

# LES IMMÉMORIALES

ARTISTS: AGNES DENES, MONIKA GRZYMALA, CECILIA VICUÑA

**02 MARCH – 23 JUNE 2013**

49 NORD 6 EST - FRAC LORRAINE, METZ



1-

Nourished by the living memory of Andean, Native American, and Australian Aboriginal people, Agnes Denes, Monika Grzymala and Cecilia Vicuña, three artists of different generations and horizons invite you on a sensuous and poetic journey into the heart of political issues affecting our first-world societies.

-

« We are now pushing the earth to a very dangerous unsustainability, so it is time for us to hear the ancient voices in a new way. »

Cecilia Vicuña

Environmental movements, which emerged in the 1960s<sup>1</sup> in response to the excesses of the consumer society and sprawling industrialization, have fundamentally transformed our relation to the world. They have managed to imprint in our consciousness the idea that human beings are responsible for the general degradation of the planet: the depletion of natural resources, the drying up of water supplies, exploitation of ancestral lands, disappearance of indigenous populations... Millennial oral traditions are becoming extinct, and, along with them, entire segments of human culture and history pass into oblivion.

To refuse oblivion and disappearance in order to reinvent being-in-the-world based on equality, respect, and freedom: this desire captures well the ambition of Agnes Denes, Monika Grzymala, and Cecilia Vicuña. These three artists share an ethical and aesthetic consciousness which guides their approach to the world and to others. Their art is the ephemeral, the passage, and the transmission, inhabited by the living memory of peoples and territories which the artists interweave with the present and which they use to construct the future<sup>2</sup>.

1- *Silent Spring* by Rachel Louise Carson appeared in 1962. This book was a bestseller which popularized the term "ecology" in the United States.  
2- Dedicated to "the Maori people of the forgotten time," *Les Immémoriaux*, an ethnographic-poetic novel by Victor Segalen (1878-1919) opens with a memory blank. What might have been but an anecdotal instance of forgetfulness in the recitation of a long litany of ancestors comes to foreshadow the disappearance of a people, forgetful of its own lore and its own customs-of its own past.

## ACCESS

Admission free

-

Tuesday-Friday 2-7pm

Saturday & Sunday 11am-7pm

-

Group visits in English on request  
mediation@fraclorraine.org

-----  
The Frac receives funding from the Conseil  
Régional de Lorraine and the Ministère de la  
Culture et de la Communication - Direction  
régionale des affaires culturelles de Lorraine.  
-----

1- Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipu Austral*, 2012/2013.

Installation, sound. Exhibition view *Les  
Immémoriales*, Frac Lorraine.

Photo: Eric Chenal © The artist



1

-----  
TO GO FURTHER

[www.ceciliavicuna.org](http://www.ceciliavicuna.org)  
[www.agnesdenesstudio.com](http://www.agnesdenesstudio.com)  
[www.t-r-a-n-s-i-t.net](http://www.t-r-a-n-s-i-t.net)

In 1968, **Agnes Denes** (born 1931, Hungary), made her first “ecological” intervention in the state of New York, announcing her commitment to environmental questions and human issues. In 1977, near the Niagara Falls, she re-enacted the ritual *Rice/Tree/Burial* — an “allegory of the life cycle” which associates the planting of a rice paddy; chaining together of trees in a sacred forest, formerly an Indian burial ground; filming from the edge of the Niagara Falls; and burying a time capsule addressed to “Homo Futurus” of the year 2979.

Since the 1960s, the poet and artist **Cecilia Vicuña** (born 1948, Chili) has been creating installations that summon the spirits of the first inhabitants of the Andes. She literally and figuratively weaves together the past and the present. Her *Quipus* are inspired by a form of “writing” used by Indian tribes, made up of knotted cords, which was banned by the Spanish conquerors. The long, colored cotton cords which make up the immersive installation *Quipu Austral* (2012 - 13) are a shimmering, tactile ode to the communion between man and the cosmos.

**Monika Grzymala's** (born 1970, Poland) ephemeral architectural interventions are engendered by physical and imagined lines, made from everyday, fragile materials, such as hand-made paper, scotch tape, magnetic tape...). The artist created *The River* in 2012 in collaboration with Euraba Papermakers, an art collective of Australian Aboriginal women who use offcuts from the clothing industry established on their ancestral grounds. Water, indispensable in the manufacture of paper, is at the heart of the Goomeroi culture. *The River II* (2012-13) floods the space of the exhibition with thousands of suspended white paper leaves—a river of tears evoking lost spirits.

