press kit
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antarctica
musée des confluences
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Following on from the encounter with the teams of the polar expedition “Antarctica” led by Luc Jacquet and Wild-Touch in 2015, the musée des Confluences presents an immersive exhibition devoted to Antarctica.

“Antarctica” is a journey to the heart of an oasis in polar life. On the borders of the French Dumont d’Urville Station in Adelie Land, this exceptional natural site is only accessible to scientific missions.

Combining a twofold approach both aesthetic and scientific, mixing underwater and terrestrial points of view, “Antarctica” is a true ode to polar biodiversity and its protection.

From expedition...

Ten years after “The March of the Penguins”, the Oscar-winning filmmaker Luc Jacquet returns to Antarctica. For the first time a team of artists has captured over 45 days with state-of-the-art equipment and techniques the extraordinary terrestrial and underwater diversity of the white continent.

Luc Jacquet, accompanied by two nature photographers, Laurent Ballesta and Vincent Munier, explores the polar universe with his own sensibility. Under the ice, Laurent Ballesta, a diver-photographer and marine biologist, is taking up a technical and human challenge by discovering at hitherto unexplored depths a biodiversity one never knew existed. On the ice, Vincent Munier, a photographer of extreme environments, bears witness to the animal life in Adelie Land.

As many sensitive testimonies to a territory, which is not represented by any people.
From this crossing of terrestrial and underwater viewpoints, from this crossing of gazes both natural and aesthetic, the exhibition ‘Antarctica’ was born. For the first time the ice field appears as a **door between two worlds**: brutal, swept by winds and peopled with rare species above, serene and teeming with life below. Over its trail within the museum, the exhibition puts the visitor in balance between these two worlds and turns his visit into an unprecedented experience.

The atypical scenography conceived by Wild-Touch and the musée des Confluences is based on visual and auditory immersion and the release of films in high definition, really embarking the visitor on this expedition. **Everyone has the experience of a world, which is nevertheless inaccessible**, whether it be underwater at extreme depths or on the ice, surrounded by colonies of penguins.

By the decompartmentalisation of artistic and scientific disciplines, this exhibition invites the public, in terms of emotion and marvels, to discover new worlds. Once the visitor is sensitized to the beauty of the Antarctic, he is initiated to fresh knowledge of this extraordinary continent.

**The exhibition trail in brief**

After the changing room where the men engage in long and meticulous preparations, the visitor is invited to dive side by side with Weddell seals and emperor penguins in Adelie Land into the depths of the Southern Ocean. Submerged, guided by the divers, he will discover the teeming life of deep water. Returning to the surface, he will step onto the ice. Surrounded through 360° by screens several metres high, he will be present at scenes of the daily life of colonies of penguins, lost in contemplation of the beauty of the ice, which stretches out as far as the eye can see.

*Antarctica, an exhibition co-conceived by the musée des Confluences and Wild-Touch.*

*Brought into being at the Dumont d’Urville Station in Adelie Land, Antarctica with the aid of the teams and logistics of the French Polar Institute Paul-Émile Victor and French Antarctica.*

*With the support of Blancpain and in partnership with Paprika Films, Andromède, ARTE, IPEV, TAAF, CNRS.*
"The musée des Confluences is presenting an atypical exhibition on a subject both scientific and sensitive. “Antarctica” was conceived after returning from an extraordinary expedition led by remarkable people: simultaneously explorers in extreme environments, artists passionate about what they do and scientists convinced by the need for transmission. Making use of their scientific training and their mastery of cinematic techniques and equipment, they sought to show how beautiful, surprising and marvellous what they saw had been. On this basis, they arouse an awareness of the fragility and the necessity to protect these places and their still not well-known inhabitants. “Antarctica” thus shares in every way the ambitions of the musée des Confluences: by stimulating our capacity to marvel, the visitor is invited to discover new horizons and to question himself on what is currently at stake in our world.”

Georges Képénékian  
President of the public institution of the musée des Confluences  
First deputy mayor of Lyon, delegated to cultural matters, large scale events and the rights of citizens

Hélène Lafont-Couturier  
Director of the musée des Confluences

"As director narrating our expedition in the form of an exhibition in the musée des Confluences has allowed me to explore a new way of storytelling. In a space open through 360°, the visitor can be totally submerged in a landscape nevertheless inaccessible and hostile, whether it be terrestrial or underwater. He also decides how quickly he will go round, just gathering information or stopping to stare. Conceived with our Wild-Touch team, the exhibition is an experience, a journey which gives rise to sensations and emotions. I am convinced that people are made more sensitive to and more knowledge is transmitted by this sensitive sharing of experience. The Antarctic has no people to represent it. The images of an expedition like ours are essential testimonies to the character both exceptional and fragile of life on this continent.”

