Stalker
Experimenting the Zone

PRESS KIT / Useful informations

Maison d’Ailleurs
Museum of science fiction, utopia and extraordinary journeys
Piazza Pestalozzi 14
P.O. Box 945
CH – 1401 Yverdon-les-Bains
T. : + 41 24 425 64 38
@ : www.ailleurs.ch

Exhibition opens from
September 15, 2013 to March 02, 2014
Tu-Fr 2pm-6pm, Sa-Su 11am-6pm

Press conference
Thursday, September 12, 2013, at 10:30am

Opening ceremony
Saturday, September 14, 2013, from 4pm
SUMMARY

Project abstract p. 3

The temporary exhibition: “Stalker | Experimenting the Zone”
Exhibition, Thematic booklet, Mediation program p. 4

Semi-permanent exhibitions: “Memories from the Future” and “Jules Verne Space”
Concept, “Memories from the Future”, “Jules Verne Space” p. 6

Partners p. 7
PROJECT ABSTRACT

In the beginning, in 1972 to be accurate, an amazing science fiction novel was published: *Roadside Picnic*, co-written by Arkadi and Boris Strougatski (1925-1991, 1933-2012), two Russian brothers. Basically, the novel is about the repeatedly wanderings of a person in the Zone – a mysterious place that the visits of aliens make dangerous –, in order to collect objects left by those visitors from a world of which we know nothing. This story is mostly interpreted as a metaphor of the process of knowledge acquisition or rather, as one of the limits of that same process.

The film *Stalker* by Andreï Tarkovski (1932-1986) is released in 1979; it is based on the book of the Strougatski brothers. The film is a worldwide masterpiece and an important achievement of the famous Russian film director. Moreover, *Stalker* is also associated with the disaster of Chernobyl, i.e. it points out to persons who illegally cross forbidden zones in the surrounding of the damaged plant, looking for metallic remains. More generally, a global definition could be given to all those meanings of the word: a “Stalker” is a smuggler who accompanies bold visitors through the Zone, a forbidden and enigmatic place, which witnesses an unprecedented cataclysm.

To pay tribute to Andreï Tarkovski, on his 80th Birthday Anniversary, the Maison d’Ailleurs is organizing an ambitious and original exhibition co-produced by the Heig-vd (“Haute Ecole d’Ingénierie et de Gestion du Canton de Vaud”): *Stalker | Experimenting the Zone*. This partnership is the first of its kind in the Swiss-French cultural area. Another unprecedented event will be the personal presence of Rashit Safiullin, the film scenographer and one of Tarkovski’s friends, who will transform a complete floor of the Museum into a fascinating strange Zone. This will allow the visitors of the Museum to dive into this realm, to discover and to play with the interactive devices designed by the engineers of the Heig-vd, thus reproducing the atmosphere of the film. Doing so, the visitors would become the actors of this exhibition, which will be considered as an extension of a novel – which later became a film –, and one of the most terrifying events of the last century.
THE TEMPORARY EXHIBITION:  
“STALKER | EXPERIMENTING THE ZONE” 

15.09.2013 – 02.03.2014

THE EXHIBITION

The film by Tarkovski tells the story on how, twenty years after the events that lead to the inexplicable outbreak of the Zone, a Stalker brings in two clients, a scientific and a writer: the hint to science fiction, and hence to the Strougatski brothers is obvious. In our actual world, a generation has also passed since the sadly remembered explosion of Chernobyl’s nuclear reactor four. People visiting Pripiat’s zone today, discover a post-apocalyptic universe, strangely analogous to the one described in the movie, cluttered with rusty vehicles, abandoned buildings; a universe where nature regained all its rights.

In order to build up a stimulating dialogue between the visitors of the Museum and a seemingly historical context, the Stalker | Experimenting the Zone exhibition strives to favor the dialogue and interaction with the visitor. In that respect, many multimedia installations have been put up by the Heig-vd: the “Bottom-Less Well”, the “Fire on Water”, the “Stray Dog”, the “Telekinesis Table” and the “Room of the Desires” (based upon an original idea of Alexandra Kaourova). All the preceding media will allow the visitors to immerse into the atmosphere of the movie and to live through a unique experience.

