

PRESS RELEASE



Claudia Comte, *The Morphing Scallops (black on white)*, 2019
Installation view at Gladstone Gallery, New York (January 11 – February 16, 2019)
© Claudia Comte
Image: Courtesy the artist, Gladstone Gallery, New York – Brussels, and KÖNIG Galerie, Berlin/London
Photo Roman März

Claudia Comte. How to Grow and Still Stay the Same Shape
Drafted by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Marianna Vecellio
October 31, 2019 – February 23, 2020
Opening: October 30, 2019

Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea organizes and presents the first Italian museum exhibition dedicated to the Swiss artist **Claudia Comte** (Grancy, 1983). Developed closely with the artist and drafted by **Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev** and **Marianna Vecellio**, the exhibition will be inaugurated on October 30.

Starting from the observation of nature and its changing patterns, the artist creates large-scale environmental installations that embody the world from the perspective of a form of consciousness primarily shaped through the digital experience. Examining current issues such as climate change, ecology and global pollution, her work also narrates the memory of materials and the wisdom of art and craft. These large installations represent the main group of Comte's works, but her work also includes sculpture and painting, as well as extensive multimedia installations.

All the projects by the Swiss artist share a series of rules, as well as reference points, which clearly link one work to another in the conception phase. From this process, her works combine a rigid method with a dynamic approach characterized by a minimalist attitude at the same time.

Born and raised in Grancy, a small village near Lausanne at the foot of the Mont Tendre, one of the highest peaks of the Jura Mountains, a limestone mountain range located in the Alps, the Swiss artist puts a strong autobiographical reference in her artworks. The forest with its trees and all its non-anthropocentric data belong to the artist's memory and specifically her childhood memories, and these elements are the first to influence the translation of the landscape into her creations.

If Comte's sculptures are rooted in the naturalness of biomorphic forms, her mural interventions transform surfaces into optical sequences and infinite graphic signs with a digital age aesthetic. The monochromatic vocabulary that invests all her work brings her visually close to the abstraction of Sol LeWitt, Bridget Riley and even John Armleder, an artist with whom she studied. On the occasion of her exhibition at Castello di Rivoli, Comte will carry out a **gigantic mural** intervention consisting of eleven individual wall paintings specially designed for the galleries on the third floor of the historic residence. Also inspired by some eighteenth-century decorative motifs present on the ceilings and walls of the main museum building, the work develops repeated modules through space. The artist also draws her inspiration from the information and the geological specificity of the area where the Museum is located, or the Rivoli-Avigliana morainic amphitheatre.

In the phase of conception and creation, Comte was able to deepen the study that investigates this stratification of reliefs derived from the movements of the glaciers in the Neozoic era. The hill on which the Castello di Rivoli rises and, also, a part of the historical centre of the town, is a rock formation typical of this kind of event and is called by scholars "erratic mass" or "mass of witches." The artist added to her site-specific proposal her recent research consisting in the exploration of the underwater world, the life in the sea and the mysterious submerged landscape, revealing an alliance between research and ecological thought. "In this sense," says Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Director of Castello di Rivoli, "Comte's work expresses a return to absolutely current cybernetic thinking that in the 1960s and 1970s studied the patterns of nature in relation to the emergence of information technology in the middle of the twentieth century. Think of the work of scholars such as Gregory Bateson, author of *Towards an ecology of the mind* in 1972."

The mixture of scientific data and historical notions is filtered by the artist and returned visually in abstract forms to create a visual and sensorial experience. Geometry and the linear repetition of shapes are recognizable elements of the style of Comte.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a **bilingual scholarly catalog** (English and Italian), published by the Castello di Rivoli. The catalog will present an essay by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and an interview with the artist by Marianna Vecellio. It will include a broad photographic documentation regarding the work at the Castello and a selected chronicle of the mural interventions by the artist from her beginnings twelve years ago to the present. The volume is completed by a section of scholarly apparatuses that include the artist's chronology and bibliography.

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Biography



Claudia Comte (Grancy, 1983) received her advanced studies at the ECAL - Ecole cantonale d'art in Lausanne, and then perfected her academic career at the Haute Ecole Pédagogique. Recent solo exhibitions include *I have grown taller from standing with Trees* at Copenhagen Contemporary, 2019; *The Morphing Scallops* at the Gladstone Gallery in New York, 2019; *Claudia Comte: Electric Burst (Lines and Zigzags)* at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (Missouri), 2018 and in the same year *Zigzags and Diagonals* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (Ohio). In 2017 there are *10 Rooms, 40 Walls, 1059 m²* at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne and *La Ligne Claire* at Basement, Rome. Her works have also been included in group exhibitions, the most recent being *Hot Saw - Electric Power* at the Kunsthalle in Basel, 2018; *The Primary Fondue Party*, a side event at the 57th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, 2016, at the Salon Suisse: ATARAXIA and again *The Language of Things* organized by the Public Art Fund, at the City Hall Park in New York.

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