

ELANA GUTMANN
THE TALKING TREES



the notion of home
of migration in nature
of
the movement
of individuals and cultures
from country to country
and place to place...

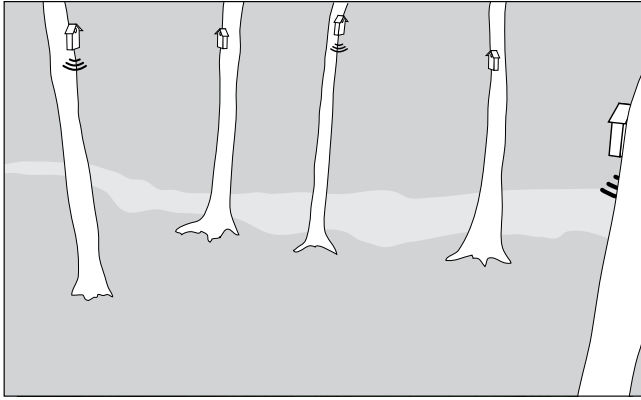
This work was born, perhaps generations ago, in Riga, Kharkhov, Bialystok,
Munich, in ancient Persé or places yet unknown...

Its artistic conception took place in more contemporary times,
in a meeting with dastangoi Mahmood Farooqui in Delhi.
It was here that a passage from an ancient Urdu epic and that of a bedside fairytale
told by my Latvian grandmother coincided...

In New York, Paris and Basel, I interviewed individuals
who had moved from one country or culture to another for a variety of reasons:
for love, by necessity or politic, or simply by instinct or desire.
Rather than ask for a commentary regarding this migration, I asked for
a simple memory or story from childhood...

Told in the speaker's mother tongue, and then in their adopted language.
their tales share individual perspectives, diverse experience
and a common humanity.

Elana Gutmann, Bâle, Suisse 2011



THE TALKING TREES/ LES ARBRES QUI PARLENT

The installation work *The Talking Trees/Les Arbres Qui Parlent** was first presented in the exhibition LandArt in Basel, Switzerland. It employs language, symbol and sound to evoke the theme of migration, the notion of home and the rich resource that is the result of the movement of culture and individual from context to context and place to place. *The Talking Trees/Les Arbres Qui Parlent* is designed to draw visitors to a contemplative, resonant experience that will travel with them far beyond the installation's environ.

Three acoustic birdhouses share individuals' memories, simple stories from childhood.

Told in the speaker's mother tongue, and then in their adopted language, their tales share individual perspectives, diverse experience and a common humanity.

Each house has its own sonoric backdrop: the sounds of Nature, Ocean and Wind.

* *Die Sprechenden Bäume*



THE TALKING TREES/DIE SPRECHENDEN BÄUME *Debut Exhibition: LandArt*

Basel, Switzerland 2011

Within the terrain of the extensive Tschäpperli vineyards in Basel, one finds a *clairière ombragée*, a grove of trees that surround a grassy, center space dappled with light. The *clairière*, or clearing, is situated near a stream traversed by a small bridge. It was in this setting that the first installation of *The Talking Trees* came to life.

INSTALLATION DETAILS

- 1 As visitors first approach the clearing, they begin to hear the random play of chimes. Suspended from the trees surrounding the clearing, the chimes respond to the slightest movement, offering subtle, magical notes.
- 2 As visitors approach the clearing, the trees begin to "speak", each with its own voice. Birdhouses hang from the branches of several of the trees, suggesting a symbolic "home". Their form echoes the weathered tones of the vineyard's ancient guardians' cabins. These houses emit a symphony of spoken text -- the voices of individuals who have migrated from their place of birth to resettle and plant roots in new countries and continents. Their stories are recounted in the speaker's mother tongue and then in their "adopted" language. Their tales disappearing and re-appearing within a spacious backdrop of the sounds and silences of nature.
- 3 Ivy-covered stones and felled wood found in the clearing are arranged at the foot of the trees to offer visitors a place to rest within the clearing.



For more information, please contact:

FRANCE

Cécile Martin
cecile@art-polling.com 06 19 63 64 51

SWITZERLAND

Margrit Gass
margritgassbasel@vtxmail.ch 41 78 61 414 29

USA

Elana Gutmann Studio
elanagutmann@gmail.com 917 257 4480

PERIMETER GALLERY

perimeterchicago@perimetergallery.com 312 266 9473

