

# ART | BASEL 2025

## Feature | Booth D3

### ANNETTE BARCELO

June 17th - 22nd 2025

# MADRAGOA



## BADEWANNE (1987–91)

At Feature sector in ArtlBasel 2025, Madragoa presents an emblematic series of paintings on canvas and drawings by Swiss, Basel-based, artist Annette Barcelo (b. 1943, Basel). Barcelo's practice explores the intersection of personal and collective mythology, mental states, and storytelling. Her work, especially the "Bathtub Series" from the late '80s and early '90s, which has only recently been brought to attention, brings an original perspective on topics such as womanhood, motherhood, and how to reconcile them with art practice, revealing the relevance of her work in the current art discourse.

Barcelo's works feature recurring themes and figures that form an original mythology that touches on existential issues—birth and death, disappearance and reappearance—that are both personal and universal. Her iconic "Bathtub Series," developed in the late '80s and early '90s, is particularly notable for its exploration of these subjects, reflecting the complex history of women in artistic representation as well as in the art system. Each work from Barcelo's "Bathtub Series" depicts a woman immersed in a bathtub in an indoor setting, surrounded by other presences, human or animal. While engaging with the historical portrayal of women in bathing scenes, evoking their ideal state of purity and vulnerability, and often subjected to the male gaze, Barcelo's paintings give rise to reflections that go beyond the issues generally addressed by this iconography. The suspended atmosphere and the interplay of glances between the characters and the woman, who exposes her naked body, offer a reflection on the female condition itself. How can one remain visible as an artist without being consumed by societal expectations? Where can safety be found if not in the work itself? This series represents both the release of personal demons and a statement on the healing power of art.

Madragoa presents a selection of the main existing paintings from the series, as well as two works on paper from the same years. For this presentation, the walls of the booth are painted with a greenish/blueish, watery tone chosen by the artist, immersing visitors in an "aquatic" environment. In Barcelo's work, water serves as both a shield and a unifying life force, and also symbolizes a cosmic flow that can alleviate and at the same time and intensify life's pain.

These works document a practice that has been overlooked by the art world at the time (as was the case with most of her female colleagues). The

importance of these works is reinforced by the fact that many paintings have been destroyed or painted over by Barcelo, due to the difficulties for a woman artist to show back in the days.

In the past few years, the artist's practice has been brought to attention through the show "Live Your Transformation" at Der Tank, Basel, curated by Chus Martínez, that then traveled to Madragoa, in Lisbon. A selection of drawings by Barcelo was featured in Manifesta in Barcelona, testifying to a new, growing interest in her practice.

Through their metaphorical language, the paintings from the "Bathtub Series" offer a reflection on the female condition itself. The figures watching the woman in the bath embody societal pressures, forcing her to seek refuge in the water, a womb, a temporary safe space.

Barcelo's "Bathtub Series" is crucial for its depiction of these dark forces and their cultural and social implications, particularly regarding the female figure. The bathtub becomes a dwelling, a magical spring that allows for a different way of imagining life. From this pain emerges a new world, coexisting with the material one—a universe filled with animalesque and dynamic forces, anthropomorphic transformations, and moments of renewal. Barcelo's art discloses private fantasies on a public stage, addressing the isolation, alienation, and loss of identity prevalent in modern life. Her work strives to create a language that reinvigorates the world, alleviating these feelings through the recollection of dreams and the rendering of invisible worlds visible.





