[Abstract]
My research is based on tangible and virtual, scientific and historical media in order to address issues that have to do with identity. I combine and distort processes of creation with the consciousness that technology tends to transform our perception of the self and of the others. As much as I feel concerned about local and global picture, I tackle the slippery issues of gender, animality, artefact, sensuality, agglomerate and abstraction. Inspired by eco-feminists & sciences philosophers (Starhawk, Haraway, Stengers), I propose to consider the "wet" media with a feminine, intuitive and regenerative state of mind. "Staying with the trouble" enables us to transform the nature/culture distinction as a vantage point to "leaving by Sea".

LEAVING BY SEA  Pascale Barret 2015

According to the evidence, my creative process has demonstrated a clear inclination towards nomadism in recent years. Since 2008, I have noticed a liberated desire to materially alleviate myself, the internet quickly became a world of exponential values in which to explore, re-invent oneself solitary or in networks, a dizzying array of mass or micro politics. Computers are movable laboratories, technological growths that collaborate in chance, in precision, in magic or mistakes. Servers seem to my like filing cabinets of memories, both alive and dormant. From physical to mental spaces, these laboratories reclaim an intellectual nomadism, they want to escape the dualities of innocence – sin, for example; in favour of an art of words, and therefore also one of thought and feeling, one that is accountable. Just as in certain views of science, at most, one starts out with a desire to prove, to show, to have “an effect on” and to assert one’s claims, at the least one is open to research and experimentation. Now we are experiencing floating in a hybrid of genres, of unrest, of the imagined, of encounters and events without classification, nor hierarchy.

[wet in media]
Today my work is moving towards a more in-depth research into language (human, non-human, machine), IT, literature, fiction, science-fiction and inventive science. Thus I hope to examine the specifics of language as a cosmopolitical force. What exactly are we talking about? For whom and with whom? In what ways do our languages share a common ground, or escape one another? How do we represent and simulate the various alternatives?

I have asked myself, what are the “wet in media”? Aside from the natural, biological, and organic definitions that I will leave those much more experienced than I am to explain. From a conceptual point of view, the subject is vast. Two lines attracted my attention in my practice. The first being the link between humidity and the feminine. The second, the notion of fluidity, darkness, the sea, the oceans as places of fantasy. Between the visible and the invisible, the “wet media” embody the unrest.

The french sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in 1980, in his pratical theory, « le sens pratique » and « domination masculine » used representations of oppositions, compounds of sociological observations, between the cycle of time and the human life. In a horizontal and vertical, circular dimension, masculine / feminine, dry / wet, the wet is associated with the inside, the deep, wild and uncultivated nature, the night, the sacred, the secret, the winter, the North, the feminine.
Schéma synoptique des oppositions pertinentes

On peut lire ce schéma en s’attachant soit aux oppositions verticales (sec/humide, haut/bas, droite/gauche, masculin/féminin, etc.), soit aux processus (e.g. ceux du cycle de vie : mariage, gestation, naissance, etc., ou ceux de l’année agraire) et aux mouvements (ouvrir/fermer, entrer/sortir, etc.).
In my works, the figure of a sea monster, a feminine monster, often appears. The sea
monster has served as a source of inspiration for the collective imagination, anthropology, as
well as in the mythology of art. Sirens, giant squid, Gorgone and Echidna (created by Gaia), Medusa, Scylla.

[Joyce inspiration for textual data ecosystem]
[Contextual ecosystem in « Uncreative writing », K. Goldsmith]
On a meditation on the properties of water in « Ulysses », James Joyce writes about the
potential for water’s drama and catastrophe « its violence in sequakes, waterspouts, artesian wells, eruptions, torrents, eddies, freshets, spates, groundswells, watersheds, waterpartings, geyseres, cataracts, whirlpools, maelstroms, inundations, deluges, cloudbursts. »
« Its properties for cleansing, quenching thirst and fire, nourishing vegetation : its infallibility as paradigm and paragon. »

[caught in the act to fabulate]
« Neither description, nor critique, nor explanation, nor good intentions, nor world view can determine that which will constrain what engages the mind, and what makes possible resistance to the probable. » Isabelle Stengers

The leading thinkers of Eco-feminism and Inventive Science such as Haraway, Stengers and Starhawk, remain too often on the margins of symposia and think tanks addressing ecological problems in the broader sense. Emerging in the 1980s, eco-feminism placed at its heart the parallels apparent between man’s domination over nature, and over women. Karen Warren opposes the vision of man as conquering and domineering, with a more feminine relationship to nature, that is both affectionate and caring.

