

# Les Marées Sèches

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# LES MARÉES SÈCHES - PORTFOLIO

## Summary

*Les Marées Sèches* (*The Dry Tides*) is a **long durational and choreographic performance** for algae and a human in a **horizontal and non-hierarchical relationship**. It attempts to answer a paradoxical question: What would be a **non-anthropocentric choreographic work**, that is to say, not centered on humans? This attempt to give as much attention to a non-human species as to humans implies **modulating and reconfiguring the performer's presence**. The performance's temporality is defined according to the **tidal cycle, 6 hours and 12 minutes**. It is also an **act of resistance against the acceleration** of our lives and a **way to trouble our productivity-driven mindset**, which reduces our capacity of listening to other living beings.

## The whole story

### 1. What's wrong with anthropocentrism?

Deeply concerned by the ecological crisis, what strikes me most in my research and readings is **our inability to think beyond our anthropocentric paradigm** in our daily life; that is, humans, emancipated from and dominating nature, believe themselves **to be at the center of every ecosystem**. Going back and forth between ecology and the artistic medium I have chosen, dance, my research question emerges:

**What would a non-anthropocentric choreographic work?**

I see here **a friction, a paradox**, as traditionally, a work described as "choreographic" showcases a certain **virtuosity of human bodies in movement, in a rather anthropocentric way**.

My response to this question is an attempt to **establish a non-hierarchical and horizontal relationship between two species**: algae and humans. Therefore, it implies modulating the centrality and presence of the performer, to attempt to experience a more **eco-centric paradigm**. This question is the source and driving force of the project, and everything else flows from it.

### 2. The algae, a living waste?

It was primarily the **green algae scandal** on the shores of Brittany (France) that drew me to algae. They blossom and **proliferate abundantly** due to the **excess nitrates used in intensive farming**, flowing into the rivers and entering the sea. As they dry and decompose, they release a toxic gas (hydrogen sulfide), dangerous to humans and animals. This scandal exposes the **harmful effects of agricultural policies**, our capitalist economic model, the **overexploitation** of the planet, and our **lack of sensitivity** to living things. Moreover, algae are currently attracting industrials, who exploit them as a **new material to replace plastic**; on the other hand, they are considered as **waste**, from which beaches must be cleaned. I choose to work with algae out of sincere **curiosity for this mysterious marine plant species**, which has existed since the dawn of time. Here, **I propose to take a different look at them**, and to **give them the space to exist**, simply as they are.

### 3. A question of duration?

I initially conceived this creation as an installation; however, I forgot the notion of time! The initial concept of an installation thus becomes a **durational performance, lasting 6 hours and 12 minutes**, the average time of **a transition from low tide to high tide**.

Choosing the temporality of the tides means **adopting the life rhythm of coastal algae and shoreline ecosystems**, and **shifting our perspective away from our conventional temporalities**. Furthermore, the temporality of the tides is a **universal rhythm**, because the rotational movements of the Moon and the Earth, which govern the tides, also influence **the flow of sap in plants and trees**. Creating a durational performance is **not an end goal in itself**, demonstrating human's incredible endurance and tenacity. For me, it's about using it as **a format, a tool to question our relationship to time and deconstruct our chrono-normativity**. This duration, which implies a clear slowing down, is also **an act of resistance against the acceleration of our lives and the productivism that reduces our connection to the living world**. Finally, this duration allows the performer to **access altered states of consciousness**, which are a starting point for my choreographic research.



