

Champs-Élysées

In Greek mythology, the abode of the blessed after death (Webster's)

In *Loss of Breath* (1832), Edgar Allan Poe underlines the aesthetic value of tombs with a Freudian slip, confusing the words sepulture and sculpture: “we arrived at the place of sculpture, and I felt myself deposited within the tomb.”

Born out of now crumbling religious beliefs and outdated sanitary concerns, the graveyard continues to materialize the memory of the deceased. Surviving the secularization of Western societies, the cemetery remains an intensely invested space, the inexorable destination for eternal sleep, the mandatory retreat of the dead, either buried or cremated. Although conceived to receive the dead, the cemetery, a creation by and for the living, is a reflection of its socio-economic environment with an illusory varnish of eternity.

Through a selection of either specially produced or already existing artworks, Champs-Élysées invites twenty-seven artists to turn the exhibition space into an ideal cemetery, reexamining the decorative and performative aspects of the funerary within an immersive display. Contemplating the museum as cemetery, the exhibition transports the aesthetic of the cemetery back to the museum. Champs-Élysées suggests links between the graveyard's aesthetic aspects and its societal functions, perceiving fertile artistic ground in the persistence of funerary rites. The works do not only present the idyllic necropolis through its static and hackneyed image (tombstones, chrysanthemums, crucifixes, tears, portraits of the deceased, eco-friendly urns etc.) but also as the premise for guided tours, black magic ceremonies, role-play, chess tournaments and secret encounters.

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