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Globus and Fondation Beyeler Announce Public Art Project: *Julian Charrière Calls for Action*

8 June – 6 October 2024, Market Square, Basel



This summer, Swiss-French artist Julian Charrière will transform Basel's historical department store Globus, currently under renovation, with a boundary pushing artwork that aims to connect visitors across vast distances, bridging mountainous Switzerland with a Western Andean Cloud Forest in Ecuador. A radical intervention in public space, it invites the citizens and visitors of Basel to become participants and protectors, lending their voices to one of Earth's critical carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots.

Calls for Action is the second iteration of the "Globus Public Art Project". During the three-year renovation of its iconic department store on Basel's market square, Globus is collaborating with the Fondation Beyeler on inviting artists to conceive and realize new site-specific works of art that engage with the building and the public.

Julian Charrière's *Calls for Action* brings together public art with land conservation, opening a live feed between the city of Basel and a Western Andean Cloud Forest in Ecuador to highlight the interconnectivity of our planet, along with the environmental issues that threaten such vital ecosystems. Featuring a large screen suspended on the department store façade, the project acts as a real-time window into the rich biodiversity of an endangered ecoregion. Encouraging communication and interaction, a phone booth has been installed on the market square, wherein visitors can pick up a phone to both listen and talk to this far removed ecosystem. Fostering a more intimate connection between the city and the jungle, *Calls for Action* thus proposes an encounter beyond mere spectatorship, whereby speaking into the rainforest we can also speak out on its behalf.

Through this collective experience, Julian Charrière seeks to create new planetary bonds beyond the boundaries of our immediate surroundings, showing how art can be a tool for connecting with environmental issues beyond our everyday lives. In the process it brings to the foreground urgent concerns regarding deforestation, environmental stewardship and the sustainable management of rainforests.

Inherent in the project is not only creating an emotional link to a specific region, but also to make direct donations for conservation efforts there, in this case a cloud forest in Ecuador. Ranked as a biodiversity hotspot, it is one of 36 sites around the world that has at least 1,500 species of vascular plants that exist nowhere else on Earth, but which has already lost 70% of its primary vegetation. One of the wettest regions on the planet, it has a high rate of endemic species that occur nowhere else. Habitat to a number of endangered species, it is home to Great Green Macaws, Brown-headed Spider Monkeys, Black-breasted Pufflegs, White-lipped Peccaries, Harpy Eagles, Banded Ground Cuckoos, Geoffroy's Tamarins, Tapirs, and Pumas. Beyond being crucial for biodiversity, carbon sequestration and hydrological cycles, cloud forests such as these represent a vital component of mitigating climate change and maintaining the health of our planet.

The conservation efforts of *Calls for Action* are facilitated with the support of *Art into Acres*, an artist-run, non-profit environmental initiative; *Re:wild*, a global organization supporting environmental causes around the world; and local collaboration with *Fundación de Conservación Jocotoco*, an Ecuadorian nongovernmental organization protecting areas of critical importance for the conservation of threatened species in the region. The installation represents the beginning of a larger effort by the artist to bring awareness to the threats faced by rainforests around the world, run on an environmentally minded solar panel system, promoting a renewed closeness to the life and liveliness that inhabits these ecosystems.

By using a QR-code within the phone booth, visitors can individually join the fundraising efforts and contribute to protecting the site depicted in the livestream.

“*Calls for Action* is both a playful and critical intervention, showing the importance of emotional connection to environmental action. Though rainforests act as important carbon sinks and home to vibrant biodiverse communities of life, few people in the Global North have had the opportunity to experience them first-hand. I wanted to create an opportunity for the public to intimately engage with an ecosystem distant to Basel, and to hear their own voices within it. It is a reminder that our presence is felt even in places we imagine are remote. Everything is connected, and there is no place that does not feel the consequences of human action, as well as inaction. *Calls for Action* is an encounter with this reality, but also with the possibility that if we act with intention, if we put out voices together, we can support and regrow that which might otherwise have been silently lost.”

