Interregnum: between emergence and contamination

Patricia M. Hernández



FLAPJACK OCTOPUS

This little octopus often rests on the mud, its orange body resembling a flat, fluffy pancake. When startled by a predator, a flapjack octopus perks up and swims to safety by flapping its stubby fins, pulsing its webbed arms, pushing water through its funnel for jet propulsion, or all three at once. When the coast is clear, it stretches its webbed arms and parachutes back to the seafloor.

Sourced from the Monterey
BAY AQUARIUM RESEARCH
INSTITUTE WEBSITE

Participating artists

Keren Benbenisty Domingo Castillo Ofri Cnaani Deville Cohen Sofía Córdova Nir Evron Dor Guez, Elite Kedan Nestor Siré

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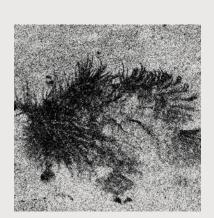
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CONTAMINATION

Interregnum: between emergence and contamination **Patricia M. Hernández**



HAIRY FROGFISH

The hairy frogfish is also known as the striated frogfish, which derives from its scientific name: Antennarius striatus. Its "hairs" are actually skin appendages or spinules which cover the frogfish's body, head, and fins. These spinules can be copious and long or very short and sometimes even almost invisible.

Sourced from Lembeh Resort and Dive Center Website

- 1 Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks eds. Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Dagenham, UK: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 1971).
- 2 Zygmunt Bauman, "Times of Interregnum," *Ethics and Global Politics* vol. 5, no.1 (2012): 49-56.

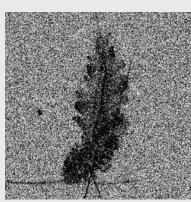
Suspended in a state between what was, is, and could be, the interregnum is made of invisible spaces, unconsciously constructed intangible gaps between individual perceptions and external realities. "Interregnum: between emergence and contamination" defines the present condition as an interregnum, following political thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937): "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear." Interregnum, a term from the fifteenth century, was originally used to demarcate a transition of power, the period between the death of one sovereign and the coming of another. Gramsci expands our understanding of this in-between state to represent the different conditions of suspension, where new systems responsible for making the old frames obsolete are not yet strong enough to emerge.²

We are bound by the visible and hidden entanglements that govern our societies—temporal configurations of language, facts, events, and values that are informed by the patterning of individual choices, policies that shape national and international relations, and inevitably shift societal and ecological outcomes. This project questions who and what are in the process of emerging in this moment, and reflects on the emancipatory potentials to be imagined, shaped, and created in relation to the effects of the climate crisis. Within the interregnum, art acts as a space to build alliances through collaboration. It supports imagining and creating these emancipatory potentials. The interregnum is a period of accelerated reflection and growth toward a future which has the potential to be ethically and equitably better than the past.

Historically, humans have developed infrastructures of conquest, business, and governance which are predicated on dominion over people and nature. Humans have deforested land to build railways and roads, terraformed coasts to create more land to inhabit, and farmed food sources to the point where species go extinct. The established frameworks of modernism—its utopian ideals and vision of human progress—sought to master nature rather than build infrastructures that considered it. These infrastructures are the embodiment of settler colonialism, the pervasive extraction of a planet with finite resources. They are relics of a dying system—objects, customs, and beliefs that reshape the planetary landscape.

The old frameworks have become obsolete by their unsustainability. The climate crisis, a morbid symptom of capitalism, is evidence of the current reduction of nature that cultural critic Macarena Gómez-Barris describes as being guided by capital linked to colonial history. This mode of accumulation, implicit in the perpetuation of systemic injustices across human and non-human ecologies, is not only an unjust configuration, based on a racialized and class-bases hierarchy, but it also continues to marginalize non-Western cultures of

class-bases hierarchy, but it also continues to marginalize non-Western cultures and histories.⁴ There are many examples of how racial, class, and colonial oppression unfold as ecological violence: the ongoing wildfires in the West Coast of the US resulting in burned homes and land, and emitting so much pollution it can be detected across the country; the toxic flood in Tampa, Florida, forcing the evacuation of more than 300 homes and businesses; the lead contamination in the water of the majority-Black city of Flint, Michigan, between 2014–19; the neglect of Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria in 2018; the continued theft and poisoning of Indigenous land and water for extractive capitalism in North Dakota, Utah, and throughout the Americas. More people, more migration, more territories, more concrete, more plastic, more drought, and more rising water—our systems and infrastructures are failing us.



TOMOPTERIS CARPENTERI

In Antarctica's Southern Ocean swims a beautiful polychaete (bristly worm) called Tomopteris carpenteri, which is adorned with alternating red and transparent bands. The largest species in its genus, it is found throughout the water column, including the deep sea. Most polychaetes swim in the open water using their parapodia, the comb-like appendages coming off their sides, but some bury into the seafloor. Many members of the Tomopteris genus are bioluminescent and can shoot sparks off their parapodia when threatened.

SOURCED FROM THE

OCEAN PORTAL, A SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION'S OCEAN
INITIATIVE

CONTAMINATION

Macarena Gómez-Barris, The Extractive Zone Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 2–14.

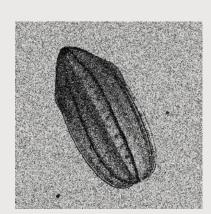
Arturo Escobar, "Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements," Third World Quarterly vol. 25, no. 1 (2004): 207-30. Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," Cultural Studies vol. 21, no. 2 (2007): 168-178.

maintain its power. Although there have been historical moments of refusal, protest, and change, many of these were led by institutions that aimed to improve society but inevitably fell into the same patterns of oppression they claimed to resist. One example thereof is the feminist movement in the US, where fighting for the rights of women neglected to include Indigenous, Black, and Hispanic women due to internal anxieties around the need to present a unified feminist message and an uncomplicated relationship to whiteness and privilege. To understand their failures and blind spots would help us salvage from them the nascent rumblings of a future still to arrive.

The monolithic, well-oiled machine of colonialism has taken centuries to develop and

Recognizing the shortcomings and the possibilities of historical resistance movements lays the groundwork for different movements to coalesce. The climate crisis causes significant harm to communities of color, both in the West and the so-called Global South. Communities in areas that are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate crisis, such as coastal storms, drought, fire, and sea-level rise often create the least environmental damage and yet are disproportionately affected by an interrelated set of combined vulnerabilities, including geographical context; financial, socio-economic, cultural, and gender status; and limited access to public services, voting rights, and justice.

The climate crisis impacts more than nature. It is a social crisis that asks people to address issues of inequality on many levels: between countries, class divisions within countries, gender parity, and between generations. Addressing these inequalities necessitates the leadership of people from the most vulnerable communities, who are already calling for more ambitious action on climate change, discrimination, and other global issues. Looking to activists, artists, cultural workers, and facilitators are acts that teach us to embrace change that pivots out of past failures. Together, they create the multiple actions needed for this transition which form the process of envisioning and implementing pathways out of the interregnum.



BEROE_SP_CTENOPHORE

The Ctenophore, commonly known as the Comb Jelly, are usually a colorless species that are transparent when suspended in water, except for an iridescent rows of comb plates. These tiny creatures exhibit nocturnal displays of bluish and greenish light that are among the most brilliant and beautiful known in the animal kingdom.

SOURCED FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

Such actions, when formed within the imaginative perspectives of art, invite us to view the world from another perspective. However infinitely small or localized they may begin, they connect communities and help us see more broadly. These links are forged by practicing and repeating new patterns of action that have the power to incite the changes we seek and repair the injustices of our past. Racial and environmental justice are inextricably linked. The systems of power and privilege that destroy the environment also perpetuate the violence toward people of color. When the system, still based on the needs of settler colonialism, fails us, the resulting effects are oppressed groups being treated as excess and extractable. Expanding upon Audre Lorde's writing that our future on the planet depended upon "all women to identify and develop new patterns of relating across difference," I would add that all humans must accept that the old frameworks have not served us, nor the planet that supports us.

In the context of climate, the interregnum presents the possibility to form collaborations across unlikely commons. These collaborations manifest in what anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing has characterized as patches of contaminated diversity, open-ended assemblages, or relationships between humans and non-humans undergoing systems of distress. Although, contamination is usually to be avoided, in this project not only is contamination inevitable, it is desired, sought out. When something is found to be contaminated, it has been transformed by an encounter. Contamination is thus a tool for transformation from which to rethink precarity and form new modes of collaboration across difference, human and non-human. Such a transformation happens through a collaborative process—it is dialectical, relational, and everchanging, depending on context. Here contamination becomes a method of collaboration to imagine building alliances across human and non-human domains. While the interregnum may be an indeterminate space, it also provides a productive sense of hope, asking people, communities, governments, and corporations to think and act differently. Therein lies the potential for forging multiple pathways to change, creating the possibility to rewrite our future into one that is just, fair.

⁵ Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (Berkley: Crossing Press, 1984), 114–123.

10 Hernández

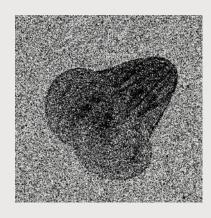
These forms of allyship question traditional understandings of kinship and intimacy and invite us to see the human as just another node in the network of interspecies dependencies. The climate crisis is created through non-human responses to imperial and industrial infrastructure dispersed unevenly across the earth. Therefore, mitigating the effects of climate change requires more generative collaborative approaches that embrace contamination, deviation, and mutation as a necessary part of ethics, politics, and resistance to imperialist and patriarchal systems.

Deconstructing the hierarchies implicit within human relations with our surrounding environment involves the unlearning of nature as other, and therefore, dangerous and unknown. Othering is a learned method of negating another person's individual human agency, and consequently, those that are othered are treated with less dignity and respect. This method contributes to the dehumanization of individuals, leading to the persecution of marginalized groups, the denial of rights based on group identities, or even acts of violence against others. Much like people learn to exclude and fear an other, we also learn to regard nature, from forests to the seas, as expendable and disposable. In many cultures, nature is othered because it is understood to lack agency. Humans have always understood nature to be subordinate to them. Contamination acknowledges that nature can make its own choices and provides the framework for collaborative adaptation to human-disturbed ecosystems. Contamination supports alliances as a tool to counter a colonial matrix of power in which regions of high biodiversity are reduced to resources through the demands of capitalism. We may be entangled in a violent past, but it isn't a predestined life sentence. Within the interregnum, we have the possibility to unlearn the patterns that got us here in the first place.

CONTAMINATION

This unlearning builds on non-Western, decolonial, and intersectional scholarship, in which there are historical precedents for non-anthropocentric ways of being. They offer knowledge based on biodiversity and de-linking hegemonic epistemologies from coloniality, working instead toward the multiplicity of a shared ecology. Philosopher Walter D. Mignolo introduces the concept of epistemic disobedience—a form of decolonial thinking which he describes as a tool to unlearn

⁶ Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America," *Nepantla* vol. 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580.



BLOODY-BELLY COMB JELLY

Many of the deep-sea animals the bloody-belly comb jelly preys upon can be bioluminescent, creating their own light. The translucent predator needs to conceal its stomach or risk its most recent meal lighting it up from the inside out and alerting potential predators to its whereabouts. The vibrant crimson that gives this comb jelly its name is actually helping it hide from its predators since red is nearly invisible in the deep sea.

Bloody-belly comb jellies are ctenophores, not true jellyfish. Like other comb jellies, they move through the water by beating their shimmering, hair-like cilia.

EMERGE

Sourced from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute website

- 7 Walter D. Mignolo, *Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: a Manifesto* (Merced: University of California, 2011).
- 8 runo Latour, "On Actornetwork Theory: A Few Clarifications," *Soziale Welt* vol. 47, no. 4 (1996): 369-81.
- 9 Donna J. Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

and de-link from the effects of colonial modernity, it is a practice of recognizing the perspective of the subject and actively seeking knowledge outside the Western cannon. For Mignolo, epistemic disobedience is necessary because there is no way out of the colonial entanglements from within Western categories of thought. Epistemic disobedience has the potential to situate us in a different place, at a different beginning.⁷

Where there is no singular vision of the common, an effort to find common ground would introduce methods of alliances foregrounding collaboration and intersectional dialogue that are not simply in the hands of individuals, but distributed across dynamic networks composed of human and non human actors, objects, and actants. Together, they offer an understanding of ecology as a method of collective action and becoming-with each other through difference, an approach located in the interstices of multiple fields, such as the social, political, economic, and material.

The role of art in this equation is to provide a space for imagining a future based on multi-disciplinary dialogue in response to the global impact of the climate crisis. Art provides a space for the convergence of political resistance and social action, where varying narratives, time, and space meet. Artists' work and art institutions are where alternatives emerge and form powerful genealogies of thought and praxis. Interdisciplinarity is itself a form of contamination: art brings together multiple disciplines and modes of working. In making room for contamination, art institutions become contaminated themselves by the world outside them.

Art is a platform to create new speculative imaginaries, connecting with critical thought, political action, and science, which construct cultural meaning from structural effects. "Interregnum: between emergence and contamination," therefore, works through the advantages and potential limitations of art serving as a medium for small-scale social change at a moment when larger global movements toward ecological sustainability are absent. The artworks featured make apparent that there exists an elasticity to human thought that can open potential futures.