Luc Jacquet  
Exhibition curator  
Director and founder of Wild-Touch
Our artist-adventurers ventured into lands hostile to man: the temperatures, the storms and the terrain demand infinite care in order not to put men and equipment at risk. The latter have to be adapted to observation times that can prove to be very long before capturing the images sought after. Thus, in order to get a picture of penguins moving about on the fractured ice, we had to wait 4 days, while images of emperor penguin chicks taking to the water needed 8 days of work. So many elements allowing us to seize the value of the images delivered during this exhibition.

After completing higher studies in biology it was following on from fourteen months of wintering in Antarctica, in the French Dumont d’Urville Station, that Luc Jacquet discovered his two great passions: taking pictures and scientific mediation. His first full-length feature, “March of the Penguins”, was watched by more than 35 million people throughout the world. It was crowned by numerous awards including the prestigious Academy Award or Oscar for Best Film Documentary in 2006.

In 2010 he founded the Wild-Touch Association with the will to act to conserve nature through the emotion provided by pictures and cinema. In 2014 Luc Jacquet pursued his cinematographic adventure side by side with the highly skilled glaciologist Claude Lorius by directing a new full-length feature film “Ice and the Sky”, out on screens in the autumn of 2015. This project is accompanied by an ambitious transmedia programme, carried by the Association, on the major theme of climate change.

Today, Luc Jacquet is working with Wild-Touch on a global and large scale artistic project centring on biodiversity: “The Flow of Life”, 5 expeditions to tell how each living being on the planet is connected to the others and of which the first panel is Antarctica.
Diver and nature photographer, he is also the founder of the association “L’œil d’Andromède” whose aim is to associate science and image in one single teaching strategy. Curious and determined, Laurent Ballesta is passionate about extreme diving and is developing tools and techniques allowing people to dive safely at great depths. One of his recent expeditions allowed him to approach and photograph at a depth of 120 metres a rare species that had been believed extinct: The Coelacanth. Having won numerous prizes at the World Festival of the Underwater Image in Antibes, the Senate paid tribute to him in 2006 with a public photographic exhibition on the grilles of the Luxemburg Gardens in Paris, entitled “Planète Mers” [Planet Seas].

Passionate about wild wide open spaces, extreme traveller Vincent Munier has chosen the photograph as a tool to express his dreams, his emotions and his encounters. A professional photographer, he is the author of several books and his pictures are the subject of exhibitions and publications all over the world. Inspired by Japanese painters and minimalist art, his work portrays the animal at the heart of its environment. Vincent Munier has won numerous awards since 2000 in the “BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year” competition and the prize of “Legendary Photographer of the Nikon Corporation”. He is recognized as one of the “10 Masters of Nature photography” by the Natural History Museum in London.
Welcome to Antarctica, to the Dumont d’Urville Station in Adelie Land, more than 10 days by boat from Australia! At the end of 2015, for nearly 2 months, the expedition Antarctica went to explore this exceptional site where a totally unique wealth of life is concentrated in which most of the species that live on the ice come together and reproduce. This expedition is unprecedented for several reasons: it’s the first time that such a high profile artistic team has committed itself to such an extreme adventure. The various deep dives effected in the Southern Ocean constitute as many technical exploits and world firsts.

Numerous pictures taken in situ had never been taken before. Some of them relate scenes of life on the surface which are rare and difficult to capture, while others reveal the completely unknown world of marine deeps in Adélie Land. Indeed, the artists have focused their gaze on either side of this icy border formed by the ice between two worlds as contrasted as a frozen desert as far as the eye can see, on which only 7 types of animal live, and an underwater environment teeming with life at the heart of which are evolving more than 9,000 types of fish, molluscs, crustaceans, corals, some of which have been observed for the first time... This is a border that penguins and seals do not cease to cross to go to find their food in a world where they suddenly change.

These pictorial testimonies, of unequalled scientific and artistic quality, set out, by raising our capacity to marvel and our emotion, to sensitize the public to the wealth but also to the fragility of these extraordinary natural environments.
The cloakroom

On entering the changing room, the first stage of the exhibition, sheltered from the gusts of wind that can be heard in the room, we discover some of the specific equipment used by the members of the expedition, adapted to the ruggedness of the elements:
— Parkas designed to resist the great cold, rendered shiny by wind and sea spray.
— Dry custom-built diving combinations adapted to the extreme weather conditions.
— Part of the diving equipment, specifically designed for the needs of the expedition.
— Camera cases resistant to pressure and cold.

9,000— It’s the number of species counted up till now in the waters of the Southern Ocean

7— It’s the number of species living on the ice in Antarctica

An environment which is cold but very alive: because of relatively stable salinity, temperature and luminosity all the year round the Southern seas favour the development of multiple life forms.
The dive

Let’s jump in the water! Two video screens side by side, showing respectively the pictures of a diver preparing for submersion and the animals that live on the ice ready to throw themselves into water with a temperature of -2o.

