

PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

CURATOR VITTORIA MATARRESE

“O sweet spontaneous earth”, from the eponymous poem by E.E. Cummings, is the title given to this set of proposals that attempt to work with the earth as a philosophical material.

If the “Reclaim the Earth” as a whole season aims to uncover the ramifications of work by artists who help us think through and feel a charged, intense, and engaged nature, scouring the earth in the literal and figurative sense, bringing to light forgotten narratives or inventing new ones altogether, this associated performance program questions our experiences of the landscape in the broadest sense of the term, focusing on the environments that we recompose with our eyes, ears, and taste buds.

The invited artists investigate environmental transformations and their impact on the human as an individual and the human as a social structure, as well as exploring the socio-political, geographical, and economic implications of these shifting landscapes.

A range of contemplative meditations, stark warnings, concrete actions and imaginary proposals here stimulate our relationships with ecosystems and those between ourselves and others, seeking a greater understanding of contemporary problems and our emotional states. A plurality of actors with a wide range of different forms of knowledge come together here to rethink the balance of ecologies and try to offset and counteract the drift of the present world. Collaborative practices promise to generate a community that weaves together, builds, and sculpts a new commons of shared knowledge.

Artist residency

La Manutention:

Holly Childs & Gediminas Žygus

Performances:

Annemarie Maes

Annamaria Ajmone

Screenings of films by:

Joséfa Ntjam

Cecil B. Evans

Amélie Giacomini et Laura Sellies

Azzedine Saleck

Natália Trejbalová

Ana Vaz

PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

ARTIST RESIDENCY LA MANUTENTION

Holly Childs & Gediminas Žygas
Thursday 28th, April 5th, May 12th
Saturday May 21st

La Manutention is a residency programme for performance artists. Artists Holly Childs & Gediminas Žygas have been invited for a one month residency and will meet the public every Thursday evening in the Palais de Tokyo over the course of their stay. These performance evenings allow the public to discover their universe and that of their invited guests, offering an opportunity to follow their work as it evolves.

Holly Childs, born in Australia, is a writer and artist living and working between Adelaide (Australia) and Amsterdam (The Netherlands). Her research focuses on the language and emotions of ecological and computer systems. She has published two books – *No Limit (Hologram)* and *Danklands (Arcadia Missa)*—and has presented her work at the ICA (London), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), the Trust (Berlin), and the Elam School of Art (Auckland).

Gediminas Žygas is an artist living and working in Vilnius (Lithuania) across the fields of sound, documentary, and performance. His practice brings together a range of influences drawn variously from architecture, ecology, ethnography, scientific studies, and media theory. Žygas has presented his work at the Barbican Centre (London), the Berghain (Berlin), Sonic Acts (Amsterdam) and the *Centre Pompidou* (Paris).

Childs and Žygas' time at *La Manutention* will be dedicated to research and will unfold in four chapters around the *Hydrangea* series, which sees the artists immersed in a constantly evaporating world whose narratives are also dissolving. As individuals are increasingly confined to online space, can the cracks in reality ever be closed? Is history itself a form of science fiction? Are its narrators always reliable? The creative process of *Hydrangea* has been defined by the search for a form that might link fiction, poetry and musical experiment. Its narrative is influenced by both artists' experiences of rave culture, technical precepts, lectures, as well as whispered conversations.

Holly Childs et Gediminas Žygas's residency is supported by the Lithuanian Cultural Institute.



Holly Childs & Gediminas Žygas, *Hydrangea*
Photogram, film HD
Photo credit: Marijn Degenaar and Nicola Baratto

PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Annemarie Maes **Friday June 3rd**

Annemarie Maes is an artist and research scientist, and has been studying the interactions of bees with the urban environment for 15 years now.

With a keen interest in ecology and technology, she is constantly seeking to grasp the mysteries of living things, engaging in a fascinating collaboration with nature. Her work is structured around three axes:

1. a deep concern for socio-ecological issues
2. DIY technology, which she uses for many of her projects and which she develops and integrates in collaboration with fab labs and university research laboratories
3. extensive research into biomaterials (based on algae, bacteria and products made by bees) that is anchored in the context of 'new materialism'.

In 2009 she founded the "Brussels Urban Bee Lab" [BUBL]. BUBL is an independent international collective of artists, scientists, beekeepers, technicians, and creatives. They use artistic, scientific and technological research approaches to address the challenges of sustainability and the monitoring and survival of urban bees. They work on urban bee colonies, approaching them as a vehicle for innovative artistic practices that can raise ecological awareness.

