

AMITAI ROMM





MACULA LUTEA

VEDA, Florence, 2019



Keeper: A small vacuum pump, attached to the main gallery space window. It keeps a single Citron fruit suspended behind PVC, forming an enclosure with no space or air. The assembly sustains a tension between what is on display and what meets the eye.

Dispenser: A modified industrial ventilator with blades made of brittle glass, installed in the rear wall between the exhibition space and its back rooms and office.

Analyst: A semi-fictional character, in search of a perfect skin. Immersed in a civilizing ritual to keep the world in check, seeking to eliminate inconsistencies and construct a ground from which to begin and end. Of course it slips, the surface becomes a field, the ground does its dizzying thing.

Keeper
2019
Variable dimensions
Citron fruit, plastic, vacuum pump, tubes and fittings



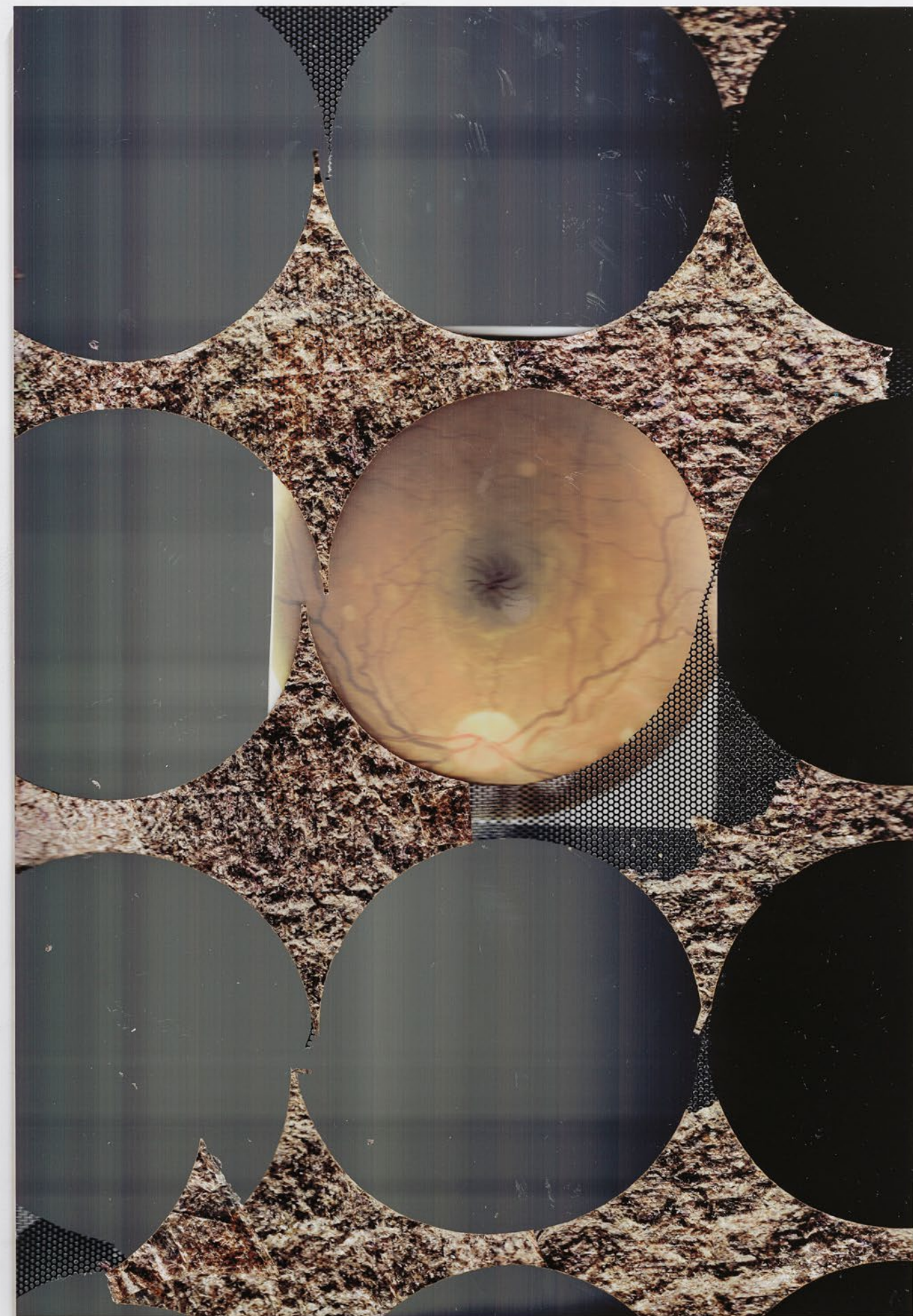






Disperser
2019
60 ø x 30 cm
Axial fan, voltage regulator, glass

Permeable Boundaries
2019
110x162 cm
Inkjet print on paper
Mounted on dibond and aluminium foam





Analyst (8)
2019
21x29 cm
Laserprint, pencil, ink and oil pastel on paper
Mounted on dibond and aluminum honeycomb



Analyst (7)
2019
21x29 cm
Laserprint, pencil, ink and oil pastel on paper
Mounted on dibond and aluminum foam





DOROTHEA VON STETTEN ART AWARD

Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, 2018

Human Security System | 2018
Photogravure
27 x 33 cm

A LIBRARY OF SPHINCTERS

Chris Fite-Wassilak

Have a breathe in.

