

Press kit

Lausanne, 27 August 2020

Jorge Macchi. The Submerged Cathedral (11.9 – 22.11.2020)

Jorge Macchi

The Submerged Cathedral

11.9 – 22.11.2020

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Press release

The Argentinian artist Jorge Macchi has created a new installation for the MCBA's Espace Projet

Thanks to a play of echoes, literal and figurative, Jorge Macchi (born in 1963) has dreamed up for the MCBA's Espace Projet a story that brings together the Cathedral of Lausanne, a prelude by Claude Debussy, and the Breton myth of the city of Ys which served as inspiration for the French composer. When they enter the Espace Projet, visitors to the museum face a range of elements that seem frozen in time, caught in an odd state. The concept of water is the thread running through various objects, a wall painting, and a sound piece.

Since the early 1990s, Jorge Macchi has gleefully hunted down symmetries, parallels, and repetitions, while playing on viewers' perception by designing and mounting illusions. This strategy lies at the heart of the installation he calls *La Cathédrale engloutie* (*The Submerged Cathedral*), which takes its title from a Claude Debussy prelude of the same name (published in 1910).

During the design phase of his installation, Macchi delved into the history of Lausanne and its cathedral. He immediately drew a parallel between the number of bells hanging in the religious building and the number of large plate-glass windows that form one of the Project Space's walls. Then it became absolutely clear to him that water, a recurrent motif in his work, notably for its physical and optical properties, was the founding element of the new piece. The artist saw a swimming pool in the volume and proportions of the exhibition venue. Associated with the cathedral, water then pointed Macchi in the direction of a piece by Claude Debussy that he had discovered when he was twenty years old but had never managed to use in his art until now. This prelude for piano, known for the score's unusual notations (for instance, "Comme un écho de la phrase entendue précédemment" (Like an echo of the phrase heard before)), evokes the myth of Ys, a town that supposedly lies submerged somewhere along the coast of Brittany. The bells of the town's cathedral, it is said, can occasionally be heard to toll from the depths of the sea. Sometimes it can even be glimpsed.

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In the MCBA's Espace Projet, Macchi brings together these different cultural references. Plastic bottles seem to float while their concrete shadows rest on the floor; a pool hose winds its way through the space like a rolling wave; a broom handle leaning against the wall is broken at a precise angle; and the hands of a clock have stopped, creating a symmetrical figure. Visitors find themselves plunged in a space that seems to have been filled with water once – the grey veil on the walls would be in fact a high-water mark – and where the objects in it continue to show the flood's effects. On the gallery's large plate-glass windows can be seen various seemingly mysterious inscriptions. They are the names of the bells hanging in the Cathedral of Lausanne and the dates they were cast. When viewers move closer to read them, they ring out. By moving around the installation, visitors thus create a random composition, recalling the unstructured form of Debussy's prelude.

Using these various sources and resources in a new narrative, Jorge Macchi has transformed the Espace Projet into a theater of memory.

The sound installation was developed by Manuel Eguía with the support of the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina.

Exhibition curator: Laurence Schmidlin, curator of contemporary art

Dates of the show: 11.9 – 22.11.2020

Catalogue:



Laurence Schmidlin (ed.), *Jorge Macchi. La Cathédrale engloutie*, with contributions by Laurence Schmidlin, Jorge Macchi and Edgardo Rudnitzky, (Espace Projet, no° 2), 32 p., 12 color ill., Fr./Eng., Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 2020. Price: CHF 5.-

2. Press images

Images of the installation will be available from 10 September on <https://www.mcba.ch/presse/>

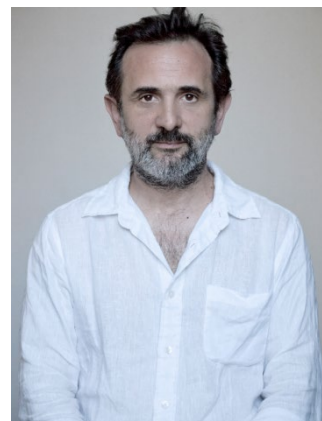
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3. Artist's biography

Jorge Macchi was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1963. He graduated in 1987 from the "Prilidiano Pueyrredón" Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires. He currently lives and works in Buenos Aires.



