

Across and Beyond  
*Body and Landscape in Translation*





**Across and Beyond**  
*Body and Landscape in Translation*

## Table of Contents

5	<b>Foreword</b> Valentina Sansone
9	<b>Across and Beyond: An Introduction</b> Karolina Aastrup, Paulina Granat, Isabelle Ribe
15	<b>displacement of time and resistance</b> Joi Wengström
25	<b>Futile Endeavors</b> Malin Lin Nordström
35	<b>WRITE BRAID MILK</b> Elina Birkehag
49	<b>Rymd — فضا</b> Shiva Anoushirvani
65	<b>What Is a Photograph?</b> Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole
75	<b>Mis-Translations</b> Axel Gagge
85	<b>Watertalks</b> tm
95	<b>Back to Back</b> Karin Keisu & Josse Thuresson
113	<b>Utan titel</b> Timimie Märak



## Appendix

Space — فضا	118
Translation of Rymd — فضا by Shiva Anoushirvani Tilda Dalunde	
to whom it may concern	124
Translation of till vem det berör by tm Tilda Dalunde	
It's All True, All the Time	126
Notes on translating till vem det berör/to whom it may concern by tm Tilda Dalunde	
References	128
List of Contributors	129
Colophon	132

## **Valentina Sansone**

Valentina Sansone is Publication Course Leader at the International MA in Curating Art, Stockholm University, and a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths University of London, UK.

## Foreword

“Studies in Curating Art” was founded in 2014 by the former Chair of programme Prof. Jeff Werner within the frame of the International MA in Curating, including Art, Management and Law in the Department of Culture and Aesthetics at Stockholm University. By primarily aiming to bring attention to curatorial research, as well as to the connections between curatorial theory and practice, the series expanded the students’ research questions and ideas into an editorial project, and was therefore originally produced in the last part of their course of study.

With the release of the series’ seventh edition and for the last eight years, the ongoing editorial collection has intentionally maintained this original structure. In addition, the collection has widened its horizons through the many essays, the critical and curatorial positions and questions, and the graphic designs featured in each of the past editions, in an attempt to present necessary questions raised by publishing as a curatorial practice.

As a result of the work undertaken within the frame of the *Publication* course, the production of each book in the series has also represented the opportunity to reflect on the practice of publishing and on the numerous relations that this incorporates. This year, publisher and visual artist Anna Kleberg and publisher and graphic designer Sandra Praun have shared their thoughts on their respective viewpoints on visual art, theory, and editorial projects with the course participants.

The editors of the 2022 edition of “Studies in Curating Art”, Karolina Aastrup, Paulina Granat, and Isabelle Ribe have worked with graphic designer Simon Nilsson to develop their editorial project, stemming from the course’s open and initial invitation, which was to reflect collectively upon the idea of ‘translation’.

Over the last few months, the work of the editors has undergone the conditions of the currently changing social and political circumstances, and has, in addition, experienced

the limitations imposed on their practice as a result of the apex of the Covid-19 pandemic for almost the whole duration of the programme. Still somehow, questions around the reasons to produce a book seemed even more relevant. From this initial issue arose further debates, such as what perspective can be affirmed from under-represented and marginalised viewpoints? What is possible to translate and what remains untranslatable? Is translation a form of representation? Have any of the elements which compose a text been muted in the translation, or have they turned into passive components?

In the process of commissioning the texts for their book, doing interviews, and editing the material shared by the many artists, writers, and the graphic designer involved in the production of this editorial project, the editors have gone through the core of the problematic nature of translating. In the shift produced by moving from one practice, one language, and one perspective to another, still something is inevitably lost. As a result, it is in the space for negotiation, in the search for a vocabulary that is yet to be postulated, in the claim for neglected sounds and languages that the curatorial practice has occurred. It resides in the inability to define with one's own words a condition, or a state of mind, in the attempt to interpret and to give birth to a new, autonomous entity that originates from this shift.

In November 2021, just a few weeks before this year's *Publication* started, American Indian Movement activist, poet and contemporary artist Jimmie Durham passed away. In his essay "On Internationalism", he argued for a world without nations, where everyone is equal to each other. Trying to disable the vocabulary and the mindset that nations and borders have produced, Durham tried to imagine what indigenous people of the world have in common, in his words "the general romantic idea is that we are all somehow closer to nature".<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is in essence

## Foreword

a natural landscape what the editors hereby present, mapped through the many pathways unravelled in this book, inhabited by histories and identities, which originate from fictional or real native lands, as well as from gestures and sounds produced by human bodies, “across and beyond” borders and nations.



## Across and Beyond

As people who travel across linguistic borders daily, the idea of making a book about translation immediately appealed to us. For nearly two years together, we have been searching to find the right words in many different situations, switching back and forth between our respective mother tongues and English– the only spoken and written language we share – in our attempts at translating the entirety of ourselves to each other. We delved into the etymology of translation and discovered the physical and spatial aspects embedded in the origins of the word: *translatius* (“to carry across”) and *traducere* (“to lead beyond”). This led us to focus on the process of translation and its impact on our bodies and their place in the world: the strange sensation of how the tongue folds differently to make new sounds, the limiting experience of failing to convey certain states of being, or the physical sensation of creating space with words.

Language is not merely a collection of equivalently transferrable phrases, but also consists of the miniscule grains of information that hold tone, cadence, movement, expression, gestures, context, references and so on. For meaning to carry across, the message has to be taken apart, scrutinised in its core purpose, form and features. Only then can it, potentially, be re-crafted into something that makes sense in the new context. Translation is thus a careful process of carrying across the fullness of a spoken, written, signed, hummed or visualised message. Unavoidably, things will get lost, or spilled, along the way when we stumble, lose our grip and feel some of the grains slip through our fingers along the winding path. The result can be both devastating, amusing and beautiful. Spilling seeds of meaning where new parts of our individual and collective identities can root, all the while ourselves being carriers of seeds from the world around us, we do our best to hold as much of the original as we can still in our hands when we finally arrive. Sometimes, we end up arriving with something more, less, or else than intended.

Inspired by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's conception of translation as an intimate act, Sherry Simon's definition of translation as a form of recognition and Sophie J. Williamson's conviction that translating is "a human instinct woven into the fabric of our being", we have attempted to further expand notions of what translation does and what it can be.<sup>1</sup> This process has been a journey shared with a group of artists who, in different ways, address the translating act across both human and non-human communication. Several of them have language as a recurring theme in their practice, while others were invited due to their interest in forms of transformation. Some of the presented works were created prior to our invitation, and some specifically for this book. By translating the relationships between different forms of embodiment and the landscape, these artists have created new universes in which to exist.

Joi Wengström's work *displacement of time and resistance* (2022) is the first you will encounter. By deconstructing and reassembling maps, Wengström creates new worlds for exploration which mirror both outer and inner landscapes through poetry. His work explores the displacement which occurs during the act of translating, as well as ways to get lost and simultaneously find oneself in language. Wengström's work reclaims power over the surrounding environment and infrastructure, as well as over their mediated visual form.

Similarly to Wengström, the work of Malin Lin Nordström takes us on a journey where the forest and the act of walking itself serves as a method for exploration of language and longing. Memories from childhood travels to her mother's homeland, Taiwan, are mixed with reflections on melancholy, sorrow, migration and rootlessness in an artistic process which culminates in the creation of the wood sculpture series *Futile Endeavors* (2022).

Elina Birkehag presents a work which also takes off from the natural landscape, rooted deep within the forests of Dalarna



and the history of Swedish women tending cattle in the area over the past few hundred years. Birkehag's practice is guided by the question: "what does a place want to tell us?" and effectively explores the possibilities of presenting messages and stories through new mediums. Reading the forest like a book and each carved tree as a page, her process for *WRITE BRAID MILK* (2022) blends the reading of places with acts of weaving and record-keeping, ultimately exposing the possible expansion of fragmented messages.

Shiva Anoushirvani's work investigates the links between political and personal experiences in the world; the landscapes we dwell in, our inner feelings and how these translate into each other. In the poetic essay *Rymd* – فضا (2022) she investigates the untranslatability of racism, comparing the landscape in her first homeland Iran, to rural Sweden. Editor Isabelle Ribe met with Anoushirvani for a conversation on her artistic practice and another of her photographic works, *Yad-dasht* (2018), is presented.

Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole's *Honest Portraits* (2021) physically and chemically translates the body into different photographic prints. The series offers a way of reflecting on the meaning, fragility and changeability of the human body, as well as an attempt to understand how we have constructed the photograph, and by extension, our relationship to visual "truth".

Connecting to the idea of objective truth and its complexities, Axel Gagge is both an artist and a researcher of physics who has approached the glitches of information which occur in translating processes in his work *Mis-Translations* (2022) – specifically conceived for this publication. Taking off from the language of mathematics, he explores the failure of metaphor and convertibility when transferring information from one discipline and its set of rules to another. Mathematical equations are here re-formulated into digital models and the leakage occurring there becomes the focus of attention in a series of works that suggests an embodiment of

the very concept of translation.

Under the title *Watertalks* (2020), visual artist tm provides a work which embraces the idea of untranslatability. Using hydrophones, tm records the sounds of different bodies of water, which are amplified through speakers, and later presented as a political council. The work thereby reflects on the agency of water and other non-human bodies, while remaining critical of the problems of forcing anthropocentric translation onto an entity which transcends human rules.

In *Back to Back* (2022), collaborative duo Karin Keisu and Josse Thuresson delve into the politics of language, exploring the ban of Meänkieli and Swedish Sign Language in the twentieth century. Their essays echo each other, attempting to find new ways of producing embodied knowledge that troubles linguistic, social and cultural hegemonies based on their own lived experiences.

Finally, Timimie Mäarak lends to this publication an insight into the possible pain of translation, and the emotional connections we form with languages as a result of personal and societal circumstances. The Swedish history of oppression of the Sámi people and languages serves as a backdrop for an articulation of how politics and inherited trauma can physically affect the ways we relate to language. Mäarak's poem *Utan Titel* (2021) is presented here in its original language only.

This publication ends with an appendix meant to provide tools for our non-Swedish speaking readers – namely translations to English created by artist and translator Tilda Dalunde, who has also contributed with a reflective translator's note *It's All True, All the Time* (2022). Keeping in mind that certain parts can never be fully translated, and the implications involved in using a majority language with a colonial history (a history shared with Swedish and many other European languages as well), it is a compromise which, for better or worse, is the only one available to us at this moment,

## Across and Beyond

and one which we would like our readers to gain from as well, while recognising that it is a tainted solution.

The final translatory process in this book occurred through the work of graphic designer Simon Nilsson, whose interest in graphic design as a way of materialising language in all its glorious forms constituted a perfect pairing with the concerns of this publication. With a deep awareness of the history of typefaces, a keen attention to detail and a newly created font inspired by the book's contents, Nilsson's design weaves all of these forms of translation together.

We have approached translation in terms of expansion, extraction and presence – as a profoundly intimate, embodied phenomenon and something that we do constantly in order to understand the contexts and landscapes in which we live. We have investigated its leaky qualities, its elements of surprise and its possibilities for both displays of power, oppression and refuge. In an era of increasing polarisations, shifting identity politics and climate breakdown, we are constantly redefining our relationships to ourselves, each other and our environment, making translation in this expanded perspective particularly urgent. With this in mind, we invite you to read on and ask yourselves: how do you translate your world and yourself within it? What is lost and what is gained in the translatory act? What has transformed along the way?



