



EXUBÉRANCE BAROQUE

4 JUNE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2010

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PRESS RELEASE



EXUBÉRANCE BAROQUE EXHIBITION OF PLANT WORKS OF ART

From 4 June to 26 September 2010 – French Garden of the Petit Trianon

TO MARK THE ANNUAL "RENDEZ-VOUS AUX JARDINS" GARDEN FESTIVAL (5 AND 6 JUNE), THE CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES IS INAUGURATING AN EXHIBITION CALLED "EXUBERANCE BAROQUE". THE CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES WILL EXCEPTIONALLY KEEP THE FRENCH GARDEN OF THE PETIT TRIANON OPEN OVER THREE MONTHS FOR TWO CREATIVE DESIGNERS OF THE PLANT NEW WAVE WHO WILL PRESENT ORIGINAL WORKS.

THE ARTIST-DESIGNER **Alexis Tricoire**, associated with Jardins de Gally, and the landscape architect **Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville** will each exhibit several works as ephemeral as they are original. Created to dialogue with the elegant classical layout of the French Garden, they add a touch of fantasy via the curves and movement of Baroque effects.

THE TWO CREATIVE DESIGNERS have developed a daring, unexpected and spectacular language that restores to the gardens their festive and enchanting dimension.

ALEXIS TRICOIRE proposes a "poetic-playful circuit to make visitors wonder, discover and understand". JEAN-PHILIPPE POIRÉE-VILLE, seeks to show "a new relationship between Man and nature" by the evocation of "the links that unite the sky and buildings". These seven works will evolve with the growth of the plants of which they are composed, thus presenting a different appearance as the season advances.

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This exhibition is produced with the sponsorship of



and



MAP

COLUX BAROQUE GALERIE VÉGÉTALE
FRUIT DEFENDU
FORÊT IVRE
CRUTE
ELEVATION NATUREL CYCLIQUE

Alexis Tricoire

Alexis Tricoire

Alexis Tricoire

Jean Philippe Poirée Ville

Alexis Tricoire

Jean-Philippe Poirée Ville

Alexis Tricoire

ALEXIS TRICOIRE

Alexis Tricoire

THE ARTIST'S PROJECT

IN THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY, the Baroque style spread through Europe devastated by the Wars of Religion. The Papacy promoted magnificence and sumptuousness to counter the austerity advocated by the Reformation churches. I regard this style of exaggeration and over-embellishment as a form of “splendid decadence”.

TODAY, IN THE CONTEXT OF A MAJOR SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL CRISIS, when humanity continues to exploit without discernment the resources of a fragile Earth to satisfy its desire for abundance, the presence of some exuberant mega-sculptures in the very emblematic French-style formal garden of the Petit Trianon might be seen as an ostentatious provocation.

ON THE CONTRARY, the ethical and environmental symbols that the works convey and the metaphors around which they are constructed form an appeal to meditate on concepts that are the foundation for a return to more moderation and clear-headedness.

INSPIRED BY THE CYCLE OF LIFE, global warming, the plant habitat, medicinal botany and the love of living things, each work carries a message of love and respect for nature and the need to preserve it in all its biodiversity.

CONCERNED TO BE CONSISTENT, I wanted all the works to have a minimal carbon footprint. So they are almost exclusively designed with the help of light, recyclable and biodegradable materials. I wish to thank *Jardins de Gally*, my plant partner for this exhibition, for having supported me in this approach through their professionalism and their proximity to Versailles.

Alexis Tricoire

Alexis Tricoire

THE WORKS

NATUREL CYCLIQUE,

or the power of the moment present in life's impermanence.



© Alexis Tricoire

IN ALL PERIODS and on all the continents, man has sought to express what became for them, as their awareness grew, the experience of transcendence. Contemplation of the starry sky and meditation on the constant renewal of time found regular expression in symbols to convey and sometimes reach the sacred.

A UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF INVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION, birth and death, death and rebirth, this 6 metre-high plant spiral reminds us that the only constant in life is impermanence. The blue bindweed flowers that quickly colonise Naturel Cyclique are emblematic of this perpetual renewal: they open in the morning and fade away at night, to be replaced the next day, as they have done since the dawn of time.

HOW NOT TO FEEL AFRAID, faced with the vertiginous rapidity of life, the loss of each lived moment and the approach of each moment to be lived? Life unfolds in a succession of present instants which make up the only tangible reality which we can hold on to fully when we seek inner peace. Life perpetuates itself without any other goal than to keep surviving itself.

PLANT SELECTION : To mark the idea of a continuous cycle, a series of green nuances from silvery green to dark green – *Lysimachia nummularia*, *Helxine solerei*, *Bacopa*, *Ipomoea batatas* – succeed each other along this circle of life. It is given highlights of blue bindweed flowers (*Ipomoea volubilis*).