A bee is a bee is a bee

For the Palais de Tokyo, Annemarie Maes proposes an immersive experience. She transforms the spaces of the Palais into a laboratory through an approach that is at once artistic and scientific.

Her performance is anchored in the research of two major scientists who studied the world of bees: Karl Von Frisch and François Huber. Through a poetic narrative, the artist invites us into an animal world with a highly organized social structure. Annemarie Maes creates a symphony for the five senses and explores the "waggle", the dance through which bees determine the functioning of their colonies.

With the support of the Center Wallonie-Bruxelles/ Paris, within their *Hors-Les-Murs* and the contribution of Wallonie-Bruxelles International.

Annamaria Ajmone **Thursday June 9th**

Annamaria Ajmone is a dancer and choreographer. She earned a diploma in Modern Literature from the University of Milan, before continuing her training as a dancer at the Paolo Grassi Civic School of Dramatic Art. At the centre of her research is the body, understood as a malleable and changeable material that is capable of transforming places by creating temporal parallels and superimpositions. Ajmone works with a number of collaborators for her productions, sharing her creative process involving different images and visions with them. Since 2014, she has presented her choreographic work at numerous dance festivals, theatres, museums, art galleries and other venues in Europe, Asia, North Africa and the USA.

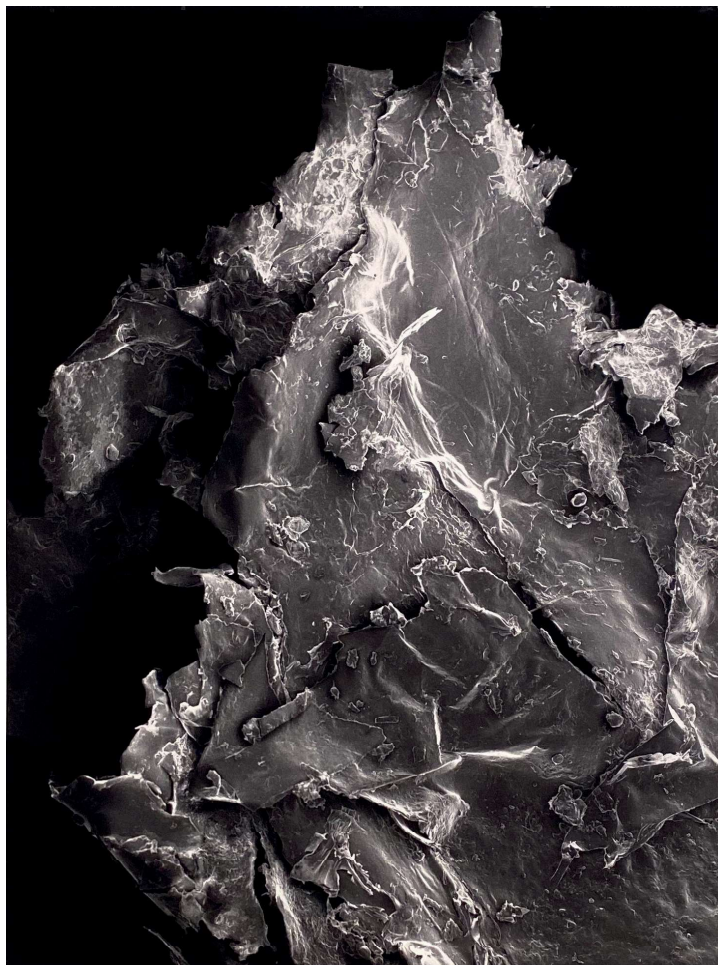
Ajmone is an associate artist of the Triennale Milano Teatro 2019-2024.

La notte é il mio giorno preferito is a reflection on the relationship with the Other by way of a meditation on animals and the ecosystems in which they live.

