Yona Friedman

Born in 1923 in Hungary (HU). Lives and works in Paris (FR)
Yona Friedman: Architecture improvisée
Solo show
In collaboration with the Centre Georges-Pompidou and the Centre national édition art image
From March 18th to April 15th

The exhibition “Architecture improvisée” brings together a series of recent works by Yona Friedman embodying most of the founding concepts of the work he has been developing since the 1950s around the notion of mobile architecture. This notion is the basis of a universal theory where habitat and urban planning must be considered on the one hand directly by their users and on the other hand by integrating the unpredictability of the user’s future behaviour.

First of all, it is an exceptional set of fifteen Slide Shows that Yona Friedman exhibits for the first time on the walls of a gallery. Since the 1970s, after the Ministry of Culture entrusted him with a mission on teaching architecture at school, Yona Friedman uses drawing and comics to explain his thinking about architecture, urbanism and public life. Linked to two of his most important recent works, Vous avez un chien, c’est lui qui vous a choisi.e (2014) and L’Humain expliqué aux extraterrestres (2016), the Slide Shows question as well architectural (Architecture without building, Sculpting the Void, etc.), urban and social (Animal Society, The World According to Balkis, Elections, Social Changes) or philosophical matters.

In comparison with this graphic ensemble, the exhibition brings together five “improvised” models whose production process is documented by a film made by Jean-Baptiste Decavèle. Two models relate to his famous principle “Space City”, imagined in 1959, which still nourishes the imagination of many contemporary artists and architects. Space City is a spacial structure raised on stilts, which can span non-building areas or even existing cities. “This technique allows a new development of city planning: that of the three-dimensional city. It is a question of multiplying the original surface of the city by means of elevated plans” (Friedman). Buildings must "touch the ground in a minimum area; be demountable and movable; be transformed at will by the inhabitant”. On the open grid are added the individual dwellings which occupy only half of the space, the "fills" having to alternate with the "voids". The set therefore has a variable rhythm, depending on the choices of the inhabitants. "The individual force of expression will thus become a random composition (…) and the city becomes what it has always been: a theatre of everyday life” (Friedman).

The model Froissée (2017) (Creased), which Yona Friedman improvised during the installation of the exhibition, replay the same named technique experimented for the first time at the Universal Exhibition of Osaka in 1970. This gesture, less architectural than artistic and handmade, is inspired by organic models (trees, clouds, self-developing organisms) while referring to automatic writing. More recently, Yona Friedman realized in 2017 an immense 500 m2 reticular installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Lyon.

Finally, the two models made with copper rings or Indian coloured bracelets belong to the Space Chains series that Yona Friedman also developed in the early 1960s. Inspired by irregular protein structures, these modular structures can grow infinitely, according to a very flexible protocol of improvisation. Several Space Chains were built at scale 1, as was the Summer Pavilion commissioned by the Serpentine Gallery last year to Yona Friedman for the Kensington Gardens, which has since been installed in front of Windsor Castle.

It is also with this technique of Space Chains that Yona Friedman took part in the last Venice Biennial of Architecture where he realized a Mountain with coloured plastic hola-hoops which, after having sail on the canals of the lakeside town, is now installed in front of the Venice Academy of Architecture. Yona Friedman used these same material and protocol at the gallery’s cabinet to build an improvised architecture, subject to a game of shadow and light that it already had constructed at the Pavilion of the Arsenal in Venice.
Yona Friedman I News

___ Loop, Barcelona (ES)

Les contes africains
May 25th - 27th 2017

The gallery Jérôme Poggi is pleased to present for the first time Yona Friedman at LOOP Barcelona. Les contes africains (African Tales) is a series of ten films produced by Yona Friedman and his wife Denise Charvein between 1960 and 1963. The films are made from blocks of engraved wood which are equally assembled in order to create different scenes. The soundtrack chosen by Friedman comes from UNESCO’s African Music Funds and each film is inspired by an ancestral tale. Distributed in Africa by the ethnologist and film-maker Jean Rouch, these films have been a great success. Lost until 2007, Les contes africains were restored with the help of Cneai (Centre National Edition Art Image).