*DAS BOOT*  
1987/88  
acrylic on canvas  
195 x 170 cm  
unique





*DAS BOOT*  
1987/88  
detail





*DIE HABEN'S GUT*

1991

acrylic on canvas

150 x 200 cm

unique









*DIE WÄCHTER*  
1990/91  
acrylic on canvas  
160 x 195 cm  
unique









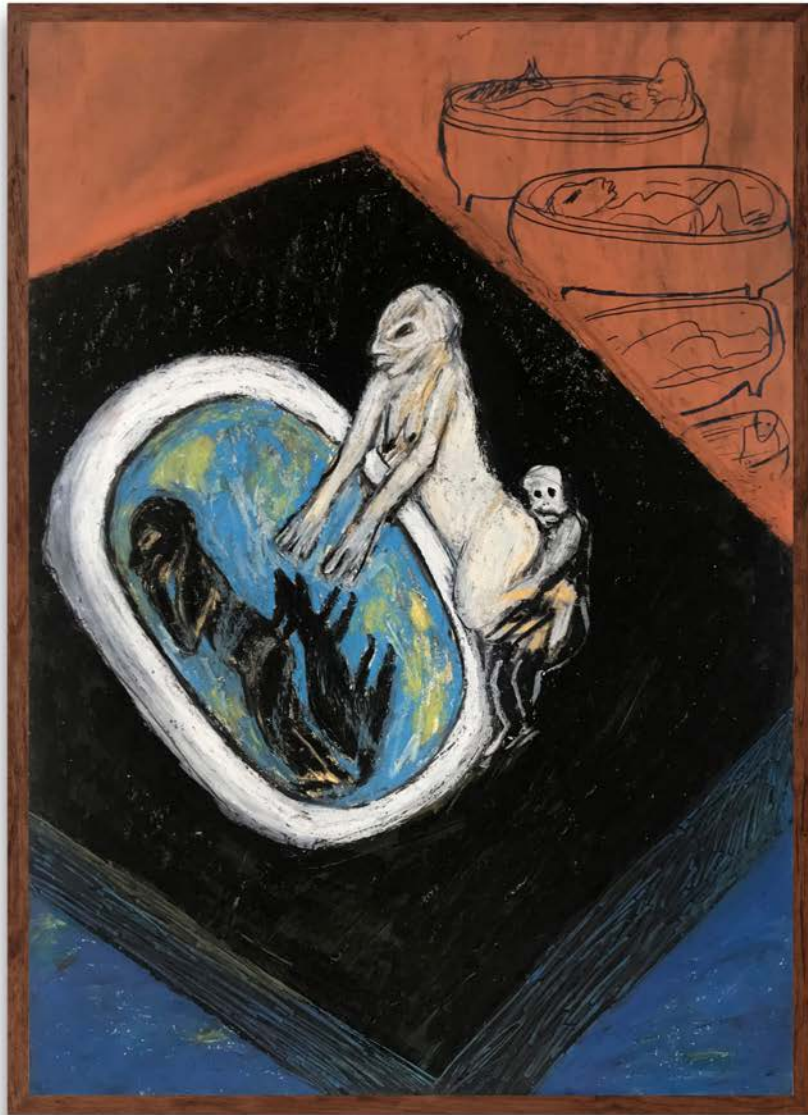
*Con Bestie*  
1991  
acrylic on canvas  
110 x 95 cm  
unique





