

Impro & coquillages 2022

They say river dolphins don't leap as much as dolphins in the ocean. Because of turbid flows of rushing water, they do not trust their eyes. Their eyes grow small. Echolocation becomes crucial. Their listening becomes more nuanced. – Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Undrowned. Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals

Fifty years ago, a dozen terrestrial mammals were meeting on a hot muggy New York City day to jump and roll on each other in an art gallery: June 1972, these were the first performances of what was then called, in the plural, Contact Improvisations. The world then, as our world today, was tumultuous: the civil rights movement, black power, the vietnam war, its countercultures, the sexual liberation movement, the second wave of feminism...

Fifty years later, it hasn't become easier to orient, in a world full of crises and clashes and control, where we have to fight to recognize and celebrate the invention of modes of resistance, of ways of living otherwise—in the zads and taz and contact zones of the world which, everywhere, burst alternatives.

What are the lessons of Contact Improvisation, and of its fifty years of practices and experiments, in this effort of inventing strategies of survival and counterworlding? What does it teach us about adaptation, openness to uncertainty, deviance, decentering, relation and tactfulness? What kinds of commoning and undercommoning does it rehearse for us? And conversely, what can our environments, human and nonhuman, teach us for our dances?

We are about to spend a week of improvisation in a dreamy oceanic landscape. And: we will be at work with what's going on, inside and outside. Our commitment, as always (and in the words of anarchist poet Beth Strano) :

*We will not be perfect
This space will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
But
It will be our space together,
and
we will work on it side by side.*

Looking forward to dive with you in our week together,

Emma, Céline & Catherine
for L'œil et la main



"Where you are when you don't know where you are is one of the most precious spots offered by improvisation. It is a place from which more directions are possible than anywhere else." – Nancy Stark Smith, "Taking No For An Answer"