

23.Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)

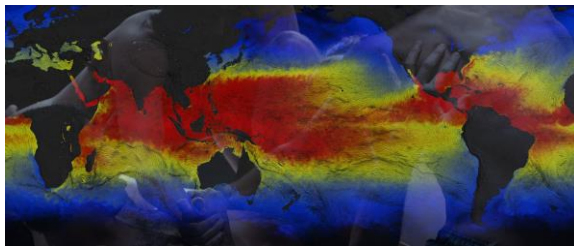
Technical details

23.1 4KHD video, 2:39, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 6 min, Portugal – Switzerland –Italy (for Interdependence)

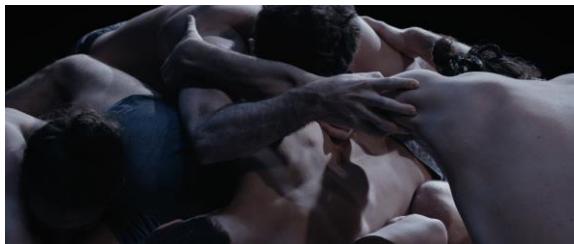
23.2 4KHD video, 2:39, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 10 min, Portugal – Switzerland –Italy

23.3 Installation, Four-channels 4KHD video, 2:39, color, dolby 5.1 sound, 15 min in a loop, Scenographic sculpture 400 X 238 cm, Portugal – Switzerland – Italy

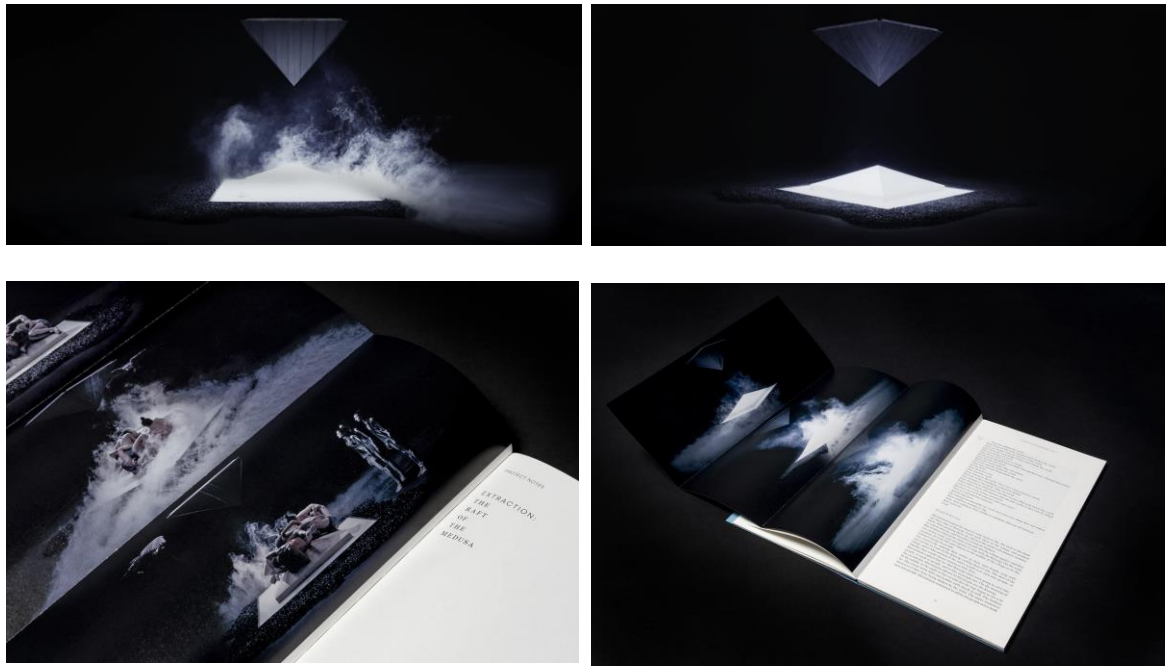
23.4 Publication, offset printing, format 15 X 20 cm, 100pp., Portugal – Spain
In collaboration with Intersección – Contemporary Audiovisual Art Festival, Estraperlo



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019) (for interdependence)



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2020)



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019)

Synopsis

Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa is a meditation on humanity's massive redesign of the planet and a dystopic pamphlet on the *anthropocene*.

Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa portrays a brief moment of euphoria as the drifting occupants on the raft, hoping and praying to be rescued, appear to glimpse a possibility of salvation. We can almost hear the hoarse cries through which they attempt to draw attention to their desperate plight, mustering a final ounce of strength before the void. This is their last chance of survival.

Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa refers to the colonial paradigm, worldview, and technologies that mark out regions of high biodiversity in order to reduce life to its conversion into a resource through capitalism, with an enormous environmental and social impact.

It is an allegory for states of emergency in environmental policy, climate and migration, with an ethical-political purpose.

Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa is a multidisciplinary project in which sequential satellite products are layered around the exploration of a composed allegoric image.

Credits

Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020) is a project with the artistic direction of Salomé Lamas produced by ART for The World in coproduction with Lamaland.

The project was produced with materials collected during the production of *Interdependence* (2019) an omnibus composed by eleven short films to raise awareness on Environment and Climate Change, conceived, developed and produced by Adelina von Fürstenberg with ART for The World, under the auspice of United Nations, World Meteorological Organization and the City

of Milan, funded by SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, with the main partnership of Gail (India) Limited, ITC – Ethical Fashion Initiative.

The project was produced with the support of ICA – Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual, Fundación Botín, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, the development support of Yaddo, Atelier – Museu Júlio Pomar, Fundação Oriente, Brown Foundation Fellows Program at the Dora Maar House, the additional support of Grupo Nova Imagem, Bikini, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa – Lisbon Film Commission, Screen Miguel Nabinho, Forum Dança, Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência, cE3c – Center for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, Alexandra Moura, CCB – Centro Cultural de Belém, Silva Dias – Sociedade de Comércio de Lenhas e Carvão, EDM – Empresa de Desenvolvimento Mineiro, RNTRANS – Grupo Urbanos, António e Luciano Neto Décor – Artes Décor e Cenografia, INTERSECCIÓN – Contemporary Audiovisual Art Festival, Estraperlo Editora, Fundación Luís Seoane and Deputación da Coruña



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020) B Roll

Concept and direction: Salomé Lamas

Text development and research: Isabel Ramos, Salomé Lamas

Translation: Ellis Dixon

Performers: Henrique Furtado, Luis Guerra, Matthieu Ehlacher, João Villas Boas, Cláudio Vieira, Bruno Brandolino, Filipe Pereira, Paulo Quedas

Audio: Text to speech digital voice generator

With the additional participation: Kamayurá – Xingu, Brazil; Dayak – Kalimantan Central, Indonesia; Sónia Balacó, Marianne Cassagnet, Alice Santos

Art direction: Salomé Lamas

Consultants: Fernando Brízio, Vera Mantero, Alexandra Moura, Judite Alves – cE3c – Center for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, Catarina Teixeira da Silva, Pedro Andrade – Conservation of Scientific Collections –

Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência

Scenographic sculpture: Mircea Anghel – Cabana Studio

Cabana Studio additional support: António Motta, José Valente, Thybaut Dewart, Serigne Massyle

Additional contribution to build up: Kristoffeer Fernando Raposo

Art direction contributor: Nádía Henriques

Art direction contributor assistant: Maria Ribeiro, Julio Alves

Makeup artist: Mafalda Belo

3D model operator: Diogo Dias João

Laser printer: Vasco Cosme – Fábrica Moderna

Coal provider: Jorge Silva Dias

Cinematography: Rui Xavier

Camera assistant and focus puller: Afonso Marmelo

Lightning operator: Sérgio Moreira

Photographer: António Júlio Duarte

Grip: José Loureiro

Grip assistants: Carlos Santos, Luciano Manso

Additional grip assistant: Francisco Pereira

Gaffer: João Aguiar

Gaffer assistant: Fernando Gomes

Additional gaffer assistants: Ricardo Santos, Gonçalo Aguiar

Transport and handling of museology works: Fernando Cirilo – RNTRANS Grupo Urbanos

Additional cinematography, thermal images, Pejão: Salomé Lamas, Raquel da Silva

Archive footage: Théodore Géricault – The Raft of the Medusa, NASA – International Space Station / ESA

Sound design and mix: Miguel Martins

Sound recording, Brazil / Indonesia: Salomé Lamas

Sound recording, Portugal: Miguel Martins, João Gazua

Editing: Francisco Moreira

Color correction: Paulo Inês – Lightfilm

Postproduction: Maria Adriana Ventura

Graphics: Diogo Dias João

Credits: Sofia Bairrão

Production direction coordinator: Raquel da Silva

Production assistant: Iris Cayatte

Production, Brazil/Indonesia: Salomé Lamas
Assistant production, Indonesia: Lamtiar Simorangkir
Intern: Carolina Caramujo
Insurance: Vitoria, Lusitania
Accountant: Barbara Ramos

Image equipment: Show Reel – Grupo Nova Imagem
Grupo Nova Imagem coordinator: Tânia Vaz Nunes, Rosário Belmar
Additional sound and image equipment: Ricochete, Screen Miguel Nabinho, Grupo Acre, Miguel Martins, CCB – Centro Cultural de Belém

Shooting studio: Show Reel – Grupo Nova Imagem
Studio coordinator Show Reel: Vera Mauricio
Sound studio: Walla Collective
Editing studio: Lamaland, Francisco Moreira
Digital laboratories: Bikini, Lightfilm – Grupo Nova Imagem,
Digital laboratory Bikini: Eugénio Marques
Digital laboratory coordinator Lightfilm: João Pinheiro

Photography studio: Black Box Studio
Exhibition consultant: Fernando Brízio
Technical consultant: João Chaves – Baclava Noir
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ART FOR THE WORLD
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Our planet today

We know that human activities have a direct impact on the resources of our planet, as well as on animals and nature with whom we share the Earth. It is indeed clearly evidenced that human influences are the primary causes of global warming, especially the carbon pollution we cause by burning fossil fuels and the pollution-capturing we prevent by destroying forests.

