

Claude Alma  
Documentation - biography - projects 2010>2018  
english

Claude « Alma » ( aka Claude Besnard ) is a member of Alma Fury.

## ALMA FURY ARTISTS COLLECTIVE

Vonnick Mocholi and Claude Besnard, independent artists

They developed the project « **Volume Sonore** »

**Sounds, architectures, questions about interactions - the spatial and social behaviors involved in listening via a poetic approach.**

The **sound material** comes from transcribing inaudible or invisible phenomena, such as brain waves or the light waves of stars, into sound waves.

Collaborating with research experts in astrophysics and the neurosciences, the members of Alma Fury artists collective were particularly interested in making **these sounds visible** through a system that sets in motion simple and natural elements like sand and water, to create moving micro-landscapes, metaphors for instability that also allow you to “feel” the sound through the use of their **vibratory component**. This **raw material** is also **made audible** by working with acoustics, timbre and frequencies - to bring out its “harmonic essence.”

Field recordings of waves emitted in distinct locations and natural landscapes are also used. The resulting pieces are played multiphonicly in an architectural space or module, which is installed in public space.

With Alma Fury, Vonnick Mocholi and Claude Besnard invent, build and install volumes of sound, or sound pavillons, sound architectures and resonant spaces that also function as instruments. They establish a **poetic link** between architecture, light, the sciences and sound - unfurling infinite worlds...

These light and simple **architectures** “shelter” sound and allow for a different kind of listening, playing with interior vs. exterior and creating **spaces to disconnect, havens of intimacy**. They are designed with respect to the sounds they accommodate. Architecture and sound also relate intimately with the light.

What drives the creative work of Alma Fury is the experience of space as sensations, textures and sounds, and the relationship sound material can have with space - new possibilities of listening and orientation, in between real and imaginary, sensing uncertainty, rhythm, fragility, sensitivity, flow and interstice... Exploring mysterious territories between matter and the immaterial.

This is **cosmophony** - calling on the Universe and the living:

“Cosmophony - which I define as creative work that uses the universe as its means of expression - operates through the universe’s contribution of nature and the elements: earth, water, mountains, fire, flora, fauna, rainbows, dew, stars... in the development of the artistic thing in itself as both aesthetic morphology and tool.” (Jacques Roumain)

Mocholi and Besnard work on a “music of frontiers” - transboundary sound landscapes - and attempt to make the organic and technological, human and machine, living and inanimate... **harmonious**. As Virginia Woolf wrote in her “letter to a young poet,” that is precisely the role of the artist: to render these “opposing” worlds harmonious. Taking into account the human body, and the living organism in general, as source, echo, transmitter and receiver of electromagnetic and sound waves is also very important in the work of these artists.

In their various projects, **the visitor is invited to an uncommon listening experience**, in the broad sense - to a refuge where vibration resonates differently.

At the very beginning, **Claude « alma »** lived in the country, listening to the nature.

Urbanism, music and cinema studies

After the saxophone, he has turned to electric and electronic instruments such as an old analog Moog synthesizer searching the « harmonic essence »

Waves

Passionate by recordings, sound processing and singular « sound and vibe-systems » creation linked with resonant spaces and architectures.

Sound and space

Since the death of Vonnick Mocholi in January 2014, Claude Besnard continued to explore these immaterial sound territories under the name of Claude « Alma ». He actually works with the composer Vittorio Montalti (IRCAM) on sound spatialization tools.

VOLUME SONORE # 2 "axe ohm" Garden of the Museum of Fine Arts Tours sept / oct 2010



To perceive sound and light vibrations, coming from the cosmos and terrestrial elements.  
The space is a parallelepipedic Plexiglas shelter, with a transparent ceiling open to the sky. The walls, on the outside (in collaboration with B.Calet), are covered with a kaleidoscopic-looking enveloping material with a few narrow windows.

