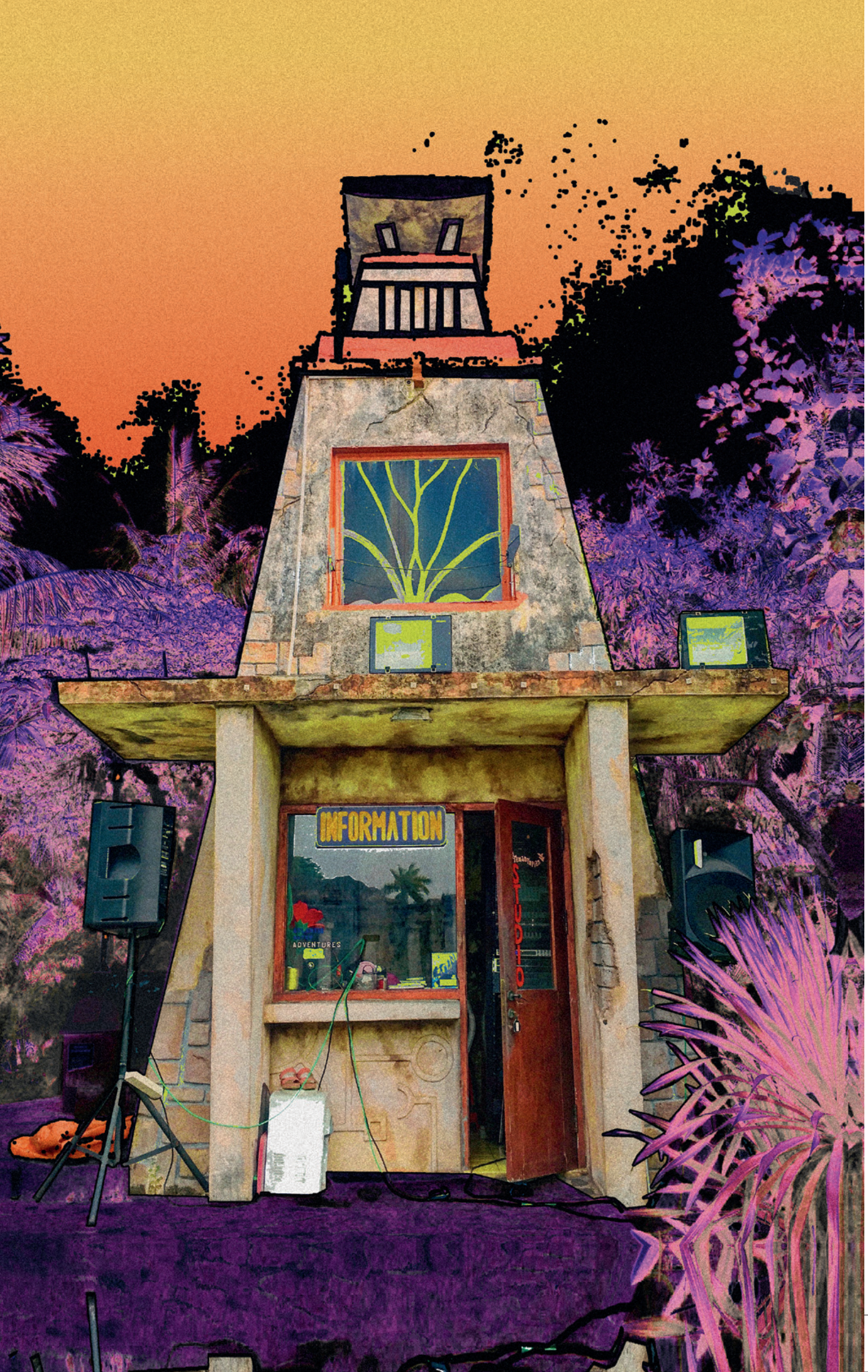


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Karin Ferrari is an artist of the trash stratum and its sacred and subliminal iconography. Working with a wide variety of materials, including digital media, assemblage, and traditional analog craft, the artist has created a body of vexing, funny, and disturbing work that at once actively probes and passively submits itself to contemporary esoteric currents: occult symbolism, technopop paranoia, gnostic conspiratorality. Not long ago, these currents were pretty marginal concerns, but they have exploded in power and visibility over the last decade, intoxicating our politics, our dreams, and our doomscrolling. And they clearly intoxicated Ferrari as well, who reveled in what she calls "trash mysticism" like few contemporary artists.

— Erik Davis (High Weirdness, TechGnosis)
San Francisco March 2023



Installation view in the exhibition **Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism**, Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, 2019



A Techno-Magical Portal

Video installation for the video *DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal* in the exhibition *Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism* at the Ferdinandeum Innsbruck, with Raiffeisen Landesbank as cooperation partner, as part of the main prize of the RLB Art Award 2019.

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The video installation in the show *Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism* is inspired by the artist's research trips to Southeast Asia. During these trips, Karin Ferrari noticed the use of sacred elements in leisure architecture and hotel facilities, which she identified as *trash mysticism*. The installation architecture is based on a *Candi Bentar*, a split gate - an architecture commonly found in the temples of Java and Bali - that signifies the transition from the mundane to the sacred space. The gate serves as an entrance to Ferrari's video installation, where her film *DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal* is shown on a sculpture of an oversized iPhone. The video is a reassembled version of the iPhone Xs advertising clip, which was released during the artist's BMKÖS residency in Yogyakarta in 2018. The video takes the cosmobiological imagery featured in the original advertisement for the iPhone Xs quite literal, interpreting it to suggest that the device actually is a conduit to otherworldly dimensions.



Installation view in the exhibition **Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism**, Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, 2019
Photos: Wolfgang Lackner



Karin Ferrari. **Aliens, Sex + Paranoia**, Künstlerhaus Bregenz, 2019

Performance/lecture **The Ultimate Guide to™ (TRASH MYSTICISM)**. A performance-lecture with a light projector projection on Meme Magic and Chaos Magic, New Age and Alt-Right, Alchemy and YouTube channelings. 2019



Videostill **DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal**, 2019

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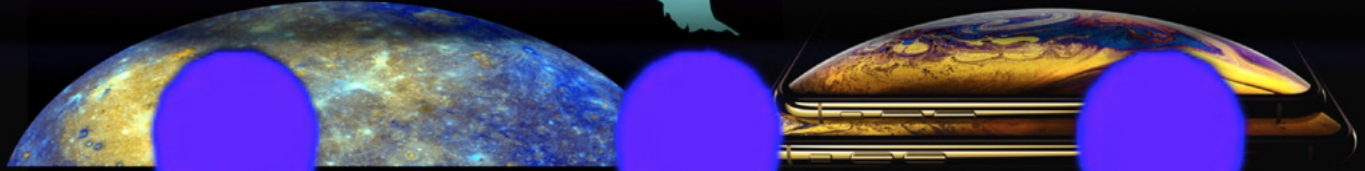
Karin Ferrari

DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal

Experimental mystery docu-fiction, collage film

English, 13 min, 2019

COMMUNICATION
COGNITION
TECHNOLOGY



UNDERWORLD

DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal

Experimental mystery docu-fiction, collage film, English, 13 min, 2019

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzUZy3lrcc>

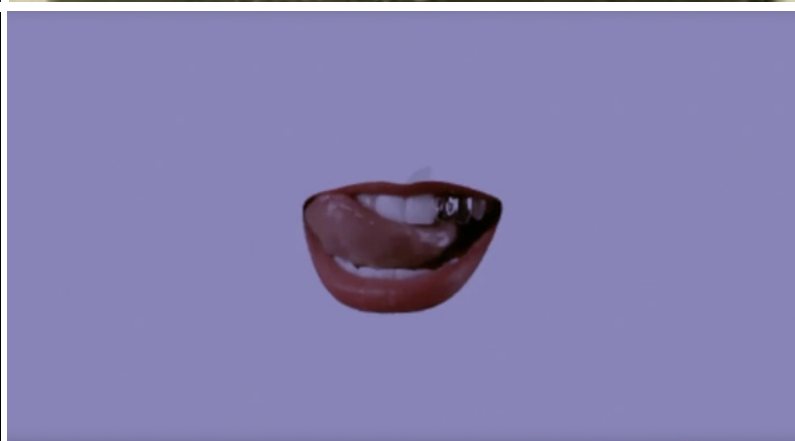
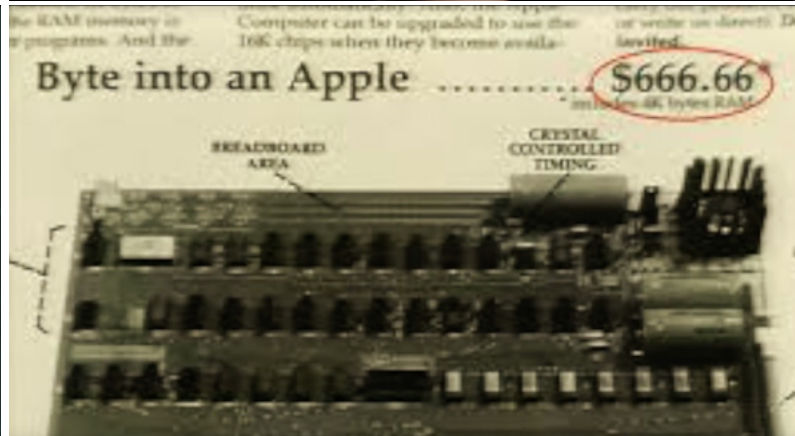
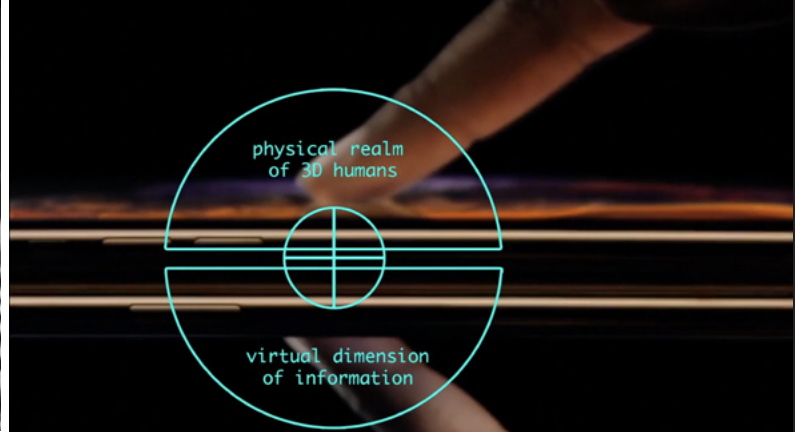
'The iPhone Xs as more than simply a modern mobile phone; as a code that Karin Ferrari sets out to interpret. In a superb re-assemblage of the ad made by Apple, the film develops an impressive density of semiotic linkages while, at the same time, repeatedly succumbing to the paranoid sign mania.

In a reassembled version of the advertising clip produced by Apple – the material is paused, slowed down, repeated, and overlaid with graphics and text – the film develops an impressive density of semiotic linkages while, at the same time, repeatedly succumbing to the paranoid sign mania of conspiracy theorists. The critical attitude towards consumer culture is paired with an equally powerful delirious euphoria for the aesthetics and potentials of contemporary pop culture. Whether a portal to God or an instrument of the devil – one thing is certain: Never before has the world spirit assumed such a perfected form.'

— Diagonale catalogue, ab/mk

'The new iPhone... It's not what you think it is. Karin Ferrari looked into the secret symbolism of the advertising campaign of the iPhone Xs. Her new short mystery documentary shows: It's alive. And it is not entirely of terrestrial origin. These startling revelations are just the beginning of the strangest details to emerge from Ferrari's alternative reading of iconic images and the curious insights they offer into our collective technological imagination.'

—
Gnostix TV



Video stills DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal, 2019



Bernhard Garnicnig

Apocryphal Technologies

Karin Ferrari's research not only debunks and reconnects the claims of designers and engineers behind the latest Apple smart device to the unconscious and undocumented. Also, it allows us to establish a connection to an undercurrent in which slick tech gadgets create entirely otherworldly connections.

"What can we do with this thing?" becomes "What is this thing doing with us?" What we increasingly rely on to survive may, in fact, depend on us to manifest its vitality. DECODING The iPhone Xs. A Techno-Magical Portal is not critique that disenchant hyperbolic Apple-ad-speak. The video also questions a superficial belief in ourselves, as technologically advanced and intellectually reflected users, as truly in the know about the basic truth of origin of an organic light emitting diode multi-touch microwave spectrum gigaflop telecomputing slab in our hands. The contradiction between knowing and rejecting something is precisely a point of connection: by way of the cinematic, ecstatic truth, Ferrari's video does not render the faux as fact, but instead tunes into our desires — that we might, for once, be allowed to believe what we truly feel. In contrast to many info-blobs weighing down the world wide web, this video has not been made by an anonymous algorithmic entity or a think-tank sub-contractor. The artist Karin Ferrari is a medium of a persisting extra-modern curiosity: Do I believe this could be true? And more importantly: Does she? Her work uncovers the insidious relation between knowledge and belief. Is belief guided by analytical assessment preceding acceptance of other ways of knowing, so that I can imagine-to-know, therefore believe, her story to be true? Does the artist believe it to be true because she doesn't know any better, or because she knows something that I do not? Would I believe someone who knows something that I do not know? What is she reading? What is she smoking? Or perhaps I do not care about the truth, but actually long for the same capacity that allows me to ecstatically connect to a truth beyond a binary of true and false, a kind of knowing that feels like a prolonged moment of truth, like a long now between the breathing in of knowledge and breathing out of judgment? To hold on to a truth of the in-between, in perpetual ambiguity, so that we can make the ultimate choice of whether or not I really need this damned new phone?

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Karin Ferrari's artistic research delves into the realm of contemporary do-it-yourself (DIY) forms of superstition and spirituality emerging from our digital screen culture. She terms this phenomenon trash mysticism. It's ironic, considering our self-perception as a rational and enlightened society, how often beneath the surface, concealed desires that are actually of mystical nature exist and operate - often unrecognized - within pop culture, consumer capitalism, our built environment. And technology.



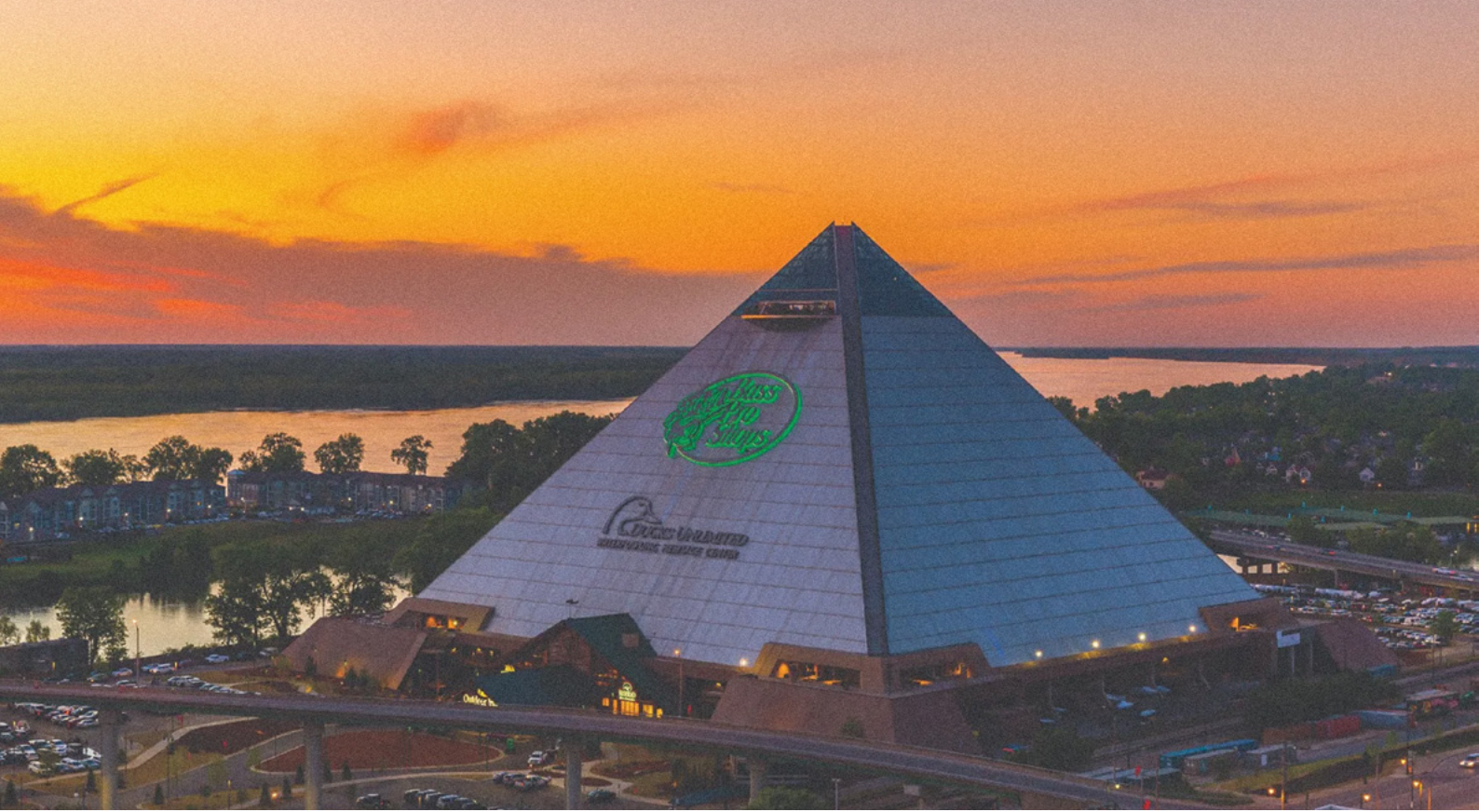


Trash Mysticism

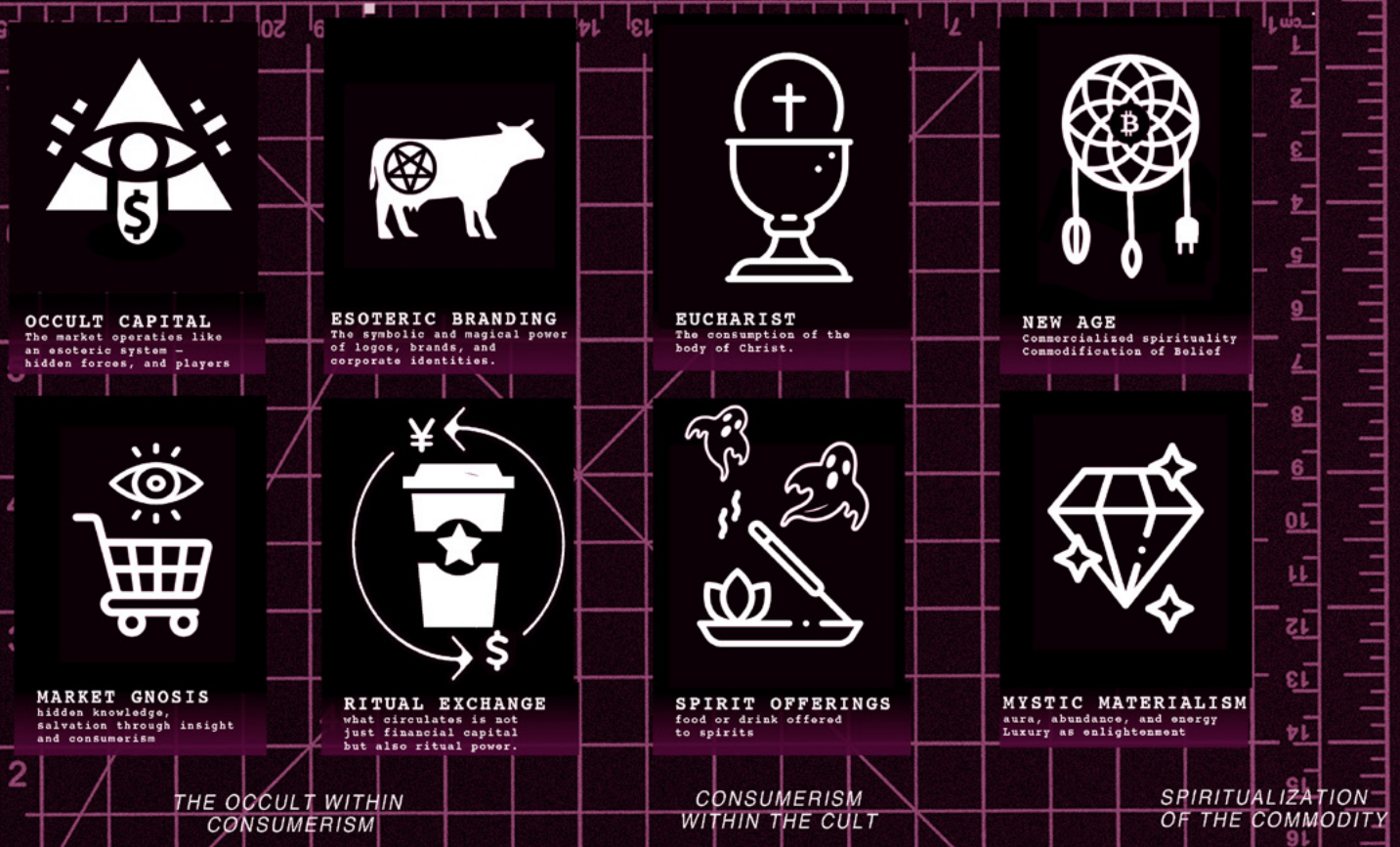
Artist book, 112 pages, 2019.

With a text by Gary Lachman, author of *Dark Star Rising*, expert for contemporary forms of occultism in modern politics and former bass player of Blondie. Forewords by Wolfgang Meighörner and Johannes Ortner, and an introduction by Rosanna Dematté.

An extensive essay by Gary Lachman, author of *"Dark Star Rising: Magick and Power in the Age of Trump"* (2018), embeds Ferraris' work in a stunning analysis of what he calls "rejected knowledge" and phenomena such as Meme Magic, Fake News, and the post-factual age. The visual part of the publication Karin Ferrari. *Trash Mysticism* is an artist's grimoire. Both Gary Lachman and Karin Ferrari succeed in closely examining important but elusive phenomena of the present, influenced by the various facets of occultism, virtual simulation, and image manipulation.



Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid Shopping Mall, Memphis, Tennessee



Gods and Goods. The Culty Side of Capitalism

Artist lecture Verdurin, London, 2025

Media artist Karin Ferrari decodes and reinterprets contemporary visual culture, revealing its mystical undercurrents. In this presentation, Ferrari explores magico-religious rites in consumer culture, offering a funhouse-mirror reflection on the symbols, rituals, and sacred spaces of consumer culture.

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Pop music videos as initiation rites. Hotel temple-pool-bars in Bali. Overlooked cultic sites atop Manhattan's financial skyline. A pyramid-shaped shopping mall in Memphis, Tennessee. And ultimately, a techno-shamanistic magic flight on the escalator leads - inevitably, like the slurp at the bottom of an iced Frappuccino - to the question: Could the layout of Angkor Wat be the original blueprint for the modern mall???



Karin Ferrari

Gods and Goods. The Culty Side of Capitalism

What actually are cults? Not all cults are occult, and what even is the occult? Is that the right name at all? The word cult is already inside occult, so it can't be that wrong.

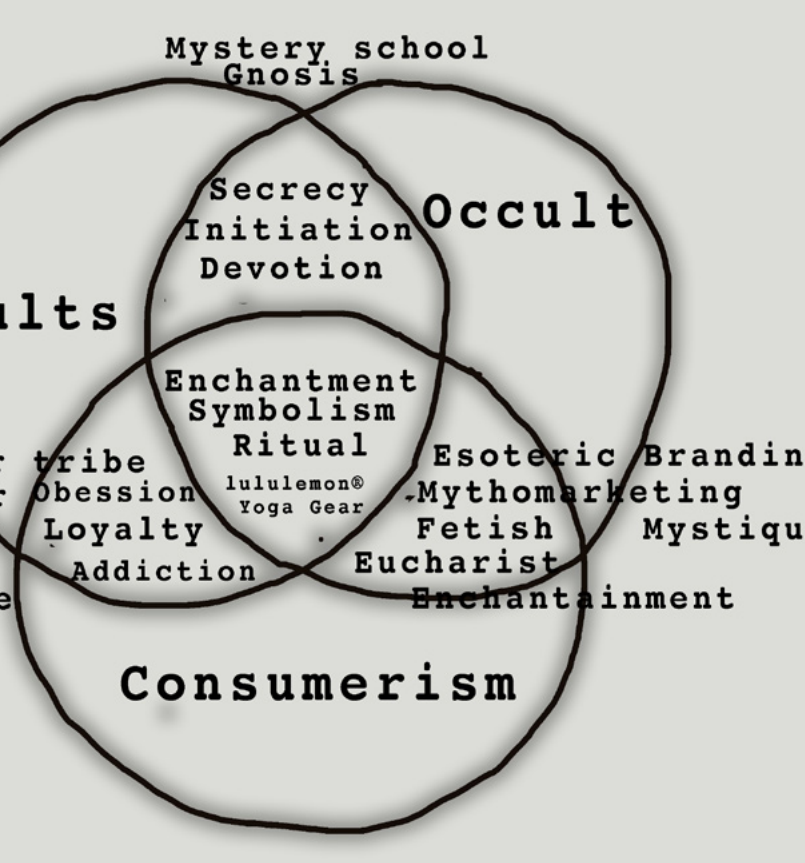
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When things become complicated, I start making diagrams. The dance of consumerism, cults, and the occult moves in several directions at once. On one hand, there is something occult within consumerism itself. Branding feels esoteric. The way symbols operate within logos, how they seem to carry hidden meanings and promise transformation. Capital, too, often feels occult: it's opaque, its operations and hierarchies are invisible and inaccessible. Even the act of exchanging money and goods can feel ritualistic, almost sacramental.

