

Data Ocean Theatre/Tragedy & the Goddexes

VII. EXODOS (Seaformances)

Vincent Roumagnac with Océane Bruel, Outi Condit, Laurent Joly, Simo Kellokumpu, Aurélie Pétreil and Sophie Rodrigues.



FIFTH RESEARCH PAVILION 5.-21.6.2023

Gallery Augusta HIAP - Helsinki International Artist Programme

Group exhibition curated by: Taru Elfving

ARTISTS: Sara Bédard-Goulet, Damien Beyrouthy, Elena Bisena, Sara Blossville, Toni Brell, Nicky Coutts, Camila Flores-Fernández, Adam Kaasa, Anastasia (A) Khodyreva, Neill Lin, Elena Mazzi, Hannah Rowan, Agata Ruchlewicz-Dzianach, Bárbara Sánchez Barroso, Noora Sandgren, Tim Shaw, Jaceks Smolicki, Angeliki Tzortzakaki, Jessica Wiesner, and Vincent Roumagnac with Océane Bruel, Outi Condit, Laurent Joly, Simo Kellokumpu, Aurélie Pétreil and Sophie Rodrigues.

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Tragedy & the Goddexxes is the first part of the discipline-fluid project Data Ocean Theatre (D.O.T.), which tangles myths, western theatre memory, new media, digital animism, climate emergency, seas and oceans transformations, and technological mutations in relation to diverse aspects of « submersion » as a contemporary living condition.

D.O.T. appears, disappears, and reappears through a series of polymorphic works and research affordances based on the eco-dramaturgical consideration of the simultaneous phenomenon of:

1. the rising sea and ocean levels
2. the exponential growth of big data in our informational age, and
3. the emotional overload caused by the latter two happening, projection, and prophecy.

Tragedy & the Goddexxes, as the first part of D.O.T. project, aims at setting the aqua-stages for a queered and techno-animist revision of the “tragic”, at the intersection of Greek tragedy’s structural study, syncretic marine mythology, and the contemporary ambiguities of “technology-as-monster” narratives.

The last part, EXODOS, consists of a collective display of Seaformance prototypes and acts by/with/in/for the Baltic Sea as many collaborative and speculative gestures, objects, ceremonies, showing hospitality towards the rising waters and data while crying in the middle of the raging biospheric and algorithmic storms.

Concluding, yet regenerating.

FRIENDSHIP AS A FIELDWORK

“I was awarded a three-month artistic research residency at HIAP Helsinki in the frame of the Fifth Research Pavilion, and I am thanking the selection committee for this. From April 17 to June 5 (the half of the residency period), in addition to realizing solo works, I invited artists friends from diverse fields of practice - acting, visual arts, photography, choreography, performance - to spend one week – each - in my allocated studio in Suomenlinna and carry collaborative work based on the crossing/colliding/blending of their practice with my research project's foci and dramaturgy, and as an experimental response to the tentative notion of *seaformance*.

The kaleidoscopic outcome of this generative process consists of the display in the Fifth Research Pavilion open-studio-like exhibition of several objects, gestures, acts, whether prototypes or already finalized artworks, alternately anxiety-provoking, melancholic, or humorous, as many speculative fictions and sensorial encounters within the research project.

One of my responses to the Fifth Research Pavilion tagline - *Puzzled Together* - was to make my residency a space-time not to work individually and in isolation on my research but to engage in a collective friendship-oriented process. By setting a residency within the residency, by inviting artist-friends to join and contribute through dialogue within the research project, I wanted to enact, once again, the conviction that artistic research can be this carefully cultivated alternative ecosystem for producing and sharing art and research matters beyond the individual face-to-face-with-the-research-or-the-art-market impasse narratives and ecologies. Individual methods, questions, and outcomes, are processual components that are thus being re-evaluated through infrastructural and relational, enmeshed and generative, thinking-making together, where decision-making, as well as labor, happen on a more horizontally distributed plane.