Let the mingled molecules of nitrogen, oxygen, argon caress your nose hairs, slip under your epiglottis and tickle the cilia that line your trachea on the way in. Maybe follow one floating pair of atoms, as they drift further into the fluvial outreaches of your lungs, cross over the alveoli wall and hitch a ride on a red blood cell into your arteries. The other, unneeded molecules are ushered back the way they came.

Notions of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ are easily theorised, obsessed as we are with the workings of our own heads. Though the thin skin that covers our muscles and tendons is, if flattened out, up to two square metres worth of pulsing fabric; the combined routes of the bronchi of our lungs can have a surface area of up to seventy-five square metres. Which is to say that: an area of us around the size of a tennis court is constantly exposed to the air and elements, incessantly absorbing and exchanging materials. Life is simply, on one level, a thinly delineated set of molecules, filtering and sorting what’s needed from its surroundings in order to cultivate the conditions for existence. Humans are merely another permeable sac, punctuated at either end by muscular sphincters admitting and ejecting atoms.

The work of Amitai Romm is, broadly, a designation of systems. Rooms of sorted materials, sifted and organised into plastic and Styrofoam, matter redistributed to see what entity might emerge. Romm’s work has called on commercial distribution methods – shipping containers and packing materials that move parcels of food and goods; parabolas that echo satellites dispersing information signals – as well as sensory distribution methods, from spices and manufactured scents to drawing and art itself as a means of systemisation. In his work is the repeated question of how we have distinguished one thing from the other over time, and what is at stake when we do so. Whether using the stars or GoogleMaps to choose walk one direction rather than another, or choosing to ingest one plant or another, each choice is an incremental step in reconstituting what our body and our mind is made up of. Can a system ever be said to be fully independent, to have a life of its own?

At the centre of his installation at the Kunstmuseum Bonn is a circulation system, pumping at rhythmic intervals, where a liquid that approximates human sweat is drawn by osmosis through a filtration system. What emerges, through fragrant, cloth-bound appendages, is something approximating water. Ancient Sanskrit texts suggest purifying water by passing it through sand or coarse gravel; this system relies instead on a thin biotech membrane and household spices.

What leaches through those boundaries is, hopefully, the right molecules. A body is defined, as such, by what it is not. Any number of human habits – our diets, our disgusts and aversions – might be considered logical extensions of such a dynamic, though it would seem we’ve developed our own twists to that tale. The conception of cleanliness is a relatively recent take on what’s considered permissible to pass into contact with our body; in some contexts, dirt and rot are anathema, things to be rinsed away and disappeared. In others,

they’re a replenishing mud bath and restorative probiotic. ‘If we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt,’ the anthropologist Mary Douglas noted, ‘we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place.’¹ Immaculacy is only a matter of context.

Douglas, of course, didn’t provide a precise source for her supposed ‘old definition’; notes of hers point towards Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, as the source of the idea, though no scholar has been able to find such a record. Henry John Temple, the third Viscount Palmerston, was found to have addressed the British Royal Agricultural Society in 1852 using a similar phrase: ‘I have heard it said that dirt is nothing but a thing in a wrong place.’² It would seem hard to believe that theories of dirt originated with 18th and 19th century English gentry (but perhaps appropriate to their pursuit of notions of segregation and distinction); though it remains a matter of hearsay, an elusive whisper. The idea of dirt as a matter out of place is itself without a place. That might be part of its threat, as a notion that can shift, permeate and transform any supposed order; defined only as a thing that doesn’t belong it might determine what belonging is.

It recalls the way writer, poet and translator Anne Carson, in describing Jean-Paul Sartre’s examination of slime in *Being and Nothingness*, summed it up succinctly as a ‘crisis of contact’³. The viscosity of slime, for Sartre, is repulsive because of the threat of permeability, that it might stick to you, and then drag everything else in with it and in turn invade your consciousness: ‘The horror of the slimy is the horrible fear that time might become slimy, that facticity might progress continually and insensibly and absorb the For-Itself which exists it.’⁴ Like the ever-growing alien mass of *The Blob* (1958), terrifying because it makes no distinction of boundaries, has no discernable taste for one matter or another: all is absorbed and turned to goo.

Placement and permeability, then, might to be bases around which we might approach Romm’s work. Materials, categorised into various containers, then placed into a system of select transaction, the specific crossing over, between a permeable boundary. It suggests the dynamic the formation of a body, a synthetic life form, that has yet to find its own skin or outside. We are witness to its first exchanges, its first sputtering breaths. The telling point might be when this body then wants to reach out and touch us. What right do humans, as just an organised library of sphincters, have to repel from any such touch? The crisis of contact is happening constantly, and the future lies in how each of us in turn embrace it.

Now, have a breathe out.

