

Designed by the Paris-based architectural firm Mas and Roux in collaboration with Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, Les Portes de la Defense, is incontestably a "high-tech" building. The architects have attempted to foresee and make provision for technological evolutions in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the users. This vision was one that the companies Oracle and Shell both adhered to fully: they now occupy the glass and aluminium edifice. In the midst of

Portes de la Défense Paris



such state-of-the-art technology, Alberto Pinto has decided to introduce a counterpoise in the form of nature, but not just any nature. Pinto's idea of the natural is diverted and reappropriated. More cultured than cultivated, this forest is petrified, fossilized, reified. A major element of the installation, this forest becomes a leitmotif, which is repeated and reinterpreted throughout. This is yet another occasion on which Alberto Pinto collaborates with contemporary artists.

Facing page: Standing just inside the main door, an immense totem, carved and assembled by Jerome Abel-Seguin, sets the tone. The urban fiber, the din of the metropolis, yield to another world: secure, majestic, and peaceful.





Left, above, and following pages: The three interior halls are interconnected by wood totems and flowers by Abel-Seguin, wrought plaster wall panels by Stephane Mocanu, lights designed by Alberto Pinto, against a background of sandstone and Zimbabwean black granite.