The exhibition displays some exceptionally rich works of art:
- The sketches, paintings and drawings from Rashit Safiullin, which were used in the carrying out of the scenography of the movie.
- Pictures of Andreï Tarkovski taken during the making of Stalker. They have never been exhibited in Switzerland before, most of them coming from the Russian archives.
- Interactive devices developed by the engineers of the Heig-vd.
- Projections of films and documentaries related to Stalker and the work of Safiullin.

More than thirty years after the release of Stalker, this exhibition shows that this film still fascinates. Its strange aesthetics, close to the arte povera, and the decision to project on cinema screens a science fiction novel without resorting to special effects or to the typical outfits of the genre, have struck not only film-lovers and artists, but also the general public. In this respect, it is an immense and unique opportunity for the Maison d’Ailleurs to invite Rashit Safiullin – the decorator of Stalker –, in order to build up the scenography of the first exhibition dedicated to this cult film. The structure of the exhibition and the quality of the works presented, whereas provided by the Museum’s exceptional collections or by external sources, all give tribute to Tarkovski’s artistic talents of genius. Structure and quality will succeed in raising, by the use of interactivity, the fundamental questionings, which are at the core of this wave of modern science fiction.
THE THEMATIC BOOKLET
In order to pursue its goal of popularizing the role of science fiction in today's world, the Maison d’Ailleurs decided to start a new collection called “Les Collections de la Maison d’Ailleurs”, and edited by ActuSF. Each exhibition set up by the Museum will give birth to one of these booklets. These, in turn, will offer many different points of view on the thematic of the exhibition which will be planned then and, added to that, a selection of exceptional pictures.

The first issue of the booklet, which will be available as of September 14 2013, is based on the post-apocalyptic thematic, i.e. the aesthetical tradition in which Strougatski’s novel and Tarkovski’s film both fit. The approach followed by this thematic is through short essays, all of them illustrated by the collections of the Maison d’Ailleurs. These collections are the same that the ones presented in the semi-permanent space Memories from the Future.

List of contents:
- “Narrate The Devastating Zones...”, by Marc Atallah
- “Of Ants And Zones”, by Francis Valéry
- “It Was Indeed A Nice Apocalypses...!”, by Francis Valéry
- “Boum, When The Cinema Makes Boum”, by Frédéric Maire
- “Stalker | Experimenting the Zone”, by Alexandra Kaourova and Eugene

Technical specifications:
12x17,5 cm - soft cover
96 colored pages – 40 illustrations
CHF 9.---

MEDIATION PROGRAM
A wide variety of activities are scheduled during the total duration of the exhibition. They are intended to cover the different interests of the public of the Maison d’Ailleurs. Here are but a few examples:

- A theater play put together by the International Center of Lomonosov State University of Moscow, based on a novel from the Strougatski brothers.
- A lot of workshops for children on the thematic of ecology.
- Playful walks and spots for reading the Roadside Picnic novel in different unusual places in the town of Yverdon-les-Bains.
- A pedagogic file set for children, including those in school-age.
- An interactive visit for families, using iPads.
- An audio-guide for the adults.
- A series of post-apocalyptic movies programed in Lausanne by the “Cinémathèque suisse”, partner of the exhibition.
THE SEMI-PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS: “MEMORIES FROM THE FUTURE” AND “JULES VERNE SPACE”

CONCEPT
The Maison d’Ailleurs benefits from an outstanding museographic device, since it relies on its two semi-permanent exhibition areas to materialize, both historically and aesthetically, the works of contemporary artists, which is presented in the temporary room. However, such a materialization implies the ability, for each exhibition, to replace the more or less 250 objects which make up the areas of Memories from the Future and Jules Verne Space, in order to better tune them up with the currently addressed thematic. In fact, it is this adaptation scheme that makes the strength of the Maison d’Ailleurs, in that sense that its visitors are able to discover, with each new temporary exhibition, new exceptional archives and can better grasp the sources and the originality of the works exhibited then. And that, independently from what they know already from the field of science fiction!