The conference entitled “Eco-feminism and life on earth” was a key moment, taking place in the U.S. in March 1980, after the nuclear accident on Three Mile Island the year before, in 1979. The contemporary topical concern with environmental issues is reminiscent of these earlier events.

[ONE PART FOR ALL]
Slow art, slow sciences
Books : Donna Haraway “Situated Knowledge” (which questions objectivity) and Starhawk’s “Dreaming the Dark”.

Geological time meets with historical time the moment one uses the term “The Anthropocene” to describe this era where man is the principal geophysical force on the Earth. To describe Earth’s new role, Bruno Latour as well as Isabelle Stengers suggest adopting the bygone word “Gaia”, used by the British Geophysicist James Lovelock. Our era is marked by the threat of climate change, the systematic destruction of the natural planet, the difficulty to tune in to voices which engage our thoughts against the forceful link between modernity and colonial devastation. It is an era of gestures, of engagement with and for possibilities, of Situated virtualities.
Biologist, Philosopher and Science Historian, Donna Haraway is a leading figure in feminist theory and science studies. Her multifaceted work interrogates the way in which technological and scientific developments reengage with the dominant contributions to occidental thought (nature/culture, masculine/feminine, animal/human).

"there is nothing about being 'female' that naturally binds women"
In her Cyborg Manifesto, Donna Haraway embraces the abandoning of all hierarchies (economic, political, racial, sexual, etc). The cyborg as the end of binary opposition would be a human who had completely subsumed the machine, and quite simply become a new species.
"Staying with the Trouble" aims to work through ontological, ethical, and ecological knots. « Anna Tsing defines “worlds” as “previously unrecognized galaxies of multicultural and multispecies relations plus life-enhancing relations among non-living elements of the earth.” Her definition interests me for and in a sf humananimal terraforming mode of attention, where recuperation might yet be possible.

[Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene: Staying with the Trouble]
« If primates have a sense of humor, there is no reason why intellectuals may not share in it. » (Plank, 1989)

The Chthulucene was put forward by Donna Haraway in reaction to the controversy that has surrounded the Anthropocene for years; a concept directed towards notions of eco-feminism and inventive science.

"The Chthulucene is not about embracing life or death, it is not about embracing transcendence. It is about embracing the snaky ongoingness of earthly worlding in its pasts, presents and futures."
« Sympoiesis, not autopoiesis, threads the string figure game played by Terran critters. Always many-stranded, SF is spun from science fact, speculative fabrication, science fiction, and, in French, soin de ficelles (care of/for the threads). The sciences of the mid-20th-century “new evolutionary synthesis” shaped approaches to human-induced mass extinctions and reworldings later named the Anthropocene. Rooted in units and relations, especially competitive relations, these sciences have a hard time with three key biological domains: embryology and development, symbiosis and collaborative entanglements, and the vast worlds of microbes. Approaches tuned to “multi-species becoming with” better sustain us in staying with the trouble on Terra. An emerging “new new synthesis” in trans-disciplinary biologies and arts proposes string figures tying together human and nonhuman ecologies, evolution, development, history, technology, and more. Corals, microbes, robotic and fleshly geese, artists, and scientists are the dramatis personae in the Haraway talk’s SF game. »

[WIDEN MICRO BREACHES]
“Tell me how you tell a story, and I will tell you the construction of what you participate in.” Isabelle Stengers, Fabriquer de l'espoir au bord du gouffre: (About the work of Donna Haraway).

The revival of speculative thought appears inseparable from the general crisis affecting modes of thought which remain subjugated by the dominant frameworks of progress, rationalism and universality.
Isabelle Stengers, Philosopher of Science, speaks of speculation: the important thing is not the probable, but the possible, that which leads back to creation. To speculate is « to bet in favour of! »

Speculation creates "in favour of the world" when it adds something, it risks introducing the possible, an additional dimension, a relevant dimension when it allows us to ask questions a bit differently, to shift the stakes, to complicate positions. The fight proceeds as a gamble “for” and not an engagement “against”, capable of satisfying the demands of experimental practices.