___ MAXXI, Roma (IT)

Mobile architecture

The exhibition was created in collaboration with the Shanghai Power Station of Art and will question the intense and sometimes complex relationships between the utopian dimension of design and its realization, through the work of Yona Friedman. The theory of "mobile architecture", devised by Friedman in the 1950s, questions the modernist viewpoint through which inhabitants must adapt to buildings, not the other way round. The exhibition will explore improvisation as a possible feature of architecture, through drawings, sculptures and installations.
SUMMARY

ICONOSTASE

MODELS

Ville spatiale #1
Ville spatiale #2
Froissée
Space Chains #1
Space Chains #2

SLIDE SHOWS

Architecture is not sculpture
L’art du vide
Sculpting in the void
Architecture

SLIDE SHOWS (EXTRACTS)

Cités virtuelles
Architecture without building
Changements sociaux
Élections
L’univers des parasites
Le piège de la communication
Cosmologie canine
Le monde selon Balkis
Animal Society
The Universe with no dimensions
YONA FRIEDMAN

Iconostase, 2016
Mixed media
Variable dimensions
Unique piece
MODELS
Ville spatiale #1, 2016
Mixed media
48 x 33,5 x 14 cm
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Ville spatiale #2, 2016
Mixed media
40 x 52 x 11 cm
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Froissée, 2017
Mixed media
46.5 x 32 x 45 cm
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Space Chains #1, 2016
Mixed media
113 x 80 x 55 cm
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Space Chains #2, 2016
Mixed media
43 x 38 x 48 cm
Unique piece
SLIDE SHOWS
YONA FRIEDMAN

Architecture is not sculpture, 2016
Slide show of 5 pictures
Ink on paper
29,7 x 21 cm each
Unique piece
ARCHITECTURE IS NOT SIMPLY SCULPTURE

BESIDE ITS OUTSIDE SHAPE A SORT OF A "SCULPTURE OF VOID"

IN MOST MAINSTREAM ARCHITECTURE THE INSIDE IS SIMPLY THE NEGATIVE OF THE OUTSIDE
AND, EVEN IF IT IS NOT MORE THAN THE NEGATIVE OF THE OUTSIDE YOU FEEL IT DIFFERENT.
AS FOR "THE VILLE SPATIALE"

YONA CAN LOOK AT AS A SCULPTURE

THE INSIDE IS THE OUTSIDE

BUT AS WELL AS AN INSIDE OF A LABYRINTHE

WE HAVE TO LEARN THAT DOUBLE VIEW

THAN IT LOOKS WHEN YOU MUST IT

FOR EXAMPLE A GLOVE LOOKS DIFFERENT ON THE HAND

THE OUTSIDE IS NOT SYMMETRIC TO THE INSIDE
YONA FRIEDMAN

L’art du vide, 2016
Slide show of 4 pictures
Ink on paper
29.7 x 21 cm each
Unique piece
Exposition de Yona Friedman

L'architecture est, d'abord, sociale.

Elle est aussi artisanale.

On peut la considérer comme une des beaux arts.

Beaucoup pensent que l'architecture est simple sculpture.

Mais, même à l'extérieur, l'espace autour du bâtiment compte.

En oubliant l'espace à l'intérieur.

Négliger ces simples facts a appauvri l'architecture comme art.
À côté des formes classiques architecturales

Il y a de nouvelles possibilités

L'espace architecturale enchevêtré, de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur.
Sculpting in the void, 2016
Slide show of 5 pictures
Ink on paper
29.7 x 21 cm each
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

ARCHITECTURE IS FIRST OF ALL SOCIAL

IT IS THE SAME TIME SCULPTURE

IT UNIFIES OR SEPARATES SOCIAL TERRITORIES

BUT A SCULPTURE WHICH HAS AN INSIDE

THERE ARE CASES WHERE OUTSIDE AND INSIDE ARE THE SAME

IT IS ALSO INSIDE

INTERPENETRATING ARCHITECTURAL SPACE IS DIFFERENT

IT OPERATES WITH “VOIDS”
YONA FRIEDMAN

Exhibition review | YONA FRIEDMAN

Architecture as social agent attributes space, but architecture can also act as an art. But it can operate only with consentment of the other. That of sculpting the void.

What we call "architectural space" is not simply "the object". Is the "void" articulated by objects? But the object envelopes in void.
YONA FRIEDMAN

Architecture, 2016
Slide show of 4 pictures
Ink on paper
29.7 x 21 cm each
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

ARCHITECTURE AS I UNDERSTAND IT IS A GENERAL METHOD OF ORGANISATION.

