speaking around the sacred fire. David Archambault II, the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux, was there around the fire from morning until night.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Did that first visit inspire you to go back?

OSCAR TUAZON — It was really an incredible experience. When I got back from Standing Rock, I started to think about how I could contribute. This is a movement that is much bigger than me, of course. I am trying to participate as an artist is able to, but keeping in mind that labor and donations are what they need. One of the things that is so beautiful about the camp is that there is really an egalitarian spirit — each person's contribution is valuable, at the level that you are able to contribute.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Did you provide structures for the camp?

OSCAR TUAZON — I'm working on it. Unfortunately that hasn't happened just yet. I chopped wood. I worked in the kitchen making coffee. I donated my

PURPLE FASHION

[PURPLE NEWS]



SHELTERS, EXHIBITION VIEW, 2016, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, PARIS

tent, my sleeping bags, and all the supplies that I had brought on my first visit. I donated more supplies on my second visit. I had intended to build a tent; it's kind of a Quonset-type structure. Last April, I did a show at Chantal Crousel called "Shelters," and the main structure there was a Quonset tent. It was kind of a model shelter.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Did you have this kind of emergency scenario in mind?
OSCAR TUAZON — I didn't make it for any one particular need or destination. I was thinking about a specific problem, however: a space for one family. At that time, in Paris, it really resonated with the camps in Calais that were about to be cleared at that point. Coming back to the US — when I became aware of what was going on at Standing Rock — a light bulb went off in my mind: that tent really belongs at Standing Rock. But by being there, I understood that coming up with a simple process of building was more important than a finished product. Trying to make an architectural toolbox, using what's available. This tent is smaller, more efficient, easier to build on site. A set of bent steel tube frames make an ellipsoid half-circle about 6 feet high, 8 feet wide, and these frames can be extended as long as you want the tent to be. Something you can set up in a day and, with a small stove and the proper insulation, should be able to be used as shelter and sleeping space in North Dakota winter.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — What kind of emergency structures did you find at the camp?

OSCAR TUAZON — The structures being built there are really interesting. It's been an amazing seminar in temporary emergency architecture, in a lot of different forms. Of course, tipis predominate, and you can see why they have worked in that environment for thousands of years. But there are also wigwams, yurts, geodesic domes. And now, more and more heated, semi-permanent wood structures. In just that one month in between my visits, I could see how this informal camp had become a town of its own. There are streets, emergency services, a school. There's commerce without money. Everything except weapons, drugs, and alcohol. It's utopian urban planning in action, and the energy of this makeshift city embodies so many of the things I try to do in my own work.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Is this your main focus right now?

OSCAR TUAZON — I think it is an environment where my work can be useful. Thinking as an artist — what I think about the most is function and utility, and the apparent paradox of a useful artwork. It's not a paradox. This is a real-life situation where the models that we've developed in the art world can really be tested out. For me, it's important to extend the range and power of what an artwork can do beyond the confines of an art context. Art and culture play a huge role in the movement — from the singing and ceremony at the camp to the banners that are being produced, the media that is being created, the structures that are being put up. It's an incredibly rich context in which to work.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Is there a risk or a necessity for art to become so closely linked to a political context?

OSCAR TUAZON — Being an artist and making an artwork is inevitably a political act. Sometimes you think about it less than at other times, or you can try to deny it, but it's always there. I've always thought that an artwork has to be tough. It has to be able to fend for itself in the world. Of course, there is a risk. As an artist, you have a voice, and if you can't risk working in public, then you probably shouldn't be working. As an artist, you have to know who your audience is; you need to know whom you're working for. And you need to be realistic about what the work can actually do. The kind of work that I have always been interested in engages the public, happens in public — Vito Acconci, Group Material, Felix Gonzales-Torres. The things that capitalize on the public spheres of the art world to do something more interesting than simply produce objects.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Who is present at the camp?

OSCAR TUAZON — It's a broad coalition. There are over 300 native nations represented there, and many of them have permanent camps. The camps are drawing people from all over the world. I met people from Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Japan ... it's such a universally resonant environmental message. It's so basic, really. Clean drinking water. Especially here in California, water rights and water struggles are a forefront topic. And it's no different in other countries — the issue affects us all.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — Why do you think Americans don't make environmental protection a priority?

OSCAR TUAZON — It's always framed in really deceptive ways. It's framed on short-term economics; like the whole idea of reopening coal plants — it has a short-term economic effect, but it leaves a long-term environmental cost that eventually has to be cleaned up, so we sign ourselves up for years of destruction that will have to be paid for eventually. DAPL [Dakota Access Pipeline] is a perfect example of this: a \$3.8 billion pipeline that will make a small circle of investors some short-term money, but it would create environmental devastation that will last for generations. And I think people are finally sick of paying that long-term environmental cost.

CAROLINE GAIMARI — What may be the outcome of these protests?

OSCAR TUAZON — Whatever happens in North Dakota, the movement crystallizing here has set a precedent of historic importance. There is a consistent pattern in America of genocide, disenfranchisement, land grabs. This touches really close to home, having grown up on Suquamish treaty lands in Washington State, and seeing how tribal water rights and land rights have played a pivotal role in environmental protection. The Fish Wars of the '60s and '70s established the power of native sovereignty to protect fish habitat and clean water, something we all benefit from. Veterans of the Fish Wars are there now. Being at camp is an incredible intellectual experience where these histories and struggles across generations are coming together, peacefully. There is a pan-tribal movement growing; it's been growing for decades, but now we really see the strength of this movement at Standing Rock — over 300 native nations standing together to defeat this pipeline and build enthusiasm for the fights to come.

END



VALDOIE

LE PONT DE L'ARSOT REND HOMMAGE AUX « INDIGÈNES »

À la fois solennelle et familiale, l'inauguration du monument d'Oscar Tuazon, dédié à la mémoire des commandos d'Afrique, était hier très au-delà des polémiques.

20/11/2016 à 05:00, actualisé à 21:19



Le préfet Hugues Besancenot avec l'artiste Oscar Tuazon (au centre) et Xavier Douroux, de la Fondation de France (à gauche). Photo Pascal LAINÉ

photo
HD
(abonnés)

préc.

suiv.

1 / 8





« Les hommes construisent trop de murs et pas assez de pont ». C'est en citant Isaac Newton que le préfet Hugues Besancenot a conclu son propos. Avant, le représentant de l'État a rappelé le 22 novembre 1944, quand « 127 hommes des commandos d'Afrique ont vaillamment combattu pour maîtriser le fort de Roppe et éviter que les Allemands ne reprennent Belfort. Ce fut une bataille dure, sanglante, décisive, mais à l'issue de laquelle 40 soldats dont six officiers sur sept furent tués, et 40 blessés ».

Quelques instants plus tard, les noms - en grande partie à consonance maghrébine - de ces 40 soldats morts pour la France étaient égrenés. Le traditionnel appel des morts des cérémonies patriotiques prenait ici un sens particulier, en présence des enfants de la Clé d'Offemont, dont les noms évoquent aussi l'autre rive de la Méditerranée.

Rapprocher les hommes

Oscar Tuazon, l'auteur américain du double pont, qui pointe à la fois vers le Lion de Belfort et vers le port d'Alger, a lui aussi dit combien son œuvre doit servir la mémoire et rapprocher les hommes.

Xavier Douroux, médiateur de l'action nouveaux commanditaires de la Fondation de France, maître d'œuvre du projet, dit sa joie d'avoir mené à bien ce projet, « initialement voulu par les anciens combattants du secteur, soutenu par l'ancien président du conseil départemental ». Il a une pensée pour Michel Schroll, ancien élu offemontois qui a porté le projet depuis le début, et le maire Pierre Carles, qui sont passés au-dessus de leurs divergences politiques pour que le Pont voit le jour.

Comme le résume le préfet : « 72 ans après, cet épisode terrible de la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale que nous célébrons est un symbole des rencontres intergénérationnelles, de la solidarité et du lien social, conduit avec détermination et enthousiasme, par le monde associatif et de l'éducation ».

Pascal LAINÉ

LE TEMPS

Art Basel, version urbaine et gratuite



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

La grande messe de l'art contemporain distille aussi quelques œuvres et événements dans l'espace public, malgré la météo.

Le prix d'une entrée journalière à Art Basel est de 50 francs, 29 francs si l'on entre après 17h. Rien à redire si l'on se réfère au nombre et à la qualité des œuvres qui sont exposées ici. Il reste aussi possible de profiter un peu de la foire sans déboursier un centime. Celle-ci est en effet aussi présente dans la cité. Et ce premier accès donnera sans doute l'envie à certains de plonger une fois dans les immenses halles de la Messeplatz.

Le Parcours est né pour faire le lien entre la foire et la ville. Il est un événement de liaison, les habitants se voyant ainsi entrouvrir l'univers d'Art Basel et les visiteurs de la foire étant ainsi incités à découvrir la Cité rhénane, à s'aventurer dans ses ruelles.

Pour sa septième édition, le Parcours, qui a investi différents quartiers de la ville, dans le Petit-Bâle notamment, prend maintenant ses aises autour de la Münsterplatz et de cette cathédrale rose qui reste emblématique de la ville. Il a été confié cette année à un nouveau commissaire, Samuel Leuenberger, fondateur et curateur de Salts, un espace d'exposition indépendant à Birsfelden (Bâle-Campagne).

Silhouettes sculptées sur la Münsterplatz

Il est vrai que cette année, la météo n'est pas propice à la balade et que souvent les œuvres semblent se désoler sous les flots. Une part d'entre elles sont visibles à toute heure, simplement posées dans l'espace public, mais on se fiera tout de même aux horaires pour apprécier aussi celles qui se cachent dans des cours fermées ou des institutions.

Un Parcours Night est par ailleurs prévu samedi de 18h à minuit, qui verra s'ajouter aux installations toute une série de performances. Une signalétique est mise en place, des bornes donnent le plan de

LE TEMPS

l'ensemble du parcours, chaque étape est signalée et la Chine en effet bâtit plus de parc d'attractions que n'importe quel pays au monde, bien décidée à développer son industrie touristique œuvre documentée.

C'est ainsi un plaisir de voir les sculptures de Hans Josephsohn peupler la Münsterplatz. Décédé en 2012 à Zurich à 92 ans, l'artiste a travaillé la figure humaine, modelant ses pièces en plâtre avant de les fondre en bronze. Ses formes monolithiques ne représentent personne en particulier même si des femmes proches de l'artiste ont posé pour lui. Au-delà de leur rudesse apparente, elles semblent en fait rassembler la somme de notre humanité depuis le commencement des temps.

Des vagues échouées

A l'opposé, c'est un clin d'œil à notre civilisation automobile que fait l'Américaine Virginia Overton avec son pick-up démonté et réassemblé sans plus d'utilité aucune. Ce drôle de jeu de plots, œuvre sans titre, de 2012 est posé dans la cour du Département des constructions de la Ville de Bâle. On verra ainsi au fil du parcours des pièces de Sam Durant, Alberto Garutti, Allan McCollum ou Ivan Navarro.

On croisera peut-être aussi les distributeurs de curieuses petites boîtes en cartons. Elles figurent des vagues s'échouant sur une plage. Une plage de détresse et de tristesse. Alfredo Jaar recrée aujourd'hui en faveur des victimes de la crise des migrants *The Gift/Le Don*, une œuvre qu'il avait imaginée en faveur des victimes du génocide du Rwanda. Cette fois, quand on déploie la boîte, on peut lire que c'est à l'organisme Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) qu'iront les fonds récoltés grâce à cet appel. MOAS a déjà sauvé quelque 12 000 personnes, en Méditerranée mais aussi dans le golfe du Bengale.

La pluie n'est pas non plus très aimable avec l'installation d'Oscar Tuazon sur la Messeplatz. L'artiste de Los Angeles reprend la structure de la Zoom House développée par l'architecte et ingénieur solaire californien Steve Bear dans les années 1960. Ces coques en bois, ouvertes au sud, protégées sur leur flanc par des sacs qui donnent l'impression d'une situation d'urgence – comme en écho aux mesures exceptionnelles de sécurité à l'entrée de la foire – devraient fonctionner comme des abris pour les pauses et les rendez-vous des visiteurs, ou même pour des événements plus officiels. Mais à vrai dire, on n'y voit peu de monde.

Samedi et dimanche, les éclaircies seront, on l'espère, au rendez-vous pour y découvrir le projet *Green Light* d'Olafur Eliasson. Si le titre est symbolique, comme un feu vert aux migrants, c'est aussi une action concrète, faite d'ateliers de fabrication de ce modèle de lampes, des modules aux petites lumières émeraude dont les formes sont de fait assez cohérentes avec la construction d'Oscar Tuazon.

Art Basel, jusqu'au 19 juin.
www.artbasel.com

Art Review:

Ariana Reines & Oscar Tuazon *PUBIC SPACE*

Modern Art, London 25 February – 9 April

The sculptural genre of the herm originated in ancient Greece as a mere heap of rocks or crude pillar of stone or wood. In time it acquired a head, sometimes a torso and usually male genitals, as though plonked onto the carved and squared-off column. Herms were apotropaic objects, protective or guiding figures placed at crossroads, on borders, in front of tombs. Guardians of some kind of passage, in other words – thus apt subjects for collaboration between artforms. As the poet Ariana Reines tells it, the exhibition *PUBIC SPACE* was first mooted when she performed at an Oscar Tuazon opening in Paris in 2009: ‘He said we should do something together called “Mein Cock”, which is the title of a memoir by the protagonist/antagonist of a book of mine, *Coeur de Lion*. I said we should make herms.’

The result is a show populated by rough-hewn sculptural columns that are not unlike much of Tuazon’s work to date: elongated agglomerations of wood, metal, concrete and

plaster that partake of an aesthetic the LA-based artist calls ‘outlaw architecture’. There are two of these herms in the first room at Modern Art, side by side like gateway ornaments. They are called *MA* and *PA* (all works 2016): the first a tower of wood and concrete topped with burning candles and affixed with a stained polystyrene coffee cup at its notional crotch level, the second taller and capped with a bucket of soapy water that drips constantly into a hollow cylindrical concrete base. A few printouts of Reines’s poems are messily pasted onto the wooden bodies of *MA* and *PA*, another stuffed into the grey sump below, where an image of a primitive Greek herm also languishes.

The precise nature of the collaboration between Reines and Tuazon is otherwise unclear from the work itself. It turns out they spent two weeks working together at Tuazon’s studio, making for example the lumps of soap that protrude here and there from the five herms in the show’s second space. But what of thematic,

conceptual or formal affinities between the work of writer and artist? Reines’s poetry – in books such as *The Cow* (2006), *Mercury* (2011) and *The Origin of the World* (2014) – typically pitches confessional energy against conceptual awareness. Her writing snatches voraciously from literary history, high theory and social media; her monologist personae are given to highbrow citations and mundane musings, seized also with confused desires and ambitions. In ‘Trying to see the proportional relation’, she writes: ‘I have no idea / What it feels like to have / A cock. Sometimes I feel / As though I’m getting close / To understanding and then / Something happens to make / Me have no clue again.’

In light of such lines, the herms in *PUBIC SPACE* seem like tragicomic assertions of the cultural ubiquity and comic vulnerability of the phallus, and the collaboration an erudite and extended dick joke. The thing about classical herms is that sooner or later they tended to have their genitals snapped clean off. *Brian Dillon*



OLD SPICE, 2016, concrete, wood, soap, paint, buckets, tap, water, leaf, paper, poems, 231 × 43 × 86 cm. Courtesy Stuart Shave / Modern Art, London



Oscar Tuazon, *Zome Alloy*, projection pour Art Basel 2016.
© Oscar Tuazon.

UNE ŒUVRE D'OSCAR TUAZON AU CŒUR D'ART BASEL

> L'artiste américain Oscar Tuazon installera une nouvelle œuvre au cœur de Bâle, en Suisse, à l'occasion d'Art Basel du 13 au 19 juin 2016, ont annoncé les organisateurs de la foire, hier, lundi. Installée sur Messeplatz, *Zome Alloy* sera une adaptation de la structure architecturale *Zome House*, conçue en 1972 par Steve Baer. Ce pavillon en aluminium démontable accueillera divers événements sur le thème de l'habitat. Là encore, le thème des conférences sera emprunté à Steve Baer, qui avait organisé un cycle de rencontres similaires sous son édifice à La Luz (Nouveau Mexique) en 1969. Contrairement au module architectural d'origine fabriqué à la main, la version d'Oscar Tuazon est entièrement réalisée à l'aide de technologies de pointe.

www.artbasel.com



Flash Art

Oscar Tuazon

Chantal Crousel / Paris

Urban pandemonium pullulates. Lagos, Shenzhen, Calcutta and Mexico City are the nightmare of anti-metropolitan ideologies, from the late nineteenth-century Lebensreform movement to Situationists who sanctioned the city as a "concrete cemetery." Even though, in his latest solo show at Chantal Crousel, Oscar Tuazon's exploration of the neo-Thoreauvian forces of the 1970s could at first glance fall into that category, he manages to inject ambiguity into a scene that could have been dulled by romantic nostalgia.

The exhibition is dominated by three metal structures directly inspired by survivalist architecture. Installed in the center of the gallery, *Quonset Tent* (2016) borrows its semi-circular shape from the ephemeral modules used by military or polar expeditions. Unlike the archetypal model, the sculpture's transparent surface emphasizes occupants instead of hiding them. Here, the metallic skeleton does not parasitically merge with the architecture, as in Tuazon's solo show at Kunsthalle Bern, but enters into metonymical interplay with the gallery space. Reading rooms stand on each side of the structure. Built out of metallic panels sutured together, they offer a suspect moment of isolation in the monitored space of the white cube. Benches, sporadically installed, serve as reading platforms for the magazine *Vonulife*, a cult libertarian fanzine published in the '70s that indexed tips, schemas, political analysis and small ads for the survivalist community.

Despite abhorring the very idea of superstructure, the latter cherished an almost irrational faith in architecture. Appropriated from Buckminster Fuller's designs, the dome became an emblem for their cult of paranoia, the temple in which the threat of nuclear war and the military-industrial conspiracy could be relentlessly adored. Images of hunters and animals are displayed sparsely within the exhibition. They were shot in the forest by cameras equipped with motion detectors, normally used to prevent poaching. In this context, they seem to act as the depleted emblem for a community that has been offering perpetual amnesia instead of iconography.

by Charles Teyssou



From top:
Oscar Tuazon
Wall shelter (2016)
Courtesy of the Artist and
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
Photography by
Florian Kleinfenn

Ceal Floyer
Helix (2015)
Courtesy of the Artist and
Esther Schipper, Berlin
Photography by
Andrea Rossetti

"The Playground Project"
Installation view at
Kunsthalle Zürich (2016)
Courtesy of Kunsthalle Zürich
Photography by Annik Wetter



ARTFORUM

Paris

Oscar Tuazon

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL

10 rue Charlot

March 5–April 16

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Oscar Tuazon's current exhibition, appropriately titled "Shelters," examines the twinned specters of hope and idealism through industrial design through the lens of his Pacific Northwest upbringing.

