

NIGHT SOIL – NOCTURNAL GARDENING

Melanie Bonajo

Opening on Friday, March 16th 2018 at 7:00 PM
At Le Narcissio, 16 rue Parmentier, 06 Nice (France)

Curated by **Chiara Nuzzi**,
as part of ACROSS residency, run by *thankyouforcoming*.

March 17th – April 20th 2018
Opening hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 2:30 to 6:00 PM
Tramway Borriglione or Valrose

•

Night Soil – Nocturnal Gardening is the title of the exhibition-installation dedicated to the eponymous video work realized by Dutch artist **Melanie Bonajo** in 2016. Transformed for the occasion into a project space where the public can experience the film in a fully absorbing atmosphere, Le Narcissio hosts the last chapter of *Night Soil* for the first time in France. The project consists of an experimental documentary in three parts that narrates the disconnection undergone by Western people in relation to nature. Considering how communities come together through alternative and pre-colonial uses of land, the video explores indigenous land rights, off-the-grid subsistence, racism and injustice in the food system and the consequences of consumer behaviour on farm animals.

In this chapter four protagonists with very different backgrounds narrate their stories about radical agriculture. Departing from Bonajo's curiosity in women who live by alternative norms and have established communities by themselves, *Nocturnal Gardening* gives greater attention to women characters, as the artist believes their voices are insufficiently heard even today. The four characters all fiercely represent strong and progressive women: Mandana is a Paleolithic revivalist, anarchist and hunter-gatherer from Iran, currently living entirely off the land. She works as an educator and herbalist teaching people about plants on both a spiritual and scientific level. Leah Penniman is a food justice organizer and youth educator at Soul Fire Farm (U.S.A.), a family-run farm working to dismantle the structures of oppression within our food system and end racial injustice through farming, by increasing sustainable growing with people marginalized by food apartheid. Dafne Westerhof is a farmer from Friesland (The Netherlands) who educates people on the behaviour and wellbeing of farm animals and pigs in particular while Lyla June Johnson is a Navajo musician, land rights and non-violent communication activist.

Through such narrations, with the characters disclosing new ways of togetherness, applying measures that interrupt our current rules and speaking out for an anti-capitalist system of care, Bonajo's combines a quasi-documentary style, that explores how people tackle feelings of fragmentation and alienation, with hallucinogenic fragments springing from her own imagination.

•

HD IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



Images caption:

Melanie Bonajo

Still from *Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening*, 2016

HD video, digital, colour, sound, 50'

Courtesy the artist & AKINCI

MELANIE BONAJO



In her work, **Melanie Bonajo** (1978, The Netherlands) examines the paradoxes inherent to ideas of comfort with a strong sense for community, equality, and body-politics. Through her videos, performances, photographs and installations, she studies subjects related to how technological advances and commodity-based pleasures increase feelings of alienation, removing a sense of belonging in an individual. Her experimental documentaries often explore communities living or

working on the margins of society, either through illegal means or cultural exclusion. Captivated by concepts of the divine, Bonajo explores the spiritual emptiness of her generation, examines peoples' shifting relationship with nature and tries to understand existential questions by reflecting on our domestic situations, ideas around classification, concepts of home, gender and attitudes towards value.

Bonajo's work has been exhibited and performed in international art institutions, such as Tate Modern, London; EYE Film Museum, Amsterdam; STUK, Louvain; de Bond, Bruges; Rogaland Kunstsenter, Stavanger, Norway; De Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam; Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Moscow Biennale; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; Fondazione Prada, Milan; PPOW Gallery and MoMA PS1, New York. Her films have been screened at Kunsthalle Basel (2016), and numerous festivals such as International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and the Berlinale. In 2012, she initiated the collective *Genital International*, which tackles subjects around feminism, participation, equality, our Earth: 'Politics beyond Polarity' and 'Revolution through Relaxation'.

Bonajo has contributed to several art magazines, was creative editor of Capricious Magazine, and curated various shows, such as the QQC Performance Festival about pop music in visual arts at the Paradiso, Amsterdam. She published several books, the most recent being: 'Matrix Botanica, numero 1 – Non-Human Persons,' designed by Experimental Jetset and published by Capricious Publishing (New York). In 2013, she released an album with her band ZaZaZoZo (in collaboration with Joseph Marzolla) called Inua. She is currently working at a solo-project called *Mel's Positive Morning Exercise*. The first song was released on YouTube in 2016. Bonajo surf fluidly through various platforms of high and low culture, organizing events, and by using her music/videoclips in her films and using social media for her music and collaborative projects.

Melanie Bonajo studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and completed residencies at the Rijksakademie voor Beeldende Kunst in Amsterdam (2009-10) and at ISCP in New York (2014). Last year, she was shortlisted for the 57th Venice Biennale. Her film *Night Soil— Economy of Love*, recently awarded for the IFFR Tiger Awards (2016), has been produced and screened by Schunck, Heerlen (2015), was shown at a.o. Tate Modern, London, AKINCI, Amsterdam (2015) and EYE Film Museum, Amsterdam (2016). Recently, Melanie Bonajo presented her *Night Soil* trilogy in a solo show at FOAM, Amsterdam, now acquired by Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht. The trilogy has recently been exhibited at Frankfurter Kunstverein and Haus der Kunst München. Last March she premiered her performance "Pilgrimage with the Animal" at Tate Modern.

