



Microperformances

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Iri Berkleid



Portrait dans l'installation *Les incontinenances* pour l'exposition Coalescence
Césure Paris, 2025



Photo of the growing artwork *Guts help us !*

Statement

Iri Berkleid lives and works in Paris. After exploring experimental techniques at the biological lab of the School of Visual Arts in New York, Iri Berkleid has developed her own cosmogony through a practice grounded in intervening within **microbiological processes of matter formation**. The artist shapes cellulose as it grows in symbiotic cultures of bacteria and yeast, thus revisiting traditional pictorial and sculptural methods through the lens of the biological principles that underpin her practice. These principles have become both her primary constraint for creation and a major source of inspiration.

By seeking to transfigure **ever-mutating organic matter**, Iri Berkleid aims to «shift our perception of the abject and the sublime, and question our relationship to the body and its environment». She sees each work produced through this **dual process of creation** as a multitude of artworks, whose different states she shares through immersive installations, performances, or «documentary-works.»

Her will of transmission is driven by the **concept of the “aura”** as developed by the philosopher Walter Benjamin. Oscillating between abstraction and figuration, the **finalized and stabilized pieces**—presented as sculptures or “organic tapestries”—retain the traces of past vital activity.

In searching for the **imprints of the psyche upon matter**, the themes explored by the artist sketch out intimate chimerical imaginaries drawn from her dreams or from social myths inspired by evolving contemporary narratives, such as the biopolitics of bodies, interspecies alterity, or spirituality in connection with a microcosmic nature.

Microperformances

This body of work concerns the **experimental and spiritual dimension of my material research with organic matter** as the foundation of my artistic practice. Echoing my own studio experience and a transformative practice shaped through contact with ever-evolving material, the micro-performances I produce alongside my sculptural works offer unique **moments of communion across multiple scales of life**— a direct, **unmediated experience of micro-organic nature**.



Esthetic of a Wet Resistance, 2025, Césure Paris

These performative works emerge from **immersive evolving installations** in which living artworks are growing and activated by the performer Jodie Williams. They stem from a search for an abstract corporeal language born from the **symbiosis** between the actant, Jodie Williams, and the living matter at the moment of action. The various manipulations of the material by the actant and her two assistants (recurring figures), as choreographed in each performance, tell stories that have already been told throughout art history—but here, they are told differently.

It is through this hybrid creature—at once akin to us humans and to the artwork itself, resembling a seeping, vigorous mattress of flesh—that a reflection on a **new form of interspecies otherness** emerges. It is an experience **rooted in the sacredness of organic matter and its life force**—raw, potent, and unapologetic.



*Body Abstracts, 2022, SOMA Marseille
Immersive installation preceding the performance*

Several elements recur in each creation and together form the essence of this body of performative works: **a space** defined and structured by a tarp; the presence of the installation enabling the growth of the work in an **exhibition space** prior to the performance, making the ongoing mutations visible and accessible to the public; **the act of extracting the work** from its growth bath using ropes and pulleys; **the physical endurance** of the actant (each piece weighs approximately 80 kilograms) and the centrality of **water**.



Esthétique d'une résistance mouillée, 2025, Césure Paris



Body Abstracts, 2022, SOMA Marseille



A Wet Aesthetic of Resistance, 2025, Césure Paris
Hybrid sculpture with a culture table in metal and ceramic, blown glass sculptures, and a growing cellulose mattress embedded with pigments and threads, immersed in its bath of microorganisms.

Also present are **two assistants**, whose waterproof and fully covering costumes contrast with the actant's symbiotic relation to the living matter—echoing the paradox between the organic closeness of the living world and the classificatory systems that reduce its agents to pathogenic spectra.

Each performance features **live musical compositions** by invited composers and the intervention of soprano Fanny Perrier Rochas, whose presence embodies the **ritual dimension** of the act. The performance ends in a recurring final gesture: the actant creates a **wall fresco** by hanging fragments of organic material onto nails.



La Naissance d'Eva, 2023, the artist's studio

The term **"microperformance"** was coined by art critic Jens Hauser and artist Lucie Strecker to describe a new form of performance developed by bio-artists, which stages microorganisms as active agents within the work.

