

Helene Nymann



*Knots
of Ecphoræ*

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● Helene Nymann
Knots of Ecphore
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Knots of Ecphore

FOREWORD

In recent years O—Overgaden has focused on presenting new, artistic voices – younger as well as more mature – all prior to their institutional breakthrough. As an artist, Helene Nymann is hardly a blank page. She belongs to a crowd of recognized and established Danish contemporary artists, and has a distinct voice and an active, international career. So why do we show Nymann at O—Overgaden now?

We do so because Helene Nymann is one of the few artists in Denmark currently doing a PhD in artistic research. Artistic or practice-oriented research, as it is also called, is a relatively new discipline in Denmark consisting of further academic training of artists, where the focus lies on the art practice as a form of knowledge creation. It is a unique possibility for artists to get the necessary time to experiment and dive into new layers of their practice – and to do this alongside scientists and researchers from other fields and disciplines. For O—Overgaden, it is interesting to present our audience with contemporary art that is a product of more thorough, artistic research and that reflects nuanced dialogues across different scientific fields. Since research is a fundamental part of our society's development, it is exciting to gain an insight into how science can originate in art; and on the other hand, it is also interesting to see how the creation of an artwork can be shaped by scientific frameworks.

The exhibition *Knots of Ecphore* at O—Overgaden is both an artistic downstroke in Helene Nymann's year-long research of memory techniques and mechanisms, and also an active part of Nymann's ongoing studies. The exhibition presents brand new and partly experimental works in the form of the poetic and sculpturally beautiful video installation *Mesh Mother*, a series of large, abstract glass sculptures submerged in soil-filled basins of steel. The installation presents an open invitation for interaction with the audience via micro-phenomenological interviews conducted by the artist, and an invitation to tie knots on waxed strings in order

to physically seal a personal memory, that the visitor will then leave in the exhibition. By involving new research within the fields of anthropology, archeology and neuroscience, Nymann investigates the porosity of memory and the outer as well as inner aspects that contribute to memory creation. Our memories are not just shaped by cognitive understanding, but are also highly stimulated by our outer surroundings: taste, scent, sound, sensation, the weather, colors, and so on. The discovery of this was already made in the previous century by biologist Richard Sermon and defined through his term “ecphore”, directly contradicting the previous systematic absence of a sensory body in relation to understanding the mechanisms of memory. It is a central point in Nymann's work to understand that the human brain is absolutely plastic: soft, responsive, able to be modeled, constantly changing and transforming throughout our lives. That is exactly why our brains are also able to revisit, re-remember, and rewrite stories. According to Nymann, this ability contains endless possibilities.

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Aukje Lepoutre Ravn,
Interim Director, O—Overgaden, August 2022

OVERLAPS

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SIRI HUSTVEDT
& HELENE NYMANN, SUMMER 2022

Dearest Siri,

To tell you the truth I have become rather obsessed with the quipu structures; these knotted lines that, like points in time, offer a seismographic world view. One that disrupts my linear thinking and incites the making of new correspondences and imaginings of what once was and thus what might become. Another feature I love about the quipu, besides the tactile and embodied element of them having been held and handled, is that all knots work in relation to one another. Intertwining these ancient sturdy knots together with the slippery sea slug *Aplysia californica*, this fascinating hermaphroditic creature that, through the experiments of Erik Kandel, shows us that it too remembers, while proving the fascinating thing about neuroplasticity: that our bodies are malleable and that we too are capable of change. A last component in the work is a group of micro-phenomenological interviews. The interview technique, grounded in the theories of neurobiologist Francisco Varela, today led by Claire Petitmengin, is a somewhat "psychological microscope" that opens up vast fields of investigation into subjective experiences. As such, for the first time, I've sat down and done hour-long interviews. Some really interesting statements came from interviewing the dancers of the video work in which I had them move, inspired by an old Danish children's game known as Kluddermor (translated: "mesh-mother"). Here they described their experiences finely, until words almost didn't reach. For how to describe, without resorting to concepts, how it feels to move your arm? Or to be entangled with others, moving as "one body", holding the weight of the others and trusting that they too will hold you? Siri, I wanted to ask you something that has really struck me in researching and preparing for this exhibition, namely about the things we forget and then spend most of our lives retracing or reimagining; in the case of the quipu, but also simple small events in our private lives. Experiences that fade, leaving us with gaps or what I've begun to see as in-between spaces. I'm wondering how you view the things that you forget? Where do you think these experiences go? Do you believe that forgotten things might reappear if someone asked you the right questions or triggered certain stimuli? As such, on a broader scale, what about the things we as society, in certain moments, forget?

Your fellow countrywoman Linn Ullmann recently said: "It is almost comical how long it took for me to realize that this is exactly what I do. What we do. Authors compose in the spaces, in the gaps, that exist in our memories and narratives. Forgetting is therefore not a black hole but a luminous space of possibilities."

Siri, all good thoughts are sent to you, from the twins and me, here in Copenhagen.

Warmth,
Helene

Dear Helene,

It is terribly interesting what you are doing and I wanted to respond well. I know something about quipu. I became interested when I was doing some research on writing systems, what constituted a writing system, etc. I know some scholars think narratives may be inside them as well as accounting systems, but I am hardly an expert. That colors and knots have meaning is deeply seductive and like books, they are tangible memory outside the body.

Kandel made *Aplysia* famous: the inside of learning and memory in a simple creature, just 20,000 neurons, ideal for study. I suspect you like the shape of the snail in tandem with the knots or is it not so literal? Memory is fascinating and I keep returning to it myself. Neuroplasticity is just one aspect of dynamic biological organisms that have regularities but no laws. The attempt to find laws has never worked. In biology, fixity is death. Maintaining homeostasis is life, but that maintenance requires response to constant perturbations and interactions with the environment. You might take a look at C.H. Waddington, a late great biologist who coined the term "epigenetics". Up your alley. I have just started reading on micro-phenomenology, although Edmund Husserl and Varela are old friends. It seems Petitmengin, whose work I have admired in the past, is working to uncover generic aspects of such experiences. I will have to read much more to penetrate it. I am not certain what you mean by many shapes of body subject. It depends on how one defines subject. Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty defined it as persons only, humans. Are you thinking of other creatures too? I agree. There are varying forms of subjectivity. But perhaps you mean experience? That the way experience is integrated takes many forms? Kluddermor is also in Norway, weaving people! It is wonderful. We did it here in the States too, but I don't remember naming it. I am looking forward to seeing images from the work.

Warmest from me back in Brooklyn,
Siri

Siri,

Thank you so much for your reply. Yes, they are seductive those ancient knots and, just as you suggested, I'm using them in tandem with the slug, both because of their correlating shapes, but also because both have changed my perception of linear thought. For me, the knots bring in the mystery of the past and allow me to imagine other narratives and worlds. The slug is the same. This little mysterious creature. Why did its neurons become so big? And why, as a defense mechanism, does *Aplysia* spurt the most beautiful colored ink? I also see the knots as a somewhat neural network, firing neurons and forming synapses, exactly as Kandel discovered.

It is so nice that you mention Waddington. I have just done a work inspired by Waddington, since I fell in love with his epigenetic landscape and his allegory of the formation of cells, like marble balls rolling down hills and valleys, and finding their function. Someone I've also returned to is Richard Semon and his *Die Mneme* book (1921). Do you know his work? His thoughts on the engram, but also his interesting theory of ephore, the retrieval memory process. The usage of this word is fascinating: ephoric, ephorically, ephorizable, ephorize. From what I've read, Waddington also knew of Semon's work, and Aby Warburg developed the concept for his *Mnemosyne Atlas* inspired by his *Die Mneme* book.

In my perhaps rather clumsy sentence about the shapes of body subjects, I was thinking of other creatures too. All the sentient beings out there, a whole other realm of sensing and experiencing.

I guess this is also what Petitmengin and micro-phenomenology has shown me, that every moment of this present reaches out, like branches or roots, in contact with so many aspects of being with other beings in the world. I did a micro-phenomenological interview yesterday. It was with one of the dancers. I asked him to describe in detail one experience that made a significant impact on him during the filming. He mentioned that in the "mesh mother scene" he felt safe, interwoven with the others, as if inside the womb. As we tried to go deeper into this experience, he expressed the feeling of being held and that all the movements of the others simply felt as one moving organism.

I am attaching a still-image of the Kluddermor scene.

Warmth,
Helene

Dearest Siri,

An additional email. I have to send you this beautiful quote I found the other day from *Mathematics of the Incas: Code of the Quipu*: "The quipumaker composed his recording by tracing figures in space as when, for example, he turned a string in an ever-changing direction in the process of tying a knot. All of this was not preparatory to making a record; it was part of the very process of recording. The stylus and the brush were held in the hand, their use had to be learned, and the learning involved a sense of touch. But the quipumaker's way of recording – direct construction – required tactile sensitivity to a much greater degree. In fact, the overall aesthetic of the quipu is related to the tactile: the manner of recording and the recording itself are decidedly rhythmic; the first in the activity, the second in the effect. We seldom realize the potential of our sense of touch, and we are usually unaware of its association with rhythm. Yet anyone familiar with the activity of caressing will immediately see the connection between touch and rhythm. In fact, tactile sensitivity begins in the rhythmic pulsating environment of the unborn child far in advance of the development of other senses."

Touching rhythmic strings as a way of developing our senses. Is the umbilical cord part of this process? Siri, I've been wanting to ask you if/how you see the importance of touch in relation to memory making?