# displacement of time and resistance

## Joi Wengström

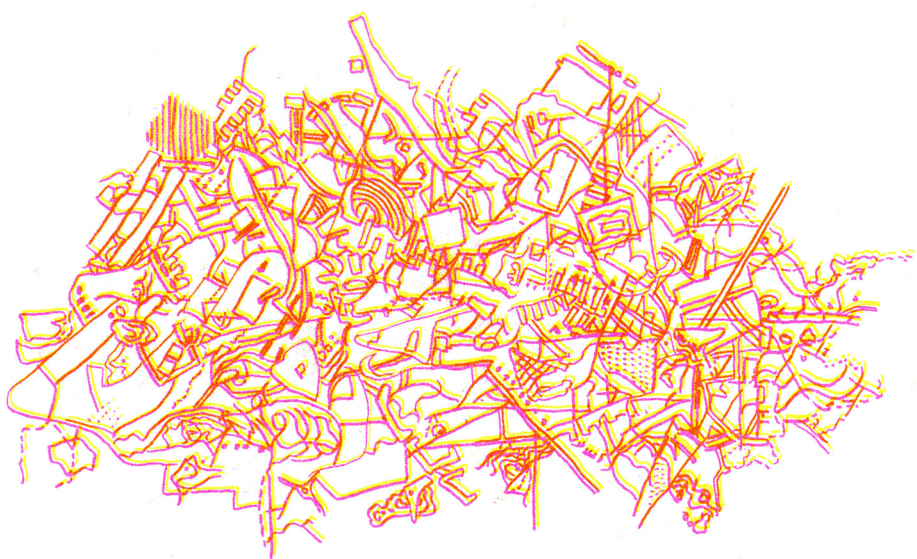
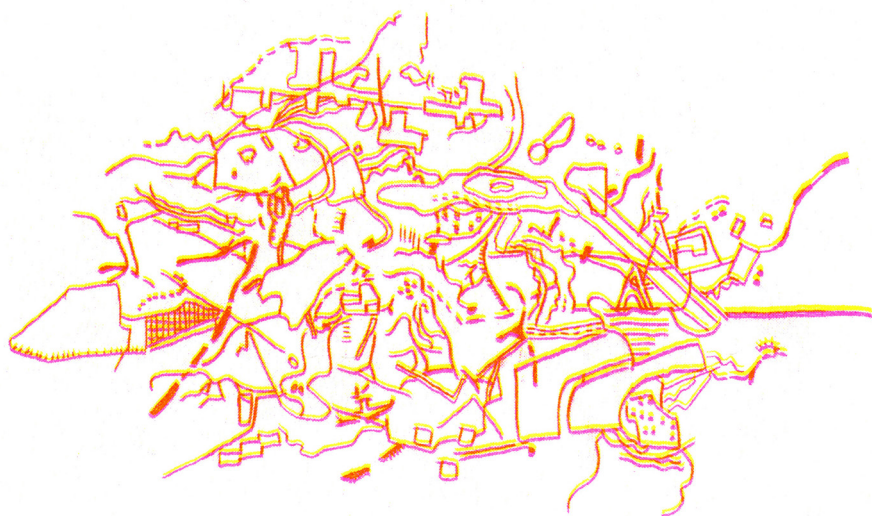
*displacement of time and resistance* (2022) uses disassembled and reassembled maps to create new imaginary, impossible landscapes. The act of making maps read like poetry, and vice versa, is paired with an ambition to re-establish power over one's environment and to ground one's body in a subjectively mapped space.

Joi Wengström, ►

*displacement of time and resistance*, 2022.

Risograph prints, 14.8 x 21cm and 29.7 x 21cm.

Courtesy of the artist.



In between time and madness you dream of forgetfulness

Violent waves of confusion and resistance

Your refusal of something that has already occurred

Your brain's and body's forced rhythm

A landscape made of clocks

Compromise was not an option

Empty dialogue and isolation

You share their failure and potential

The years in fear

Walking inside narrow maps you disappear into your memory

Linguistic experiments and tenderness

The ground trembles





# GLOSSARY

A.....



An.....



Already.....



And.....



Body's.....



Brain's.....



Clocks.....



Compromise.....



Confusion.....



Dialogue.....



Disappear.....



Dream.....



Empty.....



Experiments.....



Failure.....	
Fear.....	
Forced.....	
Forgetfulness.....	
Ground.....	
Has.....	
In.....	
In between.....	
Inside.....	
Into.....	
Isolation.....	
Landscape.....	
Linguistic.....	
Made.....	

Madness.....



Maps.....



Memory.....



Narrow.....



Not.....



Occurred.....



Of.....



Option.....



Potential.....



Refusal.....



Resistance.....



Rhythm.....



Share.....



Something.....



Tenderness.....  
Tenderness.....



That.....  
That.....



The.....  
The.....



Their.....  
Their.....



Time.....  
Time.....



Trembles.....  
Trembles.....



Violent.....  
Violent.....



Walking.....  
Walking.....



Was.....  
Was.....



Waves.....  
Waves.....



Years.....  
Years.....



You.....  
You.....



Your.....  
Your.....





# Futile Endeavors

## Malin Lin Nordström



Malin Lin Nordström,  
*Futile Endeavors* (detail), 2022.  
Wood, dimensions variable.  
Courtesy of the artist.



## Futile Endeavors

8 December 2020

trying to be less in the mind, less in the intellectual. cultivate the intuitive, the wordless, the non-verbal, the non-articulated.

there is this preoccupation with longing, melancholy, sorrow. the psychological suffering in it. attempts to accept them as a part of life. try to get over them. a kind of ambiguity and ambivalence. to personify a sense of being lost, a rootlessness, which is the product of a migration, a psychological inadequacy. even after many years of investigation and research, I still cannot understand myself. haunted by this fragmented longing that is also transmitted into my work. I'm still in the dark and it's manifested in everything I do.

One night in May last year, I walked out into the forest and brought my hammock with me, hung it between two trees and fell asleep, and it felt like things were exactly the way they should be. I woke up to the sound of thousands of birds singing across the lake. There was something inexplicably soothing about being by myself in the forest. So, I kept returning. Walked in silence, listening, writing, observing, collecting thoughts and sounds, text fragments and pieces of wood. The smell of wet moss and leaves or warm sundried pine needles, the sounds of birds and insects, the tall

old trees bending in and embracing me.

I have been thinking a lot about longing, trying to describe, analyse, and verbalise it but the words never get it right. I grew up with a mother who migrated from Taiwan, in a second home country that was always present in its absence, almost more so than what was actually in front of us. Thinking back, I remember fantasies about my mother's birth country almost more vividly than my everyday life at the time.

We would arrive there after a long journey, I would be dizzy and jetlagged, and everything was surrounded by this magic haze. We would ride four adults and three kids in a car and I had to sit on the floor between my father's feet and from there I would look up, peek out of the car windows seeing all the city lights passing by while we drove through the hot and dark summer nights, lined by the smell of exhaust fumes, sewages and deep-fried food.

When I enter my studio, it smells like the forest and it brings

## Malin Lin Nordström

me a sense of peace to sit down and surround myself with the pieces of wood that I have collected. I remember where each of them came from, how I picked them up and carried them, what the weather was like and how I felt at that moment. In a way it could have been any type of material, but wood lends itself so well to what I am doing. It's easy to work with, it's soft and hard, it manifests time in such a way that we can relate to it. We can perceive it as both dead and alive simultaneously. And it holds my sense of loss, grief, desire and longing.

### Language / What Is It I Am Trying to Say?

29 December 2020

if my brain was a mind map, the centre would say LONGING as if everything was converging there. my mother made a comment this weekend – “it’s a house, not a home” – in a way that says it all. I think I need to go to Taiwan, the object of both her longing and mine. back to where it started. there are parallels: my recent relocation, the activation of my own rootlessness, being torn between different cities, in doubt, unresolved.

For a long time, language has been my comfort zone. In moments of loneliness, text has become a way of dealing with existential dread, both through the company of literature and the consolation of the diary. I come from a background as a psychologist where I have largely relied on verbal language as a tool to understand and help others in understanding the world.

To work with psychotherapy is to believe in the power of conversation. To work with art is to believe that there are other languages than the verbal.

### Longing / What Is It That I Am Missing?

23 March 2021

I know that I long for a place that does not exist. I am not here, not there. I am in between.

Over the past few years, my work has been revolving around questions related to desire, longing, distance, lack and abstaining. I have been

## Futile Endeavors

preoccupied with the notion that desire and lack are an inherent and inevitable part of being human. Since we can imagine everything and anything, our actual lives will always be less than what we can dream. The gap between what we have and what we want is what constitutes desire and longing.

## Longing / An Embrace

1 June 2021

I am thinking about writing and I think through writing. I am thinking about writing in my mother tongue, and about writing in a second language. writing is in the corner of my eye but when I look straight at it, it disappears. do you remember that children's game, 1 2 3 stop, red light/green light. I used to have nightmares about those topiary animals in the shining.

In *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Rebecca Solnit writes about blue as the colour of longing, that only from a distance do we perceive the horizon, sky, mountains and far edges of the world as blue – as we approach them, the blue dissolves.<sup>1</sup> She writes about how we treat desire as a problem to be solved, and poses the question whether desire could “be cherished as

a sensation on its own terms, since it is as inherent to the human condition as blue is to distance” – can we experience the gap without wanting to close it, and stay in our longing in the same way that we embrace the blue of distance?

As long as I can remember I have been having dreams about the ocean. Sometimes it's dark and imposing but mostly it's calm, inviting, like a soft embrace. I see it from afar and I enter into it. Even when there's a tsunami there is some sort of safety and care, a sense of mutual kindness and compassion.

I read that the word “desire” comes from the Latin *desiderare*, which means to long for the stars, our origin, because we are all made of stardust. I was very touched by this notion and I didn't fully understand why. But I guess that somewhere in me there is something that resonates with this. Is this it, a feeling of going back

## Malin Lin Nordström

to something, some sort of primordial state of being? Again, I come to think of my mother. I didn't leave my home country like she did, but in some part of my being, her exile is still present.

### Language / Failure

6 February 2021

I wish I had words to tell you.

What is it that I am missing? I have been using words always. Relied on words to talk to myself and others,

to make sense of the world and to take refuge in when the world didn't make sense. I feel like I have tried to understand and explain, verbalise and put into words, examine, and analyse by reading, writing, conversing. But it seems like words are always a compromise, an approximate sketch, a model which in the absence of something else becomes the truth, becomes the original instead of the imitation. What can be said in words becomes what is real more than that which is complex, vague, abstract, that cannot be described in words in any exact way.

Growing up, we would have large family gatherings in my grandparents' house, with my mother's siblings and all their families, as well as their old family friends and their families. I would speak Swedish to my father and my siblings, Mandarin to my mother and cousins, my father spoke English to my mother and her siblings, my aunt's husband spoke French to his wife and children, and my grandparents spoke Hokkien, the local Taiwanese dialect of Chinese, to each other and their children. Everyone spoke at least two, three languages simultaneously, often in strange combinations using the words that would first come to mind or which would describe something in the most accurate way. Somehow this was never accomplished by using only one language at the time, and it became clear to me how each language seemed inadequate. Still, I search for this precision in the spoken and

## Futile Endeavors

written language, in an attempt to convey the experiences of the inner world in an exact, faithful manner.

Sometimes I think that I try too hard. I want the words to be the answer and now I'm not sure if I can trust them. I seek to leave the world of words and try to trust my other senses and sensations.

## Studio / Into the Woods

6 December 2021

I guess somehow, it's about consolation, maybe about comforting yourself.

