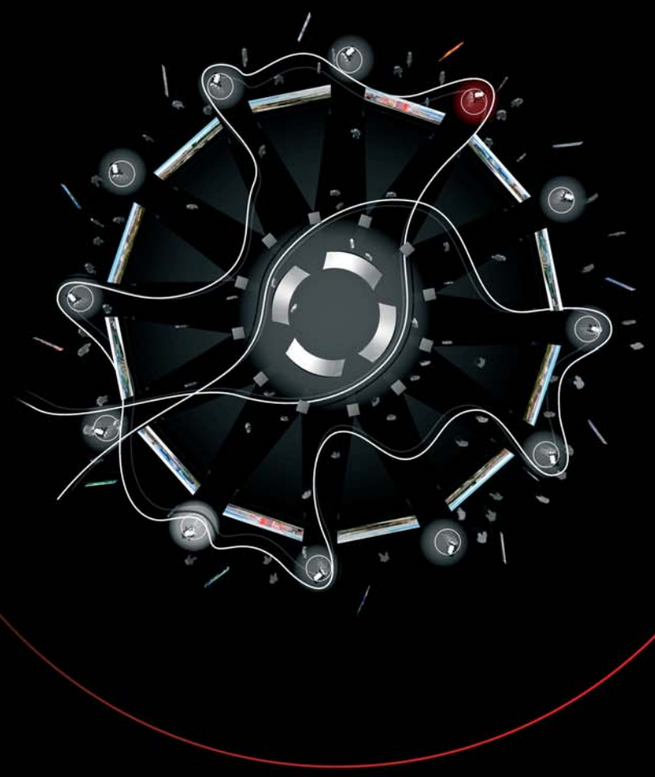

cosmopolis

OVERWRITING THE CITY

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OVERWRITING THE CITY

Artistic and Scientific Exhibition created for the French season in China

APRIL / MAY 2005
SHANGHAÏ > Science and Technology Museum

JUNE / JULY 2005
CHONGQING > 3 Gorges Museum

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER
CHENGDU

Creation: Maurice Benayoun
Production: Hugo Jacomet
Sound design: Jean-Baptiste Barrière
Artistic consulting: Hou Hanru
Scientific consulting: Jean-François Doulet

法国文化年
L'ANNEE
DE LA FRANCE
EN CHINE
2004/2005

法国文化年
荣誉委员会
COMITE
D'HONNEUR

cosmopolis OVERWRITING THE CITY

An interactive multimedia and immersive exhibition on the major issues linked to urbanization and sustainable development.

The urbanization of the planet seems to have become an inexorable process. The issues linked to controlling it with a view to sustainable development have become civilization-wide issues. Advancement, fuelled by empiricism, opportunism, and pragmatism, has led to this transformation, which has now reached a pace that makes it necessary to plan the future of cities while constructing their present.

Cities are vital melting pots of cultural and social diversity, of industrial and human issues. They are an active, structured or chaotic expression of "community living."

Cosmopolis endeavors to examine urban realities through people's eyes. It is an artistic, recreational and scientific interpretation of urbanization, making a visit to this exhibition an exciting and memorable experience.

The visitor enters a big, moving panorama of a constantly-changing city. Twelve AVR binoculars*, much like those found at scenic lookout points, allow one to be surrounded 360° by twelve urban universes. Seven Occidental cities and five Asian cities: Paris, Berlin, Barcelona, Chicago, Johannesburg, Cairo, Sao Paulo, Beijing, Shanghaï, Chongqing, Chengdu, Hong Kong, can thus be discovered, each from different viewpoints. Bearing no resemblance to the touristic landscapes one may expect to see, these scenes lay out major urban issues simply through a choice of viewpoints: transportation, environment, architecture, energy, health...

Only later does the visitor realize that his or her viewpoint through the AVR binoculars* is "captured" and used to create the big panorama of Cosmopolis at the center of the exhibition. Little by little, a surprising city is built, both strange and familiar, the fruit of visitors' intersecting gazes and visual experiences. The visitors seated in the center of the exhibition witness this action, which is both artistically stunning and symbolically crucial: the City of Tomorrow must be the fruit of intersecting gazes and experiences.