Evidence shows that the last decade was hotter than any other in at least the past 1300 years.

This warming is altering the earth's climate system, including its land,

atmosphere, oceans, and ice, in far-reaching ways. Higher temperatures are worsening many types of disasters, including storms, heat waves, floods, droughts and pollution.

With climate change set to force millions of people from their homes due to more frequent extreme weather events and rising sea levels, by 2100, our oceans are estimated to be one to four feet higher, threatening coastal systems and low-lying areas, including entire island nations and the world's largest cities.

As land and sea undergo rapid changes, the animals that inhabit them are doomed to disappear if they don't adapt quickly enough. Some will make it, and many won't, leading to higher wildlife extinction rates.

Droughts, wildfires, storms, floods, pollution among others, propel us to critically observe and reflect on the relationship between the four elements, between our species, all other forms of life and the environment that hosts us.

These phenomena not only threaten the very basis of our existence on the planet but also are increasing the cause and motivation for progressively polarized social structures that threaten the stability of our political and economic systems.

Project Notes

Bibliography: The data found on these project notes was freely collected from the internet. The Work Methodology was written in dialogue with Sara Magno.

Work Methodology

1. a conversation sharing matters of concern, not matters of fact
2. reflexive and multivocal
3. comparatist rhizomatic approach not bound to the disciplinary drive to claim or master the images or formations studied
4. a performative act
5. indirect language
6. not a conclusion

7. not a technique or a statement to be made verbally: rather an attitude to life, a way of positioning oneself in relation to the world
8. critical affect
9. an allowance of space for the void: a void is not only the opposite of something full, not only an absence of a presence or a lack of a center. It does not necessarily need to be negative. The void is a necessary place, a vital open space in terms of creativity
10. partially illogical, elliptical and metaphorical

Earth, Air, Fire, Water

Classical Elements¹

Earth that carries us and whose fruits feed us; Water that quenches our thirst and renders the earth fertile; Air that gives us breath to be able to live; Fire that warms us and through which the sun brings life to our planet. Each of these elements, in all their might, cannot exist without each other.

North-South Interdependence

Interdependence²

¹Classical Elements

Classical elements typically refer to the concepts in ancient Greece of earth, water, air, fire, and (later) aether, which were proposed to explain the nature and complexity of all matter in terms of simpler, fundamental substances.

Ancient cultures in Persia, Greece, Babylonia, Japan, Tibet, and India had similar lists, sometimes referring in local languages to "air" as "wind" and to the fifth element (aether) as "void".

The Chinese Wu Xing system lists Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water, though these are described more as energies or transitional forces rather than as types of material.

These different cultures, and even individual philosophers, had widely varying explanations concerning the attributes of these elements and how they related to observable phenomena as well as cosmology. Sometimes these theories overlapped with mythology and were personified through deities. Some of these interpretations included atomism, but other interpretations considered the elements to be divisible into infinitely small pieces without changing their nature.

² Interdependence

Global Interdependence: Mutual dependence at a global level. One country depends on another country for something, and that country may depend on another country, which eventually creates global interdependence. The import and export of goods and services highly contributes to global interdependence. Certain commodities such as oil have created a global interdependence between the countries that produce the precious commodity and those that covet it.

Reciprocal Interdependence: A cyclical situation where the output of one organizational division is regularly used as the input of another organizational division.

Global economic activity exerts relentless pressure on the planet's ecological systems and threatens the health and well-being of present and future generations. Despite the proliferation of legal instruments to combat environmental degradation, the global economy continues to exploit natural resources at unsustainable rates while intensifying inequality within and among nations.

The leading cause of global environmental degradation is the profligate consumption of the planet's resources by its wealthiest inhabitants, most of who reside in the Global North or in the mega-cities of the Global South.

North-South environmental conflicts are inextricably intertwined with colonialism and with postcolonial trade, aid, finance, and investment policies that have impoverished Southern nations and enabled the North to exploit the South's resources without internalizing the associated social and environmental costs.

From the acceleration of colonialism in the 15th century to the present, the North's appropriation of the South's natural resources in order to fuel its economic expansion has generated harmful economic and environmental consequences, trapping Southern nations in vicious cycles of poverty and environmental degradation and producing global environmental problems (such as climate change and biodiversity loss) that will constrain the development options of generations to come.

Sequential Interdependence: The dependence of subunits or subdivisions of information, materials, products, or resources generated by those preceding them in a process.

Economic Interdependence: A characteristic of a society or macro-economy with a high degree of division of labor, where people depend on other people to produce most of the goods and services required to sustain life and living.

Ecological Interdependence: A self-sustaining community comprised of interdependent organisms (plants, insects, animals) and their natural environment. It provides the food chain through which energy flows, and the biological cycles that recycle essential nutrients and waste.

Social Interdependence: Human interactions that follow from degrees, symmetries, bases, and other kinds of dependence. Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each individual's outcomes are affected by the actions of the others. There are two types of social interdependence: cooperative and competitive. Distributive justice applied elementary principles of operant behaviorism to social interdependence, holding that individuals expect rewards proportionate to costs.



Global scale of climate change consequences, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*



Observed impacts attributed to climate change, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*



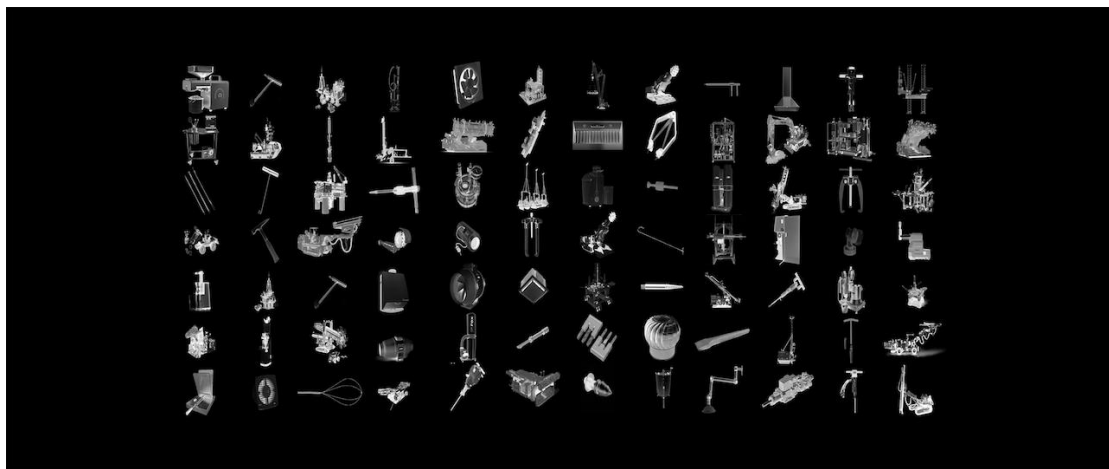
Countries that have ratified or signed the Paris Agreement as of June 1, 2017, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*

Extraction

The broad adoption of the term anthropocene is a key shift in our willingness to acknowledge the impact the human has had on the planet. Yet we use the term too generally, addressing “humanity” as a whole without understanding histories of racial thought and settler colonialism that are imposed upon categorizations of biodiversity, spaces where the biotechnologies of capitalism

accelerate.

Decolonial theorizations allow us to identify how new/old forms of colonialism – such as extractive capitalism, the reorganization of territories, digital surveillance, modernity as a universalized mode of governance, criminalization of Indigenous peoples as a weapon of neoliberal expansion, and the extraction of Native and Afro-descendent knowledge – all depend on prior civilizational projects, in which the Global South has long been constructed as a region of plunder, discovery, raw resources, taming, classification, and racist adventure; continually perpetuating the dramatic social and economic inequalities that delimit sovereignty and local and national autonomy.



Appliances for domestic and industrial extraction, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)

The Raft of the Medusa: migrations and refugees

The story behind *Le Radeau de La Méduse*³

³ The story behind *Le Radeau de La Méduse*

In June of 1816, the frigate *Méduse* set sail with three other ships, setting their course for the Senegalese port of Saint-Louis, which had been given to the French by the British as a sign of good faith to the reinstated king, Louis XVIII. *Méduse* held nearly four hundred people, as well as the new governor of Senegal. The role of the captain was given to Hugues Duroy de Chaumereys, a 53 year old man who had not been on a ship for twenty five years and had never commanded a frigate before in his life. Since the captain was inexperienced, all the *Méduse*'s crew was interested in was traveling as fast as possible and they stuck close to the African shoreline in order to do so. The frigate quickly outpaced the other ships, but it was simply sailing too close to shore and inevitably hit a sandbar.

The crew decided to throw extra weight overboard in the hope of raising the ship out of the muck in order for it to float out with the tide. However, scared and inexperienced, the captain Hugues Duroy de Chaumereys forbid them from getting rid of the valuable cannons as he did not want to anger his constituents back in France. Eventually, the ship hit the bottom of the ocean. The wealthy were given access and ample space on the lifeboats while the remaining 149 people were forced onto a makeshift raft that was tied by a rope to one of the lifeboats. At some point, the raft was either intentionally or accidentally cut loose. What followed was a two week nightmare of stormy seas, brutal killings, insanity and cannibalism. Out of all the crewmembers that were placed on the raft, just fifteen men survived the ordeal and four of

In 1819 *Le Radeau de La Méduse* by Théodore Géricault outraged the world with its depiction of migrants abandoned at sea following the sinking of a colonial Western ship off the coast of Africa, and through the social critique it dared to reflect through an image of a contemporary disaster.

The painting portrays a brief moment of euphoria, as the occupants on the raft, hoping and praying for their rescue, appear to glimpse a possibility of salvation on the horizon. Géricault makes us feel the loss of each of the dead and the pain of each of the living, whilst also surpassing these emotive affects through an image further loaded with intentional allegoric power and purpose.

Le Radeau de La Méduse is an act of empathy and pity for our fellow human beings, and a critical denouncement of social and political inequities in the organization of the world.

But where is such empathy today? Today, most of us ignore those dying to cross borders, the genocidal tragedy of our time.



Most cross-border migrants stay within their region, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*

Allegory and Symbol

Treated as an emblem, for ethical-political reasons, the narrative and composition is modified to match our desires to create, explore and compose allegorical images.

