



## City SALTS (Cabane)

Opening hours: Thu/Fri 12–5 pm, during Art Basel daily 1–6 pm

Reception during the City SALTS Summer Party on 19 June 2025  
Launch of *ways of remembering ourselves*, a new publication about the artist,  
co-published by Kodoji Press, Galerie Tschudi, and blank projects

City SALTS, Hauptstrasse 12, down by the river, 4127 Birsfelden

### **donna Kukama: breath, wind, and water**

Curated by Samuel Leuenberger and Benedikt Wyss

donna Kukama (b. 1981, Mafikeng, South Africa) is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice engages performance art as a tool for creative research. Her work presents institutions, monuments, gestures of protest, rumors, and fleeting moments that are as real as they are fictitious. Shifting between performance, video, text, sound, and multimedia installations, her practice takes on a form that is experimental, applying methods that are deliberately undisciplined. She uses performance as a strategy that allows her to invent as well as to apply methods that are outside the canon of what is predictable or expected. Kukama questions how histories are narrated and subverts how value systems are constructed, instead centering methods and perspectives that originate from Global Majorities beyond the West. Through her practice, she weaves major with minor aspects of histories, introducing fragile and brief moments of 'strangeness' within sociopolitical settings. Her performances are to be understood as gestures of poetry with a political intent and an urgent need to destabilize existing canons regarding the ways we look at reality. For Kukama, performance becomes a strategy for inserting 'less documented' voices and presences into history by occupying sites and territories that remember less-told stories. Living and working in Cologne, Germany, Kukama is a professor of Contemporary Art with a focus on the Global South at the Academy of Media Arts (KHM).

*breath, wind and water* is conceived of as a single immersive installation incorporating the total architecture of the Cabane at City SALTS. The work's title takes its cue from the name of the famous 60s–70s funk band, Earth, Wind & Fire, which fused R&B, rock, disco, soul, and pop with elements of African and Afro-diasporic music genres. The band's reference to the three elements as a gesture towards the spiritual is invited into the installation by the artist's proposition of an ecosystem for resilience and survival, where breath, wind, and water embody mystical allies sounding in solidarity with all whose existence(s) is threatened by violence, coloniality, white supremacy, ethnic cleansing, and erasure. A time-specific, time-based reflection of both history and current times, this newly proposed sound installation presents a sonic band made up of ceramic vessels made of the earth, with speakers sounding the breath of the artist, wind from the Caribbean that has been transformed to a rumbling drum-like sound, alongside sounds of water collected from the Atlantic Ocean and the mangrove areas of Martinique "singing" in unison, out-of-tune, and in fragmented yet life-affirming grammars of resilience. Also included in the installation are sounds from previous works, *Chapter C: The Genealogy of Pain*, and *Chapter O...*, alongside a series of texts and drawings, as echoes of fragments from Kukama's performances series, *the history book for those who absolutely need to be remembered* (2017–2024). The sentences from performance scripts referencing breath, wind, and water are repeatedly rewritten on the walls, while drawings are rendered in copper to welcome the element's properties of healing spiritual and emotional energies in the body.

On the outside of the Cabane, the sentence «to make love to concrete, you cannot pretend that concrete needs your loving», a re-adaptation from Audre Lorde's «making love to concrete», is inscribed (again and again and again) in a palette of black, green, red, gold, and copper hues. The sentence is rewritten to resonate with the sentiment of Lorde's poem, which speaks of love and resilience persevering in harsh environments. Its reconfiguration by inserting «you cannot» also negates the desire for assimilation into environments that meet our bodies with violence.

*breath, wind, and water* is produced in collaboration with blank projects and Galerie Tschudi. Elements of the sound were sourced from Martinique during the *In The Shade* residency organised by Ronald Rose-Antoinette. The installation features voices of Anan Anshour (Palestine) and Daiane Ciriáco (Brazil).

Occasion (from the performance: To Be Announced, 2015), 2015–2024

Copper

54 x 93 x 0.6 cm

1/3 + 1 AP

DK/S 7 Speechlessness (from Chapter P: We the Not-Not Educational Spirits, 2017), 2017–2024

copper

90 x 55 x 0.6 cm

1/3 + 1 AP

Hundreds and hundreds (from Chapter C: The Genealogy of Pain, 2016), 2016–2024

Copper

30 x 100 x 0.6 cm

1/3 + 1 AP

Chapter C: The Genealogy of Pain (revisited), 2016–2024

Sound installation, Clay speaker

23 x 23 x 32.5 cm (speaker)

1/3 + 1 AP

Chapter O: ...,\_,,, 2022–2024

Sound installation, Clay speaker

31 x 31 x 19 cm (speaker)

1/3 + 1AP

breath, wind, and water, 2025

Sound installation, Three clay speakers

**The exhibition is made possible through the support of Abteilung Kulturförderung Baselland.**