Warmth,
Helene

Helene, forgive my silence.
I will write this afternoon after my writing day.
Hug, Siri

Here is a paper I wrote that was published not long ago on, yes, umbilical phantoms and art too and strings. See if it interests you. More later. Siri

I tried sending you this paper but it isn't in my sent box, so I am sending it again. I gave it as the opening address to the International Psychoanalytic Congress. Significant overlaps I think. Siri

Helene, this may be my third attempt to send this to you. If you now have three PDFs many apologies for inundation, but it simply doesn't show up as sent. The paper with interesting thoughts on umbilicus and art is below. Siri

Siri, I received the pdf, three of them, and know all too well when it doesn't show as sent. I just read the first few lines and the quote by Warburg and I wanted to eat it! That's just how I feel when I love a text. I will read it in full tomorrow. Evening greetings from Copenhagen. Helene

(Helene, my responses to your last questions and comments are below. I have written them directly into the email. I hope they inspire. Siri)

Siri, I have just read the paper and am sitting here in awe by the many overlaps between what you write and my current process, practice, recent pregnancy and birth of the twins. Did I tell you that, even though the doctors told us the twins had each their own separate placenta, at birth we saw that the placentas had grown together by a thin almost veil-like wall. The in-between state of the twins, bodies in bodies, and what you so beautifully write: "the other is felt in the body".

In cognitive science there has been a turn against the implicit Cartesian dualism of the so-called first generation and a return to the body. In the humanities too, especially in literature and art, the body and emotion have made a comeback as a corrective to earlier social constructionist theories that turned everything into text, including the body. I wanted you to read the paper precisely because it addresses our overlapping concerns.

Although betweenness has been theorized, as I point out – Husserl, Sigmund Freud, Martin Buber, Merleau-Ponty and, most notably, D.W. Winnicott in his analysis of play as an intermediate zone, its biological actuality before birth has been missed/repressed even by these thinkers. I suggest the repression is an anxious one that turns on longstanding misogyny in the culture. This is important to recognize.

You have an enviable position, I think, to look closely at your twins as they grow. I even mention Alessandra Piontelli's book on twins and her observations of the emergence of relations between fetal twins. I also caution against over-interpretation and assigning mental capacities to fetuses that are a form of projection. Nevertheless, twins represent a special between of shared uterine space. I read somewhere that fused placentas happen because there is not all that much room in there, but that may be a guess.

Siri, this rhythm you address, this phantom placenta with its pulsating umbilical cord. Consciously, I thought my recent work was (only) about memory systems and quipu strings, about language and the transmission of knowledge, but it is surely also about nurture, rhythm and birth of another/ the other. Namely about that between states. Pregnancy, birth, the period just before delivering a new artwork to the world, another type of birth.

I have another paper, called "Pace, Space, and the Other in the Writing of Fiction" in which rhythm is emphasized as crucial to the act of writing and narrative but rooted in the body and its rhythm – heartbeat, breath, menstruation, circadian rhythms, menstrual cycle, the human gait in relation to external rhythms – day and night, the tide, moon cycles etc. There I emphasize how, in late pregnancy, the mother's walk puts the fetus to sleep.

Her walk predates the infant's own walking and initiates the newborn's desire for rocking and being carried. The image you sent me from Kluddermor is most definitely an image of beings entwined in a limited space. The old metaphor of finishing a work of art and giving birth has never left us. In history it has been defined almost exclusively as masculine birth, Plato's superior birth; the woman relies merely on natural processes but the philosopher pops out an idea.

Also, the acknowledgement of flow attributed to rhythm that you address and that the dancers, glassblowers and myself have noticed when making the work. My recent interview with one of the dancers who felt the Kluddermor scene as being inside the womb, my intense reaction when filming that scene. As if the images had struck a point in me. A place that resonated so deeply that I had to recompose myself afterwards.

I suspect that it touched on what is not consciously remembered but nevertheless is carried around with us and is repeated in felt embodied experience.

This makes me think about my daughter Gaia. You know, she is crazy about her navel. She loves pointing at it, touching it, and pointing at me to show her mine and whoever is in the room with her. Until the other day, in the park, it was everyone we met.

Navels belong to all human beings, although we have different genitals. This commonality has also been overlooked, although Elizabeth Bromfen has written nicely about it.

It's fun to read up on Plato's *The Symposium* about the first people, the story you mention about the navel. How Apollo stretches the skin over the people cut in halves and at the end of his labors "tied up the one remaining opening to form what we call the navel".

But there is something dark about Aristophanes' comedy recounted in the text because, although I suspect Plato himself suppressed it, it is a parody of natural birth, not a preposterous story of fantastic doubling. It hides the two-person-in-one drama of late rotund pregnancy. No one before me has made this interpretation of *The Symposium*, which again speaks to the amnesia that surrounds pregnancy and birth in Western culture. The navel is the site of the lost physical connection, one which every human being had.

Your paper open with this beautiful quote by Aby Warburg: "The detachment of the subject from the object that establishes the room for abstract thought originates in the cutting of the umbilical cord." I have never heard this quote before, but I'm drawn to it and Warburg.

Warburg, who, as you know, suffered from a dramatic psychotic break, was a highly sensitive person who lived close to but also feared fusions and the loss of borders. The significance of this cut is that he believed it allowed for "Denkraum", the possibility of reflection, which is always separation, an ability to leave the self to think it. Warburg lived in fear of drowning in and being flooded by emotional immediacy, in which there are no distinctions.

In fact, for the last few years, my work always seems to carry a Warburgian touch to it. Warburg, with his *Mnemosyne Atlas*, his cloth-covered black plates. What has always intrigued me most about this atlas are the spaces between the images. The empty black areas, the between states where your eyes wander off until they are met with yet another image or rather correspondence.

Yes, arrangement and rearrangement depend on the separations, the spaces between through which contemplation can happen.

Michael Alain Michaud's book on Warburg, called *The Image in Motion*, proposes Warburg to be the founder of montage film. The moving from image to image, the hard cuts that allow for abstract thinking.

I read this book but do not remember Michaud writing this. It was a while ago. I have always thought of Warburg's motion as emotion, as a return in images of bodily postures, the "Pathosformel" that evoke feelings, often dangerous ones. He is radically ahistorical. Montage might be thought of in the same way, but the effect on the viewer is to create feeling through juxtaposition. I will have to look back at the book.

In my new video work the images are cut into darkness. Editing in an almost Warburgian-like manner. The images, like a breath, come and go. It has a rhythm.

I cannot wait to see it.

My body and mind have changed after giving birth to the twins and so my work changes.

As you know I argue fiercely that although we use these terms to distinguish what we call conscious thought from other bodily functions they are not separate. Mind cannot be reduced to brain or body because we are social beings engaged in a world with others which is essential not only to our thinking but to many systems of the body. Forgive me, but I think we have to begin to find other ways of speaking about ourselves that don't encourage habitual dualism.

I used to hang things from the ceiling, now the sculptures stand firmly planted on the floor. The viewer even has to bend over or squat down to see it properly. My perspective has changed. Also my materials are different now. I used to make them out of light and rather fragile materials. Now my sculptures are of steel, glass and soil. The exhibition space is dimly lit, moving in darkness, like the dancing bodies, that are "kludret sammen". I guess most artworks are autobiographical? At least mine are, as they are felt and formed (born) from an overtly embodied state of mind.

I think the change is interesting. It is as if your work is now earthbound and solid. I gave birth to my daughter Sophie 35 years ago, but I have always felt it was immensely important to my work and my understanding of what it means to be alive. When I pushed her out of me, I had an ecstatic feeling I had not had before and have not had since. Yes, I am sure it changed my work as it has changed yours. These choices in art come from a sense of "rightness".

That rightness is not about surveying all the possibilities and arriving at some rational decision about what is best. This is impossible. Rightness in art comes from an emotional or gut feeling that generates working decisions. In an essay called "Why One Story and Not Another?" I ask the same question about fiction. There are no actual limits on the imagination and yet an artist is compelled by a feeling of rightness and wrongness to take the narrative in one direction or another. With visual art it is the same process, except the materials are different. I am convinced all creative acts are generated from the same processes. In *Art as Experience*. John Dewey writes beautifully about this motion of becoming in art. "The live being recurrently loses and reestablishes equilibrium with his surroundings. The moment of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of intensest life." It is in the push and pull between the live being, who is in and of the world, that art is made, but the thing that is made, the work of art, is born of a particular experience, which stands out as distinct, and has a beginning, middle and an end, an arc. The art is a distillation of that experience in an object, a piece of music, or a book. You would like Dewey if you haven't already read him. There is the brilliant philosopher Susanne Langer too. "Art is the objectification of feeling."

Siri, I have to ask you, what were the overlaps that you detected? I would love to hear it in your words. Or whatever comes to your mind.

The overlaps are fairly obvious, I think. We are both artists in different fields. You are interested in science, as am I, but you are interested in the kind of science that recognizes complexity and development, as am I. Many years ago now, I began to feel that if I wanted to penetrate what it means to be a human being, I needed to know much more about biology. The brain boom was happening in the 1990s, and I began to read and attend lectures to find out as much as I could. After years of study, I realized that much of this science was reductive and philosophically naive. It had serious epistemological problems. The neuroscientists Antonio Damasio and Vittorio Gallese are notable exceptions, and both have become friends of mine. The biological meat of human experience cannot be cut off from psychic and social reality. We create taxonomies to help us think, but we must resist their reification. I feel strongly that the divisions we make among them are convenient. A "thought", for example, is a biological, psychological and social process all at once. Drawing the lines among these three is a way to focus on a single aspect of the thing being examined even though the three cannot be disentangled. What is needed is a philosophically sophisticated approach to biological processes, which doesn't turn them into machines but recognizes them as dynamic patterns with regularities.