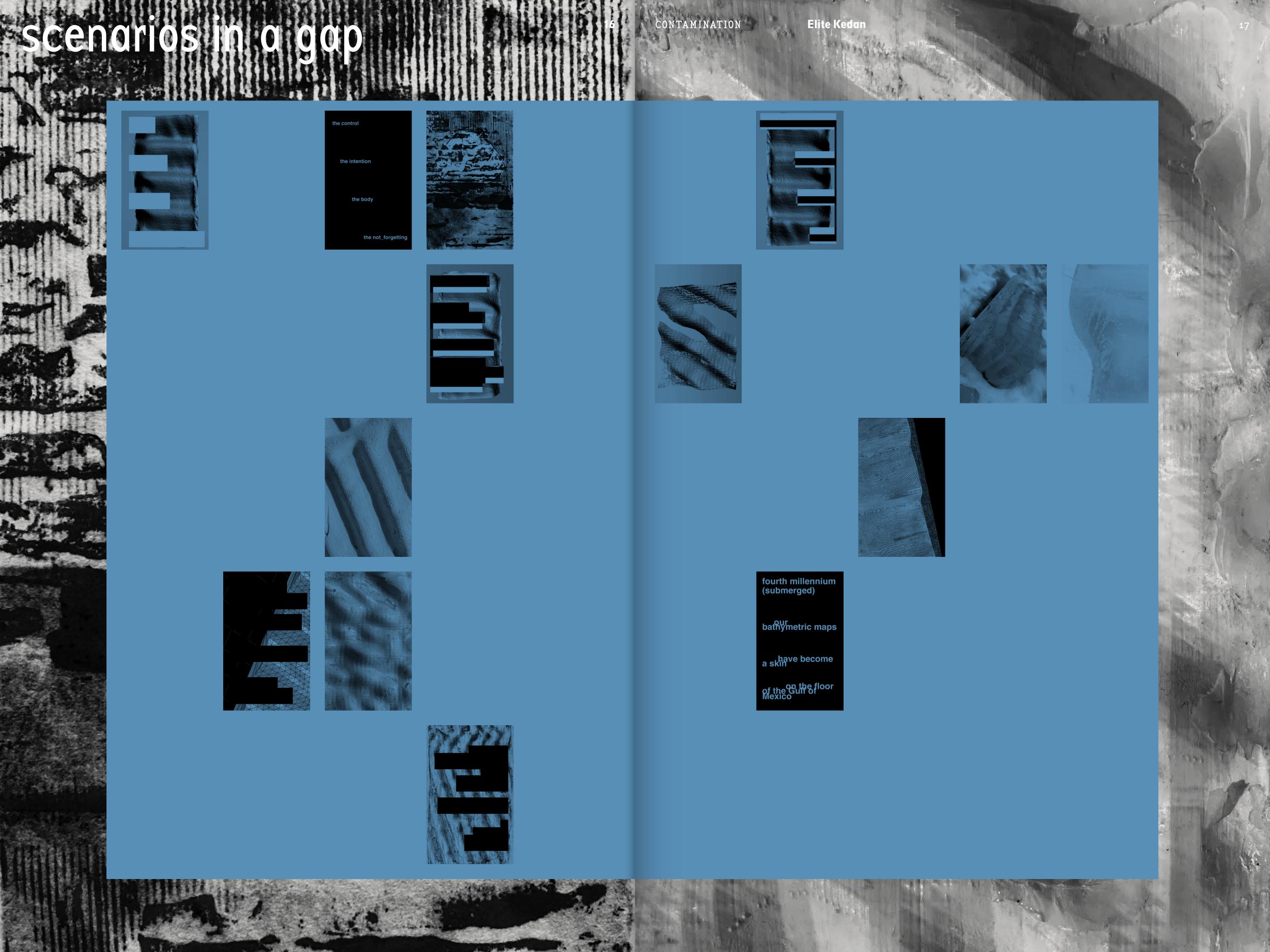
Elite Kedan

"Interregnum: between emergence and contamination" is an exhibition in the form of an online publication inviting the reader to reflect on the in-betweenness of the present condition. Building on Antonio Gramsci's definition of the interregnum as a period of crisis or an in-between time, the liminal spaces described in the curatorial text and works in the publication are caught between what has yet to collapse and that which cannot yet manifest.

The project presents fragments from films, conversations, sound, and text reflecting on terms such as contamination, delinking, entanglement, alliances, and interregnum. Positioning the readers or viewers as active participants, the project reflects on the potential effects of both the individual and collective imagination to envision a different future. The aim is to think about how the participating artists' work can reflect the interstices of our encounters translated and mediated from various vantage points, locations, disciplines, and politics.

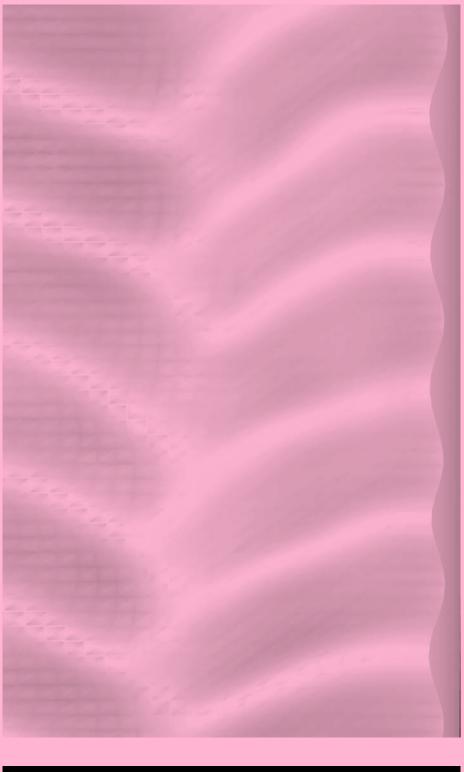
Accompanying this publication is a set of film screenings that will be made available on Artis' website from June-September 2021.

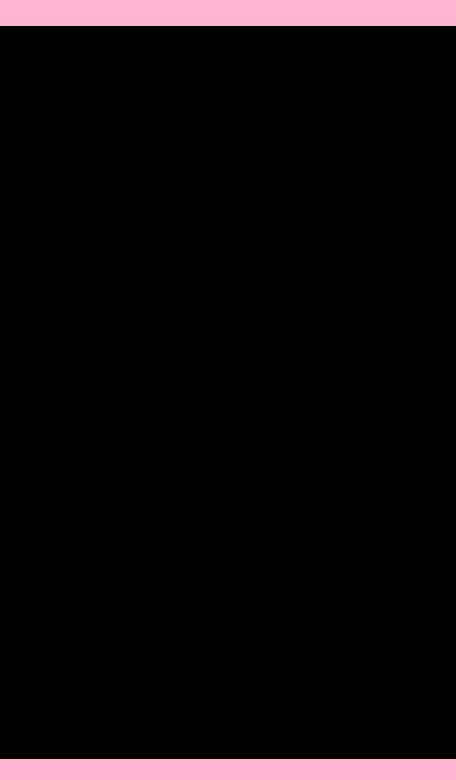




TOUR Than I lenn um







the control the intention the body the not_forgetting (scenarios in a gap)

2020 Ice, casts, digital molds, and text

Elite Kedan's scenarios in a gap (the control, the intention, the body, the not_forgetting) is a meditation on the personal and societal vulnerabilities and inequalities visible in the in-between spaces, like the interregnum. In particular, Kedan reflects on the charged definition of the interregnum in light of the **Covid-19 pandemic and the political transformation** that emerged in 2020. Although these vulnerabilities and inequalities have always been present, they were pushed to the fore as political and social systems began to collapse in March 2020. In scenarios in a gap, Kedan makes use of the interregnum as a dynamic space of intention and action, where new outcomes can emerge.

Through a series of open-ended explorations, Kedan abstracts the spaces in the gaps found in both the physical and digital objects. She begins from the digital to render typographic landscapes, taking an element like ice in its state of melting and digitally molding it. scenarios in a gap presents her explorations of the relationships between an element like the ice itself and the casts made using digital methods. Embracing reductive geometry, repetition, natural elements, and digital design, she developed a project that addresses the leaks between the environmental and the digital. Kedan employs playful conceptual devices that expose these leaks' variables, details, and textures to extend speculative thinking toward different temporalities, agencies, landscapes, and subjectivities.

- PMH



GLAUCUS ATLANTICUS

Glaucus atlanticus is commonly referred to as the blue sea dragon, sea swallow, blue angel, blue Glaucus, dragon slug, blue dragon, blue sea slug, and blue ocean slug. These little sea slugs are pelagic, they float upside down by using the surface tension of the water to stay up, where they are carried along by the winds and ocean currents. The Glaucus atlanticus makes use of countershading the blue side of their body faces upward, blending in with the blue of the sea water. Their other side is silver and faces downward, where it blends with the sunlight reflecting on the ocean's surface.

SOURCED FROM WIKIPEDIA







La Solitude

[…]

2.

Suddenly the Great Green—all so green, extending almost to the end of the field of vision. Through the close-knit unity one may see, here and there—like branched veins—the springs, creeks, and rivers. One vein, and two, and three gradually merge into a single main artery. This artery, like a scalpel that wounds the skin, cuts the Great Green to a slash which the eye cannot cease following, almost involuntarily, with total curiosity. It is the Orinoco winding calmly, progressing toward the great delta.

You realize this could be the way to the city and the myth.

The gaze tails further and further down, noticing shimmering on the riverbanks. Consciousness says: Gold! The dark-skinned figures of locals also become visible, right on the shallow edge of the river. They are bent, busy drawing something out of the thick mud. Above them, on the very same edge, only on its more solid side, stand white men, waving their hands and pointing.

You realize that the search is not over, and that this story is the absolute truth, even if El Dorado indeed existed, and even if it was told as a fictive story by generations of Westerners. The desire to reduce the distance and take that which was not yours to begin with still persists, and you, too, share in the disgrace.

3.

The photographer always thought it is better to hear. In fact, this was the great paradox of his professional life. He reveled in the past—a hundred years back, when people simply sat and listened; or read, or wrote. To this day he films without sound, and at other times he goes out to record, for no reason, without a camera. He says there is something about this separation that spawns a different type of consciousness. When he climbs up the stairs, he encounters the state-of-the-art, computerized command center, with its myriad screens and buttons. This must be the most accurate formulation of remote research. In other words, research reaches a peak here. This entire process—the filmed records, the aural records, and the way in which he uses them to construct his anthropological profiles—bears considerable likeness to astronomical research.

When he said: "Anthropology bears great likeness to astronomy," he meant that it was precisely the great distance separating, for instance, researchers of celestial bodies from their subject matter, or Western anthropologists from the Native American tribes which they study—it was precisely this distance that is significant and crucial to the research process itself, enabling concentration on the wheat rather than the chaff.

So the photographer sinks comfortably into one of the chairs in the guest lounge, observing all the equipment that bridges the distance between here and there. Perhaps this monumental attempt is in bad taste, thinks the photographer. Perhaps this entire technological circus in fact shortens the distance, and perhaps this great effort ultimately strikes at the heart of the research.



La Solitude CONTAMINATION

He keeps telling himself that one must be wary of curiosity, that this word contains some colonialist patronizing which leaves him uncomfortable. He makes sure that the camera's sound switch remains off. As far as he is concerned, this deliberate disconnection will prevent the consciousness from overflowing into "curious" realms. He conducts a pleasant conversation with one of the village women. The way she carries herself appears so strange to him, and yet so perfect. Later he wonders how the conversation with her looks through the camera. Can the content of their conversation be construed through the way she stands or the way she moves her hands? He is sure it can.

[…]

5.

The real challenge is revealed when darkness falls. Until then, camera work is relatively easy. Press and forget, the photographer thinks to himself; night distinguishes between amateurism and the thing itself. At night, the ghosts of photography demand their pound of flesh. Darkness is photography's habitat; it would not have come into being without it. Light is what enables photography to materialize, but only in the right quantity. Too much light—and it will be lost. Expire. Be burnt to the point of blindness.

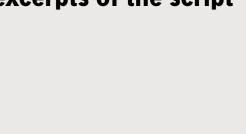
Amid the green leaves exposed by the beam of light he identifies a whole world of holes gnawed by forest pests. They remind him of eyes, and he thinks they can serve as a fair metaphor for blindness. He recalls Herodotus and the plucked eyes of the slaves taken captive by the Scythians in the 4th century BCE, white eyes which were nothing but hollow sockets. He thinks how for the Scythians, slavery meant mainly denial of the right to observe or to return a gaze. All of a sudden he wonders how much subjectivity remains to a man deprived of his eyesight, and his own eyes fill with involuntary tears that run down and moisten his eyeball.

Once again he is amazed by the sophistication of the human brain, which quickly fills the tear duct, even though there is no imminent danger—only an unpleasant story, not even his own.



Nir Evron





La Solitude

2016
Stills from the film and excerpts of the script

The film-essay *La Solitude* departs from events surrounding the outcome of the Dreyfus affair in 1894. In particular, Evron focuses on events that had a significant impact on the role of moving images in shaping and manipulating the imagination and consciousness of the masses. The film draws on both Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish French military officer who was accused of treason, as well as Georges Méliès, the filmmaker who dramatized Dreyfus's story, which eventually assisted in Dreyfus's release.

La Solitude was filmed on Devil's Island in French Guiana, where Dreyfus was imprisoned after his conviction in 1894. It opens with scenes of the abandoned ruins on the island and traces the divergent and violent histories of the place, from the early days of the slave trade through the time it was a penal colony and up to the new horizons of the European Space Port. As the film progresses, it depicts quotidian moments of current-day French Guiana and how it continues to be entangled with the effects of colonization.

