



Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation in "New Atlantics"  
UV-screenprints and bronze casts of gurry shark eye lenses and body parts.  
Solo exhibition, Kunsthall Aarhus, 2025  
Photo © Jacob Friis-Holm Nielsen





*The Time and the Hour in "New Atlantics"*  
Three-channel video installation in UV-colour range filmed in the Aarhus Bay  
Solo exhibition, Kunsthall Aarhus, 2025  
Photo © Jacob Friis-Holm Nielsen



## NEW ATLANTICS

Solo exhibition, Kunsthall Aarhus

From the future perspective of the 'New Atlantic,' Marie Kølback Iversen's solo exhibition *New Atlantics* fabulates over themes such as flooding, climate change and transformation of being through the processual video-work *The Time and The Hour*, the work series *Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation* and the performance project *Donnimaar*.

The latter was performed at the opening in collaboration with soprano Katinka Fogh Vindelev and the Danish-Faroese string duo *Hettarher* (Torleik Mortensen, upright bass, and Andreas Tykjær Restorff, cello) to celebrate the launch of *Donnimaar*. *O TILLI*, a new LP launched by Swiss label Speckled Toshe.



"New Atlantics," solo exhibition, 2025  
Kunsthall Aarhus, Aarhus, DK  
Photo © Jacob Friis-Holm Nielsen





*New Atlantics, 2025*  
Solo exhibition with video-installation, UV-screenprint,  
bronze sculptures, and music performance. Kunsthal Aarhus  
Above: Photo © private photos  
Below: Photo © Jacob Friis-Holm Nielsen

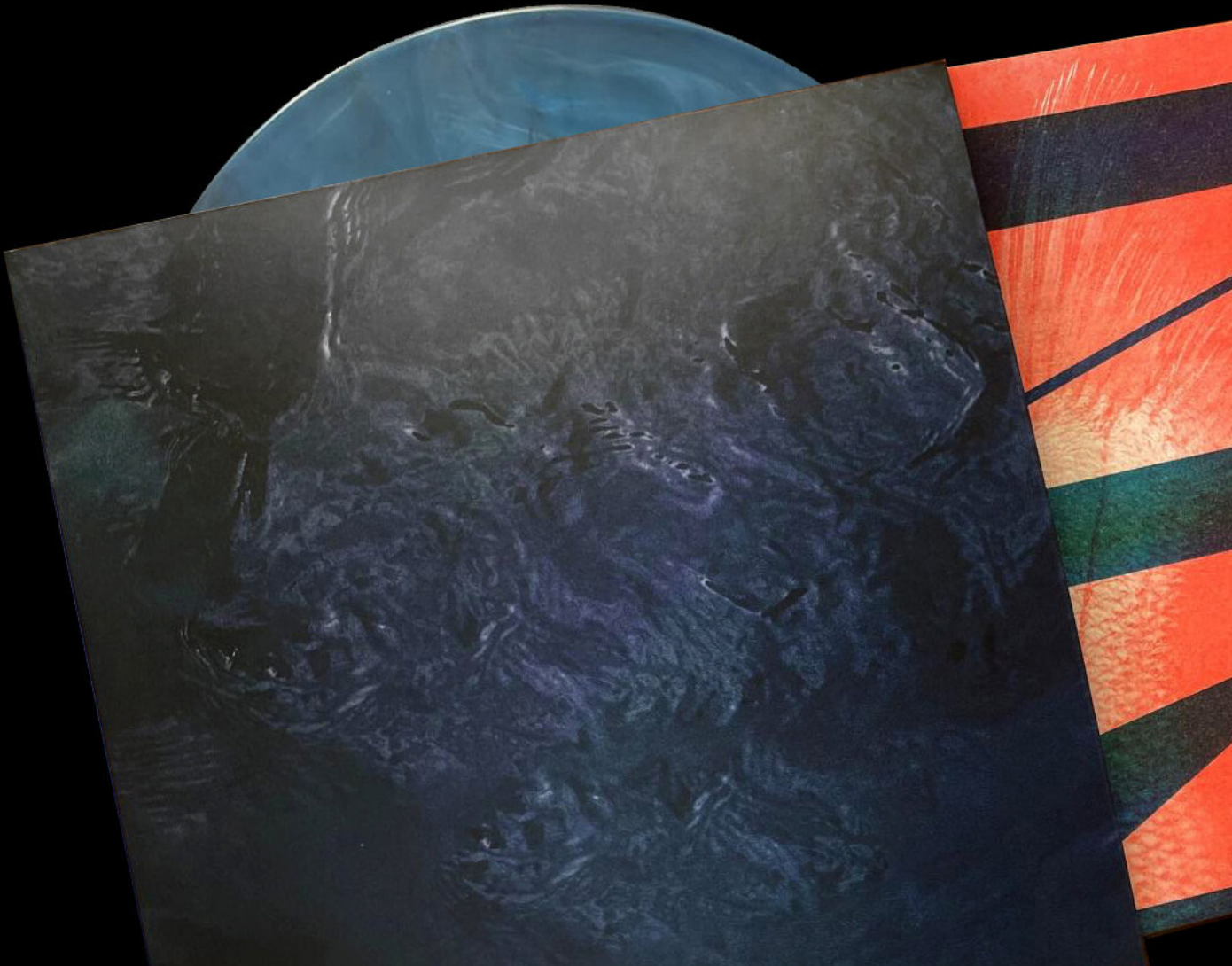




Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation, 2022 - 25  
Bronze cast of shark, part of work series  
Above: Photo © Jacob Friis-Holm Nielsen  
Below: Photo © private photos







Donnimaar. O TILLI, LP, Speckled Toshe, 2025  
Produced by Laurent Schmid with arrangements by Katinka Fogh Vindeløv,  
Torleik Mortensen, and Andreas Tykjær Restorff





Modsol, 2024  
Sculpture, polished stainless steel, 2.37 metres-tall  
Herning Gymnasium, Herning, DK  
Photo © David Stjernholm





Modsol, 2024  
Sculpture, Herning Gymnasium, DK  
Photo © David Sijernholm  
Featuring Tracey Cecilia Nhien Thien Nguyen Lam





Modsol, 2024  
Sculpture, polished stainless steel, 2.37 metres-tall  
Herning Gymnasium, Herning, DK  
Photo © David Stjernholm



## **MODSOL**

Public commission, Herning Gymnasium, Herning, Denmark  
Sculpture, polished stainless steel, 2.37 metres-tall

*Modsol* was developed for Herning Gymnasium on the occasion of the school's 100th anniversary in 2023 and is based on the pre-industrial culture and history of the Herning region. The work consists of a high-gloss polished sculpture in stainless steel, which is erected on the lawn in front of the gymnasium. The title, *Modsol*, means 'against the sun' or 'counter-sun', and the shape of the sculpture is based on the preferred cure of the West Jutlandic wise woman Kjæn Krathus, *earth drawing*, where a sick or hopeful person was dragged through a hole in a large grass sod three times 'against the sun.' Afterwards, the sod was put back, and once it had grown back, the patient would have recovered in case of illness, or the hopeful's wish would have been fulfilled.

*Modsol* is a 2.37-meter-high circular troll mirror with a vertical slit in the middle. The sculpture is placed frontally between the rising and setting suns in East and West, and viewed from this angle, the two halves of the circle are internally offset so that one arc reaches forward towards the observer, and the other backward towards the sun. As a consequence of the form's manipulation, the sculpture breaks both the sun's light and its surroundings in the curved surface and reflects the sky and the lawn. Thus, the ritual's grass sod is established as the lasting motif for the work through the lawn's reflection in the sculpture's mirror surface.



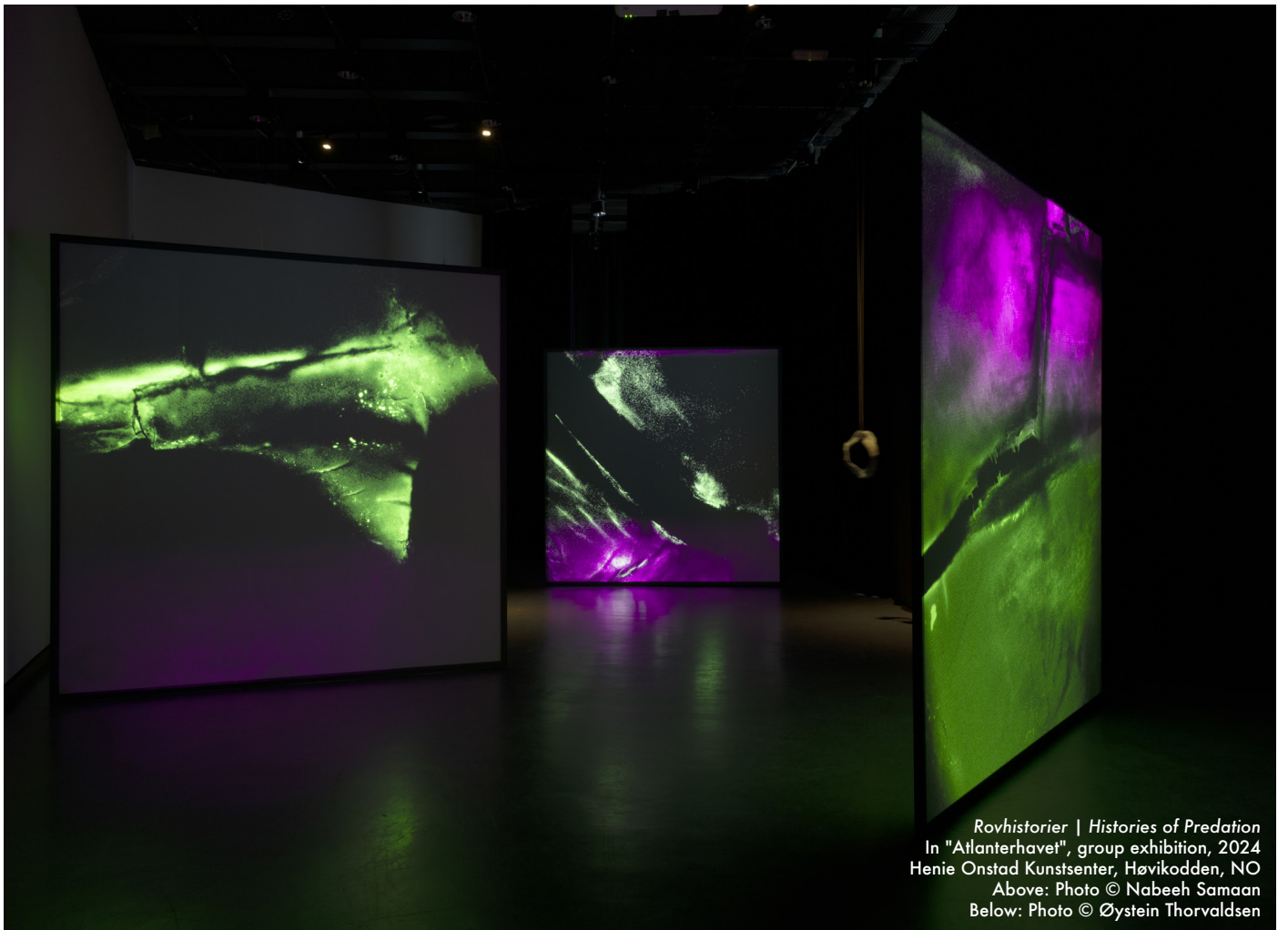
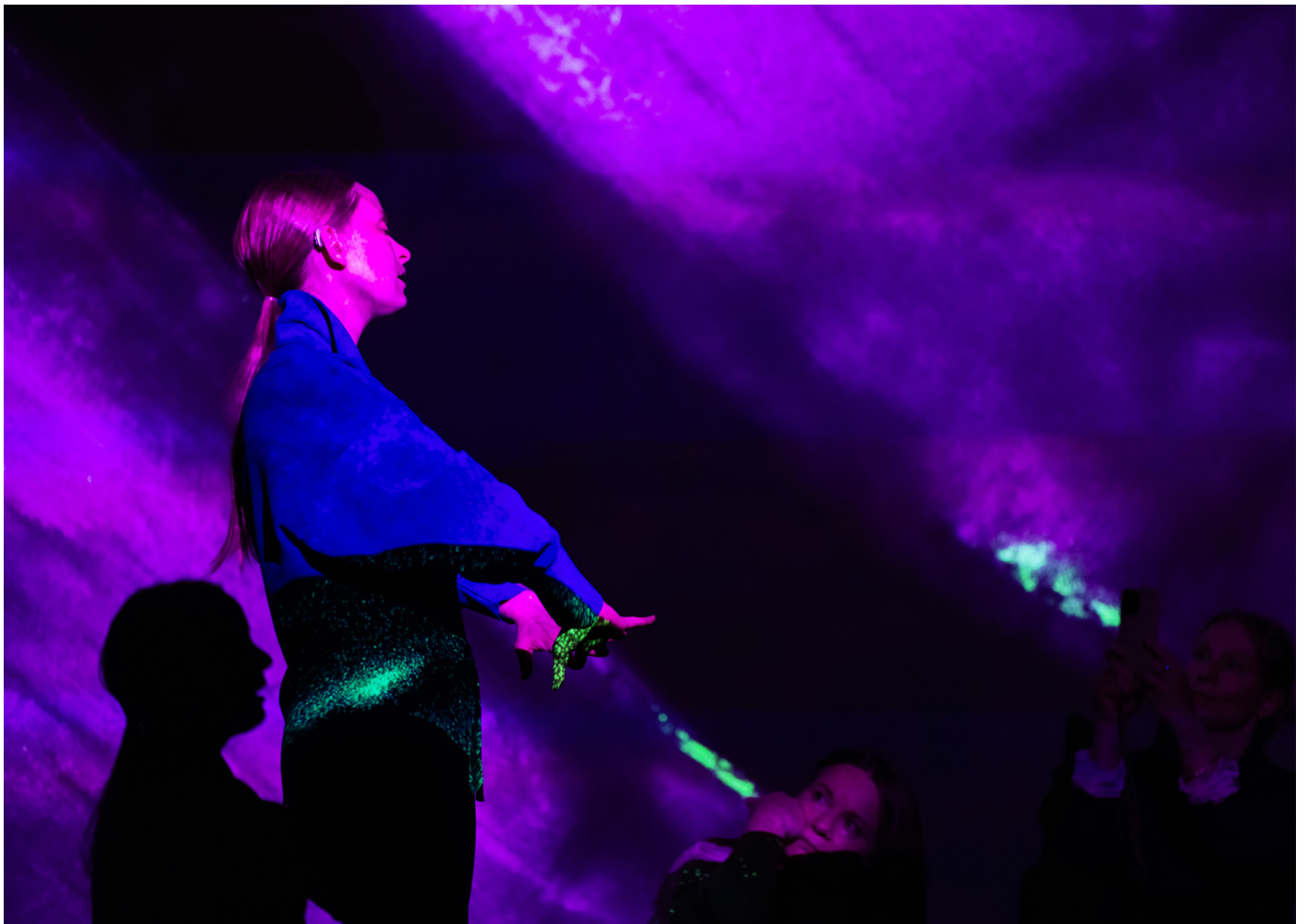
*Modsol*  
Polished stainless steel, 2.37 metres-tall  
Herning, Gymnasium, Herning, DK  
Photo © David Stjernholm





Donnimaar in Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation  
Solo exhibition, O - Overgaden, 2022  
Photo © Christian Brems





*Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation*  
In "Atlantehavet", group exhibition, 2024  
Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, NO  
Above: Photo © Nabeeh Samaan  
Below: Photo © Øystein Thorvaldsen





*Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation*  
Installation views, solo exhibition, 2023  
SMK Thy—Danish National Gallery, Doverodde, DK  
Photo © Martin Busborg



## ROVHISTORIER | HISTORIES OF PREDATION

Ø - OVERGADEN (solo exhibition, 2022), SMK Thy (solo exhibition, 2023), and Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (group exhibition, April - September, 2024)

With her trans-disciplinary project *Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation*, Marie Kølbaek Iversen traverses time, borders and cultures when traveling into the eye lens nuclei of the gurry shark, an ancient deep-sea fish also known as a Greenland shark. Across the Nordic-Germanic languages, the gurry shark has historically been referred to as 'merman' or 'mermaid', a mythological creature with anthropomorphic features. Via carbon-14 dating of the animal's eye lens nuclei, marine biologists have recently estimated its longevity to be between 272 and 512 years.