The nucleus of this show is Quonset Tent (all works 2016), a semicylindrical structure of aluminum and glass, which has been kitted out with floor planks, a door with a porthole window, and a suspended table, all made out of wood. This utilitarian-looking domicile is modeled and named after a style of prefab military hut popular during World War II. It's a versatile space and could function as anything—from provisional disaster housing to a backyard hobby shed. (It also looks a lot like the charging stations for Autolib', Paris's electric-car-sharing service.) Walking through its invisible walls stirs up visions of the many promises—and failures—of utopian architecture.

Installed throughout the gallery are ten of the artist's cantilevered white steel Reading Benches. Each Plexiglas-covered seat and backrest holds an issue of VONUlife, an anarchist paper from Oregon, published from 1971–72, that espoused a sustainable, radical existence and the "search for personal freedom" by "opting out" of modern life. Trying to glean the periodical's super-tiny, jam-packed texts makes one feel at once roused and lost—perhaps like VONUlife's editors, who apparently just dropped off the grid one day and disappeared into the woods. Maybe the best kind of shelter for a contemporary survivalist—or pragmatist—is simply a resolute state of mind.

— Jo-ey Tang



View of "Oscar Tuazon," 2016.

«Valdoie : l'artiste Oscar Tuazon a imaginé « le pont sans fin »», *l'Est Républicain*, March 21st, 2016.
<http://www.estrepublicain.fr/edition-belfort-hericourt-montbeliard/2016/03/21/valdoie-l-artiste-oscar-tuazon-a-imagine-le-pont-sans-fin>



VALDOIE : L'ARTISTE OSCAR TUAZON A IMAGINÉ « LE PONT SANS FIN »

Oscar Tuazon est né en 1975 à Tacoma, dans l'État de Washington. Fils d'éditeurs, il a étudié les arts à la Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Il a également étudié l'architecture. D'abord installé à New York, il a déménagé pour Paris en 2007. Il a vécu plusieurs années en France. Son épouse Dorothee Perret est française. L'artiste travaille aujourd'hui à Los Angeles.

Le magazine Vogue, qui lui a consacré une interview en 2011, estime qu'Oscar Tuazon « fait évoluer son art aux frontières de l'architecture, de l'habitat précaire ou de la ruine ».

Travaillant souvent le bois, le béton, l'acier et le verre, il crée des sculptures monumentales, inspirées du land art. Ses œuvres sont d'ailleurs parfois... des lieux d'exposition. Comme à la biennale de Venise de 2011 où il a créé l'un des quatre pavillons.

Étoile montante de l'art contemporain, il expose dans toutes les capitales européennes mais aussi à Tokyo et bien entendu aux États-Unis.

«Oscar Tuazon “Shelters” exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris», *Purple.fr*, March 8th, 2016.
<http://purple.fr/diary/oscar-tuazon-shelters-exhibition-at-galerie-chantal-crousel-paris/>

PURPLE.FR

PURPLE ART

[March 8 2016]

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



OSCAR TUAZON “SHELTERS” EXHIBITION AT GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, PARIS

Photo Inès Manai

«Oscar Tuazon “Shelters” exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris», *Purple.fr*, March 8th, 2016.
<http://purple.fr/diary/oscar-tuazon-shelters-exhibition-at-galerie-chantal-crousel-paris/>

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[March 8 2016]

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



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OSCAR TUAZON “SHELTERS” EXHIBITION AT GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, PARIS

Photo Inès Manai

Eric Troncy. «Zoom sur l'artiste Oscar Tuazon à l'occasion de son exposition "Shelters" à la Galerie Chantal Crousel», *Numero* 732, March 2016.

<http://www.numero.com/fr/art/exposition-oscar-tuazon-galerie-chantal-crousel-shelters>

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Zoom sur l'artiste Oscar Tuazon à l'occasion de son exposition "Shelters" à la Galerie Chantal Crousel

Art 05 Mars 2016

Dans un mouvement de lutte permanente avec les espaces d'exposition qui les accueillent, les sculptures d'Oscar Tuazon imposent leur présence pour interroger les notions d'habitation et de foyer, dialoguant ainsi avec l'architecture. Par Éric Troncy.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Oscar Tuazon, *Shelters*

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

Enfin, ce sera Los Angeles. Enfin pour un temps, car Oscar Tuazon a l'âme voyageuse. Né en 1975 à Seattle (État de Washington), il a fait ses études à New York, puis s'est installé plusieurs années à Paris (sa femme, Dorothée Perret, éditrice du magazine Paris, LA, est française) avant de vivre à New York. Enfin, l'an dernier, donc, il a opté pour Los Angeles. Mais la question "Où habiter?" n'est pas le problème pour cet artiste. L'ensemble de son œuvre, en effet, dialogue avec l'architecture sur des modes peu académiques, plutôt autour de la question: "Comment habiter?" D'ailleurs, lui-même est né dans

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un dôme géodésique – une de ces constructions hémisphériques en treillis popularisées par l'architecte R. Buckminster Fuller dans les années 50 – que ses parents avaient édifié. Un épisode qui apparaît rétrospectivement comme un sérieux point de départ – ou contribue à donner à l'histoire de Tuazon la dimension héroïque qu'on aime attendre d'un artiste, a fortiori quand il a pour habitude de transpercer les murs avec des poutres de bois, comme peut en témoigner son ex-appartement familial parisien où l'une de ses constructions sculpturales a proliféré au point de traverser plusieurs pièces, y compris la chambre.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Courtesy Oscar Tuazon et Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich/Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography, Zurich

Windowpane (2013), acier, acrylique, composants électriques, tambour, polystyrène et verre, 232 x 172,5 x 119 cm.

Physiquement, Tuazon ressemble à une sorte de paisible petit frère de Larry Clark. Cheveux longs, casquette et hoodie, il a grandi à Tacoma, une petite ville située à deux heures de route de Seattle. "J'ai vu pour la première fois Nirvana alors que j'avais à peine 17 ans", confiait-il à *The Independent*. "À partir de ce moment, j'ai voué une passion au denim et à la flanelle.

Je profitais de mes week-ends pour me rendre au magasin de vêtements d'occasion de la ville voisine. J'y dénichais des polos de bowling et des chemises de paysan sur lesquelles étaient cousus les noms de personnes inconnues. Pour un temps, je pouvais devenir quelqu'un d'autre." Et devenir "quelqu'un d'autre" semble avoir été une préoccupation majeure bien après son adolescence, quand il a poursuivi ses études à New York, à la Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, jusqu'à l'orée des années 2000. "C'était la première fois que je parlais de chez moi. J'essayais de toutes mes forces de me transformer en quelque chose de différent. J'ai connu une phase où je ne portais que des vêtements de créateurs et où j'avais coloré mes cheveux en gris. J'avais d'abord été obligé de les décolorer, puis je leur avais appliqué une teinte bleuâtre. Je pense que j'essayais d'attirer l'attention, et pas de la meilleure façon qui soit."

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Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Courtesy Oscar Tuazon et Galerie
Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

Word Rain (2013), acier, acrylique,
composants électriques, tambour,
matériaux d'isolation et verre, 232 x
172,5 x 119 cm.

Il est effectivement devenu “quelqu’un d’autre”, mais, plus que ses choix vestimentaires, c’est son art qui l’a distingué. Un art qui embrasse des moments apparemment antinomiques de l’histoire récente des formes, et les conjugue avec une indiscutable grâce. À ce sujet, les hashtags qui, sur Instagram, s’attachent aux textes concernant son œuvre sont éloquents : #do-it-yourself, #hippie, #minimalisme et #artepovera. Pas faux, en effet, si l’on accorde à ces termes les significations simplifiées qu’ils ont acquises. Ses grandes constructions en bois (la partie la plus saillante de son œuvre) sont d’ambitieuses sculptures qui imposent leur logique à celle de l’espace qui les accueille. Peu disposées aux concessions, elles dictent l’évidence de leur tracé, la nécessité de leur forme, les exigences de leur déploiement et contrarient les usages, infirment les fonctions. Un mur placé au mauvais endroit sera ainsi percé pour qu’une poutre le traverse. Les espaces d’exposition semblent unilatéralement humiliés par ces occupations irrespectueuses, vaincus, K.-O. L’expérience est saisissante, plutôt unique. Aucun bavardage inutile ne vient étayer cette voluptueuse mise à mal, sinon ce qui pourrait s’apparenter à un impératif sculptural. Il y a en vérité chez Tuazon davantage de Mark di Suvero et d’Anthony Caro que de Sol LeWitt, et on ajouterait bien à la litanie des hashtags celui de #expressionnismeabstrait.

Eric Troncy. «Zoom sur l'artiste Oscar Tuazon à l'occasion de son exposition "Shelters" à la Galerie Chantal Crousel», *Numero* 732, March 2016.

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C'est cependant chez un héros de l'histoire de la performance qu'il semble avoir ajusté les paramètres de son art. Étudiant, au début des années 2000, du célèbre et envié Independent Study Program du Whitney Museum of American Art, Tuazon y rencontra Vito Acconci qui, s'il s'est illustré dans les années 60 par des performances qui marquèrent l'histoire de l'art, préfère se consacrer depuis une vingtaine d'années à l'architecture. Il a ainsi fondé Acconci Studio, un "studio de réflexion théorique sur le design et la construction".

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Souvent magnifiée, l'histoire avoue rarement que Tuazon y fut engagé pour déménager des caisses. Il sut si bien se rendre utile qu'il devint vite un membre à part entière de l'équipe d'une dizaine d'architectes qui constitue le studio. "Ce que je préfère dans mon métier, c'est qu'il offre la possibilité de travailler avec des gens réellement incroyables. Moi-même, je ne suis pas vraiment un constructeur, même si le marteau ne m'est pas étranger. Je sais aussi souder, mais je ne suis pas particulièrement doué. Après des années passées à travailler le béton, j'en ai toujours une compréhension très grossière. Mais j'aime ce que je fais, et j'ai la chance de pouvoir apprendre ce métier en travaillant avec des gens qui en savent beaucoup plus que moi", avoue-t-il, bien qu'il ne délègue pas la construction de ses œuvres et porte un grand intérêt aux "gens qui bâtissent eux-mêmes leur maison" – comme le firent ses parents. Cette dimension home-made, en contradiction apparente avec la monumentalité de ses œuvres, l'a aussi distingué à une époque où il était bon, pour un artiste, d'avoir à sa disposition une dizaine d'ingénieurs et autant d'assistants. "Ce qui m'intéresse dans la construction, c'est le processus lui-même, j'entends par là l'opération physique de la construction d'une chose plutôt que le design de cette chose."

Shelters d'Oscar Tuazon à la Galerie Chantal Crousel, 10, rue Charlot Paris IIIe, du 5 mars au 16 avril.

Par Éric Troncy



Le top 5 des expos de la semaine

Le jeudi 3 mars 2016

[...]



Oscar Tuazon, *Shelters*, Courtesy de l'artiste et Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Oscar Tuazon

Shelters

Oscar Tuazon puise ses références dans l'architecture underground des années 1960, les dômes futuristes et les structures géométriques de Steve Baer et de Buckminster Fuller. Son exposition *Shelters* nous offre des abris de lecture minimalistes. "Lire est une activité physique. Quelque chose que les corps font avec des mots. Je veux créer un espace dédié à cela. Un espace pour les mots, un endroit où lire", écrit l'artiste.

Si vous n'avez pas de livre sous la main, vous pourrez toujours vous asseoir sur l'un des bancs "Vonulife". Les neufs numéros de ce fanzine libertaire des années 1970 y sont directement incrustés. Vous y apprendrez, entre autre, comment enseigner la lecture à la maison et garder les enfants à distance de l'école publique ou comment réaliser des constructions avec des poutres naturelles. À l'instar des cellules d'Absalon et des capsules d'Andrea Zetti, les abris et bancs de lectures d'Oscar Tuazon invitent à réévaluer nos modes de vie.

Du 5 mars au 16 avril à la galerie Chantal Crousel à Paris [...]



Oscar Tuazon debuts a new site-specific project for his first solo museum exhibition in Los Angeles.

The sculptor Oscar Tuazon works with natural and industrial materials to create inventive and often functional objects, structures, and installations that can be used, occupied, or otherwise engaged by viewers. With a strong interest in and influence from architecture and minimalism, Tuazon turns both disciplines on their heads as he mangles, twists, combines, and connects steel, glass, and concrete as well as two-by-fours, tree trunks, and found objects. For his Hammer Projects show, Tuazon will present a site-specific project displayed across several spaces throughout the museum, establishing and underscoring the relationships between inside and out, the visitors and the works, our bodies and the objects.

Hammer Projects: Oscar Tuazon is organized by Ali Subotnick, curator, with Emily Gonzalez-Jarrett, curatorial associate.

Timeline	
2016	
MAY 15	CLOSING
FEB 10	Lunchtime Art Talks Curator Talk on Oscar Tuazon
FEB 6	OPENING

Ali Subotnick. «Hammer Projects: Oscar Tuazon», *Hammer ucla*, February, 2016.
<https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2016/hammer-projects-oscar-tuazon/>



MUSEUM ADMISSION IS FREE
 OPENING TODAY AT 11AM



HAMMER PROJECTS: OSCAR TUAZON



Oscar Tuazon, *Pipe Prototype*, 2015



Oscar Tuazon, *Natural Man*, 2015



Oscar Tuazon, *An Error*, 2011



Oscar Tuazon, *process view of Sun Riot (scale model)*, 2015



Oscar Tuazon, *Vena Contracta*, 2015



Hammer Projects: Oscar Tuazon,
 February 6-May 22, 2016



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Hammer Projects: Oscar Tuazon,
 February 6-May 22, 2016



Biography

Oscar Tuazon (b. 1975, Seattle) studied at Cooper Union and the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program, both in New York. He lives and works in Los Angeles. He has shown his work extensively in the United States and Europe, including in solo exhibitions at T-Space, Rhinebeck, New York; Le Consortium Dijon, France; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and the Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin. In 2012 the Public Art Fund, New York, presented three commissioned outdoor works in Brooklyn Bridge Park. Tuazon's work has been featured in several important international group exhibitions, including the 5th Beaufort, Triennial of Contemporary Art by the Sea, Oostende, Belgium; the 2012 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and ILLUMInations, 54th Venice Biennale.

Essay

Architectural structures serve a specific function of providing shelter, a space shielded from the elements, separate from the environment and the unpredictable chaos of the natural world. For the artist Oscar Tuazon, architecture provides an opportunity both to engage order and to disrupt it with controlled chaos. On more than one occasion he has presented the footprint of his home inside the confines of a gallery, provoking a reconsideration of our relationship to shelter and domestic space. In the summer of 2015 Tuazon staged a performance at the alternative space Paradise Garage, in Venice, California. The freestanding garage, which was utilized as a gallery, was being torn down to make way for a new structure. In a dramatic fashion, Tuazon yanked down the garage, using a rope attached to a come-along, in less than a minute as spectators looked on, desperately trying to film the action before the building was completely flattened. This seemingly simple gesture demonstrated key aspects of his work. He is simultaneously an admirer of architecture and nature and an iconoclast, more than willing to tear something down in order to salvage its parts and resurrect it into a new form and/or function. Reusing and recycling are key for Tuazon as he frequently incorporates recycled two-by-fours, discarded building materials (including doors and windows), unwanted steel or aluminum, and fallen trees. His sculptures and installations often merge wood and tree parts with industrial materials such as metal, glass, and concrete. Integrating the organic with the inorganic establishes a tension but also in many cases creates an unexpected harmony. Tuazon produces objects and environments that draw out humanity's relationship to buildings, interior and exterior spaces, and other objects and structures.

Tuazon's frequent inclusion of trees in his work is often linked to his childhood in the Pacific Northwest. But he has also spent a significant portion of his life living in urban environments, including New York and Paris and now Los Angeles. This duality pervades his work, especially his materials: we feel the influence of the metropolis in the concrete and steel and that of the forests of Washington state in his use of trees and wood. In Los Angeles, a city in which the urban and natural coexist, Tuazon takes full advantage of the landscape, often traveling to the nearby desert and mountains.

Recently Tuazon acquired some land near the Washington coast, where he is constructing an artwork that will also function as a home. He started with a concrete slab and has slowly been building it out. The piece reflects the artist's interest in providing a social platform and function through his artwork. He isn't simply conceiving of and constructing objects to be looked at; he wants his viewers to actively engage



with and participate in the work. The Trees (2011), Tuazon's contribution to the 2011 Venice Biennale, took the form of an outdoor pavilion. The structure, made out of concrete walls precariously leaning on one another for support, provided a space for a variety of performers to present their works. The siting of his works also plays an important role. For his 2012–13 Public Art Fund project, titled *People*, he installed three distinct sculptures in Brooklyn Bridge Park: a small open cube pierced by a tree, a basketball hoop, and a tree sculpture. By situating his works in a park, he allowed the public's engagement to activate the pieces, and the three works eventually merged into the landscape rather than standing apart from their surroundings.

A Machine (2012), one of the works for *People*, consists of a forked tree planted in the grass, with a very slow stream of water emanating from its trunk. Like a tuning fork or divining rod, the tree appears to conjure up moisture from deep below the grassy surface. In a similar vein, *Natural Man* (2015), which will be presented in one of the planters in the Hammer Museum's outdoor courtyard, features a tree that has been given a fork shape by the addition of a concrete appendage. Like *A Machine*, the new work emits a slow stream of water, barely noticeable at times as it trickles silently from a knot in the black oak's trunk. The sculpture is an upright version of a shape that Tuazon has been exploring over the last few years in a variety of materials and dimensions. When upright, it resembles a Y with two arms reaching to the sky and coming together in a sturdy base rooted in the earth. On its back, however, the form becomes more of a V, its hollow legs sprawled open, serving a new function as passageways for air or water. For a recent project on the Greek island of Antiparos, Tuazon inset two tubes into a hillside, and the circular openings peered out of the landscape like a pair of eyes. The openings can be tunnels to transport water or air or light—or windows into another space or time. The shape is a conduit, a connector, and yet in Tuazon's hands it can become so much more: a bench, a monument, or an empty vessel. By exploiting the various manifestations of and uses for this shape, he opens up our experience of and relationship to this seemingly ordinary form.

For his Hammer Projects exhibition, Tuazon has conceived of a presentation of four variations on the form. In addition to *Natural Man*, there will be a concrete version placed on its back, also situated in the museum's outdoor areas. A third concrete work features an additional appendage, and this three-legged version no longer functions as a potential pipe because the three tubes merge in the back, so there is no outlet. The fourth element will be a large, nearly seven-foot-diameter aluminum tube piercing the west wall of the gallery and butting up to the window. From outside, passersby can gaze into the tube and beyond, into the gallery space and museum lobby. Tuazon envisions this work as a passageway for visitors, who can walk through the tube right up to the window and gain an entirely new perspective on the interior and exterior of the building. Working with and against the architecture of the space, this piece compels visitors to reassess their physical relationship to the gallery and the sculpture.

