

## Paparuda

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### Abstract

*Paparuda* is the title of a project that I carried out in June 2011, which consisted in artificially provoking a rain on the border between the United States of America and Canada.

This text is the result of my presentation at the *Water is in the Air* workshop in June 2012.

### The context

The heart of the project *Paparuda* is the realization of a performance in which I launched in the Canadian sky 15 kg of silver iodide for a cloud seeding campaign touching clouds going on the United States direction. The location of the launch site — Saint Honoré de Chicoutimi — symmetrically corresponds to the area where the first climate manipulation in history took place, in 1946, when Kurt Herbert spill in the American sky a similar amount of silver iodide. This manipulation served as a palliative to the severe drought extending over a large part of the North-East quarter of the American continent. This maneuver had the effect of triggering a powerful rain and saving to stop the dry side of the United States. Yet this artificially induced flood had no beneficial effect on Canadian soil to which the clouds were moving steadfastly. This lead to a geopolitical incident during which Canadians turned to the United Nations and to their own government to legislate the application of this emerging technology with terrifying effects. This treaty the RQC-P43, r1 had to serve as a legal safeguard.

### The performance

While Kurt Herbert had used a small plane to disperse the condensing agent, I chose to launch aerostatical material. Using weather balloons ordinary used to study climate, I transposed the precariousness of silver iodide cloud seeding by my gesture. In order to achieve the maneuver I worked for three years in technological development especially during a residency at the OHP — Observatoire de Haute Provence — where I have been formed to balloon launch and understanding of the meteorological mechanisms. Then it is at the side of the laboratory at the University of Chicoutimi and Meteopro that the latest technical elements (nacelle, control of dispersion, determining the dispersion zone and the type of cloud, launch site selection, purchase material, partnerships, funding, etc.) were defined.

At the end of the first year of development, a lawyer following the project highlighted the need to obtain a license to climate change under the mandate of the treaty RQC-P43, r1. The process get complicated when no member of the Quebec Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development, Canadian or federal lawyer were able to edit an authorization as my project was the application the first in history. Countless passages before the lawyers, the departments and the Chamber of Ministers have been due to the international administrative mechanisms. Today, for the fourth year, the project *Paparuda* continues to be investigated for issuing a license.

Despite this last pitfall the performance finally took place. On 7th June 2011, at 48.52 degrees north, 71.05 degrees west, 232 meters, seven balloons, each dragging a box carrying a little more than 2 kg of silver iodide were dropped under a *cumulus semi-congestus* via the corridor formed by the Saguenay Fjord and the resulting straight to the US border.

The first two boxes were opened at 1948 meters above sea level at a temperature of 7°C and a humidity of 98%, the third and fourth released their cargo at 8 minutes and 22 seconds at 2477 meters, temperature 4°C, humidity 97%, then a little more than 2 minutes later, at 10 minutes 28 seconds of flight, the boxes number 5 and 6 were opened at 3034 meters of altitude, temperature



Still from the film *Paparuda*, Monsieur Moo, 2011. Image © Monsieur Moo.

0°C humidity 93%, more than 1° longitudinal from their launch point. The last box was opened after 15 minutes and 4 seconds at 4255 meters driven by a favorable wind of 17 meters per second at an ideal temperature of -3°C to a moisture content of 66% .

Nearly two hours later the boxes landed in the boreal forest, 135 degrees from the original position magnetics, 47.4 nautical miles down south.

It was after a equivalent period of time that steady rain hit the entire region of Saguenay-Lac Saint Jean to the south shore of the St. Laurent river.

### The film

Generally speaking my work is to develop and produce performances that become the subject of a film for *post-performance* trace but also as an autonomous object, valuable for its own cinematic values. *Paparuda* is no exception to this protocol, the 13 minute film consists of a series of still shots archiving totalities of the steps in the manufacture and handling of the activation conditions. A complete tutorial suggesting that the practice is accessible and easy to perform.

Only one moving sequence is breaking the overall stability following the ascension of the last balloon until it disappears in the cloud. This silent sequence illustrates the uncertainty gesture of the artist and evokes the disproportion between the means of developing the project and the familiarity of its subject through a reversed bottle thrown a into the sea.

### The posture of the artist

Initially planned as an act respecting the legal framework, mediated and public *Paparuda* was realized in hiding. With the support and complicity of various operators, releasing balloons actually occurred. I chose to do it illegally because the project was ready and because thousands of cloud seedings are regularly done throughout the world, including Canada and the United States of America, without anybody bothering.

### Epilogue

Three years of project development have allowed me to discover that clouds – with icebergs- are the only last drinking water with no legal status. Fabienne Quilleret-Majzoub seems to be the only

one to have addressed the issue by proposing, as part of her work as a researcher in a laboratory of Philosophy of Law and Justice, a legal status for clouds [1]. A logical continuation of the project would be to reactivate this proposal and propose it to be adopted by the United Nations.

Thus a purely artistic project based on a historical and geopolitical event that has found its form and development in the context of the hard sciences before reaching the field of humanities could end up on a concrete and useful act.

### References and Notes

1. Fabienne Quilleré-Majzoub, "A qui appartiennent les nuages ? Essai de définition d'un statut des nuages en droit international public", *Annuaire français de droit international*, L-2004 (CNRS Editions, 2005, pp. 653-667). Available as Pdf at: [www.gabrielperi.fr/IMG/article\\_PDF/A-qui-appartiennent-les-nuages.pdf](http://www.gabrielperi.fr/IMG/article_PDF/A-qui-appartiennent-les-nuages.pdf)