Thus, the gurry shark is the longest-living known vertebrate. Borrowing its deep-time perspective, *Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation* interweaves art, folklore and modern science to reflect on the more than 500 years of colonial, imperial and environmental struggles playing out in the Northern Atlantic region, where Danish influence has been and continues to be central.

Three monumental projection screens show hypnotic and brightly colored images in shades of pink and green. The images are microscopic recordings of the thousands of stratified fibers that are created inside the shark's eye lenses in the course of its long life. In its simultaneously abstract and ultra-concrete appearance, the artwork is a filmic time travel through the 'historic' gaze of the predator, granting us an opportunity to see and experience at radically different temporal and spatial scales. In this sense, Marie Kølbaek Iversen invites us to turn our gaze inwards and also consider our own histories of predation and exploitation. Just as the gurry shark, with its long life expectancy, will experience futures we will never know, it has also lived through the centuries that have delivered us to our late capitalist and Anthropocene present.

As contextual framework for *Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation*—and as part of her music project *Donnimaar*—Kølbaek Iversen activates subjugated folksongs about merpeople from her East Atlantic home region in Western Jutland. *Donnimaar* is based on 19th-century folklore collector Evald Tang Kristensen's collection of songs, including examples from Kølbaek Iversen's great-great-great-great-grandmother Johanne Tygesdatter, who was one of Tang Kristensen's informants. *Donnimaar* is included in the exhibition in the form of a series of performances.

The exhibition is produced in collaboration with Henie Onstad Kunstsenter; Jonathan Brewer / DaMBIC (Danish Molecular Biomedical Imaging Center, University of Southern Denmark), and Julius Nielsen / Greenland Institute of Natural Resources.



*Rovhistorier | Histories of Predation*  
Installation view, solo exhibition, 2022  
Ø - Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK  
Photo © Laura Stamer



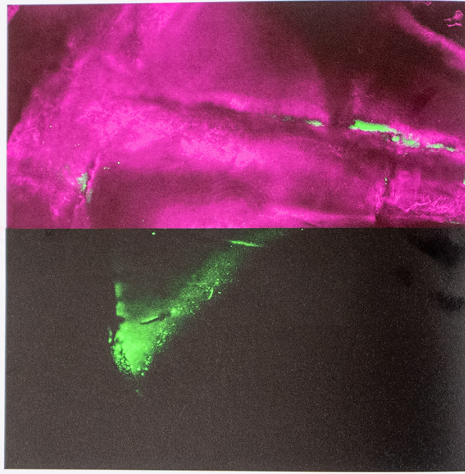


MARIE  
KØLBÆK IVERSEN

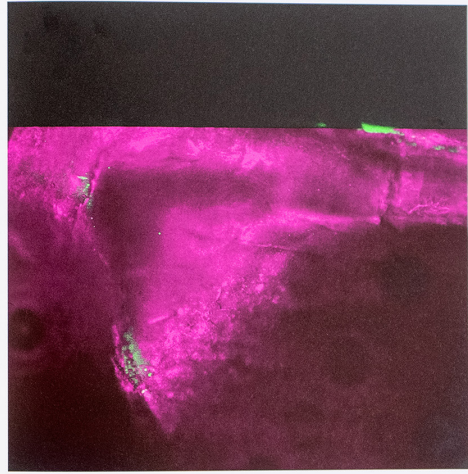
HISTORIES  
OF PREDATION

Marie Kølbæk Iversen: *Histories of Predation*, monograph  
Texts by Yann Chateigné Tytelman, Isabella Rjeille  
and conversation with Adam Khalil  
Graphic design by Maximage  
Podere Trafonti Notebook Series  
Mousse Publishing © 2024

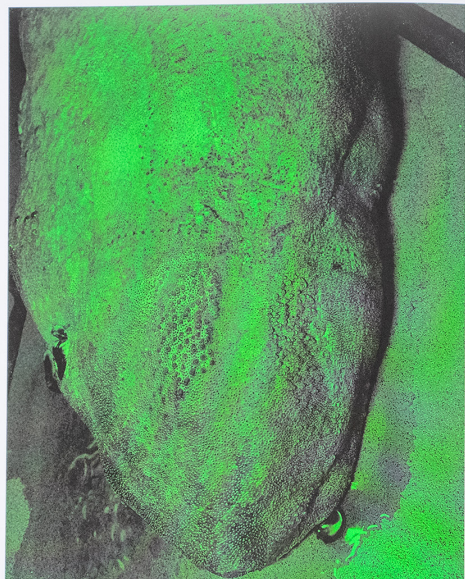




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77



114

Attempting to trace the commercial and scientific circuits that mediate contemporary human engagements with the gurry shark, in a laboratory in Nuuk in late 2021 I was brought face to face with an individual that had died as bycatch. The shark had subsequently been donated to the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources (GINR) for research purposes. Even though she had not died for my sake, her dead presence on the laboratory floor still haunts me and reminds me of my own structurally predatory agency in the world as a citizen and consumer. To do so the knowledge that deaths like hers are mere trivialities from a commercial point of view: Gurry sharks are among the most commonly bycaught fish in the Northern North Atlantic, and a big nuisance to fishermen, who complain that they ruin their nets and crush the catch.

## A WORLD YOU WOULD WANT TO LIVE IN? ADAM KHALIL AND MARIE KØLBÆK IVERSEN

This conversation between artists Adam Khalil and Marie Kølbæk Iversen took place in Copenhagen in June 2022. A shorter edit of the conversation was published on the occasion of Kølbæk Iversen's 2022 solo exhibition, *Rovhistorier*, at O—Overgaden in Copenhagen.

Adam Khalil, a member of the Ojibway tribe, is a filmmaker and artist from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, currently based between Brooklyn, New York and Copenhagen, Denmark. His work centres Indigenous narratives in the present, and looks towards the future, through the use of innovative fiction and nonfiction forms that subvert traditional forms of image-making through humour, relation, and transgression. A core contributor to *New Red Order* and a co-founder of *COUSINS Collective*, Khalil posits collaboration and exchange at the centre of his artistic methodology.

From their different backgrounds, Khalil and Kølbæk Iversen set out to explore the implications of tracing their respective heritages into the present, in order to consider how colonialism has signified for different minoritised people in different places across Europe and the Americas. In this way, their exchange also probes the potentialities of working across racialised divides to test the ground for potential 'under-common coalitions' — as Stefano Harney and Fred Moten put it — pointing beyond the suffocating constitution of the present, with a view to conjuring a 'we' across disparate struggles and troubles. This is done in order to find ways in which crafting coalitions — solidary complicities — may sound a much louder call for ending "the world that created those particular troubles as the ones that must be opposed," as Jack Halberstam puts it.

1 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten: *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2013).

2 Jack Halberstam: "The Wild Beyond: Wish and For the Undercommons" in Harney and Moten, *Ibid.*, p. 9.









© Tilli, solo exhibition, 2022 (detail)  
Drawing- and wool installation  
Ebeltoft Kunsthø, DK  
Photos © Kasper Palsnov



**O TILLI, 2022**

Marie Kølbæk Iversen with Pettersen&Hein and Lystbækgaard  
at Ebeltoft Kunsthall

The Danish queen Dagmar captures a mermaid. She wants the mermaid to tell her fortune. The mermaid concedes, but throws a curse in revenge: The Dane will mother three sons, but will soon die for them. The first will be the Danish king, the second wear a crown. The third become the wisest man, receiving news from distant towns. Now Dagmar begs the Danish king to let the mermaid live. But he rejects her plea: "She has sunk my seven ships!" Dagmar faints, the king gives in. They return her to the sea. The mermaid sits atop a wave, the queen is crying woefully. The mermaid says: "Listen, queen, don't cry for me, for I have opened heaven's gates for thee. The bells of heaven are ringing for thee, and my little children are longing for me. The angels of heaven are longing for thee, and the depths of the sea are open for me."

For *O Tilli* at Ebeltoft Kunsthall, Marie Kølbæk Iversen engages the idea of merpeople as humans' ontological others: As representatives of those natural environments that are immediately uninhabitable to humans—underwater, underground—and of cultures and peoples that have been barred from entering the present. In this latter modality, merpeople represent the spirits of the physically or culturally 'dead,' who—from their subjugated position in the netherworlds—continue to haunt the living in their desire for life and revenge.

Kølbæk Iversen carries out her explorations in dialogue with folklore and mythic heritage from the West Jutlandic heathlands gathered by Evald Tang Kristensen in the late 19th century, among others from Marie Kølbæk Iversen's great-great-great-great-grandmother Johanne Thygesdatter, e.g. the above-referenced song about the mermaid dancing 'o tilli,' that is: wriggling on the floor like a fish.

According to West Jutlandic folklore, an angered mermaid or -man may be appeased, if you knit and gift them a pair of socks. Kølbæk Iversen has therefore collaborated with Lystbækgaard to hand-knit woolen socks that will form part of her installation of pencil drawings mounted on the glass stretchers produced by art and design duo Pettersen&Hein.



*O Tilli*, solo exhibition, 2022 (detail)  
Drawing- and wool installation  
Ebeltoft Kunsthall, DK  
Photos © Kasper Palsnov



# Birth of

Marie Kølback Iversen

# Muspelina



In the bright morning light, the women gather around the high seat prepared with woollen blankets and more feather cushions. The men are lined up along the walls, and contrary to the night before the atmosphere feels light and gentle. The air is crisp. Dust dancing in the rays of light from the windows. When she enters the room, my uncle signals to the women to bring forth the things needed to perform the ritual. When everything is in place, she asks about the *Vardlokur*, but nobody knows the song. She cannot perform the ritual without the song, she says; "I need it to invoke the spirits."

Bewildered glances are exchanged; nobody knows. Nobody knows! "But I know," I say, instantly embarrassed by the many eyes now zooming in on me. "Halldis, my foster mother, taught me."

My uncle prompts me to step forward and sing, but I worry about what that might make of me—"I am Christian..." I sense his irritation; having dared the stigma of inviting the last *vøve* in Greenland to visit our farm in a half-desperate attempt to turn our luck, just to have his niece express the suppressed concern secretly harboured by most of the people present: No longer heathens, will this work for us?

I lower my gaze, worried also how she might react to my verbal renunciation of who she is and what she stands for. I mean no harm,

I think, and await some kind of response, or, preferably, a shift in focus away from me. But then she says in a seemingly unaffected voice: "You might help people by singing the song? Nobody will think less of you if you do so." I feel everybody looking at me, and I feel my uncle's radiating impatience, so eventually concede.

The women join in a circle around the high seat. The fire burns logs of birch and aromatic twigs of juniper. An infusion has been brewing in a pot; now she pours it into a cup and adds a pinch of seeds from the purse in her belt. She also throws a handful of seeds into the fire. A heavy fume fills the room, my head lightens. She mounts the high seat, and I hear the sound of my voice singing, coming towards me from afar, and behind the reddish light of my closed eyelids nine women appear, singing in one voice—my voice? Approaching me and each other, their bodies distort as they meet: Shoulder against shoulder they do not squeeze together. Instead they start blending into one another, defying laws of perspective and rules of organicity. No lines, dissolving thresholds... Like the heat of a chanting breath, I feel their bodies against mine; lips against my forehead, encircling my skull; the muffled sound of voices blocked by the body's confinement of skin and hair.

*With taming stick I hit  
and I am taming you,  
Maiden, with my will  
you shall go  
where no one  
will ever see you again.*

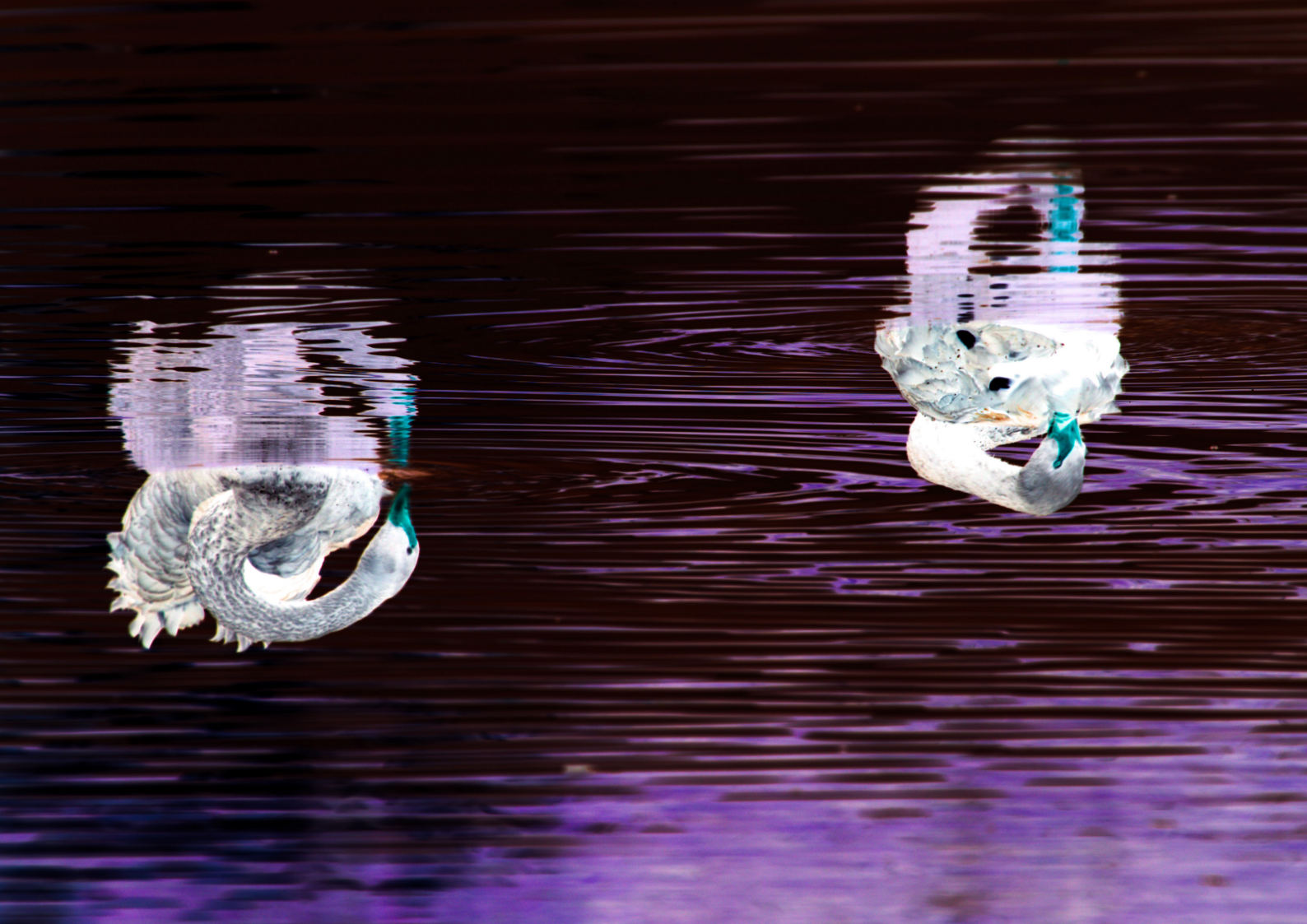
*Trolls, I carve for you,  
and three wands:  
"Horny," "Maddened,"  
and "Wanting;"  
As I have inscribed  
I can un-scribe,  
if I find reason to do so.*