An underlying theme of the project is water. As any Angeleno can attest, water, or more specifically the lack of water, is a constant, growing concern. The story of water in Southern California is particularly poignant and dramatic. In 1913 the city of Los Angeles completed construction of the first aqueduct (233 miles long) to bring water to the city, which until then had depended on the insufficient Los Angeles River. William Mulholland, an Irish immigrant who headed the agency that was the predecessor to the Department of Water and Power, is credited with spearheading the plan to source water from the Owens River Valley. The larger-than-life story, too long to detail here, continues even today. Recently Tuazon noticed a monument to Mulholland in the Los Feliz neighborhood, in front of the Mulholland Memorial Fountain. The piece is a nine-foot riveted circular section of the original steel aqueduct, repurposed



as a site-specific sculpture. Echoing Tuazon's works, the pipe-sculpture takes on new meaning as it memorializes the never-ending struggle to provide water to the region. Water certainly isn't the only material transported in such pipes and tubes, but it is an unavoidable reference in the midst of an environmental crisis that threatens to paralyze and transform the region. Like the aqueduct monument, Tuazon's project underscores our tangled relationships with the environment, the industrial, and the organic.

-Ali Subotnick

Charlotte Jansen. «Pipe dreams: Oscar Tuazon emulates LA's aqueducts in his latest body of work», *Wallpaper*,
February 10, 2016.

<http://www.wallpaper.com/art/oscar-tuazon-emulates-los-angeles-aqueducts-in-new-work#145612>

Wallpaper*

Pipe dreams: Oscar Tuazon emulates LA's aqueducts in his latest body of work

10 Feb 2016

Charlotte Jansen

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



The Los Angeles aqueduct, constructed in 1913, serves as inspiration for architect/artist Oscar Tuazon, who is revisiting the 233 mile-long pipe for an exhibition at Hammer Museum.

Pictured: *Vena Contracta*, 2015

Photography courtesy of the artist and Hammer Museum

Who would have thought a story about an aqueduct could be so salacious? Riddled with corruption, intrigue and drama, the story of the first aqueduct in Los Angeles – completed in 1913 and led by William Mulholland – is well known, thanks to Roman Polanski's 1974 film *Chinatown*. Now it has piqued the interest of architect/artist Oscar Tuazon, who is revisiting the 233 mile-long pipe for an exhibition at the Hammer Museum.

Comprising four elements spread across different areas of the museum, Tuazon has created concrete and aluminium sculptures inspired by a monument to Mulholland that Tuazon came across in the neighbourhood of Los Feliz.

Charlotte Jansen. «Pipe dreams: Oscar Tuazon emulates LA's aqueducts in his latest body of work», *Wallpaper*, February 10, 2016.

<http://www.wallpaper.com/art/oscar-tuazon-emulates-los-angeles-aqueducts-in-new-work#145612>

Wallpaper*

'Mulholland was a strange figure. His aqueduct is the infrastructure that created Los Angeles, a transformative piece of geo-engineering,' says Tuazon. 'It's a massive earth work; you can trace its path on Google Earth like a line drawing. But Mulholland was also responsible for the worst civic engineering disaster in California history: the collapse of the St Francis dam, which flooded the valley with 12 billion gallons of water and killed hundreds of people. The central feature of the Mulholland memorial park is a large Art Deco fountain. Placed in front of the fountain is a piece of the aqueduct, an empty section of pipe. A portrait of Los Angeles.'

He continues: 'I had started thinking of a pipe as a kind of space – not quite architecture because it doesn't have a flat floor – but at the scale of a room. I was building crude models of pipes in the studio, imagining them as apertures, viewing devices that could be placed in a landscape, ways of making connections between places. Plumbing is pure infrastructure. Water pipes, oil pipelines, plumbing – the Hammer is in the former Occidental Petroleum building (now owned by UCLA), so these are not metaphorical connections but they are usually invisible.'

In Southern California, water issues continue to be contentious, and those connections are quickly made with the opposite extremes being experienced on the East Coast and beyond, to the environmental crisis beyond that around the world. Tuazon's work often dismantles – literally and conceptually – the idea of a stable, safe domestic space. (In a recent 2015 work, he crushed a whole freestanding building as a performance at Paradise Garage in Venice, California.)

His new site-specific work unavoidably articulates our troubled relationship with our surroundings and questions the impact of our industrial constructions on the environment. But it isn't simply a cynical critique. His approach to architecture is somehow hopeful. He says, 'An artwork can create spatial situations that don't exist anywhere else, things that would literally be illegal to build as architecture. There are very real practical benefits to this kind of privilege, I try to take advantage of that and build things that should not be built.'

Recently Tuazon, originally from Seattle, acquired some land near the Washington coast, where he is constructing an artwork that will also function as a home. Much like his work at the Hammer, water is a literal and conceptual source, and Tuazon's approach is largely an attempt to reharmonise a relationship to the environment, practically and politically. 'It's a house with one room, on the Hoh River in the Olympic rainforest. It is surrounded by water, it rains constantly, and that defines the house. One of the first things we did was a plumbing project – a rainwater collection tank and a filtration system. It was a good way to understand what water does. Water is the best material for making sculpture, it has a mind of its own, it's alive.'

Charlotte Jansen. «Pipe dreams: Oscar Tuazon emulates LA' s aqueducts in his latest body of work», *Wallpaper*,
February 10, 2016.

<http://www.wallpaper.com/art/oscar-tuazon-emulates-los-angeles-aqueducts-in-new-work#145612>

Wallpaper*

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



The artist explains: 'I was building crude models of pipes in the studio, imagining them as apertures, viewing devices that could be placed in a landscape, ways of making connections between places.'
Pictured: Natural Man, 2015



The new site-specific work expresses our troubled relationship with our surroundings and questions the impact of our industrial constructions on the environment.
Pictured: Pipe Prototype, 2015

Charlotte Jansen. «Pipe dreams: Oscar Tuazon emulates LA' s aqueducts in his latest body of work», *Wallpaper*,
February 10, 2016.

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Wallpaper*



Tuazon says, 'An artwork can create spatial situations that don't exist anywhere else, things that would literally be illegal to build as architecture. There are very real practical benefits to this kind of privilege, I try to take advantage of that and build things that should not be built.'

Pictured: An Error, 2011, installation view



Process view of Sun Riot (scale model), 2015

The New York Times

Six Wild, Western Projects at L.A.’s Least Stuff Art Fair

RACHEL CORBETT

JAN. 29, 2016

Art fairs, typically housed in convention centers and white tents, are rarely wild and woolly affairs. But as the art industry flies southwest this winter for its fair season — anchored in Art Los Angeles Contemporary, held at the Barker Hanger, and Photo LA, at the LA Mart downtown — they will find an exception to this rule at Paramount Ranch. Situated in the Santa Monica Mountains just north of Malibu, the three-year-old event takes place on the eponymous Western film set that served as the backdrop for such horse operas as “Gunfight at the OK Corral” and “Gunsmoke.”

“It engages in capitalism enough to go through the motions” of an art fair, says co-founder Pentti Monkkonen. “But it’s more an enactment because it’s on a set. Even though works do get sold, and there’s a ritual everybody knows, hopefully people make light of it and tease out the fun parts.” Indeed, many of this year’s exhibitors are doing just that by presenting works that play on the setting’s Wild West theme. Here are a few of the highlights.

Caught Red-Footed

The German artist Bea Schlingelhoff is dusting the bridge leading into the replica village with a thin layer of iron oxide, a pigment commonly found in California mineral deposits. As visitors pass and disperse the red earth, their feet will grind the dust, much like artists do to create red paint. “Mineral pigments epitomize our formative cultures” — from the hematite mines in East Mojave to the ocher found in Native American grave sites in California — offers the artist Oscar Tuazon, whose Los Angeles project space Corner Door is presenting Schlingelhoff’s work, in a statement about the project.



Sylvia Lavin and Oscar Tuazon



Oscar Tuazon, *A Person*, 2014, steel, concrete, glass, brick, lamps, paint, image courtesy of the artist

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

A conversation between critic, historian, and curator Sylvia Lavin and artist Oscar Tuazon. The dialogue took place in person at Tuazon's studio in Los Angeles. This is the first time Lavin and Tuazon have spoken.

Sylvia Lavin: Can I ask you just a quick question? It's weirdly wonderful to be thrown into an intimate conversation with somebody you've never met before, so it's hard to know how much preliminary background is useful. But some of it is useful for me.

Oscar Tuazon: Yeah.

SL: The critical reception of your work that I am aware of always frames your work through the lens of the art/architecture problem. Do I have that impression because I come from architecture? Is it imposed as a bias from within the interests of art criticism? Or does it reflect your own thinking? Is that a boring, overworked conversation?

OT: No, for me it's really essential to think about. I guess that's probably where it starts. You know as a sculptor you're thinking—or I was thinking—how does an object work in this space? How does an object intervene in a building? Now, I'm more and more trying to design spaces, and I guess I still do it in a very—I'm not quite sure how to describe it—I don't think that I use design the way that an architect does to solve design problems, but I use the same tools.



Oscar Tuazon, project rendering for Un Pont, image courtesy of the artist SL: Well, I guess I'm thinking that from minimalism on—I mean obviously there's a prehistory to it also—but let's just say in relation to what you're doing, the most relevant history seems the one from minimalism on. I suppose you could describe that history as having added various things to the debate, so let's say: architectural materials, an architectural situation is part of it. I don't think that when you're looking at a Carl Andre floor, let's say, that you're really thinking of it as an architectural floor—you wouldn't hire him to do your floor.

OT: Right.

SL: But people have hired Jorge Pardo to do their floors. I know you had a conversation with Pardo along these lines, because I looked it up on YouTube. I'm curious what you thought of that conversation, which was less about sculpture as such and more about “artists” working as architects, like Pardo, [Olafur] Eliasson and [Vito] Acconci—and now you. I've called you all “super producers.” Where and how do you think you do or do not fit into that category or way of working?

OT: Well, I think there're so many different angles, but yeah, you never hire Carl Andre to do your floor, but also he wouldn't. I guess what I'm saying is that the artwork was still an object—discrete, a thing in a space... You know to me what was interesting about Jorge Pardo and that whole generation was that it's really hard to identify where the work ends and begins. It's a space—I mean the interesting and kind of perilous territory is that not all the decisions really matter.

SL: So it seems to me that the maybe art/architecture is even too broad because really it's mostly sculpture and architecture. Although there're all kinds of other things, but I guess what I'm trying to think about is that the contact has become more urgent, and prevalent, and pressing, and yet increasingly less defined. I'm wondering about the stakes of that, and I'm trying to make sure that we think about where writing fits into this. Part of what was in the back of my mind is that the art/architecture situation has been largely discursively defined by the October crowd. So it's a very specific channel within the world—Yve-Alain [Bois], [Benjamin] Buchloh, and Hal Foster, and so forth. So those are the people who have really attended to it, and as far as I know, the fact that that group is the one that established the parameters is itself not an object of much analysis, so I'm trying to figure out what are the stakes for them. For Buchloh, the stakes were very clear: architecture is always intrinsically a negative object, that's its job for sculpture. Hal Foster, I think, would pretend otherwise, but I think it is also intrinsically...

OT: He's always setting it up as, what would you call it, the kind of relationship...

SL: The bad boy, yeah, antagonistic...

OT: Antagonistic relationship, exactly! Also the figure of the architect as this kind of like...

SL: Complicit capitalist, that's it!



OT: Exactly.

SL: That's it. So that's its job. Its job for the artist is to clarify the problems of capitalism. So, fine, as long as we're understanding that you have to invent your antithesis, but what that discursive work doesn't account for is this emerging generation of people who are crossing enough of the lines to make that symbolization of the architect no longer useful. So, if you're entering competitions, let's say—you don't have to tell me any of the details, I'm just really curious—if you enter a competition and you win, do you get paid as an artist or an architect?

OT: I think in pretty much every case so far the competitions that I've entered have been defined as public art-type projects. I've tried to fit architecture into those, but they're not really fit to make buildings in those kinds of situations. But they're typically in it as sculpture commissions, but...



Oscar Tuazon, project rendering for *Un Pont*, image courtesy of the artist

SL: But your bridge [*Un Pont*, a memorial project in Belfort, France], for example, and the different ways that you were imagining that bridge would have, amongst other things, huge economic considerations.

OT: Yeah.

SL: A concrete bridge versus a rope bridge, you know. Thinking about those budgets—how do you think about that? So when you were saying that you use a lot of the same tools as architects, I guess I'm trying to take the Buchloh/Foster thing and say that for them—and this comes from a long line of thinking about architecture—for them, the constraint of architecture that makes it essentially, fundamentally, and always problematic was not its space and those kinds of things but its relation to capital, its economic system. So if we think of the specificity of architecture as an economic condition—is that one of your tools as well?



OT: But that seems like that's architecture with a capital "A," right? If we're talking about architecture as a representative force of a dominant, capitalist situation, then yeah, I agree. But I don't think that's necessarily the architecture that I'm interested in, I'm just interested in building stuff, you know what I mean? I'm interested in general contractor-type spaces and situations and using kind of simple tools. I'm fascinated by international architecture, but that doesn't have much relevance to me. What is relevant to me is much simpler, like creating a space to sit down or those kinds of things. And to do those kinds of things, you need all of the tools, I'm interested in using the tools. But I don't actually do any computer drafting myself, I work with someone who does, to be able to visualize spaces and then create in those situations.

SL: It's funny that you would refer to architecture with a capital "A," those are all very typically architectural, architect-speak distinctions. Do people say sculpture with a capital "S?"

OT: That's a good question, I mean, isn't it always? [laughs]

SL: With a capital "S?"

OT: No, I'm just kidding! But as a concept, sculpture necessarily dignifies itself and separates itself from the world, right? That's my struggle, I have to fight against that all the time. To try and make lowercase sculpture, that's what I want to do. But I think it's challenging because, you know, where does this stuff end up? Well mostly, unfortunately, it's destined to end up in an art gallery, or maybe somebody's house, or a museum. Where else would it end up?

SL: So then maybe architecture is a misnomer, in other words, maybe what interests you about architecture is not architecture but building, if that's a distinction, and you might be interested in building in order to invent a lowercase sculpture. Just so that you know my view of things—I think the distinction between capital "A" architecture and lowercase "b" building is a fantasy. And I think that lowercase building also imagines itself to be architecture, and I think architecture with a capital "A" is always full of innumerable prosaic everyday sorts of things. But the distinction is useful for various reasons, and I suppose this is why I was pressing on the competition. Competitions are very typical in architecture. For me, they're stand-ins for all of the constraints that architecture both resists and embraces. I mean, architecture is envious of artists, because it imagines that they don't have constraints. And I guess I'm thinking that now that you all are working in these new ways, I think you do have them. [laughs] You do. But maybe there isn't the habit of talking about them in the same way.

OT: Totally. It's so weird 'cause for example, I'm working on a project now for the Seattle Waterfront. It's a project I've been working on for maybe a year and a half or two, and it's interesting because the commissioning agency invited artists at the very beginning of the process. But rather than defining a site and completely defining where and what this thing is going to be, they invited the artist at the very early stage of the process with the landscape architect and the architect, when things are still nebulous enough that something could be proposed. To me, that's the ideal situation, but it's also really complica-



ted because it's almost like speaking a different language.

So I've been working on this for a long time. I came up with a really elaborate, developed proposal, finished engineering, consultation, and design, and I came to them with a question. I said, I want to put a pylon because I wanted to suspend this tree. This is the really pie-in-the-sky version. It's an elevated walkway that would take you up to this tree, and the tree is suspended over the water. I came to my senses. Sometimes the design process tells you when the project isn't working. The project that I came up with after realizing the constraints is way better and much lighter. It fits in and responds to the conditions in a much better way, but somehow getting to "no" is always important, I think. To me that's what was always appealing about the architectural process is this fighting for a "yes" or a "no"—fighting for a "yes" and getting a "no"—maybe that's what it is.

SL: Well some people have said that the distinction between architecture and other things is the toilet. I mean in the end, every practice has its own form of "yes" and "no;" every practice has its own form of economy. Every practice, at least post-minimalism, has its own form of space and social engagement.

OT: And function! I mean, as much as artworks are supposed to be functionless, and that's the distinction.

SL: Right, I agree. I think that being responsible to the toilet is still the architect's job. The notion of the function of a work of art is so expanded, that I would agree we can't hold functionalism as an architectural problem, but what about the bathroom?

OT: By the toilet do you mean the plumbing? The infrastructure?

SL: Yeah, like some base condition for survival, let's say. You can chip it away, and you can go live in The Land [Foundation] project in Thailand and cook and eat and do all of those kinds of things, but somehow fundamentally the toilet is not an art project.



Eli Hansen and Oscar Tuazon,
Huh, 2014, Toilet, steel, 68 x 36
1/4 x 47 1/4 inches
Image courtesy of the artist
and Maccarone, New York/Los
Angeles



OT: Yeah, well I did make a toilet sculpture, but... [laughs]

SL: Well, lots of people have made toilet sculptures! Those are very famous! But I'm not sure anybody ever took a shit in one of them. [both laugh]

OT: Exactly! Yeah, I think that's kind of the answer right there...my toilet is not one that you'd want to have in your house.



SHERRIE LEVINE, FOUNTAIN (AFTER MARCEL DUCHAMP: A.P.), 1991, BRONZE, 14.5 × 14.25 × 25 INCHES, COURTESY OF THE WALKER ART CENTER

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SL: I fantasize that Sherrie Levine has at times peed in one of her bronze toilets, just secretly, because it would be fun.

OT: Again, it just reinforces the difference, because it would be fun.

SL: Yeah, not because you have to pee.

OT: Not because it would work. Like, you don't go to a toilet in a normal bathroom because it would be fun. [both laugh]

SL: Who are the other artists working today that you feel the most close engagement with? Or architects? Who do you talk to in your head who might talk back?



OT: Steve Baer, I'm talking with Steve Baer a lot, and he's been a major source of inspiration for me. He's somebody whom I would consider an artist, definitely an architect, just in terms of the way that his thinking process is so driven by a particular idea of function. Baer's idea of function is very eccentric, idiosyncratic, and not at all like the kind of function that we think about in say, normal architecture, which is to make things easy, convenient, and nice. In very simple terms, Baer's impulse is to make it work, but there are other motivations that preclude comfort.

SL: Most architects must be terrible by that definition, though, because I think people generally complain that architects make things too complicated, that they're not efficient. It's just ironic that they seem to fail what you think of as their most basic job, to make life easy. If somebody came to you and said, "design me a house," would you think that that they had confused you with somebody else? Or would you think that was a great thing? What would you do?

OT: That's the phone call I've been waiting for my entire life! Yeah, of course, that's what I want to do, to design a house. I haven't found someone foolhardy enough to embark on that project yet, but that would be cool.

SL: And again, just hypothetically—so depending on who the architect is, they get a percentage of the construction budget—let's say you got whatever it is to make it, which I would imagine is significantly less than what you would get for selling a sculpture. So what would be your thoughts about that?