Photo: Céline Egues

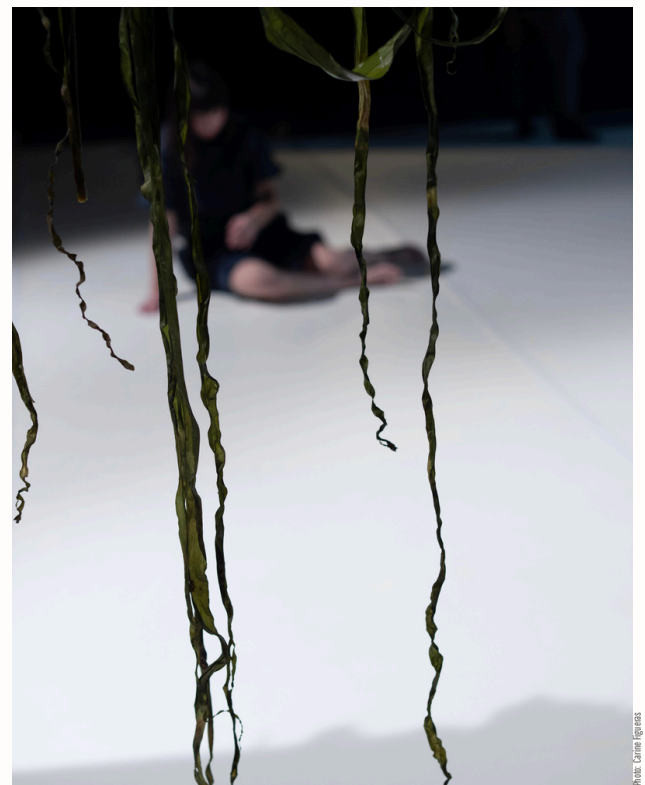


Photo: Céline Egues



Photo: Arnaud Krizan



#### 4. What about the dance?

The choreographic material was **inspired by a hypnosis practice** (transmitted by Catherine Contour), allowing an oscillating movement to emerge, by slowly transferring the body weight from one side to the other. Here, I detach and decontextualize this movement from the hypnotic tool, to study it as a **perpetual movement of oscillation**, of ebb and flow, **de-centering and re-centering** oneself, infinitely adaptable, which can **multiply, fragment, dissociate, bifurcate, branch off...**

This **radical slowness** is therefore the **external visual consequence** of this detailed exploration of movement down to the millimeter. This induces a **"dive,"** a temporal disconnection, but also a state of presence that **reopens the perceptual and sensory fields** and presents the human being in a **decentralized position**.

The choreographic score is based on four rules:

- To **'not make an event'**, meaning avoid any action or effort that would disrupt the horizontality, the balance of presences within the algae/human coexistence.
- To **'not make a project'**, meaning refrain from "achieving," not seeking to accomplish a goal (for example, rolling in a certain direction).
- **Defer and branch off**, meaning always be on the move but constantly reconsider one's intentional choices in space and time, so as not to create a project.
- **De-hierarchize/dissociate** the body parts: each oscillation has the same importance.

#### 5. Which spaces?

The performance is primarily intended for a **"white box" setting** (museum, art center, exhibition space), but could also take place on a theater stage. The audience is invited join the performance at any point—beginning, middle, or end. It is **their responsibility to choose how long they would to stay** and spend with us.

The **strong smell of seaweed and the hypnotic soundscape makes it an immersive experience**, where the audience is included and immersed in the performance space, opening them to different scales of sensitivity and perception, and inviting them to **experience this slowing down**. They are invited to sit on chairs or cushions, they can also lie down and have a nap.

It is **not a "show" or a "spectacle"**. The audience's gaze is **more contemplative** and fluid than guided by dramatic perspectives or actions. In the long term, I would like this performance to also exist in a site-specific format, on the coastline, with the existing ecosystem and the true temporality of the tides and the seaweed already present.

#### 6. An "ecological" performance... impossible ? Failures and paradoxes

While the project was thought with an **eco-conception approach**, it was important for me **to avoid an "artistic greenwashing"**. The goal here is not simply to create a work that addresses ecology as a topic, but where **ecology is a commitment, considered in every aspects of the project** - its subjects, form, and production.

Despite our attention to the overall coherence of the project, some points remain **contradictory**. Even attempting to answer the question, "What would be a non-anthropocentric choreographic work?" is perhaps already **a failure in itself**. A choreographic work is a creation made by humans for other humans, and in our case, in spaces built by humans. While the artistic proposition itself manages to be non-anthropocentric, the context in which this choreographic work is created remains highly anthropocentric.

Moreover, a **certain ecological "purity" is impossible to achieve**: to do this project, we travelled (by trains), turned on the lights, used electricity for our computers, etc. Talking about "zero environmental impact" would be hypocritical; to achieve it, we would have to not do any artistic projects (or even not exist at all).



## Agenda

**January 2024:** Research residency "Performance and Ecological practices" funded by **Culture Moves Europe** and carried by **Instant Dissidence**, at **Cloughjordan Ecovillage**, Ireland. This residency wasn't specifically dedicated to Les Marées Sèches, but it was an important time for reflecting and preparing the creative process.