Following the stream of water in order to grasp the thread of life, this exhibition renews the vital connection between the human and the Earth.

-----  
 With thanks to Bergère de France (Bar-le-Duc) for their assistance in technical production of Cecilia Vicuña's work.  
 -----

## Images available for the press



### Agnes Denes, *Rice/Tree/Burial*, 1977/2012

39 b&w photographs, diagram and text.  
49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine Collection.  
© The artist



### Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipu Austral*, 2012/2013

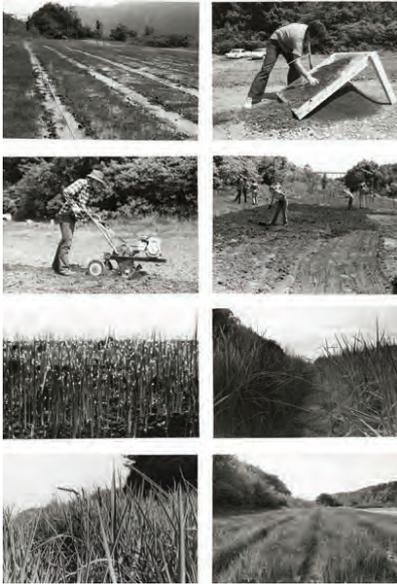
Installation, sound. Exhibition views *Les Immémoriales*, Frac Lorraine. Photos: Eric Chenal © The artist



### Monika Grzymala, *The River II*, 2012/2013

Site specific installation realized with Euraba Artists and Papermakers. Exhibition views *Les Immémoriales*, Frac Lorraine.  
Photos: Eric Chenal © The artist





1-

## AGNES DENES

Born in 1931 in Budapest (Hungary). Lives and works in New York (US)

### **Rice/Tree/Burial, 1977/2012**

39 b&w photographs, diagram and text

49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine Collection

Agnes Denes is an American artist who was first associated with the Conceptual Art movement. In the late 1960s, she pushed its boundaries in the direction of Ecological Art which covered everything from individual creation to social awareness—an “eco-logical” esthetic confronting environmental issues. Art and Science, both vectors of human knowledge and experience, joined forces to counter an anthropocentric civilization which turns its back on nature—a civilization founded on a suicidal, progressivist idea of nature’s exploitation. It is no longer just a question of landscape as representation, but of Nature itself. The artist intervenes on the site through performances. She develops a singular metaphor of growth—a movement of life and permanent evolution.

*Rice/Tree/Burial* is above all a work on the scale of nature, the first public eco-logical performance realized by the artist since 1968 in Sullivan county, then repeated starting in 1977 at ArtPark<sup>1</sup> near Niagara Falls. *Rice/Tree/Burial* composes an allegoric trinity of a cycle of Life.

In the first act, the artist planted an half-acre of rice. It was a creative process, a metaphor for the nourishing Earth—a maternal figure which naturally engenders life and matter.

The second act radically contrasts with the first. The artist chained some trees within triangles in order to contain their growth. Trees are a symbol of the regeneration of the Earth, of the power of nature and destiny, trees of life whose natural growth is curbed by the chains of existence and the human will to dominate.

The third act was the elaboration of a memorial, a buried “time capsule” which must not be opened for a thousand years. It contained in its second version a microfilm of different responses to an evolution questionnaire<sup>2</sup> which the artist had circulated on the occasion of her guest appearances at universities around the world. This final act represented civilization: the invisible roots of our world rising out of another form of culture—they constitute our language, our knowledge, writing, science, abstraction... In ArtPark, she enhanced her performance with a film shot from a ledge by the famous falls and meant to immortalize this moment of fusion with nature.

TO GO FURTHER  
[www.agnesdenesstudio.com](http://www.agnesdenesstudio.com)

This text is extracted from Luc Jeand’heur’s essay which is available in its entirety at <http://collection.fracloorraine.org>

1- Agnes Denes, *Rice/Tree/Burial*, 1977/2012  
39 b&w photographs, diagram and text  
49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine Collection

1- A park dedicated to performing and visual arts, located in Lewiston, NY.  
2- For example: “What would you say the human purpose is?”, “If we are results of a development, in what direction is that development moving?”, etc.

