



From the Volcano to

the Sea



The Feminist Group
Le Nemesiache in 1970s
and 1980s Naples

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 transfigure domesticity and its oppressive apparatus. During the exhibition, the hosts introduce the visitors to the archival materials, but also to the memories and mythologies that belong to them. Keeping with the group's embodied methodology, this gesture is an attempt to keep alive practices of transmission and storytelling.

Giulia Damiani is a writer, curator and dramaturge working in London and Amsterdam. In Amsterdam she is the fellow of the current edition on Ritual and Display at *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* (2019–2020). She is completing a PhD in the Art department at Goldsmiths University, London (2020, AHRC scholarship) and has been teaching on the MA Curating at Goldsmiths as well as guest lecturing and tutoring at Sandberg Instituut, Dutch Art Institute and SNDO in Amsterdam. She has been thinking with the archive of the feminist group Le Nemesiache from Naples and has been writing new performances inspired by the group's ritual investment in their natural, supernatural and urban landscape. Her collaborations with artists bring together practices of myth-making, magic, landscape and the language of evocation and invocation.

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

23 October 2020–17 January 2021
Rongwrong, Amsterdam

From the Volcano to the Sea is a collaboration between If I Can't Dance and Rongwrong and is curated by If I Can't Dance 2019–20 Research Fellow Giulia Damiani in dialogue with Sara Giannini (If I Can't Dance) and Arnisa Zeqo (Rongwrong).

Graphic and exhibition design by Maud Vervenne.
Realisation of exhibition displays by Christoph Seyferth.

Special thanks to Linda van Deursen, Andrea Verdecchia, Vincent Verhoef, Catherine Grant and Helena Reckitt from Goldsmiths University as well as Frédérique Bergholtz, Anik Fournier and Megan Hoetger from If I Can't Dance.

The meeting between If I Can't Dance and Rongwrong began during the Spring 2020 lockdown, starting from a shared sense of commitment to the locality of Amsterdam, as well as similar sensitivities toward the work of performance. Giulia Damiani's research on Le Nemesiache has been the bridge through which a collaboration developed, spanning the frame of the If I Can't Dance Edition VIII – *Ritual and Display* and Rongwrong's *Ephemeral Evidence* programme.

In the past two years Giulia Damiani has, in dialogue with If I Can't Dance Archivist Anik Fournier, led the research activities of If I Can't Dance Edition VIII – *Ritual and Display*, taking her dissertation work on Le Nemesiache as a starting point for approaching topics such as everyday rituals, display and displacement, spells and incantations. *From the Volcano to the Sea* follows this research trajectory and opens the activities of the If I Can't Dance Edition VIII – *Ritual and Display* presentation season, which continues at various sites around Amsterdam, the Netherlands and internationally through Spring 2021. Following the conclusion of Edition VIII, Damiani will edit with If I Can't Dance the *Ritual and Display Reader*.

Rongwrong's *Ephemeral Evidence* is both a programme of exhibitions and a methodology of work. This attitude is a continuation of Rongwrong's research into the blurring of the boundaries between individual and collective practices, between exhibitions, performances and educational moments. The title *Ephemeral Evidence* is derived from "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory notes to Queer Acts" (1996) by Cuban-American performance writer José Esteban Muñoz (1967–2013) and the monthly artist magazine *Ephemera* edited by Ulises Carrión (1941–1989) and Aart van Barneveld (...–1990) in Amsterdam between 1977 and 1978.

The most heartfelt gratitude goes to **LE NEMESIACHE** for their fierce and poetic work, and in particular to the group's members Silvana Campese (Medea), Fausta Base, Conni Capobianco (Nausicaa), Bruna Felletti (Karma) and Maria Matteucci (Marea) for contributing materials towards the show.

A visceral call to some presences of this story:
NEMESI, ARACHNE, ARETUSA, ASTREA, CAMILLA,
CASSANDRA, COCA, DAFNE, ELSA / MAGA CIRCE,
ECO, FAUSTA, HELENA, ILIZIA, HIPPOLITA, KARMA,
MAREA, MEDEA, NAUSICAA, NIOBE, TIKE, ADELE,
ANGELA, ANGELA ROSA, ANNA, ANNA N., ANTONELLA,
CARMEN, CAROLINE, CHANTAL, CICCI, CINZIA,
CATERINA, CATHERINE, CONSUELO, COSIMA,
DESPINA, DINA, DOLORES, ELISABETH, ELISABETTA,
ELISABETTA M., ESTHER, GIANNI, GIULIANA,
GIUDITTA, GLORIA, ISABEL, LAURA, LILLY, LUCIA,
LUCIA M., LUISITA, LYDIA, MARIA, MARIE LAURENCE,
MATILDE, MONICA, NADIA, NAZARENA, RITA,
ROSALBA, ROSELLA, ROSSANA, ROSSELLA,
SABINE, TONIA, VITTORIA...

