

ISABELL SPENGLER
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DIE HÖRPOSAUNE (THE HEARING TROMBONE)

Film-/Installation, 2022



Die Hörposaune (The Hearing Trombone)

film & 1-channel video installation by Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl, Isabell Spengler, DE 2022

filmed in a visual installation by Nadia Lauro, photos /film stills: Anja Weber

DIE HÖRPOSAUNE (THE HEARING TROMBONE)

Film-/Installation, 2022



Through a floating camera motion, the film invites us to enter a world with its own logic, passing through sensitive membranes, liquefied borders and openings between inner and outer spaces. Here we attend a reading circle or vocal performance in memory of the counter tenor and queer icon Klaus Nomi, one of the first public figures to die within the AIDS pandemic. Daydream-like, as if to save them from oblivion, the film delves into the guts of fantastical, queer body imaginations - with spit, panting, oral sounds, singing, and vulva-like paper flower arrangements, whereby anatomical representations are reinterpreted.

film & 1 channel installation, UHD, surround sound, 31 min. loop, GER 2022

directors: Isabell Spengler, Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl

set/stage design: Nadia Lauro

performance: Jule Flierl, Werner Hirsch

cinematography: Bernadette Paassen

sound recordists: S. McKenna, Claudia Mattai del Moro

costumes: Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl, Nadia Lauro

light design: Gretchen Blegen

musical compositions: S. McKenna, Jule Flierl, Antonia Baehr

sound & technical director: Carola Caggiano

editor: Isabell Spengler

color grading: Till Beckmann

sound design & mix: Jochen Jezussek

producer: Alexandra Wellensiek

A production by make up productions in coproduction with HAU Hebbel am Ufer Berlin. Post production funded by DIEHL+RITTER/TANZPAKT RECONNECT, with support by BKM, Initiative Neustart Kultur

Exhibitions & Festivals:

- Feminist Futures Festival, Kino Arsenal, Berlin, Nov. 2022 / -Videonale19, Kunstmuseum Bonn 2023 / - Frac Bretagne, Kunstmuseum Rennes (FR), 2023 /
- Rencontres Internationles Paris, 2023 /
- Toward New Spaces, nGbK Berlin, 2023
- Extended Library, HFBK Hamburg 2024
- Werkleitz Videorama, Halle (Saale), Feb. 2024

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/775834959>

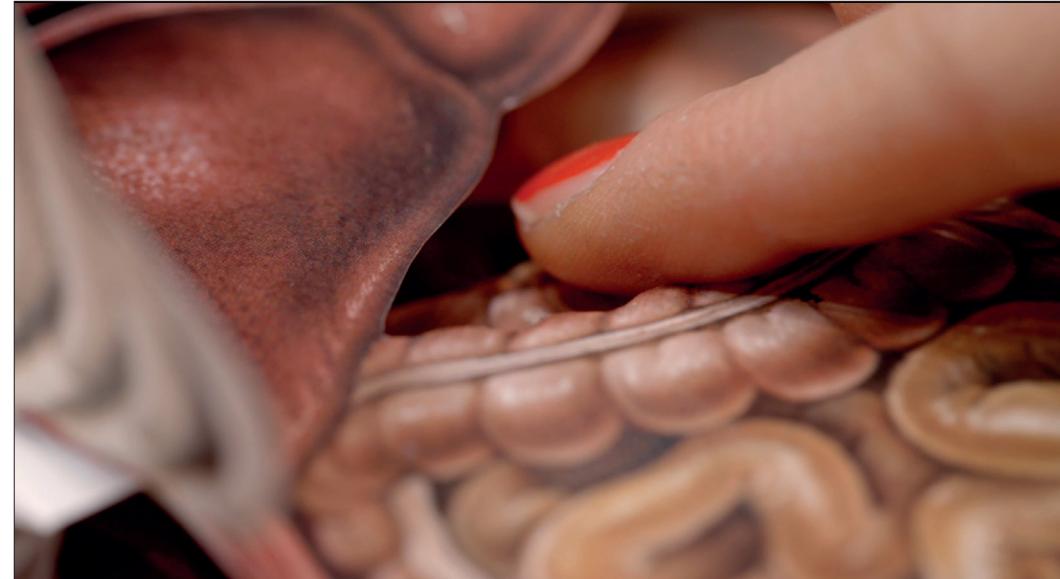
Die Hörposaune, installation view

1-channel video installation by Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl, Isabell Spengler, DE 2022

Videonale.19, Kunstmuseum Bonn, 31. March - 14. May 2023

DIE HÖRPOSAUNE (THE HEARING TROMBONE)

Film-/Installation, 2022



Die Hörposaune (The Hearing Trombone)

film & 1-channel video installation by Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl, Isabell Spengler, DE 2022
filmed in a visual installation by Nadia Lauro, photos /film stills: Anja Weber/ Bernadatte Paassen

DIE HÖRPOSAUNE

Film-/Installation, 2022 (Text - deutsch)

Es öffnet sich – eine Situation, ein Raum, eine Sphäre aus Klang. Es begegnen sich dort die Performer:innen - Werner Hirsch (aka Antonia Baehr) und Jule Flierl - in einer visuellen Installation von Nadia Lauro, umgeben von einem stumm empfangenden Publikum und einer körperlos Anwesenden – der Kamera – , geführt von Bernadette Paassen, in Regie von Isabell Spengler.

Intro: Öffnung des Kreises der Zuschauer:innen, auch wir vor der Leinwand werden angesprochen, sind Teil. Die Wand wird durchlässig.

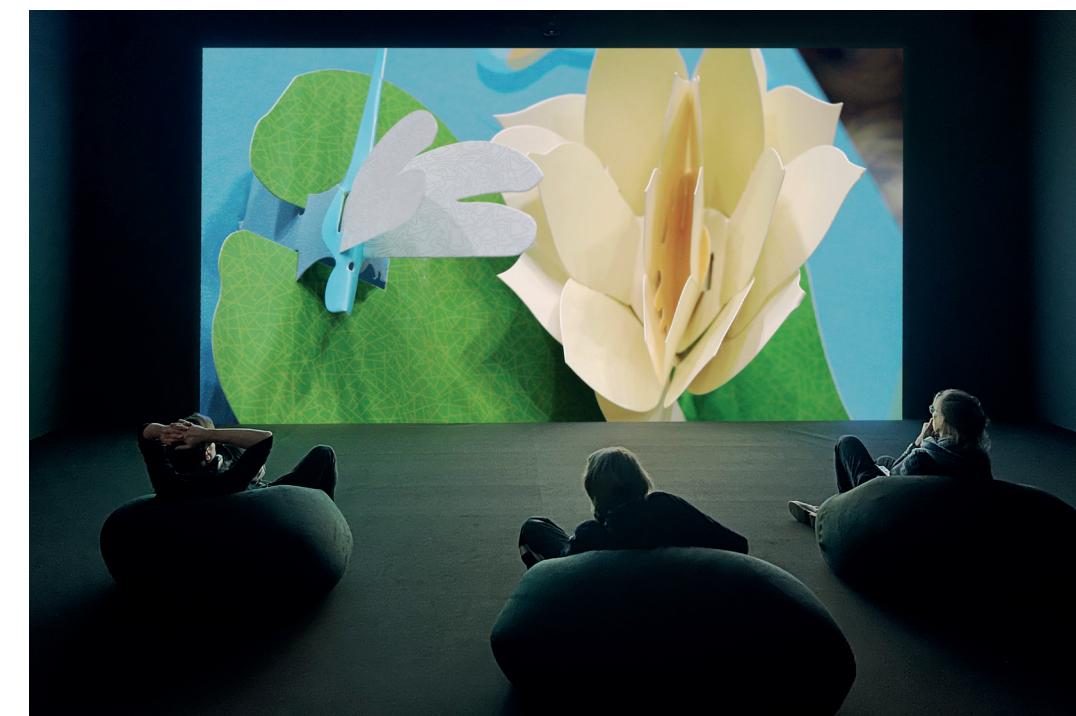
Hauptteil: Ein Duett. Stummer Blickkontakt. Einsatz. Interpretiert wird eine Partitur aus Pop-Up Büchern mit dreidimensionalen Modellen des Körperinneren und von Pflanzen, deren Formen, Kanten, Bewegungen, Übergänge und Öffnungen die Interpret:innen mit ihren Fingerkuppen langsam erfassen und in Geräusche, Sounds, Melodien, Rhythmen, leibliche Notationen umwandeln. Sie gehen unter die Haut, durchdringen die Schichten, nehmen Kontakt auf mit dem, was normalerweise im Verborgenen bleibt – dem Wirken der Organe und Säfte im Inneren der Körper, menschlichen wie pflanzlichen, dem Übergang von einem materiellen Zustand in einen anderen im Moment der Verdauung, der Atmung, der Photosynthese: Verstoffwechselung. Obwohl sich während des Duetts die Körper in ihren Positionen nicht verändern, entsteht eine dem Stück eigen-tümliche Dynamik, in der sich die Körper der Interpret:innen, der Rhythmus ihres Murmels, Tönens, Schmatzens, Seufzens, Hechelns, ihre Bewegungen, die Bewegungen der Bilder, der Bücher in einen einzigen großen Organismus zu verwandeln scheinen, in dem alles einzelne mit allem anderen in Wechselwirkung tritt. Bestimmt wird diese Dynamik wesentlich durch die körperlos Anwesende, die durch ihr Spiel mit Nähe und Distanz, ihre rhythmisierten Perspektivwechsel, das Einfangen und wieder Loslassen zur Ko-Komponistin und Vermittlerin dieser fantastischen Welt wird. Ihre Bilder lassen, zusammen mit der Sphäre aus Klängen, Geräuschen, Sounds, einen dreidimensionalen, atmenden Raum entstehen, der sich in den Zuschauerraum hinein erweitert. Die harten

Grenzen – körperliche, mediale, sprachliche, gedankliche – verflüssigen sich und gehen neue Allianzen ein. Es entsteht im Verlauf des audiovisuellen Duetts nichts weniger als eine neue Form von Sprache und in der Folge von Kommunikation, Wahrnehmung und Wirklichkeit.

