

PROTODINEMA

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz
David Horvitz
Onur Karaoğlu

RUNNING IN PLACE

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BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ DAVID HORVITZ ONUR KARAOĞLU

Protocinema presents **Running In Place**, a group exhibition with **Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, David Horvitz, and Onur Karaoğlu**, at & in partnership with **Polat Piyalepaşa Çarşısı**, supported by the **United States Mission – Turkey**, opening to the public on Saturday, September 10. This exhibition convenes artworks on the circulation of ideas, water and bodies along with their inherent contradictions. The artists in *Running In Place* occupy three positions - Santiago Muñoz's is that of suspension, Horvitz's of regulated mobility, and Karaoğlu's of free-flowing forces of nature and imagination.

Generally, circulation is considered good - good for healthy societies, oceans, and human bodies. The current dissonance lies in extremes of hyper-movement and restricted mass-movement. Globalism has maximized its force of flight for the survival of many, on the one hand, and liberty of transit by class and nationhood, on the other hand. This grotesque dissonance of circulation holds humanity captive, frenetically running in place. An early video by **Beatriz Santiago Muñoz**, *Todo lleva a nada* (Everything leads to nothing, 2003), "shows a group of girls in a normally isolated part of the island of Puerto Rico become even more so when a bridge that connects them to town is damaged. They perform fantasies of escape and return."¹ Pacing and loitering, bright young minds fill their time lethargically lounging or trying on adult shoes while the rain and sun fall. We get a short glimpse of the washed out bridge while the majority of what we see are girls looking at each other while we look at them. There is a painful elongation of time, every minute feels like it lasts hours, which is all too familiar. As we know, limitation of mobility, space, and time, limits the living of life.

David Horvitz's commission is called *In the limit of disorientation* (2022) and is made of glass vessels, hand blown in Istanbul, holding seawater collected from Cape Baba, Turkey, the westernmost site of the Asian continent. Its title, *In the limit of disorientation*, refers to the literal meaning of the word dis'orient'ation, to turn away from the east, and the historically constructed fiction of what is East and what is West. Cape Baba in Babakale is an incongruity. It is the westest point of Asia yet latitudinally

it is more west than Turkey's European side. It is even further west than parts of Greece and Europe's Nordic countries. Horvitz's work draws an "imaginary line that determines spatial and temporal coordination," displaced and completely abstracted.² It examines questions of the distance between places, people, and time in order to test the possibilities of appropriating, undermining, or even erasing these distances. **Onur Karaoğlu's** *In Vain* gets right into these murky waters. The four-channel video installation takes its name from the ashik (poet)³ Mahzuni Şerif's song, *Boşu Boşuna* (In Vain). One of the qualities of an ashik poet is that they travel from town to town singing and spreading reflections to live by. During this work, the audience is invited to write and experience the role of a poet. Our journey is guided by the narration of four characters: a storyteller, an ancient sea, an oceanographer from the middle ages, and a poet from the last century. All of the stories intersect on marine mucilage that has covered the Marmara Sea as a result of the climate crisis in 2021. The ramifications of this abundance of mucilage are catastrophic.

In Vain creates a space to investigate the passing on of oral and written tales, and how to make meaning in the face of crisis. There are lines in Karaoğlu's video in which he dismisses hope. To even bring up the negation of hope is somehow hopeful. Nonetheless, the artist invites the viewers to put themselves into the shoes of the poet, the creator, in order to fuel their own ingenuity, to think of solutions via geological time. We do all this while submerged in contradiction of a need for, and simultaneously the broken promise of, circulation, breathless and running in place.

There will be two presentations of the participatory performance version of *In Vain* with the addition of a fifth character, a young writer from contemporary times, once on September 14 and then in October 2022.



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Protocinema is supported by the **United States Mission - Turkey** and **Polat Piyalepaşa Çarşısı**, İstanbul.

2 Horvitz, David; Alexander Provan, "Somewhere in Between the Jurisdiction of Time," Art In America, 2014.

3 An ashik (Azerbaijani: aşiq; Turkish: âşık) is traditionally a singer-poet and bard who accompanies his song—be it a dastan (traditional epic story) or a shorter original composition—with a long-necked lute (usually a bağlama or saz) in Turkic (primarily Turkish and Azerbaijani cultures, including Iranian Azerbaijanis) and non-Turkic cultures of South Caucasus (primarily Armenian and Georgian).

BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ

TODO LLEVA A NADA
(EVERYTHING LEADS TO NOTHING)

Single-channel video
2003



For *Protozine*, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz spoke with us about one of her early videos, *Todo lleva a nada* (Everything leads to nothing, 2003), as well as about the social and political conditions then and now in Puerto Rico, which has been a territory of the United States since 1898. Santiago Muñoz's video shows a group of girls in a normally isolated part of the island of Puerto Rico become even more so when a bridge that connects them to town is damaged. In our conversation, Santiago Muñoz expands on military presence as a spaceship, being stifled and immobilized, and proposes that institutions cannot become decolonized because they are, themselves, colonial: "*It's in the life outside of these structures that the work of creating another life is done.*" In her life and work, Santiago Muñoz creates images that embody the complexity of lived experiences, and suggests that by doing so "*we would be able to access other ways of feeling and thinking.*"

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, on *Todo lleva a nada*

with Mari Spirito

Mari Spirito: What were the social and political conditions of Puerto Rico (and the Caribbean) when you made *Todo lleva a nada* (Everything leads to nothing) in 2003? Why is this part of the island, where the girls are in your video, isolated and what caused the bridge to become washed out?

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz: The town where these girls are is in a relatively remote area, with just one road that connected it quickly to a nearby bigger town center, and it was



this road's bridge that became unusable that summer. There was another way out on foot, but it would take many hours to get anywhere, and even then it was still a kind of no-place. The girls were completely on their own and in that dangerous moment where status as an adult or child is contextual. They would protect each other, which was beautiful to watch, but they also felt stifled and oppressed by the place and were sometimes overwhelmed

by ambiguous longing. They were between thirteen and sixteen years old and were already being perceived as adult women by young and old men around them. In fact, one of them gave birth to twins less than two years later. Weirdly, it doesn't feel like that long ago or that anything particularly different was happening then. It was just three years before the start of a deep economic recession in Puerto Rico, which we have still not climbed out of. The political response has been to enforce even more destructive austerity measures. It's going to be a long century.

MS: I'm sorry to hear that. Has the situation changed since then?

BSM: It has only intensified.

MS: You mentioned this early work was made with "what was at hand." Would you expand on that? How was it made? Do you ever still work this way?

BSM: Just me and a video camera—at that point an NTSC MiniDV camera. Bad resolution and even worse stills, not even semi-professional sound, no budget. In a way I don't really work very differently now, except that I have developed ways of working that are almost always with nonsynchronous sound so that I can concentrate on one thing at a time, decent cameras, whether 16mm or digital, and sometimes a sound collaborator—usually

Joel Rodríguez, an artist and musician I have worked with on many projects.

MS: Given that this exhibition, *Running In Place*, is about the circulation of ideas, water, and bodies along with their inherent contradictions, how does lack of mobility affect these young girls? What are the long-term ramifications of isolation?



BSM: Knowing what the next twenty years will bring for them, lack of mobility is a life sentence. Even their interaction with me—at that point I was a woman old enough to have children, but single and moving around by myself, traveling, just generally being an autonomous person. I was a strange apparition for them. I knew that and tried to make the most of it for them, but encouragement is no match for the weight of the world.

MS: How do your concerns in this work relate to more recent films, such as *Gosila* (2018) about the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, a natural disaster, which, like COVID, revealed generations of colonial wounds, or *Otros Usos* (Other Uses, 2014), which was shot from an old fuel dock of Roosevelt Roads, a former US naval base in Ceiba?

BSM: I think with *Todo lleva a nada* I was trying to work with these girls on capturing the feeling of being stifled and immobilized but I also wanted them to spend some time dreaming about escape and rupture. I wanted to give them an image of themselves to look at, one that was perhaps a bit open ended and that would create a moment of rehearsal of possibility, a “what next?” It was a modest wager. In very general terms, I was then, and still am, interested in re-signifying how the landscape is read and what it might stand for.

MS: For outsiders, there is a perception that Puerto Rico and the Caribbean are at a cultural intersection due to the military and colonial presence and movement. Would you agree with that? I am asking because there is a common misperception of Turkey as the “meeting point of East and West.” What is your perspective?