It is also a question of escaping this monopolising idea of duality. Starhawk heads in this direction - towards the point of view of the individual, be that alone on in a group.

Starhawk is an American writer, social activist and pagan in the Reclaiming tradition.

[Power-Over and Power-From-Within]

About her notion of « Power-Over and Power-From-Within » in Dreaming the Dark, Starhawk writes: : Magic is another word that makes people uneasy, so I use it deliberately, because words they are comfortable with, the words that sound acceptable, rational, scientific, and intellectually sound, are comfortable precisely because they are the language of estrangement.

Another figure of masculine domination is the witch/sorceress - woman at one with nature, woman uncontrollable.

The question of witches constitutes the question of scientific knowledge versus the rejection of vernacular knowledge, common knowledge, women's knowledge. It is she who can bear children, she who has traditional pharmacopoeia. Our European pharmacopeia has been practically annihilated. From iconography, you can clearly see how women who have been accused of sorcery are those who are considered to be sexually free, and financially free as well. It is not only a religious belief - the machinery is complex. In the 15th Century medicine was revolutionised - under political control the step was taken to forbid all practices not recognised by the state. It was supposed that such practices were satanic and above all non-scientific. Today, by means of an ideology extremely hierarchical and elitist, industrial-capitalist technologies pose new problems.

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" (Arthur C. Clarke). "Any technology distinguishable from magic is insufficiently advanced" (Barry Ghems).

This year, I created the collective “ENDORA societe joyeuse”. In it, we are self-proclaimed magic witches, women outside the norm. ENDORA societe joyeuse evolved to become a generous community that ignored the differences (male/female, life/death, man/animal) that hinder imagined possibilities, and that unveiled a collective fiction/fabrication. It will to be a permanent celebration!

In ENDORA societe joyeuse, the protagonists are in the balance of imbalance and in the imbalance of balance. I'm looking for the place where art, science, theory, and practice meet.

These cheerful and flippant fools play out an art of paradox, wielding humour gladly, embracing slapstick and confrontation. DIY fantasists, they improvise journeys with spontaneity and self-deprecation. ENDORA societe joyeuse doesn't accord any hierarchy to its reference points; whether they be historical, scientific, philosophical, artistic, or whether they come from popular or high culture, documentary of fictional sources.
Isabelle Stengers writes in « Fabriquer de l'espoir au bord du gouffre »:
“It is a question of thinking of “a society of the marginal”: an anonymous and secret society, since there is neither a list of members, nor an admissions process, nor a secretariat, nor words of order or encouragement. To find yourself there without necessarily knowing those who resist infection from corruption, the prostitution of thought, hateful conformism, loyalty to abstract ideas.”

“…. we must respond to the consequences. Respond - that’s to say - learn, regain, dare to try new versions (or tropes) each time a bit more “bizarre”, “queer”, disconcerting, with greater expectations, escaping from the very real cliff face that we hadn’t noticed had reached dangerous proximity.”

[PRINCIPLE OF THE DRIFT]
Contemplating one’s language from the borders of other languages
to be a stranger in one’s own practice
to refuse belonging
to make a new home in one’s wanderings
to liberate life, there where it is held prisoner.

[ON INVISIBLE QUALITIES]
Whether it is about orders, or specific contexts, my creative drive is all about slight imbalances; displacements generated by the movement of other artists or collaborators, patrons and sometimes quite simply by myself.
Without any obligation to radically liberate myself, I am moving forward by proposing an intuitive hypothesis that a skill, whatever it may be, not only has tangible qualities, visible or asserted by itself, but also invisible qualities, more embedded in its attitude and the way it interrelates with other practices, in a less self-evident manner. In this way, I get to thinking that these echoes through different practices make the art form itself subtler, more precise and in certain cases more accessible to the public. And lacking in volition, the visible and invisible perseverance or persistence of a practice enables its effects in space and time to thrive.

To conclude I would like to share a phrase from the psychoanalyst, Donald Winnicot, « After being, doing and being done too. But first being. »

“Leaving by Sea” would be a way to undertake this voyage across the “staying with the trouble”, collaborate more profoundly, leave together the dry desert for the depths and beings to reinvent whilst maintaining the desire for the neutral, a horizon that pushes thought forward and towards the new.

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