Outro: Schwerelos bewegen sich die Duett-partner:innen im Raum, ein Stück von Henry Purcell neu interpretierend, irgendwo zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft, in der Schwebe.

Die Hörposaune ist vieles und nicht zuletzt eine Hommage an die queere Ikone und Counter-tenor Klaus Nomi, der mit seinem stimmlichen und körperlichen Ausdruck neue Räume öffnete und jung, als eine der ersten prominenten Persönlichkeiten, an den Folgen einer HIV-Infektion starb.

Tanja Langenbach, Kuratorin, Künstlerische Leiterin Videonale.19, Kunstmuseum Bonn



Die Hörposaune, Installationsansicht

Filminstallation von Isabell Spengler, Antonia Baehr und Jule Flierl

Videonale.19, Kunstmuseum Bonn, 31. März - 14. Mai 2023, Foto: Hans-Helmut Häßler

DIE HÖRPOSAUNE (THE HEARING TROMBONE)

Film-/Installation, 2022 (text - english)

It opens up – a situation, a room, a sphere of sound. This is where the performers – Werner Hirsch (a.k.a. Antonia Baehr) and Jule Flierl – meet in a visual installation by Nadia Lauro, surrounded by a silently welcoming audience and a disembodied presence – the camera –, operated by Bernadette Paassen, directed by Isabell Spengler.

Intro: The circle of viewers opens, we who are in front of the screen are also addressed, are part of it. The wall becomes permeable.



Die Hörposaune,
film presentation with wireless headphones and binaural sound, Extended Library, HFBK Hamburg, Jan. 2024
by Isabell Spengler, Antonia Baehr und Jule Flierl

Main part: A duet. Silent eye contact. Action. Cue. The interpretation of a score from pop-up books with three-dimensional models of the body's interior and of plants whose shapes, edges, transitions, and orifices are slowly captured by the interpreters' fingertips and transformed into noises, sounds, melodies, rhythms, and bodily notations. They are getting under the skin, penetrating its layers, getting in touch with what usually remains hidden – the work of the organs and fluids inside the body, both human and vegetal, the transition from one physical state to another at the moment of digestion, breathing, photosynthesis: metabolization. Although the bodies' positions never change throughout the duet, a peculiar dynamic develops, in which the interpreters' bodies, the rhythm of their murmurs, sounds, smacking, sighing, panting, their movements, the images' movements, and the books all seem to transform into one huge organism, where every single element interacts with everything else. This dynamic is substantially defined by the disembodied presence, which turns into the co-composer and vessel of this fantastic world through her play with proximity and distance, her rhythmic changes in perspective, her capturing, and letting go. Together with the sphere of sound, her images create a three-dimensional, breathing space that extends into the audience. Rigid boundaries – physical, medial, verbal, and mental – dissolve and enter into new alliances. The duet and its mediation generate no less than a new kind of language and, subsequently, new kinds of communication, perception, and reality.

Outro: The duet partners move weightlessly in space, re-interpreting a piece by Henry Purcell, somewhere between past and present, in limbo.

Die Hörposaune is a lot of things; to no small degree, it is an homage to queer icon and countertenor Klaus Nomi, who opened up new spaces with his vocal and physical expression and who, as one of the first public figures, died young in the course of the HIV-pandemic.

Tasja Langenbach, curator, artistic director of Videonale.19, Kunstmuseum Bonn



Voice Elevator

vertical cinema installation, rear projection, 300x168cm, stereo sound, 13 min. loop

installation view, 26. Videokunst Förderpreis, GAK-Bremen, 2021, photo: Franziska von Driesch

VOICE ELEVATOR

Vertical Cinema Installation, 2021

Transient moments during a gender-transition are examined in a musical composition and a dialogue scene for a breaking voice.

Two elevator rides are presented in a vertical cinema projection. The first scene is a musical elevator choreography: The movements of three elevators at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin are musically interpreted and sung as glissandi, whereby the singer's voice break is particularly audible. The second scene shows a first encounter between two artists in a glass elevator at Berlin Central Station: Connections between pitch of voice, persuasiveness, authority and the concept of the „status see-saw“ are discussed and simultaneously tested in performance. In three variations, the scene unfolds a structural play by relating dialogue, performance and voice pitch to the direction of travel of the elevator.

The relationship between the performers and its depiction are questioned with regard to the construction of status and gender.

The work was created as a collaboration between Isabell Spengler and the composer*/performer* Neo Hülcker (formerly Neele Hülcker). For her concept, Isabell Spengler received the Bremen Award for Video Art.

Vertical Cinema Installation, UHD, stereo sound, deutsch mit engl. UT, 13 min. loop, GER 2021

concept, director, editor:

Isabell Spengler

scores and performance:

Neo Hülcker, Isabell Spengler

cinematographer, color grading:

Till Beckmann

sound recordist: Manuela Schinina

light design: Josephine Freiberg

sound mix: Jochen Jezussek

extras: Katrin Winkler, Cat Barich, Ann

Oren, Carola Schaal, Sabine Erklenz,

Meggie Schneider, Steffi Weismann, Lea

Uria Garcia

supported by:

Bremen Award for Video Art

exhibitions:

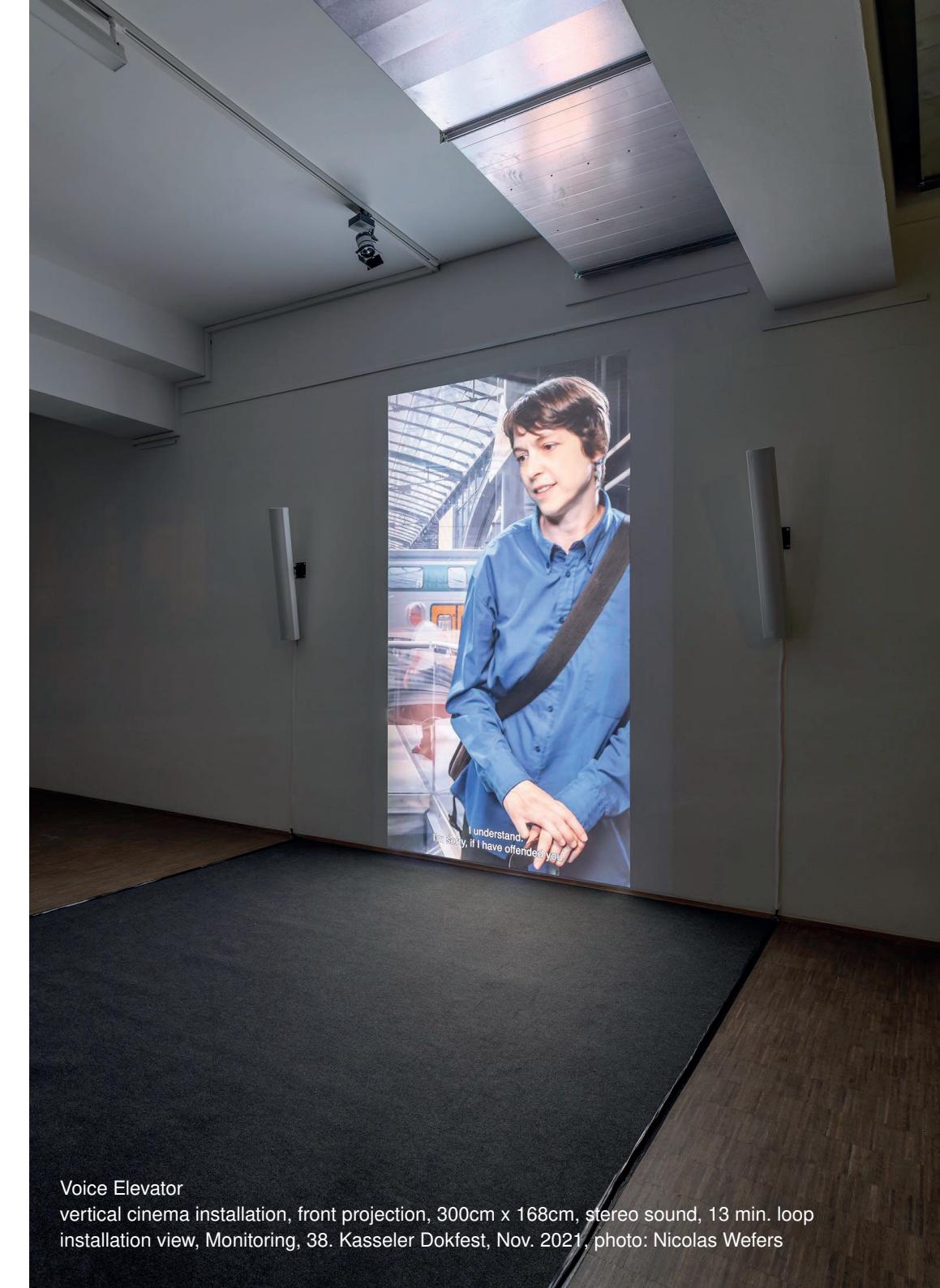
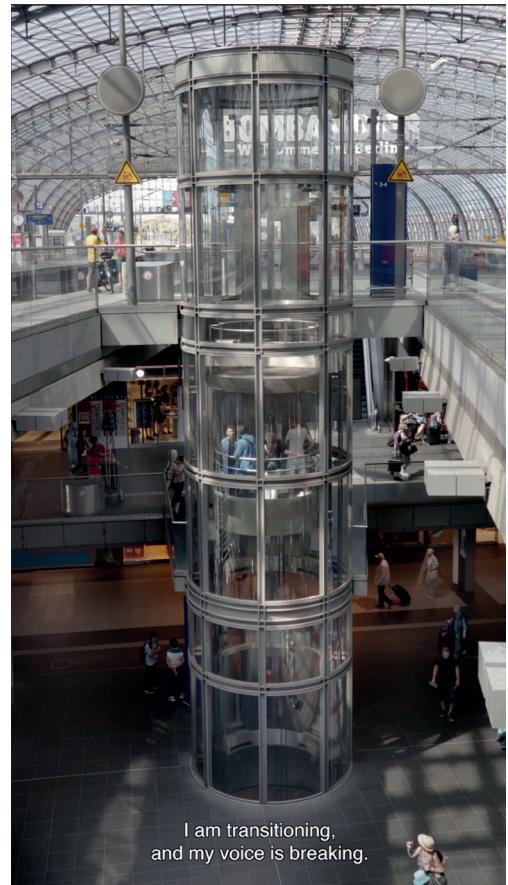
- 26. Videokunst Förderpreis, GAK - Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen, 2021
- Monitoring, 38. Kasseler Dokfest, 2021
- Das Zentrum ist tot, es lebe das Zentrum, Microcentro & Goethe Institut, Buenos Aires, 2023