AGNES DENES

**RICE/TREE/BURIAL**  
(1968/79)

*Rice/Tree/Burial* was first realized in 1968 in Sullivan County, New York, as a private ritual. It was a symbolic "event" and announced my commitment to environmental issues and human concerns. It was also the first exercise in Eco-logic – an act in eco-philosophy.

I planted rice to represent life (initiation and growth), chained trees to indicate interference with life and natural processes (evolutionary mutations, variations, decay, death), and buried my Haiku poetry to symbolize the idea or concept (the abstract, the absolute, human intellectual powers, and creation itself). These three acts constituted the first transitional triangulation' (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) and formed the Event. According to evolutionary theories, Event is the only reality, while the reality we perceive is forever changing and transforming in an expanding evolutionary universe in which time, space, mass, and energy are all interconnected and interdependent.

Rice represented a universal substance referring to sustenance and the life-giving element, while the seed itself denoted the nucleus, first principle or cause – the beginning. The act of sowing implied the source of growth, the introduction of a thing into another environment in order to initiate a process, the setting of something into motion (fertilization, conceiving, induction).

The chaining of trees signified linkage, connective units and associations, flexibility and restraint. It implied bondage, defeat, interference with growth – decay. The act of chaining brought attention to the mysterious life-force of an organism and its partial triumph over boundaries and restraints – its uneven, limited transcendence. Chaining trees also expressed choice, the selection and defining necessary in the creative process.

The texture of the forest, having been interrupted by the re-ordering of its elements, yielded unique structures of isolated or combined sculptural forms. The chains became additional limbs and blended into their surroundings to become visible only in certain lights, angles and perspectives, conveying the conflicting and interdependent aspects of art and existence, illusion and reality, imagination and fact. The chained trees stood as monuments to human thought versus nature.

The burial of my haiku formed the essence of thinking processes (consciousness, deductive reasoning, and the logic of emotions). It represented the concept as essence of invention, which connects and defines life and death and acts as modifier and rationale for both.

I kept no copies of my poetry, thereby relinquishing, "giving up to the soil," something personal and precious – an act that also symbolized the self-denial and discipline required by this new analytical art form.

The act of burial, or placing into the ground and receiving from it, a cause-and-effect process, marks our intimate relationship with the earth. In the one hand, it indicates passing, returning to the soil, disintegration, and transformation; on the other, generation and life-giving, placing in the ground in the purpose of planting. It is also a metaphor for human intelligence and transcendence through the communication of ideas – in this case, to future descendants.

All three imply change from one form to another, cyclic phenomena, transformation – as from chaos to order and back. Consequently, all three idea representatives or metaphors – the rice, the tree, the burial – become analogous, interactive and interdependent, creating the tension of opposing forces acting on each other and the momentum necessary to pass from one state to another and into further propositions. Their interaction creates a counter-balance as they pass into each other's realm or meaning to become successively interchangeable through their inherent polarity.

---

\* *Dialectic Triangulation: A Visual Philosophy and Exercises in Eco-Logic*  
(1967-69)

## AGNES DENES

The ritual marked the beginning of my involvement with the creation of a "visual philosophy," a complex process that explores essences as forms of communication. It finds methods to put analytical propositions into visual forms, defines elusive processes and creates analogies among divergent fields and thought processes. It challenges the status quo and tests its own validity.

In the summer of 1977, the ritual was re-enacted and realized on a full scale at Artpark (Lewiston, N.Y.), completing the first cycle in the evolutionary process of my work and marking an important phase in its development. This periodical summation is a natural evolutionary phenomenon. Organisms probe their environment to find best possible ways to survive by developing memory and the ability to compare. In our limited existence, this long view of reaching back and re-examining provides answers as to where we have been and where we are going.

I planted a half-acre rice field 150 feet above the Niagara gorge. The site marked the birthplace of Niagara Falls between Canada and the U.S., 12,000 years ago. The rice grew up mutant, an unforeseen consequence of Artpark having been a dump-site near Love Canal.

I chained the trees in a sacred forest that was once an Indian burial ground, long since rooted and desecrated, working under the watchful eyes of the Indians who seemed to hover over us in the trees and cover our bodies in the form of eerie spiders.

I then climbed out to the edge of Niagara Falls and filmed it for seven days, adding the force of nature, as a fourth element, to this cycle of dialectics. With this act I also affirmed that my art functioned on the edge of the unknown in the delicate balance of the universals and the self, of the moment and of eternity – and was not afraid to assume the risks such art must take.