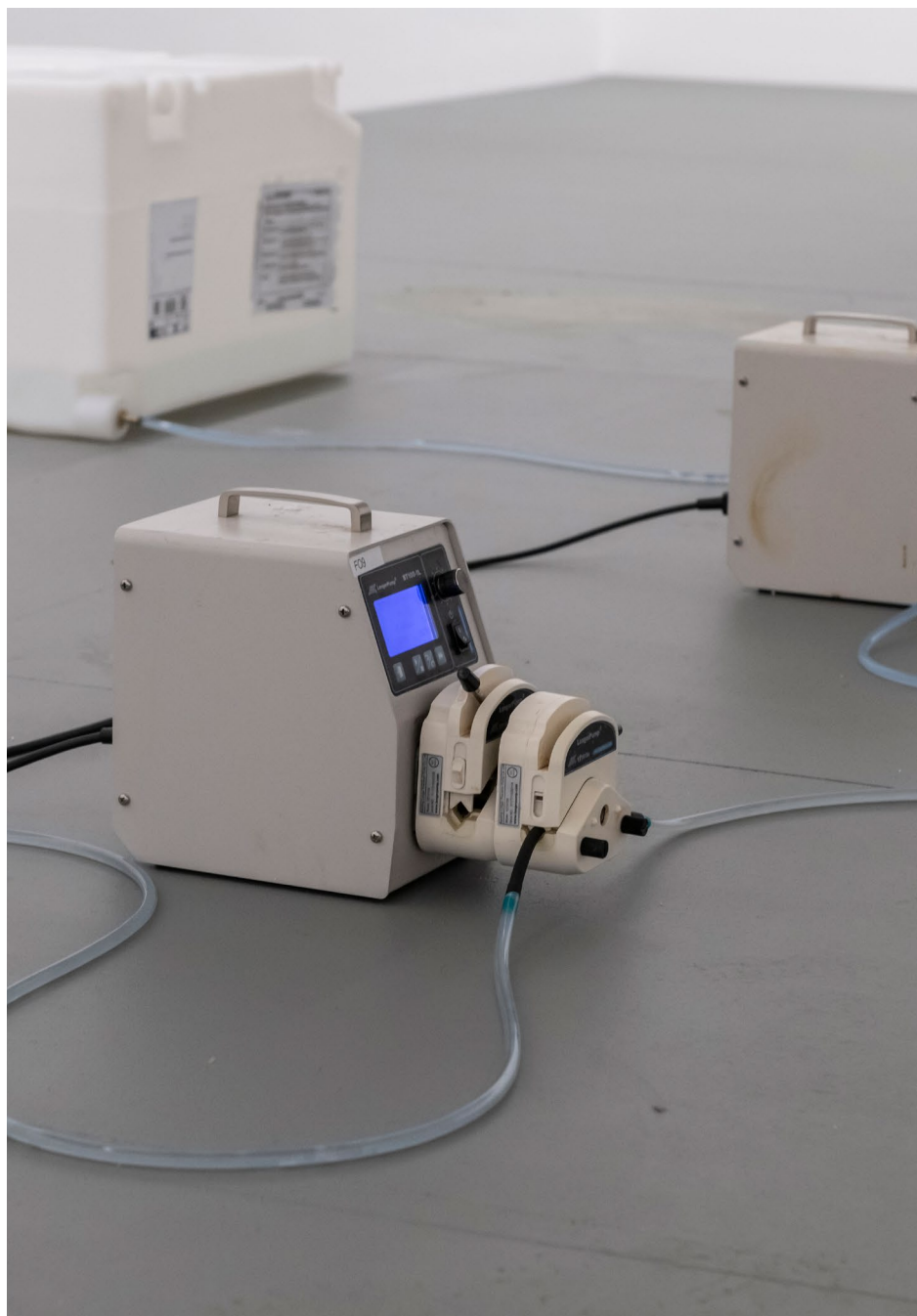
¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, London: Routledge, 1966, page 44.

² Anon., ‘The Royal Agricultural Society’, *The Times*, 21169, 16 July 1852, p. 8.

³ Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, page 41.

⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, London: Methuen, trans. Hazel E Barnes, 1957, page 611.





ILOVEWITHNOLIMITATION (Circadian Rythm) | 2018
 Water tanks, PVC tubes, laboratory pumps, Aquaporin Inside forward osmosis filter, fabrics, clothing, stainless steel,
 tapwater, salt, L-histidine monohydrochloride monohydrate, sodium dihydrogen orthophosphate dihydrate
 variable dimensions