The text presented in this publication is adapted from the script for the narration that guides the viewer through the film. It weaves together a blend of commissioned texts with accounts of the lives of Dreyfus and Méliès, alongside historical figures who made significant contributions to the Dreyfus affair, the history of filmmaking, and the field of ethnography. Evron links these historical figures with the continued presence of colonialism while simultaneously questioning how he is implicated in the problematic relationship between the photographer and the subject.

- PMH



MORAY EELS

The moray eel has one long dorsal fin that extends down the entire length of its body. These creatures are often seen by scuba divers along coral reefs. While moray eels are not currently under threat, their coral reef habitat is under pressure, primarily from global warming. Since the 1980s, the oceans have absorbed 90 percent of the excess heat in the atmosphere and up to 30 percent of carbon emissions from the fossil fuel industry. This mixture of heat and carbon emissions leads to a domino effect of negative consequences, starting with increased acidity in the oceans and leading to mass bleaching of coral reefs. If the planet heats up by 2 degrees Celsius, nearly all of the world's coral reefs, including places where moray eels live, will die.

Sourced from Oceana



Domingo Castillo

the quiet shock of stillness, air a snake follows me in the water

PLAY AUDIO

32

Tropical Malaise

Tropical Malaise Original Soundtrack Composed by Wilted Woman

2018 **MPEG-2 Audio Layer III** at 320kbps 44.1kHz 75,330,864 bytes, 31:23 min

Music by Wilted Woman. mastered by Bridget Fera, poetry by Glenda Romualdo, released on Psychic Liberation in 2019

Domingo Castillo's audiovisual project *Tropical* Malaise exposes how architectural renderings are employed as a visionary fiction for real estate marketing which maps a city's future while cementing present narratives. The project explores the speculative and real temporalities created by the feedback loop of rendered imagery in Miami, Florida. The vision of the future has been captured, the present now vectoring toward that reality. The anxiety it creates is felt daily on the street, in the atmosphere, and at the cellular level within the body and minds of the city's inhabitants. Miami exists as a place where these fantasies and instruments are prototyped and then exported throughout the world, using up against every natural and societal environment, continuing the endless return of our contemporary condition. Tropical Malaise isn't a completed film but a slow accumulation of parts working toward a whole.

The original soundtrack *Tropical Malaise* (2018) is the film score for an experimental feature-length documentary film that is yet to be produced. Castillo commissioned musician and composer Wilted Woman to create a score abstracting Castillo's image of Miami. The score is stretched out, slowly combusting and tearing open. Wilted Woman decomposes, modulates, and synthesizes Castillo's vision of a city disjointed in its decelerated collapse. The score undulates into the most remote folds of the listener's psyche, echoing the anxiety produced by the schism of living between the misleading renderings and the violence of sea-level rise.

Together, Castillo and Wilted Woman engage the film score as an ongoing political action within three temporal registers: past as historical memory, the potential of the present moment, and the need to facilitate agitation as a continuous process in the future.

— PMH



NUDIBRANCH

The nudibranch is a bottomdwelling, jelly-bodied, shell-less mollusk, part of the sea slug family. Nudibranchs have some of the most fascinating shapes, sumptuous hues, and intricate patterns of any animal. They are carnivores that slowly ply their range grazing on algae, sponges, anemones, corals, barnacles, and even other nudibranchs. To identify prey, they have two highly sensitive tentacles, called rhinophores, located on top of their heads. Nudibranchs derive their coloring from the food they eat, which helps in camouflage, and some even retain the foultasting poisons of their prey and secrete them as a defense mechanism.

Sourced from National GEOGRAPHIC

EMERGENCE Tropical Malaise



I can remember the first time I went to the museum park.



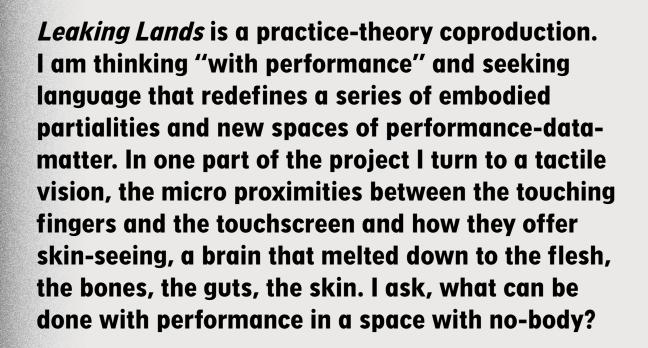
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Leaking Lands

2020-Video and performance

Fire is oblivious to history. In six short hours in September 2018 a fatal fire brought to an end centuries' worth of treasures in Brazil's national museum. Only a handful of artifacts of the 20 million items that were housed at the museum survived this colossal disaster. It feels almost unimaginable that so many valuable objects were simply wiped off the earth without leaving any digital trace. What survived was captured and stored in several formats, and most of it is available online and open to the public to view and use. The digital files are accompanied by a full virtual tour, a product of Google Arts & Culture, where one can easily visit the no-longer-existing museum. The digital collection that formed from content contributed by users/visitors can be found on Wikimedia Commons and includes photos of the collection as seen on visits to the museum. There was no systematic digitization effort at the museum and the fragmented collection that remains represents a challenge to fixed taxonomies and epistemic frameworks, traditionally designed by the institution.

It is a story that starts with an error. Can we possibly think of these digital residues as an active form? If so, in what way can these "active residues" of body, data, and matter help us imagine the day after the museum? Leaking Lands is a multi-faceted project that includes a video installation, lectureperformance, and written research. Sometimes it acts like a "digital séance," using the Google virtual tour to wander around the spectral museum, guided by conversations with several of the institution's caretakers, people who looked after the collection and the museum's publics. In other parts, I use the hybrid collection, or a digital recollection, to look at ways data systems intermingled and refused the canonic institutional order and its indexing system, industry standards, and the forms of governing these orders represent.



As part of the project, I invited Uruguayan born, Brooklyn-based dance-maker luciana achugar to collaborate. achugar has developed an embodied practice that she uses for making dance, teaching, and for ritualistic gathering. For our collaboration, I worked with a number of objects from the burned collection that survived as 3D models. I challenged achugar to engage with her somatic practice only by voice and to engage with objects without tactility. Like achugar approaching the body in its prelingual state, when sensations don't have names yet, I worked with the 3D simulation, searching for the point where the object is too closed to be known. In each video segment, we started with a single object: a mammalian skull, a fossil, a mineral, an object used for Indigenous rituals, and a classic marble bust of a woman. Using the 3D model, I started to wander through the back of the objects and "crawl" into their inner spaces. With achugar's guidance, the inner spaces of the objects became a landscape of caves and digital grottos, or bodily passages, like veins or a digestive system. I zoomed in to the point the object melts away. It was no longer a cultural product designed for the gaze, to look and know.

These objects made their way to the institution through a culture of extractivism and were then named, ordered, archived, categorized, compared, and contrasted. The digital ghost of the destroyed objects is now melting into the voice,

circulating back to a pleasure point where body part and the partial object are no longer separated, they melt together into a new state of being, they are performance-data-matter. At this point, looking at the object is no longer a way of knowing it. Instead, being with an object is offered as a form of resistance and not of captivity.

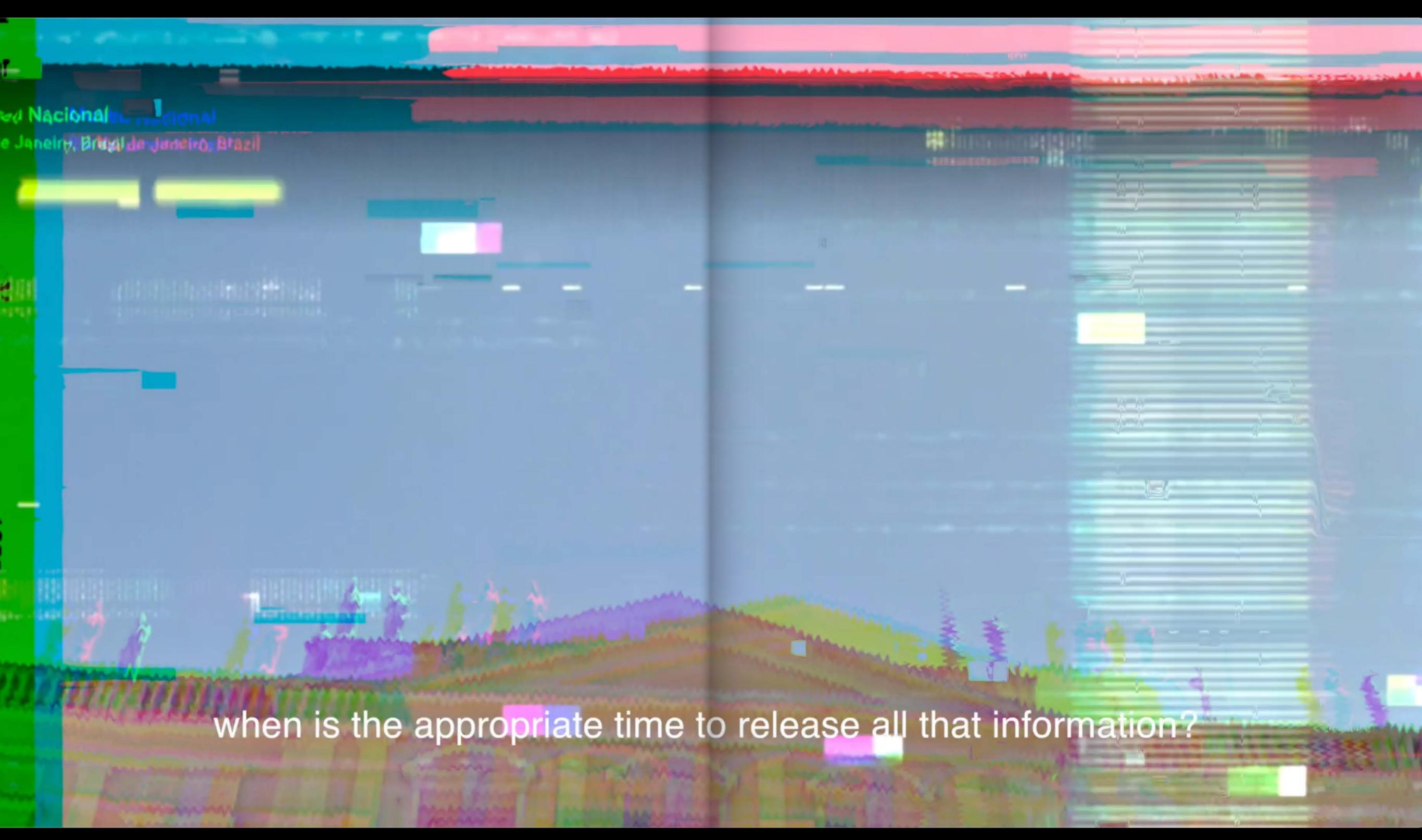
With achugar, we approach hapticality through unbounding the body from its hierarchical organization toward a state of fleshy being.
Objects and bodies are too partial, too closed, or too far away to be captured through a system of categorization, which makes them harder to possess. Leaking Lands is the dematerialization of an individual body into a collective arrangement of bodies, matter, and technology, not as a split, but as a temporal alliance. Such a process accepts the screen as a social agent that can transmit closeness. The computer's skin as a way of manifesting an embodied relationship with an "other" and the establishment of a tactile and haptic encounter with ourselves through an "other."