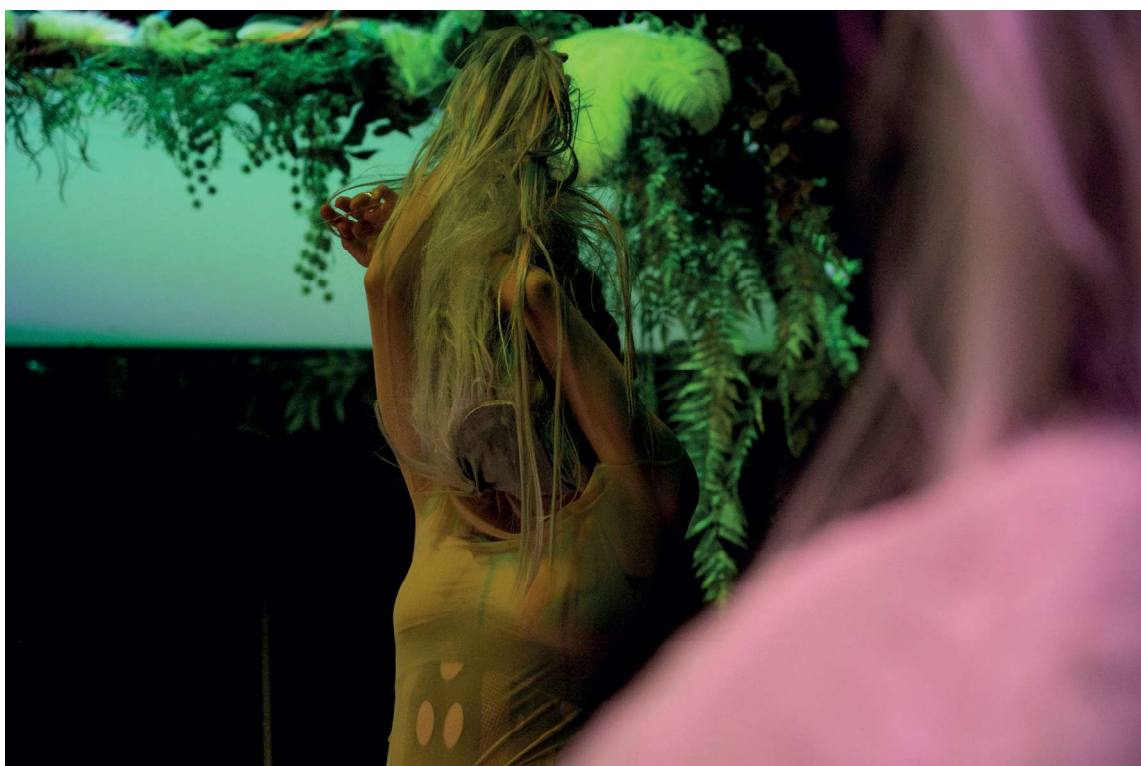
The performance is inspired by the philosophical practice of tracking outlined by Baptiste Morizot in his essay *Sur la piste animale*, an activity which consist of following the paths taken by wild animals in an attempt to recreate their gaze and guess at their possibilities of action, following the ontological positions formulated by anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

The animal and the plant-based, the organic and the inorganic merge in the dark space of the forest at night – with slides and animal calls breaking its calm. Mysterious signals and perceptive tools, inspired by different species, constitute its connective tissue. This is a forest that is neither virgin nor idealized, but rather techno-natural, integrating and transforming the imprints left by its inhabitants.

La notte é il mio giorno preferito has been imagined and created in collaboration with Natália Trejbalová (visual artist), Stella Succi (researcher), Giulia Pastore (lighting designer), Jules Goldsmith (costume designer), and Flora Yin-Wong (sound artist).



Annamarie Maes, *a bee is a bee is a bee*
Photo credit: Annemarie Maes



Annamaria Ajmone, *La notte é il mio giorno preferito*
Photo credit: Andrea Pizzalis

SCREENINGS/TALK PROGRAM
MAY 11th

Josèfa Ntjam

Born in 1992 in Metz (France), lives and works in Paris. Josèfa Ntjam develops a transversal practice that blends video, writing, installation, and photomontage. Working around the idea of spatial speculation, for the past several years she has been developing a work of fiction that deals with possible worlds and potential futures. She also presents performative readings as a means of embodying her writing. Her work has been shown at the Hordaland kunstsenter (Bergen, Norway), the 2019 Lyon Biennale, La Mostra de Givors, Arnolfini – Bristol's International's Center for Contemporary Arts (Bristol, United Kingdom), GENERATOR projects (Dundee, Scotland), Bootleg with DOC! (New York, USA), Galerie Paris–Beijing (Paris), Zentrale Pratteln (Basel, Switzerland), Palais de Tokyo and Bétonsalon (Paris).

