

TEXT //
CLARISSA BAUMANN

GENERAL BIOGRAPHY CLARISSA BAUMANN

Clarissa Baumann (1988), is an artist born in Rio de Janeiro. She possesses a double cursus as she graduated from the Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and the National Superior Fine Arts School of Paris. She was also trained in contemporary dance in the Angel Vianna Escola e Faculdade de Dança. Clarissa Baumann is the winner of the *Beaux-Arts de Paris Prize* and the *Adap Révélation des Arts Plastiques Prize* in 2016.

PROTOPOÈME : SOL, SONO & URUBUS a solo show by Clarissa Baumann

December 08th - December 22nd 2018 // January 08th - February 02nd 2019

Performance by Clarissa Baumann, *Passarada*, with Kidows Kim and Olavo Vianna
on Saturday December 08th at 7 pm

How can language construct a sense of closeness with the world? How can it translate an awareness of the surrounding space? And what could be said if this language were to become inaudible, having dispensed with words? These are the questions posed by Clarissa Baumann in her monographic exhibition at the Dohyang Lee Gallery. The title *Protopoem: Sol, Sono & Urubus*, in this regard, announces slow, aerial tones – sun, sleep and the vulture, when translated from the Portuguese – even if their French pronunciation suggests other colours: ground and sound, whereas urubus resonates through its strangeness and leads us to an imaginary idiom. Under these conditions, the *protopoem* could be the language primer of an intuition that nothing can confirm. Only momentum and groping movements, as if it remained suspended between two airs, destined to operate in perpetual incompleteness.

We notice straight away that Clarissa Baumann's propositions suggest a retreat from immediacy in her evocations and interpretations. Performance, video and text attest to this, since her manner of proceeding by reunification and interconnections seems to circumscribe a form of reality composed of different layers, which would have gone astray in a single form. Without losing any of the poetry that befits instigations whose outlines are not always perceivable, Clarissa Baumann's intended trajectory proceeds in this manner by accumulating symptoms and hidden suggestions, based, nevertheless, on a text by Angolan author Jose Eduardo Agualusa, *Milagrário Pessoal* : two passages are exhibited on the gallery walls. The narrative, between fable and fiction, relates a series of events in which a character inherits a language comparable to that of birds. The writing, as well as the narration, plays with neologisms and phonetics in order to draw connections between language, spatiality and animality. A notion of territory is highlighted, in particular when its appropriation operates not only on the mode of convention or arrangement, but through abstract, intuitive gestures, those composed by the body, voice, memory and, assuredly, language.

In this context, the performance *Passarada*, which opens the exhibition, creates an ideal frame for the issues that concern Clarissa Baumann, while offering a certain number of intermediary paths. Coordinated with Kidows Kim and Olavo Vianna, 24 handcrafted wooden decoys are activated among the public, then worn on faces in order to dissimulate features. What appears then is akin to a mask whose physiognomy, between archaic vestige and ritual object, recalls forgotten or fantastical times. The origin of the sound gradually fades away, mixing with the other sound pieces in the gallery. With this in mind, three elements can be specified.

Of utmost importance are the gestures and manner in which hands sculpt meaning in the air. In Clarissa Baumann's work, hands always seem to possess choreographic reality, as can be seen in the video *TAC TAC (Bate-Pedra)*, also on display, in which two stones are struck continually one against the other until fatigue wears them away. Hands, globally, seem to speak of the primordial interaction that every body and being weaves into the immediate surrounding environment, in order to affirm one's presence and capacity of interaction.

Secondly, the fact of dissimulating the face behind these same hands clarifies a narrative in which one makes oneself invisible from the eyes of the world; not because one is afraid of being recognized, but in order to reduce the identity codes we live by. To become imperceptible, unnamed, united to the ample, uniform multitude, like a breath of air, is undoubtedly a way of being inscribed in a cohesive relationship with all that exists. Consequently, one measures the surrounding rhythm and flow, both present and indistinguishable, as can be seen in the video *Araponga*, which plunges us into the vast maze of a jungle, lost among the cries and songs of the thousands of beings who live there.

Thirdly, one considers the proximity with the animal kingdom, not in the perspective of copying it, resembling it or being transformed into one of its representatives, but in order to prolong its roaming. Animals are no different from us as human beings seen from this point of view. They are living beings dealing with their milieu, which is also our milieu, although unknown and invisible. It may be more accurate to perceive, through the language of birds in Agualusa's text, the acquisition of the ability to free ourselves of our humanity overly subjected to arbitrarily decided foundations – what may be called culture – in order to recover an essential standing point, a situation that could be qualified as non-human.

Through Clarissa Baumann's diverse inspirations, one perceives her acute manner of collecting the minute nuances of our surroundings, at times on a banal scale, leading nevertheless to issues of a much wider range. The core of her practice could be defined as the necessity of collecting these nuances, in order to read them and interpret them. It is no coincidence that the question of language, among other themes, appears so insistently in her work. Words personify self-expression in all attempts to address the world, while they also make up for a way of being impregnated by the world. These words, however, are only words; they are interchangeable, and what counts, finally, Clarissa Baumann seems to tell us, is the effusion of sensitivity that flows from them, their texture, especially when they have been collected by using methods other than those of the eyes of the spirit. Within this framework, the exhibition *Protopoem: Sol, Sono & Urubus* invites us to a stance that is both poetic and contemplative.

