AKINCI

melanie bonajo

portfolio

About

melanie bonajo (they/them/theirs) is an artist, filmmaker, sexological bodyworker, somatic sex coach and educator, cuddle workshop facilitator and activist. Through their videos, performances, photographs and installations, they examine current conundrums of co-existence in a crippling capitalist system, and address themes of eroding intimacy and isolation in an increasingly sterile, technological world. They research how technological advances and commodity-based pleasures increase feelings of alienation, removing an individual's sense of belonging. Their works present anticapitalist methods to reconnect and to explore sexualities, intimacies and feelings. bonajo's experimental documentaries often feature communities living or working on the margins of society, either through illegal means or cultural exclusion, and the paradoxes inherent to ideas of comfort with a strong sense for community, equality and body-politics. They initiated the collective Skinship- A touch based place for Kinship-, an all bodies inclusive queer space to learn somatically about touch and intimacy.

melanie bonajo represented The Netherlands at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022 with 'When the body says Yes'. bonajo has been working with a curatorial team consisting of Orlando Maaike Gouwenberg, Geir Haraldseth and Soraya Pol. The scenography for their immersive installation 'When the body says Yes' is created in collaboration with Théo Demans.

'When the body says Yes', first presented at the 59th Biennale of Venice representing the Netherlands has been on tour in: FOMU, Antwerp, BE (2023);; KUMU Tallinn, Estonia (2023/24); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2024); IMMA Dublin, Ireland (2024); Museum of Modern Art Malva, Lahti, Finland (2025).

Solo exhibitions are: FOAM, Amsterdam (2016), Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt (2017), Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (2018), Pori Museum, Pori, Finland (2025), Kunstpalais Erlangen, Germany (2025/26).



Film still from When the body says Yes, for the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds

Selected international shows and projects include: Lahti Museum of Visual Art Malva, Finland (2025); Kunsthalle Mainz, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2024); Germany (2024); Barbican Art Gallery, London (2023); Museum Seoul, KR (2023); Gwangju Biennale, KR (2023); National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (2023); Esch European Capital Luxembourg (2022); HEK (House of Electronic Arts Basel, 2022); ARKEN Museum for Moderne Kunst, Denmark (2021); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Italy (2021); Museum Schloss Moyland, Germany (2021); Shanghai Biennale, China (2020/21); Kunsthaus Hamburg (2020); Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany (2020); Museum für Neue Kunst Freiburg, Germany (2020); Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Netherlands (2020); Pori Museum, Finland (2019/20); Les Rencontres d'Arles, France (2019); Palais de Tokyo, France (performance 2019); Guangzhou Triennial, China (2018/19); Kunsthalle Lingen, Germany (2018); Museum Marta Herford, Germany (2018); Haus der Kunst, Germany (2018); Manifesta 12, Palermo, Italy (2018); Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Latvia (2018); Kunstsaele Berlin, Germany (2018); Tate Modern, London, UK (performance 2017); Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2016).



Night Soil — Economy of Love, 2015, HD video, 32:46 minutes (film still)

Upcoming solo exhibitions: 'Schule der Liebenden', Kunstpalais Erlangen, DE (2025); 'Night Soil Trilogy', Pori Museum, Pori, FI (2025).

In 2014 melanie bonajo started working on their monumental *Night Soil Trilogy*, consisting of *Night Soil - Fake Paradise* (2014), *Night Soil - Economy of Love* (2015) and *Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening* (2016). *Night Soil* is a trilogy of documentaries presenting progressive (sometimes illegal) approaches through the portraits of ayahuasca consumers, sex worker activists or women farmers. In 2016 *Progress vs Regress* was released, followed by *Progress vs Sunsets* in 2017. This new Trilogy examines extinction or endangerment of vulnerable groups through techno-capital development, but also extinction in an abstract sense, extinction of feelings and thoughts. In *TouchMETell* (2019) bonajo invites children (and adults) to think and talk about intimacy, their limits and body awareness. In 2022 *When the body says Yes* was released and presented as the Dutch Entry at the Venice Biennial. The most recent film production with the topic of intimacy and touch is *Schule der Liebenden*, (*School of Lovers*), 2024, produced in collaboration with HORA theatre in Zurich, Switzerland.

melanie bonajo studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and completed residencies at the Rijksakademie voor Beeldende Kunst in Amsterdam (2009-10) and at ISCP in New York (2014).

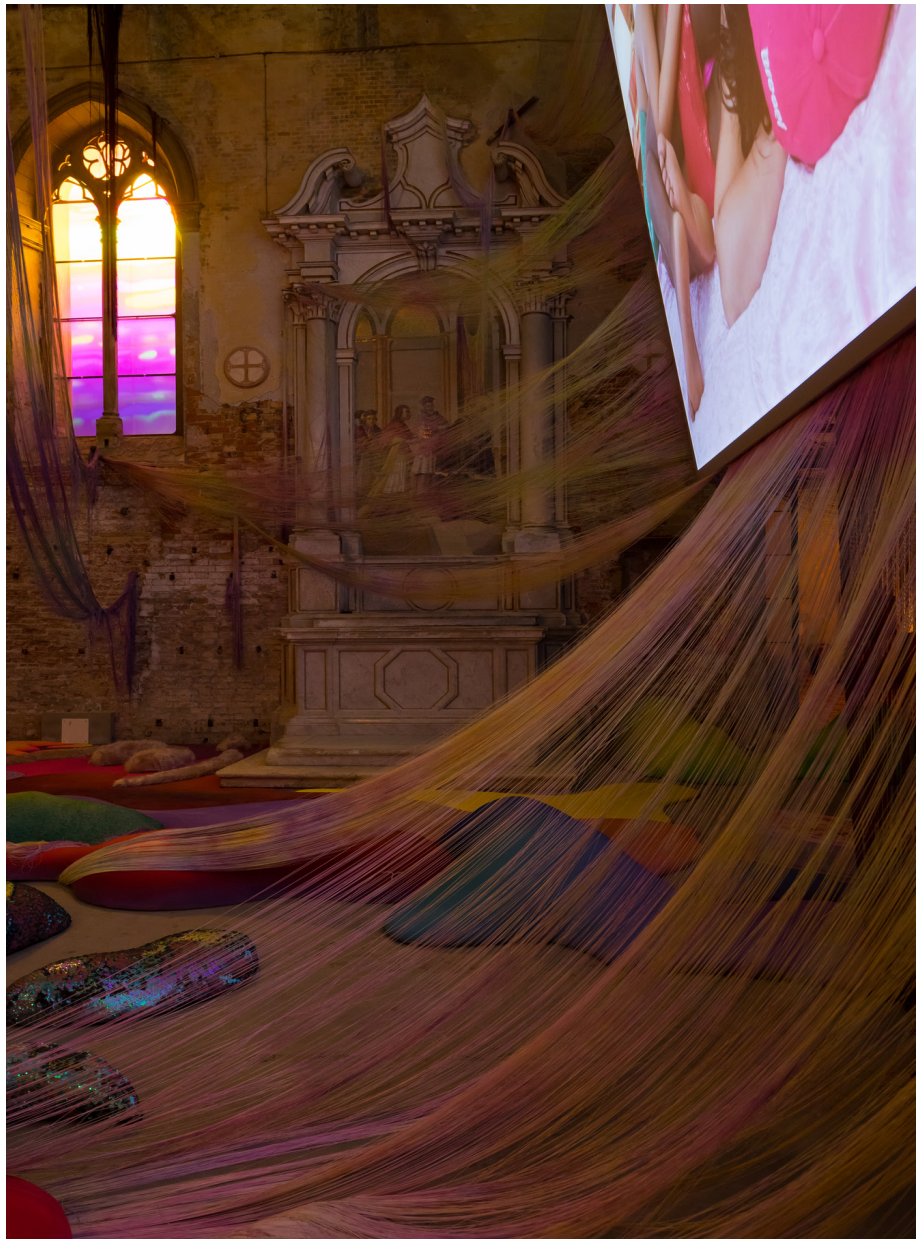
melanie bonajo was nominated for the Nam June Paik Award (2018) and the Prix de Rome (2017) and won the IFFR Tiger Award (2016).

When the body says Yes, 2022
Dutch Entry of the 59th Venice Biennale

When the body says Yes is an immersive video installation by melanie bonajo, Dutch artist, filmmaker, sexological bodyworker and somatic sex coach and educator. The installation, commissioned by the Mondriaan Fund for the Biennale Arte 2022 (23 April - 17 November), is part of the artist's ongoing research into the current status of intimacy in our increasingly alienating, commodity-driven world. For bonajo, touch can be a powerful remedy for the modern epidemic of loneliness.

About the project, bonajo says: "Love is not learned in isolation and, if you have felt it, someone else has probably felt it too. We created a collective spell in the form of a pleasure positive camp, an eco-erotic queer eros, celebrating our kin through skinship. A place of productive chaos and care, where we practiced touch tutorials, set boundaries, gave and received consent, drank our own poison at the trigger bar, did weird therapies and acknowledged feelings as valid…"

"We brought together a group of international gender queer people, where many have a bicultural identity and we expanded on sexuality beyond the western discourse, what our genitals mean to us and others, self-expression as a healing modality, the way our body matrix sends and receives information about closeness and touch, and how that is embodied in different language structures. Do you know the sensational dimensions of your No. How do you feel when your body says Yes?"



Installation view When the body says Yes, for the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds, photo by Peter Tijhuis





Film stills from When the body says Yes, for the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022.
Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds

"Let's move away from our disembodied zoom fatigue, this scenography is a sensual invitation to emerge our bodies into a pluffy pillow pleasure island. Embrace your inner sloth. We celebrate the beauty of our own softness, our senses, the portal to the present. Playing with the social conditioning of proximity and distance between bodies, the spaciousness allows for kindness, sensuality, surrender, and playfulness. It is essentially a cuddle space which centralizes the clitoris as the epicentre of social design and a place for worship. Sponsored by consent and your own oxytocin."

When the body says Yes is curated by Orlando Maaike Gouwenberg, Geir Haraldseth and Soraya Pol. The scenography is in collaboration with Théo Demans.

Click **here** to watch *When the body says Yes* on Vimeo
Password: Whenthebodysaysyes2022!



When the body says Yes, 2022, HD video, 41:23 min., installation & scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, Dutch entry 59th Venice Biennale, commissioned by Mondriaan Fund, curated by Orlando Maaike Gouwenberg, Geir Haraldseth & Soraya Pol. Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds. Photo by Peter Tijhuis.



When the body says Yes, 2022, HD video, 41:23 min., installation & scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, Dutch entry 59th Venice Biennale, commissioned by Mondriaan Fund, curated by Orlando Maaike Gouwenberg, Geir Haraldseth & Soraya Pol. Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds. Photo by Peter Tijhuis.





Installation view When the body says Yes, for the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds, photo by Peter Tijhuis



Film still from When the body says Yes, for the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. Commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds.

Read more about *When the body says Yes*

ENG:

The Art Newspaper
Something Curated
ArtForum
artnet News
British Vogue
ART news
designboom
FAD Magazine
OCULA Magazine
Elephant Magazine
Art Review
Dutch News

NL:
Volkskrant Magazine
NRC
De Groene Amsterdammer
De Telegraaf
Mister Motley
Het Parool
Zout Magazine
Metropolis m

DE:
Monopol
Kunstform

EST:
Estonian Public Broadcasting
Kultuur Postimees
Eesti Päevaleht
SIRP

IT:
Artribune

SP:
ARA News
La Vanguardia

BE:
Hart Magazine
De Tijd

FR:
Connassaince des Arts
Les Nouveaux Riches Magazin



Installation view When the body says Yes, for the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, commissioned by the Mondriaan Fonds, photo by Peter Tijhuis



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min/ inst. variable, installation view Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2024, photo by Aad Hoogendoorn



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min/ inst. variable, installation view Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2024, photo by Aad Hoogendoorn



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min/ inst. variable, installation view Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2024, photo by Aad Hoogendoorn



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min/ inst. variable, installation view FOMU Antwerp, 2023, photo by We document art



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min/ inst. variable, installation view KUMU Kunstimuuseum, Tallinn, 2023, photo by Stanislav Stepashko



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min/ inst. variable, installation view IMMA, Dublin, 2024, photo by Ros Kavanagh



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min, installation view Lahti Museum, Malva, Finland, 2025, photo by Elis Hannikainen



When the body says Yes, scenography in collaboration with Théo Demans, 2022, HD video & installation, 41:23 min, installation view Thinking through Touch, AKINCI, 2025, photo by Peter Tijhuis



Exhibition view Thinking through Touch, AKINCI, 2025, photo by Peter Tijhuis

Schule der Liebenden, 2024

“In what kind of school could we have learnt all the things that nobody taught us in reality? How to feel and communicate a yes and a no in your body; how to flirt, maintain your boundaries, touch with care and how to love yourself?”

Schule der Liebenden is a humorous, sensitive, empowering and genre-bending art experience on the subject of love and intimacy. It is created for people with and without disabilities.

