

LAURENT GRASSO, *REVOLVING HISTORY*

Commission for the Couvent des Jacobins - Rennes

Official Opening on Saturday the 8th of December, 11:30 am



^ View from the outside - simulation

For the Couvent des Jacobins, integrated into the construction of the new Congress Center by the architect Jean Guervilly, Laurent Grasso thought of an artwork installed in the framework of the original bay windows of the convent.

In keeping with other large-scale projects created for the public space (*Du Soleil dans la Nuit*, 2012; *Solar Wind*, 2016), *Revolving History* questions the ways artworks appear within the city. A few months after his latest solo show at the Perrotin gallery, the artist proposes a new visual enigma, which, for the first time, will feature permanently.

Each bay window is equipped with twenty-seven brass-plated triangular prisms, namely one hundred and eight modules. These modules, integrated into the ribs of the former stained glass windows, are rotating in a synchronized manner. The movement of their mirror-like golden surfaces reflects the exterior and interior surroundings alternatively, in the same way that it magnifies that of the sun's path and the variations of ambient light. The slow rotation,

which always involves a glare or an irradiation, produces a feeling of hypnotic strangeness.

Referring to the *Dreamachines* of Brion Gysin, art historian Arnauld Pierre reminds that this is a recurring motif in the working method of Laurent Grasso who “organizes focal points of attention, which constitutes one of the first conditions for a descent into hypnosis”. The slow and consistent motion of the prisms suggests an activity, thereby inventing the fiction of an actual operation. Together they form an unidentifiable object, which remains visible from afar through its radiation, arousing curiosity yet refusing to provide a definitive answer regarding the aim of their presence.

The use of brass echoes an interest for the aesthetic of scientific machines and instruments, from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century (microscopes, sextants, theodolites, Tesla's antenna), which the artist often revisited or transformed into sculptural objects in order to question their fictional promise or the enigma of their function.

“The idea of interior/exterior, of a symbolic passage from a historical era to another, of an intrigue of back and forth movements, is often the drive behind my installations (Laurent Grasso).” *Revolving History* suggests a rotation of history, a diffraction of time. Integrated into the sculpture of a religious building from the fourteenth century, it functions as an intersection between a historical and scientific material and a kinetic system.

Visible from the exterior, the artwork also creates an animation inside the new building transformed into a Congress Center. *“The idea of a filter applied to reality interests me a lot. Likewise, the idea of a parallel world, of universes that coexist, of travelling through time (Laurent Grasso).”*

Revolving History proposes a reflection on the appearance of the image and the control of the gaze by a system of observation and representation. Already present for Laurent Grasso’s solo show at the Jeu de Paume entitled

“Uraniborg” (2012), in which windows with beveled glass insinuated themselves between the viewer and the works, *Revolving History* reinvests the traditional frame of the window. This motif, which was often represented in paintings from the Renaissance, served as an example for Alberti to conceptualize the painting, then conceived “like an opened window from which the depicted story can be considered.”

Although partially screening the bay windows, this work is part of a centuries-old vision of the window as an opening onto an alternate reality, be it dreamed, distorted or simply represented, with a decidedly futuristic and kinetic approach. The copper of the prisms, their perfectly synchronized rotation and the diffraction of the environment that they perform are means to propose an alteration to our perception and to project ourselves to another space-time.



^ View from the inside - simulation

Biography

Laurent Grasso lives and works in Paris (France) and New York (USA).

Graduated from the Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts of Paris, Laurent Grasso was laureate of the Marcel Duchamp Prize (2008) and a member of the French Academy in Rome - Villa Médicis (2004-2005). Laurent Grasso presented his work on the occasion of many personal exhibitions conceived in immersive or labyrinthine measures: Palais Fesch, Beaux-Arts museum, Ajaccio (« PARAMUSEUM », 2016); Fondation Hermès, Tokyo (« Soleil Noir », 2015); Kunsthau Baselland, MuttENZ, Switzerland (« Disasters and Miracles », 2013); Contemporary Art museum of Montreal (« Uraniborg », 2013); Jeu de Paume, Paris (« Uraniborg », 2012); Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (« The Black Box », 2011); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (« Gakona », 2009); Kunstverein, Arnsberg, Allemagne (« Reflections Belong the Past », 2009); Centre Pompidou, 315 Espace, Paris (« The Horn Perspective », 2009); regional contemporary art museum of Rochechouart (« Neurocinema », 2008); IAC, Institut d'art contemporain of Villeurbanne (« Magnetic Palace », 2007); MIT, List, Visual Art Center, Cambridge, USA (« L'Éclipse », 2006)...

