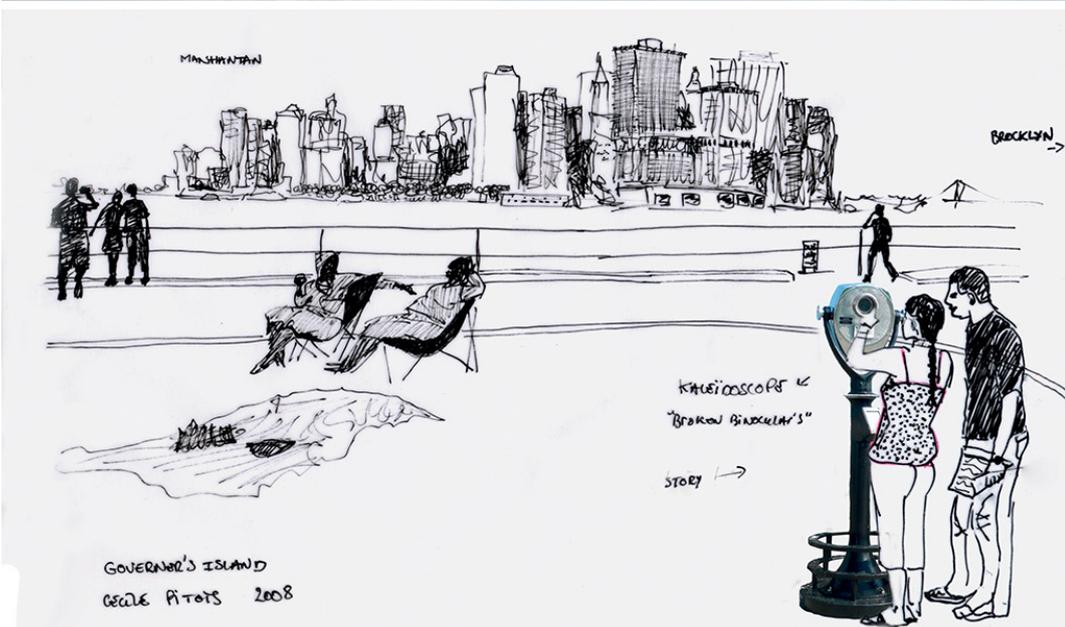


A piece of the Puzzle

Governor's Island Project
Upper New York Bay, New York City, 2007

On Governor's Island, situated just a mile from the southern tip of Manhattan, you get a postcard view of Manhattan. New York is a myth in and of itself; a place of endless possibilities, where you can start over with nothing to create a new life. In this project, the artist has imagined installing a kaleidoscopic spyglass on the island, affording both an enlarged and multiplied vision of Manhattan, like an inner close-up of urban reality focusing on both the overview and the details. This back-and-forth movement between distance and immediate reality is also the process that leads to self-awareness, as suggested by the caption displayed on the ground.



A piece of the Puzzle

Texte légende

For his 9th birthday, on the 7th of July 1816, Jason received something completely unusual, a pair of binoculars. No one owned binoculars at that time. But his father, a captain in the army, had the privilege of working with the latest technologies available. His father had to keep an eye on the protection of New York, an attractive city in America. There was a big fort there but it felt pretty lonely for a young boy to live on this piece of land. A majestic bird called the blue falcon fascinated the little boy. This island was a true paradise for birds. Thanks to his binoculars, he would discover their secret world. A world of beauty and fantasy opened to him. Before his very eyes, flew all the different species with their brightly colored feathers, specific unique beaks... Jason grew up, so did the city of New York. People from all around the world came there and maybe one day he would too. Indeed, he thought and dreamt to make more friends there.

