

## Press Release

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## Angelica Mesiti *Relay League*



Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* (production still), 2017  
3 Channel Video Installation, 8 min.

Courtesy the artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Galerie Allen, Paris

**Presented by** Art Sonje Center

**Co-curated by** Artspace, Sydney

**Supported by** Australia-Korea Foundation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,  
Keir Foundation, Australia Council for the Arts

Art Sonje Center presents Australian artist Angelica Mesiti's solo exhibition, *Relay League* from 12 January to 11 February 2018. Mesiti's interest in community, ephemeral cultural tradition and spirituality is expressed through non-linguistic forms of communication experimenting with vocabularies of sound and gesture.

This exhibition stemmed from a Morse code message – *Calling all, this is our final cry before our eternal silence* – transmitted by the French Navy on 31 January 1997 to signal the imminent demise of this communication method, which was phased out after 130 years. Sound sculpture, *Appel a Tours/Calling All* (2017), provides a visual and sonic cue to the ideas of transmission and reception that resonate throughout the entire exhibition space. *Relay League* (2017), a 3-channel video, leaves a sensory impression of a language that has been transformed into a code, which in turn iterates as a musical score, a body movement and a haptic exchange, enabling multiple acts of translation. Through these two works, Mesiti attempts a communion with strange gestures within communities. *Citizens Band* (2012) is a video ensemble that performs a distinct sound across time and space, using a technique inflected with its specific cultural origins by 4 migrant musicians in France and Australia. By chasing a trace of their auditory languages, Mesiti adds value to the ephemeral cultural tradition and captures its cultural distinctiveness recalled in the lyrics and rhythms.

In association with the exhibition, an artist talk will be held at the Art Hall in Art Sonje Center at 5 pm on 11 January 2018. Angelica Mesiti will have a talk with Alexie Glass-Kantor, the executive director of Artspace, Sydney, which commissioned *Relay League*, and Haeju Kim, the vice director of Art Sonje Center, Seoul.

**\* Works****Angelica Mesiti, *Appel à Tous/Calling All*, 2017**

Entering the exhibition space, the visitor encounters the sound sculpture *Appel à Tous/Calling All* (2017), a materialisation of the dots and dashes composing the French Navy's final transmission in Morse code. The brass sculpture streams down from the ceiling, its parts clanging and jangling together to produce sound and cast shadows on the surrounding walls: a visual and aural allusion to the motif of transmission and reception that resonates throughout the exhibition space.

**Angelica Mesiti, *Appel à Tous/Calling All*, 2017**

Brass, Steel, 320 x 40 x 40 mm

Courtesy the artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Galerie Allen, Paris

Installation view at Artspace Sydney

**Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* (production still), 2017**

The vinyl structure that spans the second floor of the gallery functions as a membrane between the physical and psychological components embodied by the artist's work. Following this structure, the viewer is led to the 3-channel video work *Relay League* and its sequence of projections. First, musician and composer Uriel Barthélémi performs on his drum set, placed on the rooftop of a building in the suburbs of Paris, the intricate and subtle percussion composition into which he has translated the final Morse code message. Alternating between drum sticks, a brush, and a flame tree pod filled with seeds which he incorporates according to a precise musical interpretation and sequence, Barthélémi weaves a rhythm of dots and dashes that are here expressed through the cymbal and the low beats of the bass drum. The second video projection shows two dancers in a studio, communicating with one another through an intimate, physical language. The female dancer, Emilia Wibron Vesterlund, continues to look at something off-camera while holding onto Sindri Runudde, who has a sight impairment, and leading him to gesture this way and that through her touch and movements. The final video features the dancer and choreographer Filipe Lourenço dancing to the same soundtrack as the first video, translating Barthélémi's sound language into the language of gestures through strictly calculated physical movements – which from time to time burst into uncontrollable movements as though with unrestrained emotion. Lourenço's unfamiliar gestures may be a metaphorical response to the special Morse transmission of 1997, a distress signal that was fated never to be answered. Moving one's focus from his movements, the viewer's eyes alight on two dancers in the background, these being the same dancers who had appeared in the earlier video. It becomes clear then that Wibron Vesterlund and Runudde had in fact been gesturing after Lourenço's own movements.

*Relay League* is a work in which multiple acts of translation are made possible, from the initial linguistic translation of the French Navy's last coded message of farewell to the repeated iterations of the lyrical core of this transmission in and through the forms of sculpture, musical score, physical gestures, sensory perception and interaction. The attempts at non-linguistic communication and communion in the work brings to the surface the various facets of human subjectivity even as conventional language and expression fall silent.



**Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League*** (production still), 2017  
Courtesy the artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Galerie Allen, Paris.



**Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League*** (production still), 2017  
Courtesy the artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Galerie Allen, Paris.



