

Sonia BAZANTAY

Portfolio

« We ourselves are sea, sands, corals, seaweeds, beaches, tides, swimmers, children, waves...seas and mothers. ¹ »

On the border between two worlds, Sonia Bazantay traces a journey from design to visual arts, from the living world to the unreal. To demonstrate her assimilation of it, she proposes new cohabitations: fascinated by the toxicity of materials, manipulating also the impure, she gives shape to disorder and future survivals.

From the soil that she fertilizes with pigments, ceramics, textiles, steel, earth, plastics, ropes, inks and eyeshadows, she deploys invasive compositions with a strong political charge which refer to her native Breton shore, the material being «a reflection on the fault line between natural and artificial landscape.² »

Her work is also influenced by a myriad of sources, from which she draws to create her « Dévidoirs-Balises, Cosmogrammes, Lignes Molles, Polypes, Bobines, Racines », and immersive spaces. Mythology, looms, technological objects; from the first troglodyte houses, to the “Bubble Houses” of the 1960s, all her recent installations are nourished by environmental writings where design, the primary source she uses to become one with the material, gives life to textures and worlds from below the surface.

Her work is a collision of aesthetics that of territories transformed by humans, which she confronts with fluid topographies, embodied by her rejection of capitalist rationality and by the constant reflection that she links to those by Donna Haraway and Astrida Neimanis in their understandings of the ecological emergency.

Sonia Bazantay offers us the possibility of a breath, facing her recreated worlds, we imagine the ebb and flow of the sea waves, what they carry away, what they deposit, the intimate networks that they connect and the bodies that they recreate. Those are “watery bodies”, emerging within resilient spaces.

Sonia Bazantay was born in Rennes in 1971, graduated from ESSA Duperré Paris specializing in Fashion and Environment and from Parsons’ School in New York.

Laureen Picaut
art critic and curator, 2023.

¹ Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, « Sorties : Out and Out : Attacks/ Ways Out/Forays », Newly Born Woman, Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p.89.

² Sonia Bazantay, interview with the artist, 2023.



« Attelage »: ceramics, wood and textile fibers in tension,
 « Terre Mère - Maison Future », Agnès b, Montpellier, May-July 2023.

« Terre Mère - Maison Future » :

Welcome to my house, a house that is returning to the state of a rock shelter. The house is melting, is it burning or is it submerged? No matter here, there is at first our desire for roundness. We are «warpped» like in a troglodyte habitat. Rest and roundness are here a response to the modern dictate of the square.

A subversion of the objects occurs, by their own substance, the curved and soft lines against every angle, against the tight line of «performance», «efficiency» and modern power. The textile and the earth itself enter in rebellion, they claim a certain indeterminacy. Borrowing the aspect of lower beings like worms and roots, they remind us where we belong and the urgency of sharing.

The house, like our thoughts, is also dwelled by others.



« Terre Mère - Maison Future » : cotton, plaster, pigments, ceramics and textile fibers, Agnès b, Montpellier, May -July 2023..



« L'Arbre » standing and « Holobionte Bubble-gum » on the wall, « Terre Mère - Maison Future » : Cedar, cotton, plaster, earth, pigments, ceramics and textile fibers, Agnès b, Montpellier, May-July 2023.



« Terres Mères »: ceramics, « Terre Mère - Maison Future »
Agnès b, Montpellier, Mai-Juillet 2023.



« L'arbre », on the wall: « Racine » & « Adonis pariétal »: Cedar, cotton, earth,
pigments & gesso, Agnès b, Montpellier, Mai-Juillet 2023.



« Ligne Molle » performance in « Retourner la surface »,
ICI-CCN, National Choreographic Center of Montpellier, June-July 2022.

« Retourner la surface »:

In this environment, I selected works that make the exhibition space a moving place of exchanges and fusion between beings and objects. We are physically engaged: two large portals punctuate the space, and the plaster “writings” on the floor led the visitor to cross them.