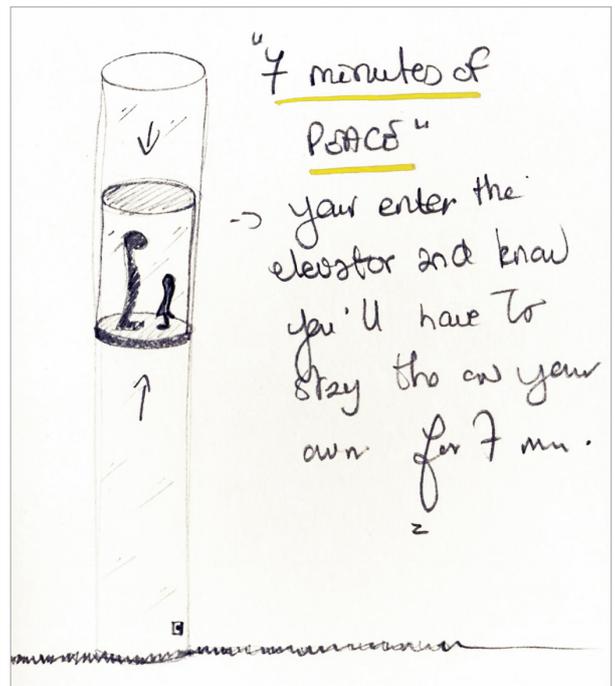
One day as he was spying a beautiful turtledove, the binoculars fell down by mistake on the ground. A broken glass noise was clinking. He was so disappointed that he just sat and cried. In despair, Jason took one last look through the binoculars at New York City and what a surprise! When he looked at the city, it was sparkling and beautiful. Everything seemed completely dismantled, like a huge puzzle to play with. He suddenly wondered what kind of part of this puzzle would he like to be? And decided that he will definitely go there when he will know more about himself.

Since then people come here to look at Manhattan through the big broken binoculars, and still a little voice tells them: "What is this reality that you think you are in now, is it the one that you want to keep or is there a new one you could build from now..."

7 minutes of Peace Tribute to Philippe Petit

Study for the city of New York - Ground Zero
Manhattan, New York City, United States. 2007-2008

7 minutes of Peace is a tribute to the performance of Philippe Petit who, in 1974, used a tightrope to cross the space between the two towers of the World Trade Centre. The piece is made up of a monumental column that soars skyward, topped by the tightrope walker's silhouette. At its foot, a huge cylindrical glass elevator takes visitors on a seven-minute solitary journey. Their ascent gives them time to contemplate while offering them an alternative, silent view of a city in constant motion.



Whistling Benches

Study for the city of New York
The Ramble, Central Park, Manhattan New York City, United States, 2007

Did you know that birds belonging to the same species sing differently in different continents? The differences are tiny, but they underscore the importance of context. The project for Central Park is based partly on this scientific observation. In a secluded area, in the woods, the artist has designed rock benches that would allow strollers to stop, listen and learn the song of birds singing in the trees; the “textlegend” indicates that should birds forget their language, humans could help them learn it again. The question is how to preserve our identity and our own memory in a huge city when we assimilate another culture and another language.



Whistling Benches

Text-Legend

Whistling Benches

Not long ago, Emma was visiting New York City. Someone had recommended that she discover the infinite beauty of Central Park. To a certain extent, this huge park is the New Yorkers' big garden. As she walked through an area of the park called The Ramble, a blackbird greeted her with a trill. But to her surprise the bird's warbling was somewhat different from the one she had heard in her own country. Emma had once read that birds from the same species have different dialects from one country to the other, but she had never experienced this as it was her first time travelling abroad.

All of a sudden, Emma heard a pretty tune behind her. "It's a wood warbler", she thought. She heard its distinctive chirruping again "ti ti ti tik-tik tititrrrrr" and tried to identify where it came from. Not far from there, a young boy was sitting on a bench, singing along with the bird. She walked towards him and realized the child was blind. "How come you can whistle so well?" she asked. "I've decided to learn bird songs, that way if one day they no longer remember them, I will be able to remind them," answered the boy. The child invited her to listen carefully to different songs and taught her how to imitate the tune of her favorite species. She had a wonderful day enjoying this unusual experience.

Ever since that day, it is customary to sit on the Whistling Benches. Everyone does their utmost to imitate their favorite bird song so that in the future these different languages will not disappear.