In his book *Granskogsfolk*, David Thurfjell, historian of religion, writes about Swedes' relationship to nature. Based on his interview study, he describes a kind of silence or wordlessness that surrounds the secularized Swedes' existential and spiritual experiences of being in nature. This is despite the fact that these experiences are deeply meaningful and important to them. Thurfjell points out that much of what affects people most often remains unsaid or may even be surrounded by taboos. He quotes the poet Kerstin Hed: often "the unspoken is what is most deeply known".<sup>2</sup>

When I was working with a project relating to the forests in Dalarna and Hälsingland, I started making frequent overnight trips by myself to research and collect materials. If the weather was unpredictable, I brought a used tent that I had bought for cheap. If it was a short trip and the forecast promised sun I would just bring a hammock to sleep in. I brought a sleeping bag and a sleeping mat, a small gas burner and a pot for both cooking and eating from, a water bottle and a water filter, rain clothes, something warm to wear, and one change of clothes for the night. I brought oats for breakfast, instant noodles for lunch and tortillas for dinner. I downloaded offline GPS maps to my phone, bought a power bank and ventured out. I had slept outdoors before but never by myself and I was nervous. The first time that I managed to spend several

days and nights by myself in the forest, I felt proud of myself. Like I had accomplished something that was important. And I couldn't remember what I had been scared of in the first place.

The forest project included a sound walk. While working on this, I walked far and for hours and slowly fell into a rhythm, in my body and in my thoughts. Step by step I traversed the inner and outer landscape. Rebecca Solnit writes about walking as a space for contemplation. In a production-oriented society, it is difficult to do nothing, and since thinking is generally thought of as doing nothing, it is best done by disguising it as doing something, "and the something closest to doing nothing is walking".<sup>3</sup> I could feel how something in my brain was slowly softening, dissolving, opening. It felt like there was more room for my body. I could see and feel every change in the weather and its direct effects on me. Everything that I needed for my immediate survival I was carrying by myself. I had to trust myself. I was amazed by the way my legs carried me. And I could suddenly write.

### Language / The Unsaid

15 May 2021

something about trying to accept longing and desire as a part of existence, trying to explore it verbally and non-verbally, let the objects speak of futile endeavours to bridge the gap between reality and imagination.

I let my feet lead me forward and something opened up. I had an idea that there are emotions and experiences which are impossible for me to articulate. Perhaps stemming from early episodes and encounters predating

my knowledge of language or even my understanding of my own existence. Memories that will always elude my intellect. At the same time, I am sure that these experiences exist somewhere within me. Can I understand these experiences without taking the detour through language? Let these unspoken, voiceless experiences move through my body and into the world, be expressed without words.

## Futile Endeavors

### Studio / Silence

3 January 2022  
the work is not “about” something,  
it IS that.

During my forest excursions I collected pieces and fragments of wood that caught my attention. As a pastime I started carving things out of them. First with an idea of making something, with a specific plan from the outset, shaping a piece of wood into utensils, spoons. Then the carving slowly evolved into something else, just something to do with my hands while thinking or watching the fire. I spent time looking at these pieces that I had found, got to know them with my eyes and hands, and I could remember exactly where I had been when I picked them up, what the weather was like that day, what I had been thinking about at that moment, how I had felt. I cleaned, brushed and peeled following an intuitive desire to give care to these pieces of wood, trying to figure out what everyone needed from me. I brought them back to my studio and asked their forgiveness for taking them out of the forest. I spent even more time with them, surrounding myself with them, letting them spend time with each other. Some of them started talking to one another and I put them together, some of them seemed to need some sort of mending.

### Studio / An Embrace

Most of the material I had collected in the forest were pieces of dead wood, many of them had been part of huge, old trees, perhaps hundreds of years old. I felt a deep sense of awe and reverence holding them in my hands, like they had known and seen things I would never know. In the same way that my own body had experienced things I still couldn't articulate or understand. I started to build sculptures.





WRITE  
BRAID  
MILK



## WRITE BRAID MILK

In the spring of 2018, my mother told me about tree carvings located in the area where we grew up in Dalarna. It was the first time I heard about it. After asking around, I found out that the carvings were made by young women tending cattle in the summers, dating back to the seventeenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. The carvings were made with small axes and had left deep cuts and traces in pine trees. People said that the carvings might have been a way for the shepherds to communicate with each other. Others said that they could have been a way of passing the time. Later that year, during summer, I visited Halgonberget, a mountain outside of the region of Furudal, in Sweden. I found seven dead pine trees, covered with letters.

During continuous visits to places where women lived during the summer, I documented more than 100 trees with one or several carved messages. My attempts to trace and read them filled my notebooks and blended with my own texts, thoughts, memories, and gossip around the phenomenon. This research brought me back to look at my grandmother's photo albums and visit local historical archives.

The following pages include a selection of my notes and an excerpt of a transcript made from my readings of the trees. It is a selection from a larger body of work.

Elina Birkehag, ►  
*WRITE BRAID MILK*, 2022.  
Digital prints, 13,8 x 21 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.

AHOD AHD

R

A HEADSCARF

K

M

KOD AAD A BACKBONE OF A COW

XMDPDOD II AI 8

AX

FABRIC BOUGHT  
AT MORA MARKET

IAA G D

A

MORE POTATOES

MORE CHEESE

MORE MESSMÖR

TWO PAIRS OF SHOES

A DIRTY SKIRT

GOSSIP ALPHABET

WOMEN WITH NAMES

X

BID RID

K (X3)

M (X2)

O (X2)

D (X 3)

A (X3)

I REPEAT AOD

LEAVE WHEN THE SUNLIGHT

MAKES A CROSS

ON THE FLOOR



A LAZY BITCH IS HOMESICK

TWO LONG BRAIDS

SHE TURNS HER HEAD TO READ

SOLE

Ä E ÖGA

UPP OCH NER  
GÅR LOCKET

TRÄDES SÅR

ENNÖS ÖGA

VI TITTÖR PÅ VÖRARE

GUN

KNIFE

MISSPELLED

ONE AXE EACH

DU SÅG

SLEEP

SKOG SKOG SKOG

ON THE COW'S

DÅGGOR UTA ÄNDÖ

BELLY

11 PM – 3 AM



ZIG ZAG WITH THE BLADE

TWO HUNDRED

YEARS AFTER SY BGD AED XXXXXX

MAMMA MINNS

SANT

TRUE

FLOUR FOR PORRIDGE    AND BREAD

DELIVERED

ON SPECIFIC DATES

AND SOME SKIN

FROM A YOUNG COW HEAD

FOR PATCHING

WELL WRITTEN

TWO LINES

SPIKY R

CURSIVE LINES

S

U

C

K IN WOOD

BRINGS EXTRA

FAT MILK

YOU CARVED DAYS



A HORSETAIL

WOOL

MILK PRODUCTS

HOPS

LINEN

MALT

I REPEAT

A NAME

THE SALARY FOR

BRITA

A SUMMER'S WORK

FINGERS TAPS CAPS

DU RISTA

KM

MAMMA SÄGER

JAG MINNS INTE

ATT DET VAR NÅGRA

KALAVVERKNINGAR DÅ

GRASS TO BUTTER

MILK TO CREAM

HOURS TO WORDS

B TO E

MUM DOESN'T REMEMBER

WE DON'T REMEMBER

MY TOUNGE

CLINGS

A BRAIDED CODE

SHE PICKS UP THE PHONE

AND SAYS

A ÖJ E VA JE



X LET'S MEET HERE



فضا—Rymd

فضا

\* To some love is given,  
to others only Sci-fi.



Episod 1

Inget är förlorat

Bara materia

Sista nätterna mitt bland Jordajord.

Innan färden

Den ena *maman*

stora kroppen som delar vätskan i sina ådror  
har sålt

Allt allt allt,  
mest gett bort  
skänkt

Sakerna förvandlas till mat eller Rial

till enbart kropparna som ska färdas

Bara materiellt  
utan betydelse

I och på jordrymden bland vissa:

Zen

(Sa någon att Buddha var överklass?)

Innan färden på Jordajord  
på avsatt tak ovanpå byggnad

En liten kropp bredvid en större

Den stora kroppen av annan vätska i ådrorna än den lilla  
men utav samma hav som cirkulerar på Jordajord  
och i den lilla

Den stora kroppens farväl till den lilla innan färden:

Båda åker till en tredje dimension,

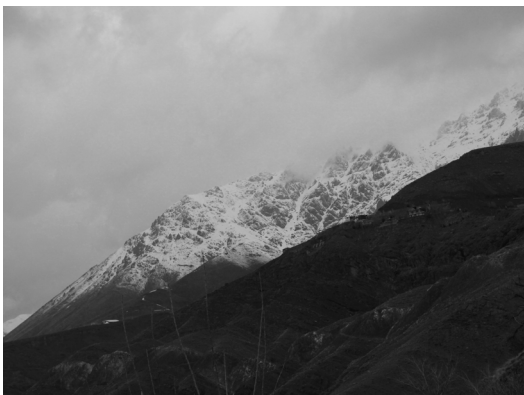
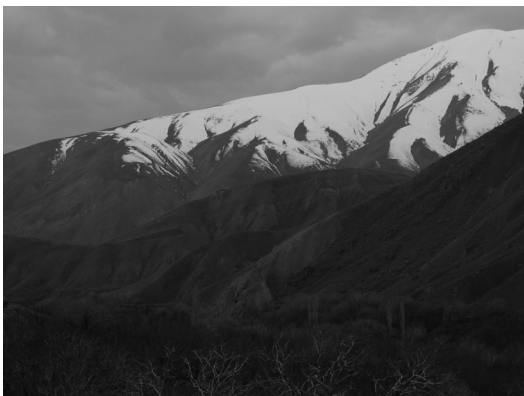
där de flyger ovanför tak

glömmer raketer och ljuger för sig själva

Krig finns INTE under stjärnorna.  
Det är där och då, de bli till två stjärnor

Och den stora säger:  
en dag kommer vi att mötas däruppe bland de andra stjärnorna  
far väl

Lilla färdas bort med ljuset, under och över raketerna



Shiva Anoushirvani,  
*Love Is Given\_Tehran no 1-3*, 2022.  
Photographs, dimensions variable.  
Courtesy of the artist.

# Shiva Anoushirvani

## Episod 2

Det som syns finns

INTE

Det vi ser är bara vad våra kroppar förnimmer, känner, älskar eller  
äcklas av.

Folk bland berg och folk bland berg, ses inte av samma vatten

Bland vissa berg vill vi enbart se krig

Bland andra berg och klippor:

Idyll



Shiva Anoushirvani,  
*White Emptiness*, 2022.  
Still from video, dimensions variable.  
Courtesy of the artist.

### Episod 3

Medel, Över och Under

Någonstans där Medel och Över, inte Under har sina bon,  
där tomheten dödar  
om vintrarna

Såg kroppen plötsligt anden:  
Utbränd av synen på orättvisor

Här, precis här under prick till prick  
ännu en Hilma af Klint

Formerna känns igen med en liten avvikelse  
Det är 2020

Bland vita hus.

De som skrattade åt dom som hade ett "HUCKLE",

medan skrattet skallade i smyg  
blev nästan alla i de vita husen  
andliga

Buddha  
och  
Ahura Mazda

## Shiva Anoushirvani



Shiva Anoushirvani,  
*Dot to Dot, Whoever You Are*, 2022.  
Photograph, dimensions variable.  
Courtesy of the artist.

Episod 4

Det finns en avgrund mellan oss där möts vi...

Kanske aldrig

Vi i termer av kollektiv på jorden

De i termer av  
AF och VON

Dom i termer av: inte fräscha,  
dom andra

Vi i termer av,  
älskade

De som ÄR i och på,

De som är på andra sidan avgrunden

När de aldrig tvingades skiljas:  
Love is fucking given!

För övrigt:

Det är genom lögnen alla färdas  
Den ljuva lögnen  
Som ett skal

Episod 5

Återseende

Den lilla och den stora möts men aldrig i stjärnorna

Love is not given, på det sättet.

Däremot: Plankton:

VI > blev <

Från stjärna till blyg mareld en sen, sen, sen sensommarnatt 2020  
Norra västra kusten,  
på Jordajord

På sidan av de tomma vita taken.

