Eloquence Prize 2026
Our forests in danger

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In the future, I am aspiring to work in cultural diplomacy and international project management.

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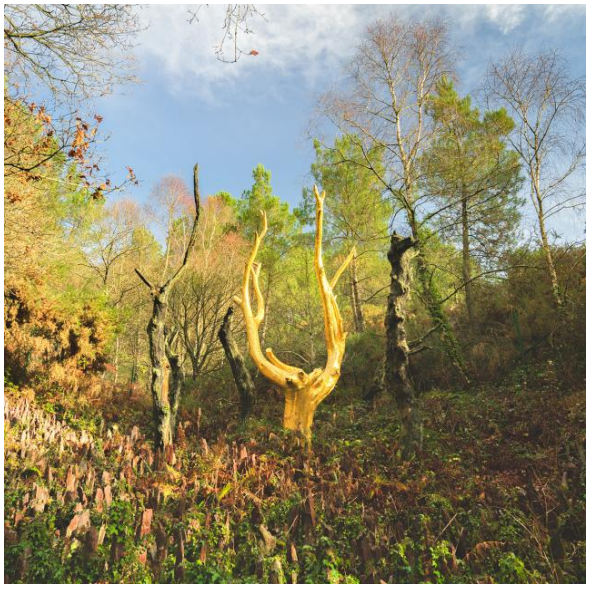
Mythological and folkloric narratives in Contemporary Art,

Using Collective Memory to Protect Our Forests

Forests are more than ecosystems, they are cultural landscapes, deeply tied to identity and collective memory. Environmental protection, in this context, is inseparable from the preservation of traditions and founding myths. Through two geographically distant works, we will explore how artists use mythological and folkloric narratives to sacralize forests, reviving a collective imagination to inspire their protection.

Darryl Rogers, an Australian artist, collaborates with the Bob Brown Foundation to protect Takayna Forest in Tasmania. For the "Art for Takayna" exhibition, he made in 2024 his Target Painting.



François Davin, a French Land Art artist, created L'Arbre d'Or in 1991 in the Brocéliande Forest in Brittany, commissioned by the Association for the Preservation of the Val sans Retour.

We will examine two similar visual and narrative strategies : one rooted in Australian mythology, the other in Breton folklore. *Target Painting* confronts deforestation in the Takayna Forest threatened by mining projects. Darryl Rogers depicts a bleeding tree stump and evokes at the same time the Rainbow Serpent, an ancestral *Dreaming* myth. On the other hand, the french artist François Davin with *L'Arbre d'Or*, responds to the devastating forest fires that ravaged Brocéliande in 1990. Relying on Arthurian legends, he transforms destruction into a magic symbol of regeneration and resilience. Ten years later, anchoring his work in Breton folklore, his statue gave birth to a contemporary and eponymous legend conveying an ecological message.

Finally, we will and must ask : What is the real impact of such artistic interventions ? Can art truly challenge the driving forces of deforestation and global warming ?
Perhaps, more than raising awareness about forests in danger, we must hope that art involves people and inspires action.

Number of words : 320

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