Jorge Macchi
Photo © Kicca Tommasi

Prizes and grants

- 2002 Konex Prize, Fundación Konex, Buenos Aires
- 2001 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship
- 2000 Fondo Nacional de las Artes Fellowship, Buenos Aires
Subsidy for Artistic Creation, Fundación Antorchas, Buenos Aires
First Prize, Banco de la Nación Argentina Prize, Centro Cultural Recoleta
- 1999 Leonardo Prize, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires
- 1998 Gobierno Francés Grant
Ignacio Pirovano Prize to a Young Artist, Asociación Argentina de Críticos
Subsidy for Artistic Creation, Fundación Antorchas, Buenos Aires
- 1993 First Prize, Braque Prize, Fundación Banco Patricios
- 1992 Diploma of Merit, Fundación Konex (installations)
- 1990 First Prize, Fundación Nuevo Mundo Prize, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires

Solo exhibitions

- 2019 *Portal*, Arte Continua, Havana
Cámara traslúcida, Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires
with Edgardo Rudnitzky, *Maratón*, Bienalsur, MAR Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires
- 2018 *Der Zauberberg*, Quartz Studio, Turin
Suspension Points, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano
- 2017 with Nicolás Fernández Sanz, *Díptico*, Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires
Mikrokosmos, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich
with Edgardo Rudnitzky, *From Here to Eternity*, Alexander and Bonin, New York
Perspectiva, CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Móstoles
Threshold, Alexander and Bonin, New York

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- 2016 Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo
MNBA, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires
Book of Hours, City Hall, Deinze
Perspectiva, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano MALBA, Buenos Aires
Refraction, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires
- 2015 *Lampo*, NC-Arte, Bogotá
Spectrum, Le 10Neuf, Centre régional d'art contemporain, Montbéliard
- 2014 *Jorge Macchi*, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano
Memoria externa, Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires
Prestidigitador, MUAC Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico
- 2013 *Container*, MAMBA Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires
Refraction, Art Basel Unlimited, Basel
Loop, Alexander and Bonin, New York
Container, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucern
- 2012 *Light and Weight*, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich
- 2011 *Jorge Macchi*, Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo
Music Stands Still, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, SMAK, Ghent
- 2010 *Crónicas Eventuales*, Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires
- 2009 *Rendez-vous*, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano
10:5, Künstlerhaus Bremen, Bremen
with Edgardo Rudnitzky, *Last Minute*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo
- 2008 *Round Midnight*, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich
The Anatomy of Melancholy, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela
- 2007 *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, The Blanton Museum of Art, Austin
Gallery Night, Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo
6th Bienal Mercosur, Porto Alegre
Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2006 *Singers Room*, University Gallery, University of Essex, Essex
Twilight, Firstsite, Essex
Due volte nello stesso fiume, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano
- 2005 *Time Machine*, Galería Distrito4, Madrid
Still Song, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich
Doppelgänger, La Casa Encendida, Madrid
ArtPace, San Antonio, Texas
La Ascensión, Argentina Pavilion, 51st Biennale di Venezia, Venice
Doppelgänger, Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires

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- 2003 *Buenos Aires Tour*, Galería Distrito4, Madrid
Galería Luisa Strina, São Paulo
- 2002 *Fuegos de artificio*, Mirta Demare Gallery, Rotterdam
Fuegos de artificio, Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires
- 2001 Le 10Neuf, Centre régional d'art contemporain, Montbéliard
Nocturno, Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires
- 1998 *Incidental Music*, University Gallery, University of Essex, Essex
with Miguel Rothschild, *The Killing Tear*, Galerie Jorge Alyskewycz, Paris
Música incidental, Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires
with Gustavo Romano, *Evidencias circunstanciales*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires
The Wandering Golfer, MUHKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp
- 1996 *Extremely Recent Works*, Duende Artists Initiative, Rotterdam
- 1995 Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, Buenos Aires
- 1994 *32 morceaux d'eau*, Galerie Jorge Alyskewycz, Paris
- 1993 Casal de Catalunya, Buenos Aires
- 1992 Galerie François Mitaine, Paris
- 1991 Fundación Banco Patricios, Buenos Aires
- 1990 Galería Alberto Elía, Buenos Aires
- 1989 *Pinturas y retablos de fines del siglo XX*, Galería Alberto Elía, Buenos Aires

Monographs

- 2016 *Jorge Macchi. The Book of Hours*, Deinze, Museum van Deinze
Jorge Macchi. Perspectiva, Buenos Aires, Fundación Eduardo F. Constantini
- 2014 *Jorge Macchi. Prestidigitador*, Mexico, MUAC
- 2011 *Music Stands Still*, Ghent, SMAK/Buenos Aires, KBB
- 2009 *Jorge Macchi. 10:51*, Bremen, Künstlerhaus Bremen
- 2008 *Block/Dibujos*, Buenos Aires, Ambasciata d'Italia Istituto Italiano di Cultura/Buenos Aires, Fundación Proa
- 2007 *Jorge Macchi. Anatomía da Melancolía*, Porto Alegre, Fundação Bienal do Mercosul/Austin, Blanton Museum of Art, Santiago de Compostela, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea
- 2006 *Jorge Macchi. Light Music*, Colchester, AHRC Research Centre for Studies of Surrealism/Farnham, Palladian Publications
- 2005 *Jorge Macchi. Doppelgänger'* Madrid, La Casa Encendida
La Ascensión, Buenos Aires, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
- 2001 *12 Views*, New York, The Drawing Center
Jorge Macchi, Montbéliard, Le 10Neuf, Centre régional d'art contemporain