*Con Bestie*  
1991  
detail





*WANNENBILDER*

1990/91

mixed media on paper

54 x 40 cm

unique



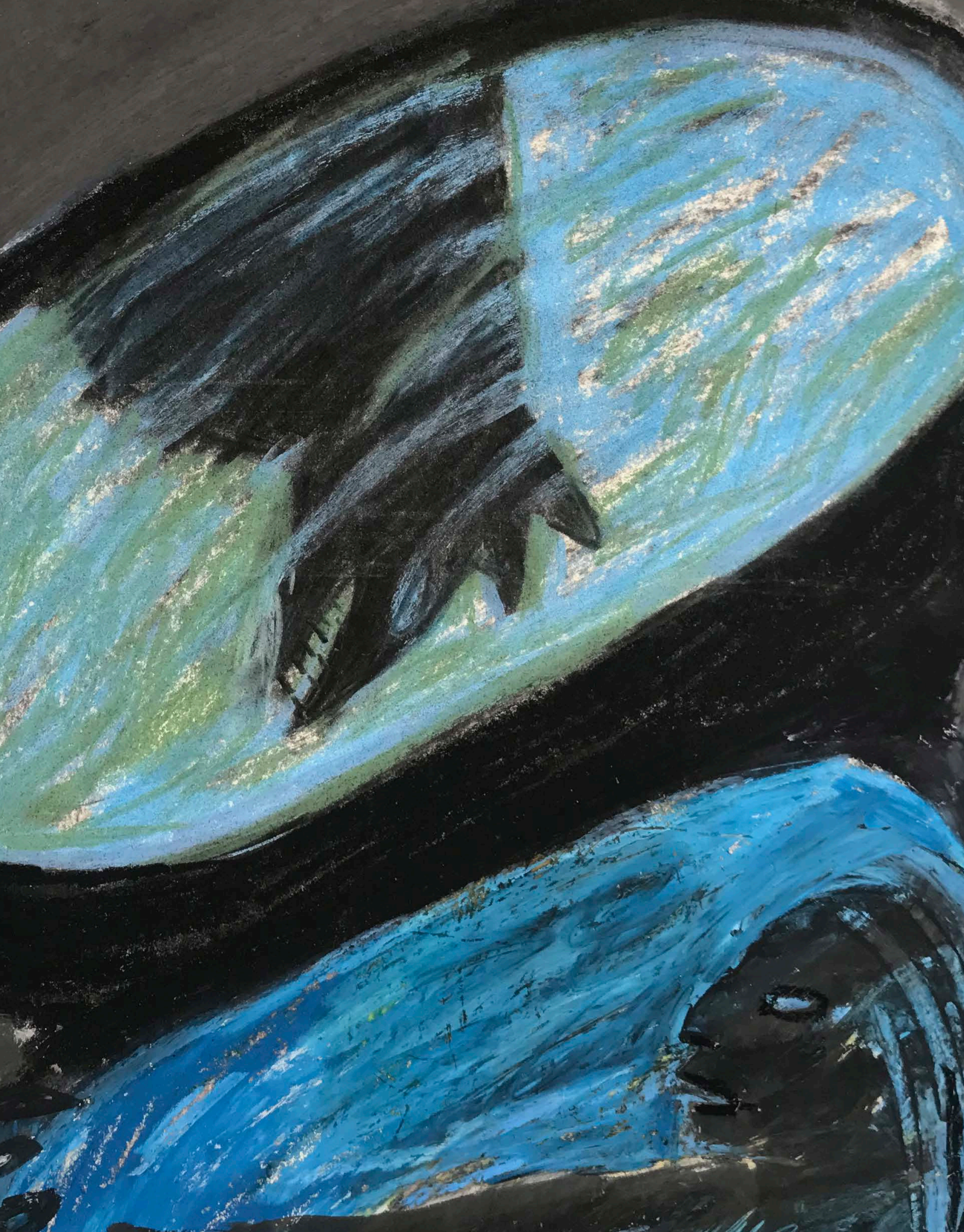






*WANNENBILDER*  
1990/91  
mixed media on paper  
54 x 40 cm  
unique







# ANNETTE BARCELO



Annette Barcelo was born in Basel in 1943, where she lives and works.

She attended the Basel School of Design. For over five decades, she has worked continuously, often in series and using various techniques such as painting, drawing and printmaking, on her specific visual language, which explores the connections between the diverse areas of life and mythologies. Since the 1980s, the artist's works have been exhibited both locally and internationally.

Annette's work is a part of collections such as Kunstkredit Basel-Stadt, Basellandschaft Kunstsammlung Kanton Obwalden Und Kanton Zürich Cabinet Cantonal Des Estampes, Musee Jenisch, Vevey Sammlung Ciba, Basel Sammlung Bank Heusser, Basel Sammlung Ubs, Basel Kunstkommission, Baden Sammlung Ricola and Laufen

She has received various awards including in 1986 the 1st PRIZE, KUNSTKREDIT BASEL STADT Fountain niche Malzgasse, Basel Execution, in 1995 1ST PRIZE OF THE CITY OF LE LOCLE FOR ORIGINAL GRAPHICS and 1st PRIZE OF THE CANTON OF AARGAU for the design and illustration of the story "Erdnüsse" by Ruth Schweikert.



# MADRAGOA

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