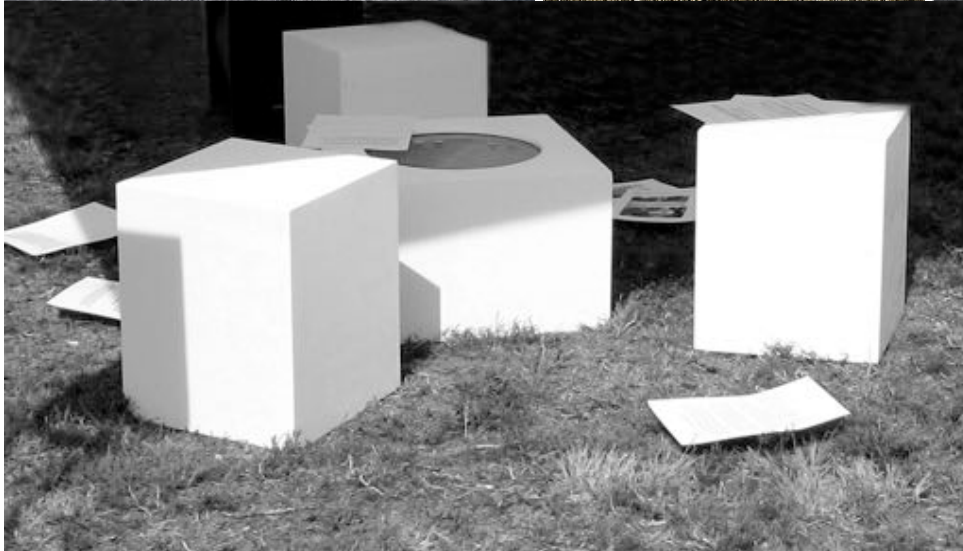
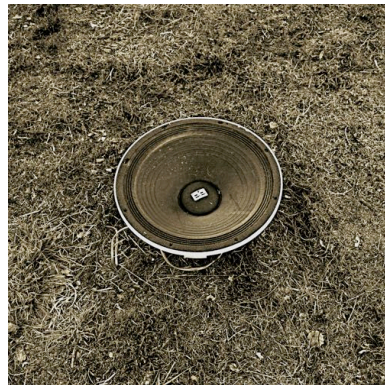