excerpts:

<https://vimeo.com/810707117>

VOICE ELEVATOR

Vertical Cinema Installation, 2021



Voice Elevator

vertical cinema installation, front projection, 300cm x 168cm, stereo sound, 13 min. loop
installation view, Monitoring, 38. Kasseler Dokfest, Nov. 2021, photo: Nicolas Wefers



VOICE ELEVATOR

Vertical Cinema Installation, 2021



Voice Elevator, vertical cinema installation, stereo sound, 13 min. loop
installation view, 26. Videokunst Förderpreis, GAK-Bremen, 2021, photo: Franziska von Driesch

Voice Elevator, video still (detail)

VOICE ELEVATOR

Vertical Cinema Installation, 2021 (Text deutsch/english)

Die „Vertical-Cinema-Installation“ VOICE ELEVATOR ist eine Kollaboration zwischen der Künstlerin Isabell Spengler und dem* Komponisten* und Performer* Neo Hülcker. Die hochformatige Videoprojektion ist in drei Teile strukturiert und zeigt zunächst Fahrstuhlfahrten an zwei Locations in Berlin: dem Filmhaus am Potsdamer Platz mit seinen drei verglasten Aufzügen, und einem ebenfalls verglasten, zylinderförmigen Aufzug im Berliner Hauptbahnhof. Alle Aufzüge fahren mehrere Geschosse auf und ab. Dabei werden mit Mitteln des Strukturellen Films und Verfahren queerer Abstraktion Konventionen des narrativen Kinos sowie des psychologischen Filmschauspiels untersucht: Im Spiel mit zwei verschiedenen Kommunikationskonzepten thematisieren die Künstler*innen die genderpolitische Konnotation der Stimmhöhe und erproben diese performativ in ihrer Wirkung hinsichtlich Autorität und sozialem Status in hierarchischen Gesellschaftsstrukturen.

Während die „Statuswippe“ ein Bild aus der Schauspieltheorie ist und Verschiebungen von Machtgefällen in der zwischenmenschlichen Interaktion beschreibt, ist „Elevator Pitch“ ein Marketingbegriff bei dem es darum geht, ein Projekt möglichst komprimiert – in der Zeitspanne einer Aufzugsfahrt – anzupreisen.

Die erste Sequenz zeigt eine Fahrstuhl-Choreografie im Filmhaus – musikalisch interpretiert als Gesangspartitur für eine Stimme im Stimmbruch. Gleich einem Glissando steigt oder fällt die Stimme mit der jeweiligen Fahrtrichtung des Aufzugs. In der nächsten Sequenz am Hauptbahnhof stellen die zwei Protagonist*innen eine hypothetische Begegnung nach, in der die Grenzen zwischen Schauspiel und Alltag, Intimität und Gesellschaftsanalyse verschwimmen. Während sie im Aufzug nach unten fahren bittet Hülcker Spengler um eine Kollaboration: eine Solo-Partitur für seine Stimme im (Gendertransitions-be dingten) Stimmbruch. Während der Fahrt wandelt sich seine Stimme von fiepsig-hoch zu souverän-tief. Dialog- und Gesangssequenzen wechseln sich einige Male ab, wobei der narrative Teil jeweils variiert und sich die Stimme – und damit ihr vermeintlicher Status

– je nach Fahrtrichtung hebt und senkt. Durch eine Entkopplung des Dialoginhalts von der Intonation sowie verschiedene Richtungswechsel wird eine binäre Lesbarkeit des Plots jedoch bewusst untergraben. Im dritten Teil wechselt der Film vom vertikalen Format in Fullscreen zu einem schwarz gerahmten Breitbild. Im Duett ertönen die Stimmen beider Protagonist*innen, während sie sich vor einem bewegten Glitzervorhang nach unten oder oben bewegen. In vielschichtigen Bezügen untersucht VOICE ELEVATOR die komplexen Mechanismen von Film, Theater, Architektur, Genderpolitik, Stimme und sozialem Status.

The “Vertical Cinema installation” VOICE ELEVATOR is a collaboration between the artist Isabell Spengler and the composer and performer Neo Hülcker. The vertical-format video projection is structured in three parts and initially shows elevator rides at two locations in Berlin: the Filmhaus at Potsdamer Platz with its three glazed elevators, and a likewise glazed, cylindrical elevator in Berlin’s main train station. All elevators ascend and descend several floors. Conventions of narrative cinema as well as psychological film acting are examined here by means of structural film and procedures of queer abstraction: Playing with two different communication concepts, the artists address the gender-political connotation of voice pitch, performatively testing its effect on authority and social status in hierarchical social structures.

While the “status seesaw” is an image from the theory of acting and describes shifts in power imbalances in interpersonal interaction, the “elevator pitch” is a marketing term that is about presenting a project in as condensed a form as possible – in the time span of an elevator ride.

The first sequence shows an elevator choreography in the film house – musically interpreted as a vocal score for a voice in vocal inflection. Like a glissando, the voice rises or falls with the respective direction of travel of the elevator. In the next sequence at the main station, the two protagonists re-enact a hypo-

thetical encounter in which the boundaries between acting and everyday life, intimacy and social analysis become blurred. While they are riding down in the elevator, Hülcker asks Spengler for a collaboration: a solo score for his voice in (gender-transition-related) voice break. During the ride, his voice changes from feely-high to confident-low. Dialog and vocal sequences alternate a few times, with the narrative part varying in each case and the voice – and thus its supposed status – rising and falling depending on the direction of travel. However, by decoupling the content of the dialog from the intonation, as well as various changes of direction, a binary readability of the plot is deliberately undermined.

In the third section, the film switches from a vertical format in full screen to a black-framed widescreen. In a duet, the voices of both protagonists sound as they move up or down in front of a moving glitter curtain. In multi-layered references, VOICE ELEVATOR explores the complex mechanisms of film, theater, architecture, gender politics, voice, and social status.

Eva Scharrer, Katalogtext, Ausstellung Monitoring, Kasseler Dokfest, 2021

SUSPENDED TIME, ON CARING

Film, 2020



Suspended Time, on Caring

film still / fine art print, essay film, 53 min. & 12 min., by and with Maternal Fantasies collectiv, GER 2020

„Wreckage“ (2018), fine art print 70 x 100 cm, from the series „Landpartie 01“, Maternal Fantasies collective, exhibition: Angst, keine Angst, Times Art Center, Berlin 2021

SUSPENDED TIME, ON CARING

Film, 2020



SUSPENDED TIME is an essay film by and with the interdisciplinary art collective MATERNAL FANTASIES about motherhood(s) and its representation, care/work and art production. The film exists in a medium-length and a short version.

The film proposes new vocabularies and visual performative translations of the maternal experience with the goal of integrating intergenerational knowledge. Through its production process and its form it stretches tensions between social invisibility and fantastical visibility.

Collectively staged tableaux vivants and re-enactments of art historical references are weaved together with conversations between the collective's members and performative interventions in outdoor spaces together with the children of the collective.