– Julian Charrière

The “Globus Public Art Project” is an initiative by the Swiss department store Globus, realized in collaboration with the Fondation Beyeler. As part of this cooperation, each year during the three-year renovation of the iconic department store on Basel’s market square, an artist is invited to conceive and realize a work of art for the public space in and around the building. The “Globus Public Art Project” is curated by Samuel Leuenberger. www.globus.ch/public-art-project

In Baden-Baden (Germany), Museum Frieder Burda presents Julian Charrière’s *Calls for Action* as an immersive, participatory installation featuring a second livestream into a Coastal Rainforest in Ecuador as part of the museum’s 20th anniversary exhibition “I Feel the Earth Whisper” with Bianca Bondi, Julian Charrière, Sam Falls and Ernesto Neto, from 14 June until 3 November 2024. Curated by Patricia Kamp and Jérôme Sans.

About Julian Charrière

Julian Charrière (b. 1987) is a French-Swiss artist based in Berlin. A seminal voice in contemporary art, Charrière has been widely exhibited across esteemed institutions and museums around the globe. Marshalling performance, sculpture and photography, his projects often stem from remote fieldwork in liminal or discarded locations, such as volcanoes, ice fields and radioactive sites. By encountering places where acute geophysical identities have formed, Charrière speculates on alternative histories, often looking at materials through the lens of deep geological time. Exploring how our ideas of nature have changed from the Romantic movement into the Anthropocene, his projects deconstruct the cultural traditions which govern how we perceive and represent the natural world.

About Globus

For almost 130 years, Globus department stores have been delighting their customers with an exquisite and high-quality range of goods in nine department stores and their online channel. The range is complemented by the incomparable service for which Globus and its approximately 1,800 employees are known. Globus has been present in Basel since 1907.

About Fondation Beyeler

The museum in Riehen near Basel is internationally renowned for its high-calibre exhibitions, its outstanding collection of modern and contemporary art, as well as its ambitious schedule of events. The museum building was designed by Renzo Piano in the idyllic setting of a park with venerable trees and water lily ponds. It boasts a unique location in the heart of a local recreation area, looking out onto fields, pastures and vineyards close to the foothills of the Black Forest. In collaboration with Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, the Fondation Beyeler is constructing a new museum building in the adjoining park, thus further enhancing the harmonious interplay of art, architecture and nature.

About Re:wild

Re:wild is a global organization supporting environmental causes around the world. Founded by a group of renowned conservation scientists together with Leonardo DiCaprio and combining more than 35 years of conservation impact, Re:wild is a force multiplier that brings together Indigenous peoples, local communities, influential leaders, nongovernmental organizations, governments, companies, and the public to protect and rewild at the scale and speed we need.

About Fundación de Conservación Jocotoco

Jocotoco protects irreplaceable regions that are essential to maintain life on earth owing to their uniqueness and high concentration of biodiversity. On just 40,000 ha, Jocotoco protects 11% of all bird species in the world. Dozens of plants, reptiles, and amphibians have found their sole refuge in Jocotoco's reserves, occurring nowhere else. Jocotoco treasures its deep connection to nature. What makes Jocotoco different from other organizations are the 'boots on the ground,' 80% of its 124 staff live around the reserves.

About Art into Acres

Art into Acres an artist-founded, non-profit initiative that supports large-scale land conservation with a focus on biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples-led efforts. Alongside the support of artists, galleries and institutions, and in collaboration with matching fund partners, Art into Acres has supported the permanent conservation of millions of hectares of tropical and boreal forest to date. Projects are locally-led and based on community-voiced interests.

Image: Julian Charrière, *Western Andean Cloud Forest*, Ecuador, 2024; © the artist; VG-Bild Kunst, Bonn, Germany / 2024, ProLitteris, Zurich

Press images are available at www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/media/press-images

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