

# JOAN

**Caitlin Berrigan, *Cassandra with a flood in her mouth***

February 4 - April 15, 2023

JOAN presents a solo exhibition by Berlin and New York-based artist, Caitlin Berrigan, the artist's first institutional show in Los Angeles. *Cassandra with a flood in her mouth* features two new video installations alongside recent videos, sculptures, texts, and research materials, and parallel public programs that reimagine relations among human and more-than-human life forms through the lens of deep time. The immersive installation centers on the artist's ongoing research project, *Imaginary Explosions* (2018-present)—a speculative worldbuilding cosmology that blurs research science with art and fiction. Focusing on communication with geologic subjects through various technologies, sensory modalities, and mutual alliances, the project explores how human and mineral subjectivities are entangled, emphasizing moments when the earthly asserts its agency in the political sphere.

Consisting of episodic videos and sculptural “instruments” that consider volcanic landscapes as sites of temporal rupture, *Imaginary Explosions* depicts an affiliation of transfeminist scientists composed of real-life artists and scholars, who communicate with and collectively follow the desires of the mineral earth to simultaneously erupt all volcanoes. They traverse geological sites across place and time and attempt to divest technoscientific instruments of their corporate and military infrastructures of power. The first episode focuses on the 2010 eruption of the volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, in Iceland, when the volcanic activity interrupted global air travel. In the second episode, the non-fictional research of an archaeology team is woven into the narrative, as signals arrive from a cave at the foot of a volcano in Chile, where hybrid spider-humans have infiltrated military surveillance apparatuses. Gardens as models of worldbuilding empires and atmospheres are the subject of the third, new episode, with the focus being the only miniature, artificial volcano to survive its own eruption from 18th-century Germany.

*Cassandra with a flood in her mouth* also includes a new multichannel video installation, *A voice becomes a mirror plane becomes a holohedral wand* (2023), a speculative fiction that plays with tones and resonances from hydrothermal vents and appetites for rare earth minerals. The interweaving of science with fiction in these works speculates on the idea of becoming mineral and enlists sensory modes to attune to geological animacies, while the notion of deep time offers a critical lens to think beyond the time scale of the human. Berrigan draws connections across ecological disasters and various scales of violence and contamination, along with personal histories that are enfolded in earth histories. She projects imaginary landscapes onto existing ones to propose alternative geological temporalities and affinities, enlisting embodied knowledges towards ecological reparation and the subversion of dominant power structures.

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The exhibition is Act One in three acts of public programs organized with Berrigan that expand upon the project's themes and associations. Act Two is a film program and conversation presented at REDCAT on February 27. Titled *Cassandra with a flood in her mouth: A chorus, a riot, a cult, a swarm*, the program asks "How do we relate to land, place, and ecologies under conditions of destabilization and contamination?" Mixing fabulation with fact, the films rehearse forms of social life that resist the harmful distinctions between humans and other beings. Works by **Sofía Córdova, Rana Hamadeh in collaboration with Sara Hamadeh, Erin Johnson, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, and Bassem Saad** reimagine our relationships to the earthly and the elemental while emphasizing that we are inseparable from the material ecologies of place.

More information on the REDCAT program can be found on our website, and additional information on the parallel Acts is forthcoming.

JOAN will also release Berrigan's script for *A voice becomes a mirror plane becomes a holohedral wand* as the first publication of our newly launched Autograph Press.

The videos are captioned, and headsets with audio descriptions by Elaine Lillian Joseph are available upon request.

**Caitlin Berrigan** works as a visual artist, writer, and researcher. Her early works address viruses and the spatial choreographies of capitalism and contagion. Recent works in her speculative cosmology called *Imaginary Explosions* explore poetics and queer science fiction as world-making practices. The work has been the subject of a book (Broken Dimanche Press, 2018); a 2019 solo show at Art in General, reviewed in *Artforum*; and a world premiere in the 2020 Berlinale Forum Expanded exhibition. She has presented her work at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Poetry Project, Henry Art Gallery, the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Anthology Film Archives, La Casa Encendida, Ashkal Alwan, Goldsmiths' College, and other international venues. Her experimental essays are published by *e-flux*, *Georgia*, *MARCH*, and Duke University Press. She has received fellowships and residencies from Creative Capital, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Graham Foundation, and the Akademie Schloss Solitude. She earned a Master's in Visual Art from MIT and a BA from Hampshire College. Currently a Caltech-Huntington artist-in-residence, Berrigan has held full-time and visiting faculty positions at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Bard College Berlin, Harvard University, and UMass Boston.