But it also works the other way around—there's a consumerist side to occultism. Just think of the Christian mass: it is literally an act of consumption, the eating of the body of Christ. And beyond that lies the commodification of spirituality itself, where sacred symbols and rituals become products to be sold. We live amid what I call consumer mysticism or mystic materialism, where luxury becomes a form of aura, and where wealth is reimagined as “energy.”

The point I want to make is that occult and cultic behaviors are not confined to religion. They're everywhere. Walter Benjamin once suggested that capitalism is a parasitic transformation of Christianity, built, like Christianity, on the concept of guilt—Schuld in German, which also means debt.

I often return to the image of the rooftop pyramid hovering over Wall Street—the pyramid that also appears on the one-dollar bill. The world of finance and banking has always had deep ties to the magico-religious. Just think about the language: speculation is a form of divination, credit comes from the Latin credere, to believe, to have faith. The market is guided by an invisible hand. Wealth itself is imagined as a sign of divine favor. Banking and mysticism have been intertwined since the very beginning.



As an artist, my question is how to work with this entanglement. In my collaboration with Francesco Fonassi, we created the album *Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation*, for a sound installation titled *Temple of Ga Ga*. The work explored these intersections between finance, faith, and fantasy. I collected cheap plastic bowls during my BMKOES residency in Indonesia in 2018. Indonesia is the biggest producer of plastic and these plastic bowls were everywhere, stacked to towers along the streets, stacked plastic bowl towers that weirdly reminded me of the fractal temple architecture of the region.

In my sound installation I used theater light to animate the bowls and these banal objects acquired a strange, transcendental quality; many even react to ultraviolet light, glowing as if enchanted. The geometry of the installation drew from multiple sources: the circuitry of a computer chip, the maze of a shopping mall, the ground plan of Angkor Wat, and the arcade grid of Pac-Man. Through this layered composition, I wanted to trace how economy, technology, and sacred architecture share a common imaginary realm.

The accompanying soundtrack connected these ideas back to the Crusades as the origins of banking itself. The Knights Templar, often considered the first international bankers, invented the check to protect pilgrims from being robbed, replacing gold with a piece of paper that held invisible value. In that sense, the birth of modern finance was deeply tied to religion and something of a magical act in itself.

Excerpt from Artist Lecture at Verdurin, London, 2025





(Detail) **Simple Disanimated Integration Ceremony**, Acryl on Canvas, 80 x 100 cm, 2024

Erik Davis

Karin Ferrari. Trash Mystic

In his 1981 novel *Valis*, Philip K. Dick wrote that “the symbols of the divine initially show up at the trash stratum.” This is no throw-away line. For Dick, this quip conceals an ontology, a hope, and a cultural practice. But to see these dimensions you first you need to unpack – or rather, uncompact – the meaning of the “trash stratum.” Here Dick was inspired, at least in part, by the logic of inversion that drives so much Christian myth: the last is made first, the rejected stone becomes the cornerstone, and God dies a lowly criminal’s death. (...) The trash stratum also refers to cultural hierarchies. In the early 1980s, when Dick was writing, trash referred to a rejected zone of cultural production – punk rock 45s, monster movies, comic books, and, well, pulp science-fiction novels like the ones Dick cranked out to survive. In the early 1980s, when an increasingly conservative mainstream culture recaptured and reterritorialized the more utopian energies released by the counterculture, sacred and otherwise, this marginalia crackled with resistance because it was too weird to assimilate. As such, the trash stratum also embedded a praxis. Inspired by the spiritual guerillas of gnostic myth, redeeming the sparks of the true God from the demiurge’s prison planet, or by the underground Christians persecuted in pagan Rome, Dick believed that cultural struggle could still be waged from the (cultural and ontological) margins. Dick’s God was a camouflage God: faced with the demonic simulacrum of the Spectacle, which Dick called the Black Iron Prison, “the true God” must mimic “sticks and trees and beer cans in gutters.” By presuming to be “trash discarded, debris no longer needed,” God can hide in a foxhole of the discarded, so that he “literally ambushes reality and us as well.”

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Karin Ferrari is an artist of the trash stratum and its sacred and subliminal iconography.

Working with a wide variety of materials, including digital media, assemblage, and traditional analog craft, the artist has created a body of vexing, funny, and disturbing work that at once actively probes and passively submits itself to contemporary esoteric currents: occult symbolism, technopop paranoia, gnostic conspirituality. Not long ago, these currents were pretty marginal concerns, but they have exploded in power and visibility over the last decade, intoxicating our politics, our dreams, and our doomscrolling. And they clearly intoxicated Ferrari as well, who reveled in what she calls “trash mysticism” like few contemporary artists.

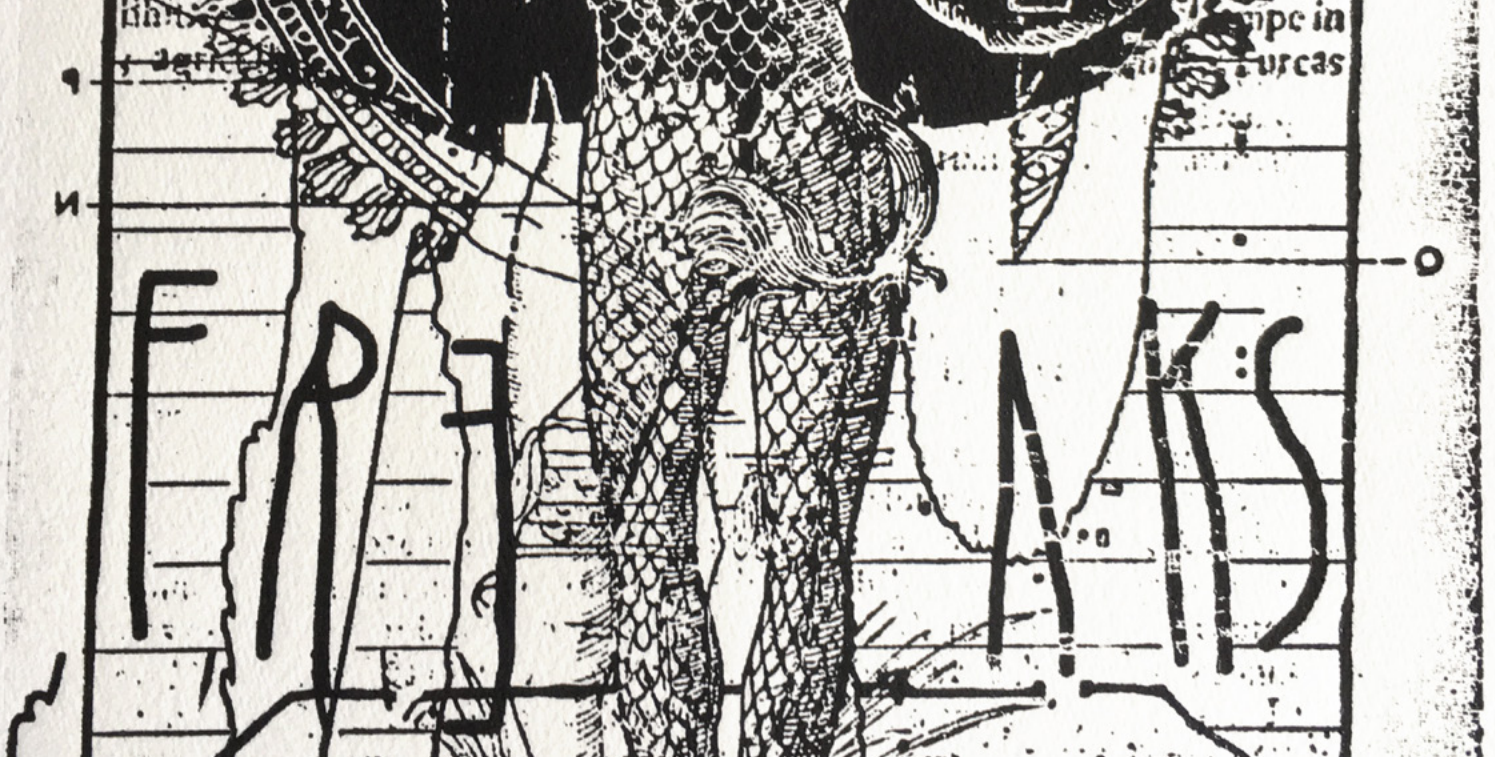


Video still **DECODING** Katy Perry's Dark Horse (**THE WHOLE TRUTH**), 2016

Far from a distanced conceptual intervention, Ferrari's work itself results from obsession, fascination, and the sort of "interpretive drift" that the anthropologist Tanya Luhmann identified as the mechanism through which once outlandish ideas come to seem plausible. While studying in a traditional fine arts program, and working as a curatorial assistant, Ferrari fell to binge-watching alien conspiracy videos on YouTube. The power of this material derives from a Dickeyan dialectic between weird possibilities, often with sacred or cosmic implications, and the trashy styles and feverish vibes that characterized so many DIY video back in the late 2000s. Ferrari came to understand that YouTube's trash mysticism did not just draw its iterated stories out of the grab-bag of conspiracy lore and the paranormal, but unfolded those tales through the critical work of interpreting signs. In other words, these esoteric detectives largely based their narratives on a delirious and sometimes paranoid exegesis of symbols, words, rituals, and visual puns dredged out of the cultural mediascape — a mediascape that had been reframed by this very process into a vast and essentially menacing subliminal text.

Ferrari's response to all this was **DECODING THE TRUTH**, a video series that included a number of largely didactic films devoted to cracking the dark "twilight language" embedded by elites into pop culture, which in Ferrari's work principally focused on revealing the Illuminati symbolism hidden in TV news graphics and high production music videos from pop stars like Katy Perry and Lady Gaga. At once critical deconstructions and parasitic hallucinations, Ferrari's videos were formally indistinguishable from countless other YouTube revelations devoted to unpacking these demonic suggestions. But while it is easy to mock hysterical visions of Hollywood bestiality cults or transhuman techno-Satanists, Ferrari does not mock. Instead, she follows the bread crumbs down the slippery slope. What we discover is not not that there are no conspiracies — its that there are too many! Spend some time with Ferrari's films, and it becomes impossible to believe that some of the symbolism she unpacks was not slipped in for its esoteric implications. Even if the artists and producers are just goofing around, or planting evil Easter eggs to mess with the paranoids, the end result is the same: a pop landscape stained with an apocalyptic occultism whose infectious tropes that have now invaded our own eyes, making it hard as hell to tell the difference between critique and hallucination, programming and parody, eye candy and ritual.

For Dick, at least on his better days, there was still a distinction between God and the trash, a boundary between the holy sparks and the dark materials that camouflaged them. But Ferrari's work suggests that this distinction itself has broken down, another victim of high-bandwidth entropy. What Dick saw as a sacred invasion has become a more daemonic contamination. The sacred is garbage, and the symbols of the divine have become symbols of the malign. The trash stratum is



(Detail) *Holy Freaks*, woodcut, 2019

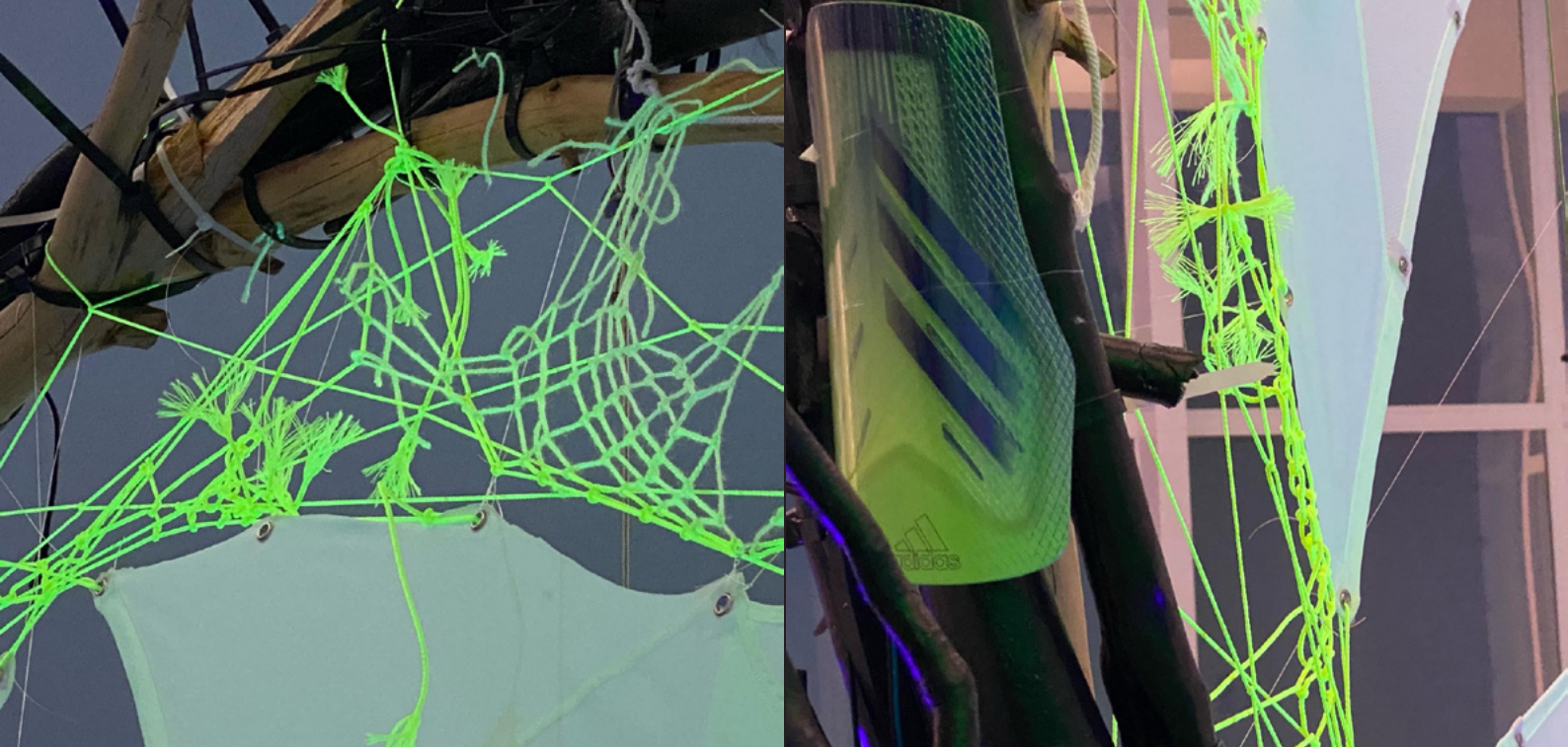
now everywhere and nowhere, as genres that once scraped the bottom of the cultural hierarchy get recirculated through the same audience algorithms as everything else. Fetish porn, superheroes, witchcraft, UFOs, numerology, conspiracy — all this weird stuff now has its fat slice of the attention economy. The hyperactive cannibalism of meme culture now assures that shitposting and Godposting overlap one another, gestures in an extinction prayer at once hermetic and banal.

The spirit of contamination is reflected in the problem of Ferrari's positionality, perhaps the most provocative and disturbing feature of her work. Is she a believer or a prankster, a doyen or collector, an ethnographer or revelator? Her ambiguous and ambivalent stance breaks one of the unspoken rules for gallery ar/sts who traffic with "problema/c" cultural forms: the agreement that at some point or another the ar/st will give us — viewers, cri/cs, buyers — an indica/on that they haven't en/rely lost their "cri/cal distance" or their outsider commitment to interroga/on and transcoding. By largely refusing to give us this knowing wink, Ferrari stokes our anxiety about where she is actually coming from. This is the secret she carries, and it lends the work itself the glow of contamina/on, a fear of ideological impurity that has only grown more intense as conspirituality has grown more aggressive and disrup/ve over the years.

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By not playing it straight, Ferrari allows her work to become a pure symptom, not only of the dark occulture she analyzes, but of its infectious potential as well. We too feel the rabbit hole opening up beneath our feet. But this unsettling warp also forces us to take Ferrari's material more seriously, not only as a potentially threatening social contagion but as a "real picture" of contemporary forms and forces otherwise too weird and nebulous to limn. After all, even the most far-out conspiracy narratives sometimes function as allegories of hyper-objects too elusive to peg with more conventional discursive or analytic tools. So we can laugh at the surface claims that Ferrari makes, like the argument she makes in a 2019 video-essay that an Apple promotional event for the iPhone XS was actually a "megaritual summoning of the A.I. Overlord." But it is harder to chuckle at the implied depths of this creepy argument, for those insidious deeps, where ads and algorithms drive posthuman mutation into overdrive, are now our own, every time we tap that succulent screen.

But screens can only take you so far — or rather, they take you too far, all the way into the black hole. If there are signs of resistance in Ferrari's work, they mostly take place outside the digital frame. In *Holy Freaks*, an Internet Meme War between Lana Del Rey and the forces of darkness compel a secret coven of witches to elude digital surveillance by re-activatinng traditional woodcut prints — the medium of so much early modern esoterica, here mixed with the daemonic sigils of commercial logos. Ferrari also directs our ta_ered a_en/on to feral and fabulous architectures that



(Detail) Technoanimae, 2021

lie outside the white box of the gallery. With Roo4op Temples of New York, she shifted her gaze from the gutter to the heights, discovering scores of pseudo- sacred shrines that literally and figuratively crown Manhattan's commercial skyline. For The New Holy F*ck, the artist built a small temple in a forest using e-waste, cables, and pop detritus, inviting passersby to discover the ironic spiritual enchantment appropriate to a theme of sacred contamination. Not everyone can follow the signs -- Ferrari tells of two hikers, dressed in high-tech clothes composed with synthetic microfibers, who complained that a plastic chair had no business in the forest.

Perhaps the most potent divine symbols that Ferrari has dredged from today's trash stratum are her dreamcatchers. These apotropaic objects, traditionally made from willow hoops, woven sinew netting, and various beads, charms, and feathers, were attested to in Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) culture as far back as the early 1800s. The Ojibwe call them *asabikeshiinh* — the inanimate form of the word for spider — which probably refers to a trickster spirit known as the Spider Woman. According to the lore, these human-crafted spiderwebs were given to children to hang above their beds, where the objects promised to filter out bad dreams and allow only the good stuff through. During the Red Power movement of the 1960s and 70s, dreamcatchers were adopted as a pan-Indian symbol, and soon became popular and marketable items in Native craft stores as well as blue-eyed New Age shops. Today many non-Natives craft dreamcatchers out of non-traditional materials with an eye towards Instagram flash or a global market hungry for indigenous kitsch.

Ferrari's large dreamcatchers are aggressively non-traditional. The first one was called Fake Dreams Catcher, and while the "fake" in the title refers to the cheesy fantasies the thing promises to capture, the word also reminds us of the object's status as an inauthentic and appropriated Native design. Ferrari named another dreamcatcher *Animadidas*, which was similarly crafted from e-waste, polished branches, rare earth metals, springs and cables, VHS tape, faux fur, a feather ordered on Amazon, and bilious fragments of Nike Sport mesh tank tops. As if to underscore this thing's contaminated character, Ferrari hung it in the atrium of the Sillpark shopping mall in Innsbruck before bringing it to a gallery. Paradoxically, the work's appearance as an inoffensive item of public art in a commercial space may actually have lent the thing more sorcerous mana. Rather than weathering the cool gaze of gallery critics, it hung in the periphery of consciousness, silently absorbing the phantasmic desires and sacrificial rituals that compose the altered state known as "shopping." To unpack these secrets, she even convinced Sillpark to bring artists and theorists together for a "Shamanic Mall Retreat", no doubt the world's first.



Again, Ferrari is not offering some haughty sneer here. She is too haunted by the power of enchanted consumerism for that, too aware of the sad truth that shopping and media serve unmet spiritual hungers today, especially for an animated world that bridges our sense of anomie and dread. Her objects are contaminated not only with the evidence of planetary crisis, but with the occult forces and supernatural agents contemporary artists and intellectuals were once supposed to keep at a distance. For there is too much witchery in her dreamcatchers for them to serve as tools of critique or sociology alone. The VHS tape that decorates *Animadidas*, for example, contains recordings of MTV videos from the late 1990s – an encoding that only matters if you believe that invisibly magnetized particles can subliminally charge the work.

So if Ferrari's dreamcatchers are still spellcraft, which dreams do they capture, and which do they let through? Their seeming target is the "fake dreams" that still fuel consumer capitalism, resource depletion, and the rivalrous magic show of the social media subject. As the artist notes, such dreams aren't nightmares but the smiling specters that haunt you during the day, vexing you with their inspirational messages and promises of individual wellness. Ferrari calls such messages "psycho-emotional malware programmed into 3D human collective (sub) conscious by the forces in power." But as the political spectacle of Q-Anon proved, the same thing can also be said of madcap conspiracy thinking, which also perpetuates malware designed to influence the course of power. Ferrari knows we can no longer afford any of these dreams, which distract us from the universal precarity of the (post)human situation, and the absolute necessity to think and imagine outside the paranoias of both self and society. Here Ferrari's unsettling refusal to take an obvious position offers something like a saving grace. If her dreamcatchers are still apotropaic, if they offer healing or protection beyond the dark ironies of sacred trash, then they manage to ward off this darkness without delivering any obvious light. But sometimes the opposite of bad dreams is not better dreams. Sometimes the opposite of bad dreams is waking up to the real condition at hand, a condition that for better or worse is also irredeemably enchanted.

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— Erik Davis is the author of 'High Weirdness' and
'TechGnosis. Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information'.
San Francisco March 2023





oC_cult Machines. Series of AI generated Images, 2025



oO_cult Machines

Images generated with AI. Part of the BMKOES research grant AI in the arts
Experimental Film in progress

In a way these are occult machines—made with an occult machine. No one really knows how AI works or how it makes decisions. That’s why it’s often called a black box.

This series of images is an evolution of my ongoing exploration of imagination within the interplay of humans and machines. At the core of this inquiry is the concept of techno-animism: the perception of technology as alive, sentient, or spiritually charged. It describes not only the human tendency to anthropomorphize machines, but also how mystical desires and speculative visions drive technological imagination itself. From pop culture and spiritual subcultures to post-digital practices, this mythical view of technology is increasingly relevant in the age of AI.

“Generating images with neural networks, something strange happened. My relationship with the machine shifted. And at some point, my way of thinking and imagining things started to change. And so did my dreams.”

— Midjourney user

The image series oO_cult Machines is part of an experimental short film currently in development. The film explores techno-animistic experiences through the lens of AI, touching on themes such as anthropomorphization, digital transference, and synthetic imagination.





Ai.GIP STREET SHRINES

part of the series: O C _ C U L T M A C H I N E S / CAR CULT

Images generated with AI. Part of the BMKOES research grant AI in the arts.

Edition for Kunstraum Innsbruck

Print on Metal, framed 5+2, 40 x 40 cm, 2025

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AI.GIP Street Shrines is a series of AI-generated images that transform roadside petrol stations into surreal altars. Part of the larger project *Car Cult*, within *oO_Ccult Machines*, the series blends car culture with contemporary mysticism. Gas pumps become devotional objects, decorated with synthetic flowers, feathers, and golden plastic. Inspired by the artist's travels and long research stays in Southeast Asia, the United States, and Southern Italy, the work draws from folk shrines, street offerings, and the glossy aesthetics of consumer culture. Ferrari, something like a car herself—inhabits this mythic terrain from the inside out.

This work expands Karin Ferrari's ongoing investigation into trash mysticism, re-enchanting everyday environments with speculative spiritual meaning. The automobile emerges not only as a machine but as a fetish object—an emblem of aspiration, transcendence, and manufactured desire. Advertising imagery borrows liberally from sacred motifs: halos, ascensions, and dreamlike landscapes. In its design and sensory appeal, the car mimics ritual devices—flashing LEDs, haptic touchscreens, ambient hums—inviting a kind of synthetic devotion. Within this framework, the car ceases to be mere transport and becomes a techno-religious relic, humming with the mythologies of late capitalism.

For quite a while Ferrari's chosen artistic medium was video. Her experimental docu-fiction series DECODING THE WHOLE TRUTH claims to reveal the symbolism and subliminal messages in images of global media culture. The video series is inspired by the weird part of YouTube of the early 2010s. Ferrari got the idea to create her own theory fictions and reveal hidden messages in images of global media culture in 2010 while spending one night binge watching reptilian shapeshifting news reporter on YouTube.

DECODING Filmography

The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way by Lady Gaga, 24 min, 2020/2023

DECODING Taylor Swifts LWYMMD, 25 min, 2019

DECODING The iPhone Xs: A Techno-Magical Portal, 13 min, 2018

DECODING US TV News Intros – Pt. 1., 8 min, 2018

DECODING The FIFA World Cup Logo, 11 min, 2018

DECODING The Mysteries of Antarctica (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 11 min, 2017

HYPERCONNECTED THE WHOLE PICTURE, 4 min, 2017

DECODER La Terre, 2 min, 2017

DECODING Die Intros der ZiB (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 20 min, 2016

DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 20 min, 2016

DECODING Reuter's Business As Usual For Siemens in Russia, 10 min, 2014

DECODING Azealia Bank's Atlantis (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 27, 2013

DECODING Lady Gaga's Bad Romance (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 19 min, 2011



Video installation **The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way by Lady Gaga BRUX**, Vorbrenner Projekt, Innsbruck, 2023.
Foto West

In her video works, Karin Ferrari approaches the ubiquitous changes in the handling and perception of information or disinformation on the internet. Conspiracy theories, fake news, modern myths, so-called 'urban legends', pseudoscientific theories and esoteric utopias are experiencing a boom thanks to the internet and are setting the scene for current debates. Witty and ironically, the artist picks up these contents. As a digital flaneur, she wanders through social media, YouTube and relevant blogs or databases, constructing 'mystery-docus' video works on various topics, skillfully interweaving facts with falsehoods, speculation, and rumors into a compelling artistic Zeitgeist analysis.'