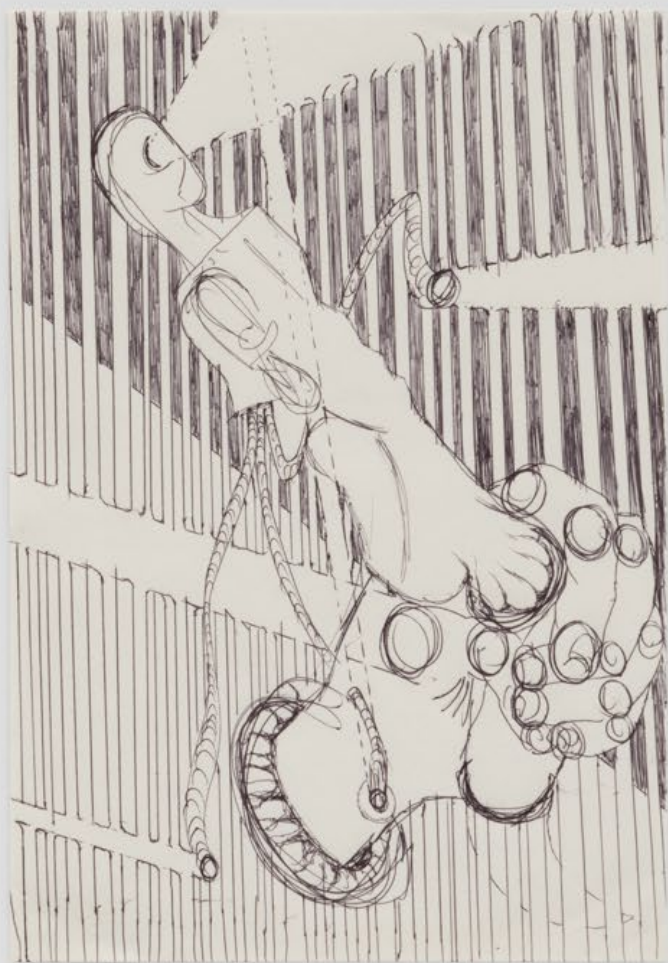
ILOVEWITHNOLIMITATION (Circadian Rythm) | 2018
 Water tanks, PVC tubes, laboratory pumps, Aquaporin Inside forward osmosis filter, fabrics, clothing, stainless steel,
 tapwater, salt, L-histidine monohydrochloride monohydrate, sodium dihydrogen orthophosphate dihydrate
 variable dimensions





Parable | 2017
Steel, neodymium magnets, flexicalymene trilobites variable dimension





HIBERNATION

Tranen, Gentofte Main Library, Hellerup, 2017

Untitled | 2017
Ballpoint pen on paper
21 x 15 cm





(right) *Influencer Sarcophagus 2* | 2017
 Steel, polystyrene, neodymium magnets, acrylic glass, acrylic mirror,
 UV heating lamp, blue poppy seeds
 60 x 40 x 50 cm







Untitled | 2017
Inkjet print, tush and watercolour on paper
21 x 15 cm





(right) *Influencer Sarcophagus 4* | 2017
Steel, polystyrene, neodymium magnets, acrylic glass, acrylic mirror, UV heating lamp, computer hardware fan,
stainless steel, whole cinnamon, ground cinnamon
200 x 40 x 30 cm



