

GUGGENHEIM BILBAO

Press release



The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents on June 24, 2021

Cecilia Bengolea: *Animations in Water*

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Cecilia Bengolea. Animations in Water

- Dates: June 24–October 24, 2021
- Curator: Manuel Cirauqui
- Film & Video gallery (103)

From June 24 to October 24, 2021, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao will be presenting *Cecilia Bengolea. Animations in Water*, the second exhibition of 2021 in the Film & Video gallery, a space that the Museum reserves for key works in video art, film, and the artistic languages associated with the moving image.

This time, three recent works by Cecilia Bengolea (b. 1979, Buenos Aires) will be featured. Bengolea is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice merges video, choreography, and sculpture. Following the thread of water and movement flows, this exhibition presents a selection of works where the artist's reflection on dance, the sensorial interplay between the body's interiority and its surroundings, as well as the rhythmical relations of social communities and nature, symptomatically manifest through the choreographic language.

Animations in Water gathers three pieces that are representative of the artist's singular approach to video sculpture—an understanding of moving images as corporeal agencies freely operating in the exhibition space. The ambiguous concept of animation relates both to the life-like motion of cinematic figures and the ancient idea of breathing life into the artificial, vigor into the inert. The anima—as soul, breath, or vital energy of a body—is deeply connected in Bengolea's work to the conductive capabilities of living organisms, while music appears as the contagious force of animation. In their inexhaustible potential to transform, mutate, and mimic others, animated beings identify with the element of water and its endless plasticity.

The three works that comprise *Animations in Water* explore experiences with the water, the liquid, the fluid. *Lightning Dance* (2018), filmed in Jamaica, is based on a profound collaboration between the artist and select performers featured in the work. A single-channel video projection in black and white, this piece investigates the influence of atmospheric electricity on behavior and the imagination and is part of an ongoing series of works developed by Bengolea around dancehall culture on the island of Jamaica—now a global phenomenon inspiring many subgenres and styles in pop music and dance. Not only is dancehall an unusually rich form of choreographic expression, but it is also a daily ritual that confers healing powers and self-amplifying benefits to its practitioners. Haunted by performative tension like stormy air, the soundtrack's latent crescendo is accompanied by explosive sequences of improvised group dancing on road sides. *Lightning Dance* presents the constant intertwining of musical and environmental energies as an imminent shock: somewhat muffled, thunder and percussion are synchronized as part of a unique sound environment where silence can also be physically felt.

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The impactful display of this work is joined by two digital animations, *Bestiaire* (2019) and *Favorite Positions* (2018). Using hologram-like imagery, the artist visualizes the fantastical transformations of a body in a state of perpetual change. *Bestiaire* takes inspiration from descriptions found in Jorge Luis Borges's *Book of Imaginary Beings* (1967), after which the artist scanned her body while morphing into a panoply of fantastic creatures. Meanwhile, the video sculpture *Favorite Positions* summons the octopus's spirit to suggest a body without boundaries—a fully liquid and immensely sensitive creature whose intelligence is decentralized and multiple, and whose movements freely swap inside and outside, environment and self.

Cecilia Bengolea. Biography

Cecilia Bengolea (b.1979, Buenos Aires) is based in Paris for the past two decades. After studying Philosophy and Art History, she became exploring choreographic practice and emerging this discipline with video and sculpture. In her research, Bengolea explores forms of popular dance combining contemporary and archaic elements, giving way to constant redefinitions of the concept of figuration.

In her multidisciplinary and collaborative work, she has teamed with legendary dancehall figures such as Craig Black Eagle, Bombom DHQ, and Damion BG, alongside renowned contemporary artists such as Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Jeremy Deller. Her collaborative works with French choreographer François Chaignaud, *Pâquerette* (2005-2008) and *Sylphides* (2009), have received such prestigious awards as the Prix de la Critique de Paris, in 2010, and the Young Artist Prize at the Gwangju Biennial in 2014. Bengolea's video installations and performances have been exhibited at the Biennale de Lyon; Tate Modern, London; Dia Art Foundation, New York; the Biennale de Sao Paulo; Dhaka Art Summit; Centre Pompidou, Paris; DesertX, California; Performa, New York; Mistake Room, Los Angeles; and Fondation Giacometti, Paris, among various other major institutions.

Film & Video (Gallery 103)

The Film & Video gallery features a program of exhibitions exclusively devoted to contemporary practices of the moving image, video art, and film-based media installation. Since it opened in 2014, this space has presented work by unique artists such as Christian Marclay, Ragnar Kjartansson, Fiona Tan, Ken Jacobs, Amie Siegel, Pierre Huyghe, Michael Snow, Javier Téllez, Diana Thater, Allora & Calzadilla, Jesper Just, Jesse Jones, and William Kentridge, among others.

Encounters with artists: Cecilia Bengolea (June 24)

Manuel Cirauqui, curator of the Museum's Film & Video gallery program at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao will talk with Cecilia Bengolea on the occasion of the opening of her exhibition, *Animations in Water*. The discussion, which will include some of her videos, will address Bengolea's relationship with performance, pop culture, literature, and speculative fiction, while paying close attention to her ongoing investigation of Jamaican dancehall.

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Cover image:

Cecilia Bengolea. Animations in Water

Lightning Dance, 2018

Video projection, black and white, sound

Courtesy the artist and Galería Àngels Barcelona

© Cecilia Bengolea

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All information about the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is available at www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus (press room).

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Press Images for
Cecilia Bengolea. Animations in Water
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For further information, please contact the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Press Department: tel. +34 944 359 008 and email: media@guggenheim-bilbao.eus

Cecilia Bengolea: Animations in Water

Danza del rayo (Lightning Dance), 2018

Proyección de vídeo, blanco y negro, sonora

Cortesía de la artista y Galería Àngels Barcelona

© Cecilia Bengolea



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Cecilia Bengolea: Animations in Water

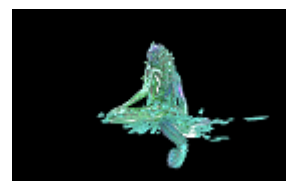
Bestiaire, 2019

Video, color, 3D animation, 7 min.

Dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Galería Àngels Barcelona

© Cecilia Bengolea



Cecilia Bengolea: Animations in Water

Bestiaire, 2019

Video, color, 3D animation, 7 min.

Dimensions variable

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Cecilia Bengolea: Animations in Water

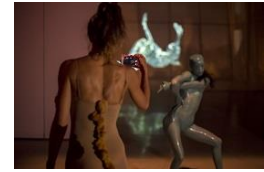
Favorite Positions, 2019

Video, color, 3D animation, 7 min.

Dimensions variables

Courtesy the artist and Galería Àngels Barcelona

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Cecilia Bengolea: Animations in Water

Favorite Positions, 2019

Video, color, 3D animation, 7 min.

Dimensions variables

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