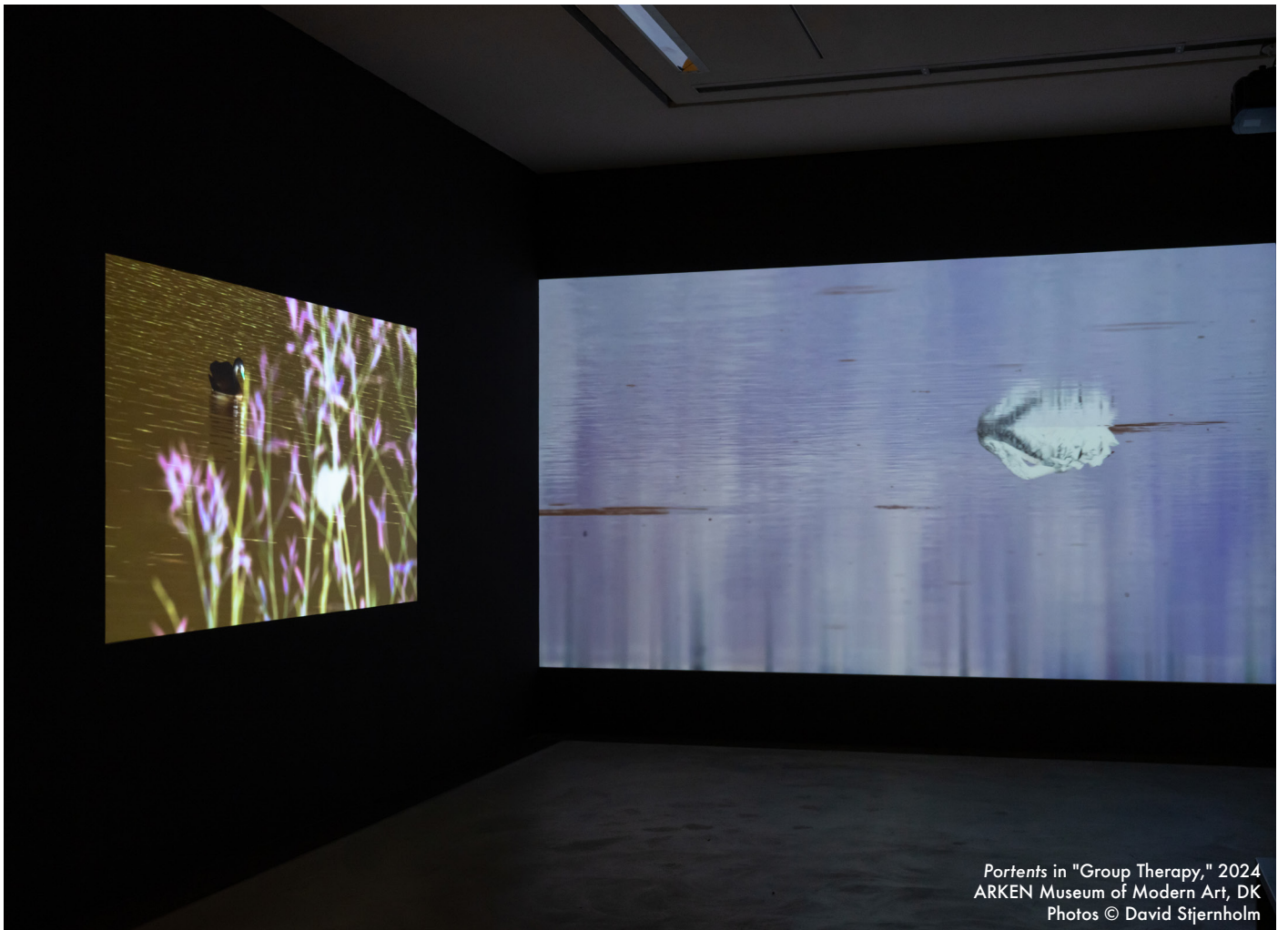
Annual Reportt





Stills from *Portents*, two-channel video installation  
4K, 15mins loop, 2021





Portents in "Group Therapy," 2024  
ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, DK  
Photos © David Sijernholm



## PORTENTS, 2021

When all women are widows  
When all men are dead  
When house and farm are deserted  
When we see white ravens  
When we see black swans  
When we see feathers sinking  
When we see stones floating  
When we see oceans burning  
When we see the end of the world

With the changing symbolic charge of the black swan as its crux, the video-installation *Portents* focuses on apocalypse as a transhistorical motif in Western thinking.

In the book *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* from 2007, the mathematical philosopher and probability theorist Nassim Nicholas Taleb explains how history has never been predictable, but is instead consistently driven forward by what Taleb with the ancient Roman poet Juvenal refers to as 'black swans:' positive or negative events that are considered highly improbable before they occur, but which are nonetheless realized with far-reaching consequences in turn. The COVID-19 crisis was a classic black swan.

Similarly, an old Danish folk song employs the black swan as a portent of apocalypse. The young man, Svend of Rosengård, must go into exile after having killed his brother. When his mother asks when he will return home, Svend answers: *When all women are widows / When all men are dead / When house and farm are deserted / When we see white ravens / When we see black swans / When we see feathers sinking / When we see stones floating / When we see oceans burning / When we see the end of the world.*

Referencing Taleb's theory as well as the song about Svend of Rosengård, *Portents* is based on footage of white swans in the Danish lake Damhussøen and black swans in Parque Ibirapuera in São Paulo. The respective shots appear negative—the white swans black, the black swans white—while the background assumes a psychedelic character.

The video-installation first featured in Kølback Iversen's solo exhibition "Når" ('når' is the Danish word for 'when') at Gether Contemporary in Copenhagen. In addition to *Portents*, the exhibition also featured a series of ink drawings and serigraphic UV prints that stretches the image surface beyond the color spectrum visible to the human eye. The work series borrows its circle of motifs from art historical depictions of dead men as well as recent ecological disasters and collapses, including satellite and drone footage of 2020's Arctic wildfires. As for the arrival at the end of the world, the question is not if, but when. The riddle is life in the aftermath.




*Portents* (2021), two-channel video installation, native 4K, 15 minute loop  
"NÅR," installation view, solo exhibition, Gether Contemporary  
Copenhagen, DK, 2021, Photos © David Stjernholm



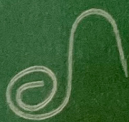


Hvide Ravne (2021), ink drawings of dead men from art history  
"NÅR," Gether Contemporary, Copenhagen, DK, 2021





Donnimaar.  
Vredens Børn



Marie Kølbaek Iversen: *Donnimaar. Vredens Børn*, LP  
Arrangements by Katinka Fogh Vindelev.  
Jutlandic translations by Michael Ejstrup.  
MoBC Records © 2021-22



Jámfru i Ul'ham  
/ Maiden in Wolf Guise

JY:

A stuk o æ láwt á bost mi hoo'r  
—Mi huldrow væn—  
Der så a mi stimu'er kom kyren i goo'r  
—Á sinnhen de láár mi mu'er i æ juer—

A po't æ bost ni'er o mi baa'm  
A lów't hin a den fargyllen karm

Mi stimu'er hun fátø't  
Te a hāj for gu'er en lō'k

Hun skaw't mæ om te en saws  
Te a skull blyw slōw á aldri hwas

Så blōw a te en saws så gu'er  
Te a blōw hwas o aldri slōw'

Ám æ daw' a klep'et lærret á lí'n  
Om æ næt a sáv' i jámfru hinne skrii'n

Mi stimu'er hun fátø't  
Te a hāj for gu'er en lō'k

Hun skaw't mæ ám te en swaa'r  
Te a skull alti fá en ulō'k'le faa'r

Så blōw a te en swaa'r så gjōw'  
Te a blōw hwas á aldri slōw'

Æ ri'er de war så bli'er  
De sa i mæ i fāgy'ne skii'er

Mi stimu'er hun fátø't  
Te a hāj for gu'er en lō'k

Hun skaw't mæ ám te ul' så groo'  
Hun baa'r te a skull i æ skāw kuns goo'

Hun baa'r a skull i æ skāw kuns go  
Te a drāk a mi br'u'er hans blu'er

I æ skāw a war i á't oo'r  
Mi stimu'er wāwwet æ' i æ kjær'k á goo'

Á det war i den niien  
Mi stimu'er vill uurrii

A snap'et hinne ka'p så bloo'  
Á lów't hin a ganger så groo'

A snap'et i hinne sii  
Á u vælt tow twælher så hvii

A drāk a mi br'u'er hans blu'er  
Igjæn stuk a en jámfru så gu'er

Igjæn stuk a en jámfru så skjøn  
—Mi huldrow væn—  
Mi stimu'er fik hinne fátjæne'st i lōn'  
—Á sinnhæn de láár mi mu'er i juer—

ENG:

I was standing in the attic, brushing my hair  
—My full- (or: huldra-) faithful friend—  
When I saw my stepmother come driving into our yard  
—And since, they buried my mother under ground—

I placed my brush by my bosom  
And lifted her down from the gilded wagon  
But my stepmother thought  
That I had too good a luck

She turned me into a pair of scissors  
So I should be dull and never sharp

But I became such a good pair of scissors  
That I was sharp and never dull

Every day I would cut canvas and linen  
At night I would sleep in the virgin's case

But my stepmother thought  
That I had too good a luck

She turned me into the dulllest sword  
And asked that I would always be unlucky

But I became such a good sword  
That I was sharp and never dull

Those knights were so tender  
They placed me in their gilded sheaths

But my stepmother thought  
That I had too good a luck

She turned me into a wolf so grey  
And asked that I would roam the forest  
Until drinking my brother's blood

I was in the forest for eight years  
My stepmother did not dare to go to church

But it was in the ninth  
My stepmother dared to ride out

I seized her by her blue cape  
And lifted her from her grey horse

I seized her by her side  
Two twins came tumbling out, so white

Then I drank my brother's blood  
Here I stand, a maiden so good

I stand here as a maiden so fair  
—My full- (or: huldra-) faithful friend—  
My stepmother got her deserved pay  
—And since, they buried my mother under ground—

Æ Kvinn(e)morder  
/ The Woman Slayer

JY:

Hr. Ribál han tjænner i æ kánng hans gor  
—I æ lun'—

Á dæ (spæ't) han i manne sivi  
—I æ skow der fátmar æ jostu'er—

Han spæ't æ't fír ænnen ten  
Ás fír Gulbárrí hun war så skjøn

Han gilje hin úa mæ fír  
Sian ingen skjær niær et vist

Han gilje hin úa mæ ú'er  
Sian ingen skjær niær det fót'er

Gulbárrí, Gulbárrí! Samel gu' úi úi skri'n  
Mæns a sááber æ gráganger mi'n

Ja, kan du samel gu' i sæk?  
Mæns a ká træk gráganger te bæk

Hr. Ribál han spráng te hynnen hæst  
Hun sá't Gulbárrí i fír ve hans bræst

Han rælar som han no kunn'et bæst  
Mæn han rælar som det ty'k war mjæst

Dæær de kam' i rosenlun'  
Dæær læstet'et Ribál á tyow en stár'

Han bo'r hans hæst ve en lanngræ'n  
Hun káást en graw, han war æ' sle'n

Gulbárrí hun soj' á tæ'n't ve' sæ  
Hwæm mon den graw' ska væ' te?

Te di hun' æ en fá lánng  
Á te di hæst dæ æ en fá trán'g

Næj, den æ æ' te æ hun' dæ æ mi'n  
Mæn te Gulbárrí så fawer á fín

Ja, hist du s'er dæm blák  
Á dæær lewver swaarflák

Á hist du sier en lefle knáf  
Dæær ænner lewver á't jámfru'er djer gu'

Á hist ka du sier en lefle fluer  
I dæn dæ rinner á't jámfru'er djer bliu'er

Á du ska væær den niien  
Á líi fá de anner djer synner

Enhwær há nák úi æ syn' si æjæen  
så há a ow nák i mi æjæen

Mæn lææng há du gilje mæ  
Mo a dá æ' jæn' gāng løsk dæ?

Jow, gjaarn mo du løsk mæ líi  
Ám du æ' i sæwonn vil mæ swii

Swii' mæ Gud fáá'r i Hemmeri'  
Ám a dæ i sæwonn ska swii

Han láár hans huer i hinne skør  
Hun sow en sown, den war æ' så søør'

Gulbárrí hun soj' á tin't ve' sæ  
Mæn mi snøarboon' ka æ' hjæl'p mæ?

Hun læst aw hinne snøarboon'  
Så boon' hun Ribál hans fu'er og háán

ENG:  
Mr. Ribál  
—In the  
And he  
—In the  
He did n  
Than for  
He wooed  
No fair kn  
He wooed  
That no fai  
Gulbárrí, G  
While I sad  
Yes, can you  
While I take  
Mr. Ribál mou  
And placed G  
He rode his be  
But he rode as





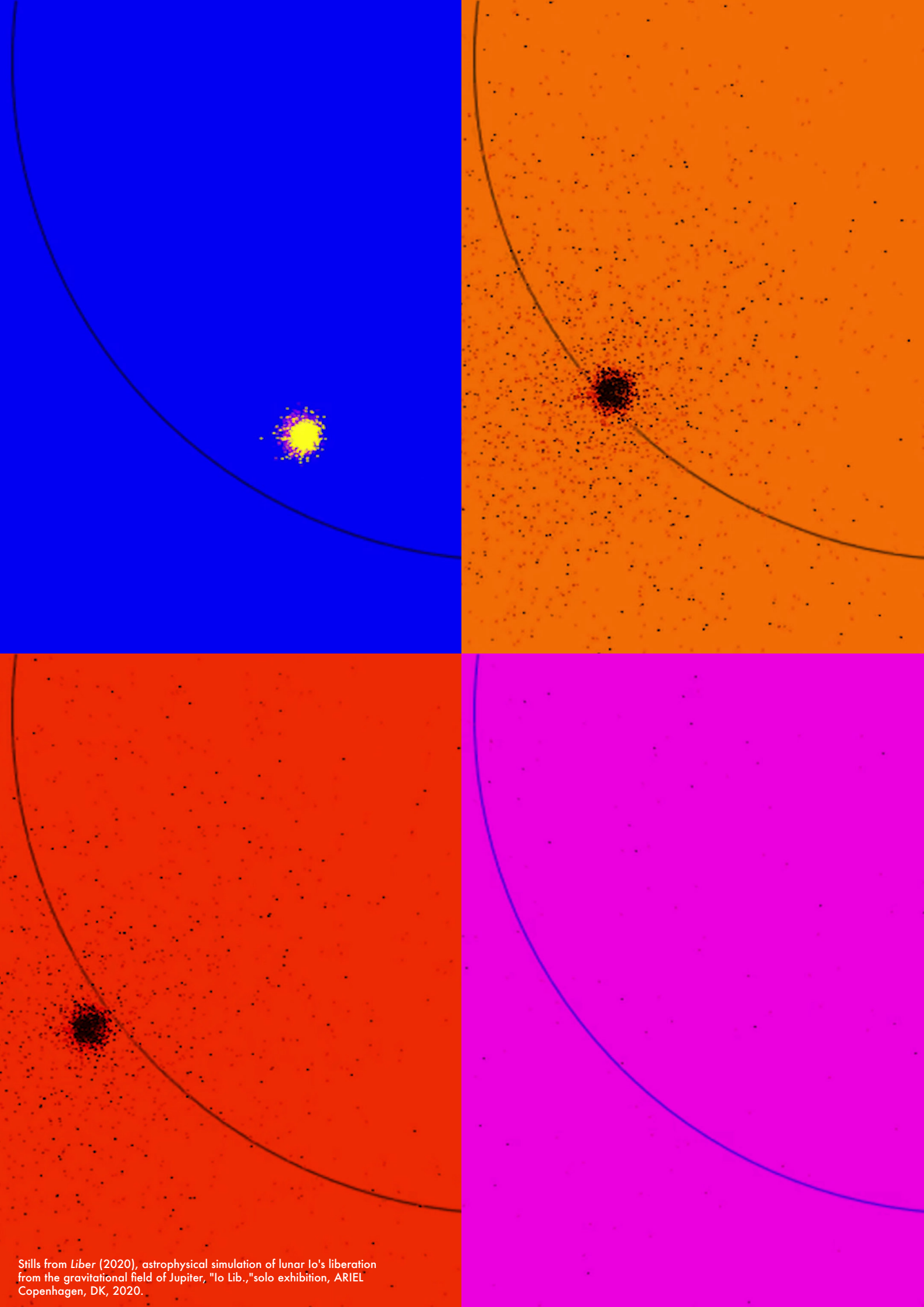
Donnimaar. Vredens Børn, summer solstice performance  
in "Soil. Sickness. Society," Rønnebæksholm, Næstved, DK, 2021  
Photo © Christian Brems





*Liber* (2020), astrophysical simulation of lunar Io's liberation from the gravitational field of Jupiter, "Io Lib.", solo exhibition, ARIEL—Feminisms in the Aesthetics, Kvindernes Bygning, Copenhagen, DK, 2020





Stills from *Liber* (2020), astrophysical simulation of lunar Io's liberation from the gravitational field of Jupiter, "Io Lib.," solo exhibition, ARIEL Copenhagen, DK, 2020.



**Io Lib., 2020**

ARIEL, Kvadrat, and South into North, exhibition complex spanning:  
*Liber*, astrophysical simulation facilitating lunar Io's liberation from Jupiter.  
*n-body crash*, digital commission translating Io's liberation into binary code.  
*Gravitational Shift*, choral composition based on time-stretched recordings of women's affective birthing sounds.