Joy, generosity, fun, a sense of vitality - and a few tears too, shared inside the built trust of a soft workspace - have animated and colored these five past collaborative weeks, during which friendship has become a prolific field to work within. As an ethos, terrain and working condition, friendship was indeed confirmed as a methodological response to the «puzzled-ness» of the pavilion's title this year. Friendship, not as a limited and exclusive space-time-bubble of homophilia, but as an always already expandable territory, via the hope-generative public sharing of art and its research.” VR

Works



General View



Seaformance 1 – Guests: Laurent Joly, Sophie Rodrigues (Actors-France)

Working title: All the Seas the Sea

(Film, 6')

Two actors perform excerpts from plays from the Western theatre repertoire with the sea as the topic and/or backdrop. The actors, in period costume, and equipped with portable teleprompters, are part of landscape compositions inspired by 19th-century romantic painting, (re-)enacted in situ, on the rocky shores of Suomenlinna. Their voice, recorded live, is partially covered by the surrounding sounds of the sea, the wind, and the island fauna, to which was added an open-source recording of the underwater seabed with an hydrophone.





Seaformance 2 – Guest: Outi Condit (Actor, Performer, Performance-maker – Finland)

Working title: The Cryer

(Video, 4'/Installation)

The actor cries. The actor is a moirologist - a professional (paid) mourner. Crying is what actors (athletes of the heart - says Artaud) do, right? But how can they do this on cue? Thinking of the climatic and belligerent state of the planet and letting go of the individual and collective emotional overload should be enough though. In four forty-five-second sequences, the actor is therefore crying, for the camera. Tears are produced by different stimuli for each shot; from the 'emotional truth' of the triggered affective memory (Stanislavki/The Actors Studio methods) to the falsity of the use of a menthol-infused tear stick, through different possibilities of channeling social media or movies crying scenes found online using a wireless earphone... During the winter, Vincent collected at low tide in Biarritz, his hometown on the Atlantic coast, pebbles covered with dried red algae (*Gelidium Sesquipedale*) resembling body parts, or landscapes. The algal patterns were extracted from the mineral surface and transformed into digital filters/tattoos, and placed randomly on the face and body of the crying actor.



Seaformance 3 – Guest: Océane Bruel (Visual artist – Finland/France)

Working title: The Psamides

(Installation/Performance)

In Greek mythology, 'psamides' designates the nereids of the sand, of strands, and beaches, which they preserve and protect. The psamides are composed of three deities sisters: Psamathe, Actaea, and Eione. Psamathe, the goddess of the sand, has the specific power to transform herself into a seal. Actaea is the sea-shore and rocky coast deity, and their sister, Eione, is the sprite of the fine sand beaches. From sea glass collected on various shores in the past, as well as along the beaches of Suomenlinna during walks with Vincent, Océane Bruel creates a series of imaginary ritual objects, dedicated to the three psamides. With the technical support of glass artist, and HIAP studios neighbor, Anna Schroderus, Océane melts the sea glass collection and transforms the molten material into several containers of various sizes, intended to be used for speculative ceremonies dedicated to the return of all waters to the sea. On the occasion of a gathering by the sea scheduled during the exhibition period, the objects circulate from hand to hand, then are filled by the participants with residual waters found in the natural pools of the rocky shores around, before being emptied back into the sea. *(If they wish, the participants may mix a few tears with the collected water before returning the salty liquid mixture to the sea)*

Additionally to the blown sea glass objects, a color inventory database from the picked sea glass collection was processed in the serial format of CAD square-shaped color palettes. Each pattern-palette may later be printed on and as handkerchiefs.









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**Seaformance 4 – Guest : Simo Kellokumpu (Choreographer, Performer – Finland)
Working title: The Oracle (Three Metamorphoses of Hanzaki the Giant Salamander)
(Performance-Installation)**

Hanzaki is a mythological monstrous version of the Japanese giant salamander. They are called *hanzaki* for their regenerative powers (it is believed that a salamander's body could be cut (*saku*) in half (*han*) and it would survive, and regrow). Five extra-large masks were made by Vincent from a photograph of a giant salamander shot in Japan, during the winter of 2023. Choreographer and performer Simo Kellokumpu, dressed in a modern-dance-type unitard on which is printed a satellite image of an algal bloom near the coast of Suomenlinna, and wearing each mask successively, performs a little choreography. The latter is simultaneously informed by *The Prophetess* - a dance by Hanna Alprin, premiered at the Marines Memorial Theatre, San Francisco, California, in 1947 - and by Simo's *choreoreading* practice in relation to the movement of the observation satellites orbiting above the space in which Simo's body takes place. From a photographic capture of this choreographic act, Vincent realizes a stand-in (face-in-hole) on a 1:1 body scale, and invites each exhibition visitor to become the dancing monster, and the oracle of their own destiny.