At the edge of the night, what is below, the ignored or despised, blossoms under the surface. Tones and depths, even tenuous, dilute beings and give density to the space. We sink into the state of the diver.

All the same, touching the sunset, the twilight or the eclipse, drives us to experience the shift, the sudden crossing of a border between the worlds. This is why I also paid particular attention to the lighting.



« Retourner la surface »: installation with performance at ICI-CCN National Choreographic Center of Montpellier, June-July 2022.



« Écritures »: plaster Installation « Retourner la surface », ICI CCN Montpellier, "Chambre d'écho", June-July 2022.



« Dévidoir-Balise »: Ball bearing, wood, steel, acrylic and ropes, 230X80cm, ICI CCN Montpellier, June-July 2022.



« Ligne Molle »: rope and textiles, « Retourner la surface », ICI CCN Montpellier, Chambre d'écho, July 2022.



« Ligne Molle » performance in « Retourner la surface », ICI-CCN Montpellier, June-July 2022.



« Protée #2 »: plaster, plastic, inks, watercolor, Dim 65X32cm, February 2021

« Entre les eaux »:

Qui suis-je?

Mon nom change avec la luminosité.

Who am I?

My name changes with the brightness.

To respond to this odd idea of “identity” while we are in constant evolution, I choose Proteus, nudibranchs and cephalopods as totems.

As a cephalopod, the god Proteus metamorphoses according to his mood. Here, body fragments as autonomous beings present us permeable, the result of an ever-changing ecosystem.

The fleeting pastels and washes, flush with plaster’s surfaces: an echo of the shimmering of the abyss which disappears from skin when out of water.

We sink below the surface, « Entre les eaux », where all boundaries are blurred.



« Protée #1 »: Ink & watercolor on plaster, Dim 60X27cm
January 2021.



« Méduse »: Ink & watercolor on plaster, Dim 40X28cm,
March 2021.



"Sonde n°4" Detail: ball bearing, wood, plastic, textile, epoxy resin and inks, workshop view, February 2020.

Encore:

Probes and tachometers:

Sculpting, destroying, building over again: my devices act in the landscapes of our depths. These tools expand our senses and participate in our global ecosystem like probes and tachometers.

Survey and predation of the landscape: the tripods and other devices symbolize our industrial and predatory nature, their head can move. Laser telemeter or topographer's tachometer quantify space. This is the promise of earthworks and drilling: the sliced landscape will soon become a product.

As if suddenly brought to the surface, these tools seem to have been digested by the iridescent sediments like animals of the great depths. Color translates materials from inert to the living. The "décor" merges natural and manufactured materials: floating from one material to another, we design our new hybrid essence.



"Triton": Dim 80X46X16cm, Plaster, pigments, acrylics, inks, eye shadows, February 2022.

« Limons » :

Since 2020, I explored plaster and materials carrying a specific temporality, they enable me to translate how our affects densify and transform us.

My sculptures emerge from mud and silt. Their skin mixes the shimmering and the muted, they exist from below. This is the so-called "cryptic" fauna, applying to invertebrates and batrachians, that live hidden and with a camouflage.

The versatility of the plaster allows me to explore this adventure of imprints, mimicry, fusions, precipitates and reactions close, to our inner states. I approach «from the inside» the phenomena of sweating, concretion, and sedimentation: another relationship to time which goes beyond the individual.



« Solastalgie », Plaster, pigments, oil, inks, baking soda, eyeshadow, June 2021.



« Solastalgie »: Plaster, pigments, oil, inks, baking soda, eyeshadow, Dim: 75X40X28cm, June 2021.



“THE MEADOWS”: Detail, Japanese cedar, Sugi-ban, acrylic, Aso-gun, Kumamoto, Japan, September-November 2017.