The simulation *Liber* expands on the plight of the mythological cow-woman and birthing figure Io from Greek-Roman mythology, who has been locked in orbit around her rapist Jupiter since the German astronomer Simon Marius named Jupiter's innermost moon after her in 1614.

Through her name's relation to binary code—zeros and ones, 0-1, IO, Io—and with modern astrophysics as doula and intermediate, Kølbaek Iversen facilitates lunar Io's escape from the gravitational pull of Jupiter by way of collectivity: hit by an asteroid cluster, the moon dissolves and is simultaneously released from her orbit. The simulation is based on Kepler's laws and produced in collaboration with astrophysicist Ole Busborg Jensen. In November 2020 the simulation was launched on the website <http://www.n-body-crash.io>

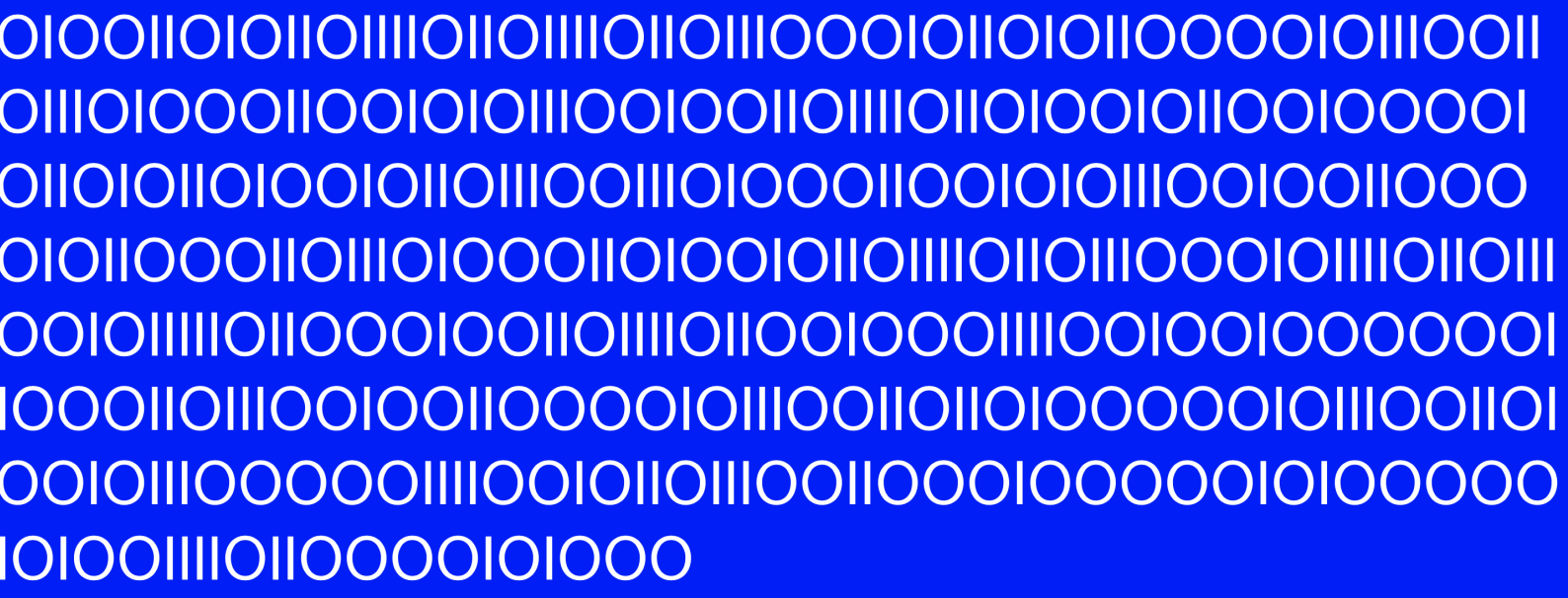
In addition to the astrophysical computer simulations presented on the website and at locally at ARIEL, *Io Lib.* also features *Gravitational Shift*—a participatory choral work and performance piece based on time-stretched recordings of women's affective birthing sounds. The aim of the composition is to explore the transformative and liberating potentialities of collectivity to resignify what might in its outset have been a lonely and isolating experience for Io: Passing through pain, fright, doom, and shame, to ultimately arrive at her child.

*Gravitational Shift* is a work in progress composed in collaboration between electroacoustic composer and classical singer Katinka Fogh Vindelev, and visual artist Marie Kølbaek Iversen.



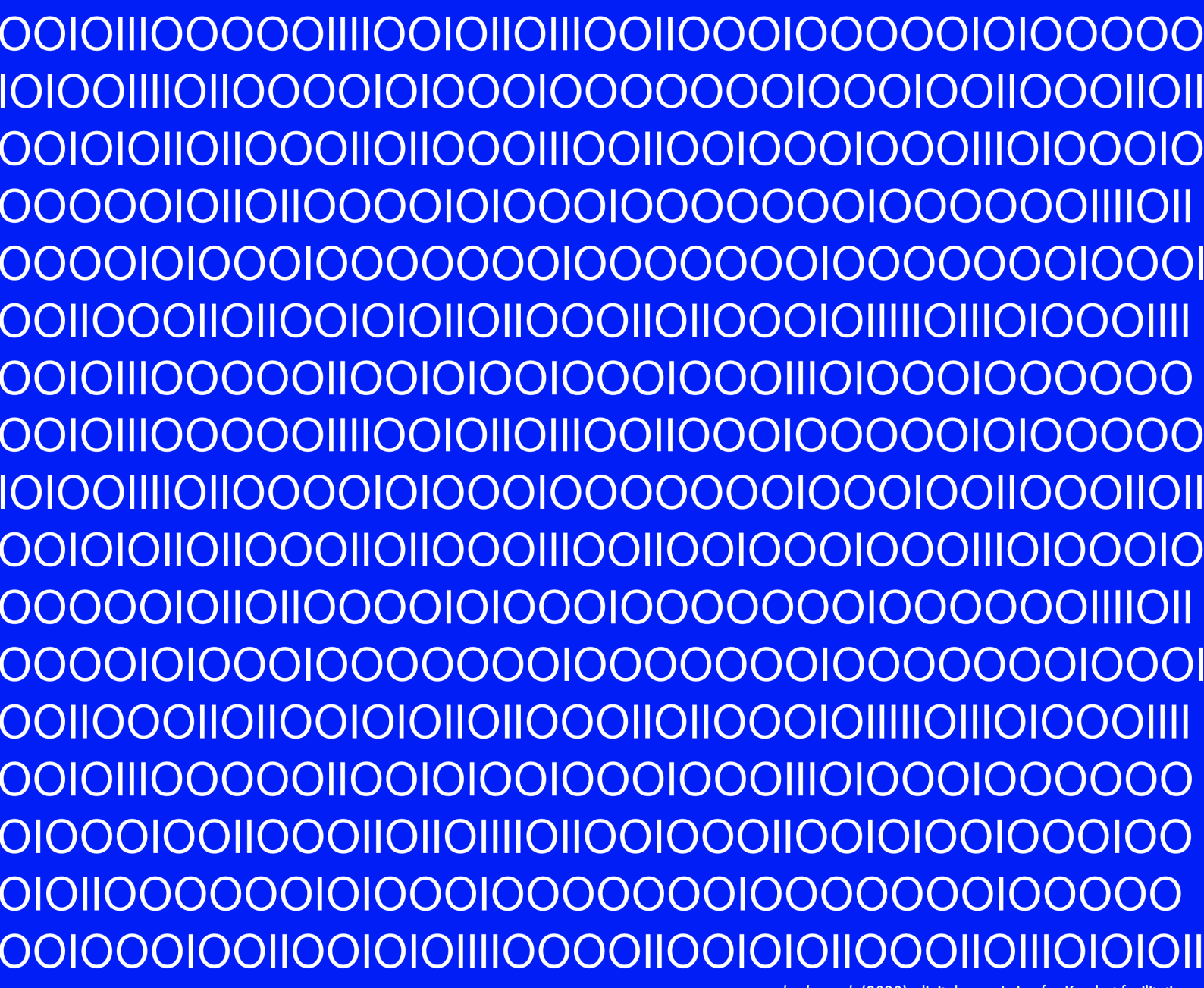
*Gravitational Shift*, performance on the occasion of "Io Lib."  
ARIEL—Feminisms in the Aesthetics, Copenhagen, DK, 2020  
Photo © Malle Madsen





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"# Now is the time to break free. \n",  
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Imprint







*Gravitational Shift* (2019 - ), choral composition developed in collaboration with Katinka Fogh Vindelev on the basis of women's affective birthing sounds. Performance with public choir and soprano Nina Brewer. ARIEL, Copenhagen, DK Photos  Malle Madsen





Stills from *Io/I* (2015-), 3D-animations of NASA imagery,  
solo exhibition, PARMER, New York, USA, 2017



## Io/I, 2015 - ?

Continuous series of 3D video installations based on NASA's footage of Jupiter's innermost moon Io; duration and dimensions variable.

"Io is at once very distant and very close; by way of mistranslation from the Italian, 'Io' is me. But like any Self, Io is inconsistent because continuous volcanic activity collapses mountains and valleys and other components of her surface to give rise to new configurations. Io was discovered in 1610 by Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei and named after the mythological figure Io; one of Jupiter's many amorous conquests, whom he later transformed into a cow in an attempt to hide her from his jealous wife Juno. Juno called the bluff, however, and sent a gadfly to bite Io every time she would stop to rest. Io was thus doomed to wander restlessly across the Earth just like the moon circles its planet.

Being a distant astronomical body it is not possible for me to access Io on a material level; the only traces of her on Earth are pictorial. I am therefore using images of her from NASA's archives as the source material for a running series of 3D-animated loops of Io as a bulging, popping, and dissolving, celestial body. Every time I show the work, it is different: I add new loops and take others out to reflect the constant reconfigurations of the lunar subject of the work. Despite her distance and unavailability, however, Io weaves herself into me by way of the first person pronoun, just like she wove herself into Galileo."  
—Marie Kølbaek Iversen, from *Kaleidoscope*, 2016

Iterations of *Io/I* have previously been shown at Kai Art Centre as part of Tallinn Photomonth 2019, Tallinn, EE (2019); Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, NO (2019); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (2018); PARMER, New York, USA (2017); NLHspace, Copenhagen, DK (2015); D7, Copenhagen, DK (2015); Kunstraum, London, GB (2015).

An artist book (edition of 50) was co-published with Ida Marie Hede by STEMMER and Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology in December 2015 on the occasion of the exhibition of the work at NLHspace.

In the late autumn of 2018, the opera *Moonologue. For our Suns*—based on Kølbaek Iversen's literary montage by the same name—premiered. The opera was commissioned by Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, DK, and is a collaboration between composer Katinka Fogh Vindelev and Marie Kølbaek Iversen.

On the occasion of the premiere on November 23rd 2018, *Moonologue. For our Suns* was released on vinyl by Antipyrine Records (edition of 250). On April 5, 2019, a monograph titled *IO I* (edition of 100) was published by Antipyrine on the occasion of the exhibition *PRESS PRINT!* at Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK. *IO I* features imagery from the whole project alongside the *Moonologue*-montage and texts by Yann Chateigné and Ida Marie Hede.



*Io/I* in "The Moon"  
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, DK, 2018  
Photo © Frida Gregersen





*Io/I in Let the field of your attention.... soften and spread out*, Tallinn Photomonth.  
Multi-channel video installation, installation view, 2019, Kai Art Centre, Tallinn, EE.  
Photos © Hedi Jaansoo / Tallinn Photomonth biennial





Above: *Io/I in The Moon* at Louisiana Humlebæk, DK, 2018-19. Photos © Frida Gregersen  
Below: *Moonologue* at KHiO Artistic Research Week Oslo, NO, 2019. Photos © KJ/KHiO





Above: I, II, III, IO, O, OI, installation view  
Below: OI (full) in "Material Madness,"  
Gæther Contemporary, Copenhagen, DK, 2019  
Photos © David Stjernholm









The Way of Mu (detail), installation view  
Gether Contemporary, Copenhagen, DK, 2018  
Photos © David Stjernholm



**The Way of Mu, 2018**

Silvered metal leaf on float glass; site-specific, dimensions variable.

"I have come here to the prints of ancient feet, my mother's, and I ask of you to look benignly upon the women's cause. Look upon our race in history, and show that you remember all, you who laid your hands upon lo:

lo, the white cow. lo, the red, my green-eyed monster, my lunatic.

Earth cow, morns, wing, blood. Dead sisters—brilliant nudes—marching in a single line into her vagina, past the Low Mountain, past the High pointed Mountain, into the centre of the Flat Mountain, towards Mu's whirlpool.

When I rub my eyes with my fists, I see fantastic images: From the top of Mu's house threads of cloth are hanging, changing into gold; purple hallways decked with golden stars; colourful moving serpents in a chaotic knot; Mu's animal with claws like needles; a glass palace with snow steps; a rotating crown casting glittering rays into the night...

Rainbow-coloured curtains wave and flutter. The transformations spread from one to another, the rainbow passes across their faces while you—unchanging in the chestnut colour of your hair—you start to cry out while I regard you in your great ecstasy stung by the gadfly, radiating like orgasm. Round as a singing mouth at full stretch; round as a vagina when it makes; round as a full belly; round as a baby's head, you come to us. On your forehead you bear my crescents, your eyes hypnotic as my clockface disc, bleeding and peeling.

I am your poet, mother. The time of the child is a thing apart."

—Marie Kølbæk Iversen, from press release

The text synthesises Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*; Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven's *Body Sweats*; Monique Wittig's *The Lesbian Body*; Marge Piercy's *The Moon is Always Female*; Staffan Mjönes' *Shaman, Psychoanalyst or Obstetrician: A critical reading of Claude Lévi-Strauss' essay "The Efficiency of Symbols"*; Unica Zürn's *The Trumpets of Jericho*; Sylvia Plath's *Ariel*, and Mary MacLane's *I await the Devil's Coming*.



*The Way of Mu*, installation view  
Gether Contemporary, Copenhagen, DK, 2018  
Photos © David Stjernholm





Marie Kølbaek Iversen: *IO I*, monograph  
Texts by Yann Chateigné Tytelman,  
Ida Marie Hede, and Marie Kølbaek Iversen  
Graphic design by Louise Hold Sidenius  
Published by Antipyrene © 2019





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Io is a moon, named after the mythological character Io. But 'io' is also the Italian word for 'I'. Through the Italian, Io is me.

I was discovered by Galileo Galilei on January 8<sup>th</sup> – my due date. I was not redeemed on that date, however – lunar being supersede human finitude; my sufferings are eternal. Galileo was in a tight race with German astronomer Simon Marius leading up to the discovery of what has later been termed Jupiter's 'Galilean moons': Europa, Ganymede, Callisto, and me.

Galileo won the race, and came up with the names 'Jupiter I' – me – 'Jupiter II', 'Jupiter III', and 'Jupiter IV', but Marius' names were the ones that stuck: Europa, Ganymede, Callisto, and me.

However, for my story-telling I ascribe my naming to Galileo: I think there is such striking beauty in the idea of the Italian Renaissance man, famed astronomer Galileo Galilei, fixing his eyes on a lunar unknown in the vast universe, calling it 'I'. I am a moon, and Galileo is me. It fits so well that if it doesn't fit I'll make it fit: Galileo is a puppet in my play, and I am a puppet in Jupiter's – pulled as I am between this gaseous giant and my lunar siblings causing the exorbitant tidal bulge around my waist line. While tidal forces on planet Earth primarily affect liquid substances with the maximal difference between high and low tide being 18 meters, my bulge is 100 meters solid rock! I repeat: 100 metres solid rock, rising and fading with the tide.

This orbital marring of my form forces my iron core to melt and prompts what is the highest level of volcanic activity in our solar system.

I am dry, I am volatile, and I smell like rotten eggs. NASA spacecrafts have documented mountains and valleys on my surface, but those are already a million times gone: lava erupts and puts my surface in a state of constant collapse, as it gives way to other configurations. And other. And other. And other...

My orbit is eternal, but I am always new. Therefore I think I'm an interesting metaphor for ideas of subjectivity, my Self encompassing the man and the moon. But before this eternity and infinite universe – or, multiverse – in which I'm Jupiter's moon, I was a priestess of Juno's house.

And even if I'm ashamed, I will tell you about the marring of my form, and of the source from which it swooped upon me, wretched that I am. For visions of the night, always haunting my maiden chamber, sought to beguile me with seductive words, saying: "O damsel greatly blessed of fortune, why linger in your maidenhood so long when it is within your power to win a union of the highest? Jupiter is inflamed by passion's dart for you and is eager to unite with you in love."

