

Nicole Fournier, EmballeToi! Landscape, Fonderie Darling, Montréal

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Numéro 99, printemps 2020

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/93200ac>

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Éditeur(s)

Les éditions Esse

ISSN

0831-859X (imprimé)

1929-3577 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Lacombe, M. (2020). Compte rendu de [Nicole Fournier, EmballeToi! Landscape, Fonderie Darling, Montréal]. *esse arts + opinions*, (99), 103–103.



Nicole Fournier

EmballeToi! Landscape, details,
Fonderie Darling, Montréal.

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St-Laurent, courtesy of Fonderie Darling,
Montréal

Nicole Fournier

EmballeToi! Landscape

In one thousand years, you and I will have become something else. This transformation, steadily pulling at us from the margins of our perception, is at the heart of Nicole Fournier's *EmballeToi! Landscape*. Installed outside the Fonderie Darling in 2017 as part of the group exhibition *The House of Dust* d'Alison Knowles, this performative work literally relocates a section of the artist's private garden into public space for one thousand years. A stage of sorts, the public plot invites organic material—all things alive—to participate in a shared action that is slowly unfolding with the rhythm of the seasons.

Fournier, an artist whose interests lie somewhere between the realms of Relational Aesthetics and Land Art, has been working with growing plants in overlooked fragments of land for over twenty years. In the context of her performances and installations, she facilitates cycles of creation and decay that include the active participation of co-performers; humans, native plants, animals, birds, bugs, and assorted micro-organisms that react to her prompts and the constraints put forth by nature itself. Fournier's actions and environments thus emphasize the resilience and chaos of being alive, as well as the importance of interspecies collaboration.

EmballeToi! Landscape emerges from artistic research that has been unfolding since 2012 in the artist's studio: an overgrown and tended yard in the suburbs of Ville Saint-Laurent. Specifically, the work consists of ongoing actions orchestrated around the slow decomposition of a collection of salvaged winter coats, which are at times suspended, or buried, or draped within the shifting ecosystem. As symbolically charged as they are difficult to recycle, the synthetic garments protect the delicate roots that tear through them, creating a complicated form of co-dependence. The installation at the Fonderie Darling is created using transplanted sections of this living landscape, and the disappearing materials it contains.

As part of the artwork, Fournier periodically visits the Fonderie Darling to collaborate with her organic co-performers, supporting them as they interact with the manufactured textiles. These live interventions engage with what has unfolded since the artist's last visit; a new plant species that has taken root, a dissolved sleeve that has left a ghost shape in the dirt, a collapsed support that has become entangled in weeds, etc. In *EmballeToi! Landscape*, it is the relationship between materials, their mutual and constant transformation, that is highlighted. As such, the project's commitment to duration—a millennium—is critical. The impossibly long timeframe not only hints at the resistance of synthetic materials but, more importantly, de-centres the human within the artwork. By prompting us to think outside of the temporal limits of our own bodies, Fournier's work allows us to consider what is occurring at otherwise imperceptible paces. The slowly decomposing synthetic remnants become artifacts, traces of the actions being performed by the garden itself. None of us will witness the conclusion of this steady shift in form, but I am reassured by the thought that the network of life currently performing will.

Michelle Lacombe

Fonderie Darling, Montréal

June 14, 2017–December 31, 3012