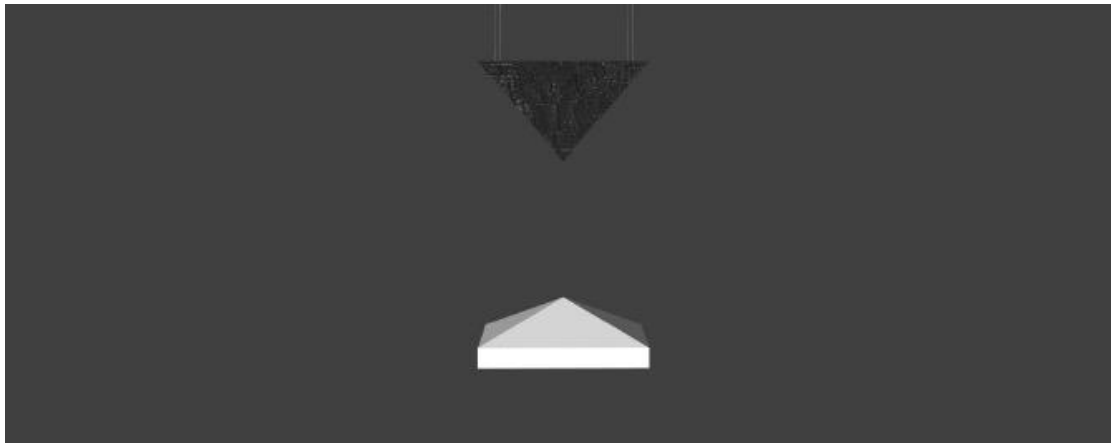
Allegory keeps us from hearing the harmonics, consonances and dissonances generated by the veil cast upon all things (their own undecipherable skin), the veil that makes distant what is close, that invites imaginative drift and affinity, the veil of the symbol.

them died shortly after their eventual rescue. This tragedy became a major news event and scandal of its day, an international embarrassment whose cause was widely attributed to the incompetence of the captain.

Allegory feeds on meanings and symbols that are endlessly being sequenced and replaced, erasing, little by little, every small difference and leading to a void. It is due to the void that possibilities keep on renewing, hence nothing can be simply classified, seized or reified.



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)



Scenographic sculpture 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)

Dialectical Image. Time and Figure: homogeneity and emptiness versus discontinuity and fullness

Triangle / Hourglass / Crystal-Images / Pyramids

The systemic asymmetrical interdependence of the Northern and Southern hemispheres is translated into a tridimensional⁴ scenographic sculpture

⁴ Triangle

composed of two pyramids, one above the other – resembling an hourglass – in which the Northern hemisphere is depicted as an upright pyramid (bottom), and the raft and the Southern hemisphere is depicted as an inverted pyramid (top).

The hourglass structure stresses the factor of time – *tempus fugit* – urging for action on climate change and other global environmental problems.⁵

The two pyramids don't just convene as an hourglass, but also imply many other assets – a wide universe of references, symbolisms, mysticisms, diagrams of visualization – as well as a link to Gericault's painting. Emphasized by the materials used in its construction, the sculpture generates a crystal-image.⁶

The geometric image of the ternary, also equivalent to the number three in the symbolism of numbers. In its highest sense it concerns the Trinity. In its normal position, with its apex uppermost, it also symbolizes fire and the aspiration of all things towards the higher unity—the urge to escape from extension (signified by the base) into non-extension (the apex) or towards the Origin or the Irradiating Point. Nicholas of Cusa said of the triangle that, truncated (without its apex) it served the alchemists as a symbol for air; inverted (with apex pointing downwards) it symbolized water; and inverted but with the tip cut off, it symbolized earth. Two complete triangles, one in the normal position and one inverted — representing, respectively, fire and water — superimposed so as to form a six-pointed star (called Solomon's Seal) constitute a symbol of the human soul. A triangle surmounted by horns was the Carthaginian symbol for Tanit (or Tanith).

⁵Hourglass

The hourglass was one of the earliest timekeeping devices. As such, its connection to time-related symbolism is undeniable.

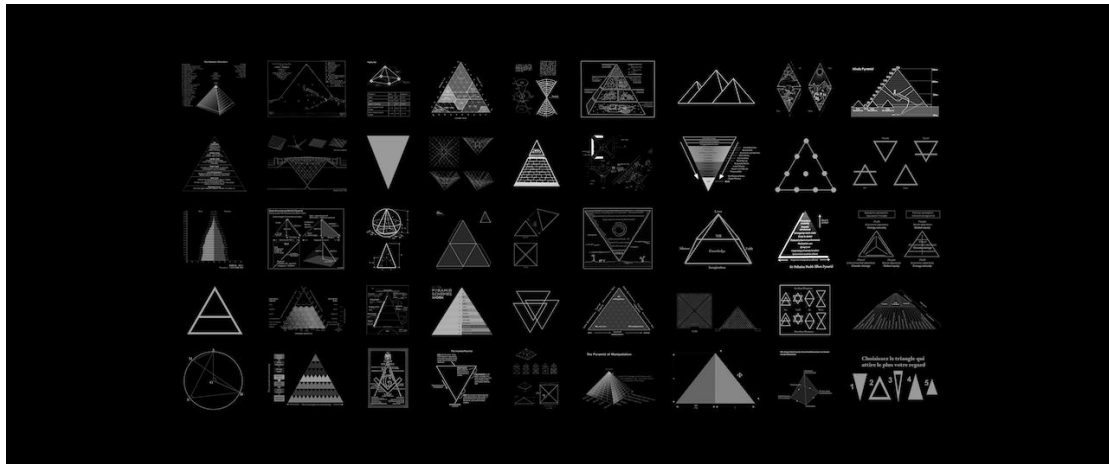
Ancient alchemists recognized the concept of balance in the hourglass. Its very shape is made up of triangles in equilibrium. Alchemists interpreted these triangles as representing two aspects of nature: the upper being the sky and the lower equating with earth.

Energy passes between the two sides of the hourglass just as the energies of our world are contained by its atmosphere and crust. All of the natural processes and cycles occur there (not including what happens in outer space, of course), which gives us a greater sense of relation with our environment. This also forces us to realize our own role within the natural cycles happening around us.

Another common theme associated with the symbolism of the hourglass is the idea of inevitability. All of the events in nature run in cycles and, although we do have a say in them in our lives, there are some cycles that just cannot be stopped.

⁶Crystal-Images

Crystal-images, formed by the collision of the actual and virtual, allow us to see time. According to Gilles Deleuze, the limpid, actual image and the opaque, virtual, become accessible in the crystalline form. What constitutes the purest crystal image is when the “actual optical image crystallizes with *its own* virtual image”. This image that consists of the smallest internal circuit, where the actual image finds its own “genetic” element, forms a pure crystal. The image becomes irreducible to the actual and virtual, the present and contemporaneous past. The image cannot be broken down into its constituent parts because these parts become indiscernible from each other. Deleuze even suggests that in the light of



Universe of references, symbolisms, mysticisms and diagrams of visualization provided by pyramids and triangles: *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*



Le Radeau de La Méduse (1818) by Théodore Géricault. Diagram showing the outline of the two pyramidal structures that form the basis and composition of the work. *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*

The two separate components, in interlocking pyramids, of Géricault's pictorial composition refer to two possibilities – which the doomed men of the raft have to look forward to – rescue or death.

The dimensions of the pyramids⁷ in the scenographic sculpture pay a tribute

the actual, the virtual becomes the actual and the actual, virtual, in the crystal. There is a fluidity in the crystal that means its parts cannot be demarcated. The crystal-image is the present and past, co-existing.

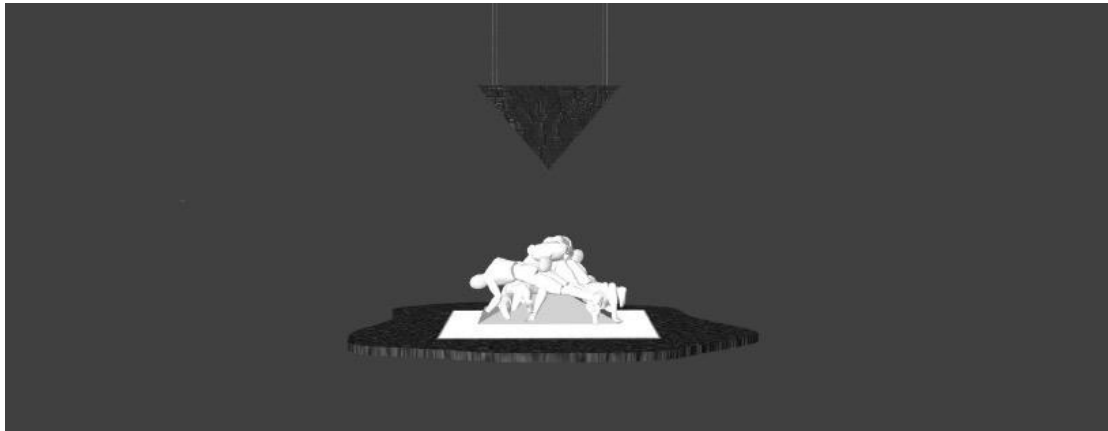
⁷ Pyramids

Pyramids are believed to be extremely sacred in many cultures around the world. Many churches are built with pyramid-like steeples and ancient pyramid structures can be found not just in Egypt, but also in South America and parts of Asia.

The Native Americans also sat in tipis, which have a pyramid-like shape to them, to conduct rituals and ceremonies. It was believed that this shape helped to connect them with the earth and the heavens above.

In fact, what makes a pyramid so powerful is its ability to channel or collect energy from the higher realms of the stars, the planets and the universe, and deliver it down to Earth.

to the painting. The calculations made to generate the sculpture, along with the number of occupants in the raft, were engraved together with other project information on the sculpture's bottom pyramid.



Scenographic sculpture 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)

Scenographic Sculpture: calculations, scale and narrative

Narrative of a Voyage to Senegal in 1816 by J.B. Henry Savigny and Alexander Corréard⁸

The limits of the frame were fixed, in articulation with technical equipment and location, with the concern of creating a balanced composition and area to be occupied by the human scale.

