

**CENTRE
RÉGIONAL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE
NORD-PAS-DE-CALAIS**

CRPV

PRESS RELEASE

MAXIME BRYGO PAVILLONS ET TOTEMS

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***Pavillons et totems*
an exhibition of Maxime
Brygo at the CRP/**

December 3rd 2016 . . . February 5th
2017

Press visit

Saturday December 3rd / 11:30 am
in the presence of the artist and the
curator

Opening

Saturday December 3rd / 12:30 am

Free admission

Tuesday . . . Friday
1pm . . . 5pm
Saturday - Sunday
2 pm . . . 6 pm
Closed on December 25th and
January 1st

**Screening/meeting with the
artist**

Tuesday January 10th 2017 / 8 pm
Cinéma l'Univers
16 rue Georges Danton, Lille
Admission: pay what you want

PAVILLONS ET TOTEMS

“Places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in a reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state.”¹

The CRP/ presents Pavillons et totems, a solo exhibition by artist Maxime Brygo, the product of research he carried out in the former Franco-Belgian mining region with the support of the Région des Hauts-de-France and the Communauté d’Agglomération de la Porte du Hainaut.

The exhibition presents a set of photographs along with a sound montage played in the art center space, forming an installation that invites visitors to consider various sites in Nord, in Pas-de-Calais and in Hainaut, plunging them into the stories and legends these sites echo.

For over three years, Maxime Brygo travelled through these anonymous spaces, which at first sight would seem to have no exceptional qualities in terms of landscape or history—the traditional criteria for the recognition of listed and preserved heritage. The artist took an unusual photographic inventory of these suburban landscapes, which he first showed to inhabitants of the region who either did or did not live near these sites, inviting them to express themselves freely on these images, to talk about them and describe the thoughts they summoned. At the edge of a forest, at the end of a road, behind a curtain of trees, monuments that are sometimes ordinary speak to the inhabitants and open their imagination, making them evoke a biblical tower, a memorial, a historical vestige or even a cosmic one. The images are above all memory triggers for those who read the photos by summoning their past and their personal memories. Some of them displace the sites they describe to sites in other countries, getting them mixed up in their memory.

Through the eyes and accounts of the inhabitants, these places teeming with true and fictional stories acquire a singularity and an emotional dimension. In the art center space, their accounts are offered to listeners as “micro narratives”, brief stories that form a discontinuous chronicle. These voices—through their musicality, the diversity of their accents from here and elsewhere, as well as the different language registers used—offer rich linguistic material and a necessary counterpoint of sound. Even in their hesitation and awkwardness, even in their silences, they bring these places back to life, restoring them for the duration of an evocation that is by turns moving, serious or extravagant, inspiring us to enter the images. This succession of digressions, which does not really enable one to attach any specific story to any particular image, envelops visitors and stimulates their imagination.

Through this installation, Maxime Brygo questions our relationship to history and myths by exploring little-known, suppressed or evolving heritage, conveying experienced or legendary stories that stem from the construction of a collective narrative. Being tied to a region, his anthropological approach

1. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, 1984 p.108

is that of an ethnographer of humble places. In nature marked by the haunting presence of trees, one finds the stamp of human activity. These singular structures seem to have been abandoned in deserted places, forming forgotten, corroded, even hidden heritage. Local heritage stands next to imported heritage: on a roundabout, there is the incongruous presence of an arc de triomphe eclipsed by a giant pylon and a high-voltage line. These landscapes and buildings lie in geometric spaces: horizontal and vertical intersections, perspectives reconstructed by low-angle shots, interlocked triangles. This kind of abstraction gives them a strange aura, raises questions about their origins and history, and becomes the pretext and material of vernacular stories.

The places and landscapes are like phantasmagorical or totemic objects with their aura: a halo of fog in an undergrowth, trunks reflected in a pond sketching a grid, the mouth-shadow of stone blocks assembled like a dolmen.

Walter Benjamin defined the aura, whose disappearance through photography he prophesied, as “a peculiar web of space and time: the unique manifestation of a distance, however near it may be”.²

And it is this spatial and temporal web that is revealed in these photographs and accounts, through the stratification of the stories and customs of these places. As in that den in an undergrowth, giving off a strange white smoke, we detect tectonic forces, still-active underground sources. These landscapes are alive, shaped not just by natural phenomena, but also by humans and their industries. The mining history still determines them today, just as it determines their inhabitants, and one can discern its stigmata even if nature has reasserted its rights and would seem to have swallowed up that memory.

Like the earth, which shapes objects and brings them to light, these photographs exhume stories that irrigate a territory, suddenly giving a universal significance back to these sites.