BSM: That’s interesting. In many ways it feels like a spaceship landed on us. There’s still a different life that is possible in the interstices, but speculation, absorption into a military system, austerity—these systems are pounding away, the rhythms of which are sometimes overwhelming, hard to escape. This is actually something that I love to do, to find the ways in which life escapes that spaceship. Against that there are just some beautiful forms of life: Puerto Rico has a huge underground

economy—everything that happens underneath, in blind spots, offers possibilities for reorganizing what a certain experience might mean. Everything is a cultural intersection. I can't remember who corrected my thinking about this, a historian, maybe? She was exasperated at the Caribbean obsession with describing the culture as "syncretic," as if African cultures were not already syncretic before slavery. So perhaps that is also a way to think about whether the Caribbean is at a cultural intersection.

MS: Puerto Rico has been a territory of the United States since 1898. Do you think there will come a day when Puerto Rico will become independent and decolonized? What do you imagine Puerto Rico would be like in that case?

BSM: Independence, national sovereignty, even though they mean so little these days, would still be useful, especially in being able to live a bit more harmoniously in our region. Without getting too much into the weeds here, it's the inability to control our own budget, land, and so on that makes things crazy. Some kind of Pan-Caribbean Confederation would be beautiful. The other day, the US Coast Guard



slammed straight into some fisherman's boat and killed them. That pretty much sums up the US "policing" here. Decolonization is another thing altogether, one that I don't really understand when describing institutions and structures—nations, museums, universities originate from and are thoroughly grounded in colonial structures. Interestingly, it's in the life outside of these structures that the work of creating another life is done.

MS: Many of your films bring the viewer landscapes and sea as sites of evidence of abusive power structures. Do you feel that it is possible for Puerto Rican residents to be decoupled from the historical trauma carried in its earth and ocean?

BSM: I think we are more symbolically structured by the image of the Caribbean Sea and tropical ecologies as landscapes of enjoyment and mindless pleasure for others that we don't really have a correspondence between the effects of living on this island and the image. There is no symbolic correspondence. So I think—and this is perhaps a bit paradoxical—that if there was greater symbolic complexity in how we experience the image, if there was a wider array overlaid on the landscape, then we would be able to access other ways of feeling and thinking.





DAVID HORVITZ

IN THE LIMIT OF DISORIENTATION



blown glass vessels,
seawater collected from Cape Baba, Turkey,
the westernmost side of the Asian continent
2022

Protocinema invited David Horvitz to make a new artwork, which he titled *In the limit of disorientation*. His new commission is composed of seawater collected from Cape Baba, Turkey, the westernmost side of the Asian continent in glass blown in Istanbul. For Protozine, Horvitz contributed a selection of pages from his book, also made this year, titled “Adjust the level of the sea,” a co-production with JBE Books & Fondation Carmignac. He collaborated with Sena Başöz, a long-time friend and artist, to translate his texts into Turkish. The work is described as “156 waves of thoughts and actions to be realized in relation to or contact with the sea.”

**put your tongue
into the sea**

dilini
dewin igine
sok

**make a hole
in the sea
the shape
of your body**

derin 1992
bedenin seklinde
bir delik as

derin bederinin
setlini hayal et

**imagine
the shape
of the sea's body**





ONUR KARAOĞLU

IN VAIN



four-channel video, audio installation
& participatory performance
2022

For *Running In Places*, Protocinema invited Onur Karaoğlu to transform his performance, titled *In Vain*, into a four-channel video installation of the same name. Each of his four characters—a storyteller, an oceanographer from the Middle Ages, a poet from the last century, and an ancient sea called Thetis—communicate with the viewer through voice-over and rolling text on flat screens. The text below, edited for Protozine, is a selection of excerpts from the fifth character, the artist himself, whose presence is marked only through his live performance. In this work, Karaoğlu grapples with a self-reflective journey to research and create collective poetry that, we hope, will not be made in vain in the face of the mounting global climate crisis.

Things That Should be Done Against Mucilage

Here I will tell you a story about marine mucilage¹. This artwork is an invitation to write poetry and to think collectively at a time when power and corruption are destroying many resources in our lives. We will try to form an anthology, a collection of poems, here and now. An anthology can be a form of resistance. We can start our own movement in this room with words that have the potential to change everything we know.

In the summer of 2021 in the Marmara Sea in İstanbul, a strange organism called phytoplankton, which secretes a substance called mucilage—also known as sea snot—suddenly appeared. It quickly formed white, cloud-like masses on the surface of the sea. Researchers began diving deep into the water, where they observed a large presence of mucilage as well. This simple organism was killing other marine life and suffocating the sea's entire ecosystem. Being an inhabitant of İstanbul, I was very worried. This is my home and this non-human living being of the city is being killed. The sea has been here for millions of years, and I now would see its death. I had to do something, but I didn't know what.

