

Ecotoni II

One year after Ecotoni I, with **Laurie Anderson, Ericka Beckman, Jenny Holzer, Joan Jonas, Agnieszka Polska and Jenna Sutela**, Like A Little Disaster is proud to present the second chapter of the series which involves three new artists: **Daniela Corbascio, Jumana Manna and Nguyễn Trinh Thi**.

A transition between two adjacent but different ecosystems, the ecotones appear as both gradual shifts and abrupt demarcations. But more than just a marker of separation or even a marker of connection (although importantly both of these things), an ecotone is also a zone of fecundity, creativity, transformation; of becoming assembling, multiplying; of diverging, differentiating, relinquishing.

The inhabitants of an ecotone are zones for brave pioneers.

An ecotone is simultaneously an anticipated past and a remembered future.

Through different practices, poetics and semantic fields, the three artists on display structure territories of transition or tension between two or more heterogeneous natural-cultural community ecosystems. The ecotone thus becomes the most effective strategy and method for reflecting on the interlaced relationships between nature and culture.

“Something happens.

Estuaries, tidal zones, wetlands: these are all liminal spaces where “two complex systems meet, embrace, clash, and transform one another.”

Eco: home. Tone: tension.

We must learn to be at home in the quivering tension of the in-between. No other home is available. In-between nature and culture, in-between biology and philosophy, in-between the human and everything we ram ourselves up against, everything we desperately shield ourselves from, everything we throw ourselves into, wrecked and recklessly, watching, amazed, as our skins become thinner”

Ecotoni II

Daniela Corbascio, Jumana Manna and Nguyễn Trinh Thi

Curated by **Like A Little Disaster**

2 September / 30 November

By **appointment only** at info@likealittledisaster.com

Like A Little Disaster

Via Cavour 68

Polignano a mare

www.likealittledisaster.com

It is hard to find a comprehensive definition for **Daniela Corbascio's** work. Her research phagocytises languages, follows a personal stream of consciousness, regulates and

orchestrates the forms of their memory, making them co-exist in balancing acts. Her primary approach is that of an independent researcher who takes an original, anti-academic method, identifying a starting point and then following an evolution dictated by the alternation of modular strictness and random coincidences. Daniela has an extraordinary ability to appropriating of a space in which organizes strictly forms and materials ambivalent between what she creates with her hands and what she found, gathered, collected, and preserved. The material and immaterial logic of this theatre offers philosophical insight into the relationship between signs, things, language and perception. Her installations operate as phenomenological staging grounds which are highly tuned to their surrounding architectural spaces. Daniela's interventions are a memory that turns into a landscape – not intended as a scene but as a contingent space through in time – is accompanied by a memory made of forms; the minimalism with its basic forms and their positioning in the gallery, the post-minimalism with the corruption of these same forms, the conceptual, while not adhering to the dematerialisation of the work, the land art, the arte povera, etc.. A memory of forms involved in a number of sculptural practices or semi-practices inherent in the recent generations of artists with whom Corbascio also shares the practice of "collecting" as one of the tools to reach a state of authorship and in this poetic assembly, the transformation; divergent and differentiated multiplication become fertile territories for new mysticisms. Appropriation, alteration and rethinking of objects, elements and forms of phenomenal reality marks their action and through these steps, allowing us to think of reality as a game of differences, while we normally think of it in terms of similarity, analogy, and identity. Her practice investigates the possibilities of giving new purpose to everyday life elements, intentionally removing them from the dominion of automatic perception and making them abstract in order to place those elements and their relationships, using connotations on show. Through the dissociation of objects and concepts, the artifice of the works on the show makes the perception slow and permanent, generating a strange contradiction because the same concepts and objects are fragmented or separated from their mechanical use, in order to support a closer and lasting gaze. Like paradoxes, her interventions have the unique ability to amplify contradictions, speaking out through their confusion, so that the viewer must pause and think about what might be their connections and developments. What “confuses” in the exhibition’s works is that they present us a comment through the attribution of new intentions, offering at the same time a branch of sensations allowing various interpretations cause they activate a chain reaction of reflections.

These premises implicate complex issues such as the relation between copy and original, seen and interpreted by the artist as mutually constitutive of the thing and its double, the thing and the shadow. Through a continuous process of calling into question the logic of representation the artist suggests repetitions, “doubles”, estranged objects and subjects that host multiple realities within them or fall apart, disconnected and become whole. This process alters in countless ways the logic of the original and the copy, so as to deny any ruling image of thought and to emancipate it from the enslavement to and the hierarchy of any form-default image.

Jumana Manna is a Palestinian artist working primarily with film and sculpture. Her work explores how power is articulated through relationships, often focusing on the body and materiality in relation to narratives of state-building, and histories of place.

Through sculptures, films and texts, Manna questions the paradoxes of conservation practices, particularly in the fields of archeology, science and law. His research takes into account the tension between the modernist traditions of categorization and conservation and the potential "recklessness" of ruins as an integral part of life and its regeneration.

