

**'Long live the independence of water'**  
**A workshop organised as part of**  
**Sharjah Biennial 13: Tamawuj**  
**University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar**  
**8–9 January 2017**



'Long live the independence of water' is a two-day workshop that considers the relationship between water and belief. Whether through the lens of tradition, animism, rational logic or contemporary thought, water has been vital to life and the subject of human fascination and inquiry for centuries. Water has been studied, explained and consumed endlessly. In this current era of amnesia overrun by human hubris, how is it possible to recall the maternal relationships between this fundamental element and all forms of life? Does this call for reinventing the very nature of culture – that which humanity created as it evolved, that which alienates and liberates it in equal measure.

**Day 1: Beliefs and non-knowledge**  
**8 January**

Water is an expansive topic that transcends the rise and fall of civilisations. It is impossible to approach it completely; its totality is ungraspable, and therefore, endless. When reflecting on water as a departure point for this workshop, the element's fluidity, in both physical and philosophical terms, makes it difficult to intellectualise or lay claim to any stable understanding. Humanity might be condemned to endlessly thinking about water, but the urgency of our times now demands that we reassess our relationship to it. Today, it is impossible to think about water and to not think about coming crises, where severe droughts threaten some places on the planet and mass-flooding loom over the future of others.

The first day, titled 'Beliefs and non-knowledge', will focus on bringing to the fore the impact that water has had on the psyche of peoples over extended periods of time and address the task of transmitting this heritage to future generations. Water is at the core of such discussions, whether we speak of earthen architecture, magical divination or methods of seeking safety in the midst of a storm. Here, water offers a metaphor for the flow of language, the liquidity of exchange and inheritance.

'Long live the independence of water' will address cultural questions regarding the theme of water. Through intellectual and artistic practices, the day will utilise various ways of sharing knowledge through film screenings, lectures and other formats. In addition, these contributions will be augmented by putting participants and audience in intimate proximity with objects that heighten the group's relationship and rapport with the theme of water.

Spanning a number of fields from architecture to film and from image to text, workshop participants include: poet Rachida Madani (Morocco), architect Samia Rab (Pakistan), artist Marcel Dinahet (France), anthropologist Ibrahima Sow (Senegal), architect Yasmine Terki (Algeria) and artist and hydrologist Christoph Keller (Germany). Together, they will develop discussion that expands upon the workshop's title, 'Long live the independence of water'.

**Day 2: Everyday life's political control of liquidity**  
**9 January**

After spending the first day plumbing the depths of older and collective forms of relating to water and their contemporary relevance to the world now, the second day, titled 'Everyday life's political control of liquidity', focuses on more pragmatic approaches to water related issues in light of present urgencies. In many myths and beliefs, water is typically considered vital to life, but on the African continent today, water is also strongly associated with death. This recognition provides motivation for the development of a socio-political exploration of water that will enable us to consider the implications of its independence.

This day shifts the focus on water from culture to the dimensions of ethics. Here, we will develop perspectives around the thematic that expand into the realms of knowledge production, politics, capital and migration to contemplate how this element governs our immaterial psyche as well as the most concrete aspects of daily life—even when water itself is nowhere in sight. 'Everyday life's political control of liquidity' will explore the thematic of water within a twentieth century context from colonialism to the present day.

Artist Kemi Bassene and former Senegalese Minister of Ecology and Fisheries of Senegal, Haidar El Ali (both from Senegal) will propose a historical, political, social and juridical re-reading of water in the Peul territories of North Senegal. Artists and activists Charles Heller (Switzerland) and Lorenzo Pezzani (Italy) of the group 'Watch The Med' will propose expanded ways of conceiving of the Mediterranean Sea.

Hito Steyerl (Germany) will present a film that approaches the subject of water through forms of human productivity within neoliberal capitalism. Proposing a metaphor of liquid flux, philosopher Seloua Luste Boulbina (Algeria) will consider the human body as a site of struggle within the context of population control.