*Ipomoea volubilis* (liseron bleu)

FORÊT IVRE, a disaster announced on the north pole of the Great Spinning-Top



© Alexis Tricoire

IN THIS PLAYFUL AND PERPLEXING INSTALLATION, consisting of seven laurel trees planted in large spinning-tops, I wanted to illustrate a dramatic phenomenon still not very well known: in Siberia, covering an area bigger than France and Germany combined, global warming is leading to the melting of the permafrost, the crust of subsoil that has remained frozen since the end of the last ice age 11,000 years ago.

THE CONSEQUENCES ARE SPECTACULAR : apart from the destabilisation of the soil and the disoriented look of the northern forest, with trees bending in all directions, a second major preoccupation lies in the quantity of carbon hitherto imprisoned in the frozen ground. It could be released massively into the atmosphere. The estimations vary between 350 and 450 gigatonnes, nearly one third of all carbon present in the ground. So even a partial emission of this gigantic store of carbon would have catastrophic climatic consequences!

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*Laurus nobilis* (laurier sauce)

HERE IN VERSAILLES, IN THIS FRENCH-STYLE FORMAL GARDEN, all straight lines and careful symmetry, the spinning-tops have stopped and bend over to the ground, and the trees standing over them have not had the time to adapt themselves. Prisoners of a movement they could not control, having lost the sense of verticality, they are the symbolic image of the strange chaotic disorder that has altered nature.

PLANT SELECTION : One very simple species, the well-known bay tree (*Laurus nobilis*), here embodies the discipline of topiary art in contrast with the exuberance of the spinning-tops.

CŒUR BAROQUE, when awareness of beauty creates joy and love



© Alexis Tricoire

ACCORDING TO ECKHART TOLLE in *Nouvelle Terre*, « seeing the beauty of a flower, human beings become aware, even if only briefly, of the beauty that is an essential part of their innermost being, forming part of their true nature. The first time that beauty was recognised was one of the most significant steps in the evolution of human consciousness, given that the feelings of joy and love are intrinsically linked. Without realising this fully, flowers have become for us the manifest expression of what is highest and most sacred, and ultimately what is not manifested in us ».

THIS HEART FOUR METRES HIGH AND WIDE, pierced by an arrow with a royal tip and decked with red flowers evoking passion, dominates the French-style formal garden of the Petit Trianon. It is a hymn to universal love that leads us to ask an existential question: surely it is essential to contemplate flowers and let them teach us how to live?

*Begonia Dragon wing* (bégonia retombant)

PLANT SELECTION : a set of showy varieties with abundant red flowers – *Dragon wing begonia*, *Surfinia vulcano*, *Red nasturtium*, *Diascia* – recalling the symbol that they form. Under the red flowers, the foliage background goes from dark green – *Bacopa* – to purple – *Tradescantia*. The heart is covered with the hanging plant *Ipomoea batatas*, *Helxine soleirolii*.

FRUIT DÉFENDU

or the power of plants over man



© Alexis Tricoire

PLANTS DEVELOPED WITHOUT ANY HUMAN INPUT for millions of years, but the opposite has never been found. Without plants, mankind would die out.

THIS INSTALLATION INSPIRED BY LABORATORY WORK with nine transparent bubbles floating above the rose bushes like strange oversized fruits reminds us of this fact. The aromatic and medicinal herbs growing here behind this protection represent an infinitesimal sample of the power of plants over our life. It is a question of biodiversity and science: an infinite variety of plant species still hidden in the multiple endemic ecosystems of the planet offer potential medications that could save humanity.



Helichrysum italicum (plante à curry)

PLANT SELECTION : In the middle is a composition of aromatic and medicinal plants – *Patchouli*, *Tricolour sage*, *Lemon balm*, *Orange mint*, *Carum* and *Helicrysum italicum* – which “protect” themselves with the thorns of the rosebushes. Each “bubble” contains a single variety in order to highlight them and allow their fragrance to be clearly identified.

GALERIE VÉGÉTALE

or the planet is our garden and nature is our shelter



© Alexis Tricoire

DIRECTLY INSPIRED by the diagonal ribs meeting in the centre of the ceilings of baroque churches, this line of inverted plant arcades nine metres long is there to remind us that nature is our host, that it welcomes us on this earth.

SO IT IS MEANT AS HOMAGE to the enlightened people who try to “defend” this wild, fragile and infinitely precious architecture from the individualistic cupidity of those who pillage it at a frantic rate. I agree with those who have the intimate conviction that if we do not stop this massacre, humanity will not last long.

