



MAMAC

28 AUGUST 2020 - 17 JANUARY 2021

1, place Yves Klein - Nice
www.mamac-nice.org

**URSULA
BIEMANN**

*SAVOIRS INDIGÈNES_
FICTIONS COSMOLOGIQUES*

*(INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES_
COSMOLOGICAL FICTIONS*



For over twenty years, Ursula Biemann has been closely intertwining in her video essays contemporary ecological challenges, the extraction and unequal distribution of the Earth's resources and migratory flows as a consequence of the pressure exerted on the environment and all living beings.

More than ever before, current events highlight the relevance of her complex vision, intertwining these social and environmental issues, this voracity in the exploitation of resources and the irreversible transformations of soils and entire ecosystems.

Highly informed about current scientific research and philosophical or anthropological debates on ecological issues, the artist instills ecofeminist visions in her filmic work (an alliance of feminist and ecological conceptions to counter the exploitation of nature, the commodification of living beings and to promote gestures of repair).

The exhibition also shows the evolution of her practice from her video essays giving voice to other geographies, to fictional or even science fiction stories. The territory of imagination and the invention of narratives emerge as possible paths today for envisaging new connections to the world and an ethical approach to relations with other species. Far from yielding to the prevailing catastrophism, Ursula Biemann thus invites us to reconnect with our original belonging to the natural order and to hear the voices of peoples who live in rich and respectful interactions with non-human beings.

This exhibition is organized in collaboration with the Centre culturel Suisse, Paris. It is part of the program Les Parallèles du Sud of Manifesta 13 Marseille – European touring Biennial.

FOREST LAW, 2014

**URSULA BIEMANN
& PAULO TAVARES**



Ursula Biemann & Paulo Tavares :Forest Law, 2014 Video installation double projection with audio © Ursula Biemann

Situated between the Amazon floodplains and the Andes, Ecuador is one of the richest regions on the planet in terms of biodiversity and minerals and it has therefore come under great pressure from oil companies. Its large tropical forests have experienced severe degradation of soil, water and living conditions due to hydrocarbon contamination. Since 1993, indigenous people have sued oil and mining companies to obtain recognition of this serious attack on their territories and their biodiversity demanding compensation and soil rehabilitation. Ursula Biemann and Paulo Tavares, a Brazilian architect and urban planner, specialized in indigenous resistance movements in the Amazon, met with the protagonists – indigenous leaders, lawyers and scientists – of some of these landmark trials that have provided elements of jurisprudence. In particular, they are following the "Sarayaku" case. For 25 years the people of Sarayaku have become a figure of resistance by protecting their territory and developing a defense system based on the central core of a cosmology of the "Living Forest" which is vital for the survival of their community.

DEEP WEATHER, 2013

Deep Weather presents a striking parallel between two geographies, two disastrous and intimately linked ecological situations resulting from profound transformations in nature and climate. The mining of Northern Canada's tar sands, which encroach heavily on the region's forests, are spreading their dark pollution over the wilderness, destroying Alberta's wildlife and permanently contaminating the soil and water. To these images of disturbing beauty, respond those of the construction of a dam in Bangladesh by Delta villagers, where melting Himalayan glaciers, rising sea levels and extreme climatic conditions are forcing the population into an amphibian lifestyle and a permanent struggle for survival. This beautiful and chilling contemporary tale recounts in a whisper what is known as the "butterfly effect": the unsuspected repercussions of the irrational exploitation of resources and the unpredictable future shaped by our actions on the other side of the world.



Deep Weather, 2013, video © Ursula Biemann.
Duration : 9 minutes



Subatlantic, 2015 © Ursula Biemann,

SUBATLANTIC, 2015

The Subatlantic defines both the submerged areas of the Atlantic and the geological climatic chronozone that began 2500 years ago and in which we are now living. This is the last phase of the Holocene era. In this narrative fiction, Ursula Biemann superimposes human history with geology and climate science. Images shot in the Shetland Islands (Scotland), in Disko Bay in Greenland, and on a tiny Caribbean island, evoke the invisible links that connect these remote islands through the ocean currents that determine the temperatures of the land and seas of the North Atlantic. A voice-over shares the findings of a female scientist, related to the last great ice melt 12,000 years ago and the changing interactions she observes during the 1,000 years in which the sea level has steadily risen, causing human presences to be displaced. She tells of one consequence of the disappearance of the glaciers: the release of hitherto imprisoned micro-organisms, which mix their archaic DNA with today's ecosystems, thus blending immemorial times with today's climate issues. Relying on scientific observations, Biemann, through the voice of her character, speculates on the possible appearance of new species and new dynamics invisible to our eyes, potentially generating new interactions. She substitutes the limited perspective of human history with that of geological timeframes, and reminding us of the ability of living beings to self-organize and regulate themselves. The narrative shifts between rational scientific descriptions to poetic insertions underlining an intense cohabitation between the character's thoughts and emotions and the surrounding landscape, or even their interaction.