I continued to worry about the mucilage all summer. I live near the sea. Every time I passed by the shore I had a terrible feeling that I was witnessing the death of the Marmara Sea by a sticky, white murderer as if I could sense the suffocation of the water. After a couple of weeks passed, I realized I couldn't do anything personally to stop this, and I made a decision: I had to understand the murderer, mucilage. I had to empathize with it to understand its motivation, and to know what would happen next. I started to think like mucilage.

**Through the window behind the judge
I could see the Bosphorus.
While the prosecutor was reading
the accusations,
I was looking at the sea,
and a strong glow appeared
on the Bosphorus water
just ahead of my sight.**

As the situation in the Marmara Sea got worse, I became more involved in my personal task. I was empathizing with mucilage, I was trying to understand how it sees the world. It is a creature that probably doesn't think like me. What could help me relate to its behavior?

1 Mucilage, which the fishermen called "hez"—foam or snot—is the intense proliferation of *Gonyaulax fragilis*, a type of phytoplankton. Although mucilage, which is more apparent in calmer seas, is natural, it can damage the ecosystem when it grows excessively due to climate change.

I tried all kinds of impossible plans to fight the mucilage. I thought maybe I could change something. I could find something useful even if everything was beyond my comprehension. I had a vision that was connected to a certain moment in my past. And remembering it led me to write this text. I understood that words could help us defeat the mucilage. Words that hold a different kind of truth than the ones we use in our daily lives. Words that come from the past and open a path to a common future. Words that will help us forever with anything. I am talking about poetry. Poetry, maybe, could help me.

**Today I saw a lot of journalists
in front of the building.
I stopped for a while.
Then an old man was escorted
by the police out of the building.
The journalists were asking him questions.
I heard one of them say:
"Master poet, are you afraid?"**

There is more to do. Perhaps the best and strongest thing I can do is to cultivate these words, and to start a collective effort through writing. I know it is stupid to try to explain a poem to others. I shouldn't tell you the meaning of what we are doing. Our future is already written, but we can determine the meaning of the things that happen to us, and find the change we want. I mean living the pure form of meaning.

Maybe all revolutions happen by really living the meanings that are set for us.

The only way for me to struggle with the mucilage was through poetry. Because poetry can make sense of the most disparate things: the signs of aging, the waves of the sea, the common future we have. It might seem absurd, but I decided to save the Marmara Sea with words.

I know I am suggesting an extreme way of using poetry. But what is the use of poetry? What can its purpose be? Imagine ancient monuments that have poems inscribed on them. What achievements did those poems bring to the people who carved them into stone?

Do the words work for you? Or are they against you? Can they function beyond consolation? Prayers are for hope. Real things happen through the words of invitations. Invitations happen through words. Imagine a million people inviting others to meet them at the nearest park right now. Millions of people would suddenly go to the parks. Poems are invitations to meaning. If we all start to write poems now, there will be countless invitations for meaning. I am trying to illustrate how strong your words will be in poetry. I am also trying to explain my situation. I couldn't find a direct way to communicate with the mucilage. But I know there are other ways and other means. Words can help me. I want you to understand as well.





PROTOZINE

RUNNING IN PLACE

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, David Horvitz, Onur Karaoğlu

Exhibition Dates: September 10 - October 29, 2022

Location: Polat Piyalepaşa Çarşısı, -1. Floor,
No: C-04-05 Piyalepaşa Bulvarı, Istanbul
(shuttle or 15-minute walk from Arter)

Open: Wednesday through Saturday. 12:00 - 18:00

Protozine Collaborators: Beatriz Santiago Muñoz (with Mari Spirito), David Horvitz
(with Sena Başöz), Onur Karaoğlu

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Protocinema is supported by the United States Mission - Turkey and Polat Piyalepaşa

Çarşısı, Istanbul; **Board of Trustees:** Defne Ayas, Dillon Cohen, David Howe, Jane

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About Protocinema: Protocinema is a cross-cultural art organization that commissions and presents site-aware art around the world. Our purpose is to support dialogue between cultures on equal footing and create opportunities for listening & expression. By doing so, Protocinema aids the development of relationships both at the mindfully local & globally interconnected levels. Protocinema advocates for empathy, working towards an understanding of difference across regions through its exhibitions, commissions, public programs, publications, and mentorship. Founded in 2011 by Mari Spirito, Protocinema is an ambulant nonprofit 501(c)3, free of 'brick and mortar.' Our locations are varied, responding both to global concerns and changing conditions on the ground.

