

# ACT 5: NOMENRATURE

JANUARY 9 - 15, 2017

WORKSHOP

RADIO-PERFORMANCE:

HANAN BENAMMAR (DZ/FR/NO)

INSTALLATION/PERFORMANCE:

CLAUDIA LOMOSCHITZ (DE/AUT)

**Hanan Benammar** (b. 1989, Algeria, France) is a performance and visual artist living and working in between Norway, France and The Netherlands. Her diverse artistic practise includes sound installations, noise opera and long-term performance projects in which she invites other people to carry out tasks. In her recent work **One Way to a Desert** in which Benammar invites people to take part in a competition, two people winning the adventure of a one way trip to the West-Saharan desert. In the solo exhibition at House of Foundation (2014, Norway) Benammar narrates the story of the two travellers in an 8-channel sound installation.

Since moving to Oslo in 2011, Benammar has been involved in art events and institutions such as Gallery BOA, Ultima, Mosaic Rooms, Black Box Theater, aria (artist residency in algiers), the Museum of Yugoslav History and TAAK among others; with installations, texts, and performances. Benammar is involved in experimental opera noise project **Feilkontroll**. She studied at the Art Academy of Oslo and the Dutch Art Institute (Arnhem, NL).

[www.onewaytoadesert.com](http://www.onewaytoadesert.com)

**Claudia Lomoschitz** (b. 1987, Austria) is working as an artist, lecturer and performer in Hamburg and Vienna. Her main focus lies on sculptural installations and performative objects, that shift normative understandings of inter-organical relationships and movement. Lomoschitz enculturalized plants and taught them how to read in the piece **Reading Plants** shown in One Mess Gallery, Vienna. In the participative installation piece **Oral Imaginery** shown 2016 at Fluc Vienna, she invites the audience to shape small sculptures with their mouth. In 2015 she showed the performance and videoinstallation **Wer Spielt Hier mit Wem - Performance Revisited** at Futurelab Vienna, turning the theatrical setting into a place of collective spacial explorations.

Lomoschitz is a founding member of One Mess Gallery Vienna, a collaborative artist run exhibition space. She received her Diploma from the Academy of Fine arts Vienna, where she is currently teaching as lecturer, and working on her PhD on the relationship between text and bodies, concerning performative ways of mediation. Since 2015 she studies at the MA programme Performance Studies at the University of Hamburg.

[www.claudialomoschitz.com](http://www.claudialomoschitz.com)

logographic phase

TAX\_ON\_OM\_Y

A POTATO LIES ON A TABLE.