37

— Jury statement, RLB Art Award 2018





The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way by Lady Gaga

Experimental docu-fiction, 22:22 min, 2022

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQUfocSeGBc&t=2s>

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The music video 'Born This Way' (2013) by Lady Gaga is brimming with occult significance and strangely satanic and death-related symbolism. Amidst it all, there is a cosmic birth scene. How could images of birth, death, and satanic symbolism possibly be connected?

'The Lost Goddess: Decoding Born This Way by Lady Gaga' is an experimental mystery documentary that interprets the enigmatic imagery in Lady Gaga's music video 'Born This Way' (2013). The video contends that the music video refers to an alternative creation myth of a forgotten archaic goddess. This lost almighty goddess of primordial times underlies many hidden religious beliefs. It appears that concepts such as the Virgin Birth and the iconography of the devil were inspired by this original horned creator goddess. There seems to be a connection between the superstar's imaginative space, the mother, and the devil, which was distorted and weakened with the rise and enforcement of patriarchal ideologies. A highly complex field of themes that this video appears to uncover within Lady Gaga's music video.



practices of labor and birth

medicine

the physical world

knowledge about the body

~~"satanic"~~ pentagram

female practices and forms of power

Ivana Marjanovic

Performative Theory

40

Karin Ferrari's video installation *The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way* by Lady Gaga (2020-2023) belongs to the series *DECODING (The Whole Truth)* that analyses music video clips and other pop cultural images revealing their supposedly hidden messages. These videos are part of Ferrari's "trash mysticism" concept and they operate autonomously as youtube videos and as artworks exhibited in art spaces.

Using complexly constructed performative theory, based on the analysis of the occult meanings in Lady Gaga's video clip, the work builds a counter argument that Lady Gaga's music video *Born This Way* does not represent a "satanic" discourse (or rather a naïve superficial notion of what would be "satanic"). On contrary, it is a medium in which the oppressed primordial Earth and fertility Goddess (the fallen or lost Goddess), her cult, female power and sovereignty manifest. We hear three persons (including the artist herself) who perform an analytical speculation overlaying the video, looking at different aspects of Lady Gaga's means of expression, from costumes to choreography and text. They interpret this material using different contemporary and historical analogies, images, and symbols. Imitating the logic of conspiracy theories and paranoid narratives that circulate online (secret meanings, alien theories etc.), Karin Ferrari performs an ironic and humorous deconstruction of misogynist, patriarchal, homophobic concepts, contrasting them with what she calls "esoteric utopian desires." Bringing up alternative representations, such as the Lost Goddess, that was imagined beyond binary gender principles as a hermaphrodite, she contributes to non-essentialist feminist representations. Further, in this analysis, the topics of life and creation are also inseparable from darkness and death.

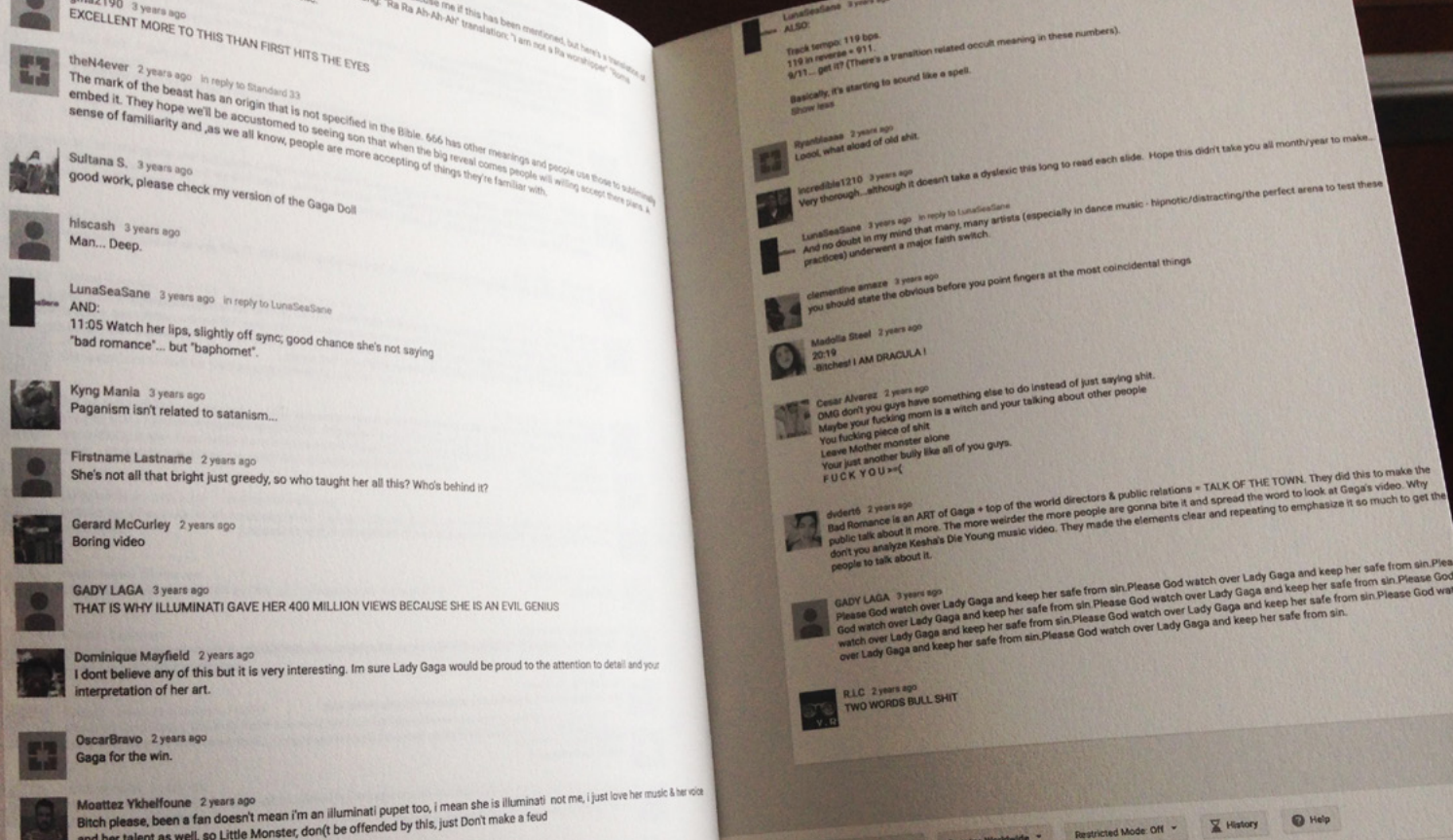


Videostill **The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way** by Lady Gaga, 2022

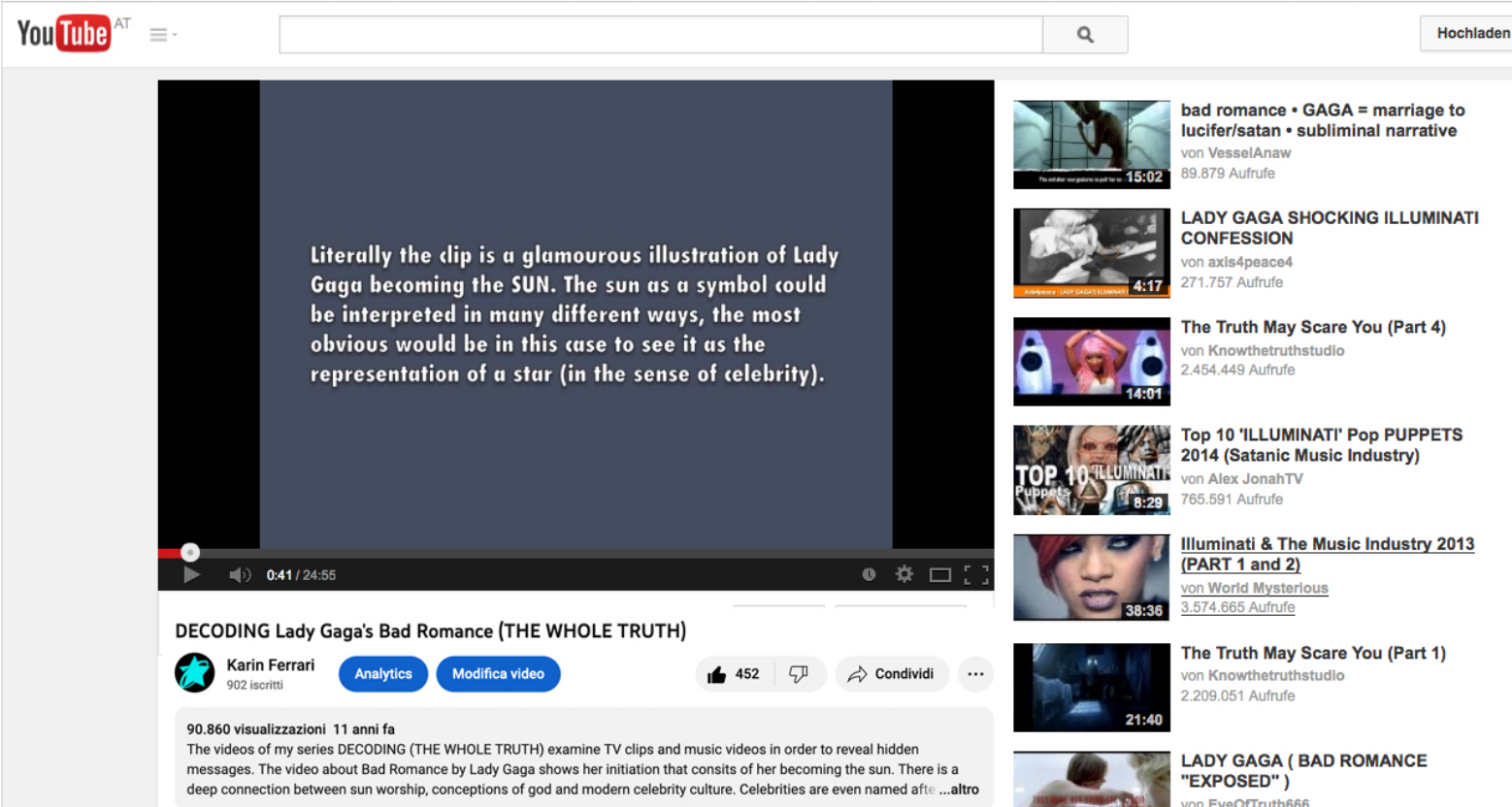
Video installation **The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way** by Lady Gaga, 2022 in the exhibition **When We Move it's A Movement**, Kunstraum Innsbruck, 2023

Great part of the analysis is focused on the corrective interpretation where the figure of devil is understood as a demonized version of the archetypes of the Mother and the Earth goddess, recalling the female practices and forms of power, knowledge about the physical world, medicine, body and birth, proposing an alternative version of creation myths of life and the universe that contest the Christian narrative (pointing to multiple knowledge and spiritual traditions). The way Lady Gaga presents herself in the music video (inventing the figure of Mother Monster) recalls ancient religious concepts of universal goddesses that used to embody seemingly contradicting aspects, namely fertility and annihilation. This reading recalls and affirms a cyclical understanding of life and death. Death symbolism represents the Lost Goddess's power over both life and death recalling the ancient interpretation of death as a creative force which is essential for the preservation of life.

— Ivana Marjanovic, Director Kunstraum Innsbruck
Catalogue Text for 'When We Move It's A Movement', Kunstraum Innsbruck 2024



Publication of the screenshots of comments on my YouTube videos in **Epidemic Subjects** (Ed. Elisabeth von Samsonow), The University of Chicago Press, Diaphanes, 2017.



Screenshot of YouTube's recommendation feature from 2014 when the algorithm pushed polarizing content. Video still from Karin Ferrari DECODING Lady Gaga's Bad Romance (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 2011

DECODING Lady Gaga's Bad Romance (THE WHOLE TRUTH)

Experimental docu-fiction, 19:00 min, 2011

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20x93d0Ghdg&t=1077s>

DECODING Lady Gaga's Bad Romance (THE WHOLE TRUTH) was Ferrari's first *DECODING* video. The video claims that Lady Gaga's music video *Bad Romance* tells the story of her occult initiation by means of ancient Egyptian sun symbolism — a motif present in many pop music videos.

Karin Ferrari's *DECODING THE WHOLE TRUTH* video series was inspired by a particular genre of YouTube videos that gained prominence in the early 2010s. These were largely self-made, experimental, low-budget, trashy documentaries existing in a strange intersection of pop culture, paranoia, and esoteric fascination. These videos were characterized by their trashy aesthetics, unconventional editing, and an intense focus on uncovering hidden truths or secret knowledge, blending spirituality, conspiracy theories, and fringe science.

Examples of such videos include:

- **Beyonce 7/11 Music Video Illuminati Symbols Exposed**
- **Reptilian Shapeshifter Caught on Camera During Live News Broadcast**
- **Alien Races & Galactic Federations: The Pleadians, Greys, and Reptilians**
- **Channeling the Ashtar Command: Messages from the Galactic Federation of Light**
- **Jay-Z: Illuminati Puppet Exposed – Hidden Occult Symbols in 'On to the Next One'**
- **Reptilian Aliens Control the British Royal Family**
- **The Moon is a Hologram: Proof of the Lunar Matrix and Alien Bases**
- **CERN and the Opening of Portals to Other Dimensions: The Hidden Agenda**



Videostills **DECODING The Mysteries of Antarctica**, 2017

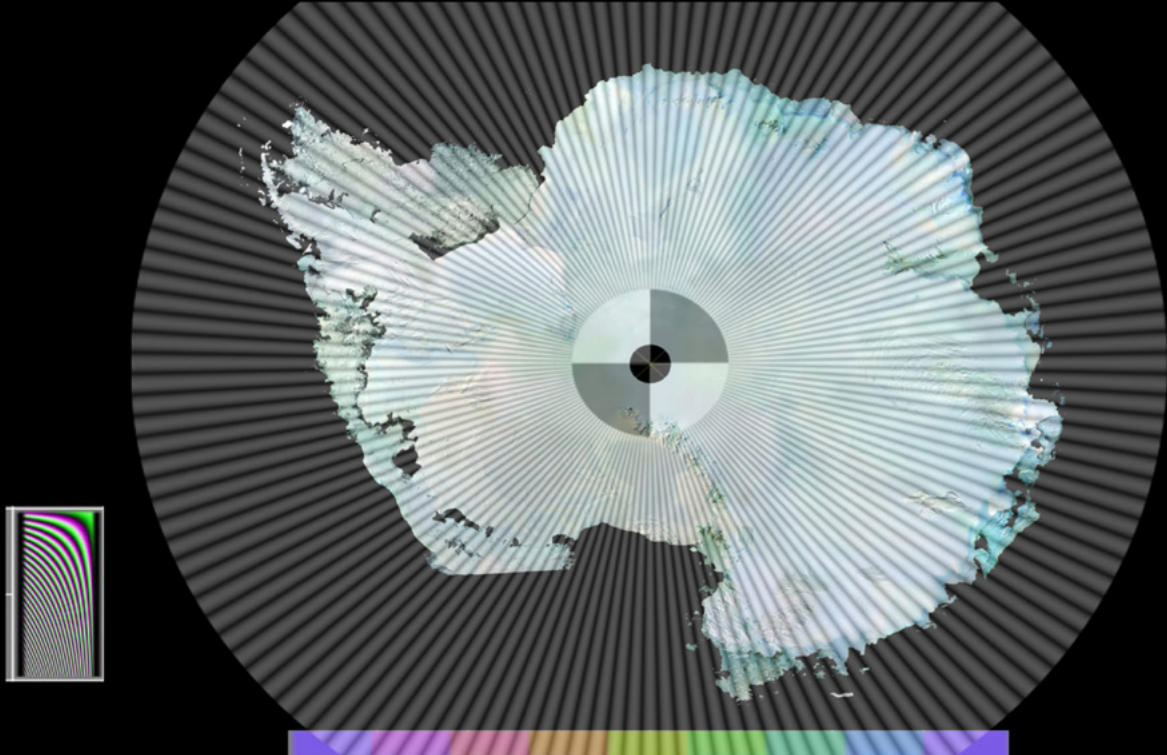
Nina Tabassomi

DECODING THE WHOLE TRUTH

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Karin Ferrari scours internet video platforms for esoteric and conspiratorial explanations from various subcultures. She weaves these findings, drawing on academic research and her own imagination, into highly ambivalent audiovisual decoding narratives. In *DECODING The Mysteries of Antarctica (THE WHOLE TRUTH)*, she interprets historical and contemporary representations and symbols as evidence of extraterrestrial populations and other obscure secrets of Antarctica. Ferrari's videos create suggestive causal chains from collaged found footage and custom animations. While they amplify the allure of each link in the argument, they also make us hesitant to fully believe, as the thread of pearls seems on the verge of breaking. On one hand, the meticulously detailed decoding scenarios create a seductive pull; on the other, they reveal the underlying delusional hubris in their seamless yet absurd transitions. The voice-over, which connects the images, simultaneously unravels them. We hear Ferrari's own voice, attempting ironically and in vain to mimic a computer-generated tone. Ferrari's voice oscillates between the poles of "the whole truth" and a medium for whispered ghost voices, reacting with bemused wonder to its own proclamations. Rather than decoding the subjects indicated in the title, Ferrari's work absurdly spells out the stylesheet of truth production and plausibility strategies on the internet, questioning what debates about our world prosumers on digital platforms are actually engaging in when they exchange seemingly occult and extraterrestrial messages.

— Nina Tabassomi, director Taxispalais - Kunsthalle Tirol
on the occasion of the RLB Art Award 2018



DECODING The Mysteries of Antarctica (THE WHOLE TRUTH)

Experimental docu-fiction, Englisch HD 16.9, 11 min, 2017

[LINK https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGUfUQa_FIMv](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGUfUQa_FIMv)

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The short film *DECODING The Mysteries of Antarctica (THE WHOLE TRUTH)* claims to uncover the secrets of Antarctica through the maps, symbols, and iconographies representing the continent. The film was created for the 1st Antarctic Biennale in 2017.

Karin Ferrari's dangerous expedition through the murky terrain of Antarctic 'alternative facts' has resulted in a suitably distorted documentary. The revelation of the Secrets of Antarctica (THE WHOLE TRUTH) premiered aboard the research vessel Akademik Sergei Vavilov after it had crossed the Antarctic Circle.

— Nadim Samman, Curator of Antarctic Biennale 2017



Videostill, DECODING US TV News Intros - Pt. 1



DECODING US TV News Intros - Pt. 1

Experimental docu-fiction, Englisch, 8 min, 2018

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tetiul3ECM>

With the series DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH) Karin Ferrari operates an alternative semiotics of media pop culture and everyday life. The short videos analyse visual languages and reveal hidden messages and symbols. In DECODING US TV News Intros (THE WHOLE TRUTH) Pt. 1, Ferrari examines the opening credits of various American news programs whose symbolism are linked to Freemasonry, the Illuminati, and powers that work in secrecy and influence the media. Ferrari satirises the speculative narratives of a disinfotainment industry, which positions itself with fake news, alternative facts, and conspiracy theories in opposition to its slandered mainstream media and „liar press,” and undermines informed opinion through emotionalised “rumor-based” reporting.

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— Severin Dünser, curator Belvedere 21 - Museum for Contemporary Art, Vienna

m h y t n i x

After DECODING over a dozen videos Karin Ferrari began in 2018 to work on a real-life inspired short story that explores the unconscious of the internet. m h y t n i x is an animated live-action mystery short film, made in collaboration with Bernhard Garnicnig and Peter Moosgaard.





m h y t n i x

Experimental Fiction. German, English, 22 min, 2020

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3M9q4fvQMo>

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Live action / animated mystery comedy short film.

Story, Animation, Director: Karin Ferrari

Cast Peter Moosgaard, Karin Ferrari, Bernhard Garnicnig

Cinematography Caro Bobek, Bernhard Garnicnig

Editing Karin Ferrari, Peter Moosgaard, Bernhard Garnicnig

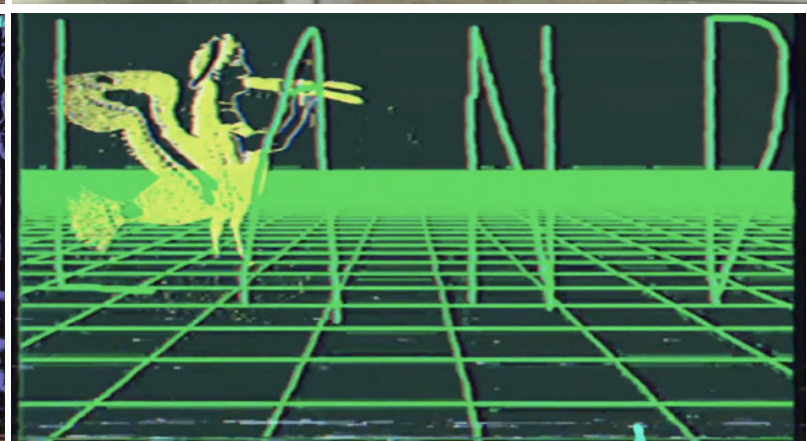
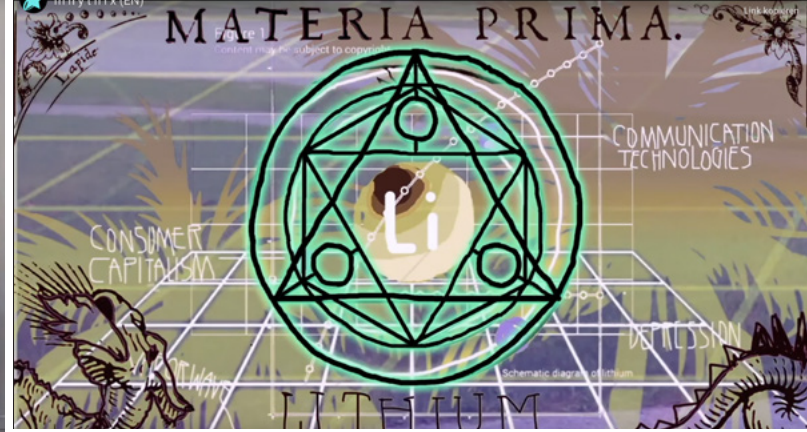
Music Bernhard Garnicnig

Screenplay Karin Ferrari

Sound Simone Borghi, Gerhard Daurer

Made with support by BMKÖS – Pixel Bytes & Film, ORF III Artist in Residence, Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, WTO – Wissenstransferzentrum Ost

The element lithium plays a key role in the manufacture of smartphone batteries and also antidepressants. Coincidence or System? m h y t n i x embarks on a psychedelic road trip into a bizarre world of exploding Teslas, smartphone occultism and trash mysticism. Three friends embark on a roadtrip to find out where milk and lithium actually come from. Suddenly Peter disappears. His last sign of life a cryptic message: m h y t n i x.



m h y t n i x ist ein psychedelisches Roadmovie in dem sich drei Millenials aufmachen, um nach dem Ursprung des modernen Allheilmittels Lithium zu suchen. Besonderes Augenmerk verdient die Ästhetik des Experimentalfilms. In aufwendiger Handarbeit hat Karin Ferrari (Drehbuch, Animation, Schnitt) eine eigene Bildsprache entwickelt. Der Film ist eine Kollaboration von Karin Ferrari, Bernhard Garnicnig und Peter Moosgaard. Mit einem originalen Soundtrack zur Gänze am Handy komponiert von The New Whole™.

— Judith Revers, Pixel Bytes & Film, ORF III

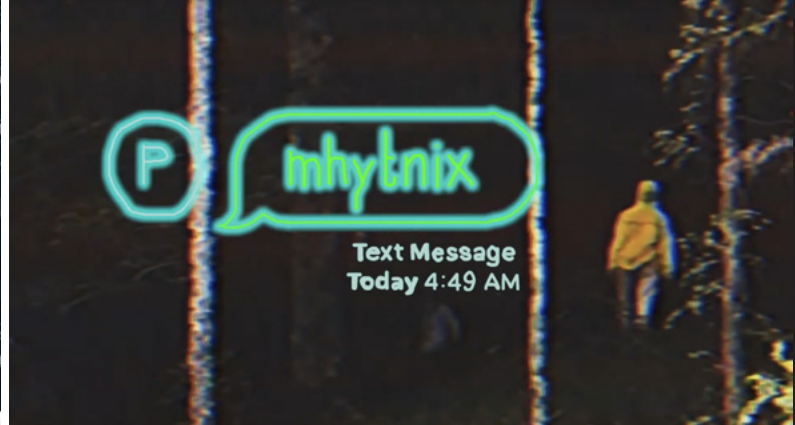
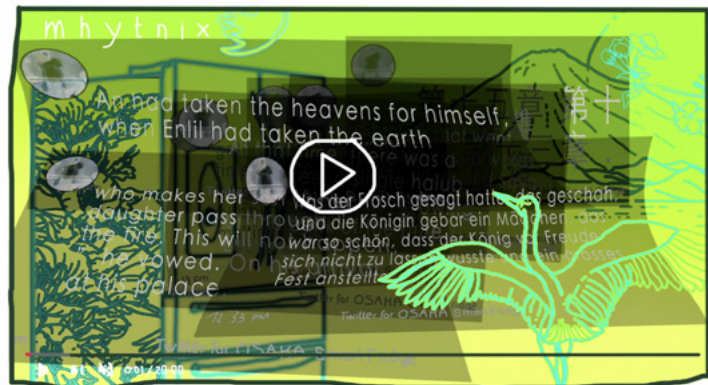


Three young people embark on a journey to decipher the origin of lithium on Gaston Glock's property. The cell phone goes on strike, the Tesla explodes, but undeterred by the failures of the latest technology, they fight their way further into the mountain to find the truth, the myth, the absurd story not only of lithium, but of the world spirit, collective consciousness and of milk. Karin Ferrari transfers the imperatives of the technological present - networking, mobility, immaterial availability, infinite stream of creativity - into a contemporary, trashy-tricky adventure story. Here, in a world that looks as if Christoph Schlingensiefel had filmed a screenplay by Christopher Nolan, the millennials' belief in progress is a component of everlasting myths.