Protocinema is a legally registered non-profit in the United States operating internationally.

501(c)(3) EIN Registration number 46-1366509 Registered Charitable Organization CHAR500 number 48-38-81

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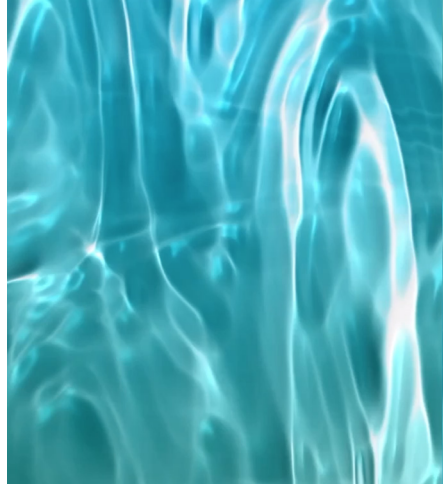
About Polat Piyalepaşa İstanbul: Piyalepaşa İstanbul's Polat Piyalepaşa Çarşısı was realized as Turkey's largest urban transformation project with the assurance of Polat. It is the new art stop of the city with six art galleries including artSümer, March Art Project, Art On İstanbul, Merkur, Pi Artworks, and Zilberman Gallery. In its unique complex, Polat Piyalepaşa Çarşısı creates a new climate with its outdoor shopping experience with national and international brands, playgrounds for children, and rich gastronomic culture.



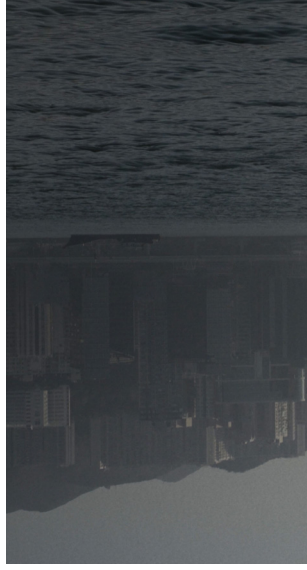


Protodispatch germinates from Protocinema's mission to support dialogue across cultures on equal footing. As intensity grows in many places due to urgent ecological crisis, the rise of right-wing/conservative leadership, and enduring economic turbulence, Protocinema believes cultural workers must respond to these conditions with alternative ways of seeing and confronting entrenched problems. By presenting trusted information and viewpoints that are sometimes deeply personal, a network of interconnected individuals with a plurality of perspectives and resources can emerge. While physical mobility is limited due to the pandemic as well as concerns around the economy and sustainability, Protodispatch addresses the desire to stay connected and circulate ideas, using what is available to us to support mutual survival and shared joy.

Laura Raicovich is the curator and editor of Protodispatch. She is a writer and curator whose book *Culture Strike: Art and Museums in an Age of Protest* was published by Verso Books in June 2021. She recently served as Interim Director of the Leslie Lohman Museum of Art, and previously was Director of the Queens Museum, as well as a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow at the Bellagio Center, and the Tremaine Curatorial Fellow for Journalism at Hyperallergic.



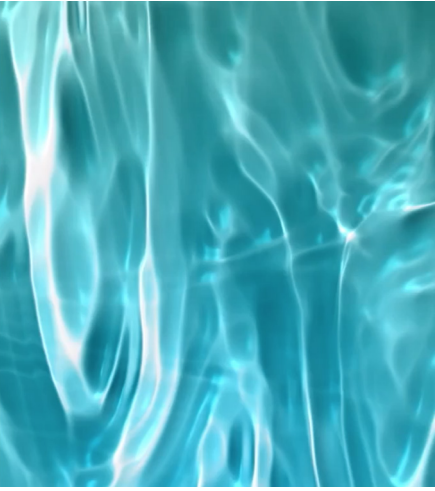
Kenya (Robinson), *A Black Aquatic*, 2022.