« MEMORIES FROM THE FUTURE »
The ground and the first floors of the Maison d’Ailleurs are dedicated to the history of the post-apocalyptic thematic, addressed during the Stalker / Experimenting the Zone exhibition. While the exhibition room on the ground floor offers a panoramic view of that aesthetic throughout the twentieth century by the use of various sources, the first floor dedicates four spaces regarding four different perspectives: the “Literature” space pays tribute to the Strougatski brothers. The “Comic books” space shows various ways of handling the Apocalypse depending on national sensibilities, the “Cinema” space reports on the two golden ages of the post-apocalyptic film genre, and finally the “Music” space makes everyone experience the acoustics of the Zone.

The visitors could get a glimpse of the manuscript of Roadside Picnic novel that Andreï Tarkovski used for the making of the Stalker movie, they also can get aware of the influence that two nuclear bombs had on the mangas from the eighties up to this date (Akira, Dragon Head, etc.), then see the original posters of these films which, in the seventies, were inspired by the social fears, or listen to some rare musical pieces such as “Enola Gay” by Orchestral Manœuvres in the Dark, or “The Forgotten Planet” by Nino Nardini, or “It’s After the End of the World” by Sun Ra.

Having been immersed into the post-apocalyptic and its tradition, the visitor does not enter the Zone on the second floor prepared by Rashit Safiullin as if he hasn’t already walked around other areas. In fact, Memories from the Future is a matrix that encourages establishing aesthetical parallels and comprehending the history of a culture.

« JULES VERNE SPACE »
Once the Memories from the Future and the temporary exhibition areas have been covered, the walkway leads to the “Jules Verne Space”, an area dedicated to the ancient origins of that thematic known as the post-apocalyptic and, hence, ideal to remind oneself that science fiction has its roots long before the twentieth century.

Two more rooms complete the visit of the Maison d’Ailleurs by offering new outlooks on the temporary exhibition thematic. The first one, under the staring of multiple mutants who invade the “Affichotron”, lists the various zones of the nineteenth century (the zones of Jules Verne in The Children of Captain Grant, of Garrett Serviss in The Second Deluge, or of H. G. Wells in War of the Words). The second room reminds us to what extent the pulp magazines, those cheap magazines that flourished in the 1930’s-1940’s, used catastrophes to question the readers and encourage them to realize what are the most probable zones that his day-to-day life was imagining.

--

Three exhibition areas, twelve rooms offering twelve ways to look at a fundamental issue of our society; the post-apocalyptic should not be considered as only a word, or be reduced to some movies, but it could very well be accepted as a tradition that, aesthetically, mirrors itself in the work of Rashit Safiullin, the major architect of Stalker / Experimenting the Zone.
PARTNERS

Project Lead

Maison d’Ailleurs
Director: Marc Atallah
Administrator: Marie DuPasquier
Curator in Charge of the Collections: Frédéric Jaccaud
Coordinator: Patricia Valceschini
Communication Assistant: Mona Juillard
Research Associate: Julien Glardon

Exhibition curators
Alexandra Kaourova, Eugène (CH)

Scenography
Rashit Safiullin (RU)

Graphic design
Notter+Vigne (CH)

Exhibition Partners

Coproduction
Heig-vd

Main partners
Town of Yverdon-les-Bains
Yverdon-les-Bains Jura-Lac Region
International Center of Lomonosov State University of Moscow

Official partners
Embassy of the Russian Confederation in Switzerland
Honorary Consulate of Russia
Leenaards Foundation
Mosfilm
Association des Amis de la Maison d’Ailleurs

Economic partners
Artgraphic Cavin SA
Ilford
RailAway
Payot Librairie
World Art Design

Media partners
La Région
Actu SF
Nasha Gazeta

Event partners
Cinémathèque Suisse
Théâtre de l’Échandole
Gonflable-events.ch

Thematic booklet Le Post-apocalyptique

Our thanks go to
Leenaards Foundation
Ernest Gabella SA
ADNV
Association des Amis de la Maison d’Ailleurs