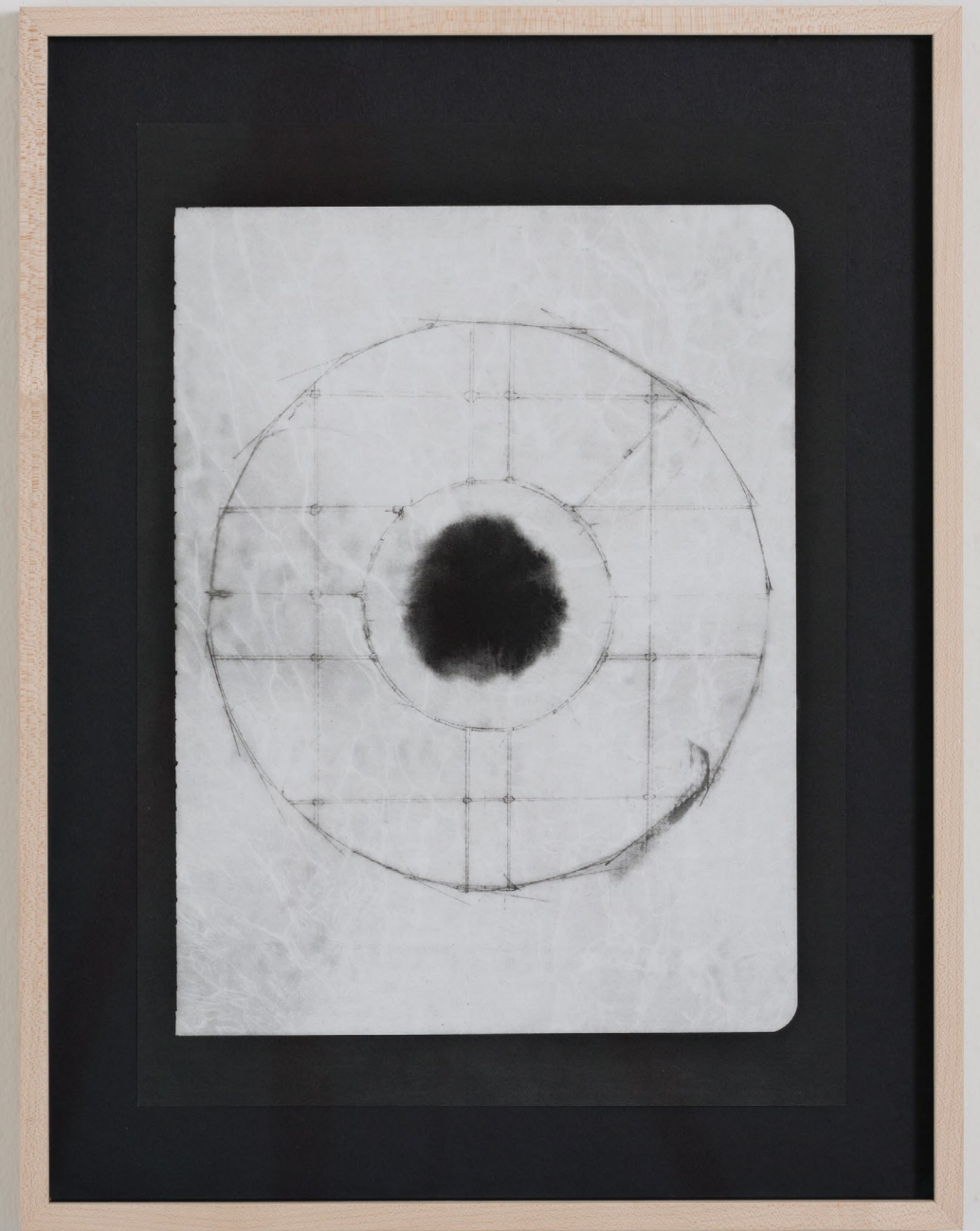
HOW SHALL THE SEA BE REFERRED TO

Bianca D'Alessandro, Copenhagen, 2016

Skin | 2016
Photogravure
34 x 24 cm



○ | 2016
Photogravure
34 × 24 cm





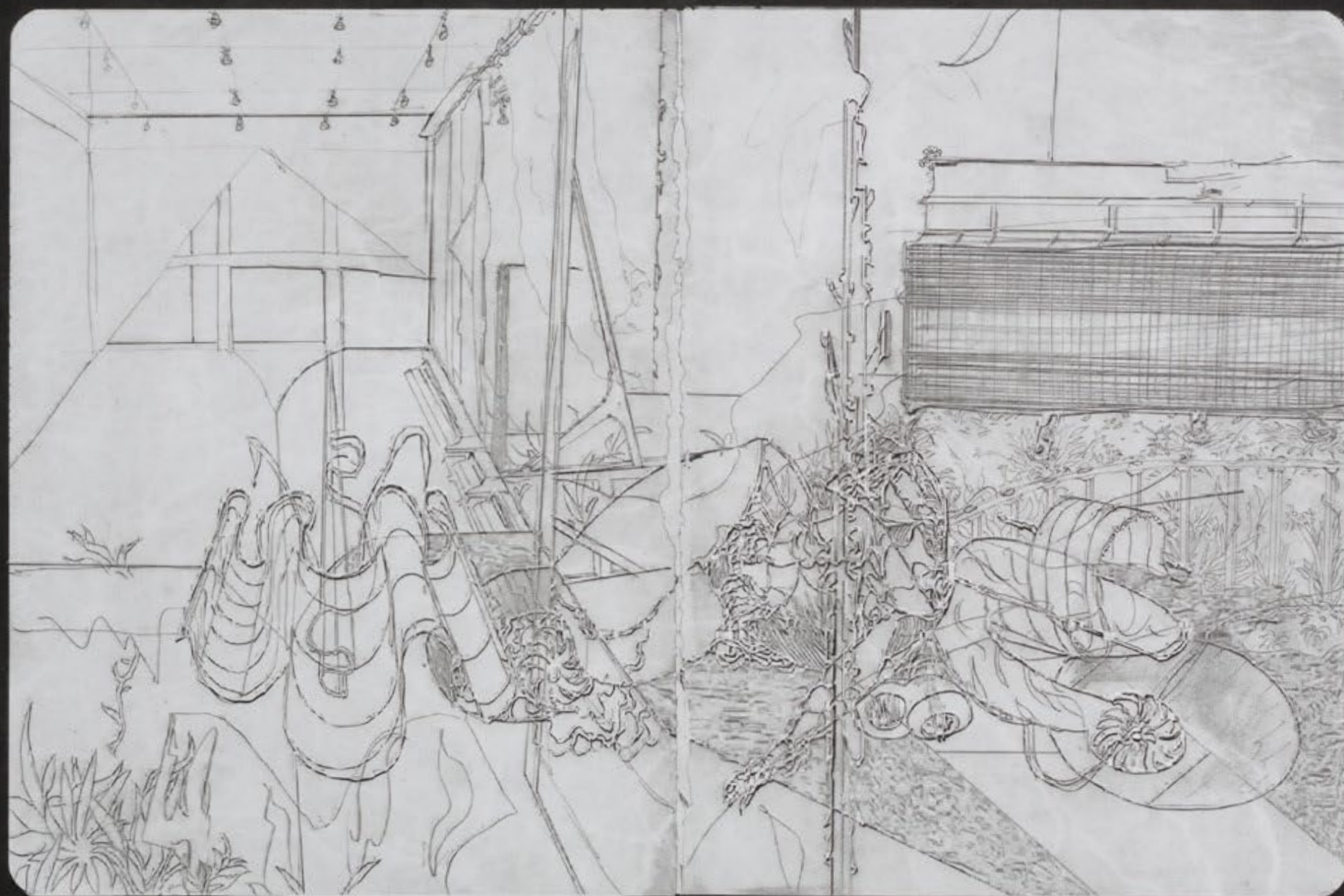
Blind/Compass (1 and 2) | 2016
 Tarp, ropes, water, laserdisc, neodymium magnets
 355 × 200 cm and 300 × 200 cm

