

GANGES WALK

Marie Julia Bollansée

streetperformance in Varanasi, India

February 24-27, 2017

video, 15'55"

with 319 barefoot walkers in Varanasi, thank you for your walk.

Kalu Sures, thank you for rowing the boat when I made the sound recording.

Marie Julia Bollansée, concept, directing, camera, sound, editing

special thanks to Ria Paquée for her helpfull advice

In 1961, Pier Paolo Pasolini made a journey to India, together with Alberto Moravia and Elsa Morante. The lecture of his travel diary "l'Odore dell' India" (Then Scent of India), and specially the final pages, where he tells his experiences in Benares and nearby the funeral stakes aside the Ganges, awaken my desire to travel to this mystery place.

Benares, or Varanasi is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is the city on the banks of the river Ganges, in the NorthEast of India. The Ganges is the holy River for Hindu people, and they aim to go on pilgrimage to Varanasi at least ones in their lifetime. Most of all, when the time comes, they want to die in Varanasi and have their corpse cremated on a funeral stake beside the River, and have their ashes strewn in the Ganges. When they do so, their soul is set free and reaches Nirvana.

I went to Benares with the challenge to make a work about the city and the people living there and coming there. So I booked a room with a view on the River Ganges. I was wandering around, visiting temples, looking at burning rituals, trying to make connection.

Then I assume a little territory on the bank of the River, and trace it out by laying down a **blue tarpaulin** on the soil. And I invent a simple ritual myself, to which the passengers and the pilgrims feel familiar.

I spread my blue tarpaulin on the side of the River Ganges, and invite the people passing by, the ones that are walking barefoot, to walk over the tarpaulin. (Also people who take off their shoes can participate). The direction of the walk follows the flow of the River Ganges; in Varanasi she flows from South to North.

Putting up my blue tarpaulin and my camera gave me an opportunity to meet the people in Varanasi, to touch their religious rituals, to surprise them without disturbing them.

In my room with a view on the river, I edited my video-footage. All the long waiting I cutted. So the video-image became a river of barefoot-walkers.

The rhythm of the sound of the River Ganges, which I recorded on a rowing- boat, gets along with the pace of the walking.

With this streetperformance at the side of the River Ganges, I create a work of art that connects with the people in this very old place, where the stream of life and death continues for thousands of years and never stops.



GANGES WALK, streetperformance @ work picture

Why I used a blue tarpaulin in this streetperformance:

TARPAULIN BLUE © Marie Julia Bollansée 2016

I became aware of the existence of a new blue, Tarpaulin blue, during my residency in Mumbai, where blue tarpaulins are used for everything. From then on, I am alerted by tarpaulins almost everywhere and everyday. Tarpaulins are the universal emergency solution and the primary shelter for people around the globe. Tarpaulin blue occurs as infinite variations (like the hydrangea in my mother's garden). There are as many Tarpaulin blue's as there are situations where people use the (blue) tarpaulins in.

Lapis Lazuli and Indigo are the two enchanting families of blue where all later blue shades are descendants of. Lapis Lazuli has a cristalline origin, it was made by pulverizing the precious stones from Afghanistan. The original Indigo is vegetal, as it is produced out of indigo-plants through an intensive rotting process. International Klein Blue, Yves Klein's Ultramarine blue paint, the most brilliant appearance of the old Lapis Lazuli, consists solely of chemicals.

Tarpaulin blue has neither a fabulous ancestor nor a precedent in nature or patented synthetic formula. Tarpaulin blue is alterable, it changes and fades by use and it's pigmented by necessity in **peoples lives**. Tarpaulins penetrate my work and become a bearer of sense. I perceive the color Tarpaulin blue as a sign of the time, as the **now-blue**.

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streetprojection at GALERIE VRIJDAG in collaboration with EVA STEYNEN.DEVIATION(S)
18-1-2018 / 1-3-2018, every day from sunset

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www.galerievrijdag.be

www.deviations.be



GANGES WALK, streetperformance, @ work picture