Your interest in Claire Petitmengin's work in micro-phenomenology is another overlap between us. She is a researcher I have also followed, although you are better informed about her more recent turn,

which I understand to involve an interview that attempts to parse the diachronic and synchronic qualities of lived experience, as well as other qualities, including emotion and attention. The work comes out of phenomenology, a philosophy I have spent many years immersed inside. Petitmengin is attempting to create a scientifically viable way of getting at actual lived experience, what Husserl called *Erlebnis*. Husserl's idea of "bracketing" means we have to put aside our preconceptions, prejudices really, about how things are and discover our experience of them anew. Petitmengin was a student of Varela, whose work I also know well. I don't know what your reading experience has been or whether you read *The Embodied Mind*. Varela was one of the co-authors with Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch. That book was really important to me.

The point here is that these mutual attractions are signs of a commonality I have felt since I first saw your work and then met you. Art, I would say, whether visual or literary, can be a form of bracketing, a way to dig past the banal preconceptions that haunt all of us, the clichés and platitudes about other people and the world that fall like a veil over it. That veil, it seems to me, is becoming more and more dangerous. A big part of the danger is treating the human being as if it is an isolate, removed from other human beings and the ecological niches it depends on for existence. We are paying the price for this kind of thinking now. We were all absolute dependents on another person's body and entwined with that body, inside that body. No one remembers that time, but I suspect it lives in us in various ways; if an artist is open to unconscious processes, for example, your listening to your need to choose solid rather than airy materials, your connecting your pregnancy and birth experience to Kluddermor, a game of literal bodily overlap, the artistic process of merging what isn't automatically merged. Kandel's work on the snail was a momentous discovery in memory studies. Even a simple creature learns and remembers, but that memory is not reflectively self-conscious. The snail does not know that it knows. We too have bodily memories, however, and I think that is part of what you are after in this remarkable work.

PULSES

MICRO-PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

Micro-phenomenology is a method for guided introspection advocated by French philosopher Claire Petitmengin. The method is scientifically approved for (re)activating and opening the finer layers of a subjective experience. The statements below were collected by Helene Nymann and cognition scientist Katrin Heimann through interviews on the creation of the works for the exhibition *Knots of Ecphore*.

*There is a space in between the knots.
There is something in that space.*
— Helene

*I can kind of look through the gap, which is really strange.
It's a very strange feeling to be able to look through a knot.
Again, I have this sensation of another space and time.*
— Helene

*There is a sense of something lost. It is a kind of darkness;
not of emptiness but of something missing.*
— Helene

*At that moment, if you had asked me who I am,
I would not have answered with a name.
It was three bodies in a room, but one organism.*
— Jens, dancer

*It was the smell of skin just before it begins to sweat,
but not a sour smell. The smell of the carpet was like soil.
The smell of sand, somehow burned in a way.
The smell of hair. Like walking outside, just after
it has rained and you smell all that is fresh.*
— Jens, dancer

*It is kind of in the space between things that something
has been forgotten and it is trying to remember the links...
the links between things that have
been forgotten, abandoned or detached.*
— Helene

*A pulse that is like the pulse of breathing, like a buzzing
in the ears. I can hear my own body moving on the carpet,
the sound of fibers, and then I start to notice all
the metallic sounds in the space.*
— Jens, dancer

*I am trying to communicate with them.
They really open you up.*
— Helene

*My senses released. It was womb-like. It felt like how
it feels before you are born... to be back in the womb.*
— Jens, dancer

*I have wiggle room here with this left elbow, and now
I can actually follow this path, this elbow goes here
and then the whole situation dissolves.*
— Alma, dancer

*Corresponding your language into mine, into yours, into
ours, or into something we cannot quite know yet?*
— Anders, glassblower

*Like the night sky, this strange feeling of being lost
in space, this void. I feel like I float out there. I follow
the string and it ends abruptly; it has been torn
and I do not know where to go and it leaves me here.*
— Helene

*Omnipresent. I can see the temperature, I can see the
softness, I can see how quickly it moves.*
— Anders, glassblower

Releasing suddenly opens up options.
— Alma, dancer

*They allow us to see or focus on the spaces
we do not normally see.*
— Helene

It is a form of pulse that becomes a rhythm.
— Alma, dancer

*It was like peeling away the layers of oneself to be one with
the organism. It felt just like riding a wave, one after the
other, just like waves that keep tumbling in.*
— Jens, dancer

ECPHORIZING REMINDERS

Joe Dumit

How and what do we want to remember to remember? This question from Alexis Pauline Gumbs opens a pause in life, imagines a self who has forgotten, forgotten their ancestors, forgotten even to check their lists or charge their phone. Remembering seems fragile in this way, needing reinforcements, a ring or a knot tied around one's finger, a ceremony to support the kind of future we want to live in.

Perhaps memories are not information stored in a place in our brains like a USB stick. What if memories are conjured by a world that prompts them into life? We are reminded by a fragment of music of a childhood song that transports us to a forgotten moment. Or the face of a friend is not just familiar – their smile today suggests that this friend who we met yesterday has had a wish granted. We remember, more or less, this yesterday friend, and we are remembering into a story still being written, and rewritten. We time travel and fabulate.

Some neuroscientists and some poets talk of memory like a rock canyon or forest in which each encounter is like a blowing wind that whistles and rustles different sounds. The wind ecpborizes memories, evokes a response particular to the moment. So each wind prompts a different response, each response we call remembering. Each remembering changes us, who are body-mind canyons and forests in the making, therefore we are different the next time a wind blows. In other words, memories are not things inside of us, we are responses ecpborized by encounters.

Sometimes a parent's voice, a childhood nickname called across a room, a turn of phrase or dialect calls up a different person in us, a personality we used to be. These encounters remind us that none of our selves are finished. We have ties to the past, knots that entangle us in quantum ways; we are all too often in two times at once. These knots might keep us from becoming other, from growing up, from outgrowing the self we were. We think we have matured, until that voice, nickname, or kitchen smell, brings an old self out of us, conjured out of this same set of cells, this same brain fired by an old wind blowing like a spell, and a child reappears. Do we then exorcize this inner child or make friends with it?

These emotional knots help us to remember. Help us to remember to remember. Are they so different from the strings we tie around our fingers to remember to buy wine on the way home, or the notes we post on our mirror to remember to be kind to ourselves? The me who makes promises to remember, to call tomorrow, to exercise in the morning, to write regularly. I tie these knots to remind a future self, to bind that self to an intention of this self. As if in the act of intending to remember, I'm splitting myself and there is now a future me who needs to be reminded. But which me is reliable? If the knot is a bit loose it might fall off and then I'm not reminded; the future me is not to blame.

If I want to remember to call, to be kind, to take care, to care for others, to breathe and to love, why is this so hard? Maybe we should consider how there are forces interrupting remembering to remember, distracting us, keeping us busy so our reminders never function. Do we need to remember to remember climate change? Is climate change about memory? Is a newspaper or news website that does mention it a force for forgetting? I spend half an hour on social media and I am full – so ecpborized about a celebrity and about a friend's vacation that climate change is depolarized, along with coronavirus and war and domestic violence. How many knots do I need to tie? How many can I be present to?

Maybe this is how neurons work. Each one a little self, a subject, a world, sensitized and waiting, pulsing on its own and connected. Each pulse is then a reminder, a kick in the ass to the next one: Hey! Wake up, it's time, remember! Remember what? says the next. That's your job. Each neuron full of dendrite knots, each a mesh mother ecpborizing across a synapse, a gap of space and time, trying to remember to remember.

Maybe neurons aren't just pulsars though, maybe they tendrill out and caress each other into shapes. Maybe they hold hands for a bit, flirt, and play with knots. Maybe they are contact dancing, speculatively creating forms that wind can whistle through. Maybe imagination is memory engaged, ecpborizing reminders that the world can be otherwise.

Each of us can be a reminder to the next person to be kind. My friend Dorte Bjerre Jensen reminds me about so-called weak social ties – light encounters with people like shopkeepers that we see for a little bit once a week when we buy groceries. These light encounters nonetheless remind us to breathe, to smile, to remember we are connected. If replaced with automation, self-checkout, these chances to ecpborize each other are removed.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs reminds us that the world is helping us remember to remember. Marine mammals help her remember that breath is possible. Soil, too, is a reminder to remember. Pernille Bruhn invites us to remember to lay on the earth so it can remember through us. Soil remembers life and death as flows of compost and seeds and light and breath. Soil remembers to remember those who brought us here in these fleshy grounded bodies. We can also remember whose love brought us here to this place right now, a question I learned from Neema Githere. The soil we hold in our hands remembers to remember touch and care. We remember to remember so we can be different, so we can change this world into one we want to remember.

So we might pause and remember what we want to remember. To take this time to make a knot and place it in a container with others. I think of these knotted

glass continents as eidolons, avatars of memories, phantom or ghost structures that we double by placing our remembering there. In the double, in the knot, we charge and change our future selves. These glass reliquaries enact remembering to remember as social gesture, as ritual ecpborizing.

