



Cultiver la Mémoire

Vieux Craonne, France, 2018

plan & realization: 2018

cooperation @ 100land:
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client:
Jardins de la Paix
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For the commemoration of war a garden would at first seem the worst medium. War is death, disorder, discontinuity. Especially in the case of the First World War it is also typically about the literal turning over of soil. At the same time, any garden is about struggle, it is a fight about creating and achieving a certain order and then maintaining it – quite often at odds against nature.

I'm interested in the garden as a cultural medium, even as a cultural tool. In this the garden is very apt to the effort of collective memory, of remembrance and commemoration. The garden is about learning, about overcoming adverse situations and taking up responsibility. Remembering war, and specifically the two big wars that have overturned civilization in Europe has to be kept an ongoing project. We Europeans are obliged to cultivate our shared garden of memory. And while at large we are currently still granted the fruits of beauty and peaceful cohabitation, we have to look after sowing the seeds for further generations.

Cultiver la Mémoire is a small project that is not oriented towards form, but towards process and practice. Three gardens, located at the far ends of Old Craonne, are intended to arouse curiosity and interest in the larger site. The garden installations primarily aim at highlighting the authenticity of the site and make it more accessible. Three rings of stainless steel, a material that cannot be confounded with any historical remnants in the area, serve as a simple marking element. The rigid steel reacts with and underlines the dramatic topography of the area. Within the rings the ground receives additional attention, it is used to plant thousands of bulbs. Starting with the inauguration of the garden in autumn 2018, the planting of bulbs could be an on-going activity at the site. During most periods of the year, inhabitants, neighbours and visitors can bring bulbs of some twenty different plants and set them in the ground.

The bulb – botanically the storage and carrier of energy and information – is in itself an element of memory. Activating its semantic and participative power in the scarred soil of the former battle grounds, the visitors individual contribution could become a simple, long term project in the shared cultivation of memory.











