



## Cecilia Bengolea: Oneness der TANK, Basel

Curated by Chus Martínez

8 June – 16 June 2019

Opening reception on Friday, 7 June, 6 pm

Performance on Tuesday, 11 June, 7 pm

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der TANK is proud to present a new, specially commissioned project by Cecilia Bengolea and curated by Chus Martínez. *Oneness* articulates itself as an immersive landscape that reminds of the bottom of the sea. The installation comprises new and archive video work and will be activated on the occasion of a one-time performance by the Argentinian, Paris-based artist, dancer and choreographer.

One cannot but feel fascinated by words such as “riverbed” and “seabed”—the soft ground where the water flows. Imagine all the stones now on the floor of der TANK in their previous life at the bottom of the Rhine. In fact, there is a whole choreography in the encounter between the water and the rocks. It is not the movement of the water that erodes the rocks, but the smaller pieces of rock, sediment, and silt that constantly dance within it. These tiny bits of broken stones hit the rocks at the bottom of the river, breaking off small pieces, and the river does the rest by carrying them away. The faster the water moves, the more sediment flows over the river rocks, hastening erosion. It is easy to imagine this ballet of particles.

All the stones now forming the floor of the new performance piece by Cecilia Bengolea at der TANK miss the water, although a family of deep-sea creatures is resting on top of them. They are all invertebrate species, the type of organisms that dominate deep areas. Oh, the deep sea is an amazing world! Life in the depths is extremely slow-growing, like the time it took for the great rocks to become small stones. For both these ceramic creatures and these silent stones, time has a dimension that has nothing to do with human life. I assume that this is why Cecilia Bengolea has transformed herself into a hybrid creature capable of dancing with and for these life-forms.

Too often we talk as if climate emergency were a technical problem and could be «solved» through the adoption of certain measures. But in reality, our negative impact on nature is a cultural problem, or rather is due to the lack of a culture that sees this damage as self-inflicted pain, as domestic violence, as a negation of coexistence... This new performance and installation piece by Cecilia Bengolea is entitled *Oneness* or «Danse au fond de la mer» because it is in dancing and performing a different relationship with elements of nature removed from our daily experience that we are able to understand the effects of human activity, such as pollution, destructive trawl-fishing, deep sea mining, and climate change, as well as the possibility of producing different conditions to positively affect our future in oneness, in togetherness with life in a broad sense.



*Oneness* also marks a very fruitful four-year collaboration with the French foundation **[NA!] Project**. Their commitment to supporting art and artists addressing this different approach to our coexistence with nature began during dOCUMENTA (13) but has evolved over the last few years, giving rise to different initiatives such as supporting new commissions at der TANK. Mathilde Rosier, Ingela Ihrmann, Teresa Solar, and now Cecilia Bengolea have benefited from a program that not only helps the Art Institute to support artists, but also to situate these questions and praxis at the core of our curricula. We cannot conceive of nature separately from the social issues we face: gender inequality, poverty, the transformation of labor ... and it is through the emergence of languages that are sensitive to them and capable of creating an artistic experience of them that we can learn to see new possibilities. Possibilities and new future scenarios that are linked with «awareness,» but—first and foremost—with the joy of a world that views its responsibility and future freedom as inextricably linked with the life of each and every one of our planet's organisms.

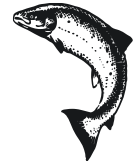
A multidisciplinary artist, **Cecilia Bengolea** investigates the history of both vernacular and urban dancing through her installations and performances. She's particularly interested in the relation to nature, elements, animist beliefs and choreographed figuration. She conceives of her artistic practice as an animated sculpture that allows her to become both subject and object within her own work.

Cecilia Bengolea's performances and video installations were exhibited at Desert X (2019); the Engadin Art Talks (2019); the Venice Biennale (2019); Art Basel in Miami Beach (2018); the Ocean Space, TBA21, Venice (2018); Dhaka Art Summit (2018); Volcano Extravaganza, Fiorucci Art Trust, Stromboli (2018); Palais de Tokyo (2015 and 2018); Elevation 1049, Gstaad (2017); Dia Art Foundation (2017); Faena Arts Center, Buenos Aires (2015 and 2017); Bienal de Sao Paulo (2016); The Infinite Mix at Hayward Gallery (2016); Spiral Hall, Tokyo (2016); the Centre Pompidou (2010 and 2016); The Tanks, Tate Modern (2015); ICA, London (2015); the Biennale de Lyon (2015); The Kitchen, New York (2014); and the Gwangju Biennial (2014).

Since 2005, Bengolea has been collaborating with François Chaignaud with whom she created and presented pieces in numerous art and dance institutions around the world, among which the Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon, the Ballet de Lorraine or Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal. They were awarded the Prix de la critique de Paris (2009) and the young Artist Prize at Gwangju Biennial (2014). Bengolea also frequently collaborates with dancehall artists such as Craig Black Eagle, Bombom DHQ, Damion BG and contemporary artists among which Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Jeremy Deller.

Cecilia Bengolea enjoys a contribution to production by **[NA!] Project**.

**der TANK** is the Art Institute's exhibition space. This glass cube at the core of the Campus of the Arts in Basel hosts every year numerous exhibitions and projects by the Art Institute. Two or three times a year, it serves as a presentation space for new commissions by guest artists strongly linked to the teaching program of the Art Institute. These commissions coexist with an exhibition series presenting twice a year solo projects by former students of the Art Institute. der TANK additionally serves as an experimentation lab for students during seminars and workshops or to develop their own exhibitions and projects.



## Information

- Curated by **Chus Martínez**  
Curatorial Assistance Simon Würsten
- **Exhibition:** 8 June through 16 June 2019
- **Opening reception** on Friday, 7 June 2019, 6 pm
- **Performance** on Tuesday, 11 June 2019, 7 pm
- **Press preview** on Tuesday, 11 June 2019, 6.30 pm
- **Opening hours**  
Wednesday – Sunday, 2–7 pm  
And by appointment: [dertank.hgk@fhnw.ch](mailto:dertank.hgk@fhnw.ch)
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