Research into the work and life of some feminist predecessors - female artists and authors from the second wave of feminisms (such as Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Hélène Cixous, Marguerite Duras, Clarice Lispector, Valie Export and Valerie Solanas) flows into the film through quotes in sound and image and is reflected in conversations about the structural conditions of female artists then and now.

MATERNAL FANTASIES is an interdisciplinary group of international artists and cultural producers based in Berlin, founded in 2018. They work with photography, video, text, installation and performance. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, workshops, publications, participation in symposia and panels, they shape the discourse about motherhood in the arts and increase the visibility of contemporary feminist positions.

Suspended Time
essay film, 53 min, UHD, GER 2020
Suspended Time, on Caring
film, short essay, UHD, 12 min. GER 2020

script / conceptual lead: Isabell Spengler & Maicyra Leao
editor, sound design: Isabell Spengler
concept, research, direction, texts, performance, voices, camera, sound, costumes and props: MATERNAL FANTASIES

MATERNAL FANTASIES are:
Isabell Spengler, Mikala Hyldig Dal, Aino Onia, Hanne Klaas, Lena Chen, Magdalena Kallenberger, Maicyra Leão and Nassib (11 years), Astro (2 years), Wim (9 years), Rasmus (6 years), Morten (6 years), Sascha (9 years), Samuel (5 years), Kayan (6 years), Selma (10 years), Liva (6 months)

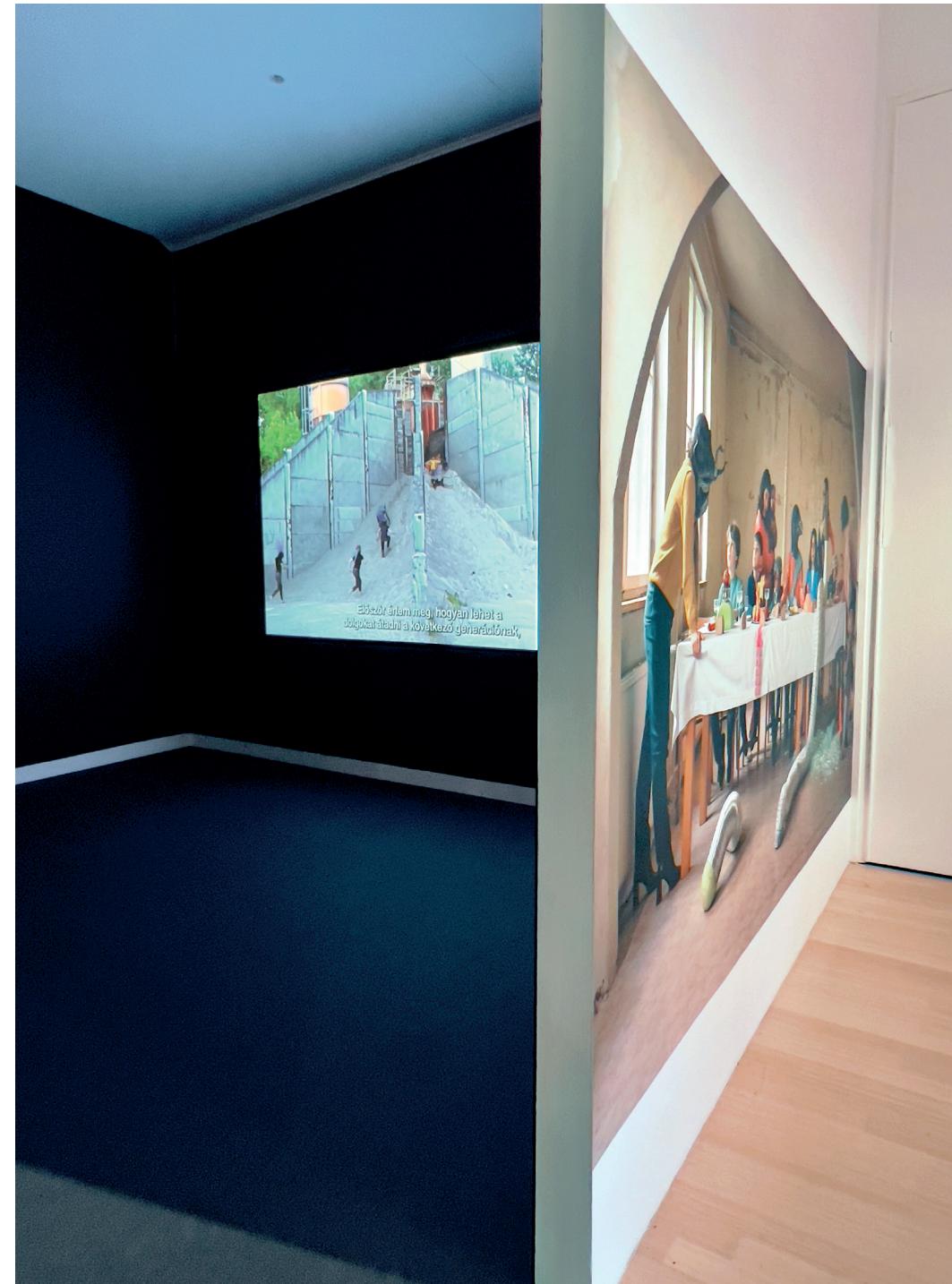
supported by:
M1. Arthur-Boskamp Advancement Award 2019/20

exhibitions / screenings (selection):
MOCA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2020 / M1. Arthur-Boskamp-Förderpreis Ausstellung, Hohenlockstedt, DE 2020 / Spill Festival of Performance, Ipswich, GB 2021 / LA-Artcore, Los Angeles, USA, 2022 / Pleasure Dome, Toronto, CAN 2022 / Museum Ludwig, Budapest, HUN 2023 / Arnolfini, Bristol, UK 2024

www.maternalfantasies.net

SUSPENDED TIME, ON CARING

Film, 2020 / THE FIRST SUPPER, Photograph, 2023



Suspended Time, on Caring

video, 12 min., by and with Maternal Fantasies collective, GER 2020

installation view, exhibition: Handle with Care, Ludwig Museum Budapest, Sept. 2023 - Jan. 2024

(on the right) The First Supper

Photograph / Wallposter, by Maternal Fantasies collective, GER 2023

installation view, exhibition: Handle with Care, Ludwig Museum Budapest, Sept. 2023 - Jan. 2024

THE FIRST SUPPER

Wallposter, from the photo series Landpartie #3, 2023



The First Supper

Photographic Wallposter, 300 cm x 400 cm, from the photo series „Landpartie #3“, Maternal Fantasies collective, GER 2023

exhibition: Handle with Care, Ludwig Museum Budapest, Sept. 2023 - Jan. 2024



The First Supper, from the series „Landpartie #3“
photograph / wallposter, 300 cm x 400 cm, Maternal Fantasies, GER 2023
instalation view, exhibition Handle with Care, Ludwig Museum Budapest, HUN, 2023/ 2024

Forest Ghosts, from the series „Landpartie #2“
photograph / wallposter, 200 cm x 266 cm, Maternal Fantasies, GER 2019
exhibition Re-assembling Motherhood(s), onomatopee, Eindhoven, NL, 2022

LANDPARTIE #1 - #3

photo editions 2019 - 2023

In their large-scale photograph *The First Supper*, the members of the MATERNAL FANTASIES collective reenact the famous, already frequently restaged, religious mural *The Last Supper* (Leonardo da Vinci, 1494–1498) from their feminist, collective and non-religious perspective.

The photograph was created in spring 2023 during their "Landpartie #3" artist residency at Haus des Wandels, a cultural production site in Brandenburg, Germany. The collective has developed a set of self-imposed rules for the staging, co-authoring and (co-)directing of video scenes as tableaux vivants and photographs taken at the same time. Their playful way of working, which includes the children of the collective, is based on a principle of rotation of team members in all the responsibilities associated with artistic production including care work – e.g. rotation in the roles as cook, director, performer, childcare worker, writer, cleaner, or as camera person. This spontaneous and pragmatic process takes into account the different capacities and abilities of individuals in different phases of life and motherhood(s), and gives a fantastic visibility to the multi-faceted and diverse experiences therein. The resulting co-authored and polyphonic art works highlight rather than hide imperfections, flaws, diversity of personal struggles and motivations, contradictory opinions and interpretations.

In this context, the two animal masks (octopus and raven) self-ironically challenge one-sided and stereotypical views of mothers as either „holy“ or „monstrous“, e.g. as expressed in the term „Rabenmutter“ ("Rabenmutter" is a German swear word for a bad mother, one who neglects her children because of a professional occupation.) With the masks and the roles they assume in *The First Supper* MATERNAL FANTASIES articulate their rejection of the idealized and exclusive mother role personified in the holy Madonna with child (and the concept of immaculate conception) within Christian, patriarchal mythology.