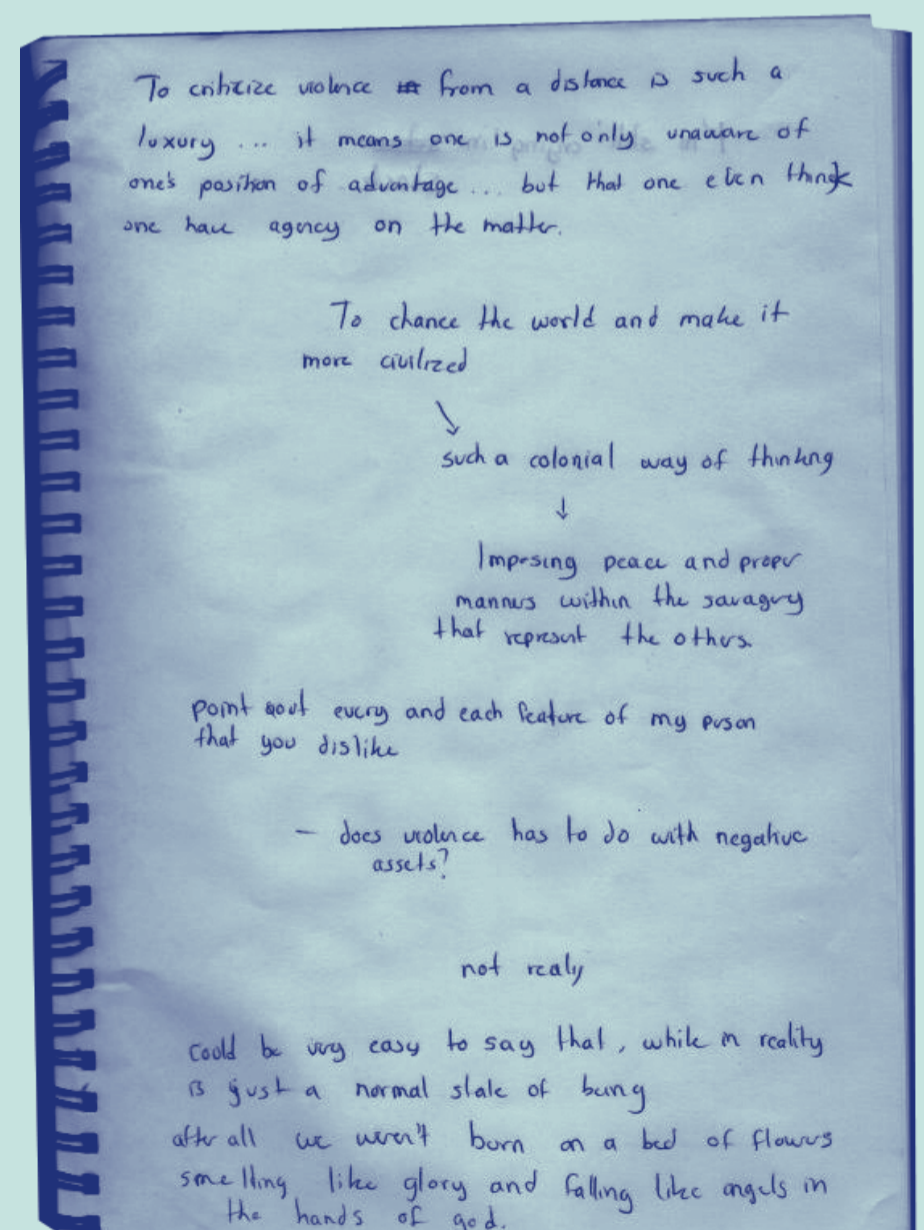
alphabetic phase

ANOTHER BODY COMES ALONG AND PICKS UP THE POTATO'S BODY -

orthographic phase

'IS THIS A KIWI? AH NO, IT'S AN APPLE' PUTS THE BODY DOWN AND LEAVES.

Photo and text by Claudia Lomoschitz



From the project "Antiphony" by Hanan Benammar (Van Abbemuseum, 2014)





In her work "Antiphony" Benammar created an answering machine service that was set up for the Van Abbe's Museum phone number. The museum's main phone number was occupied by a new service, offering callers the chance to select and speak to someone about 12 words redefined under the constraints of desert landscapes: action, silence, withdraw, emptiness, failure, violence, doubt, chaos, ritual, border, nomenclature and pabulum. Photo by Hanan Benammar.



**RECHOREOGRAPHED** literacy for plants

**A:** Read me, read me, read me.  
**TEXTBODY:** Treat your body like a book.  
**OLD PLANT:** I am.  
**TEXTBODY:** Logical identification.  
**SHEET:** Put your ear close to me - hear my osmosis.  
**TEXTBODY:** Upside down, move your body not the book.  
**OLD PLANT:** The body, our document.  
**WHALE EYE:** This is a rather ambiguous text.  
**FIGUS BENJAMIN:** Civialatory disease.  
**INANIMATE:** An animal is like an artist.  
**WHALE EYE:** Anything can happen, when an animal is your cameraman.  
**BABYLEAF:** Is it possible to force a plant to read the latin alphabet?  
**TEXTBODY:** Cultivate the uncertain.  
**FRUITY:** Read my fragrance.  
**MOUTH:** When words worked like magic.  
**TEXTBODY:** Jump!  
**FRUITY:** Shrinking infinite - taste my wrinkles.  
**OLD PLANT:** Jump.  
**BONSAI:** To become is a metaphysical experience.  
**MOUTH:** Dear Text, I do speak.  
**FINGERTIP:** I slit my finger on a sheet of paper.  
**FRUITY:** If you eat an Apple you eat the landscape.  
**FIGUS BENJAMIN:** I have a quite specific perception of time and space.  
**FINGERTIP:** Plant Communication Research.  
**FRUITY:** My exotic aging is yours - fast forward.  
**WHALE EYE:** I fell asleep in a tipi, inside a museum and felt quite nomadic.  
**EAR:** Movement and plants are silenced.  
**FRUITY:** My skin is hairy like a kiwi under an armpit.  
**BODY:** Can we move in synchronicity?

Photo and text by Claudia Lomoschitz



# DESERT BÆRBÆR



Essay and photo by Hanan Benammar

**There is always a system behind the idea of naming things, places and even people. A scientific system, a structure, a classification, a clarification; a way to make sense out of unknown substance. An onomatopoeia, a sound that is not distinguishable. A “Bar-Bar” sound, something that does not make sense in your own language. A substance you are carrying with you, within you.**

Before having a pejorative meaning, “barbar” was referring to “strangers” in ancient Greek, but also that they could not understand the other person’s language or pronunciation.