Meanwhile:

I varje hörn gömmer sig någon som avskyr "HUCKLE"

I ordet som sprider sig utan att hitta målet hörs slottsfolk såväl så  
väl som, (alla vill väl väääl) havsfolket som badar och jävlas

eller som  
bara badar.





Shiva Anoushirvani,  
*Mareld-Galaxy*, 2022.  
Photograph, dimensions  
variable. Courtesy of the artist.

\*“To some people  
Love is given,  
To others  
Only Heaven.”

— Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems*

## **Shiva Anoushirvani**

Shiva Anoushirvani works with history and political events on the one hand, and with memory and personal experiences on the other. Currently, she explores landscape and language as a tool to reflect on personal and political relationships.

**Conversation between Shiva Anoushirvani and Isabelle Ribe ►**

**IR:** *How would you say that relations translate into landscape?*

**SA:** We all interpret landscape and nature differently. I partly live in the countryside where I am the only refugee in the village. I really enjoy where I live now, being surrounded by nature, but I am also surrounded by people amongst which a majority vote for the nationalist party Sverigedemokraterna. For example, I have been asked repeatedly if I am a Muslim and why I don't wear a veil when I mention that I am originally from Iran. This makes me feel that my presence is questioned when I am immersed in a place where racism is a prominent part of how many people think. This experience of racism is untranslatable to someone who has never had to live through it. Although racism can be understood theoretically from the outside, the physical, bodily effects of it will always remain out of reach.

**IR:** *How does changing from one landscape to the other help you think?*

**SA:** For someone who has the privilege to choose to travel, it can be relaxing and soothing. Although for me, as a non-white foreigner from Iran, I see and hear things that are pointed against people with similar experiences of racism as me. For instance, once I went for a walk along the shore where I live now, and I reached a section with enormous white houses for wealthy people. Right next to them stood a council house; a lady walked out and we started talking. At that moment, I could have been just another tourist getting to know the area. She started to ask about me, and I told her about where I work when suddenly she said: "I've been there, there is a Muslim person working in the kitchen. I can't go and eat there." Although not directed at me, her comment was a reminder that racism is everywhere, and therefore I cannot feel completely relaxed when I move around Europe – perhaps this situation

becomes even clearer in the European countryside, where there are few non-European refugees, like in Les Cevennes in France where I created the *Yad-dasht* series (2018) for example.

**IR:** *In your work Love when you seek shelter in a menacing place (2016), seismography is used as a kind of translation of love and relationships. How was that process for you?*

**SA:** I tried to understand separation anxiety in relation to love. The work was a way to manifest that feeling, and to transform the ups and downs in love curves into something else. I thought about landscapes, nature's fragility, and how delicate our relationship to love is. The earthquake operates as a symbol for these tremors and fragility; at the same time, it is such a powerful event, similar to how love in all its forms can be so potent and unstoppable.

**IR:** *One often thinks of history and political events as "seismic events", and these expressions are also so widely used to discuss love.*

**SA:** When major political events happen in a society, like revolutions or war, this also affects your personal and family life. My practice investigates the links between our experiences in the world and our inner feelings; and how these mutually affect and construct each other, which is what *Love when you seek shelter in a menacing place* (2016) is about essentially. I am reminded of Édouard Glissant. In my understanding, he argues that poetry and art come in when you cannot fully grasp what is going on in the world. I think it's important to come to a stage where you are honest with yourself, that you cannot understand everything in the here and now. I think of this kind of acceptance as a landscape full of oxygen, because in the act of acceptance, you can breathe for a while.



Shiva Anoushirvani,  
*Yad-dasht* (series), 2018.  
Photographs, dimensions variable.  
Courtesy of the artist.



# What Is a Photograph?







## Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole

*Honest Portraits* physically and chemically translates the body into different photographic prints, and this work offers a way of reflecting on the fragility and changeability of the human body.

Inscribing the body on photographic paper directly using photographic chemicals troubles how we see and how we interpret the bodies that we encounter. How does one read the fragmented, ever-changing imprints of the body on the paper? They are simultaneously recognisable as of the body yet disturb what a body can look like. The changes and development of the image on the paper as it gets exposed to different types of air and light echoes the unavoidable mutations and transformations of our physical bodies throughout life. Perhaps translating the body through photographic media in this way, with neither the body nor the photograph fully “fixed” or “finished”, is the most honest way to portray how ephemeral and mutable both a body and a photograph inherently are?

◀ Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole,  
*Honest Portrait*, 2017.  
Photograph, 53.3 cm x 144.8 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.  
Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm.  
Photo: Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

## What Is a Photograph?

Photograph (noun): a picture made using a camera, in which an image is focused on to light-sensitive material and then made visible and permanent by chemical treatment or stored digitally.<sup>1</sup>

Is it a photograph if it did not come from a camera?

Is it a photograph if not made permanent by chemicals or stored digitally? *Honest Portraits* is a series of photographic performances in which I investigate what makes an honest photographic portrait.

The work questions the truth behind a photographic portrait and invites the audience to reimagine how they relate, view and experience photographic portraits. These performances consist of me covering my body with photographic chemicals and then making contact with the photographic paper.

The portraits are created by two components: the performative photographic process and the material remnants of the performances. The remnants are forever in transition as they are not fixed or made permanent, meaning that viewing the work in natural or artificial light will alter its appearance.

We often consider that looking at a photograph is equal to being informed about the event that occurred. To experience an event and to re-view it through a photograph does not generate a linear outcome. I have witnessed the changing meaning or formalities of a photograph, from its previous material existence to the immateriality of the now ubiquitous camera phone. In layman's terms "A photograph" or "The photograph" represented a print. A physical product that had been manipulated and transformed many times until it reached its end point — the print. An object that we then held, touched and felt as something that was OUT of the camera. Now when we use the word photograph it is something stored. Something kept IN. It is no longer a requirement to print out the photograph to access it, rather the contrary. To access the photograph easily, the majority of the time it must be kept in, the act of taking a photograph is now what is understood as a photograph.

## Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole

Photograph (verb):

transitive verb

: to take a photograph of

intransitive verb

1: to take a photograph

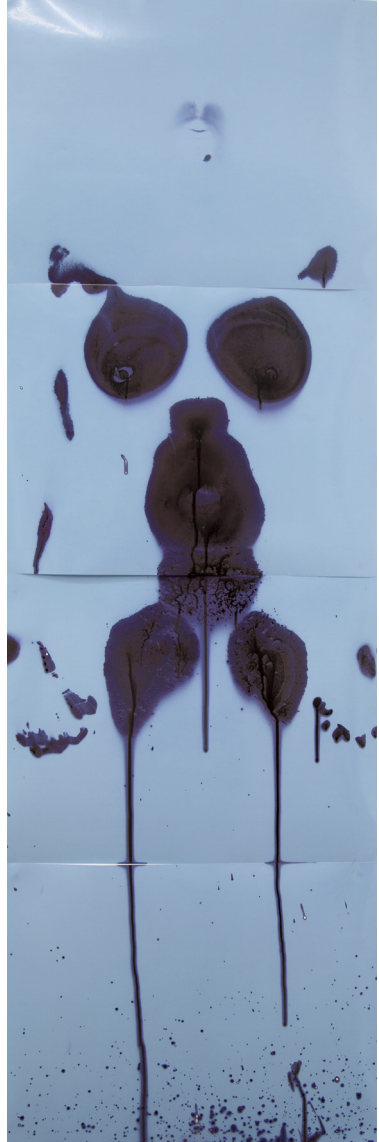
2: to appear as an image in a photograph<sup>2</sup>

Did what we previously know as photograph transition into photography, or should it now go by the name of a photographic print? Our inclination to view a photograph as a physical object still exists, but in reality the photograph has evolved in the digital age into an electronic thing anchored in a light box, a phone screen rather than a physical object on paper. This development means that to see a photograph is to see a camera simultaneously.

Camera (noun): a device for recording visual images in the form of photographs, film, or video signals.<sup>3</sup>

This development has led to an amalgamation, an implosion, of the photograph-print-camera function. As shown in the case of *Honest Portraits*, the photographic paper is at once a recording device, a camera and a print. If a photograph is a testament of specific events, and our definition and expectation of a photograph is changing, does that mean a photograph that has already occurred can also change?

## What Is a Photograph?



Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole,  
*Honest Portrait*, 2020.  
Photograph, 61 cm x 152.4 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.

## Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole



Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole,  
*Honest Portrait*, 2021.  
Photograph, 152.4 cm x 121.9 cm.  
Documented on Februari 9, 2021.  
Courtesy of the artist.



## What Is a Photograph?



Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole,  
*Honest Portrait*, 2021.  
Photograph, 152.4 cm x 121.9 cm.  
Documented on Januari 29, 2022.  
Courtesy of the artist.