LANDPARTIE #1
photo edition, 12 tableaux
created in group residency at BetoNest,
Brandenburg, GER, 2018

LANDPARTIE #2
photo edition, 9 tableaux
created in group residency at M1. Arthur-Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt,
Schleswig-Holstein, GER, 2019

LANDPARTIE #3
photo edition, 8 tableaux
created in group residency at Haus des
Wandels, Brandenburg, GER, 2023

MATERNAL FANTASIES are:
Isabell Spengler, Mikala Hyldig Dal, Aino
Onia, Hanne Klaas, Lena Chen, Magdalena
Kallenberger, Maicyra Leão
and children (0-13 years old):
Nassib, Astro, Wim, Rasmus, Morten,
Mie, Sascha, Samuel, Kayan, Selma,
Liva, Nury

exhibitions (selection):
alpha Nova, gallery futura, Berlin 2019
/ Kunstraum34 gallery, Stuttgart,
2020 / Times Art Center Berlin, 2021
/ Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos
Humanos, Santiago de Chile, CHL 2022
/ Re-Assembling Motherhood(s) - solo
exhibition, onomatopee, Eindhoven, NL,
2022 / LHUCA Centre for the Arts, Texas,
USA 2023 / Galeria Arsenal, Bialystok,
PL 2023 / Museum Ludwig, Budapest,
HUN 2023

www.maternalfantasies.net

RE-ASSEMBLING MOTHERHOODS

Book publication, 2021

Re-Assembling Motherhood(s) invites the reader to learn about and from MATERNAL FANTASIES' feminist research and collective artistic practice on motherhood(s), care work and representation in the arts.

Composed of seven interdisciplinary artists / mothers and ten children, MATERNAL FANTASIES takes the social invisibility of the maternal experience as a point of departure to produce films, images, and performances of fantastical visibility. Through personal writing exercises and collective performance scores, they align themselves with ancestral figures of feminist discourses and artmaking, in order to establish new vocabularies and narratives around the maternal for future generations. As both a handbook and an archive of feminist artmaking, this publication (re-)assembles maternal experiences, reflective essays, autobiographical writing, instructional scores, selected artworks, and a manifesto for a caring economy.

MATERNAL FANTASIES are Lena Chen, Mikala Hyldig Dal, Magdalena Kallenberger, Hanne Klaas, Maicyra Leão, Aino Onia, Isabell Spengler

Re-Assembling Motherhood(s):
On Radical Care and Collective Art as
Feminist Practices

book publication by
MATERNAL FANTASIES
published by [onomatopee #216](#),
180 pages, 58 color images, 2021
editors: Magdalena Kallenberger,
Maicyra Teles Leão e Silva, Sascia Bailer
ISBN: 978-94-93148-57-4

authors: Lena Chen, Mikala Hyldig
Dal, Magdalena Kallenberger, Hanne
Klaas, Maicyra Leão, Aino Onia, Isabell
Spengler

book presentations (selection):

onomatopee projects, Eindhoven,
Netherlands, „Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)”, performative book- presentation/
Lunch with MATERNAL FANTASIES
(Kallenberger / El Solh), 08/2022.

Conceptual Poetics Day, MISS READ –
Berlin Art Book Fair, Haus der Kulturen
der Welt Berlin (HKW), performative
readings with MATERNAL FANTASIES
(Kallenberger/Leão/Spengler), 04/2022.

Literaturbote 141, publication launch,
bookstore odradek, with MATERNAL FANTASIES
(Kallenberger/Leão), 04/2022

„Fortuna Womens Day Saloon“, Berlin
organized by Anne Zacho Søgaard, with
MATERNAL FANTASIES
(Spengler), 03/2022

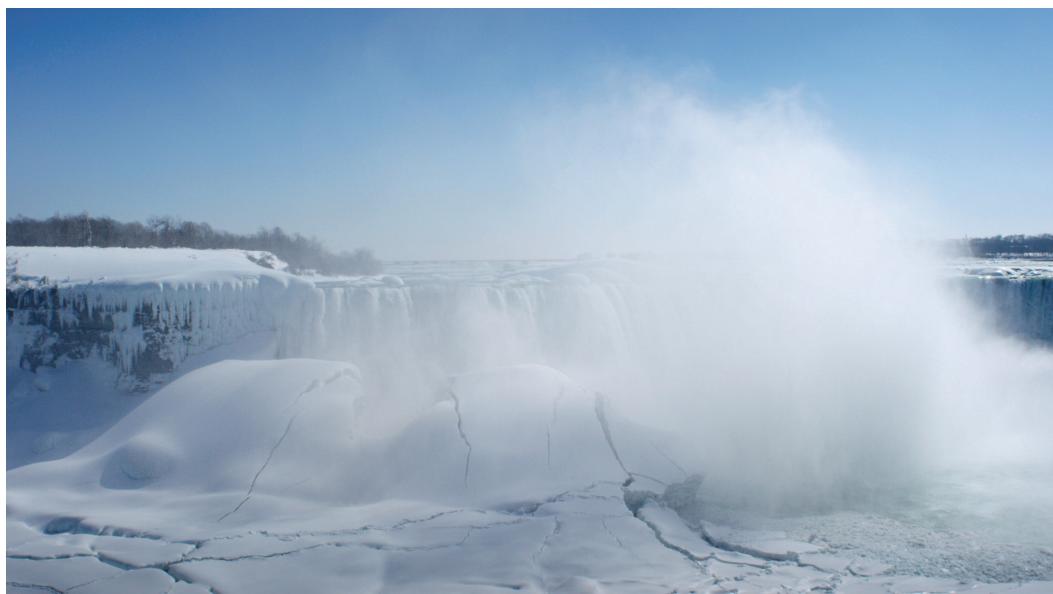
alpha nova galerie futura, Berlin, „Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)”, book launch
and performative readings
by MATERNAL FANTASIE collective,
12/2021.



Re-Assembling Motherhood(s)
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TWO DAYS AT THE FALLS

2 channel video installation, 2015



Two Days at the Falls, video stills, right and left channel
2 channel video instalation, 4K, 22 min. loop, stereo sound, GER /CAN 2015

In Isabell Spengler's installation we are presented with two panoramic video depictions of the iconic Niagara Falls - one that was created onsite and the other, filmed in a three-dimensional model, constructed by the artist in her Berlin studio having never visited the Falls. This second model is an embodiment of the artist's preconceived notions of the place - a distillation of ideas based on a multitude of images, paintings, photos, films, texts and digital replicas depicting the famous site. A study of its history of representation in various media over the past 500 years. Alongside these fictional falls, we are confronted with the same 360-degree pan over the actual cataract and surrounding landscape, shot on location in Niagara Falls, Ontario, in March 2015 when the falls happened to be partially frozen. The adjacent screens play with concepts of anticipation, imagination, time and place.

Isabell Spengler's Two Days at the Falls explores of the intersection between the real and the imagined, popular culture and private perception, the monumental and the ordinary against the backdrop of contemporary and historical „immersive“ media technologies. (Text: Sandra Naumann)

2 channel video installation, 4K (UHD),
stereo sound, 22 min. loop, GER/CAN,
2015

concept, production, set, editing, sound
design: Isabell Spengler
starring: Lucile Desamory
cinematography & color correction: Till
Beckmann
sound recordists: Markus Ruff, Pedro
Ferreira
stage hands/extras: Clarissa Thieme,
Juliane Zelwies
music: WOO - Clive and Mark Ives

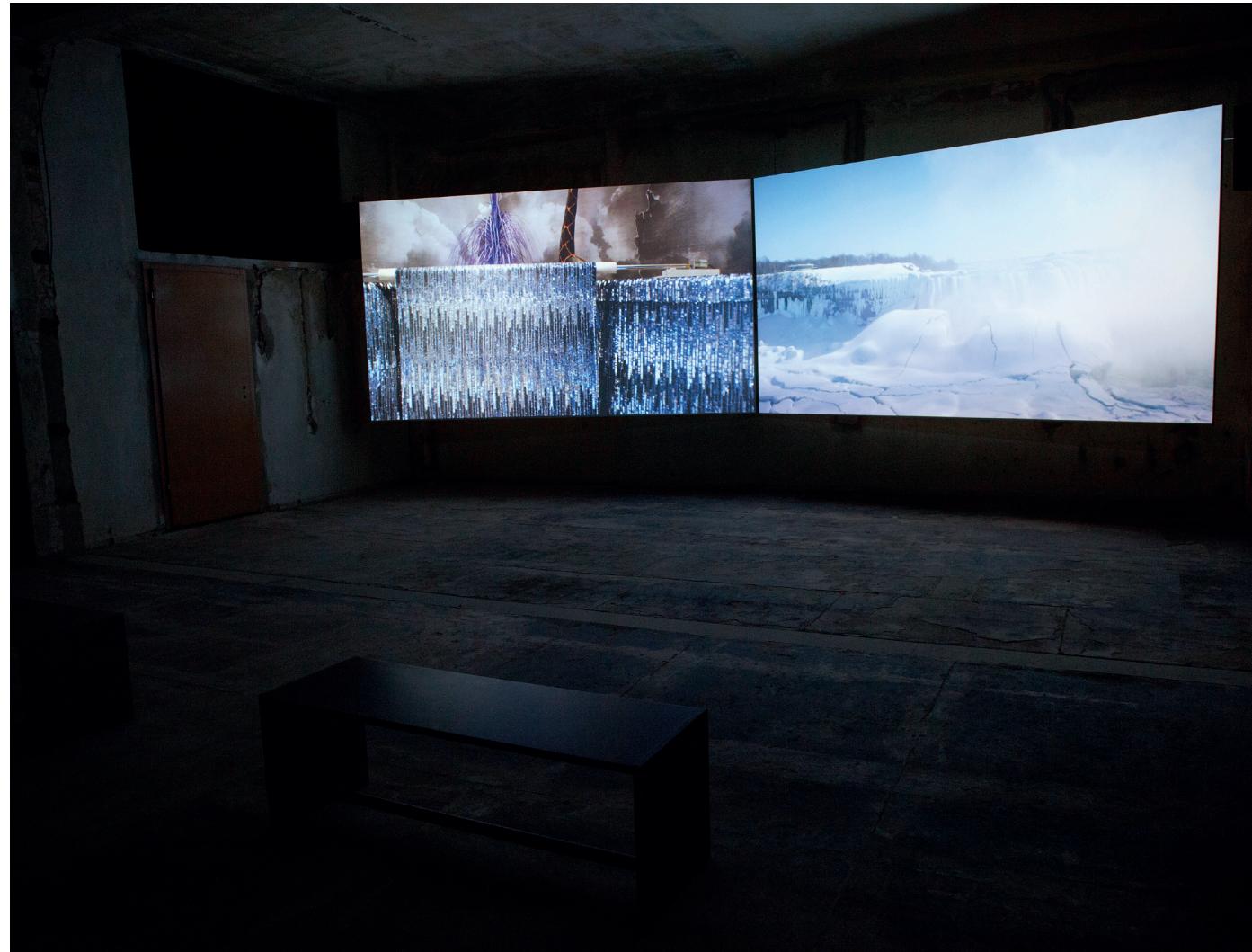
supported by:
Werkleitz, Goethe Institute Toronto, EU
Culture, IFA, Trinity Square Video, Images
Festival, Embassy Suites Hotel