The initial round of commissions focuses on a diversity of subjects. All of the artists address topics relevant to their respective geographies that can resonate beyond its own locality. Through a hyperlinked lyric essay, and a forthcoming month-long social media takeover, **Kenya (Robinson)** explores Black people and water—both fresh and saltwater—as an essential part of the storytelling of US histories. **Jorge Gonzalez**, in an email exchange accompanied by a diary of images and texts, practices and reflects on the relearning of traditional crafts in Puerto Rico as a recuperative strategy for colonial erasure. **Ximena Garrido/Ishmael Randal Weeks** describe a process of building a structure communally out of materials brought by participants, revealing the strength of collective memory and its capacity to unveil corruption and lies in the context of Peru's recent and deep pasts. **Tiffany Sia** (with **Emilie Sin Yi Choi**, **Chan Tze-Woon**) discuss the perils and opportunities of working in Hong Kong in the wake of shattered pro-democracy protests. **Simone Leigh** suggests that as Black Americans continue to be besieged by white supremacy, it may be time to once again go underground.



Chan Tze-woon, Blue Island (still), 2022



Simone Leigh, *Satellite*, 2022, bronze; Sovereignty exhibition, U.S. Pavilion, Venice Art Biennale 2022



Of the project, Raicovich said, "We've imagined Protodispatch as a site for global publics that offers ideas for how we might survive and thrive in a world beset by precarity and violence. While our material circumstances might differ radically, we all face pandemic, late capitalism, and colonialism as powerful forces in daily life. If part of art's potential is to help us

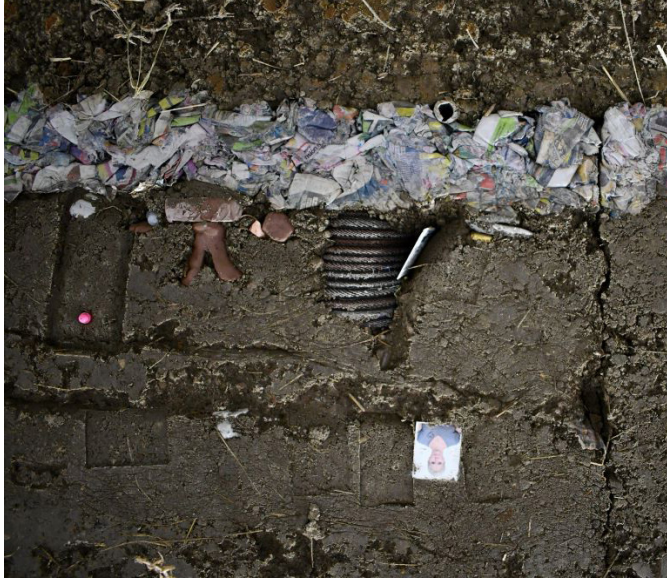
imagine otherwise,

Protodispatch is a platform that provides a place of connection, and even hope."

To expand the reach of Protodispatch, Artnet is collaborating as our first publication partner to

distribute each of the commissions on their site

every month. This will extend the reach of each dispatch to Artnet's audience of over 5 million monthly users from over 239 countries and territories.



Jorge González, image from his practices with Escuela de Oficios, 2016- ongoing



Founded in 2011 by Mari Spirito, **Protocinema** is a cross-cultural art organization that commissions and presents site-aware art around the world. Spirito said, "Protodispatch is an evolution of Protocinema programs in many places over the past 11 years. It is important to recognize that we are interconnected because it requires that we take better care of each other. I'm excited to see what Protodispatch will add to these efforts."

Ximena Garrido & Ishmael Randal Weeks,
from their ongoing project,
Materia Comun (Common Materials)



PROTODISPATCH

Announcing

Initiated by LAURA RAICOVICH

with

XIMENA GARRIDO/ISHMAEL RANDAL WEEKS,
JORGE GONZALEZ (WITH ANGELA BROWN),
SIMONE LEIGH, KENTIA (ROBINSON), AND TIFFANY SIA
(WITH EMILIE SIN YI CHOI AND CHAN TZE-WOON)

Protodispach is a new digital publication featuring personal perspectives by artists addressing transcontinental concerns, filtered by where they are in the world. Published by the international nonprofit Protocinema, Protodispach will be available for free on the organization's website, communication channels, and through publication partners including Artnet.com. Conceived by Laura Raicovich, the initiative launches on September 14th with dispatches by Ximena Garrido/ Ishmael Randal Weeks, Jorge Gonzalez (with Angela Brown), Simone Leigh, Kenya (Robinson), and Tiffany Sia (with Emilie Sin Yi Choi and Chan Tze-Woon). Through original commissioned videos, texts, slide shows, and playlists, artists will dig into the precarities and celebrations of our times.





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Protocinema is supported by the United States Mission - Turkey and Polat Piyalepaşa Çarşısı, Istanbul; Artnet.com is Protodispatch's publication partner.



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