# Mis-Translations

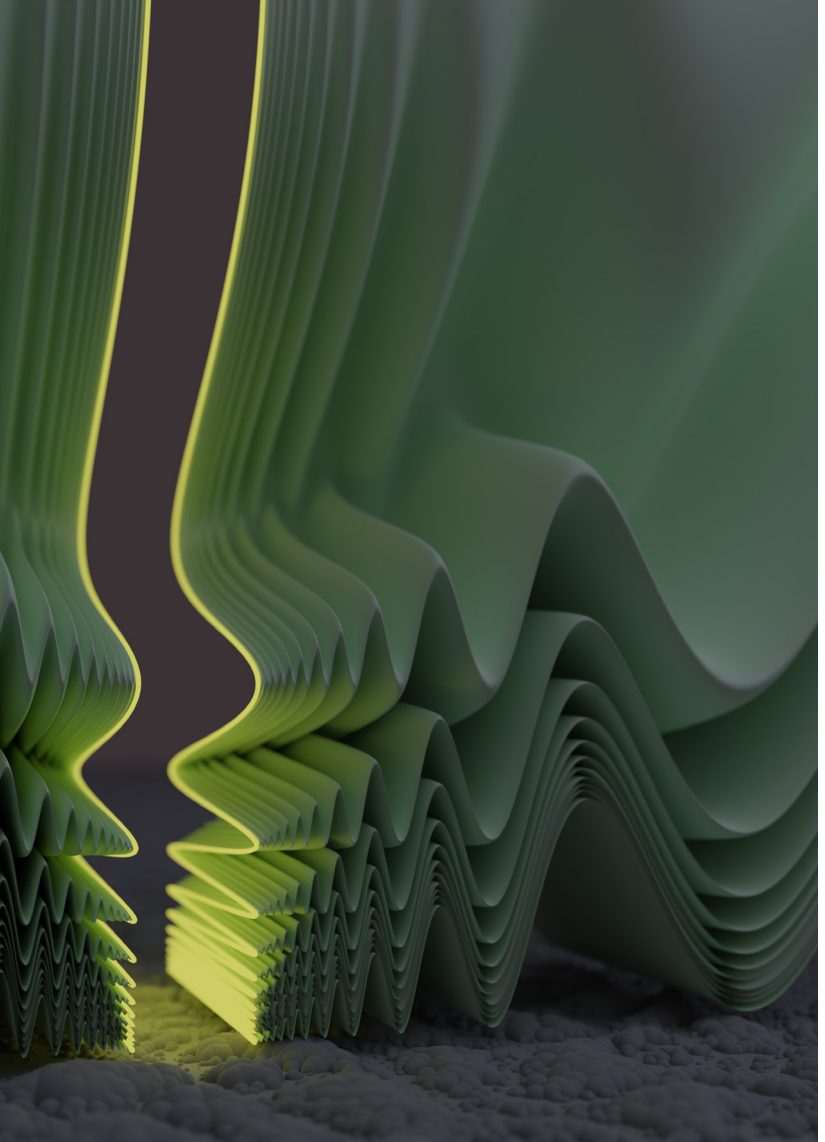


## Mis-Translations

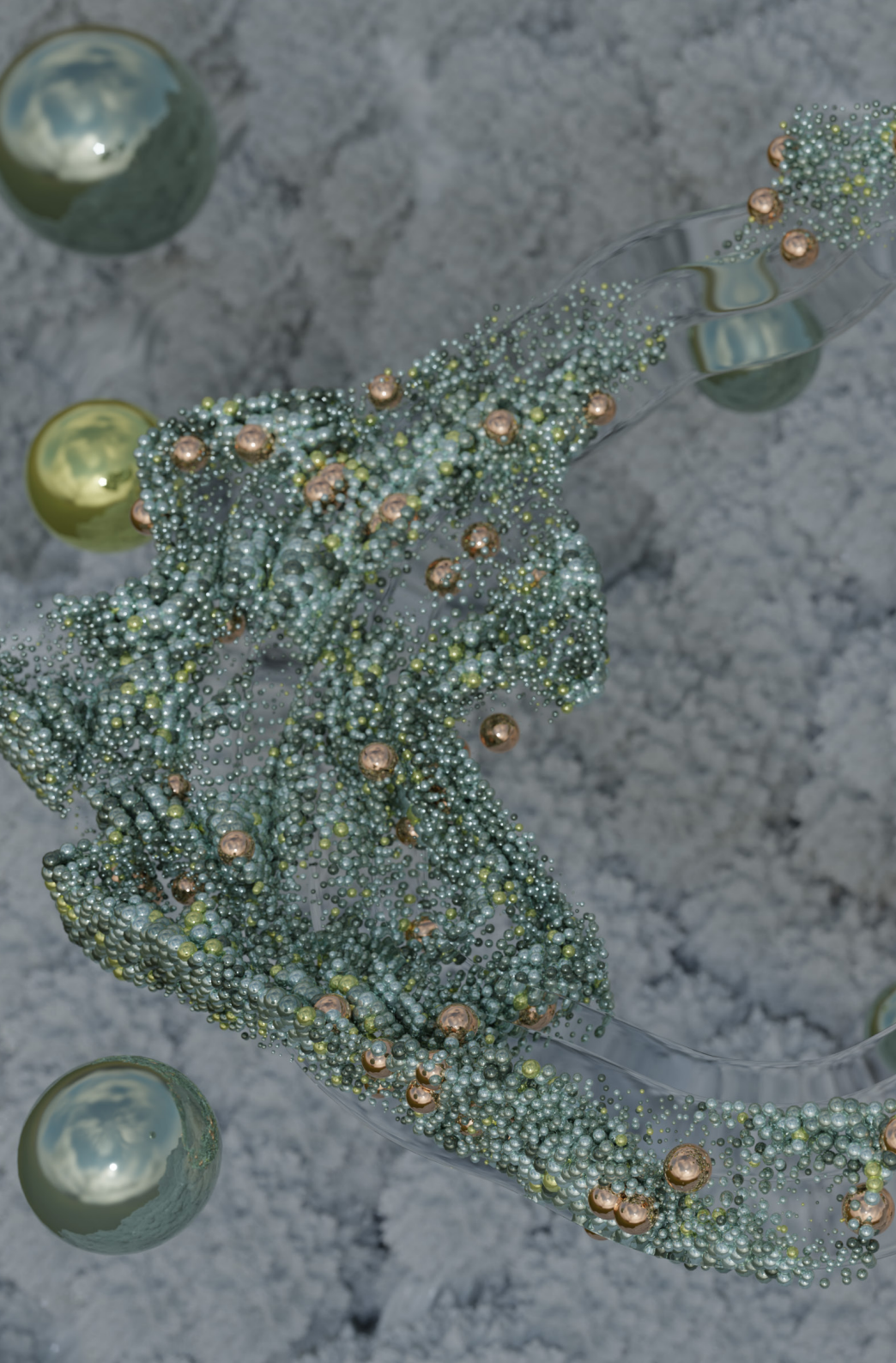
*Mis-Translations* is an attempt to see translation through the lens of mathematics. Is translation a kind of transformation? Is translation only about language, or can shape and body, too, be translated? Can translation itself be given a body? What is leaked and what is added, as the concept of translation itself gets translated into mathematics?

Much of mathematics itself is a mis-translation. For example, the important concept of a “fiber bundle” in mathematics captures the idea of a surface covered in hair, like a fur or a rug: a leaking translation from the world of textiles and biology. In the end, it is perhaps the mis-translations that carry the greatest power?

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \pi^{-1}(\mathfrak{U}) & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & \mathfrak{U} \times \mathfrak{F} \\
 \pi \downarrow & \swarrow \text{proj}_1 & \\
 \mathfrak{U} & & 
 \end{array}$$

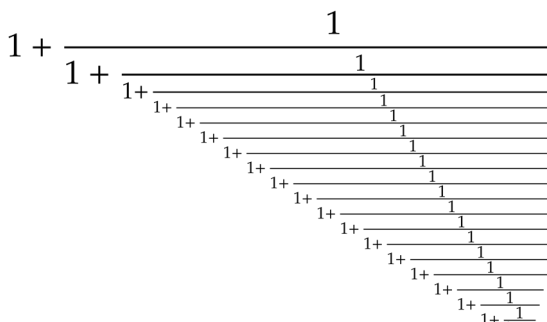


Axel Gagge,  
*Mending and Transforming*, 2022.  
Digital image from 3D rendering.  
Courtesy of the artist.



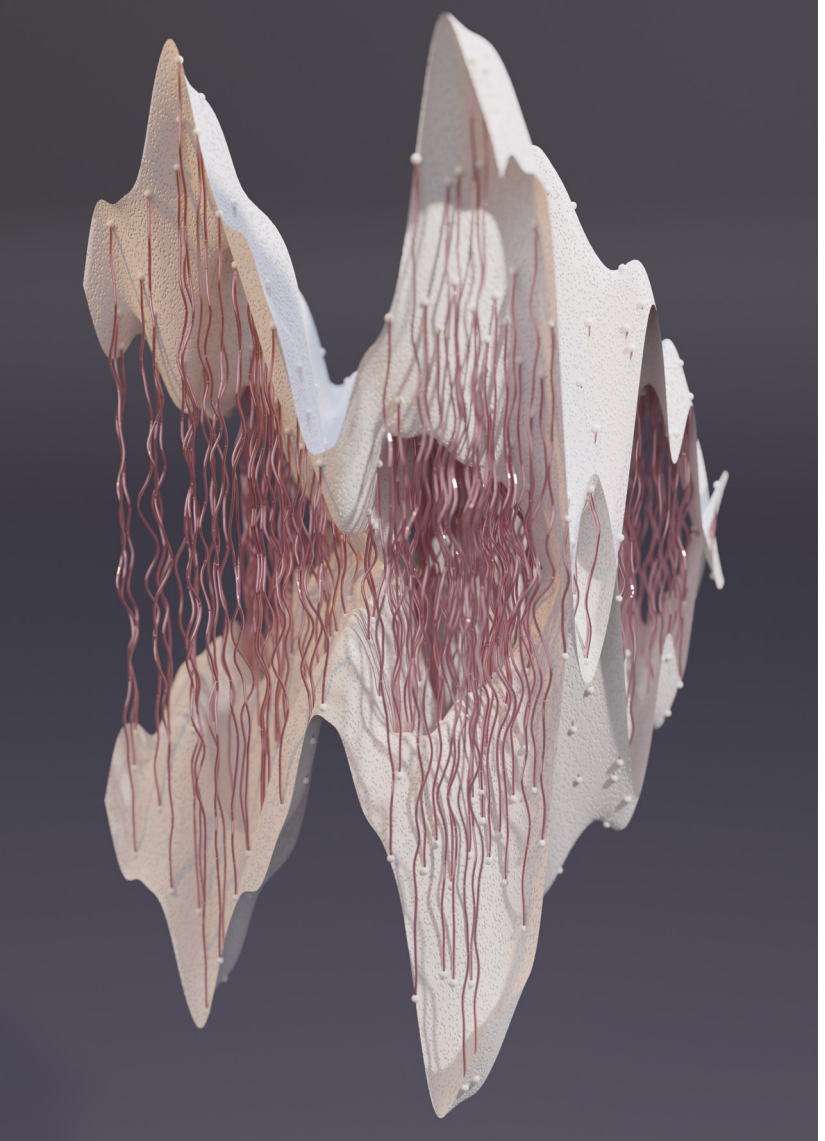






◀ Axel Gagne,  
*Joyful Presence Parametrization*, 2022.  
Digital image from 3D rendering.  
Courtesy of the artist.





Axel Gagge,  
*Pelagic Bundle*, 2022.  
Digital image from 3D rendering.  
Courtesy of the artist.



tm

# Waternalks







tm

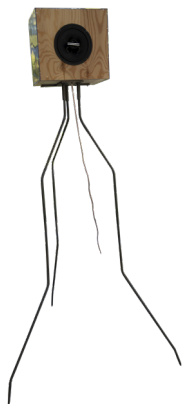
◀ tm,

*till vem det berör, 2020.*

Documentation of the sound recording process.

Courtesy of the artist.

## till vem det berör



för er är vi bara en yta. något platt,  
något som får er att känna melankoli,  
får er att titta djupt. något som får er att vilja  
förflytta era kroppar. ni är många kroppar.  
vi är en. ni flyter i oss. vi är spridda överallt.  
vi är i er. tänker ni på det? vi har lärt oss ert  
språk. ni kunde inte lära er vårt.

ni känner. vi är.

vi är i en konstant rörelse, genom olika  
tider i olika hastighet. vi är på så sätt lika.  
ni är också i en konstant rörelse. men ni ökar  
ständigt farten. vi har försökt förstå, men vi  
förstår inte. ni ökar ständigt farten utan att ni har bråttom? har ni  
en tid att passa, en plats att vara på?

ja, kanske.

ni ska resa snart. ni letar överallt efter oss. ni letar efter oss  
långt bort för att ni ska kunna ge er av.

därför har vi lärt oss ert språk. vi ska ta farväl av er.

vi fortsätter att vara, sen när ni har rest. ni flyter i oss. ni har  
inget att förlåtas för, men vi vill ändå ta farväl.

ni är en flock. ni är en flock.

vi har alltid skrämt er visst? ni har skapat  
väsen och myter. ni har gjort oss till bärare  
av monster. för ni har alltid vetat att vi skulle  
kunna vara er undergång. vi har inga ambitioner.

ni flyr oss samtidigt som ni riktar blicken  
så långt bort ni kan för att hitta oss. ni har gjort  
oss till en grav. vi är ingen skillnad. vi är ingen  
skillnad.

ibland reser vi oss högt över er. och ni har  
inte sett allt vi kan. långt ifrån.

här finns vi överallt. ni skulle inte överleva





en dag utan oss. för ni har så mycket av oss i er. ni är mer vi är ni är ni. men vi tror inte ni förstår. det har ni aldrig gjort.

vi är en yta och ett djup. och i djupen skapar ni era gravar. när ni hittar ett hål så fyller ni igen det. sen ser ni det inte mer. ni vill slippa se, och under ytan slipper ni det.

i skymningszonen förlorar ni sikten. det är oftast där ni är.

ni kan inte fylla igen oss. för ni består av oss. vi är överallt. även där ni inte tror vi är.

ni skriver dikter om oss. speglar er i oss när vi är stilla. vad är det ni ser? vi ser er. ni är en yta. ni väljer ytor.

vi är ett öga. ni tror kanske att vi också riktar blicken bortåt, utåt.

gå till ruinen för att blicka bakåt, för att se framåt. det är där vi hittar er. ni vill känna hopp. ni bygger era historier kring hopp. har ni försökt att inte göra det?

ni bygger något. sen får det förfalla. ni överger så mycket. ni har misslyckats. vi är ju

ert misslyckande. men det finns ingen som ni kan be om förlåtelse hos. ni har ingen att offra för.

ni kan ju alltid skylla på era begränsningar. det gör vi. skyller på era begränsningar. det är så vi förstår er. i kanterna. kanterna formar er. men ni läcker, hela tiden, ni är porösa och kan inte hålla det inne.