-0C



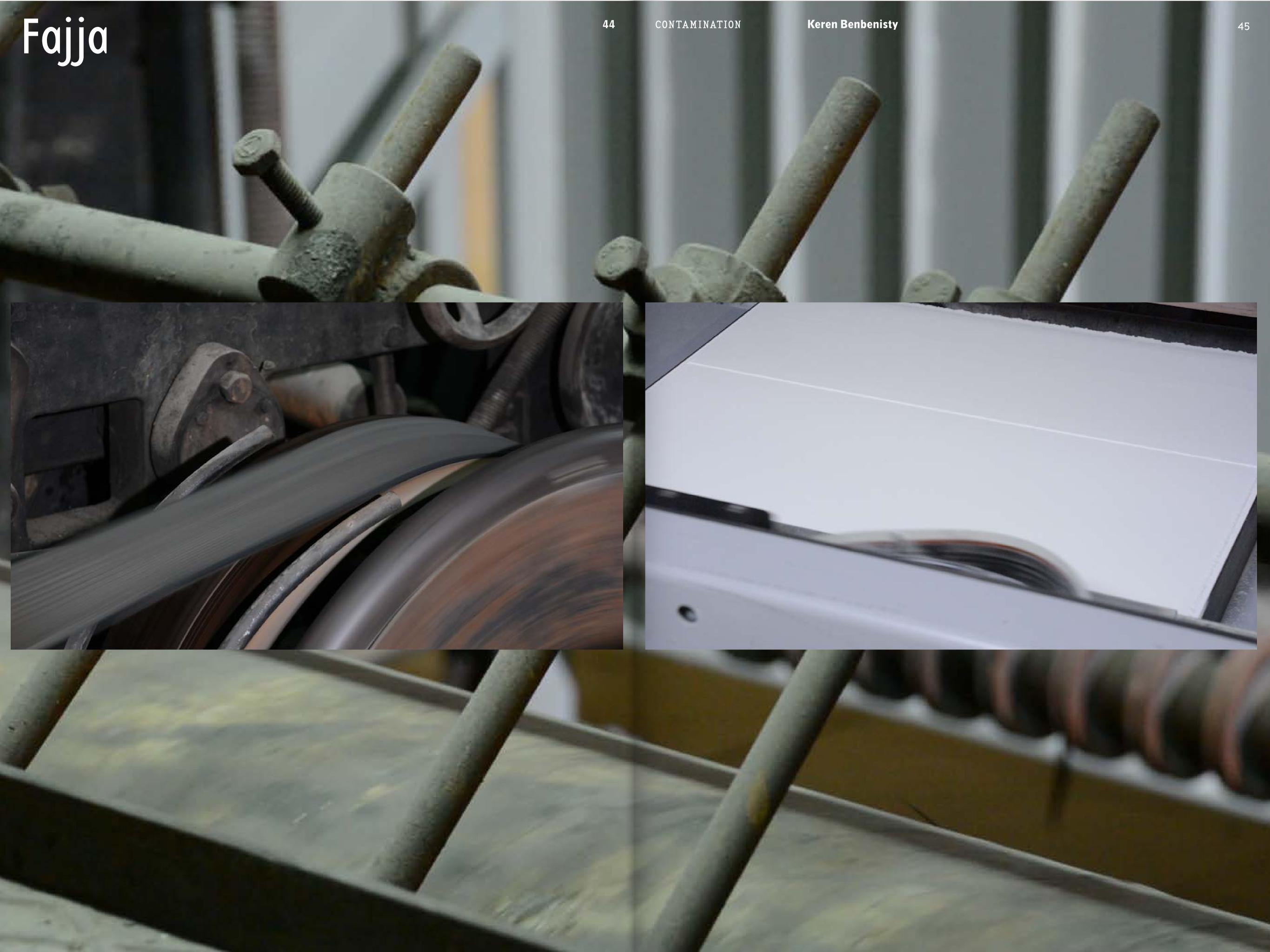
SEA PIG

Sea pigs live in the deepest part of the ocean. These critters with puffy legs and plump, oval-shaped pinkish bodies, are found in the deepest abyssal depths of the world's oceans. They get around by walking on the seafloor. Sea pigs have five to seven pairs of enlarged tube feet. These "walking legs" are hydraulically operated appendages that can be inflated and deflated as they move around.



It's too cruel







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CONTAMINATION

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Bir'Adas. The well of lentiles. Bir ez Zeiba The plentiful well.

Fajja

Kirket Bing el Kafir. Pool of the daughter of the infidel or pagar (pear the lâmia el Abiad), at Ramleh. The Kanal Birt el Kaffr leads to it and an aqueduct from near Abu Shushel llows into it.

Birkeld Famikhir. The pools of pregious things, or of

Birket el Jamis. The pool of the buffalo.

Birket el Vallas. The pool of el Jathus. p.n. means pond, "sitting, 'ascending a throne.'

> Dirkettel Kimr. The pool of the moon. The old port of Jaffa, now silted up.

El Burak. The pools.

Burak Leil. The pools of Leil.

Ed Dekâkîn. The shops. Here applied to Kokîvî, rockcut tombs, as in many other instances, from their resembance to an Arab shop.

Phahabiyat. The golder things. It also means 'a well-known company of sect of doctors who used to report the sayings of Mohammed, which, under the name of hadith (traditions), form the is suited, or supplementary law of Islam.' In the Egyptian dialect the word would mean 'Nile pleasure boats'

Dhahr Schneh. Ridge of Selmeh. p.n.; from the village.

Fijin Eija. p.n. monning a broadway especially between two mountains.

Ferrikhiyeh. Ferrikhiyeh. sprouting plant.')

Ibn Theak. The son of brak.

Hq Imam, Aly. The Iman 'Aly. Scarp 182 The name applies to the kubbeh or shrine at Blaret Heiderah.

El Jelil, p.m. The word in Arabic means illustrious, 'grand'; but it is a survival of the Hebrew אליק, signifying 'a district or 'circuit.

Fajja

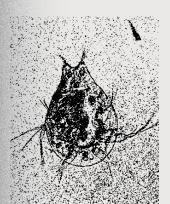
2018 a two-channel video, a series of 60 drawings, blue ink on original Jaffa Oranges wrapping paper; **3D-printed object.**

Fajja (2018) borrows its name from a Palestinian village north of Jaffa whose lands became the site of a temporary refugee camp for Jewish immigrants in the aftermath of 1948. In this work, Benbenisty explores the relationship between typography and topography by tracing the dialectical entanglements between history, land, technology, and nature through the story of the Jaffa orange and the nineteenthcentury printing press that inspired the work. The image of the orange is a symbol of Israeli culture, and while the Zionist narrative developed, the orange became one of the symbols of the disputes over lost Palestinian lands.

The two-channel video installation *The Place of the* Fold (2018) consists of one video of the printing press at work, alongside a narrator reading excerpts from Victor Guérin's book Geographical, Historical, and Archaeological Description of Palestine (1868), which documents Arab villages in the region that have long since disappeared. The second video depicts a 3D printer printing an object from white polyamide dust combined with scenes of Benbenisty's hands printing Land of Blue Oranges (2018), a series of drawings on sheets of paper used to wrap Jaffa oranges, which she inherited from her grandmother, who used to work as a citrus packer. In these drawings, the artist makes orange peels covered in blue ink into stamps and sets them against the English translations of the names of disappeared villages taken from Edward Henry Palmer's Survey of Western Palestine (1881).

These works hold space for the people and places that have been systematically erased. The printing process in its multiple iterations, including the printing press, 3D printer, and the stamps, provides a nonlinear way of understanding the land, the people who inhabited it, and its products. The printed surface of a map, an orange wrapper, and a 3D-printed object reveal the violence imposed by settler colonial imaginations and trajectories.

- PMH



CYCLOPS NAUPLIUS

Cyclops are commonly called water fleas. These little critters take their name from the Cyclops of Greek mythology, as they share the quality of having a single large eye, which may be either red or black. They live along the plantcovered banks of stagnant and slow-flowing bodies of water, where they feed on small fragments of plant material, animals, or carrion. The Cyclops have the capacity to survive in unsuitable conditions by forming a cloak of slime.

SOURCED FROM WIKIPEDIA

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SURVEY OF WESTERN PALESTINE.

Fajja

a stream. The ruin of abundant herbage pessage

...ell ul, ast TR Kulit Ras el'Ain. The fastle of the springshoad.

Ludd. Ludd. p.n. Heb in Lod.

Birket el Janus. The willas; a piece of ground east of

Hp El Makhra The place where there is no echo.

Hr El Mattalah. The place of slaughter; once said to have been infested with robbers.

Gr Minet Ribin. The harbour of Rubin. See Neby Rabin.

Ip El Mire. The passage. Also called el Mahmûdîyeh, 'the property of Mahmûd.'

Ir \ Mukâm el Imâm كاله (Ibn Ali Tâleb). The shrine of the Imâm Ali ibn Ali Tâleb, the cousin, son-in-law, and; successor of Mohammed. See p. 182.

Jr Mukâm en Neby Dân. The shrine of the Prophet Dan.

Ist Ja Mukan su Neby Hada. The shaine of the Prophet Sudah.

Ip. Mulebbis. Obscute

Hp Nath Aujd. The meandering river.

الباردة Hp Naturel Barusch. The cold river.

نبر روبين Gr Nahr Rubin. The river of Rubin. See Neby Rribin.

النبي دانيال A'coy Dânia or Dânian. The Propher Daniel.

The Prophet Dangan. Police

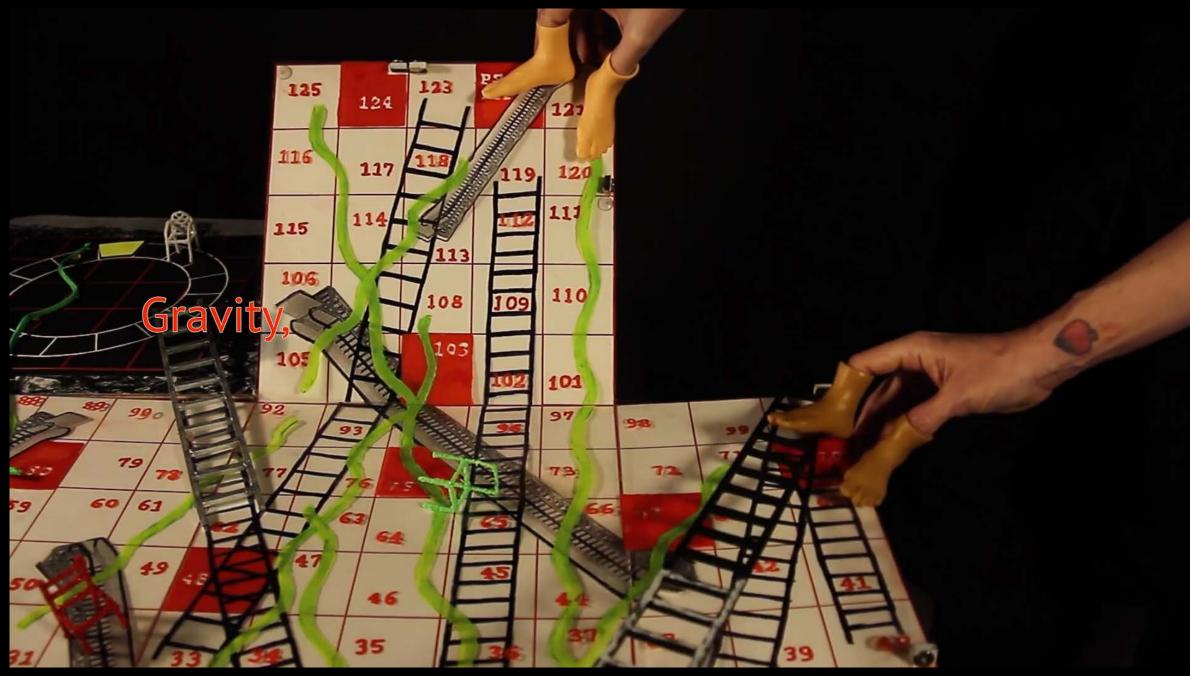
Jq Neby Kifil. The Prophet Kifil. Sh Koran, ch. ۱۷XI, v. 85, "And Ishmael and Idris, and Dhu Kifil," all these were of the patient, and we made them enter into our mercy:

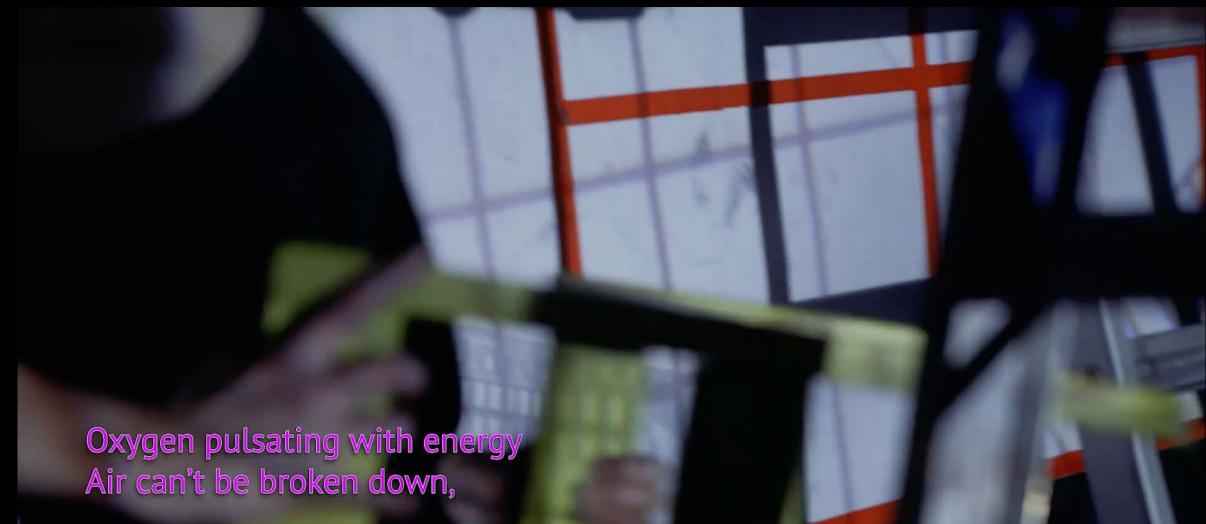
verily they were among the righteous."

"That is, Eles, or, as some say, Joshua and some say Lachufiah, so dilled because he had a portion from God must high and 'guaranteed' his people' on because he had 'double' the work of the prophets of his time, and their reward; the word high being used in the various lesses of 'portion,' sponsorship, and double.' British and Irabic Commentary, quoted in I history translation of the Koran, Vol. 11, p. 13.