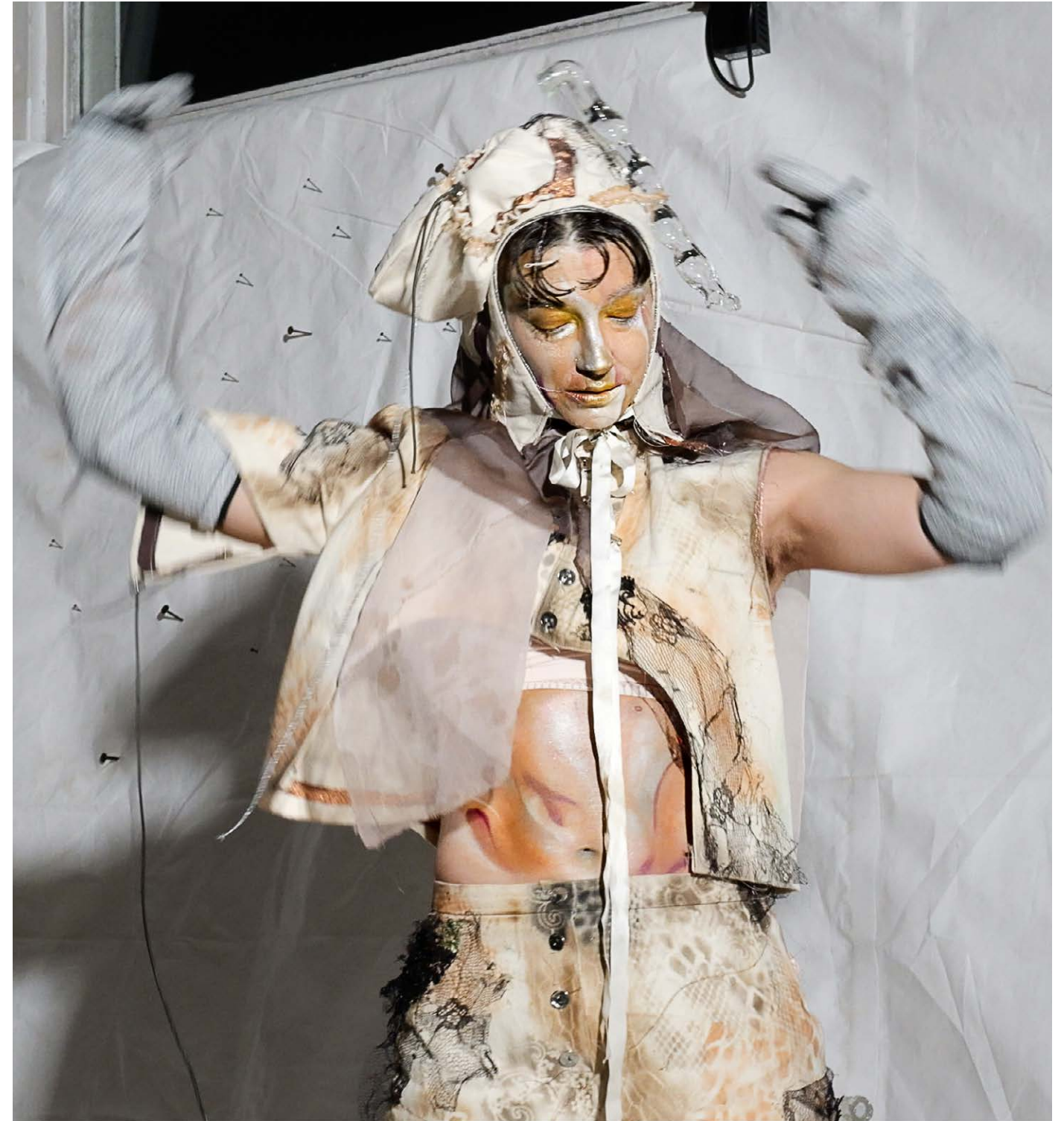
A Wet Aesthetic of Resistance, 2025

A Wet Aesthetic of Resistance (Esthétique d'une Résistance Mouillée) is a performance written and produced by Iri Berkleid, for which performer and circus artist Jodie Williams activates the artist's installation in which a work is in the process of growth through a microcosmic biological process.

This performance is the third in a series of works that the artist describes as "mini-operas," showcasing multiple scales of life concurrently to create spaces of communion between all bodies. Each performance embarks on the search for traces of the psyche on matter, addressing different themes.