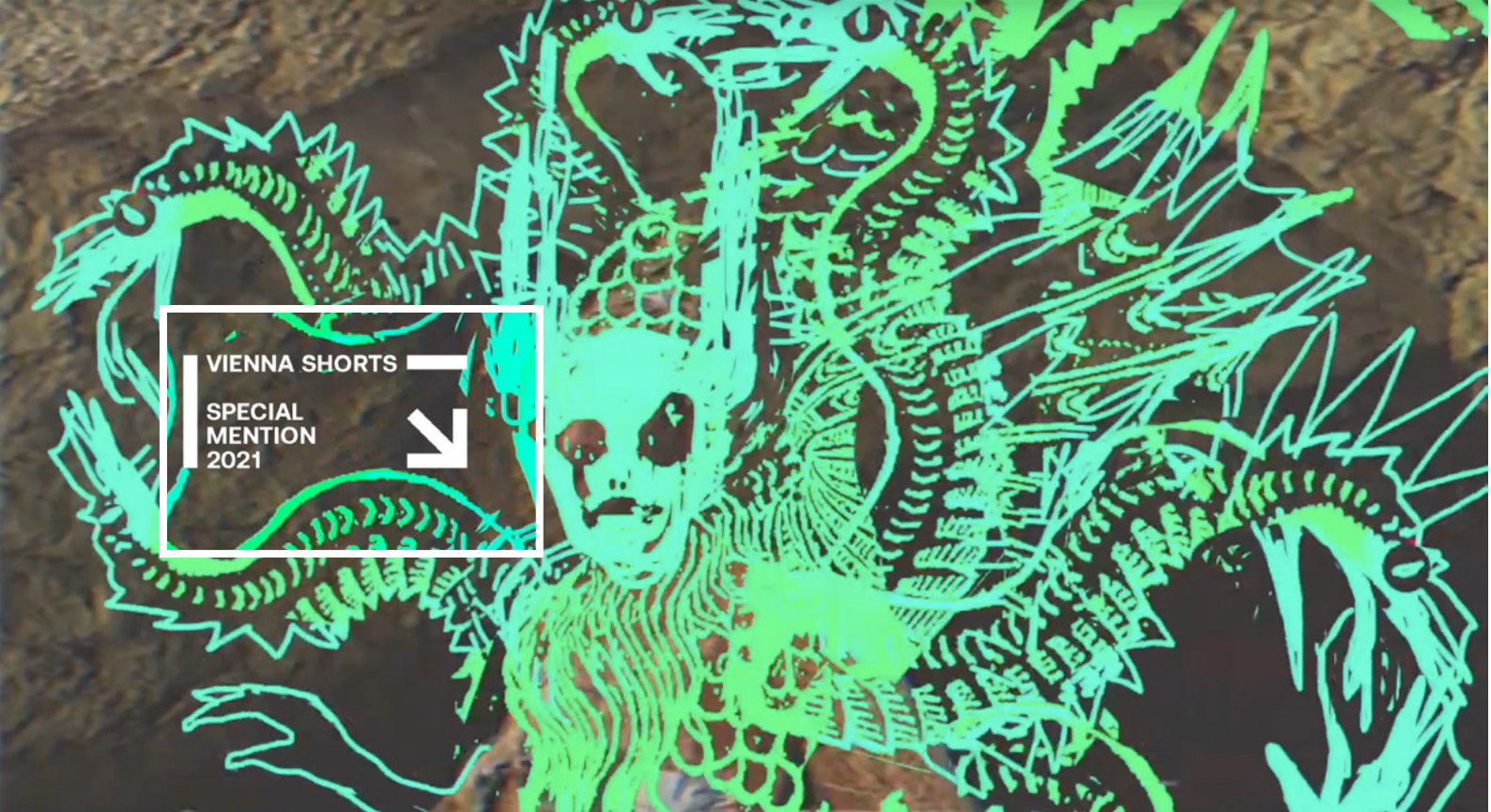
53

— Diagonale, ab

A coruscatingly wild foray into the "unconscious of the Internet" [sic]. Relentless visual stimulation + rapid-fire editing ricochet the viewer through a dizzying labyrinth of sensory impressions and p\$ych€d€lic absurdities as we follow 3 bored millennials in their quest to discover the Or1g1n of lithium. Their road of excess may lead to the palace of wisdom but there are prices to be paid along the (milky) way ... and not just in cryptocurr€ncy. (ny)



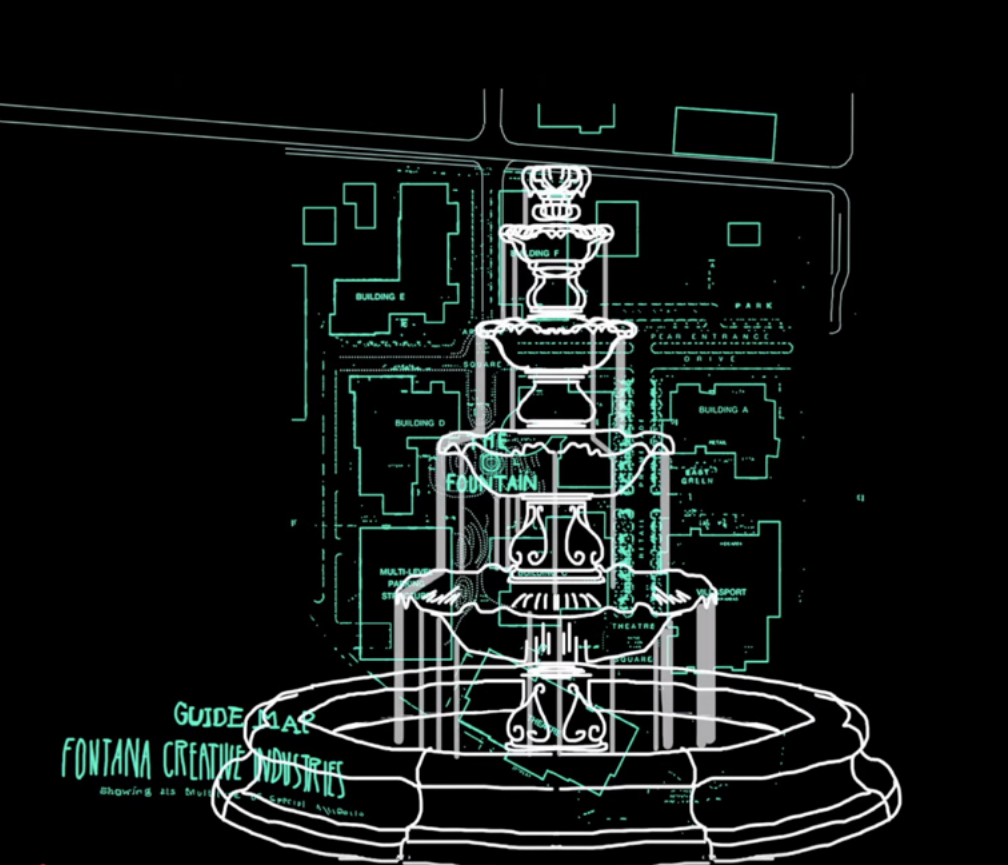
Das Element Lithium spielt eine Schlüsselrolle bei der Herstellung von Smartphone-Akkus und auch von Antidepressiva. Zufall oder System? m h y t n i x begibt sich auf einen psychedelischen Roadtrip in eine bizarre Welt explodierender Teslas, Smartphone-Okkultismus und Trash-Mystik. Die Millennials Carmen, Peter und Gustav sind reif für eine digitale Entgiftung und suchen das „Neue und Ursprüngliche“: Peter will wissen, woher Milch und Batterien eigentlich kommen. Und so begeben sie sich auf eine fantastische Entdeckungsreise. Doch plötzlich verschwindet Peter. Das letzte Lebenszeichen ist eine kryptische SMS: m h y t n i x. Eine Abenteuerreise beginnt ins hybride Gelände im Kärntner Oberland, wo Milchwirtschaft, Autobatterien, Hightech, Kryptoökonomien, Vaporwave-Mythologie und professionelle Paranoia aufeinanderprallen.



A film that stood out for its visual inventiveness, punk spirit and ambition. Its satirical narrative encompasses Silicon Valley tech start-up culture, 60s' New Communalist roots, references to the early internet days as well as contemporary online culture, all the while crossing genres lines. We admired this film for its confidence, fun aesthetic, and absurdist critique of digital consumerism. The Special Mention goes to *m h y t n i x* by Karin Ferrari in collaboration with Bernhard Garnicnig and Peter Moosgaard.

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Special Mention, Vienna Shorts



Video still *m h y t n i x*, 2020

Shapes of Civilization (Mayan Skylines)
Ink on paper, 30 x 40 cm, 2020





The Fountain, ink on paper, 30 x 40 cm, 2020

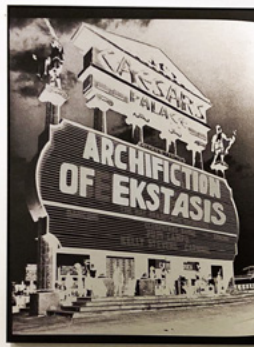


Fountain of the Friendly Freaks, print on Metal, 30 x 40 cm, 3+2. 2023

All over the world, we find elements of sacred architecture and mythological themes in casinos, leisure facilities, banks, and hotels. What kind of otherworldly desires and utopian fantasies are manifested here, and why?

Archi-Fictions of Ecstasy is a long term artistic research and theory fiction project about pseudo-sacred architecture. It's an experimental examination of leisure and entertainment architectures that imitate and reference mythological, religious, spiritual, and fantastical motifs.

The research was implemented in a number of ways. As space-filling wall installations, as the sound installations, photo editions, drawings, collages, artist book, and an experimental animation short film.



Hyatt Regency Mustika Yogyakarta

21 x 30 cm Print on Metall, 3 + 2, 2018, 1/3 Collection CCA Andratx

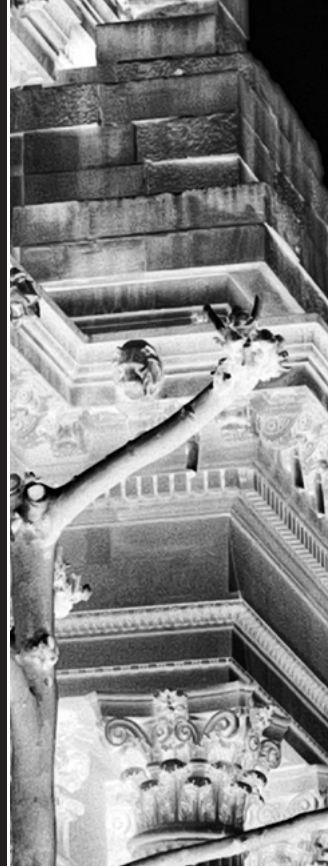
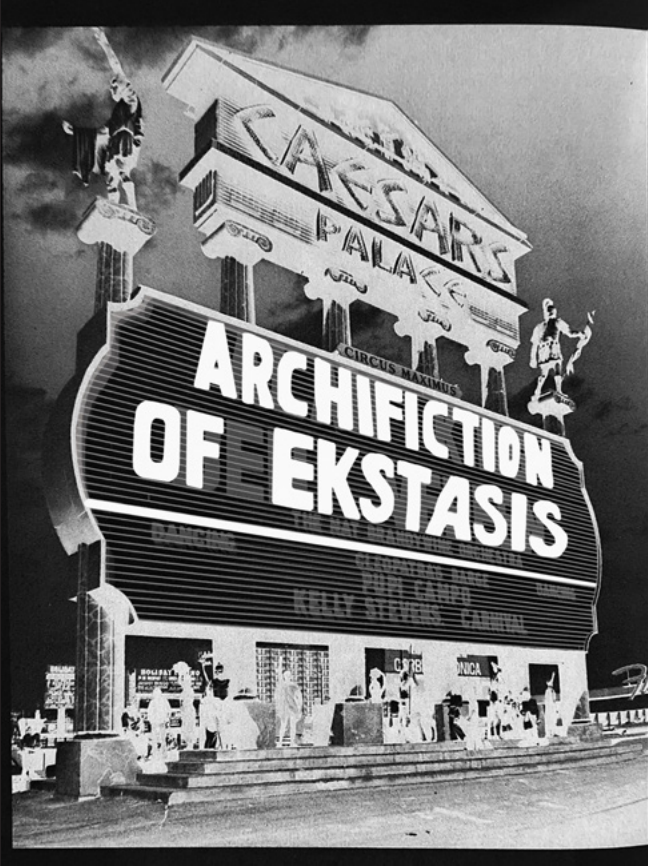
Exhibition view. **Karin Ferrari, Rooftop Temples of New York City**, Galerie Jünger, Wien 2020

ARCHIFUNCTION OF EKSTASIS (Las Vegas)

Print on Metall, framed, 60 x 80 cm, 2020, Edition of 6
1/6, 2/6, 3/6 Public Collection, private Collection

RENAISSANCE (Kuala Lumpur)

Print on Metall, framed, 60 x 80 cm, 2020, Edition of 6
2/6, 3/6, 4/6 Public Collection, private Collections



O.T., Collage, 2021

ARCHIFUNCTION OF EKSTASIS (Las Vegas)

Print on Metall, framed, 60 x 80 cm, 2020, Editoin of 6
1/6, 2/6, 3/6 Public Collection, private Collection



Shapes of Civilization (Temple City Angkor Wat, Manhattan Bridge, (Hyatt Mustika Yogyakarta, Bayon Temple Cambodia)
2018 - 2020



Can you discuss the concept of “pseudo-sacred commercial architecture” in your project *Archi_Fictions of Ecstasy* and what inspired this research direction?

Mystical motifs sneak into our everyday lives. The boundaries between sacred and profane space are highly porous, something that struck me during research trips in South East Asia. Like many other Western tourists, I found it challenging at times to distinguish between sacred and secular spaces within traditional Balinese residential compounds. Temples doubled as living rooms, furnished with TVs and sofas. In shopping centers, Coca-Cola cans and Mentos mints were arranged as offerings alongside incense sticks and votive figurines. In a street nook tangled with electrical cables, a roadside shrine.

Back at the hotel, it dawned on me how deeply ingrained the division between the sacred and the profane is in the Western worldview and how artificial it is. Floating in the hotel pool, I became preoccupied with imagining what it might feel like to exist in a world where spirit and matter aren't perceived as two irreconcilable realms. I tried to perceive my surroundings—the pool bar, the columns on the hotel façade, the temple-like structure that served as a façade concealing the technical infrastructure of the pool's waterslide, the glittery garden statue of the elephant god, and the distant street noise—without judgment. Without immediately dismissing it as some meaningless kitch. I can't claim this exercise brought me to the non-dual shores of enlightenment. Still, it did cast the many sacred references in hotel architecture in a new and intriguing light.

Following this experience in Bali, I extended my travels across Southeast Asia and the United States, documenting pseudo-sacred architecture wherever I found it. The research and my experiences developed into a series of texts and short stories that were produced as the spoken word album *Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation* with the musician Francesco Fonassi and released as Heart of Noise Edition 11.

— Interview from Wowart Magazine, London, 2024



Detail of the wall installation **Haunted Landscapes of Desire**, E/// with Galerie Jünger, Wien, 2022
in the collection of Museion for contemporary art Bozen

Rosanna Dematté

Archi_Fictions of Ecstasy

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Karin Ferrari analyzes images and architectural structures as products of pop and everyday culture to investigate contemporary phenomena. She explores the impact and use of signs and symbols in pop-cultural contexts, aiming to understand how the dissemination and migration of visual content function. A close connection between mysticism, technology, and pop culture was identified as early as 1999 by the American theorist Erik Davis, who coined the term techno mysticism. Inspired by Davis's reflections, Ferrari's concept of Trash Mysticism represents a pop-cultural version of occultism and spirituality emerging from contemporary technologized culture.

The artist has examined this intersection in several video works, where she intertwines facts with fiction and speculation with scientific theories. Behind a detached, pseudo-scientific stance, she highlights a fascinating density of semiotic connections in imagery drawn from advertisements and music videos. Through this approach, Ferrari critiques contemporary media phenomena, such as fantastical conspiracy narratives rooted in a fascination with hidden signs and mysterious connections.

The interplay between the search for spiritual occult dimensions and a new technological collective memory becomes apparent in other works that address this cultural-critical field of inquiry. Since 2018, Ferrari has been working on the artistic research project Archi-Fictions of Ecstasy. During her research in multiple countries, she identified sacred architectural references in commercial buildings,

— Rosanna Dematté, curator Tiroler Landesmuseum
about the acquisition of *ArchiFictions of Ecstasy* into the collection of Land Tirol



Collection Benno Barth, which supported my 2019 research trip to the United States through the Benno Barth Award.



Galaxy Tower, Marker auf Bristolkarton, 50 x 65 cm, 2022
Sumerian Sun, Marker auf Bristolkarton, 50 x 65 cm, 2022
Collection of Museum Ladin Ciastel de Tor



Exhibition view, Installation 'Shimmering Chasms. How to see invisible things', 150 cm x 700 cm, 2023
 Trienala Ladina, Museum Ladin, Ciastel de Tor, Italy

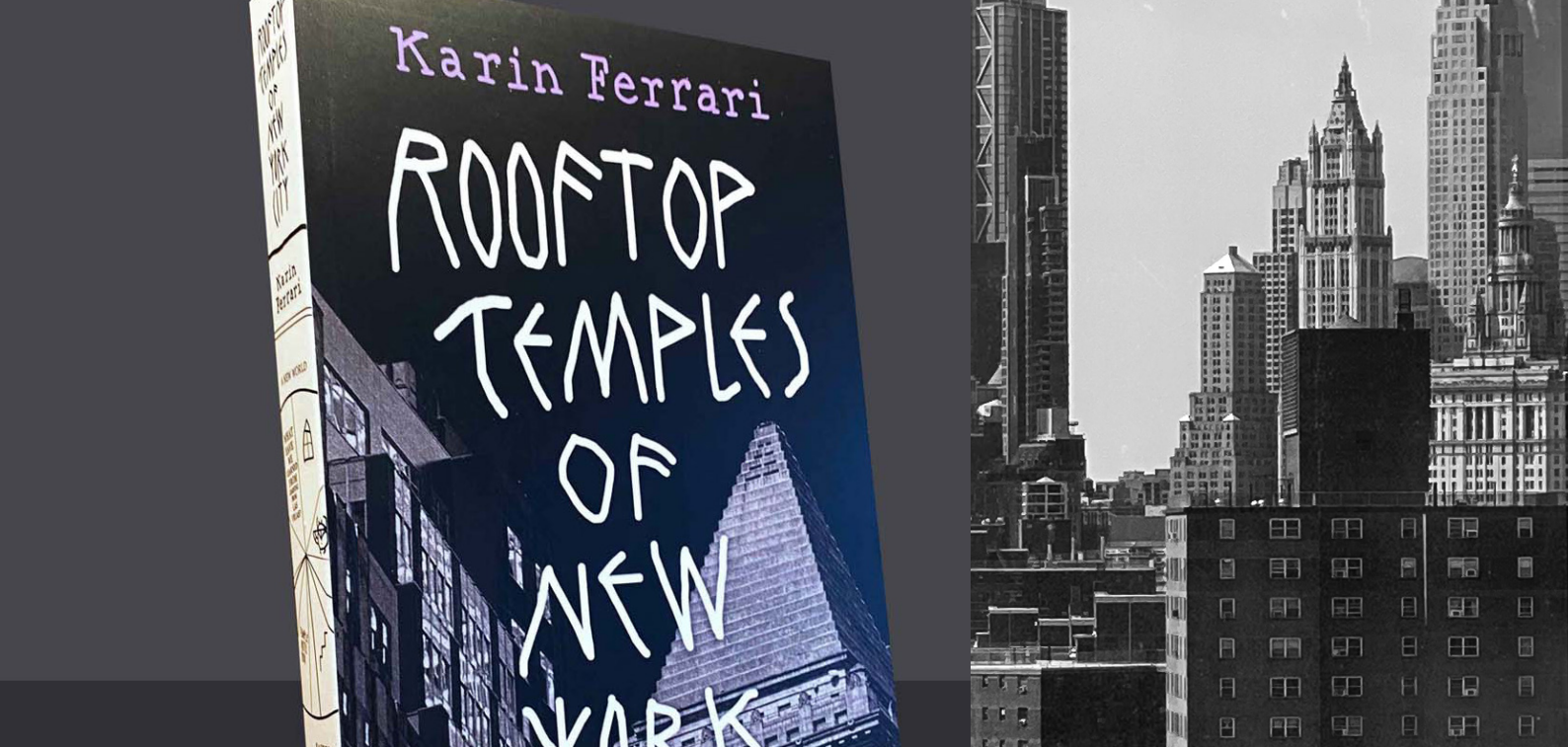
,Karin Ferrari is an extremely versatile media artist. She uses visual material from pop and everyday culture to describe and investigate the phenomena of our times. Ferrari makes playful and skillful use of ambivalence as a technique, working with the grey areas between fact and fiction, with conjecture, conspiracy theories, and myths. The genesis of her artistic investigation lies in the analysis of speculative narratives engendered by internet subcultures and propagated through social media. Ferrari investigates and documents a wide range of paranoid political make-believe and esoteric utopian desires, subjecting them to her own interpretation in experimental docu-fictions. Since 2018, Ferrari's interest has shifted towards the topic of pseudo-sacred commercial architecture. (...) The collagesque installation on display here represents a progression of the theme and was created specially for this exhibition.'

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— Günther Oberhollenzer, director Künstlerhaus Vienna
 On the occasion of the Trienala Ladina 2023 in the Museum Ladin, Ciastel de Tor



Installation *Rooftop Temples of New York City (Wallstreet)* at *Looking Elsewhere Being There*, 2024
Cermodeern Arts Center in Ankara, Turkey
Curated by Marcello Farabegoli, Co-curators: Charlotte Aurich, Pablo Chiereghin



Rooftop Temples of New York City

Artist book, monochrome photo essay, 300 pages, Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2020

It's not surprising that pseudo-sacral commercial architecture as a global phenomenon, is strongly present in the USA as well. In 2019, I expanded my artistic research to the United States. Being in New York City in March 2020 to research architecture was an exceptionally unique experience. As the metropolis emptied during the initial Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown, I had the opportunity to truly perceive the city's architecture. In Manhattan, a distinct architectural phenomenon caught my attention: Functional additions for infrastructure such as elevator shafts and water tanks, or multi-story penthouse units that indeed resemble cultic sites, protrude from numerous New York skyscrapers. I documented these structures, giving rise to the book "Rooftop Temples of New York City" (edited by Karin Ferrari), published in 2020 with Verlag für moderne Kunst.

At first glance, the book looks like a flip-book tour of New York's high-rise buildings. Nevertheless, it is not a culinary souvenir or a harmless gift. Karin Ferrari publishes her collection of the "Rooftop Temples of New York City" as a lesson in uncertainty, as evidence of a self-nurturing suspicion. It is not the »Delirious New York« that architect Rem Koolhaas admired, but a *Mysterious New York* that makes people shudder and fear. To do this, Ferrari plays with the suspicions that are circulating in the Internet subculture, imitating the conspiracies that are spreading in social media channels.

— Thomas Trummer, Director Kunsthhaus Bregenz
Bregenz December 16, 2020

On the occasion of the presentation of the Art Prize of the City of Innsbruck 2020 to Karin Ferrari



Bryant Park NYU 60 x 80 cm, print on metall edition 5 + 1 (diverse collections)

The Original Rooftop Temple of Greenwich 40 x 40 cm, 2020 edition 5 + 1, public and private collections



Thomas Trummer

Mysterious New York

The skyscrapers of New York squeeze upwards. It is not uncommon for pyramids to close off the uniformly designed storeys. Banks and insurance companies, even the Wall Street building, are adorned with a pyramidal spire. What does that mean? Why only these triangular peaks? Photographs in a new book show these examples in black and white and in loose sequence. Many of these are reproduced in negative. As a result, they glow like X-rays or surreal solarizations. The Art Deco architecture conveys an air of uneasiness and gothic.

At first glance, the book looks like a flip-book tour of New York's high-rise buildings. Nevertheless, it is not a culinary souvenir or a harmless gift. Karin Ferrari publishes her collection of the "Rooftop Temples of New York City" as a lesson in uncertainty, as evidence of a self-nurturing suspicion. It is not the »Delirious New York« that architect Rem Koolhaas admired, but a »Mysterious New York« that makes people shudder and fear. To do this, Ferrari plays with the suspicions that are circulating in the Internet subculture, imitating the conspiracies that are spreading in social media channels.

In terms of design, Ferrari builds on simple effects of photographic alienation in order to advance the intrigues of the rumours. The negative becomes the pattern for decoding. Bright facades appear mystically darkened, daylight suddenly blackened in reversal. The tips of shadowy Manhattan canyons sparkle like torches. Normal chemical processes mutate into will-o'-the-wisps as in alchemy. Manhattan turns pale as magnesium. Then, for the first time, the images reveal what they ward off: disbelief, fear, the magical and evil.

Where do the speaking architectural forms come from? – is it just trivial visual additions or thoughtless appropriations of style? – is it post-modern gimmicks avant la lettre that cannot stand the uniformity of the facades and therefore have to adorn themselves with narrative architecture, sometimes putting on Gothic tips, sometimes Masonic-Egyptian crowns? Or is it actually a sign of a hidden message or even a symbol of extraterrestrial intervention that only dons the robe of reliability in order to play an abysmal game? Any suspicion is a toxic injection.



Morphology of Pseudo-Sacred Structures Poster (Detail), 2020

Ferrari finds clues in hotel complexes in Bali. Clues are the ingredients of all conspiratorial hunches. Residential buildings and temples, Mentos Mints and incense sticks, water slides and Neptune quotes, Coke cans and shrines are found in the same ambience: the differences between commerce and cult are leveled. What does the pseudo-sacral have to say? Is a mysterious power in the game?

