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IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER, NEW ORLEANS

# CECILIA VICUÑA: ABOUT TO HAPPEN

WITH ESSAYS BY ANDREA ANDERSSON, LUCY LIPPARD, MACARENA GÓMEZ-BARRIS AND AN INTERVIEW BY JULIA BRYAN-WILSON

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Beginning and ending at the edge of the ocean at the sacred mouth of the Aconcagua River, *About to Happen* serves as a lament as well as love letter to the sea. **In this artist's book, Chilean-born artist and poet Cecilia Vicuña weaves personal and ancestral memory while summoning collective power to confront the economic disparities and environmental crises of the 21st century.**

Collecting the detritus that washes up on shore, Vicuña assembles out of the refuse tiny *precarios* and *basuritas*—little sculptures held together with nothing more than string and wire, which she sometimes makes as offerings to be reclaimed by the sea. These acts of creation and erasure mirror the ways in which her work inhabits and enlivens the liminal spaces between the remembered and forgotten, the revered and the discarded, the material and the dematerialized.

*About to Happen*, which accompanies an eponymous exhibition at the **Contemporary Arts Center (March 16 - June 18, 2017)**, traces a decades-long practice that has refused categorical distinctions and thrived within the confluences of conceptual art, land art, feminist art, performance and poetry. **Vicuña's nuanced visual poetics—operating fluidly between concept and craft, text and textile—transforms the discarded into the elemental, paying acute attention to the displaced, the marginalized and the forgotten.**

The exhibition will also travel 2018 through 2019 to the **Berkeley Art Museum**, Berkeley, California; the **Institute of Contemporary Art**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the **Henry Art Gallery**, Seattle, Washington. **Lucy Lippard's** original essay "Floating Between the Past and Future" will be featured in the Spring 2017 issue of *Afterall*.

*Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen* is the second in a collaborative series of artist's books co-published with the Contemporary Arts Center in which each year an artist is invited to intervene in the history and space of the book. **The first artist in the series was Adam Pendleton. Sarah Morris will be the third, with a book scheduled for release in 2018.**

**CECILIA VICUÑA** (b. 1948, Santiago, Chile) is a poet, visual and performance artist, and filmmaker whose multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional works bridge art and life, the ancestral and the avant-garde. Vicuña's work emphasizes transformative acts and "metaphors in space": an image becomes a poem, a film, a song, a sculpture or a collective performance. Beginning often with a delicate line (drawn or written) or a piece of string, she weaves complex works that are rich with political and social awareness as well as aesthetic beauty.

**The author of more than a dozen volumes of poetry**, Vicuña has most recently published *Spit Temple: Oral Performances of Cecilia Vicuña* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2012), *Chanccani Quipu* (Granary Books, 2012) and *Sabor a Mí* (Chain Links, 2011). She also co-edited *The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry* and is the co-founder of oysi.org, a site for the oral cultures and poetics of the world.

Widely exhibited internationally, **her work will be a part of Documenta 14 in both Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany.** Her work is also in the collections of Tate Gallery in London, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Chile in Santiago and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among others. She is represented by England & Co. Gallery in London.

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