The shaky ledge from which I filmed had been dynamited to control the retreat of the falls. Soon after my filming, it fell into the white foam below.

The time capsule was buried at Artpark at 47°10' longitude and 79°2'32" latitude. It contained no objects other than the micro-filmed responses to a questionnaire that had traveled around the world, and a long letter I wrote addressed "Dear Homo Futurus".

The questionnaire was composed of existential questions concerning human values, the quality of life, and the future of humanity. The responses were primarily from university students in various countries where I spoke or had exhibitions of my work. Within the context of a time capsule, the questionnaire functioned as an open system of communication, allowing our descendants to evaluate us not so much by the objects we created – as is customary in time capsules – but by the questions we asked and how we responded to them.

The desiccated microfilm was placed in a steel capsule inside a heavy lead box in nine feet of concrete. A plaque marks the spot: at the edge of the Indian forest, surrounded by blackberry bushes. The time capsule is to be opened in 2979, in the 30th century, a thousand years from the time of the burial.

There are, still within the framework of this project, several time capsules planned on earth and in space, aimed at various time frames in the future.

Agnes Denes

## AGNES DENES

**MANIFESTO**  
(1969)

working with a paradox  
defining the elusive  
visualizing the invisible  
communicating the incommunicable  
not accepting the limitations society has accepted  
seeing in new ways  
living for a fraction of a second and penetrating light years –  
measuring time in the extreme distances –  
long before and beyond living existence  
using intellect and instinct to achieve intuition  
striving to surpass human limitations by searching the mysteries  
and probing the silent universe,  
alive with hidden creativity  
achieving total self-consciousness and self-awareness  
probing to locate the center of things –  
the true inner core of inherent but not yet understood meaning –  
and expose it to be analyzed  
being creatively obsessive  
questioning, reasoning, analyzing, dissecting and re-examining  
understanding that everything has further meaning,  
that order has been created out of chaos,  
but order, when it reaches a certain totality  
must be shattered by new disorder  
and by new inquiries and developments  
finding new concepts, recognizing new patterns  
understanding the finitude of human existence and still striving  
to create beauty  
and provocative reasoning  
recognizing and interpreting the relationship of creative elements  
to each other : people to people  
people to god, people to nature, nature to nature, thought to  
thought, art to art  
seeing reality and still being able to dream  
desiring to know the importance or insignificance of existence  
persisting in eternal search

AGNES DENES



## CECILIA VICUÑA

Born in 1948 in Santiago of Chile. Lives and works in New York and Chile.

### **Quipu Austral, 2012/2013**

Installation. Unspun wool, sound. Variable dimensions

"My installation *Quipu Austral* is composed of two elements: unspun wool tied to the cross beams in "quipu" ("quipu" means knot in Quechua, an Andean language), and a sound recording of my voice chanting my poems.

I intend this *Quipu* as a prayer for the union of the world, emerging from the commonality of world views of the ancient peoples of South America and Australia who created societies based on the beauty of exchange, in other words relationships based on equality and freedom. The long unspun streams's colours were inspired by the palette in Aboriginal paintings and range from pale yellows to the colour of red earth.

I began making these "quipu" knots as a teenager living in Chile. "Quipus" are a system of 'writing' with knots and coloured threads that was created in the Andes, more than 5,000 years ago, (which makes them perhaps older than writing.) It was in use until the Spanish Conquest of South America in the 15th century. Soon after it was abolished. So, for me, it was an act of rebellion to begin again the process of speaking through the threads.

I called my installation *Quipu Austral* to emphasise the connectedness between the arts of the Southern Hemisphere which share a metaphysical orientation. The "quipu" had a virtual counterpart: the "ceque" which means line in Quechua. It was a concept connecting all communities to the sacred sites in the land, usually water. I was struck by the parallels between the "ceque" and the Dreamtime songlines of the Aboriginal Australians. Both these oral traditions imply an ethical and aesthetic way of being that sustains the fertility of the land. We are now pushing the earth to a very dangerous unsustainability, so it is time for us to hear the ancient voices in a new way.

Over the years I have often written that there is a deep human desire for fair relationships, and this need should be the basis of all exchanges. If art is understood as an expression of this desire, it can become again, as it was in the past, an ethical model, a place for reflection.

-----  
TO GO FURTHER  
[www.ceciliavicuna.org](http://www.ceciliavicuna.org)  
-----

My *Quipu* is a poem in space, unlike any "quipu" that existed before. It is constructed with unspun wool which symbolises the "not yet" state from which everything is born. When people walk through it, they themselves become the "knots", the carriers of memory.

