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**Press release**  
**Marie Lorenz, *CONFLUENCE***

**Solo show at 19, Crac Montbéliard**  
**From 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2024**  
**to 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2025**



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1 – Marie Lorenz, portrait.

2 – *Newtown Odyssey*, 2023. Documentation image of a floating opera that Marie Lorenz staged on Newtown Creek in Queens. Score written by Kurt Rohde and the libretto by Dana Spiotta.

## Marie Lorenz, *CONFLUENCE*

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«Please bring strange things.  
Please come bringing new things.  
Let very old things come into your hands.  
Let what you do not know come into your eyes.  
Let desert sand harden your feet.  
Let the arch of your feet be the mountains.  
Let the paths of your fingertips be your maps  
And the ways you go be the lines of your palms.  
Let there be deep snow in your inbreathing  
And your outbreath be the shining of ice.  
May your mouth contain the shapes of strange words.  
May you smell food cooking you have not eaten.  
May the spring of a foreign river be your navel.  
May your soul be at home where there are no houses<sup>1</sup>.»

*CONFLUENCE* by Marie Lorenz explores the notions of common goods and places. Observing the relationships between an environment and the organisms that inhabit it, the artist sees her subjects as fellow travelers, from whom it is possible to move reality towards a poetics. She adopts an anthropological posture of «participant observation [through which] the correspondence, whether with people or with other things, is a labour of giving back what we owe to the human and non-human beings with which and with whom we share our world, for our own existence and formation<sup>2</sup>.» By surveying territories, she produces new narratives like a storyteller.

The exhibition highlights the urgent need to reappropriate controversial subjects in a sensitive and cultural way, while preserving the dissensus<sup>3</sup> they imply. Indeed, “[artists’] interpretations are themselves real changes when they transform the forms of visibility of a common world and, with them, the capacities that any bodies can exercise on a new common landscape<sup>4</sup>”. So, these goods and places of the common are as many sources of inspiration as they are tools with which to reflect on the complex and delicate relationships we maintain with our territories, our histories, our ecosystems, our habitat and our fellow human beings.

“An urban river is the best place in the world to contemplate the future of our civilization. By understanding these realms and our relationship to them, we might change course, not like the industrialists and city planners of the 1900s or 1990s, but in the comparatively simple task of shifting our own perception.<sup>5</sup>”

For the past 20 years, Marie Lorenz has navigated New York harbor on a boat she built from scratch, using plywood and fiberglass. She brings along family

1- Ursula K. LeGuin, “Initiation Song from the Finders’ Lodge” in *Always Coming Home*, Harper and Row, New York City, 1985.

2- Tim Ingold, “Art and Anthropology for a Living World”, conference script for the seminar *Prendre le parti des choses. Publications hybrides sur les processus de création* by Ensadlab in May 2018.

3- Dissensus must not only shake up the map of the given, but also institute new relationships between elements, opening new possibilities.

4- Translated in English from French by the author: Jacques Rancière *Politique de la littérature*, Éditions Galilée, Paris, 2007.

5- Marie Lorenz, research text for *CONFLUENCE*, March 2024.



and friends, other artists and volunteer participants, moving from river to river and islet to islet. This long-term process-work, *Tide and Current Taxi*, feeds a constant intuition in the artist's work, that "when you find a network of forgotten public space, it opens the entire city"<sup>6</sup>. As unprecedented, shared experiences, each crossing is an opportunity to document and map the surroundings. These elements are catalogued publicly to encourage their dissemination. They are also an opportunity to collect various types of garbage found in the water or on the shore, which the artist then reuses in her visual works.

From 2021 to 2023, she is collaborating on Newtown Odyssey, an interdisciplinary opera performance at Newtown Creek with composer Kurt Rhode and writer Dana Spiotta. The librettist's narrative, combined with a specific scenography, aims to make visible the field of possibilities of these aquatic environments relayed to peri-urban areas, as well as the unique ecological challenges imposed by industrial pollution. The result is a recognition of waterways as social spaces, as sites where landscape aesthetics can capture the messy ways in which we relate to natural and unnatural things.

Marie Lorenz invites us to reimagine these spaces through a body of work that often defies categorization, existing on the edge of the ephemeral and the tangible. Through this almost daily practice, she is part of a certain history of seascape art, as well as that of a multidisciplinary contemporary art that brings together performance, happening and mesological aesthetics<sup>7</sup>.