At regular intervals, the big panorama is replaced by one of the urban landscapes, depicted via a scanning action that sweeps the entire circumference of the central space. It displays key areas in the form of words, sounds, and video images. In various spots, it points out the limitations of a urbanistic course or the solutions found that can be adopted elsewhere.

Cosmopolis is therefore a space for exchange and analysis, contemplation and action. It presages new ways of confronting major urban tendencies and makes Asian and Occidental viewpoints converge in a symbolic and useful way.

*an exclusive device for Augmented and Virtual Reality (AVR) created for Cosmopolis (© Benayoun / J.I.M. PROD)

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Tour scenario

1 Arrival in the Center of Cosmopolis

The visitor to Cosmopolis enters a cylindrical room made up of twelve large-scale screens. From the inside, he or she discovers a continuous panorama which reveals a surprising urban landscape. Wherever the visitor turns, the panorama reveals new perspectives, with the apparent continuity of a 360-degree landscape.

2 Panorama of a Composite, Dynamic City

Suite

Careful observation of the landscape allows the visitor to realize quickly that what he or she thought was one city is actually an agglomeration of cities. The combined fragments of Asian and Occidental cities constitute a spectacular landscape, a subtle or provocative mix of the most remarkable urban features. Upon close examination, the landscape seems almost alive. Indeed, new fragments blend into the existing view, conveying an unexpected transformation and making this city into a palimpsest which continually rewrites itself.

The sound used within the space of Cosmopolis seems to be made up of an infinite number of sound samples arising from the atmosphere inherent to each city and to each culture, assembled in a unique musical environment suitable to the dynamic transformation of the landscape.

3 The AVR binoculars*

The visitor sits down, taking the time to observe these transformations, or perhaps, comes closer to the image to take in the details. That is when he or she notices, between the screens that make up the large panorama, behind the central hall, the silhouettes of other visitors who seem to be busying themselves with a field glass of the type that is used at tourist sites to observe the surrounding landscape.

The visitor approaches and looks into one of the twelve AVR binoculars*. He or she can thus observe, at leisure, five panoramas of the same city in succession.

4 Urban landscapes: Views of the Contemporary City

These are not traditional tourist-attracting panoramas, but rather, unique viewpoints that shed a new light on one's perception of cities that seemed familiar, at least from pictures. Chicago seeks to rehabilitate its center with the installation of new public equipment and the organization of cultural events; Paris unites road and river networks in an unceasing attempt to conciliate transport and fluidity; Shanghai juxtaposes contrasting landscapes which testify its desire to build modernity on deeply-rooted historic foundations.

5 The Key to Cosmopolis

Only later, coming back to the central panorama, does the visitor realize that his or her gaze, having scanned 12 cities and 60 different panoramas through the AVR binoculars*, is painted in real time on the large central landscape; in fact, it constitutes the very principle of the development of Cosmopolis: "Overwriting the city", made up of intersecting gazes, of shared moments of attention.

6 A Virtual Excursion through the Cities

Moving from one AVR binocular* to another, the visitor discovers new urban environments, new lines of questioning about the city and its development. While awaiting his or her turn at a new AVR binocular*, the visitor can observe, on a plasma screen, the preceding visitor's path of exploration, thus benefiting from the experiences of others.

7 Deciphering: Reading Cities, Development Issues. The Scanner

The sounds seem to change. A sweeping visual and audio effect, like a scanner, moves across the large central panorama which the visitor continues to see from the other side of the translucent screens.

8 Reading Cities

He or she returns to the centre of the large panorama and finds that he or she is now surrounded by a "true" city.
Then a new sweeping effect displays a depiction of this city, superimposing a scientific gaze upon that of the photographer. The key words, the emphasis on certain zones, and photo or video zooms all provide clues and information which allow a "reading" of the city. The sound effects also contribute to the comprehension of this didactic landscape.

9 Two Different and Complementary Readings

A new sweep provides a new reading. Whereas the first one pointed out features, crisis zones, and lines of questioning, the second one indicates solutions found, practiced or planned by inhabitants or urban planners. Solutions that are different everywhere, and which, in contact with different cities, viewpoints and readings, contribute a synthesis of a comprehensive reflection on the urban future of our planet.

These moments of deciphering follow moments of calm contemplation for the visitor in the centre, and moments of activity for the visitor at the periphery. Each visitor thus circulates freely from one viewpoint to the other, from discovery to contemplation, from questioning to explanation, from surprise to analysis.