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EXHIBITION *NIGHT SOIL*

The exhibition is the second chapter of the events programme *What Happens To People And What Happens To The Land Is The Same Thing*¹, curated by **Chiara Nuzzi** in the frame of the three months residency **ACROSS**, organized by *thankyouforcoming* in Nice.

The project explores the role of art in ecological emergency, investigating its intersections with environmental commitment, political ecology and indigenous knowledge in relation to our time. The programme, divided in different episodes covering the whole residency, presents works that question nature's inextricable bonds to economics, technology and culture.

A TALK AND VIDEO SCREENING – 02.15.2018

The first chapter of the project took place on February 15th with a curator's lecture and a screening night at Le Narcissio, presenting a selection of works by artists **Ursula Biemann & Paulo Tavares**, **the Karrabing Film Collective** and **Uriel Orlow**.



AN EXHIBITION-INSTALLATION BY MELANIE BONAJO – 03.17.2018 TO 04.20.2018

The second chapter is the exhibition *Night Soil – Nocturnal Gardening*, from March 17th to April 20^d, the last part of an experimental documentary that explores the disconnection undergone by Western people in relation to nature, through the voices of four female protagonists with very different backgrounds who narrate their stories about radical agriculture.

A SOUND WALK AS A GROUP SHOW, AND A PERFORMANCE – LAUNCHING: 04.22.2018 (1 MONTH)



The third and final chapter of the programme will be presented on Sunday, April 22nd at the Botanical Exotical Garden of Val Rahmeh in Menton and will entail a collective exhibition in the shape of a sound walk with contributions, among others, by **Islands Songs (Silvia Ploner & Nicolas Perret)**, **Annika Kappner**, **Giacomo Raffaelli** and **Anna Raimondo**.

On this occasion, French artist **Mathilde Dadaux** will present a new specifically conceived performance.

The third season of the program ACROSS is realised with the support of the Region Provence – Alpes – Côte d'Azur.

The events program is realized with the support of the Prize ON BOARD 2017 promoted by MiBACT Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism – General Directorate for Contemporary Art and Architecture and Urban Suburbs and by GAI – Association for the Circuit of the Young Italian Artists.

¹ Linda Hogan, *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*, New York, Norton, 1995.

ONE CURATOR, ONE RESIDENCY, ONE SPACE

Chiara Nuzzi (b. 1986, Naples, Italy) is an independent curator and researcher living and working between Italy and Belgium. Her practice revolves around the relation between art and collectivity, analysing the social function of art and its effects as a tool to rethink and transform our society. Her survey pays great attention to moving images and sound and, since 2015, she is artistic co-director of Sonic Somatic, a Florence-based festival ranging between visual arts and music production.

Thankyouforcoming: <http://thankyouforcoming.net>

Thankyouforcoming operates as a platform to devise, facilitate, produce and foster art projects, by working closely with artists, art critics and curators. Since 2015, Claire Migraine (*thankyouforcoming*) runs **ACROSS**, an innovative short art critic/curator residency program developed from Nice, which aims to support the emergence and renewal of critical and curatorial practices, through research and exploration on the field.

Le Narcissio: <http://www.le-narcissio.fr>

Le Narcissio is a new contemporary art space run by DEL'ART in Nice, directed by Florence Forterre. Major resource space on the French Riviera, its missions of information, mediation and diffusion of contemporary art take on several tools: programmes, edition, professional support, artistic education, expertise and counselling for art in the public space.

Address: 16 rue Parmentier, 06 Nice

Tram Borriglione or Valrose

GAI : <http://www.giovaniartisti.it/en>

The aim of the association Giovani Artisti Italiani is to gather information, to offer various services, to organise formative and promotional opportunities for young people who work in the field of creativity, arts and show. This process is developed through initiatives which support the circulation of information and events, both at national and international levels.

Contacts

Claire Migraine / *thankyouforcoming*

contact@thankyouforcoming.net

+33(0) 674 985 247

Florence Forterre / Le Narcissio / DEL'ART

info@de-lart.org

+33(0) 630 204 724

NIGHT SOIL – NOCTURNAL GARDENING

Exhibition-installation by Melanie Bonajo

Curated by Chiara Nuzzi, art curator,

as part of ACROSS curatorial residency, run by *thankyouforcoming*.

March 17th – April 20th 2018, at Le Narcissio, 16 rue Parmentier, 06100 Nice, FR.

Wednesday – Saturday; 2:30 to 6:00 PM and on appointment.



Région
Provence
Alpes
Côte d'Azur

le narcissio
espace d'art contemporain, nice