

A SERPENTINE GESTURE  
AND OTHER PROPHECIES

## PIERRE-ÉTIENNE MORELLE

Born in 1980 in Château-Thierry (FR). Lives and works in Berlin (DE).

*Grow*, 2008-2010

Installation, Inner tubes

Loan of the artist

A timeline stretches at our feet. It rolls in on itself, folds and unfolds. Undulates. Winds. Its starting point has been lost: concealed at the center of an enormous sphere. A skein which feeds insatiably on the passing time.

The past is embodied in this form whose strata tell forgotten stories. The illusory archive contains the whole memory of the world, hidden from human gaze and consciousness. The future pours forth, luxuriant. Its meanders await us.

Following in Roman Signer's footsteps, Pierre-Étienne Morelle invents absurd situations whose subject and purpose are their own failure. Using his own body as an instrument, Morelle tries out the scenarios by putting his physical resistance to the test. Each scenario is driven by a different constraint. In *Woody* (2010), he transformed a flimsy cardboard tube (previously used to support a roll of carpeting) and started to climb it by means of steel-spiques used as make-shift rungs. In *Body Constrictor* (2005), he wore a body suit made of inflatable cushions, which gradually expanded to the point of disturbing his equilibrium and nearly suffocating him.

Once the performance is over, the objects which remain sometimes take on a new physical and narrative dimension. This is the case of *Grow*. Using rubber inner tubes which have been joined together, the artist has created a twelve-mile-long band. He rolled it up into a ball which grows exponentially as his strength wanes. The rubber ball has replaced the rock, our modern world stands in for ancient Greece, but Sisyphus continues to repeat his absurd, existential task.

Greek mythology teaches us that there is no more terrible punishment than laboring in vain, forever starting anew. Artwork after artwork, Pierre-Étienne Morelle encourages us to think otherwise. Perhaps inspired by Machiguengas, the Indians of Peruvian Amazonia, who walk in order to prevent the Sun from setting.<sup>1</sup>

Eléonore Jacquiau Chamska

1- Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*, Picador: New York, 2001.TO GO FURTHER  
[www.pemorelle.com](http://www.pemorelle.com)

1- Pierre-Étienne Morelle, *GROW*, 2008  
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