

GARDEN DESIGN JOURNAL

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PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN GARDEN DESIGN

New series:
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THE SHORTLIST

Showcasing the finalists
of the SGD Awards 2016

STATE OF THE ART

CREATIVE INSTALLATIONS AT
THIS YEAR'S AMIENS FESTIVAL

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PHOTOGRAPHS: Richard Hanson WORDS: Jackie Bennett

ARTFUL IDEAS

Here are some exciting new installations at this year's Art, Cities & Landscape Festival in Amiens, France, building on many years of creative gardens

Over the past seven years, the Art, Cities & Landscape Festival in Amiens in northern France has developed as a destination for young artists, designers and landscapers. Currently there are 28 gardens and 12 installations, with new ones added each year to replace older ones that have reached the end of their natural lives. This year the successful applicants – all under 36 years of age – have responded in very different ways to the unique atmosphere and challenges created by the complex Somme landscape.

The former *hortillonages* (market gardens), set on islands within the shallow lakes fed by the river Somme, have been revitalised by international creators keen to reflect the area's history and culture. There is a combination of art installations, sculpture and conventional gardens, all set in or beside the water. Many can be reached on foot, but the best way to see them is to hire a boat and wind through the waterways, mooring up and exploring the wooded islands.

Here we look at some of the new works on show for the 2016 festival.



01 ÉGILOPE

Collectif élément collectif: Jimme Cloo, Marion Flament, Soline Portmann

ILLUSTRATING A light touch and a respect for this fragile environment, this Paris-trained group of artists have installed 3,000 golden rods to represent a field of wheat. The title is derived from *Aegilops*, or goat grasses – an ancient and wild genus of wheat from which agricultural cereals were developed. Making the

connection between land, water and sky, the 'field' recalls the productive market garden plots that have now disappeared from Amiens. The painted rods are floated by corks (painted black to be invisible), which means they move with the water and the wind, in harmony with the reed beds.



02 SPHÈRE NOURRICIÈRE

Manon Bordet-Chavanes, Marie Brégeon, Johann Laskowski

FOR THIS WORK, three professionals from different branches of the landscape profession came together to create a sphere of plants, meant to illustrate the contrast between intensive and non-intensive farming techniques. The visitor is led through a deliberately sterile environment towards the interior, where the dome of woven willow is a biosphere where balance has been restored. The trio have interesting backgrounds – Bordet-Chavanes is an agronomist, Marie Brégeon works on communal gardens with a medical role, and Laskowski is trained in agro-ecological techniques. They hope that this project will make viewers meditate on how we produce food and question their own professions.

05 LE JARDIN DES CIMES

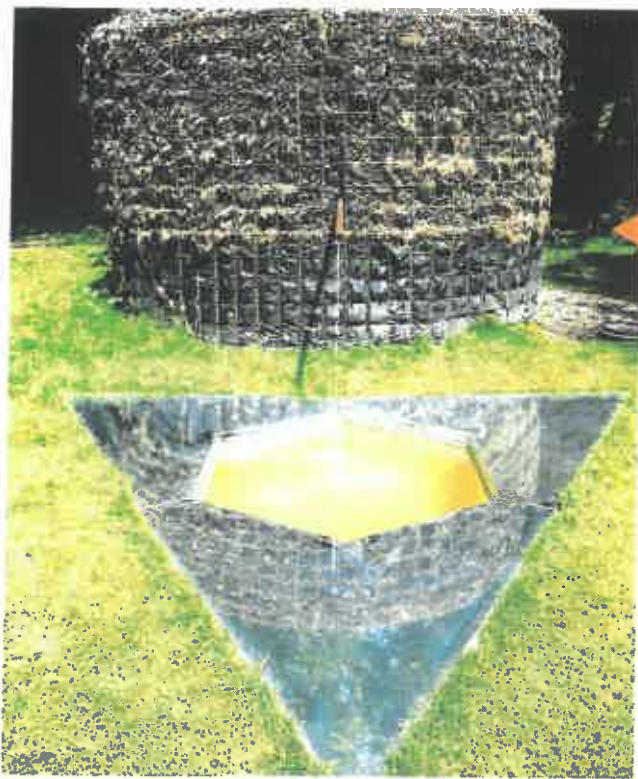
*Atelier Landscriptum:
Alexandre Liebersart, Nicolas Orgolet,
Maryline Tagliabue*