Thus, the “barbar” was speaking an incomprehensible language that sounded like bar - bar. An unbearable repetition. The grief of the “Other” is throughout history endlessly linked to a rough vocal expansion. The Berbers (indigenous people of North-Africa) are most certainly named after this onomatopoeia. Confused and misguided, we might make the hastily presumption that they are an homogenous group, but it exists various ethnical, cultural, religious and linguistic differences among them.

The term “barbarian” later became an adjective for tribes described as violent and terrific, responsible for the end of the Roman Empire among others.

In French, a “barbarisme” is a language mistake by alteration of a word modifying its meaning. “Bærbær” is therefore a barbarism, since the word “barbare” has been modified using the grapheme æ formed by the letter a and e. Originally a ligature representing a Latin diphthong, it has been promoted to the full status of a letter in the alphabets of some languages, including Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic and Faroese. Furthermore, “bær” means nothing else than a berry in Norwegian, and its repetition, something that you can carry with you. We can imagine it as a physical or immaterial object.

Desert Bærbær will remain a work-and-title-in-progress, substantially and constantly rephrasing the space between two distant geographical points in Hanan Benammar’s perimeter of action. The shape of this continent is fluctuating. The landscape is yet to imagine.

## Preamble

pre|amble /pri:'amb(ə)l, 'pri:-/

**“And it is told how once the Earth swayed in deep quiet, swayed in deep silence, rested in stillness, softly rocking, and lay there, lonely and void. And this is the first testimony, the first word. There was no man, nor beast, fowl, fish, crab, tree, stone, cave, gorge, grass-tuft, nor bush. Only the heavens were there.**

**Invisible was the face of the Earth. Only the seas gathered under the firmament. That was all. Nothing was there to take form or become audible, nothing to move, trickle or rush under the firmament. There was only the nothingness.**

**Only the waters gathered together, only the sea lay calmly there, one single surging sea. Truly nothing was there, which might otherwise have existed.**

[...]

**In Paradise you cross the sand without seeing your face. There is a landscape even without deeper meaning. The gates of Paradise are open to everybody. There, works are inspected which no one would do. There you dig holes without stumbling on man. There you slake lime and are chosen for this task by the rich. There, men cast a shadow in spite of the scorching sun.”<sup>1</sup>**

The patterns of the desert have for a while both haunted and hunted my work: invisible, boring, too long, too silent, too noisy, too messy; chaotic. Adjectives that co-habit and overlap each other in the general observation/consternation of my practice.

In parallel to building my thoughts, I continue literally travelling in deserts and step by step discovering the sensorial meaning of these words. Heat. Cold. Extreme temperatures. Remote derive, where the exploration is both limited and infinite. Where “the intervention of hazards is rare” and brings you to an “inevitable depression”.<sup>2</sup>

This landscape, which is apparently empty is linked to an essential component of all human being, the survival of every second, the necessity of minimizing movements, speed and materiality; subjected to the territory itself, with the furtive humbleness of a sand grain. The feeling I want to share in this text is the reflection on my practice through the two wanderers - and their shadows<sup>3,4</sup>, through their blind conversation and yet unfolded will.

“Desert Bærbær” aims to formulate a vocabulary shaped by words being redefined under the constraints of “desert”, navigating through my practice as I am asking “How can the terminology of the desert be applied to an artistic proposal?”

After “Antiphony”<sup>5</sup>, the workshop Nomenclature - commissioned by Radikal Unsichtbar and curated by Louise Vind Nielsen - will be the second attempt to contextualize this research in relation to a specific history and museum collection.

## Nomenclature

nomenclature |'nōmənrat(y)r|

During the workshop “Nomenclature”, the participants are invited to investigate a series of words taken from the work-and-title-in-progress “Desert Bærbær”: Action, Silence, Withdraw, Emptiness, Failure, Violence, Doubt, Chaos, Ritual, Border, Nomenclature and Pabulum.

Each word is entitling a paragraph and are divided between 4 different chapters: Desire, Strength, Metamorphosis and Hospitality.

Taking the structure of this writing-in-progress, the workshop will be an attempt to work collectively through the plethora of possibilities that offer these words and link them to the colonial history of Germany and more specifically Hamburg.

The title of the workshop is a neologism of the words Nomen (lat.: name) referring to Nomenclature (br.: system of names) and Rature (fr.: crossing out words with a horizontal line). The horizontal line of erasure bring us back to the theme of desert landscapes, central in Hanan Benammar’s practice.

The Museum of Anthropology of Hamburg (Hamburger Museum für Völkerkunde) will host part of the workshop by making accessible their collection and archive.

In order to collect documentation for the experimental radio play, the participants are encouraged to use various techniques, such as; invasive scanning, furtive sound recordings, badly behaved interviews, stolen moments and text cut-up: this is state of legitimate offense.

Radio FSK will air the out-come of the workshop on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2017, 2-4 pm, and presented in the space of Raum Links-rechts from the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of January.

