



Hommage to Christian Boltanski (1944-2021)

From Tuesday 12 October 2021

An itinerary between the Palace of Versailles,
the Louvre Museum and the Centre Pompidou,
with the Opéra Comique

**“The more we work, the more we disappear and the more
we become our work. I believe that artists wish
to become their work (...)” – Christian Boltanski**

To celebrate his work and commemorate Christian Boltanski, the Centre Pompidou, the Opéra Comique, the Palace of Versailles and the Louvre Museum have come together to pay homage to this immense artist, who passed away on July 14th. Designed as a pathway through Christian Boltanski's sensitive work, this homage invites the public to (re)discover several emblematic pieces from his body of work.

From a sound installation in the Royal Chapel at the Palace of Versailles and monumental archives in the Grand Gallery of the Louvre to an original presentation of works at the Centre Pompidou, everyone is invited to stroll through the “impossible life of Christian Boltanski”, all the way to the underground car park of the Centre Pompidou where *Fosse*, his last operatic experiment, created in 2020, will again be presented by the Opéra Comique.

Joined together for the first time, the four institutions thus wished to invite the public to remember. To remember, as the artist always endeavoured to do, in order to combat finitude and forgetting, reconstituting the lives of beings with all their “small memories” in order to sketch a fragile and disturbing form of the collective memory of humanity.



Christian Boltanski, *Entre-temps*, 2003
Video projection, black and white, 1min. 37 sec., silent, video projector, rope curtain,
Courtesy Christian Boltanski studio and Marian Goodman Gallery
© Adagp, Paris, 2021 / Photo © Kazuo Fukunaga

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Fosse (2020)

**An Opera by Christian Boltanski,
Jean Kalman and Franck Krawczyk,
Commissioned by the Opéra Comique,
in the car park of the Centre Pompidou
Tuesday 12 October 2021, from 6.00 pm**

Free admission upon reservation at [centrepompidou.fr](https://www.centrepompidou.fr)

Produced by the Opéra Comique in January 2020 in the car park of the Centre Pompidou as a conclusion to the retrospective "Faire son temps" (Life in the Making), *Fosse* is a singular project that Christian Boltanski wished to act as a poetic link between the visible and perceptible world.

As a prelude to this homage, Annette Messager wished to recreate this experience of a total art outside of time, plunging visitors into the heart of a mysterious world with Orphic connotations.

Imagined with composer Franck Krawczyk and light creator Jean Kalman, *Fosse* is an opera with no ending or beginning where everyone can pick up the thread of a story.

Lights, errant souls, musicians and actors bring to life this opera of a new kind in which the movements of the public are also part of the work, transforming the car park of the Centre Pompidou into a Dantean cave that resounds to the voice of soprano Karen Vourc'h, accompanied by twenty-eight choir singers of the Accentus ensemble, the music of thirteen cellos, including that of Sonia Wieder-Atherton, six pianos, percussion and electric guitar in an artistic coordination orchestrated by Plein Jour.



With the support of Marian Goodman Gallery

Fosse, January 2020
Photo © Stefan Brion pour l'Opéra Comique

L'Horloge parlante (The Speaking Clock) (2003)

Palace of Versailles

Royal Chapel

From 12 October to 6 November 2021

L'Horloge parlante (The Speaking Clock) is a sound opus first imagined in 2003 and given permanent form in 2009 for the crypt of Salzburg Cathedral (Austria). *L'Horloge parlante* is here reactivated for the first time in the Royal Chapel of the Palace of Versailles, reopened for the occasion after an impressive three-year renovation.

From the vault to the altar, *L'Horloge parlante* sounds the austere echo of a voice counting out the hours, the minutes and seconds, reminding us of the ineluctable passage of time.

"It's a parable. To be human is to fight against God – or chance, depending on the name you give it – but there is one domain where we will always lose: time" – C.B.



La Chapelle Royale © Thomas Garnier

Les Archives de Christian Boltanski, 1965-1988 (1989)

Louvre Museum

Grande Galerie, Denon Wing, 1st floor

From 13 October 2021 to 10 January 2022

In the context of the homage to Christian Boltanski, from 13 October 2021 to 10 January 2022 the Louvre Museum is exhibiting the installation entitled *Les Archives de Christian Boltanski 1965-1988*, from the collections of the Musée national d'art moderne / Centre Pompidou. As early as 1989 Christian Boltanski used this monumental piece consisting of more than 600 rusty biscuit boxes containing nearly two million photographs and documents to constitute his own memorial, illustrating the project of his life. The work will be presented to the public in the Grande Galerie, one of the most prestigious and emblematic spaces in the Louvre.

This is the Louvre Museum's third presentation of works by Christian Boltanski. The first was on the occasion of the exhibition "The Empire of Time. Myths and Creations" (14 April – 10 July 2000). He had elaborated a sort of archaeology of the present by bringing together photographs of objects lost by visitors in the rooms of the museum. The second time, Christian Boltanski was one of eleven contemporary artists to feature among the permanent collections of the museum in the framework of the first "Counterpoint. Contemporary art in the Louvre" (12 November 2004 – 10 February 2005).

True to his approach which consists in finding and preserving the traces of a vanished past in a form of personal archaeology, Christian Boltanski notably used the Saint Louis room in the heart of the medieval Louvre to present a reconstitution of objects that once belonged to him, contrasting them with the commonplace everyday objects found in the foundations of the Louvre Palace. He thus questioned the cycle of time, how memory functions, and posed the question of reproduction.

