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IN RESiDENCE at the School La Ribera

A sound that is unheard, a dust that is unseen

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Mediation

At less than three hundred metres from Montcada i Reixac, the Holcim cement factory is also one of the thirty-six waste incinerators currently found in Spain. Tyres, pharmaceuticals, meat meal, grey water and heavy metals are burned to produce the energy needed to make cement.

Emissions from this type of factory contain dioxins, furans, heavy metals, mercury, and the like that cannot be retained by filters, and these pollute the air, land and water. They are ultrafine particles in suspension that are inhaled and enter the bloodstream. Various studies have shown that people living within a radius of four to five kilometres of an incinerator have a higher risk of various types of cancer and cardiovascular disease. These industrialised urban areas, usually on the periphery, are known as 'environmental sacrifice zones', places where extractive activities are carried out that cause environmental and social degradation. These 'environmental sacrifice zones' are also linked to certain population groups: those who live in urban centres near industrial production plants have lower incomes.

'A sound that is unheard, a dust that is unseen' is a sculptural documentary investigation carried out together with third year students from the Institut La Ribera (Montcada i Reixac) compulsory secondary school as part of the Artists IN RESiDENCE in Schools programme, which offers support and visibility to social and environmental movements that safeguard the health of urban settlements near these industrial areas. In this case, the project continues the discourse led by the Can Sant Joan neighbourhood association, which has been fighting since the 1970s for the closure of the Holcim-Lafarge cement and incinerator plant. Their demonstrations led to the first pollution controls and

the installation of the first particulate filters. Before that, the streets and cars were covered every morning with a thin layer of grey dust from the factory's activities. This dust, together with the humidity in the air, hardened into a hard crust that could only be removed with a mixture of salt and vinegar.

'A sound that is unheard, a dust that is unseen' explores some of the 'invisible' materialities emitted by the factory in order to reflect on the ways in which industrialisation affects the lives of its closest inhabitants.

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With the students Salar Ahmad, Faris Bougrain, Ibrahim Chtioui, Hugo López, Xaviera Manzo, Aleix Notario, Lydia Santos, Ainhoa Umbert, Hugo Villar, Marwa Zitouni, Valeria Cuba y los profesores Magnòlia Martínez and David Hidalgo.

Curated and coordinated by L'Afluent.

