

CONTAINED RITUALS

COHABITING, FOLLOWING RELATIONSHIPS AND GETTING ENTANGLED

SEILA FERNÁNDEZ ARCONADA

'Contained rituals. Cohabiting, following relationships and getting entangled' is a project by the artist-researcher Seila Fernández Arconada. It presents a process based research of re-rooting to the territory in which she was born, establishing new links with it, through a series of artistic rituals that are born on an 'island' located at the confluence between the Besaya river and the Dobra mountain. It is a project with multiple layers where tensions take place, arising from a watery reality in constant transformation where human processes are present having a trace on the land, even an impact on the territory immersed on natural cycles of more than human species.

'Contained Rituals' is nourished by (co)inhabiting through (bio)diverse artistic languages, branching out into questions and fluid creations that transit the multisensory; from the most corporeal to what is immersed in collective traditions and rituals. A dialogue of different kinds of knowledge inspired by nature submerged between bodies of water from the human body itself to the river and the Dobra mountain (Dobra: Dubron in Celtic 'place where water abounds') to reach the Moon and its 'watery temporalities'.

This approach seeks to flow from artistic exploration, encouraging relational questions, entangled in the cracks and the outskirts, through methodologies that begin in art and are woven with other disciplines and knowledge. One of the ingredients of this project is the mapping of the river through various techniques such as sound and photographic creation, dialogue with people near the river, as well as the search for 'river plants' and plants that are extinct in the natural environment, among others. . In turn, the artist has organized several collective gatherings on the 'island' of the Besaya river, seeking to encourage debate and creation and thus weave links and knowledge through collective experience in the territory.

The resulting reflection of this process is transferred to the exhibition showing an experimental ground where several multidisciplinary installations inhabit the space, some of them changing throughout the exhibition through natural processes, others inhabiting and expanding through sound waves and light weaving watery transitory temporalities between day and night. The duration of the exhibition from its assembly to its disassembly is exactly one lunar cycle, which is important in its narrative.

'Contained rituals' also includes collaborations with international artists close to the artist, including the Ukrainian artist Bogdan Bondarchuk. Collaborative processes are intrinsic to the nature of her work and reveal other synergies and relationships beyond the local context. The narratives of this exhibition start from the situated and are woven with global debates such as climate change, the fragility of water and biodiversity as well as the construction of present and future imaginaries where other forms, other views and other worlds are possible.

Seila Fernández Arconada

This project has been awarded with the Program Curatorship 2022 carried out with the support of the Ministry of Universities, Equality, Culture and Sports of the Government of Cantabria. The aim of the program is promoting and disseminating the talent of artists and curators in the region and diversifying the exhibition of projects in institutions and cultural spaces in the region. Coordination and management of this year's program is by Emma Meruelo and Wendy Navarro.

Bio of the artist

Seila Fernández Arconada is a multidisciplinary artist-researcher. Her process-based practice explores artistic methods, its boundaries and social approaches focusing on ecosocial contemporary concerns.

Seila has exhibited internationally as well as leading numerous multidisciplinary workshops and interventions, including Migration, Identity and Belonging (Institut Français, Maurice), Natural Camp (Role Models Ukraine), Wonder, Wander (Jordan), On Earth (UK), AGU (USA), Communities Development in Post-Crisis Regions (Ukraine), Governing for Resilience in Vulnerable Places (Netherlands) and Transnational Dialogues (China).

Participatory and collaborative research methodologies with professionals from other disciplines and community members are vital in her practice. She has co-directed The Land of the Summer People, a collaborative project with the Department of Water Engineering of the University of Bristol (UK), Some:When, celebrating cohesion through the watery heritage of the Somerset Levels and Moors, a collaborative-socially engaged project co-directed with the artist Sage Brice and locals in Somerset (UK) and Afluents within the international partnership Collaborative Arts Partnership Program in ACVic (Spain) among others.

Recently, she is directing the project “#EstudioFlotante, cuando el río suena a Amazonas” project granted by the International Grant for Artistic Creation of Botín Foundation. This project taken place in 2020 takes place at the course of the Amazon River (from source to mouth) in Peru, Colombia and Brazil.

She has been awarded with European Alternatives funding and the Artists' International Fund of the British Council and Arts Council England for 2014 and Moore Institute Visiting Fellowship 2017 (Ireland) among others. Her academic experience includes BA-MA Fine Art (with distinction, University of the Basque Country, 2009) and MA Fine Art (with distinction, University of the West of England, 2012).



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