TOUR TIMING > 30'-1H30

cosmopolis HIGHLIGHT 1

MATERIALIZATION OF THE "COLLECTIVE RETINAL MEMORY"

Cosmopolis is created by the gaze. Each visitor's viewpoint through the AVR binoculars* is blended, interlocked, mixed and juxtaposed in real time to create Cosmopolis. The imaginary city is thus the result of intersecting viewpoints and experiences and is painted on a 360° panorama by the visitors' gaze.

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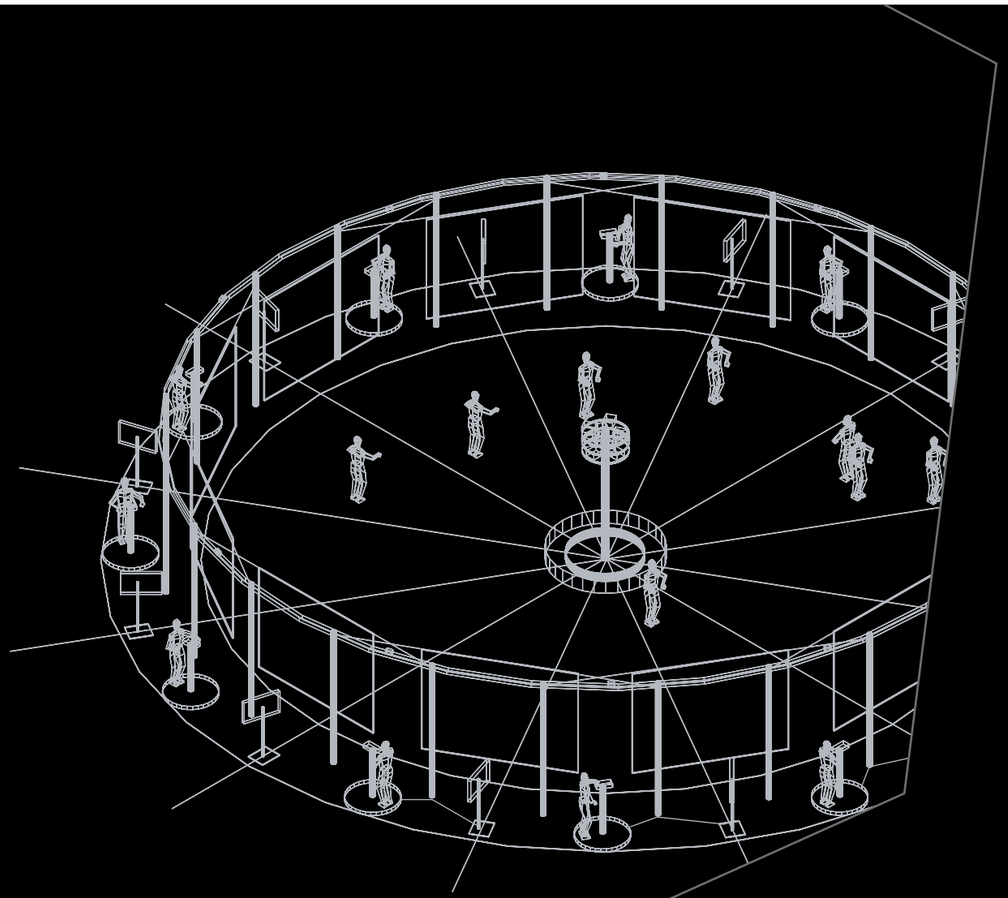
cosmopolis HIGHLIGHT 2

12 GUIDED AND NARRATIVE TOURS

At regular intervals, the big panorama is replaced by one of the urban landscapes, depicted via a scanning action that sweeps the entire circumference of the central space. It displays key areas with superimposed material: words, sounds, videos, interviews. 12 guided and narrative tours are proposed every 5 minutes to allow the visitor to see and understand the major urban stakes the cities face.



cosmopolis

TECHNICAL DATA

Surface: 25mx25m (82 feetx82 feet), 600m^2 approximately (2000 square feet). Smaller set-up on demand
Floor protection: black coating
Room blacked out
Ground resistance to 500 kg/m^2 (1100 pounds / square feet)
No columns