Video artist and somatic sex coach melanie bonajo made an educational film 2.0 with the HORA ensemble. Scenographer Carolin Gieszner invented a school space where learning is pleasurable. The HORA performers bring the teaching bodies of this school to life together with directors Yanna Rüger and Daniel Cremer.

Click **here** to watch *Schule der Liebenden* on Vimeo
password: LoveIsHere



Schule der Liebenden, 2024, full HD single channel video film with sound, 38:45 min. Commissioned by HORA Theater, Zurich (film still)



Schule der Liebenden, 2024, full HD single channel video film with sound, 38:45 min. Commissioned by HORA Theater, Zurich / Exhibition view Thinking through Touch, AKINCI, 2025, photo by Peter Tijhuis



Schule der Liebenden, 2024, full HD single channel video film with sound, 38:45 min. Commissioned by HORA Theater, Zurich (film still)



Schule der Liebenden, 2024, full HD single channel video film with sound, 38:45 min. Commissioned by HORA Theater, Zurich (film still)



Schule der Liebenden, 2024, full HD single channel video film with sound, 38:45 min. Commissioned by HORA Theater, Zurich / exhibition view Kunsthalle Mainz, 2024, photo by Norbert Miguletz



Schule der Liebenden, 2024, full HD single channel video film with sound, 38:45 min. Commissioned by HORA Theater, Zurich / Exhibition view Thinking through Touch, AKINCI, 2025, photo by Peter Tijhuis

Skinship, 2021

It is almost one year ago that we did the 21 days of self-pleasure, the first iteration of this Queer & Pagan 'Advent Calendar' with 400 participants from all over the globe from World Aids Day to Winter Solstice in 2020. Out of this experience came a need to stay together and spice up our dating life with some more connection dishes on the plate then the usual buffet. From this an idea for a datingshow arose and here it is! We proud to announce the first installment of THE SKINSHIP DATING SHOW. We still figuring it out, so be patient with us. We aim to meet up all tother once with you in IRL in a ballroom, a bedroom, a bathroom the doomdungeonroom for all your ragelove, a shroomhotelroom and the spoonroom for nothing but sweetness and groom.

THE SKINSHIP DATINSHOW TUTORIAL gets you into and out of the hot mess of online dating into this participatory dating show for queers and the respectful curious beyond the binary. How can we put the body online?

Meeting on screen can seem to be distinct from a bodily experience, yet this bodily experience is at the center of the human experience, especially when dating. THE DATINGSHOW invites you to rise up from your seat and swipe your body from left to right. Prepare to be played – in a fun way . Five amazing hosts in various rooms will be your guides for some playful connections, including touch tutorials, sensual sensing quizzes, erotic self dance, cosmic make-over, anal speech class, unapologetic making the weirdest truest profiles, celebrating the end of toxic relationships (in a break-out room turned into a break-up room) and lots more.

SKINSHIP-a touch-based place for kinship- is a space for queer, trans, non-binary, intersex, agender and gender fluid people providing workshops around touch and intimacy embodied activism and art in Berlin.

Skinship is a performance game show and video dating tutorial made for Impakt Festival 2021, and the exhibition *Modern Love (or Love in the Age of Cold Intimacies)* at National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, curated by Katerina Gregos.

Click **here** to watch *Skinship* on Vimeo
password: dating2021!!!



Skinship, 2021, full HD single channel video film with sound, 29:06 min.
(film still)



Skinship, 2021, full HD single channel video film with sound, 29:06 min. (film still)



Skinship, 2021, full HD single channel video film with sound, 29:06 min. (film still)

The Coven, 2019

Femxle independence and especially sexual independence is still frightening, because it liberates us from oppressive structures and having to rely on a patriarchal system to grant us power to survive.

It is in relationships of close intimacy that our unresolved psychological issues tend to show up most intensely. That's because psychological and emotional wounds are always relational. How can we, as sisters and holders of our own future, help and support each other in a safer and sexual space through rituals of purification, intimacy, demystifying and empowering female sexuality beyond the shame and guilt society conditions us with. We encourage support and conversation among 'vulva identifying bodies' as opposed to jealousy and oppression by reclaiming language and stigmatized female sexual stereotypes. This gathering actively works to challenge conceptions of female roles in 'herstory'.



Cruising, 2019, UltraChrome Print, CansonLuster, framed, museum glass 42,8 x 30 cm



Trustingingeling, 2019, UltraChrome Print, CansonLuster, framed, museum glass, 72,4 x 108,4 cm



Cuddle Coven, 2019,UltraChrome Print, CansonLuster, framed, museum glass, framed, museum glass, 72,4 x 108,4 cm

TouchMETell, 2019

The video installation called *TouchMETell* allows children (and adults) to think and talk about intimacy, their limits and body awareness.

melanie bonajo and a group of children aged 6-8 investigate how they experience their own body and physical contact with others. melanie uses open interview techniques and kinesthetic forms of play which take place in a soft, fuzzy, cuddly and multi-colored landscape of different formed objects.

'What is sex? Does love have anything to do with sex? Can you feel emotional pain in your body? What are feelings? Are you ever lonely?' These are a selection of the many questions bonajo asks the children while they push, hug, paint or stroke each other.

With *TouchMETell* bonajo wants to initiate a discussion about boundaries, gender roles, physical autonomy and intimacy and the lack of physical contact in this digital age. We seem to have forgotten the language of the body. In a world where digital contact predominates, many of us are increasingly struggling with intimacy and defining boundaries and needs. What does the lump in my throat or the knot in my stomach tell me? Our proverbial language reveals the wisdom of the body, but how can we really learn to listen to it? *TouchMETell* offers a counterbalance in our digital culture and the current taboo around physical intimacy. What are limits? How do I discuss this with the other person? What is physical autonomy? What is love? All topics that are discussed and that help the children learn to trust each other. They discover the difference between giving and receiving. The work can be viewed in the same colorful and fluffy world that the children were interviewed in.

TouchMeTell was commissioned by Cinekid, the media festival for children. A part of *TouchMETell* was seen at the Westergasfabrieksterrein, during the MediaLab. At the Stedelijk, the installation is supplemented after 26 October ,2019 with the work of the Cinekid Festival, workshops and an additional music video clip. Afterwards, the installation traveled for educational purposes to libraries and schools in the Netherlands.

Click **here** to watch *TouchMETell* on Vimeo
password: ToucheME



TouchMETell, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, installation in collaboration with Théo Demans (film still)





TouchMETell, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, installation in collaboration with Théo Demans (film stills)



TouchMETell, installation view Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, installation in collaboration with Théo Demans, photo by Wim Hanenberg



TouchMETell, installation view Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, installation in collaboration with Théo Demans, photo by Wim Hanenberg



TouchMETell, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, installation in collaboration with Théo Demans (film still)



TouchMETell, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, coll. with Théo Demans, installation view Seoul Museum of Art, South-Korea, 2023



TouchMETell, 2019, HD video film, 24:27 minutes, coll. with Théo Demans, installation view 14th Gwangju Biennale, South-Korea, 2023

Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, 2017

Can we send 'funny' animal videos into space for aliens to discover the Earth's ecosystem?

This and other questions are the ones that bonajo investigates for the second part of their trilogy, *Progress vs. Sunsets* (2017), a trilogy examining extinction or endangerment of vulnerable groups through techno-capital development, but also extinction in an abstract sense, extinction of feelings and thought forms.

It seems our culture is tone deaf to the non-human world. How does animal representation online influence the prolonging of a species life in the 'wild' or in captivity? Paying attention to the animal online tells us something about our own species future, about who is protected on this planet and who is not.

The lives of non-human animals and their online representation is closely interwoven and that is why the symbol of the animal has drastically changed over the past couple of years. The film *Progress vs. Sunsets* illustrates how our relationship to nature has changed through the popularization of amateur-nature photography and film on the Internet. This is shown through the eyes and voice of children, the next generation, who seem to pinpoint and address easily the complicated issues around animal rights, bio-politics, dwindling resources, ecology, anthropomorphism in which Nature, as the ultimate other is seen as a utilitarian object outside of ourselves and the implications these ethics have on human desires, emotions, emotiveness and sentimentality towards 'the others'.

On another level the film addresses how adults often prejudice and accompany systematic discrimination against young people, applying an adult model of thinking and being on a young child caused by a fear to the child's view of self that trades on rejecting and excluding child-subjectivity, or magical non-dualistic way of thinking, which has always been excluded of Western thinking. This view holds that compassion depends on emotions, and that emotions lead to attachments. These emotions and attachments are traditionally perceived as irrational leading to vulnerability and consequent suffering within a state of acknowledging interrelatedness. This film points out the opposite. Affective connections, including empathy and compassion, have a rational and practical component and which if devaluated justify oppression and distorts our relationship to each other, with the earth and other animals and consequently our own survival as a species.

Read the text by Franziska Nori, written for Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017 **here**.

Click **here** to watch *Progress vs Sunsets* on Vimeo
password: progress123



Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, 2017, full HD one-colour video with sound, 48:20 min. (film still)



Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view melanie bonajo: Single Mother Songs from the End of Nature, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017, photo by N. Miguletz



Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij





Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view Freedom of Movement, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Progress vs Sunsets - Re-formulating the Nature Documentary, coll. with Théo Demans, 2017, full HD one-colour video with sound, 48:20 min installation view Seoul Museum of Art, 2023

Progress vs. Regress, 2016

Progress vs. Regress is a film about the ways modern inventions have changed social relationships, seen through the eyes of those almost one hundred years of age. This generation has lived through a century with the most sudden, widespread industrial, technological, and digital changes in the history of humankind.

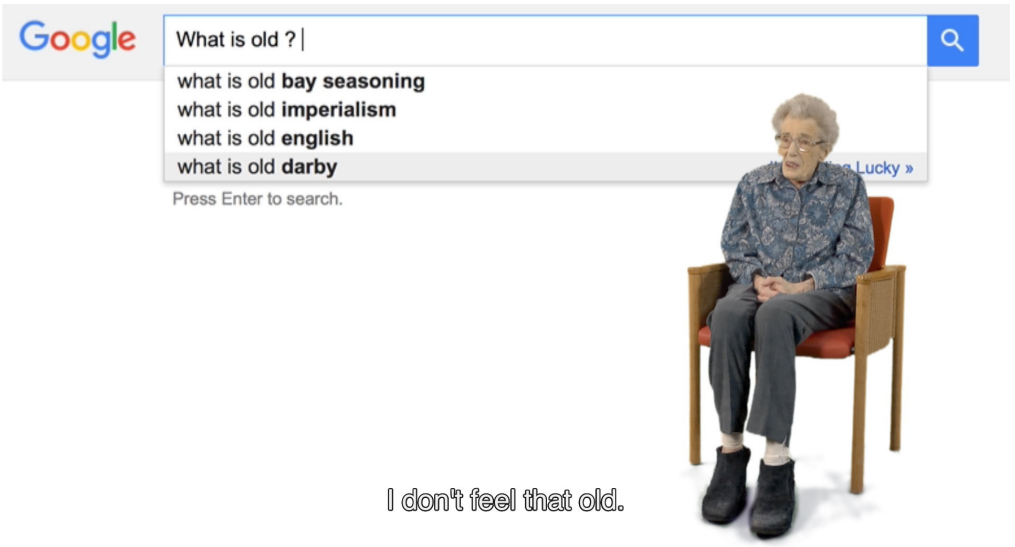
Progress vs. Regress documents the most influential of these inventions with regards to how they shape us, our values, and investigates how the myth of progress affected and continues to affect attitudes towards labour, money, time and emotions. Embedded within the film lies the story of how we as a society cope with our elderly population. The generation born now grows up on a conveyer belt of inventions in the name of progress, while the elderly have no perceived economic value and are not taking part in our visual culture.

By providing an insider look into the lives of elderly homes and trying out various playful and humorous experiments, this film asks us to reshape our view of the elderly, to think about what kind of care we need to supply, what an old body needs, and simultaneously inform the young generation about the impact of inventions.

This film has been commissioned by HACKING HABITAT.

Read the text by Franziska Nori, written for Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017 **here**.