Deville Cohen







CONTAMINATION

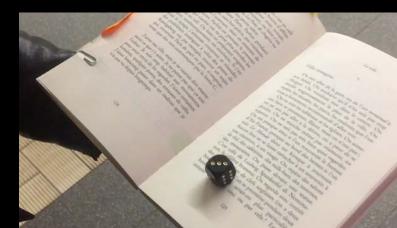
Hand Town Out high Notion:
DE-SUICIDE (Part 3>: C'est la

Crisis











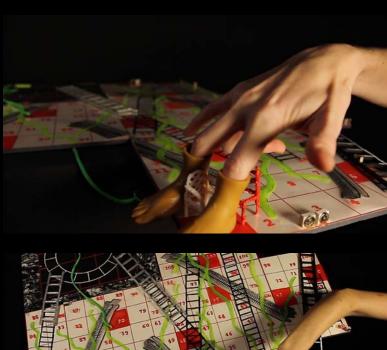










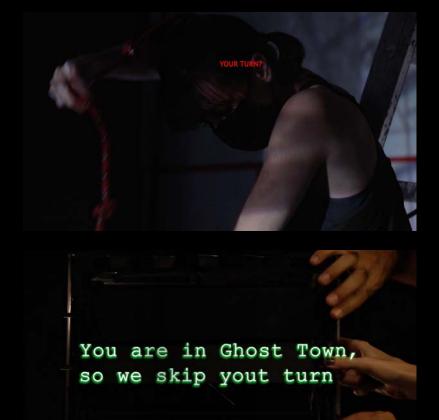
















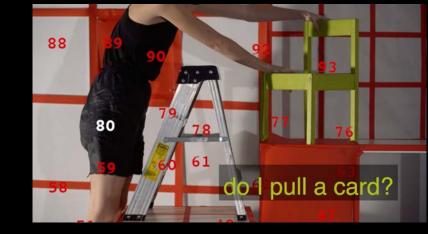


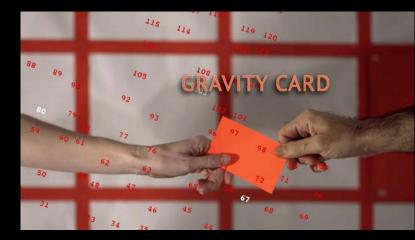




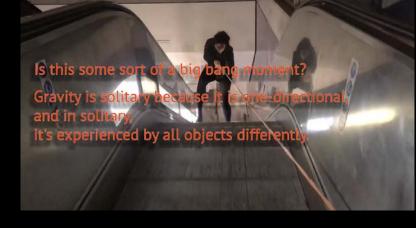


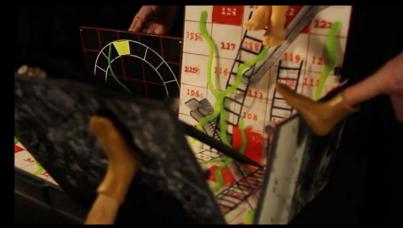








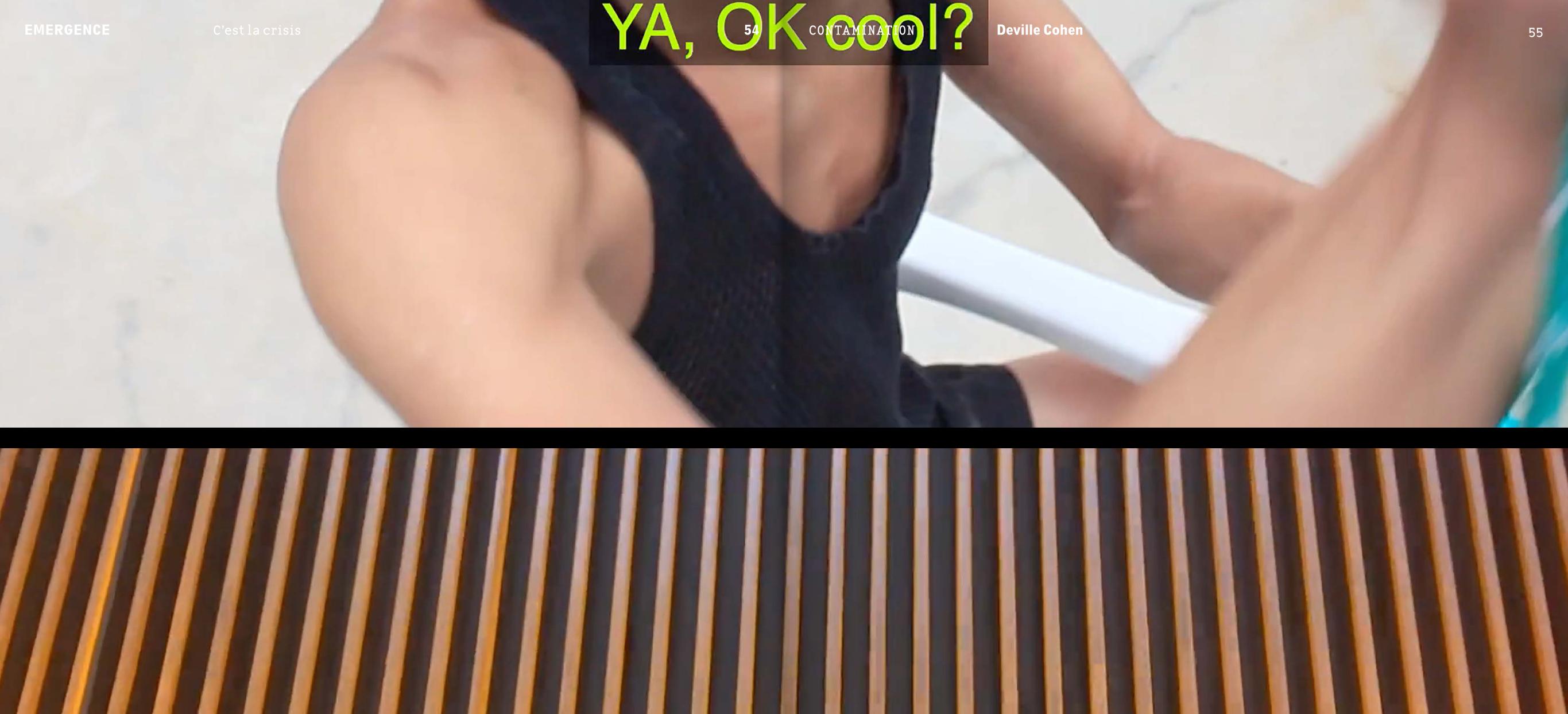












WE LOST MARGAUX





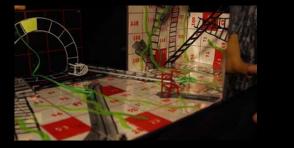
EMERGENCE























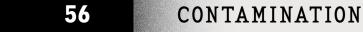












Hand To Mouth, Notion: DE-SUICIDE, <Part 3>: C'est la crisis

2020–21 Stills from the film and excerpts of the script

Deville Cohen

The third in a series of workshops dedicated to the notion of suicide. Featuring dancers Tushrik Fredericks, Margaux Marielle-Tréhoüart, and Laura K. Nicoll. Produced in partner-ship with Artis, PS122 Gallery, New York, and JOAN, Los Angeles.

"It's a workshop, it's a crisis, it's a dance."

—Deville Cohen

Hand to Mouth describes itself as a global network of sentient and inanimate collaborators invested in the labor of survival. The dance company produces monthly workshops titled "Notions," which explore specific choreographic and sculptural themes. The final results of these workshops are released to the public monthly for each full moon as part of a growing body of original experiments, actions, and propositions.

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For the Notion of *DE-SUICIDE*, Cohen produced three workshops with dancers Tushrik Fredericks (Johannesburg), Margaux Marielle-Tréhoüart (Berlin), and Laura K. Nicoll (New York). Cohen sees suicide as a state of refusal that carries the imaginary potential to re-turn to wrong human choices made individually and collectively within their existence on earth. Cohen draws on writer Albert Camus's Myth of Sisyphus (1942), where the protagonist is Sisyphus, who in Greek myth, was punished for all eternity to roll a rock up a mountain only for it to roll back down to the bottom when he reaches the top. Sisyphus is the ideal absurd hero and his punishment represents the human condition, to perpetually struggle without hope of success. In *DE-SUICIDE*, however, time is not linear, and the protagonists can re-turn to the moment of failure in the hopes of making a different choice.

The third workshop of *DE-SUICIDE* culminates in *<Part* 3>: C'est la crisis, an adaptation of the game Snakes and Ladders. This game represents *DE-SUICIDE* as a journey through multiple locations and periods, which are navigated through the board game featuring three players, enacted by the dancers. The game's objective was to navigate one's game piece—a chair—according to the roll of a die, helped or hindered by ladders, ropes, and escalators. The die represents a version of Karen Barad's understanding of "diffraction," which provides a helpful fiction needed in the quest to DE-SUICIDE. In this workshop, diffraction is not a singular event; rather, it is used to create a narrative that repeats dimensionally across temporalities. The board is a collective method of being in movement. There are no winners or awards, instead, the game is an exercise in being present together within overlapping temporalities. The instruments of time travel are the ladders, ropes, and escalators which can take the player up or down the board rapidly or slowly, at times facilitating the option to re-turn and make a different choice. Through the rolling of the die and the reading of the game cards, the players find themselves entangled between the past and a present that has yet to happen.



SOURCED FROM THE

CRAB

Though no crab is truly

commensally with other

within the shells of mussels

animals. The little pea crab lives

and a variety of other mollusks,

worm-tubes, and echinoderms

and shares its hosts' food. The

coral-gall crab also irritates the

growing tips of certain corals so

that they grow to enclose the

female in a stony prison. Many

cover their shells with growing

sponges, which afford them a

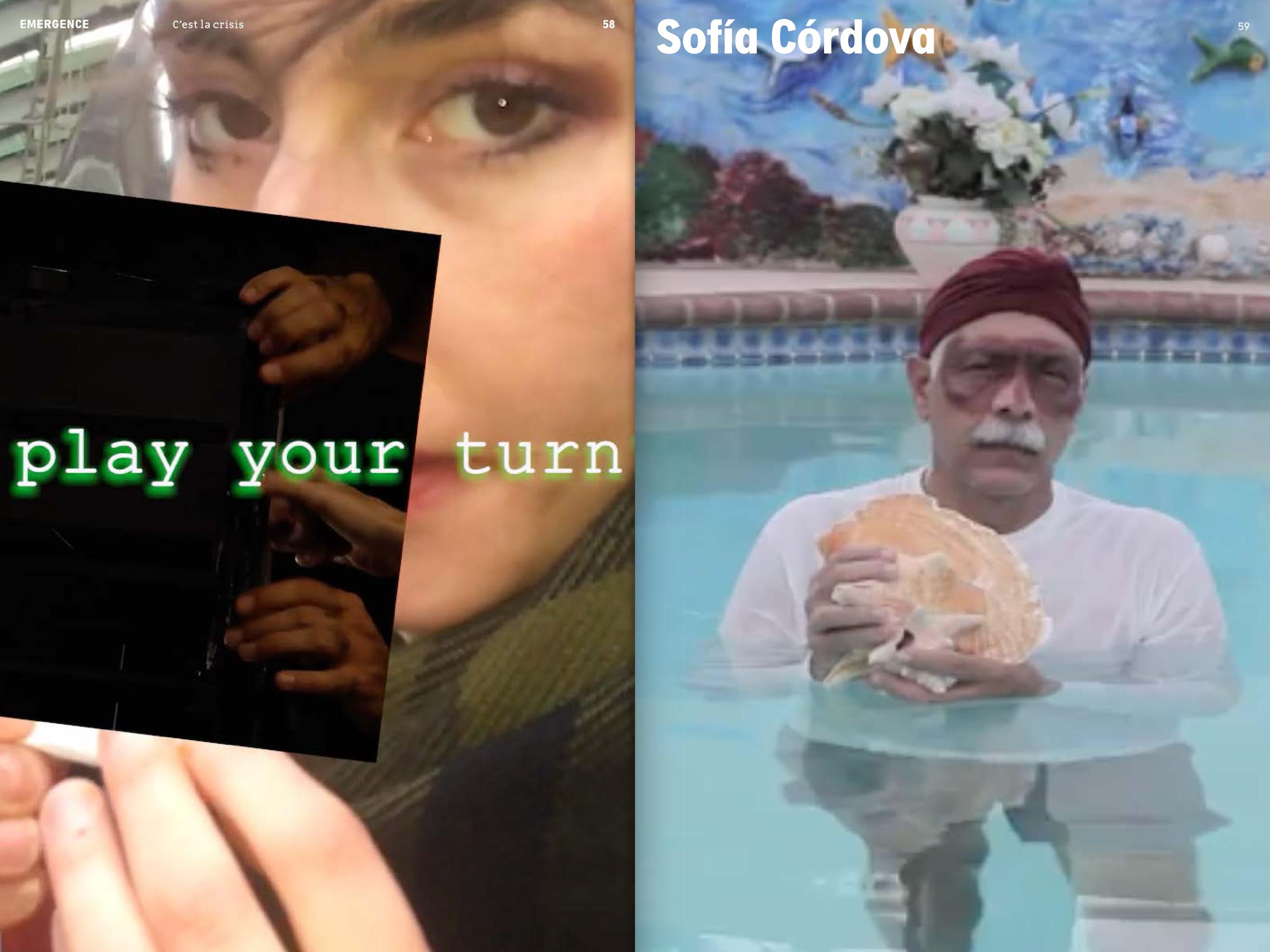
of the sluggish spider crabs

seaweeds, zoophytes, and

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

very effective disguise.

parasitic, some live





Maggie: This picture here is the generator, which Miguel under the winds went out to turn it on.

All this water...all this water

Sofia: Not this one, you sent me this, my god, did downstairs flood?

Maggie: No downstairs no, the house was open and no one noticed but the house didn't flood.

Maggie: This is me at 2 am talking to myself. I don't have a good signal here.

(video plays)

Miguel in background: That's another thing, the postal service is fucking trash.

Sofia: So what time did it start?

Miguel: At 3 in the morning [Maggie Interrupts: No, no. Yezennia interrupts: It started earlier, Miguel I know it was before but. Maggie: It gained strength around six]. It was before six because since 5 am I was taking out water like a demon.