Wild Relatives, 2018

64min, HD video

Deep in the earth beneath the Arctic permafrost, seeds from all over the world are stored in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault to provide a backup should disaster strike. *Wild Relatives* starts from an event that has sparked media interest worldwide: in 2012 an international agricultural research center was forced to relocate from Aleppo to Lebanon due to the Syrian Revolution turned war, and began a laborious process of planting their seed collection from the Svalbard back-ups. Following the path of this transaction of seeds between the Arctic and Lebanon, a series of encounters unfold a matrix of human and non-human lives between these two distant spots of the earth. It captures the articulation between this large-scale international initiative and its local implementation in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, carried out primarily by young migrant women. The meditative pace patiently teases out tensions between state and individual, industrial and organic approaches to seed saving, climate change and biodiversity, witnessed through the journey of these seeds.

NGUYEN Trinh Thi is an independent video/media artist and director based in Hanoi. In her practice, she explores the power of sound and listening, and the multiple relationships between image, sound and space, with continuous interests in memory, representation, landscape, indigenusness and ecology. Her work investigates the role of memory in complex cultural histories.

Nguyen studied journalism, photography, international relations and ethnographic cinema in the United States. In 2009 she founded Hanoi DOCLAB, an independent center for documentary cinema and the art of moving images in Hanoi.

She is known for her layered, personal, and poetic approach to contentious histories and current events through experiments with the moving image. Regarded as one of the pioneers of her home country Vietnam's independent cinema, Thi is seen as the most notable video artist in Vietnam's contemporary art scene.

Inspired by her heritage, her pieces are powerful and haunting, and they focus on social and cultural issues, especially the complex, traumatic history of Vietnam and its after-effects in the present. In her longer documentary films, she employs calm and quiet visuals while eschewing voiceovers in order to let the people of her country speak directly to the camera. Her diverse practice has consistently investigated the role of memory in the necessary unveiling of hidden, displaced, or misinterpreted histories, and she has examined the position of artists in Vietnamese society.

How to Improve the World (2021)

Single-channel video, colour and B&W, sound, 47 minutes

Set in the Central Highlands of Vietnam where a large concentration of groups of indigenous people live, *How to Improve the World* is a film about listening. The film reflects on the differences in how memory is processed between the culture of the eye and that of the ear, while observing the loss of land, forests, and the way of life of the indigenous people in this part of the world. 'Do you trust sounds or images better?' Nguyễn, off screen, asks her daughter, who replies 'images, mum'. Of the cultural dominance of images and looking at the expense of other sensory modes, Nguyen has said: 'As our globalised and westernised cultures have come to be dominated by visual media, I feel the need and responsibility as a filmmaker to resist this narrative power of the visual imagery, and look for a more balanced and sensitive approach in perceiving the world by paying more attention to aural landscapes, in line with my interests in the unknown, the invisible, the inaccessible, and in potentialities'.

Letters from Panduranga (2015)

Single-channel video, colour and b&w, sound, 35:00

The essay film, made in the form of a letter exchange between a man and a woman, was inspired by the fact that the government of Vietnam plans to build the country's first two nuclear power plants in Ninh Thuan (formerly known as Panduranga), right at the spiritual heart of the Cham indigenous people, threatening the survival of this ancient matriarchal Hindu culture that stretches back almost two thousand years.

At the border between documentary and fiction, the film shifts audience attention between foreground and background, between intimate portraits and distant landscapes, offering reflections around fieldwork, ethnography, art, and the role of the artist.

Intertwining circumstances of the past, present, and future, the film also unfolds a multi-faceted historical and on-going experience of colonialisms, and looks into the central ideas of power and ideology in our everyday.

Fifth Cinema (2018)

Single-channel video, color and B&W, sound, 56 minutes

With text by Barry Barclay ("Celebrating the Fourth Cinema", 2003)

Fifth Cinema begins with a quiet statement "I am a filmmaker, as you know." That text and what follows, by Maori filmmaker Barry Barclay, who coined the term 'Fourth Cinema' to distinguish Indigenous cinema from the established 'First, Second, and Third Cinema' framework, provides structure to Nguyen's hybrid essay film that moves on multiple cinematic and topical terrains. Eschewing voice in favor of the written word and juxtaposing moving images of the filmmaker's own daughter with archival images of Vietnamese women seen through the lens of the "ship's officers", the film slowly leads the viewer through a narrative of colonialism, indigeneity and cinematic limitations in representation.

Statement

I make this film as a citizen – of Vietnam, and of the world – as a filmmaker, an artist, a woman, a mother. There are multiple identities. I'm interested in merging my identities with those of Barry Barclay's, to be able to see things with broader senses and perspectives. I'm speaking from the point of view that any one of us can potentially be the oppressed; and the oppressor.

I make films that engage with local and national identity, history and memories, but at the same time address something that is universal. I seek to find the underlying rules that govern our lives, worlds and realities. The way we look at things.

I'm interested also in the unknown, the invisible, the inaccessible, in potentialities. As Barclay said, "But I believe that in Fourth Cinema — at its best — something else is being asserted which is not easy to access."

In this film I think Fourth Cinema and Indigeneity function more on a metaphorical level, standing for the beauty and wisdom in the world that require respect. A metaphor for all things oppressed — women, minorities, the colonized.

I like to travel across space and time and genders to find all these connections and identify the underlying structures. I think we're unfortunately governed universally by structures of power, dominance, and patriarchy.