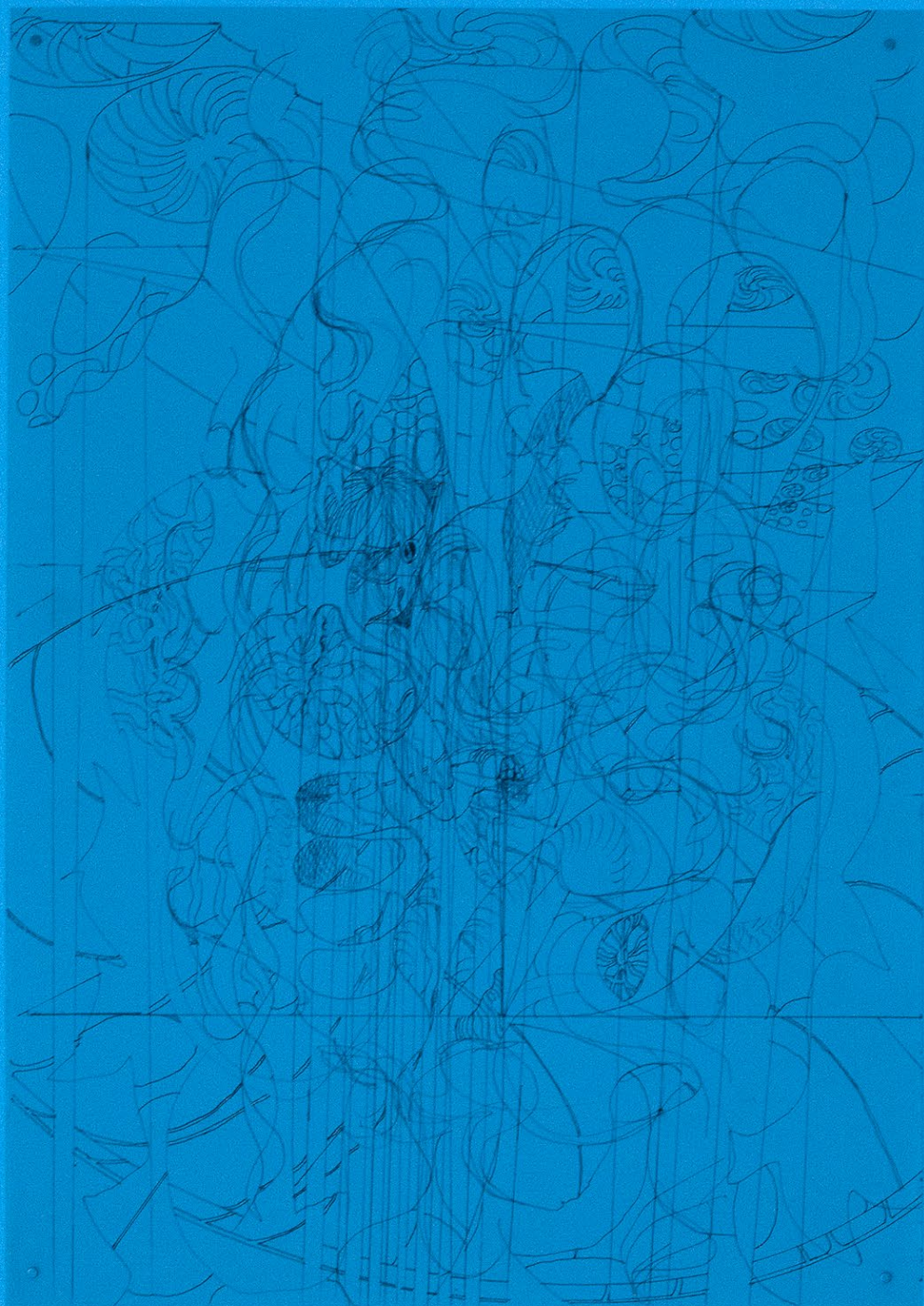




Parable (1-2) | 2016
Steel
150 × 150 × 30 cm each







BUBBLE METROPOLIS

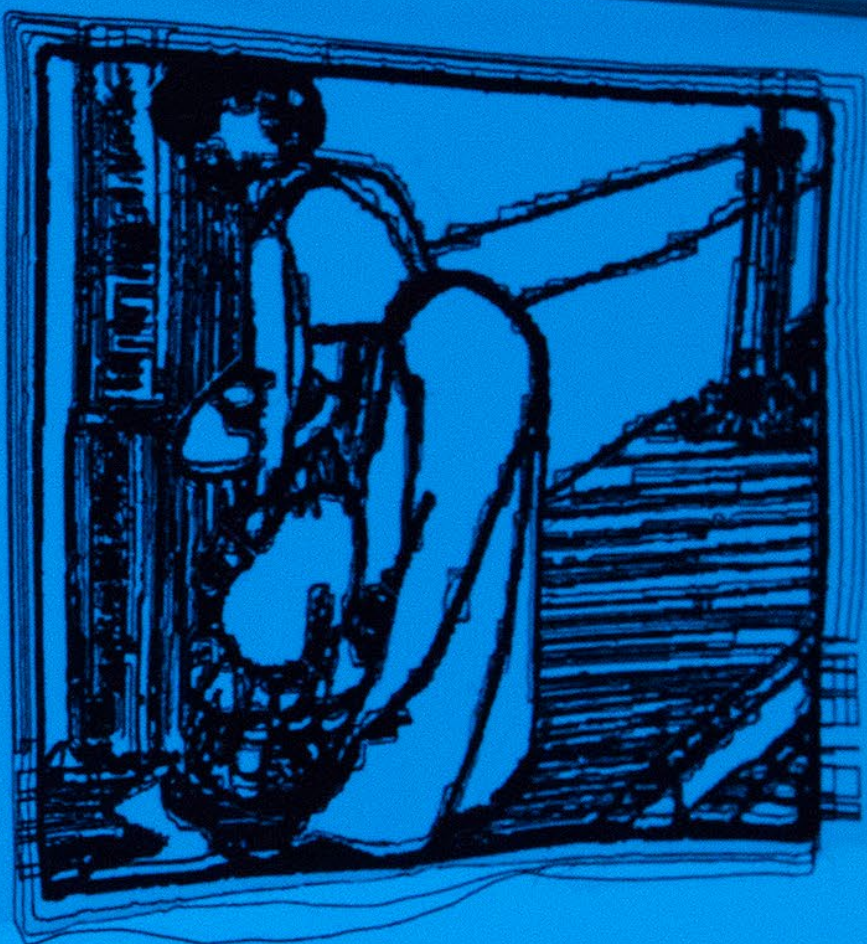
Vermilion Sands, Copenhagen, 2019
With Calder Harben, The Otolith Group, Allan Sekula & Noël Burch

