

ARTIST'S STATEMENT
APPROPRIATION OF A TERRITORY

I am principally interested in the environment, which I appropriate through my artistic process. It begins with me literally trampling over a territory in my own particular way. This implies that I experience a place from the perspective of an artist that others - animals, building and land owners, sports enthusiasts, hikers and pedestrians, experience in diverse other ways.

Slow life or slow art

As an example, the central focal point of my work is a yellow birch tree that grows underneath a large rock. The latter is suspended seven feet above the ground with the aid of a wooden structure held in place with guy ropes. The tree gradually adapts to an inhabitable situation, and in thirty years, will be incorporated into the rock. Eventually, the tree will be entirely supported by the rock with its strong, mature branches, the wooden structure having long ago disappeared. What remains is a natural, yet remarkable, phenomenon. Essentially I would have created a forest marker and defined a location that previously had no point of reference. I would have made the most of an intrinsically natural ability to adapt. The process unravels on a timescale that reflects the patient, slow growth of a tree rather than the frenetic pace of our current era.

Re-occurring symbols of Nordicity

Whether they attempt to imitate, appropriate or adapt to nature, my interventions are essentially defined and inspired by an environmental context as it relates to the forest or to nordicity. I observe and capture clues and signs within this context as they relate to my work, then synthesize the information in order to deduct relevant symbols. Trees and ice are hence often present in my work.

From the perception of territory to the creation of work

The artistic process described above is essentially situated and driven by the personal interpretations and experiences of the viewer, who establishes his own strategies to understand the work and orientate himself around it. My work allows the viewer to immerse himself within a particular environment and to enter into a ritual that stimulates his perception of the territory, thereby implicating him in the creation of the artwork.

Frédéric Saia 2012
fredericsaia.org