Here, drawing on a phrase from Peter Weiss's book The Aesthetics of Resistance: «I am made of flesh and blood that flows in my veins, and you, now reduced to ideology only, are lost,» here the artist questions the transformation of our ways of thinking in times of acute conflict. The costume is designed by Chaim Vischel.

VIDEO





A Wet Aesthetic of Resistance, 2025

Césure, Paris

Written, directed, and musically composed by Iri Berkleid

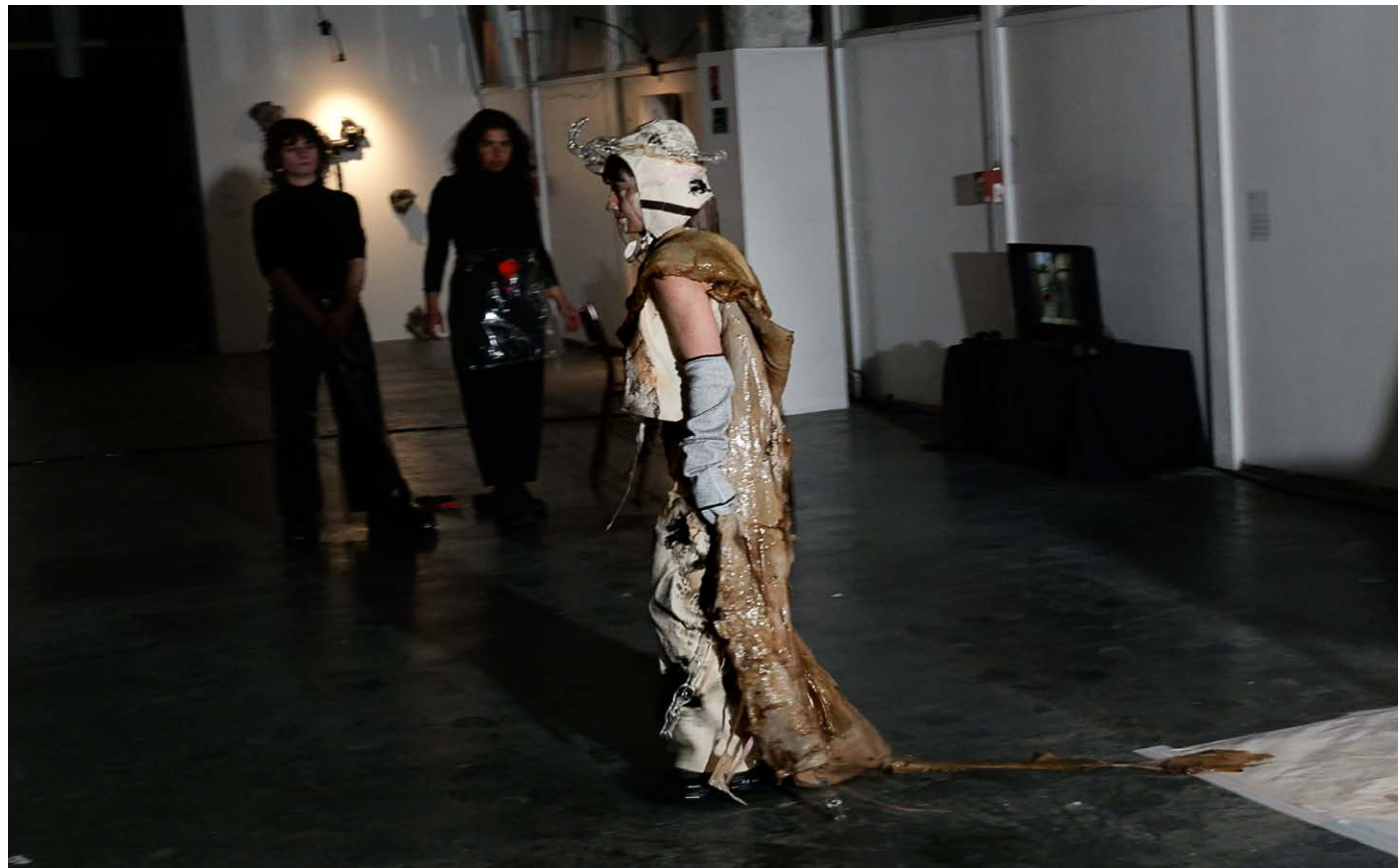
Performance by Jodie Williams, Julia Jibert, and Maylis Cluzet

Costume and makeup design by Chaim Vischel









Body Abstracts, 2022

Synopsis : *Body Abstracts, The Performance*, is an immersive performance by the artist Iri Berkleid that tells the story of a symbiosis and a separation in 5 "tableaux". At the intersection of music, theatre and visual arts shows, Iri stages the circus artist Jodie Williams, the poet and musician Santiago Aldunate and the music composer Tamas Juhasz. A first public version of 18 minutes took place at SOMA Marseille in October 2022 in front of an audience of sixty people.