Laurent Grasso also took part in numerous collective exhibitions and international art contemporary biennale such as the Biennale of

Sydney (Australia, 2018), the Gwangju Biennale (South Korea, 2012), Manifesta 8 (Cartagena, Murcia, Spain, 2010), the Sharjah Biennale in United Arab Emirates (2009), the Moscow Biennale (2009), the Lyon Biennale (2007), Busan Biennale, South Korea (2006 and 2004).

Alongside, Laurent Grasso was invited to make installations in the public space: *Solar Wind* (2016), permanent artwork placed on the Calcia silo's wall in the suburbs of the 13th arrondissement of Paris ; *Du Soleil dans la Nuit* (2012), a 25-meter neon presented during the 11th edition of the Nuit Blanche in Paris, and installed on the roof of the Samaritaine; *Memories of the Future* (2010), permanent neon installation on the wall of the Leeum Samsung Museum in Seoul in South Korea; *Nomiya* (2009-2011), micro-architecture put on the roof of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris during two years; or the *Infinite Light* neon (2008), installation on the pedestrian footbridge of the Hunter College in New York, Lexington Avenue.

His work is the object of several important monographs : *Paramuseum* (Silvana Editoriale/ Palais Fesch, 2016), *Soleil Double* (Dilecta/ Perrotin, 2015), *Uraniborg* (Flammarion/Jeu de Paume, 2012), *The Black-Body Radiation* (les presses du réel, 2009).

Practical Informations

Laurent Grasso, *Revolving History*, 2018
Brass prisms, motors, software

Permanent installation for the construction of the Congress Center of Rennes Métropole

Project ownership: Rennes Métropole -
Direction générale de la Culture
Architect: Jean Guervilly
Production: Eva Albarran & Co

Artwork visible from the forecourt of the Couvent des Jacobins, Place Sainte-Anne, and in the nave of the convent.

Press Contact

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Recently

Previous Exhibitions

Laurent Grasso. OttO,

Galerie Perrotin,

Paris, France

6 September – 6 October 2018

Le grand écart: 10 nominés du Prix Marcel

Duchamp,

Tsinghua University Art Museum,

Beijing, China

14 May – 17 June 2018

**RECTO/VERSO: Exposition et vente “à l’aveugle”
au profit du Secours populaire français,**

Fondation Louis Vuitton,

Paris, France

15-24 June 2018

38th EVA INTERNATIONAL Ireland’s Biennial,

Limerick, Ireland

14 April – 8 July 2018

21st Sydney Biennale, SUPERPOSITION.

Equilibrium & Engagement,

Sydney, Australia

16 March – 11 June 2018

En chair et en os,

Musée des Beaux-Arts,

Arras, France

17 March – 20 August 2018

Parallax,

The Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop’s

University,

Sherbrooke (Quebec), Canada

17 January – 17 March 2018

Edifice, Complex, Visionary, Structure,

Sean Kelly Gallery,

New York, United States

6 January – 3 February 2018

Gravity. Imaging the Universe after Einstein,

MAXXI,

Rome, Italy

2 December, 2017 – 6 May, 2018

Current and Forthcoming Exhibitions

**Almost by Chance. Traces and Trajectories of
Delcacomania,**

EA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes,

Tenerife, Spain

26 July, 2018 – 1er January, 2019

Météorites. Entre ciel et terre,

Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle,

Paris, France

18 October, 2017 – 6 January, 2019

Spectral Exchange Seminar, Tabakalera,

International Centre for Contemporary

Culture, St. Sebastian, Spain

16-17 November, 2018

Percent for art of the Auditorium undertaken by

Marc Barani at Institut de France,

23 Quai de Conti, Paris

Opening in February 2019

Special project,

Sean Kelly Gallery, TEFAF,

New York, United States

3-7 May, 2019

Laurent Grasso,

Sean Kelly Gallery,

New York, United States

October 2019