Seaformance 5 – Guest : Aurélie Pétreil (Visual arts, Photography – France)

Working title: 71/2011 + Marées (Tides)

(Installation-Gesture)

During the last 20 years, Aurélie Pétreil has collected over 2200 «latent shots», and constituted a large dataset in which each shot is referenced, titled by its order number and shooting date. These archived images are all printed on Baryta paper (standard format / 40 x 50 cm) and stored in black boxes kept closed inside a metallic custom-made device. These dormant images, sometimes, come out of their latency, and are “activated” in response to a chosen context. Architecture- and/or context- responsive photographic objects of different materials and sizes are then appearing, throughout the activation of the latent shot into a relational and situated haptic experience. Aurélie, therefore, responded to Vincent's invitation and project dramaturgy by activating the latent shot *71/2011*.

Aurélie and Vincent, beside their solo activity, are also working together as the artistic entity PétreilRoumagnac (duo). Their ever-changing pieces are made of «photoscenic objects» in constant movement. In the spirit of the duo's poetics, Vincent has proposed to activate the piece through a performative act on-site: following the Helsinki tidal calendar, the photographic object is placed, at high tide, in front of the window of the gallery, and, at low tide, it is moved to the floor of the gallery, beside the window.







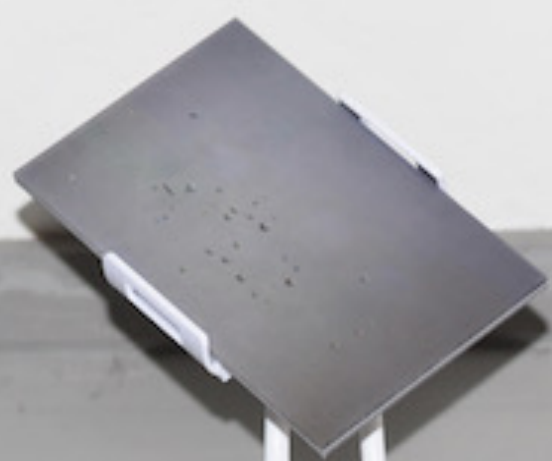


Seaformance 6 – Vincent Roumagnac (Theatre, Scenography, Visual Arts – Finland/France)

Working titles: *Impact, Tears, A Raft of Curiosities, Backdrop, Imagine data ocean theatre...*

(Installation)

- *Impact* is a model for a theatre stage frame. The printed image is a slightly glitched photograph of a huge Atlantic wave clashing of a coastal rock, shot in Biarritz, in March 2023. The wallpaper is glued to two sheets of hard cardboard given by the gallery's technical team to protect the floor of the gallery, e.g. in case of liquid leakage.
- *Tears* is a series of three acrylic prints made from shots of tears on cell phone and tablet screens. The prints are supported by the lazy neck phone holders used for the film *All the Seas the Sea*.
- *A Raft of Curiosities* echoes several previous works from my *Reacclimating the Stage* project in which fragments of wooden theater stages exposed to weather changes would freeze, drift, drown, burn... Found by the sea in front of Augusta gallery, a chunk of deck pallet has been sanded and gilded in the spirit of *Kintsugi*, the Japanese art of fixing broken material with gold. On and around the pallet fragment, found and transformed objects are displayed such as red-algae-ed pebbles, sea glass ceremony ware, rusty ship debris covered with cinnamon, (temperature changes in the Baltic sea diagram transformed into a) faux-leather mask.
- *Backdrop* echoes the series exhibited in the previous episode of the project (*V. Kommos/Titanik Gallery, 2022*), detaching itself from the latter to rest in a pool of residual seawater in the rocks of Suomenlinna.
- *Imagine data ocean theatre tragedy goddexes exodos stage screen waves storm algorithms red algae seaglass ritual tears underwater cables satellite raft seamonster queer computer cellphone oracle emotion overload overflow flood submersion drama sorrow Kraken Hanzaki Iku-Turso Renaissance* is a series of three stickers made from a selection of three images out of ninety generated online by the application *Imagine: AI Art Generator* as a response to the input keywords contained in the title of the work.







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@ Sheung Yiu





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