The action takes place in an evolving installation in which a cellulose membrane, resembling human skin, grows during the month running up to the performance. Jodie's body is transformed by the fusion with the membrane and emerges in enigmatic forms in the bathtub before spilling out, body to body, into the performance space. The separation of the two bodies marks the second part of the performance, where Jodie becomes the conscious master of the material. She now handles the material practically, yet still sacredly, under the improvised sounds of Tamas who sets the tempo for her ascension to the final scene, her projection, the creation of a mural from the remaining pieces of material.

Her actions are abstractions of Iri Berkleid's real process and experience of working with this matter, highlighting the labour and physical effort, the intimacy and fusion, the constraints and conflicts of working with a new materiality. The audience is invited to a complete sensory experience, in proximity with odours, sounds and textures; a new environment, displacing them to reconsider their notion of abjection and awe.

In each performance Iri invites a different musician to frame the work, giving a sensitive impulse to start the action. Their voice leaves a gentle trace carried through the duration of the piece until the audience are reunited with the music in the form of a concert at the end. Jodie, exiting the performance space after the final act, leads a hypnotized audience into the concert of the guest musician, a familiarity that now relieves the trance of the performance environment.

TEASER

Body Abstracts, The Performance
Soma Marseille, Octobre 2022

Written and directed by Iri Berkleid, performance by Jodie Williams,
musical performance by Santiago Aldunate and Hanta Yo,
sound creation and live music by Tamas Juhasz











*Body Abstracts, Hanta Yo concert with
Santiago Aldunate
SOMA Marseille*



*Microperformance Eros' Wake
Les Chaudronneries de Montreuil, 2024
Fanny Perrier Rochas*

Extractions at the Artist's studio

The microperformances at the studio open the doors of Iri Berkleid's workspace to invite an audience to witness the extraction of a new work at the site of its production. Extraction is a key moment in the artist's creative process. Like a birth, it marks the moment when the artwork is separated from its culture bath to begin transitioning into a stabilized and inert state.

The artist invites the public to encounter the piece while it is still vibrant and full of life, before initiating a performative ritual that activates the infrastructure specifically conceived and built for her practice. Singer Fanny Perrier Rochas engages multiple musical languages. Accompanied by a drum, a harp, or a piano, her ancestral chants—drawing from Byzantine and Syriac repertoires—drift into vocalizations, guiding the communion of all scales of living beings present at the event.



La Naissance d'Eva, 2023





PERFORMANCE TEXT (translated from french) read by Martin Guillaud

«In a few moments, you will witness the extraction of the artwork. This is the precise moment when the cellulose skin is removed from its culture of bacteria and yeast after three months of incubation.

The connection with its culture will be irreversibly broken, the structures of the microorganisms disrupted, and the symbiotic process interrupted.

This moment does not yet exist, and soon, it will no longer exist.

In the vat, the symbiotic ecosystem will continue its course, forming a new cellulose skin. Meanwhile, the extracted cellulose skin will begin its drying process, losing 95% of its water weight over two weeks at a controlled humidity level. It will go from approximately 40 kilograms to 200 grams in 15 days. Only the traces of this past vital activity will remain on the waterless cellulose.

During extraction and drying, the artwork will be extremely vulnerable. It may be colonized by external microorganisms, crumble, tear, detach, or deform.

Since the beginning of this speech, the artwork has already transformed several times as cellular duplications have occurred. While the reaction of microorganisms to different interventions—with tissues, pigments, and other various manipulations—could be roughly reported by the recreational human, the reaction of microorganisms to their incessantly observing eye is even more uncertain.

In report no. 112, the recreational human notes: «Every measurement implies an exchange of information, by definition.»