OT: Yeah, it's a good question actually. I don't know how it would stack up. Well, maybe just to put it in terms that I'm already familiar with, the way it works here is that the architectural or public art projects need to be subsidized by the artistic production of the studio. That's something I learned from [Vito] Acconci. The architecture is going to bankrupt you, so you better have something else that can create the conditions for making that work, which is very expensive, especially for somebody who's untrained. It takes so much time and work, and if you don't know what you're doing, it takes triple the time that it should.

SL: I think it always takes a long time. Even the great efficient architectural firms are not winning every competition, and spend a lot of money producing stuff, losing competitions. Some architects make plenty of money, it's not that you can't make money as an architect, but the economies of it are very different. You know here's a funny story, I don't quite know where it goes, but I think it goes somewhere. There's a house that Frank Gehry worked on for years and years for Peter Lewis called the Peter Lewis House, and he worked on it for 12, 15 years, and in terms of Gehry's output, it's one of his significant projects for a variety of reasons. One of them is that it is where the digital modeling first entered. So this is a huge development that affects a lot of other production—Gehry Technologies makes software, which is all over the place, so it's pivotal from a variety of points of view. So the house was never built, and before he died, Peter Lewis was asked: don't you feel ripped off? You spent 80 million dollars in fees and a really, really long time. [Oscar laughs] It's a lot of money. Maybe that was an exaggeration. And Lewis said no no no, because to build the house, it would have cost me a lot more, so actually I got what I wanted, which is the Peter Lewis Gehry House, and I got it at a bargain, 'cause I got what counts, which is the idea. Who the fuck needs the house?



OT: Dream client! [laughs]

SL: So then there was another internal story inside of that, which is that one of the reasons it was all so expensive over the years was because Gehry kept getting collaborators. Frank Stella was one of them. He got the call—your dream call—from Frank Gehry saying, “come and design the little building on this project.” So he got the gateway, a little building. And so this is going along, and then it turns out that at a certain moment that there was a confusion. This was while they thought that this thing might actually get constructed. The figure of a million dollars had been stated, and it turned out that Stella was calling complaining that he needed more money, but then it turned out the money wasn't for his fee, the million dollars that he had been told was the construction budget. So for a tiny little thing, a million dollars then was a huge construction budget, and to which Stella's response was, well this was way bigger than any one of my paintings, and I get way more for my paintings, so why should I make a giant thing and make a fraction. It was so interesting that it was scale—like it's bigger...so you should get paid more.

OT: Oh, that drives me nuts, I mean it's a weird retail logic that infiltrates the valuation of every artwork. It's insane.

SL: And who makes those determinations of value? Is that you and the gallerist?

OT: [laughs] Let's put it on the quiet hand of the market. I mean, I participate, I have to make those decisions, but ultimately it does come down to be very arbitrary...you know why? It's terms that are set by the consumer, it's based on their interests. The size of something matters, who cares how long you worked on it. You know this is something—a weird sidetrack—but maybe it brings us back to writing. I did a project once that I spent a lot of time on. It was an artist edition, and rather than produce a sculpture, I produced a book. I republished this book called Vonu, which is a weird, hippie, libertarian survivalist manual. I republished and rebound it in this nice leather binding, and I was so excited about it. It's a project that I still love, it's a great book and a nice object. And this book and then another book that I did, just never sold, and I was like, “why?” 'Cause it's greater than any of my other works... [Sylvia laughs] I realized that it's because it's something that doesn't fulfill the function of an artwork—to be present, and to be looked at. It's just something that's on a shelf, and so it isn't something that communicates status or whatever. I don't really know what the distinction is, but if it's a book, it's on a shelf, and because it's an artwork, it has a different valuation applied to it.

SL: Do you like to read art criticism? Or do you like to make art writing?

OT: I don't read so much art criticism at the moment. I like to write, well I don't know if I like it...

SL: It's not fun. [both laugh]

OT: It's one of the most difficult things. I don't want to say that art criticism or theory completely misses the point, it's not that, it's just that it's fundamentally apart from the object somehow, and that gives it a lot more freedom. And I've always thought that the way that an artist writing can relate to the work is just to be a separate...



SL: Is it a work? Or is it about the work?

OT: I'd say it's more of a work.

SL: And why therefore do you think it's more difficult?

OT: I don't know if it's more difficult because it's its own work, I think it's just difficult to write. It's really hard work. [laughs]

SL: But I guess I'm saying: is sculpting easy?

OT: No, it's also really hard.

SL: OK, OK.

OT: It can be hard, but at least you can walk around while you're doing it. That's the difference.

SL: [laughs] Well now with Siri you can walk around while you're writing, too.

OT: It's true, yeah. Is that how you write?

SL: No, no. But I imagine some moment in which writing will actually happen in a different way, and it will be more like that. I've started trying to figure out a way to communicate with students with voice messages for example, rather than writing things out, and I think there are a lot of publications now that are dealing with oral formats. I think of the return to orality as the sort of theory equivalent of the use of rough-hewn timber, you know. There's a sense of a kind of—I mean we don't believe in these words anymore—but nevertheless there's a kind of authenticity, a vitality, a lack of mediation, which of course it's not, but it's somewhere more in that neighborhood that I think people are interested in.

OT: Right, yeah. I think this is maybe kind of banal, but it feels to me that a distinction or a change has happened recently, from book-based writing having to do with a certain kind of long temporality, and what's happening now, where I feel like, whether it's things that you read online, it's much more about transmission, immediate transmission. I guess what I'm talking about, to use an analogy, is something that I've never even used: Snapchat. But something like this, a momentary appearance that is present, and that doesn't need to have...

SL: ...the burden of long time.

OT: Yeah. Is that orality? I don't know if it's the same thing.

SL: Yeah, well, I think that orality has been the traditional locus for that sort of thing. Now I don't think it has to be. You know the Snapchat thing—I think that part of the issue is that it's clearly doing



something that other sorts of formats didn't do in the past, but I'm not sure anybody completely knows how to valorize them. I mean there's something weirdly juvenile in its instant gratification without any consequence.

OT: I'm wondering what's the next form after the book.

SL: Well, I'm on the board of a museum, and I'm trying to get them to collect an Instagram account, and the legalities of this are complicated because I think it needs to have all of the posts.

OT: Right.

SL: I'm not interested in it without the posts. The photographer said, well, I'll give you all the prints, and I was like no, that's really not the deal.

OT: No, to do an exhibition of an Instagram account would be a nightmare, right?

SL: A nightmare. Well, I'm trying to figure out how to do that with an Instagram account. If we're going to do an exhibition, what would you show? And how would you show it?

OT: Right, exactly, yeah.

SL: It's clearly one of the key formats of the day. I've become really interested in the problem of the Freudian slip in the digital era, because, on some level, my generation as readers were trained in the critical universe to treat everything as though it were a symptom. That's the way I was trained in the world. And everything has an ulterior thing, and if it didn't, the critic would have absolutely no work to do because everything would be self-evident, requiring no analysis in the classic Freudian sense. I really spend more time in the car than I like to admit. I got to the point where I realized if I'm not going to use Siri or something like that, I'm just going to get endlessly behind. So I decided that there was a certain kind of e-mailing that I would do in the car.

OT: Yeah.

SL: I was having an argument with somebody, with an important personage in my field, and so my e-mails had to be very carefully worded, slowly and carefully worded, much more crafted as a text than something that I would send to Artforum or something like that, right? And so I sent off an e-mail, and then I got an e-mail back, and I was reading it in the car, and it said, "Well, OK," and then at the end, it said, "I hope you didn't really mean it," and I thought, oh God. So I went back and I looked at the e-mail that I had sent, and it had this beautiful crafted, super tempered, very elegant paragraph, and then instead of sincerely or whatever I would have said, it said, "you fucking idiot."

OT: [laughs hysterically] What?!



SL: With a comma by the way, like perfectly, “You fucking idiot,” and I was thinking back, and I thought...

OT: Siri, have you been listening on all of my conversations?!

SL: So all of the sudden I remembered that I had gotten cut off by somebody, and I yelled out, “you fucking idiot!” in the car... [Oscar laughs] and “hit send.” And the thing was that’s really what I meant to this person, you fucking idiot. But it really was Siri, and at that moment, I had a kind of universe collapse.

So, when I was a student in New York, I went to a show at the New Museum on Broadway, and I was in art history, and I had been taking a class on Vienna blah blah blah, you know I thought I knew something. And I walked into the show, and then I was looking at these Egon Schieles, and I knew Egon Schiele, I was so pleased and proud of myself. And then it turned out that they were Sherrie Levines, and my world was fucked right at that moment.

OT: Right.

SL: 'Cause I didn't understand. And it was like, OK, the world actually really changed. So this e-mail for me was the end of the world that [Levine] had me enter, 'cause that was a world of double entendre, innuendo, unconscious drives, and all kinds of things.

OT: Where it could still also be shocking...

SL: Yes, shocking, and then Siri did this thing to me, and it flattened everything out.

OT: Right.

SL: And the fact that she actually spoke my unconscious. It made me feel as though I didn't have an unconscious anymore, or it was over, it was flat. The world was incredibly crazy. Writing without an unconscious, without symptomology, without any of those things...I don't quite know where they go. And so the writing on Instagram, it's very hard to know what to make of it, 'cause it's super uncrafted.

OT: It's uncrafted, and there's also this true lack of an audience—or there's an overabundance of audience—you know what I mean? The way that everybody's talking at once.

SL: The people who otherwise we don't particularly like, because they say really stupid things on Instagram. [both laugh] But I hope your tree [at the Seattle Waterfront] gets built and becomes a great selfie station...

OT: But like I said, the project I have now is so much better! It's really light, it's the house post from the Old Man House, which was the Chief Seattle's longhouse in Suquamish, across the water from



Seattle. It was the largest longhouse known, it's insane. Basically, what happened is the longhouse was burned down by the Indian Agent in 1870, and the village dispersed. It's interesting also in architectural terms. The way that the longhouse would work is the posts and the beams were permanent, but that the house would expand and contract seasonally. Everybody would be there in the winter, there'd be maybe 800 people living there, and then in the summer, you would just take the boards off of the posts, put them in your canoe and go to your summer camp. And so the house would expand and contract.

SL: But the frame is the same.

OT: The frame is consistent, so early explorers like [George] Vancouver would see these structures and just thought they were abandoned ruins. But really they're this kind of modular living thing. Anyways, that's kind of where the project is going now. I'm trying to expand the project area to 800 feet. It's so fascinating just to be able to see that structure in your mind, to start on one end and walk the whole length of it and have some sense of the scale of it.

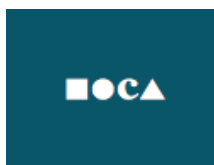
SL: And so it's not of the actual materials, but their size would replicate the original?

OT: Yeah, I think it could be done more or less in the traditional way. I don't think you could have a joint, a wood-to-wood joint because it would rot, but we'll see.



Lorenzo Costa, *The Argo*, 1500-1530, painting, image courtesy of wikimedia commons

«Sylvia Lavin and Oscar Tuazon», *MOCA, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles*, 2016.
<http://www.moca.org/stream/post/sylvia-lavin-and-oscar-tuazon>



SL: In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes writes about the Argo ship, and he describes how as it went about its quest every so often a piece of wood would fall off. The piece would get replaced, and another piece of wood would fall off, and it would get replaced, and by the time the ship got back to where it started, not a single piece of the original wood was there. It had been completely remade. But the name held all those otherwise disconnected pieces of wood together. So the ship remained actual in a structural sense. In fact, Barthes called it the perfect structural object. Anyway, your project reminds me of that, with some important twists.

OT: That's great, that's really cool.

SL: A nice way to think about this is remaking, making, and unmaking it, remaking, but somehow the name, the geometry is the thing.

OT: Yeah.

SL: Anyway. It was really nice to meet you!

OT: Yeah, likewise.

This dialogue was organized by Marco Kane Braunschweiler and edited by Karly Wildenhaus. Special thanks to Aria Dean.

Oscar Tuazon.

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*Interview
by
Eric Troncy,
pictures
by Salomé
Joinneau.*

here's this funny story about you being sort of born in a geodesic dome or something, would you like to comment on that?

I'm not sure what I can say about it. The geodesic dome did fascinate me for a few years not only as a geometrical issue but also as a cultural relic, you know. I was very interested in that stuff for a while but beyond that... My childhood was also about construction and building houses and things like that.

— Your parents did built that structure, right?

They were hippies [laughs]. I mean, at first, I didn't know anything, I had no idea what they were doing, and you know as a house it was a disaster but as an object it's fascinating. It's still there! It's funny because I think a lot right now about how to make a building, like would it be possible to make a building or a house as a sculpture. I have not really figured out what that means yet but it's in this tradition really, a non-functional house, I think about it as a sculpture.

— The geodesic dome is an epic story, but the serious one is probably the time spent with the Acconci Studio, right? Do you still have good memories of your time there?

Great memories. I keep a lot of memories, very good memories. What impressed me working with Acconci was just how difficult it was. Everything he was doing was really cautious.

— When was that?

2001-2002.

— So it was a bit before the big Acconci Studio thing?

Yes, this island in Graz [Mur Island, Austria] was the only building that had already been built when I was there, it was like eight or ten people working there, the rest were architects and I played this funny role where I restored the other works, started some others and worked with architects. But yeah, he made a huge impression on me and also just in terms of how the studio functions, for me it was interesting. I was already 28 but I was really junior and it was always about debate with Acconci, he was interested in talking with someone like me like he was with senior architects of the studio, and I thought it was really interesting to always question everything, at the beginning of a project but also at its end, he had no problem to take a project that was totally finished and just scrap it and start again, that was great.

— How did you end up there?

He needed somebody to unpack his library from a studio to another one in DUMBO [District Under the Manhattan Bodge Overpass, a Brooklyn neighborhood] and at that time I was studying in the Whitney Program [Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art]. It was supposed to be a freelance job but I loved it so much I just found a way to stay [laughs]. I made a job for myself.

— Has this been an important moment in the construction of your work?

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Interview

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I think so because I was always looking for a way of doing sculpture in a certain scale that relates to a physical experience with the body, and watching what he was doing with architecture gave me some of the tools and means to think about space, I guess. Also I was still a student and it was my first work experience. It was a different way of thinking about what it is to be an artist and an architect and it was very active. There was not a lot of reflection; it was an active process.

— *Would he inform your perception of the scale of the structure/sculpture?*

Yeah, he's also always using his body even when it's not during his performances, and I noticed each architecture project was described in a page. The description was like a description of walking through something, a phenomenological object description, really straightforward.

— *Who were the artists you did admire when you were a student?*

[Long pause].

— I'm asking because I'd like to know if you always knew you would build things. When you decide to be an artist, you don't necessarily know which medium is going to be yours.

No, no, I think I was much more interested in photography at school even if I was also doing sculpture. I wanted to do something that effects reality and that's an impossible project. I didn't really know what that meant and I guess it was what I was probably trying to do with photography. It was not until much later that I had the means to do things in space. And in a way I think the piece "Goodbye" (2008), which is a tent, pretty much marks the beginning of my work in my mind. Before that...

— *When did you start these big constructions going through the entire space and through the walls? Was it around that time?*

I guess it was that time, yeah. In 2007 I did that big geodesic dome that I made in cardboard. I first showed it at the Whitney Program in an exhibition space and then during the exhibition I took it and moved it outside. It's a structure of three or four meters in diameter and it was mobile so then I started to do this kind of things, and in the next few years I keep doing that.

— *Some of your works are made in the studio and some are more, I wouldn't say "site-specific" or at least let's say they deal on a very intimate mode with the space where they are exhibited. Are you really going to the studio everyday, and work everyday and build things everyday?*

[laughs]. Yeah, I go nine to six everyday.

— Seriously?

[laughs]. Yeah. It's a job and it's a particular job. The way I work, you can't put in really long hours. Physically you can't do much more than eight or ten hours a day, that's enough. But I like, not the routine of it but just being able to focus on one problem and have time to really develop it. The studio itself is something new for me because at first I was mostly building on site, and now I'm trying to understand what can be done in the studio and what's interesting about that. This may be because I'm in L.A., but I see the studio itself as a space, as a social space or as an exhibition

space even, as a living space. It was kind of a revelation for me, coming to L.A., that the gallery scene has not that a fundamental strong role and in a way the studio has a bigger role. We're also talking about bigger spaces and a history of people working in that way, using the studio as a kind of hybrid space. It's really exciting to me.

— *Why would you call it hybrid?*

I don't know if that's the right word but it can serve several different roles. You know that it can be a social space, or an event space like what Jason Rhoades was doing, it is the best context for the work he was doing, rather than a gallery, rather than an exhibition space.

— *Why did you move to L.A? It was quite a decision as it also involved your entire family.*

Well it was partly about the family also, I had the feeling the kids would like it there and would be able to be outside more often — and that's true. On the work side, we had visited for a few years before moving there, and every time I would rent a studio just for a month to get materials, to get things fabricated, because I guess it's built here around the entertainment industry and there's this ability to get anything at anytime.

— *In Paris you were part of a scene, and when you decided to leave to go to L.A, you were not a part of any scene anymore, you had to rebuild everything... Or maybe it was a nice way for you to be alone and quiet?*

Yeah definitely. That's a classic L.A thing, you can go and be by yourself and nobody cares, nobody really sees people and it's okay.

— *Was it also about going back home to your country, because you were born in Seattle, right?*

Yeah, and I lived a long time away from Seattle so I think there is a certain amount of, not like going home or anything, but things are familiar, things are easy.

— *Do you work alone? How many people do work with you in the studio?*

It depends, from two to eight people at the very most. It fluctuates based on projects, it also fluctuates based on the people I work with because there are artists, musicians, architects and each have various things going on so it depends on their availability.

— *Was music as important as art for you when you were younger? You have mentioned many times discovering Nirvana when you were a kid.*

Sure, it was impossible to avoid.

— *I'm asking because many people say this Nirvana record was a shock, because they loved music but it didn't inform their work. In your case, I think, this particular energy, which is probably the same energy as in a concert, is very present in your sculpture.*

Well, it's interesting because I never really fed off music, even now that I have strong connections or associations with house music, but I think you're right. The live element is always something that is really fascinating to me in music. I feel like the live songs are always divergent from the original in one way or another. I think it is part of why I insist so much on working in situ, producing

things specifically for an exhibition, because of this pressure. Decisions have to be made spontaneously, the thing develops in different ways than expected; there is some fatality to the work.

— *When you're doing a show, do you decide on everything before?*

No, never, never, although it used to be like that.

— *But in architecture you decide something, and then you build it.*

I would usually start building before I have a plan or before I finish the plan, and the plan of the construction would converge in some point. Now we have to plan something out but it's not a primarily architectural process; it comes also both ways and we adapt somehow the architectural design process to our way of working and leaving room for improvisation.

— *Is there room for improvisation when you're working on a show?*

I think. In a way having something planned out, I mean as soon as you walk in the space there is a completely different feeling.

— *Do you think a great place for your work to be experienced is outdoors?*

I think so, it's very different though, I feel like in an exhibition space you always respond to the space, but outside there is nothing to respond to. I'm not sure how to explain it. The advantage and the interesting thing with the outside and one of the reasons I'm trying to work more and more with public spaces, is that a thing doesn't have to be named, like an object doesn't need to be identified or as quickly identified as in an art space, firstly because nobody knows it's an artwork, secondly because there is a kind of specific visibility and it's really possible for things to disappear and reappear outside.