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4. Questions for the artist

In the footsteps of Claude Debussy

For the MCBA's Espace Projet the Argentinian artist has devised a new installation inspired by a prelude by Claude Debussy and the Cathedral of Lausanne. It is an immersive interactive piece of art that translates into space and sound the traces of an event frozen in time.

MCBA: *How would you describe your show "The Submerged Cathedral"?*

Jorge Macchi: The installation is made up of several smaller installations, i.e., a sound piece, a sculpture formed from a pool cleaning tube, a clock, and casts of bottles. It was imagined by drawing on the notations Claude Debussy added to the score of his prelude *La Cathédrale engloutie (The Submerged Cathedral)*. Those notations are very peculiar. They seem more visual than simply musical. What is also singular is that those nuances give the pianist almost too much freedom in terms of interpretation! They work like an echo. The theme of the prelude is to be played *fortissimo*. At the end, the theme comes back but has to be performed *pianissimo*. It's the first time that I've used this prelude in my work, even if I've known it for quite a long time. I've been trying to play it for twenty-five years (without much success!), but performing the piece more than listening to it is what inspired me. I realized that those nuances had a strong connection to my own creative strategies (symmetries, transparencies, repetitions, etc.). It's the score that made me aware of that.

MCBA: *Your installation links Debussy's prelude and a range of elements borrowed from the context of Lausanne...*

Jorge Macchi: The Breton legend of the city of Ys which Debussy translated into music tells us how the inhabitants were punished for their sins by a flood. According to the legend, even nowadays, when the weather is calm, you can still hear the bells of the cathedral and the chanting of a choir of monks rising from the depths of the sea. In the prelude, powerful chords conjure up the bells; the *fortissimo* playing is transformed into a *pianissimo* echo. That image comes up again in one of the elements of the installation I designed for MCBA. In my research on the city of Lausanne, I found information on the cathedral's bells. They number seven, just like the windows of the Espace Projet. I brought these two elements together. When you approach each opening, you set off the sound of one of the bells.

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MCBA: *You were invited to take over MCBA's Espace Projet. How did you perceive the space?*

Jorge Macchi: Architecturally the Espace Projet is perfect. Rectangular, without any juts or protrusions... That put me in mind of a pool! I had to activate that space. To do that, I conjured up something that apparently took place in the past. The room had been filled with water; the water has vanished but traces of that flood remain. Odd traces, optical effects, the color of the walls, floating objects, marks indicating the water level... Visual elements recalling the past endure. The effects persist.

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5. Public engagement – Public outreach services

Guided tour open to the public (registration required; free admission)

Tuesday 10 November at 12:30 pm

With Laurence Schmidlin, curator of the exhibition

6. Museum services

Book- and Giftshop

In the MCBA Book- and Giftshop you can find monographs on Jorge Macchi, books on all of the shows currently on view, and a selection of publications on artists in the collection, the history of art and techniques and mediums, books for children, along with a range of items (notebooks, jewelry, scarves, pencils, etc.).

Hours:

Tuesday-Wednesday	10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am - 8:00 pm
Friday-Sunday	10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Monday	Closed

Le Nabi café-restaurant

Before or after your visit, *Le Nabi* invites you to take a break. The menu, reflecting the open, welcoming spirit of our museum, is both family oriented and refined. Drinks are all artisanal and the menu emphasizes local products that change with the seasons.

Hours:

Tuesday-Wednesday	10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am - 8:00 pm
Friday-Sunday	10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Monday	Closed

Reservations: T. 021 311 02 90 / info@lenabi.ch

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7. MCBA partners and sponsors

The MCBA building was inaugurated on 5 April 2019. The museum's new premises were built by the Canton of Vaud with the generous support of the City of Lausanne and the following private partnerships:

Fondation Les Mûrons

Loterie Romande



Fondation Anita et Werner Damm-Etienne

BCV



Fondation Gandur pour l'Art



Audemars Piguet



Mrs. Alice Pauli

Fondation Ernst Göhner



Nestlé



Fondation Art et Vie

Philip Morris International



ECA – Établissement cantonal d'assurance

Abakanowicz art and culture charitable foundation

Fondation Payot



Association rétrospective Pierrette Gonseth-Favre