Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen represents the first major US solo exhibition of the influential Chilean-born artist and poet. Featuring a diverse range of works from the 1960s to the present, this exhibition frames Vicuña’s use of dematerialization as a formal consequence of irreversible climate change. These themes are explored through varying mediums including performance, sculpture, drawing, video, text, and site-specific installation. Vicuña has long refused categorical distinctions, operating fluidly between concept and craft, text and textile. In doing so, Vicuña’s practice is at the intersection of conceptual art, land art, poetry, and feminist art histories. This exhibition features a large selection of Vicuña’s precario sculptures — produced over the last four decades — composed of found objects, and includes the monumental work, Balsa Snake Raft to Escape the Flood (2017), created from collectively scavenged materials from the ever-diminishing Louisiana coast. Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen stages a conversation about discarded and displaced materials, people, and landscapes in a time of global climate change.

—Meg Onli, Assistant Curator. Prepared from materials provided by the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans.
THE ORIGIN OF WEAVING

ORIGIN
from *oriri*: the coming out of the stars

WEAVE
from *weban*, *wefta*, Old English *weft*, *cross thread*

*web*

the coming out of the cross-star
the interlacing of warp and weft
to imagine the first cross intertwining of branches and twigs
to make a nest
to give birth

the first spinning of a thread
to cross spiraling
a vegetable fiber imitating a vine

the first thread coming out of fleece
trapped in
vegetation

the first cross of warp and weft
union of high and low, sky and earth, woman and man

the first knot, beginning of the spiral:
life and death, birth and rebirth
THE QUASAR

Light of sound, or sound of light?

Its not-yet-being, its “no ser nada aún” is what attracted me.

Being “almost” a border, an “about to happen.”

That quality kept me looking for a form before the form.

Form was not born from an idea.

It was an idea vanishing.

At its birth, the “no” understood and soothed it, allowing it to be in its undoing.

A poem looking for its being, the quasar can only search for the sleep of dreams.

EL QUASAR

La luz de un sonido, o el sonido de una luz?

Era su no ser nada aún, su “not yet” lo que me atraía

Su ser “casi” un borde, un “a punto de suceder”

En ese estado me mantenía, buscando una forma antes de la forma.

La forma no nacía de una idea.

Era la idea desvaneciéndose.

Al nacer, el “no” la comprendía y aliviaba, dejándola ser en su deshacer.

Un poema buscando su ser, el quasar no sabe buscar si no el sueño del soñar.
Cecilia Vicuña (b. 1948 Chile, lives New York) has made her home between her native country and the United States since 1980. A poet, visual artist, and filmmaker born in Santiago de Chile, Vicuña exhibits and performs internationally, and is the author of more than twenty books of poetry. Her multidimensional works begin as images that become poems, films, songs, sculpture, or collective performances. Her work is included in the collections of the Tate Modern (London); the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Chile (Santiago de Chile); Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires); the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art; and the Museum of Modern Art (New York). Vicuña was appointed Messenger Lecturer at Cornell University in 2015; and in the summer of 2017, Vicuña’s work was presented at documenta 14 (Kassel, Germany, and Athens, Greece). She is cofounder of oysi.org, a site for oral cultures and poetries of the world.
Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen is organized by the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans (CACNO), and co-curated by Andrea Andersson, The Helis Foundation Chief Curator of Visual Arts, and Julia Bryan-Wilson, Doris and Clarence Malo Professor, University of California, Berkeley. The presentation at ICA is organized by Meg Onli, Assistant Curator.

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ICA IS ALWAYS FREE. FOR ALL.

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