Helene Nymann would like to thank

FILM

Cinematographer: Troels Rasmus Jensen DFF
Gaffer: Phillip Sacht
Composer and Musician: Jeppe Brix
Dancers: Alma Toaspern, Hazuki Kajima, Jens Brøndum
Animator: Lasse Smith
Creative Consultant: Nadia Donnerborg
Post Production Coordinator: Bacon Production, Louise Ryge
Producer: The Lab, Emil Eskesen

Digital Post Production: Nordisk Film Shortcut
In-House Post Producer: Maggie Winther Hansen
Colorist: Nordisk Film Shortcut, Olesya Kireeva

STUDY

Professor: Head of Department, Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Andreas Roepstorff
Neuroscientist and Teacher of Microphenomenology: Katrin Heimann
Writer: Siri Hustvedt
Cultural Anthropologist, Scientist: Joe Dumit
Curator at The Danish National Museum: Anne-Mette Marchen Andersen

GLASS

Anders Raad Glass: Anders Raad
Holmegaard Glasværk
Glassblowers: Jonas Noël Niedermann, Iben Kielberg,
Peer Nielsen, Pierre Roger Ondongo, Lean Pedersen

STEEL

Frank Jensen, Alvilde Holm

Special thanks to choreographer and dancer, Tim Matiakis
Statens Værksteder for Kunst
O—Overgaden
Family and friends
Everyone who visited the exhibition and tied a knot

O—OVERGADEN

Overgaden neden vandet 17, 1414 København K,
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Helene Nymann
Knots of Ecphore

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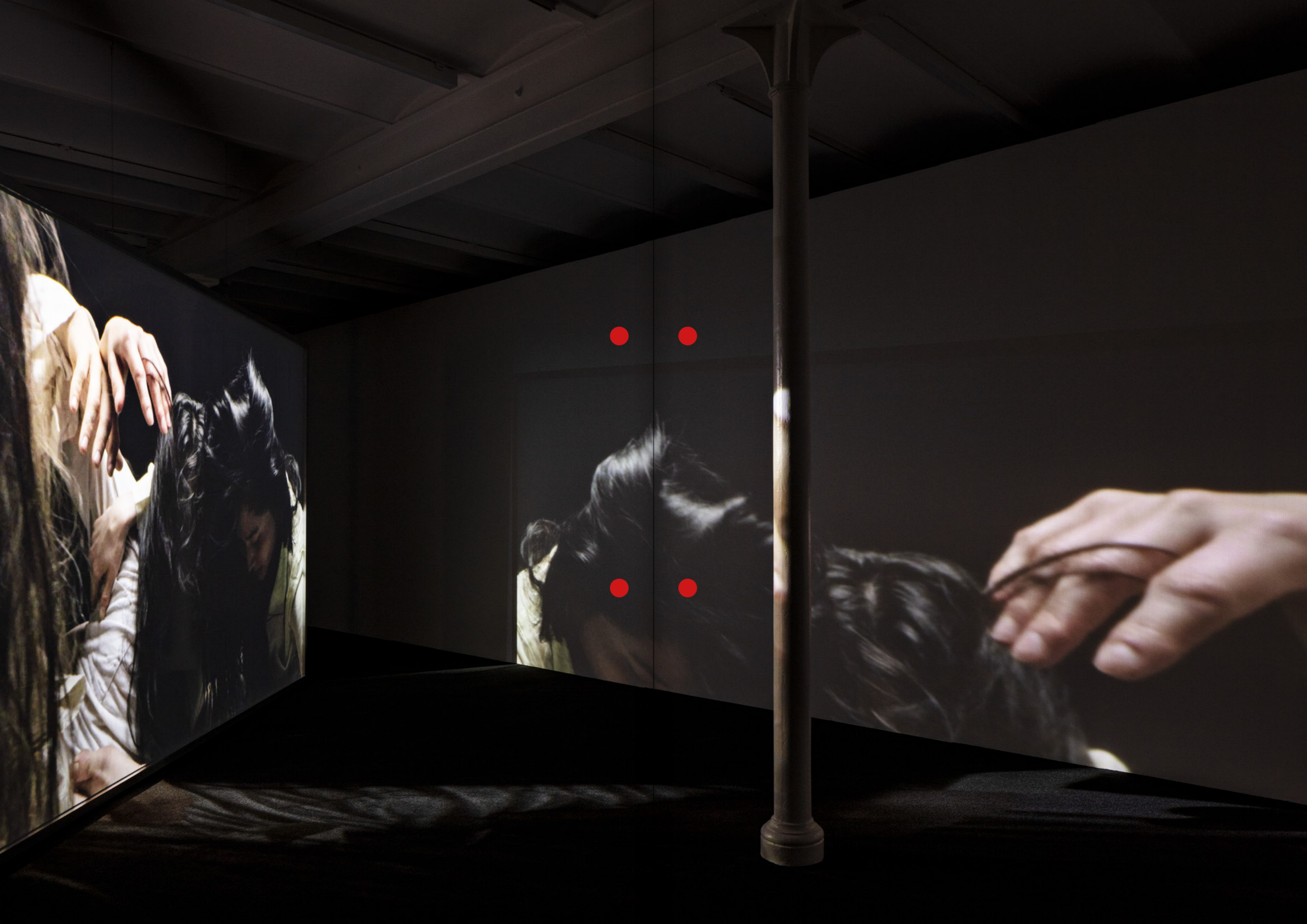
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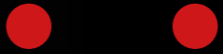
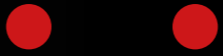


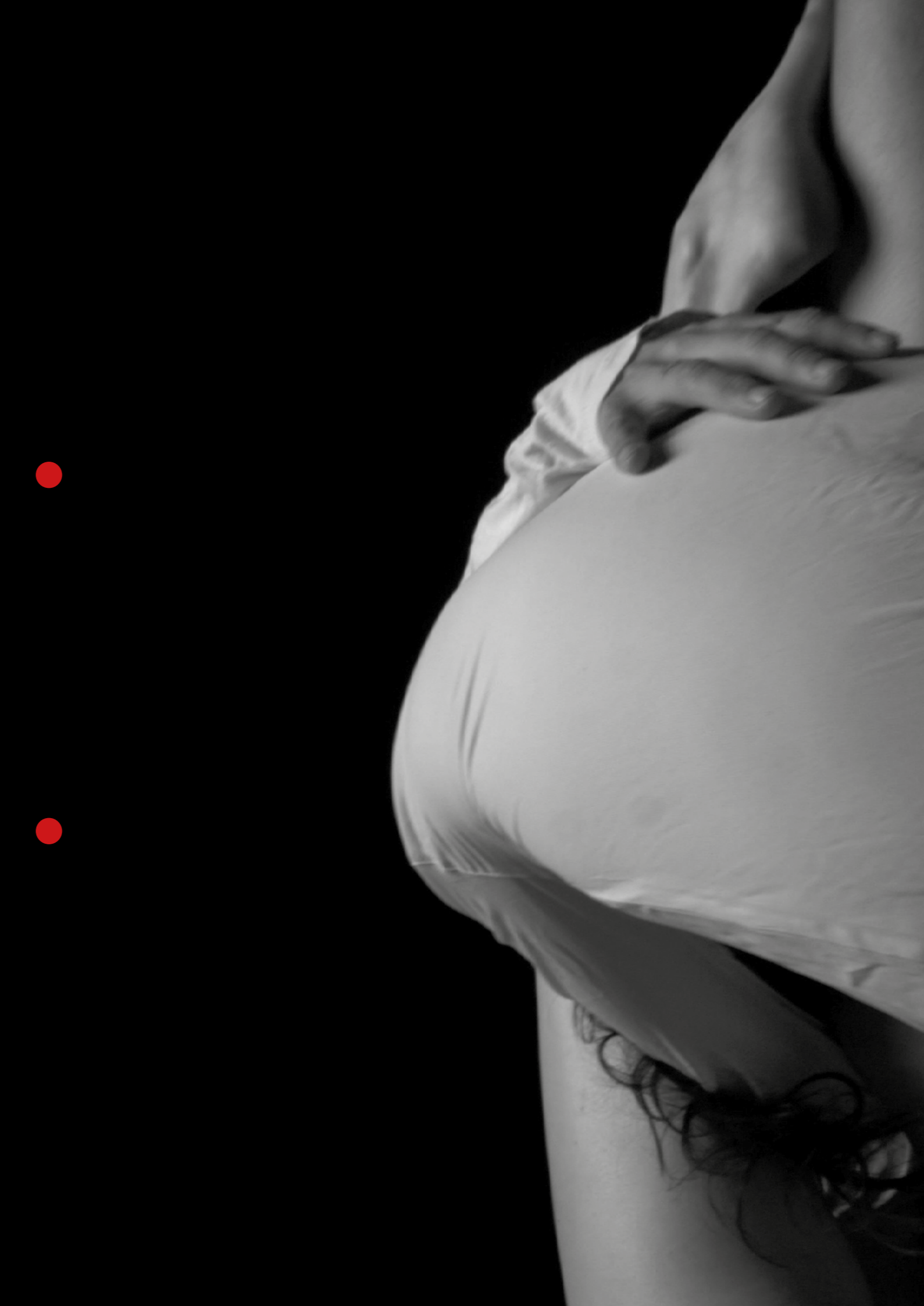
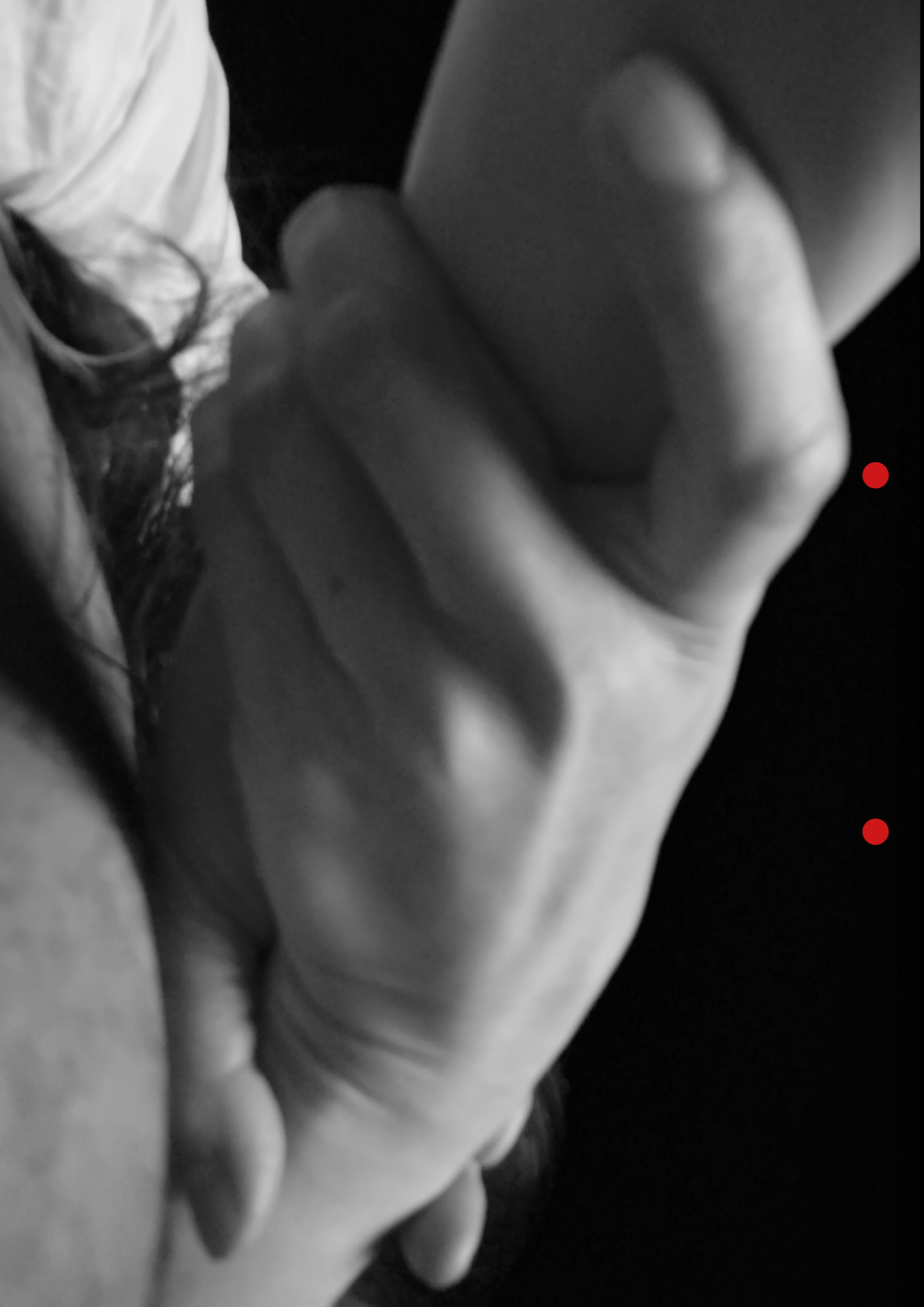












