URSULA BIEMANN

Indigenous knowledges_ Cosmologic fiction

28th of august 2020 – 17th of january 2021

MEDIATION FORM

Acoustic ocean, Ursula Biemann, 2018 © Ursula Biemann
PRESENTATION

This exhibition is the first monographic exhibition of the artist Ursula Biemann in France. It proposes a large selection of artworks concentrating on contemporaneous questions. Video installation presented take form of essays, stories that linked documentary and fiction. The artist links stories and ecological stakes to give a state of reflection and open doors on visions about future. She brings those debates and shows the social reality in the heart of public space by working the aesthetic aspect of her videos because it’s according to her essential to touch the social imaginary.

« The art activates the social imaginary ». Ursula Biemann, 2016

Visit's duration: 1h to 1h30

Goals

• See how art could be engaged
• Sensitize about ecological stakes
• Study artistic possibilities that offers nature
• Learn how to read an artwork
• To be familiarized with the specific vocabulary of art
• Discover the immersive art and the video art
• Link art, biology, anthropology and science

A | STEP OF THE VISIT

From that information, teacher must make a choice of steps according to the lever of the class and the availability of artworks in the gallery. Steps could be modulated by teachers. The preparation sheet to come must be completed as support for visiting.

Step 1: Nature and human
Step 2: Listen to the nature

B | ASSOCIATED KNOWLEDGES
A | VISIT’S STEPS

❖ STEP 1: NATURE AND HUMAN

URSULA BIEMANN

Born in 1955 in Switzerland, Ursula Biemann is a videast, plastic artist and writer (because she is essayist and art theorician). She is also art commissioner. She studied in Fine Arts school of Mexico in the 80's then in the School of Visual Arts of New York. Her videos and installations are exposed all over the world, essentially during art contemporary biennials. Her writings are about migratory displacements, notion of frontier, ecofeminism, state of genders, influence of technologies and also climate changing. Biemann bases her work on an idea of research, meeting and collaboration with searchers, anthropologist, geographer, journalist and specialist in social sciences that are for her a big inspiration and information source.

FORREST LAW | 2014
ESSAI VIDEO, 38 MIN.

Forest Law is a video installation accompanied with a table on which is arranged a multitude of objects. Ursula Biemann goes meeting people that accumulate knowledge about interactions between living beings and vegetable beings, who know how to preserve diversity, equilibrium. We must learn from them if we want to preserve threatened environments. Artist uses forms of indigenous knowledge to make accessible and reveal alternatives to live together with the world. Forest Law concentrates on a population in the Ecuador forest: the Sarayaku, who bring to the law the defense of their territory face to the pression of petroleum industries. In fact, ecuadorean Amazonia is one of the richest region of biodiversity and minerals. This people fights for the recognition of forest law and obtains recognition by wining the process. Ursula Biemann shows interviews of Sarayaku's individuals that explain the wealth of their territory and why the wished to defend it.
To make her work deeper in Amazonia, Ursula Biemann commits in long-term in the Devenir University project, judging that her videos do not have a sufficient concrete impact. It is her last project that began in 2019 and consist in creation of an university for indigenous population in Amazonia in favor of a cohabitation ecological and durable for the territory. This university tends to make accessible knowledge and teaching to population, by putting forward transmission of indigenous knowledges. So, this university has not utilitarian goal as one of the capitalist society.

DEEP WEATHER | 2013

This video shows what we call « butterfly effect ». From one part, Canada and its polluted landscapes because of the exploitation of tarries grounds; from another part, the Bangladesh, country almost amphibian which lives between sea water and water from the melting of the glaciers. A voice-over accompanies pictures and appears as a whisper. The two situations to part and another of the planet are linked by this voice. It is about showing the friction between ressources exploitation and its direct consequence on the environment.
STEP 2: LISTEN THE NATURE

SUBATLANTIC | 2015
VIDEO ESSAY, 11 MIN.

Ursula Biemann offers us a fiction story that gets in actual scientific researches about species communication. Three sea flows of different geographical zones are linked. With the melt of ice we know that a liberation of archaic DNA could happened and melted with life already presents. Here, the artist imagines the impact that this phenomenon could have, the consequences being unknown. Then, this story creates new species. Ursula Biemann uses philosophical texts to creat this phantasmagoric universe.

ACOUSTIC OCEAN | 2018
VIDEO INSTALLATION, 18 MIN.

Acoustic Ocean is a poetical science-fiction that staged a scientific from Sami nomadic population. It's a population that lives in north of Europe on several frontiers. The woman inherits of ancestrals knowledges from her popularion that is added to her rich scientific knowledge. She connects devices and plunges them in the water to listen communication of creatures that live in depths of water of Lofoten islands, in Norway. In fact, one of the rare means of communication in dark and deep waters is the sound. And this is felt in the precise sound work of this installation. Ursula Biemann warns us about the impact of our way of life on the seabed that endanger submarines creatures. The prologue relates the history of the SOFAR canal, used for spying during the Cold War, then opened for science, which introduces violently in nature, by making a strong sound.
B | ASSOCIATED KNOWLEDGES

❖ KEY WORDS

ECOLOGY: Science that studies living beings (humans, animals, plants) and the organic or inorganic environment where they live. Study of existence's conditions and behaviours of living beings according to the biological equilibrium and the survival of species. Study of reciprocal relations between human and his moral, social and economic environment.

GLOBALIZATION: Corresponds to the free movement of goods, capitals, services, persons, technics and information. It indicates the integration process of markets and rapprochement of humans that results notably of exchanges liberation, development of means of transport for persons and goods, and repercussion of information technology and communication at planetary scale.

ECOSYSTEM: System formed by an environment and by the group of species living here, nourishing here and reproducing here.

CLIMATE: Conditions météorologiques en un lieu donné. Meteolorogical conditions in a given place.

FRONTIER: Limit that, naturally, determines the area of a territory or which, by convention, divides two states.

ANTHROPOLOGY: Science that studies human being and groups of human by physical and cultural aspects, the goal is to understand his place in the nature by retracing his origins to determine relations with other living beings.

FICTION: Story based on imaginary facts.

❖ WORK TRAILS

➔ Nature
➔ Fiction
➔ Ecological art
➔ Engaged art
➔ Yves Klein and fire
➔ Arman
➔ Christo
➔ Anthropology
➔ Science
➔ Documentary art
➔ Video art