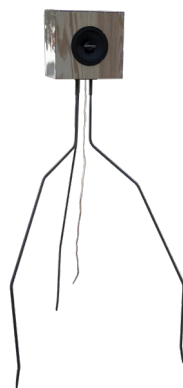
vi är inte konstant. vi finns tills vi inte finns.



tm,  
*till vem det berör* (detail), 2020.

Speakers.

Courtesy of the artist.





## till vem det berör



tm,  
*till vem det berör*, 2020.  
Installation view (detail).  
Courtesy of the artist.

tm, ►  
*till vem det berör*, 2020.  
Documentation of the sound recording process.  
Courtesy of the artist.









# Back to Back

## **Karin Keisu & Josse Thuresson**

Karin Keisu and Josse Thuresson met when they started in the same class at the Academy of Fine Art in Oslo, in 2017. Keisu is Tornedalian and Thuresson is a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults). They naturally sparked a conversation about embodied and inherited experiences of language oppression, history and politics. Keisu and Thuresson's relationship turned into a collaborative artistic practice that opposes the pursuit of monolingualism and raises questions around ideas such as "normality", "nationalism" and "language".

The following are excerpts from two individual essays, written separately by Keisu and Thuresson, here presented side by side.

## Back to Back — Becoming Tornedalians

This essay looks at the idea of being “Swedish”, at the power structures of colonisation and *Swedification*. It is a way to explore how these processes, through history and in the present, have categorised people into minorities, and how this categorisation has led to cultures, languages and identities being disrupted, assimilated and lost, in favour of a homogenic, dominant white cultural majority. The latter would, in Sweden, go under the category Swedish. In this essay, I suggest a process of unlearning and decolonisation.

“*Talo, lauantai, keltainen, kotona, pyörä, hevonen, koira, musta, varmast, kyllä, kukka, kaverit, veli, hyvä, mettä, vettä, ulkona, sisälle, Tornionlaakso*, what is the word for the Tornedalian River?... We should know this,” we say, looking at each other with inquisitive eyes. We were in the same language course, but are realising only now that we never learned the word. The camera is tracing the question hanging in the air between us, capturing the sound of flaked ceiling paint under our boots, our sighing and smacking of the tongue, our noses turning cold and wet. I pick up my phone to find the word for river. “It is the most important word,” I say, and Fanny nods.

Fanny is a childhood friend participating in Josse and I’s film project *Back to Back* (2022). The idea is that we will say everything we know in Meänkieli in a performative setting in front of the camera: we say as much Meänkieli as we know and then we will stop filming. I choose the word performative, because in this setting, with a predetermined outcome, we allow ourselves to dwell in that embarrassing space of “not being Tornedalian enough”. Without this setting, we would not be speaking Meänkieli to each other. Even so, we share the feeling of loss and understand the importance of reclaiming the language that was once forbidden in the house we are standing in.

The river was once the main road, running through the middle of Tornedalen with its strong current. However, in 1809, when Sweden “lost” Finland to Russia in war, a new national border

needed to be drawn. It was decided that the border would run in the deepest part of the river, an invisible barrier between two new nations. *Meänmaa tullu sinun ja minun maa*. I was born in a Swedish hospital by a Swedish midwife in a Swedish town and was given a burgundy red book with golden inscriptions reading *European Union, Sweden, Passport*. A friend once said that having a Swedish passport is like having gold in your pocket. On the one hand, I would argue they were right. Being Swedish, and being seen as Swedish, comes with privileges that should not be taken for granted. I used to be comfortable with identifying as Swedish. It was only when I had grown into adulthood that I gained enough distance, physically and mentally, to glance back. Something was not right, and Tornedalen was that itch.

*Seisomme Torniojoen laidalla ja yritämme hengähtää, hakea sanoja. Sen on pysyttävä*. It was like somebody had placed a mirror in front of me and I did not understand what I was looking at. Researching my heritage made me recognise that I had known nothing. The image I had of Tornedalen and of Sweden crumbled as I began seeing the patterns of discrimination of minorities in Sweden and could put myself into that history. It was then that I learned about the Tornedalian workhouses for the first time.

The workhouses were established in Tornedalen in 1903 after two years of famine. It was a type of privately funded boarding school, where children from large poor families received housing, food, education, and work training. However, when the famine was over, the aim of the institution shifted. It turned into a nationalistic experiment and the most prominent change was the ban of Meänkieli, not only in the workhouses but in all educational systems. Meänkieli was considered dangerous and did not fit into the idea of “one nation, one people, one language”, an idea which had become central as Sweden built its “new” modern nation. Tornedalen, located on the border between Sweden and Finland,



## Back to Back — Becoming Tornedalians

became the rope in a tug of war. Tornedalen was culturally and linguistically connected to Finland. The majority language was Meänkieli, schools used educational material in Finnish and the names of people and places were either in Finnish, Meänkieli or Sámi. This sparked fear. A fear of the “non-Swedish” people living in Sweden. Who was going to protect the border? Who was going to stand on the barricades in a potential Russian invasion and protect the iron ore mine in Kiruna? To whom would they prove loyal? It was stated that the children must be saved from moral decay, inadequate upbringing, lethargy, from becoming uncivilised and becoming Finnish. As newspapers and letters described the people in the North as non-Swedish destitutes, funding from the South continued to come in. This not only made the workhouses financially stable, but also caused multiple municipalities to close their official schools in favour of sending children to one of the twenty workhouses, thereby saving money. The workhouses were active until 1954 and had by then established the idea that Tornedalen and Tornedalians needed salvation and rescue both from an outside and inside perspective.

How could I present these stories to the world through art? I was unsure of what my words could do, of how much my voice could carry. Audre Lorde writes that even though we are afraid of speaking in the fear of judgement, discrimination, or visibility, the most important thing is to still be vocal. Even in silence the world will be a fearful place, “your silence will not protect you”. I am beginning to understand that the key to my, our, resistance is being more afraid of silence than of the forces that try to silence us.

When Josse and I visit Korpilombolo, a one-hour drive north from my childhood village, the big yellow house is frozen. We begin filming, but as it becomes hard to move our glove-free fingers, we make the decision to pack everything up. We are just about to drive off when a car enters the parking lot. A man

steps out and looks at us suspiciously. After a bit of hesitation, I step out of the car. “Hi, my name is Karin Keisu, I come from Juoksengi. And this is Josse. They come from Stockholm.” I add with my softest, fastest voice: “We are working on a film about the workhouses. Do you know who oversees this building? We would really like to film inside the house...”

“I see”, he says, “I got a call about some people lurking around the houses and had to come by and see who they were. We have had some trouble with kids going in and destroying things. Juoksengi, you said? Keisu? We had a Keisu here in Korpilombolo who made knives, maybe you are related? *Nå niin*, I have the keys here, I can let you in.” The man’s name is Sune. *Kiitos kaikesta Sune*. As he is clearing the snow in front of the door, we are told that this house has both been a police station and a town hall after the workhouse closed. We press record on the camera. “Now it’s neither this nor that.” he says as he turns the key in the frosty lock.

My friends and I used to say that only failures stay. We left when we were young, in the hope of never moving back to the North of Sweden. The instructions of “becoming Swedish” had turned into that deep desire of assimilation. It meant being seen as an adequate human, of being educated and of being civilised. It promised opportunities such as income, power, success. I moved from city to city, uprooting every part of me that resembled a Tornedalian, from accent to manners and interests. In my memories I speak Meänkieli to my parents. One time, I asked my mother about when I stopped speaking the language, to which she replied “You never spoke Meänkieli. We talked to you in Meänkieli and Finnish, but you answered in Swedish.” Their choice to not actively teach me Meänkieli was like that of many other Tornedalian parents. They did not want to set us up for what they had gone through. With their lived knowledge, they figured that a Swedish speaking child would be a happier child. I had assumed that the words in

## Back to Back — Becoming Tornedalian

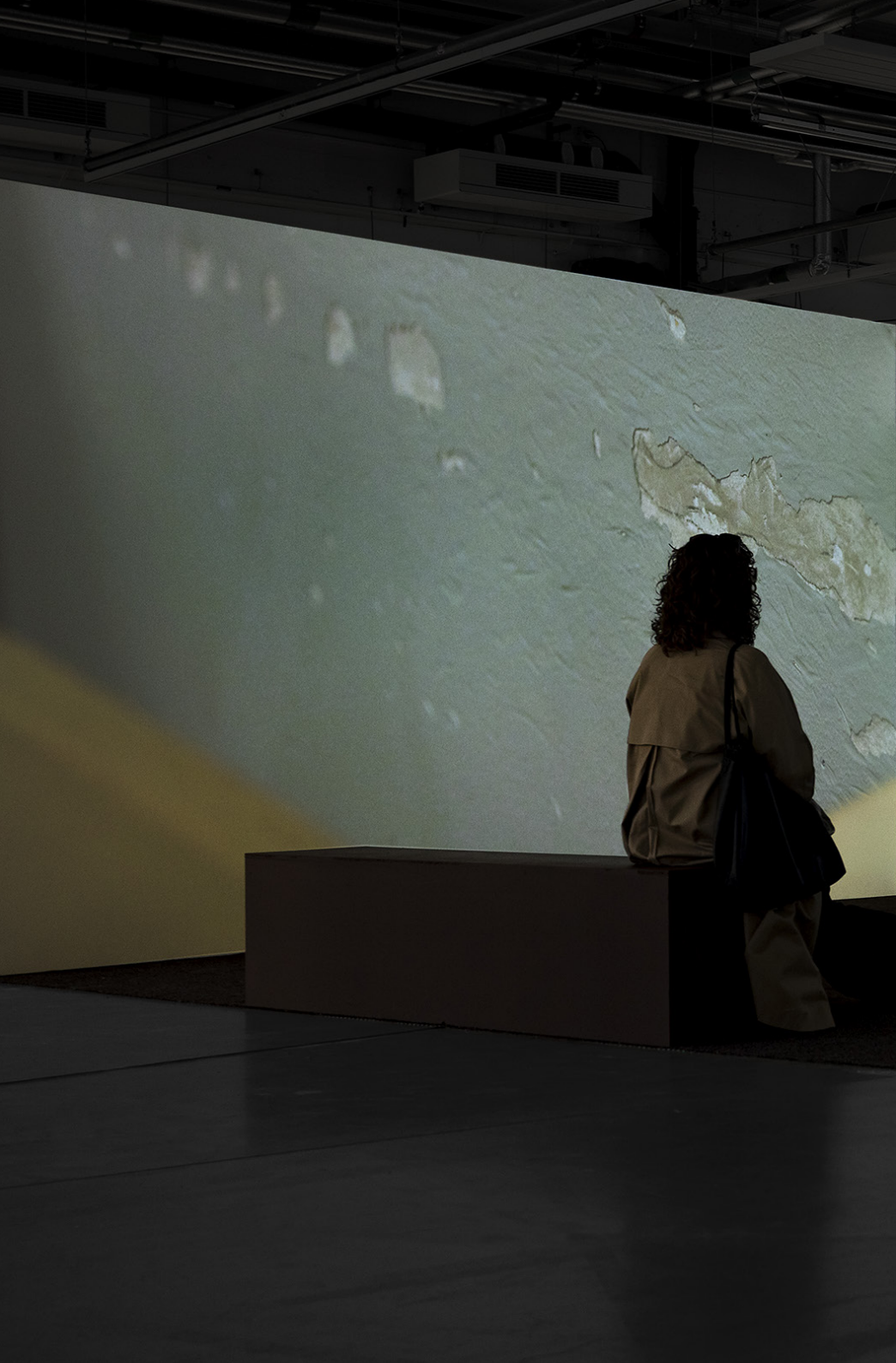
the back of my mind were a reminiscence from childhood. I envision a rich, full language living inside of me, longing to become visible. Waiting for me to start to miss it, to start asking where it went. Then, one day out of nowhere, when I am ready to cherish it, to love it, it will become present and fully embrace me. I have read the words as a suggestion of a future where I am fluent in my mother tongue. In the language courses I learned how to encapsulate *minun nimi on* and *mie asun* into the right grammar and syntax. I put up yellow post-it notes teaching me the words of my surroundings. *Kuppi, pöytä, tooli, ikkuna, ovi, klasi, uuni*. In 2020, the Swedish state established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission after a demand from the Tornedalian organisation STR-T with the purpose to investigate the *Swedification* of Tornedalen and to prevent similar acts in the future. The statement was written in relation to Tornedalen, however since this commission is funded by the state, one could argue that it should be of interest to prevent assimilation of other minorities in Sweden as well. In 2019, the Swedish right-wing, racist party Sverigedemokraterna suggested that all languages other than Swedish should be forbidden in the Swedish educational system. This was a proposition targeted at immigrants and refugees from non-European countries living in Sweden, as it did not include forbidding English or any of the official minority languages such as Meänkieli.

