

IF I CAN'T DANCE, I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF YOUR REVOLUTION

*From the Volcano to the Sea:
The Feminist Group Le Nemesiache
in 1970s and 1980s Naples*



Curated by If I Can't Dance 2019–2020
Research Fellow Giulia Damiani

23 October 2020 – 17 January 2021

Rongwrong

Binnen Bantammerstraat 2,
1011 CK Amsterdam

Friday, Saturday 14–18hr
After-work Thursdays with
If I Can't Dance 17–19hr
Free entry

From the Volcano to The Sea brings to Amsterdam the story of the feminist group Le Nemesiache, focusing on their activity in Naples between the 1970s and 1980s. Founded by philosopher, artist and writer Lina Mangiacapre in 1970, Le Nemesiache was an open group, comprising exclusively female participants. Together, and at various intensities, they participated in the construction of a ‘different daily life,’ a life devoted to the conception and realization of relationships and creative political actions. Their expansive work included films, performances, rituals, conferences, parties and protests, purposefully blurring the lines between art and politics. With their actions, Le Nemesiache collectively imagined how the worlds of art and literature could engender forms of protest within broader women’s liberation struggles in Italy at the time.

Taking their name from Nemesis, the Greek goddess of revenge against the masculine Hubris, Le Nemesiache reclaimed mythology as an embodied practice of feminist transformation. As Mangiacapre articulated in the group’s self-published cultural magazine *Mani-Festa*: “there is a mythic philosophy at the base of logic philosophy. It is an androgynous thought, where the cyclic unity of night and day, of dream and of reality, and of sight and blindness materializes itself [...]. Logic is a rift in thought; it was born out of a wound, a cut [...]. Gender difference was established by men after the inventions of concepts, when they killed the Amazons.”

From the Volcano to the Sea presents to the public the group’s archive for the first time, dwelling upon Le Nemesiache’s ritualistic investments in mythology, place and body. It was indeed from these three points of reference that the group navigated the existing material conditions of Naples, combining the city’s natural and supernatural landscapes – from its volcanic fumes to its archeological ruins – in order to produce a model of feminism specific to their context. As they themselves wrote in 1981, the references to the mythical past of Naples were not a nostalgic gesture but a way to “reject the reduction of an entire civilization, such as the Neapolitan one, to the folklore and subcultural status in which it has been confined. Feminism in Naples was born from Naples and its roots, from the reality of the struggles of women who have never allowed themselves to be colonized and will continue – alongside men, and sometimes against or simply distant to them –, the story of the life of HARMONY, to revenge all the violence that has been done to Naples; to the SIBYLS, to life, to Beauty.” (Statement, 1981)

Their interest in myth and ritualistic embodiment as ambiguous systems of reference different from Western modern conceptual thinking finds echoes today in the practice of other artists, writers and thinkers. With *From the Volcano to the Sea* we hope to spark new alliances across worlds, times and geographies. The three levels of *Rongwrong*, a house and a space for art in Amsterdam, bring Le Nemesiache’s cosmological landscape to life, introducing original documents and photographs,

poetry, films, original collages, costumes and textiles such as hand-printed tablecloths and banners. If the apartment of Le Nemesiache's founder Lina Mangiacapre in Naples represented a portal through which 'a different daily life' could be imagined and practiced by all the women whose lives crossed paths with group, then we hope Rongwrong can be an energetic channel to that space, where being together, making art and politics transfigured domesticity and its oppressive apparatus.

Acknowledgements

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Cover image: Symbol of Le Nemesiache, Lina Mangiacapre.

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