

# Place-ness

## Inhabiting space

1 December 2023 – 28 March 2025

Recent events have prompted many people to move to the countryside in the hope of getting back to a peaceful life far from the stress and lack of space imposed by cities. The works assembled here transcend this urban-rural antagonism in order to explore different territorial realities. They invite us to decentre our gaze in order to see these spaces as interdependent rather than static. Imagined, developed and exploited by human beings, territory is the product of historical events and political decisions and reflects mutations and tensions occurring in contemporary society.

The sections of the exhibition are all approaches to analysing the way we inhabit space. To focus on the concept of territory implies examining how humans relate to their environment and their impact on it. Some artists use natural or industrial materials in order to transform them and rethink how we relate to the world. Many abandoned spaces are the result of productivity-oriented exploitation of the planet in the post-industrial age. These indeterminate places can nurture all kinds of possibilities. Relationships between territories are regulated by the yield and consumption that are inherent to capitalist society. In public space, surveillance hinders bodies and their movements. Confronted with these dynamics, territories can break free from their physical anchorage in order to be seen as a mental space in which art can oppose a certain attitude of resignation.



Ayuntamiento  
de Málaga

AGENCIA PÚBLICA PARA LA GESTIÓN DE  
LA CASA NATAL DE PABLO RUIZ PICASSO  
Y OTROS EQUIPAMIENTOS MUSEÍSTICOS  
Y CULTURALES

Centre  
Pompidou  
Málaga



Fernand Léger, *Deux papillons jaunes sur une échelle*, 1951. Oil on canvas, 92 × 73 cm. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Jacques Faujour/Dist. RMN-GP © Fernand Léger, VEGAP, Málaga, 2023

## Deconstructing clichés

The word "urban" comes from the Latin *urbs*, meaning city. Urbanity also evokes civility and courtesy. This twofold meaning reveals a tacit hierarchy between town and country, as evidenced in many clichés. The ambivalence of the dominant urban view of rural territories lies in the coexistence of two contradictory visions. The first conveys a form of disdain that restricts rurality to an outmoded rustic ideal, as opposed to cities, seen as the high point of modern life. The second, on the contrary, is associated with an idealisation of country landscapes and a peaceful lifestyle.

This first part of the exhibition sets out to transcend this dichotomy between town and country by presenting a variety of visions of rural and urban life. Scenes of agricultural labour, rustic views and subversions of the landscape genre are found side by side with works illustrating the rapid development of cities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the spatial organisation of modern cities and the never-ending ebb and flow of contemporary megalopolises.

## Transforming matter: tributes and traces

This section focuses on the physical and sensory relationships that human beings maintain with their environment, and on the ephemeral and ineradicable marks that we leave on territories. Many artists, often living in rural or remote areas, adopt a position of humility, even devotion, with regard to nature, which they celebrate in their works.

In this respect, the choice of materials is significant because it determines techniques, tools and uses, but it also communicates a history, a memory or a set of symbols. The same holds true for everyday objects and work instruments: they can reveal a tension between the practices they relate to and their symbolism, or be reused and associated with industrial materials. Lastly, many artists and designers, aware of the significant impact of human activity on the environment, use natural and non-polluting materials to develop innovative and eco-responsible production processes.



Studio 5.5, *Chaise soignée avec béquille*, 2004. Recycled chair and green coated steel crutch, 95 × 45 × 45 cm. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Georges Meguerditchian/Dist. RMN-GP



Wim Wenders, "Vacancy", Amboy, California, 1983.  
 Dye destruction print, Cibachrome type, 29,8 × 35,6 cm.  
 © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP

## Living in indefinite spaces

The different phases of industrialisation resulting from technical progress overturned the organisation of built-up and non-built-up spaces. While industrial sites may have been seen as symbols of progress, they also embody the degradation of territories and the alienation of populations in the name of ever-increasing production. The development of railway networks and then the democratisation of the car led to greater proximity between territories and an expansion of the phenomenon of urban sprawl, which has become widespread in western countries since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with suburbs consisting of impersonal housing estates and zones of economic activity.

This led to the appearance of "non-places", purely functional spaces that are characteristic of "supermodernity": airports, train stations, motorway interchanges, shopping malls and even refugee camps. These spaces illustrate an increase in both standardisation and dehumanisation, but they may also stimulate the imagination, foster physical and mental wandering and see the birth of new types of urbanity.