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Ferrari's work could not be more timely. During the first two weeks after the onset of the Corona crisis, the project of enlightenment experienced its historical climax. The goal of enlightenment, the objectification of arguments and the rationality of judgment seems to have been fully realized. Experts take the floor, facts and premises from medicine and mathematics provide the guidelines for behavior. Politicians act according to the guidelines of science, the churches refrain from worship services. But the triumph of reason is short-lived. As the crisis continues, the antitheses are nourished. Resistant views begin to ferment, fueled by suspicion and the lust for slander. In some political camps, the conspiracies are even gaining the upper hand. Unconfirmed reports have long been circulating not only in the Darknet channels. That the Enlightenment dialectic is undermining their project was an insight of Horkheimer/Adorno during the middle of the last century. Nonetheless, the thesis of reason unleashing resistance to itself hardly seems more substantiated than in the last few months since the beginning of the crisis.

Karin Ferrari imitates the principles that conspiracy theories use: the general suspicion that feeds on small details in order to undermine trust in one's own powers of judgment. What makes their projects so valuable: This happens in artistic processing and after patient research. Ferrari calls her art a "crazy iconology". The world of malignant thoughts returns in it, but not as a continuation of the conspiracy, but in a reverse thrust, as mimicry and clever art.

— Thomas Trummer, Director Kunsthau Bregenz
Bregenz December 16, 2020

On the occasion of the presentation of the Art Prize of the City of Innsbruck 2020 to Karin Ferrari



To Other Heaven Acrylics on Canvas, 90 x 120 cm, 2023
Photo 2024 Tamara Rametsteiner for Galerie Krinzinger



Rooftop Temple of New York Acrylics on Canvas, 80 x 120 cm, 2023



Mysterious New York Acrylics on Canvas, 30 x 40 cm, 2025



Rooftop Temples Dazzle Collage



Exhibition view **Karin Ferrari. Paranjolly Symphony**, Galeria Rigo Novigrad 2025

Shapes of Civilizations (Temple City), Print on Metal, 30 x 40 cm, 3 + 2, 2018

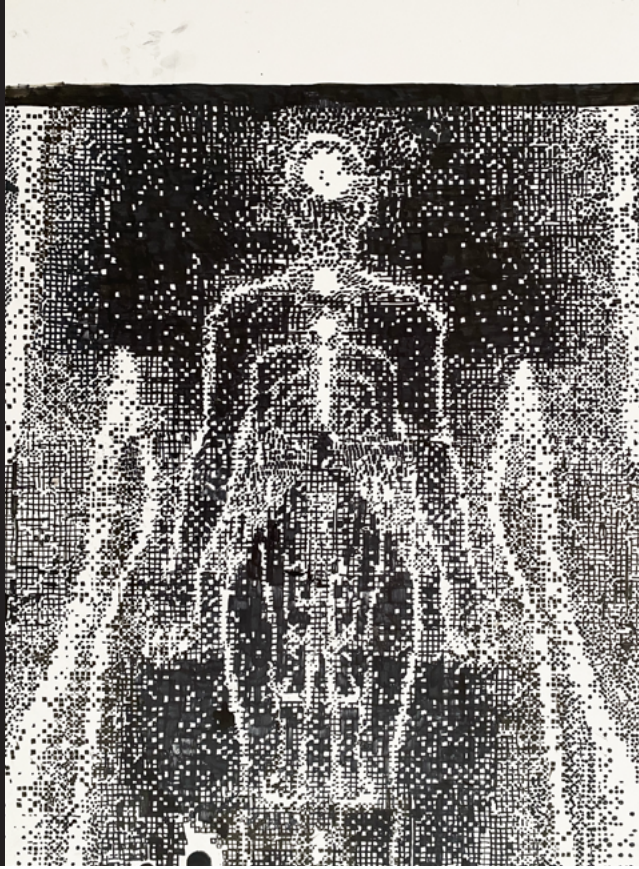
Eradicating Camelot (The Collapse of Opaque Power Structures), Acryl on Canvas, 30 x 40 cm, 2023

Do you know, the atomic bomb basically comes from the same laboratories that also produced LSD therapy, hormone pills, and the personal computer. I didn't. I read it in this book *'Tripping on Utopia. Margaret Mead, the Cold War and the birth of psychedelics'*. And dazzle camouflage? These wild black and white stripes they used during WWI to paint warships with? It looks totally psychedelic. Picasso claimed he invented it. I got that one from the Internet.

77

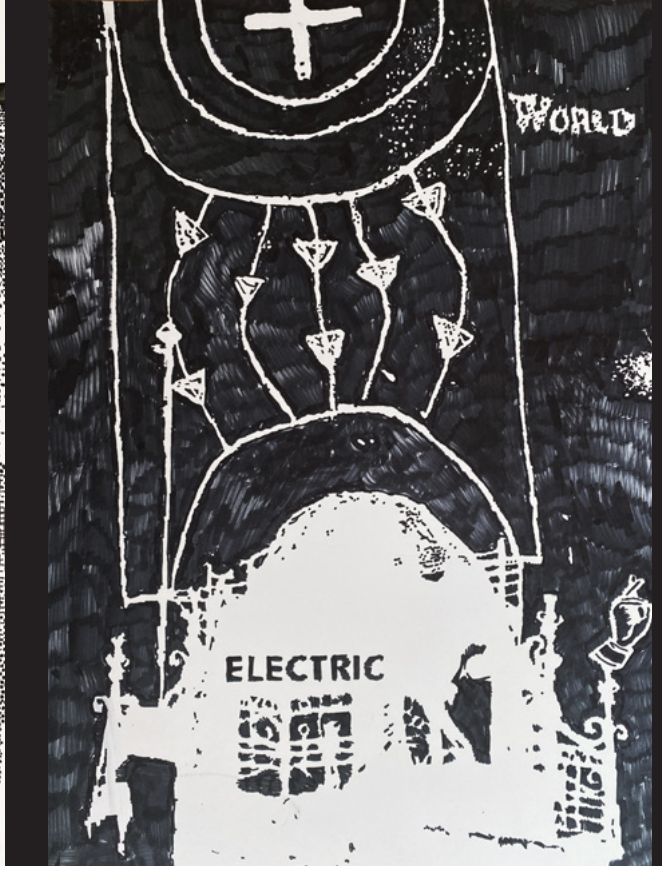
Excerpt from Spoken Sound Track **A Thousand Suns / The Eye in the Sky**





World Electric 42 x 60 cm drawing on paper, 2023

Body Electric 42 x 60 cm drawing on paper, 2023



GALERIJA-GALLERIA RIGO

4 - 26 | 10 | 2025



KARIN FERRARI

*Paranjolly Symphony.
How the Towers Learned to Dance*



Paranjolly Symphony. How the Towers Learned to Dance

Rigo Gallery Novigrad presents Paranjolly Symphony, continuing Karin Ferrari's exploration of pseudo-sacred architecture. What is meant with pseudo-sacred architecture are secular buildings such as banks, hotels, and shopping centers that imitate the forms and symbols of sacred traditions. Following earlier projects like New York City's rooftop temples and wellness-hotel cult sites in Southeast Asia, Ferrari discovered another compelling subject in Istria, Croatia: historical watchtowers later repurposed as church towers. This research began during her 2023 Krinzinger artist residency in Kuberton, organized in collaboration with the Museum Lapidarium.

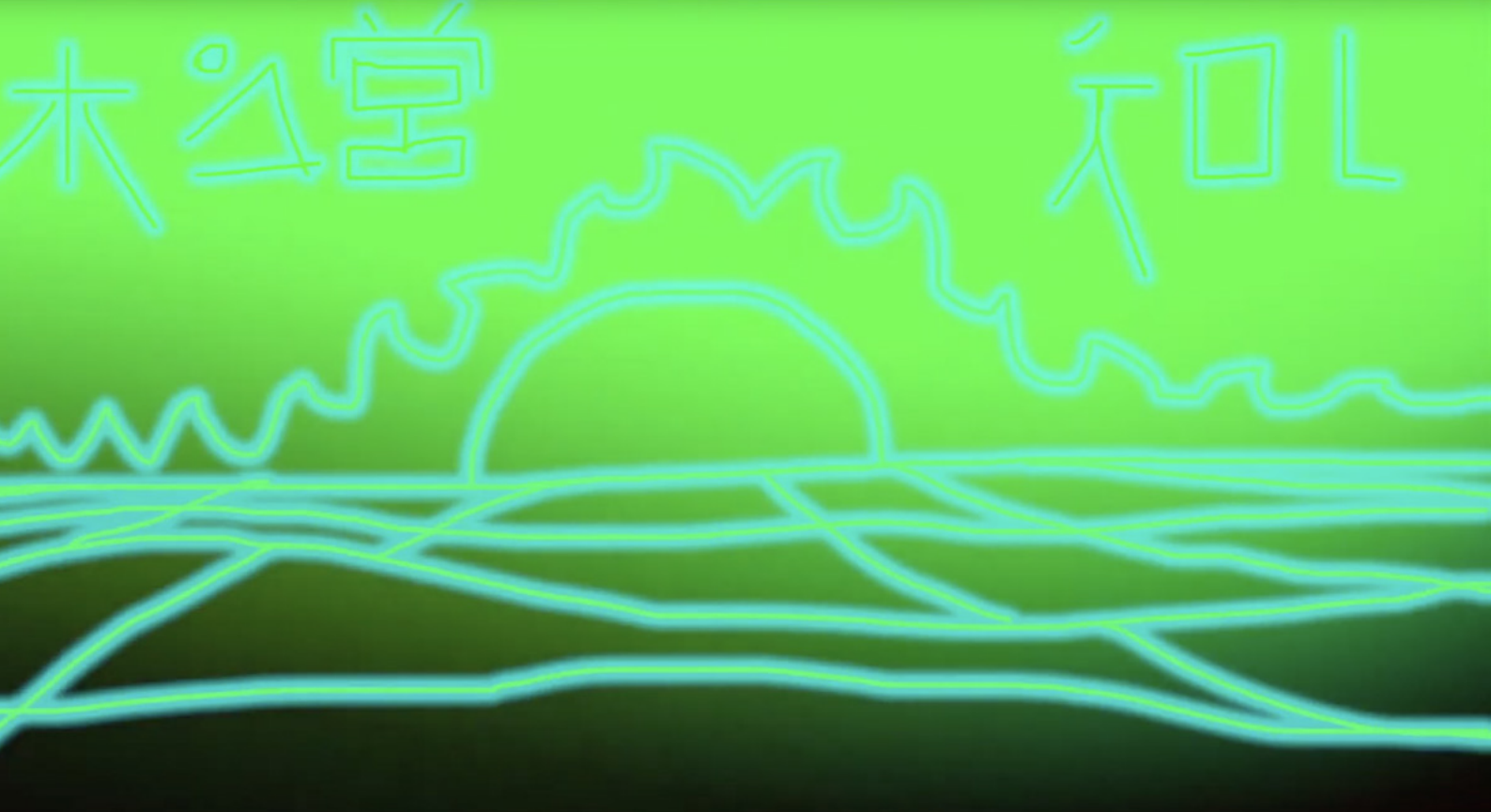
81

Paranjolly Symphony investigates the overlaps between spaces of defense and devotion. Towers become a lens through which to consider verticality and its ambivalent symbolism. How does the upright form embody both surveillance as well as divine connection? How does the archetype of verticality resonate today in skyscrapers, mobile phone masts, satellite towers, and even the endless vertical scroll of social media?

Ultimately, Ferrari reflects on how military and spiritual forces intertwine in collective culture and individual consciousness. Towers emerge as oscillating forms, between control and transcendence, worldly power and inner ritual, inviting viewers to reconsider the structures, external and internal, that shape how we believe, perceive, and inhabit the world.

For the exhibition, the new spoken word track *The Eye in the Sky / A Thousand Suns* has been created in collaboration with Juniper Foam. An exhibition catalogue will be published.

The project is supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum Zagreb, the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport of the Republic of Austria, and the Department for German Culture of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano–South Tyrol.



Video still **m h y t n i x**, 2020



The Sun Goes Underground At Night Chalk paint and acrylic on Canvas, Dyptichon, 80 x 40 cm, 2025

Karin Ferrari

A Thousand Suns. The Towers of Istria between Warfare and Religion

Strange Weather

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It was a strange time that September two years ago. We had an unusual late heatwave in Europe. In Mexico, alien corpses were being discussed at the parliament, and NASA held a press conference on UFOs. I was in Croatia at the Krinzinger Artist Residency in Kuberton. On my way to the beach, driving through the rolling hills, I listened to Radio Capodistria, the Italian minority station. Its radio news jingle was the same music as a viral YouTube videto from the late 2000s: Alien Species 1 – Humans. A trashy YouTube video with hand-drawn sketches of humanoid star beings. And there it was again, at least the music. I thought, now come the aliens, but it was just the lead-up to the weather report.

Outside the car window, there were these towers. Towers hovering over the landscape, glowing in golden light. Churches, I thought. But then I found out many of them were actually medieval defense towers, that were turned only later into church bell towers. How can that be? How can military and religion claim the same form?

Later, I looked up that old YouTube video again. It said humans came from the Lyra star system and scattered across the galaxies after a psychotronic war. I used to show that video in artist talks to explain how, in the late 2000s, I became interested in YouTube esoteric conspiracy subculture. And here it's back as an example how spiritual utopianism entwines with war fantasies into a hallucinatory narrative.

What began as a trip to the beach turned into a two-year exploration of the mythic core linking religion and military. From prophets and desert witches in the Old Testament to warrior saints and holy wars, from ancient sun cults to the atomic bomb, the line between mysticism and warfare has always been very blurry.



This short essay doesn't claim to cover the long and complex history between religion, war, and technology. But it sketches a few moments where religious imagination, military technology, and mythic thinking overlap. Moving between personal memory, cultural fragments, and speculative connections, it traces how ancient motives like the eye in the sky, the tower and the sacrifice, continue to shape the ever-shifting mythic landscape of perception and power - a terrain in which the Towers of Istria still stand, oscillating between the sacred and the strategic.

Ufos, Utopia and Apocalypse

One dazzling messenger that carries the entanglement of religion and military technology into the present day is the UFO. The first UFO sightings didn't emerge in a vacuum. They occurred just after the Second World War along the atomic bomb. Even though it represented unprecedented destruction the blinding brilliance of the explosion of the Trinity Test in 1945 was described as beautiful, magnificent, or like a new sun. Carl Gustav Jung noted that UFOs are often circular, shining bodies of light and linked them to solar symbolism as well. He interpreted the UFO phenomena as a symbolic reaction to collective apocalyptic anxiety. Even today, reports of UFO sightings often appear above military bases and nuclear power plants. Ufos are this strange mix of otherworldly hope and existential threat.

Except they're not purely symbolic. NASA has acknowledged the existence of UFOs, though they now call them UAPs. And I've seen them myself. It was 1999. We were sitting on a beach close to Venice. Oddly behaving lights, shooting in impossible formations from one end of the horizon to the other, stopping mid-air, motionless, before they flew off again. Not far from there, lies Aviano Air Base, a NATO stronghold, that FYI, also stores nuclear weapons. At the time, it was during the Kosovo War, air operations over Yugoslavia were being launched from that very base. I sometimes think those weren't alien ships at all, but secret technology. In a way a UFO is really just a flying car.

Similar to the Towers of Istria, which began as defensive fortresses and later became church spires, the UFO embodies a dual symbolism. Hovering between awe and dread, it shows that the sacred, the technological, and the military are rarely separate. They occupy the same vertical, the same sky, the same architecture of perception and power.



On the ground, the quest to transcend human limits is quite paradoxical as well. The same places that make weapons invent tools that expand consciousness: the atomic bomb basically comes from the same labs experimenting with human dolphin communication, LSD therapy, hormone pills, and gave us the personal computer and the Internet. During the Cold War, the U.S. military ran a remote viewing program Project Stargate, a psychic spying program that inspired the film *Man Who Stare At Goats*. One part of the project that didn't quite make it into the movie involved reports from soldiers who claimed to have contact with star beings in their dreams.

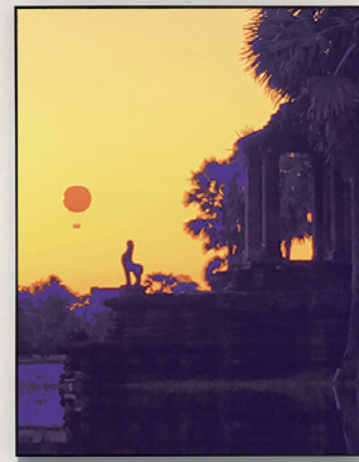
This entanglement of utopian vision and military power didn't end with the Cold War. Recently Peter Thiel talks a lot about the Apocalypse. He has openly framed modern warfare and technology within biblical prophecy. He suggests that high-tech weaponry and global surveillance architectures mirror Ezekiel's vision of a blazing, wheel-within-wheel deity in the Old Testament — a vision that has long been reinterpreted as a spaceship in certain circles. Techno-magical utopia and apocalyptic dread stem from the same mythic drive. Fittingly, Thiel named his AI war-tech company Palantir after Tolkien's seeing stone, a device that, spoiler alert, in the story falls under the sway of the dark side.

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From NASA-funded LSD experiments to communicate with dolphins to roaring, cosmic war-machines, technological pursuit is driven by the desire to stretch human limits. There is one impulse above all: mastery over perception itself.

The Eye in the Sky

On the most fundamental level, the impulse that connects the realms of religion, technology, and the military, is the dream of mastering perception. From monkeys plotting in treetops to the upright walk, this dream started with the gaze from above. Its purest symbol is the eye in the sky. A symbol that appears all over the world from the lime-painted wall of a village chapel, to the US one-dollar bill, from watcher spirits atop totem poles to pop music videos and spinning TV news logos. The all-seeing eye morphs through religion, finance, entertainment, conspiracy culture and back, tracing like a diagnostic light the magico-religious ideas embedded in technology, economy, entertainment industry, mass media and military power.



A Hundredsixty Million Years Ago under the constellation of Leo, Angkor Wat 2018

45 cm x 60 cm, 2019, Edition 3 + 2, 1/3 in the collection Museion Bozen

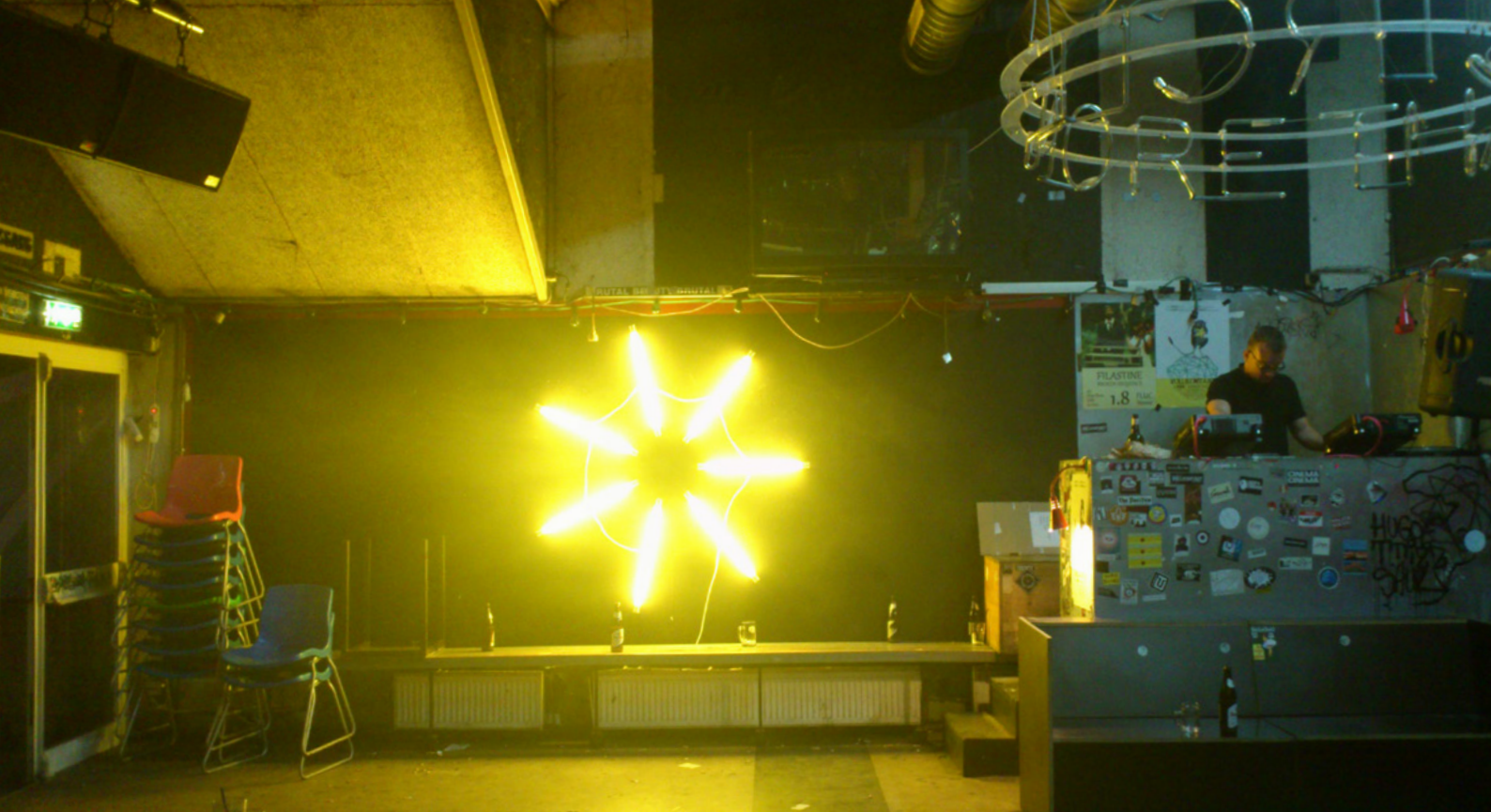
30 cm x 40 cm, 2019, Edition 3 + 2, 1/3 private collection

The peculiar transformation of the Towers of Istria, from defense towers to sacred spires, can be understood within the broad meanings surrounding the idea of the all-seeing eye. The verticality that once let guards scan the horizon becomes a mirror for divine oversight. Rising from stone to bell, a tower forms a kind of axis mundi, a spine of perception. Verticality itself is consciousness: the first act of vision is standing up. The human experience begins with verticality: the upright gait, the raising of the spine.

The church tower and the watchtower rise from the same impulse: to see from above. Yet the question remains: who is watching, and to what extent? During the Snowden mass surveillance disclosures I remember seeing the emblem of DARPA's Information Awareness Office (IAO). DARPA runs cutting-edge military research for the US, and the IAO's motto was *scientia est potentia* ("knowledge is power"), but with that floodlight beaming from the all-seeing eye onto the globe, it might as well say: We spy on the whole world.

Ancient dreams of divine omniscience have become modern fantasies of total surveillance, unfolding before our own algorithmically tracked, doom-scrolling eyes. And yet, I cannot help but wonder, especially within the symbolic arc of the all-seeing eye, if this is part of a larger evolution in which observation folds in on itself, transforming both observer and observed. After all, the all seeing eye also signifies the opening of the third eye, the awakening of inner sight and psychic power of the individual.

The motif of the all-seeing eye continues to shape our tools and myths, from global surveillance systems to Instagram carousels about opening the third eye, circulated by the hidden, all-seeing algorithms of social media. Yet, the all seeing gaze conceals as much as it reveals.



Sun Readymade 7 fluorescent tubes, installation at the Fluc, 150 x 150 cm, 2014
An On-Going Project curated by Ursula Maria Probst

The Myth of the Sacrifice

A shifting terrain, like the imaginary realm shared by religion and the military, gives rise to symbols and architectures that are just as mutable. In this context, the all-seeing eye emerges as a trickster. I doesn't simply shine light on everything, but also keeps a bunch of stuff in the dark. Infamously, on the one-dollar bill's pyramid, its gaze descends from hierarchies of power we cannot see. It hides as much as it conceals.

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There's one thing in particular that's hidden: the sacrifice. Literal or symbolic, the sacrifice keeps the system running. Our myths, machines, and economy all perform this logic: something has to be sacrificed. Something vital is transfigured for a greater good: the lamb, the soldier, labor, resources. Once read in the entrails of animals, the future is now read in the streams of data we hand over to algorithms, surrendering our time, energy, and eventually our mental health.

In the act of sacrifice, the division between sacred and violent dissolves entirely. In Christianity, with Jesus, of course, the ultimate sacrifice has been made, leaving no further offerings required. Which didn't stop me from adding my two cents.

For the exhibition, I made an altar of paper: The Oracular Joss Paper Altar. It's made of paper because it is a fire sacrifice. The very mythic logic for the sacrifice may go up in smoke. The Oracular Joss Paper Altar is covered with AI gibberish, phantasms of text, hallucinated by the machine. By the way those pretty AI pictures are made with tech with roots to the military. And they demands their own sacrifices. Every time AI makes a picture of a cat wearing sunglasses, it's boiling a small lake. I once prompted Midjourney to make a Venn diagram of Paranoia + Metaphysix - obviously with the all-seeing eye in the overlap. Anyway, it produced: Paranjolly Symphony. Actually, it didn't, but it looked a lot like that, and that's what I spontaneously read. So, I hallucinated within the hallucination. But is that then still hallucination, or already prophecy?



Video installation 'The Lost Goddess', Reich für die Insel, Innsbruck 2023. Foto: Daniel Jarosch

Return to the Beach

Warfare and religion have been entangled since the first gods. The original eye in the sky was the sun. In ancient times, long before the pyramids, Indo-Iranian cults believed the sun went underground at night. That's why the ancient Mithraic temples were all built in caves: sun worship was practiced underground, at night. To be closer to the sun. And people are still looking for the sun underground. Or something like it. A thousand suns. Nuclear underground facilities, doomsday bunkers, missile silos.

What does it help to understand this strange alliance of magico-religious imagination and military technology? There is this idea that the tools we make mirror the powers we carry inside, and that every gain requires a sacrifice. It began with Odin swapping an eye for the runes and I'm not sure if I want to find out where it ends. Maybe by seeing this entanglement of dominance and enlightenment, we can return to what we truly want: to communicate with dolphins.

