

I borrowed this title, whose poetic qualities resonated intimately with the project. It was also a way of bringing the album back to its place of origin. The photographs I took are more about fragments, details, materiality, traces of plants than a description of the album. In general, I like to be surrounded by books, which certainly led me to the Carthusian Library. The link that unites or connects the books we choose is precise and subtle, but sometimes takes time to become apparent. I often buy a book but open it, browse through it or read it much later, I am always surprised by this moment which often takes the form of an obviousness, as if there was a latency inherent in the encounter with each book.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Liget Carthusian Monastery

Street D 760
37460 Chemillé-Sur-Indrois
+(0)33 2 47 92 60 02
— www.lachartreuseduliget.com

Open every day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Full price: 2 euros

Guided tour by reservation : 5 euros per person

Free : under 12



Flash me to access the digital map

« BOOK OF THE PLANTS » (2020)

BENOÎT FOUGEIROL

Exhibition from 19 May to 19 September
2021 at **Liget Carthusian Monastery.**

#habiterlelieu

#livinginthelieu

Curator : **Anne-Laure Chamboissier**

— www.champrojects.com

Curiously, no one was shocked by the implausibility of suddenly raising the first weed to the rank of an artistic motif

— Aloïs Riegl.-

For the Carthusian monks, « living » meant first of all appropriating a territory, delimiting it and managing it so that it would become their living space, capable of providing the isolation necessary to devote themselves to their faith but also of being able to meet the subsistence needs of a monastic establishment. The carthusian monastery is no exception to the rule and its location in a clearing in the forest of Loches brings together the qualities essential to the creation of the « **Carthusian Desert** ». From the horizon of the forest to the floral ornamentation of the manuscripts illuminated by the copyist monks, botany is a thread that links the territory to knowledge and its transmission, materialised in the books of the Liget library, now preserved in Loches. From this collection, the « **Book of Plants** » will serve as a guide to observe the site, reawakening its history and revealing through photography a repertoire of forms between nature, architecture and writing, in order to question its analogies and discrepancies.

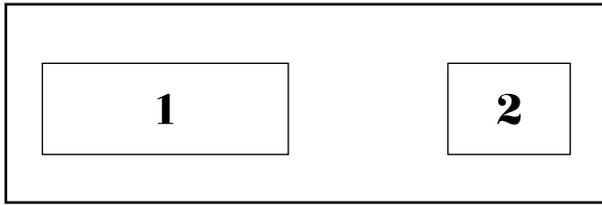
With the support of **Indre-et-Loire Departmental council**

BENOÎT FOUGEIROL (1962), photographer and artist, Benoît Fougeirol lives and works in Paris. His approach, both topographical and poetic, captures silent and unsuspected riches, between nature and asphalt. He published « **Autour / Around** » in 2010 by vmcf and « **Botanic** » in 2013 by Temple. Recently his work has focused on so-called « sensitive » urban areas. Sensitive no doubt because they are as itchy for the social body as they are for the territories and lives. He has undertaken a methodical inventory of the places and landscapes proposed by these territories covered by clichés that their reality overflows or denies. The project (Zus) was published in 2017 as an artist's book by X Artist's Books, and was awarded the MAD ADAGP prize in 2018.

« LIVING IN THE PLACE »

Gathered together by **Anne-Laure Chamboissier**, artistic curator, about ten artists were invited to live in places* in Touraine from spring to autumn 2021 following a creative residency. The theme « **Living in the place** » takes on its full meaning at a time when everyone is reviewing their lifestyles and the spaces that surround them. The artists reinterrogate what constitutes these places, whether through the prism of their history, their architecture or their function. These works draw a new and sensitive cartography of the territory through their singular view of these places.

***Castle of Azay Le Rideau :** Anne-Laure Sacriste, **Castle of Montrésor :** Valérie Sonnier, **Collegiale of Buéil-en-Touraine :** Cécile Le Talec, **Castle of Gizeux :** Guillaume Constantin, **Castle of Valmer :** Charles le Hyaric, **Castle of Champchevrier :** Diego Movilla, **Priory of St Cosme :** Natalia Jaime Cortez, **Castle of Saché :** Léa Bismuth et Nicolas Boulard, **La Devinière :** Jean-François Guillo et Didier Galas, **Domaine of Candé-Monts :** Eric Mézan, **ecoMuseum of the Véron :** Florent Lamouroux.