Click **here** to watch *Progress vs. Regress* on Vimeo
passwoord: progress123





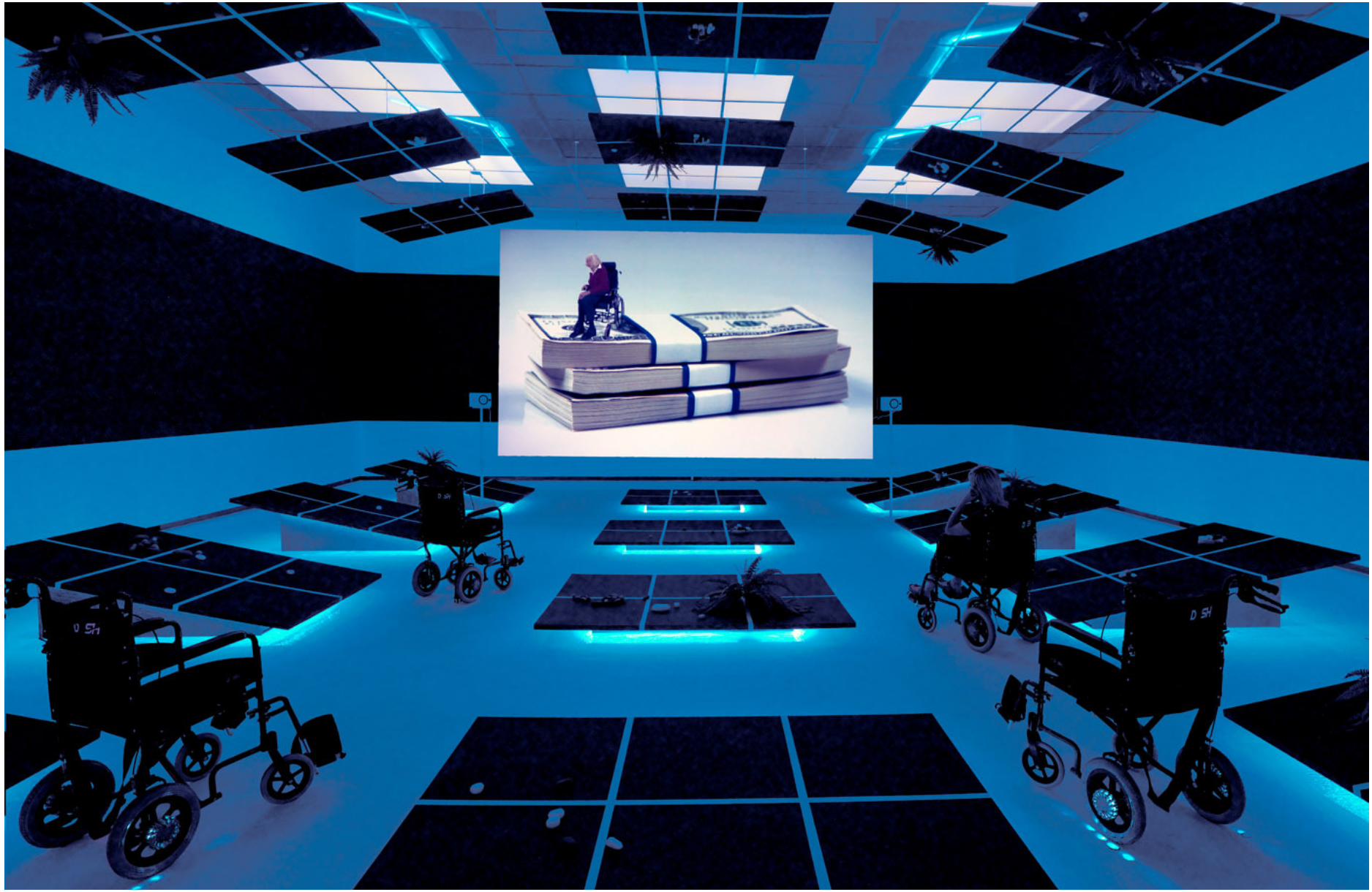
Progress vs. Regress, 2016, HD video, 53 minutes (film stills)



Progress vs. Regress, 2016, HD video, 53 minutes (film still)



Progress vs. Regress, 2016, HD video, 53 minutes (film still)



Progress vs Regress, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Progress vs Regress, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij

Night Soil Trilogy, 2014 - 2016

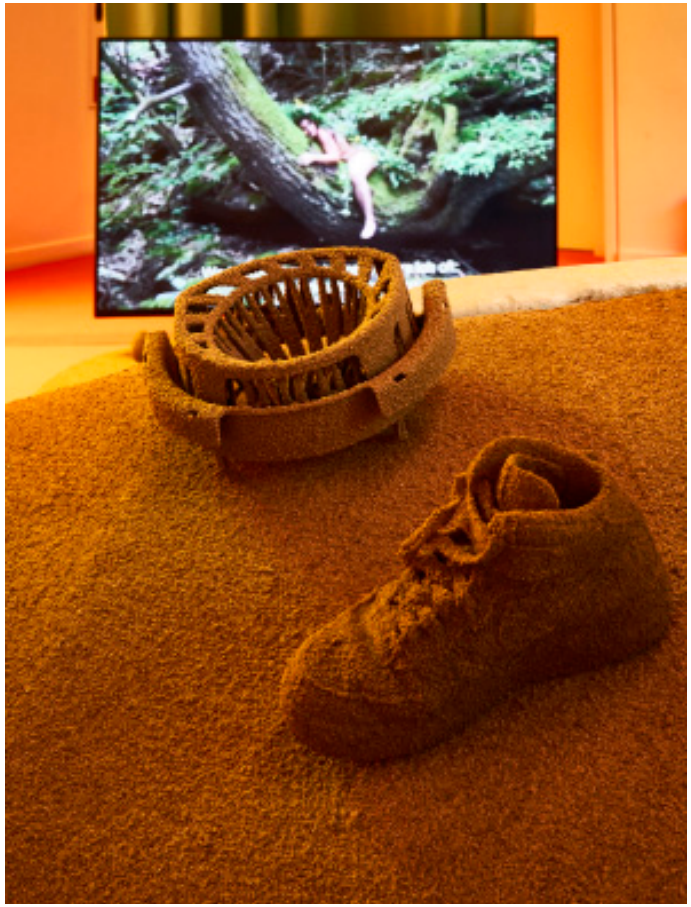
Night Soil is an experimental documentary in three parts showing the huge disconnection most Western people feel to nature. In a semi-documentary style melanie bonajo explores how people today tackle feelings of fragmentation and alienation head-on. The central characters in their videos are in search of new rituals, a different relationship with nature and a reassessment of ideas surrounding gender, with the aim of combating a gnawing sense of emptiness. It is far from rare for this to involve an illegal and alternative way of life that exists outside the established system. bonajo portrays this with passion and elegance, and occasional bursts of absurdism, and they do not shrink from stepping into view themself. Beneath a layer of humour and apparent chaos lurks an ambivalent attitude to all kinds of technological and capitalist developments in modern society. Semi-documentary scenes alternate with hallucinogenic fragments that spring from bonajo's imagination. They are shaped by an intensive collaboration with the main characters. These are mainly women, because bonajo believes their voices are insufficiently heard even today.

The Night Soil trilogy is presented in a total installation, made up of rooms with different atmospheres that completely submerge the visitor in the work. These psychedelic and hallucinatory spaces have been created by designers Clemence Seilles and Theo Demans.

Read the text by Franziska Nori, written for Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017 **here**.

Watch Melanie Bonajo speak about *The Night Soil Trilogy* **here**.

For a documentary on her way of working, click **here**.



Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view melanie bonajo: Single Mother Songs from the End of Nature, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017, photo by N. Miguletz



Installation view entrance hall, design in collaboration with Théo Demans, melanie bonajo: Single Mother Songs from the End of Nature, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017, photo by N. Miguletz

Night Soil — Fake Paradise, 2014

melanie bonajo: “In recent years there has been an expansion of a ‘medicine’ called Ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is a psychedelic brew of various plant infusions. Its origin springs from ancient Amazon traditions. My question is: why have people born in Western culture started to re-use psychedelic plants as a mental, physical and spiritual medicine? How does this ancient tradition fit in to our contemporary lifestyle? What are the potentials and what are the consequences of its popularity?”

“The influence of ‘alternate states of consciousness’ on a society within a religious, political and social context interests me. Hallucinogens have been around since the beginning of human culture. They have influenced the way society is shaped, how we define our relationship to one another. They have a long history as medicine, stimulating physical and mental healing. In most contemporary societies the use of hallucinogens is prohibited. The hypothesis I’d like to bring forward is that Ayahuasca can have a similar meaning for us today, as LSD did in the sixties. LSD influenced the rise of a counter culture that explored new ethical systems, sexual freedom, feminism, gay liberation, the peace-movement, anarchism, environmentalism, different ways of building relationships, revolutions in art and music, alternative economic models... It affected a fresh view on mental health and was used in an elaborate range of conscious experiments. It stimulated a visual, non-linear creativity that influenced visionary developments in technology and influenced the communal ethos of the early personal computing industry, and later the open source software movement.”

“Within contemporary, scientific psychedelic research and popular culture there is a huge lack of the female voice. Therefore, I mainly collect stories from women and during the process, try to figure out why this lack exists.”

“It is often reported that individuals capable of gaining access to higher spiritual dimensions, or making contact with various spiritual or extra-dimensional beings, can act as guides or healers. Western civilization is a loaded gun pointed at the head of this planet. The plants propose us a system based on empathy, love, caring, new ways of defining unconsciousness and more, bringing forward a strong ecological consciousness to pragmatically make changes necessary for future generations (of all species) to live a healthy life on this planet.”

“Fake Paradise tries to draw a parallel between cyberspace and the psychedelic space, both places where we transcend our bodies. In the film the difference in ethics between these spaces is explored; how they influence each other, as in a post-enlightenment tutorial. Other subjects addressed are personal experiences, the natural versus the supernatural, the role of urban shamanism, the female, the psychedelic experience, the return of the feminine, sexuality, the sacred, narcissism, alternative medical systems, and, most important, ecology.”

Watch the trailer of *Fake Paradise* **here**.

View the entire film **here** on Vimeo
password: PlantSpiritLove



Night Soil — Fake Paradise, 2014, HD video, 33.9 minutes (film still)



Installation view Night Soil — Fake Paradise, De Appel, Amsterdam, 2014



Night Soil—Fake Paradise, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Night Soil—Fake Paradise, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Night Soil - Fake Paradise, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans and Carolin Giessner, exhibition view of melanie bonajo and Pauline Curnier Jardin: The Institute of Things in Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino, 2021





Night Soil - Fake Paradise, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans and Carolin Giessner, exhibition view Haus der Kunst München, 2018

Night Soil — Economy of Love, 2015

Night Soil is an experimental documentary in three parts showing the huge disconnection most Western people feel to nature. In the first part, *Fake Paradise* (2014), the film shows a trend of people trying to find their way back into the 'natural system' by having conversations with plants, exploring the cultural affect of hallucino-gens and human connection to nature. The second part, *Economy of Love*, questions the relationship between sex and spirit, body and mind, sensual appetites and transcendental aspirations, aiming to reflect on the multitude of ways in which human beings have struggled to make sense of themselves.

Night Soil — Economy of Love portrays a Brooklyn-based movement of female sex workers, regarding their work as a way for women to reclaim power in a male-dominated pleasure zone; their mission being to rearrange sexual conventions and ideas about intimacy itself. Often referring to Sumerian traditions of sacred prostitution, they believe that pleasing one's sexual body is just as holy an action as pleasing one's soul. Their standpoint is that sex is not obscene, but empowering; not pornographic, but an equally shared experience; not condemned, but enjoyed. In a mutually liberating utopia of activism they seek to embody temple prostitutes, who were believed to temporarily resemble goddesses while performing sex, thus elevating the male client towards a divine status as well.

Vivid imagery is accompanied by a spoken score, revealing bonajo's vision on contemporary spirituality and expectations surrounding gender roles by playful, sensual, and feminist-driven means. In a world where a swipe to the right on a smartphone can grant access to supermarket sex, where social media tend to create an alternate form of loneliness, and where we are increasingly disconnected from the physical world, bonajo questions the complex relationships that exist within and without the natural world, challenging the traditional notions that divide nature, people, and technology. They look to environmental activism and, in particular, how that activism is leveraged illegally against global capitalism.

View *Economy of Love* **here** on Vimeo
password: Economy2015



Night Soil — Economy of Love, 2015, HD video, 32:46 minutes (film still)



Night Soil — Economy of Love, 2015, HD video, 32:46 minutes (film still)



Night Soil — Economy of Love, 2015, HD video, 32:46 minutes (film still)



Night Soil—Economy of Love, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of melanie bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Night Soil - Economy of Love, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view melanie bonajo: Single Mother Songs from the End of Nature, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2017, photo by N. Miguletz



Night Soil — Economy of Love, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans and Celemence Seilles, exhibition view Next Level: Melanie Bonajo — Night Soil, FOAM, Amsterdam, 2016, photo by Christian van der Kooy

Night Soil — Nocturnal Gardening, 2016

Nocturnal Gardening portrays a group of women living by alternative norms and who have each, on their own, established communities. The women stand for sensitivity, connection, and communication with other communities, plants, animals and elements. They attune their energy to the ecosystem around them with an enhanced sensibility. They are friends with the Earth and dependent members of the community of Nature. They explore new ways of togetherness and do so in a pragmatic, personal way. Though they are revolted by the counterproductive insanity of our hoarder culture, in which everything is archived in a museum of dead things, they are not trying to destroy civilization, but rather experiment with different agreements. They all take great risks in their search through this wilderness. They are independent but share their messages as educators and activists in the most humble way. Each of them embraces social movements and self-organization, exploring spiritual anarchy and the solitary wild in their own way. All of them work in a way that might seem really hardcore, with vast amounts of knowledge — it takes a lot of commitment, compassion and patience for people to do so.