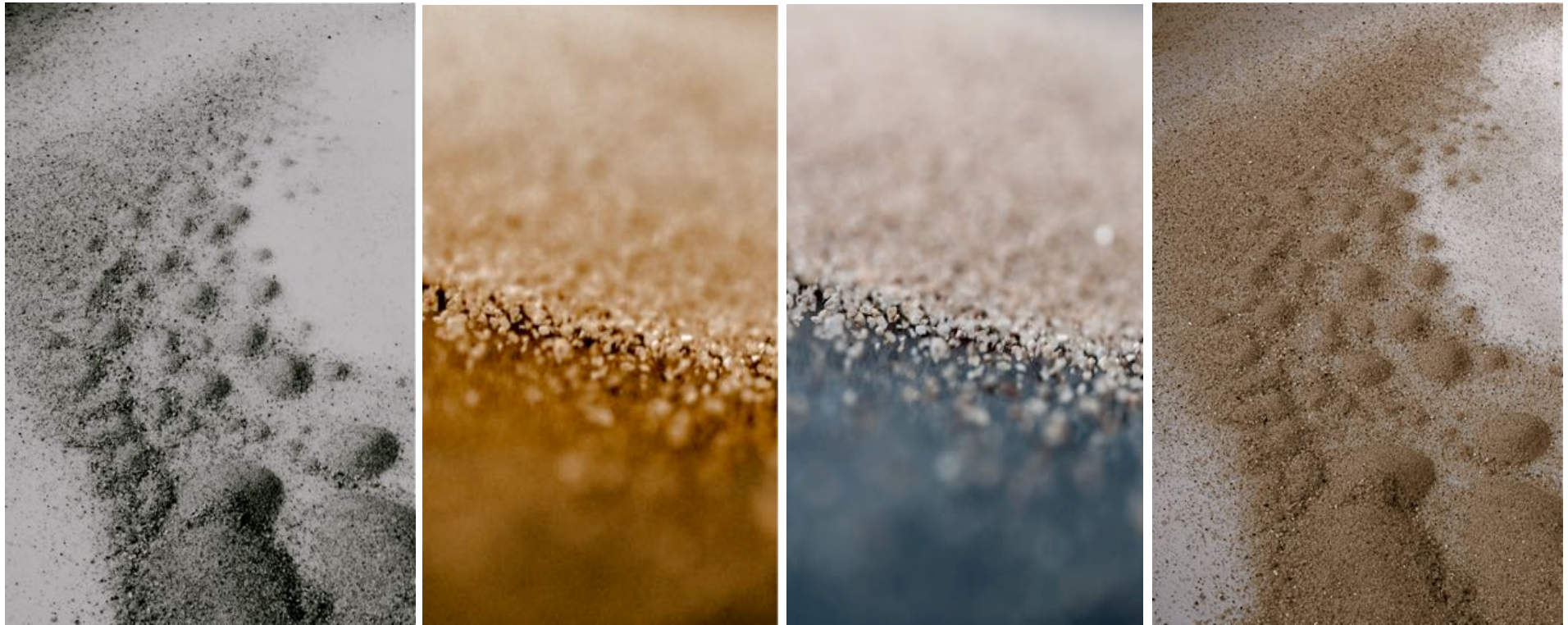


## VOLUME SONORE # 2.2 RADIOTELESCOPE OF N A N C A Y May 2011

Continuing work with astrophysicists Philippe Zarka & Ismaël Cognard for the launch of the European station LOFAR (LOW FREQUENCY ARRAY)

Installation: texts, vibratory device, sand, speakers (quadriphony). Here, the device is closer to the measuring instruments allowing the capture of waves / source mixed with poetic texts (Federico Garcia Lorca, Jean-Henri Fabre, Isaac Newton ...) on the floor, for a "connection" between heaven and earth ...





*“stardust moved by stars soundfiles”*

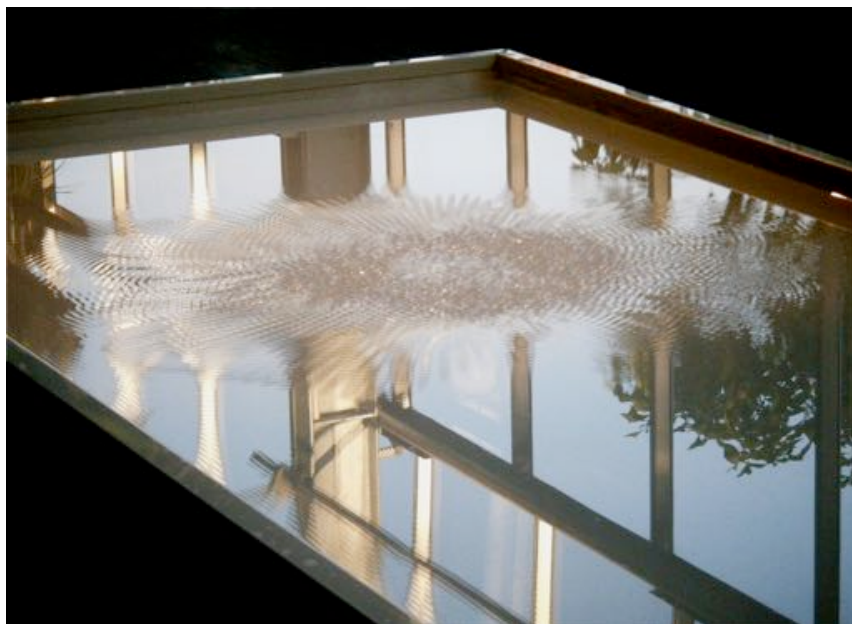
The sound material comes from invisible light information, stellar vibrations, electromagnetic waves (Sun - Jupiter - Pulsars) ... translated into sound by astrophysicists, Philippe Zarka & Ismaël Cognard (astrophysicists and research directors at CNRS and partners of this project), The sand, here stardust, is the metaphor for the unstable, the movement ... it reveals the sound.

Set in motion by the vibrations coming from the sound transcriptions of invisible light waves, it forms micro landscapes, constantly renewed, echoing the landscapes that the eye perceives through the fine openings of the architecture.

It is a poetic loop: since "star dust" is set in motion by vibrations from the stars.



VOLUME SONORE # 3 «refle x ions» botanical garden TOURS Oct / Nov 2011  
galerie des Tourelles NANTERRE Feb / Mar 2013



## . sound

We were able to record, with the help of researchers in neuroscience, and within the University Hospital of Tours, brain wave files (the "fields of thought") of a person in a listening situation. the brain is an enigmatic territory ... thus highlighting the complexity of the neural system, and his relationship with the sound world.