The 20 meter long by 7 meter wide replica of the raft, produced for the Bicentenary of the Medusa 1816-2016 by the Musée National de la Marine in Rochefort, was used for reference.

The pyramid always symbolizes a greater consciousness of strength and energy.

At the spiritual level the pyramid is a symbol for the integration of self and soul. In dreams the pyramid can stand for death, but it also contains rebirth. The base of the pyramid stands for the body, the sides demarcate spiritual attempts, the point symbolizes the harmonious union of the human with the "higher self." (God).

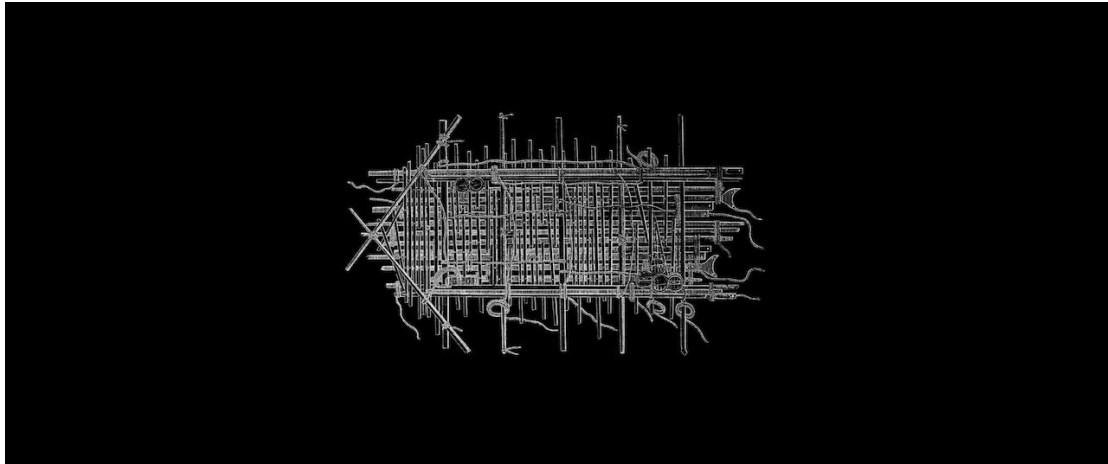
The shape of the pyramid carefully reflects these underlying aspects of the divine unity. The pyramid has four faces – three faces to the heavens, and one face to the earth. The pyramid is composed of four equilateral triangles, which together manifest the cosmic nature of God: three in one, and one in three.

The three sides refer to the tri-natured aspect of God: God the creator, God the preserver and God the transformer. This tri-natured aspect of God can also be seen in the analogy of a seeker's journey.

Pyramids were chosen to represent an outer symbolism for man's inner quest.

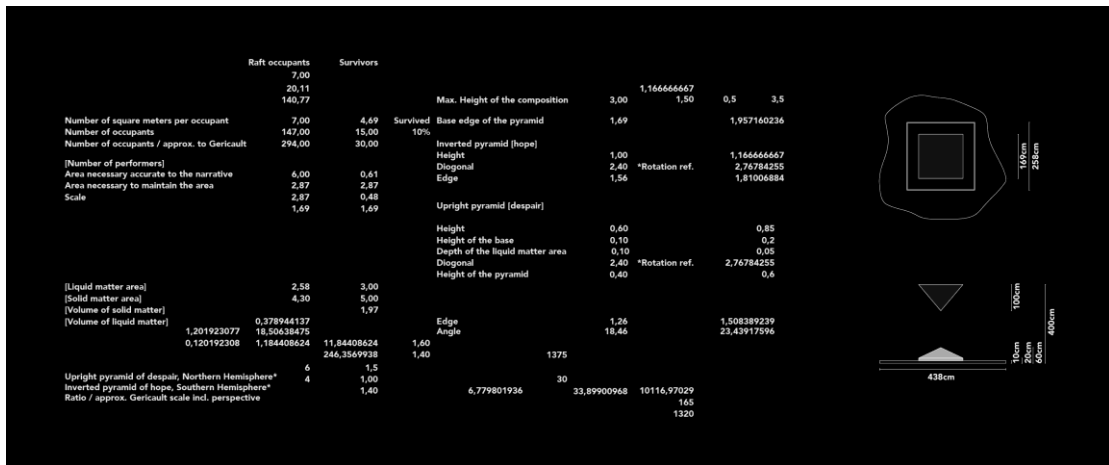
⁸ *Narrative of a Voyage to Senegal in 1816* by J.B. Henry Savigny and Alexander Corréard:

"There are about 150 of us on a raft. As soon as the last boat left, there was no doubt we were abandoned; yet we were not fully convinced of it 'til the boats had disappeared. We were sacrificed. We cry that this desertion had been premeditated. (...) On the 13th morning, Argus finds us. It is by chance. The French Navy wasn't searching for the raft. There were fifteen of us left. Four died during the following days. Now, there are eleven."



Replica of the raft produced for the Bicentenary of the Medusa 1816-2016 by the Musée National de la Marine in Rochefort

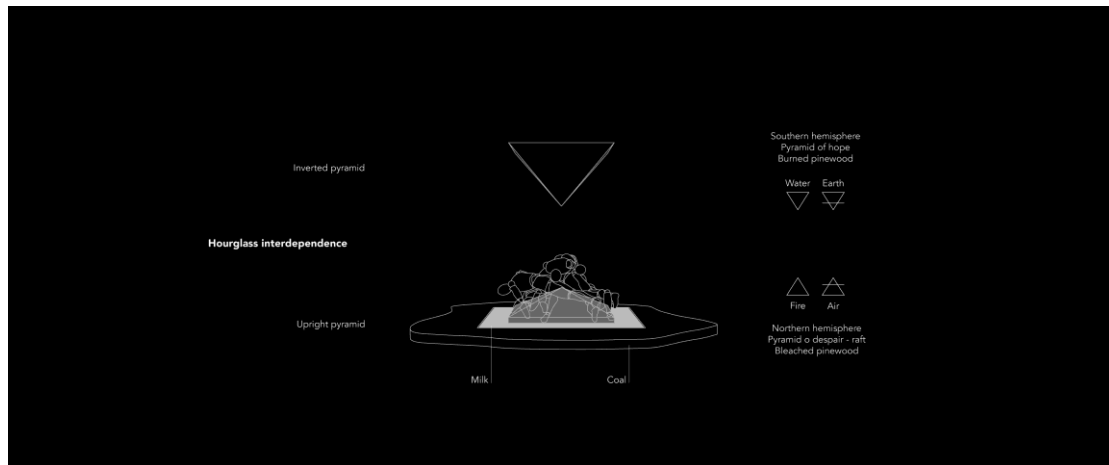
An equation was produced to determine the number of occupants of the raft in relation to its scale, taking into account the progressively decreasing number of occupants over time. This equation was then conformed to the scale of Géricault’s painting, where the survivors are depicted over life-sized, to provide the dimensions for the bottom pyramid – the raft – in the scenographic sculpture. The result of this equation also indicated the number of performers necessary to activate the work’s choreography.



Scenographic sculpture plans and sections simulation combined with the table illustrating the calculations engraved in the bottom pyramid – raft, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*

Construction Materials

Wood / Coal / Milk



Scenographic sculpture symbolism, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)

The materials used for the construction of the scenographic sculpture reinforce the binary interdependence established between the two hemispheres, with a clear reference to both the four elements and racially encoded extractive capitalism.

The Southern hemisphere is depicted (above) as an inverted pyramid / pyramid of hope, in black burned pinewood.

The Northern hemisphere is depicted (below) as an upright pyramid / pyramid of despair – raft – in white bleached pinewood.⁹

The raft is standing on solid matter – such as coal. Coal is the single biggest contributor to anthropogenic climate change.¹⁰

⁹ Wood

Deforestation, clearance, clear-cutting or clearing is the removal of a forest or stand of trees from land, which is then converted to a non-forest use. Deforestation can involve conversion of forestland to farms, ranches, or urban use. The most concentrated deforestation occurs in tropical rainforests.

Deforestation can occur for several reasons: trees can be cut down to be used for building or sold as fuel (sometimes in the form of charcoal or timber), while cleared land can be used as pasture for livestock and plantation. The removal of trees without sufficient reforestation has resulted in habitat damage, biodiversity loss, and aridity. It has adverse impacts on biosequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Deforestation has also been used in war to deprive the enemy of vital resources and cover for its forces.

¹⁰ Coal

The burning of coal is responsible for 46% of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide and accounts for 72% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the electricity sector. If plans to build up to 1200 new coal fired power stations around the world are realized, the

The raft is surrounded by a metal frame containing liquid matter – such as milk.¹¹



Deforestation fronts and projected deforestation 2010-2030, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*



World's biggest crude oil reserves by country (in billions of barrels, Gbbl), *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*

GHG emissions from these plants would put us on a path towards catastrophic climate change, causing global temperatures to rise by over five degrees Celsius by 2100. This will have dire impacts for all life on Earth.

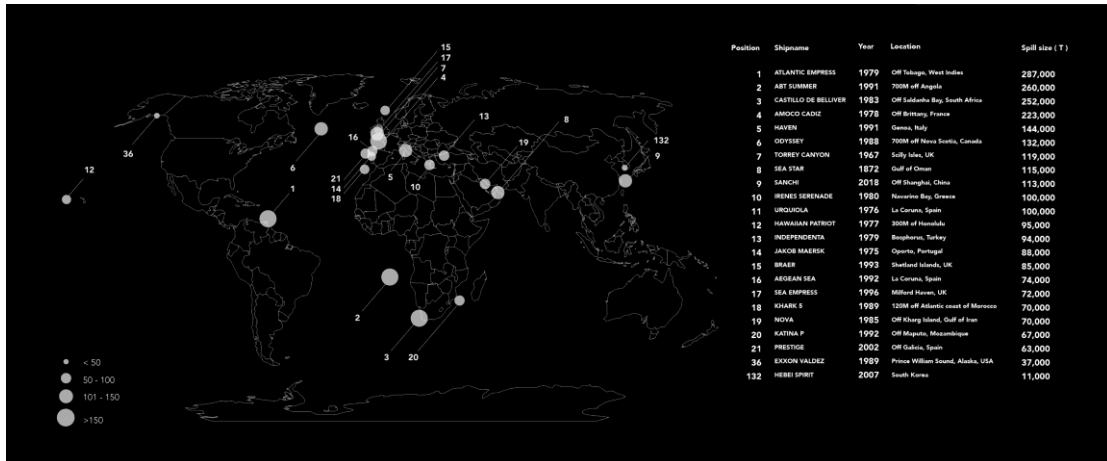
Coal was the fastest-growing primary energy source in the world in the past decade: between 2001 and 2010, world consumption of coal increased by 45%. During the same time period, total anthropogenic GHG emissions were the highest in human history.