With love, beauty and a welcoming spirit, the women have created practical, well-developed environments to deal with land use, marginalized land and crop growing, bringing people together from previously traumatic situations — not the convenient agenda items. They apply measures that interrupt our current rules and speak for an anti-capitalist system of care. They all apply alternative systems of economy, such as bartering, sliding scales etc. The food we eat is such a vital source for reflection. It is a very practical place to reflect on justice and injustice because it is something that links and concerns us all — inside of us, in our mouths, in our hearts, in our toes, in our thoughts and behaviour. If you really think about the origin of your food, where it comes from, who made it, where it travelled before it reached your plate, a whole system of co-dependency and interconnectedness is presented to you.

The film *Nocturnal Gardening* is a conversion of human psychic content into a imagery that enhances our moral landscape for our own decision making, both in terms of ecology and interdependent values, as well as in the care for ourselves, our neighbours, and our earth.

Watch *Nocturnal Gardening* **here** on Vimeo
password: NocturnalMel



Night Soil — Nocturnal Gardening, 2016, HD video , 49:47 min (film still)



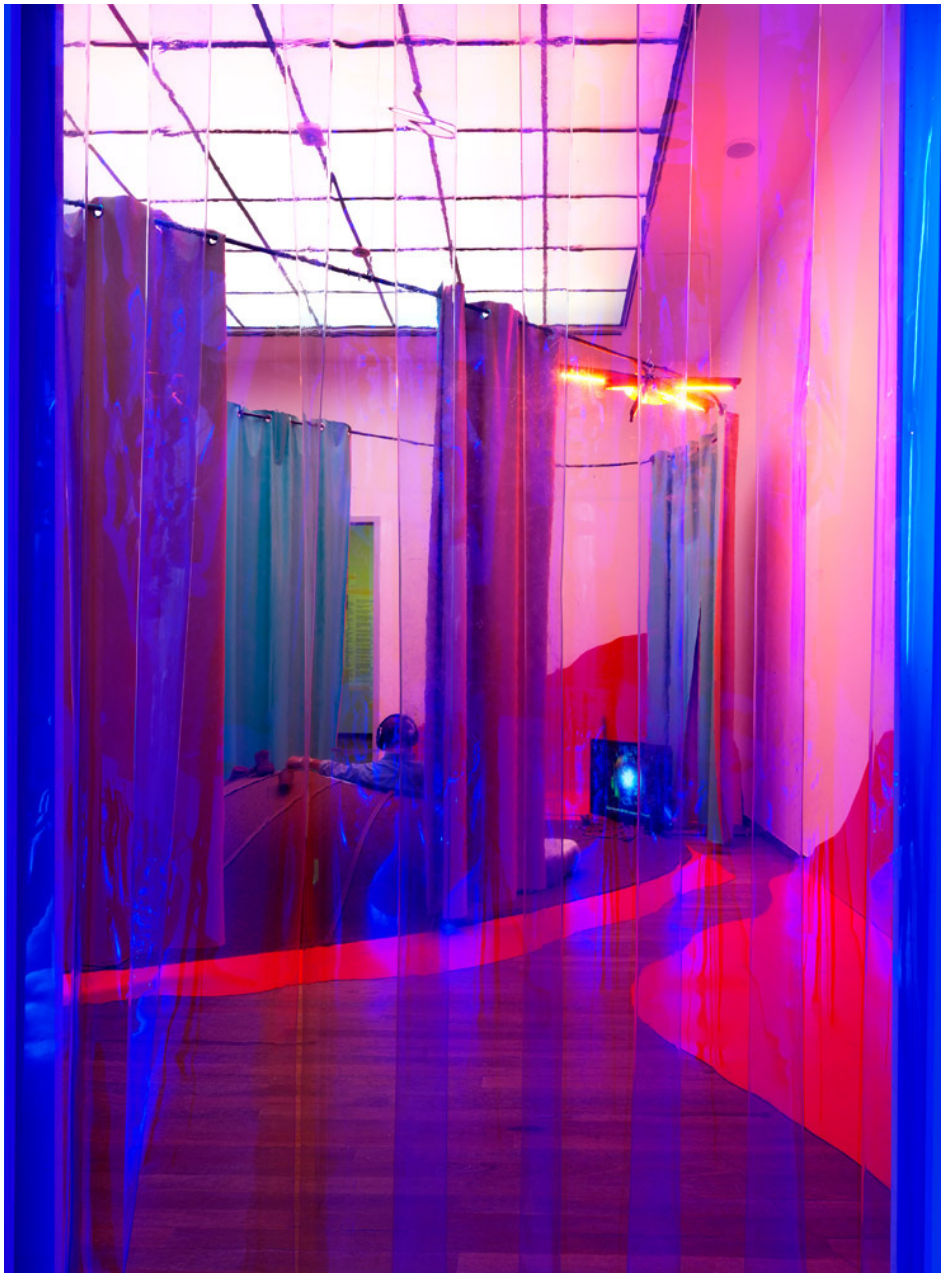
Night Soil — Nocturnal Gardening, 2016, HD video, 49:47 min (film still)



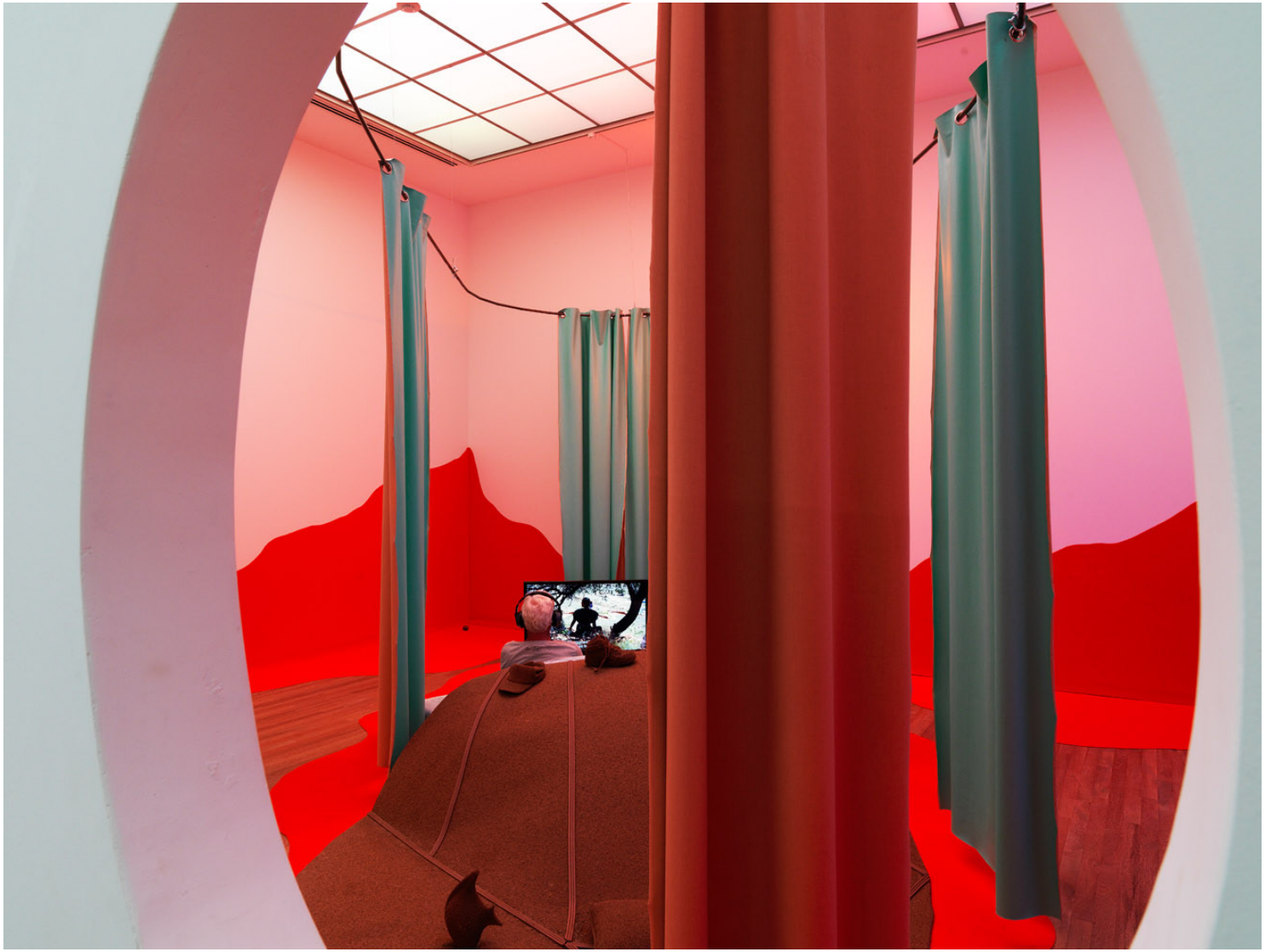
Night Soil—Nocturnal Gardening, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view Next Level: melanie bonajo — Night Soil, FOAM, Amsterdam, 2016, photo by Christian van der Kooy



Night Soil—Nocturnal Gardening, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of Melanie Bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Night Soil—Nocturnal Gardening, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of Melanie Bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Night Soil—Nocturnal Gardening, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of Melanie Bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij



Night Soil—Nocturnal Gardening, installation design in collaboration with Théo Demans, exhibition view The Death of Melanie Bonajo, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij

Performance

At Do Disturb festival at Palais de Tokyo in April 2019, bonajo presented a new musical performance on the future of human species, and of the Earth itself. bonajo activates her films *Night Soil - Fake Paradise* and *Night Soil - Economy of Love* with performance and music (in collaboration with producer/ composer Michael Beharie) and plants by a new character: MatrixxBotanica.

The subject matter consisted of: Sexuality, Ecology, Technology, Gender, Future. Having as backdrop on a screen the film *Night Soil - Fake Paradise* and *Night Soil - Economy of Love*, melanie bonajo creates with a musical performance a visionary situation: 30 years from now, in 2047, human-induced climate change will lead to a catastrophic, unnatural disaster causing the extinction of one-fourth of the Earth's species and surrounding us with an ocean that will have turned into an empty water bottle theme park. The fresh GMO chicken on our plates will joke with us before being eaten, and the transcribed brain waves of the last elephants and dolphins will have been transcoded into a human language and published as critical theory for extreme environmental survival study groups. Everywhere we look, nature is a mess, both materially and conceptually. Has nature become a dystopian wellness hell or an industrial spa only to preserve the biotic or our microorganisms?
In this new musical, engaging performance we make an appeal to the imagination to speculate on the future of the human species, and of the Earth itself. Will we be willing to sacrifice our comfort for the benefit of everyone? Are we glorifying a form of naturalism as our true state, or are we accepting ourselves as a techno-species with all its possible opportunities and consequences?



Do Disturb festival, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019, photo by Ayka Lux

You might remember the public outcry that resulted from the studies showing that millenials are not having sex anymore, as they are receiving the same dopamine kick from their technological devices that previous generations got from sex. How could we blame them?

The political urgency of this performance is manifold, and we will be asking pertinent questions in relation to intimacy and ecology such as: Why should every man be fucked in the ass? How did Freud's vibrator therapies to treat 'hysteric' women evolve into pharmaceutical antidepressant drugs that decrease sex drive and climax? What happens when we are no longer touched? Do we turn into artificial intelligence subjects, moving farther and farther from our natural bodies?

bonajo's musical performance is an appeal to the imagination to speculate on the future of the human species, and of the Earth itself. Will we be willing to sacrifice our comfort for the benefit of everyone? Do we artificially need to re-awake all the burned witches from the death to unlearn the patriarchy in a non-hierarchical areal educational system. Are we glorifying a form of naturalism as our true state in which we awaken ourselves to our innate-truth through self-help comedy, or are we accepting ourselves as a techno-species without gender, cultural heritage and all its possible opportunities and consequences?



Do Disturb festival, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019, photo by Ayka Lux



Do Disturb festival, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019, photo by Ayka Lux



Do Disturb festival, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019, photo by Ayka Lux



Do Disturb festival, (with Night Soil—Economy of Love) Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019 , photo by Ayka Lux

Tate Modern, 2017

melanie bonajo's *Pilgrimage with the Animals* proposes a space in which we can communicate through the senses. Attempting to create a sense of unity with the creatures with whom we share the planet, the performance challenges the forms of relationships that humans build with the animal world, asking whether we can move beyond a sense of reverence for the animal, the rainforest, the mountain or the wilderness towards a more concrete ethics of shared experience and solidarity. bonajo asks: Would you like a baby elephant in your garden? Is anger a right only humans have? At what convenience do you love animals? Are all animals actors in a human landscape? Do all animals in the zoo need to meet each other? Did you ever feel like you are / could be possessed or owned? Will some of our thoughts and feelings go extinct along with the species vanishing from our lives? Do new kinds of violence surface due to new kinds of care? *Pilgrimage with the Animals* is performed by Patricia Bardi, Izabella Finch, Daniel Hernandez, Anthony Goh, Edoardo Mozzanega and Rozalind Holgate Smith, with new music by the composer Michael Beharie.