They then adds: «Observing the artwork during its three months of growth was like observing the sky in motion, as if I could feel and sniff this fleetingness.»

TEASER

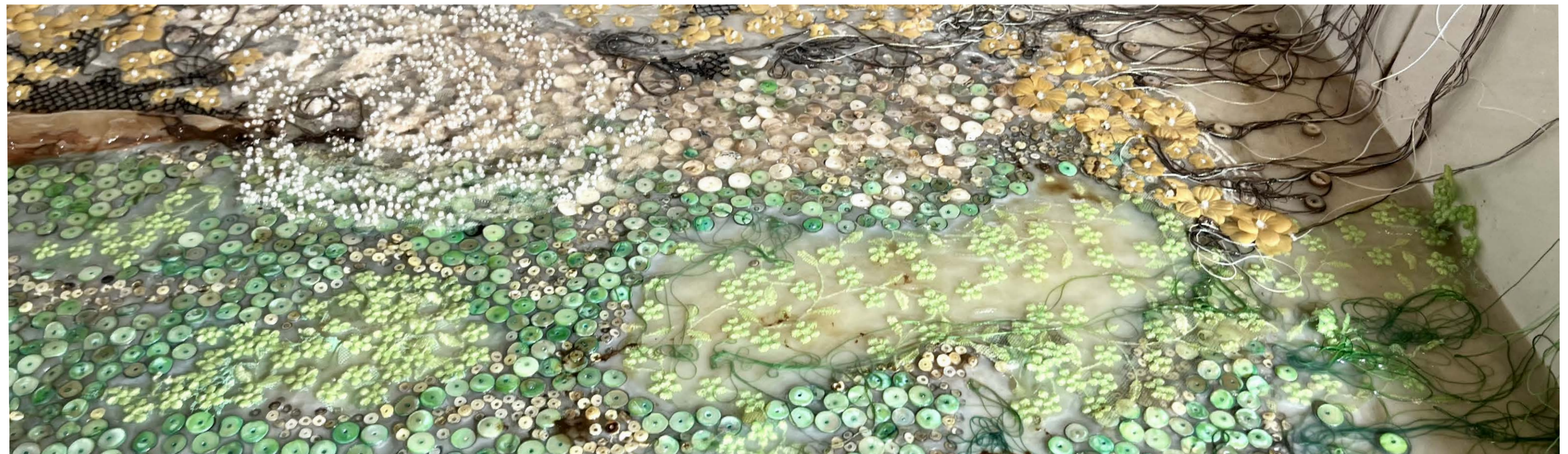
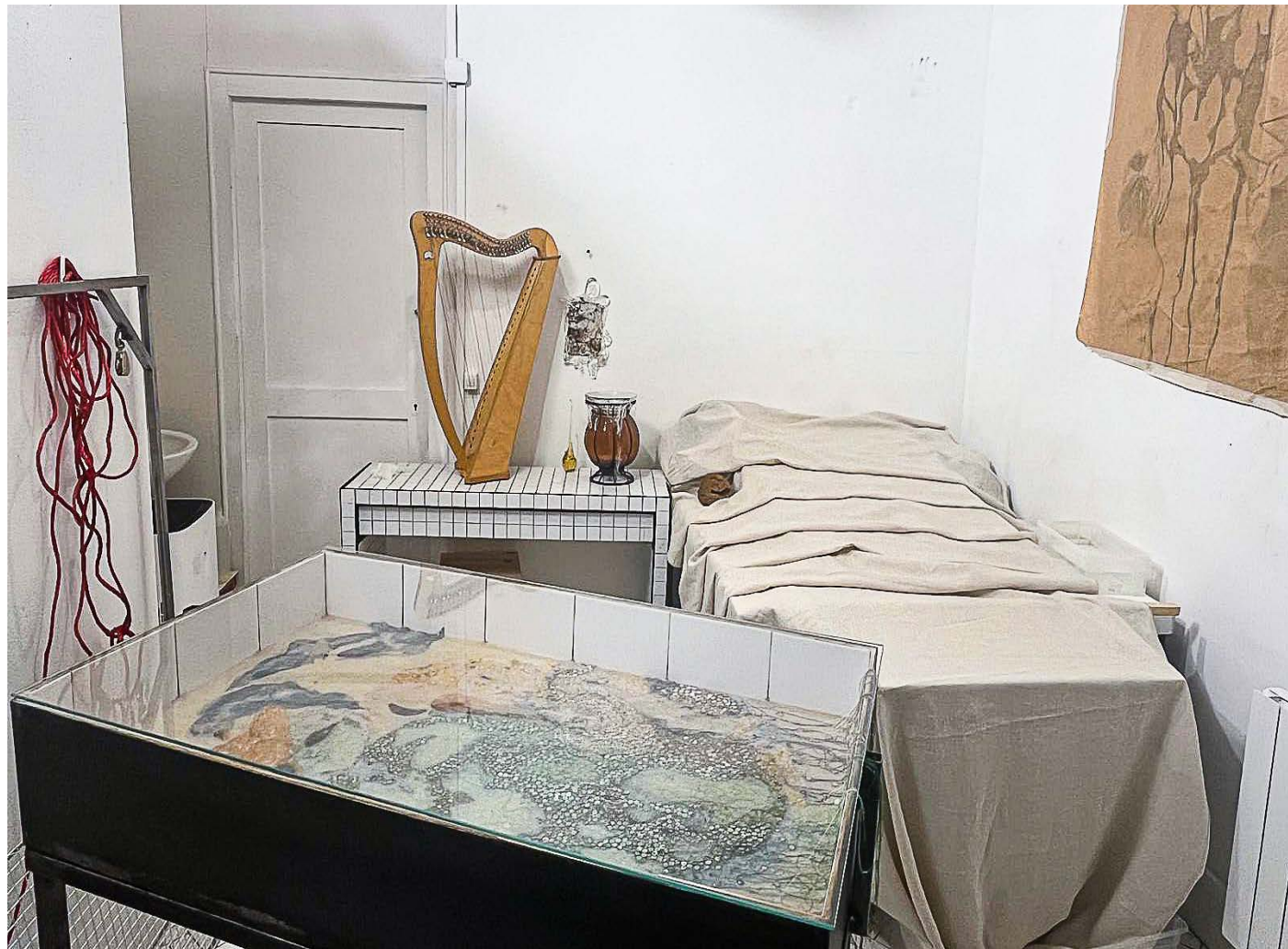
Microperformance La Naissance d'Eva