Helene Nyman vil gerne takke

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Forfatter: Siri Hustvedt
Kulturantropolog og videnskabs- og teknologiforsker: Joe Dumit
Museumssinspektør på Nationalmuseet: Anne-Mette Marchen Andersen

GLAS

Anders Kaad Glas: Anders Raad
Holmgaard Glasværk
Glaspusster: Jonas Noël Niedermann,
Iben Kielberg, Per Nielsen,
Pierre Roger Ondongo, Lean Pedersen

STÅL

Frank Jensen, Alvide Holm

Særlig tak til koreograf og danser Tim Matiakis
Stuens Værksteder for Kunst
O – Overgaden
Familie og venner

Alle der besøgte udstillingen og bandt en knude

O – OVERGADEN

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Helene Nyman

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EKFOR- ISERENDE PAMINDELSE

Joe Dumit

Visse hjerneforskere og visse poeter taler om erindring som en blyergløft eller en skov, hvor et møde er ligesom en vind, der blæser, den piber og rusker minder frem. Vinden ekforiserer* minder, vækker en reaktion, der er særlig for netop dette øjeblik. Enhver vind forårsager forskellige reaktioner, og reaktionerne kalder vi erindring. Enhver erindring forandrer os, der er i gang med at blive kløftet og skove af krop og sind, derfor er vi anderledes, næste gang en vind blæser. Med andre ord: minder er ikke ting, der findes inde i os, vi er reaktioner, der ekforiseres gennem forskellige møder.

Sommetider en forælders stemme, et barndomskælnavn, der bliver kaldt gennem et rum, en særlig vending eller dialekt vækker en anden person inde i os, en personlighed vi engang var. Disse møder minder os om, at vores selv aldrig er afsluttet. Vi har forbindelser til fortiden, knuder, der filtrer os sammen på kvantemåder: vi kan være i to tider på en gang. Disse knuder afholder os måske fra at blive andre, fra at blive voksne, fra at vokse ud af det selv, vi var. Vi tror, vi er blevet modne indtil en stemme, et kælnavn, en køkkenlugt, btinger et gammelt selv frem i os, fremryllet ud af disse samme celler, den samme hjerne er blevet tændt af en gammel vind, der blæser som en forbandelse – og så kommer et barn til syne igen. Uddriver vi så dette indre barn, eller bliver vi venner med det?

Disse emotionelle knuder hjælper os med at huske. Hjælper os med at huske at huske. Er de så anderledes end de snore, vi binder rundt om vores fingre for at huske at købe vin på hjemvejen, de sceller vi sætter på spjle for at huske at være gode mod os selv? Det jeg der lover at huske at ringe morgen, at træne i morgen, at skrive ofte. Jeg binder disse knuder for at minde et fremtidigt jeg om at forbinde det jeg til dette nuværende jeg. Som hvis jeg, i intentionen om at huske, kommer til at spalte mig selv, og der så nu findes et fremtidigt jeg, der har brug for en påmindelse. Men hvilket jeg er pålideligt? Hvis knuden er lidt løs, falder den måske af, og jeg får ikke påmindelsen, man kan ikke skyde skylden på det fremtidige jeg.

Hvis jeg vil huske at ringe, være venlig, drage omsorg, også for andre, at trække vejret og elske, hvorfor er det så så svært? Som om der er kræfter, der afbryder intentioner om at huske at huske, distraherer os, holder os beskæftiget, så påmindelserne aldrig fungerer. Behøver vi huske at huske klimaforandringerne? Handler klimaforandringer om erindring? En avis eller en nyheds-side, der nævner det, er det en glemslens kraft? Jeg bruger en halv time på sociale medier, og så er jeg mæt – så ekforiserer om en kendis eller en vens ferie, at klimaforandringer er underordnet, lige såvel som corona og krig og hustruvold er det. Hvor mange knuder skal jeg binde? Hvor mange kan jeg være et nærstående menneske for?

*direkte oversættelse af "ephorize": en betegnelse for at vække noget til live der eksisterer latent, eksempelvis erindringer.

Måske er det sådan, neuroner fungerer. Hver enkelt af dem er et lille jeg, et subjekt, en verden, følsom og afventende, pulserende og forbundet. Hver puls er en påmindelse, et spark i røven til den næste: Hey! Vagn op, det er tid, Husk! Husk hvad, siger den næste? Det må du selv finde ud af. Hver neuron er fuld af dendrit-knuder, hver og en af dem er kluddermor, der ekforiseres på tværs af synapserne, en kløft af rum og tid, et forsøg på at huske at huske.

Måske er neuroner ikke bare pulsarer, måske slynger de sig ud og kærtegner hinanden ind i nye former. Måske holder de i hånden et øjeblik, flirter, leger med knuder. Måske kontaktimeproviserer de, skaber udtryk og spekulative, udtryk som vinden kan pibe igennem. Måske er fantasien en travlt beskæftiget udgave af erindringen, ekforiserende påmindelser om, at verden kan være anderledes.

Vi kan alle sammen være en påmindelse for den næste person om at opføre sig ordentligt. Min ven Doris minder mig om såkaldt svage sociale bånd – flygtige møder med mennesker, eksempelvis butiksskspedienter, som vi ser lidt til en gang om ugen, når vi køber ind. Disse flygtige møder er ikke desto mindre en påmindelse om at trække vejret, at smile, at huske vi er forbundne. Hvis de erstattes med automatik, selvbetjening, bliver muligheden for at vække andre til live fjernet.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs minder os om, at verden rent faktisk hjælper os med at huske. Havpartedyr hjælper hende med at huske, at vejtrækning er mulig. Og jord er også en påmindelse om at huske. Min ven Pernille påpeger, at jord også husker. Og det kan være, vi husker at ligge på jorden, så den husker igennem os. Jord husker liv og død som strømme af kompost og frø og lys og vejtrækning. Jord husker at huske dem, der har fået os hertil i disse jordbundne, kødelige kroppe. Vi kan også huske hvis kærlighed, der har bragt os til dette sted og dette nu, et spørgsmål jeg har lært fra teoritiker og kunstner Necma Githere. Jorden vi holder i hænderne husker at huske betøring og omsorg. Vi husker at huske, så vi kan være anderledes, så vi kan forandre denne verden til en, vi gerne vil huske.

Så vi må holde en pause, og huske hvad vi gerne vil huske. Tage os tid til at binde en knude, og lægge den i en beholder sammen med andre. Jeg tænker på disse knudrede glaskontainer som idealbilleder, erindringsavatars, fantom- og spørgelssstrukturer, som vi fordobler ved at placere vores erindringer der. I fordoblingen, i knuden, oplader og ændrer vi vores fremtidige selv. Disse glasrøkvier skaber erindringen om at huske som social gestus, som en ritual vækkelse af minder.



PULSE

MIKROFÆNOMENOLOGISKE INTERVIEWS

Mikrofænomnologi er en metode til guidet introspektion, som den franske filosof Claire Petitmengin advokater for. Metoden er videnskabeligt anerkendt til at (gen)aktivere og åbne de finere lag af en subjektiv oplevelse. Nedenstående udsagn er indsamlet af Helene Nyman og kognitionsforsker Katrin Heimann gennem interview's omkring tilblivelsen af værkerne i udstillingen *Knobs of Ecphore*.

Det var lugten af hud lige før den begynder at svede, men ikke en sur lugt. Toppets lugt var ligesom jord. Lugten af sand, brændt på en eller anden måde. Lugten af hår. Ligesom at gå udenfor lige efter det har regnet, og du kan lugte alt det, der er friskt.