Julien Verhaeghe, art critic.

ZOOM - Projection III
Les Fileuses (The Spinners)

With **CLARISSA BAUMANN**, **MINIA BIABIANY** and **NATALIA VILLANUEVA LINARES**

January 28th - March 04th 2017

“ Parcae, announce his fate... ” For this exhibition, we would like to listen to the famous trio from *Hippolyte and Aricie*¹. There is a strange chance between the fact to display films from three women artists, and the steady expression that is common to all. However, we will not evoke here nor the ancient goddesses, but the strong originality of each artist and their respective videos. Why not singing *Aguas de Março*², while pondering about Clarissa Baumann's artworks? From the first lyrics, only the stone would remain, but the end of the road would be replaced by the sea or chance. For Minia Biabiany, the drawing does not tell a linear story but shows a back and forth sight like it were a crossing. Would the moving pictures be memories on blackboard? The profusion of colors, the delicacy of the threads in the installation *Sisters* and the video *Breathing* by Natalia Villanueva makes us wonder about one question : Are the colorful threads which join together a metaphor of the birth of everything, of a common origin, but also we are individualities, as for these threads, with one individual fate?

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The artist proposes a new installation *Pli, contrepoids* made of a thread that begins from outside the gallery space, then pierces the window and finishes its way wrapped into a street paving stone imported from Rio de Janeiro. The video *Architecture pour la mer* shows a view of Rio de Janeiro in which a sea line crosses horizontally the frame of a window. While trying to add a perpendicular to that horizon, a sewing thread is unwrapped from the inside of the house, crossing the sinous architecture of Burle Marx, the roads, and the sand until the seafront. In *Eloge du hasard*, Clarissa Baumann throws three dice on barges that transport clay along the Seine river. This version of a failed Mallarmé activates an action which result will never be summarized : each barge continues its way : the clay could be poured in various points of the city or continue its infinite route to more distant harbours, in China or Mexico...

Minia Biabiany was born in Guadeloupe Island, in 1988. She graduated from the National Superior Fine Arts School of Lyon, in 2011. She lives and works between Paris and Mexico D.F. Her work questions the interlacing between intimacy and politics from the place and the territory. Her installations in situ consider the space as the origin and build poetics of the place from its features and from objects conveying personal and collective history. (from her Caribbean origins). In February, 2016, she introduced and realized collectively the semillero *Caribe*, an educational and artistic experiment questioning concepts of Caribbean authors through the body. The video *Blue spelling...* was realized by accumulation of drawings made by chalk on a blackboard and photographed with a fixed centring. The repetition of drawings and the always jerky changing rhythm of *Blue spelling...* lead an elusive image, which resists to be totally understood. The artwork spells our forgettings, writes a doubt in the black surface and the not linear time of a History made from breaks. A release of body which looks itself; an imagination of the representation of the black body, of how it sees itself and of how its vision of itself builds. In the light sleep, the perception of time differs for the broken echo. The chalk spells in soft speed an exile, and the repetition draws between obstinacy and disappearance.

Natalia Villanueva Linares is a French Peruvian artist who graduated from the National Superior Fine Arts School of Paris with the congratulations from the jury. Her work has been shown in two major exhibitions at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Paris, in galleries and art fairs in Los Angeles, Madrid, Chicago, Peoria, IL (USA), Berlin, and Lima. She is the founder of the art magazine *Ukay-zine*. Natalia has two distinct approaches of her work : she builds moments with a monumental feel for volume and colors and she unveils detail oriented situations charged with an intense metaphorical spirit. She often moves into the destruction of an object to produce transformations, opening the object to others, allowing destruction to become a gesture of distribution in which the notion of devotion is born. Most pieces have a protective role, they sacralize overproduction to highlight a multitude of sui generis imperfections. For *Sisters 1 - 10*, each sister is a metal box of different colors and sizes. These opened boxes are put on a shelf, and contain a quantity of used wooden thread spools. All the threads go out from the box to meet in the same point nailed to the wall. This gesture allows to make visible the contents of each, what they have the thinner and colored. The film *Breathing* captures bunch by bunch, the creation of the piece *Sister n°0*. It is an encounter between the generosity of the object, a part of its history, and the viewer. The action is vital to the becoming of the piece and reveals the symbolic nature of the materials that are offered, little by little, as they are transformed into writing, words hidden from the gaze but present through strong sensitive evidence.

1 : *Hippolyte and Aricie* (1733) is an opera by Jean-Philippe Rameau.

2 : *Aguas de Março* (1972) is a song by Antonio Carlos Jobim.

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The movement of the commonplace or functional gestures to which we do not pay anymore attention in the daily life reveals various wefts of organizations that surround us. Action can skip between its various systems to reveal its limits, borders, permeability, humor or its rigor.

Pushed until their surpasement or disappearance, the multiple dimensions of the gesture question our relationship with human scale in a contemporary world more complex than ever : What is the origin of an action? What are its temporal and spatial progresses? Until where could it be visible? How does it continue to exist?