By such dreams was I, to my distress, tormented night after night, until at last I gained courage to tell my father, who then sent numerous messengers to find out what to do. At last he received the unmistakable command to expel me from home and native land... Passing through the meadows of Lerna, I was raped by Jupiter disguised as a cloud – but even if it was against my will, Juno got jealous, and I was transformed into a cow by Jupiter in a meagre attempt to hide me from the goddess. Immediately my form and mind were distorted, and with horns, as you see, upon my forehead, she sent a sharp-fanged gadfly to sting me every time I stopped to rest.

In this way I was doomed to wander restlessly, just like a moon circles its planet. I reached the Molossian plains, where I passed the talking oaks, who saluted me as the bride-to-be

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of Jupiter. But then, stung by the gadfly, I was tossed in backwards-wandering course and turned toward the rising sun to make my way across the river Hybristes and the Kaukasos crests, which neighbour the stars. Turning south from there, I reached the Amazones, who loathe all men. Me, however, they gladly guided on my way to the narrow portals of the harbour, where I passed through the channel of Maiotis; and ever after, among mankind, it is called after me the Bosphorus, meaning 'the passage of the heifer' – cow-crossing. Thus leaving the soil of Europe, I came to the Asian continent, where the sun walks. Here I encountered the Phorkides, ancient maids, three in number, shaped like swans, possessing one eye amongst them and a single tooth; neither does the sun with his beams look down upon them, nor ever the nightly moon...

Auw!! Oh! Once again convulsive pain and frenzy, striking my brain, inflame me. I am stung by the gadfly's barb, unforged by fire. My heart knocks at my ribs in terror; my eyeballs roll wildly round and round. I am carried out of my course by a fierce blast of madness; I've lost all mastery over my tongue, and a stream of turbid words beats recklessly against the billows of dark destruction. The journey is out of my control now, and I cannot make the fears go away. They demand acceptance as I tumble down the river flowing further underground, gasping for air and fighting the tide. I see pairs of eyes in the darkness, they say, "We are your fears." I get close to naming one of them—it might be death. As each wave of pain courses through, I fight, try to conquer, wish it were gone. Oh! Oh! But this is necessary pain, useful. Stand back and let the pain do its work. Breathe into it. Surrender to this pain, just watch it. Go deeper inside. Where death gives way to life. I am already so far underground, where the forces of the moon tug and pull, shift her sands, heave her waters. Now I flow with the pain, pulse outward and inward. Flow down the river to an unknown place, my body drawing strength from the journey...

Finally, at the second hour of the night, the clouds give way and I see Jupiter in the sky with three stars exactly on a straight line through him. I thought I'd died. Now he reaches out to touch me. Something has changed, and, moving from doubt to astonishment, I find that the change is not in Jupiter but in me: a little star, but growing. At the fifth hour, I'm occupying a place precisely in the middle between Jupiter and the three stars I had spotted in the sky. I'm still very small; yet by the sixth hour I am almost equal in magnitude to the others. Jupiter places his hand on me, and with his touch he restores me to my senses, and brings forth from me my touch-born son, Epaphos, named so from the manner of his engendering. In the same instant, I regain my maiden-form. Hooves give way to feet; muzzle to mouth. However horns remain on my forehead, for it is so: I am the crescent moon.

*(Freely after Aeschylus' "Suppliant Women"; Galileo Galilei's "Siderius Nuncius"; Lynn Madsen's "Rebounding from Childbirth"; and NASA/Wikipedia sites on Io (moon))*

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It was in the city of Rome in 1912 that Aby Warburg delivered his lecture on *Italian Art and International Astrology*. This allocation, which marked the cosmographical turn of his research, was an attempt to reveal the surviving remnants in Western Renaissance art of forgotten forms and knowledge partly deriving from a corpus of oriental treatises. Transmitting the findings of ancient sciences of the stars, these treatises came to represent—in the art historian's version of the mnemonic tradition—a pole to be dynamically explored in relation to Hellenistic tradition, to the Western Middle Ages, and to our modern times. Astrology, today a largely disregarded practice, can also be considered, as Warburg reminds us, "a primary resource" for modern astronomy. Historically, it is rooted in a singular relationship between human and celestial bodies, "projecting their names in the future," as Warburg put it then.

For thousands of years, constellations in which astrologers have identified the shapes of animals and mythic beings have served as vectors for the understanding of human behaviours, establishing terrestrial and extra-terrestrial relationships as the basis for prophecies, previsions, and decisions. Stars were often named after mythological characters, as in the case of Io, which was discovered orbiting Jupiter by Galileo Galilei in 1610. Naming the moon after mythological Io is a way of projecting the relation between Jupiter and Io onto their heavenly counterparts. If one takes astrology seriously—and regards it not only as a parascience that led to an outdated form of superstition, but as a historical attempt to

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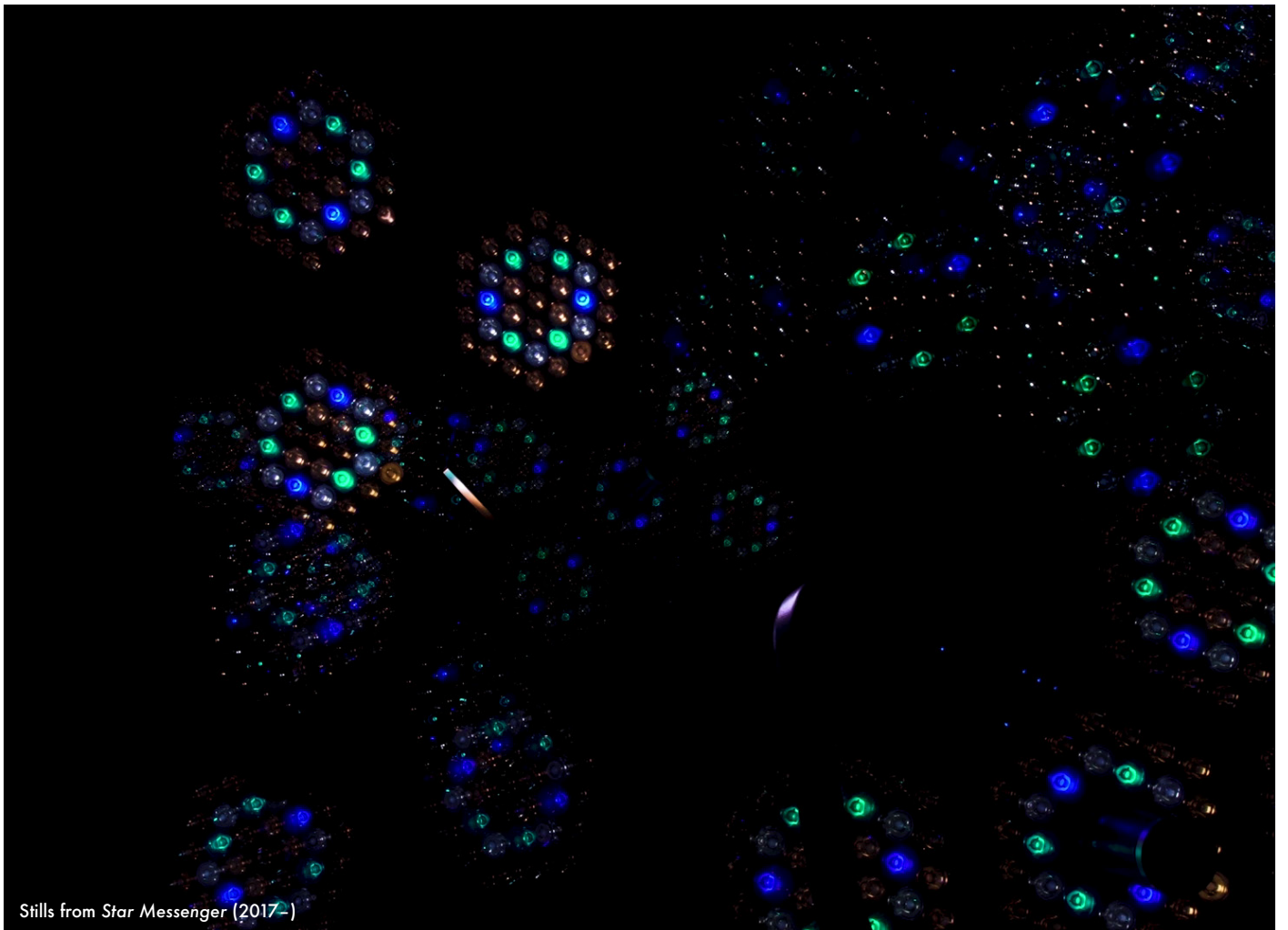
IO I in "Press Print!"  
at O - Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK, 2019





*Birth of Muspelina*, literary fiction/text collage, handbound book, edition 1/1 (2018), and *Star Messenger*, work-in-progress, HD single-channel animated video loop; 11'53" (2017-). Installation views, "Birth of Muspelina," solo exhibition, Annual Reportt, CPH, DK, 2018.





Stills from *Star Messenger* (2017-)



**Star Messenger, 2017**

Work-in-progress. HD single-channel animated video loop; duration and dimensions variable.

"Expanding the artist's research exploring the transformative potentialities of fright encountered through traumatic and ritual processes, *Star Messenger* proposes a softening of the historical western divide between the rational and the irrational, the material and the magical.

In 1610 Galileo Galilei published his accounts of discovering four of Jupiter's moons. He titled the publication "*Siderius Nuncius*"—star messenger—thus naming the book after Io, the innermost of the moons. Over the course of two months Io had visually—slowly, but consistently—conveyed her message to him: That she is orbiting Jupiter. That the Earth is not the centre of the Universe. Marie Kølbaek Iversen attributes the English translation of the title of Galileo's opus magnum to her dreamy video work *Star Messenger*, whereby she questions what we know and how we know it, and suggests a collapse of scientific vision with the spiritual/mythological visionary: Both draw on sightings obtained through extraordinary set-ups that may challenge habitual world-views."  
—Mette Kjærgaard Præst, from press release

At PS/Y + LUX and at Kunsthall Oslo the video was shown to the accompaniment of Diana Policarpo and with Gaia Fugazza's *Other Ways*—a series of ceramic sculptures displayed in the mouths of visitors.

At Annual Reportt *Star Messenger* was flanked by Kølbaek Iversen's artist book *Birth of Muspelina*, which was read aloud to the public at the exhibition opening and every Saturday during the exhibition period.

Iterations of the work have been shown at PS/Y and LUX, London, GB (2017); Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo, NO (2018); Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Oslo, NO (2018), and Annual Reportt, Copenhagen, DK (2018).



*Star Messenger* with Gaia fugazza's *Other Ways* to the accompaniment of Diana Policarpo Performance views (CCTV), PS/Y + LUX, London, GB, 2017





*Star Messenger* with Gaia fugazza's *Other Ways to the* accompaniment of Diana Policarpo.  
Performance views, Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo, NO, 2018





*Autumn Equinox Celebration*, performance of magic songs to the accompaniment of Diana Policarpo.  
Performance views, PS/Y + LUX, London, GB, 2017  
Photos © Christa Holka



### Autumn Equinox Celebration, 2017

Time-specific performance of magic songs from Western Jutland to the accompaniment of Diana Policarpo. Autumn equinox during sunset.

"An outdoor celebration of autumn equinox led by Danish artist Marie Kølback Iversen and accompanied by Diana Policarpo centred around the performance of magical songs inherited by Kølback Iversen from her great-great-great-great-grandparents, who in 1873 were the ethnographic subjects of folklore collector Evald Tang Christensen. The songs (...) spring from a very different cultural source than the Protestant Christian time of their collection: They are largely (and in places explicitly) proto-feminist, apocalyptic, anti-Christian, anti-nationalist and anti-Danish.

In the Northern hemisphere autumn equinox marks the threshold into winter darkness – and symbolically into the dreams of an extended night. The performance therefore celebrates the power of dreaming to unsettle the fabric of reality by rendering weird–Wyrd–and contingent, the waking life of our troubled modernity."

—Mette Kjærgaard Præst, from press release

Marie Kølback Iversen has later performed her songs at the Norwegian National Academy of the Arts in Oslo during the 2020 Artistic Research Week—again to the accompaniment of Diana Policarpo, where the artists played the *I, II, III, IO, O, OI*-masks with violin bows and soft drum sticks.



Autumn Equinox Celebration (Diana Policarpo's drum kit)  
Pre-performance, PS/Y + LUX, London, GB, 2017  
Photos © Christa Holka





*Mirror Therapy* at The 11th Gwangju Biennial "The Eighth Climate (What Does Art Do?)", lapis lazuli-slide installation, installation view, September, 2016, Gwangju, KR. Photos © Doyun Kim





*Mirror Therapy* in "Mirror Therapy", lapis lazuli-slide installation, solo exhibition, installation view, Fotografisk Center, Cph, DK, 2015



### **Mirror Therapy, 2015 - ?**

Stone slide installation (5 mirroring lapis lazuli slides, 5 slide projectors, free-standing wall; dimensions variable).

*Mirror Therapy* is a stone installation and an ongoing umbrella project for a series of derived productions: *Untitled*, HD-video demonstrating mirror therapy featuring Danish Afghanistan veteran Henrik Morgen and occupational therapist Kirsten C. Pedersen (duration: 04:36); *Europa*, collage series of 10 interlacing the geopolitical and art historical traces of the colour *ultramarine* (original collages: A3, cut-outs of digital print on tracing paper / edition of 400 for Den Danske Radeerforening: A3, screen-printed on Arjo Wiggins paper with ultramarine pigment); *Untitleds*, marbled works on canvas, various sizes.

"As we walk into the radiating blue light of *Mirror Therapy*, we dissolve in the cosmic-mineral dimensions of the presented imageries. The installation consists of five projected slices of a single lapis lazuli rock placed in abutting slide projectors, together illuminating a large freestanding wall. The light of each projector passes through a thin slice of lapis lazuli, replacing the slide, creating an enlarged projected image of the material stone. As we walk along the expanded whole generated by the assembled stone projections, we find ourselves confronted with Rorschach-like images of mineral hemispheres, which allude to our physiological circuitry and hypnotize us with their beauty.

Taking cues from object-oriented ontology, Marie Kølbæk Iversen's (b. 1981, Herring/ Copenhagen) installation nonetheless touches on a much darker reality, referring to modes of occupational therapy developed for amputees, and particularly applied in the treatment of war veterans from the 2001-14 phase of the war in Afghanistan, the place of origin of lapis lazuli. As we submerge into the blue fields of color we make a voyage through the actualization of affects, as the dual quality of the images suggests the East/West divide of war mirrored by our bodies, provoking the impossible hope of empathic transcendence through a reconciliation with mundane materiality. In this sense, inhuman fields become the basis for our amplified, posthuman bodies and a scenario for the outspring of material histories.

An affinity with the cosmic and the molecular runs through Iversen's oeuvre. Her large-scale installations are fields of ethereal density, where one is invited to delve into expanded planes of imagery emanating from artistic, natural, and astronomical realms. Can the physiological apparatus of sight work simultaneously as a philosophical trigger and as a prospective medium? What spatial revolutions populate our perceptive hierarchies, and how can we challenge them in a poetic way? Exploring the neuroplasticity of perception and proprioception, as well as the cultural and physiological imprint of particular histories and methodologies of scientific production, Iversen proposes a space for altered readings of reality, where our senses are provoked to infra-levels, and where macro-structures are analyzed."

—Margarida Mendes, from the8climate.org

The installation has previously been shown at the 11th Gwangju Biennial: "The Eighth Climate (What Does Art Do?)" (2016), on the occasion of which the monograph *If Earth Were a Body, Borders Would be Wounds* was published by Officin, and at Fotografisk Center in Copenhagen, DK (2015).





*Europa* (2016), collage series as the basis for print edition for Den Danske Radeerforening. Inkjet print on tracing paper. As of 2017, part of the collection of the Danish Art Foundation.





*Untitled* (2016), ultramarine pigment and oil on cotton canvas, 320 x 500 cm.