— Jens, danser

Der er et rum mellem knuderne. Noget findes i dette rum.

— Helene

Det på en måde i rummet mellem tingene, at noget er blevet glemt og forsøger at huske sine forbindelser. Forbindelserne mellem ting, der er blevet glemt, forladt eller frakoblet.

— Helene

Jeg kan på en måde kigge ind gennem mellemrummet, hvilket er meget mærkeligt. Det er en vildt underlig følelse at kunne kigge igennem en knude. Igen har jeg den her fornemmelse af et andet rum, en anden tid.

— Helene

En puls, der er ligesom en vejtrækning's puls, som en summen i ørerne. Jeg kan høre min egen krop bevæge sig på tæpper, lyden af fibre og så begynder jeg at lægge mærke til alle de metalliske lyde i rummet.

— Jens, danser

Der er en fornemmelse af noget tabt. En slags mørke, ikke af tomhed, men af noget, der mangler.

— Helene

Jeg prøver at kommunikere med dem. De åbner dig virkelig op.

— Helene

Hvis du havde spurgt mig, hvem jeg var i det øjeblik, havde jeg ikke svaret med et navn. Der var tre kroppe i rummet, men en organsisme.

— Jens, danser

Mine sanser blev sluppet fri. Det var livmoderagtigt. Det føltes, som det føltes ikke at være født. At være tilbage i livmoderen.

— Jens, danser

Alles dødsnær værende. Jeg kan se temperaturen, jeg kan se blodigheden, jeg kan se hvor hurtigt, det bevæger sig.

— Anders, glaspuster

Jeg har plads til den her venstre albue her, og nu kan jeg ren faktisk følge forløbet, albuen skal herhen, og så opløser hele situationen sig.

— Alma, danser

At slippe det fri åbner pludselig muligheder op.

— Alma, danser

At føre dit sprog ind i mit, ind i dit eget, ind i vores eller ind i noget vi ikke rigtig kan vide endnu?

— Anders, glaspuster

De gør det muligt for os at se eller fokusere på rum, vi normalt ikke ser.

— Helene

Det er en slags puls, der bliver en rytme.

— Alma, danser

...Ligesom nattehimlen, den her sære følelse af at være fortabt i rummet, i tomrummet. Jeg har det, som om jeg svæver derude. Jeg følger snoren, og den ender pludseligt, den er blevet revet over, og jeg ved ikke, hvor jeg skal gå hen, og det efterlader mig her.

— Helene

Det var som at skrevle lag af sig selv for at være et med organsismen. Det føltes som at ride på en bølge, den ene efter den anden, som følger, der bare blev ved med at vælte ind.

— Jens, danser

Vi skaber taksonomier, der kan hjælpe os med at tænke, men vi må modså trængen til at tingsliggøre dem. Jeg er overbevist om, at de skal vi skabe mellem taksonomierne, er praktiske. For eksempel er en tanke en biologisk, psykologisk og social proces på en gang. At trække linjer mellem disse tre er en måde at fokuser på et enkeltstående aspekt af det, der undersøges, selvom de tre begreber ikke kan vistes fra hinanden. Hvad der er brug for, er en filosofisk sofistikeret tilgang til biologiske processer, der ikke gør dem til maskiner, men anerkender dem som dynamiske mønstre underlagt visse regler.

Din interesse i Claire Pettimengins arbejde med mikrofænomologi er et andet overlap mellem os. Hun er en forsker, jeg også har fulgt, selvom du ved mere om hendes nyere arbejde – der, så vidt jeg forstår, involverer et interview, som både forsøger at fortolke den levede erfarings dialektiske og synkronne egenskaber, men også følger og opmærksomhed. Hendes arbejde udspringer fra fænomologien, en tanke jeg har været villigt opslagt af i mange år. Pettimengin forsøger at skabe en videnskabeligt holdbar metode til at nærmere sig den levede erfaring på det Husserl kaldte Erlebnis. Husserls ide om rubricering betyder, at vi er nødt til at sætte vores forundtagelser – måske i virkeligheden skabes af de samme processer. John Dewey skriver meget smukt om tilblivelsens begælselse indenfor kunst i *Art As Experience*. "The live being recurrently loses and reestablishes equilibrium with his surroundings. The moment of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of intensest life". Det er i skubdet og modtrækket mellem det levende væsen, væsenet der er i og af verden, at kunst opstår, men den ting, der skabes, kunstværket, er født ud af en specifik erfaring, der skiller sig ud og har en begyndelse, midte, slutning, en bue. Kunsten er en destillering af den oplevelse i form af et objekt, et stykke musik, en bog. Du ville kunne lide Dewey – hvis du ikke allerede har læst ham. Og så er der den vidunderlige filosof Susanne Langer. *Art is the Objectification of Feeling*. Siri, jeg er nødt til at spørge dig: Hvad var det for nogle overlap, du stod på? Jeg ville elske at høre om det med dine egne ord. Ellers hvad end, der falder dig ind.

Jeg synes, overlappene er ret åbenlyse. Vi er begge kunstnere på forskellig områder. Du er interesseret i videnskab, der anerkender komplekser interesser i videnskab, der samme er jeg, men du er også at begynde jeg at være et menneske, ville jeg ind i, hvad det vil sige at være et menneske, ville jeg være nødt til at vide meget mere om biologi. Under uddannelsesopsvinget i 1990'erne begyndte jeg at studere og tage til forelæsninger, for at lære så meget jeg kunne. Efter flere års studier gik det op for mig, at meget af den her videnskab var reduktiv og filosofisk naiv. Den havde seriøse epistemologiske problemer. Hjernerforskerne Antonio Damasio og Vittorio Gallese er mine venner. Den menneskelige erfarings biologiske kød kan ikke afskæres fra den sociale virkelighed.

Warburg, der, som du ved, led af dramatiske psykiske nedbrud, var en vældig sensitiv person, han levede indelukket, men frygtede også fusioner, tab af grænser. Det bemærkelsesværdige er, at han mente, det næste muliggjorde et såkaldt Denkraum: muligheden for et refleksionsrum, hvilket altid kræver adskillelse, en evne til at forlade selvet for at kunne tænke det. Warburg levede med frygten for at drukne i eller blive oversvømmet af følelsesmæssig umiddelbarhed, hvori der ikke findes nogen afgrænsninger.

Warburg levede at hænge ting fra loftet, nu står skulpturerne solidt på gulvet. Beskueren er nødt til at bukke sig ned eller sidde på hug for at se dem ordentligt. Mit perspektiv har ændret sig. Mine materialer er også anderledes nu. Jeg plejede at skabe værker af lys og ret skrobefige materialer. Nu er mine skulpturer glas, stål, jord. Som du ved, er det min inderlige overbevisning, at selvom vi anvender disse begreber til at skelne den såkaldt bevistste tanke fra andre kropsfunktioner, så er det i virkeligheden ikke adskilt. Sindet kan ikke reduceres til hjernen eller krop, eftersom vi er sociale væsener, der er engagerede i verden sammen med andre, hvilket er afgørende, ikke bare for vores tænkning men for vores kropes systemer. Jeg tror, vi er nødt til at begynde at finde andre måder at tale om os selv på, der ikke afføder den sædvanlige dualisme.

Som du ved, er det min inderlige overbevisning, at alle mennesker har navet, selvom vi har forskellige konesorger. Dette fællesskab er også blevet overført, på trods af at Elizabeth Bromfen har skrevet rigtig fint om det. Det er sjovt at læse op på Platons *Symposium* om de første mennesker, historien du nævnte om navet. Hvordan Apollo strakte huden udover mennesker delti i to, og når hans arbejde var færdigt "bandt den tilbageværende åbning sammen for at forme det, vi kalder navet". Men der er noget dybt ved Aristophanes komedie, som den bliver genfortalt i teksten, for selvom jeg mistænkte at Platon selv undertrykte det, er det en slags parodi på naturlige fødsler, ikke en urimelig historie om fantastiske fordoblinger. Ingen har lavet denne fortolkning af *Symposium*, før jeg gjorde det, hvilket også siger noget om det hukommelsesstab, der omgærdet graviditet og fødsel i den vestlige kultur. Navet er selve disse tabe fysiske forbindelsers sted, noget alle mennesker har.

Din artikel begynder med det her smukke Aby Warburg-citat: "The detachment of the subject from the object that establishes the room for abstract thought originates in the cutting of the umbilical cord" (Gombrich 1986, 246). Jeg har aldrig hørt det før, men jeg er virkelig drager af det og af Warburg.

Warburg, der, som du ved, led af dramatiske psykiske nedbrud, var en vældig sensitiv person, han levede indelukket, men frygtede også fusioner, tab af grænser. Det bemærkelsesværdige er, at han mente, det næste muliggjorde et såkaldt Denkraum: muligheden for et refleksionsrum, hvilket altid kræver adskillelse, en evne til at forlade selvet for at kunne tænke det. Warburg levede med frygten for at drukne i eller blive oversvømmet af følelsesmæssig umiddelbarhed, hvori der ikke findes nogen afgrænsninger.

Faktisk er det som om, mine værker de seneste år altid har lidt Warburg i sig. Warburg med sit *Mnemosyne Atlas*, hans stofbetrukne sorte plader. Det, der altid har fascineret mig mest ved hans atlas, er rummene mellem billederne. De tomme, sorte områder, disse mellemsteder som øjnene vandrer hen til, inden de møder et andet billede eller en anden sammenhæng.

