



ART

# Eva Jospin's Grottesco Turns Cardboard Into Ancient Ruins



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By virtue of their scale and physical immersion, **installations** can suspend us inside entirely new environments. For more than 15 years, **Eva Jospin** has been building such worlds, drawing viewers into dense, cave-like structures that feel at once mythical and

architectural. Her latest solo **exhibition** at the **Grand Palais** extends this approach to monumental effect.

Titled **Grottesco**, the exhibition brings together more than 15 works rooted in a foundational **Roman** legend. According to the story, a young man stumbles into a long-forgotten cave and discovers painted ruins later identified as **Domus Aurea**, Emperor Nero's buried palace. From this accidental rediscovery emerged the "grotesque," a decorative language where vegetation, architecture, and myth interlace freely. It is a lineage that aligns closely with Jospin's long-standing attraction to cavernous, organic forms.



While the reference point may be expected, the execution is not. Throughout Grottesco, columns appear overtaken by creeping vines. Domes open inward, enveloping visitors like artificial grottos. Forests stand petrified, frozen as if remnants of a vanished civilization. Elsewhere, embroidered bas-reliefs merge **textile** and **sculpture**, marking a new technical direction for the artist. Unified by earthy tones and dense vegetal motifs, the works evoke a prehistoric atmosphere, as if the exhibition itself were unearthed rather than constructed.

Material choice plays a central role in sustaining this illusion. Jospin once again works primarily with cardboard, a substance typically dismissed as temporary or disposable. Here, it becomes architecture. Its natural color recalls soil and sediment, while its fragility introduces questions of sustainability, impermanence, and human intervention in natural systems.



“Cardboard was everywhere in my studios, and became an accessible and transformable material,” Jospin explains. “It has become definitive in my work because it allows me to create durable works while expressing a certain vulnerability that reflects the relationship to living things and nature.”

Despite its deep engagement with Roman antiquity, Grottesco is also acutely responsive to its setting. The Grand Palais’s vast arches and glass-roofed domes echo the movement

and scale of Jospin's installations. Notably, the artist chose to leave the gallery windows uncovered, deliberately preventing total illusion. The outside world remains visible. Visitors are reminded, as Jospin puts it, that they are still in **Paris**.



This decision resists full escapism. Instead, it creates a tension between past and present, fantasy and reality. That friction has long defined Jospin's practice, which operates between archaeology, imagination, and **contemporary** experience.

"I create spaces to live in, places where visitors can enter, get closer and let themselves be absorbed by the details," Jospin says. "What counts is each person's experience, rather than the transmission of a precise message."

Eva Jospin: Grottesco is on view at the **Grand Palais** through March 15, 2026. The exhibition runs concurrently with Claire Tabouret: D'un seul souffle, presented in the same venue through the same date.













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