Lying in the sun at the beach across the Adriatic, where I'd seen the UFOs as a teenager, my hand wandered through the pebbles and found fragments of a Roman mosaic, even a large chunk.

In the grains of sand, I could see the towering shapes of civilizations slowly ground to dust.

— Karin Ferrari
catalogue text for Rigo Galleria Novigrad, Museum Lapidarium



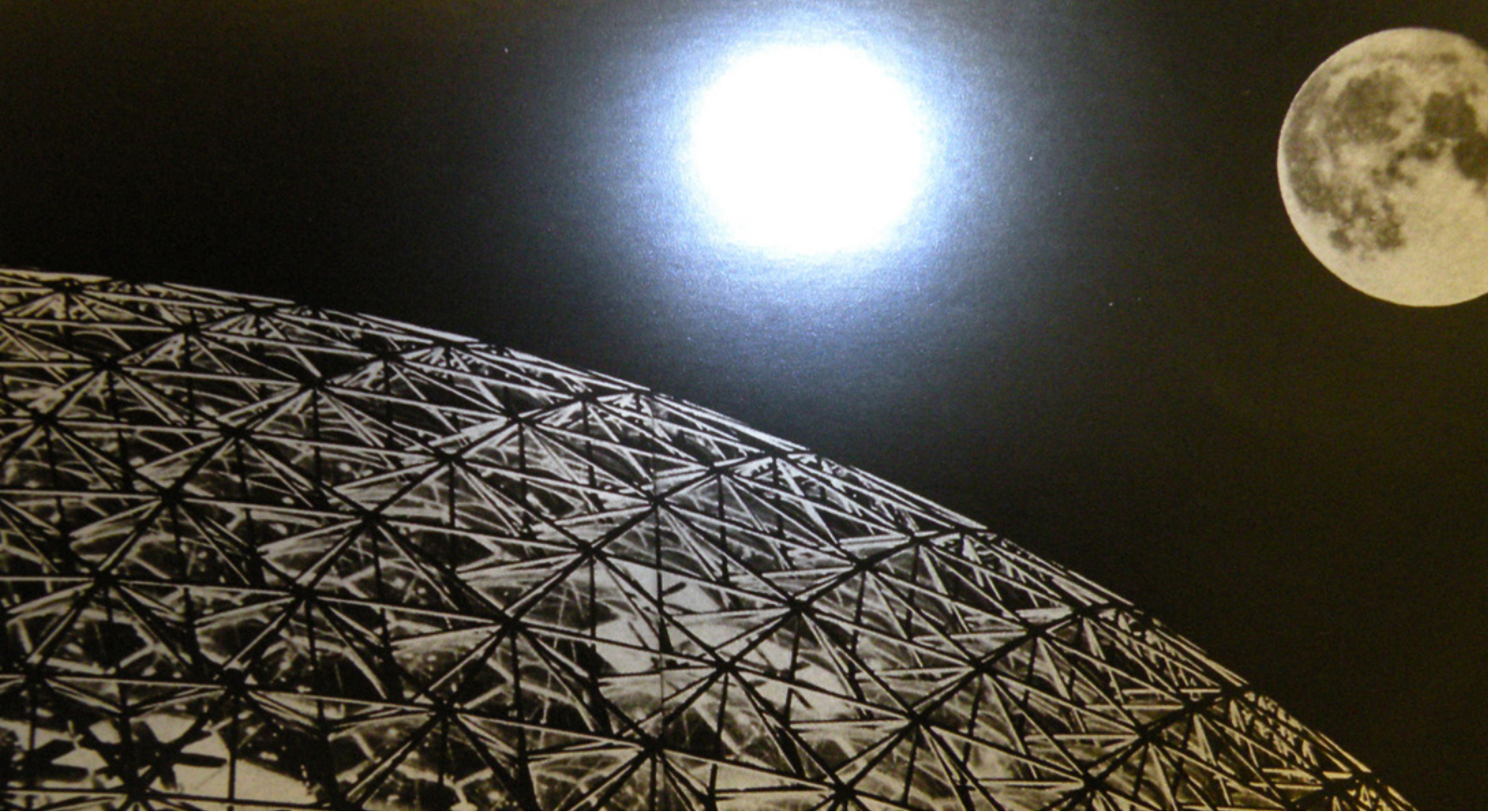
Exhibition View **Haunted Landscapes of Desire** E3 with Galerie Jünger, Wien, 2022

Black Sun Ink on Paper Bristolkarton 21 x 29,7 cm, 2021, Collection Muesion for Contemporary Art Bozen



Solar Echo 1 (based on an image of the Center of Performing Arts Manila), C-Print on Aluminium, 90 x 120 cm, 2006

Solar Echo 9 (based on Buckminster Fuller's visualization for "The Last Whole Earth Catalog" 1971), 2011



Solar Echo 1-9

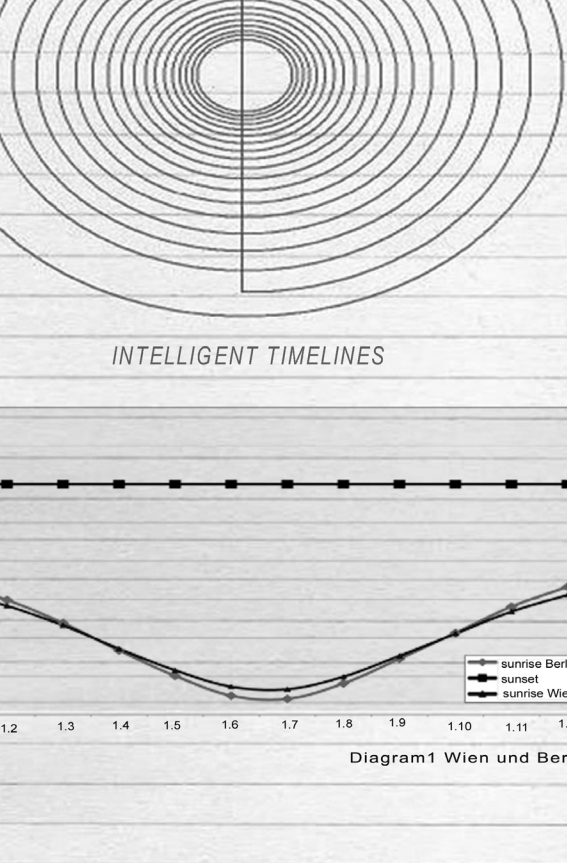
Conceptual photography series, 2011

In this project, I photographed images of architecture from books with the camera flash. By carefully positioning the camera angle, the reflection on the glossy paper transformed into a luminous circle, evoking the sun. The resulting images capture a collision of mediums: printed architectural forms, ephemeral light, and photographic intervention. The flash becomes a sculptural tool, reactivating the static images and imbuing them with a fleeting, celestial presence.

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die neue nukleare sonne leuchtet uns von der anderen seite an. ihr blaues licht leuchtet rückwärts durch die zeit. blue shift. wie auf karin ferraris fotos. der pilger aus flammarios bild ist schon seit langem verschwunden. zurück bleibt das half-life, die halbwelt. endlich angekommen: der schwarze block. und lässt uns in den letzten traum erwachen.

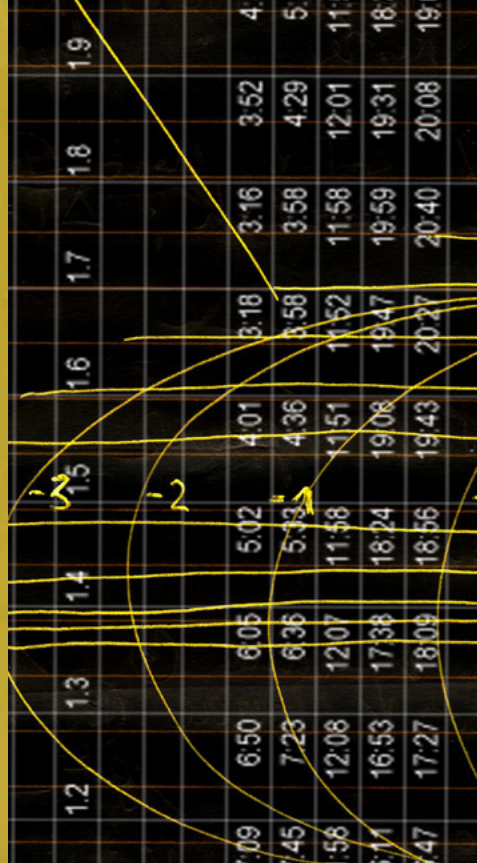
Michael Saup



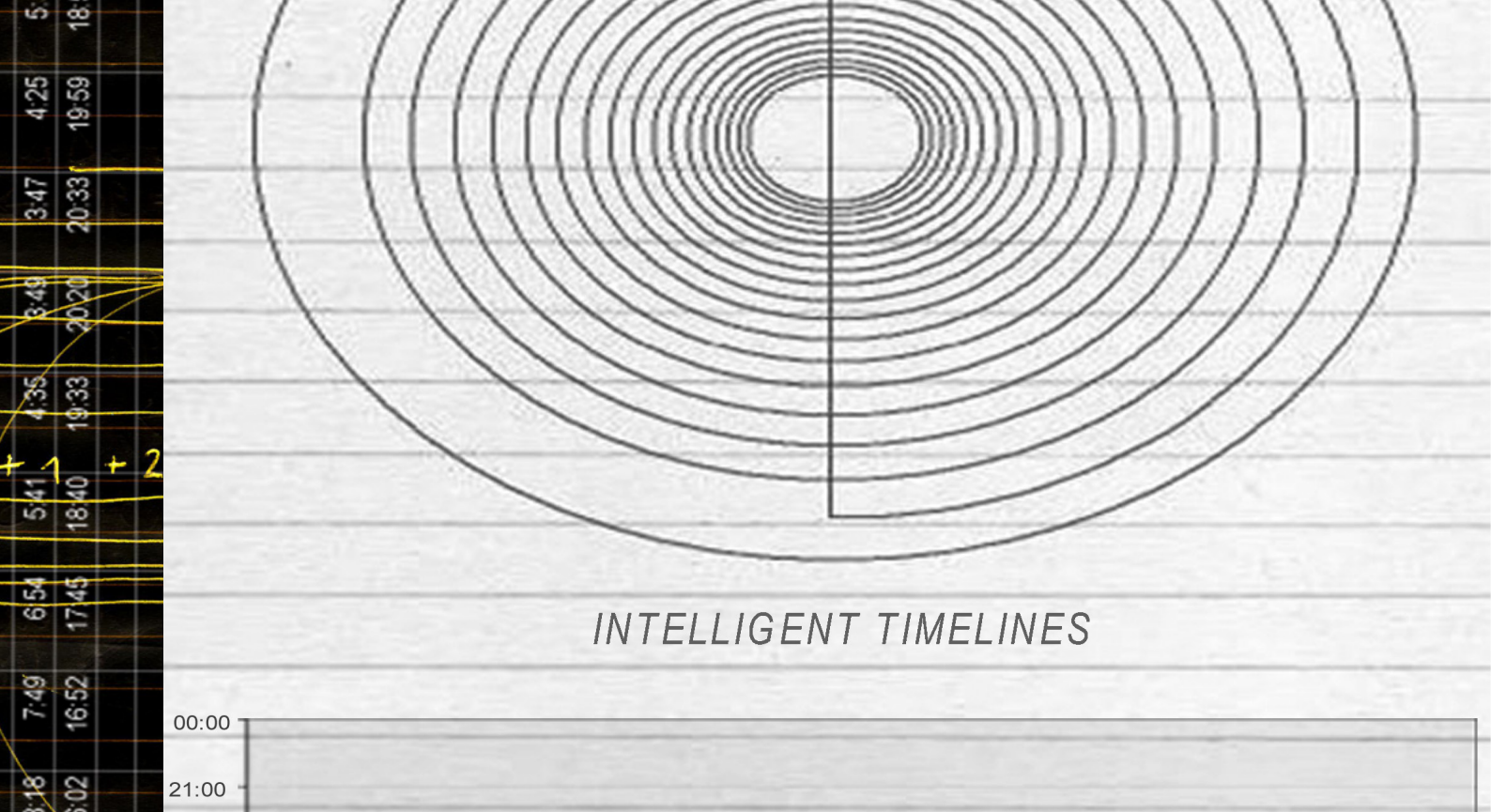
WORLD'S BEST NEW ART

Tania Ragasol • InSite_05 • San Diego/Tijuana
 Doryun Chong • Walker Art Center • Minneapolis
 Trevor Smith • New Museum of Contemporary Art • New York
 Vincent Honoré • Tate Modern • London
 Hans Ulrich Obrist • Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris • Paris
 Wilfried Lentz • SKOR • Amsterdam
 Gunnar B. Kvaran • Astrup Fearnley Museet • Oslo
 Udo Kittelmann • Museum für Moderne Kunst • Frankfurt on the Main
 Georg Leutner • Bétonsalon • Vienna
 Sonja Traar • Sammlung Essl • Klosterneuburg/Vienna
 Zhang Qing • Shanghai Biennial • Shanghai

UNREAL PROJECTS



INTELLIGENT TIMELINES Speculative project, 2006, published in World Best New Art (ed. by Georg Leutner)



INTELLIGENT TIMELINES

Speculative project, 2006, published in World Best New Art (ed. by Georg Leutner)

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Intelligent Timelines is an alternative time system depicted by diagrams and calculations: every day the sun goes down at 6 pm worldwide. *Intelligent Timelines* was published in 'World Best New Art', a book project in which curators of leading art museums introduce fictitious projects by young artists, which are relevant for the future development of art. The starting point is our understanding of the earth as a system of coordinates. For Ferraris *Intelligent Timelines*, our division of the earth into time zones that run vertically is replaced by a system with time zones running horizontally. The project is based on a scientific calculation. However the results are shown in the form of a painting and are governed by the language of images. According to the calculations, the solar days last 28 hours in certain areas, while in many places the sun never rises at all.

Sonja Traar, *Intelligent Timelines*, in: World Best New Art.



Speck of Dust (detail), ink on paper, 50 x 65 cm, 2022, private collection



to cosmology Marker on cardboard 50 x 65 cm.

Exhibition view **Rooftop Temples of New York City**, at Galerie Jünger Wien, 2020.

These drawings grew out of early experiments with a cheap, barely functioning printer in the Lower East Side, where I printed the first dummies for my artist book *Rooftop Temples of New York City*. This process defined the monochrome aesthetic of my later work. During the first Covid lockdown in March 2020, I spent much of my time in a penthouse in the Lower East Side, when I wasn't wandering the emptied streets looking for rooftop temples. Around the same time, narratives and videos began circulating that speculated about a lost civilization and claimed that many historical buildings were designed as energy machines. These works also evolved from my video practice, where I overlay moving images with hand-drawn animations traced directly with my finger on the trackpad.

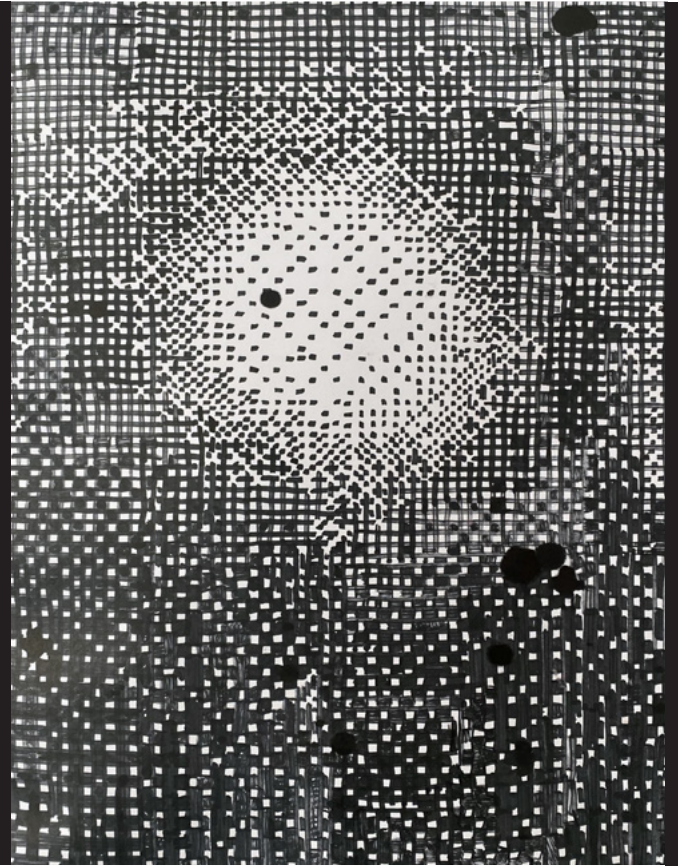


Manhattan Bridge Print on Metall, various sizes, Edition of 3, 2020

O.T. Marker on Bristol paper, 50 x 65 cm, 2021, Collection of Benno Barth



A New World Marker on Bristol paper, 50 x 65 cm, 2021, Courtesy Galerie Jünger



Dream Spells / Outr Flux, ink, pastel and pencil on paper, 30 x 42 cm, 2025, Courtesy of CCA Andratx

Megamyth, ink, pastel and pencil on paper, 30 x 42 cm, 2025, Courtesy of CCA Andratx

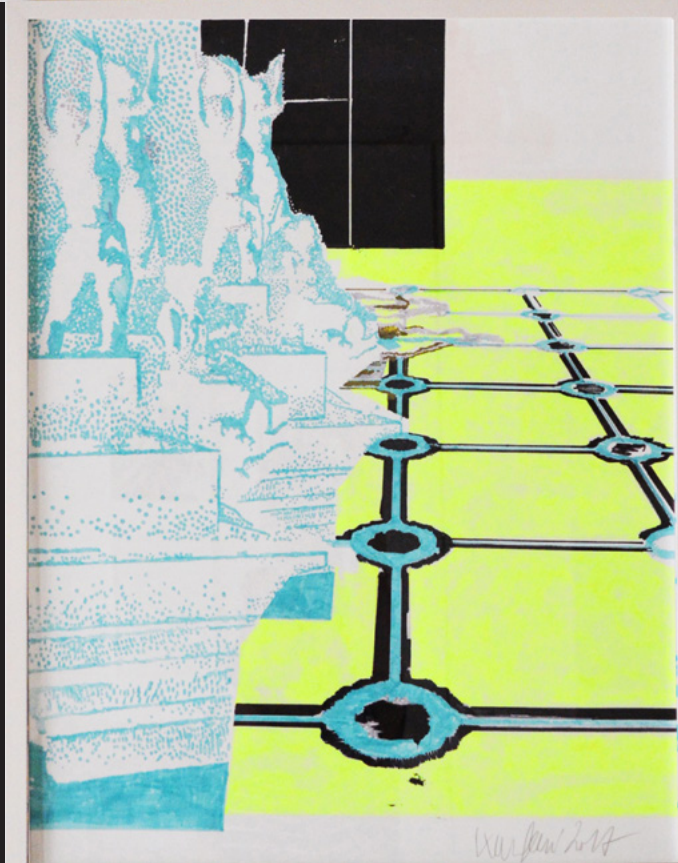
These works on paper evolve from my video practice, where I traced hand-drawn animation, diagrams, and text directly on the trackpad—a literal digitalism, linking the finger (digitus) to digital. I explore the coexistence of machine aesthetics, digital artifacts, and traces of the hand within the same flat space. Works like *Dream Spells / Outr Flux* and *Megamyth* translate glitch and digital aesthetics into hand-drawn gestures, exploring the interplay of human imagination and machine logic. My interest in negative space, coloring the void rather than the form, originates from woodcut practice during a 2019 Amsterdam residency. This inversion amplifies the tension between presence and absence, digital and hand, structure and chaos, creating a space where time, memory, technology, and myth collide.



Disanimated Integration Ceremony Acryl on Canvas, 80 x 100 cm, 2024



Exhibition view, Parallel Vienna mit medien.kunst.tirol, 2018



Mimetic Desire ink on paper, 50 x 65 cm, 2017



Stellar Trash Strata Acrylic and colored pencil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2023



Dream Spells / Outr Flux, ink, pastel and pencil on paper, 42 x 60 cm, 2025. Collection Museum Lapidarium



Exhibition view **Karin Ferrari. Paranjolly Symphony**, Galeria Rigo Novigrad 2025

Temple of Ga Ga

+

Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation

+

Temples To Go

+

Ikea Altaara

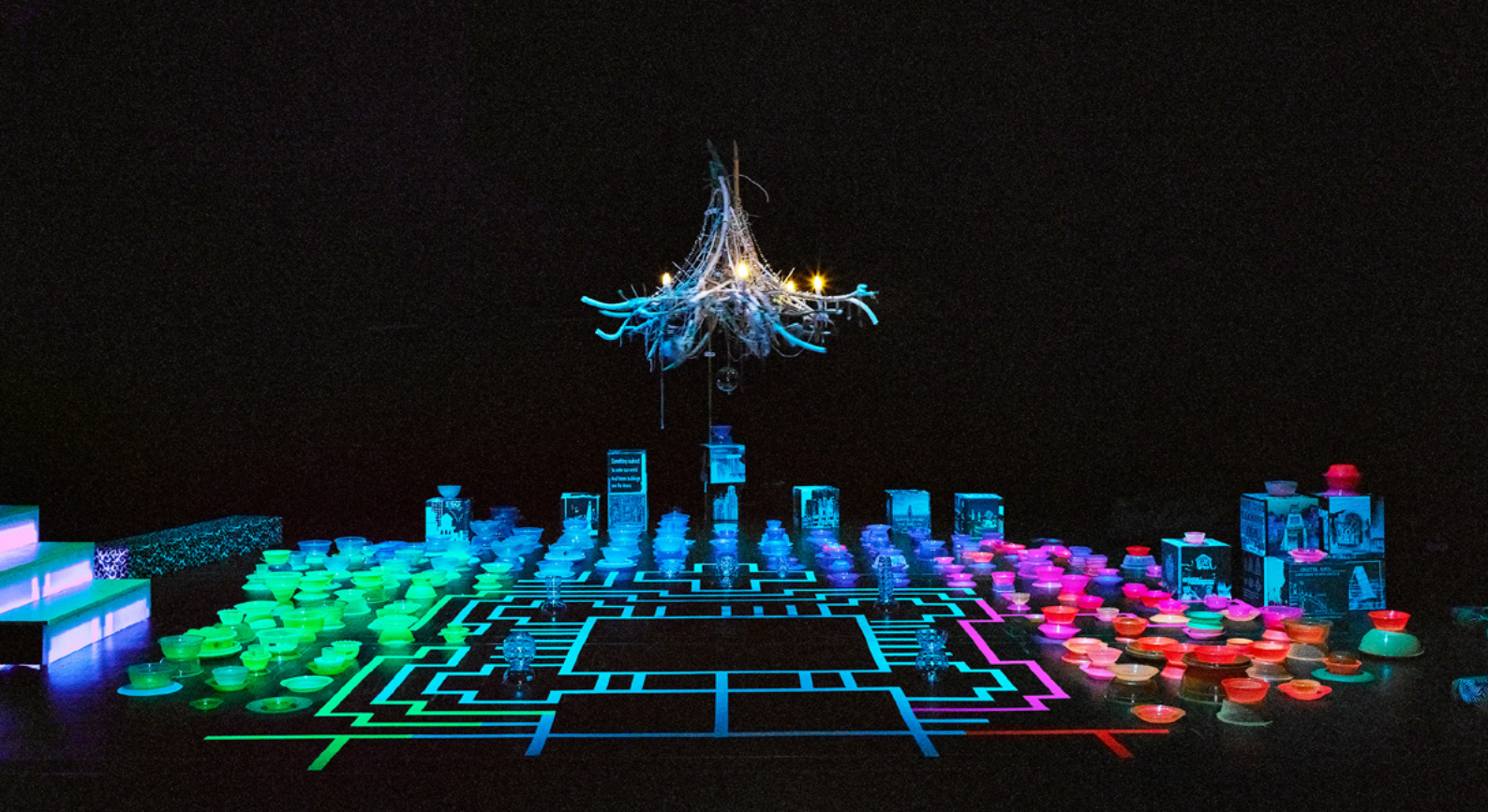
During Karin Ferrari's research trips across Southeast Asia as part of her BMKOES Artist Residency in Yogyakarta in 2018, she documented hotels, banks, and other structures that mimic sacred architecture for her research project, Archi-Fictions of Ecstasy. In addition, Ferrari delved deeper into these strange spaces through short stories inspired by her encounters with people, objects, and specters, blending her observations with elements of fiction, theory and myth.

These semi-fictional adventures and mystery stories were further developed into the spoken word sound installation TEMPLE OF GA GA and in collaboration with the musician and sound artist Francesco Fonassi transformed into the album FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION. Ferrari's intent was to create stories of magical realism set in everyday environments where the boundaries between the sacred and the profane blur. Each spoken sound composition weaves a short story within a specific environment and architecture, whether it be a shopping mall, a temple ruin complex, a hotel, or even the cosmic waste layers of the trash strata, transforming it into a metaphorical fabric beyond their physical presence.

In a way, the spoken-word pieces are an evolution of Ferrari's DECODING THE WHOLE TRUTH video series (2011-2022), in which the artist herself often speaks the off voice.



Temple of Ga Ga, Vorbrenner Projekt im BRUX - Freies Theater Innsbruck, 2022 Fotos: WEST and Daniel Jarosch



Temple of Ga Ga

Sound installation, 27 min, 9m x 9m. (Adaptable) Plastic bowls imported from Indonesia, masking tape, downwood, e-waste, wallpapered cubes. Sound by Karin Ferrari (spoken word) and Francesco Fonassi (music). A Vorbrenner project at the BRUX - experimental TheaterInnsbruck, October 2022. Stadtmuseum Bruneck, March 2023. RfdInsel and Heart of Noise Festival, Innsbruck 2023, Galerie am Stadtplatz, Wörgl November 2023. Made with support of the city of Innsbruck, Land Tirol and Autonome Provinz Bozen-Südtirol. Dokfest Kasesl with support by Bundesministeriums für Kunst, Kultur, öffentlichen Dienst und Sport, Sektion IV – Kunst und Kultur

LINK video documentation (excerpt) 4:50 min, <https://youtu.be/uAPRmKMK-6Q>

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A psychedelic, tricky-trashy installation that creates a listening situation that involves visitors in a holistic experience of disembodied sound, materiality, objects, storytelling, and subjective sensory perception.