Gennem historien er metarolen stort set udelukkende maskulin, Platons ide om den højrestående fødsel – kvinden læner sig udelukkende op ad naturlig proces, mens filosofien kan sprøjte ideer ud. Der er også anerkendelsen af rytme i forhold til flow, som du papere, og som danserne, glassusterner og jeg selv har lagt mærke til, da værket blev skabt. Mit seneste interview med en af danserne, gennem samtalen på beskueren handler om at skabe følelser men effekten på beskueren handler om at skabe følelser gennem sammenstillinger. Jeg bliver nødt til at læse den bog igen.

I mit nye videværk kipper jeg mørke ind mellem billederne. At klappe på en næsten Warburgsk måde. Billederne kommer og går, som en veftrækning. De har en rytme. Jeg kan ikke vente med at se det.

Min krop og mit sind har ændret sig efter jeg har født, og derfor ændrer mit arbejde sig også.

Som du ved, er det min inderlige overbevisning, at alle mennesker har navet, selvom vi har forskellige konesorger. Dette fællesskab er også blevet overført, på trods af at Elizabeth Bromfen har skrevet rigtig fint om det. Det er sjovt at læse op på Platons *Symposium* om de første mennesker, historien du nævnte om navet. Hvordan Apollo strakte huden udover mennesker delti i to, og når hans arbejde var færdigt "bandt den tilbageværende åbning sammen for at forme det, vi kalder navet". Men der er noget dybt ved Aristophanes komedie, som den bliver genfortalt i teksten, for selvom jeg mistænkte at Platon selv undertrykte det, er det en slags parodi på naturlige fødsler, ikke en urimelig historie om fantastiske fordoblinger. Ingen har lavet denne fortolkning af *Symposium*, før jeg gjorde det, hvilket også siger noget om det hukommelsesstab, der omgærdet graviditet og fødsel i den vestlige kultur. Navet er selve disse tabe fysiske forbindelsers sted, noget alle mennesker har.

Din artikel begynder med det her smukke Aby Warburg-citat: "The detachment of the subject from the object that establishes the room for abstract thought originates in the cutting of the umbilical cord" (Gombrich 1986, 246). Jeg har aldrig hørt det før, men jeg er virkelig drager af det og af Warburg.

Udstillingsrummet er dunkelt oplyst, man bevæger sig i mørke ligesom kunstværker er autobiografiske? Mine er i hvert fald, de er mærket og fornet (født) fra en åbenlyst legemliggjort sindstilstand.

Warburg levede at hænge ting fra loftet, nu står skulpturerne solidt på gulvet. Beskueren er nødt til at bukke sig ned eller sidde på hug for at se dem ordentligt. Mit perspektiv har ændret sig. Mine materialer er også anderledes nu. Jeg plejede at skabe værker af lys og ret skrobefige materialer. Nu er mine skulpturer glas, stål, jord. Som du ved, er det min inderlige overbevisning, at selvom vi anvender disse begreber til at skelne den såkaldt bevistste tanke fra andre kropsfunktioner, så er det i virkeligheden ikke adskilt. Sindet kan ikke reduceres til hjernen eller krop, eftersom vi er sociale væsener, der er engagerede i verden sammen med andre, hvilket er afgørende, ikke bare for vores tænkning men for vores kropes systemer. Jeg tror, vi er nødt til at begynde at finde andre måder at tale om os selv på, der ikke afføder den sædvanlige dualisme.

Som du ved, er det min inderlige overbevisning, at alle mennesker har navet, selvom vi har forskellige konesorger. Dette fællesskab er også blevet overført, på trods af at Elizabeth Bromfen har skrevet rigtig fint om det. Det er sjovt at læse op på Platons *Symposium* om de første mennesker, historien du nævnte om navet. Hvordan Apollo strakte huden udover mennesker delti i to, og når hans arbejde var færdigt "bandt den tilbageværende åbning sammen for at forme det, vi kalder navet". Men der er noget dybt ved Aristophanes komedie, som den bliver genfortalt i teksten, for selvom jeg mistænkte at Platon selv undertrykte det, er det en slags parodi på naturlige fødsler, ikke en urimelig historie om fantastiske fordoblinger. Ingen har lavet denne fortolkning af *Symposium*, før jeg gjorde det, hvilket også siger noget om det hukommelsesstab, der omgærdet graviditet og fødsel i den vestlige kultur. Navet er selve disse tabe fysiske forbindelsers sted, noget alle mennesker har.

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OVERLAP

BREVUDVEKSLING MELLEMS SIRI HUSTVEDT
OG HELENE NYMANN, SOMMEREN 2022

Kæreste Siri,

For at være helt ærlig er jeg blevet ret besat af khipu-strukturerne, og skaber nye forestillinger om, hvad der var, og hvad der af den grund måske kommer. Noget ander, jeg elsker ved khipuen, udover det taktile og det kropslige, er, at knuderne er blevet håndteret af mennesker, og at de alle fungerer i samspil med hinanden. At forbinde de hårdføre knuder med den glatte sønsngl Aplysia Californica, det her hermafroditvæsen, det gemmen Erik Kandel's eksperimenter viser os, at det også har hukommelse og samtidig underretter det fascinerende ved neuroplasticitet. Altså at vores kroppe er formbar, og at vi også er i stand til at forandre os. En sidste komponent i mit værk er de mikrofænomnologiske interviews. Interviewteknikken er blandt andet forankret i neurobiologen Francisco Varelas arbejde, og føres i dag videre af Claire Pettimenghin. Mikroænomnologi er en slags "psykologisk mikroskop", som udvider rammerne for undersøgselsen af subjektive erfaringer. For første gang har jeg siddet ned og lavet timelange interviews. Der kom nogle virkelig interessante udslag ud af at interviewe danserne fra mit videoværk. De beskrev deres oplevelser i detaljer indtil det punkt, hvor ord nærmest ikke rakte længere. For hvordan beskriver man, uden at gribe til flygtige koncepter, hvordan det føles at bevæge sin arm? Eller at være kludret sammen med andre, bevæge sig som en krop, at holde andres vægt og stole på, at de også holder din?

Siri, jeg vil gerne spørge dig om noget, der virkelig har grebet mig i min research og i forbedringsen til denne udstilling. Om de ting, vi glæmmer, og så bruger det mest af vores liv på at genfinde eller forsølle os på. I forhold til khipuen, men også i forhold til almindelige, små begivenheder i vores privatliv. Oplevelser der fortoner sig. Efterlåder os med en slags huller, eller det jeg er begyndt at opfatte som mellemrum. Jeg tænker på, hvordan du opfatter de ting, du, glæmmer? Hvor tror du disse oplevelser forsvinder hen? Tør du, glæmte ting kunne komme tilbage, hvis nogen stillede dig de rigtige spørgsmål eller satte gang i bestemte sansendtryk? Og i et bredere perspektiv: hvad med de ting vi som samfund har glemt eller fortrængt?

Din landskvinde Linn Ullmann sagde for nylig i et interview i Weckendavisen "Det er næsten komisk, men der går ganske lang tid, før jeg forstår, at det jo for pokker er det, vi gør. Det, jeg gør: Fortæller dig det i de mellemrum, i de huller, der er i vores erindring og fortælling. På den måde er glæmsen ikke et sort hul, men et lysende rum af muligheder." Siri, alle gode tanker til dig fra tvillingerne og mig her i København, forvarsmekanismen? Jeg opfatter også khipu-knuderne som en slags neuronal netværk, der udsender signaler/elektricitet og former synapsen, ja, de ældgamle knuder er forfærende, og som du nævnte, anvender jeg dem i forbindelse med sneglen, både på grund af sammenfaldene i deres former, men også fordi de begge har ændret min opfatelse af den lineære og den gør det muligt for mig at forestille mig andre narrativer og verdener. På samme måde med sneglen. Det her mystiske lille væsen. Hvorfor blev dens neuroner så store? Og hvorfor spøjter den det smukkeste blæk ud som forvarsmekanismen? Jeg opfatter også khipu-knuderne som en slags præcis som Kandel opdagede det hos sneglen.

Alt det bedste fra mig i Brooklyn, Siri

Tusind tak for dit svar

Kære Helene, Det er virkelig interessant, det du laver, og jeg vil gerne svare dig ordentligt. Jeg ved en lille smule om khipuer. Jeg blev interesseret i dem, da jeg researchede skriftsystemer, hvad der konstituerer et skriftsystem osv. Jeg ved, at nogle forskere mener, der både findes narrativer og regnskabsystemer inde i knuderne, men jeg er virkelig ikke ekspert. At farver og knuder har mening er vanvittig forfærende, og ligesom bøger de håndgribelige minder, der lever uden for kroppen.

Kæreste Siri, Ud fra hvad jeg har læst kendte Waddington også til Semons arbejde og selv erindringen og det at lære, indkapslet i et ret simpelt væsen. Aplysia-sneglen har kun 20.000 neuroner, der kan ses med det blotte øje, den er ideel til forskning. Jeg foresliller mig, at du godt kan lide sneglens form i relation til knuderne, eller måske er det ikke så bogstaveligt? Erindring er fascinerende, og jeg bliver selv ved med at vende tilbage til den. Neuroplasticiteten er bare et aspekt af dynamiske biologiske organismer, den har en vis regelbundethed, men ingen reelle regler. Forsøgt på at definere regler har aldrig virket. I biologi er uforanderlighed lig med død. At blive i homøostasen er lig med liv, men bibeholdelsen kræver reaktioner på konstant uro og en interaktion med omgivelserne. Tag for eksempel C. H. Waddington, en tidligere, børnem biolog, der var lig noget for dig. Jeg er netop gået i gang med at læse om mikrofænomnologi, selvom Hussertl og Varela er gamle venner. Det lader til, at Pettimenghin, hvis arbejde om mikrofænomnologi, selvom Hussertl og Varela er mere generiske aspekter af den her slags oplevelser. Jeg længe har beundret, arbejder med at afdekke de andre væsener? Jeg er enig. Der er forskellige former for subjektivitet. Men måske mener du erfaring? At måder, hvorpå erfaring integreres, kan antage mange former. Kluddermor findes også i Norge; at være mennesker sammen. Det er vidunderligt. Vi gjorde det også her i USA, men jeg kan ikke huske, hvad vi kaldte det. Jeg glæder mig til at se billedet.