Maggie: We were removing water from the house since two in the morning, Miguel.

Yezennia: It really started like at twelve? It got really really strong around 3 am, I think. At 6 am the shed in the backyard was already gone. The storm took it. The blow from the overflowing river happened around 4 am.

Sofía: Did your house flood?

Yezennia: It did but not because of the river.

Miguel: It was because of the rain.

Sofia: The rain? You mean...

[overlapping voices]

Miguel: The strength of the wind first got us from this direction and then it got us from here and then got us from this other direction. When I realized that the wind had changed direction, that's when I went out to turn on the generator because I know that the zinc we have there, which doesn't have the protection of the of the roof, the wind was hitting it like that so it's not going to fly off but what it did do was nonstop go "PRRRRR." Man, it was so intense that when that thing, that motherfucker started to push and pull, Sofia.

Maggie: It moved the poles we had to hold that up.

EMERGENCE

CONTAMINATION Sofía Córdova 63

Miguel: 0h, yeah. It moved all the cement bases. It moved them all. It was only salvaged because I tied it down. I tied all of that down with rope. If I hadn't tied it down with rope, we'd have to go who knows where, to hell and back, to Piñones.

Maggie: It was something really impressive. And I got power back...[Interrupted by Miguel.]

Miguel: Since I'm the alpha male, I wasn't scared. Pffft. Here even the prettiest, toughest was scared shitless, even Carlitos Colón who is the universal badass [guapetón]. Everyone was scared shitless, negra, because no one expected something like this. I mean this shit started with Irma. I mean when you see that Irma came and all it did was caress us. We got power back three days before Maria.

Maggie: And then the light 24th of December, which brought me no joy because I know there are still so many people without electricity.

Miguel: You haven't gone to Yabucoa, right? If you want to record a mess on video, go to Yabucoa.

Millie: Go to Yabucoa, Humacao. This one went to Humacao to help.

Miguel: Those folks have been like that for 9 months. Listen, you don't want to know what the suicide rate is like there.

Sofía: Yes, I know. It has tripled.

Miguel: Orocovis.

Yezennia: Aibonito.

Miguel: Hatilla over there in Corozal—where grandfather Miguel is from—is still without electricity. The Maguey barrio up there is also without electricity. Everything between, between Orocovis and Corozal, all of that is without electricity...

Maggie: Utuado.

Miguel: Utuado is, pfft...destroyed

Maggie: Comerio.

Miguel: But the parts that hurt the most, there are still parts of Canovanas, where this one lives, the center of Canovanas, they don't have electricity.

Yezennia: That don't have power.

Miguel: Here you are seeing the cherry. Your old man's house, it's that your dad had some kind of luck, you know?

Sofia: I know. Believe me I know, that was one of my worries.

Miguel: But SOME luck. When I showed up there and saw how those windows were all there I said, "What luck!" Because, I'll tell you something, they weren't here, but this country emptied out. Before the hurricane, those flights were nonstop out of here everyone. For those who had money, of course, because the tickets got expensive fast. There were tickets to go to New York for a thousand dollars. Those are \$99 tickets any other day of the week. And, after that...I wish you could see your uncle José fronting all, "¡Yo no me quito! ¡Yo no me quito!" "I won't leave this place! I won't leave this place!" with the suitcase as I leave him at the airport. And when I got there, it was, I tell you, it made you want to cry. I had to leave them, you know you go up and the road splits so those who want to keep going...

[Incomprehensible - everyone talks]

Miguel: That's when you realize...when Trump came...the hurricane had just happened and they were already dealing with the issue in the US of the athletes in the NFL kneeling. They force Trump to come here...I, what the hell do I care about Trump, why does he have to come here? We didn't vote for that guy. I tell Mami [Maggie], "Just you wait, they're gonna come down here trying to distract from / packing that damn NFL issue with them." And here it is...you know how gringos work, with their damn editorial lines on CNN and FOX News and all that trash. The guy gets here, and starts throwing paper towels. And over there they started with, "Oh look at him! Throwing paper towels!" No one investigated who the hell he was throwing paper towels to, no one knew that those were local politicians and a bunch of gophers with government contracts. Look at the pictures and you'll see all those assholes grabbing up paper towels with freshly laundered white shirts. One week after a hurricane that broke all this shit to hell and I'll tell you who the hell had a washer on and able to wash a white shirt, my sister, when everyone here was covered in dirt up to their eyes. And you tell me, you tell me...

Maggie interrupts: I got a rash.

Miguel: Everyone's face broke out, we all had infections on our skin, this was all fucked! And you tell me that these people who were there, who were all men, who were all politicians, all with clean clothes, with fresh haircuts, were all poor people? But no, they took that over there and exploded/exploited it like "Trump was throwing paper towels to poor people!" Girl, please, let's be more serious. Then the day after the hurricane, the shooting in Las Vegas. Everyone wonders why the attention was drawn away...because my brother, because the very next day after the hurricane they cleaned the clocks of 40 sons of bitches in Las Vegas. And gringos don't care about anything that doesn't happen within their perimeter. Look right now, in Hawaii [Kilauea volcano was erupting], and you know who it is that is crying, right? The little white gringos, because the Hawaiians have it clear.



Sofía interrupts: Hawaii is another colony.

Miguel: And Hawaiians have it clear! That's part of it, those people have been there for millenia, for over a thousand years there! They know what explodes and what doesn't and what to do when it explodes. So what do they do, they move to the other side where the fucking lava doesn't descend. But the gringos because they want all the fucking land in front of the water.... Look, me, me, I'd sell Puerto Rico to them, I tell you, all the land in front of the water I'd sell it to the fucking gringos right now. You want it? Give me 50 million for that shit, develop whatever comes out of your ass on it because in 10 years that shit won't exist. And it's already happening, go to Rincón! In Rincón they lost buildings that were, I'm saying Sofía, buildings that were 4 to 5 stories, that were intact, the structure was fine, but the water came up through the sand and knocked them from the root, they were gone *sound*. To the shore of the beach. Where is the planning here? And then you see that they take away regulatory power from Natural Resources to give more construction permits. And it's just, it's just that this is a shit mess what's happening here right now. That's why you see that the Puerto Rican evades taxes, does what they have to do to not pay these assholes. And you see that the congress people all the shit they talk, don't do anything. You know who was here the other day doing a fundraiser? Rob Bishop. Rob Bishop the same asshole who is saying that, Puerto Rico has to adjust to what the oversight board says. Guy, no. First he says, "I don't support statehood for Puerto Rico because Puerto Rico is not solvent." And because he knew they were doing a fundraiser, the day before he came here, he changes the statement and says, "No, I said I support statehood for Puerto Rico if and only if Puerto Rico is solvent." Then, they don't include us in Reforma Contributiva (Tax Reform)? They're jamming a tax of 20% to US companies that stay here, my sister... Amgen, Amgen [pharmaceutical] just opened a factory that they put 2 billion dollars into and they're going to close it! They're going to close it to hell.

A kick in the ass is coming. They need to stop taking the economy and exploiting it like they did when they came in and devalued the worth of the bonds/money held by those who had some money to less than 40%. And then they went and said, "That place is full of poor people." Well yeah asshole, because you just came and made them poor. I tell you, it's madness and then you see the way that they protect Wall Street, man...





dawn_chorus ii: el niagara en bicicleta

2018 Video, color, sound, on unique unistrut mount

dawn chorus ii: el niagara en bicicleta is the second video in a trilogy that examines the effects of settler colonialism in an era of accelerated climate disasters, set in Puerto Rico just after the deadly category 5 Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017. Hurricane Maria wiped out infrastructure over large swaths of land, contaminated drinking water, and damaged electrical and communications cables and roads, significantly slowing down federal and local aid. The hurricane resulted in 2,975 excess deaths from the time it made in September 2017 to February 2018.

In this long-form fantastical video, Córdova combines science fiction and documentary strategies to shape a narrative that examines how climate change exacerbated the systemic effects of anti-Indigenous sentiment and settler colonialism on communities of color. Córdova combines footage of the Puerto Rican landscape before the hurricane and after the disaster with anti-settler monologues and familial accounts of survival in order to create imagery and sounds of Caribbean celebration and continuity. The interweaving of depictions of daily life, the stories of disaster and overcoming, and surreal scenes forefronts the human ability to navigate rapidly changing ecologies—societal, environmental, and industrial.

- PMH

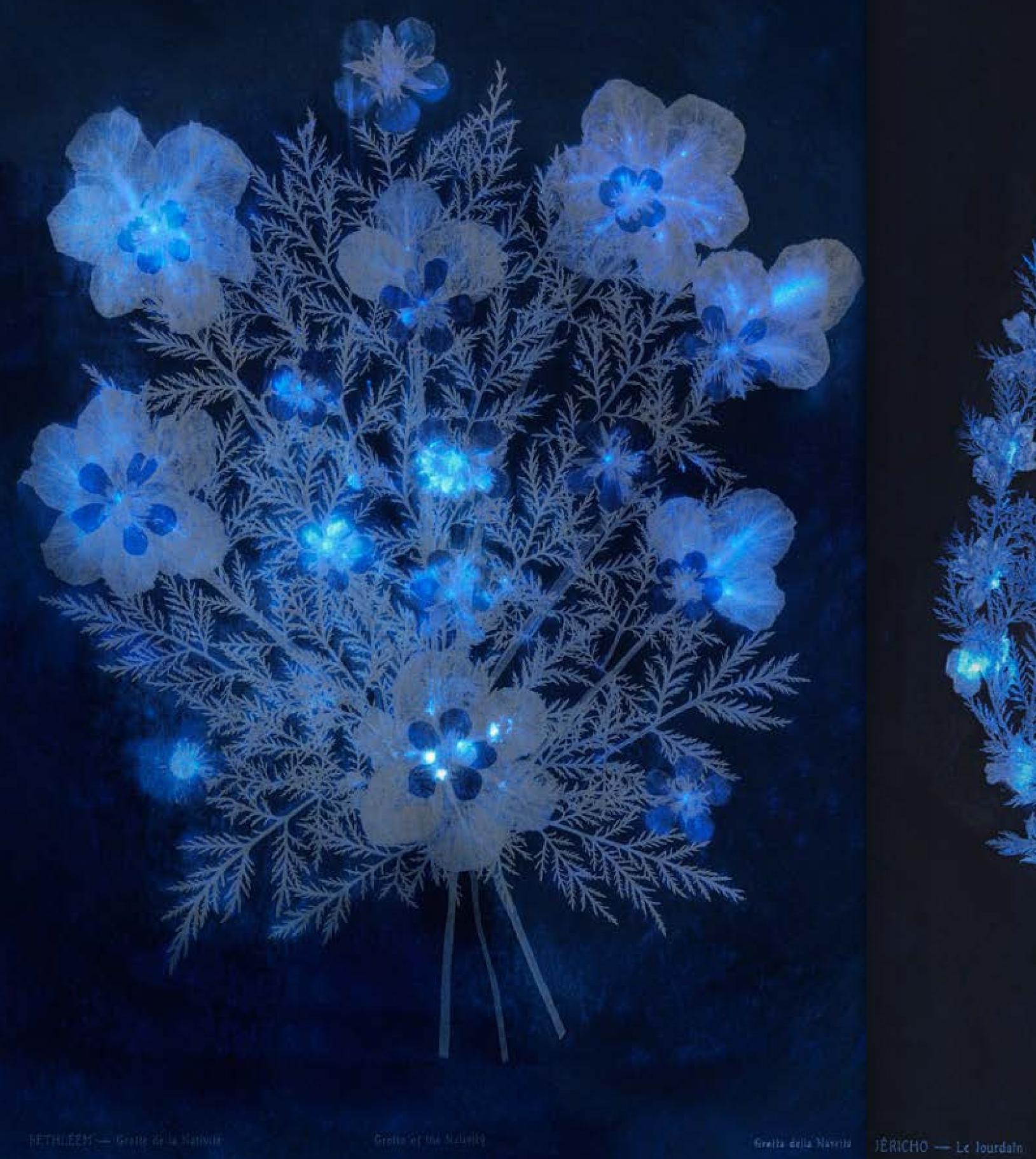


CUTTLEFISH CEPHALOPOD

Cuttlefish are related to the octopus and the squid, and characterized by a thick internal calcified shell called the cuttlebone. Cuttlefish range between 2.5 and 90 centimeters (1 to 35 inches) and have somewhat flattened bodies bordered by a pair of narrow fins. All species have eight arms and two longer tentacles that are used when capturing prey and can be withdrawn into two pouches. Suction disks are located on the arms and on expanded pads at the tips of the tentacles.

SOURCED FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA







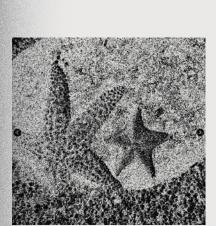


Lilies of the Field

2019-20 A selection from a series of archival inkjet prints.

Dor Guez was born to a Christian-Palestinian family on his mother's side and a family of Jewish immigrants from North Africa on his father's. Guez's practice explores the relationship between art, narrative, and memory. Lilies of the Field mines the rich historical and mythological dimensions of Jerusalem as a site of religious and political projection. The series is a collection of luminous pressed floral and plant arrangements that Guez discovered in his archival research of the American Colony in Jerusalem. *Lilies of the Field* reveals the colonialist mechanisms and aesthetic constructions of touristic objects by using photographic forensic tools.