exhibitions:
- Trinity Square Video Gallery - Images
Festival Toronto, (CAN) 2015 / - Move On
Werkleitz - Biennale, Halle (Saale), 2015 /
- Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Montréal,
(CAN) 2015 / - Glasmoog, Kunsthoch-
schule für Medien, Köln, 2015 / - Goethe
Institut Montreal, (CAN) 2016 / - Gurevich
Fine Art Gallery, WNND Festival of the
Moving Image, Winnipeg, (CAN) 2016 /
- Arsenal - Institut für Film- und Video-
kunst, Berlin, 2016 / - CINEMA+, Kultur-
raum Zwinglikirche, Berlin, 2019 /
- 20 Sunsets, Haus der Kulturen der Welt,
Berlin, 2020

video documentation, exhibitions:
<https://vimeo.com/147595612>
password: niagara

TWO DAYS AT THE FALLS

2 channel video installation, 2015



Two Days at the Falls

2 channel video instalation, 4K, 22 min. loop, stereo sound, GER /CAN 2015
installation view, Move On Festival, Werkleitz - Biennial, Halle (Saale), Oct. 2015



Two Days at the Falls

2 channel window instalation, 4K, 22 min. loop, stereo sound,
installation view, Goethe Institut Montreal, May–July 2016 18

TWO DAYS AT THE FALLS

2 channel video installation, 2015



top: Two Days at the Falls, film set, kinetic model of Niagara Falls,

studio of the artist, Berlin, Feb. 2015

below: Two Days at the Falls; installation view (reading room)

Move On Festival, Werkleitz Biennial, Halle (Saale), Oct. 2015



Two Days at the Falls - performance version

2 channel projection with live reading, 4K video, 22 Min.

performance: Isabell Spengler, Zwingli-Kirche, Berlin, cinema+ series, March 2019, photo: Noam Gorbat



Echo Chamber, installation in 2 rooms, LAMOA - Los Angeles Museum of Art, 2017
 Partition wall, dark and bright room, spy mirror, audio, furniture, objects and video, 17 min. loop
 installation views: Solo exhibition Isabell Spengler

ECHO CHAMBER

Site-specific mixed media installation, with a spy mirror, 2017

The installation transforms the mobile exhibition pavilion LAMOA into the home of Vivianne Echo Starlight, protagonist of a film by Isabell Spengler and Daniel Adams, shot in 2014. The Starlight figure was created in reference to the Greek myth of the nymph Echo, who was condemned to speak only by repeating the words of others and, in a second transformation, physically merges with the walls of a cave. The behavior of the androgynous figure, played by both Spengler and Adams in turn, the time structure of the video and the audio played in the space, are created by interpreting the idea of the echo as an algorithmic score. (for performance and editing) By dividing the exhibition space into two walk-in dressing rooms connected by a spy mirror, visitors are invited to literally step into Starlight's slippers and to share their perspective on loops, duplication and variance, refractions of light and sound waves. Visitors can secretly observe and monitor other exhibition visitors through the magic mirror, or make visual contact with them and - depending on the lighting - allow their faces to merge in the mirror.

LAMOA (Los Angeles Museum of Art) is a mobile exhibition space, founded and curated by Alice Könitz. In 2017, LAMOA was located on the Campus of Occidental College in Eagle Rock, Los Angeles.

Mixed media installation, 2017
 (with built-in partition wall,
 spy mirror, video, audio, furniture,
 objects)

Concept, video, audio, production, installations and objects: Isabell Spengler

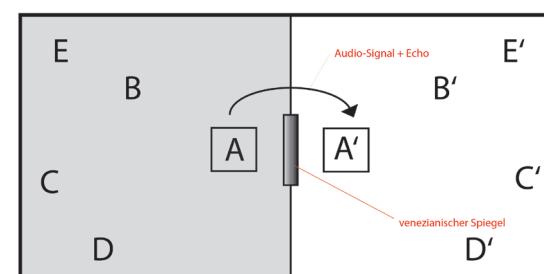
Video, 17 min. loop, silent
 Concept, direction, performance, camera, editing: Isabell Spengler, Daniel Adams

Sound installation, stereo, 17 min. loop
 Concept, text, voice: Isabell Spengler
 Concept, electronics/music: Daniel Adams

Performance / Video Concert, 23 Min.
 Concept, direction, video, performance, text, voice, keyboard: Isabell Spengler
 Performance, loop machine, real-time sound effects: Daniel Adams / Priyanka Ram

Commissioned by: LAMOA,
 Los Angeles Museum of Art, 2017
 curator: Alice Könitz
 funded by: GLOBAL Kulturaustausch-Stipendiums, Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin

Ausstellungsorte:
 LAMOA (Los Angeles Museum of Art),
 2017 (installation and performance with Priyanka Ram)
 Labor Sonor, Kunsthaus KuLe, Berlin,
 2017 (Performance, with Daniel Adam)



Echo Chamber
 Installation concept for two rooms with spy mirror

ECHO CHAMBER

Site-specific mixed media installation & video performance, 2017



Echo Chamber, installation, 2017

Detail in room 2: Exhibition visitor in room 1 as seen through the spy mirror

Detail in room 2: Sound installation, 17 min. loop

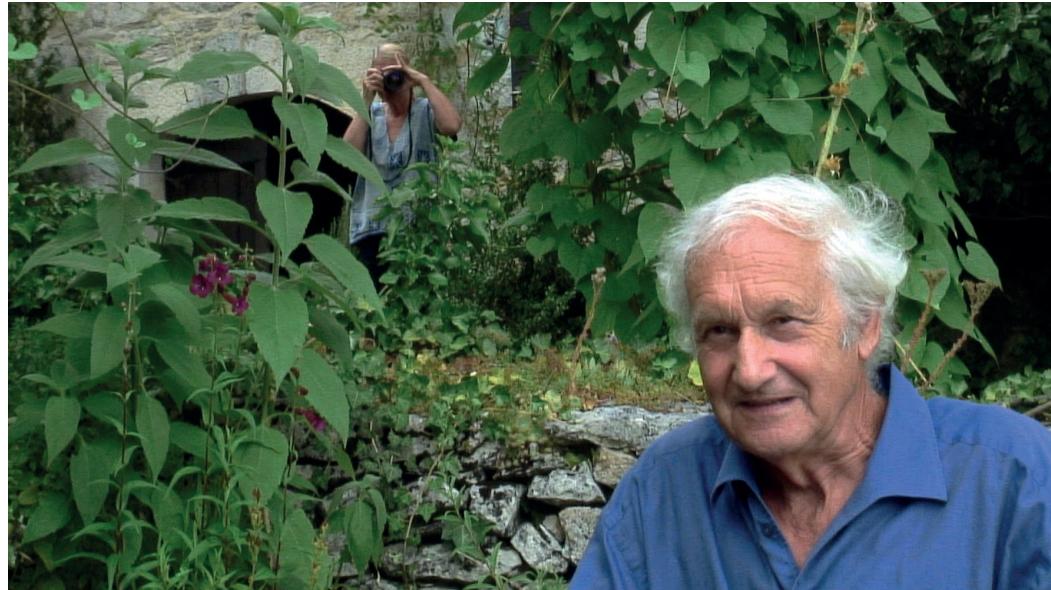
Echo Chamber, Performance & Installation, 2017

Video-Concert by Isabell Spengler & Priyanka Ram, 23 min., Los Angeles Museum of Art

Detail in room 1: Video installation, monitor + objects, HD video, color, silent, 17 min. loop

FATHER, MOTHER, WHAT SHOULD I FILM TODAY?