Ud fra hvad jeg har læst kendte Waddington også til Semons arbejde og selv Warburg navngav sit *Mnemosyne Atlas* i tråd med Semons begreber.

I min måske lidt klodsede sætning om kroppe og subjektrens former tænkte jeg også på andre væsener. Alle de sansende væsner der findes, et helt andet sans- og erfaringsrige.

Jeg tror også, det er det. Pettimenghin og mikrofænomologien har vist mig, at alle tidens øjeblikke breder sig ud ligesom grene eller rødder. Det er i kontakt med så mange aspekter af væren. I går lavede jeg et mikrofænomologisk interview med en af danserne. Jeg bad ham om at beskrive en oplevelse i detaljer, en der havde gjort mærkbart indtryk på ham under opførelserne. Han nævnte, at han følte sig tryk under kluddermorsscenerne, flittet sammen med de andre, nærmest som at være inde i en livmoder. Da vi forsøgte at gå dybere ind i det, talte han om følelsen af at blive holdt om, og at alle de andre bevægsler simpelthen føltes som en samlet organisme i bevægelse.

Jeg har vedhæftet et billede af kluddermorscenen.

Kærligst,

Helene

Kæreste Siri,

Lige en supplerende email. Jeg fandt det her smukke citat fra bogen *Mathematics of the Invas* forleden dag:

"The khipu maker composed his recording by tracing figures in space as when, for example, he turned a string in an ever changing direction in the process of tying a knot. All of this was not preparatory to making a record; it was part of the very process of recording. The stylus and the brush were held in the hand, their use had to be learned, and the learning involved a sense of touch. But the khipu maker's way of recording – direct construction – required tactile sensitivity to a much greater degree. In fact, the overall aesthetic of the khipu is related to the tactile: the manner of recording and the recording itself are decidedly rhythmic: the first in the activity, the second in the effect. We seldom realize the potential of our sense of touch, and we are usually unaware of its association with rhythm. Yet anyone familiar with the activity of carressing will immediately see the connection between touch and rhythm. In fact, tactile sensitivity begins in the rhythmic pulsating environment of the unborn child far in advance of the development of other senses."

Indenfor den kognitive videnskaber er der opstået en bevægelse imod den såkaldt første generations implicit kartesiske dualisme og en tilbagevenden til kroppen. Også inden for humaniora, særligt litteratur og kunst, er kroppen og følsomheden genopblomstret som en slags korrigering af tidlige, socialkonstruktivistiske teorier, der gjorde alting til tekst, inklusiv kroppen. Jeg ville have dig til at læse artiklen, netop fordi den adresserer vores overlappende fokuspunkter.

Selvom der, som jeg påpeger, er blevet teoretiseret over disse mellemrummssteder – Husertl, Freud, Buber, Merleau-Ponty og særligt Wittgenort i sin analyse af legen som en mellemstation, er begreberets biologiske aktualitet for fødslen blevet overset/undertrykt, selv af disse tænkere. Min påstand er, at undertrykkelsen er en angst, der beror på langvarig – og kulturtelt betinget misogynt. Det er vigtigt at anerkende. Du har en misundelsesværdig mulighed, synes jeg, for at observere dine tvillinger på nært hold, mens de vokser. Jeg har nævnt Piomellis bog om tvillinger og hendes observationer af, hvordan relationer opstår mellem tvillinger. Jeg synes, man skal være varsom med at overfortolke fosterets mentale kapacitet, det er en form for projektion. Ikke desto mindre repræsenterer tvillinger et særligt mellemrum på grund af deres delte livmoderum. Jeg læste et sted, at moderkager i de tilfælde smelter sammen, fordi der slet ikke er nok plads derinde, men måske er det bare et gæt.

Siri, den rytme du adresserer, fantommoderkagen med dens pulserende navlestreg. Min bevidsthed røbede, at mine nye værker (kun) drøjede sig om hukommelsessystemer og khipusnore, om sporg og vidensudveksling. men det handler i den grad også om rytme, om at nære og føde en anden. Især om de der mellemstadiet. Graviditet, fødsel, tiden lige før et kunstværk er klar til verden, en anden slags fødsel.

Siri

Helene, det er muligvis mit tredje forsøg på at sende dig det her. Hvis du har tre PDF'er nu, beklager jeg oversvømmelsen, men den står simpelt hen bare ikke som sendt. Artiklen med spændende tanker om navlestreng og kunst er herunder.

Helene

Aftenhilsner fra København.

Siri, nu har jeg læst artiklen og sidder og er forbløffet over de mange overlap mellem det, du skriver og min arbejdsproces, praksis, nyhede graviditet og tvillingernes fødsel. Foralt jeg dig, at selvom lægerne fortalte os, at tvillingerne havde deres moderkage, opdagede vi ved fødslen, at moderkagerne var vokset sammen omkring en tynd, næsten slørlignende hinde? Det her mellemrumssadie der er tvillingernes, kroppe i kroppe, og det du så smukt skriver:

"Man mærker den anden i kroppen"

Knots of Ecpnore

FORORD

via mikroteknologiske interviews udført af kunstneren og en opfordring til at binde knuder på vokseblagte snore, der fysisk forsegler et personligt mind, som den besøgende efterlader i udstillingen. Ved at inddrage ny forskning indenfor bl.a. antropologi, arkæologi, biologi og neurovidenskab undersøger Nymann hukommelsens porøsitet og de påvirkninger – ydre som indre – der er med til at stadfæste en erindring. Vores erindringer formes ikke kun af kognitive forstælses, men stimuleres i allerhøjeste grad også af ydre omgivelser – smage, dufte, lyde, fornemmelser, vejret, farver. En opdagelse, der allerede i forrige århundrede blev defineret af biologen Richard Semon gennem hans begreb ”ecphore”, og som direkte modsagde det hidtidige systematiske fraver af kroppens sensorium, når det kommer til at forstå erindringens mekanisme. For Nymann er det en central pointe, at menneskets hjerne er fuldætnet plastisk. Blød, modtagelig, modellerbar – i forandring og transformation gennem hele livet. Netop derfor er vores hjerner også i stand til at gendbese, om-erindre og genskrive historier, og i denne erkendelse ligger der, ifølge Nymann, uændede muligheder.

Nærværende udgivelse er del af en publikationsrække, som O – Overgaden siden foråret 2021 har produceret som et tekstabaseret og visuelt supplement til kunstnerens soloudstillinger. Udgivelserne er muliggjort gennem støtte fra Augustinus Fonden, som skal have en hjertelig tak. Jeg vil gerne takke Statens Kunstfond, Beckett Fonden, Arne V. Schleschs Fond og Novo Nordisk Fonden for at støtte, udstillingen og vores dygtige grafiske designere fra fanfare, César Rogers and Miquel Heras Gómez, for deres altid smukke arbejde. En stor tak til O – Overgadens in-house redaktør Nanna Friis, der har redigeret denne publikation og til O – Overgadens øvrige team, der sammen med Helene har muliggjort udstillingen; Vera Østrup, Toke Martins, Owen Armour, Malte Linnebjerg, Line Brædder og Maria Kamilla Larsen. Den allerstørste og varmeste tak til Helene Nymann for de gode samtaler, det glimrende samarbejde og ikke mindst den smukke og velkomne udstilling.

Aukje Lepoutre Ravn,
O – Overgaden, august, 2022.
konstitueret leder,

Gennem de seneste år har O – Overgaden fokuseret sit arbejde på at præsentere nye, kunstneriske stemmer – yngre som ældre – med det tilfældes, at de ikke har haft deres institutionelle gennemtrud endnu. Som billedkunstner er Helene Nymann langt fra et ubeskrevet blad. Hun tilhører skaren af anerkendte og etablerede danske samtidskunstnere med en tydelig stemme og en aktiv international karriere allerede. Så hvorfor viser vi Nymann på O – Overgaden nu?

Det gør vi, fordi Helene Nymann er en af de få kunstnere i Danmark, der i øjeblikket er i færd med at tage en ph.d. i kunstnerisk forskning. Kunstnerisk eller praksisbaseret forskning som det også kaldes, er en forholdsvis ny disciplin herhjemme, og begræbter dækker over en akademisk videreuddannelse af kunstneren, hvor der fokuseres på kunstpraksisser som vidensproducerende handling. Det er en helt unik mulighed for kunstneren at få den nødvendige tid til at eksperimentere og gå i dybden med nye lag i vedkommendes praksis – og at gøre dette i sparring med forskere og fagfolk fra andre discipliner og fagområder. For O – Overgaden er det interessant at præsentere vores publikum for samtidskunst, der er et produkt af en dybere kunstnerisk forskning, og som reflekterer nuancerede dialoger på tværs af videnskaber. Fordi forskning er fundamentalt for udviklingen af vores samfund, er det spændende at få indsigt i de forskningsbidrag, som udspringer af kunst, men omvendt også interessant at se nærmere på, hvordan kunstværkets tilblivelse formes af forskningens rammesætning.

Udstilling *Knots of Ecpnore* på O – Overgaden er et kunstnerisk nedslag i Helene Nymanns flerårige forskning i hukommelsesmeknikker og erindringsmekanismer samt en aktiv del af Nymanns fortsatte forskning. Udstillingen præsenterer helt nyproducerede og til dels eksperimenterende værker i form af den poetiske og skulpturel smukke videoinstallation *Kluddermor*, en serie store, abstrakte glasskulpturer nedskænkede i muldbelagte stalker og en åben invitation til publikumsinteraktion

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