

Surfando no Dilúvio (Maelström Porto Alegre)

*Exhibition catalogue*

Cataclysmic events often make us realize how nature and culture are entangled. For Sandrine Teixido and Aurélien Gamboni, this is a given fact and they have, over the last few years, focused on cases of floods to foreground the various networks composed of human and non-human, and past and present agents. For their contribution to the 9th Bienal, they have concentrated on the 1941 devastating floods of downtown Porto Alegre.

Their process combines archival research as well as interaction with local residents. In addition to the compilation of an archive and testimonials, they also introduce speculation into their project. Precisely in order to get beyond mere testimony or witnessing, they organize live, close readings of Edgar Allan Poe's 1841 *A Descent into the Maelström*, a short story recounting how a fisherman was able to save himself from a whirlpool.

Similarly, in Porto Alegre, Poe's science fiction tale functions as a portal through which to enter the speculative realm. For the artists, the story not only activates local memories, but also allows for different questions and propositions to come forth. Gamboni and Teixido call such collective interpretative process *confabulation* (after the literary theorist Yves Citton), describing the collective creation of a new, future script that joins the historical with the potential, the specific with the imaginary. The live readings and discussion is the starting ground for an assembly of voices that comes together into a future script.

Sarah Demeuse, 2013