Sources come from :

neuronal recordings, which Philippe Zarka, astrophysicist researcher, translated into sound waves, according to our indications.

.sounds collected in the territory of the installation from terrestrial natural environments,

In voices, those "silent" voices of thought that rise in us ...

we developed the sound piece to "install" it in this "volume sonore", as a sound box.

## . architecture: sound pavilion - bench - pool

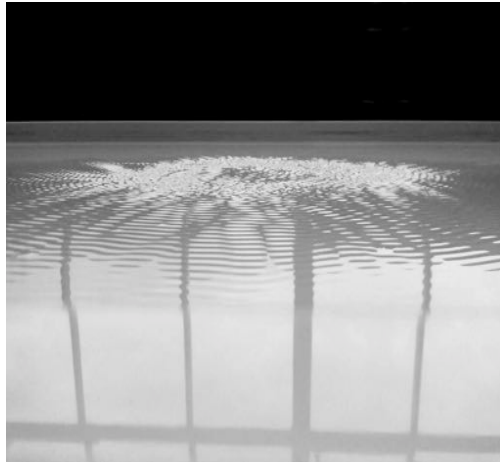
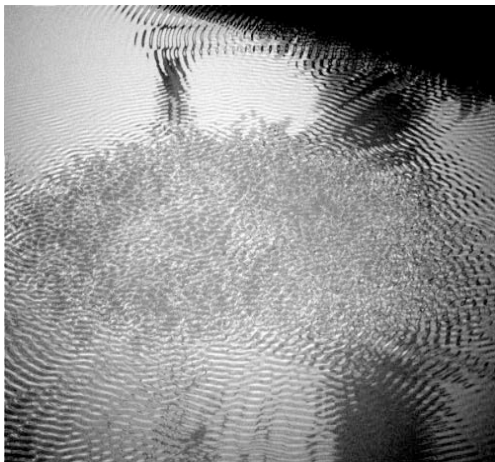
Through the transparent walls of the module, we invite the visitor to operate a porosity, a cross between the real world, the imaginary world and the sensitive, to explore the movement between outside and inside , the singularity of the human body and the universality of the environment.

We do not create a closed place but a space, open to the environment.

The bench is made of poplar. Its surface has been worked to reveal the natural "ripples" of wood.

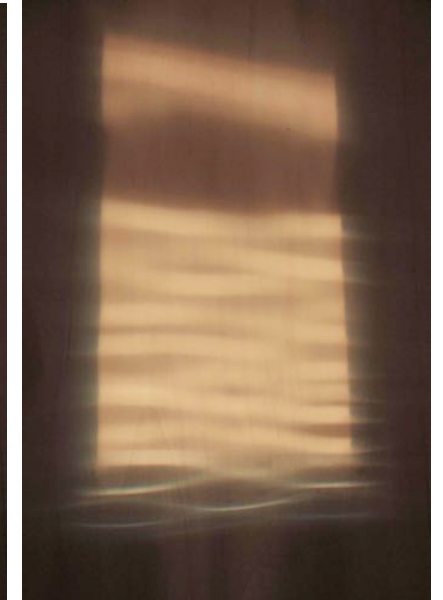
The pool: water is set in motion by sound, bass & infra-bass (transcriptions of neuronal waves): in the liquid element, the waves live. These sounds (most of them non-audible) are made perceptible by the ripples on the surface of the water.

A beam of light takes up these forms and projects their reflections on the wall of the bottom of the architecture.





"The reflection of the movement on the surface of the basin, taken up by a light beam, is projected at the bottom of the architectural module, giving body to the infrabass sound vibrations coming from the neuronal waves [...] This ray is necessarily cut by any incoming person, whose 'shadow' is projected on the screen wall according to the same principle as the cave of Plato ... [...]  
Any reflection would be an illusion? "



« *brain waves reflections* »

## VOLUME SONORE # 4 "song-e " abbey of Noirlac (May 2013)



### .architecture

An idea of the intimate, a return, a "refocusing" in the dark.  
The folding screens of architecture are like indoor parables,  
geometric parables and "allegorical parables".

### .sound

We have mixed sounds gleaned from the musical universe of the place (piano, voice ...) to the neural waves of a person in a state of silence, a state conducive to dreaming.