— *Does the scale of nature also define the scale of the work?*

Yeah, and it's great. There's much less control on it and the element of nature, the element of the weather and the time.

— *This work seems to be more comfortable outside also because nothing is new in the materials you use, nothing ever seems brand new, except maybe some wooden elements, everything seems to be already used, that puts those used elements in their element.*

Yes.

— *You've been working a lot with concrete and wood.*

Concrete, I ask myself why I do it, it's so difficult and it's so painful every time. The reason I like concrete is that it is the material of the building environment; it's the most common. Maybe it's also something to do with the unfinished aspect of it, letting things unfinished. Some materials, techniques or ideas I'm working with are basic, sort of basic construction techniques that normally are finished. I'm trying to work with structures and spaces without finishing them. I like the openness of an unfinished object, which could diverge in so different directions. It's something I can't stop thinking about, looking at all my works together here in the show at le Consortium, it's the first time I see so much in one only place like this and there's some kind of temporality or something like that. But it probably comes from the handmade aspect and leaving the marks of the process on the

work. Doing things by hand it's—I hope—important, it's interesting, it's exciting and engaging because that's where you see the struggle of the conceptual thinking process and the difficulty of translating that into materials. An idea is just an excuse to build something and the construction process is to me more stimulating, strangely. Even something in a really monumental scale, it's like a really direct relationship, the relationship of touch when you can see somebody's fingerprints on something and that you can put your hand on the same spots. We live in a very manufactured environment that has been almost completely manufactured by machine.

— *It was very smart, you avoided the music question quite smoothly.*

[laughs].

— *Like the one about artists you admired.*

[laughs] It's true [laughs]! Well the music thing, I feel like, I have a strong relationship with the music of that time, The Melvins, Nirvana... the grunge scene of Seattle, I did have a little band myself.

— *Well, you grew up in Seattle... And before being international those people also were born somewhere and that somewhere is the same city.*

Exactly, and it's totally interesting to see the places and the people who made that scene happen, it's fascinating, but at the same time it was twenty years ago. I had a discussion with one of the students the other day and he asked me a similar question, he asked me what kind of music would you like to listen to during the show, and I wouldn't point to one particular scene or style.

— *Are you working on many things at the same time or do you need to focus on one thing at a time?*

I'd say, many different. The nice thing about the work I do is that I love to work on long cycles.

— *What do you mean long cycles?*

Well, for example Belfort [An Endless Brige, 2015], it's already been two years that we have done that.

— *It's a very ambitious project actually, it's very big.*

Yeah, it's huge, it's already amazing we got to that point and have the support of everyone to build and follow through a project like that, there's always little decisions to be made along the way and then it will be a very important monument.

— *Do you like it when projects take time?*

Yes, and at the same time, I produce things very fast also. But yeah, I like to have time to things to develop. The first ideas are never the good ones. It needs time. Even if the project, like Belfort, I don't think the project is really going to change at all, but the details need more focus, more time, more people attached to it, I'm able to understand the project, the site, the context, the materials. Then one decision might screw over the year, it's probably totally bullshit but at least for me it will take some consciousness and signification, and I will finally be able to say "that's the one, this is exactly what we have to do". I think it's also because finally what I do is so reductive, I really try

to take things really simply and really elementarily, to do that really well I think it takes a long time.
I'd say the things I would edit out of my catalogue are the things I did too quickly, in one shot.

— *What do you mean « edit out », was it a metaphor or was it serious?*

[laughs]. No, seriously, there are mistakes. You can never stop to make mistakes but I guess the projects I consider failed projects are the ones I can't keep on thinking about.

— *It would be boring to just do very successful things, anyway.*

Exactly. I think that if you already know what the result is going to be when you do it. The experimental, this idea of doing something to see how it works out, that's what interests me.

— *That's what art can be about.*

Yes, I think.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel





Le top 5 des expos de la semaine

Chaque semaine, le meilleur des expositions art contemporain, à Paris et en province.

Robert Overby / Oscar Tuazon / Marie Angeletti

Un revival, une épiphanie et une découverte. C'est un programme en trois parties qu'a conçu cet hiver le Consortium de Dijon. Dans la catégorie "renaissance" on demande l'Américain Robert Overby dont la riche rétrospective post-mortem achève sa tournée européenne, après Genève, Bergame et Bergen (Norvège). Chassé de sa galerie par plusieurs artistes (dont les conceptuels Carl André et Robert Smithson) dans les années 70, l'autodidacte californien Robert Overby fera profil bas jusqu'à sa mort en 1993, à l'âge de cinquante-huit ans. Ce qui ne l'empêcha pas de continuer à produire dans le plus grand secret ses sculptures en latex, peaux de vinyle et peintures bondage plus ou moins sexy.

Pour l'épiphanie, on misera plutôt sur Oscar Tuazon et ses grandes architectures précaires, tandis que la trentenaire Marie Angeletti, présentée à l'automne dernier dans le cadre du Prix Ricard, fera le point pour la première fois sur sa banque d'images et deux ensembles en particulier, "Hotel 11 a bis" réalisé à Londres et "Fabricants Couleurs" qui documente une exposition orchestrée par l'artiste au sein d'une usine de peintures.

"Robert Overby / Oscar Tuazon / Marie Angeletti", du 14 février au 17 mai au Consortium à Dijon. leconsortium.fr

«‘Oscar Tuazon: Alone in an empty room’ opens at Museum Ludwig in Cologne», *ArtDaily*, February 18, 2014.
<http://artdaily.com/news/68271/-Oscar-Tuazon--Alone-in-an-empty-room--opens-at-Museum-Ludwig-in-Cologne>



"Oscar Tuazon: Alone in an empty room" opens at Museum Ludwig in Cologne



Oscar Tuazon, *Piece By Piece*, 2013 Cinderblocks, Douglas Fir, Steel. Installation view Museum Ludwig.

Photo: Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Britta Schlier. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich.

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COLOGNE.- Oscar Tuazon's (b. 1975 in Seattle) expansive constructions engage with both exterior and interior spaces; they enter into a dialogue with existing architecture, burst its structures, and create new spaces—visible as well as invisible. His work focuses on, among other things, the subject of physical labor and the developmental process involved in an artwork. This is immediately apparent in his pieces that range between sculpture and architecture, as well as in his choice of materials— oftentimes wood, metal, stone, and concrete.

Tuazon's works combine concepts of Land Art with the principles of Minimalism and post-Minimalism and as such link the conception of something abstract with an actual construction; this is marked by extreme physical challenges in the installation phase as well as by continually shifting spatial conditions.

The presentation of Oscar Tuazon's work in the Museum Ludwig is not being shown in the exhibition spaces but, rather, extends throughout the museum's entire main staircase. On all four levels, visitors will encounter architectural components of a private residence; on the basement level the lower staircase landing is extended into a type of garage door, an intervention that was realized for the new presentation of the collection *Not Yet Titled* and now announces the current exhibition. The architectural fragments distributed throughout the staircase represent a counterargument to the existing museum architecture: private and public, institutional space are contrasted with one another and engage in a direct dialogue.

«'Oscar Tuazon: Alone in an empty room' opens at Museum Ludwig in Cologne», *ArtDaily*, February 18, 2014.
<http://artdaily.com/news/68271/-Oscar-Tuazon--Alone-in-an-empty-room--opens-at-Museum-Ludwig-in-Cologne>



As part of his artistic practice Tuazon investigates the history of art since the late 1960s. The content of his art builds on the work of artists such as Carl Andre, Bruce Nauman, Robert Smithson, and Gordon Matta-Clark, and newly situates the discourse on space, material, and labor in contemporary art.

Beginning in 2007 Oscar Tuazon lived and worked in Paris, where he co-founded the artist collective-run gallery castillo/corrales. In 2013 Tuazon moved to Los Angeles. He studied at the Cooper Union School of Art and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. In 2011 Tuazon was represented at the fifty-fourth Venice Biennale. In 2013 his work was featured in solo exhibitions at the Schinkel Pavillion in Berlin and at the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam.

On the occasion of the exhibition an artist book is being published by DoPe Press on June, 21 with texts Anna Brohm, Philipp Kaiser, Miwon Kwon, Nico Machida, and Antek Walczak.

Exhibition curators: Philipp Kaiser and Anna Brohm

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How To Build a House

Jorge Pardo in conversation with Oscar Tuazon

Color images: Jorge Pardo, *Tecoh*, Yucatán, México.
B&W images: Oscar Tuazon, *White Walls*.
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

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What do two artists who share common visions talk about when they meet for the first time?

The Cuban artist Jorge Pardo, whose groundbreaking work at the limits of design, architecture and art have redefined these fields and the spaces between them, is asked a very simple question by the American artist Oscar Tuazon: "How do you go about building a house?" Although the work of each is marked by aesthetic differences, they both follow a remarkably similar train of thought in the process of making art. The following conversation—which focuses on the story of Tecoh, a hacienda in the Yucatán Peninsula that Pardo restored and transformed into an art experience—is the perfect illustration of the playful nature of their unconventional approaches to work.

An original commission by Emma Reeves,
Creative Director of MOCAtv.
Link to the film on YouTube:
bit.ly/MOCAtvPardoTuazon



JORGE PARDO

What're you thinking?

OSCAR TUAZON

[laughs] To be honest, I just bought a small house. It's not even really a house, it's a cabin—a cabin in the woods, up on the Olympic Peninsula, where I'm from. Right now, it's just a box, like a roof, and a floor, and walls—nothing else, no plumbing, no nothing, not even interior walls. And so, I'm at this point where I have to design the house, somehow. And I know it's something you've done, in many different ways. How do you go about it? How do you start that process?

JORGE

I start very conventionally. The first thing I do is, I probably put it on my computer. That's usually the way I start. And I try to sort of understand what it is, how big it is, how big it feels, how big I think it's going to feel. Then I just start programming things. And as you program things, relationships start to emerge. And when I say program, I don't mean necessarily this is what it's going to be. I mean more in terms of, "Do I like rooms to be this big, or what's going to happen here?" Once I have a decent understanding, to some degree, of how it has to happen spatially, I just start to elaborate more. It depends. Most of the places that I've built, they all have an eccentric relationship to exhibitions, or something like that. There's always that, on the back end—everything you're thinking. You propose what you want to make, in your head, on paper, or on the computer, whatever. And then I start to think about the motions between things I've done, things I'm interested in, things that are there. I think about what would be an interesting way to interface with a local tradition, and with an eccentric tradition that maybe it has some affinity with. And I just start to bring things in. That's pretty much how it starts.

OSCAR

Do you work with a floor plan? What kind of drawings do you do?

JORGE

I do it on the computer. I build it really simply. I have a sense of how big things are, how small they are, where is this door going to close. I usually start with that. And when that gets understood, then I start to change it.

OSCAR

Change it? Say, you're working on the kitchen. How do you place the ...

JORGE

I cook a lot. So, I have a pretty clear understanding, a preference, for how I like to move in the kitchen. I'll just program that into the space, given the configuration you have to work with. It's very pragmatic, in terms of laying out the kitchen. That kind of stuff, I control all those things. And people will help me architecturally with the more difficult stuff, which is filling in all the

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information you have to fill in that you don't want to draw. In general, I have a certain idea about what kind of bathroom I want to take a shit in. [laughs]

OSCAR

As you get into this process of designing a space, what's the point where you're willing to let some of the other decisions be made or taken care of by someone else?

JORGE

Well, there's never really a clean threshold of where you stop making decisions and where somebody else starts. There's always a lot of back-and-forth, in general. Since I generally can make really rudimentary drawings on the computer about what I'm interested in and what I want to do, I usually have a pretty good baseline to begin with. The thing's not going to change dramatically once I understand what I want to do. It's going with walls, and you add doors, and you add everything down to what you need. What kind of plumbing do you want to have? Do you want to have a common wall in the bathroom that services the kitchen? There's all kinds of really pragmatic things that you do that, for me, come more from a tradition of building than from more traditional conceptual architectural stuff. I do like, sometimes, to invert or divert traditional relationships with things like that, but not all the time. It depends. There just seems to be a lot of languages going on inside your head when you're conceiving these kinds of spaces.

OSCAR

How much is drawn out? Are there things that you are able to describe to the contractor as you walk through the space?

JORGE

It's pretty free. We do a lot of things, we make a lot of things. A lot of the finishes get worked out physically in the studio, and sometimes we'll actually do the finishing ourselves. And even when we don't, we'll usually provide some pretty extensive prototyping, in house. It's in the studio, so I have a pretty good idea of what's coming down the pike. And more importantly, I have a lot of control in terms of editing, and installing a kind of investigatory process in developing something. It's not necessarily even driven by drawing, or anything like that. But it's more driven by ...

OSCAR

It's physical.

JORGE

Yeah. They're things. You find the material. You figure out a way to use it, and things like that.

OSCAR

Is the work ever done? When a space is finished, and you're using it, do you find yourself changing it?

JORGE

Yeah, all the time! I think what I've done with build-

ing, to some degree, is I've figured out a way to install a kind of very eccentric reflexivity in it. In the sense that, if somebody approaches a work of mine—which could take the form of an architectural object—the question you ask is a logical one within the repertoire of how to read it, let's say. It's not a typical question you would ask of an architect who is designing your house. Because, generally speaking, when an architect designs your house, you feel like there are ideas that belong to the architect, and you really decide if you can live with them or not. Generally, I don't really work that way so much. Most of the things that I've built, people have asked me to do in a way where they stay kind of sidelined in that process. For reasons that are strange, to some degree. You're hiring an artist to make a place for you to be. A lot of people hire architects because they feel overwhelmed about all the decisions required to put together a space to live.

OSCAR

[laughs] Yeah, I'm feeling a little bit that way myself with this project I have.

JORGE

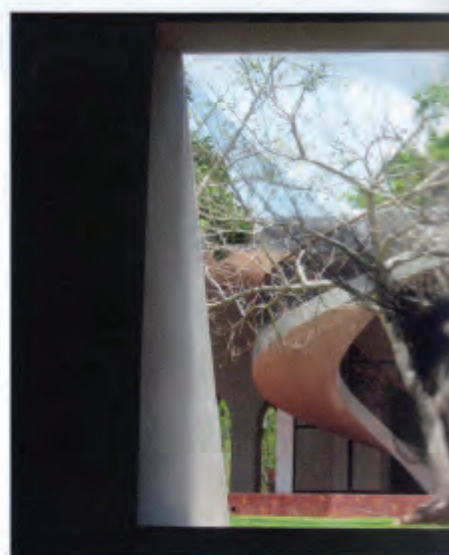
But they usually hire me because they want a "work" of some sort. And I don't even know what the fuck that is. Generally speaking, this is what I want to do—if you're interested, great, if not, well ... But it's not overwhelming to function like an architect.

OSCAR

It's not?

JORGE

It takes time. It takes a long time to build something. The thing that's nice about that is, if you understand that, you actually use that duration of the time as a space to make decisions. And it's actually like fun.



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OSCAR

This is really interesting because, up until this point, I think most of the work I've done has been episodic. For exhibitions, basically. And to finally have a space that might take three, five—who knows how many years. To be working in that time frame while working on it at the same, that's pretty exciting. You get to literally live inside the idea. It's cool. There's also this thing, sort of related to being inside of a computer. The process of thinking about a space where you go from macro to micro, where you're designing your house, and at the same time designing a lamp. You're coming in and out?

JORGE

I don't really think about scale that way. I think about scale physically. When I design lamps, one of the things I think about is how much space will they make? What happens when you turn the light bulb on? It actually permeates and makes patterns on the walls and things like that. I think of it as more like this kind of a filter, or something, to make different painterly qualities on the wall. Or sometimes it's the opposite—sometimes it's like the lamp is sort of an object, or something like that, that has an odd relationship to how it negotiates the way it glows versus the way it is. I don't think of that necessarily as any different than any other series of effects you might be interested in trying to achieve when you make a space. They both invoke the kind of thinking of something that's read through your body, or something like that.

OSCAR

The place in the Yucatán is called Tecoh?

JORGE

Yeah. It's a Mayan name, I think. If not a Mayan name, then Spanish. But it doesn't sound Spanish.

OSCAR

One of the things that really struck me about the project in Tecoh, if I remember it right, is that you were designing the place without a program. That's kind of incredible. Maybe you can just talk some more about that.

JORGE

What I mean is that the programmatic in a project like that is so vague, it's really not a program in that sense. No one quite knew what it would eventually be used for. And generally, programs are—if you build a library, you're part of a library. There are still a lot of default programs that happen when you build a place for people to be. But we didn't really know how it was going to be used. And that, to me, is interesting and important. Usually, in architecture, programs are used as a very important organizing principle for how you make decisions about what you're doing. And we didn't really have that, so we were making decisions more in terms of what the prior decision was, and things happened in procession. We would make up space for a room and something would get developed there and that would get reiterated and developed more in another space. It sort of happened like that. All we really knew about Tecoh was that



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It was going to be a place for people to be, or spend time at—but not necessarily what it was going to be, or what type of place it was going to be.

OSCAR

There are functional elements?

JORGE

It's highly functional. It's very straightforward. There are no cues in the building that make caricatures about what its function is supposed to be or not be. That's not really an issue. It's not like a Robert Wilson piece, it's not like a giant chair that nobody can sit on. Everything is always kept in the realm of accommodating people—in real life, I think what is eccentric about the project is that it is a series of follies. It's a series of places, and rooms, and gardens which set off intense aesthetic relationships between one another. Ultimately, that probably is its organizing principle, to some degree.

OSCAR

Right. So the experience, in a way, takes the place of the program. Experience isn't really designed *per se*, is it?

JORGE

I don't know if it's designed. But I think it sort of evolves. Because one thing gets built and then something else gets built. And maybe there is a deficiency in something that gets built that gets re-evaluated and developed further in some other part of the building. It's got a couple of pool areas. One pool area started one way, then it went another, and went another; then it went underground.

OSCAR

This is also a really interesting question to me—Tecoh had some existing walls or ruins, right? There was

something that you were building on. You were building on the foundation?

JORGE

Yeah. Very little of it, though.

OSCAR

And, obviously, you responded to that component of the site. There's an interesting question about the status of an artwork. Do you imagine it getting renovated again at some point?

JORGE

Sure, why not?

OSCAR

It has a kind of continuous ...

JORGE

Absolutely. It really depends on how much fidelity the people who own it steward over it. All the emotions that the site has are about an effect. There's never anything traumatic or tragic about that becoming something else, with me or without me—it doesn't really matter. It's not really something I think about. When I build something, I don't think about something's duration beyond my general interest in it at the time that it's being made. You build it in a way that it's going to be around for a while. You want it to be. You know, the jungle's pretty brutal in the sense that, if you left the place on its own, for five years, you'd have trees growing out of the buildings, and stuff like that. It's just the nature of that climate.

OSCAR

But, to me, it's really fascinating because the material status of that place is in constant flux, right?



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JORGE

All houses are.