« THE MEADOWS »:

“The Meadows” are installations built in the rural landscape during a residency in Aso National Park, on the island of Kyushu in Japan, from September to November 2017. They were made with the support of the association “Artist in Aso”, from Oguni community and Kumamoto province.

“The Meadows” is based on the serial repetition of elementary construction units to weave space. They are reminiscent of fragments of fences, devices for fodder or cereals storage. Here I merge my technic for coloring wood with the traditional Son Sughi Ban.

This project was conceived in « résonance » with local agricultural practices: Aso Park and its traditions are classified as being of world interest by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).



"THE MEADOWS": In-situ installations in Japanese cedar, sugi-ban (burnt wood) and acrylic, total dimensions L800X300X260cm, Residence "Artists in Aso", Aso-gun, Kumamoto, Japan, September - November 2017.

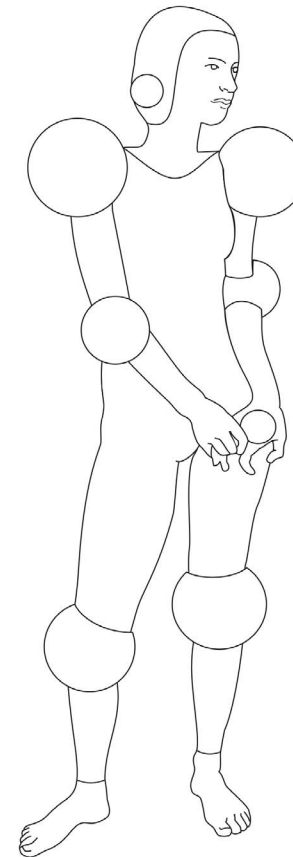
BIOGRAPHY :

Sonia Bazantay is a contemporary French artist born in 1971. Graduated from ESSA Duperré Paris and Parsons' School NYC., she received a double training in both Fine Arts and Applied Arts. A higher Diploma of Applied Arts "DSAA fashion and environment » with the congratulations of the jury, strengthened her own transversal approach between Fine Arts and Design. Adding her personal researches to the experience in design and forecast agencies, she created "out of standard" sets & spaces for Fashion.

From the end of the 90s to 2008, she shared a life between Paris and Milan, working with Alessandro Mendini, le Public Système, Mattel, Trudi, Chicco. In the 2000s, she carried on creating specific environments for Nelly Rodi, Petit Bateau, Caffarel, Diesel and other brands.

Consecutively member of the French Color Committee and of the MIC (its Italian equivalent), she has contributed to numerous consultation meetings intended for the textile sector and industry. This expertise places color in particular at the heart of his practice.

Today, her action has focused on her practices and transmission. She lives and works in Montpellier.



BODYDRIPPING :
Outfit for performances,
Digital drawing, June 2016.

EDUCATION:

- 1990-91 ESAA Duperré, Paris : BTS Textile Arts and Printing.
- 1991-92 PARSON'S SCHOOL, New York. Undergraduate in Fine Arts;
New School for Jazz & Juilliard School, New York.
Fine-Arts and Contemporary music.
- 1993-95 ESAA Duperré Paris, DSAA: Master's Diploma in Applied Arts:
Fashion and Design.
- 1993-95 École du Louvre: Art History:

CREDITS & SCHOLASHIPS:

- 2018 "Aide Individuelle à la Création" state credits from Cultural Department
DRAC Occitanie, Montpellier.
- 1991-92 Parsons'School's NY Scholarships given by both Parsons'School NY
and the Paris City Hall.

RESIDENCIES:

- 2022 « Retourner la Surface », Installation at ICI-CCN , Chambre d'Écho,
Choreographical National de Montpellier.
- 2017 « The Meadows » Installations and workshops around traditional
practices At Oguni-Machi, Aso-gun; with "Artist in Aso" Association
Aso District, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan.

PUBLIC MARKETS:

- 2016 « La Ronde des Quatre Saisons » : courtyard fresco in the public schools,
after winning a competitive call for bids, City of Montpellier, France.