AN EXPLORATION of one of the key environmental challenges for the hortillonnages today – the gradual encroachment of trees, particularly poplar and willow. While some see this as a good thing – the roots help to stabilise the islands – many see this as a loss of the very nature of the hortillonnages, which were open fields with views across the marshland. Describing themselves as engineer-landscape designers, the members of Atelier Landscriptum have ‘harvested’ the leaves of the trees by throwing a huge 500m² net above them that will be gradually encased with the falling leaves and colours of autumn. The message is that gardeners benefit from this slow decomposition of the leaves into a growing medium.



06 RÉSERVOIR
Matthieu Pilaud

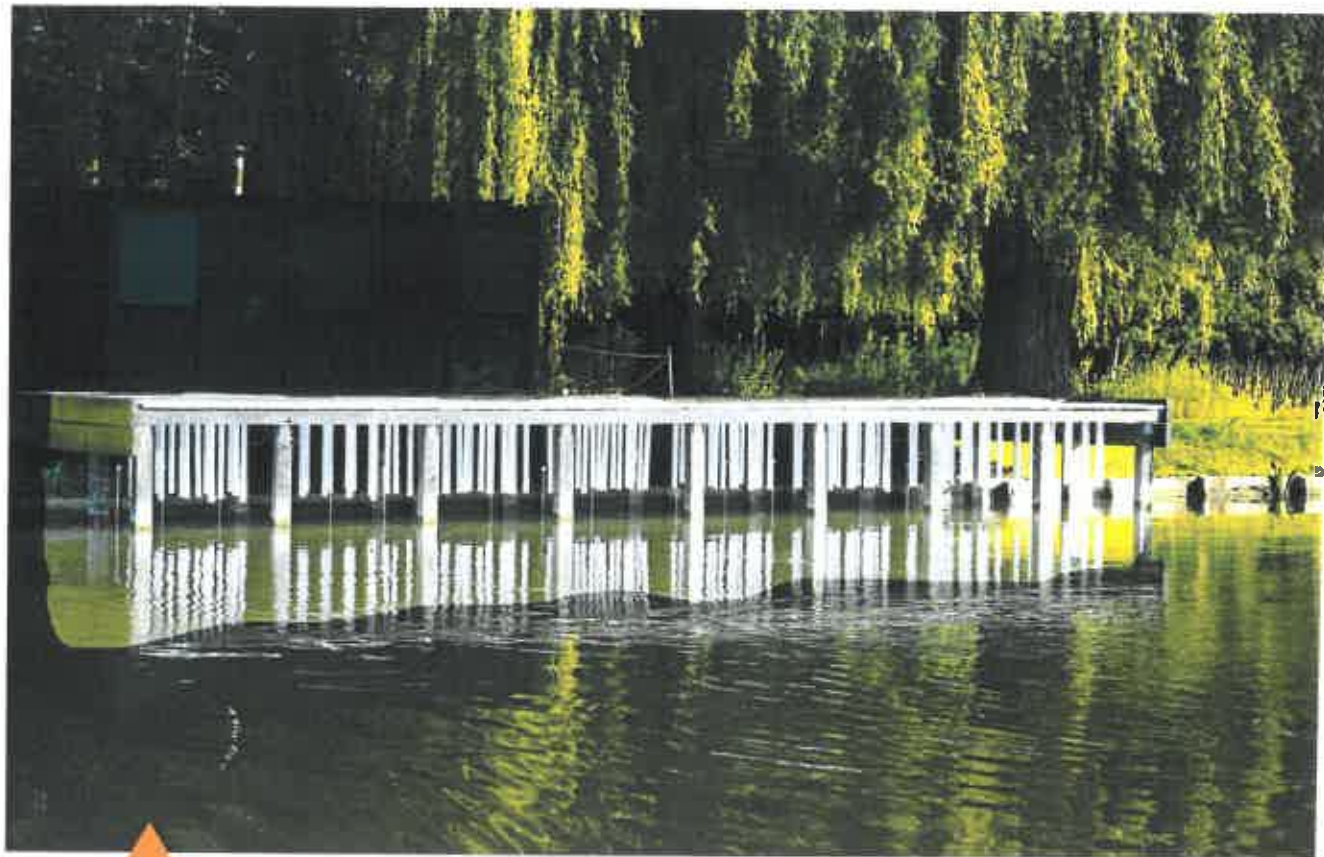
A NEW PIECE by French artist Matthieu Pilaud, who last year created the memorable ‘Dazzle’ to represent the camouflage of ships in the First World War. This metal sculpture creates a steel shell, which, paradoxically, cannot be used as a shelter despite its appearance. Constructed from stainless steel sheets, it is inaccessible, while the lines cut out echo some of Pilaud’s earlier work. It is not, he says, a memorial to the military dead, but pays homage to the living. Pilaud has exhibited in outdoor spaces across France, but also in China, Serbia and India.