The speakers are turned outward to make a "reflection" of the sound. This one is sent inwards, towards the focal point, in the center, where we sit ... We perceive the sound by return, an impression that the vibration comes from the outside of the sound flag ...

We have blurred the sources, the receptions and the emissions, as in a dream (a special dream, a state of between - two, an interlude).

"To create is to dare looking in the dark" (Marguerite Yourcenar)

We are here between the black and a fluctuating light, on the territory of the luminous shadows ...

## “Ciel et terre” Abbey of Noirlac May 2013 - Volume Sonore # 5

"Ciel et terres" is a sound and light installation.

Some porcelain bowls in form of parabolas are vibrated through speakers engines. The sound comes from transcriptions of light waves emitted by a pulsating star (a pulsar) located at 850 light years. These transcriptions are provided by Philippe Zarka, astrophysicist, director of research at the Observatory of Paris and co-director of the Nancey's radioastronomy center.

That means that the emission of the waves is exactly contemporaneous with the building of the Abbey of Noirlac, and the reception is contemporaneous to us. These parabolas are filled with a mixture of water and pigments. The reflections of the movement of the surface are cast and visualized through a subtle lightning device to show the waves of the past...



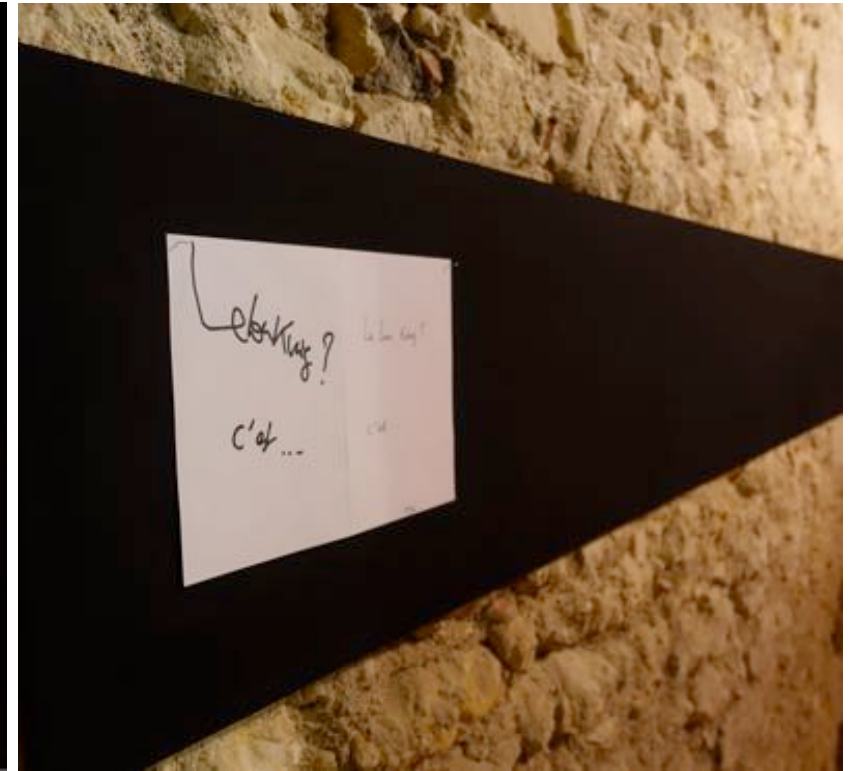


“En-Vol “ (volume sonore # 6): preparatory phase



Launch of a helium balloon at 1800m altitude to capture the sound environment of swifts during sleep.

## “En-Vol “ Eternal Gallery Tours November 2016 - Volume sonore # 6



Eternal Gallery is occupied by an architectural structure that hosts Virgile Novarina making a performance . An atmospheric piece is played during Virgil's sleep and serves as a catalyst for his drawings and writings at night.

This piece contains sounds picked up with a balloon sent at 1800 meters of altitude (the sound environment of the swifts during their "wsleep"), swift songs and transcriptions of the vibration of 'a pulsar, a distant star at 1700 light-years, ie whose emission of the wave is contemporary with the birth of Martin de Tours in 316 and whose reception is contemporary.