Since 2000 Tornedalians have been protected by law as an official minority group, together with the Sámi, Swedish Finns, Roma, and Jews. However, while Sweden has recognized us as “official”, the nationalist movement has changed target, changed form, and lived on. There are still ideas about what a Swedish person is, what they look like, and what language they speak. Without undertaking the work of understanding how these ideas function, and what histories they are connected to, assimilation politics will continue to be the cause of death for cultures, languages, identities, and communities.













with clattering speech

## Josse Thuresson

- ◀ Karin Keisu and Josse Thuresson,  
*Back to Back*, 2022.  
Four-channel film installation with sound,  
wall construction, wall colour, carpet, benches.  
64 min loop, 450 x 900 x 250 cm.  
Courtesy of the artists.



## Back to Back — This Language Is Not Abandoned Yet

As a child, when giving good night hugs to my parents, I used to ask them to mute the film they were watching. They always argued that they would not turn off the sound. I needed to get used to it, they said. When I got older, I would have hearing people in my surroundings, a partner perhaps, who would not lower the volume in order for me to be able to sleep. I stomped off to bed and did not understand why they were so stubborn about this.

My father became deaf at the age of eight. Meningitis had inflamed his brain and changed the function of his hearing organs. His parents were devastated and brought him to different experts around the country, searching for a cure or tools to deal with the situation. They visited one of the five schools for the deaf in Sweden, two hundred kilometres away from their home, and briefly considered moving there. A professor in Uppsala advised them that they should not, warning them that my father would lose his spoken language in favour of sign language. My grandfather listened to him, relieved perhaps, being offered a guarantee that everything could stay the way it was. Despite being completely deaf, my father remained in his small-town school and continued to have music class on schedule. He taught himself to read lips and continued to use his voice. Once, he told me that the main reason he managed to get through school was by learning to fake it. Pretending to understand everyone's rapidly moving lips, to follow the quick turns in dialogue, or to catch the point of the joke. He swallowed the pain. This is experienced by many deaf people with hearing families; their families will talk and laugh around the dinner table, telling the deaf person that they will explain the content of the conversation later, excluding them from everyday social situations. Deafness did not harm him, but deprivation of sufficient language, as well as the lack of belonging, identity and support, did. Even today, he confessed to me, he feels tremendously ashamed of being different. Attending a school for the deaf and learning

sign language are for many deaf children the most affirmative environment they can be in. My father, among many, never experienced that.

Throughout Western history, three different methods of education for the deaf are known to have been used: the French signed method, using sign language; the German oral method, using lip reading and speech therapy; and the British written method, using writing. In 1809, Pär Aron Borg started the first school for the deaf in Sweden and developed the Swedish sign language and alphabet. This drastically changed when the oral method became more popular throughout the nineteenth century. In Milan, in 1880, the Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf decided to ban sign language as an educational language. Known as the Dark Age of Deaf Education, or Oralism, all schools for the deaf and hard of hearing turned toward speech therapy. Pupils had to try to learn to pronounce words correctly at the expense of learning a regular curriculum. It was seen as a necessary act, to make deaf people fit into mainstream society. But the knowledge of prohibited sign language was taught during breaks and in the secret of the night, among the students in the residential deaf schools. The one out of ten who had deaf parents showed the other children that there exists a method of communication without endless misunderstandings and headaches.

In 1981, after a century, Sweden was the first country in the world to recognise sign language as a legitimate language. Nowadays, the schools for deaf and hard of hearing are bilingual, using both sign language and speech depending on the students' individual preferences, in a sign language environment. However, an excessive trust in new medical technologies once again fuels the aspiration to monolingualism. Fifty percent of the deaf between the ages zero-twenty have Cochlear Implants (CI) with various results, at the expense of sign language. Doctors often

## Back to Back — This Language Is Not Abandoned Yet

solely advocate for speech exercises and integration into hearing schools. Deafness can and should be cured, they say, looking away from the fact that some deaf people with CI later in life decide to unplug their implants due to complications, dissatisfaction and aversion to the constant struggle to try and fit in.

In his twenties, my father finally found the deaf community. He learned that Swedish sign language is neither gesturing, nor a crutch, but a complex and rich language that differs from spoken languages. The grammar exists in the eyes, eyebrows, the mouth, the shoulders, and the hands at the same time. It is not to be confused with communication methods such as “signs as support” (*tecken som stöd*) or “signed Swedish” (*tecknad svenska*), which follows the linearity of Swedish. Some signs are however simultaneously and silently articulated in Swedish when you express them in sign language, except for the so-called “genuine characters”, which are signs that do not have a Swedish oral form. For example, when you do the sign for *för säkerhets skull* (just in case) you silently pronounce *hyff*, for *vänta väldigt länge* (wait for a long time) you use *pi pi* and for *har gjort* (have done) you use *happ*. Moreover, sign language is not international, since sign languages were developed separately in different places around the world, just like other languages.

Sweden has a long history of structural oppression of linguistic minorities. In 2017, right-wing party leader Ulf Kristersson claimed that “*I Sverige talar man svenska*” (“In Sweden one speaks Swedish”), and proposed stricter language requirements to be able to get permanent residence and citizenship. The extreme right-wing party Sverigedemokraterna have proposed to shut down first language education for children with other native languages than Swedish, as well as banning other languages than Swedish in schools and workplaces. We see language politics that build on conservative nationalistic ideas of “one nation, one people,

one language". A frenetic aim towards homogeneity that obscures the fact that in Sweden one speaks multiple languages and that these languages have existed parallel to each other long before the constitution of the Swedish nation state.

At dinner at home, when my parents were still together, my father spoke to me and my hearing siblings when asking for the butter or about our day, making my mother furious at him for excluding her. Born deaf in a third-generation deaf family, she is a native sign language user and made it her children's first language. We always answered in sign language, but for her, half the dialogue was chopped off when my dad used his voice instead of signing. My father's complex aspiration for normality reproduced linguistic inequity within his own family. Today, I understand it as an expression of deeply internalised ableism and audism, deriving from society never allowing him to rely on sign language. He has never been able to trust it, since it is a method of communication that is constantly devalued by society.

The specific oppression of deaf people's experience is called audism. One expression of audism is that deafness is still primarily seen as a medical condition and not a minority group with a valuable culture and language. In 2021, Karin and I visited Sign Language Arts Night, an international workshop in sign language poetry and Visual Vernacular (VV) at Riksteatern Crea, in Stockholm. When interviewed, the participants expressed an urgent desire to reach new generations of deaf children and teach them the unique and empowering potential of sign language. Access to art and poetry in sign language is essential to evoke confidence and imagination among deaf children and youths.

VV is an art form developed by and for deaf people, often claimed to be untranslatable into spoken or written form. It was given a name and established as an art form by Bernard Bragg (born in the United States in 1928 and co-founder of the National

## Back to Back — This Language Is Not Abandoned Yet

Theatre of the Deaf) but has existed as a method of storytelling in sign language for an unknown amount of time. It is related to sign language poetry and pantomime, but uses cinematographic techniques and unfolds more like moving images. The performer freely shifts characters and perspectives, embodying different subjects and objects within the narrative. In VV, you do not describe an apple tree with words or signs – you are the apple tree. You are also the growing seed, the sun, wind, and rain, as well as the human passing by, grabbing an apple and eating it.

Swedish, in its written form, is my mother's fourth language, since she is a Danish-Hungarian deaf immigrant in Sweden. Her writing always carried traces of sign language grammar. Prepositions and conjunctions were sometimes left out and the order of things turned around. I grew up embarrassed of her misspellings and her own internalised feelings of being insufficient made her ask for my help. I often took on the responsibility of writing emails, job applications and work assignments for her, with a bad feeling in my gut. Society made her dependent. Lesser than me.

It inflicted an unwanted power relation that created a gap between us. I did not realise at the time that by policing and erasing my mother's sign language from her texts I was part of controlling which voices and narratives are made illegitimate in society. In my work today, I am interested in allowing errors, misunderstandings, hybrids, dislocations, and deterritorialisation. These kinds of contaminations can insert minority narratives into the mainstream and put forward a critique towards national identity. Ways of being, embodied knowledge and specific contexts, beyond conventions, are made visible that way. Moving from the margin towards the centre, not necessarily to become the centre, but to disturb it.



Utan titel

## Timimie Mäarak



## Utan titel

Att lära sig ett nytt språk  
är som att lära känna en ny person  
Det tar fram nya sidor hos oss

Olika typer av humor  
olika sätt att uttrycka sorg

Kanske många samer blir stoppade att lära sitt språk för  
att känslorna blir uttryckta på ett så ärligt sätt att det blir  
överväldigande

Det är både enklare och svårare att prata om det på  
svenska än att lära sig samiska där vi både måste ta oss  
igenom skammen av att inte känna sig varken vuxen eller  
samisk nog, när vi alla andra gånger måste veta allt om vår historia  
för att sen  
bara  
inte  
kunna  
prata.

Att lära dig ett nytt språk  
en ny konstform  
är en ny chans att lära känna sig själv.  
Att ta hand om sitt inre.  
Och för vår del, att också läka ut all skam, all smärta,  
som gått i arv sen generationer tillbaka.

Använd ditt språk, varje dag, oavsett hur mycket lite du  
kan. Dina äldre kommer att höra dig



## Appendix

# Shiva Anoushirvani

Space — فضا

Translation of Rymd — فضا by Shiva Anoushirvani

Tilda Dalunde

\* To some love is given,  
to others only Sci-fi.

## Episode 1

Nothing is lost

Only matter

The last nights among Earth's earth.  
Before the journey

One of the *mamans*  
the large body that shares the liquid in its veins  
has sold

Everything everything everything,  
mostly given away  
bestowed

The things transform into food or Rial  
into only the bodies that will journey

Only materially  
without meaning

In and on the earth-space among some:

Zen

(Did anyone say that Buddha was upper class?)

Before the journey on Earth's earth  
at allotted roof on top of building

A small body next to a larger

The large body of other liquid in the veins than the small,  
but of the same ocean that circulates Earth's earth  
and in the small

The large body's farewell to the small before the journey:

Both go to a third dimension,

where they fly above roofs

forget about rockets and lie to themselves

War does NOT exist under the stars.

It is there and then, they become two stars

And the large one says:

one day we will meet up there among the other stars

fare well

Small one journeys with the light, below and above the rockets

## Shiva Anoushirvani

### Episode 2

What is visible

does NOT exist

What we see is just what our bodies perceive, feel, love, or are disgusted by.