¹¹ Milk

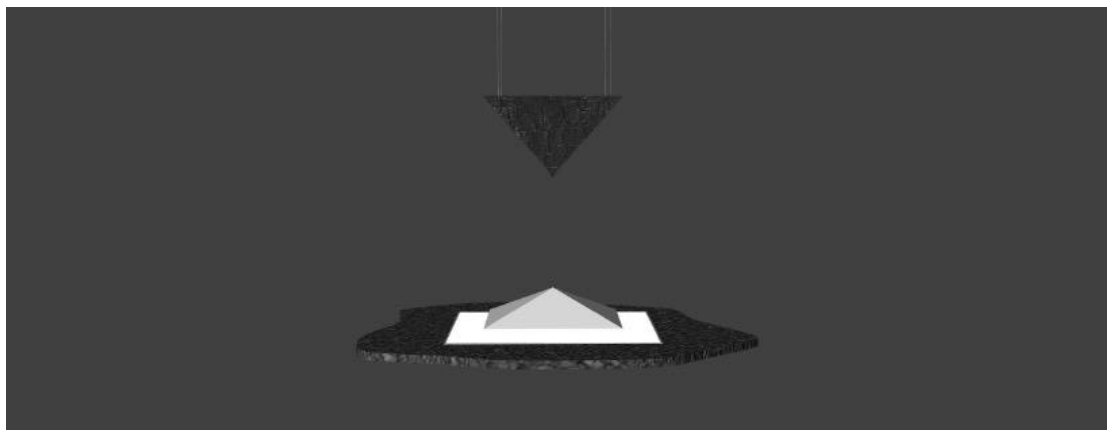
Milk is a powerful symbol within most cultural traditions. It is the fluid of eternal life, fertility, abundance; it is the food of the gods, the first human diet, it flows freely in the "promised land of Canaan". Milk symbolizes the Mother; it is deeply connected with life itself.

All liquid substances (that is to say milk, honey and wine) that were offered up in antiquity to the dead, to spirits and to gods, were images of blood, the most precious offering of all.

These attributes denote the continuity of life, the power of invigorating liquids such as water, milk, blood and soma (related to the draught which Isolde gives Tristan to drink), and the hardships of existence.



Top 20 major spills that have occurred since the Torrey Canyon shipwreck in 1967, *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*



Scenographic sculpture 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)*

Performers and Choreography

The raft is a minimal funerary sculpture.

According to the calculations the number of performers on the raft was identified to be six.

The raft is in the center of the frame with the performers on top of it.

There were no female occupants of the raft depicted in Gericault's painting.

The performers are professional contemporary dancers.

The action is dramatic and the choreography is an endurance exercise in exploration of the surfaces of the raft and its pyramidal shape.

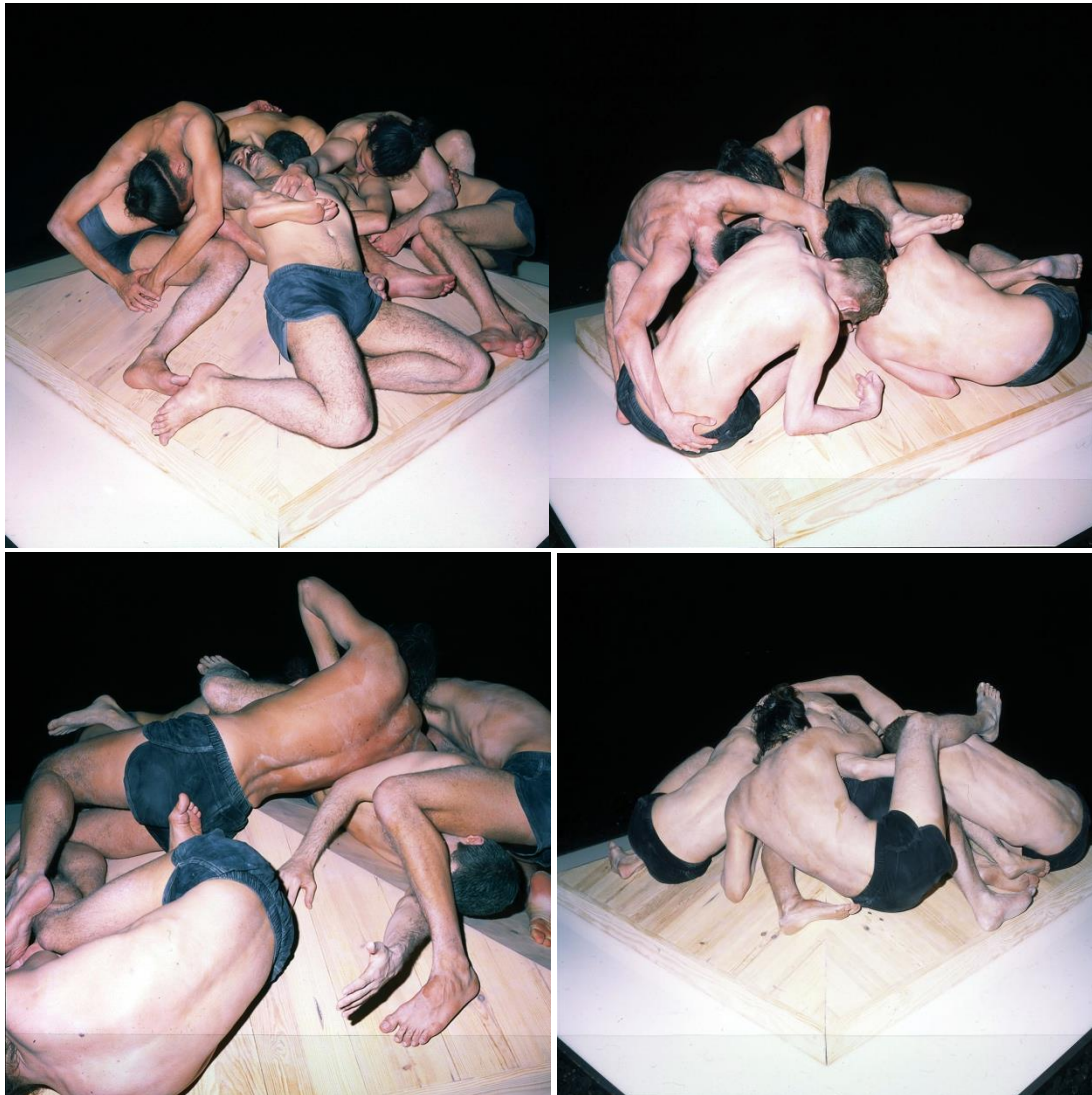
The androgynous, athletic and colorless bodies are identified as a singular mass.

The bodies move in paradoxical progressions of tension and fluidity. Their faces over-act gloomy and grotesque emotions.

Migrant's bodies reflect the contemporary social crisis as they stand for a

flight from either conflict regions troubled by resource extraction, natural catastrophes, or livelihood systems compromised by climate change impacts.

Rigorous choreography and a symbolically composed mise-en-scène ask questions about the nature of survival, barbarism, and the miracle of human resilience in the face of the awesome and unforgiving power of nature, as well as inner-struggles for meaning and purpose.



Images of the studio shoot by photographer António Júlio Duarte
Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019)



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)

Other Elements

A black vulture – a species in risk, loaned from a museum's collection.
Sci-fi elements (smoke / fog) and silver figures – referring to our efforts in space conquest and evasion.

Material gathered in the coalmines of Pejão in the North of Portugal in April 2019.

Material and research from NASA, sourced from the internet, displaying information on galaxies, planet Earth, and the impacts of climate change.

Material gathered in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, with the Dayak Tribe in 2016.

Material gathered in the Xingu region, Amazonia, Brazil, with the Kamayurá Tribe in 2018.



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)

Lighting

The color palette is strong and somber and there is a sharp contrast of chiaroscuro, presenting an atmosphere of neoclassical austerity. The environment is sacred and solemn, combined with a contemporary lexicon of references.

Camera

Circle¹²

The performance is captured in one single shot; the camera movement describes a continuous perfect circle (360), with a symbolic charge.

The camera is in sync with the alternating rhythm of the choreography. The

¹² Circle

At times the circle is synonymous with the circumference, just as the circumference is often equated with circular movement. But although its general meaning embraces both aspects, there are some further details that it is important to emphasize.

The circle or disk is, very frequently, an emblem of the sun (and indisputably so when it is surrounded by rays). It also bears a certain relationship to the number ten (symbolizing the return to unity from multiplicity), when it comes to stand for heaven or perfection and sometimes also eternity. There are profound psychological implications in this particular concept of perfection. As Jung observes, the square, representing the lowest of the composite and factorial numbers, symbolizes the pluralist state of man who has not achieved inner unity (perfection) whilst the circle would correspond to this ultimate state of Oneness.

Representations of the relationship between the circle and the square are very common in the universal and spiritual world of morphology, notably in the mandalas of India and Tibet and in Chinese emblems.

Indeed in China, according to Louis Chochod, activity, or the masculine principle (Yang), is represented by a white circle (depicting heaven), whereas passivity, the feminine principle (Yin), is denoted by a black square (portraying earth). The white circle stands for energy and celestial influences and the black square for telluric forces. We must also point to the relationship between the circle and the sphere, which is a symbol of the All.