03 MIRACLE MOUNTAIN

Collectif Disaster: Pieter-Jan Grandry, Valentina Karga, Andrea Sollozzo, Louisa Vermoere

AN INTERNATIONAL collaboration with members from Greece, Belgium and Italy, the Disaster Collective has been working together since the early 2000s on projects with a sustainable theme. They bring together architecture, graphic design and scientific research to create this 'miracle' – hot water from a compost heap. Drawing on the forgotten theories of Franco-Swiss engineer Jean Pain who invented an eco-friendly heating device, pipes criss-cross the heap, producing hot water (35°C) via a hand pump at the side. Visitors are encouraged to soak their feet after a hard day's walking.



04 LES BERGES SONORES

Collectif Creative Landscape Process: Florian Bonino and Stéphanie Querio

TRAINED AT THE landscape school in Versailles, this duo from Bordeaux has created a musical installation that echoes the closeness of city and river through sound. It is a huge musical instrument, built on a pontoon in the waters of the Étang de Clermont. The sound of

the water lapping against the bank is amplified, and when the waters are high, it rings loudly to warn the gardeners of the rising water. When the water subsides, the instrument rings softly, inviting visitors to sit down and listen. The title loosely translates as 'the singing banks'.



07 VIVE LES HORTILLONSI

The Cloud Collectif: Joris Lipsch, Rene van Poppel, Floriane Pic

THIS MULTI-DISCIPLINARY practice takes on the challenge of telling the whole evolution of the *Hortillonnages* from the Middle Ages to the present day. Gently perched on a sliver of land, this translucent structure tries to depict the continuing changes. It consists of two parallel corridors with moveable walls,

which the visitor can manipulate to show both the advance of nature and of cultivation. One obstructs the other – so the message is that collaboration between people is needed to reach the goal – a balance between the two. Lipsch and van Poppel are Dutch architects; Pic is a French graphic designer.

PICK OF THE PAST

A selection of interesting installations from previous years that are still in situ.

MIRROIR DES ALLOUETTES

Designer Boris Chouvelon

Part-wildfowl decoy, part-super yacht under construction, this piece is constructed from nine panels of mirrored stainless steel on metal tubes. Black life buoys are suspended on chains giving the appearance that they would float the structure should the water levels rise enough. Set in 25 sq m of water, it is intended to be an ode to shipbuilding, but also to shipwrecks.



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Designer L'Atelier de Gründberg

A living micro-brewery, this is a field of hops where people are as welcome as plants. Challenging the idea that the two processes of growing and consuming food and drink need to be done separately, visitors are invited into the 'hop garden', which has become a place to relax and chill out in hammocks slung between the hop poles.



LE JARDIN D'ÉRODE

Designer Mathieu Gontier with Chloé Francisci

Erosion is something the market gardeners of Amiens live with as each year ditches and canals have to be cleared of silt to ensure the water flows freely and produce can be grown. This garden is an attempt to tackle the erosion of the banks with wooden projections that trap the debris but also support the tree roots and create seating areas.



ENTAILLES

Designer Wilson Trouvé

This piece consists of 30 3m-high hollow steel tubes onto which have been fixed thin strips of plexiglass. The idea is to reflect the sky, the wood and water, depending on where you view it. The random nature of the reflections is part of its appeal, offering the walker a shifting perspective – like a photo-montage of the landscape.



The festival is open until 16 October. To find out about next year's call for applications, go to www.bca-amiens.com