POWER REQUIREMENTS

Power supply: 125 Amps, three-phase service (380 V), 50 meters maximum from the exhibition

STRUCTURE SIZE (smaller set-up on demand)

Diameter of 22m (72 feet)
Height of 3.8m (12.5 feet)

SET-UP / STRIKE

Set-up: 5 days
Strike: 2 days

CONTACT J.I.M. PROD

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MAURICE BENAYOUN

Maurice Benayoun (aka MoBen) is a French transmedia artist born in Mascara (Algeria) in 1957. His work explores the potentiality of various media from video and computer graphics, to virtual reality, web and wireless art, public space large scale art installations and interactive exhibitions. Maurice Benayoun's work has been widely exhibited all over the world and received numerous international awards and prizes.

Between 1990 and 1993, Maurice Benayoun creates and directs with François Schuiten *The Quarxs,* the first HDTV CG series widely awarded and broadcasted in more than 15 countries. In 1993, he is prize-winner of the Villa Medicis Hors Les Murs of the Foreign Ministry for his *Art After Museum* project, a contemporary art collection in virtual reality. After 1993, he creates VR and interactive art installations. Among them, in 1995, *the Tunnel under the Atlantic,* a televirtual project linking the Pompidou center, in Paris, and the museum of contemporary art, in Montreal. In 1998, he is awarded with the Golden Nica, Ars Electronica prize, Interactive Art category for *World skin, a Photo Safari in the Land of War.* Both works are considered by critics as major ones in the field of interactive art.

Beside his art works, Maurice Benayoun is involved in large scale exhibitions, events and architecture projects for the conception and direction of interactive scenography: *the Navigation Room* (1997) and *the Membrane* (2001) for the Cité des Sciences de la Villette, *the Panoramic Tables* for *the Planet of Visions Pavilion* for Hanover EXPO2000 and *the Multimedia Tour* for the Abbaye de Fontevraud. Since 1984, Maurice Benayoun has been teaching video and media art at the University Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne) and is an invited artist at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts of Paris. He is co-founder and art director of the CITU, federation of new media labs (University Paris 1 / University Paris 8).

www.moben.net

ARTISTIC AND PRODUCTION CREW J.I.M. PROD PARIS

Creation: Maurice Benayoun
Production: Hugo Jacomet
Sound Design: Jean-Baptiste Barrière
Scientific Consulting: Jean-François Doulet
Artistic Consulting: Hou Hanru
Scenography: Maurice Benayoun / Olivier Ferracci / Samuel Jordan
Interactivity and Museography: CITU (University Paris 1 and University Paris 8)

Production Management: Murielle Jacomet
Production Coordination: Frédérique Jacomet
Technical Management: Samuel Jordan
Soft Development Management: Arnaud Balay
Shootings: Laurent Simonini & Alexander Brandt
Videos: Odile Fillon
Artistic Direction of Media: Alexander Brandt

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE - COORDINATED BY JEAN-FRANCOIS DOULET

Eva Serra / Urban planner (Barcelona)
Finn Geipel / Architect, teacher at the technical university of Berlin (Berlin)
Francis Beaucire / Urban planning professor at the university of Paris I - Pantheon Sorbonne (Paris)
Didier Rebois / Architect, teacher at the architecture school of Paris Val-de-Seine (Paris)
Anne Jaluzot / Urban planner (Chicago)
John Betancur / Urban planning professor at the university of Illinois (Chicago)
Tomas Morera / Urban planner (Sao Paulo)
Marcelo Tramontano / Architect, teacher at the university of Sao Paulo (Sao Paulo)
Omneya Abdel Barr / Architect (Cairo)
Aurelia Wa Kabwe-Segatti / Director of the French Institute of South Africa (Johannesburg)
Liu Jian / Architect, teacher at the architecture university of Tsinghua (Beijing)
Pan Haixiao / Urban planning professor at the university of Tongji (Shanghai)
Zhao Wanmin / Urban planning professor at the university of Chongqing (Chongqing)
Du Chunlan / Architecture school, university of Chongqing (Chongqing)
Guo Shiwei / Urban planner (Chengdu)
Tang Wingshing / Professor at the Baptist university of Hong Kong (Hong Kong)
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