

Press release

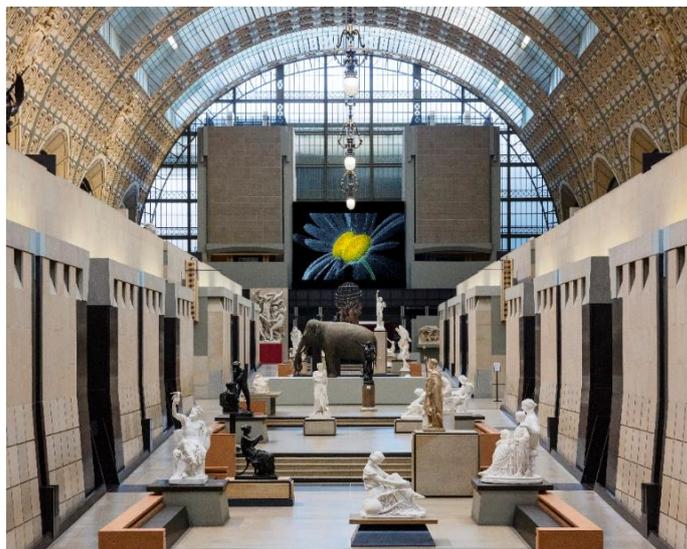
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Laurent Grasso ARTIFICIALIS

Musée d'Orsay

Level 0, between the towers, end of the Nave

15 december 2020 – 2 may 2021



Laurent Grasso
ARTIFICIALIS

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French artist Laurent Grasso has created a new film for the exhibition *The Origins of the World: The Invention of Nature in the 19th Century*, which will be screened as an installation between two towers at the back of the main nave. His research and study crystallized around the grand architecture of the venue (a former train station) and the major transformations throughout the 19th century, an era characterized by electricity, beliefs in progress and science—subjects at the heart of Laurent Grasso's own work. He specially created the film for this autumn, which dialogues with the museum as an ensemble, and is projected in the back of the nave on an LED screen, tailored to the monumental scale of the Musée d'Orsay.

The film will represent a moving tableau, visible from the entrance of the museum and from everywhere across the nave. This is the second time that the monumental space of the two towers has been entrusted to a contemporary artist, following Glenn Ligon, who created a custom work—*Des Parisiens Noirs*—for the exhibition *The Black Model (Le modèle noir)*. Laurent Grasso's film installation will explore the historical issues featured in the exhibition *The Origins of the World: The Invention of Nature in the 19th Century*, its purpose being to highlight the depleted distinction between nature and culture, reframing our world within the context of the museum.

Darwin, who is a key point of reference in the exhibition, had chosen to place himself within the lineage of the great explorers, given his expedition aboard the HMS Beagle. Laurent Grasso overturns the Darwinian project by questioning the very possibility of exploration in a hyperconnected world mapped by satellites, where space and time are compressed and in which the discoveries are linked to an experimental geography, one where exoticism no longer has a place. The film, finalized during confinement, showcases the deep mutations of the contemporary world in the setting of the nave.

Thanks to an extended process of both archival and contemporary research, Studio Laurent Grasso, assisted by a scientific team, gathered and reworked images pulled from a diverse array of sources. The artist himself calls it a "*film machine*, presented on a machine screen—a film written, evolving and rearranging itself like a code, drawing information from the world as though it's a database, underlining the spectrum of places that reflect the impact or engineering force of humankind on the environment."

Spotlighting areas where nature has mutated in the wake of disasters, including polar regions in the midst of recalibrating, the artist shows a post-Anthropocene world where nature has been transformed by human beings. By using occasional special effects, a form of image ambiguity emerges, resulting in unclear meanings that confound the natural, the artificial and the fictional. Today's images are not unlike those in the exhibition, but they have been obtained by using the most contemporary tools, such as Lidar scanners.

The film thus bridges the gap between the conceptions of nature developed during Darwin's era—as stunning as they were novel—and the perspectives of our current existence, where blurring of the line between nature and culture, now outmoded, has become the real space for exploration.

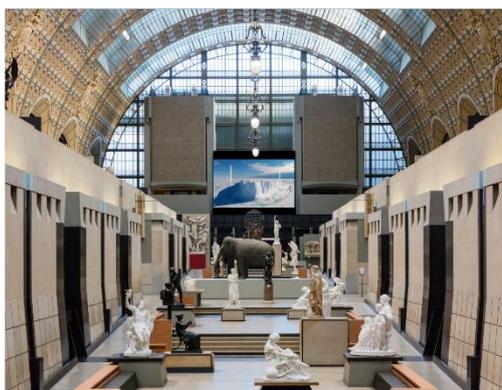
Laurent Grasso (born in 1972) lives and works between Paris (France) and New York (USA). His work addresses different scales and temporalities across multiple media. He has questioned the structure of the museum ("PARAMUSEUM," Palais Fesch, Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Ajaccio), the history of art, as well as themes of nature and culture (notably with "The Black Box," Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC; "Uraniborg," Jeu de Paume, 2012, and Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal; "Soleil Noir," Fondation Hermès, Tokyo; "OTTO", Biennale of Sydney, 2018, and Perrotin, 2019), as well as notions of science and technology (starting with "Gakona," Palais de Tokyo, 2009). He was awarded the Prix Marcel-Duchamp (2008) and was a resident of the French Academy in Rome (Villa Medici) (2004-2005). In parallel, Laurent Grasso has been invited to create installations in public spaces, such as *Solar Wind* (2016), a permanent work on the outskirts of the 13th arrondissement in Paris, placed on the walls of the Calcia silos. He is represented by Perrotin (Paris, New York, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai) and Sean Kelly Gallery (New York).

Project conceived by the artist, in collaboration with **Donatien Grau**, Head of Contemporary Programs, Musée d'Orsay



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Laurent Grasso, *ARTIFICIALIS*, 2020, Film HR, 27'33" © Laurent Grasso / ADAGP, Paris 2020 Photo © Studio Laurent Grasso, Courtesy Perrotin



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Practical information

Opening hours: daily, except Mondays, 9.30am – 6pm.

Prices / Exhibition and museum entrance ticket: full rate: €16 / Concessions: €13 / Free entry for those under 26 years of age residing in, or citizens of, a European Union country

Access : Musée d'Orsay, access through the main entrance : 1 Rue de la Légion d'Honneur, 75007 Paris. Information and switchboard: www.musee-orsay.fr - +33 (0)1 40 49 48 14. **Reservation required:** www.billetterie.musee-orsay.fr / 01 40 49 48 14

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