

PRESSBOOK

Jesper JUST

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EXPERIENCE JESPER JUST'S HAUNTING AUDIOVISUAL
INSTALLATION *SERVITUDES* IN PARIS

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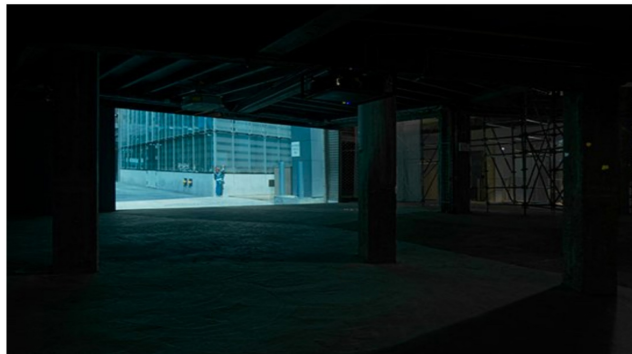
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Jesper Just's *Servitudes* installation features nine short films projected in the basement of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

New York-based artist Jesper Just has long been interested in how buildings and public spaces are set up to accommodate (or not, as the case may be) people with disabilities. So when he was offered a solo exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, he chose to incorporate ideas of access into his installation.

"When I was invited to do the show, I asked to use the basement. Usually that's not a popular place for artists because it's a very complicated space and it's very hard to find, but I was intrigued by it," says Just, who decided to create an audiovisual experience, titled *Servitudes*, for the exhibition.



The films were shot at 1 World Trade Center in New York.

He wanted to create the "feeling of spelunking" in the basement by showing a film—composed of nine, nine-minute clips shot in and around New York's 1 World Trade Center—on transparent fabrics in a space navigated by nearly 400 feet of wheelchair-accessible ramps. "Cities are really constructed around the able-bodied," says Just. "So I thought it would be interesting to turn it around and force all able-bodied people to take the long ramp in the exhibition."

Choosing 1WTC as his set of his film shorts was no less challenging, and it took months of negotiating to secure three days to shoot outside the tower, in the lobbies, in the elevator banks, and on the 63rd, 64th, and 65th floors. But Just wanted to use the architecturally and emotionally fraught building as an

infrastructural character and mediator between his two human characters—the model-actress Dree Hemingway and Rylee Sweeney, a nine-year-old who has Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, a neurological disorder that affects motor and sensory nerves—as they respond to the World Trade Center.



A character (played by Dree Hemingway) wears continuous passive motion devices, used to rehabilitate muscle movement.

In one scene, Hemingway stands at a window in a lobby space on one of the higher floors, and delivers a monologue as she peers at the city below. Meanwhile, in a different film, Sweeney plays with her reflection in the tower's windows. In yet another clip, she struggles to play a white grand piano, using two hands for the melody, which is usually played with one.

The soundtrack accompanying the films has special significance to the installation. During the course of researching the Palais de Tokyo, Just discovered that the Germans used the basement to store more than 2,000 pianos confiscated from French Jews during World War II. He decided to incorporate the instrument into his work and chose a composition based on Éliane Radigue's *Opus 17*.

"I'm very interested in place, which in this project becomes a mediator and a transporter of sound," says Just. "It's a very particular exhibition. It's haunting, definitely."

Through September 13 at Palais de Tokyo, 13, Avenue du Président Wilson, Paris: palaisdetokyo.com