Dislocation, 2022, video, 15min
 Followed by a conversation with Vittoria Matarrese

Dislocation is a 15-minute short film directed by Josèfa Ntjam, Sean Hart, and Nicolas Pirus. The film follows a main character – Persona – as they make their way through a cave. Characters with liquid forms come to meet them, melding with Persona and creating a composite and shapeless body, to the point that they are completely transformed, becoming a wave that fills the cave with water. Amidst a collective movement of words and memories where the human body ceases to exist and watery excrescences swallow up assignations, Persona is no more.

This film uses several techniques of image generation, animation, 3D modelling, collage and filming. The 3D modelling was carried out in a cave at the archaeological site of Soyons.

This film was co-produced by the Palais de Tokyo, in the frame of the residency *La Manutention*, in october 2019.

Cecil B. Evans

Cecil was born in 1983 in Cleveland (USA), and lives and works in Paris (France). Cecil creates multidisciplinary projects on an international scale. In her creations, she uses technologies developed alongside and in the wake of the internet to examine the value of emotion and its capacity for rebellion when it comes into contact with ideological structures. Cecil B. Evans explores and interrogates the concepts of mutability and adaptation in the face of change, notions which she approaches as part of a complex strategy oriented towards a difficult process of survival.

What the Heart Wants, 2016, video, 40min

After the collapse of the World Wide Web, a ubiquitous system has completely replaced the internet's failing infrastructure, evolving to the point of achieving its ultimate goal: personhood. We meet some of the inhabitants of this world, as they try to understand what it means to be 'human', and as the parameters through which this intelligence looks to define humanity begin to unravel.

The video is projected in a specially designed environment, allowing visitors to fully experience the multiplicity of voices, scenarios and questions that are superimposed on one another throughout the film.



Josefa Ntjam, *Dislocation*, 2022
Photogram, film HD, 15'
Courtesy of the artists



Cécile B. Evans, *What the Heart Wants*, 2016
Photogram, film HD, 41'05"
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Emanuel Layr

Amélie Giacomini and Laura Sellies

Born respectively in 1988 in Lyon and in 1989 in Grenoble, live and work in Paris.

Amélie Giacomini and Laura Sellies graduated from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Lyon in 2014 and have been working together since 2009.

Their approach combines installation and sound environments with performance. They invent composite, superimposed narratives that are activated by objects or performers and which are staged in deserted locations. Myths as well as contemporary, architectural, literary, and even animist references are set within these highly detailed imaginary landscapes where objects are actors within a complex choreography, where human presence becomes sculptural, and where every element is potential material for possible narratives.

Toutes ces filles couronnées de langues, 2021, video, 25 min

A group of eighty-nine women lived on a volcanic island, where they began inventing a new language, the cornerstone of a new society. For eighty-nine days, they discovered and recorded gestures and the shapes these gestures traced out. They inscribed them as they went along on the ground and on walls, stones, goats, and bellies. The island became an alphabet.

In the film *Toutes ces filles couronnées de langues*, Laura Sellies and Amélie Giacomini continue their research on language, a central part of their work for a number of years now.

This research begins from the conviction that language is one of the main tools of domination and fundamentally shapes our society, and that, in order to deconstruct it, we must conceive of new modes of exchange. The body and sculpture have always been at the heart of this research. How might the movement of the body, linked to the materiality of an object reimagined as an equal partner, enable us to invent a new system of signs? Through their work, the artists suggest rudiments of a language that will speak to those who take the time to decipher it and make it their own.

Azzedine Saleck

Azzedine Saleck is a Mauritanian–American poet and artist. He was born in Paris in 1987 and currently lives between the French capital and Nouakchott (Mauritania).

In his work, he draws on the complexity of fragmented cultural influences at the intersection of language and form. His practice centres on language-based sculptures and spaces which touch upon the intimate and elicit affective responses from viewers. Dislocating his references to assemble them anew, Saleck creates and recreates fictional spaces and habitats that refer to one another and encourage ritualistic behaviours. The situations that arise from them prompt and reflect moments of heightened awareness, and act as witnesses to subjective and collective histories. Saleck has shown his work at the Fondation Gulbenkian, the Centre Pompidou and the independent artistic space Treize in Paris, at Confort Moderne in Poitiers, at the Villa Arson in Nice, and at the Southard Reid Gallery in London. His work has been published in *Talismans: The desert between us is only Sand*, Gulbenkian Foundation, 2018, *Year*, 2014, *Alter* *Zombie*, 2015.