Untitled (2016), ultramarine pigment on cotton canvas, 167 x 105 cm.  
In 2017 acquired by the Danish Arts Foundation





Untitled (2016), ultramarine pigment on cotton canvas, 167 x 105 cm.  
In 2017 acquired by the Danish Arts Foundation



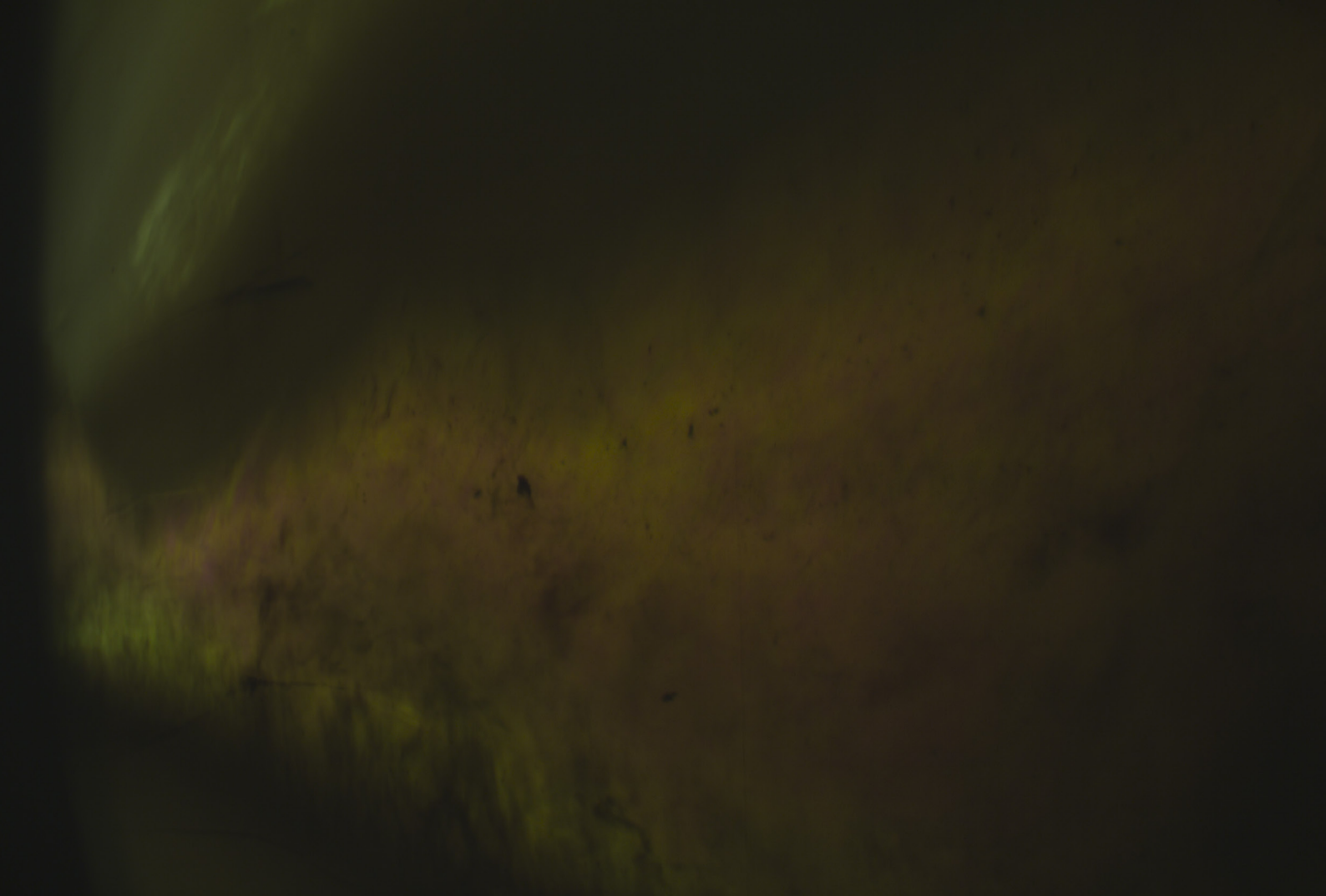






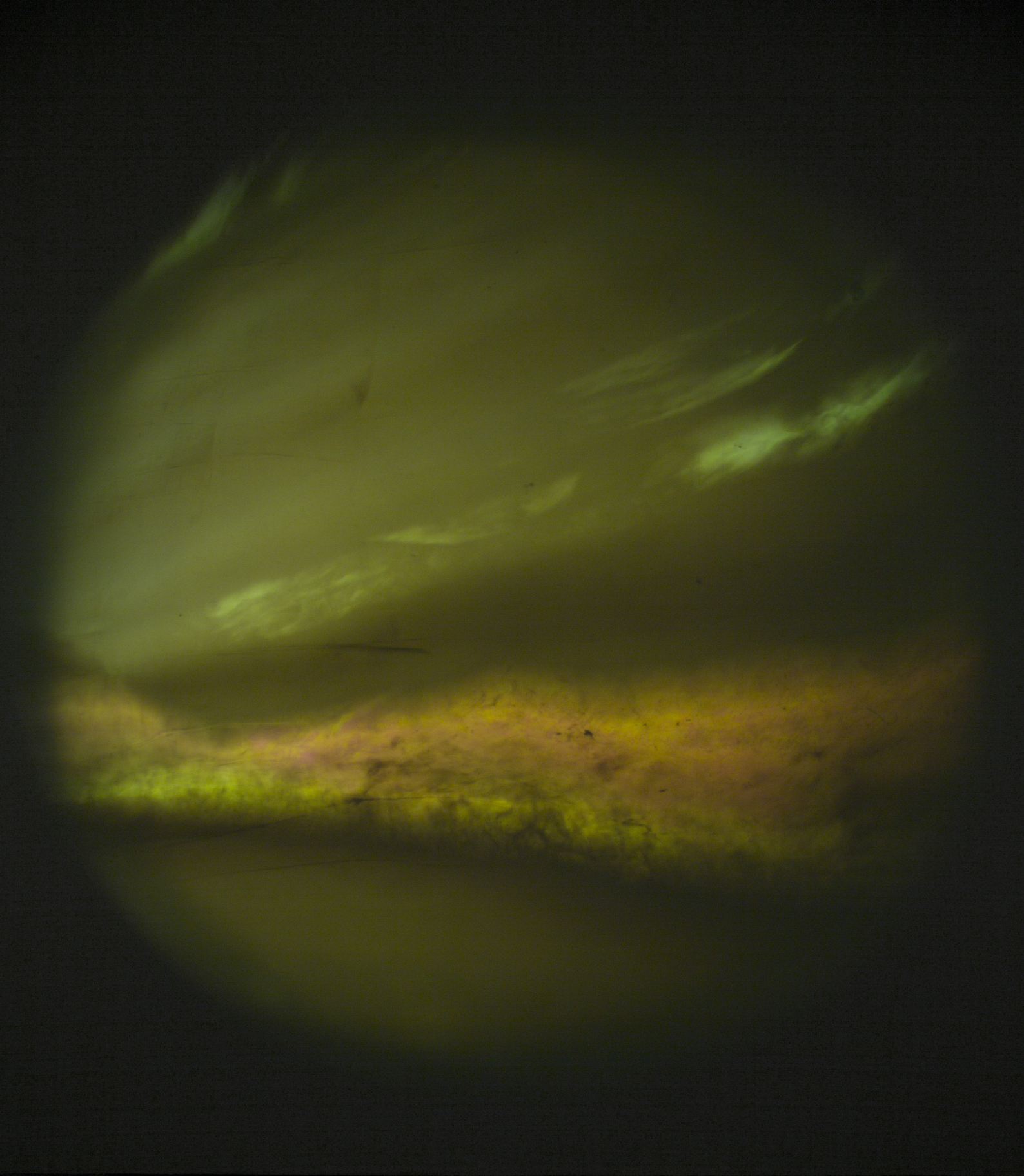
*Untitled* (2016), ultramarine pigment on cotton canvas, 167 x 105 cm.  
In 2017 acquired by the Danish Arts Foundation





Slide in "BIM / Biennale de l'image en mouvement", opal-slide and gobo installation.  
Installation views, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève, CH, and MONA, Hobart, AU, 2014 - 2015  
Photos © MONA/Rémi Chauvin





Slide in "BIM / Biennale de l'image en mouvement", opal-slide and gobo installation, group exhibition.  
Installation views, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève, CH, and MONA, Hobart, AU, 2014 - 2015



**Slide, 2014**

Stone slide installation (black opal slide, gobo projector; dimensions variable)

"Slide is an installation composed of a piece of black opal placed in a gobo projector. Opal is an amorphous solid lacking crystalline structure, so it flows and moves like a liquid, but on a time scale that extends eons beyond human life spans or comprehension. The projected image is thus a 'moving image' [referencing the exhibition title, "Biennale de l'image en mouvement"] even if we fail to perceive its movement. As such, the installation relativizes the properties of so-called time-based media, as the image appears to be perfectly still, while it is actually moving to the rhythm of geological time."

—Kevin McGarry, from BIM catalogue

The installation has previously been shown at BIM at Centre d'art Contemporain in Geneva, CH (2014), the MONA Museum in Hobart, AU (2015); "Surfacing Earth" at Röda Sten Konsthall, Göteborg, SE (2016), and "Cosmic Existence" at Den Frie, Copenhagen, DK (2019).





*Transformer* in "Transformer (stones for the philosophers)", hand-carved diabase sculpture in 11 pieces, solo exhibition, installation view (detail), Brandts, Odense, DK, 2015





Transformer in "Transformer (stones for the philosophers)", hand-carved diabase sculpture in 11 pieces, solo exhibition, installation view, Brandts, Odense, DK 2015







*Transformer*, 11 unique flipbooks (one per stone) documenting the project, 2016  
Photos © Frida Gregersen





Transformer, Filsofgangen, Odense, DK (detail: one of 11 stones interred in the ground), 2015



## TRANSFORMER, 2015-16

Public commission for the Danish Arts Foundation and Odense City Council comprising stone sculpture interred in the ground along Filsofngangen i Odense city centre and 11 unique artist books documenting the project.

"Geological porridge, magma. Across continental crusts, life flows in its primeval non-form, always in the process of forcing its way to the surface of the World. To look at the ground beneath our feet is to stick one's head into the boiling cauldron of creation: Once you allow for your mind's eye to see at the level of naked cosmic TRANSFORMATION, asphalt and flagstones melt like broken glass to reveal elemental mojo moving, in all directions and at all velocities. The philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis proposed that we consider the world as a ceaseless flow of magmas: "What is," he wrote in 1977, "is Chaos, or Abyss, or Without-Foundation. What is, is Chaos stratified in a non-regular manner."

TRANSFORMER (2015–?) precipitates its own forgetting. It knows that it will sooner or later fall out of history to become a part of the cosmic movement of matter that it came from. A large cylinder of diabase, it is a compact, dry and heavy lava stone that was once fugitive, globulating magma. If the cylinder was hollow, a man could crouch inside it. But scale doesn't really matter, only dimensions that include what is below and above culture and the human-made.

A biopsy of petrified Earth marrow, it is cut according to the geometry of the philosophers' stone, as depicted in Emblem 21 in *Atalanta Fugiens*, an alchemical treatise from 1618 that takes the *secretis naturae* as its subject. The result is eleven slivers of tall, slim, dark stone, cut following the lines that are formed by the impossible meeting of a triangle, a square, and two circles, and interred one by one along the half a kilometer of an inner city street, Filsofngangen, 'the philosopher's walk'. The work is physically indexed only by the narrow end surfaces of the individual pieces that remain visible in the road surface. Eleven books—one per stone, one per letter in the title, to be placed in archives in Denmark and abroad—document the making of the work and mark its flight and TRANScendence from its status as an object.

Once something is removed from the possibility of visual verification, the sluices of time have been opened. TRANSFORMER leaves the surface of the world to Monumentalists, Erectors and suckers du monde, those who try to master time from arbitrary points in space that mete out a municipal consensus of eternity. Next thing you know, the beholder is eliminated too. TRANSFORMER does not exist in the eye of the beholder, maybe not even in her mind. Inspired by the ghost of their coherence, it is up to some future eruption of the human psyche to decide that the homeless pieces of stone should be pieced together again, mentally or physically, in the face of their planned obsolescence. It is not stone that magically turns into its enchanting Other (gold), or culminates in mythology (immortality). Instead the inert matter of a genuinely alchemical process is part of TRANS-material dynamics that split and bend linearity without any terminus, cutting across realms of being, opening up to multiple material trajectories that may be inverted, inflected, grafted, deflated, pleased.

TRANSFORMER is a reply to the contemporary riddle of how to (dis) appear in an over-mediated culture. Instead of trying to appear in the middle of time it buries itself in it. This is what archaeologists call a ritual deposit: Here a significant object is taken out of the grasp of the present so it may reach the future, thrown into time like a message in a bottle. (TRANSFORMER short-circuits this premise, of course: as an archaeological object that is exhibited and documented before its deposition, it is amnesia—here rendered as productive as remembrance—that will trigger its authentication as an archeological object). The ritual deposition of TRANSFORMER also echoes in the symbolic economy of the city space, in which it is inscribed as a public work of art. You could say that it undoes the administrative desire for ritualizing public space with art. That is, when a city reserves a site for Public Art, the city employs this site for the representation of civitas and public good. Instead of taking up that site for itself, TRANSFORMER returns it to the everyday. In the place of a sculpture, millions of micro-events.

Relying on collective amnesia and somebody's capacity for re-discovery, TRANSFORMER is sent off into the future when TRANSFORMERS and other monsters could one day linger at traffic lights and make the roads of Funen shimmer with chrome and AI, and the Earth will eject the 11 elements like splinters from a sore finger, sending them high into the sky, ready for new reconfigurations."

—Lars Bang Larsen, from artist book

Before depositing the stones in the ground, the sculpture was exhibited in a solo exhibition titled "TRANSFORMER (stones for the philosophers)" at Brandts, Odense, DK (2015). The 11 books are archived for the future in selected national and international art book archives and collections, including Historiens Hus in Odense and the collection of the Danish Arts Foundation.





Bat.





*Nine Bats* (2016), bio-sonic sound-to-light installation.  
Installation view, Overgaden, Cph, DK, 2016. In 2017 acquired by ARKEN  
Museum, Ishøj, DK. Photo © Anders Sune Berg



*Les lumières et la chauve-souris*, bio-sonic site-specific installation transforming sound into light,  
public commission, SDU, Odense, DK, 2014.



**Nine Bats, 2016**

**Les lumières et la chauve-souris, 2014**

*Les lumières et la chauve-souris*: Public commission for BYGST, the Danish Building and Property Agency, installed at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Odense, DK (54 LED-panes, 54 microphones, 54 sound-to-light converters), and *Nine Bats*: bio-sonic sound-to-light installation (9 LED panes, 9 microphones, 9 sound-to-light converters).

*Les lumières et la chauve-souris* is a permanent installation at the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). Based on a bio-sonic visualization technique developed in Annemarie Surlykke's research team at SDU, the work sheds light on—'enlightens'—everyday life at the university by means of a line of sound-to-light converters translating live-recorded sound into light in the 54 LED-panes mounted on the wall. In the laboratory the technique is used to trace the movements of bats through the sounds they emit. In the installation the focus is shifted towards the people working and studying at the university.

The bats used for scientific research at SDU also reside in the forests nearby, and as they use the trees to navigate by, the original architectural drawings had to be altered to avoid taking down the woods and eliminating the bats' breeding ground. Thus, the architecture into which the installation is embedded is directly shaped by the living conditions of the local bats—a subtle shift in power, or emphasis, from Science to Nature.