The ouroboros is a circular symbol representing a snake or dragon feeding on its own tail, or two such creatures feeding on each other's tails.

speed alternates between real time and slow motion.

Ten Texts to the Same Image

Text

Ten texts were written in response to the same image, Gericault's *Le Radeau de La Méduse* (1818). An eleventh text¹³ was produced from the synthesis of

¹³ **TEXT 11** The Raft of the Medusa (synthesis)

VOICE 1 (robotic): Consume. Use. Throw out. Waste. Impoverish. Drain out. Wear out. Steal. Amputate. Sell out. Deplete. Loot. Devastate. Plunder. Dump. Prey upon. Dominate. Rip out. Remove. Extinguish. Pollute. Contaminate. Desecrate. Mutilate. Watch. Destroy. (*pause*)

VOICE 2 (human): The only right is the right to profit. The castaways. The sacred men. The life that is simple, biological life. (*pause*) We're all on the raft. Water covers our bodies up to our knees.

VOICE 1: Water. Air. Fire. Earth. (*pause*) Man.

VOICE 2: Man has become a geological force. Man makes the earth tremble with fear. (*pause*) But it is on earth that he rests his feet and builds his house. Man pollutes the air. (*pause*) But it's the air he breathes. Man contaminates the water. (*pause*) But it's the water he drinks. Man creates the conditions for the bonfire to spread. (*pause*) But, in a gust of wind, the flames turn against him.

VOICE 1: Self-blindness. Direct will of ignorance. To know that you do not know.

VOICE 2: Know that you do not know that the last decade was the hottest on record. Know that you do not know polar caps are melting. Know that you do not know the level of the sea-water is rising. Hundreds of millions of climate refugees. (*pause*)

The production of docile bodies of exploitation has no end. The body of the Other is not a body. It's a thing. His spirit is not a spirit. It's merchandise. The Other is a brother of Nature, the first thing to be given to total exploitation – until nothing exists besides human construction. (*pause*) The Other is nothing more than myself. Which is the place on the raft for the Other that I am?

VOICE 1: Racism without race. Extractivism. Appropriation. Colonial power. Coloniality of power. Race equals to ideology and technology. Being developed equals to being urban and industrialized. Being developed equals to being far from Nature. Robotic eyes. Satellites. Remote identification of natural resources. Attack. Predation. Withdrawal. The solitude of the predator. Prosthetic environment. The era of solitude.

VOICE 2: I'm dead here but I live elsewhere. I'm alive here but I've died somewhere else. (*pause*) The river is my home. The river is my name. The river is me. You will not interrupt its current. The land is me. You will not install drilling rigs in my flesh. (*pause*) But... wait... something goes its course. We connect. We mount ourselves. We dismount ourselves. We re-mount ourselves. We are humus.

VOICE 1: Global warming. Anthropogenic factors. Burning of fossil fuel. Industrialization. Deforestation. Part of a known story. The history of Western capitalism. Imperial domination of the rest of the world by Western countries. Solving the universal problem, survival of the human species, equals to solving the impasse of capitalist modes of production.

VOICE 2: Castaways die before they die. They are drowned by profit margins. Strangled by the invisible hand of the market. The right to profit and to the dividend is a fundamental and non-derogable right of shareholders! (*pause*) The water covers our body to the waist. Time is running out. (*pause*) But technology will save us. Science and technology represent the

these ten texts.

TEXT 1: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: J.B. Henry Savigny and Alexander Corréard

TEXT 2: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: Frantz Fanon, Aimeé Césaire, Achille Mbembe, Macarena Gómez-Barris, Deleuze and Guattari, Manabe and Wetherald, Dipesh Chakrabarty.

TEXT 3: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: Slavoj Žižek, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ray Kurzweil, Deleuze and Guattari, Catherine Malabou, Michel Foucault.

TEXT 4: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: Giorgio Agamben, Franz Kafka, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Oswald de Andrade

TEXT 5: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Hannah Arendt, Plato, Aristotle, Carl Schmidt

TEXT 6: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: Peter Frase

TEXT 7: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: Reg Morrison, James Lovelock, Karl Kraus, Emile Cioran, John Grey

TEXT 8: The Raft of the Medusa

In dialogue with: BBC Science

TEXT 9: The Raft of the Medusa

miracle, the mystery, the authority. The scientist and the doctor move in an area previously reserved for the sovereign. Sovereign is the one who decides the state of exception. Our technology in heaven, hallowed be your name, thy kingdom come to us ... *(pause)* 'To us', who?

After a debate, we decided to throw the sick into the sea. This measure increases the life expectancy of those who are still healthy. *(pause)* The water reaches our neck. But Argus will come. And save us.

VOICE 1: I'm sorry, I'm afraid I can't do that. There is only room for those who can afford the ticket and all the tickets were pre-purchased. The departure of planet Earth will take place in three, two, one, take off!

(sound of the rough sea)

In dialogue with: Donna Haraway

TEXT 10: The Raft of the Medusa

Sound Design

The sound design is developed in two layers:

A voiceover, composed of extracts from the ten texts written to the same image, speaks of the anthropocene and its connection with extractive-colonial capitalism, ecocides, environmental impacts and the crisis of future life on the planet.

A patchwork of testimonies in multiple languages, interwoven with music, soundscapes and archival audio sourced from different regions of the world.

- a) The sound design is composed through a cumulative addition of movements.
- b) The sound design has no understandable words, except for the excerpts extracted from the ten texts written to the same image (the voiceover), transcribed for and spoken by a text to speech digital voice generator.
- b) There are interdependencies and references between the texts and the sound design.
- d) There are particular style indications for some texts in the sound design.
- f) The sound design explores a wide palette of sonic landscapes.

Exhibition Design

Pentagon¹⁴ / Center¹⁵

The exhibition design explores the dynamics between the pentagon, the circumference and the center.

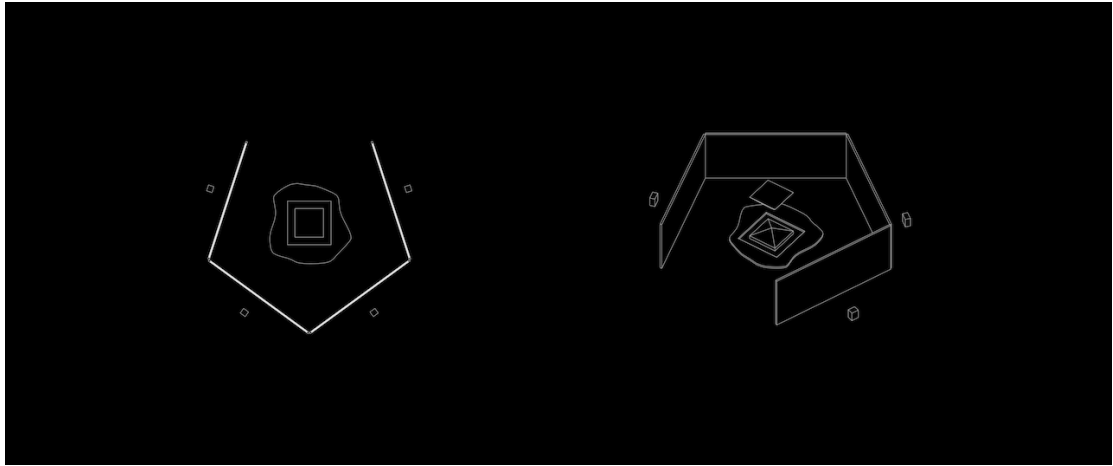
¹⁴ Pentagon

Traditionally, the number five symbolizes man after the fall, but, once applied to this order of earthly things, it signifies health and love.

Geometrically, this takes the form of the pentagram, or the five-pointed star. It corresponds to pentagonal symmetry, a common characteristic of organic nature; to the golden section (as noted by the Pythagoreans); and to the five senses representing the five 'forms' of matter.

¹⁵ Centre

To leave the circumference for the center is equivalent to moving from the exterior to the interior, from form to contemplation, from multiplicity to unity, from space to spacelessness, from time to timelessness. In all symbols expressive of the mystic Centre, the intention is to reveal to Man the meaning of the primordial "paradise state" and to teach him to identify himself with the supreme principle of the universe. This center is in effect Aristotle's "unmoved mover" and Dante's "L'Amore che muove il sole a l'altre stele".



Exhibition design *Extraction, The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)

EXTRACTION: THE RAFT OF THE MEDUSA

a film by
Salomé lamas

Concept and direction Salomé Lamas. Text development and research Isabel Ramos, Salomé Lamas. Performers Henrique Furtado, Luis Guerra, Matthieu Ehrlicher, João Villas Boas, Cláudio Vieira, Bruno Brandolino, Filipe Pereira, Paulo Quedas. Audio Text to speech digital voice generator Art direction Salomé Lamas. Scenographic sculpture Mircea Anghel. Cinematography Rui Xavier. Sound design and mix Miguel Martins. Editing Francisco Moreira. Color correction Paulo Inês. Postproduction Eugénio Marques, Mária Adriana Ventura. Production direction coordinator Raquel da Silva. Graphic Design ilhastudio.com

PRODUCED BY ART FOR THE WORLD Production Adelina von Fürstenberg LAMALAND Production Salomé Lamas PRIMEIRA IDADE Production Pedro Fernandes Duarte

Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020) was produced with materials collected during the production of Interdependence (2019) produced by Adelina von Fürstenberg with ART for the World, under the auspice of United Nations, World Meteorological Organization and the City of Milan, funded by SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, with the main partnership of (Gai) Group Limited, TIC - Ethical Fashion Initiative.



Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa (2019-2020)

The Mask of Disaster
"Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa" (2019-2020) by Salomé Lamas
By Lars Henrik Gass

The scholar Klaus Heinrich – whose entire, unfortunately much too little noticed work (his legendary lectures in Berlin especially) is dedicated to nothing else than to enlighten man about himself and his psychological entanglements with the help of mythological studies, and thus to give him a bit more presence of mind – also devoted himself to the question of what it is about the Medusa in Géricault's painting, in which at first glance one cannot recognize anything of a Medusa figure at all.