ACOUSTIC OCEAN, 2018

Acoustic Ocean plunges us into the depths of the underwater world and the richness of its sonic universe, between scientific experience and fictional narrative. Shot in the Lofoten Islands, Norway, the film follows the character of a young scientist of Sami origin, a semi-nomadic indigenous people who live in Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. She meticulously places detectors, hydrophones and microphones on the rocks of the coastline and in the water to capture the sounds emitted by marine species and their communications. Through this experience she also aspires to establish contact with them. This immense world, invisible to our eyes, emerges through the evocative force of perceived sounds, from the most majestic species to the microscopic creatures that we finally see coming on the screen. They speak to the memory and the vulnerability of an ecosystem permeable to all our actions and to the profound transformations that result from them, notably the acidification of the oceans. These songs from the depths convey the persistence of a world whose future is unpredictable. Echoing this invisible drama, the scientist, performed by singer and environmental activist Sofia Jannok, testifies to the consequences of a shifting climate on the indigenous Sami community and on the reindeer, on which their economic and cultural sovereignty rely. Based, like all of Ursula Biemann's works, on scientific research, this film underlines, through this aspiration for interspecies communication, the profound interdependence that links us to ecosystems and all forms of life.



Ursula Biemann *Acoustic Ocean*, 2018 Video installation, audio
Duration: 18 minutes © Ursula Biemann

BECOME UNIVERSITY

The Amazonian peoples have spent millennia getting to know their living forests with whom they have coevolved. Their accumulated knowledge of these ecologies is invaluable for preserving the diversity of species. On a field trip to the South of Colombia in 2018, the Indigenous leader of the Inga people, Hernando Chindoy Chindoy, invited the artist Ursula Biemann to co-create an Indigenous university to preserve and transmit their ancestral knowledge and prepare the young generation for a good life in the territory. The visionary project intends to bridge indigenous knowledge systems and occidental science and technologies in view of fostering peace and environmental protection for the indigenous communities. At the foundational Mocoa Meetings held in the Amazonian territory in 2019, numerous Inga and four potential university partners from Bogota were brought together to exchange their ideas on the purpose and nature of this future university. The artist acts as conceptual and aesthetic companion to the project, producing videos, workshops, exhibitions, and an online audiovisual platform following the process of Devenir University. Devenir University is a commission of Museum of Art, National University of Colombia.

THE EMBRACE OF THE JAGUAR

My interpretation of the Indigenous University is that of the black jaguar that inhabits the space of the sacred points between the Andes and the Amazon. It is the protective spirit that day by day safeguards this region in the thoughts of our elders, the guardians of the ancestral knowledge of the Inga People. Seen from space, the University has the form of a jaguar in the state of "samai," at rest. In Inga cosmology, the black jaguar is an important symbol of knowledge, of harmony, of infinity and is the color of the Earth who embraces us and gives us life. That is why it is so important that the house of knowledge and wisdom in our territory is embraced by the spirituality of our jaguar as the guardian of such sacred, strategic and emblematic territories in terms of biocultural wealth and political ecology of peace."

Hernando Chindoy Chindoy

Leader of the Indigenous Inga People of Colombia

**Edition of a booklet about Ursula Biemann's latest film, *Acoustic Ocean*,
in collaboration with the Centre culturel suisse, Paris.**



On sale at MAMAC and CCS for 8€.

**Exhibition « Ursula Biemann : Acoustic Ocean »
at the Centre culturel suisse, Paris.
23 February – 12 July 2020**

Exhibition curator : Claire Hoffmann
Direction : Jean-Marc Diébold

RELATED EVENTS

HORS-LES-MURS

• **Le 109, in Nice:**

28–29 August 2020

In the frame work of the event « Voilà l'été. Un éclairage public pas comme les autres ».

Projection of films by the artist Ursula Biemann in the wake of the exhibition at MAMAC's Contemporary Gallery.

• **La Criée, in Marseille:**

2nd October 6pm – 10pm
3rd October 3.30pm – 6pm

THE SEA - SOUNDS & STORYTELLING

Programme developed within the framework of Manifesta 13 Marseille - Les Parallèles du Sud, in cooperation with Istituto Svizzero - Rome, l'Institut Kunst HGK FHNW - Bâle et TBA 21 - Academy, in partnership with La Criée Théâtre National de Marseille.

PUBLICATIONS

EXHIBITION REALIZED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 13TH EDITION OF THE MANIFESTA-13 FESTIVAL.

Every edition of Manifesta creates a synergy between the main programme of the biennial and so-called "collateral events". For its 13th edition in Marseille, this programme is entitled Les Parallèles du Sud and will take place during Manifesta 13 from the 28th of August until the 29th of November 2020, and on the whole territory of the Région Sud.

FEES

- **Individual ticket 10€:** 24-hour access to all museums
- **7 days Ticket 20€:** access to all museums for 7 days
- **Group ticket (10 to 30 people) 8€:** 24-hour access to all museums
- **Free admission & Nice Museums Pass:** conditions on the museum's website



The museum is open:

Place Yves Klein – 06364 Nice cedex 4
+33 (0)4 97 13 42 01 – mamac-nice.org

- **Until October 31, 2020:** every days from 10am to 6pm except Monday
- **From November 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021:** every day from 11am to 6pm except Monday
(closed on December 25th, January 1st, Easter Sunday and May 1st)

Ticket office closes at 5.30pm

Terraces close at 5.40pm

Rooms close at 5.45pm

www.mamac-nice.org

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