Film, 2012



In their vacation home in the south of France, the artist's parents describe their ideas for film scenes that their daughter should realize spontaneously and on location.

In 6 interviews, the father and the mother formulate their aesthetic ideas in detail, eloquently and including their artistic intentions. The interviews are shown in alternation with the daughter's cinematic realizations. What emerges is a family conversation about ideas of beauty, questions of nature versus nurture and the meaning of film art, as well as a spontaneous collaboration. Whether the film scenes created by the daughter really fulfill her parents' visions or not, lays in the eyes of the film audience.

FATHER, MOTHER, WHAT SHOULD I FILM TODAY? is part of a series of works in which Isabell Spengler experiments with image descriptions in film. Word, image and gesture are the signs in communication experiments carried out between friends, relatives and the public; between film authors, interpreters and the audience. The experiments mark out clear positions for those involved—behind, in front of, and in the film image. Some earlier works of Spengler's series were THE PITCH (2008) and TELEPATHY EXPERIMENT I (2007). While these videos were streaming verbal descriptions and their visualization in film images simultaneously, FATHER, MOTHER, WHAT SHOULD I FILM TODAY? presents descriptions and visualizations in succession, thereby influencing the viewer's perception of the film scenes in a particular way.

HD-video, color, stereo sound, 52 min.,
FRA/GER, 2012

Concept, camera, sound, editing &
production: Isabell Spengler

Sound mix: Christian Obermaier
Color grading: Alexander Houtkruijer
Subtitles: Jörg von Stein / Alias

with:
Arnulf Spengler
Christiane Spengler
Isabell Spengler
Antonia Baehr

funded by:
Künstlerinnenprogramm Senat Berlin
German Films, München

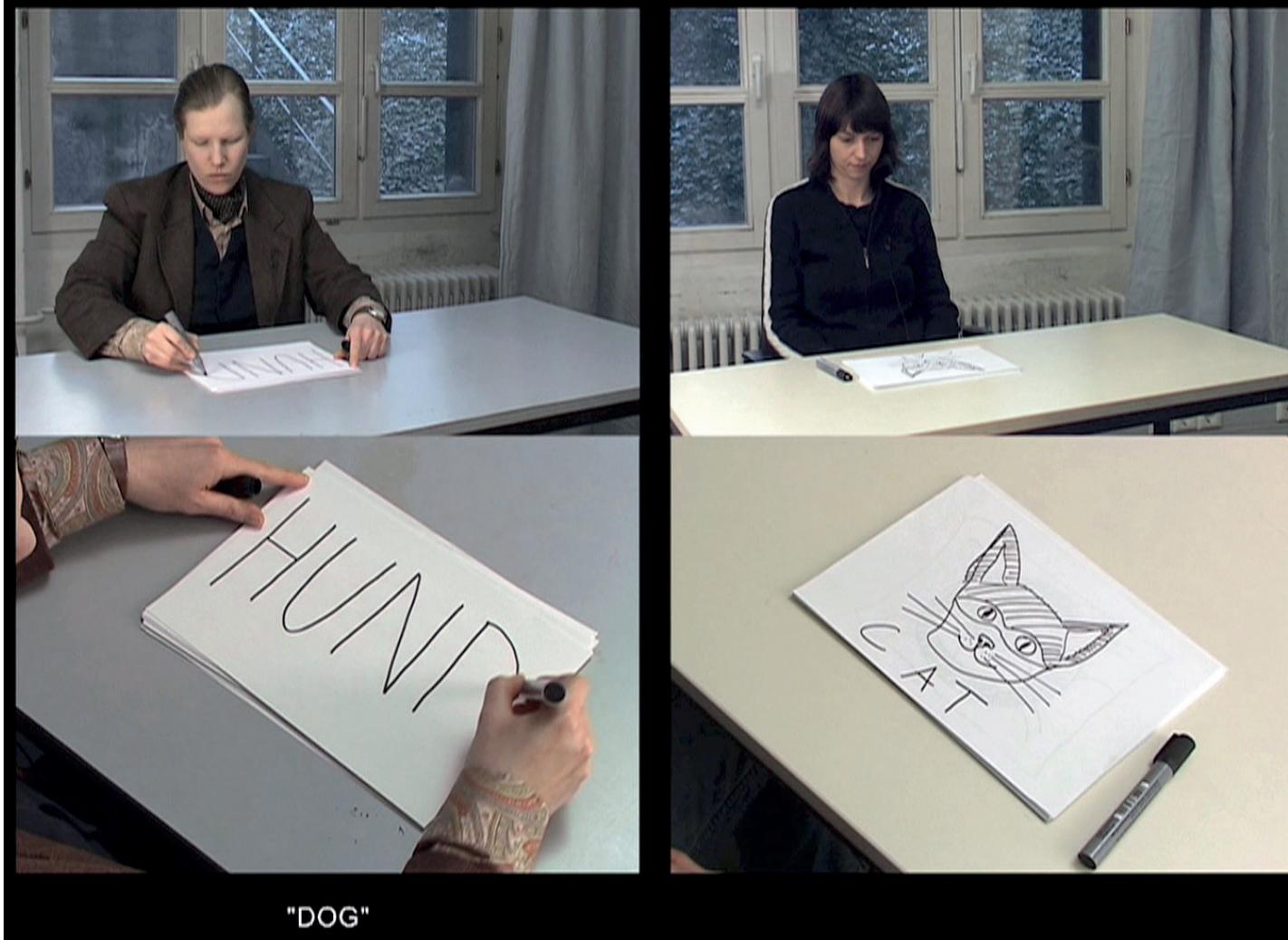
Premiere:
62. Berlinale, Forum Expanded 2012

TELEPATHIE EXPERIMENT I

4 channel video installation, 2007

The installation documents a 30-minute experiment in telepathy between two friends who have known each other all their lives: the filmmaker Isabell Spengler and the choreographer Antonia Baehr.

Placed in two separate, isolated rooms, the test subjects use words, gestures, and drawings to send and receive thoughts from and to one another. Four simultaneously recorded channels of video showing the two test persons and their drawings are projected on a split screen.



4 channel video installation, UHD, 32 min. loop, GER 2007

Concept, director, camera, editing: Isabell Spengler

Performers: Antonia Baehr, Isabell Spengler

Sound mix: Nicholas Bussmann

Color grading: Till Beckmann

Exhibitions (Selection):

- „Interior Expansion“, Büro Friedrich, Forum Expanded, Berlinale 2007
- „Mimétisme“, curated by Anselm Franke, Extra City Kunsthalle, Antwerpen, 2008 / - „Smell It“, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Wien, 2009 / - Arsenal 3, Online Programm, Berlin, 2020

supported by:

University of Fine Arts Berlin

PERMANENT RESIDENTS

16mm Film, USA 2005

The film PERMANENT RESIDENTS combines sculptural costume design with a documentary-style depiction of everyday housework activities in the contemporary urban space of Los Angeles. In compositionally polished framings, an imaginary space of a collective world of imagination opens up on the side of the viewer, a space in which motifs of popular culture, myths, and social fictions reverberate. The combination of an extremely futuristic look on the part of the protagonists and mundane everyday tasks such as cleaning, vacuuming, or shopping produces a radical joke that subversively infiltrates the acceptance of the routine activities and appearances of daily life that we all take for granted.

(Text: Angelika Ramlow)

The film title PERMANENT RESIDENTS is the term for legal immigrants in the US (green-card-holders), and points to the economic and cultural role of legal and non-legal immigrants in Los Angeles and Hollywood's film industry.

16mm film, color, sound, 9:30 min., USA/Germany, 2005

Concept, director, cinematography, editor, costumes, production: Isabell Spengler

Sound mix: Matthias Rusch

Cast: Jessica Erker, Theresa Franklin, Andreas Ramani, Jennifer Sindon, John Williams

Exhibitions & Film Festivals (selection):

-Trampoline Festival, Nottingham, UK / - Cirrus Gallery, Los Angles, USA / - Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis, Saarbrücken / - Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen / - EMAF, European Media Art Festival Osnabrück / - Cintax Film Forum, Riverside, USA / - Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin / - Kansai Film Festival, Kyoto, JAP / - Scope Art Fair, Miami, USA / - Fluctuating Images, Stuttgart / - Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz / - Transmediale, HKW, Berlin / - Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo, BRA / - KunstWerke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin / IFFF / - Int. Frauenfilmfestival Dortmund/Köln / - dotdotdot, Volkskundemuseum, Vienna (2021)



PSYCHIC TEQUILA TAROT

16mm Film, USA 1998

The film PSYCHIC TEQUILA TAROT is based on an interactive live performance (1996-1998) of the same name, in which Isabell Spengler herself embodied the main figure, illustrating the problem of conformity to female stereotypes and working the philosophy of human will into a radical parable: feminine wish fulfillment as talent and sickness.

Taking the form of an episodic road movie, the fictional autobiography of the self-proclaimed fortuneteller Leila unfolds. Having escaped her all too liberal parental home, Leila tries to fill her inner emptiness by projecting the wishes and problems of other people onto herself. On a trip through California, she invites complete strangers to a free tequila tarot card reading in her car, idealistically attempting to be a reflection of the other person and to behave in a radically "selfless" way. In flashbacks of autofictional stories from her childhood Leila provides a glimpse into the development of her convictions and her personality.