I asked the Chilean musician, my friend José Pérez de Arce, to record me as I chanted and improvised sounds that spoke to water and threads. In the Andes, thread is a metaphor for water, the thread of life. The sources of fresh water are drying up all over the world, therefore the *Quipu Austral*'s prayer. I also asked José Pérez de Arce to include his voice, responding to my chant, as well as the ambient soundscape of Chile.

I grew up in a very traditional family of artists of mixed European and Andean ancestry. Our home was filled with books in many languages and fantastic art books and encyclopedias which I devoured. My education was thoroughly European, but there was another side to the story. I felt that even the European side of my family had become attuned to the Andes, after being there since the 17th century. As a result I read the European avant garde, Dada and the Surrealists as a confirmation of the power of poetry to reconnect people to the ancient memories of the land. As an artist poet I began working in Chile in the mid 1960's, creating precarious works on the beach that disappeared with high tide, under the combined influence of the Andes and Dada."

Cecilia Vicuña

-----  
With thanks to Bergère de France  
(Bar-le-Duc) for their assistance in  
technical production of *Quipu Austral*  
-----

Extract from the forthcoming *Gleanings* by Moira Roth



1- Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipu Austral*, 2012/2013  
Exhibition view *Les Immémoriales*  
Photo: Eric Chenal © The artist

## CECILIA VICUÑA

**Quipu de luz**

hilu  
     míname  
         \*  
 umbilical  
 cord  
  
 hilo ventral  
 numen tactil  
  
 órgano  
 de la suma  
  
 cuerpo comunal  
  
 emptiness  
 within  
 the knot  
  
 non word  
 within  
 words  
  
 the union  
 of all  
         \*  
  
 stoma  
 del mundo  
  
 boca estelar  
  
 el cosmos  
 habla en ti  
  
 aliento del hilo  
  
 entraña inicial  
  
 el cielo y el niño  
 comen en ti  
         \*  
  
 to weave  
 is to awake  
  
 the web of life  
 weaving itself  
         \*  
  
 spin now  
 a speech of light  
  
 a bridge  
 between us  
         \*  
  
 tinkurqan  
 kanchaywan  
  
 kay cuniraya  
 huiracochas  
 pachakamaq 1  
  
 guía este hilar

1- Four lines in Quechua, adapted from the Manuscript of Huarochiri, the first text written by Quechua speakers in response to the conquest in the XVI century in Peru.  
 tinkurqan/kanchaywan  
 kay kuniraya/wirakuches

Provisional translation: This kuniraya who animates mankind/who charges the world with being/met with, joined my light

## CECILIA VICUÑA



Cecilia Vicuña combines political activism with an experimental esthetic practice. Her work is centered on her own country from which she was exiled at the beginning of the 1970', as well as on the places of her refuge, in particular Colombia and New York, where she is currently living. Spanning all arts—plastic arts, literature, music, theater...— all her work is poetry. She elaborates her concept of “arte precario,” a type of anti-historical materialist (precario – precarious) and spiritual (precario – prayer) art which opens up the questioning of the present.<sup>1</sup>

**Parti si Pasión, New York, 1981**

Photographs, four digital prints

49 Nord 6 Est – FRAC Lorraine Collection

El polvo  
es el sí  
de la pasión  
Parti si par  
es  
com partir  
el dolor

Pasión del latín patire, sufrir<sup>2</sup>



*Parti Sí Pasion, New York* is the trace of a gesture destined to be erased completed in New York in 1981. Cecilia Vicuña wrote “Parti Sí Pasion” in capital letters, using the colours of the American and Chilean flags<sup>3</sup>, like rock art, on the tarmac road leading to the vertical World Trade Center.



*Parti Sí Pasion*, which can be translated as “Share – Yes – Passion”, is a result of the dissection of the word “participation” which, in Manhattan, as much as the word “action”, has taken on a capitalist meaning. Vicuña’s practice of deconstruction of language has produced a body of works she calls *palábramas*, which can be translated as “armswords”, a portmanteau word containing “armas” (arms, weapons) and “palabra” (words). “Their internal metaphors are thus exposed to view; people can see the words not as abstractions but as something very real” C.V.