## Rethinking territorial dynamics

We have entered the Anthropocene era, characterised by the ineradicable effects of human activity on the planet. Our globalised world is the result of geopolitical, scientific, social and cultural choices and developments that have consequences for territories and the way we relate to our environment. The "served-serving territory" dialectic underlies relationships of domination and dependence: agricultural regions constitute breeding grounds for resources that are exploited in the interests of a capitalist urban society.

Some artists deal with the condition of overproduction and excessive consumerism while others use the banal objects that saturate our society to reveal their symbolic power or to transform them into absurd hangovers of mass consumption. The way we live in space is influenced by an economic framework, data flows and non-stop exchanges. This results in a sort of submission to our systems of industrial production and to our technological environment that damage our bodies and monitor our emotions.



Mircea Cantor, *Tasca che punge*, 2007. Armani trousers, nettles, earth, rope and wooden clothes pegs. Variable dimensions.  
 © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP



Firenze Lai, *Lunch Breaks*, 2016. Oil on canvas, 85 × 70 cm.  
© Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Audrey Laurans/Dist. RMN-GP

## Existing in public space

Theoretically, public space belongs to everyone, but in reality it is conditioned by powerful social norms. These reveal the power relations at work between individuals while exacerbating inequalities. Thus, public space sometimes seems inhospitable to people whom society views as marginal. This being the case, how can we live in it?

Although a great variety of people transit through public space, individuals tend to merge into a dense homogenised multitude. This part of the exhibition gives pride of place to the groups of nameless figures that we can all come across when we leave our homes. In some works, the absence of human beings enables us to better observe the signs of their existence or presence.

Public space has also become a playground for many artists, notably through performance. They occupy it in order to reveal and challenge its regulated uses and the violence that occurs there.

## Reconfiguring dreams and realities

Artists communicate ways of being in the world. Even when they do not adopt an openly militant stance, their works may nevertheless stand as acts of resistance. The proposals brought together in this room are pathways to thinking about the contemporary world, its history, its dynamics and the associated challenges. Several of them showcase tensions—between organic and artificial, nature and culture, form and content—to better transcend them, or even to celebrate their potential for transformation.

The undercurrents in a fruitful dialogue between unique reinterpretations of landscapes reveal the whole ambivalence of this concept located at the intersection of the natural and the social, the private and the political. These works invite us to grasp the complexity of our globalised world while opening up the range of possibilities. They overturn our certitudes and remind us that territory can also be seen independently of its physical anchoring and understood as a mental space.



Otobong Nkanga, *The Weight of Scars*, 2015 (detail)



## Prelude

Richard Long

## Deconstructing clichés

Fernand Léger · Daniel Spoerri · Pierre Roy · Serge Mansau  
Haus-Rucker-Co · Gianni Arnaudo · Nora Dumas · Charlotte  
Perriand · Gerhard Richter · Charles Eames, Ray Eames  
Maria Helena Vieira da Silva · Natalia Goncharova  
Constant · Coop Himmelb(l)au · yann beauvais  
Marie Menken · Yolande Fièvre · Victor Brauner  
Adalberto Libera · Constantin Brancusi · Andrea Branzi  
Marc Chagall · Olafur Eliasson, Frederik Ottesen · Ergy Landau  
Vera Pagava · Patkaï · Louis Vivin

## Transforming matter: tributes and traces

Ian Hamilton Finlay · Oscar Tuazon · David Nash · Lucien Clergue  
Gloria Friedmann · François Bouillon · Studio Klarenbeek & Dros  
Marlène Huissoud · Studio 5.5 · Frans Krajcberg  
Giuseppe Penone

## Living in indefinite spaces

Bernard Boutet de Monvel · Albert Renger-Patzsch  
Bill Brandt · Ergy Landau · Ahmed Mater · Vera Pagava  
Wim Wenders · Valérie Jouve · Mark Lewis · Michał Szlaga  
Marc Bardon · Pierre Boucher · Robert Doisneau  
Walker Evans · Emeric Feher · Jeff Gates