Pilgrimage with the Animals, 31 March, 2017, 10 pm, performance at BMW Tate Live Exhibition: Ten days six nights, Tate Modern Museum London

Matrix Botanica — Biosphere above Nations, 2013

Matrix Botanica touches upon the issue that all people are indigenous from somewhere and belonging, alongside all other life forms, to the Earth. In the video the Voice of Nature reflects upon us humans. She explains how she sees us and the many misunderstandings and interpretations which are caused by Western philosophical frame-work, especially the absurd construction of placing human identity 'outside' nature. Nature as the protagonist, becomes a character with personhood, one who the viewer can identify with. Through music the listener can feed in to the image and identity of Nature. The narrative of the video is completely based on an experience on the psychedelic medicine called Ayahuasca.

Matrix Botanica re-shapes contemporary human/plant/animal rituals in a desacralized global society. Trying to remake relations with nature on the basis of recognising them not as 'things' but as creative, self-directed, originative others. To care for things such as trees, rivers, forests, grasses and mountains as friends is a commitment everybody will grow from. While disbanding human identity as only minimally and accidentally connected to the earth, a ritual is created in which 're-earthing' is used for Modern individuals to intuitively gain a stronger eco-centric perspective in a more connected universe.

Matrix Botanica has been conceived as performance and video work.

View *Matrix Botanica* **here** on Vimeo
password: matrix





Matrix Botanica — Biosphere above Nations, 2013, one-channel video projection, 22:25 minutes (film stills)



Matrix Botanica — Biosphere above Nations, 2013, one-channel video projection, 22:25 minutes (film stills)

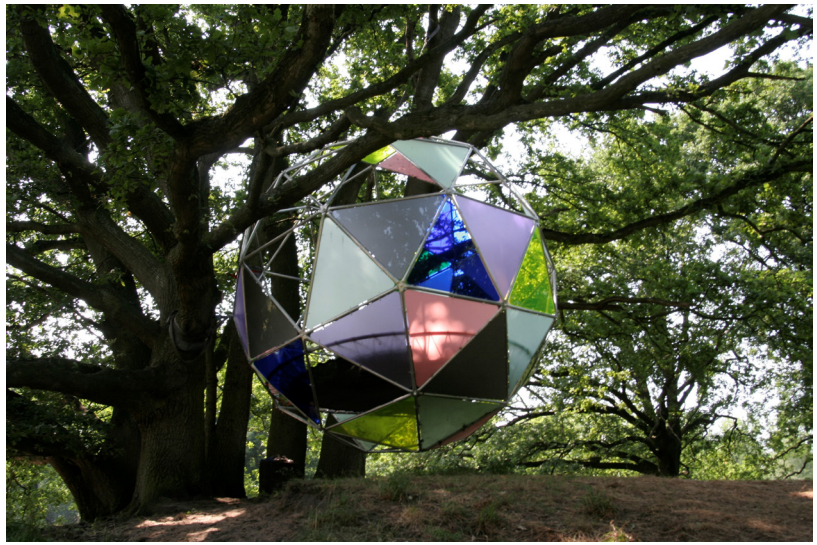


Matrix Botanica — Biosphere above Nations, 2013, one-channel video projection, 22:25 minutes (film stills)

Dream Station Space, 2013

Hovering off the ground, *Dream Station Space* is a geodesic-framed pavilion designed to bring people closer to the skies — to dream about the future. To give them an extra boost, the frame supports a trampoline to encourage physical reflection. The dome is partially clad to suggest a relic that has fallen from space, resting in the tree branches. The geodesic *Dream Station Space* is born from bonajo's interest for alternative ways of living and how our society is organized around ideas of comfort, technology and the well-being of nature. In *Dream Station Space* you will be transported into a performative healing, based on the concepts of Relaxation Revolution.

Watch a video of *Dream Station Space* **here** on Vimeo





Dream Station Space, architectural sculpture and participatory performance
Into The Great Wide Open Festival, Vlieland, 2013

Manimal, 2012

"When I woke up this morning after watching Avatar for the first time yesterday, the world seemed… grey. It was like my whole life, everything I'd done and worked for, lost its meaning. It just seems so… meaningless. I still don't really see any reason to keep… doing things at all. I live in a dying world."

These are the words of one moviegoer posted on an Avatar forum. A recent article on CNN reveals that some people who saw the movie Avatar feel depressed and even suicidal over the idea that the utopian, beautiful world of Pandora does not exist on Earth. The movie's 'eco-psychological' undertones appeal to our desire for a better connection to our world, for a more sustainable relationship with the Earth that would allow the possibility of the kind of beauty and prosperity that's depicted in the movie.

One can see the protagonist in *Manimal* as one of the males from the forum. Yearning for a deeper connection to life he goes out and tries to equalize with other living on this planet. Human beings need a connection to the natural world in order to feel mentally healthy and whole. Whether that connection is a pet, a garden, a tree or a nearby park—it doesn't matter. *Manimal* speaks about this urge for reconnection with the others and the natural. It challenges business managers to focus on the connections of life and enquire the inner-life when thinking about profit.



Manimal, 2012, HD video, 4:28 minutes (film still)



Manimal, 2012, HD video, 4:28 minutes (film still)



Manimal, 2012, HD video, 4:28 minutes (film still)

Genital Panik — An Event for Equality, 2012

The piece *Genital Panik* consists of an open call to participate in an event for equality. In this happening, the participators were asked to sacrifice their shame.

bonajo: “The objective of the gathering was to re-think our approach towards equality in an active way. Its intention was to eliminate the passive gaze with which we approach art, stimulating instead a participatory act in need for a physical entrance. Because changing perception is not merely a question of turning the tables or changing the language. The piece is a re-enactment of Valie Export’s *Genital Panik* (1968). Instead of the gun she holds, I used colour to paint the genitals. By doing so, I aim to free the genitals from their socially and sexually loaded meaning as an object back into a symbol. The colour stands for a playful redefinition of innocence and the freedom of prejudgment. I used the idea of the action-pants as a metaphor for focus. Where does our gaze rest?”



Genital Panik — An Event for Equality, installation, performance, De Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam, 2012



Genital Panik — An Event for Equality, installation, performance, De Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam, 2012

Herstories of the (Social) Naked Body, 2012

The fear of the woman is a fear of the impulses they arouse and the forces they stand for. In the history of art (and culture) the female figure is not seen as actual, limited beings in the world with their own wishes and problems, but as fantasy figures, angels or witches, beauty icons and sexual fantasies, elementals with all the spiritual power of whatever emotions they represent. “A woman is an internal part of a man’s life” (Rousseau). How can that part assume independence and start to act on its own?

In this particular project, the female figure breaks free from her representation and reclaims her image as her own. External power is important here only in so far as it shapes institutions which work to pre-text the fantasies of the dominant group. Had women been that group, they would no doubt have expressed their own fantasies institutionally in the same way. Research concludes that the ideals of body language and body forms have never been so different between the sexes as they are today. In order to open a discussion beyond gender identification and to complete a more spiritual approach towards male female archetypical qualities the figures try to fuse into a hybrid shape representing both or none.



Herstories of the (Social) Naked Body, 2012, video/photo, 4:08 minutes



Herstories of the (Social) Naked Body, 2012, video/photo, 4:08 minutes

Progress, 2011- ongoing

Ongoing series of protests in natural surroundings pointing towards environmental conditions, human's attitude to nature, and ideas about transformative power structures. Revolution as a concept is brought forward not exclusively as an outward condition, but most of all an inner condition.













Your Karma is Leaking, 2012, c-print, framed, 29 x 39 cm

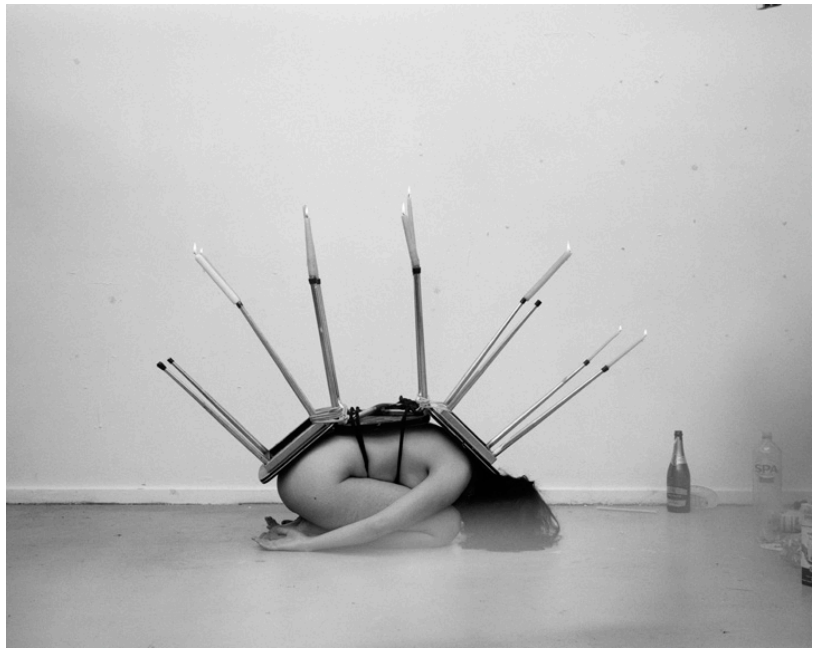


Progress vs. Regress, 2011, performance

Furniture Bondage, 2009

These photographs focus on how our domestic life creates our identity and shapes our future, the relationships that human beings have with the environment, both private and public, and the desire to create harmony within this. The images in this series combine seemingly opposing elements, nude figures with disposable objects; but when combined, these figures become a fusion of the individual and the material, becoming a hybrid that expresses our modern age.

Watch *Furniture Bondage* on Vimeo **here**.
password: diversion





Furniture Bondage (Özlem), 2008 c-print, 145 x 177 cm (above)

Furniture Bondage (Lilly), 2008 c-print, 145 x 177 cm (below)



Furniture Bondage (Hanna), 2007, c-print, 149 x 120 cm



Furniture Bondage (Anne), 2007, c-print, 152 x 110 cm



Furniture Bondage (Janneke), 2007, c-print, 149 x 120 cm



Furniture Bondage (Katja), 2008, c-print, 130 x 104 cm



Furniture Bondage series, collection and installation view Bonnefantenmuseum, The Death of melanie bonajo, 2018, photo by GJ. Van Rooij

Modern Life of the Soul, 2008

This project, in collaboration with Kinga Kielczynska, combines different elements that document the existence of a community in a primeval forest on the eastern border of Poland. This new movement turned their back to modern civilization. They oppose Darwinian theory. The cult members believe that people derive from plants and are trying to reverse evolution by living like them. They create a 'new future' based on the concept of future regress. *Modern Life of the Soul* resulted in both a self-published book as well as a series of photographs.



Modern life of the Soul (Thought in Sense), 2007, c - print framed, 82 x 66 cm



Modern life of the Soul (Vision of Quest), 2007, c - print framed, 91 x 66 cm



Modern Life of the Soul (After the Afterlife), 2007, c-print, framed, 91 x 66 cm



Modern Life of the Soul (Re-appearanc of Dawn), 2007, c-print framed, 123 x 100 cm



Modern Life of the Soul (Fatal Flower Garden), 2007, c-print, framed, 57.5 x 84.5 cm

Thank you for hurting me. I really needed that... , 2005 - ongoing

One emphasis of bonajo's artistic interest is handling emotions. For the photo series *Thank you for hurting me. I really needed that...* they photographed themself, over the course of several years, whenever they were sad or feeling hurt. In this way, bonajo counteracted the conventional, good-mood photograph with a ritual of misery and tearfulness. But while the serial nature of these works already diminishes the pathos, the title refers to the fact "that feelings of discomfort are natural, sometimes we cause them ourselves, and ultimately the responsibility for our states of emotion lies in our own hands".

(Karin Schulze in *Living Like Plants*, 2012)



Installation view (detail) Thank you for hurting me. I really needed that… at Give Me Yesterday, curated by Francesco Zanot, Osservatorio, Fondazione Prada's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan, (Courtesy Fondazione Prada)



Installation view Thank you for hurting me. I really needed that… at Give Me Yesterday, curated by Francesco Zanot, Osservatorio, Fondazione Prada's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan (Courtesy Fondazione Prada)

Publications

Matrix Botanica—Non-Human Persons
240 x 165 mm / 141 pp
Published by Capricious Publishing
2015

Can we send funny animal pictures to space for aliens to discover the Earth's ecosystem? Our enormous access to animal pictures on the Internet tramples our awareness that only humans possess self awareness, language, culture, land and customs. But when does a lion stop being a lion? How are typical Nature photography categories designed by the hands of science replaced by the images of amateurs who document the disappearing surroundings of wildlife by ever expanding urbanization? As a result, do we need complete revised scientific categories for these images?

For 10 years, melanie bonajo has collected thousands of animal pictures online. This book is her exploration of these questions. Non-Human Persons is the first instalment of bonajo's new publication series, Matrix Botanica, designed by Experimental Jetset.