Virgile Novarina artistically explores his own sleep through writings and drawings. Since 2006, the fact of sleeping has become an integral part of his work, in the form of performances "In short" during which he sleeps publicly. These attempts highlight the richness of the mysterious state of sleep. Every night, many micro-awakenings occur in our sleep, but we forget them instantly. It is during some of them that Virgile Novarina writes or draws what he has just perceived in slow sleep (stages 1 to 4). "Several times a night I suddenly realize that I see shapes and colors, and that I hear sounds and words ... I wake up in the morning without any memory of what happened ... "

This performance of Virgile Novarina is a moment of installation "en-Vol" (3 nights). Beyond that, the device and the "results" are presented to the public.



Virgile is installed in a bed suspended by means of a ball-joint without any friction and whose movement is maintained by a clockwork mechanism in the opposite direction of the rotation of the Earth (in reference to the Foucault pendulum experiment), to avoid "earthly affairs", as do the swifts during their sleep. This device is developed in collaboration with a teacher-researcher from Polytech-school of Tours.

The walls of the module are covered with copper plates or copper links connected to the earth to constitute a real Faraday box, guaranteeing the absence of electromagnetic disturbances for Virgil's sleep.

The sound diffusion system is specially designed using speakers with a mobile spherical baffle so that the spatial origin of sounds remains indeterminate. They contribute to the atmospheric effect of the sound envelope and make the vibration of the distant star perceptible by retranslating it into light.

This star pulsation is present in all the spaces of the Eternal Gallery.

Are the muses vibratory?



## "Pulsdating star" Paris Observatory June 2017 (350th Anniversary of the Observatoire de Paris)



### **Listen to the inaudible vibration of a pulsar**

Emitted in 1667, so contemporary of the creation of the Observatory, the vibration of a pulsar (pulsating star) distant 350 light-years reaches us in 2017. A sound transcription of these waves is the basis of the polyphonic piece of the 'pulsdatingstar' installation proposed by Claude Alma.

### **Observe the invisible movement of his pulsations**

A parabolic basin is set in motion by a loudspeaker, thus visually translating the vibration of the pulsar. The reflection of the perceptible animation on the aquatic surface is simultaneously projected on a wall parabolic screen delivering the luminous trace of the pulsar.

### **In a singular sound environment**

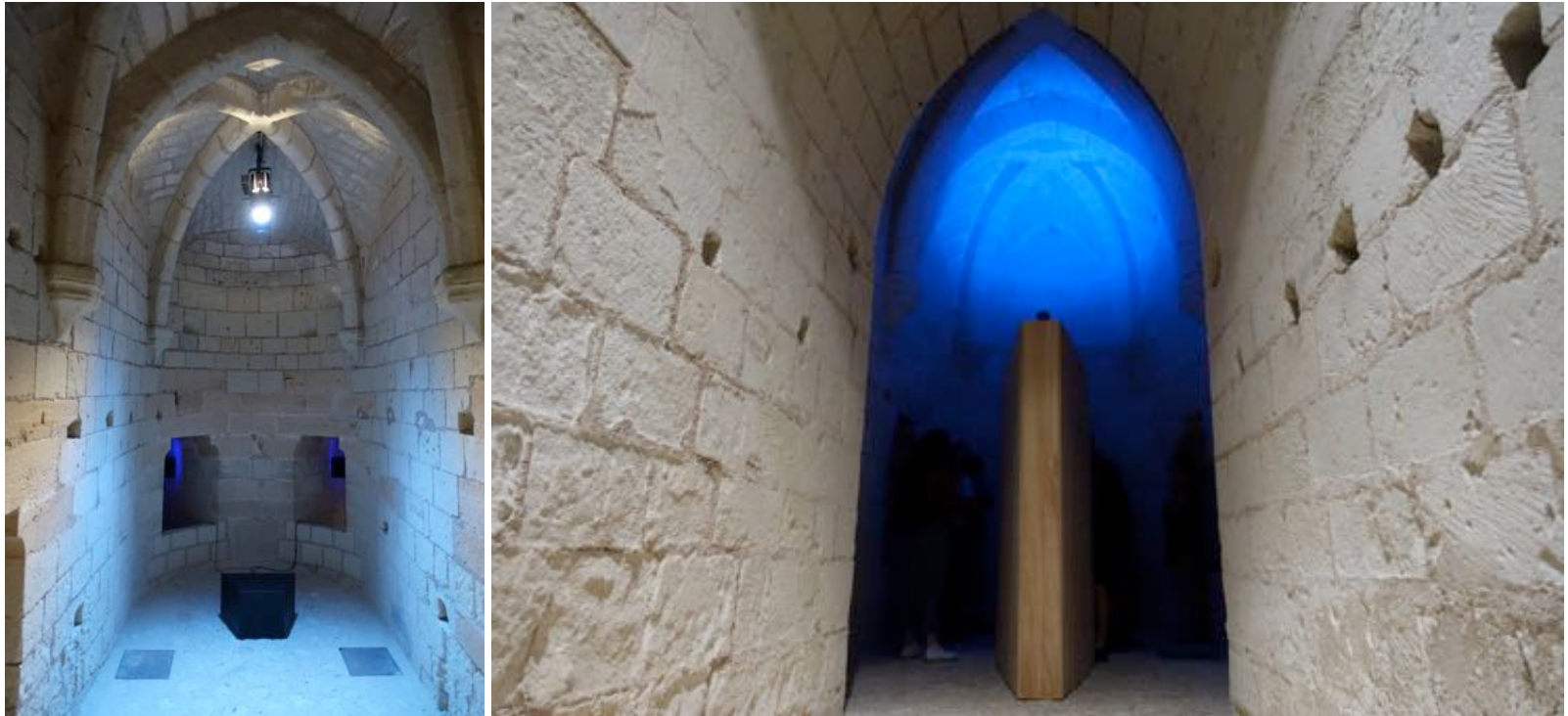
The sound diffusion device is multiple, spatialized and related to astronomical observation tools. Helium maintains many speakers projecting their stellar wave against the summit vault, the signal of the speakers is reflected against antennas to invade the space of the north rotunda (where Foucault tried his first demonstration of the terrestrial rotation) , for a unique immersive listening experience.



