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2014

Patrick BLANC (FR)

Bio:

Patrick BLANC: 1953, lives and works in Paris.

Patrick Blanc does not agree with Darwin, when it comes to competition in the evolution. Rather, he wants to express that in habitats, where there is no competition, an explosion of biodiversity can be observed. Adaptation is not intended to replace plants in the area.

Blanc is the inventor of plant walls, which enable the introduction of biodiversity onto the concrete walls of towns. A botanist as well as an artist, Blanc observed how plants were able to grow vertically without the need for soil in the wild, and developed a way to create artistic looking vegetation walls that were both lightweight and needed little maintenance.

e.g.: 2012 Miami Art Museum, 2010 MONA Hobart, 2008 Torre de Cristal Madrid, 2007 Taipei Concert Hall, 2007 Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006 Caixa Forum Museum Madrid, 2006 Parlement de Bruxelles, 2004 Modern Art Museum Kanazawa, 2004 Festival des Deux Rives Strasbourg, 1998 Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain Paris, 1994 Festival international des Jardins, 1998 Musée des Sciences et Techniques de La Villette

Werk / Work:

Mur Végétal, 1991-ongoing

The Vertical Garden as it is known in English, is something closer to a living painting than to a garden. In 2011 Blanc's Mur Végétal can be seen in 160 commercial and institutional buildings around the world, including the Athenaeum hotel in London and the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. The planted face of Quai Branly comprises 15,000 plants and 150 different species. The facade of Caixa Forum Museum in Madrid consists of 250 species of plants (more than 15,000 in all).

Blanc's gardens are not made with engineered panels. He designs vertical gardens by applying a special felt to a building wall or other vertical surface and planting vegetation on it. The intention is that the plants will use the felt instead of soil. Choosing mainly plants that grow wild on cliff faces and tree tops, Blanc weaves together a green mix, with plants chosen specifically for the climate of the country in which they will live. He gets his inspiration from examples observed in nature and, in particular, at the entrance of caves and along horizontal branches of large trees in tropical forests and offers a vault where plants grow from top to bottom, with their roots being anchored in crevices. This ingenious concept breaks down the traditional opposition of town and nature.

While the technology is fascinating, the aesthetic of Blanc's vertical gardens is what captures the imagination. He directs the selection and disposition of plant species, creating diverse green tapestries rich in texture and tonalities of green, punctuated by flowers.

Blanc works as a soloist. Previously, he has visited the city property and checked the local climate. Then he goes into his archive. It consists of over 10,000 images he has taken on expeditions. With these data he makes a sketch. Every plan is drawn by hand. The dynamic diagonals are characteristic of many drafts; after two to three years, the work looks as if a cornucopia has distributed flowers and leaves from the top right.

No work is similar to the other. Blanc produces a close relation to the buildings. The vertical garden with its rust-red drift at the Caixa Forum Museum in Madrid reflects the modern dice, made of rusted metal.



Photo: Patrick Blanc
View: Musée du Quai Branly,
Paris, 2005



Photo: Patrick Blanc
View: Caixa Forum Museum,
Madrid, 2007



Photo: Patrick Blanc
View: Privat building,
Brussels, 2005

Patrick BLANC: Mur Vegetal, 1991-ongoing
Plants, polyvinyl chloride, felt, steel
Courtesy: Patrick Blanc

Folies végétales, 2007-2008

In the exhibition Folies Végétales (Plants' Follies) Patrick Blanc has transformed the Espace EDF Electra in a huge tropical greenhouse. Through six installations comprising a total of over 2,000 plants of 100 different species, and photographs, Patrick Blanc reflects the extraordinary adaptability of plants to extreme environments such as water currents, the dark woods and caves.

For Folies Végétales blue begonias, aerial roots, brown leaves similar to dead leaves invent an unexpected universe, surprising in diversity, proving once again that protecting biodiversity should be a concern of all.



Photo: Patrick Blanc
Exhibit: Baie d'Along - ensemble
View: Espace EDF Electra, Paris, 2007



Photo: Patrick Blanc
Exhibit: Le plafond végétal
View: Espace EDF Electra, Paris, 2007



Photo: Patrick Blanc
Exhibit: Les flûtes aux rhéophytes
View: Espace EDF Electra, Paris, 2007

Patrick BLANC: Folies Végétales, 2007-2008
With Alexis Tricoire

- **Le plafond végétal**
Hoya, Rhipsalis, Aeschynanthus, Columnea, Scindapsus...
- **Les vallées des hautes et basses énergies**
Aracées, Gesnériacées, Urticacées, Acanthacées...
- **Le tapis des cryptiques**
Pilea, Begonia, Impatiens, Episcia, Peperomia, Ludisia...
- **Les flûtes aux rhéophytes**
Anubias, Cryptocoryne, Aponogeton, Crinum, Echinodorus...
- **Baie d'Along - ensemble**
Helxine, Ixeris...
- **Les bulles aux bégonias**
Begonia Pavonina

Courtesy: Patrick Blanc

Robe Végétale, 2002

Patrick Blanc's ecological art transcended vertical gardens to high fashion in 2002 when he designed for French fashion icon, Jean-Paul Gaultier. Blanc's 'Robe Végétale' dress walked the runway in Gaultier's 2002 fashion show.



Photo: Patrick Blanc
View: Jean-Paul Gaultier
spring/summer collection,
2002

Patrick BLANC: Robe Végétale, 2002
With Jean-Paul Gaultier
Wedding dress, plants
Courtesy: Patrick Blanc, Jean-Paul Gaultier