16mm film, color, sound, 24 min., USA/Germany, 1998

Konzept, Regie, Performance, Schnitt, Produktion: Isabell Spengler

Buch: Isabell Spengler, Christopher Fuelling

Darsteller/innen: Isabell Spengler, Rainbow Underhill, Marc Reveille, Jeff Libby, Damon Schindler, Debbie Thomas, Kelly Doyle u.a.

Kamera: Terence Mc Nally

Beleuchter: Anthony Vitro, Bernd Wolk

Filmmusik: Marko Pauli (Score), Deborah Hurwitz, Nicholas Bussmann, Heiko Gölzer, Grady Cousins

Tonmischung: Matthias Rusch

Premiere: Int. Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, 1998

presented at more than 50 film festivals and exhibitions worldwide

Awards: - Heinrich-Geissendorfer-Förderpreis, Gera / - No-Budget Filmpreis in Hamburg / - Special Commendation Experimental Film at the CIAFF in Barrie, Canada

funded and supported by: DAAD-Stipend; CalArts, Los Angeles;
Kodak-Eastman Scholarship



ABOUT

ISABELL SPENGLER

Isabell Spengler's film and video works are elaborate audio-visual compositions, branching out and connecting various forms of experimental and queer film and performance practice. Inhabiting a world of self-designed costumes, props, language, logic and time-structure, her fantastic looking protagonists struggle to fit in, appropriate, transform or just live in the real environments they encounter. The creatures of PERMANENT RESIDENTS adapt to the mundane, their evolved bodies mirroring the chores and errands they perform. An interesting counterpoint to PERMANENT RESIDENTS , PSYCHIC TEQUILA TAROT explores the space between self and other, and its collapse.

Since 2006 Isabell Spengler has created a series of conceptual films and installations, analysing and mediating the construction of imaginary worlds in dialogues with colleagues, friends and her parents.

Erik Martison, curator, The Pleasure Dome, Toronto, 2011

In multilayered references, VOICE ELEVATOR (by Isabell Spengler & Neo Hülcker) explores the complex mechanisms of film, theater, architecture, gender politics, and social status.

Eva Scharrer, curator and author, Kasseler Dokfest, 2021

With LANTOUEY Isabell Spengler pursues a work revolving around the magic perception of the real. The film creates a purely sensuous experience, a place in which the veiled and the unveiled rejoin. Under Isabell Spengler's gaze, the stagnant waters of the Gouffre de Lantouy in the Departement Lot in Southern France form a theater of moving matter, in a kind of delicate iridescent explosion.

François Bonenfant, curator, La Cinémathèque Française, Paris, 2007

Although the performers' body positions in DIE HÖRPOSAUNE never change throughout the duet, a peculiar dynamic develops, in which the interpreters' bodies, the rhythm of their murmurs, sounds, smacking, sighing, panting, their movements, the images' movements, and the books all seem to transform into one huge organism, where every single element interacts with everything else.

This dynamic is substantially defined by the disembodied presence (of the camera), which turns into the co-composer and vessel of this fantastic world through her play with proximity and distance, her rhythmic changes in perspective, her capturing, and letting go. Together with the sphere of sound, her images create a three-dimensional, breathing space that extends into the audience. Rigid boundaries — physical, medial, verbal, and mental — dissolve and enter into new alliances. The audiovisual duet generates no less than a new kind of language and, subsequently, new kinds of communication, perception, and reality.

Tanja Langenbach, artistic director Videonale, Kunstmuseum Bonn, 2023

Das Kollektiv MATERNAL FANTASIES diskutiert in dem Video SUSPENDED TIME, ON CARING (2020) nicht nur feministische Theorien und das Verständnis von Arbeit, sondern beschäftigt sich als Kollektiv von Müttern und Kindern auch (praktisch, künstlerisch und aktivistisch) mit der Vereinbarkeit von künstlerischem Schaffen und Care-Arbeit.

Christin Müller, exhibition review: Handle with Care, Ludwig Museum Budapest, Camera Austria, 2023

Das Sujet der experimentellen Arbeit TWO DAYS AT THE FALLS findet sich auch in anderen Werken Isabell Spenglars und verweist damit auf die persönliche Handschrift der Künstlerin, die Reflexionsräume, die für sie von Interesse sind und denen sie sich in filmästhetisch unterschiedlichster Form annähert: Die Frage nach der Wahrnehmung von Orten, Erinnerungen, Emotionen und die Suche nach experimentellen Darstellungsmöglichkeiten, um die Erfahrung dieser Wahrnehmungsräume visuell und auditiv erlebbar und auf Seiten des Rezipienten nachvollziehbar werden zu lassen.

Hervorzuheben ist hierbei, dass die einzelnen Werke, die diesem Sujet zuzuordnen sind, wie PERMANENT RESIDENTS (2005), TELEPATHY EXPERIMENT I (2007, Installation), THE PITCH (2008), LINT LENT LAND (2009), VATER, MUTTER, WAS SOLL ICH HEUTE FILMEN? (2012) die experimentelle Form sozusagen doppelt reflektieren, da der konzeptuelle Ansatz, das Experiment an sich, d. h. das Experiment des Filmens, des Wahrnehmens von Welt, und das Zusammenspiel von „Ich und Welt“, bzw. die Fiktionalisierung von Wirklichkeit zum Fokus hat und damit unterschiedlichste Ansätze von Wirklichkeitskonstruktion(en) hinterfragt. Die ästhetische Form schmiegt sich gewissermaßen dem Sujet an, um Denkprozesse auf Seiten des Rezipienten anzustoßen, statt diese in einer eindimensionalen und narrativ konventionellen Form vorzugeben.

Angelika Ramlow, Arsenal - Institut für Film und Videokunst, Berlin, 2015

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

ISABELL SPENGLER

Isabell Spengler is a film- and video artist from Berlin. In her films, video installations and live-film-performances, she analyzes and mediates diverging constructions of reality, imaginary worlds and their representation. Spengler invents new cinematic forms by working across disciplines and in interdisciplinary collaborations. In dialogues with other artists, she examines social, political and media-technological developments, predominant power structures, utopian and dystopian visions of the future.

As director, author and performer, she has worked a.o. with the artists/choreographers Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl and Lindy Annis, composer/performer Neo Hülcker, artist/filmmaker Lucile Desamory and Los Angeles-based sculptor Alice Könitz. She is a founding member of the feminist art collective Maternal Fantasies (founded 2018).

Since 1998, her works have been presented worldwide in exhibitions, film and media art festivals and in cinemas, including at the Berlinale (Forum Expanded 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2012), at MOCA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2020) and at the Kunstmuseum Bonn (Videonale 2023). For her installation VOICE ELEVATOR (2021) she received the Bremen Award for Video Art.

She studied with VALIE EXPORT and Heinz Emigholz in Berlin (Meisterschülerin of Heinz Emigholz 1999) and with James Benning at the California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles (MFA in Film/Video, 2001).

Spengler taught film and media art at universities and art colleges in Germany and in North America - including in 2022 as guest professor at the Justus Liebig University in Gießen, and from 2004 to 2014 at the Berlin University of the Arts, where she was a guest professor and assistant professor for experimental film/media art.

KURZBIOGRAFIE

ISABELL SPENGLER

Isabell Spengler ist eine Künstlerin und Filmemacherin aus Berlin. In ihren Filmen, Videoinstallationen und Live-Film-Performances analysiert und vermittelt sie divergierende Realitätskonstruktionen, imaginären Welten und deren Repräsentation. Ihre Expanded-Cinema Arbeiten befragen gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen, Machtstrukturen, utopische und dystopische Zukunftsentwürfe. Sie machen Versuchsanordnungen zur Wahrnehmung und zur Gestaltung von Wirklichkeit in neuen Räumen des Kinos erfahrbare.

Als Regisseurin, Autorin und Performerin arbeitete sie zusammen u.a. mit den Choreografinnen Antonia Baehr, Jule Flierl und Lindy Annis, dem Komponist*/Performer* Neo Hülcker, der Künstlerin/Filmemacherin Lucile Desamory und der in Los Angeles lebenden Bildhauerin Alice Könitz. Sie ist Gründungsmitglied des feministischen Kunstkollektivs Maternal Fantasies (gegründet 2018).

Ihre Arbeiten werden seit 1998 weltweit in Ausstellungen, in Film- und Medienkunstfestivals und im Kino präsentiert, beispielsweise auf der Berlinale (Forum Expanded 2007, 2009, 2010 und 2012), im MOCA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2020) und im Kunstmuseum Bonn (Videonale 2023). Für ihre Videoinstallation "Voice Elevator" wurde sie 2019 mit dem Bremer Videokunst-Förderpreis ausgezeichnet. Sie studierte bei VALIE EXPORT und Heinz Emigholz in Berlin (Meisterschülerin von Heinz Emigholz 1999) sowie bei James Benning am California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles (MFA in Film/Video, 2001).

Sie lehrt Film und Medienkunst an verschiedenen Kunsthochschulen und Art Colleges in Deutschland und in Nordamerika seit 2004 - darunter in 2022 als Gastprofessorin an der Justus-Liebig-Universität in Gießen, sowie als Gastprofessorin und als Künstlerische Mitarbeiterin für Experimentalfilm/Medienkunst an der Universität der Künste Berlin (2004 - 2014).