

Dark Continent



*Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo hosts the third chapter of [The Institute of Things to Come](#), with an exhibition and a workshop of artist Tai Shani. Founded in 2017 by curator Valerio Del Baglivo, The Institute of Things to Come is an itinerant art programme aimed at investigating forms of imaginative speculation as cultural strategies and methodologies for critical positions. The 2018-19 theme TERRA INCOGNITA is inspired by the book of sociologist Albert Meister, *Under the Beabourg* (1976) where the author describes the existence of an imaginary museum right beneath the original one functioning as a pole for counterculture. This reference is taken as a starting point to speculate about fictional territories, places and landscapes invented by artists, that have served as literal and metaphorical sites of subversion, anti- authoritarianism, utopia and fantasy.*

The artist Tai Shani exhibits, for the first time in an Italian institution one chapter of her ongoing project *Dark Continent*: the installation episode *DC: PSY CHIC ANEM ONE* produced by *The Institute of Things to Come* and previously presented at the Athens Biennial 2018. Tai Shani's multidisciplinary practice, comprising performance, film, photography and installation, revolves around experimental narrative texts. These alternate between familiar narrative tropes and structures and theoretical prose in order to explore the construction of subjectivity, excess and affect and the epic as the ground for a post-patriarchal realism.

Over the last four years, Tai Shani has been developing a body of work titled *Dark Continent*, that takes Christine de Pizan's 1405 proto-feminist text *The Book of the City of Ladies* as its starting point, to materialize an allegorical city of women. The project was iterated through interconnected yet stand-alone performances, installations and films of monologue texts which represented the various characters in the adaptation, at various institutions including Nottingham Contemporary (Nottingham), De La Warr Pavilion (Bexhill), The Tetley (Leeds), Wysing Art Centre (Cambridge), Tramway – Glasgow International (Glasgow), The Serpentine Galleries (London), and Hayward Gallery (London). The work imagines an alternative history which privileges, sensation, experience and interiority, to propose a possible post-patriarchal future. In this city, characters from fiction live side by side with figures drawn from feminist histories (including among others *The Neanderthal*

Hermaphrodite, The Medieval Mystic, The Vampyre, Phantasmagoregasm, Paradise and Sirens) and are transformed into monologues to test the potentials of feminist politics and questioning norms and gender constructs. In Turin, Tai Shani presents *Psy Chic Anem One* a time travelling AI that can communicate between past, present, and future: their immateriality is expressed through a feminine voice that remind divination and oracular prophecies.

Surpassing narrative structures Tai Shani's city outside time, invents a new cosmology that sits between myth and history, alternative universe and mysticism, to exaggerate standards of femininity, confuse categories of eroticism and annihilate hierarchy structures.

Ultimately, the artist will lead the workshop *Veronica* in collaboration with artist Aura Satz for our 2018/19 Associates (Josephine Baan, Emma Brasó, Emily Fitzell, Constantinos Taliotis, Jérôme de Vienne, Stephanie Winter). Inspired by the history of Saint Veronica who wiped the blood and sweat of Christ with the Sudarium, the workshop seeks to explore multiple manifestations of traces that create lesions between the material and imaginary worlds.

Tai Shani was born in London. Shani has presented her work extensively in the UK and abroad, recent exhibitions and commissions include, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (2019); Athens Biennial (2018); Nottingham Contemporary (2018); Glasgow International (2018) Wysing Arts Centre (2017); Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (2016); RADAR commission, Loughborough University, (2016), Serpentine Galleries (2016); Tate Britain (2016); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2015); Southbank Centre, London (2014-15); Arnolfini, Bristol (2013); Matt's Gallery, London (2012) and FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais and Loop Festival, Barcelona (2011); The Barbican, London (2011); Prospect New Orleans (2011); ICA, London (2011).