"Preserving oneself completely, keeping a trace of every instant, every object that engaged with us, everything we said and was said around us." – C.B.



Les Archives de Christian Boltanski, 1965-1988, 1989
Metal, lamps, electric wires, black and white and colour photographs, paper
Centre pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, dist. Rmn-GP
© Adagg, Paris, 2021 / Photo © Philippe Migeat

La Vie impossible de Christian Boltanski (*The Impossible Life of Christian Boltanski*)

An all-new presentation of the artist's works
Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne
Contemporary collection
Rooms 17 to 19, Level 4
From 13 October 2021 to 13 April 2022

The Centre Pompidou is dedicating three rooms of the contemporary collection of the National Museum of Modern Art to "The Impossible Life of Christian Boltanski" – the title of the artist's first film in 1968, and his first monographic exhibition the same year.

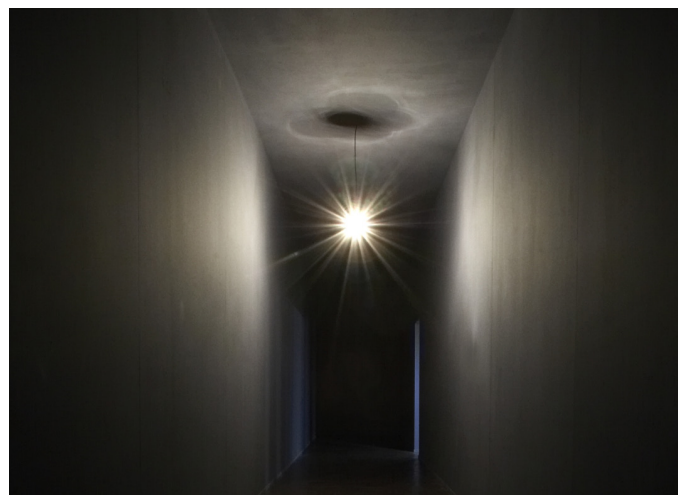
Very early on in his work, Christian Boltanski began to collect traces of his own and everyone else's life. These traces take the form of albums, archives, monuments, sound and visual evocations by means of which the artist expressed the human determination to master death and time.

The same is true of *La Vie impossible de C.B.*, a piece dating from 2001, exhibited on the occasion of this homage. An installation consisting of twenty backlit windows containing photographs and documents as personal as they are pathetic, this piece is part of the artist's long-term attempt at an autobiography.

It echoes the photographs, handwritten texts and other small, sculpted and modelled objects, carefully preserved by the artist in 1972 in *Les Vitrines de références*, also presented here, like an impossible archaeology of his childhood.

Lastly, thanks to the exceptional loan from the Antoine de Galbert Collection, this presentation concludes with the artist's heart, in the Centre Pompidou, the scene of the first and last Christian Boltanski retrospective. *Cœur* is a device created in 2005 that enables a recording of the beating of the artist's heart to be linked to a bulb that goes on and off in accordance with the heartbeats, thus blurring the reality between presence and absence.

"Yes, it's my heart, but that's not important" – C.B.



La Vie impossible de C.B., 2001
Wood, metal grid, fluorescent tubes, electric wires, paper, photographs
Centre pompidou Collection, Musée national d'art moderne, dist. Rmn-GP
© Adagg, Paris, 2021 / Photo © Philippe Migeat

Cœur, 2005
Bulb, amplifiers, case for transforming the sound of the heartbeats
into a flickering light, recordings
Antoine de Galbert Collection, Paris, Courtesy Christian Boltanski
© Adagg, Paris, 2021 / Photo © Wolfgang Günzel



Practical information

Fosse (2020)

An Opera by Christian Boltanski,
Jean Kalman and Franck Krawczyk,
Commissioned by the Opéra Comique,
in the car park of the Centre Pompidou, Forum-1
Tuesday 12 October 2021, from 6.00 pm
A continuous show in cycles of 50 minutes,
Doors close at 10.00 pm

Free admission, upon reservation only on centrepompidou.fr
Entrance via the piazza on presentation of a European health pass for
everyone aged 12 and over.

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L'Horloge parlante (2009)

Palace of Versailles
Royal Chapel
From 12 October to 6 November 2021

The Palace of Versailles is open every day except Mondays.
By reservation only on chateauversailles.fr, even for free admission.
Free for European citizens under 26 years of age. Admission subject to
presentation of a European health pass for everyone aged 12 and over.

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Les Archives de Christian Boltanski, 1965-1988 (1989)

Louvre Museum
Grande Galerie, Denon Wing, 1st floor
From Wednesday 13 October 2021 to Monday 10 January 2022

The Louvre Museum is open from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm, except Tuesdays.
Time slots must be reserved on louvre.fr, even for free admission.
Free for European citizens under 26 years of age. Admission subject to
presentation of a European health pass for everyone aged 12 and over.

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La Vie impossible de Christian Boltanski

An all-new presentation of the artist's works
Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne
Contemporary collection
Rooms 17 to 19, level 4
From 13 October 2021 to 13 April 2022

The Centre Pompidou is open every day from 11.00 am to 9.00 pm, except
Tuesdays. Time slots must be reserved on centrepompidou.fr, even for free
admission. Free for European citizens under 26 years of age. Admission
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