



## ART FRAME

### **Boris Chouvellon presents Playtime: an immersive public space designed for the youth**

[interviews](#) / By [Agnese Torres](#) / June 27, 2025 / 8 minutes of reading

**A skatepark, a gathering spot, a space devoted to social interaction that challenges the standardized norms of playgrounds — Playtime, created by French artist Boris Chouvellon in collaboration with the Italian company Lasi, is all this and more.**

A threshold space between imagination and reality, set in the town of Felletin (France) — a place where the remnants of an industrial past still linger, yet which now provides the backdrop for poetic experimentation in architecture and landscape. In response to a group of young people's request for a space for connection, French artist Boris Chouvellon was forced to make a shift in perspective: stepping momentarily away from his usual disenchanted focus on ruins, he approached the idea of memory and rupture from a regenerative angle. Playtime embodies the deepest and most human sense of art — not an object to be used, nor a passive subject to be contemplated, but a place: a fluid, ever-evolving space that brings people together, invites reflection, and, eventually, inspires hope. The activation of the work by children and teenagers is not only the functional core of the entire project — which was conceived specifically for them — but also a symbolic act of quiet rebirth, one that leaves behind a lasting echo. In this interview, Chouvellon reveals the emotional drive that led him to embark on such an ambitious adventure, as well as the conceptual and technical challenges posed by a project of this scale — both in terms of dimensions and collective effort — and the behind-the-scenes story of his collaboration with Lasi, an Italian company specialized in the manufacturing of wine tanks, that played a key role in the realization of the work.

Playtime presents a striking tension between leisure and social concerns.

What was the initial inspiration for the project?

*Playtime* was born from a reflection on how to escape the leisure spaces imposed on us — their standardized forms, their normative function. The title, a nod to Jacques Tati, allowed me to open a metaphorical field between modernity, architectural absurdity, and the genealogy of counterculture. This project questions the injunctions to “play” within rigid frameworks and proposes a sculptural alternative that transforms this constraint into a collective and emancipatory force. I observed how wastelands or urban margins are spontaneously reclaimed to build makeshift huts or ramps. *Playtime*, a playground, aligns with this logic of poetic appropriation, between fiction and function. It invites diverse audiences to engage in multiple uses: first, a collective space where young people can gather, share, and have fun — a place to skate, climb, enjoy themselves — and more broadly, a space of creation oriented toward utopia, toward dreams.



Playtime, 2025, immersive public space

The site of Felletin plays a crucial role in shaping Playtime's narrative.

How did this place influence your artistic choices?

Felletin is a threshold space. A zone that is both geographical and mental. At the gateway to the Millevaches Plateau—“a thousand springs”—the landscape, saturated with water, wood, and granite, evokes both clear-cut forests and open quarries, those scars that question our relationship to extraction. The wasteland here has an active memory, and the industrial past, especially around the railway, still lingers. This space was transformed thanks in part to the presence of the Quartier Rouge association, which carried the Playtime project. The presence of the CIAP (Centre international d’art et du paysage), designed by Aldo Rossi, is also a powerful signal. This constellation brought me back to Pasolini, to those peripheral landscapes rich in radical imagination. Playtime settled there like a plausible fiction, at the heart of a territory already haunted by social issues.

Your work often deals with notions of ruin and memory.

In what way does Playtime continue or disrupt those themes?

I often speak of the “inverted ruin,” of reversed time—as if the artwork is born already with a form of entropy. Here, I wanted to go further, toward an act of re-enchantment. Playtime is a work of rebirth: it doesn’t wait for abandonment—it calls for life. From the brutal cuts of quarries to the scars left in forests, I wanted to bring forth a structure that defies oblivion. Each element embodies a trace, an echo. Children and young people, by activating the piece, rescue it from a static temporality. They make it a lived, moving, collective place.

Playtime is a space for sharing, designed for youth. This seems to go against your usual aesthetic, often rooted in disenchantment. Why did you accept this project?

And how did you experience it personally?