OSCAR

Exactly. All houses are. And, to me, it's very different than a painting where you more or less expect it to have a fixed material identity, and to exist through time. That's one of the things that's so powerful about a painting, I guess.

JORGE

It depends. It depends on how you look at it. A painting's an image. Historically, people have had different relationships with those images. At certain times, history needed to have a sense of stability that I don't think is really required anymore.

OSCAR

True.

JORGE

And it's not about downplaying. I don't believe that things have agencies, or any of that stuff. I don't believe that things are autonomous. I don't believe that an artwork, if it's worked and shaped in a serious or important enough way, is going to contain something that will endure.

OSCAR

Even through transformational form?

JORGE

No, nothing. I think that's all magical thinking. To give you an example—I don't know your work very well, but if somebody doesn't really take care of that work, it could end up as a beam in someone's project. *[laughs]* It's very clear why these things endure, why they stay visually intact. And I've never thought that that was something that somebody could really control.

OSCAR

No, of course not.

JORGE

So, why should that be so essential in the principle of how you think about producing things or making something? If something is relevant, it's relevant. And if it's not, it's not. If it's relevant, it's probably going to be around for a while. And if not, it will probably degrade in some way. It's not any different from an oxygen/water relationship. *[laughs]* It's pretty basic.

OSCAR

I feel like Tecoh relates to the history of Land Art, and Earth Art, in a really interesting way. Even though the



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Land Art projects all have a kind of very particular physical identity, there is also this photographic image, an iconic kind of status. You couldn't really capture Tecoh in a picture, could you?

JORGE

No. It's got too many parts. At the end of the day, you'd have a hard time orienting yourself—if you're trying to orient yourself as being "there," versus making images or shooting a film. There're still so many differences, there's not much fidelity. I don't think a project like mine happens without Land Art. But, the difference is that a project of mine is made with a very different ideological construction. Land Art is something that is like a general frame to hold this thing as a kind of artistic gesture. So, that goes away, and it helps you read it. But at the same time, it doesn't go away, it stays there. The work operates very differently. It wants to muddle it up, with all the things you're not supposed to see, or all the things you do see. It's already a compromised thing. It's not like something you put in nature—an object that's so clearly not a place to live, not a place to do something. It's more like it frames the landscape. There are things to do in it that are different. You can eat at Tecoh, you can sleep there, you could commission a video about discussing it. There's a million different things you could do. I think traditional Land Art is art that has a much clearer perceptual task, which is destabilize or intensify your experience in nature. And this is com-

pletely indifferent to that. It doesn't really require that type of faith between what's supposed to be there, or what's not, or nature, or any of those things. It's in collusion with all these things, but it doesn't always pay tribute to it.

OSCAR

It's a very impure experience, right? It's very diffused.

JORGE

Yeah, it's very diffused. It wants to talk about a lot of things at the same time.

OSCAR

The Land Art project was to bring a gallery space out to the middle of the desert and set up a white cube in the middle of New Mexico.

JORGE

But it was also addressing a kind of deficiency in the white cube, to some degree. What happens if you bring a perceptual project—a project about intensifying perception or using it in some way or directing it in some way. Instead of using a wall, or a door, or some sort of entrance, what if you use a mountain ridge, or the sky, or water, or a lake or body of water? It was always a heroic kind of gesture to want to do that. To enlarge and amplify things that were—to me anyway—diminutively done in exhibition spaces. That always seems odd to me.



PARISLA

OSCAR

What do you mean "diminutively done in exhibition spaces"?

JORGE

Done in smaller form. Controlled. It always seems like it's about turning up the volume, or accessing this phenomenon in a much more direct way, with less mediation. It's always different things.

OSCAR

The Land Art work is so framed, I always wonder what's outside the frame.

JORGE

I don't know how useful Land Art is to a project like Tecoh. It is useful in a sense, as a polemic. As a way to read it in relation to what it's not. Or what it is or how it's a paradox. But the aspirations are so different. And the belief system is so different. The problems in the work are so different.

OSCAR

The last thing I want to ask you is about the visibility of the work, and that question of framing and scale. Where does the work end?

JORGE

I think the work begins with a kind of an interest by someone. An opportunity, a proposition. Someone asks you to do something. I think it probably ends when it ceases to be relevant. The work is sited in this place that most people will not go to. So, it's really kind of dependent on reproductions of it—whether they be verbal ones, or visual ones, or oral ones. I don't think that there is a real consuming of a place like Tecoh. I think, when you're there, things happen very differently. If you were sort of ideologically disposed, you could argue for it being the real thing when you're there. But, I'm not there, so my interest is more in terms of how it reverberates when I'm not there.

OSCAR

Is it a domestic space? Do you consider it a domestic space?

JORGE

Yeah. It's completely domestic. It's basically a place to eat, and sleep, and swim, and look at the sky, and talk ... and cook. [laughs] And to be in this jungle, be in this region, that brings with it a whole litany of historical problems. It's funny to talk about it as if it were a ghost.

OSCAR

But it kind of is. For everyone, it's a ghost. Except for you and the people who have been there.

JORGE

To me and the people who built it—and the people who live in the area. And it's kind of nice to make works that only accommodate so much.

OSCAR

I know you're taking people there. I'm looking forward to going there.

JORGE

Yeah.

OSCAR

Is it a place where people are going to make a pilgrimage together? I don't know if you can even answer that question.

JORGE

I have no idea. People do the weirdest things in simple places. Maybe, maybe not. It really depends on how long the attention span on a project like this sustains in the culture that I work in. And it depends on whatever relevancy the work, the project, may or may not have. It wasn't planned as a place of pilgrimage. I always thought about it as something I was making. I never thought I was making a destination. So, if it's that by default, then okay.





Oscar Tuazon at Brooklyn Bridge Park

Peggy Roalf

Thursday August 16, 2012



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Last week's art by cycle escape took me to Brooklyn Bridge Park on a day so hot that eggs were dropping from their hens hard-boiled. But an ocean breeze sweeping across New York harbor, with its view of Lady Liberty set off by a humid smoggy sky, was as refreshing as the home-made ice cream at the Blue Marble cart on Fulton Landing.

Oscar Tuazon (b. 1975, Seattle, WA), whose work was most recently seen here in the 2012 Whitney Biennale, was commissioned by the Public Art Fund to create the first site-specific sculpture made for the city's newest landscape. *People*, as it is titled, consists of three sculptures each of whose central feature is a monumental tree native to the borough.

Tuazon's art typically combines industrial and natural materials to transform the experience of a building or space. In an interview with Public Art Fund curator Andria Hickey, he said, "One of the things I was thinking about, of course, was creating spaces for people. So to me, the works each have an improvisatory character—not in how they were made but in that they will be 'completed' by other people and experienced in lots of different ways. And the utilitarian aspect of the works is really interesting to me. It's a way for the works to shift in and out of visibility. I like the idea that from a distance you might see them as sculptures, but if you're sitting down on the structure or playing basketball on it, that isn't relevant anymore."

Installed along Pier 1 and 2, each work is informed by its everyday use: a tree becomes a fountain; a concrete handball wall is held straight by a tree trunk that also accommodates a basketball hoop; a cement cube breached by a tree frames the surrounding landscape creating a playful dialogue with built and natural forms against the Manhattan skyline.

The placement of the three pieces ensures that visitors will see the newest addition to Brooklyn Bridge Park in its entirety, including a wine café nestled in a forested glade. On returning to Fulton Landing, my reward for braving New York's most recent heat wave was a cooling ride on the East River Ferry back to Manhattan, where the new pier at 34th Street has just opened. Information/Directions. Photos: Jason Wyche for the Public Art Fund.

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

Art and the City: Public Art Festival in Zurich, Switzerland

08/06/2012

Art and the City is a public art festival that runs until September 23rd in Zürich West, a district in Zürich (Switzerland) that has undergone a dramatic transformation in the recent years. To experience this up-and-coming city district of Zürich, Art and the City invited more than 40 artists and artist groups from all over the world for an exhibition that includes sculptures, installations, performances, posters and interventions. This video takes you on a rather subjective and selective tour of the exhibition on 1 August, the Swiss National Day (which explains the empty streets and the rubber dinghies).

The exhibition includes artists who have been addressing issues of urban development since the 1970s such as Richard Tuttle, Fred Sandback, Yona Friedman and Charlotte Posenenske, as well as a younger generation of artists such as Christian Jankowski, Oscar Tuazon, Los Carpinteros, and Ai Weiwei.

Art and the City has been initiated by the Public Art Task Force (Arbeitsgruppe Kunst im öffentlichen Raum). The exhibition has been put together by the freelance curator and writer Christoph Doswald.

PS: As part of the Art and the City Public Art Festival, walking artist Hamish Fulton performed one of his slow walks along the Limmat river, entitled Limmat Art Walk Zürich 2012.

Eric Magnuson. «Artist interview: Oscar Tuazon creates sculptures you are supposed to play with», *The Art Newspaper*, July 16, 2012.

<http://old.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Artist-interview-Oscar-Tuazon-creates-sculptures-you-are-supposed-to-play-with/26811>

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Artist interview: Oscar Tuazon creates sculptures you are supposed to play with

The artist discusses his new series of works commissioned by the Public Art Fund for Brooklyn Bridge Park

Eric Magnuson
16 July 2012



Oscar Tuazon selecting trees from New York's Hudson Valley for his project in Brooklyn

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Oscar Tuazon's architectural sculptures burst through gallery walls, block doorways and spread across rooms in any way the artist sees fit—providing that the gallerist gives him the carte blanche to do so. The freedom of working outdoors allows for a different dynamic. For his latest project, the Washington-born, US-and Paris-based Tuazon has been commissioned by New York City's Public Art Fund to install three new sculptures in Brooklyn Bridge Park, a recently-constructed green space designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh, a landscape architect whom Tuazon greatly admires. Tuazon says that he enjoys navigating the problems posed by working in a public space, not the least of which is the imposing Manhattan skyline in the distance. As we went to press, Tuazon was planning to construct the sculptures on-site, over a ten-day period in late June using two of his characteristic materials—concrete and trees. The exhibition, "People", is due to run from 19 July to 26 April 2013. Tuazon spoke to The Art Newspaper in early June from a taxi to his studio in the Parisian suburb of Sèvres.

Eric Magnuson. «Artist interview: Oscar Tuazon creates sculptures you are supposed to play with», *The Art Newspaper*, July 16, 2012.

<http://old.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Artist-interview-Oscar-Tuazon-creates-sculptures-you-are-supposed-to-play-with/26811>

THE ART NEWSPAPER

The Art Newspaper: How different is it creating work for a park as opposed to a gallery space?

Oscar Tuazon: Specific to this location: the skyline of Manhattan is incredible. The first thing I realised when I visited is that it's pointless to try and do something massive because you'll never be able to compete with the skyline. So, I decided to do something that was human in scale. And to me, trees are human scale. They're bigger than people, but even on a monumental scale, I think a tree is still something that's quite approachable because it has human qualities. The tree is also an interesting object in terms of its verticality. Like a totem pole, it doesn't necessarily have to be massive to do something interesting to the space around it. Its verticality [makes it interesting]. These three pieces are trying to almost function as utilitarian objects within the park. They should be used.

How do you see people interacting with the sculptures?

There's a fountain, a small room and a piece that comprises a basketball hoop and a handball wall. The basketball hoop will be a typical Parks Department basketball hoop, and I tried to replicate a handball wall so that it's almost a found object. To me, these are very typical New York things. I hope the hoop is a piece that gets used and has a completely different function apart from being a sculpture. At the same time, you may look at that basketball hoop and the game played using it as somehow being part of the sculpture. Those boundaries are going to be lost or suspended temporarily. One of the things that I've been thinking about is making objects that can function with a certain invisibility so people can use them without necessarily even thinking that they're works of art. With the fountain, I think you'll be able to play in it a little bit.

Have you ever done anything like that?

Yes, another public piece in New York [an outdoor installation titled *Use It For What It's Used For*, 2009, created with his brother Elias Hansen]. It was something that didn't look very playful, but it was meant to be occupied and had this playfulness: there was a lamp; it could rain; there was water. I'm interested in creating spaces that aren't programmed and aren't really operating on the same logic as the rest of the space that we're accustomed to. I think it's a nice rupture or void within the city when you find something that hasn't been purposed and is kind of useless and useful at the same time.

In 2005, you wrote: "An occupation evicts the existing function of a building." Do you consider these three sculptures to be an occupation that alters the park's existing function?

Yes. In a way, I hope that they enhance the functions of the park. There is a space under the basketball hoop that overlaps with a path, and you could say that this will create a change in the way the space is normally used. The pieces actually determined where they'll be installed. I came up with these three pieces, and very quickly it was obvious that the fountain would be in the valley area of the park. The other two, because of their dimensions, needed a certain amount of space around them. There were other options, but I wanted to keep the three works within sight of each other.

Eric Magnuson. «Artist interview: Oscar Tuazon creates sculptures you are supposed to play with», *The Art Newspaper*, July 16, 2012.

<http://old.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Artist-interview-Oscar-Tuazon-creates-sculptures-you-are-supposed-to-play-with/26811>

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Do you differentiate between what is commonly referred to as site-specific work and your own work?

I would say that the way I work is definitely site-responsive. I wouldn't really call it site-specific because I feel like a lot of the characteristics of any site are arbitrary. There are things that the work needs to respond to, but it doesn't necessarily form the work. For these three works, I would say that the relationship to the site is very open. They're not responding to anything in particular about the site other than the fact that it's outdoors.

These pieces have a utility to them, but you've said of some of your other work that "they can be left outside, all alone. They don't even need to be watched. They don't need anybody." Have you considered whether anybody needs a sculpture that doesn't need them in return?

I think that goes to the autonomy of a work of art. Nobody really needs a work of art. (Laughs.) And vice versa, I guess. But it's true that these [three works] are very inviting somehow. And [they're] inviting a pretty open-ended range of possibilities.

Before you first visited the park, did you have any ideas for what you were going to build? Or did that evolve after visiting?

After I visited the park, I was immediately thinking about trees. It doesn't really have trees of any real scale because it's such a new park. I've worked a lot with trees and so I thought that it [would be an] interesting thing to bring into and think about in a park. All three of the sculptures have trees, which we're bringing down from Dutchess County [in New York's Hudson Valley].

How much of the work have you plotted out in advance?

It's very laid out. It's a big project so it requires a lot of people working on it. But at the same time, there are elements built into these three works that are going to have to be improvised on site.

Are the parameters of what you can do to the site more regulated because you're working with the City of New York?

When I'm working [on a piece that will be displayed publicly] and thinking about something that potentially can be used or interacted with, I do have to think about safety and what people might do with these objects. That might be a restriction, but to me, that's the exciting kind of restriction or constraint that actually brings the work into existence and forms the work. I'm really enthusiastic about working with that kind of problem.

Do you foresee a lot of impromptu decisions on the project?

Yes, particularly with the fountain. I think we've had to premeditate a lot of stuff because of safety and I'm not able to build a lot of it myself because of the scale of it. There is this element that you can't quite control when you're working with something as organic as a tree, which is nice. Even the computer-modelling programme that we're using to make the architectural rendering isn't capable of rendering the tree exactly. So there's that nice gap between what we can premeditate and what's going to have to be improvised on site.

Eric Magnuson. «Artist interview: Oscar Tuazon creates sculptures you are supposed to play with», *The Art Newspaper*, July 16, 2012.

<http://old.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Artist-interview-Oscar-Tuazon-creates-sculptures-you-are-supposed-to-play-with/26811>

THE ART NEWSPAPER

You've worked with your brother Elias on numerous projects. How is a project different when you're the sole mind behind it?

We've actually just opened a show in Paris ["We're Just in It for the Money" at Galerie Balice Hertling until 4 August]. Working with Eli is pretty unique because we don't have to talk about it that much. As brothers, we've been working together for a long time. It almost comes out of improvisation. I think you let yourself do things that you wouldn't normally do in your own work when you collaborate because there's always this moment of projection where you are projecting with the other person, just thinking, or you have an image of the other person somehow. I think it takes us each outside of our own work in a nice way.

Many writers describe your work as "attacking" the space it inhabits. Do you agree with that description?

I think it is accurate in a lot of my work. Maybe that comes back to the question of site-specificity. Within a museum or gallery, the connotations of what those spaces are changes from a small gallery to a larger gallery to an institutional space to a museum. And I guess there's nothing to attack in a park. I feel like one of the things that a work can do within an exhibition space is engage with or challenge the context [of the space]. While not to say it's a neutral environment, the range of possibilities of what you can do in a park is so much more open than what is possible in an exhibition space. So, I felt that the best thing I could do was to make something enjoyable and fun.

Karen Rosenberg. «Heart to Hand», *The New York Times*, April 5, 2012.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/06/arts/design/heart-to-hand.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print

The New York Times

April 5, 2012

‘Heart to Hand’

By KAREN ROSENBERG

Swiss Institute

18 Wooster Street, near Grand Street, SoHo

Through April 15

Organized by the curator, art- restitution lawyer and salon hostess [Pati Hertling](#), this group show was “conceived of in the wake of the #occupywallstreet movement and the Republican primaries,” the news release says. But the art doesn’t look any more political than what you can find in other galleries or the studio-centric Whitney Biennial.

That is to say, themes of struggle and resistance play out on the level of process, as in an ambitious intervention by Oscar Tuazon and Elias Hansen. They have reconfigured the main gallery’s elevated floor, removing a section of the platform and salvaging the wood for pyramidlike sculptures. Unruly drips of blue and yellow paint highlight the freshly exposed portions of the walls.

Rumblings of dissent grow louder in Klara Liden’s large-scale photograph “Untitled (Bierbank),” which faces the graffiti-etched top of a picnic table straight on. Better yet are [Zoe Leonard](#)’s smaller shots of tree trunks that have accommodated chain-link fences and barbed wire by growing through, or around, them. Next to these works Adam Pendleton’s appropriated Bauhaus photographs, screen printed on mirrors and modified with partly erased text, look incongruously slick and uncommunicative.

The focus on wood, whether in nature or architecture, gives “Heart to Hand” an agenda that may not be explicitly political but is very much about engaging with one’s surroundings.



Social Register: Corresponding with Oscar Tuazon (A'99)

March 07, 2012



Oscar Tuazon, 'Dead Wrong', 2011; concrete, steel, plywood, sheetrock.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Oscar Tuazon's work frequently reckons with the social registers of art and architecture. In the past he has created concrete structures seemingly tormented by gravity, arrested in mid-collapse or dispersing into debris on gallery floors. Other works have defied the structure of exhibition sites, cutting swiftly through museum walls, not so much inhabiting space as dominating it. His works likewise often challenge viewers as much as they do the spaces where they are displayed: many invite physical touch and use, uncommon modes of spectatorship in the gallery or museum context.

While much of the discourse surrounding Tuazon's work seems to pit his art against architecture, critics like Julian Rose have linked him to the foundations of contemporary architectural theory. Nineteenth century architectural historian Gottfried Semper's theory of tectonics lay the groundwork for understanding much of the modernist architectural aesthetics as a dramatization of the struggle between form and gravity, Rose argued in the pages of *ArtForum*, and Tuazon's work offers a model break from this tradition while avoiding the superficiality of 80s deconstructivist aesthetics.