Not much is known about the prehistory of the painting. It is known that it was a political issue, an *interventionist* act, an affront by Géricault, which was probably intended to prevent the almost unbelievable from being covered up by state structures: in 1816, following the wrecking of the frigate "Medusa", just one tenth of its original 150 sailors were left on a raft as survivors, after the most serious social and psychological disruption, physical suffering and cannibalism. Géricault decided to paint the thing that would otherwise have long been forgotten, but which could thus remain in collective consciousness forever as a metaphor. It is known that Géricault hired extras, built a raft, made numerous preliminary studies, even painted over parts of the already almost completed painting until it reached a final form. For it was not a matter of a realistic replica, but of uncovering a substrate, an *extraction*, one may say for now; so that genre could be exceeded by proportion.

The ship that went under probably didn't owe its name to the mythological horror figure. But through the *Faszinationsgeschichte* (history of fascination) provoked by the painting, as Klaus Heinrich writes, the "puzzle figure" remains a piece of thought, i.e. related to myth, to narrative, history, language. In another place, in the text "Zur Geistlosigkeit der Universität heute" ("On the Spiritlessness of the University Today"), Heinrich gave a hint as to what is possibly of such lasting concern to us – *fascination of catastrophe*: "catastrophic events that wave in image and writing from the display boards that, like election posters, are set up on public roads. The fascination of catastrophes in comics and specially invented cinema series has put the pornographic genre in second place unless it asserts itself with catastrophic fascination". I will come back to this in the end.

But what has prompted filmmaker Salomé Lamas to turn to an installation, not for the first time, in other words to *spatialize* a film? Is "Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa" (2019-2020) a concession to the art world that lets the film become *sculptural* in order to contain it, to take away its genuine *compulsion to perception*, which makes it suspicious of the freedom of the gaze?

In the art world, which above all controls access (i.e. to art, but also to how to view it in spaces) everything is geared towards taking duration away from film – or more precisely: to take away that which only duration can produce – in order that film be made sculptural and thus usable through installation or loop. A film that requires a regulated entrance, a completely darkened room with rising rows of seats, is a constant problem in this system; it can hardly be displayed. Duration is the "imposition" of cinema, writes Juliane Rebentisch. The art business has therefore developed conventions and quite considerable restrictions for films that it approves to be thought of as art, which are now recognizably reflected as a design principle in films that want to be exploited by the art business. This is precisely the moment in which the cinema returns spatialized as sculpture, as cultic object – i.e. re-auratized. The uniqueness of cinema in terms of media history, however, consisted in the passivity of the viewer, in the compulsion to perceive. Cinema did not become social through participation. The "free", "individual" gaze that is propagated for art today and is allegedly opposed by the cinema is perfectly suited to neoliberal individualization. Cinema is social not because it is overly socially organized or provokes social processes independently of films themselves, but because it regulates, even if only for a certain duration, access to social reality, how reality becomes technically visible.

And what does "Extraction" mean? What does it add to the painting we know and to which

Lamas' work refers? What does it consist of? Why should or must Gericault's painting be "extracted"? Extraction (Latin "extrahere": pull out, take out), Wikipedia teaches me, names any separation process in which one or more components are extracted from a mixture of substances (individually solid, liquid or gaseous) – the extraction material – with the aid of an extraction agent (solid, liquid or gaseous). The extracted substance, even if it is still in solution, is referred to as an extract, or rarely as an infusion. This leads to the centre of the work, which remains a film even when it presents itself sculpturally in a double sense: as an ensemble of bodies in a room and as a moving image for a room – i.e. an object that can be walked around.

But what, to finally speak of it, does one see in Lamas' work, which I would like to continue to call a "film" because it is the temporality of the image that points to the center of the work, rather than straight to the art world. One first sees a tendingly endless frame that holds an endless space of the universe and time, the film itself embodying duration. Then Gericault's tableau and, as we approach the extraction, two intertwined triangles called "Despair" and "Hope", angles and edges opposite the earth, the globe, the curved line, the form without angles in the background. Two voices accompany the forms: initially a male one, speaking a cascade of terms that evoke doom ("extinguish", "destroy", "contaminate", "disintegrate" etc), then a female one that forms a thought, slowly and steadily: "The body of the other is not the body. It's a thing. The other is nothing more than myself." One sees a heap of bodies, bodies that devour each other, that are dependent on each other and on the limited surface of the space that remains for them, even if at the same time they threaten each other (as the speech "the boat is full" suggests), which thus, one could say, turns the raft into a Noah's Ark; a place of salvation for the last, the rest of civilization, that remains on Mount Ararat.

We begin to understand that we are dealing here with an experimental arrangement (of Gericault's material and/or the situation) which is historically re-contextualized, *faszinationsgeschichte* (fascination-historically) sharpened to the question of why we want to view the horror, the head of Medusa, at all: *aesthetically*, in that Lamas places the gaze of terror (the "catastrophe fascination") in the picture; *media historically*, in that Lamas returns the film to its place in society, by asking the world to look at the person who goes to the cinema; and finally *sociogenetically*, in that Lamas makes clear that the Medusa's role is not merely as a representation of horror (we are not only looking at terrible events) but also that of horror looking back at us, so to speak, as Medusa's *gaze*. Medusa is a projection figure, a female figure above all, a mask that should be lifted. This may be seen as the meaning of the statement of the female voice in the film: "Which is the place on the raft for the other that I am?".

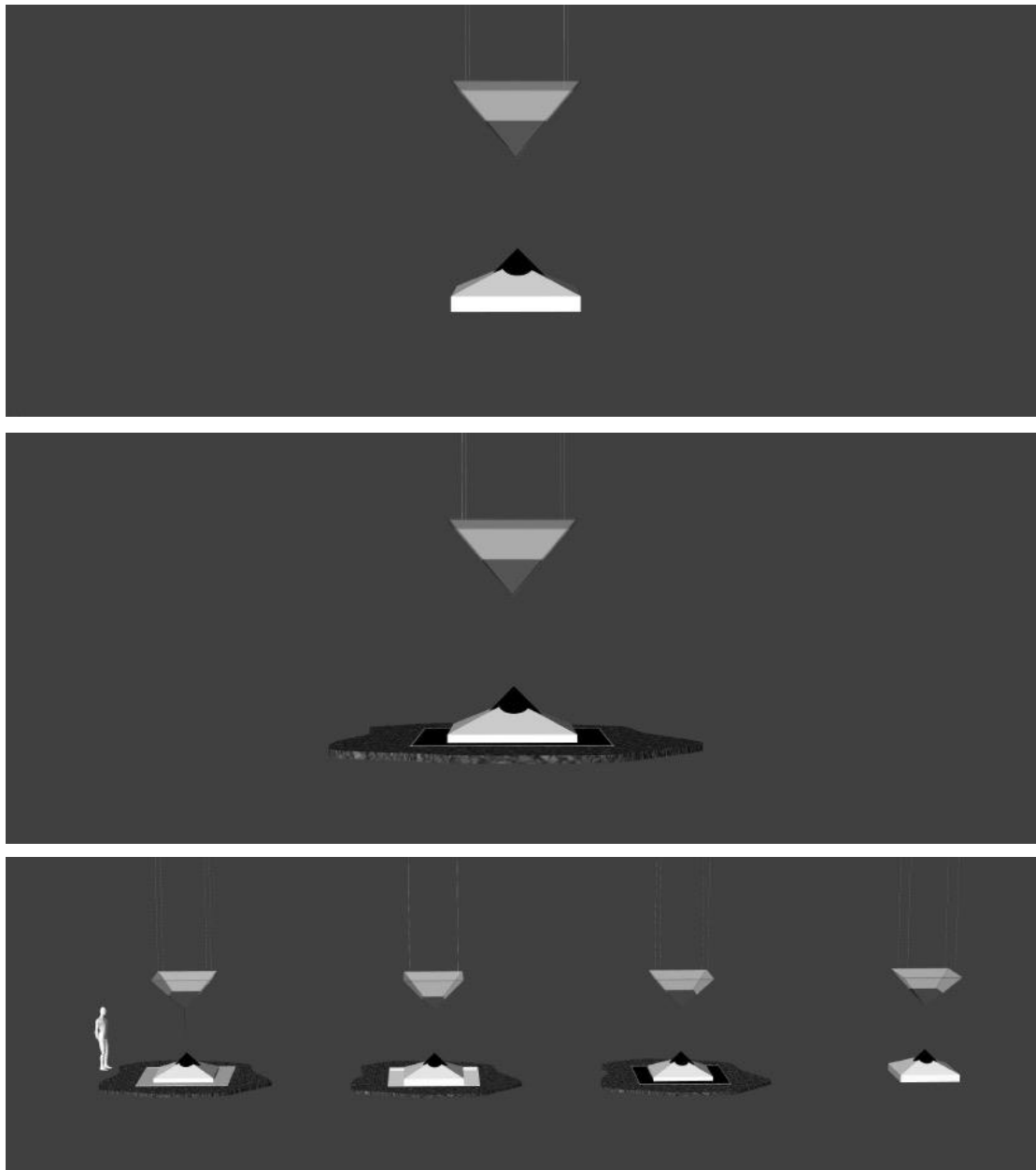
At the end of the film, Lamas graphically illustrates this peculiar, artificial situation, through the forms that stand against each other in the picture: the upright pyramid, floating on coal and milk, representing fire and air; the inverted pyramid, above all, representing water and earth; and the hourglass in between and formed by these shapes, the clock that ticks, our clock ("time is running out"). The inverted pyramid has been given an internationally sensational interpretation by the architect I.M Pei in his work at the Louvre. The inverted glass pyramidal form that drops into the building's interior was perceived as a chalice, a female symbol, while the upright stone pyramid placed beneath it was interpreted as a blade, a male symbol: the whole structure could thus express the union of the sexes. So here we are not talking about an all-seeing eye, an eye of God, but a new kind of fascination-historical, analytical Trinity, a Trinity of the gaze: the gaze of horror, the gaze of the world looking back at us through the film, and the gaze of time seen from the possible end of civilization on life, so to speak from a creaturely perspective.