**Angelica Mesiti, *Citizens Band* (production still), 2012**

The exhibition continues on the third floor with a 4-channel video piece *Citizens Band* (2012), a work that pays homage to cultural traditions that are dying out even as it attempts to discover alternative and non-linguistic means of communication within unfamiliar communities. The four individual screens that comprise the installation each project a performance by one individual who has immigrated to France or Australia. The sequential, or relayed, performances are to different degrees based on the traditional music or musical techniques of each musician's native land. Cameroonian Loïs Geraldine Zongo creates a complex percussion rhythm using only her two hands and the pool water at an indoor swimming pool in Paris; Mohammad Lamourie, a refugee musician from Algeria, sings and plays the lyrical melody and rhythms of Raï music, censored in his own country, in a rocking car of the Paris Métro; Bukhchuluun Ganburged plays his horse-head fiddle on a street corner in Sydney, joining in with the simultaneously sharp and deep throat-singing that is characteristic to his native Mongolia, while in Brisbane, Asim Goreshi, an emigrant Sudanese musician, whistles in the dark while sitting in his taxi.

These four musician's performances are followed by a concluding projection in which all four screens are filled with blurred images of moving lights, and the four independent musical lines come together across time and space to overlap and create a new polyphonic score. With this a virtual space comes into being, one that works on our senses and lets us experience an unforeseen harmony. Through the aural language communicated by this video ensemble, we begin to follow the four musician's life traces and explore the complex motives and memories that make up our own lives. At the same time, giving physical expression to the solitary emotions of the geographically, linguistically, and culturally displaced allows these particular communicative possibilities to be conserved.



**Angelica Mesiti, *Citizens Band* (production still), 2012**  
4 Channel Video Installation, 12 min. 25 sec.  
Courtesy the artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

**\* About the Artist**

Angelica Mesiti was born in Sydney in 1976 and is currently based in Paris. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales in Sydney. Mesiti works primarily with video and installation, incorporation performance, dance and musicality to explore ideas of community, cultural tradition and spirituality. She is interested in performed cultural traditions in a state of transformation or at risk of extinction due to complex social, economic or cultural shifts.

Mesiti has exhibited extensively at institutions and biennales worldwide including: 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014); 13th Istanbul Biennial, 2nd Aichi Triennale, 5th Auckland Triennial and 11th Sharjah Biennale (2013); as well as at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2016); Barbican Centre, London (2015); Jewish Museum, New York (2014); Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, Lyon (2013), France.

Her solo projects were shown at 'O' Space, Aarhus, Denmark (2017), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2017); Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney (2017), Artspace, Sydney (2017), Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada (2015); Lilith Performance Studio, Malmö, Sweden (2015); Galerie Allen, Paris (2015); Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, Canada (2014), Williams College Museum of Art, Massachusetts, USA (2014).

Mesiti was a finalist in the prestigious Prix Meurice for contemporary art (2016) and is the recipient of the inaugural Ian Potter Moving Image Commission (2013); the Anne Landa Award for video and new media arts (2013).

**\* Opening reception**

Date: 11 January 2018, 6 pm

**\* Artist Talk: Angelica Mesiti**

Date: 11 January 2018, 5 pm

Panel: Alexie Glass-Kantor(Executive director of Artspace, Sydney), Haeju Kim(Vice director of Art Sonje Center)

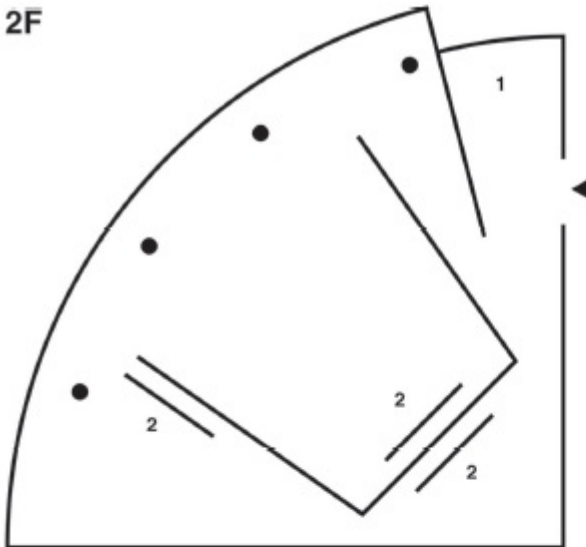
Venue: Art Sonje Center, B1 Art Hall

Admission: Free

\* *Relay League* (2017), one of the works presented in this exhibition was commissioned and developed by Artspace, Sydney. The development and presentation of *Relay League* is supported by Commissioning Partner the Keir Foundation. *Relay League* was produced with the support of C ND Centre National de la Danse, Paris and University of New South Wales Art & Design. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

## \* Floor Plan

2F



1

*Appel à Tous/Calling All*  
2017, brass, steel  
320x40x40mm

2

*Relay League*  
2017, three channel video installation  
8 mins

3

*Citizens Band*  
2012, four channel video installation  
21 mins 25 secs

3F