Finally, a cosmic-wide salutation to Teresa, Lina and all the women who are transmitters.

Opening hours:
Friday, Saturday 14:00–18:00hr
Every Thursday afternoon, from 17:00–19:00hr, a member of the If I Can't Dance Team is physically present at Rongwrong, activating the meeting between the two organisations *IRL!*

If I Can't Dance,
I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution
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Rongwrong
Binnen Bantammerstraat 2
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www.rongwrong.org

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FRONT ROOM

Everything Had to be Art, Even Politics.

- 1 Lina Mangiacapre's costume from the theatre show *Elagabulus*, 1989.
- 2 Lina's glasses.
- 3 *Manifesto for the Appropriation of Our Own Creativity*, 1977.
- 4 Manifesto from the performance *We Are All Political Prisoners*, 1978.
- 5 A constellation of photographs from Le Nemesiache's creative political actions: photograph from the performance *We Are All Political Prisoners*, 1978; rituals in the landscapes of Cumae and Capri, late 1970s; poetry party along the descent towards the sea at Gaiola, 1978; drag action *Cross-dressed as the Sibyls*, 1984.
- 6 Pamphlets vitrine: a selection from Le Nemesiache's self-produced pamphlets including their theatre manifesto, the group's cinema journal *Mani Festa* (1988–2002) and their original stamp.

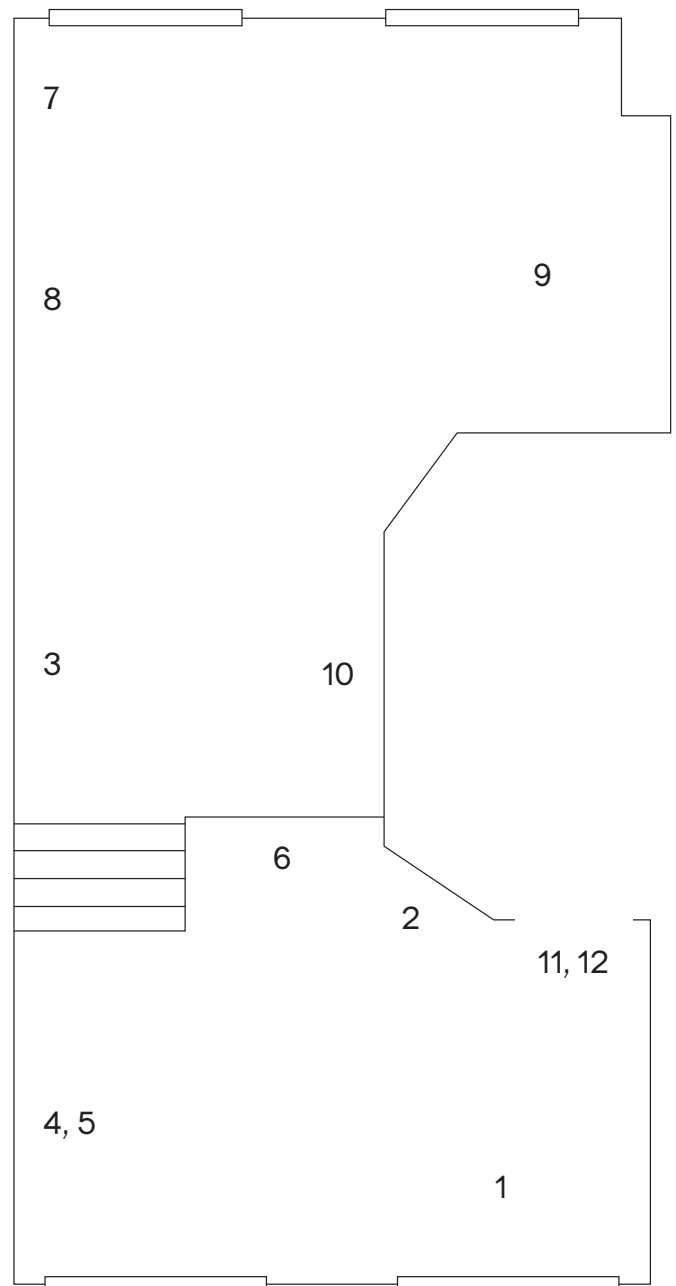
BACK ROOM

Dido's Room.

