



EL BAILE DE LA RUINA

Cecilia Bengolea
August/October 2024

CECILIA BENGOLEA

El baile de la ruina (Works 2014–2024)

August 23 – October 17

Tuesday to Saturday, 2–7 pm

Saturday, August 31, 12:15 pm

Performance: *Bureau of Destruction and Catharsis*

The artist invites the public to bring an object they wish to see destroyed. Doors open at 12 pm.

Cecilia Bengolea (1979) is an Argentine experimental artist, dancer, and choreographer based in Paris. In her first solo exhibition in Buenos Aires, she presents videos produced from 2014 to the present—two of them created in collaboration with Craig Black Eagle, a dancer from the Jamaican Dancehall scene—as well as drawings, ceramic sculptures, and lenticular collages.

Bengolea is interested in art in motion, such as choreography and video. She draws inspiration from ritual dances and movement traditions from peripheral geographies. Her work reflects on the fluid energetic exchanges between body and environment. She uses dance as a tool and medium for radical empathy and emotional exchange. Infused with the symbolic energies found in nature and in interpersonal relationships, her works are shaped around ideas of the body—both individual and collective. Bengolea understands movement as animated sculpture, in which she is simultaneously object and subject within her own work; in her practice, dance and sculpture form a continuum.

Spanish curator Chus Martínez has written:

“Cecilia Bengolea creates a dancing body that almost seems like a machine programmed to reveal to us the softness of a universe that seeks to speak to us through a dynamic flow of forces... a body that activates the senses to discover an unprecedented resemblance among all beasts. In her dance, the artist becomes a monstrous and marvelous hybrid capable of connecting with everything that surrounds her, with herself and with us... an energy that can take any form...”

Have you ever considered how performance helps us reflect on identity? Identity has nothing to do with realism. Our bodies are not meant to provide a fixed or unmistakable form to who we are. The body in motion—the deep exploration of the energies that allow the body to remain in dance—is an affirmation of its non-objectivity. Through movement we discover that power does not lie in representation or realistic identification. Power lies in how energy reveals the miraculous being.

'Miraculous' is used here not in a religious sense, but to denote the unexpected. The miraculous names the discovery of the joyful bond between species, among the millions of possibilities for inventing a body, a way of being in the world, a fertile relationship with diversity."

Her works contain multiple layers of references and meanings and are constructed from a perspective influenced by the philosopher Baruch Spinoza: composing with the other—an other that may be human or may be the energy of a storm or of water. The metaphor of liquidity is central to her approach, as it allows for constant evolution and transformation. Lenticular photography technology serves her in embodying these ideas. Her digital videos reflect this fluidity between the human body and other species or industrial environments.

In this exhibition, Bengolea—affected by the various crises shaking the planet, including climate change, ongoing wars, and systems in which poverty continues to expand—asks how we might live among ruins. "Is it possible to dance among the ruins and transform collective energy? This is what I attempt in my anthropological dance work and choreographic videos, aspiring toward an expansion of consciousness and relationships. Dance as a function of social translation."

Cecilia Bengolea has exhibited widely, including at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2021, 2022); the Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2014—where she received an award—and 2022); Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection (2021); MUDAM Luxembourg (2022, 2023); Art Basel Messeplatz commission (2021); High Line Art Program, New York (2020); Dhaka Art Summit (2018); Dia Art Foundation, Beacon, New York (2017); ICA London (2017); the São Paulo Biennial (2016); among other institutions. She has been a guest choreographer at the Lyon Opera Ballet, the Nancy Opera, and Pina Bausch's company, Tanztheater Wuppertal. She has collaborated on video

works with artist Jeremy Deller and on performance with Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, as well as with Craig Black Eagle, Bombom DHQ, Damion BG, and other participants from the Jamaican Dancehall scene.

Acknowledgments:

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