SPHERES
270x210 mm/16 pp
Published by Philippe Karrer
2012

Spheres explores the relationship of the individual to its surroundings in a commodified, globalized culture uncovering how our ideas of identity, nature and value formed by conventions are ever shifting to feelings of uncertainty and instability.

In this publication these issues are approached by trying to newly create, to turn around overpowering views and conditions that are today so influenced by our consumer society and tries to get nearer to traits that are rooted in human nature.



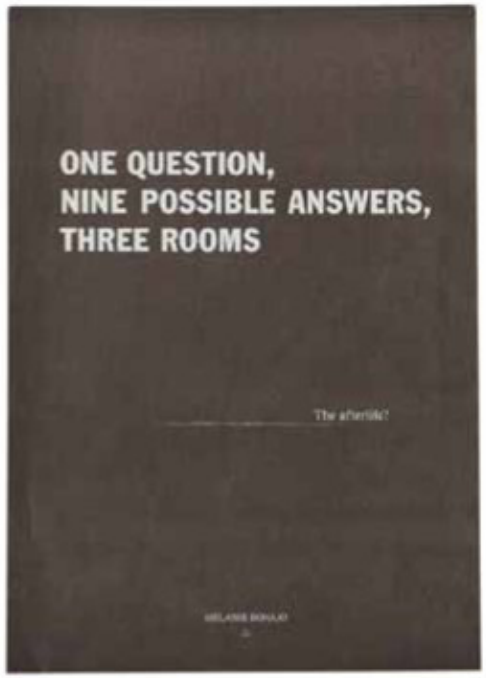


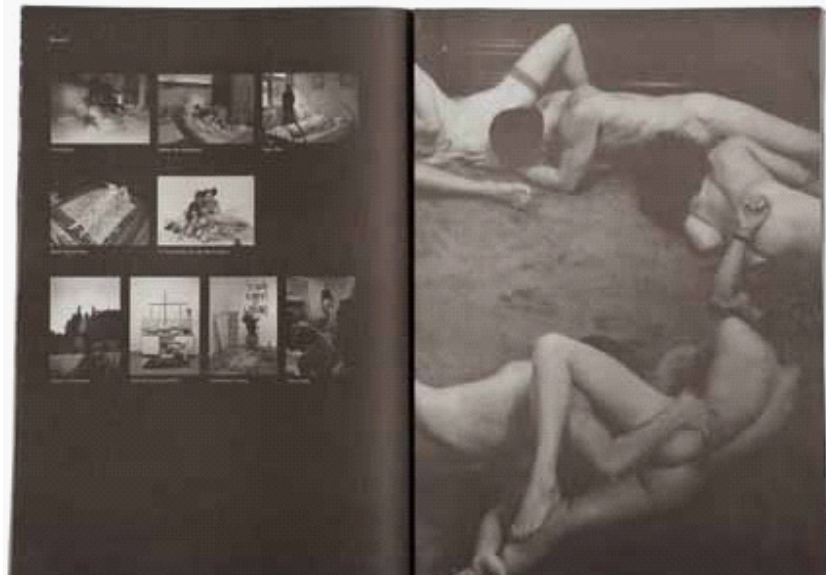
1 Question, 3 Rooms, 9 possible Answers
380x272 mm/40 pp
Published by Künstlerhaus Bethaniën
2011

1 Question, 3 Rooms, 9 possible Answers explores the way irrationality and spirituality become a manual for survival for the alienated human. Searching for a balance between opposites it looks for ingredients which can make spirituality believable. The publication exams the intrinsic value of domestic mysticism where clichés seem to give face to the disenchanted world of the modern human.

Including works by: Shana Moulton, Özlem Atin, Simone Gilges, Bianca Casady, Alexandra Leykauf, Sabina, Maria van der Linden, Kinga Kielczynska, Joseph Marzolla and Emmeline de Mooij.



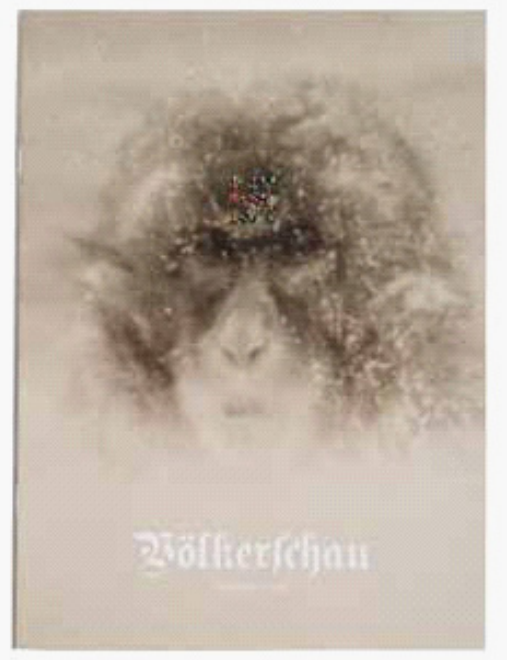


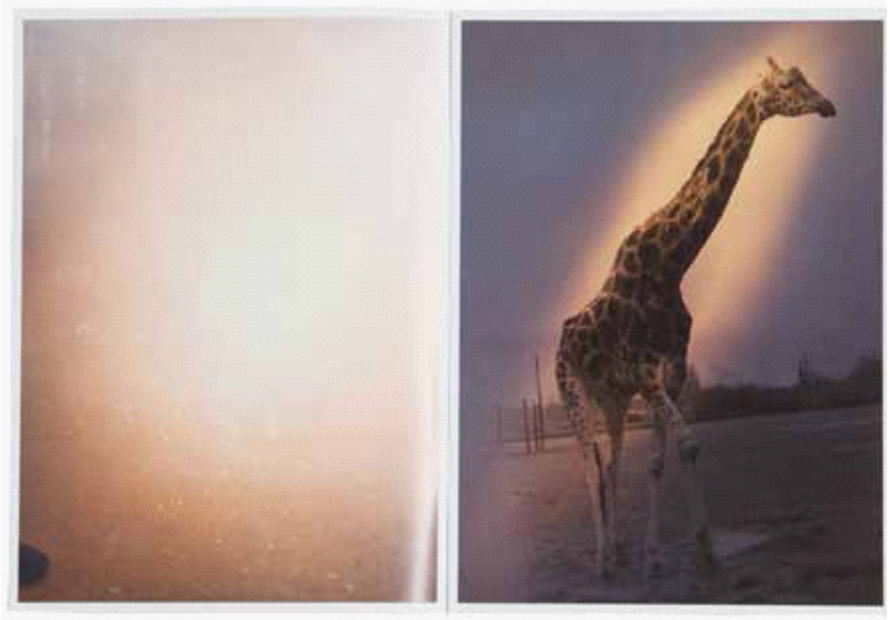


Völkerschau
Catalogue with manipulated barite prints
photographed in Zoo (2008-ongoing)
278x235 mm/16 pp
Published by Capricious Publishing
2009

Völkerschau reflects on the way people treat animals by drawing parallels between idea's of early colonialism, human zoo's and contemporary attitudes towards animals, It warns of a future in which animals no longer exist, and have permanently moved their existence into the sphere of symbols. Due to the loss, people will sanctify animals. Ghosts of the past will fuse with the ghosts of the future, creating a cultural negative in which the mirror with a memory reflects not the past, but presents a desperate need for it; and mankind will keep merging himself more and more with the machine.





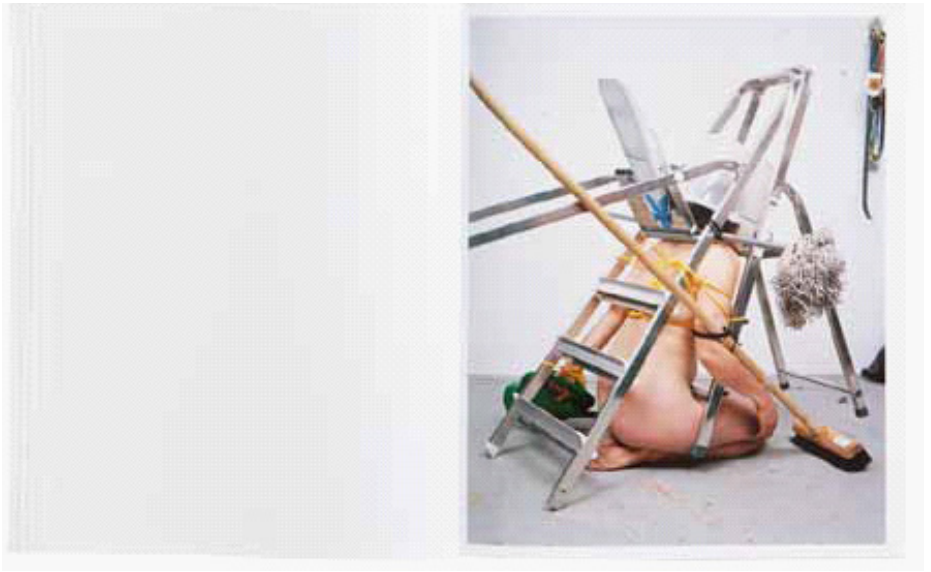


Furniture Bondage
282 x 218 mm/54 pp
Published by Kodoij Press
2009

These photographs focus on how our domestic life creates our identity and shapes our future, the relationships that human beings have with the environment, both private and public, and the desire to create harmony within this.

The images in this series combine seemingly opposing elements, nude figures with disposable objects, but when combined these figures become a fusion of the individual and the material, becoming a hybrid that expresses our modern age.







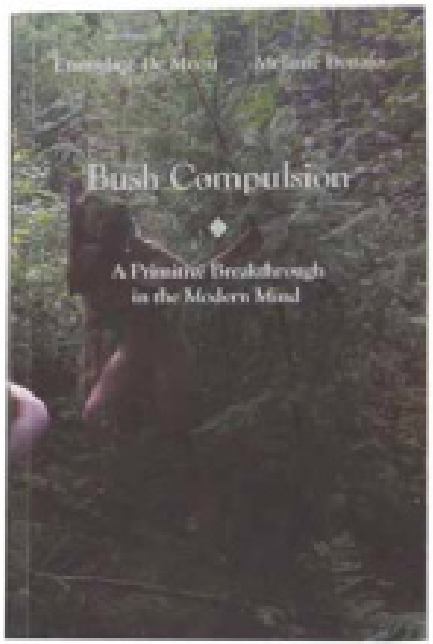
Bush Complusion: A Primitive Breakthrough in the Modern Mind
(in collaboration with Emmeline de Mooij)
180x119 mm/115 pp
Published by Museum Paper
2009

This project brings together various aspects concerning the part of human nature suppressed in our daily existence and tries to proof that the foundation of human nature is instinct, because human is essentially a part of nature. The participants enter into a state of the 'Bush-Soul' by following a strict set of rules. This 'bush' tendency is already inherent in our nature, but via the ritual, it becomes much more dominant.

In this way, the participants regain consciousness of the violent, instinctual, animalistic drives erupting from deep within. The periodic actions, tasks and exercises performed lead eventually to identification and inhabitation in which the line between fact and fiction vaporizes. The participants experience the possibility to reconnect to the foundation of human nature, and are able to integrate the outcome of this experience in a more complete understanding of existence.







Modern Life of the Soul
(in collaboration with Kinga Kielczynska)
410X290 mm/40 pp
self-published
2007

This project combines different elements that document the existence of a community in a primeval forest on the eastern border of Poland. This new movement turned their back to modern civilization. They oppose Darwinian theory. The cult members believe that people derive from plants and are trying to reverse evolution by living like them. They create a “new future” based on the concept of future regress.



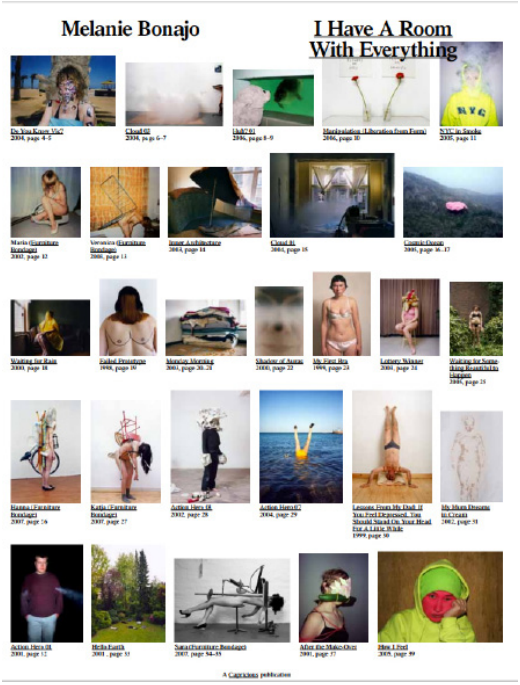




I have a Room with Everything
Monograph
270x210 mm/115 pp
Published by Capricious Publishing
2008









Curriculum vitae

melanie bonajo (they/them/mel)
Born in 1978, Heerlen, NL
Lives and works in Berlin.