1-

1- Texts on the works of Cecilia Vicuña featured in the FRAC Lorraine Collection are extracted from Luc Jeand’heur’s essays which are available in their entirety at <http://collection.fracloiraine.org>

2- In *The Precarious/Quipoem: The Art and Poetry of Cecilia Vicuña*, by Cecilia Vicuña, Catherine de Zegher and Esther Allen, 1997

3- “Parti” in white, “Sí” in blue, “Pasion” – of course – in red.

1- Cecilia Vicuña, *Parti si Pasión*, New York, 1981. Photographs.  
49 Nord 6 Est – FRAC Lorraine Coll.  
© The artist



1-

### Vaso de Leche, Bogotá, 1979

Photographs, three digital prints

49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine Collection

la vaca  
es el continente  
cuya leche  
(sangre)  
está siendo  
derramada  
¿qué estamos  
haciendo  
con la vida?

The three photographs of *Vaso de Leche, Bogotá, 1979* contain neither a face nor a site nor a historical reference, nothing but a “synopsis” of a performance featuring symbolic elements, the true historical actors.

1: A glass of milk, placed on tarmac and held on a leash made of red thread (metaphor for the blood tie, the lama wool is the material signature of the artist) by a woman’s extended arm (the gender is deduced from the hem of a skirt),

2: which is tipped over by a tug of the arm

3: and spills its whiteness on the ground, outlining a ghostly figure.

Created at the invitation from the Chilean group C.A.D.A.<sup>4</sup> as part of the manifestation *Para No Morir de Hambre en el Arte* (In Order Not to Starve to Death in Art), the performance *Vaso de Leche, Bogotá* is a reinterpretation of a scandal in which the sale of spoiled milk caused the death of 1920 children in Bogotá, imputing blame to Colombian public officials.

In her public performance, the artist invites the viewer to play the role of a witness in order to elevate the performance to a collective catharsis and to a “truth” in the face of facts. The act of spilling milk is a metaphor for the crime in which Colombians poison their own brothers with milk, literally an unbearable waste. Ironically, the artist installs her ephemeral memorial in front of Simón Bolívar’s<sup>5</sup> house—an anti-spectacular gesture intended as a protest against the ambiguous relations of complementarity between order and violence which dominate in Colombia to the point of becoming “two sides of the same everyday reality.”

There are crimes of milk as there are crimes of blood.

1- Cecilia Vicuña, *Vaso de Leche, Bogotá, 1979*. Photographs.  
49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine Coll.  
© The artist

4- Colectivo Acciones De Arte, an action art collective established in 1979 in Chile in order to protest against the dictatorship of General Pinochet.  
5- Simon Bolivar, nicknamed “el Libertador,” South-American general and politician, an emblematic figure of liberation struggle of the Spanish colonies in South America from 1813, and in particular of Colombia.



### ¿Qué Es Para Ud. la Poesía?, 1980

Video, colour, sound. Duration: 23'

49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine Collection

What is poetry to you?

In 1980, Cecilia Vicuña paced up and down the streets of Bogotá, camera in hand, and asked residents, passers-by, and workers this very question. And for the time being it is an existential one. A strange form of cultural brainstorming conducted in a social body by means of sidewalk video, as an inversed cultural meditation in which the poet, for a moment, plays the public. It is both a militant and sensible way of questioning the soul of the capital—a direct approach to the actors of the city's public spaces. The "Great City" comes out dehumanized—a mental space and the theater of a culture transcending everything that is personal.

Spontaneous, and sometimes surprising responses of the interviewed "people" (passers-by, children, beggars, prostitutes, policemen, slum inhabitants...), denote the richness of the orality of culture and of a culture of orality in Columbia.



The artist confronts the city as an urban and human landscape, with the idea that poetry and the city are, above all, common-places. She chooses to stray away from places of culture, and towards individuals who are at the margins of dominant literature and culture where Poetry may seem a mythical object. She is on a quest for energy, memories, feelings, words, stories, rather than for universal mediations and other learned discourses of the profession. She wants to produce a resonance rather than a definition.



1-



1-

## MONIKA GRZYMALA

Born in 1970 in Zabrze (PL). Lives and works in Berlin (DE).

For Monika Grzymala, “drawing is as a hand lead thought.”<sup>0</sup> In her work, everything begins with the line, liberated from the sheet of paper and launched into the open, and with paper that she makes herself. From prosaic and fragile materials, the German artist of Polish origin creates what she calls “architectural interventions,” or ephemeral, site-specific installations that come to activate space, or rather to breathe some spirit into it.

