

12 FEBRUARY 24 APRIL

MAX HOOPER SCHNEIDER

Keep On Rotting In The Free World



Dis-Memorium (Morbid Eroticism) 2 (detail), 2021, copper galvanized bondage accessories. Courtesy of the artist, High Art, Paris/Arles, and Maureen Paley, London/Hove



Estuary Holobiont (detail), 2021, chromed aluminum machine, algae and marine plants, estuarine detritus. Courtesy of the artist, High Art, Paris/Arles, and Maureen Paley, London/Hove

For spring 2022, MO.CO. Panacée is organising the first solo exhibition to be held in a European institution of American artist Max Hooper Schneider.

Keep On Rotting In The Free World – a direct reference to the eponymous song by the death metal group Carcass – is a carte blanche to the artist, for which he takes over the entirety of MO.CO. Panacée's spaces to present a series of landscapes in varying states of transformation, or what he calls *forensic gardens*. If the garden, for Hooper Schneider, is a delineation in space and time whose essential subject is growth and decay, its forensic variant performs an autopsy of the transitional states in this (de)generative process. Walking through them invariably generates the following reflexions: what new ecosystems emerge once an environment passes its breaking point? What organisms can survive or be born from the living conditions that are native to this late capitalist period on the brink of exhaustion?

This new world, as imagined by Hooper Schneider, leaves little or no space for humans. Yet, far from deploring the toxic effects that the advent of the human species has cast on Earth (the Anthropocene), the artist strategizes with the creative potential of imminent ecological disaster, his vision feeding itself on the radically hopeful idea that matter does not die but only changes form.

MO.CO. Panacée's spaces transform into so many dreamscape fragments, each of which evoke a given moment in this non-quantifiable state of perimortem, that state of change that is the phantasmatic point between life and death, decay and regeneration. Its dynamism is as much suggestive of a promising beginning as it is of an ending or loss: nothing comes from nothing, and neither can nothing be reduced to a state of nothingness. *Keep On Rotting In The Free World* resembles a somnambulant dérive through improbable states of ecological climax, collapse and succession, whose non-human protagonists, belonging instead to the plant, mineral, animal, fungal and viral kingdoms and their recombinations, are at once its oracles and entrails.

The exhibition includes a dozen recent sculptures, some of them kinetic, that through their constituent materials that have been subjected to the ravages of time – decay, fragmentation, fossilisation, mechanisation,

changes in smell and colour – address the contradictions inherent to the confrontation with death and loss. In addition, MO.CO. Panacée presents a series of new works – sculptures, videos, immersive installations – realised in collaboration with local researchers and scientists during a research and production residency in Montpellier. Fossils, resin, vintage dolls, copper-plated BDSM paraphernalia, aluminium-cast cartridge belts, marine plants and algae, estuarine detritus, neon: Hooper Schneider takes to bits the hierarchy of the symbolic value of all material that he touches, of a civilisation in freefall. It may be that these forensic gardens resemble a graveyard, but one which disgorges new forms of life.

«Predictions of which species will survive planetary devastation are more speculative than certain. What is known, however, is that the inheritors of the planet will be those who, like the extremophiles, are able to flourish on the lush substrate of human rot accumulated over the centuries of willed destruction that many have characterized as the relations of man to nature.»

Max Hooper Schneider

Salon, Belgrade Biennale; 16th Istanbul Biennale; 13th Baltic Triennial (Vilnius, Lithuania, and Riga, Latvia); the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris; and the High Line (New York, NY).

Curators: Anya Harrison
Pauline Faure

Max Hooper Schneider

Born in 1982 in Los Angeles, USA.

Lives and works in Los Angeles, USA.

Trained in marine biology and landscape architecture, Hooper Schneider's practice sits on the crossroads between art and science, and often involves different collaborations with researchers, artisans, artists and makers in order to imagine new ecosystems where the artificial and organic, the human and non-human fuse, hybridise, infect and contaminate each other resulting in novel forms.

Solo exhibitions include High Art (Paris), the Hammer Museum and Jenny's (Los Angeles, California). His work has been presented in group exhibitions at the October

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MO.CO. MONTPELLIER CONTEMPORAIN

UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM IN THE WORLD :

ONE INSTITUTION, THREE PLACES

MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain is an arts ecosystem, ranging from arts training related activities to art collections. The model is unique to Montpellier and encompasses two exhibition centres and an arts school.



MO.CO. © Salem Mostefaoui pour PCA-STREAM



MO.CO. Panacée © Yohann Gozard

This horizontally structured institution is designed around the capacity for invention and creativity of its team to produce and share content with the widest range of publics.

The exhibitions' themes delve into contemporary cultural, political, and societal issues, offering an immersion into the artistic production of lesser-known territories (Russia, South America, Africa...). Both solo and group exhibitions at MO.CO. Panacée are an opportunity to exhibit artists never before seen in France, and to produce new works in close collaboration with local artisans and industries. MO.CO. Hôtel des collections' thematic exhibitions deploy a rich and varied education programme to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the artistic, political and social contexts that each exhibition uncovers. And each exhibition is organised around a public or private collection presented for the first time in France.

Central to MO.CO. is the synergy between the art school and the exhibition sites. The École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ESBA, Montpellier School of Fine Arts) benefits from talks and other interventions by artists, curators, and other professionals invited by La Panacée and the Hôtel des collections and, conversely, the two exhibition venues benefit from the students' presence and energy. This configuration allows MO.CO. ESBA's students to learn and develop at the heart of an ecosystem that is unique both in France and internationally, and for which MO.CO. ESBA has been awarded the HCERES (High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education) accreditation for 2020-2024.

In the framework of this curatorial project, MO.CO. and the Université Paul Valéry of Montpellier have jointly set up an international and interdisciplinary research centre for research on art collections to place Montpellier as the research headquarters for this topic.

Alongside its exhibitions, MO.CO. proposes a rich cultural programme whose objective is to make contemporary art accessible to as many people as possible (young children, school and university students, adults, disabled visitors, etc...). MO.CO.'s cultural mediators embody the institution's overriding ambition to encourage visitors, be they art lovers or those who are simply curious, to develop their critical thinking skills and sensitivity to contemporary art, and to converse about artworks and artists. The editorial policy also ensures that MO.CO.'s exhibitions are shared via publications and exhibition guides.



MO.CO. ESBA © Yohann Gozard

MO.CO. MONTPELLIER CONTEMPORAIN

Program 2022 / 2023

Spring 2022

TRANS(M)ISSIONS

With Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Jean-Luc Vilmouth, Mathilde Monnier
from 19.03 to 15.05.22
MO.CO. Hôtel des collections

Summer 2022

BERLINDE DE BRUYCKERE

from 18.06 to 02.10.22
MO.CO. Hôtel des collections

CONTRE-NATURE, contes et céramiques

from 20.05 to 04.09.22
MO.CO. Panacée

Fall 2022

BIENNALE ARTPRESS DES JEUNES ARTISTES

from 01.10.22 to 08.01.23
MO.CO. Panacée

MUSEES EN EXIL

from 05.11.22 to 12.02.23
MO.CO. Hôtel des collections

Spring 2023

IMMORTELLE

from 11.03 to 21.05.23
at MO.CO. Hôtel des collections (Generation X: from 1970 to the early 1980s) and at MO.CO. Panacée (Generation Y: from the mid-1980s)

Information

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Exhibition photos available in the press area of the website
www.moco.art
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