While 4 to 6 hours of getting ready are needed by divers before going into water the temperature of which is below zero, emperor penguins, Adelie penguins, Weddell seals and even emperor penguin chicks, whose first jump we were lucky enough to see, show visible proof of greater ease. Nevertheless, each species displays miracles of ingenuity so that its organism can resist this glacial ‘sea water bath’. So the Weddell seal empties all the air from its lungs to reduce the effects of water pressure, and the penguin, when it dives, creates pockets of air under its feathers to improve its movements; a little clumsy on the ice, the latter suddenly changes into an agile swimmer.

A little further on, it’s the turn of the visitor to dive in his turn into the ocean. Penetrating into a dark space from whence emanate subaquatic sounds – bubbles, motions of the water –, he discovers on a big screen underwater images this time showing animals and divers under the water.

Under the ice

Then, there are three boxes that allow each visitor to be submerged, passing his head through the holes of a wall to find himself, in a series of short films, at the heart of a fairy-tale universe, whose dimensions, contours and lights are disconcerting. Away from icebergs and zones in which ice floes rub against each other, this environment, at the heart of which everything seems slower, procures for us a feeling of tranquillity.

The visitor discovers a fauna and a teeming underwater flora: anemones and starfish, jellyfish, strange fish and crustaceans parade among rocks, corals and giant algae. This colourful world is reminiscent of the coral reefs in warm seas. Certain species are so rare that they have never been observed before in their natural environment. Not well used to the presence of humans and without shyness, the animals allow themselves to be approached, are curious, even coming to nibble at the calves of the explorer. The divers can also witness displays of affection from a female seal to her young progeny.
Return to the ice

The visitor emerges from this underwater world by going through a passage in which he will again become familiar with the light and the movements on the surface thanks to multiple photographs and films catching as they happen veritable “scenes from life” of the seven species of the southern continent. But this is only a foretaste of the ultimate sensory experience he is preparing for!

In a room entirely equipped with giant screens arranged all round it, with the sound of the wind and the cries of the birds, we are truly right in the middle of the ice. Surrounded by sumptuous landscapes of ice floes silhouetted against the sky, expanses of ice as far as the eye can see, the visitor is up in the gallery to pay particular attention to a colony of emperor penguins at different stages of their life, from chicks that are taking to the water for the first time to their elders, who can live up to the age of 45, taking in those who hesitate for a long time before crossing a river for fear of being attacked by a sea leopard. You could watch for a long time these animals so beautiful, peaceful, sublime in every respect.

Let us not forasmuch forget that this ecosystem is fragile. Thus, in 2014, in the east of Adelie Land, thousands of Adelie penguins died because, due to climate change, an iceberg had blocked the only access to their food. And let us remember that Antarctica, over its huge surface of 14 million square kilometres, only plays host to 45 colonies of penguins.
Wild-Touch

In the wake of the success of his film "The March of the Penguins" seen by audiences of more than 35 million throughout the world and rewarded by an Oscar in 2006, the director Luc Jacquet created the not-for-profit general interest organisation Wild-Touch. With the desire to invite the public to discover and understand in order to mobilize, the association deals with major conservation issues while marvelling at the beauty of the Earth.

Forest, ice, climate, biodiversity... Wild-Touch has as its ambition to touch and meld together every public around the natural heritage of our planet, thanks to an ambitious programme of scientific mediation and sensitizing to big environmental issues, carried forward by influential personalities each with special knowledge: experts and researchers with an international reputation, thinkers, artists and major actors in audio-visual production.

Led on by highly spectacular cinema films directed by Luc Jacquet, complementary content and cross-media, with a strong element of added value editorially and emotionally, these things are coming to light and congregating round multiple sound bites: audio-visual productions (television, web documentaries), education and environmental teaching, residencies and artistic creations in situ, exhibitions and performances, a dedicated collaborative web platform and the publishing of games and books.

www.wild-touch.org
The partners of the exhibition
The Musée des Confluences opened its doors on 20 December 2014. Novel in the world of European museums, it creates a dialogue between sciences in order to understand the history of humanity.

“Beyond the defining nature of its geographical location, the musée des Confluences – which bears its name with great appropriateness – is a philosophy of encounter, a taste for exchange, a source of intelligence for gazes that cross.”
— Hélène Lafont-Couturier, director of the musée des Confluences

The musée des Confluences tackles big universal questions: the origin and destiny of humanity, the diversity of cultures and civilisations, but also the place of the human at the heart of the living world. So there is a permanent trail of four exhibitions whose novel strategy is to offer the visitor an interdisciplinary approach. By the decompartmentalisation of the sciences, new keys emerge to understand and unravel the complexity of our world. These new perspectives awaken our curiosity and, through emotion and wonder, invite us to knowledge.