In addition to the theoretical underpinning to his work, the artist likewise has another approach to its making and experience. Tuazon, a 1999 Cooper Union School of Art alumnus, makes art that is often available to touch for viewers—or users, as one may put it. In *My Mistake*, his 2010 show at London's Institute for Contemporary Art, he created an elaborate post-and-beam structure from raw, unfinished wood that enacted a serial and repetitive form throughout the space, cutting through gallery walls wherever they met the piece in its stern logic. Both visitors to the exhibition as well as the institutional staff living and working with the piece had to negotiate its incursions on a daily basis. This meant stepping over or onto the beams and adjusting habituated movement patterns throughout the galleries.

«Social Register: Corresponding with Oscar Tuazon (A' 99)», *The Cooper Union*, March 7, 2012.
<http://www.cooper.edu/about/news/social-register-corresponding-with-oscar-tuazon>



Oscar Tuazon, 'For Hire', 2012, 2012 Whitney Biennial, installation view.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Oscar Tuazon, 'For Hire', 2012, 2012 Whitney Biennial, installation view.



Eli Hansen and Oscar Tuazon, 'Kodiak', 2008; Douglas fir, pine, steel, sheetrock, adhesive, and photograph.



Last summer in Venice at the 54th Venice Biennale, Tuazon was one of four artists invited by curator Bice Curiger to create what she termed “para-pavillions.” These pavilions functioned as hubs of creative encounter between the show's artists that remained outside of the official and nationally-defined pavilions of the Biennale. Tuazon responded with *Raped Land* and *The Trees*—two outdoor concrete structures evocative of Brutalist aesthetics. *Raped Land*, an ostentatiously precarious concrete box with space between its constitutive walls, at once inviting and threatening viewers to step inside, functioned as a exhibition platform: painter Ida Ekblad’s mural occupied one of the piece’s exterior walls, while an intermittent sound installation by Asier Mendizabal played inside. Artist Nils Bech also performed at Tuazon’s para-pavillion during the exhibition’s opening days. In this sense Tuazon’s work “works” as an interface between visitors and the other artists, all the while orbiting questions on the utility and context-making power of art.

Oscar Tuazon’s latest exhibition in New York is the 2012 Whitney Biennial, curated by Jay Sanders and Elisabeth Sussman, on view through May 27, 2012. Travelling from his home in Paris to Los Angeles in order to fabricate his contribution to the show, the artist agreed to a brief email correspondence anticipating the presentation of this latest work.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Oscar Tuazon, *Raped Land & The Trees*, Illuminations: 54th Venice Biennale, 2011.



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Bosko Blagojevic: I'm wondering about your plans for the Whitney Biennial, what will you show?

Oscar Tuazon: The piece is a modular system of spaces, a modular building, it's a space for other things to happen. Maybe you could think of it as furniture. Ideally the piece should disappear, it should recede into the background.

BB: Someone once said the best technology does this: in use, it disappears. I'm thinking now of the Venice Biennial, the way your para-pavilion interfaced with the work of two other artists. Was this a disappearing piece as well?

OT: I hope so—it was a stage for performances, for a poetry reading; it was used as an exhibition space; there was a mural painted on one of the walls. And it provided some shade in an area that got very hot. So people would stop there between looking at art, to rest and talk. If you wanted to experience it as an artwork you could, but it worked just as well as a place to sit and talk. It was a space that encouraged a lot of different uses.

BB: When did you first start making art that folded into some concept of "use" like that?

OT: I think it actually came from thinking about the political dimension of an artwork—the idea that an artwork can effect some kind of change in the world around it. That was something we discussed a lot in my time at Cooper, I mean that was the sculpture department of Hans Haacke, Niki Logis and Doug Ashford—this kind of incredible and maybe delusional belief in the power of an artwork to do something in the world. That's where my idea of 'utility' comes from. Why shouldn't an artwork be useful? And when you start asking that question, it opens onto some interesting territory because then you start to think about architecture. And when an artist thinks about architecture there's going to be problems, that's inevitable.



BB: Why problems?

OT: Architecture has to design around pre-existing conditions, predefined uses. A building needs to respond to the needs of a client. But an artwork needs to invent a use where there wasn't one. Or use things wrong. That's a huge difference I think. I don't know, it's a difference in degree of frustration with the world. But to me it makes sense that artists and architects should have an antagonistic relationship, that kind of argument over how space should be used is productive, and it's maybe what makes Cooper such a funny place—the whole idea that you would have a wood shop shared by artists and architects is actually pretty insane if you think about it, dangerous even.



Oscar Tuazon, *For Hire*, 2012, 2012 Whitney Biennial, installation view

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Images courtesy Maccarone Gallery, New York.

VOGUE
PARIS

Rencontre avec Oscar Tuazon à la Biennale de Venise



Sculpteur d'origine américaine et vivant en France, Oscar Tuazon fait évoluer son art aux frontières de l'architecture, de l'habitat précaire ou de la ruine. Il a été choisi avec d'autres artistes pour créer l'un des quatre pavillons à Venise.

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Comment as-tu conçu *The Trees*, ce mini-pavillon en béton, un peu cassé, désarticulé ?

Ça n'était pas vraiment en référence aux autres pavillons. *The Trees* n'est pas un discours sur le site, uniquement au sens culturel du terme. J'ai aussi beaucoup prêté attention à la notion de "Giardini" et à la végétation qui allait entourer mon œuvre.

Quand t'as-t-on sollicité pour cette pièce ?

Environ dix mois avant la Biennale. J'avais commencé par visiter le site et fait une première proposition. Ce parapavillon est conçu entre autres pour accueillir le travail de l'artiste Asier Mendizabal. Nous avons beaucoup discuté ensemble et j'ai évolué par rapport à ma première mouture.

VOGUE

Ton projet était-il lié à la thématique générale de la Biennale,

ILLUMInations ?

Oui, dans le sens où c'était vraiment une idée intéressante d'accueillir et de concevoir un espace pour d'autres. Ma pièce est quelque peu inidentifiée. Ça n'est pas une sculpture, c'est presque de l'architecture, qui va être modifiée par les autres plasticiens. Il y aura aussi des performances, dont une pièce sonore, ou la peinture d'Ida Ekblad, qui va recouvrir le béton, voire même peut-être du graffiti.

Que penses-tu de cette Biennale ?

J'aime surtout qu'il n'y ait pas de côté spectaculaire. C'est à échelle humaine. Sur le fond des expositions, il est difficile pour moi d'en parler ou de comparer aux autres sessions car c'est la première fois que je viens ici. Même s'il est toujours malaisé de généraliser, je constate que c'est une Biennale pour les artistes. La curatrice Bice Curiger a laissé une grande liberté et a été très respectueuse du travail de chacun. Un dialogue très humain s'est noué entre elle et nous.

Quels sont tes pavillons préférés ?

J'aime le pavillon allemand qui présente l'œuvre posthume de Christoph Schlingensiefel (Il vient d'être décoré du Lion d'or du meilleur pavillon) et l'anglais, de Mike Nelson.

Quels sont les enjeux pour un artiste de 35 ans à participer à la Biennale ?

C'est très important, car c'est une grande expérience et une fenêtre sur le monde. Ton travail est vu par un public très important.

Quand tu es artiste et que tu produis une nouvelle pièce, tu ne sais jamais si cela va marcher et comment l'œuvre va être reçue. Parfois, ça n'est pas ce que tu avais prévu, mais ici, à Venise, ça a fonctionné exactement comme je l'avais imaginé.

Cette œuvre va-t-elle rester là ou a-t-on prévu de la détruire ?

Mon contrat stipule qu'elle va être détruite, mais j'espère qu'elle va perdurer. Il y a juste à côté une inscription en pierre, reste d'une œuvre qui date des années 1940. L'artiste n'est jamais revenu la chercher, donc elle est toujours là. Ça serait mon rêve !

Propos recueillis par Marie Maertens / Say Who ?

PASTE
LE
GRAM

DALLAS

**Oscar Tuazon: Die
The Power Station**

Benjamin Lima
August 26, 2011

The Power Station is a new exhibition space in Dallas with plans for a rotating series of specially commissioned, single-artist exhibitions. As the name suggests, it is housed in an early twentieth-century building that was originally a substation for the Dallas power and light company, located near the established gallery clusters of the Deep Ellum and Exposition Park neighborhoods.

For the Power Station's inaugural installation, Oscar Tuazon executed two works in wood, concrete, steel and Sheetrock. On the ground floor, *Die* is a frame structure composed of three eight-foot cubes. Two of these are wooden and braced at the corners with metal corner brackets; the third, in reinforced concrete, completes the form in the shape of an "L." Tuazon and his production team began this concrete section on the floor; then, using a crane (part of the building's original and still remaining rigging), they winched the concrete cube upwards. In the process Tuazon pushed the "L" over on its side until the concrete buckled and cracked. They left the winch and its chains in place, tying the work to the building's frame like a boat's mooring (or perhaps an umbilical cord).



Oscar Tuazon, *Die*, 2011; courtesy the Power Station. Photo by Kevin Tisdale.

Upstairs on the second floor, *Dead Wrong* is composed of Sheetrock panels mounted between two of the building's I-beam pillars and fastened securely across the upper section, but left to float free at the bottom. Tuazon poured concrete into the interior space between the two panels until the concrete's weight pushed on the Sheetrock with sufficient force to spill out underneath it like lava, buckling and curling the Sheetrock panels out like old wallpaper.

The works at the Power Station drive home a powerful point made by Tuazon's work in general. That is, a structure is defined not just by its materials and shape, but also by its force. Or, more precisely, by the

PASTELEGRAM

counterbalancing of Newtonian forces that holds a structure together: tension, compression and gravity, to name a few of those obviously at work here. It's possible to interpret this use of force through a concept of the index: it is a sign defined as the material trace of an action, like a footprint left in the sand by a passing step. This idea appeared in Marcel Duchamp's play with dust and broken glass,¹ but Rosalind Krauss more recently used indexicality to define the commonality of an otherwise disparate group of 1970s artists such as Gordon Matta-Clark, Lucio Pozzi and Marcia Hafif. Krauss argued that the index is about materiality and thing-ness. Writing that the index works to "substitute the registration of sheer physical presence for the more highly articulated language of aesthetic conventions," Krauss concluded that "Truth is understood as a matter of evidence, rather than a function of logic."²



Oscar Tuazon, *Dead Wrong*, 2011; courtesy the Power Station. Photo by Kevin Todaro.

In Tuazon's case, then, *Die* and *Dead Wrong* appear as indices of the various actions—pouring, winching, et cetera—that produced them. The way that Tuazon's work engages basic questions of structure, materiality and entropy connects back to the work of Robert Smithson, Matta-Clark and Richard Serra and thus holds affinities with that of other contemporary artists exploring similar territory, for example Gardar Eide Einarsson and Alex Hubbard.³ All of these artists engage with the "sheer physical presence" so visible in the Power Station installation.

Although I think the indexical interpretation is accurate as far as it goes, at the level of purely intuitive response I am more strongly drawn to a different but compatible reading, one grounded in the sensual apprehension of the works' materials and how they push and pull each other around. It is surprisingly easy to pick up violent or libidinal overtones from these works. Crudely put, Tuazon's works exhibit pressure, friction, bulging, straining, penetration, eruption, breaking, crushing, collapsing and other such characteristics that slide easily into the metaphorical territory of the sex drive and the death drive. This interpretation relies on one's susceptibility to read unconscious urges in perhaps unlikely places; still, I find the violence and libido of Tuazon's sculptures impossible to ignore. Of course, this interpretation turns the work into a metaphorical "body." The structures use the techniques of engineering and architecture for the anarchic pleasure of making things break and crumple. Executed in the former home of a public utility company, the latter being the very epitome of rational, constructive and orderly state enterprise, the dramatic tension between work and site is rich and rewarding.

¹ [\(re:Specifically: Duchamp's The Bride Stripped Bare of her Bachelors, 1915 – 1923\).](#)

² [\(re:Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America," October 3 \(Spring 1977\): 81, and "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America, Part 2," October 4 \(Autumn 1977\): 66.](#)

³ [\(re:Alex Hubbard: Tuazon is an alumnus of the Whitney Independent Study Program and the Accooni Studio; like Hubbard, Tuazon is a](#)

native of the Pacific Northwest and shows at a group of galleries that includes The Standard (Oslo), Eva Presenhuber (Zurich), and Maccaroni (New York). Both Hubbard and Einarsson have visited the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in recent years.

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Structural Tension

Julian Rose on the art of Oscar Tuazon



This and opposite page:
Oscar Tuazon, untitled,
2010, mixed media.
Installation view,
Kunsthalle Bern,
Switzerland. Photos:
Dominique Lütz.

IT'S EASY ENOUGH to see the work of Oscar Tuazon as a vehement attack on architecture. The Paris-based artist's two most recent shows, for example—an untitled project at the Kunsthalle Bern and *My Mistake* at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts this past spring and summer, respectively—each staged a dramatic encounter between installation and white cube. Both were large-scale frame constructions, assembled from eight-by-eight- or twelve-by-twelve-inch beams of unfinished wood, roughly cut to size with a chain saw and bolted together. In both shows, the frames filled an entire floor, weaving in and out of multiple rooms. Not only is their raw materiality a striking contrast to the high finish of the galleries' existing spatial organization with a defiantly independent logic. Where Tuazon's beams encounter the gallery walls, they simply punch through, carrying over into the next gallery, even as the massive armature blocks doors, fills rooms, and profoundly disrupts the buildings' normal patterns of occupation and use. Reviews, following the exhibitions' own literature, have overwhelmingly responded with a rhetoric of violence and destruction. The Bern work "attacks the building," while the ICA structure "annihilates" and enters into "combat" with the existing space. One can't seem to escape repeated references to "aggression," "contamination," and "penetration." This public-relations battle between art and architecture, though, is something of a red herring.

Many contemporary artists, curators, and critics share the assumption that the physical alteration of an exhibition space amounts to an inherently devastating assault on architecture, whether understood as a specific critique of the institution displaying the work or as a more generalized criticism of architecture's position in the culture at large. But these attacks seem at best rhetorical and at worst fleeting, futile, and easily absorbed by the institutions they target. What accounts for the persistence of this myth of conquering artists, vanquishers of architecture, given the glaring disjunction between our collective faith in their triumph and the actual effectiveness of their critiques? Perhaps, like any good myth, this one offers a convenient certainty with which to cover up an uncomfortable gap in understanding. In the face of an increasingly complex and murky relationship between art and architecture, staging an easy binary between the two disciplines offers a deceptively clear model for operating between them. In fact, this liminal field remains permissively vague, even escapist—a space where few difficult questions are asked.

Yet to look into Tuazon's work and find only a reinforcement of existing trends would be to miss an opportunity to move beyond the very binaries



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



This page: Oscar Tuazon, *My Mistake*, 2010, mixed media. Installation view, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Photo: Steve White. Opposite page: Oscar Tuazon, *Band M TW It Breaks*, 2009, wood, metal, concrete. Installation view, Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'Île de Vassivière, France.

his work seems at first to reinforce. There is an undeniable aggression in Tuazon's work, as well as a distrust of architectural orthodoxy. He often speaks of his lifelong interest in alternative or "outsider" architectural movements, ranging from the ad hoc constructions of hippie communes to the portable and do-it-yourself shelters of hard-core survivalists. But whatever his interest in these precedents, Tuazon does not follow them completely outside the cultural establishment. His work still operates in, around, and between art and architecture. And while his work remains critical, it is tempered by a deep insight into the way these fields operate. Tuazon does not leverage abstractions such as "art" or "sculpture" in a blunt attack on an equally abstract notion of "architecture." Rather, he tunes his work to selectively relate certain trends, practices, and histories in each discipline to the other. Thus he is able to move away from literal, staged encounters between art and architecture—so prevalent in recent practice—toward an investigation of specific themes that resonate richly in both.

In order to grasp Tuazon's relation to architecture, one must first recognize the depth of his shared concerns with the discipline. Viewed independently of their interpenetration with the galleries they occupied, the ICA and Bern pieces are simple assemblies of timbers: horizontal spanning members held up off the ground by vertical supports. In other words, they are crude post-and-beam structures. The post-and-beam frame holds a near-mythical status in architectural discourse because it is traditionally understood as the prototypical structure. In the guise of Enlightenment historian Marc-Antoine Laugier's "primitive hut," the post-and-beam frame was even famously posited as the origin of architecture. Tuazon's pieces thus address one of the most fundamental problems of architecture: the organization of posts and beams into a structural frame.

Amid the current craze for gravity-defying architecture, there is an uncanny power in Tuazon's visceral acknowledgment of gravity's force, a tectonic return of the repressed.

The post-and-beam frame is fabled not only as the first structure, however, but as the origin of the fundamental relationship between structure and representation. Simply put, much of the frame structure's appeal stems from the fact that it doesn't just stand up, it *looks like* it should stand up. The straightforward conjunction of horizontal and vertical elements projects an air of stability, providing the basic diagram shaping our expectations for a well-built building. And it was Gottfried Semper, one of the grandfathers of modern architectural history, who is best known for theorizing this slippage between structural and representational concerns through the notion of tectonics. The term, derived from the Greek *tekton*, meaning "carpenter or builder," was used in the nineteenth century by Semper specifically to refer to theories of structural expression. In his tract *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, he argued that since architecture's most fundamental task is to resist gravity, its primary aesthetic goal should be to represent symbolically the drama of this internal struggle. For Semper, architecture possesses a visual language of structure that is purely symbolic and entirely "independent of material conditions." The appearance of structural





soundness is thus ultimately just as important as structural performance itself. For example, he criticizes vertical decorations on a horizontal beam because “visually they destroy this member’s tensile strength.”

The famous modernist emphasis on “structural transparency” notwithstanding, modern architecture generally stayed within Semper’s model of tectonics. New industrial materials and conceptions of space may have changed the structural language of architecture, but it was still a *language*—and so structural expression in modernism remained largely rhetorical. This may seem counter-intuitive, yet it can be easily confirmed by a glance at any number of iconic modern buildings. In Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson’s Seagram Building, for example, the austere grid of I beams on the building’s facade appears to be its internal steel structure. But as is well known, the steel actually holding up the building lies hidden inside the curtain wall. So how could modernist structural expression be confronted other than rhetorically? When deconstruction and anti-architecture arrived in the ’80s, buildings were designed to look fragmented, unstable, incomplete—“cuts” were carefully engineered into walls, gaps introduced into floors, and columns twisted to produce an image of structure on the verge of collapse. Yet as the shock of the new wears off (it has now been more than twenty years since the epochal “Deconstructivist Architecture” show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York), it is all too easy to recognize the only destruction here as Semper’s “visual” one.

Today, many architects seem less interested in buildings that appear alarmingly close to succumbing to gravity than in those that defy it entirely—whether in the form of spectacular gestures like the cantilever of Rem Koolhaas’s CCTV tower in Beijing or in the fad for structures that just look so complicated or chaotic that one loses all sense of how they perform the job of keeping themselves upright. But this trend is still essentially a visual game. If deconstruction was an attack on structural function and much contemporary architecture is based on the suppression of structure, both continue to operate within a symbolic language of structural expression, in the shadow of Semper’s tectonics.