- 7 *Dido is not Dead*, film, 1h35min, 35mm, 1987.
- 8 Sketches for the costumes of the film *Dido is not Dead* by Maria Matteucci (Marea).
- 9 Wings or Dido's ceremonial blanket from *Dido is not Dead*.
- 10 Cinema contribution vitrine: a selection of materials dedicated to Le Nemesiache's contribution to cinema, including the Feminist Film Festival organised by the group in Sorrento (1976–1990), the Elvira Notari Award at the Venice International Film Festival, a photograph of director Sally Potter being awarded in Venice by Lina Mangiacapre in 1992 and an article by journalist Adele Cambria.

DOOR

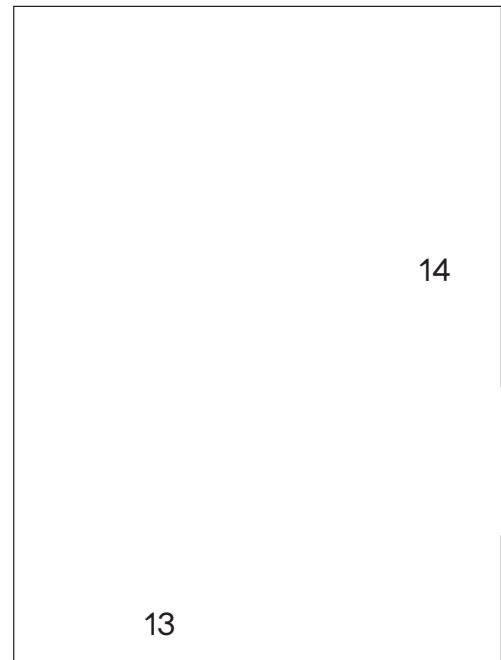
- 11 Film still from *The Sibyls*, 1977.
- 12 Photograph from International Women's day in Naples, "Let's Build a City with a Woman Dimension", 1981.



BASEMENT

The Sibyl's Cave.

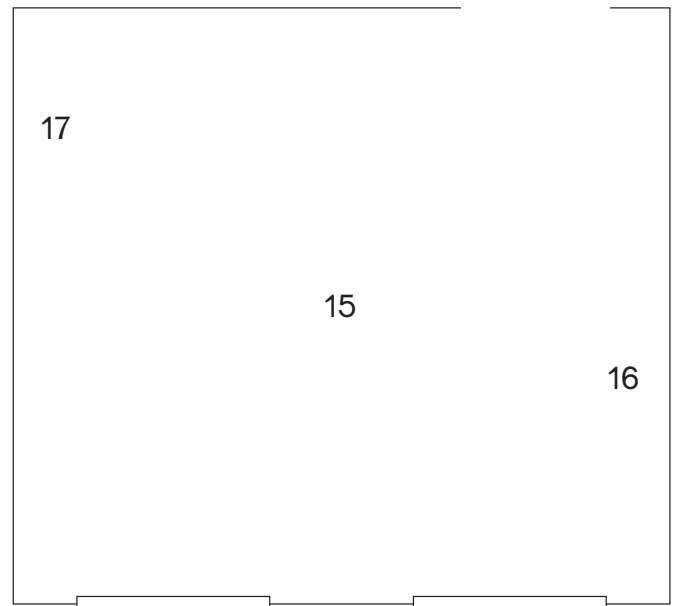
- 13 *The Sibyls*, film, 24 min, 1977.
"Lina at the Zanzibar in Rome", interview,
1m09s, early 1980s.
- 14 Fan's wall with photocopies and reproductions
from archival materials: Le Nemesiache's
actions in night clubs, postcard invites,
cornucopia postcards, lunar & solar cycles,
unicorn poems, oracles, amazons, incantations.



UPSTAIRS

Portal to Posillipo: the Meeting Place, the Home,
the Archive.

- 15 Photographs and ephemera from
Le Nemesiache's archive, 1970s–1990s.
Selection of books by Lina Mangiacapre
and members of Le Nemesiache.
Napkins 'Poetry Workshop' for a performance
at Bar Caflish, 1978.
- 16 Tablecloth 'Poetry Workshop' for
a performance at Bar Caflish, 1978.
- 17 *Aphrodite and the Vesuvius*, photograph by
Lina Mangiacapre, Posillipo early 1970s.



MOVING IN THE SPACE

"Let's Build a City with a Woman Dimension",
banner from the march on International Women's
day in Naples, 1981.