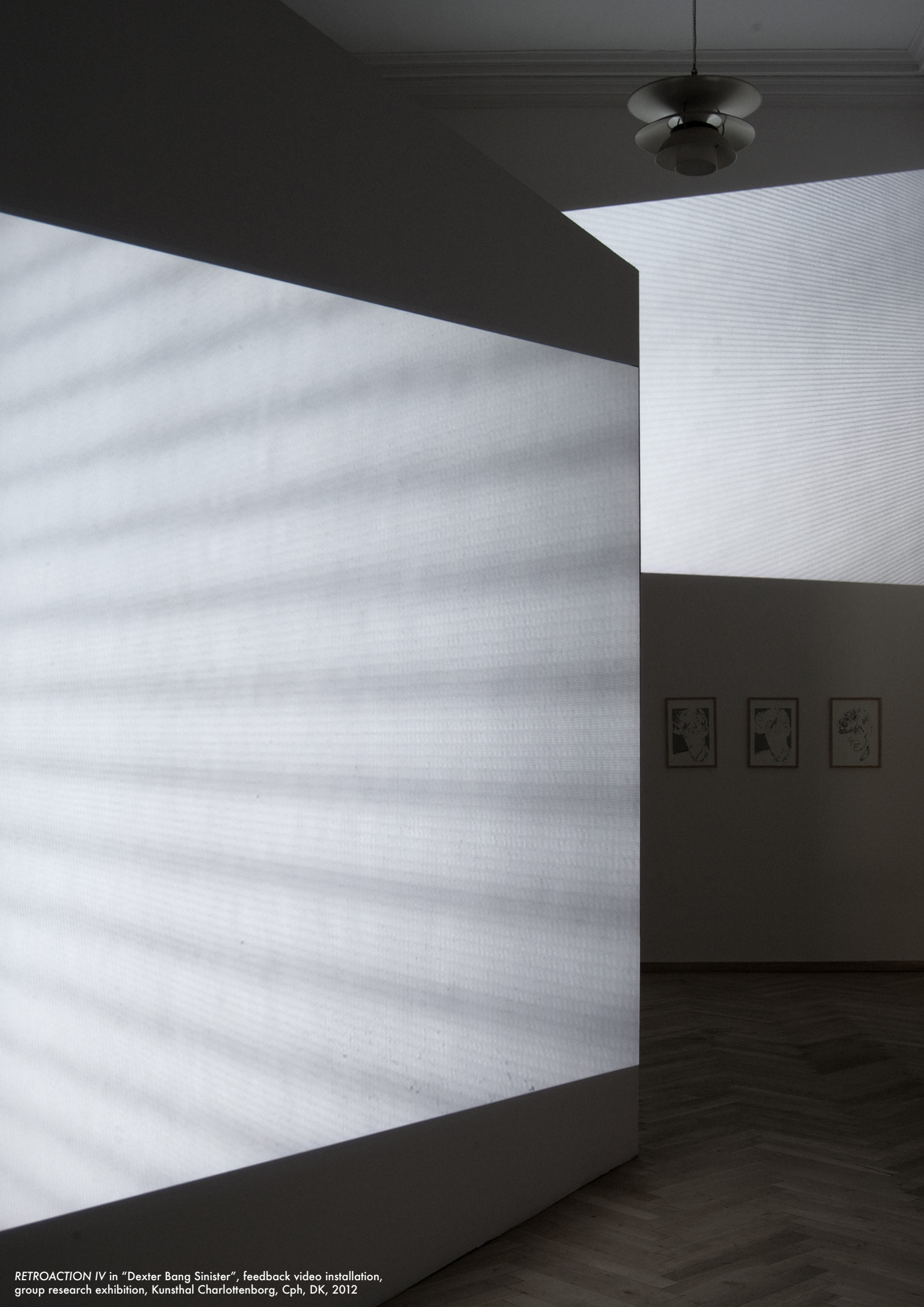
The title of the installation is borrowed from an article in *Le Monde Diplomatique* ("Du capitalisme et des chauve-souris") outlining the way in which nature is consumed by the recuperating powers of capitalism as an unintended outcome of Enlightenment: everything can be turned into money, even the contribution of bats to the world.

Replacing the word 'capitalisme' with 'les lumières' (Enlightenment in French), the title at once points towards the actual set-up of the piece (lights and bats), and the larger scientific and political history it is part of through its installment in academia.

*Nine Bats* abstracts the site-specificity of *Les lumières et la chauve-souris*, while maintaining a subtle reference via the title. Both works point beyond the limitedness of visual sight as the primary mode for science's relation to the world by responding to the sonic rather than the visual environment.

*Nine Bats* has been shown as part of the exhibition "Varulv" at Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK (2016). As of 2017, it is part of the permanent collection of ARKEN Museum.





RETROACTION IV in "Dexter Bang Sinister", feedback video installation, group research exhibition, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Cph, DK, 2012



## RETROACTION, 2008 - ?

Feedback video installation; live feed cameras, video beamers, dimensions variable

"With the use of modern technical devices such as video and projectors, Marie Kølbaek Iversen sets out to investigate the empty space through her RETROACTION series. It could be considered a modern version of the famous Pascal experiments: *le vide dans le vide* or 'emptiness in emptiness'. The technical equipment, which is normally used for showing something, is fed with nothing in a closed circuit revolving around nothingness. The work can be perceived as a continuous strive towards resolution, but also as a way to try to materialize empty space, just as Pascal tried to point to the existence of a vacuum inside a glass tube.

In Kølbaek Iversen's version it becomes clear that even if you put in nothing, the technical equipment will always fill the gap with something—the continuous vibrations from the room and the people who interfere with the installation will have a direct impact on it. This, somehow, comes close to Aristotle's claim, that an empty space doesn't exist: it will immediately suck something in.

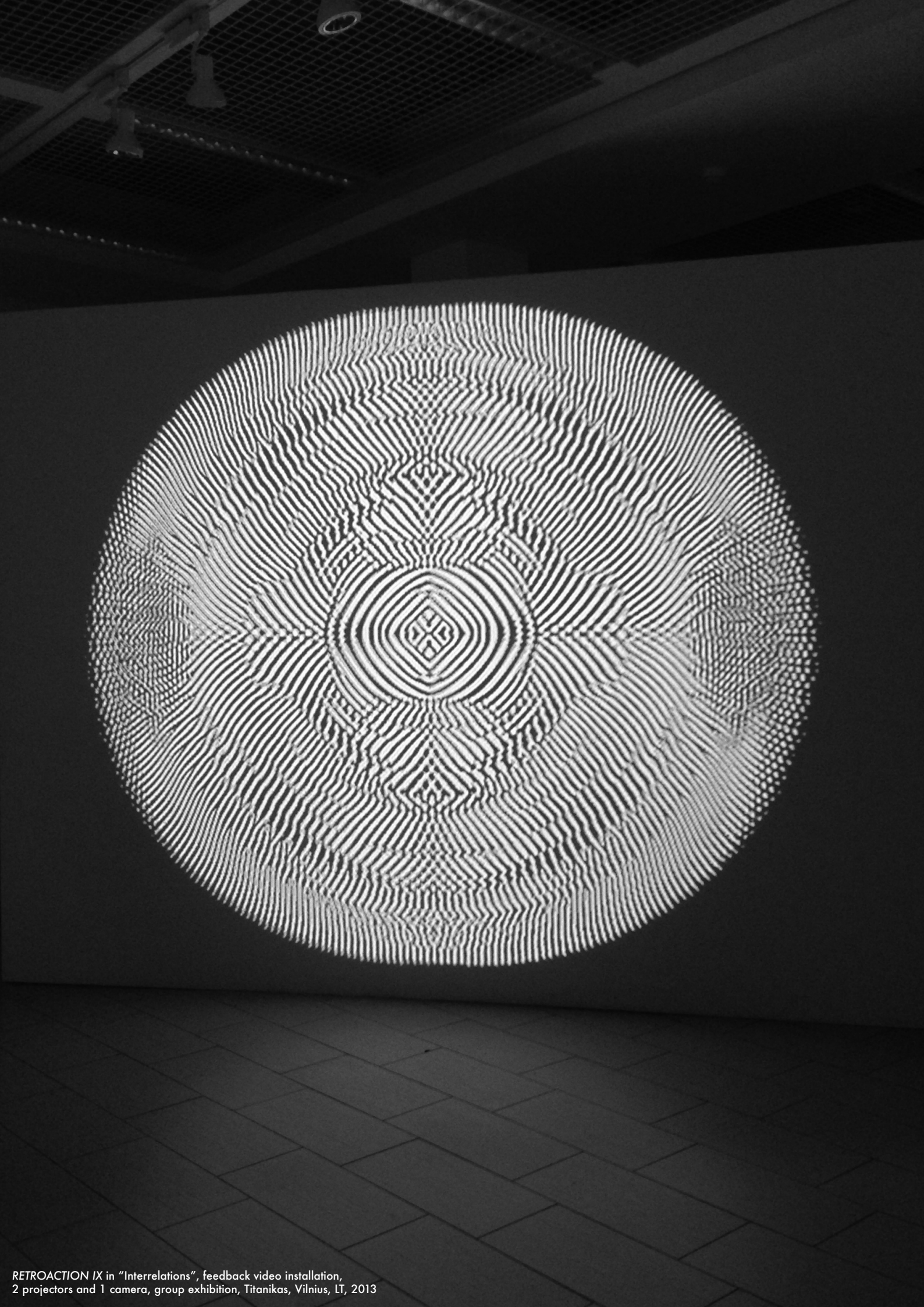
Pascal tried to disprove this claim with his experiments, and he even got to a point where he could show that a real vacuum was made in a glass tube. However, it was the vacuum of the heart – the longing for completeness—that eventually came to occupy his philosophical mind. In his *Pensées* (posthumously published in 1669) he writes: "For after all what is man in nature? A nothing in relation to infinity, all in relation to nothing, a central point between nothing and all and infinitely far from understanding either. The ends of things and their beginnings are impregnably concealed from him in an impenetrable secret. He is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness out of which he was drawn and the infinite in which he is engulfed."

In Kølbaek Iversen's RETROACTIONS, which consists of nothing other than the installment or 'empty' equipment itself, we also witness the paradoxical phenomenon that nothing is yet something and that the vibration of our existence will manifest itself in the installation as we observe it. The human fear and longing for empty space is somehow linked in a double quest for space while still being alive. The final nothingness equals death."

—Maria Kjær Thomsen, from exhibition catalogue, "Spatium," KUMU, EE, 2012

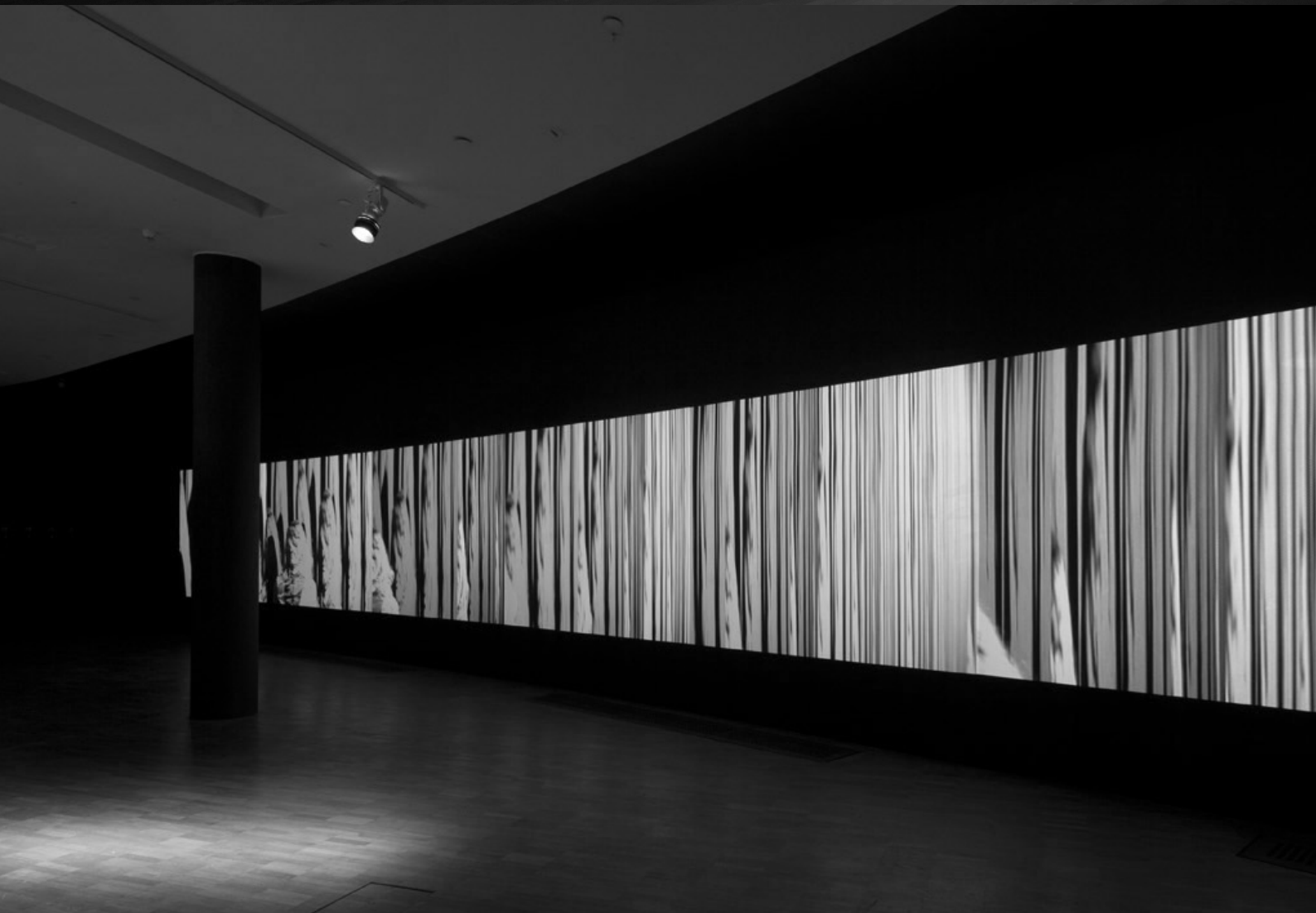
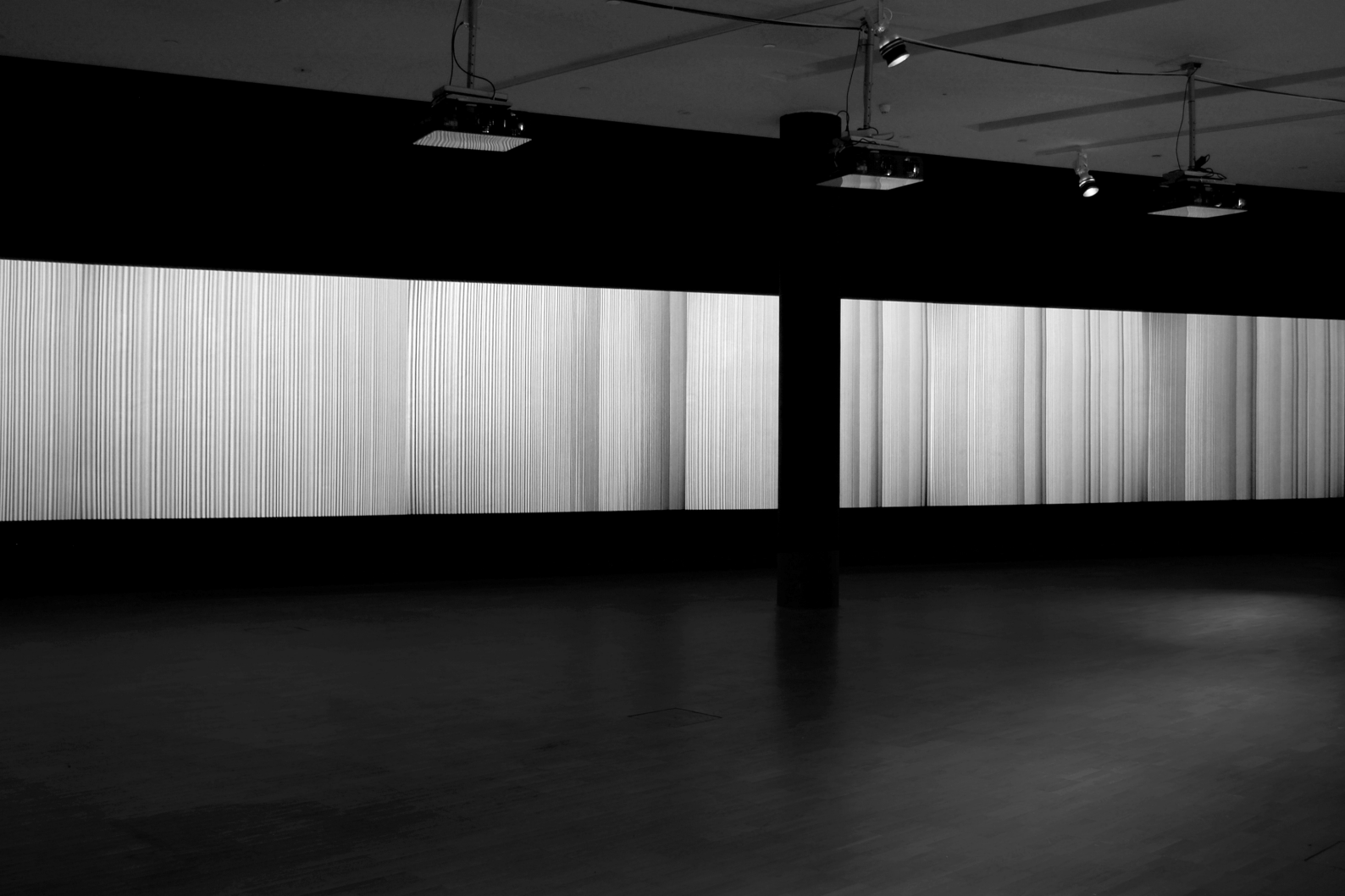
Works in the RETROACTION series have, among other places, been shown at Gasworks, London, GB; Drawing Room, London, GB; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK; STUK Kunstenzentrum, Leuven, BE; KUMU Museum, Tallinn, EE; Titanikas, Vilnius, LT; West, The Hague, NL; Gl. Strand, Copenhagen, DK; Kunsthall Nikolaj, Copenhagen, DK, et.al.