Written and directed by Iri Berkleid,
performance by Jodie Williams,
musical performance by Fanny Perrier Rochas,
theatrical performance by Martin Guillaud and Evangelia Pruvot



Extraction at the Studio, 2025

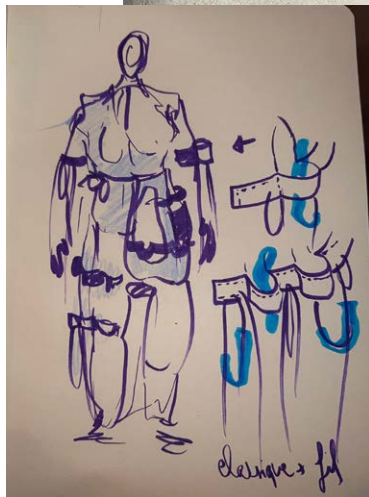
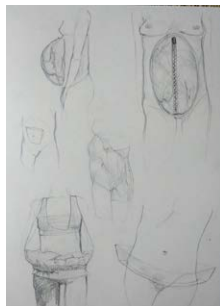
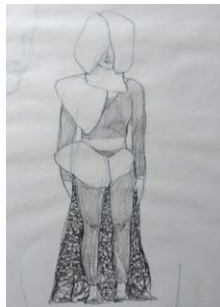






Microperformance *Extraction à l'atelier*, 2025
 At the artist's studio
 Written and directed by Iri Berkleid
 Musical performance by Fanny Perrier Rochas
 With Clara Geoffroy and Mailys Cluzet

Costume Research



Artistic Team

Artistic Direction

Iri Berkleid, visual artist: writing, direction, production
Jodie Williams, performer, aerial circus artist, visual artist: actant

Music Team

Fanny Perrier Rochas, musical performer, opera singer, and composer
Tamas Juhasz, composer, producer: live composition
Acid Reflux, producer, editor: musical research

Costume & Makeup

Chaim Vischel, costume designer, makeup artist, visual artist



Iri Berkleid



Jodie Williams



Tamas Juhasz



Fanny Perrier Rochas



Chaim Vischel

Behind the scene