PLANT SELECTION : Adopting the colours decorating the small Queen’s Theatre – blue and gold – this plant gallery consists of flowers alternating blue – *Lobelia*, *Convolvulus mauritanicus*, *Brachicomus* – and yellow – *Bidens*, *Nasturtium*, *Callibrachoa* and *Thunbergia alata*. They are held aloft by hanging plants with green nuances: *Bacopa*, *Helxine soleirolii*, *Ipomoea batatas*, *Lysimachia nummularia*, from bright green (almost yellow) to very dark green (almost blue).



Lobelia erinus (lobélie)

Alexis Tricoire

ALEXIS TRICOIRE

© D. R.

BORN IN PARIS IN 1967, Alexis Tricoire graduated from ENSAD in 1994 after attracting the attention of the VIA with *Alexis's Sister*, a pouf immediately purchased by the *Fonds National d'Art Contemporain*. After an MA in architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, he trained alongside Sylvain Dubuisson, Christian Ghion and Pucci de Rossi. At the same time his work was published by Axis, Ardi, Lucien Gau, Vange and Branex.

IN 1996, HE FOUNDED HIS AGENCY, TRICOIRE-DESIGN. He began to work in partnership with Epson, l'Oréal and Lancaster and designed display units for Cartier and Gilan in New York, not forgetting his architectural work such as the Cristal d'Arc stand and the reception counters of CulturesFrance.

His designs are recognised by the profession which has awarded him numerous prizes, including the 1st Prize of the *Lunetiers du Jura* (spectacles manufacturing sector), the special Jury prize of the *Kites for Suzy Wan* competition in 2000 and

most recently the 2nd *Top Plastique* prize for his *Slice* chair.

IN 2006, HE DESIGNED THE STAGING AND LAYOUT of the installations of the exhibition *Folies Végétales* by Patrick Blanc at the Espace Electra in Paris. This formed a new turning-point in his career and took him back to one of his first passions: staging nature. Numerous projects followed, including a club-restaurant in Brussels, an experimental platform for the Lycée horticole in Caen and an exhibition in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris in June 2009.

ALL THESE PROJECTS OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY to invent new objects and installations focussed on the qualitative and differentiated integration of plant life in an urban setting.

PRESS CONTACT

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RÉFÉRENCES

2009 Wood, club-restaurant, Brussels
2008 Ecological and educational bubble, Caen
2007 Folies Végétales, Espace Electra, P. Blanc
2006 One-man exhibition, AFAA, Paris
2005 One-man exhibition, Saatchi et Saatchi
2004 2nd Top Plastique prize for the *Slice* chair
2002 VIA Appel Permanent for a folding chair
2001 Special prize of the Jury, Suzy Wan competition
1998 Winner of the Lunetiers du Jura competition
1997 VIA Appel Permanent cardboard armchair

1995 MA, Furniture section, ENSAD Paris
1994 Diploma from ENSAD Paris, upper 2nd class honours
1994 Acquisition of a piece by the FNAC
1993 Grand Prix de the Presse Internale du Meuble (furniture press)
1992 Scholarship for the Art Institute of Chicago, USA
1989 B.T.S. at ENSAAMA. Environment & Architecture
1985 Baccalaureat C, in Rueil Malmaison 92

Alexis Tricoire

THE MESSAGE OF THE BOTANIST



IN FORMAL TERMS, the works of Alexis are already relatively complicated to produce, but it is their use of plants that makes them into genuine challenges.

THE AERIAL DEVELOPMENT OF PLANTS

IT WAS FIRST OF ALL NECESSARY TO CREATE a growth culture favourable to the development of plants at over 3.50 m from the ground and as unobtrusive as possible. We decided to use in our structures a growing medium of French origin enabling the plants to take root and flourish. To provide for their needs in water while complying with our environmental principles, a regulated drip system was installed in the structure to supply the quantities of water necessary. Lastly, in order to improve the effectiveness of the system and prevent any drying out in parts of the growing medium, a textile “wick” is rolled around each drip nozzle (1 drip every 15 cm) inside the structures to increase the area of contact between the water and the growing medium, thus distributing the water evenly.

A DEVELOPMENT RECALLING THE BAROQUE STYLE

IN ORDER TO CORRESPOND TO THE INTENTIONS OF ALEXIS and the theme of the Baroque Exuberance exhibition, we directed our choices of varieties to plants with abundant, rapid and voluminous growth. We also wanted them to be hanging plants. So I decided on annual plants called “seasonal” because their entire growth cycle takes place in one season. By working on the number of plants installed and the rhythm created between the varieties and their volume (shape), it was possible to achieve the effect of mass and overload central to the baroque style.