For Montbéliard, the artist chose as her starting point a boat she had built for an exhibition in Rotterdam during the global pandemic, but which she was never able to put afloat. It becomes the cornerstone of an exhibition that mentally follows the journey by waterway from the Netherlands to France via the Rhone-Rhine canal and, by the presence of the familiar vehicle, from the Allan valley around Montbéliard to Newton Creek in New York. Thus, *CONFLUENCE* combines textile prints, sculptures, videos and sound experiments to propose a narrative that represents both places simultaneously, bringing together fragments that could come from either through a game of blurring geographical tracks.

The walls of the art center are covered with large prints made from found objects using the direct ink transfer process known as "Gyotaku"<sup>8</sup>; a suspended installation incorporates fragments and debris from here and there; the boat is suspended in its movement and a video projection proposes a narrative told by the «voice of water» that unites the two landscapes in a single journey, these distant places merging into a single protagonist.

In her own words, Marie Lorenz was inspired to design this exhibition by a quote from the American science-fiction author Kim Stanley Robinson:

6- From Meredith Davis "Re-imagining the river: the transformation of New York's waterways in Marie Lorenz's *Tide and Current Taxi*" in *Open Rivers : Rethinking the Mississippi – Water, Art and Ecology*, N°3, Summer 2016.

7- "The emergence of the theme of aesthetics in mesology appears, at first, through research on the relationship between art and environment, whose artistic practices play a fundamental role [...] in the construction of a mesological aesthetic. Landscape has been given priority, as it constitutes the sensitive expression of human environments. [...] The mesological approach, in principle, takes a different look at reality: that of an integrated vision of reality while avoiding the binary logic of subject/object. [...]. From this perspective, contemporary landscapes play an important role as a manifestation of the links established between human beings and their environment, enabling them to inhabit the Earth." Lenice Da Silva Lira, "Pour une esthétique mésologique : les humanismes environnementaux en question" in *Sociétés 2020/2* (n° 148).

8- Traditionally, this type of printing method has been developed to record natural objects, such as leaves or fishes. Here, the artist replaces these elements with human-made objects and materials. The prints feature plastic relics that might evoke a shell or a stone, bearing witness to this century's contribution to the natural world.

"Science fiction works by a kind of double action, like the glasses people wear when watching 3D movies. One lens of science fiction's aesthetic machinery portrays some future that might actually come to pass; it's a kind of proleptic realism. The other lens presents a metaphorical vision of our current moment, like a symbol in a poem. Together the two views combine and pop into a vision of History, extending magically into the future<sup>9</sup>."

With *CONFLUENCE*, Marie Lorenz proposes another metaphor for 3D glasses, where we replace the lenses with «here» and «there». The Allan valley around Montbéliard and Newton Creek in New York are two areas affected in different ways by industrialization or the short-term need to change their landscape. But rare migratory birds sometimes cross the skyline of one of the two cities, and the space of possibilities is expanded...

*CONFLUENCE* deals with our relationship with the "non-human", with subjects whose "savagery" is read through their capacity for metamorphosis, which upsets the "order of things". Marie Lorenz's artistic practice creates spaces for contemporary socio-political issues and the dissensus they produce, incorporating their capacity to go beyond boundaries, displace them and create new ones.

Adeline Lépine  
Curator of the exhibition

*Marie Lorenz's exhibition is supported by Etant donnés, a program of the Villa Albertine, co-produced with RIB, a contemporary art venue in Rotterdam (Netherlands), and endorsed by Pays d'Agglomération de Montbéliard, Capitale Française de la Culture 2024. Marie Lorenz's exhibition is the subject of a musical performance co-conceived by the artist, composer Kurt Rhode and musician and teacher Keiko Murakami with students from the Conservatoire de Pays de Montbéliard.*

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9- Kim Stanley Robinson, "Dystopias Now" in *Commune Mag*, 11.02.2018





1 – *Charon Crossing*, 2022, 20' x 8' x 8'. Installation image from “Charon Crossing” exhibition at Dusty Gallery in Austin, Texas.

2 – Print made from contact printing on kozo paper, 17 jet ski 2012, 11 x 16 feet.

3 – *Tide and Current Taxi*, (ongoing). Documentary image of an ongoing performance that Marie Lorenz started in 2005.

4 – *Gyre*, 2017, Porcelain, 40' x 40' x 40'. Des Moines Art Center.





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(2)



(3)



1 & 2- Prints made from contact printing on kozo paper,  
17 jet ski 2012, 11 x 16 feet.

3- *Flotsam Stack*, 2023, 16' x 2.5' x 10'. Installation image from exhibition "Women Reframe the American Landscape" at New Britain Museum of American Art. This sculpture was originally installed in the Thomas Cole House Museum.

**Le 19, CRAC**  
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