Through re-enactments of various political tribunals, the curatorial collective, Le peuple qui manque [A People is Missing], will consider the role of water in and as it relates to mass population movements, as we have witnessed in some of the greatest catastrophes of the 21st Century.

Bringing music and poetry to the workshop, Professor Malick Diouf from University of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Dakar, will present a selection of traditional songs, which will be performed live by Niominka women from Dionewar Village.

## PROGRAMME

**SUNDAY  
8 JAN**

### DAY 1 - Beliefs and Non-Knowledge [Croyances et Non-savoir]

10:00 AM	Introduction by Hoor Al Qasimi [Sharjah Art Foundation President], Christine Tohme [Sharjah Biennial 13 curator] and Kader Attia [Artist and project Interlocutor]
10:30 AM	Rachida Madani [Poet, Novelist and Painter, Morocco]: Poem Lecture (20 minutes)
10:50 AM	Samia Rab [Architect Historian and Associate Professor at the Morgan State University, USA]: <i>Sea coast architectures and the oceans rise</i> (35 minutes lecture plus slides images + 15 minutes questions)
11:40 AM	Marcel Dinahet [Filmmaker, France]: Projection of his films followed by conversation with Kader Attia about his long-term obsession to film the city from the sea (30 minutes)
12:10 PM	Pierre Amrouche [Poet, Essayist and Photographer, Algeria]: Poem Lecture (20 minutes)
12:30 PM	<b>Lunch Break</b>
02:00 PM	Christoph Keller [Artist and Hydrologist, Germany]: Lecture and screening of the film <i>Anarcheology</i> (30 minutes)
02:30 PM	Prof. Ibrahima Sow [Philosopher, Researcher and Writer, Senegal]: The relation between water and sand through divination with different kinds of divinations performed live by traditional healers, with water, sand and cauris (1 hour)
03:30 PM	Yasmine Terki [Architect and Director of the Algerian Centre for the Conservation of Earthen Architecture, Algeria] : <i>The paradoxical relation between water and earth in clay architecture</i> (30 minutes)
04:10 PM	<b>Coffee Break</b>
04:30 PM	Rachida Madani [Poet, Novelist and Painter, Morocco]: Poem Lecture (20 minutes)
05:00 PM	Prof. Ibrahima Wane: Music and literature lecture about water beliefs (40 minutes)
05:40 PM	<b>End of the first day</b>

**DAY 2 - Everyday Life's Political Control of Liquidity**

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10:00 AM	Kemi Bassene [Artist and activist, France]: Lecture with Haidar El Ali [Ecologist, Filmmaker and Senegalese Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Senegal] (35 minutes + 15 minutes questions)
10:50 AM	Hito Steyerl [Artist, Theorist and Writer, Germany]: screening of the film <i>Liquidity</i>
11:10 AM	Le peuple qui manqué [A people is missing], Aliocha Imhoff and Kantuta Quiros [Art Theorists, Curators and founders, France] (35 minutes + 15 minutes questions)
12:30 PM	Rachida Madani and Pierre Amrouche: Poem Lecture
01:00 PM	<b>Lunch Break</b>
02:30 PM	Watch the Med, Lorenzo Pezzani [Architect and Researcher, Italy] and Charles Heller [Filmmaker and Researcher, Geneva], and Papa Demba Fall [Senior Researcher at Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar]: Film, lecture, questions (60 minutes)
04:00 PM	<b>Coffee Break</b>
04:30 PM	Seloua Luste Boulbina [Philosopher and Theorist, Algeria] (30 minutes)
05:00 PM	Nadine Bilong [Curator] (30 minutes)
05:30 PM	Lecture by Prof. Malick Diouf [Researcher and Director of the University Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Senegal] about the Institut Universitaire de Pêche et d'Aquaculture and live performance of Serer songs: Live performance by female singers from a Serer Village and talk by Prof. Malick Diouf on the traditional songs
06:30 PM	End of the workshop and closing words by Hoor Al Qasimi, Kader Attia and Christine Tohme
08:30 PM	<b>Dinner on the beach</b>