Slavoj Žižek recently referred to our peculiar, powerless, perverse fascination with horror: "Observing the suffering of others is the obscure reason why we can feel joy (bliss in heaven) at all. If we remove it, our bliss appears in all its sterile stupidity. The same applies to wars, famines and violence, all the horror scenarios from the Third World that we see on our screens every day. We need this horror in order to bear the happiness in our consumer heaven at all." For Klaus Heinrich, the figure of Medusa is basically a misogyny reversal: "What makes us freeze is attributed to it as *what it does to us*". The woman is ascribed the terror that her gaze merely reflects: the terror of a humanity that fails to be enlightened, the

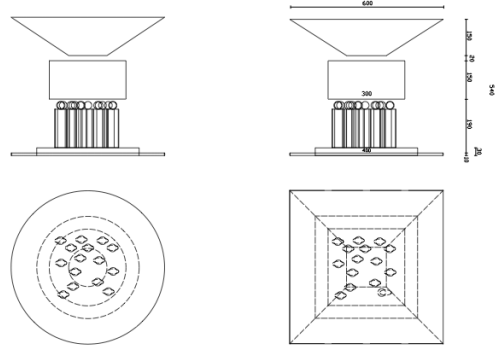
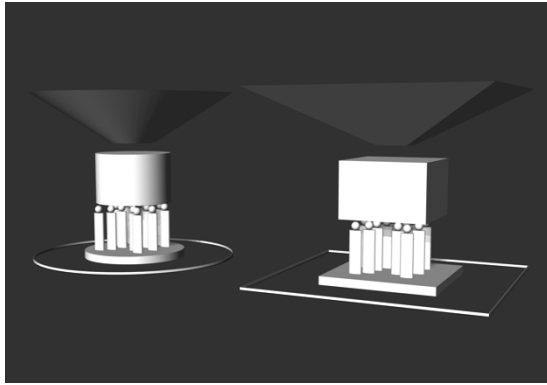
fear of destruction, as well as the fascination of the survivors. That, roughly speaking, makes us think "Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa."

Lars Henrik Gass is a German writer and curator. He is director of the Internationalen Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, since 1997.

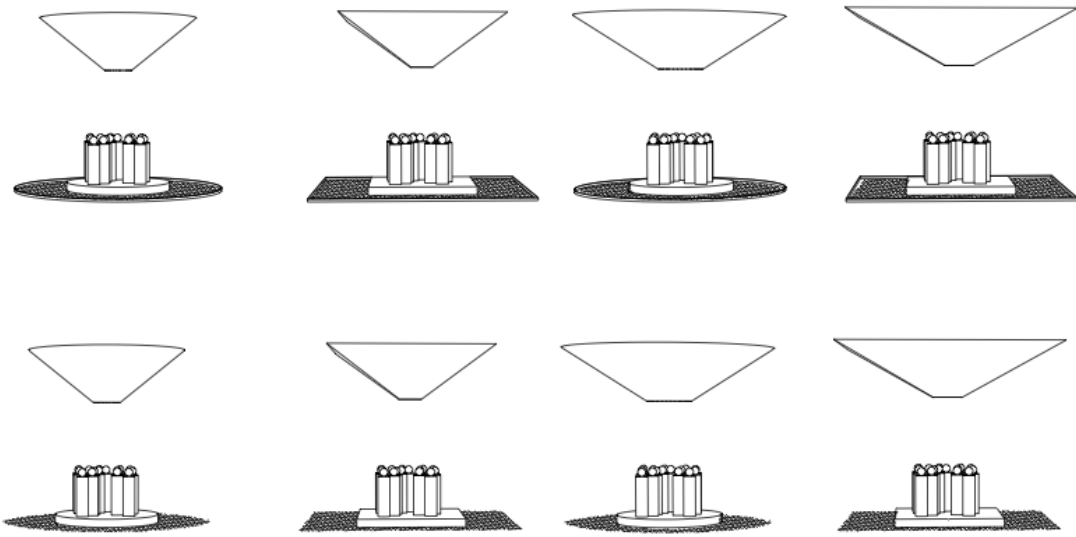
Other visualizations for project development



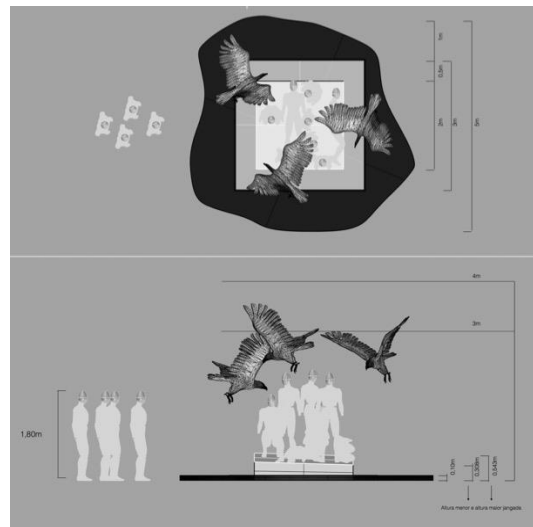
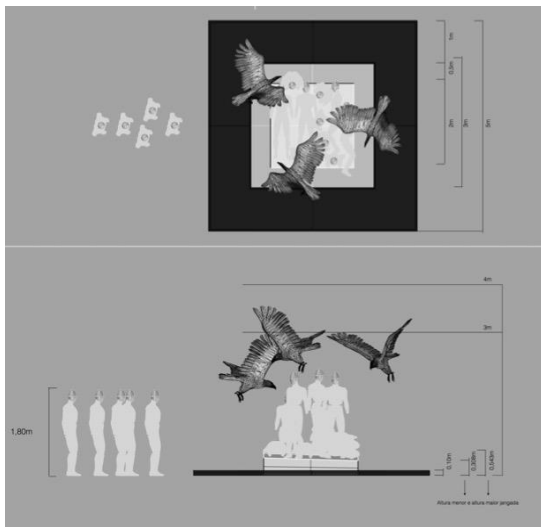
Other visualizations of the scenographic sculpture acrylic top pyramid, 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)



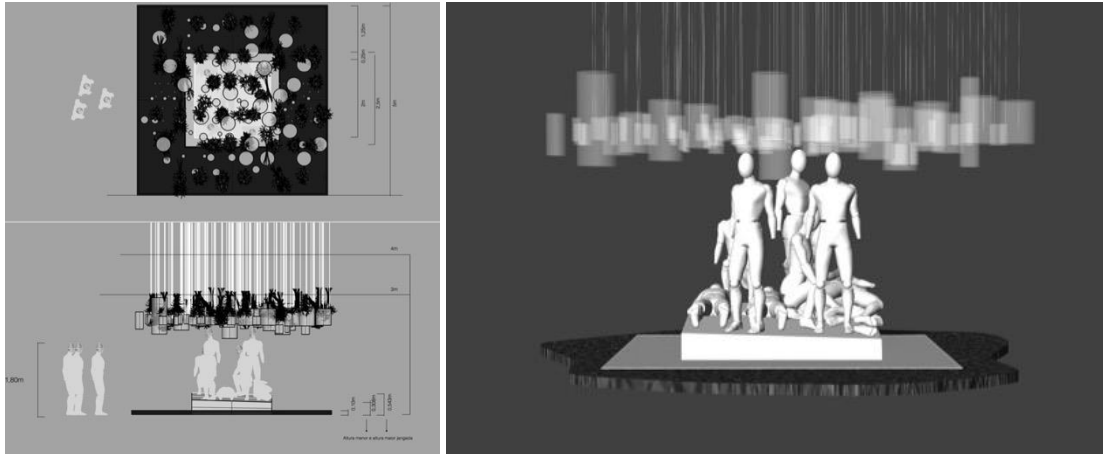
Development visualizations, 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)



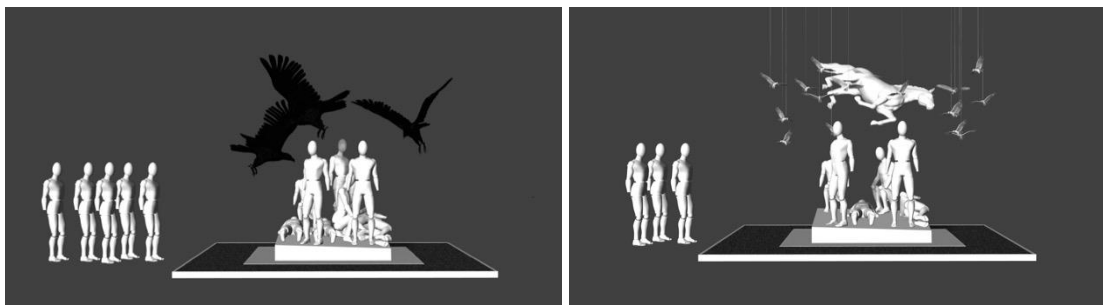
Development visualizations, 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)



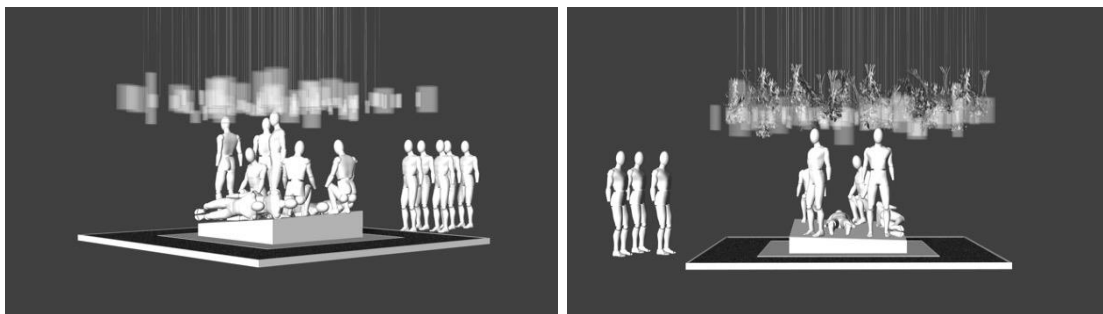
Development visualizations, 3D simulation for *Extraction: The Raft of the Medusa* (2019-2020)



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