In 2011, she was invited by the FRAC Lorraine to participate in a group show called *A Serpentine Gesture and other Prophecies*. The event is a reflection on time and how the different forms we associate with it shape our conception of the world, of the universe, and of mankind. Monika Grzymala thus imagined *Polyeder/Polyhedron* (FRAC Lorraine Collection), a site specific, three-dimensional drawing made with black, matte adhesive tape. As the title indicates, *Polyeder/Polyhedron* draws inspiration from the three-dimensional geometrical figure of the polyhedron which, according to the theory of relativity, paves the space-time that structures our universe.

### **The River II, 2012/2013**

Site specific installation realized with Euraba Artists and Papermakers.  
Handmade cotton rag paper, monofilament, paper coated aluminum wire

For the 18th Biennale of Sydney in 2012, Monika Grzymala proposed to Euraba Artists and Papermakers, a group of Goomeroi Aboriginal women, to work with her on the realization of *The River*, an ephemeral installation composed of thousands of sheets of handmade paper and representing a hymn to the earth. For the exhibition *Les Immémoriales*, Grzymala proposes a variation on that installation, *The River II*, and transposes into FRAC the intense relationship she had developed with the Euraba women.

“*The River* is dedicated to Aboriginal people and their land Australia. Through this collaboration I re-learned to see land and art. While I was travelling, the idea suggested itself: I am in the landscape and the landscape is in me.<sup>1</sup> This site-specific installation is created using basic raw materials coming from Aboriginal communities, such as handmade paper from the Euraba Paper Company in Boggabilla and weaving materials from Boolarng Nangamai in Gerringong. The Euraba logo<sup>2</sup> features a Hollander beater with water

-----  
TO GO FURTHER  
[www.t-r-a-n-s-i-t.net](http://www.t-r-a-n-s-i-t.net)  
-----

1- Monika Grzymala, *The River II*, 2012/2013  
Site specific installation realized with  
Euraba Artists and Papermakers.  
Exhibition view *Les Immémoriales*  
Photo: Eric Chenal © The artist

0- In German original: "Zeichnung ist von der Hand geführtes Denken"-MG.

1- From: John Olsen's notes Clarendon SA5157, April 16, 1984, catalogue "John Olsen" published by Deborah Hart at Craftsman House 2000.



1-

flowing around it. This main element for papermaking originates from the MacIntyre River. Water always linked Euraba women to their ancient culture. Here, in a place of healing, earth and water bear plants giving fibres for paper pulp. From time immemorial, the river is focus of life in Boggabilla. Is this labyrinthine drawing an imprint of the Rainbow Serpent when she created their land? The art of weaving crosses paths via life's journey in Aboriginal tradition. Living knowledge and holding our world together in cultural awareness. *The River II* connects with the land in a multi-vocal current to trace back towards shared dreamtime and identity. Individually and collectively composed, in unity through diversity, another cycle of life is completed." M.G.

2- In the Goomeroi language "euraba" means a place of healing, which is a reference to the healing leaves of the "euca" tree and to the word "ba" meaning "place."

## EURABA ARTISTS AND PAPERMAKERS

Euraba Artists and Papermakers is a group of northern New South Wales (AUS) Aboriginal artists specializing in handmade paper art. Euraba is situated in the border town of Boggabilla and is owned and operated by the Goomeroi people of Toomelah and Boggabilla. Cotton is a major crop grown in the Boggabilla region. Cotton off-cuts from the local clothing industry and plants growing nearby the river which irrigates their ancestral land are used to produce pulp for their paper. Euraba have taken traditional European papermaking methods and have combined this with their own contemporary indigenous consciousness.

### TO GO FURTHER

[www.eurabapaper.com.au](http://www.eurabapaper.com.au)

"We are Goomeroi people. Our art stems from our knowledge of this land and the stories of our ancestors. At Euraba we have created a place and a reason for us to come together. The process of making paper and art at Euraba has been a journey over 12 years that has united us with our people: especially our elders and children, as well with wonderful people from all over around the world. By exploring techniques and experimenting with natural fibbers to make our paper we have come closer to the people, the land and the river of this region. Art has allowed us to gain a sense of pride and identity and we want this for our young people so we can help them express their feelings and find their way."

1- Monika Grzymala, *The River II*, 2012/2013  
Site specific installation realized with  
Euraba Artists and Papermakers. (detail)  
Exhibition view *Les Immémoriales*  
Photo: Eric Chenal © The artist