In a second space of the Observatory, it is the remarkable regularity of the rotation of this pulsar which is pointed, celestial metronome flying almost at the speed of a 78 rpm ... Two copper plates placed on a vinyl of Jean-Baptiste Lully symbolize the magnetic poles of the pulsar, the reflection evoking the whirling star.

# PASSE<>MURAILLE

Tour des chiens – Forteresse royale de Chinon - 19 may to 12 november 2018



Inspired by a short story by Marcel Aymé (in which the main character has the ability to walk through walls), this installation is all about sounds going through walls.

## *Level -1*

*In collaboration with Philippe Zarka (astrophysician). Sound translation of vibrations from the Earth, the solar crown or far-away gravitational waves. X-rays, gamma waves and radio waves all can pierce thick walls while outside the atmosphere.*

## *Level -2*

*Quadraphonic mixture of translation of neuronal activity, heart beat and soundscapes made from snippets of fictional stories, documentaries and music. Here the walls are real or symbolic, past or present; the focus is on the moment when everything shifts, when protection turns into prison.*



Vol-Tige – domaine de Candé (Monts - France) - commissioned by the department of Indre et Loire - 2019



Vol-Tige is a structure of 8m height intended to shelter nests of migratory birds (swallows and swifts). These birds accept a collective habitat on the sole condition that their nest is identified and differentiated, which allows them to access it quickly. Taking this into account, the first sketches immediately evoked the façade of a building in a war zone where each projectile impact becomes the entrance to a nesting box to symbolically give life rather than generate chaos.





Swallows and swifts amaze and impress us with their multiple prowess, intrepid inhabitants of the air and sky, flying thousands of miles. Vol-Tige also conveys the idea that, like acrobats, their lives are perilous, they take constant risks and their very existence is threatened. It is also this idea of fragility which appears in the form of this proposal which evokes populations in danger in ruins after fights, these "vestiges" evoking symbolically the consequences of the influence of the man on the environment.

Beyond the environmental aspect and the fact that it favors biodiversity, Vol-Tige addresses universal societal issues, such as migration and the distress of populations on the surface of the globe.

In this respect, Vol-Tige is an eminently sonorous work: it is the silence after the crash... a silence soon to be inhabited. And rather, after a conflict, than erecting a memorial with "immutable, massive and smooth" forms in homage to the victims, to erect an unstructured monument, fragile and open to all winds but... dedicated to life.







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