ARCHITECTURE RELATES TO PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY.

ASSEMBLY OF PARTS INTO A MEANINGFUL WHOLE.

TO SOCIETY, ECONOMY, ECOLOGY AND EVEN TO ARTS.

ALL THESE FIELDS ORGANISE HETEROGENEOUS PARTS.

THEY CONSIST OF PARTS LIVING AND CHANGING IN TIME.

CONNECTING THEM WITHOUT GETTING DIS-ASSEMBLED.
ALL ARCHITECTURES FOLLOW SOME RULES IN COMMON

ALL OCCUPY SPACE AND TIME

ALL CREATE NETWORKS FOR FLEX

ALL ARE IN NEED OF A SUPPORTING STRUCTURE
SLIDE SHOWS
(EXTRACTS)
YONA FRIEDMAN

Cités virtuelles, 2016
Slide show of 15 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29,7 cm each
Unique piece

IT IS NOT ONLY THE CITY-SCAPE THAT CHANGES

A PARCEL THAT CONTAINS 20 MILLION PEOPLE

HANDLE WITH CARE CUSTOMS

BUT ALSO THE IDEA ABOUT THE CITY:
IT IS NOT ANYMORE A PACKING FOR PEOPLE
YONA FRIEDMAN

Architecture without building, 2016
Slide show of 9 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Exhibition review

YONA FRIEDMAN

Changements sociaux, 2016
Slide show of 9 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Unique piece

IL N’Y A PAS DE RÈGLES AUX CHANGEMENTS SOCIAUX
Élections, 2016
Slide show of 10 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29,7 cm each
Unique piece
L’univers des parasites, 2016
Slide show of 7 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Le piège de la communication, 2016
Slide show of 7 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Cosmologie canine, 2016
Slide show of 11 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Unique piece
Le monde selon Balkis, 2016
Slide show of 10 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Unique piece
Animal Society, 2016
Slide show of 14 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
YONA FRIEDMAN

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The Universe with no dimensions, 2016
Slide show of 16 pictures
Ink on paper
21 x 29.7 cm each
Unique piece
YONA FRIEDMAN

Biography

Yona Friedman (born in 1923) is a Hungarian-born French architect

He first studied architecture at the University of Technology and Economics in Budapest, then at the Technion of Haïfa, Israël, where he worked as an architect from 1949 to 1957. Since his early projects on housing, he tried to step away from the responsibility for designing the projects by delegating it to their future inhabitants, a procedure he calls "self-planning". In 1953, in response to postwar demographic problems and the challenges of the reconstruction period, he started to conceive spatial structures on stilts based on "mobile architecture"'s principles (1958): 1) to touch the ground in a minimum area; 2) to be demountable and movable; 3) to be transformable at will by inhabitants. These structures with indeterminate characteristics enable him to develop the principles of the "spatial city", a highly innovative urban organization based on a nomadic way of life. Yona Friedman says about the indeterminacy of his structures: "The building is mobile in the sense that any mode of use by the user or a group must be possible or practicable."

At the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) in 1956, he questioned the postulates of modernist architecture, which led him to co-found the Mobile Architecture Study Group (GEAM), in 1958, and then in 1965 the International Group of Prospective Architecture (GIAP). Yona Friedman has achieved very few buildings, including the Bergson High School in Angers in 1979, a real "self-planning" experience developed together with the education staff; as well as the Museum of Simple Technology in Madras, India, in 1987, made from local materials such as bamboo.

Yona Friedman is also the author of numerous books (including comics and didactic books for Unesco), among them Realisable Utopias, a book in which he exposes his main lines of thinking and architectural production. His publications and teaching have had a notable influence on many architects from the seventies to the present day, especially those who have worked on projects of an experimental nature, such as Archigram, transforming together buildings and lifestyles related thereto.

But Yona Friedman has also been appreciated for many years in the field of contemporary art for the multitude of project drawings, all kind of representations in plan, in section or in elevation, but also for his models marked by special artistic touches (forms of intent, circulation, projection ratios, sculptural and volumetric qualities, etc.) and an aesthetic of remarkable mobility.