Education

1998-2002	Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam, NL
2000	School of Visual Arts, New York City, US
2006-2007	Master course in Religious Science: Hermetica; Mysticism and Western Esotericism, University of Amsterdam, NL

Residencies

2022	Callies, Berlin, DE
2018	International Studio Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York City, US
2014	International Studio Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York City, US
2009-10	Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, NL
2011	Künstlerhaus Bethaniën, Berlin, DE
2011	New Zero Art Space, Yangon, MM
2009	FKK Resort, Ada Bojana, ME
2007	The Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Warsaw, PL

Awards and nominations (selection)

2023	Art Film Spirit Awards, Toronto (nomination)
2019	Prix Pictet (longlist)
2018	Nam June Paik awards (nomination)
	Amsterdamprijs voor de kunst (nomination)
2017	Shortlisted for Prix de Rome 2017
	Campaign Artist for Amsterdam Unseen 2017
2016	Shortlisted for the Dutch Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale

	IFFR Tiger Award for Economy of Love (nomination)
2014	IFFR Tiger Award (nomination)
2013	MKaward (winner)
	Vermeulen Brauckman Kunstprijs (nomination)
2011	C.o.C.a. (nomination)
2007	PUP Award for Modern Life of the Soul

Solo shows

2025	*melanie bonajo. Schule der Liebenden*, curated by Amely Deiss, Kunstpalais Erlangen, DE
	melanie bonajo: Night Soil Trilogy, Pori Museum, FI
	When the body says Yes, curated by Ilari Laamanen, Lahti Museum of Visual Arts Malva, Lathi, FI
2024	*Schule der Liebenden*, curated by Yasmin Naderi Afschar, Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz, DE
	When the body says Yes, curated by Sean Kissane and Annie Fletcher, IMMA Dublin, IE
2023	*When the body says Yes*, curated by Rein Deslé, FOMU, Antwerpen, BE
	When the body says Yes, curated by Maria Arusoo, KUMU Kunstimuuseum, Tallinn, EE
2022	59th Venice Biennale, representing The Netherlands together with her curatorial team Maaike Gouwenberg, Geir Haraldseth and Soraya Pol, Chiesetta della Misericordia, Cannaregio, Venice, IT
2019	*TouchMETell*, LAB 19, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL
	Progress vs. Sunsets, Kunsthalle Lingen, DE
2018	*The Death of Melanie Bonajo*, curated by Geir Haraldseth, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, NL
2017	*Single Mother Songs from the End of Nature*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, DE
2016	*Next Level: Melanie Bonajo — Night Soil*, FOAM, Amsterdam, NL
	Does it matter who orbits?, Rogaland Kunstsenter, Stavanger, NO
	Nachtelijke Dwaling #6, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, NL
2015	*Night Soil—Economy of Love*, AKINCI, Amsterdam, NL
	Nocturnal Gardening, Company Gallery, New York City, US
2013	*Matrix Botanica — Biosphere above Nations*, Museum de Pavijoens, Almere, NL
	So, Does this Hippie Crap really Work?, PPOW Gallery, New York City, US
2011	****** 86 details of Paradise*, Outline, Amsterdam, NL
2010	*Physical Landscapes*, Rijksakademie Open, Amsterdam, NL
2009	*As Thrown Down From Heaven*, PPOW Gallery, New York City, US
	The Grand Exploring Soul and the Point where History failed, Rijksakademie Open, Amsterdam, NL
2008	*Mediummatic* (with Kinga Kielczynska), Mediamatic, Amsterdam, NL

The Power of Negative Thinking (with Kinga Kielczynska), Mediamatic, Amsterdam, NL
2007 *Are All Clichés True?*, Modern Art Museum, Ljubljana, SL

Group shows (selection)

2025 *Erotiek - Voorbij schoonheid en schaamte,* curated by Laura Adams & Edwin Becker, Limburgs Museum, Venlo, NL
Lives of Animals, curated by Joanna Zielinska, Salt Beyoğlu, Istanbul, TR
Transformations, Lahti Museum of Visual Arts Malva, Lathi, FI
2024 *Radicaal - Vrouwelijke kunstenaars en modernisme 1910-1950,* Museum Arnhem, NL
Ik, de ander & de aarde, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, NL
in the hours between dawns, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, FR
Fort Biennale 01: In the Body of Language, curated by Ulrike Buck and Margareth Kaserer, Festung Franzensfeste, South Tyrol, IT
Snakken naar Boijmans, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DE
Dierenleven, curated by Joanna Zielinska, M HKA, Antwerp, BE
2023 *Feels like...ProtoZone13*, with Schule der Liebenden, Curated by Phila Bergmann, Thea Reifler & Vanessa Bosch, Shedhalle, Zürich, CH
POLY. A Fluid Show, KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE
RE/SISTERS, curated by Alona Pardo, Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK
KISS MY SOUL - Hemelse & Aardse Liefde in de Hedendaagse Kunst, Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht, NL
Textiel Biënnale 2023—Images of Power, Museum Rijswijk, NL
1.5 Degrees—Interdependencies between Life, the Cosmos, and Technology, Kunsthalle Mannheim, DE
soft and weak like water, curated by Sook-Kyung Lee, 14th Gwangju Biennale, KR
Textile now—elke draad een verhaal, TextielMuseum, Tilburg, NL
Windows Reconstruction, The 10th Amado Exhibition Award, Amado Art Space, Seoul, KR
Touch Me Tell, curated by Jamie Joung, Seoul Museum of Art, KR
2022 *Mysticism—Rituals. Stillness. Ecstasy.* Limburgs Museum, Venlo, NL
Modern Love (or Love in the Age of Cold Intimacies), National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, GR
Becoming Flower, Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain (MAMAC), Nice, FR
Earthbound—In dialogue with nature, Esch-sur-Alzette, the European Capital of Culture in 2022, LU
Inside the Outside, Coda Museum, Apeldoorn, NL
Rauw. De afkeer van idealisering, Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam, NL
In The Now, LACMA, Resnick Pavilion, Los Angeles, USA
2021 *Freethinkers, from Spinoza till now*, Amsterdam Museum, NL
The Institute of Things to Come, Melanie Bonajo & Pauline Curnier Jardin, curated by Valerio del Baglivo,
Fondazione Sandretto Rebaudengo, Torino, IT.

Kunstfestival Watou, Curated by Benedicte Goesaert, Watouplein, Poperinge, BE
Rettet den Wald!, curated by Anne Berk, Museum Valkenhof, Nijmegen, NL
Come Back as a Flower, Helsinki Art Museum, FI
Phantom (different film screenings), co-curated by Francesca Corona, Short Theatre, Rome, IT
Flowers in Art, curated by Dea Antonsen, Museum ARKEN, Ishøj, DK
Joseph Beuys und die Shamanen, Museum Schloss Moyland, Bedburg—Hau, DE
Re Nature Festival, 's-hertogenbosch, NL
Potential Agrarianisms, Kunsthalle Bratislava, SVK
A Fleur de Monde / A Propos de Toucher, Centre Photographique Rouen Normandie, Rouen, FR

2020 *Bodies of Water,* 13th Shanghai Biennale, CN
Modern Love, curated by Katerina Gregos, Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg, DE; Talinn Art Hall, EE; IMPAKT, Utrecht, NL
*The St*age* | Chus and TBA21, (online art space) TBA21 | Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, AT; Madrid, ES
One Swallow does not make a Summer, Curated by Vincent Schier, Christiane Mennicke-Schwarz and Robert Thiele, Kunsthaus Dresden, DE
Empathie. Geen mens is een eiland. Museum Ijsselstijn, NL
Mirrors of Time, curated by Annemie van Laethem, Erik Croux and Mat Verberkt, Castle Oud-Rekem, BE
On Earth - imaging, technology and the natural world, Foam Photgraphy Museum, Amsterdam, NL, exhibition extended to Le Lieu Unique, Nantes, FR
Spiritualities: Three Contemporary Portrayals of Transcendence and Beliefs, curated by Tereza Jindrová , Meet Factory, Prague, CZ
Liebes Ding - Object Love, curated by Anne Berk, Museum Morsbroich, DE
Animalia, curated by Imke Ruigrok, Garage Rotterdam, NL
Making Kin (Melanie Bonajo, Madison Bycraft, Anne Dule Hee Jordan), Kunsthaus Hamburg, DE

2019 *Johann Friedrich August Tischbein en de ontdekking van het gevoel*, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, NL
Be Fragile! Be Brave!, curated by Rebeka Põldsam, Pori Museum, FI
CosmoFeminism—Neue Feministische Ästhetiken, Zönotéka Project Space, Berlin, DE
Rencontres Arles - On Earth, in collaboration with FOAM photography Museum, Arles, FR
Brief Encounters, LustWarande, Centre For Contemporary Sculpture, Tilburg, NL
Vrijheid. Vijftig Nederlandse Kernkunstwerken sinds 1968, curated by Hans den Hartog Jager, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, NL
Creatures Made to Measure—Animals and Contemporary Design, an exhibition by Martha Herford Museum, DE in collaboration with Tanja Seiner, Design Museum, Ghent, BE

2018 Exhibition Nam June Paik Awards, 2018, Westfälischer Kunstverein, DE
Out of Office, Singer Museum, Laren, NL
Een ontembare kracht, Cobra Museum, Amstelveen, NL
ABN AMRO collection exhibition, *'Natural' Constructions*, curated by Danila Cahen, Circl. ART, Amsterdam, NL
Genius Loci, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-les-Eaux, FR
Bloot/Exposed, Museum Kranenburgh, Bergen, NL

Touch, Neue Gesellschaft für bild. Kunst, Berlin, DE
Freedom of Movement, Stedelijk Museum, Amserdam, NL
Guanghzou Triennial, Guangzhou Museum of Art, Guangzhou, CN
Manifesta 12, Palermo, IT
Anima Mundi, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, NL
Haus der Sinnsuche, gutes leben durch Kultur, curated by Ellen Blumenstein, Kunstsaele, Berlin, DE
Object Love, de Domijnen, Sittard, NL
Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA), curated by Katerina Gregos, Riga, LV
Reis naar de toekomst, Tussendiepen, Drachten, NL
Blind Faith: Between the Visceral and the Cognitive in Contemporary Art, curated by Julienne Lorz, Daniel Milnes, Anna Schneider, Haus der Kunst, München, DE

2017 Exhibition Prix de Rome 2017, Kunsthal, Rotterdam
Homeward Bound, Nicodim gallery, Los Angeles, US
Once more, with feeling, curated by Martine van Kampen, KAF Expo, Almere stad, NL
Summer of Love, Schwarz Foundation, curated by Katerina Gregos, Lesbos, GR
Ben ik een dier? De Domijnen, Sittard, NL
FAÇADE 2017: Face your freedom, CBK Zeeland, NL
Screen Present Tense, HDLU, Zagreb, HR
Wiener Festwochen - The Conundrum of Imagination, curated by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung & Pauline Doutreluingne in collaboration with Leopold Museum Vienna, AU
Bienne Festival of Photography, Biel, CH
Planetary Garden, curated by Ashley Lumb & Laura Mclean, Manuka Arts Centre, AU
Artefact Expo: The Act of Magic, curated by Karen Verschooren & Ilse Huygens, STUK, Leuven, BE
Living in Dreams, curated by Els Fiers & Frank Koolen, De Bond Brugge, BE

2016 *Give Me Yesterday*, curated by Francesco Zanot, Fondazione Prada, IT
True Will, curated by Hilde Jorgensen, KNIPSU, Bergen, NO
Mattering City, curated by Jussi Koitele, SixtyEight Art Institute, Copenhagen, DK
Millennials, Museum Arnhem, NL
Culture Pop Marauders, IN EXTENSO at Mains d'Oeuvres, Saint-Ouen, FR
Do Boomerangs Always Come Back?, curated by Annemie Van Laethem & Erik Croux, Castle Oud-Rekem, BE
Kunstenfestival Watou, Poperinge, BE
Reiskoorts / Wanderlust, De Hallen, Haarlem, NL
What We Have Overlooked, curated by Mirjam Westen, Museum Arnhem at Framer Framed, Amsterdam, NL
Eins, zwei, Wechselschritt, curated by Ellen de Bruijne, Art Cologne, DE
Hacking Habitat - Art of control, curated by Ine Gevers, Utrecht, NL

Close-Up: A New Generation of Film and Video Artists in the Netherlands, EYE, Amsterdam, NL
Future Queer, Ark Kültür, Istanbul, TR

2015 6th Fotofestival Mannheim-Ludwigshaven-Heidelberg, DE
Oét d'r Sjtub, Schunck, Heerlen, NL
Drzava u Krevetu // State Abed, Magacin, Belgrade, SRB

2014 *WeberWoche*, Stroom, The Hague, NL
Still/Life, Dutch Contemporary Photography, travelling exhibition:
FOAM, Amsterdam, NL
Multimedia Arts Museum, Moscow, PL
Perm State Art Gallery and Nizhny Novgorod State Art Museum, RU
Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing, CN
When Elephants Come Marching In, De Appel Art Centre, Amsterdam, NL
The Rock Show, Genk, BE
The Personal is Political, State Abed, Split, HR