## Rethinking territorial dynamics

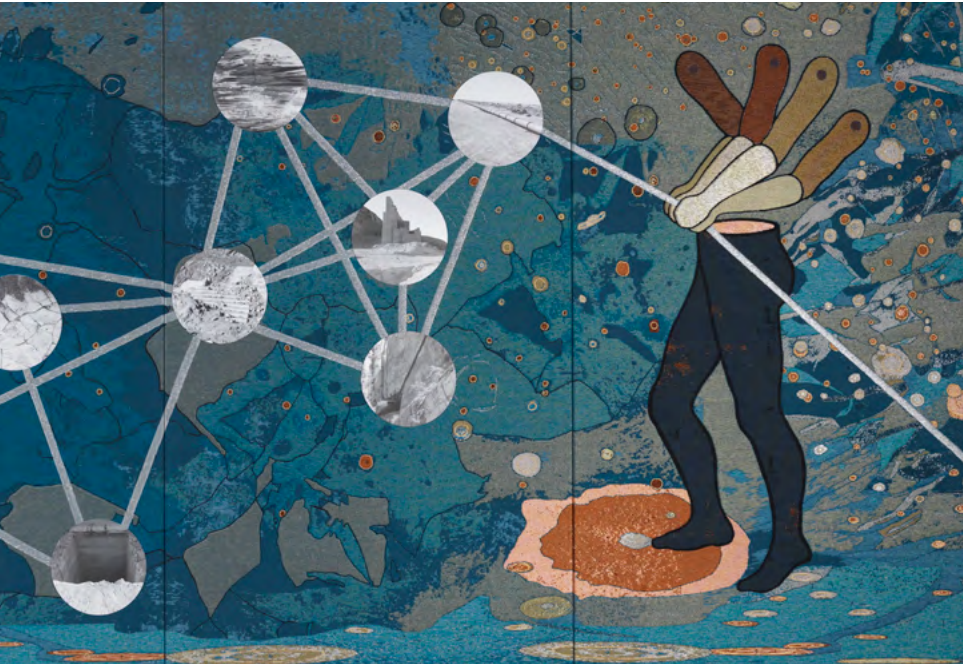
Véronique Ellena · Mika Tajima · Andrea Branzi  
Éric Baudelaire · Mircea Cantor · Jim Dine · Gabriel Kuri  
LaToya Ruby Frazier · Andreas Gursky · Robin Collyer  
Christian Milovanoff · Stéphane Couturier

## Existing in public space

Firenze Lai · Bernard Pagès · Jawad Al Malhi  
Serban Savu · Gianni Pettena · Valie Export  
Robert Filliou · Magdalena Abakanowicz  
Ryuji Miyamoto · Didier Fiuza Faustino · Diana Machulina

## Reconfiguring dreams and realities

Tony Cragg · Jannis Kounellis · Shigeru Ban · Barry Flanagan  
David Hockney · Joan Mitchell · Marc Desgrandchamps  
Barthélémy Togo · Otobong Nkanga



Otobong Nkanga, *The Weight of Scars*, 2015 (detail).  
Viscose, wool, mohair, cotton; pigment; inkjet prints and magnet, 253 × 612 cm.  
© Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CC/Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP

## Team

### Centre Pompidou

#### Curator

Valentina Moimas

In collaboration with  
Anne-Charlotte Michaut

Assisted by  
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Eladio Aguilera

#### General coordination

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#### Collection managers

Darrell Di Fiore

Xiaoliang Gu

#### Registrar

Louis Lemaire-Deflou

#### Edition

Xavier Isle de Beauchaine

#### Mediation

Celia Créten

#### Press

Clotilde Sence

### Centre Pompidou Málaga

#### Collection manager

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#### Conservation

Elisa Quiles Faz

Art & Museum

#### Scenographer and graphic design

Francisco Bocanegra

#### Corporate identity

Gloria Rueda Chaves

#### Installation

UTE ICCI (Ingeniería Cultural  
y Cobra Instalaciones)

#### Mediation

Factoría de Arte y Desarrollo

#### Communication

GAP and co

## Catalogue

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and Anne-Charlotte Michaut

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Council and Centre Pompidou  
Design: José Luis Bravo

## Family tour



Labels for kids are available all along  
the tour to discover the works with  
your family.

## Guided tours

The mediation team offers you guided  
tours to discover the works from the  
exhibition, in an active and sensitive way.

### Individuals

Visit in Spanish included in the price of  
the ticket. Inscription on the same day  
at the reception. 25 people maximum.  
Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday  
at 12:30 am and 6 pm  
Wednesday and Sunday at 12:30 am

### Groups

From a group of 25 people. In Spanish,  
English and French, by prior reservation:  
educacion.centrepompidou@malaga.eu

Discover all our activities (tours,  
workshops, events...) on our website:  
centrepompidou-malaga.eu

## Information

### Opening hours

9.30 a.m. to 8.00 p.m., every day  
Ticket offices close at 7:30 p.m.  
The museum is closed on Tuesdays  
(except holidays and days before  
holidays), 1 January and 25 December

### Prices

Temporary exhibitions: €4  
Concessions: €2.50  
Semi-permanent exhibitions: €7  
Concessions: €4  
Semi-permanent and temporary  
exhibitions: €9  
Concessions: €5.50

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