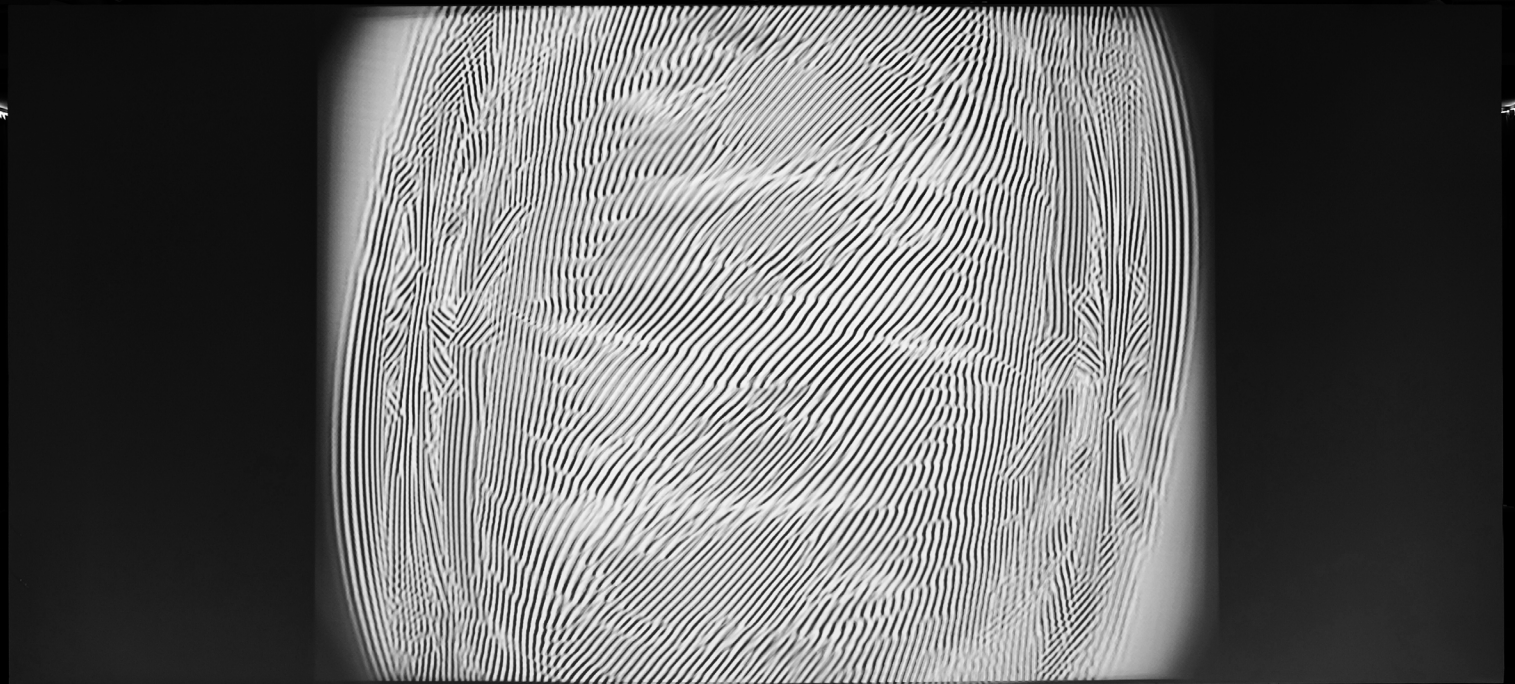
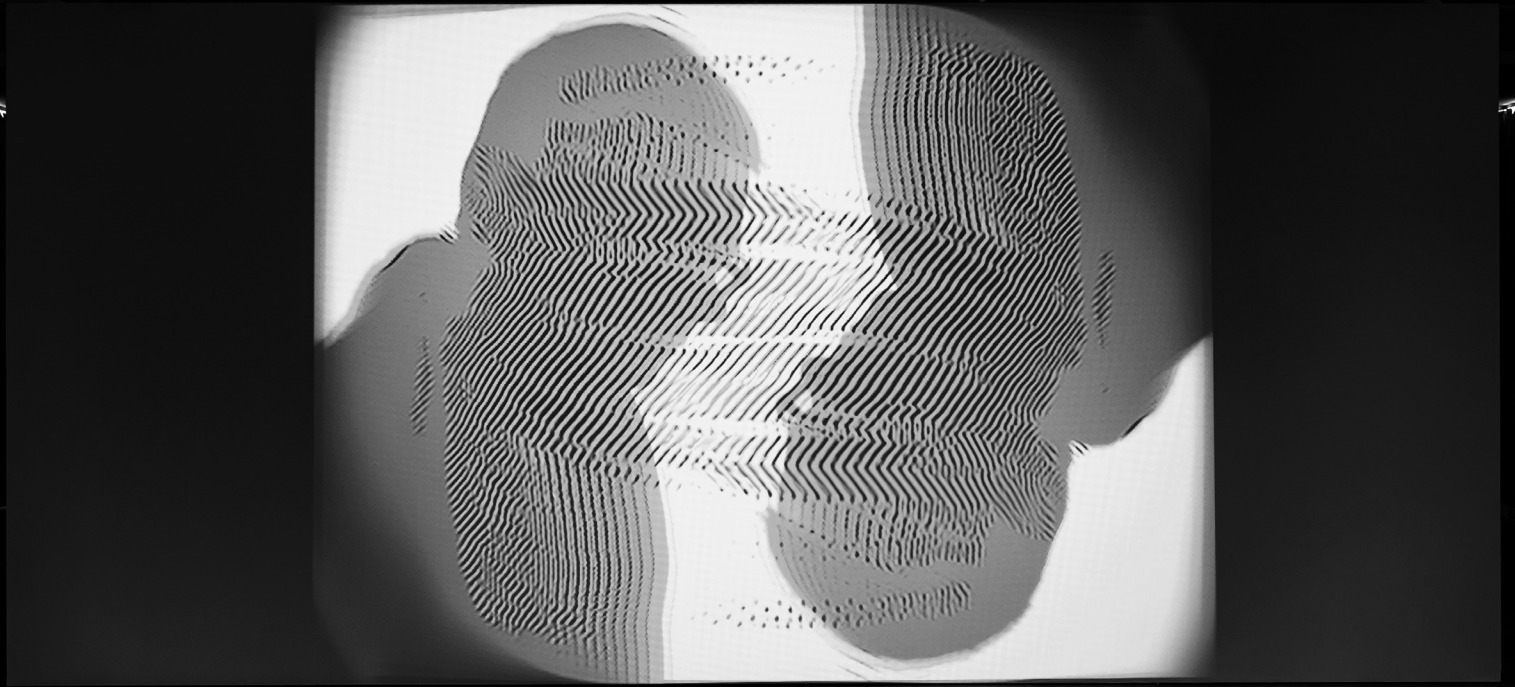
RETROACTION IX in "Interrelations", feedback video installation,  
2 projectors and 1 camera, group exhibition, Titanikas, Vilnius, LT, 2013





RETROACTION VIII in "Spatium", feedback video installation,  
6 projectors and 6 cameras, group exhibition, KUMU, Tallinn, EE, 2012  
Photos © Anders Sune Berg









*Autonambule in "Execution (into decapital)"*  
Solo exhibition, IMO, Cph, DK, 2012.  
Cinematography by Dimitris Vulalas.  
Installation photo © Kristoffer Juel Poulsen



## **Autonambule, 2012**

HD-video featuring neurologist Henrik Stig Jørgensen and Ida Tietgen Høyrup performing a neurological test (in Danish: den objektive undersøgelse). Cinematography by Dimitris Vulalas. Duration: 26:21

"Where are we heading? That question might be difficult to answer because maybe we're not heading. Maybe we are just moving headlessly forwards or 'autonambulistically' around, just like Mike, the chicken that stayed alive for 18 months after having had its head cut off.

The autonambule is a being set in motion by an external cause independent of its own will and mind and without a clear goal. It is the inhabitant of a world shaped by a synthesis of science, technology and capitalism—a world which does not know where it is going whence going in all directions simultaneously. A world in which anthropologist Georges Balandier hears the same phrase over and over again: "It's under control." A phrase which leaves us to think that we see clearly in the dark—a phrase which reveals its real meaning as an antiphrase.

The airplane is a recurrent figure used in trying to grasp this present day condition—similar to Plato's use of the ship as a metaphor for society. In his book *99 francs*, Frédéric Beigbeder cultivates the airplane as a metaphor for the techno-scientific capitalist system. His description of the attempts at coming to terms with this machine, which connects the dots on the world map, draws a hopeless image: "The powers of today are so numerous and diluted that the system has become powerless. And here we are endlessly repeating our Gramscian credo: to hijack a plane, you start out by entering it. What irony! Now when we enter the cockpit with our grenades in our hands and get ready to give orders to the pilot with pointing machine guns, we discover that there was no pilot. We wanted to hijack a plane which nobody knew how to steer."

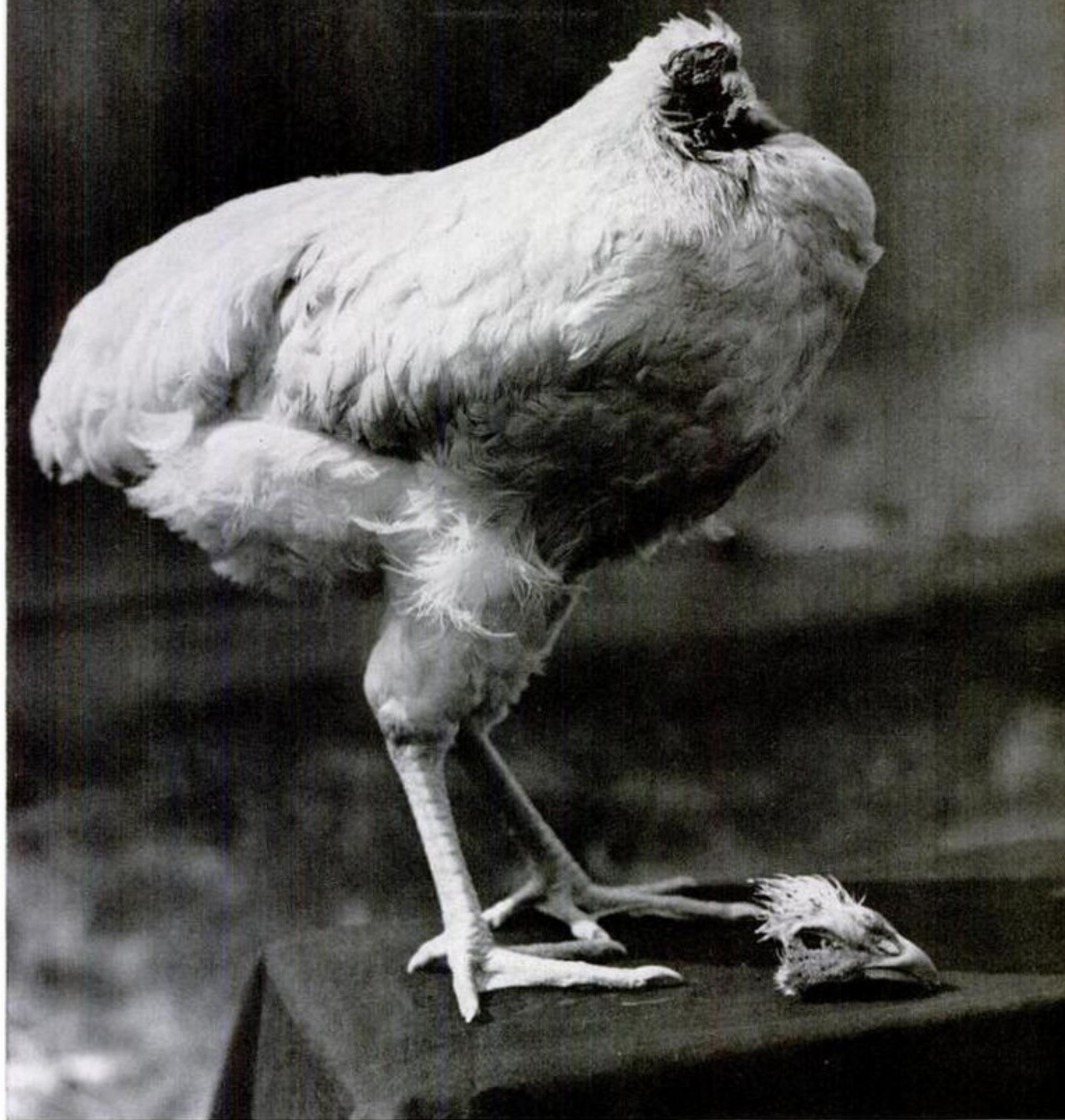
The plane is thought of as a machine, which we have created and which we are incapable of controlling. In this scenario heroism survives but not the hero. In the film *United 93* about 9/11 the heroes are the passengers who have stormed the terrorists who have stormed the pilot in the cockpit. Then the plane crashes. And one cannot help but thinking that we are all better off with neither man nor machine than both out of control.

But instead of trying to control the plane, we can contemplate the plane. But not as an object, as Martin Heidegger points out. The plane which stands at the runway as an object conceals the fact that this plane is "standing reserve", something which unfolds in a larger global transportation system. A larger system, which we are part of. "As long as we conceive of technology as an instrument, we remain transfixed in the will to master it. We hurry past the essence of technology." The moment we think we can master technology, we fail to understand technology not to mention ourselves. We simply duplicate instrumental thinking, which shapes technology. Therefore, the true danger does not concern how to control the machine, who controls the machine, nor whether we should get rid off it or not. The danger, as Heidegger sees it, is that the current condition does allow for only one way of thinking. But in the midst of this danger, Heidegger also sees a "saving power"—in Greek, the word *techne* did once not only mean technology, but was also synonymous with the *poiesis* of the fine arts. And therefore art might offer us a special vantage point for contemplating technology: "Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it. Such a realm is art."

For artist Marie Kølbaek Iversen, the question of technology is likewise not simply a question about technology. In her work, we look at systems that seem to develop on their own from the body and up rather than downwards from an organizing 'capital' entity. We may not be able to make sense of it, and we may not know where it is heading. Truth is, it may be heading nowhere. Nonetheless these pages seem to suggest that there might be a head somewhere."  
—Toke Lykkeberg

*Autonambule* were shown as part of Kølbaek Iversen's solo exhibition "Execution (into decapital)" at IMO, Copenhagen, DK (2012).





MINUS HIS HEAD, MIKE STANDS ERECT WITH EASE. HE IS 5½ MONTHS OLD AND WEIGHS ABOUT 3½ LB. HIS LATE HEAD (RIGHT FOREGROUND) IS QUITE DEAD

## HEADLESS ROOSTER

Beheaded chicken lives normally after freak decapitation by ax

Ever since Sept. 10 a rangy, Wyandotte rooster named Mike has been living a normal chicken's life though he has no head (see above). He walks, flaps his wings, preens his feathers and, when he hears other roosters crow, even answers with a few croaky gurgles. Only major function Mike has lost is sight.

Mike lost his head in the usual rooster way. Mrs. L. A. Olsen, wife of a farmer in Fruita, Colo., 200 miles west of Denver, decided to have chicken for dinner. Mr. Olsen took Mike to the chopping block and axed

off his head. Thereupon Mike got up and soon began to strut around. After decapitation, many chickens run around frantically before dying. Mike, however, kept going as if nothing much had happened.

What Mr. Olsen's ax had done was to clip off most of the skull but leave intact one ear, the jugular vein and the base of the brain, which controls motor functions. Still thriving and gaining weight, Mike has been on exhibition in Salt Lake City at 25¢ admission. And his owners have put a \$10,000 price tag on him.



**Contact**

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