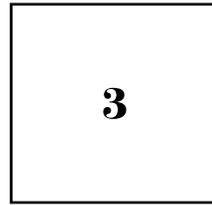
1/ *Livre des Plentes*, 2021, Color silver print

2/ *Untilted* 2021, black & white photographic paper

Interview between
Benoit Fougeirol
and **Anne-Laure Chamboissier**

You have been invited to realize a project in situ at the Carthusian monastery of Liget. What made you interested in this place ?

BF/ My first encounter with this place was through a black and white photograph that you gave me, an architectural view of the remains of the Carthusian church. This roofless building, altered by time and slightly buried in the site, made a strong impression on me. The top of the walls were strewn with wild plants and the whole was revealed in the image as a fantastic architecture. I saw this photograph as a gateway, an opening into a place that resonates with its geography, time and history.



3/ *Cross the forest to the edge*, 2021, Slideshow 5'28"

You have been in residence there for several periods, how did these times feed your project ?

BF/ The stays at the Chartreuse were privileged moments. To be able to immerse oneself in a territory chosen by monks in the 12th century to establish their place of life and meditation is not nothing. The topography, which stretches from the hollow of a valley to the edge of the forest of Loches, is a quiet and inspiring situation. A residence is also an encounter with guests who embody, through shared moments, past history and the present, a great gap between genealogy and contemporary issues. This context feeds the project in its own way and is associated with the journey, the discovery of the site, which for my part was accompanied by a slow photographic exploration. These different stays also gave me the chance to discover the collection of old books in the Loches library where the manuscripts

of the Liget monks are kept. The meeting with this place dedicated to conservation was again a very special moment. The conservator facilitated the research, shared her knowledge and allowed me to work on site in complete trust.

For several years in your work, you like to survey multiple geographical/topographical territories in an extremely methodical way. Recently, you have concentrated on urban areas, known as « sensitive ». The Carthusian monastery is the antithesis of this.

In which way did you take possession of it? It seems to me that once again you are deploying a form of photographic inventory of a place, where the reality of the subject and the poetics are mixed in your pictures ?

BF/ Even if they seem antinomic, large urban complexes and a heritage site such as the Carthusian monastery share the notion of living, which is at the heart of your project. There are also common questions that run through these territories, linked to memory, to the « muted » history of the places, to the traces that emerge from the architecture and its alteration. For sensitive urban areas, the political dimension of the project is carried by the situation of exclusion experienced by the inhabitants. From the confrontation of the pictures with the administrative documents, questions related to the point of view and representation emerged. At the Carthusian monastery, living guided me through the exploration of the ancient collection of the copyist monks of the Liget, to the discovery of an eighteenth-century herbarium made by one of the monks. The wild plants standing on top of the church walls found an echo there that would direct my research towards the traces of ornamentation and writing present in the manuscripts but also in the walls and the elements that make up the site, a kind of archaeology to archive forms and relationships of forms. In one context as in the other, in the (Zus) or at the Carthusian monastery, it seems to me that I work with the same distance to things, a distance that

could imply that it is not so much the thing looked at as the way of looking that matters. The gap you mention between the reality of the subject and the poetics is part of this work.

By the nature of the works you give us to see, are you not rather looking for what this monastic place was, the hidden traces that still reside there, by the evocation rather than the prosaic illustration of what this place has become ?

BF/ The memory of a place summons the past and questions our relationship with reality when we interpret its traces, when we make choices that create meaning through analogies, gaps or breaks. At the Carthusian monastery of the Liget, the monks experienced a close relationship between nature and writing.

Nature provided protection and sustenance, a living environment favourable to the development of the « **Cartusian Desert** », while writing maintained a link to knowledge in its most universal dimension, from theology, sciences, and history. Whether they are archived in the pages of a manuscript or appear in the topography of the place, the traces refer to experiences. The project travels with plants, through ornamentation, architecture and writing.

Why did you choose the title « Book of Plants » ? What justifies the way you present it ? And how tenuous is your relationship with the book object in general ?

BF/ Approaching the territory through questions related to botany is recurrent in my work, and it has influenced my view since the first encounter with the black and white image I mentioned. I had no idea that the history of the Carthusian monastery would make it possible to discover a herbarium. It is a unique and fragile work, of great simplicity, which touched me deeply. A few orthographical errors are repeated throughout the determinations, the most remarkable of which is the one that crept into the title of this Book « **Livre des plentes** ».