With *Pavillons et totems*, by superimposing images of places and stories of inhabitants like a mosaic, Maxime Brygo poeticizes spaces by opening them to a multiplicity of perspectives and voices. Through these micro narratives, he allows the inhabitants of these places to reclaim their history and the history of their territory.

Muriel Enjalran,
Curator and Director of the CRP/

2. Walter Benjamin, *A Short History of Photography*, in *Screen*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Oxford Journals, 1972

Maxime Brygo

Born in 1984 in Dunkirk, Maxime Brygo is a graduate of La Cambre school of visual arts in Brussels (2009). His work grows out of the territories that he travels, feeding on official history as well as on stories told. Recently, he supplemented his photographic approach with sound—taking particular interest in voices—and video. The photo and sound installation Pavilions and Totems, produced by the Centre régional de la photographie Nord—Pas-de-Calais (2016), is the result of a long-term project on the former Franco-Belgian mining region, undertaken with the help of an art grant from the town of Lens (2012) and subsequently supported by a visual arts grant from the Hauts-de-France region (2014).

Maxime Brygo has received several prizes, grants and residencies, and has participated in various solo and group exhibitions including the diep~haven festival in Dieppe and Newhaven (2015), *Explorations* at the European Ceramics Centre in Limoges (2015), *Déconstruction* at the Centre des arts et de la culture in Douchy-les-Mines (2013), Bridges Fotoprojekt Emscher Zukunft in Essen (2013), the Biennale de la jeune création in Houilles (2012), the *Prix Maison Blanche* for photography from Galerie Montgrand at the École supérieure d'art et de design Marseille-Méditerranée (2012), *Monuments* at the National School of Landscape Architecture in Lille (2011), the diep festival in Dieppe (2011), *Un monde parfait* at the Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve biennale (2010), *Copacabana n'existe pas ! De l'existence du territoire Rhin-Rhône* at the École régionale des beaux-arts in Besançon (2010), *reGeneration2: Tomorrow's Photographers Today*, a travelling exhibition presented at various institutions including the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne and the Aperture Foundation in New-York (2010–13), *Newland* at the WE Project in Brussels (2009), the *Art Contest Prize* in Brussels (2009) and the *Levallois-Epson Photography Prize* (2009).

Pictures available



First page /

Maxime Brygo, *Untitled*, from the *Pavillons et totems* series, 2016, silver print, 120x150 cm
© Maxime Brygo

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Maxime Brygo, *Untitled*, from the *Pavillons et totems* series, 2016, silver print, 61,4x76,8 cm
© Maxime Brygo



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Maxime Brygo, *Untitled*, from the *Pavillons et totems* series, 2016, silver print, 88x110 cm
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THE CRP/

The CRP/ Centre régional de la photographie based in Douchy-les-Mines develops art centre missions in the field of photography and contemporary images.

In the visual arts sphere, art centres are essential actors promoting the creation of contemporary art and its distribution in France and abroad. Their primary purpose is to support artists by helping them conduct research produce their works, and by transmitting and distributing this art research to the wider public, by means of innovative mediation tools.

Founded in 1982, the CRP/ grew out of a collective of photographers who came from the photo club of the Usinor Denain Work Council. As a mobile association at the time, the CRP spent four years developing exhibitions and organising photography competitions. In 1983, in connection with its photographic commissions and its production of works, the Ministry of Culture recognised the CRP's art library, which became the first of its kind in France in the field of photography. In 1986, the CRP/ moved in to a former post office made available by the town of Douchy-les-Mines, and in 1991 the Ministry of Culture recognised it as a national art centre.

As a centre that supports creativity, at the outset it developed a project to commission works linked with its territory: the Mission Photographique Transmanche (1988 to 2006), which lay the foundations of its collection. This has since been supplemented through the art centre's programme and productions. The CRP/ is one of the few art centres endowed with a collection directly linked to its own production activity.

The CRP/ collection currently contains 9,000 works, with an art library offering the public over 300 works that may be borrowed. Linked to its significant publication activity, it also has a document collection of over 8000 books.

The CRP's activities include creative support, research, production, distribution and mediation, all of which is developed in a region that is marked by its industrial past, an area that showed a very early commitment to culture.

Today the CRP/ is a place of experience transmission, awareness-raising, mediation and training in the field of images, with a trans-regional and national reputation.

The CRP's artistic and cultural vision, championed by its current director Muriel Enjalran, endeavours to be forward-looking, encouraging young artists through its research and support mission, keeping in mind the regional history of images to which its collection testifies. It is regionally rooted while also giving attention to other art scenes abroad, through invitations to artists who come and shift or renew visitors' perceptions of their history and region, and provide access to other cultural and societal issues in the world.

CRP/

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