Practical information

Museum opening hours
Tuesday to Friday:
from 11:00 to 19:00
Saturday and Sunday
from 10:00 to 19:00
Thursday late night until 22:00

Rates
Entry charge € 9 for all the exhibitions, free to children until the age of 18 and students under the age of 26. www.museedesconfluences.fr/fr/tarifs-expositions

Reservations et information
+33 (0)4 28 38 12 00
Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 17:00
Tickets online:
www.museedesconfluences.fr/fr/billetterie-réservation-0
Corps rebelles [Rebellious bodies]
09/13/16 – 03/05/17

Both installation and a work of art in itself, the exhibition “Corps rebelles” is an invitation to understand modern dance as a universal language.

For novices as for lovers of modern dance, this is about entering in an unprecedented way into the world of dance and seeing or seeing again extracts from iconic choreographic works which were able to leave a mark on the history of dance in the 20th century.

In Lyon, “Corps rebelles” proposes, by means of a new museographical device, to observe the links between events in 20th century history and developments or breaks in the story of modern dance. This meeting of ideas unfolds around six themes sketching the principal developments of the body in modern dance in our societies: virtuoso dance, organic dance, erudite and popular dance, dance and politics, exotic and colonial dance, dance in Lyon.

This co-production with the Musée de la civilisation de Québec is a creation which evolves through the thread of its international tour with the inclusion of new films directed for the Lyon version and the presence in situ of choreographers in residence, chosen in close conjunction with the Maison de la Danse and the Dance Biennial.

The project brings together for the first time experts from three different disciplines – dance, museology and digital technology, to reflect on the preservation and diffusion of this intangible legacy that is dance.

An exhibition at the musée des Confluences based on a concept of the Musée de la civilisation de Québec, with the participation of Moment Factory.
Do you know that your shoes are talkative and say a lot about the person wearing them? To better understand what these objects reveal, the exhibition takes the visitor step by step to discover footwear stemming from every continent, from the 16th to the 21st century, from delicate lotuses for bound feet in China to trainers nowadays.

Whether they be sandals, boots, moccasins, babouche slippers or something else, from here or elsewhere, from yesterday, today or the future, shoes are intimately linked with human history. It is therefore not surprising that they are so close to us, whether we are aware of it or not. They act as witnesses to various life styles, as objects of desire, and often indicate belonging to a group. Under the gaze of whoever knows how to decipher them, they reveal codes and symbols. These multiple facets thus reassure us with the idea that there is nothing trivial in the shoes we choose to wear. At the heart of the exhibition, you will be led to ask questions about your own shoes and what they say about you. The museum invites you to leave your comments and to contribute in this way to reflexion.

A work specially conceived for the exhibition by the Catalan artist Xavier G-Solis sheds a contemporary light on our intimate relationship with the shoe.

*In co-production with the Musée international de la chaussure de Romans – City of Romans*
Credits
Front cover—Photos: top © Vincent Munier, bottom © Laurent Ballesta. Graphic design: intégral Ruedi Baur

page 3—The Adélie penguins in synchronized swimming mode on leaving the islands of Dumont d’Urville to get back to their fishing zone on the open sea © Laurent Ballesta
page 4 and 5—Adélie penguin back fishing © Vincent Munier
page 6—top, Young penguins throwing themselves in the water for the first time © Vincent Munier—bottom, © Laurent Ballesta
page 8—Members of the Antarctica team altogether © Vincent Munier—inset, Luc Jacquet on the edge of chaos © Vincent Munier
page 9—Top, Altar of repose for snow petrels © Vincent Munier—bottom, Laurent Ballesta and an emperor penguin before the dive © Cédric Gentil; Vincent Munier after a few hours spent in the storm © Vincent Munier
page 10—Looking for an interesting camera angle © Vincent Munier—A sketch of the cloakroom at the Dumont d’Urville Station © Jérôme Krowicki
page 11—The diving team gets ready © Cédric Gentil
page 12—120 metres down the desolate rocks on the surface give way to gardens of biodiversity dominated by arborescent sponges, tubeworms and black sea cucumbers (cotton-spinners) © Laurent Ballesta
page 13—The emperor penguin colony in a storm © Vincent Munier
page 14—Portrait of an emperor penguin © Vincent Munier
page 16—Christophe Charpenel
page 17—top, Quentin Lafont, musée des Confluences—bottom, Museums of civilization, exhibition “Corps rebelles” [Rebellious Bodies], from 11 March 2015 to 4 April 2016, photographer: Jessy Bernier
page 18—top, musée des Confluences—bottom, Quentin Lafont, musée des Confluences.