2013 *Dissident Desires,* District, Berlin, DE
Women Commentators, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, PL
Van God Los, Museum voor Psychiatrie, Haarlem, NL
Female Power, Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem, NL
Quicktime, Nizhny Novgorod State Art Museum, St. Petersburg, RU
Kaap, Stichting Storm, Utrecht, NL
Erogonous zone, ffffff, Berlin, DE

2012 *The Future that Was (and Is)*, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, NL
20111111111, LEAP Berlin, DE
Topsy Turvy, De Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam, NL

2011 *What's Next,* Skor, Tot Zover, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, NL
The Second Act, de Brakke Grond, Amsterdam, NL
Diversion, Moving-Image Art Fair, New York City, US

2010 *QUICKSCAN NL – New Photography from the Netherlands*, Dutch Cultural Centre, Shanghai, CN
Private Confessions, The Cello Factory, London, UK
Humananimal, Portsmouth Museum of Art, Portsmouth, US
Diversion, ArtLA Contemporary, Los Angeles, US

2009 *Too Much of Everything*, Y3K, Melbourne, AU
Calvin Me, CBK Dordrecht, NL
Thank You for Hurting Me, I really Needed it, Gemeentelijke Aankopen, Stedelijk Museum,Amsterdam, NL
Rebelle, Art and Feminism 1969-2009, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Arnhem, NL

Tenderloveandcare, Galleri Box, Gothenborg, SE
2007 *Are All Cliche's True*, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, SL
Joie de Construction, Peepingtom Gallery, Korean Institute for the Arts, Paris, FR
2006 *Budget 10.000 euro*, W139, Amsterdam, NL
Portaal naar de hemel, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, NL
Everyday Is Not Like Everyday, FOAM, Amsterdam, NL

Screenings (selection)

2024 *When the body says Yes*, Part of the Paradocs section of International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam (IDFA), NL
Schule der Liebenden, NO LIMITS – Disability & Performing Arts Festival 2024, Ballhaus Ost, Berlin, DE
When the body says Yes & *Schule der Liebenden*, *Love is a Verb*, theatre festival by HAU, Berlin, DE
2020 *Night Soil - Fake Paradise* & *Nocturnal Gardening*, Musrara Festival, Jerusalem, IL
Progress vs Regress, Louis Hartlooper Complex (Stichting met je Hart), NL
2019 *Night Soil - Economy of Love*, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, CH
Progress vs Sunsets, Contemporary Art and Visual Culture, Bildmuseet, Umeå, SE
Night Soil - Economy of Love & *Progress vs Regress,* L'Aubette, Strasbourg, FR
Night Soil - Fake Paradise, Hemp Museum, Amsterdam, NL
Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening, Kunstnacht Nijmegen, NL
Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening, Hoogte 80 Festival, Arnhem, NL
2017 *Progress vs. Regress, Night Soil - Economy of Love*, Die Politik der Freundschaft, Kunstverein Leipzig, DL
Matrix Botanica, Gare du Noord, Amsterdam, NL
Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening, Manimal, HAU Berlin, DL
Night Soil - Nocturnal Gardening, The Second Nature, Riga, LV
Pee on Presidents (plus curating programme Was will das Weib? Das Weib will!), Cinema Erotica, EYE Film Museum, Amsterdam, NL
Night Soil - Fake Paradise, KUNSTENFESTIVALDESARTS, Brussels, BE
Night Soil - Fake Paradise, Kyiv International Short Film Festival, Kyiv, UA
Progress vs. Regress, Beat Film Festival, Moscow, RU
Night Soil - Economy of Love, Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival, Bucharest, RO
2016 *Night Soil - Economy of Love*, Perdu, Amsterdam, NL
Progress vs. Regress, KNIPSU, Bergen, NO
Night Soil - Economy of Love, beursschouwburg, Brussels, BE
Night Soil - Economy of Love, 20th Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, CH
Night Soil - Economy of Love, Tate Modern: 2016 cinema programme, London, UK

Fake Paradise, Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE
Night Soil - Economy of Love, International Film Festival Rotterdam, NL
Progress vs. Regress, Kunsthalle Basel, CH
2013 *Heart of No*, Nederlands Film Festival, Utrecht, NL
Private life of Animals, Nederlands Film Festival, Utrecht, NL
Pee on Presidents, IDFA, Amsterdam, NL
Matrix Botanica; Biosphere Above Nations, Witte de With, Rotterdam, NL
2012 *White Cosmos*, Marrakesh Biennial, MA
2011 *Diversion*, Moving Image, NYC
2010 *Diversion*, ArtLA, Contemporary, Los Angeles, US
2008 *Hunting and Gathering*, GLU, Amsterdam/Worm, Rotterdam, NL
Furniture Bondage, Loops, ParkTV
2006 *Mr. and Mrs. Mulder*, Berlinale Filmfestival, Berlin, DE
2005 *Taking Photographs of Things You Want to Forget*, Lost&Found, Amsterdam, NL

Publications (selection)

2015 *Matrix Botanica—Non-Human Persons* (Capricious Publishing)
2014 *Pee on Presidents* (Self Publish Be Happy)
2012 *SPHERES* (Philippe Karrer)
2009 *Furniture Bondage* (Kodoijpress)
Bush Compulsion, A Primitive Breakthrough in the Mind (Museumpaper)
I Have A Room With Everything (Capricious Publishing)
2007 *Modern Life Of The Soul* (Artist Book)

Performance (selection)

2020 *Boundary Boss* (videoclip) , community project
2019 *Do Disturb Festival*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
Brief Encounters, LustWarande, Tilburg, NL
2017 *Wiener Festwochen - The Conundrum of Imagination*, Vienna, AT
Pilgrimage of the Animals, Ten days six nights, Tate Modern, London, UK
2016 *OthersMother Song*, ZaZaZoZo together with Splitter Splatter and Pussy Tutorials, FOAM, Amsterdam, NL

	Progress vs Regress, Kunsthalle Basel, CH
	Liste Art Fair Performance Project Programma, curated by Eva Birkenstock, Basel, CH
	KAMP KAYA, KUB Arena, Kunsthaus Bregenz, AT
	Incubate, Tilburg, NL
2014	ZaZaZoZo, QQC, Paradiso, Amsterdam, NL
	PS1/MoMA, New York City, US
	The Artist Speaks, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, NL
2013	*Release of Inua*, debut album of ZaZaZoZo (Tsunami Addiction)
	What is your Jazzzzz, Stedelijk Museum, NL
	Into The Great Wide Open, Vlieland, NL
	Fying for Beginners, Kaap, Utrecht, NL
2009	*Demons, Devils, Monsters and Other Intermediate Beings* (with Joseph Marzolla), Stedelijk Museum BA, Amsterdam, NL
2008	*Removing Influence of Places and Objects* (with Kinga Kielczynska), Worm, Rotterdam, NL
	Heilig Vuur, Removing Influences of Places and Objects (with Kinga Kielczynska), Stedelijk Museum, NL

Lectures/teaching/workshop (selection)

2024	*Love is a Verb*, theatre festival by HAU, Berlin, DE
2020	*Animalia*, De Garage, Rotterdam, NL
2019	*Massage Mayham*, Sexyland, Amsterdam, NL
	Can I get a Cuddle?, Impakt Festival, Utrecht, NL
2016	Isa Genzken Through the Eyes of Others, artist talk for Iza Genzken's exhibition *Mach dich hübsch!* Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL
2015	School of Visual Arts, New York City, USA
	Alfred University, Rochester, USA
	Östersund Akademie, Jämtpland/Härjedalen, SE
	Cooper Union, New York City, USA
	Sandberg Institute, Cure Master, Amsterdam, NL
	Banff Art Centre, Banff, CA
2014	Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, NL
2013	*Anarchy* (project by Nicoline van Harskamp), Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, NL
2011	(Off)hrs Honolulu, USA
	Beamclub Amsterdam, NL
	l'ECAL, Lausanne, CH
2010	School of Visual Arts, The Hague, NL

2008 Aperture Foundation, NYC, USA
Parsons School of Design, NYC, USA
2007 Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, NL

Press/interviews (selection)

Metropolis M, “melanie bonajo: Ecologieën van compassie”, Ilga Minjon, 16 November, 2022
Metropolis M, “Een olijfolie overgoten knuffeldroom - melanie bonajo in Chiesetta dell aMisericordia”, Machteld Leij, 19 April, 2022
Het Parool, “Deze video installatie laat kinderen praten over hun grenzen”, Jan Pieter Ekker, 2020
Mr Motley, “Op elkaar. Met elkaar. Voor elkaar.” Jasper Griepink, 2020
Vice, “Waarom Melanie Bonajo graag blote vrouwen in de natuur wilde fotograferen”, Noor Spanjer, 2019
Art 511 Magazine, “Pankhurst in the Park Centenary Edition”, 2018
Metropolis M, “Melanie - Bonajo - Urban Shamanism”, Guus van Engelshoven, 1 April, 2018
NRC Handelsblad, “De manipulatie van mens tot object”, Hans den Hartog Jager on *Blind Faith* (Haus der Kunst, München), 28 March, 2018
De Volkskrant, “Mag je een tentoonstelling met een orgasme vergelijken? Nou ja, als het mag, dan hier, bij Melanie Bonajo (*****)”, Anna van Leeuwen on *The Death of Melanie Bonajo*, solo show in Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 29 April, 2018
NRC Handelsblad, “Melanie Bonajo eist respect voor aarde, mens en dier”, Janneke Wesseling, 2 May, 2018
Het Parool, “Kunstenaar Melanie Bonajo is een geëngageerde veelvraat”, Hannah Stöve, 19 September, 2018
NRC Handelsblad, “Object Love zet objecten op een voetstuk”, Sandra Smets on *Object Love* at Museum de Domijnen, Sittard, 16 May, 2018
De Gooi en Eemlander, “Speelse en kritische kunst”, Paola van de Velde on *Object Love*, 27 June, 2018
H-Art, “Het drukkende bezit”, on *Object Love*, 21 June, 2018
Public Seminar, 2017, interview by Bart van der Heide, Goethe Instituut, organised by Kunstvlaai, Amsterdam, NL
Berlin Art Link, “Play // Human and Non-Human Hybrids: An Interview with Melanie Bonajo”, Ilyn Wong, 3 October, 2017
BOMB - Artists in Conversation, “Ieva Misevičiūtė”, 15 July 2017
Metropolis M, “Melanie Bonajo’s The Night Soil Trilogy is nu compleet”, Debbie Broekers, 4 October, 2016
Metropolis M, “Melanie Bonajo Feminisme in neon-kleuren”, Laurence Scherz, 16 December, 2015
Metropolis M, “Most Popular Female Solo: Melanie Bonajo”, 1 October, 2015
Huffington Post, “Meet The High Priestess Of The Anti-Selfie, Dutch Artist Melanie Bonajo”, Priscilla Frank, 15 September, 2014
BOMB - Artists in Conversation, “Kim Hiorthøy”, 29 October, 2014
Dazed Digital, “Anti-selfies and bondage furniture”, 1 August, 2014
Art Forum, “MELANIE BONAJO”, Courntey Yoshimura, 8 October 2014
Blouin Artinfo, interview with melanie bonajo about the solo show *One Question, Three Rooms, 44 Possible Answers* at PPOW Gallery, 1 March, 2013
MK-Award, interview with melanie bonajo, 8 September 2013
Foam Magazine, “Construct”, 4 July 2012

Metropolis M, “Where does your gaze rest? Performance Melanie Bonajo”, Julia Geerlings, 4 July, 2012
Metropolis M, “Spheres of Melanie Bonajo”, Jolien Verlaek, 28 September, 2012

Magazines/reviews (selection)

See all this, Famous#8, Livraison#1, Capricious#1, Glumagazine#1, Nuke#2, Yang (yangtijdschrift.be), Janus,Vice, Kutt, Zoo, Bonn, SVA-magazine, Verenigd Sandbergen, Frame Forecast Magazine, Free-Eye, Eye-magazine, Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad, Limburgsdagblad, Foam magazine, Delete, Items, NO-Friends, ping-magazine, Queensday book, Presence, Amsterdam Weekly, Neue Zurich Zeitung, Mollusk, Art&Auction,Art & Culture, Curo, Artpress, Blend,Cederteg n#1,GLU #3,livraison 3#, Famous NYC, Gupmagazine, Dazed en Confused, Vorn magazine, That Damm The Duo Issue, Tubelight, NRC next, Les Beaux Arts magazine, Liberation, Art Lovers NYC, WAD magazine, Connaissances des Arts, French Vogue, Artforum Online, Liberation, Ful, '100', Future Images, FOAM magazine, White Wall, Theme, Livraison#3, Future Images, Kunstbeeld, Rebelle, Frieze magazine Issue #135, 100 New Artists, by Francesca Gavin 2011, Openlab magazine, A4 magazine, G.A.G, Missy Magazine.

Writing (selection)

FOAM magazine, Metropolis M, Mister Motley, Aperture Magazine, ARTFORUM