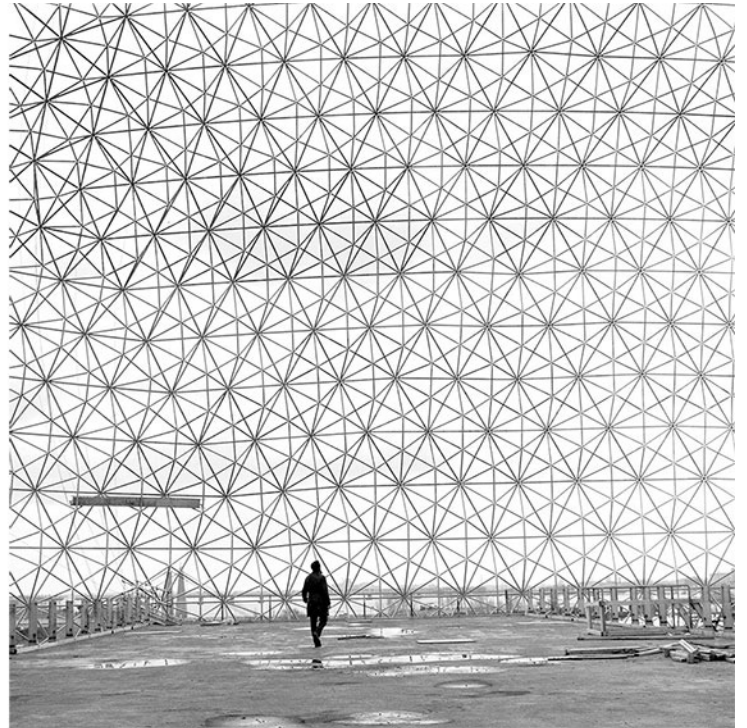




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MUST-SEES

Joseph Beuys and Buckminster Fuller Meet in Plein Sud's Latest Show

Plein Sud, Longueuil September 18 to October 27, 2012

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BY [BRYNE MCLAUGHLIN](#)

Joseph Beuys and Buckminster Fuller might seem strange bedfellows. Yet the paths of these two influential figures — Beuys, the storied leader of a Fluxus-inspired social revolution in art-making; Fuller, the enigmatic architect and dreamer of a new humanist world view — did overlap [in 1974 at Edinburgh's Royal Botanical Gardens](#).

Now, they meet again in Robert Duchesnay's exhibition "Le Studio et l'Anti-Studio de Joseph Beuys et Buckminster Fuller," which closes this week at Plein Sud in Longueuil.

Ground zero for Duchesnay's connection of the two is 1984. In October of that year, Duchesnay had arranged a meeting with Beuys in his Düsseldorf Academy of Art studio that, as it turned out, went awry when he arrived to find that Beuys had cancelled due to illness. Still, Duchesnay was granted permission to photograph the artist's empty studio, resulting in a fascinating series of images that reveal the inner workings and variable inspirations—including Elvis Presley—of a visionary mind. As the exhibition catalogue explains, these photos "stand as the most extensive visual documentation of the studio in existence."

Around the same time, Duchesnay had just begun what would become a 12-year study of Fuller's famous Expo 67 pavilion on Montreal's Île Sainte-Hélène, tracking—often covertly—the slow decay of that iconic geodesic structure as it moved from an emblem of universal promise to a looming skeleton of a fading past. Even now, the dome's future is in jeopardy as the government-run Biosphere environmental museum it has housed since 1995 [is reportedly under threat by federal budget cuts](#).

Duchesnay's exhibition draws together selections from both of these series of black-and-white photographs, which are rich with metaphorical and architectural forms, and it sets them alongside various sculptural artifacts—one of Fuller's dome attachments, for example—that the artist has gathered from the Expo 67 pavilion site. It's a photographic essay of sorts, a speculative scenario that, cast in the dystopic light of an Orwellian future-past, offers a telling connection between the utopian drive and current reality of Beuys's and Fuller's work. As catalogue essayist Céline Mayrand poetically sums it up, "What Duchesnay documents is a gaze from the inside, an intrinsic truth of things. An intuition."