**March 2024:** First seaweed harvest in Brittany (Finistère area)

**29th April - 2nd May 2024:** Site-specific residency on the beach in Brittany, and second seaweed harvest

**13th - 17th May 2024:** Residency at the **CN D** in Lyon, as part of "Artiste en expérimentation"

**10th October 2024:** Talk for the Master 2 students in Performing Arts at Université Lumière, in Lyon

**11th - 23rd November 2024:** Residency at Les **SUBS**, Lyon

**6th - 10th January 2025:** Residency at **Honolulu**, Nantes

**27th - 31st January 2025:** Residency at **Point Éphémère**, Paris

**31st January 2025:** Workshop for a middle school class in Paris, in partnership with Point Éphémère

**22nd March 2025:** **Première at Galerie Far West**, in Penmarch in Brittany, for the spring equinox and one year after the first seaweed harvest in the same region.

**29th March 2025:** Talk at **Radio Paradis** (local radio in Paris 10e)

**10th December 2025:** Talk at la **Fabrique de la Danse**, as part of the course "Eco-concevoir un projet artistique", Paris

**6th March 2026:** Talk for the research laboratory **Passages XX-XXI**, of Université Lumière, Lyon

**9th - 12th March 2026:** Workshops for amateurs in the context of the SEED project - Social & Ecological Engagement through Dance - with L'Eveilleur, at Théâtre Golovine, Avignon

## Teaser

<https://youtu.be/fhbAK8Dzmk8>

## Press

**Le Télégramme** : Les « Marées Sèches » : Clara Grosjean en mouvement à la galerie Far West de Penmarc'h. [Lien vers l'article](#)

**Ouest France** : Penmarch. Une performance de six heures parmi les algues. [Lien vers l'article](#)

## The humans behind this projects

Concept & choreography: Clara Grosjean

Performance and assistant: Emma Pocq

Sound: Louen Poppé

Costumes: Héloïse Larue

Logistics support: Shane van Neerden, Audrey Grosjean

Outside eyes: Julie Sermon, Emma Merabet, Nawelle Aînèche

This project was supported and accompanied by the CN D - Centre National de la Danse in Lyon.

### Partners:

ADAMI - Bourse Première Fois Danse

Spedidam - Aide à l'enregistrement d'une bande originale d'un spectacle chorégraphique

Centre National de la Danse, as part of the "Artiste en expérimentation" program in Lyon

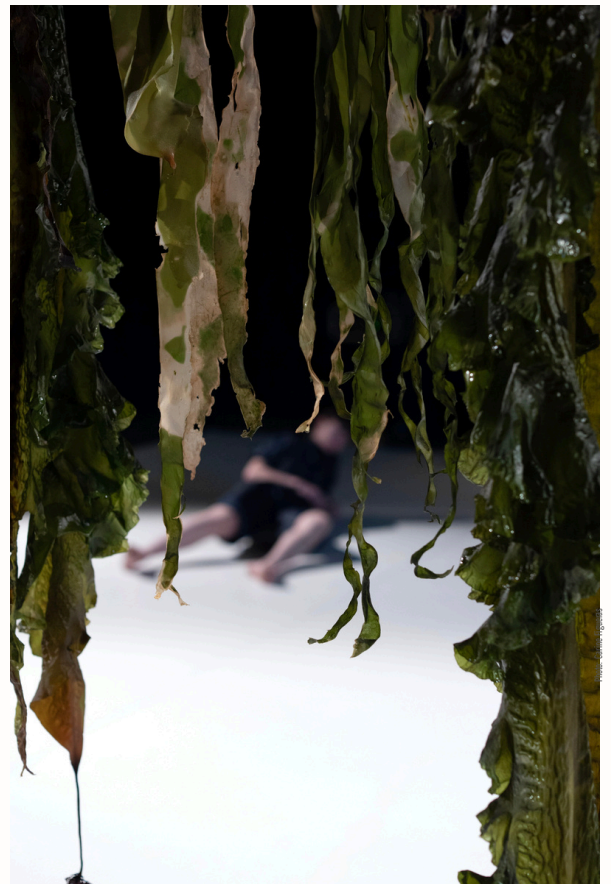
### Supports and residencies

Les SUBS, Lyon

Point Éphémère x cheville, Paris

Honolulu, Nantes

Le Far West, Penmarch



**CN D**

**la culture avec la copie privée**

**POINT ÉPHÉMÈRE**

**Adami**

**subs**

**HONOLULU**

**SPEDIDAM**  
LES DROITS DES ARTISTES-INTERPRÈTES