Lilies of the Field brings to the fore an iconographic array of still lifes created and assimilated in Western culture. At first glance, the flower arrangements appear naive. They represent a diversity of flora indigenous to the Holy Land. Many sites mentioned in the Bible appear as titles in three European languages under the idealized flower arrangements. To Western eyes, these tourist souvenirs represent a



STARFISH

Sea stars live underwater, but they do not have gills, scales, or fins. Sea stars live only in saltwater. Sea water, instead of blood, is actually used to pump nutrients through their bodies via a water vascular system. These critters move by using tiny tube feet located on the underside of their bodies. Adult sunflower sea stars can move at the astonishing speed of one meter a minute, using 15,000 tube feet. The tube feet also help sea stars hold their prey.

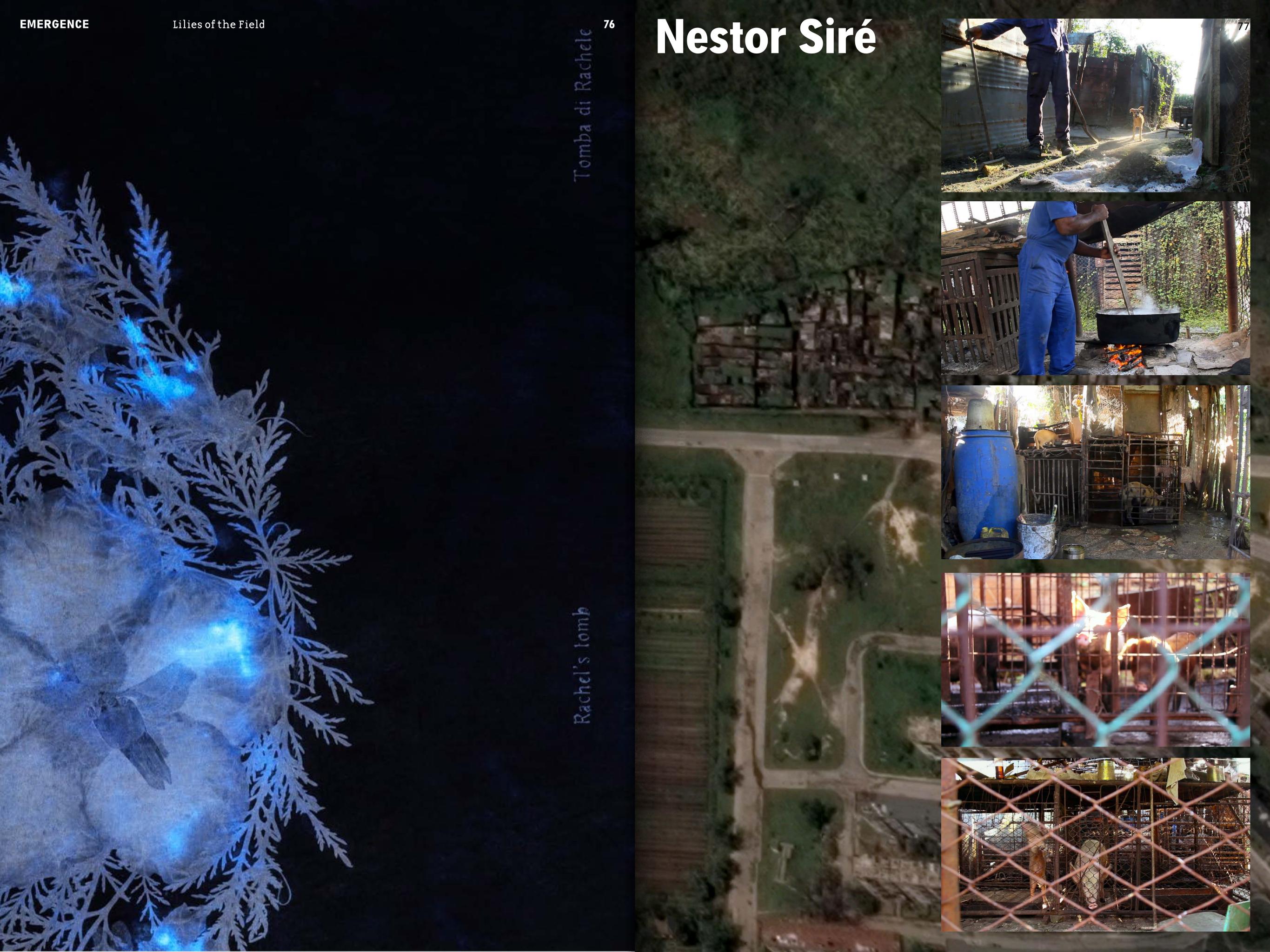
SOURCED FROM THE NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE WEBSITE

controlled, catalogued, and organized environment and nature. However, this arrangement of local vegetation necessitated a complex and violent history of imperialist attempts to conquer the Middle East by **European powers seeking regional influence. There is** no indication of historical conflicts, and the natives of the land are not considered. Nor is there any sign of the bitter political struggles that could undermine the Western view of the "Holy Land."

Guez's process involves photographing the front side of each floral arrangement on top of a paper-made lightbox and then on the other side of its overlaying sheet, which has absorbed most of the carotenoid (yellow) pigment over the years. By aligning the two images—that of the flowers, with that of the pigmented protective layer—Guez re-conceptualizes the images to reflect the time that has passed since they were created. This process produced two disturbing photographic forensic series, both of them negatives. The first, based on the flowers themselves, simulates a photogram of the flowers on a one-to-one scale. The second photograph converts the yellow to its complementary shade on the color spectrum, creating large-scale cyanotypes.

Through emphasizing the pigment shed by the flowers rather than the flowers themselves, Guez undermines the hierarchy of perception and authenticity—in contrast to the fabricated. Beneath the surface of the flower arrangements lies another territory the artist explores: the phenomenon of tourism in the East. This form of tourism engendered a dual meaning of joy and adventure, as well as the invasion, appropriation, and ownership of the land, its sites, people, and resources.

Guez's interest in these albums began in a visual research of the phenomenon of Orientalism. From his point of view, these pressed flower arrangements are a sign of bleeding wounds in the history of Palestine/ Israel. The flowers represent a diversity of flora indigenous to the land, and the areas surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem. As popular souvenirs for tourists and missionaries, the pressed flowers document different forms of devotional labor, from the work of the artisans who pressed them to those who made the journey and acquired these souvenirs. Selected by Guez, these objects embody the contradictions implied by a discrete piece of nature—a flower—preserved in resin, frozen like taxidermy game captured by a hunter.



In the 1990s, Cuba underwent a singular transformation following the collapse of the Soviet Union. For thirty years, a social revolution continually transformed the nation's landscapes, but as of 1989, a profound economic and structural crisis ensued, known as the Special Period. Cuba was dependent on the Soviet Union for around 80 percent of its international trade. When the trade agreements between Cuba and the Soviet Union ceased to exist due to the collapse of the trading bloc, Cuba could no longer count on its subsidies. These events left the Cuban economy in recession. Public assistance stopped and the government, forced to seek new funding directions, freed up direct foreign investment, restructured foreign trade, and promoted international tourism. New actors emerged: with the influx of money came the *jineteras*, slang for sex worker; with tourists, drugs; with foreign investment, the manager as a new type of empowered subject.

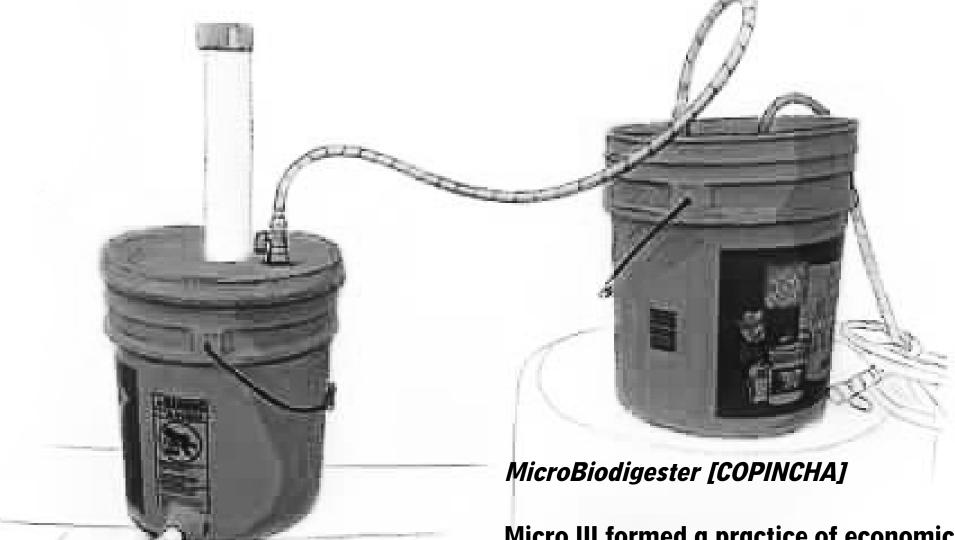
Although it brought about a dramatic regression in living standards, the Special Period opened up new spaces for alternative economies to emerge. The structural failures allowed new monsters and new images to surface. There was talk about social gaps, addressing gender, feminism, and Afro-descendants and acknowledging how their presence was silenced until then. Likewise, the continuous decline in wages as a result of the economic recession prompted people to develop new strategies to make a living, most of them illegal but seen as legitimate in the eyes of the public.







Raising pigs for self-consumption or sale is a deeply rooted custom for rural communities in Cuba. During the Special Period, pigs were bred in urban areas as well, mostly in domestic spaces, like bedrooms, bathrooms, and balconies that were abruptly and radically transformed into makeshift corrals. During this time, on the outskirts of Nuevitas, Camagüey, the most significant space for pig raising in private hands began to take shape. The two working-class neighborhoods in Camagüey, known as Micro I and Micro II, expanded in a time when the city was experiencing an industrial boom and the Cuban state built vast areas of buildings to house the laborers who worked in the growing industry. As many industries shuttered in the recession and employment was scarce, communities began to raise more animals, especially pigs. Facing a constant struggle with the local authorities, and with a hefty dose of collective participation, the residents of Micro I and Micro II spontaneously took the pigs from their homes and moved them to a vacant space on the edge of the city, which became Micro III.



Micro III formed a practice of economic subsistence from organic chaotic confluences, as a peripheral space that mediates between the rural and the urban, and collective work and individual benefits. It is a local reflection of Cuba's recent history and how it moves between various social system models without adhering to any. This is the context in which the ex-industrial workers of Nuevitas built a gigantic sty. Over time and with the influence of the private sector, the Micro III pig farm diversified its functions and organizational structures. The space features hydraulic, sanitary, and electrical installation. It has a small doctor's office, a security system, and marked streets. Since its inception, Micro III has had an administration elected by popular vote, made up of a former director and a supervisory council. Both the administration and the community surrounding the pigsty follow regulations as a governing document for the breeders and contracted workers.

As an intervention into this phenomenon and as a result of the research process, Siré and his collaborators detected that one of the most pressing problems in Micro III is waste treatment and energy use. To promote technological innovation with an environmental impact that responds to this problem, Siré established a collaboration with COPINCHA, a collaborative and open creation laboratory that integrates knowledge and technological practices consistent with the **Cuban socio-economic and cultural context. They** launched a call among community members to form a multidisciplinary working group whose objective was to create a manual for constructing wastewater treatment biodigesters optimized for this specific context's environmental and economic conditions. In addition to reusing organic waste and avoiding energy consumption from more polluting sources, the organic biodigesters would help reduce the ecological footprint of organic waste in the area.





CONTAMINATION Nestor Siré

Siré

Bien Común (Good Commons)

2018-20

This publication features the research and documentation from three different projects within *Bien Común* (Good Commons), which includes a series of multidisciplinary collaborations: *SNET [La Red]*, an offline mesh network; Hieroscopia, a film festival in Nuevitas, Camagüey, Cuba; and *Micro III*, a collaborative community space.

Nestor Siré's artistic practice focuses on unofficial methods of circulation of information and goods and alternative forms of economic production and the phenomena resulting from social creativity and recycling, piracy, and non-activities that benefit from loopholes in the formal economy. Actively committed to the object of his research, Siré gets involved in the social context that originated it, intervenes in it, and encourages the people involved in its creation to participate in the work. As part of his methodology, he confronts bureaucracies and expands social structures to obtain more effective ways in which art can participate in the complex relationship between official and informal networks.

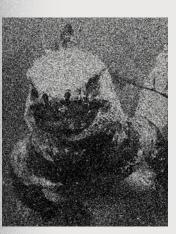
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Bien Común (Good Commons) is a research and collaborative project which aims at finding creative solutions to local economic needs generated by the depression of towns that once flourished, but withered with the fall of their fundamental wealth-generating activities. The project began in 2018 and researches daily social practices that arise spontaneously in Cuba. These occurrences are the consequences of economic precarity and deficiencies in the public sector. In response, people across the island collaborate, building informal networks independent of official institutions. These communities find strength in prioritizing the collective over the individual through the informal, spontaneous organizations they create to achieve common goals.

Central to the development and methodology of Siré's project was collaborating across disciplines such as the visual arts, design, cinema, and social sciences. Siré established a horizontal working method where each collaborator shared their perspectives and practices in order to reach results that extend outside of the artistic context and into the social. His aim in creating these collaborations was to explore these social phenomena from multiple vantage points. At the local level, he sought to register their dynamics, revealing and sharing their successful structures. On a larger scale, Siré contrasted these informal networks with the new parameters of success established at the national level.