PUBLIC ACTIONS & WORKSHOPS:

- 2018-19 « LOOM » Workshop #1, weaving and breeding in space with DNMADE
fashion students with DRAC Arts Visuels Montpellier at Ernest
Hemingway's high school, Nîmes.
- 2017 Workshops in Oguni Junior High School, Kumamoto, Japan.
- 2016 « La Ronde des Quatre Saisons » : courtyard fresco in the public schools,
after winning a competitive call for bids, City of Montpellier, France.
- 2015 « Raconter le Design »: with Indigo d'Oc, Métropole Montpellier
Méditerranée, CCI, and DesignLab; at l'Opéra Comédie, Montpellier.

SHOWS:

- 2023 « Terre Mère - Maison Future », solo-show Agnès b, Montpellier.
- 2022 « Retourner la Surface », Installation at ICI-CCN , Chambre d'Écho,
Choreographical National de Montpellier.
- 2018 Collective « Trois Femmes dans la ville », Espace Dominique Bagouet,
Ville de Montpellier.

- 2017 Collective with Artists in Aso: « The Meadows » in Aso Kumamoto Japan.
- 2016 « Lewitt's » : at Designers' Days & PDW (Paris Design week) at Galerie
Joseph 11 rue de Turenne Paris 3e, France.
- 2015 « Espaces Imprévus » at Galerie Saint-Ravy, Montpellier.
- 2014 Collective: « Lewitt's » & « Arlecchino » at Now Le Off; Cité de la Mode
et du Design, quai d'Austerlitz, Paris, Paris Design Week, France

PERFORMANCES:

- 2017 « Body Dripping » "Artplex Festival" Kumamoto, Japan.

DESIGN:

- 2014-15 Deuz : (top of the line, eco-friendly toys): artistic direction, concept and
R&D (Paris-Montpellier) France
- 2011-13 Exsud interiors, Thermoformed glass design, Poland
- 2004-06 Caffarel s.p.a (Lindt&Sprungli), Artistic direction, concepts, furniture
design, Turin, Italie.
- 2001-02 Diesel s.p.a: Artistic direction, Visual merchandising for Diesel StyleLab,
Paris. Buyer and adviser for Flagship stores.
- 1997 -99 « Atelier Mendini », working with Alessandro Mendini :
Furniture for Alessi & Mastrangelo ;
Sculptures for Club Méditerranée;
Researches for «Eco-Mimetico», scenography, furniture design,
International Milano Furniture Fair, Milano Italy,

ARTISTIC DIRECTION AND STAGE DESIGN:

- 2015 « Raconter le Design »: with Indigo d'Oc, Métropole Montpellier
Méditerranée, CCI, and DesignLab; at l'Opéra Comédie, Montpellier.
- 2001-03 Cosmoprof 2002 et 2003 (International Cosmetic fair) Bologna, Framesi
S.p.A, Stage design & scenography. Salso for Wella S.p.a, in Milan, Italy.
- 1999-01 Nelly Rodi, Agency Paris, Stage designer for « Maison » department:
Salon de la Mode Enfantine / Salon du Prêt à Porter / Salon Maison et Objets.
In charge of Visual Merchandising coordination « Petit Bateau » : France .

TEACHING

- 2021 -22 Jury DSAA Mode et Environnement : Master's Diploma in Applied Arts
ESAA Duperré, Paris.
- 2020 -22 Textile & Contemporary Practices, Space Design at Université de Nîmes.
Département Arts et Sciences, Nîmes.
- 2020 -22 Design & Contemporary arts, «Cultures de l'image», MBA 1th & 2th year,
ISG Luxury Management, Paris.
- 2017 - 21 Design, R&D, Visual merchandising, Luxury Retail, Fashion History, Press
and Fashion's photography, for Luxury Bachelors at Isefac, Montpellier.

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