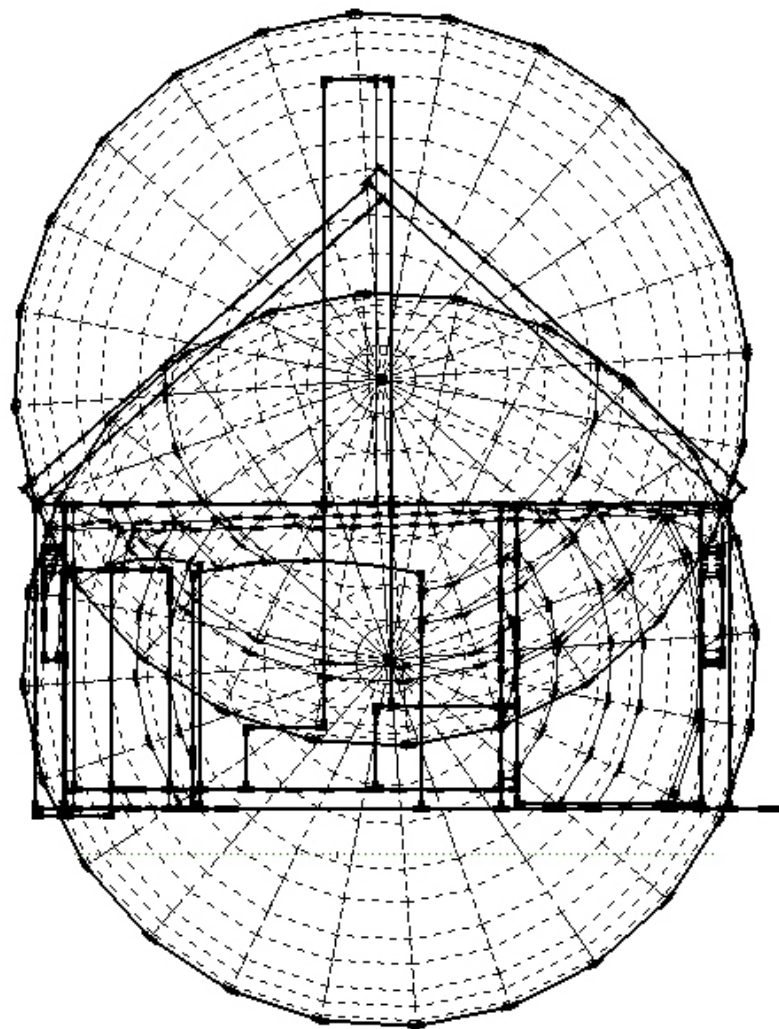
Untitled | 2019
Ballpoint pen on paper
27 x 30 cm





An Obstinate Crawling For Sleep | 2017-2018
Machine embroidery on water soluble fabric, steel, neodymium magnets
40 x 50 cm each approx.