People among mountains and people among mountains, are not seen by the same water.

Among certain mountains we only want to see war

Among other mountains and cliffs:  
Idyll

### Episode 3

Middle, Upper and Lower

Somewhere where Middle and Upper, not Lower have their nests,  
where emptiness kills  
in winter time

The body suddenly saw the spirit:  
Burned out from the view of injustice

Here, just here under dot to dot  
another Hilma af Klint

## Space — فضا

The shapes are recognizable with one small deviation  
It is 2020

Among white houses.

The ones who laughed at those who had a “HEAD SCARF”,

While the laughter roared secretly  
almost everyone in the white houses became  
spiritual

Buddha  
and  
Ahura Mazda

## Episode 4

There is an abyss between us where we meet...

Perhaps never

Us in terms of collective on Earth

Them in terms of  
AF and VON

Them in terms of: not fresh,  
the others

Us in terms of, beloved

## Shiva Anoushirvani

Them, who ARE in and on,

Them, who are on the other side of the abyss

When they were never forced to be apart:

Love is fucking given!

Besides:

It is through the lie we travel

The sweet lie

Like a shell

### Episode 5

Reunion

The small one and the large one meet but never in the stars

Love is not given, in that way.

Whereas: Plankton:

WE > became <

From star to humble sea sparkle a late, late, late late summer's  
night 2020

The northern west coast,

at Earth's earth

On the side of the empty white roofs.



Meanwhile:

In every corner there is someone hiding who loathes “HEAD  
SCARF”

In the word that spreads without finding its goal castle people are  
heard as well as, (well, everyone means well) ocean people that  
\*bathe and mess about

or that  
only bathe

\*“To some people  
Love is given,  
To others  
Only Heaven.”

— Langston Hughes, The Collected Poems

to whom it may concern  
 Translation of till vem det berör by tm  
 Tilda Dalunde

to you, we are just a surface. something flat, something that makes you melancholic, that makes you look deeply. something that makes you want to displace your bodies. you are many bodies. we are one. you float in us. we are dispersed everywhere. we are in you. have you thought about that? we have learned your language. you couldn't learn ours.

you feel. we are.

we are in a constant motion, through different times and at different speeds. in this way, we are the same. you are also in a constant motion. but you keep speeding up. we have tried to understand, but we don't. you keep speeding up without being in a hurry? do you have a place to be, at a certain time?

yes, perhaps.

you will journey soon. you look for us everywhere. you look for us far away so that you will be able to leave.

that is why we have learned your language. we will bid you farewell.

we continue to be, after you have left. you float in us. there is nothing to forgive you for, but we still want to bid you farewell. you are a flock. you are a flock.

we have always scared you, right? you have created beings and myths. you have turned us into carriers of monsters. because you have always known that we could be the end of you. we have no ambitions.

you run away from us at the same time as you direct your gaze as far away as you can to find us. you have turned us into a grave. we are no difference. we are no difference.

sometimes we rise up tall above you. and you haven't seen all that

## to whom it may concern

we can do. far from it.

here, we are everywhere. you wouldn't survive a day without us. because you have so much of us in you. you are more us than you are you. but we don't think you understand. you never did.

we are a surface and a depth. and in the depths, you make your graves. when you find a hole, you fill it. then you don't see it anymore. you want to avoid seeing, and beneath the surface you can't see.

in the twilight zone you lose your sight. that's where you usually are. you cannot fill us. for you consist of us. we are everywhere. even where you don't think we are. you write poems about us. reflect yourselves in us when we are still. what is it you see? we see you. you are a surface. you choose surfaces.

we are an eye. perhaps you think that we also direct our gaze onwards, outwards.

go to the ruin to gaze backwards, to see forwards. that is where we find you. you want to feel hope. you build your stories around hope. have you tried not doing that?

you build something. then you let it decay. you abandon so much. you have failed. we are your failure, after all. but there is no one you can ask for forgiveness. you have no one to sacrifice for.

but you can always blame your limitations. we do. blame your limitations. that's how we understand you. at the edges. the edges shape you. but you are leaking, all the time, you are porous and can't keep it in.

we are not constant. we exist until we don't exist.

**It's All True, All the Time**  
**Notes on translating**  
**till vem det berör/to whom it may concern by tm**

**I**

A text is more than the sum of its words. It is a construction built by – and around – words that are only assumed, and by their numerous combinations. If the writer succeeds, an ideal world, which only existed in their head before, is also shared with the reader, through a set of assumptions. As a translator, my job is to interpret them, as well as the ideal world produced by their combination.

It is not only the words used, but also about how they are combined, that eventually build this “in-text world”.

**II**

Pronouns are like famous paintings. You know them instantly. They are something as rare as words with perfect equivalents: there is often only one of each. They are the actors and agents of the “in-text world”, our stand-ins, that allow us to relate and connect.

Verbs and nouns fold open like fans or branch out like the mouth of a river: each possibility offering a different flavour, a different facet, a different shade to the world being built.

Prepositions are wild cards in translation. From one language to another, they will always be a surprise. Following their own paths, they are (literally) all over the place, and make visible how language operates as a system of agreements, where every position is negotiable.

# It's All True, All the Time

## III

ni (pronoun)	har (auxiliary verb)	gjort (verb)	oss (pronoun)	till (preposition)	bårare (noun)	av (preposition)	monster (noun)
you	have 've (left out)	made turned created caused composed arranged manifested drawn settled set (us) out	us	into as to be be (left out)	carriers bearers holders containers porters wearers (monster) carriers (monster) holders (monster) containers	of for	monsters*

Those above are only some of all the possible translations, which seem to activate similar assumptions in the context of this particular “in-text world”. Perhaps every sentence should be filled out like this to give the reader a closer glimpse of the world inside the writer, seen through my assumptions? I cannot, of course, take myself out of the equation.

## IV

I am the dispatch office. Receiving information, activating meanings, sorting through assumptions and contexts, making the choices of which building blocks the writer would have used if I was them.

\*Some of the possible translations.

## References

### Foreword

1. Jimmie Durham (2013), "Against Internationalism", *Third Text* 27, no. 1 (2013): 29-32. DOI: 10.1080/09528822.2013.752202

### Across and beyond: An Introduction

1. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation", in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000), 400; Sherry Simon, "Introduction", in *Speaking Memory: How Translation Shapes City Life*, ed. Sherry Simon (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 13; Sophie J. Williamson, "Introduction: Between Languages," in *Translation*, ed. Sophie J. Williamson (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2019), 22.

### Futile Endeavors

1. Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006).
2. David Thurfjell, *Granskogfolk: Hur naturen blev svenskarnas religion*, (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2020), 215.
3. Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006).

### What Is a Photograph?

1. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Photograph", <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/142818?rskey=vDx8uy&result=18&isAdvanced=false#eid>
2. *Merriam Webster*, s.v. "Photograph", <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/photograph>
3. *Oxford University Press Dictionary*, s.v. "Camera", <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=camera+meaning>

## List of Contributors

**Karolina Aastrup** is a curator and writer with a background in art history. Her main interests are contemporary lens-based practices and new media art that deals with political and environmental issues of our time. Based in Stockholm, Sweden.

**Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole** is an artist who takes inspiration from the small details of everyday existence. With playfulness and dark humour as well as the ambition to have her work seduce rather than shout for attention, she uses her artistic practice as a medium of investigation and research where the outcome is defined by the process itself.

**Shiva Anoushirvani** is a visual artist with a degree in Fine Art and Contemporary Critical Studies from Goldsmiths University. Anoushirvani mainly works with photography, moving images and performance. Her artistic practice deals with history, heritage, environment and resources, often with a poetic streak. Born in Tehran, Iran, currently based in Sweden.

**Elina Birkehag** is an artist based in Stockholm who, by examining text in relation to the body, seeks ways to process layers of information that she is exposed to. Birkehag works with everyday materials and situations, striving to activate collective and bodily memories. Her process often involves performative action, in which the writing body plays an essential role.

**Tilda Dalunde** is an artist and translator based in Stockholm who received her education at Konstfack and Stockholm University. Dalunde investigates how stories appear in relation to objects, first through the maker's and then through the viewer's attention, as we – as meaning-making creatures – cannot refrain from assembling pieces into a whole.

## List of Contributors

**Axel Gagge** is an artist living in Stockholm who likes to stay in-between rather than within. His work often takes the form of slow and collaborative investigation. He is interested in the hidden leakage of meaning and emotion from mathematics, the recursive and the beyond-calculable.

**Paulina Granat** is a curator and producer with a background in ethnology and aesthetics. Her curatorial interests stretch between local networks, different forms of self-organisation, the mundane, socio-political power structures and science fiction. Paulina is co-founder of the artist- and curator-run collective Flat Octopus.

**Karin Keisu & Josse Thuresson** have been working as a collaborative duo since 2018. Their projects take the form of text, film, performance, digital installations and curating, addressing politics of language, queer time and the strength of being on the margins. They were educated at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design.

**Timimie Mäarak** is a Sámi poet, and queer activist currently based in Stockholm, Sweden. During the Venice Biennale 2022 Mäarak participated in the Sámi pavilion as a poet in residence.

**tm** is an artist and musician currently pursuing an MFA at the Royal Institute of Arts in Stockholm, working with sculpture and sound through installations. tm's interests span between queering, worlding, kinship, nature, apocalypse and listening, as well as how to connect to local environments through layers of time.



## List of Contributors

**Simon Nilsson** is a graphic designer with a BFA from Konstfack. He is interested in how language shapes our understanding of the world, and how our understanding of the world shapes language. In his practice, Simon is mainly working with commissions within the cultural field.

**Malin Lin Nordström**'s artistic practice investigates ways to relate to nature and how to dissolve dichotomies or deal with loss and longing through sculptures, performances and audiovisual installations. Through relational and community projects she creates spaces for people to share experiences and build a sense of agency and hope. Nordström is based between Tromsø, Norway and Stockholm, Sweden.

**Isabelle Ribe** is a curator with a background in art history and theatre. Her main interests are provenance research, zine culture, queer theory, participatory artistic and curatorial methods, and the intersections between art and science.

**Joi Wengström** is currently studying fine art at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. His artistic practice is built on different methods for translating including linguistic, emotional and material sources.

## COLOPHON

### ACROSS AND BEYOND

Body and Landscape in Translation

### CONTRIBUTORS

Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole, Shiva Anoushirvani, Elina Birkehag, Tilda Dalunde, Axel Gagge, Karin Keisu, Timimie Mäarak, Simon Nilsson, Malin Lin Nordström, Josse Thuresson, tm, Joi Wengström

### SPECIAL THANKS

Elin Svahn

### EDITORS

Karolina Aastrup, Paulina Granat, Isabelle Ribe

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Robin McGinley, Valentina Sansone

### PUBLISHED BY

Department of Culture and Aesthetics at Stockholm University

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Simon Nilsson

### COVER

Joi Wengström, *displacement of time and resistance* (excerpt), 2022.

### TYPEFACE

Monument Grotesk

URW Garamond No.8

### EDITION

Studies in Curating Art VII

### ISBN

978-91-89107-32-8

### ISSN

2003-2870

### PRINTING

Östertälje Tryckeri AB, Stockholm

©2022 All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher. All images are © the artists, reproduced with the kind permission of the artists and/or their representatives.



Stockholm  
University

Contributors:  
Diana Agunbiade-Kolawole  
Shiva Anoushirvani  
Elina Birkehag  
Tilda Dalunde  
Axel Gagge  
Karin Keisu  
Timimie Märak  
Simon Nilsson  
Malin Lin Nordström  
Josse Thuresson  
tm  
Joi Wengström

Editors:  
Karolina Aastrup  
Paulina Granat  
Isabelle Ribe

ISBN 978-91-89107-32-8  
ISSN 2003-2870