About the Sound: The sound is a collaboration with the musician and sound artist Francesco Fonassi. Karin Ferrari writes and speaks the texts. Original music and soundscapes are produced using analog synthesizers like Buchla 200 and Korg Ms10, while the voice is processed through tape machines and vintage tape echoes. Atmospheric, abstract elements alternate with spoken word texts, set to music.

The texts are semi-fictional adventures and mystery stories, drawing inspiration from Ferrari's experiences during her research trips in Southeast Asia. Her intent was to craft tales of magical realism within ordinary backdrops, where the boundaries between the sacred and the profane blur. Every spoken sound composition weaves a story within a distinct location, where the very fabric of the space—be it a shopping mall, a temple ruin complex, a hotel, or even the cosmic refuse layers of the cosmic trash strata—morphs into a metaphorical tapestry beyond its physical presence.



FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION in der Ausstellung Monitoring im KV, Fridericianum beim Dokfest Kassel, 2024.
Foto von Nikolas Wefers

About the installation: Karin Ferrari collected the bowls during her BMKÖS Artist Residency in Yogyakarta, and shipped them for a fortune to Europe. Indonesia holds a notable position as a global plastic producer, with a manufacturing sector that generates a diverse array of plastic items, encompassing packaging materials, consumer goods, and industrial products. Throughout the city of Yogyakarta small shops proliferate, displaying an abundance of these plastic bowls, forming sprawling stacks along the dusty streets, forming intricate towers of plastic. The captivating fractal beauty of these bowl towers strikingly recalls the fractal intricacy present in the local temple architecture, prompting a profound resonance with the artist.



Karin Ferrari's work *Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation* is a subversive meditation on the sacred in the age of capitalism. At the heart of the sound installation is the tension between cultural and architectural symbols: mythologically charged spaces, sacred temple structures, malls, spas, and banks—places where people seek fulfillment, whether spiritual or material. In the form of a hyperreal travelogue, the spoken sound compositions, created in collaboration with musician Francesco Fonassi, trace the tourist imperatives of experiencing sacred sites. Plastic bowls, collected from Indonesia's epicenter of global plastic production, transform in their accumulation of superficial objects into a metaphysical space for pause and ritual experience. Everyday objects undergo an aesthetic transformation, trash and esoterica are treated as valuable visual and narrative resources.

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With subtle irony, Ferrari illustrates the cultural dilemma surrounding the loss of authentic spiritual experiences. Once serving transcendence, the stages of her journey are now centers of materialism. Ghosts and goods coexist with little disruption, yet even the "interdimensional entities" now struggle for airtime in the attention economy of visitors. It's not always clear whether gods are being summoned or demons exorcised. The deconstruction of religious language in the text reveals the unrestrained appropriation of sacred imagery. Some encounters seem like hallucinations or virtual experiences, repeatedly highlighting the instability of meaning itself.

Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation also addresses the destruction of specifically feminine traditions and mysticism. The worship of goddesses was pushed out of religious tradition in the first centuries of Christianity. Numerous symbols of the female body and reproduction as sources of magic and power were removed from the canon in favor of patriarchal interpretations. In her artistic treatment, Karin Ferrari follows the theories of philosopher Silvia Federici, who argues that control over women and their supposedly occult practices was necessary to establish the capitalist order. The processes poetically highlighted in Ferrari's work mirror Federici's argument that female bodies and their productive abilities were deliberately suppressed and disciplined to enable the transition to capitalism.

— Miriam Schmidtke

Catalogue text for the exhibition *Monitoring* in the Kasseler Kunstverein, Fridericianum
Dokfest Kassel - the 41. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofestes 2024



Temple of Ga Ga, Vorbrenner Projekt im BRUX - Freies Theater Innsbruck, 2022 Fotos: WEST and Daniel Jarosch





Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation, Heart of Noise Festival 2023, RFDInsel, Innsbruck, 2023 Foto: Daniel Jarosch



FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION

Performance/concert, Karin Ferrari x Francesco Fonassi, presentation of the tapes FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION RFDInsel in Innsbruck at the Heart of Noise Festival 2023

Tape made in collaboration with the musician and sound artist Francesco Fonassi.

Music by Francesco Fonassi.

Spoken word, texts, font and image by Karin Ferrari

Heart of Noise Edition 11 released with Villa Recordings, Design by Another Studio, Brescia

>> **FULL ALBUM** <https://villarec.bandcamp.com/album/freaky-fairy-flux-foundation>

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'One of the most exquisite releases in the series so far.'

Kristoffer Cornils, Groove Magazine

The Italian musician and sound artist Francesco Fonassi complements Ferrari's spoken word performance with live voice manipulation and synchronized sound material, produced using analog Buchla and Korg synthesizers, tape loops, grooves, and effects. These magnetic landscapes dynamically replicate the live sound architectures of the artist's ceremonial trash mysticism universe, transforming the audience into a close-knit ritual community. Enveloped within a white fantasy landscape, the voice and sound clusters intertwine, serving as acoustic receptors for a culture clash that samples the evoked soundscape of neopaganism and blends it with technoid sound cultures.

— Karin Pernegger, curator and former director of Kunstraum Innsbruck



Temple of Ga Ga, Vorbrenner Projekt im BRUX - Freies Theater Innsbruck, 2022 Fotos: WEST and Daniel Jarosch

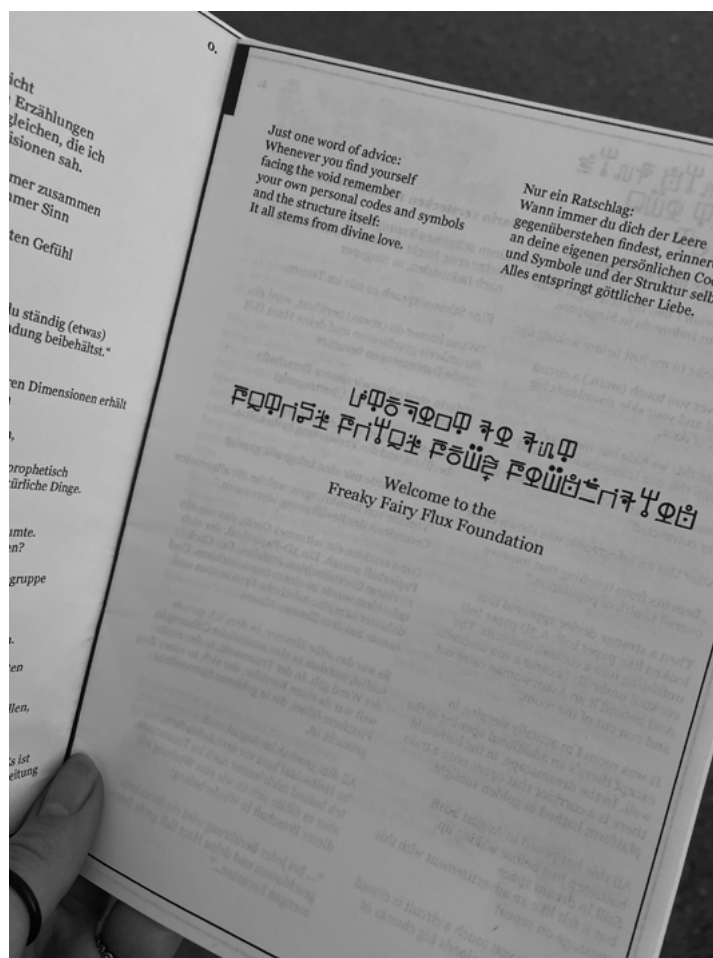
komplex-KULTURMAGAZIN

Plattform für Kunst und Kultur

„Please make sure to touch all the time and stay connected“ – mit KARIN FERRARI und FRANCESCO FONASSI ins HoN

26. Mai 2023 26. Mai 2023

Am gestrigen Abend startete das Heart of Noise Festival (<https://www.heartofnoise.at/de/2023/home>) im Reich für die Insel, das Karin Ferrari und Francesco Fonassi mit ihrem transdisziplinären Projekt FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION zeremoniell eröffneten. Wir haben uns mit den beiden darüber unterhalten, welche Theorien und Glaubenssätze hinter ihrer experimentellen Kollaboration stecken. Wer die Performance noch nicht gesehen hat, hat heute um 19:30 Uhr (RFDI) nochmals die Möglichkeit.



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Booklet zur
FFFF-
Performance
mit der
designten
Schrift von
Karin
Ferrari

Künstlerin. In diese Richtung geht auch ihr aktuelles Projekt FFFF: Es vereint das Trashig-Abgefahrene, das in unserer Alltagskultur steckt, mit Naturkräften wie sie in Mythologien eine Rolle spielen. „Ich versuche, herauszufinden, wie sich Technologie mit belebter Natur verhält und welche Codes sich dadurch für unsere Gegenwart ableiten lassen“, erklärt Ferrari, die sich im Rahmen ihrer Arbeit auch intensiv mit zeitgenössischen Theoretiker:innen wie Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway und Erik Davis beschäftigt. Insbesondere letzterer trug mit seinem Werk „TechGnosis. Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information“ erheblich zu ihrem Weltverständnis bei, indem er etwa die These vertritt, dass selbstverständlich anmutende Gegensätze wie sakral/profan, Natur/Kultur, Spiritualität/Technologie etc. nur in unseren kulturell geformten Vorstellungen getrennte Dimensionen bilden.

„Solche Anschauungen halten sich, weil sie auch Vorteile mit sich bringen und sich mit einem solches Verständnis die Natur halt auch leichter ausbeuten lässt. Ein Baum ist schneller gefällt, wenn man ihn nur als Baum betrachtet und nicht als belebtes Ding, das unsere Ahnen repräsentiert“,

so Ferrari, die Davids Anschauung teilt, dass sich diese Konzepte – vor allem auch in unseren Alltagspraktiken und -Gegenständen – nicht so einfach voneinander unterscheiden lassen. „Aus irgendeinem Grund wollen wir nicht die phantastischen, mystischen und spirituellen Kräfte hinter Phänomenen wie Smartphones, Elektrizität oder Kapitalismus erkennen. Sie wirken aber auch in diesen Kategorien“. Als Beispiel nennt Ferrari die Sprache selbst, vor allem im Englischen entdeckt sie Bezüge in gewöhnlichen Begriffen wie „savings“ (im Sinne von „Ersparnissen“ oder einer „Rettung“), ebenso „credit card“, worin der lateinische Begriff „credere“ für glauben steckt. „Viele Aspekte von Finanz und Wirtschaft sind geprägt von religiösen Vorstellungen“, führt Ferrari aus, die all diese Gedanken auch in ihrer Kunst aufnimmt. Erik Davis schreibt selbst in einem Text über ihr künstlerisches Schaffen:

Karin Ferrari ist eine Künstlerin des trash stratum und deren heiligen und unterschweligen Ikonographie. Durch die Arbeit mit einer Vielzahl von Materialien, einschließlich digitaler Medien, Assemblage und traditionellem analogen Handwerk, hat die Künstlerin ein irritierendes, lustiges und verstörendes Werk geschaffen, das gleichzeitig aktiv nachforscht und sich passiv der zeitgenössischen esoterischen Strömungen unterwirft: okkulten Symbolismus, Technopop-Paranoia, gnostische Verschwörungstheorie.

– ERIK DAVIS (IM RAHMEN VON KOER TIROL 2022)

„Trash Mysticism“ nennt Ferrari ihre künstlerische Arbeit, die bereits 2019 unter gleichnamigen Titel als Ausstellung im Ferdinandeum (<https://komplex-kulturmagazin.com/2019/08/22/diy-spiritualitaet-als-thema-zeitgenoessischer-kunst-t/>) zu sehen war. Von dieser Ausstellung blieben noch die mit samtigen Leoparden-Muster überzogenen Hockerbänke, die nun im oberen Stockwerk des Kubus platziert sind – ästhetische Alltagsobjekte, die Ferrari damals extra für die Ausstellung anfertigen ließ. In FFFF umrahmen die Bänke ein auf dem Boden aufgeklebtes Organigramm, das von einem Kronleuchter, gebastelt aus Ästen und Kristallglas, beleuchtet wird. Daneben leuchten eine Unmenge neonfarbiger Plastikschrässel, in einem Farbverlauf von grün bis violett, ornamentartig aufgetürmt. Diese Gefäße stammen nicht etwa von IKEA, sondern wurden direkt aus Yogakarta importiert, wo Karin Ferrari vor ein paar Jahren für einen Residency-Aufenthalt lebte. „Ich hatte eine richtige Obsession mit diesen Schüsseln“, gesteht die Künstlerin, die von diesen Alltagsobjekten in den Straßenständen der indonesischen Stadt regelrecht magisch angezogen war. „So gestapelt auf den Verkaufstischen haben sie Ähnlichkeiten mit der fraktalen Architektur der Tempel dort“, so Ferrari, die darum bemüht ist, mit diesen Plastikgegenständen eine Ästhetik zu erzeugen, die zugleich trashig wie sakral anmutet. „Das ist nicht einfach, weil das schnell ins Kitschige kippen kann“. Die Schüsseln hat Ferrari bereits 2019 in einer Ausstellung im Diözesanmuseum Bruneck ausgestellt, damals in Form einer Skulptur zusammen mit mittelalterlichen goldenen Messkelchen – „das hat ganz gut funktioniert“, wie sie resümiert.

FFFF ist eine Weiterentwicklung des Projekts „Temple of Ga Ga“, das Ferrari 2022 im Rahmen der Ausschreibung Vorbrenner im BRUX – Freies Theater Innsbruck umsetzte. Dieses war auch ausschlaggebend dafür, dass die Künstlerin von den Organisatoren des Heart of Noise eingeladen wurde, das Festival zu eröffnen. „Für mich als Künstlerin ist das ein großer Push, der mir weitere Perspektiven und Möglichkeit eröffnet“, zeigt sich Ferrari dankbar, die vor allem die Großzügigkeit hervorhebt, die Freiheit zu erhalten mit einem genreübergreifenden Format zu experimentieren. Dabei ist auch der zentrale Standort des Kubus – direkt zwischen dem Hofgarten, dem Landestheater sowie dem Haus der Musik von Bedeutung, wo Subkultur auf Hochkultur, Tourismus und städtisches Alltagsleben trifft. Mit Ferrari eröffnete das Festival dieses Jahr in einem wahrhaftig zeremoniellen Setting. Der Kubus wurde zum „monolithischen Tempel“ erklärt, von dem herab Karin Ferrari aus dem Fenster Botschaften der FFFF predigte, während ihr Kollaborator Francesco Fonassi das ganze Spektakel mit Soundkulissen untermalte:

Freaky Fairy Flux – The Self Help Group

Astral Travel for Beginners

Welcome to this crash course

In intergalactic communication.

[...]

Vereinzelte Personen im Publikum wurden eingeladen, Masken zu tragen, die Ferrari selbst aus Papiermaschee gebastelt hatte – sie verkörpern „Phantasiewesen“, wie sie sie nennt, manche darunter ähneln Tierköpfen wie Schlangen, Stieren oder Vögeln, andere wiederum eher Astronauten. Was sie aber gemeinsam haben, ist ein aufgekratztes Symbol auf der Stirnmitte – „das ist ihr drittes Auge“, merkt die Künstlerin an. Die Masken haben für Ferrari selbst auch eine praktische Funktion:



Karin
Ferrari bei
der FFFF-
Performance

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Im Rahmen des Festivals wurde das experimentelle Soundprojekt von Ferrari und Fonassi als 11. Heart of Noise-Edition veröffentlicht – dieses Jahr erstmals im Kassetten-Format, was insbesondere Fonassi gelegen kam, der ein Verfechter des analogen Sounds ist: „I hate computers to play with, that's why I jumped some years ago totally into reel-to-reel-tape machines and analogue synthesizers“, wie er erzählt. Dabei spielt für ihn vor allem auch die analoge Soundqualität eine Rolle, die sich sehr stark von digital produzierter Musik unterscheidet. Somit knüpft auch seine Arbeitsweise an die konzeptuelle Arbeit Ferraris an: „I think our matching point lies especially in ideas of past and future fictional theories“, so Fonassi.

Produziert wurde die Kassetten-Auflage im Underground-Space/Studio SPETTRO (<https://spettro.info/oceano>) unter dem Label Villa Recordings in Brescia – beides Projekte, die der italienische Soundkünstler Fonassi vor ein paar Jahren mit seinem Kollektiv gründete. Auch das ästhetisch ansprechende Verpackungs-Design der Kasette (by another studio (<https://anotherstudio.it/>)), das in Kombination mit Ferraris entworfener okkultur Schriftart an die

Optik von Orakelkarten-Verpackungen erinnert, erweckt Neugier und verleitet zum Kauf – auch damit sei eine Brücke zum boomenden Esoterikmarkt geschlagen. Ob die Kasette ihre Wirkung erzielt, muss wohl jeder für sich selbst herausfinden. Wir sind nach diesem vielversprechenden Einsteig jedenfalls gespannt, wie weit das diesjährige Heart of Noise unser drittes Auge zu öffnen vermag.

Die Sound-Performance wird heute (FR, 26.5.23) um 19.30 nochmals live im RFDI vorgeführt. Die Installation FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION ist von FR 26.5.–SO 28.5. von 14-19 Uhr im Kubus zugänglich.

| Brigitte Egger

Veröffentlicht in: brigit, Kultur, kunst, theater | Schlagwort: Francesco Fonassi, Heart of Noise, Karin Ferrari, Okkultismus, Performance, Pop, Reich für die Insel, Ritual, Sound



Temple of Ga Ga, Vorbrenner Projekt im BRUX - Freies Theater Innsbruck, 2022 Fotos: WEST and Daniel Jarosch

Heart of Noise 2023: Bitte keine Konventionen!



Alles wie immer vor dem Innsbrucker Alpenpanorama? Nicht ganz – Karin Ferrari und Francesco Fonassi live (Alle Fotos: Daniel Jarosch)

2. Juni 2023 — Kristoffer Cornils

Programmatischer Anarchismus und radikale Offenheit zeichnen das **Heart of Noise** in Innsbruck aus, einer der besten Adressen für Fans nicht-standardisierter Musik in Europa und alle, die es werden sollten.

Am letzten Maiwochenende lud es zum 13. Mal in die Alpenkulisse, diesmal mit Singeli aus Dar es Salaam genauso wie mit Harsh Noise aus Wien und verdubbtten Trommelrhythmen aus Tbilisi. Obwohl die Auswirkungen der laufenden Festivalkrise sich anscheinend auf die Dimension des Programms niederschlugen, bot es alternativkulturellen Reichtum.

Zwischen den Altären des Kapitals

Die **FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION** der in Wien lebenden italienischen Medienkünstlerin bringt schwarz schimmernde Trash-Skulpturen und mystisch anmutende Typografien zusammen. Sie ist wohl als visuelles Pendant zu ihrer gemeinsamen musikalischen Arbeit mit dem italienischen Elektroakustiker Francesco Fonassi zu verstehen, die als elfte Ausgabe der festivaleigenen Veröffentlichungsreihe **Heart of Noise Editions** erschienen ist. Es ist das erste Release auf Kassette, woran sich wohl ebenfalls zeigt, dass beim **Heart of Noise** in diesem Jahr etwas sparsamer budgetiert werden muss als noch im Jahr zuvor, als die zehnte Katalognummer mit einem umfassenden, alle bisherigen Veröffentlichungen umfassenden Box-Set gefeiert wurde. Es bleibt zu hoffen, dass **FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION** nicht nur via Magnet-, sondern auch über das Breitband veröffentlicht wird – es ist eines der schönsten Releases der Serie bisher.



Karin Ferrari FREAKY FAIRY FLUX FOUNDATION

Die „Sonic Fiction“, wie die Veröffentlichung in Anlehnung an einen von Kodwo Eshun geprägten Begriff untertitelt ist, klingt nach den späten Siebzigern und frühen Achtzigern, nach *Riddles of the Sphinx* und anderen Spoken-Word-Platten, in denen die musikalische Gestaltung eher zur atmosphärischen Unterstreichung von Wortmagie dient. Die Zurückhaltung Fonassis ermöglicht es, Ferrari verbalen Reisebericht konzentriert zu folgen. Mit monotoner Stimme besucht sie eine religiös konnotierte Pilgerstätte nach der nächsten und nutzt sie immer auch als Sprungbrett für Reflexionen. Es geht von Angkor Wat nach Jerusalem und Bali, quer durch alte sumerische Mythen und nicht selten an McDonald's-Filialen vorbei, immer aber thematisch durch abstrakte Themenfelder hindurch.



Alternativ- vs. Hochkultur bei der Festivaleröffnung (Foto: Daniel Jarosch)

In Ferraris essayistischen Ausführungen kontrastiert sie Tradition und Moderne aus einer zeitgenössischen Position, folgt den historischen Spuren von den Kreuzzügen bis hin zum Kapitalismus und beleuchtet die Parallelen zwischen magischem Denken und einer finanzialisierten Welt, in denen die unsichtbare Hand des Marktes genauso unergründlich würfelt wie die eines Gottes. Es entbehrt nicht einer gewissen Ironie, dass diese Auseinandersetzung mit den Altären des Kapitals an genau diesem Ort und zu diesem Zeitpunkt erstmals live präsentiert wird, kostenfrei im öffentlichen Raum.

Denn ringsherum werden bereits Zelte für das nächste Sportfest aufgebaut, das verlässlich Geld in die Kassen der Stadt spülen wird, während in der Bar des Haus der Musik teure angezogene Menschen nicht minder teuren Champagner schlürfen. Dass all



Exhibition view **Temple To Go**, Beauty Case Diözesanmuseum Hofburg Brixen
Photos: Jürgen Eheim, im Auftrag des Südtiroler Künstlerbundes



Temple To Go

Sculptures and installation made with plastic bowls collected in Indonesia during the BMKOES artist residency in Yogyakarta and shipped for a fortune to Europe, in the exhibition: **Beauty Case. Preserving the beauty of creation.** Hofburg Brixen, 2019.

I remember driving down the dusty roads, flanked on both sides by towering stacks of colorful plastic bowls. These vibrant piles reminded me of the fractal ornaments decorating the pillars and temples of the local Hindu shrines. By recontextualizing these everyday plastic objects they question the boundaries between sacred and disposable, beauty and excess. What once lined the roadsides of Yogyakarta as humble market goods becomes an intricate monuments to consumption and devotion, a paradoxical preservation of the fleeting beauty found in the most ordinary materials.

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Michael Rainer

CREATING MY OWN HALLUCINATION

Driftwood of the Anthropocene. Washed up on the shores of the present. A substance that already bears art in its name. The leading material of our global civilization. Its production, trade, and use know no bounds. In intellectual discourse, plastic is condemned with contempt, yet it has also nestled into the last corner of our lives. You're my plastic-fantastic lover. The stuff dreams are made of in the 20th century is plastic. Jefferson Airplane recognized this as early as 1967, when the plasticized revolution was still in its infancy.

In the last 25 years, we have wrapped the world in plastic and preserved it for eternity. Its beauty shines under the clear plastic wrap of supermarkets and is brought to life by advanced, organic display technologies. Leatherette, artificial flowers, artificial stone, synthetic resin. No natural material, no handcrafted surface is safe from the stupendous quality of imitation by plastics. We all have a claim to light, shine, color, and pay homage daily to the "ape" among materials, whose universal power of imitation Gottfried Semper already predicted a bright future for in the middle of the 19th century.



Karin Ferrari has had a whole container full of plastic bowls, plates, and cups from Indonesia shipped to Central Europe. The result is plastic objects, assembled from the semi-transparent wonder material of industrial mass production. Screamingly colorful and almost indestructible, they attract the public's attention in their museum showcases. Placed between two golden goblets from the late Middle Ages, the plastic objects find themselves here. They bear witness to humanity's alliance with the plastics industry. Karin Ferrari's plastic objects stand for the apotheosis of a material whose egalitarian power is one of the great, unwritten cultural achievements of humanity.

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The two medieval goblets connect Karin Ferrari's plastic objects with the central act of the Christian sacrificial meal. In the liturgical meal, creator and creation merge in the transubstantiation. "Do this in remembrance of me." The exhortation seems to be in the wrong place nowhere more than in the rooms of a museum. In its functions as a cultural archive and cultural mediator, the museum acts as a memory of creation. Its showcases organize remembrance and assign a cultural added value to things. From the liturgical remembrance of the creator has become the cultural remembrance of creation.

Karin Ferrari's plastic objects are memory machines. Their material, their shape, and the place of their storage trigger culturally specific memories that carry us further and further into a seemingly endless cosmos of cultural relationships, where everything seems connected to everything else. The existence of the plastic objects holds the promise of teleporting thoughts into a mystical space that is literally located between all worlds. As cosmic driftwood from a foreign world, Karin Ferrari's plastics have stranded with us. In conversation, Karin Ferrari speculates about the art-stuffs as the smallest modules of giant fractal structures in which one can probably only see a cosmic temple shrine. The art-stuffs are memory splinters of a larger idea, which remains as elusive as the tourist-driven parallel experience of Hindu or Buddhist spirituality in Southeast Asia. Ferrari doubts herself: "I may have created my own hallucination." The only thing that provides certainty is the objects. Visible, tangible, and interpretable. Considered in terms of their materiality as art, they remain strangely intangible in their museum showcases, where they invite us on a trip to a completely different place and a completely different time. All certainties are suspended there, and we have to form our own picture of a world in which Tibetan occultists, Indonesian tourists, and European liturgists collide. Welcome to the age of trash mysticism. You never know what to expect. Except one thing. It's engine room is the echo chamber of our collective memory made out of plastic.