YOU MAY CYCLE THE LAYERS
WITHOUT ALTERATION

Kunsthal Møn44, Askeby, 2016
in collaboration with Jean Marc Routhier





you may cycle the layers without alteration (detail) | 2016
 3D printed PLA, copper, aluminum, copper tubing
 dimensions variable





you may cycle the layers without alteration (detail) |2016
3D printed PLA, copper, aluminum, copper tubing
dimensions variable

CURRICULUM VITAE

AMITAI ROMM

Born 1985, Jerusalem
Lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark

EDUCATION

2009-2014 MFA The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Visual Arts.
2011-13 Akademie der Bildenden Künste Vienna.
2007-09 Jutland Art Academy.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020 TBA, Spike Island, Bristol (forthcoming)
2019 *Macula Lutea*, VEDA, Florence
2017 *Hibernation*, Tranen, Gentofte
2016 *How shall the sea be referred to*, Bianca D’Alessandro, Copenhagen
 you may cycle the layers without alteration, Møen44, Askeby (with Jean Marc Routhier)
2015 *SHELSTERS*, Garret Grimoire, Vienna (with SQ)
 Exfoliation, V4ULT, Berlin
2014 *Alloy*, TOVES, Copenhagen (with Jean Marc Routhier)

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019 *Mud Muses*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (with Primer)
 Bubble Metropolis, Vermillion Sands, Copenhagen
2018 *New Qualia Hotel*, Bianca D’Alessandro, Copenhagen
 Dorothea Von Stetten Award, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn
2017 *Let’s see, Where were we? In the Pit of Despair*, de Ateliers, Amsterdam
 Mediated Matter, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen
2016 *Forårsudstillingen*, Den Frie, Copenhagen
 Tongue, Bianca D’Alessandro, Copenhagen
 Spooky Action at a Distance, BUS Projects, Melbourne
2015 *Plowing Solids*, New Galerie, Paris
 Espressive Earth, TOVES, Copenhagen
2014 *FAMILY*; IMO Projects, Copenhagen
 White on White, 68sqm, Copenhagen
 HOOKS, CJCH Pavillion, Prague
2013 *Ayizen*, KBG, Vienna
 Lounge, Ve.sch, Vienna

SELECTED GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2018 Niels Wessel Bagges Kunstfond
2017 Grosserer L.f. Foghts Fond
 Preben Siigers Foundation
 Ragnvald og Ida Blix’ Foundation
2014-2017 The Danish Arts Foundation
 Den Hiemlstjerne-Rosencroneske Foundation

FAIRS

2019 Solo presentation, Frame section, Frieze New York
2017 Solo presentation, LISTE, Basel
2016 CODE, Copenhagen

RESIDENCIES

2018 The Danish Institute, Rome
2017 Cité des Arts, Paris
 The Danish Institute, Athens

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2019 “Bubble Metropolis”, Vermilion Sands, ArtForum, 2019
2018 Dorothea Von Stetten Kunstpreis 2018 Kunstmuseum Bonn Wienand
2017 Chris Fite- Wassilak “Future Greats”. Art Review, January 2018
2016 Travis Diehl, “ Amitai romm and Jean Marc Routhier”, ArtForum, 28.05.16
 Spooky Action at a Distance. ed. Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen
2014 Stain Gabrielsen, “Gloom and Doom”. Kunstkritikk, 24.02.14
 Lukas Flygare, “Witholding the climax”. kopenhagen, 24.02.14

COLLABORATIVE WORK

Primer
www.primer.dk

Primer is a platform for artistic and organizational development. It is located in the headquarter of the global water technology company Aquaporin in Kgs. Lyngby, Denmark.

- 2019
- 2018
- 2018
- 2017-18
- 2017
- 2017
- Strata. Kristine Kemp
- Ripe. Nanna Abell, Franciska Clausen, Cecilie Skov, Helmut Völter, The Pacific Institute, Anne-Françoise Schmid
- Life Without, Michala Paludan, Artist Placement Group, Susanne Ussing and Carsten Hoff
- Synthetics. Curated by Søren Andreasen. Charlotte Johannesson, Dora Maar, Karl Otto Götz, Ben F. Laposky, Morten Jakobsen, Nürnberg Chronicle, Lea Porsager, Herkules Segers, Rembrandt, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Till Mycha, Jakob Jakobsen
- Dead Reckoning. FredrikTydén, Reza Negarestani, Kristine Kemp, Berit Hjelholt, Ib Braase, Karl Sims, MagnusThorø Clausen, LACMA
- Self Passage. Rasmus Røhling, Rachal Bradley, Peter Watts, Vilhelm Hammershøi, Man Ray, Novo Nordisk, NASA

Diakron
www.diakron.dk
Diakron is a studio for transdisciplinary research and practice

Projects (selected)

- 2015 - 2017
- 2016
- 2015
- 2015
- 2015 - 2017
- Hybrid Organisations and Emerging Communities. Field studies, digital magazine, workshop and a report. Ministry ofTransport, Building and Housing, Danish Building Research Institute and Aalborg University, Copenhagen
- Market Failures and State Collapse. Interviews and panel discussion.Transmediale, Berlin
- Planetary Scale Design. Private workshop. Troy Conrad Therrien, Curator of Architecture and Digital Initiatives, Guggenheim, NewYork City
- Breaking Smart. Workshop. Venkatesh Rao, New York City
- Diakron Journal Issues. #1 “Effects”, #2 “Infrastructure”, #3 “Practices”, #4 “Ecology” and #5 “Organizing”

Photo credits

Macula Lutea - photo by Flavio Pescatori
Dorothea Van Stetten Art Award - photo by Julia Jacksch
Trilobite Closeup (pp. 16-17) - photo by IDOART.DK
Hibernation - photo by David Stjernholm
How Shall the Sea Be Referred to - photo by Jan Søndergaard
Bubble Metropolis - photo by Kevin Malcolm

VEDA