

# Cécile Hartmann

## *The Black Snake*

**Exhibition extended until September 26, 2021**

summer closure from August 2 to August 29

“Will come a black snake who will captivate men and devour the earth”  
Black Elk prophecy, around 1930.



**Cécile Hartmann**  
*The Black Snake #3*

(Sacred Stones, South Dakota), 2021  
Image from *The Black Snake* movie  
42', color, sound without dialogue,  
original music composed by  
Térence Meunier  
Fondation des Artistes  
and Cécile Hartmann Studio  
Production  
Courtesy of the artist

**Cécile Hartmann's *Black Snake* exhibition, on view at the MABA in Nogent-sur-Marne since May 19 and initially scheduled until July 18, 2021, is extended until September 26. This unprecedented project unfolds around the black snake metaphor: the gigantic Keystone pipeline delivering 700,000 barrels of impure oil from Alberta open-air exploitations through Indian reserves every day, thus spoiling lands and water resources while causing unprecedented environmental damages.**

**Carried on during the Trump presidency, on its very last sections the pipeline project has been interrupted by Biden in the first days following his election, a decision that brings a lot of new hope.**

Hartmann's film *The Black Snake* (2018-2021) follows the pipeline's invisible flow up to the boreal forest. It is the centerpiece of the exhibition, which also features photographs, sculptural element, wall-painting and screenprints.

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**Opening / Finishing**  
Saturday September 25

**Curator: Caroline Cournède**

*The Black Snake*  
Cécile Hartmann  
Digital edition  
Art Book Magazine/ABM Distribution  
February 2021

**MABA**

16, rue Charles VII  
94130 Nogent-sur-Marne, France  
maba@fondationdesartistes.fr

**Access**

RER A: Nogent-sur-Marne  
then bus 114 or 210, stop at Sous-préfecture  
RER E: Nogent-Le Perreux  
then direction Tribunal d'instance  
Metro line 1: Château de Vincennes  
then bus 114 or 210, stop at Sous-préfecture

**Open to the public**

On weekdays from 1pm to 6pm  
On Saturday and Sunday from 12pm to 6pm  
Closed on Tuesday and public holidays

**Free admission**

*The MABA is part of the Fondation des Artistes*



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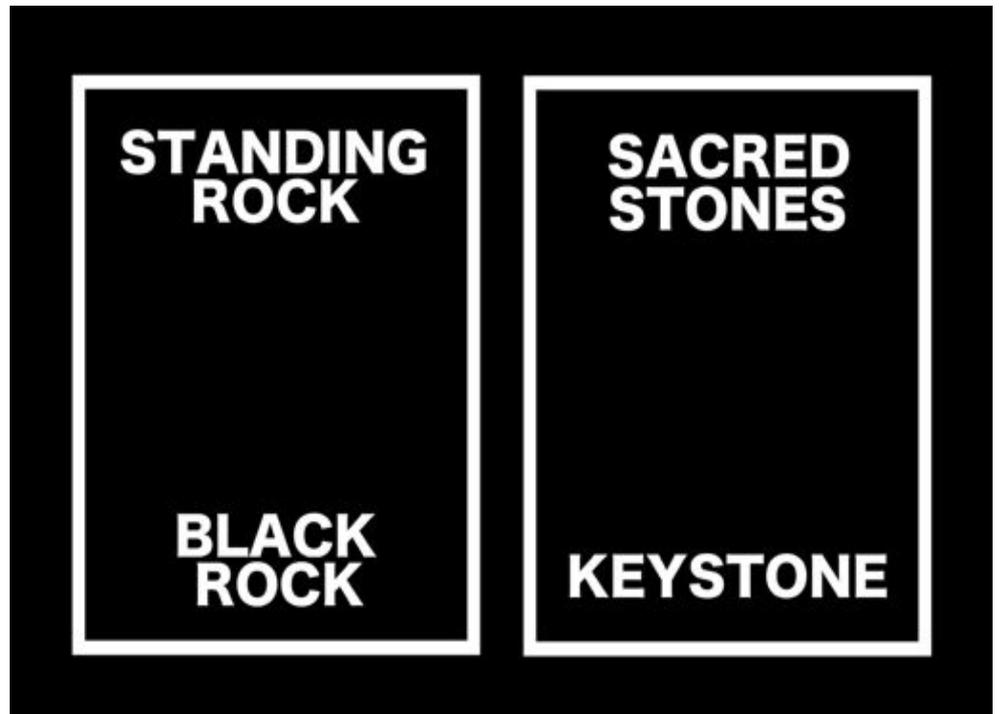
**Cécile Hartmann**  
*Untitled (Duality)*, 2021  
Wall-painting  
Variable dimensions  
Courtesy of the artist

Four years after the protests of *Standing Rock* and *Sacred Stones*, Cécile Hartmann shares the archive of "the aftermath", a new episode of contemporary history where the fights have handed the floor to the first signs of alterations of the landscapes and the living creatures. The artist turns it into a story without men, in which documentary images are tied up with mental images, and times and spaces tangle in a voyage in the heart of darkness. It is the same darkness -here considered for its destructive as well as creative potential- that used to shroud the world "at the beginning of time when there was no moon or star". Here, it is a place of shadow, emergence and disappearance. It also counteracts the idealized vision of the Enlightenment and Modernity (Christopher Columbus never discovered America) as well as the environmental dead-end they brought up (exploitation and exhaustion of natural resources).

Cécile Hartmann's work always refers to latent, underground events that show through or (re)appear at the surface of the exhibited works. The movie *The Black Snake* and its many offshoots also play on these small interstices between the visible and invisible, the fathomable and unfathomable, reality and fiction, the organic and non-organic, strength and instability. The memory -and reality- of the violence inflicted on nature as well as the indigenous community is also suggested through images of the movie, textual elements, music... There are like the clues, the traces of these events.

The enumeration of the visited places also acts as a phantasmatic projection of natural landscapes, of indigenous "home"-lands or of infamous battles. The words conjure up images, in the same way that the concepts the artist -through works which blunt design evokes militant banners- invite spectators to think about the clash between economy, politics, history and ecology. Constantly bringing her gaze closer to the ground level, the artist is interested in the various stratum, the accumulated layers of time and memories. Her vision constantly alternates between a global and fragmented point of view, a panoramic vision of the landscape and an immersion in the heart of the earth, in an introspective movement much similar to psychoanalysis.

Drawing bridges between romanticism, minimalism and activism, *The Black Snake* proposes an archeologic look at a devastated and devastating present, as well as a prophetic vision of a future where chaos and destruction could become regenerative forces if a new cycle were to begin.



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