Dune, 2022, video, 8 min

« Above the land
Across the sand
The things I've seen
The ways I've been »

Dune consists of a conversation between Bah ould Saleck and Mohamedou ould Salahi, respectively the father of the artist and a former detainee who spent twelve years imprisoned in Guantanamo at the hands of the CIA. This dialogue between the two Mauritanians about time unfolds before images of sand harvesting in the desert, perhaps suggesting that, despite human efforts, the landscape often escapes us and refuses to be conquered.



Laura Sellies et Amélie Giacomini, *Toutes ces filles couronnées de langues*, 2021
Photogram, film HD, 25'
Courtesy of the artists



Azzedine Saleck, *Dune*, 2022
Installation view, 8'18''
Courtesy of the artist and Confort Moderne

Natália Trejbalová

Natália Trejbalová was born in 1989 in Košice (Slovakia), and lives and works in Milan.

Her multidisciplinary artistic practice combines video, objects, drawing, photography, and performance with other forms. In her latest films she uses the possibilities of science fiction and speculative world-creation to explore our individual perception of global transformations, potential future inter-species relations, and changes in the planetary environment.

About Mirages and Stolen Stones, 2020, video, 20 min

About Mirages and Stolen Stones is a video in three acts, in which the artist transports the viewer to distant landscapes between her studio and the end of the world. The borders visible from one frame to the next seemingly belong to a mysteriously flattening earth: our earth, Mother Earth, seen through a screen. Embracing the paradoxes of flat-earth theories and of the two-dimensional representation of physical space, Natália Trejbalová asks a fictional scientist to investigate the new geophysical formation of the Earth, the inexplicable creation of the Edge and, finally, the Great Rainbow at the end of the world. Gradually, the subjectivity of the narrative takes precedence over its science, which in turn gives way to science fiction. A certain affinity between counter-culture and conspiracy theories emerges as the film progresses. In between these two poles, between 360° and 1°, *About Mirages and Stolen Stones* blends the meanders of miniature decors with the vast abysses of the open sea.

Ana Vaz

Ana Vaz was born in 1986 in Brasilia (Brazil), and lives and works between Paris (France), Lisbon (Portugal) and Brasilia (Brazil).

A graduate of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Le Fresnoy–Studio National des Arts Contemporains, Ana Vaz has also been a member of SPEAP (SciencesPo School of Political Arts), a project conceived and directed by Bruno Latour. Ana Vaz is an artist and filmmaker whose films and work speculate on the relationships between self and other and between myth and history by deploying a cosmology of signs, references and perspectives. Assembling found and filmed materials, her films combine ethnography and speculative fiction in an exploration of the frictions and fictions inscribed in both natural and built environments.

Olhe bem as montanhas, 2018, video, 30 min

“Look closely at the mountains!”: This imperative comes from the artist Manfredo de SouzaNetto, and was uttered during the years of military dictatorship in Brazil, when mining was ravaging the environment in the state of Minas Gerais, in the country’s south-east.

Ana Vaz uses video montage to draw a parallel between this region and the geographically distant Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, which has also been shaped by three centuries of mining.



Natalia Trejbalova, *About Mirages and Stolen Stones*, 2020
Photogram, film HD, 19'50''
Courtesy of the artist, supported by Case Chiuse by Paola Clerico



Ana Vaz, *Olhe bem as montanhas I*, 2018
Photogram, film HD, 30'40''
Courtesy of the artist

CURATOR: VITTORIA MATARRESE

An architecture graduate, Vittoria Matarrese is currently the director of performance at the Palais de Tokyo. After working as the artistic director of the Villa Medici in Rome, she has often undertaken projects at the crossroads of several artistic disciplines, from cinema to dance to theatre. This polysemy is now at the heart of her research into performance in contemporary art.

At the Palais de Tokyo, she has designed several live art formats, including the Festival Do Disturb, presented for 5 editions until 2019, as well as the creation residency La Manutention, welcoming performers since 2017.

Vittoria Matarrese most recently co-curated the exhibition “Natures Mortes” by Anne Imhof (2021) together with Emma Lavigne. As part of the curatorial team of the Palais de Tokyo, she curated the exhibition “Anticorps” (2020) and the 15th Lyon Biennial, “Là où les eaux se mêlent” (2019).



Photo credit: Katrin Jakobsen