Because this project allowed me to take responsibility. To offer a true alternative to my previous works, which were often more disillusioned. But above all, because the commission was co-constructed, co-written. The young people were at the heart of the process—from selecting the artist to defining the uses. This horizontality, this collegiality, deeply moved me. It wasn’t about imposing a work, but composing with desires, with intimate and collective stories, with bodies in motion. Personally, it was demanding—I had to step out of my usual frame—but also moving: building for others is also a way of rebuilding oneself.

The installation has a strong physicality—what role does materiality play in the layers of meaning in your work?

Material is always a language in my work. It bears the scars of previous lives. My photographic gaze often lingers on industrial fragments; here, the choice was made for raw materials sourced locally or diverted from their logistical purpose: stainless steel, granite, concrete, wood. Playtime is both a contemplative and inhabited sculpture—but above all, it is usable. In Playshine and Reflect, the sculpture’s polished surface captures and distorts the surrounding landscape, the sky, and the viewers. It’s a hall of mirrors, where vanity has no place. The viewer becomes a reflection, an actor, a fleeting image of a changing territory. If the object evokes oil tankers—and the imminent end of fossil fuels—it is transformed here into a sensitive surface, a poetic anamorphosis. It’s an inverted machine, contemplative rather than utilitarian, where the container, usually opaque and buried in logistical operations, becomes open, luminous, almost celestial.



Playtime, 2025, immersive public space

What were the main challenges during production, especially outdoors and at such a large scale?

I had to learn to work in the rain—literally to dance in the rain. This project was a school of patience. The hardest part was not getting trapped by “the standard,” by regulations. To preserve the spirit of the original drawing, with its share of flexibility and imbalance, while meeting structural requirements. This challenge would have been insurmountable without the support of Cruise Control (Vincent Magnan) and Concrete Flow (Mike Van Der Ouderaa) and their teams, who carried this project with me as a shared adventure. Without them, Playtime would not have found its rightness.

You collaborated with the Italian company LASI for the engineering part.

How did this collaboration come about?

After a long sourcing process, I got in touch with LASI France, who invited me to the SIMEI trade show (dedicated to winemaking machines and products) in Milan. There, I met the Italian team, visited their factory in Meolo near Venice, and was struck by their blend of industrial and familial dimensions. Their connection to art is strong—some of the engineers and architects studied in Venice—and their virtuosity convinced me. These trips are important moments for me: they open poetic breaches, psychogeographic narratives. Knowing I would follow the production in Venice added an additional symbolic layer.

What role did LASI play in translating your vision into structure?

Were there any constraints that changed the initial project?

On the contrary—LASI accepted the challenge. Once they understood that my role was to push their technical limits, they exceeded my expectations. They fully embraced the sculpture. Some ideas—like the modularity of the platforms or the absence of lifting rings—came from them. The dialogue was rich, demanding, and joyful. It wasn't execution, but co-creation.

Had LASI already worked in the artistic field? And how did that enrich your collaboration?

No, LASI primarily specializes in the construction of very technical—but beautiful—wine tanks. Their expertise is often part of architectural projects related to wine tourism. I immediately sensed in them a passion for well-crafted work, a culture of craftsmanship, a deep intelligence of the hand. One of the owner brothers is himself a craftsman. Their interest in art also comes from their proximity to Venice. Their curiosity and openness were a shared foundation.

How do you envision the future of Playtime? Should it evolve or resist the elements?

The initial desire to practice “the infinite wave” will continue in this heterotopic space. Time is infinite. I associate it with words like flammable, rot-proof, immortal — terms that refer to the inalienable space of art and the vanity of things. Stainless steel, derived from minerals, is oxidizable. In another form, the blue granite menhirs, extracted from a nearby quarry, have been there for 4.543 billion years, buried in the strata of the Earth’s crust, and they will still be there tomorrow, standing upright toward the sky. The only visible metamorphosis will be that of the Playgarden, which will gradually take shape within Playtime. The work will become *pharmakon*: both remedy and poison, a place of downfall and a place of healing. What matters is that *Playtime* remains an open work — in Umberto Eco’s sense — open to interpretations, uses, stories, and possibilities.

LINK

- [https://www.instagram.com/boris\\_chouvellon/?hl=it](https://www.instagram.com/boris_chouvellon/?hl=it)