The works in *Bien Común* include *SNET [La Red] (The Network)*, a community operating a mesh network that works without an internet connection; *Movimiento Audiovisual en Nuevitas (Audiovisual Movement in Nuevitas) Hieroscopia*, a film festival organized in Nuevitas, Cuba, dedicated to community and resources sharing; and *Micro III [Cochiquera] (Piggy bank)*, a space dedicated to addressing the economic needs of local communities within the neighborhood of Nuevitas.

— PMH

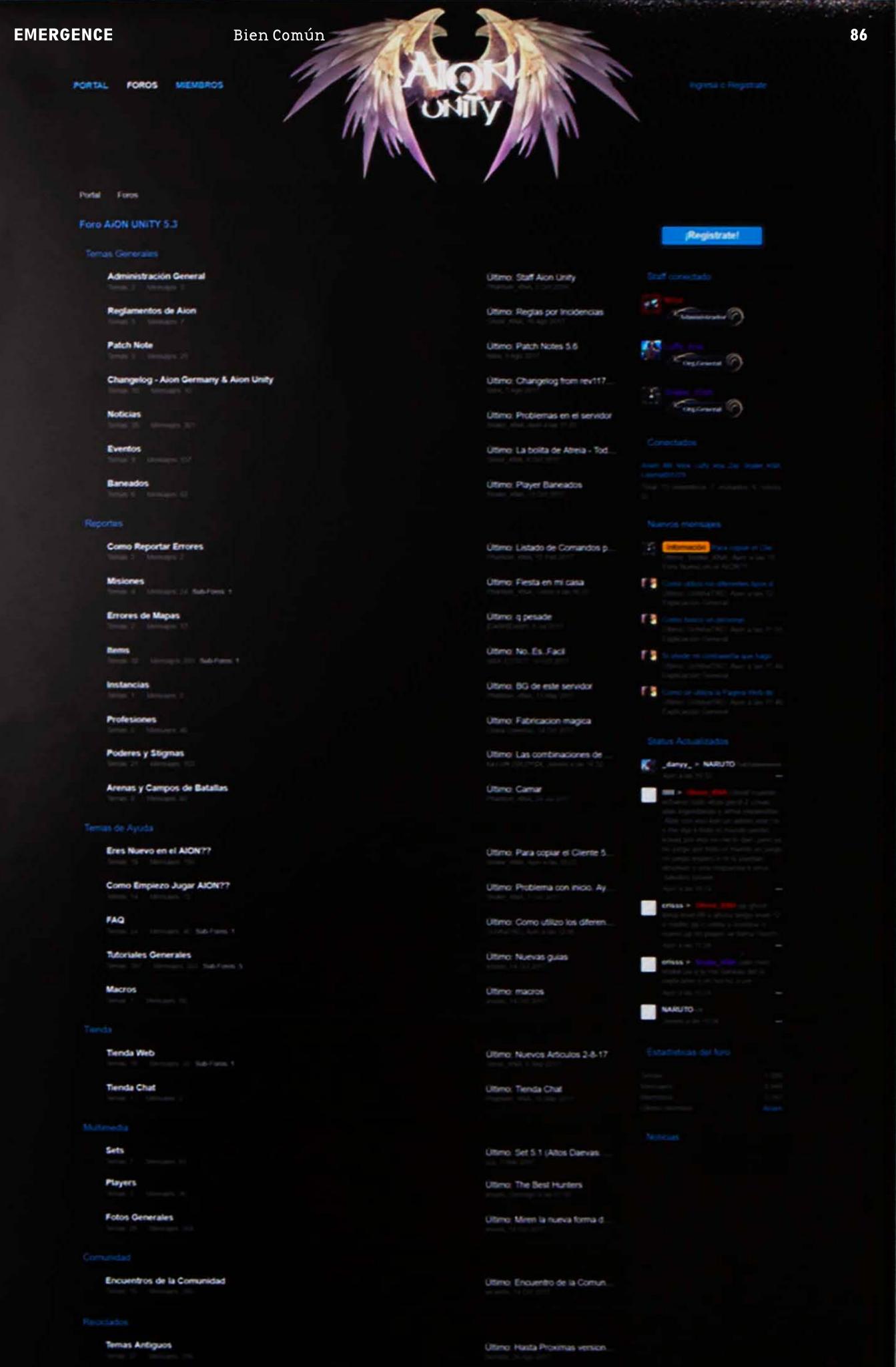


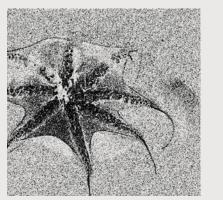
MARINE IGUANAS

Marine iguanas are often found basking in the sun because reptiles do not have the ability to thermoregulate and they need to warm their bodies after swimming in cold ocean waters in search of food. Their dark color allows them to absorb heat quickly. When their body temperature is low, these animals move sluggishly and are therefore at greater risk of predators. To counter this vulnerability, the marine iguana displays a highly aggressive behavior to bluff its way to escape.

Sourced from the MarineBio Website







VAMPIRE SQUID

When disturbed, the vampire squid inverts its cape, displaying large spines that line the underside of its arms. When exhibiting this posture, this species looks rather intimidating, but it is actually quite harmless. It is not predatory. Instead, it depends on food particles that it captures using sticky cells on its long, filamentous tentacles. In this way, it opportunistically feeds on plants and animal matter that sink from the surface ocean. Some large fish and diving predators are known to eat vampire squids. Unlike shallow-water squids and octopuses, vampire squids do not expel black ink to escape predation. In the darkness of the mesopelagic zone, black or dark purple ink would not be effective. Instead the vampire squid expels a colorless substance that contains numerous particles of bioluminescent material and these twinkling lights confuse potential predators.

Sourced from Oceana





SEA RAY

EMERGENCE

Sea rays make up a large group of cartilaginous fish, which are related to sharks. Although they look nothing like their fearsome cousins, rays and sharks have a few things in common. The most significant similarity is that rays, like sharks, have no bones. Their skeletons are actually made out of cartilage, which allows them to move more efficiently.

SOURCED FROM THE FISHING BOOKER BLOG

Dor Guez is an artist and a scholar who splits his time between Jaffa and New York. He was born in Jerusalem to a Palestinian family on his mother's side and a family of Jewish immigrants from Tunisia on his father's. Guez's photographs, video, essays, and lecture-performances explore the relationship between art, narrative, and memory. Interrogating personal experiences and official accounts of the past, Guez raises questions about contemporary art's role in narrating unwritten histories and re-contextualizing visual and written documents. His studies and artistic work focus on archival materials and photographic practices in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as mapping traces and structures of violence in the landscape. Guez received his PhD from Tel Aviv University in 2014 and earned his professorship from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in 2018. He is the founder of the CPA (Christian-Palestinian Archive), the head of the master of fine arts program at Bezalel, and the co-director of Seaport: Mediterranean Curatorial Residency.

Keren Benbenisty was born in Israel and moved to Paris in 1998. She graduated from the École Nationale Superieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2004, and attended California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) as an international exchange scholar. She was an artist in residence at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2009); The International Studio & Curatorial Program, Brooklyn (2011); Residency Unlimited, New York (2016); Arts Maebashi, Japan (2017); and the Open Sessions program at the Drawing Center, New York (2018—20). Her work has been exhibited at the Drawing Center; A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn; Soloway Gallery, Brooklyn; Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod, Israel; Petach Tikva Museum of Art, Israel; Ulterior Gallery, New York; the CUNY Graduate Center, New York; the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art; the University Gallery, Tel Aviv; the Artist House, Jerusalem; and Human Resources, Los Angeles.

CONTAMINATION

Ofri Cnaani is an artist and educator currently living in London. She works in time-based media, performance, and installation. She is currently a PhD researcher and an associate lecturer at the Visual Cultures Department, Goldsmiths, University of London. Prior to her recent move to London, Cnaani was based in New York City, where she was a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts' Visual and Critical Studies program. At SVA, she also ran the program City as Site: Performance + Social Interventions. In 2016, with curator Roxana Fabius she co-founded the Unforgettables Reading/Working Group at A.I.R. Gallery, New York. Cnaani's work has been shown at Tate Britain, London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA PS1, the Kitchen, BMW Guggenheim Lab, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York; Inhotim Institute, Brazil; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, the Herzliya Museum of Art, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; Amos Rex Museum and Kiasma Museum, Helsinki; The Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Twister, Network of Lombardy Contemporary Art Museums, Italy; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Arnolfini Foundation Museum, Bristol; Moscow Biennial; and Praque Triennial, among others.

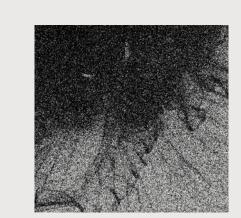
Deville Cohen is a New York-based visual artist and director. He studied sculpture at the KHB Berlin from 2002–07 and received his MFA in film/video from Bard College, New York, in 2010. His videos and installations were shown internationally in museums and galleries such as MoMA PS1, New York; SFMoMA, San Francisco; The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel-Aviv; and The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik. He began creating for the stage during a residency at the Wooster Group Performance Garage in the summer of 2014. His creation *underline*, in collaboration with the composer Hugo Morales, was commissioned and co-produced by the Deutsche Oper Berlin and The Munich Biennale for New Music Theater in 2016. In 2018, he co-created *MENAGERIE* with choreographer Shamel Pitts for Gibney Dance Company in New York. In 2019, his new creation *McGuffin* was commissioned and produced by The Center of The Less Good Idea in Johannesburg, South Africa. He was an artist in residence at Recess Art and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) workspace, in New York; Fountainhead, Miami; and EMPAC, in Troy, NY.

Nir Evron is an artist and filmmaker based in Tel Aviv whose work investigates the relationships between history, media, and memory. After receiving an MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in London, Evron began exhibiting his films, videos, and photographs widely. He has been included in the Berlin Biennial and the Rotterdam Film Festival (2010, 2012); has presented solo exhibitions at

the Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto (2020); Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2016); the Institute of Contemporary Art in Richmond, Virginia (2015); and at LAXART in Los Angeles (2014). Evron has received several awards from the Israeli Ministry of Culture. His work is in the collections of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt; and La Caixa Foundation, Barcelona, among other organizations.

Sofía Córdova was born in 1985 in Carolina, Puerto Rico and is currently based in Oakland, California. Córdova makes work that considers sci-fi as alternative history, dance music's liberatory potential, the internet, colonial contamination, mystical objects, and extinction and mutation as evolution within the matrix of class, gender, race, and late capitalism and its technologies. She works in performance, video, sound, music, installation, photography, and sometimes taxidermy.

Domingo Castillo is a Miami-based artist often working collaboratively to the open ocean. produce artworks and films. In 2009, Castillo co-founded the end /SPRING BREAK, a nomadic artist-run project space in Miami, with Patricia M. Hernández and included major contributions by Kathryn Marks and Cristina Farah. In 2013, he co-founded the gallery Noguchi Breton (F.K.A. Guccivuitton and Versace Versace Versace) with Loriel Beltran and Aramis Gutierrez, and in 2016 Public Displays of Professionalism (PDP), a transdisciplinary think tank was co-founded with Patricia M. Hernández and Natalia Zuluaga.



MOON JELLIES

The name "moon jelly" can refer to any of several jellyfish with a shallow bell and relatively short tentacles. This creature is a type of moon jelly species that is common throughout both sides of the northern Atlantic Ocean. Scientists believe that moon jellies and other jellies thrive in areas that are particularly affected by human activity: overfishing, ocean warming, and pollution are all factors that reduce moon jellies' predators and competitors thus increasing their prey. As humans activity in the oceans intensifies, the moon jelly may become one of the more successful species in

CONTAMINATION

SOURCED FROM OCEANA

CONTAMINATION

Elite Kedan is an artist and architect based in Miami. Her work is about place, process, and narrative formats that reveal our current landscapes and speculate on its trajectories. She received a master of architecture in urban design from Harvard University Graduate School of Design. She is a member of Alliance of the Southern Triangle (A.S.T.), a multidisciplinary initiative exploring how artistic and cultural possibilities can be reimagined in the context of climate change. In 2020, she completed an artist residency at Anderson Ranch in Snowmass, CO through Oolite Arts, Miami.

Nestor Siré lives and works between Havana and Camagüey, Cuba. Siré participated in the Havana Biennial (2015), the Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Cuba (2013), the Oberhausen International Festival of Short Film, Germany (2016), and the Asunción International Biennale, Paraguay (2015). He was the winner of the 2016 "Visa for Creation" from l'Institut Français and participated in artist residencies including Dos Mares in Marseille, France, and The Ludwig Foundation and LASA, Havana. His work has been exhibited at the National Museum of Fine Arts, Havana; Hong-Gah Museum, Taipei; UNAM Museum of Contemporary Art, México City; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, among other venues.

Produced on the occasion of the exhibition and film screening, "Interregnum: between emergence and contamination," as part of the Artis Curatorial Residency Program in 2020.

Artis, New York
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Curator Patricia Margarita Hernández

Editor Orit Gat

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SEA ANEMONES

The ornately colored sea anemone is named after the equally flashy terrestrial anemone flower. Close relatives of coral and jellyfish, anemones are stinging polyps that spend most of their time attached to rocks on the sea bottom or on coral reefs, waiting for fish to pass close enough to get ensnared in their venom-filled tentacles. Some anemones, like their coral cousins, establish symbiotic relationships with green algae. In exchange for providing the algae safe harbor and exposure to sunlight, the anemone receives oxygen and sugar, the by-products of the algae's photosynthesis.

Sourced from National Geographic

Interregnum:
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