GIVING EACH WORK ITS OWN IDENTITY

The works of Alexis for this exhibition have a common base of hanging green plants: light and dark green *Lysimachia* and *Helxine solerei*. Each work also possesses its own varietal selection which creates its own identity: presence/absence of flowers, colour of flowers and foliage, volume and shape of the plants.

Christophe Boutavant
Jardins de Gally

JEAN-PHILIPPE POIRÉE-VILLE

Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville

THE ARTIST AND HIS PROJECT

THE ARTIST



© Elodie Migeat

ARCHITECT OF THE PLANT WORLD

Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville is an architect and landscape architect, who graduated from the Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture in 1996. He attended in parallel the courses of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage (landscape architecture school), where he developed his talent as a "tree-top gardener". His artistic appetite and creative drive led him to design in 2003 a new system of hydroponic cultivation (growing outside the soil) based on his first patent: the "liane végétalisée" (plant creeper).

He won a special prize for the most innovative company in 2006. The city of Strasbourg, the EDF Foundation, the Château de Versailles and others called on him to create plant-based works. He collaborates with INRA and with prominent architects such as Piano, Nouvel and Wilmotte, as well as with landscape architect practices such as TER.

URBAN POETICS

Combining architecture, landscape and botany, Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville offers a response to the increasingly important issue of urban ecology based on the re-introduction of plants and biological balance. He also designs urban signage which forcefully expresses the identity of towns in a more bearable and poetic manner.

THE THEME DEVELOPED FOR EXUBÉRANCE BAROQUE

THE THEME OF THE WORKS is the links between the sky and buildings. These links were explored particularly during the Baroque period. We are going through new Copernican revolutions. In his compositions, Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville uses the vocabulary of the French-style formal garden, but here the garden is overhead.

IN HIS TWO MONUMENTAL WORKS, *l'Élévation et la Chute*, Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville highlights this new relationship of Man with nature.

Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville

THE WORKS**L'ÉLÉVATION ET LA CHUTE**

Élévation © Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville

THE IDEA OF THE HANGING GARDEN brings to mind the legendary terraces of Babylon... But in recent years we have learned that plants do not necessarily need the soil, thanks to the techniques of hydroponic cultivation, and we can now grow plants up in the air, adding an unexpected dimension to the “ascending spirit” of plants.

JEAN-PHILIPPE POIRÉE-VILLE AND GÉRARD PONTET have created two plant towers made up of plant-bearing “ropes”, one forming a series of large spirals of flowers rising into the sky, while the other consists of loops of “weeds” that hang down. The plants grow “naturally” along a perforated tube that forms an aerial water supply for them. These “plant ropes” can be used to create a garden up in the air. The principle is based on the technique known as hydroponic cultivation. The hypothesis that plants could grow away from soil dates from the time of Louis XIV. Palissy, in 1563, was the first to have the intuition that “salt makes all seeds put down roots and grow”.



Chute © Jean-Philippe Poirée-Ville

THE DYNAMIC MOTIF OF ROPES in the air recalls the *drip paintings* of Pollock. The plants are also sown at random on the structure. The birds that keep coming to sample the food possibilities of the installation accentuate this natural input. The work is designed to be open-ended, gradually creating “furrows” in the sky to form a garden.

WE KNOW THAT THE FRENCH-STYLE FORMAL GARDEN was designed to be seen from above, from the windows of the Petit Trianon or the Hall of Mirrors. In these two plant towers, the artists wished to invert the relationship of man with nature and show nature in a complex geometry that dominates man.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**ÉTABLISSEMENT PUBLIC DU MUSÉE
ET DU DOMAINE NATIONAL DE VERSAILLES**
RP 834
78008 VERSAILLES CEDEX

Exhibition location

French Garden of the Petit Trianon

Information

+ 33 1 30 83 78 00

www.chateauversailles.fr

Getting there

SNCF Versailles-Chantier (départure from Paris-Montparnasse)

SNCF Versailles-Rive Droite (départure from Paris Saint-Lazare)

RER Versailles-Rive Gauche (départure from Paris Ligne C)

Autobus 171 Versailles Place d'Armes (départure from Pont de Sèvres)

Opening times

Open every day except Monday and some public holidays from 12:00 to 7:30 pm (last admission at 6:00 pm, evacuation from 7:00 pm).

Rates

Châteaux de Trianon et Domaine de Marie-Antoinette : €10 / €6. Last ticket sold at 5:50 pm.

Passeport : €18 / €25 on the days of the Grand Musical Fountain Display and Musical Gardens. Audio guides included.

Accessibility

Exhibition and circuit accessible to persons with hearing, visual, motor and linguistic disabilities.