<sup>1</sup> Father Ximénez, (1701) Popol Vuh (“Book of the Community”). Popol Vuh is a corpus of mytho-historical narratives of the Post Classic K’iche’ kingdom in Guatemala’s western highlands. This document is supposedly a phonetic rendering of an oral recitation. It has been used as an introduction of the movie Fata Morgana, in which Werner Herzog reads this text (1972).

<sup>2</sup> Debord, Guy-Ernest (1956) ‘Théorie de la Dérive’, Les Lèvres nues n° 9: “An insufficient distrust of chance, and its ideological use always reactionary, condemned to a dismal failure the famous aimless wandering attempted in 1923 by four surrealists from a city randomly selected: Wandering in open field is obviously depressing, and the interventions of chance are poorer than ever.”

<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich (1880) “The Wanderer and His Shadow” in Human, All Too Human, Part II – A Book for Free Spirits.

<sup>4</sup> Referring to the travellers of the piece by Benammar “One way to a desert” (2013-2016).

<sup>5</sup> “Antiphony” (2014) Van Abbemuseum/Dutch Art Institute, Eindhoven.





# SHAMANISTIC CULTIVATION CAMP

Essay and photos by Claudia Lomoschitz

The production of *otherness* is carried out within a processes of taxonomy - through naming, reading or defining bodies, through reducing someone to "the other", or let's say - to "text". A classifying language of dichotomies, like body/soul, animate/inanimate, human/non-human, strongly influences perception and inter-body relationships. Within the performative installation **Shamanistic Cultivation Camp** plants and fruits will be taught how to read by imposing the latin alphabet onto their bodies. The reading body is put on a chair, in front of a table, silenced, fixed and limited to mere visuality and the mental sphere. A scripted set of rules, defining how to learn the so-called cultural good of reading, will materialize in relation to plants through a weeklong work period. This form of plant-cultivation refers to the devaluation process of communication modes that don't fit into language or text structures, like fragrances, electric impulses, movement or affects. Fruit-bodies and plant-bodies are located within a socioeconomic system, and treated like human bodies. A lot of similarities arise when it comes to "cultivation methods" like schooling, medicating, watering, transporting, importing, exporting. Their life and death circuits are controlled and acted upon through reading glasses. Exoticism occupies spaces as well as bodies, and colonises inter-organical relationships.

Donna Haraway emphasize on the term "Companion Species", which "[...] are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with." <sup>1</sup> To relate and collaborate with companion species via taking their and one's own specific practices, wishes and strategies serious, demands to reflect hierarchies of normative communication modes and to look close at structures that text imposes upon bodies. Societal contracts, laws, organisational structures are built on text based systems and following social relations and actions are legitimized through them. Text has the tendency to not acknowledge the involved participants and to neglect the fluidity relations between actors and in favour of regimentation. Sign and flesh are not the same though a text-focused learning paradigm strived towards it and invades even a plant's being. Imagine that every movement, communication, collaboration, affect, process of listening have been written ahead and choreographed (regarding the writing of movement) - imagine bodies are text.

Krõõt Juurak and Alex Bailey work on "Performances for Pets" and assume similarities regarding the life and sensemaking quest of animals and artists. Juurak and Bailey try to find a zone of indiscernibility between the human and the non-human, suggesting a de-anthropomorphisation of their relationships in favor of an undomesticated type of relationship. They visit pets within their habitat and offer them an experience of contemporary art. The performances are adjusted to the audience member's character, interests, taste and willingness to engage or interact. Within their actions they are present, communicate with the animals and listen to their bodies and take the wisdom of non verbal language into account. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari would call this "becoming". Their concept of becoming, is laid out in their book "A Thousand Plateaus". To become a body, as the metaphysical experience of a process, through which a zone of proximity made up of connections between entities is found. Becoming A has nothing to do with imitation of A or J, history, imagination or mimesis. Instead it takes the relatedness and the inbetween into consideration. The inbetween of communication can be recognized as non-verbal, verbal, bodily attentiveness, as listening.

<sup>1</sup> Companion Species  
Manifesto. Donna  
Haraway, 2003.

## MAGIC WORDS

**In the very earliest time / when both people and animals lived on earth / a person could become an animal if he wanted to and an animal could become a human being / Sometimes they were people / and sometimes animals / and there was no difference / All spoke the same language / That was the time when words were like magic / The human mind had mysterious powers / A word spoken by chance / might have strange consequences / It would suddenly come alive / and what people wanted to happen could happen all you had to do was say it / Nobody could explain this / That's the way it was.**

After Nalungiaq a woman and Inuit interviewed by ethnologist Knud Rasmussen in the early twentieth century. Translated from the Inuit by Edward Field.

