

Press
Release



MONUMENTA 2010
Christian Boltanski / Personnes
at the Grand Palais
13 January - 21 February 2010

MONUMENTA is an outstanding, ambitious artistic encounter. Each year, a leading international contemporary artist is invited by the Ministry of Culture and Communication to create an exceptional new work for the 13,500 m² Nave of the Grand Palais, in the heart of Paris.

Following the success of the first two MONUMENTA events, featuring Anselm Kiefer in 2007 and American sculptor Richard Serra in 2008 – both of which attracted over 140,000 visitors in five weeks – leading French artist Christian Boltanski takes up the Monummenta challenge in 2010. The exhibition is coproduced by the Centre national des arts plastiques (French National Centre for the Visual Arts), the Grand Palais and the Réunion des musées nationaux.

Ministry of Culture and Communication

**Department of Information
and Communication**

Press department
Phone: : 00 33 (0)1 40 15 80 5
service-de-presse@culture.gouv.fr

Department of the Visual Art
Marie-Christine Hergott

Phone : 00 33 (0)1 40 15 75 2
marie-christine.bergott@culture.gouv.fr

National Centre for the Visual Art
Perrine Martin

Phone: 00 33 (0)1 46 93 99 5
perrine.martin@culture.gouv.fr

Grand Palais

Marjorie Lecointre
Phone: 00 33 (0)1 56 43 41 75
marjorie.lecointre@grandpalais.fr

Press Contacts

**International
Agenda**

Phone : 00 33 (0)1 49 95 08 06
Fax : 00 33 (0)1 49 95 04 69
pbousquet@agendacom.com
www.agendacom.com

Born in 1944, Christian Boltanski has established an international reputation since the 1970s, as a leading artist at the forefront of the contemporary scene. His new installation, created especially for MONUMENTA 2010, is conceived as a powerful physical and psychological experience, an episode of spectacular emotion and sensations exploring the nature and meaning of human existence. Embracing the whole of the immense Nave of the Grand Palais, Boltanski creates a rich, intense commemorative space, in sound and vision. *Personnes* (literally both "people" and "nobodies") is the evocative title of this social, religious and humanistic exploration of life, memory and the irreducible individuality of each and every human existence – together with the presence of death, the dehumanisation of the body, chance and destiny.

Conceived as a work in sound and vision, *Personnes* takes up a new theme in Boltanski's work, building on his earlier explorations of the limits of human existence and the vital dimension of memory : the question of fate, and the ineluctability of death. *Personnes* transforms the entire Nave of the Grand Palais through the creation of a coherent, intensely moving installation conceived as a gigantic animated tableau. *Personnes* is a one-off, ephemeral work. In accordance with the artist's wishes, the components of the piece will all be recycled at the end of the exhibition.

Christian Boltanski's work is accessible, challenging, and moving. In the Nave of the Grand Palais visitors leave behind the conventional experience of art in a gallery or museum and enter bodily into the installation, becoming a part of the living dramatisation of art and memory. For Boltanski, an artist is "someone who shows the viewer something he already knows deep down, something that's already there inside, something he can bring to the forefront of his consciousness." MONUMENTA 2010 is a theatre of recall, questioning the meaning of human destiny and asserting the right of every individual to a place in the collective memory.

As part of MONUMENTA 2010, Christian Boltanski will continue his project to create the *Archives du cœur*, a collection of recorded human heartbeats. Visitors are invited to record their own heartbeat and offer it to the artist.

MONUMENTA 2010 is produced by the Délégation aux Arts Plastiques. Reflecting its commitment to attract the widest possible public, the Délégation has invited the Centre national des arts plastiques to implement a public outreach policy that aims to make available a huge range of visitor resources and services.

Expert guides are on hand to accompany individual visitors (free of charge) and discuss the work on show in a spirit of exchange and dialogue. School groups have access to their own specially-devised activities and teaching resources. Visits and workshops are

available for all ages, from 10 to 18, in a range of formats developed in collaboration with a variety of educational institutions, and France's national curriculum authority.

MONUMENTA is committed to the value of art in education, and to providing students with the keys to an understanding of the work on show, through practical workshops focussing on art, drama and creative writing. In a specially-created space at the heart of the installation, students will explore the relationship between individual and collective memory, the creation of identity and the expression of humanity through fiction. More than ever, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication is dedicated to promoting the widest possible access to the work of our greatest living artists, as a key focus of this exceptional event.

Catherine Grenier is the curator of MONUMENTA 2010. As a curator at the Centre Pompidou, her many exhibitions include *Les Années Pop* (2000) ; *Giuseppe Penone* (2004) ; *Big Bang* (2005-2006), the first themed rehang of the Centre's permanent collection ; and the major group exhibition *Los Angeles, 1955-1985* (2006). In 1999 Catherine Grenier was a guest curator for the exhibition *Abracadabra* at the Tate Modern in London. She publishes regularly on art history and aesthetics, and is the author of monographs on Annette Messager, Robert Morris, Claudio Parmiggiani and others. Her writings on contemporary art include the essay *La revanche des émotions*, published by Seuil, 1997. She is an expert on the work of Christian Boltanski, with whom she has undertaken a series of extended interviews, published in 2008 (*La vie possible de Christian Boltanski*). Her new monograph on his work is scheduled for publication at the end of 2009 (co-published by the Centre national des arts plastiques and Flammarion).

Reflecting MONUMENTA's commitment to promote the widest possible access to contemporary art, admission to the installation costs 4 euros (2 euros for concessions). An extensive program of related events (free to ticket holders) includes lectures on Christian Boltanski's work, themed round-table discussions, screenings, and a concert of new music in the Nave. The event's Web site is available in French and English, with extensive documentary resources : in-depth interviews with the artist and other leading personalities, texts highlighting the installation's core themes, and a photo gallery. Educational workshops will explore the artist's work in the context of the French national curriculum through a range of teaching tools (a teachers' pack, dedicated Web pages etc.). Themed tours and practical workshops for visitors of all ages are also planned, based on the shared experience of creative work.

The exhibition catalogue, co-published by the Centre national des arts plastiques and the journal *art press*, will go on sale at the exhibition shop. Richly illustrated, it features core texts on Christian Boltanski's work published in *art press* since the 1970s, plus a transcript of the artist in conversation with the critic Georges Didi-Huberman.

For further information: www.monumenta.com

Event open to the public from January 13 to February 21, 2010.

Nave of the Grand Palais, main entrance / Avenue Winston Churchill 75008 PARIS

Opening times

Daily except Tuesday

From 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday and Wednesday

From 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Thursday to Sunday

Metro (lines 1, 9, 13) : Franklin Roosevelt, Champs-Élysées-Clémenceau. Bus (lines 28, 32, 42, 72, 73, 80, 83, 93)

Standard admissions 4 euros / Concessions 2 euros.

Groups: 200 euros with guide (max. 30 people) / 80 euros without guide (max. 30 people).

Ticket-holders have free access to the related programme of cultural events.

Institutional partners: Ministry of Culture and Communications (Délégation aux arts plastiques/Department of Visual Arts), Centre national des arts plastiques, Etablissement public du Grand Palais des Champs Élysées, Réunion des musées nationaux.

Paris, 22 September 2009