The single most powerful dimension of Tuazon’s work is that it finally offers a genuine alternative to these models of tectonics. But while the Bern and ICA pieces are a convenient entry point into this problem, it is three slightly earlier works that articulate the break with tectonics most clearly. *Another Nameless Venture Gone Wrong*, 2009 (Haugar Vestfold Kunstmuseum, Tønsberg, Norway), *Beid It Till It Breaks*, 2009 (Centre International d’Art et du Paysage de l’Île de Vassivière, France), and *Tonopah*, 2008 (Maccarone Inc., New York) are—like the Bern and ICA projects—all essentially primitive frame structures. But their frames are constructed of a much more heterogeneous assortment of building materials. There are raw wooden posts but also massive concrete beams, metal studs, and patches of Sheetrock. The elegant simplicity of the frame unit is here obscured by the seemingly schizophrenic logic with which the materials have been assembled. Although the more recent installations are developed to a roughly consistent level of bare-bones completion, these previous works have an odd patchwork quality. At moments, a near-complete piece of wall (the full sandwich of beams, studs, and Sheetrock) is perched absurdly atop a single post; elsewhere, posts, beams, and studs of different sizes and materials intertwine so densely that one almost loses the identity of the structural frame. These structures are not so much fragmented—for there is none of the romance of the fragment, no suggestion of an originary order or a lost whole—as simply incomplete, undone.

But what one really notices about these structures is that they are literally collapsing. In each of these pieces, Tuazon builds a structural framework around one or more large concrete members, which he casts in place during the installation process. These are purposefully left insufficiently supported, so that as soon as Tuazon removes their formwork they begin to buckle under their own weight. The concrete slabs’ failure reverberates throughout the works; they



Opposite page: Oscar Tuazon, *Another Nameless Venture Gone Wrong*, 2009, mixed media, installation view, Haugar Vestfold Kunstmuseum, Tønsberg, Norway. Photo: Vegard Kleven. This page, above: Oscar Tuazon, *Tenapan*, 2008, wood, steel, winches, cement. Installation view, Maccarone Inc., New York. Below: Oscar Tuazon, *Bend It Till It Breaks*, 2009, wood, metal, concrete. Installation view, Centre International d'Art et du Paysage, de l'Île de Vassivière, France.



are saved from complete self-destruction only by Tuazon's deployment of a secondary support system as a kind of structural safety fuse—usually a chain hoist fixed to the gallery ceiling—to catch the work before it collapses entirely. The forces involved are immense, with tons of material precariously suspended (*Another Nameless Venture Gone Wrong*, for example, required the support of a ten-ton motorized hoist). Concrete shatters and metal studs buckle and twist, tearing through Sheetrock like tissue paper. Wooden beams bow and posts lean crazily, dragged out of alignment by the inexorable lateral force exerted by the failing concrete. Rubble accumulates on the gallery floor.

Amid the current craze for gravity-defying architecture, there is an uncanny power in Tuazon's visceral acknowledgment of gravity's force, a tectonic return of the repressed. But his use of gravity ultimately cuts much deeper. Not only does he refuse to idealize his works' resistance to gravity, as Sempër would demand, but he avoids the purely visual fragmentation and precarity of deconstruction. The relation of his structures to gravity is completely nonmetaphoric. As Tuazon says, "For me the problematic is never one of representation. I mean, I want to push materials to the point where they actually fail. So what some-

A productive potential in the gap between plan and realization arises—one that neither architects nor sculptors before Tuazon seem to have noticed.

thing looks like is almost beside the point, or at least beyond my control." Tuazon's most fundamental achievement, all the more profound for being so basic, is to build a structure that does not *look like* but simply *is*.

The relevance of this achievement is not limited to architecture, since notions of structural legibility have held a persistent importance for sculpture as well. Constructivist concerns with transparency and articulation of structure were necessarily reengaged by postwar neo-avant-gardes, particularly Minimalism; even if in the context of sculpture, *structure* referred as much to the logics of manufacture and assembly as to the tectonic expression of a contest with gravity. Donald Judd's famous mantra of "one thing after another," for example, can be interpreted as a kind of imperative for Minimalist work to reveal its logic of assembly; it is almost impossible for a viewer to fail to understand how a work constructed according to this principle has been made. The Minimalist module, then, was essentially a means of ensuring legibility. The ubiquitous grid of Minimalism is simply the most readable organization of a cubic module.

Given the shared strategies and concerns of Minimalism and modern architecture, it is not surprising that many post-Minimalist artists critiqued Minimalism by explicitly engaging architecture. Robert Smithson's *Partially Buried Woodshed*, 1970, for example, staged a dramatic encounter between the rational structure of architecture and the overwhelming force of raw matter—dumping (literally) tons of dirt onto a post-and-beam timber shed until its center beam cracked. Gordon Matta-Clark famously dissected the architectural objects of everyday modernism, interrupting the humdrum modularity of houses, offices, and industrial buildings with intricate cutting operations. And Richard Serra has replaced the gridded legibility common to both modern architecture and Minimalism with vertiginous, disorienting spaces derived from complex curvatures. For this generation of artists, the proper response to the module was either to attack it or to abandon it.

Tuazon, however, is willing to look into architecture from a different vantage point, and so his response to Minimalism need not be so overtly anti-architectural.

Tuazon's most fundamental achievement, all the more profound for being so basic, is to build a structure that does not *look like* but simply *is*.

While the destructive impulse of Smithson or Marta-Claudio might appear superficially similar to Tuazon's, the teleology of their work can be understood as pure negation: moving inexorably toward the zero degree of entropy in Smithson's case or the eventual (and precisely rendered) demolition of the building in Marta-Claudio's, distancing their work from Tuazon's investment in a more dynamic and unpredictable precarity.

Tuazon leverages his interests in alternative architecture to overcome the limits of the Minimalist module without leaving it behind. Some critics have seen echoes of Sol LeWitt's three-dimensional grids in the ICA and Bern pieces, and indeed all of Tuazon's works discussed thus far could be described as modular, insofar as a structural frame is a kind of module. Tuazon himself frankly admits to using a module in constructing these pieces, reinforcing (perhaps unintentionally) the association with Minimalism. But the artist's emphasis is on adaptability, flexibility, and the provisional—modularity in the sense that modular housing, say, is designed to be effectively deployed under a wide range of local conditions. For the projects in London and Bern, for example, Tuazon used his knowledge of the basic size and structural capabilities of the module to get an overall sense of how he wanted the work to occupy the gallery space and how it could be structurally viable. Once working on-site, however, he took advantage of the module's flexibility to adapt each piece to various spatial and material constraints as they arose, such as discoveries about the structural capabilities of the gallery building (which walls he could and could not pierce, for instance) and limitations on available tools, labor, and time. Elsewhere, he has gone so far as to construct quasi-habitable structures that respond to their siting outdoors. Although he stops well short of the utopian idealism that often accompanies modular architecture, there remains a strong architectural sensibility in this dimension of Tuazon's work—more Moshe Safdie's Habitat 67 than LeWitt's *Incomplete Open Cubes*. Those who see only echoes of Minimalism risk missing the opposite inflection—toward contingency rather than seriality—that lies behind Tuazon's modules.

All this raises the question of the plan, not only in terms of the architectural convention of drawing plans but in relation to the vehemence with which some artists have attacked this convention in their work. Historically, the plan drawing provided the architect's greatest moment of control—the God's-eye view in which the entire organization of a building could be dictated in a single moment. Though recent techniques have made plans much more complex (the layering operations favored by Peter Eisenman, among others), the essential organizational role of the plan has not dramatically changed. On the other hand, certain artists—particularly as their work has approached an architectural scale—have displayed an almost Oedipal need to destroy the primacy of the plan. Serra proudly claims that it is nearly impossible to deduce the plan of one of his sculptures merely by walking through it, or to predict the experience by looking at a plan drawing of the piece. Indeed, many have cited this elimination of the plan's traditional utility as one of the major achievements of Serra's work.

Critics have likewise routed the claim that Tuazon does not work from plans, as if the refusal of this basic architectural convention is in itself another devastating blow struck against the discipline. But as Tuazon's frame structures suggest, working with an architectural convention and criticizing architecture are not mutually exclusive. To deny that Tuazon works from plans would be both untrue (he often does) and unfair. His use of the plan reveals not complicity with



Elias Hansen and Oscar Tuazon, *Use it for What It's Used For*, 2009, concrete, wood, steel, cinder blocks, silicone, solar panel, charge controller, service disconnect, twelve-volt battery, wiring, light, timer, installation view, LentSpace, New York.

architecture but a gift for destabilizing its conventions both critically and productively. As the ad hoc quality of his constructions implies, Tuazon does make many of his construction decisions on-site. His plans are schematic, not rigid. But they are plans nonetheless. For a time, he even drew them in AutoCAD before deciding that sketching by hand was easier and faster. What matters is not that Tuazon uses plans, but that he uses them in a way fundamentally different from architects.

Tuazon does not see the plan as something that needs to be attacked or destroyed or even necessarily challenged, but he does exploit the gap between plan and actual experience. Because of their sheer scale and mass, his works must be relatively consistent and rational in conception. Tuazon has realized, however, that the design need not impose itself on the viewer's experience. At the ICA or Bern, for example, different areas of his structure can generate radically different experiences despite being very similar in plan, largely due to the way Tuazon exploits the contingency of their relationship to the existing architecture. Heights and angles change dramatically depending on location. A given cubic volume might frame a doorway and so be experienced as a passageway or portal, while elsewhere a comparable volume is embedded in a wall, even penetrating the wall's surface with its horizontal members, so that it appears more like a solid mass. Tuazon himself speaks of the "surprise and excitement" he felt walking through the ICA space as he recognized that even after weeks of effort to resolve his structure in plan, the sensation of moving through the piece varied radically from room to room. A productive potential in the difference between drawing and realization arises—one that neither architects nor sculptors before Tuazon seem to have noticed. He reinterprets disciplinary conventions with no sign of pretension, exploiting these norms as productive opportunities rather than simply destroying them.

Tuazon's materials, too, pull away from both Minimalism and post-Minimalism even as they complicate architectural orthodoxy. The rough stuff employed in his work is in obvious contrast to the fastidious (even fetishized) surfaces favored by Minimalists such as Judd. But his materials are not simply architectural, either. Most of the building materials Tuazon uses are scrap or salvage he scavenges himself, the raw guts of buildings. In actual building applications, the cheap metal studs and rough-cut timbers Tuazon favors are typically covered with more finished materials such as plaster and drywall or paneling. When we see them bare in his work, they emanate a peculiar mix of familiarity and



strangeness. We know they are architectural, yet we do not associate them with our everyday experience of architecture.

Such a tendency toward the abject might easily succumb to reverse romanticism. The latter is a sentiment that underlies the self-evidently dismantled materials in much process art and “unmonumental” work today. Yet Tuazon’s materiality is not purely transgressive: The most startling thing about many of his works is that materials retain their functional properties or even take on surprising new ones. In *Beer Bottle Test Column*, 2008, a collaboration with Tuazon’s brother, Elias Hansen, a massive construction of wood and concrete is held up in part by a stack of beer bottles reinforced with wire mesh and glue. Here Tuazon adds another level of sophistication to his critique of tectonics. He proves that, ultimately, *anything* can be used to hold up a building. Not only does a column not really need to *look like* it is holding up the building, it does not even need to *be* a column at all—a pile of trash will work just as well, provided that a few simple structural principles are observed. This radical insight trumps centuries of architectural tradition.

Underlying Tuazon’s new understanding of structure, modularity, and materiality is a new sense of subjectivity. Tuazon is clearly influenced by the Minimalist and post-Minimalist understanding of experience as embodied, mobile, and temporal, most explicitly in the ICA and Bern works. To see the whole



Left: Elias Hansen and Oscar Tuazon, *Beer Bottle Test Column*, 2008, mixed media. Installation view, The Station, Miami. Above: Oscar Tuazon, *I Went Out There and Spent a Night Out There. The Light Died Out While I Waited and So I Stopped*, 2010. Installation view, Maccaroni Inc., New York. Photo: Andrew Russell.

thing in either venue, one must walk not only around the entire floor but also into and through the structures themselves. At first glance, *I Went Out There and Spent a Night Out There. The Light Died Out While I Waited and So I Stopped*, 2010, also seems to refer directly to the Minimalist precedent of Carl Andre’s gridded metal floor pieces: Tuazon’s work is made up in part of two sheets of reinforced glass placed end to end, also on the gallery floor. Viewers are invited to walk onto both. But when you step onto an Andre piece, nothing much happens. The metal plates, of course, are rock hard and supported firmly on the floor—they don’t budge or even squeak. After he laid them down, Tuazon shattered the glass plates in *I Went . . .*, kicking them until they broke, and left them. When you stride onto that piece, fragments of glass shift and crunch disturbingly underfoot. You feel as if you are breaking Tuazon’s work as you walk across it; you are not only moving in relation to the piece, but the weight and movement of your body are implicated in its destruction. Remarkably, Tuazon is able to engage the body without slipping into an abstract model of subjectivity. The Minimalist subject, after all, remained idealist in many ways, wholly undivided and so always fully present to the world. And while the complex and increasingly illegible spaces created by Matta-Clark and Serra may have disoriented this subject, they did not alter its fundamental abstraction.

This may be why we feel such powerful emotional impact amid Tuazon’s collapsing structures. Perhaps we relate to his works not only through an abstract phenomenology or the disorienting effects of illegible space, but through the bodily and the psychological at the same time. Tuazon has said, “I’ve always tried to think about architecture from the standpoint of occupation, inhabitation. . . . So to me that’s an idea of architecture that starts with the body, with a specific body, it’s architecture in the first person I guess you could say.” Crucially, this is not the idealized analogy between body and building that has haunted architecture at least since the classical invention of the Vitruvian Man. In looking at Tuazon’s structures we experience not only an intellectual reflex of reading or decoding but the immediate shock of (bodily) recognition: a kind of first-person identification or projection. Tuazon’s work thus clears a space between art and architecture—eroding the persistent metaphors and comfortable binaries that usually languish there. □

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theguardian

Artist of the week 98: Oscar Tuazon

Inspired by 'outlaw architecture' this Seattle native channels the extreme DIY and freethinking of hippy survivalists going off-grid



Skye Sherwin
guardian.co.uk, Wednesday 28 July 2010 10:44 BST

A [human + machine](#)



Oscar Tuazon's *My Mistake*, on display at London's ICA, 2010. Photograph: Steve White

Oscar Tuazon's art may be vulnerable, but you'd never guess. His sculpture-cum-architecture has used raw slabs of concrete, steel and untreated wooden beams, bark-encrusted tree trunks and heavy metal chains. For his current installation, *My Mistake*, at London's ICA, the artist has assembled what looks like a massive climbing frame from tree-size pine beams. Almost too big for the gallery, one girder even bursts through a wall.

Born in 1975, Tuazon grew up outside Seattle, coming of age watching bands like Mudhoney and Nirvana (one spell in the mosh pit was so frenzied he once broke his leg). Having graduated from the elite Independent Study Program at New York's Whitney Museum in 2003, he cut his teeth working for renowned extremist Vito Acconci, a performance artist and poet-turned-architect. After moving to Paris in 2007, Tuazon set up the gallery castillo/corrales with a group of artist and curator friends, and the past three years have seen his constructions of wood and concrete take over exhibition spaces across Europe.

Inspired by what he calls "outlaw architecture", Tuazon channels the extreme DIY and freethinking of hippy survivalists who decide to go off-grid. If his industrial materials suggest a minimalistic stress on concept over making, he's just as interested in the physical side of sculpture. He is not afraid to get his hands dirty: working with riggers and technicians, he starts off with a sketch, chain-sawing wood, developing ideas and patching up problems on the hoof. From the impromptu-looking concrete slab that intersects the two-storey wooden frame of his 2009 work, Bend It Till It Breaks, to the neon strip light glowing two and a half metres up an untreated tree-trunk buttressed by planks in I Wanna Live, his structures have a rough-shod, improvised feel.

As muscular and uncompromising as it can first appear, Tuazon's work is ephemeral. Like the hippy idealists defining their environment on their own terms, the artist will always have to pack up and move on. Yet while they stand, pushing at walls and ceilings and taking over space, these makeshift constructions remind us of the imaginative struggle to make what we want of the world, no matter what rules and boundaries seem to press down on us.

Why We Like Him: For *Kodiak*, a 2008 installation including a water tank, window, wood beam and lantern, created with his brother Eli Hansen and based on the 10 days they spent living rough on a wintry Alaskan island. We also love his 2007 book, *Un-house – The Architecture of Dwelling Portably*, which chronicles his experiences on the road while tracking down nomads in the forests of Oregon.

Freestyle: Since they were teenagers, Tuazon and his bro have covered themselves in homemade tattoos, making up the designs as they go along.

Where Can I See Him? *My Mistake* is at London's ICA until 15 August.

STYLE

How do I look? Oscar Tuazon

Artist, 35

I grew up in a small town a couple of hours outside Seattle. When I was 17 years old, I saw Nirvana for the first time; from then on it was all about denim and flannel. On weekends I'd root around a strange old second-hand store in a nearby navy town, picking out bowling shirts or these farm labourers' shirts you could get with other people's names sewn on them. It meant I could be someone else for a little while.

In the mid-1990s I went to art school in New York. It was my first time away from home and I was trying hard to transform myself into something else; for a while I went through this phase of wearing designer clothes and dying my hair grey. First I had to bleach it out completely, then add this weird blue-ish tint to it; I think I may have been trying to draw attention to myself in the wrong way.

In New York, everyone tries to dress as crazy as possible. In Paris, where I live now, the key is understatement. Here, dressing well is about making fine, subtle choices; it's the difference between one black sweater and another. I appreciate that sensibility of being hyper-conscious about the cut or the material of something. I'm picky about what I wear; I choose clothes that are built to last.

huge, grizzled 65-year-old called Big Ben inspired this shirt. It took me a whole year to hunt out, and in the end it cost me \$15. A lot of my job as an artist involves manual work, surrounded by other guys. Some men just know how to look good within pretty narrow workwear parameters.

It takes effort to pull off the hardy/functional look and not look like an idiot. It's a fine line, and it's all about delicate choices. For one, there's a whole world of hats out there; I go for black-on-black caps. After seeing a Mexican labourer wearing a black Seattle Seahawks cap, it took three months to find one like it.

I come from Seattle, home of the Utilikilt – a specialist workman's kilt with loads of pockets – but I buy my trousers from a cowboy store in a tiny town between L.A. and Death Valley. That's the kind of place I really love, but I also appreciate stores like Raf Simons and Rick Owen, where I'd never actually buy anything. Just being surrounded by that stuff is an intimidating yet erotic experience.

*Oscar Tuazon's exhibition **My Mistake** runs until 15 August at the ICA, London SW1*

Interview by Charlotte Philby

Portrait by Rick Morris Pushinsky