Exhibition view **Temple To Go**, Beauty Case Diözesanmuseum Hofburg Brixen
Photos: Jürgen Eheim, im Auftrag des Südtiroler Künstlerbundes



The Oracular Joss Paper Alt+ar, fire sacrifice.
Exhibition view **Karin Ferrari. Paranjolly Symphony**, Galeria Rigo Novigrad 2025

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The Oracular Joss Paper Alt+ar

An altar made of paper. Paper, papier-mâché clay objects, and IKEA furniture from the LACK series, which itself is mostly made of paper itself. Why paper? Ultimately the whole thing is a fire sacrifice. The work is inspired by the paper sacrifices of East Asian of fire rituals such as the Qingming Festival, which I came to know through my colleague Peter Moosgaard's artistic research on these practices.

The term "joss" originally comes from the Portuguese word *deus*, meaning "god," and entered English via Chinese pidgin during early trade interactions. In East Asian ritual contexts, it refers to offerings made to deities or ancestors, such as incense sticks (joss sticks) or paper objects (joss paper), burned to honor and sustain spirits in the afterlife. The word thus carries a layered history, bridging European, Chinese, and spiritual practices through a single, evocative term. In this sense, joss becomes emblematic of how meaning shifts through cultural exchange and commerce, and how trade itself is crucial in the generation of forms of spirituality, language, and symbolic value.

I often work with cheap, discarded and overlooked materials. I use them to renegotiate the line between the sacred and the profane, actually questioning the division itself. By transforming the accessible and the ordinary into vessels of symbolic significance, I aim to propose a more democratic form of art and spirituality, one that reclaims value, beauty and meaning-making. It seeks to dismantle aesthetic and religious elitism and exclusion, returning the act of creation to everyone.



The altar emerged from meditations on the relationship between military and religion. These two forces appear separate but share deep symbolic and historical entanglements. From the Crusades to the recurring iconography of the All-Seeing Eye in both religious and military imagery, these powers have long mirrored one another. The work's point of departure was the defense towers of Istria, which over time transformed into church bell towers.

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The papier-mâché candles morph between traditional candle shapes, bombs, and rockets. A slow metamorphosis from sacred object to weapon. From illumination and exploration to destruction. Hopefully also back again. On top of the structure sits a surveillance camera crowned with antlers: an evolution of the All-Seeing Eye, once a symbol of divine omniscience, now reimagined as dystopian surveillance machinery and AI warfare. The antlers, in this context, represent the animism we project onto AI — we experience it as alive, which is a projection but at the same time by its very nature it is self-propelling, expanding, and growing. At the same time, the antlers also carry a sliver of hope: that all this acceleration might somehow be part of a larger, organic process that leads to something wholesome. Of course, the fact that Peter Thiel keeps talking about the Antichrist and named his AI warfare company Palantir after the magical seeing stone in *Lord of the Rings*, that spoiler alert, is abused by the bad guys, doesn't exactly make this scenario more comforting. But that's just one bored billionaire fantasizing about owning the apocalypse.

So what are you gonna do? The work starts out tangled up in all these big, messy external things, towers of power, but eventually it turns inward. Where is the power of the individual? And what is the relationship of the individual to these forces? As a cultural psychologist I really like to think of certain phenomenas as symptoms and that throws you back to the question how does the individual assist in creating these collective structures? Even billionaires who fantasies about the coming high tech apocalypse. How do these dynamics exist within the self: how do control, protection, defense mechanisms, spirituality, superstition, and devotion exist within the individual? How do external and internal structures shape how we believe, perceive, and inhabit the world? The result is an object that belongs not to the outer world anymore but to the inner space. It's a piece of furniture.



The Paper Altar also reflects on the industrial logic that shaped both modern warfare and domestic design. The military-industrial revolution of WWII prepared the ground for the mass-production systems that companies like IKEA later perfected. This industrial logic, combined with the modernist ethos of minimalism and the abolishment of ornament, reveals how austerity and reduction became intertwined with the demands of efficiency and wartime production. The minimal aesthetic that dominates both furniture and military design is inseparable from the historical moment of WWII, where ornament was not only unnecessary but ideologically rejected.

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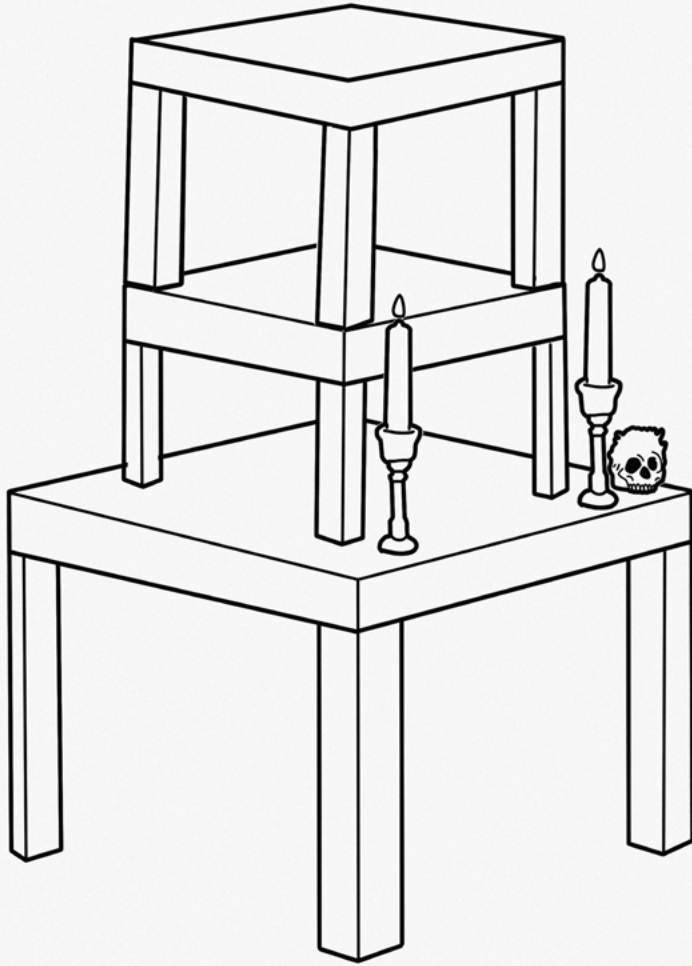
The altar's ornaments imitate marble intarsia, but their patterns are partly derived from kaomoji internet scripture, esoteric and hieroglyphic in nature, forming a kind of digital occultism. The other part consists of hallucinated texts accidentally generated by AI image software. In a way, the machine becomes oracular. This is also how the exhibition title was created: I initially prompted the AI to make an image with the words PARANOIA + METAPHYSIX, and it produced gibberish that I spontaneously read as Paranjolly Symphony. So the phrase wasn't even there, the letter phantasms suggested it, and I completed the machine's hallucination with my own.

This made me reflect on the creation of meaning more generally. It made me think the story of the infinite monkey on the typewriter: given infinite time, it might produce Shakespeare's works. Or the Bible. Ultimately, the sculpture is a gesture of DIY spirituality, in which one is not just assembling furniture, but a personal cosmology and worldview. This comes with challenges, but also with potential. The whole idea that the sacred or sublime exists somewhere very far away, in some other dimension, and is only accessible by someone extraordinarily special, makes a great story, but honestly, it sounds like a trauma response if you think about it. It's nuts, really, this idea. I even want to say cursed. So how do we find the sublime in the everyday? How do we reconnect with the here and now?



Exhibition view **Karin Ferrari. Paranjolly Symphony**, Galeria Rigo Novigrad 2025

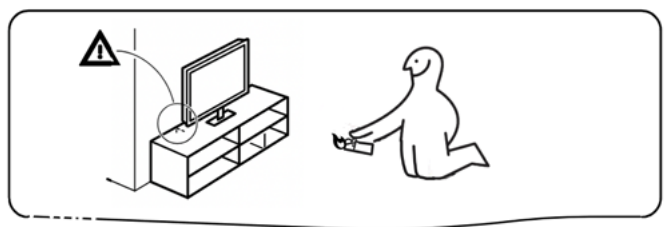
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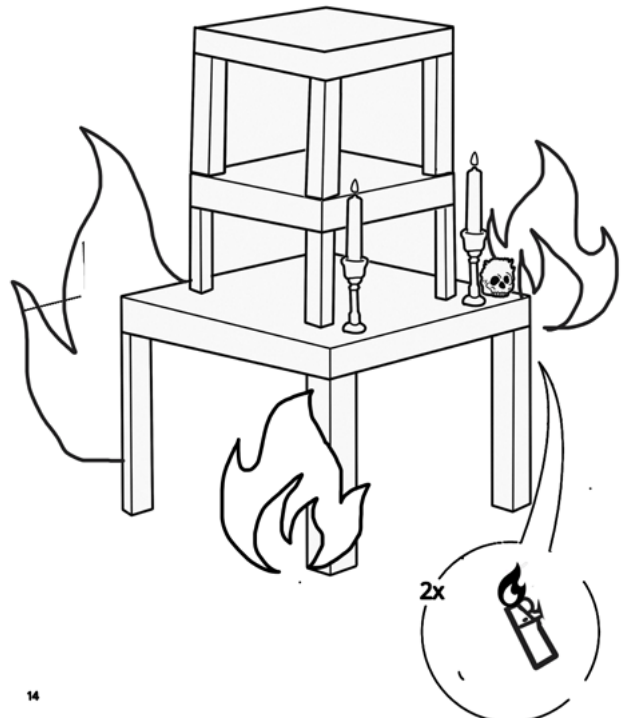
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Karin Ferrari x Trash Mysticism



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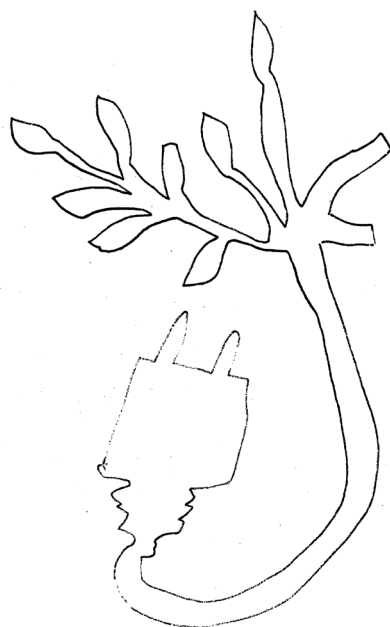
Serendipity (Chaos Preface - So exciting!!) Acrylic on Canvas, 40 x 50 x 4,5 cm, 2025. Courtesy of CCA Andratx, Mallorca

The painting **Serendipity (Chaos Preface - So exciting!!)** is a key work connecting my video practice, storytelling, and drawing. White paint glows like mist, creating a velvet like surface from which the black drawing emerges. The moment imagination becomes reality.

The imagery is a collage of images from different image cultures. A GIF I found on giphy and used in my video **The Lost Goddess (Decoding Lady Gaga's Born This Way)**, layered with a hand-drawn star, notes I wrote into my copy of the book 'Techgnosis' by Erik Davis that accompanied for three years around the globe during residencies in Paris, Indonesia and the United States," plus a kaomoji with flower eyes from a recent email with Juniper Foam regarding our new spoken soundtrack. Moving between digital and material, bitmap and brushstroke, it explores serendipity, luck, magic, and the transformative power of desire and imagination.

Techno Totems

To challenge conventional cultural categories is the driving force behind Ferrari's sculptures and installations. The overarching aim is to dismantle the conventional divisions between categories such as religion, technology, consumer materialism, and superstition. Ferrari's "Fake Dreams Catcher" series offers a techno-animistic perspective on cultural artifacts. It represents the shared imaginary realm of religion, technology, consumer materialism and superstition.





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In her video works and installations, Karin Ferrari combines paranoia and political imagination, esotericism and fake news, but also explores subliminal messages in advertising and pop culture. Her series "Fake Dreams Catcher," to which this work belongs, is composed of highly contemporary materials: rare earths, electronic waste from the dark anthropocene - to quote the artist - magnetic tape, and sportswear. The artist describes the series as an exploration of protective devices, a firewall for the realm of hopes and desires that are meant to keep dreams at bay.

— Museion for Modern and Contemporary Art Bolzano



TechnoAnimae

Painted and polished branches from the forest, Nike Sport mesh tank tops, e-waste, rare earth metals, springs and cables, cable ties, VHS tapes with recordings from MTV, 1998, a feather from Amazon, a hand painted psychedelic logo pattern, faux fur.

Part of the sculpture series 'Fake Dreams Catcher'. Other versions of the sculpture have been shown in the exhibition TECHNO, Museion for Modern and Contemporary Art - Bozen/Bolzano, 2022, Hau Berlin 2023, the shopping center Sillpark in Innsbruck as part of the art in public space program KOER Tirol 2021, in Vorarlberg Museum 2020, Künstlerhaus Bregenz 2019

One day, during my research travels through Southeast Asia, I found myself on a black market, surrounded by all sorts of goods that transcended the realms of superstition, religion, consumer capitalism, and technology. Nikes, dream catcher multipacks, radios, I-Ching disco ball keychains, calculators, feather diadems, small Buddha statues, plastic bags full of flowers, and the smell of grilled meat, dust, and exhaust in the sun. It was there that the idea emerged to create a hybrid object, a hyperobject, that surpasses all possible cultural categories and practices. TechnoAnimae is a totem for a new world, where the conceptual, artificial separation that modernity has drawn between nature and culture is obsolete, and we realize that we were never truly separate.



Animadidas hanging sculpture at the shopping mall SILLPARK Innsbruck, a KOER Tirol art in public space program, 2021



Supermarket of the Dead by Peter Moosgaard during the Shamanic Mall Retreat at Sillpark Shoppingmall, Innsbruck
Foto: Daniel Jarosch

Shamanic Mall Retreat

01. & 02.07.2021 with Karin Ferrari, Lona Gaikis, Bernhard Garnicnig, Peter Moosgaard
part of Karin Ferrari's KOER Tirol project THE NEW HOLY

Which spiritual cultures of consciousness arise in shopping malls?

What insignia does a shopping mall shaman use to identify herself?

How are artifacts of consumer society used ritually?

What mystical longings and utopias does department store architecture express?

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Shamans seek to relate to the spirit that resides in all things. What better place for this than a department store where there are so many of these things. The Shamanic Mall Retreat consists of a series of experimental, artistic and theoretical contributions and workshops in and around the shopping mall SILLPARK in Innsbruck. The artists Ferrari, Gaikis, Garnicnig and Moosgaard went with the participants to those levels and departments where psyche and public space overlap. They explore the imaginative potential of those strata of consciousness and the department store teeming with commercialized archetypes, information, images and entities. But beware: some of them are deceptive tricksters! Cultural theorist William Raymond describes advertising as a professional system of magical manipulation that functions much like the magical systems of simple societies, but bizarrely coexists with sophisticated scientific technology. Anyway, the only way to counter spells is with spells. And that's what we did to do for two days.



Jordan DREAM DNA, 2022

for THE GYM

THE GYM is a production of partner in crime. Curated by @shaymaku,
@petra_poelzl , @mirabellapaidamwoyo & johannes maile



Äste, Kabelbinder und Nike-Trikots: Karin Ferrari bezeichnet ihre künstlerische Praxis als "Trash Mysticism" und verarbeitet ganz unterschiedliche Materialien. Sie beschäftigt sich mit persönlichen Verständnissen von Spiritualität und Aberglauben. Die Installation "TechnoAnimadidas" zeigt, wie Natur und Technik miteinander verflochten sind. Unsere von Technik und Konsum geprägte Gegenwart verbindet sich in der Skulptur mit Fantasiegebilden und Wünschen, die jenseits unserer sichtbaren Welt und ihren Regeln liegen. Es entsteht ein visueller Mix aus Ahnenkult, Materialismus, und Technologie. Die Künstlerin hat "TechnoAnimadidas" in den vergangenen Jahren in einer Shopping Mall, einem Museum und einem Gym gezeigt.

— Petra Poelzl, Kuratorin HAU Berlin



The Fake Dreams Catcher, 2021 Collection vorarlberg museum



The Fake Dreams Catcher, 2019, Karin Ferrari Aliens, Sex + Paranoia, Künstlerhaus Bregenz

Ferrari's large dreamcatchers are aggressively non-traditional. The first one was called Fake Dreams Catcher, and while the "fake" in the title refers to the cheesy fantasies the thing promises to capture, the word also reminds us of the object's status as an inauthentic and appropriated Native design. Ferrari named another dreamcatcher TechnoAnimae, which was similarly crafted from e-waste, polished branches, rare earth metals, springs and cables, VHS tape, faux fur, a feather ordered on Amazon, and bilious fragments of Nike Sport mesh tank tops. As if to underscore this thing's contaminated character, Ferrari hung it in the atrium of the Sillpark shopping mall in Innsbruck before bringing it to the art museum."

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— Erik Davis (TechGnosis, High Weirdness)





The New Holy F*ck

Branches from the forest, VHS magnetic tapes with video recordings from the music channel MTV from the 1990s, feathers from Amazon, plastic bowls from Indonesia, electronic waste, fur faux, cables and cable ties, ropes, Marterle with Animadidas logo; a white plastic garden chair that quotes an organic art nouveau ornament. KOER Tirol, art in public space, with Tiroler Künstler*Innenschaft

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The installation in the forest is part of Karin Ferrari's "The New Holy" project. The artist deals in her practise with pop culture, folk and other DIY forms of spirituality and superstition. Ferrari's installation sees itself as part of the all-encompassing intertwining of nature, technoculture and mythology. A visual mash-up in which set pieces from animism, consumer materialism and technology come together. The technoid and consumer-oriented present enters into a liaison with phantasms and metaphysical longings that move apart from the prevailing worldview.

“







Animadidas Marterle

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Marterle with woodblock for woodcut printing, 40 cm x 40 cm x 16 cm, 2021
part of the public space installation THE NEW HOLYF*CK Innsbruck 2021
KOER Tirol, art in public space, in collaboration with the Tiroler Künstler*Innenschaft

Realized as an Art in Public Space installation in the forest with KOER Tirol in 2021, Karin Ferrari's work explores the intertwining of nature, technoculture, consumer materialism, and mythology. It is inspired by religious wayside crosses attached to trees, which often carry a distinct animistic quality (one of the earliest gods was the tree, long before the sun) and are frequently accompanied by votive offerings, flowers, or food for birds and squirrels.





True Stories from THE NEW HOLY F*CK installation in the Woods. And Why That's the Only Name That Fits

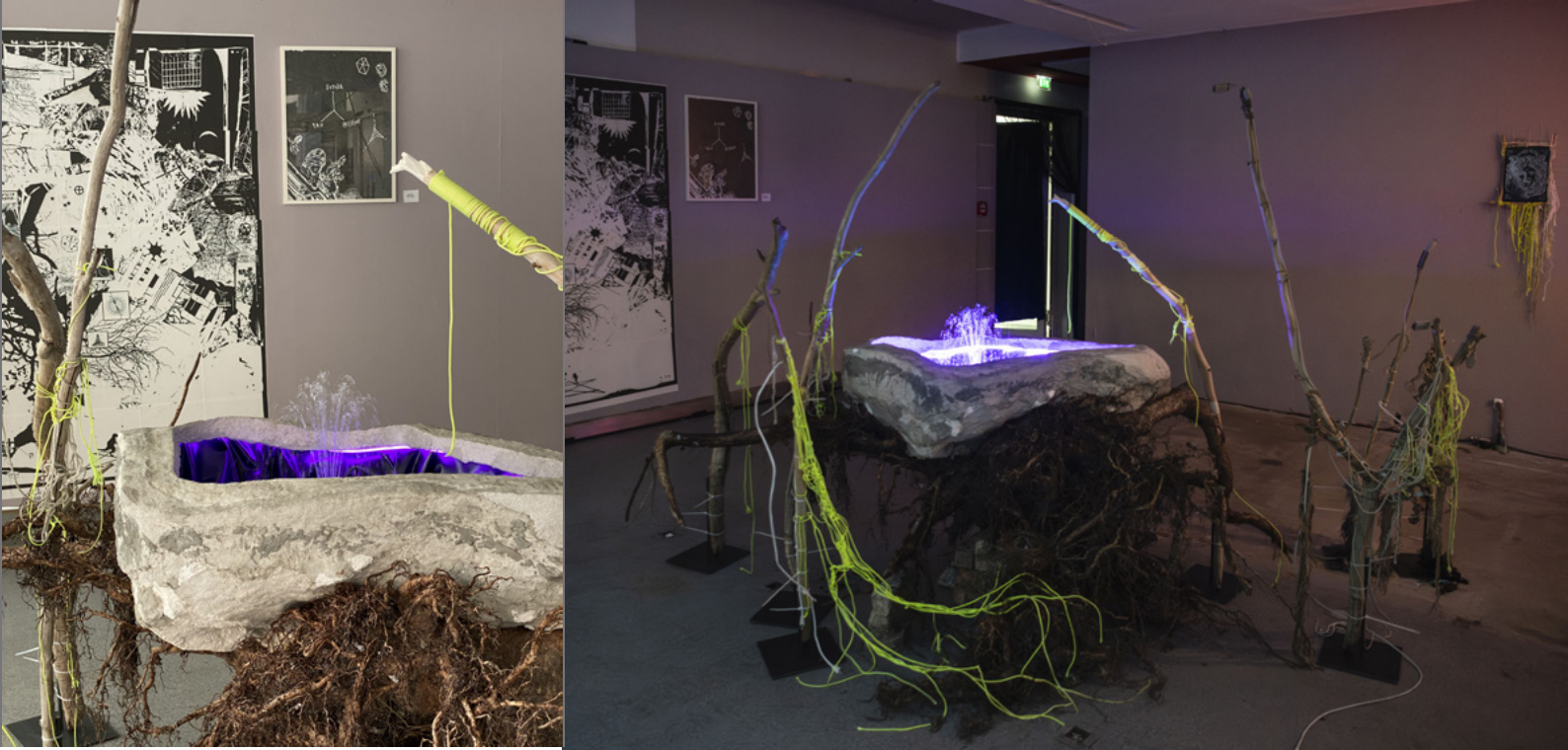
Two weeks I spent in the forest building an installation next to a place called Seven Paths. Seven Paths sounds like something out of a fairy tale, but it's real. It's a large crossing in the middle of the forest close to Innsbruck, and there's a wayside cross mounted on a tree. These types of crosses are called Marterle, and you'll find quite a few of them along the hiking trails in Tyrol.

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By the way, one of the things Tyrol is called is The Holy Land. You might think, that's in the Middle East but no, you're wrong, it's in the middle of the Alps. Also, the Malleus Maleficarum—the Hammer of Witches—has its tragic origins here. Apparently, Heinrich Kramer institutionalized his theories and methods in that book as an act of revenge, after the Bishop of Innsbruck basically told him to fuck off and leave the poor woman alone, Kramer was obsessed with and butthurt because she refused to fuck him.

Anyway. A couple of years ago, I was walking unusually early through the woods. Morning fog was still hanging in the trees. I reached Seven Paths just at the moment when a nun, dressed in full black garments, bowed to the wayside cross. It was beautiful. And a bit spooky. From where I stood, it looked as though she was bowing to the tree. It reminded me of religious practices I've seen in Southeast Asia, where small altars and offerings are scattered all over the place, not just at formal religious sites, and everything carries a distinct animistic feeling.

A few strange, weird and even magical encounters happened at my installation in the woods. Almost no hostile ones. Some minor vandalism. And hikers stomping by with their nordic walking sticks ranting about what a plastic chair is doing in the woods, dressed from head to toe in high tech plastic sportswear.



Freaky Fairy Fountain, RfdInsel, Innsbruck, 2023

I'm also not thinking about the times when the forest started to sound like a tropical jungle after sunset. I'm glad Petra Poelzl heard the sounds as well and made the same association during our one-hour Instagram live stream Artist Talk "Drinking Champagne in the Forest with PP and KF until it gets dark". I was a bit worried I was hallucinating them because of the project's personal connection to my time in Indonesia.

Nothing really bad happened—except one time. One afternoon, I was standing on that plastic chair, working on the structure, when I suddenly heard huge dogs running back and forth around me. That reminds me.... there was another time a deer sat quietly in the grass beside me while I worked. It's true.. But this time, it was big, nervous, black dogs circling. When I turned around, a group of people was standing behind me.

One of the men pointed at the installation and shouted: "Satan! Satan!" Then they explained, "A psychic told us these are the coordinates where a man has disappeared."

At that moment, I was standing inside the installation, the "portal." Completely baffled, I turned to look at the structure and thought: "What the fuck. It works."

If this weren't so sad, it would be hilarious. Apparently, a young Dutch hiker had disappeared in the mountains, and a psychic gave them coordinates where he was supposedly to be found, which just so happened to be right where my installation stood.

Oh, and then there was the magical opening night, when hundreds and hundreds of fireflies appeared all around us.

So maybe... there is something magical about it after all.

— Karin Ferrari



TechnoAnimae, print on metall, technoanimistic frame, ca. 30 cm x 60 cm, 2023 (private collection)
Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation, RfdInsel, Innsbruck, 2023

Ferrari's work with woodcuts is inspired by the intersection of science and superstition, exploring their shared imaginary realm. The images combine digital aesthetics with analog artifacts and traces of the hand. This research began during a research residency at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam, where Ferrari got her hands on the Book of Monsters by Ulisse Aldrovandi...



Exhibition view of the 37. Austrian Graphic Award for Karin Ferrari's woodcut print **CHIRO DIGITALIS** with the Prize of Niederösterreich. Collection Land Tirol, RLB Tirol, Frans Masereel Center, Allard Pierson Museum, private Collection

Chiro Digitalis

Chiro Digitalis

Woodcut, 80 x 110 cm

Taxispalais Kunsthalle Tirol, Innsbruck

Prize of Lower Austria at the Austiran Graphics Award 2021

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The woodcut Chiro Digitalis refers to the mystical dimension of technological imagination. The print was created in collaboration with the archaeological museum Allard Pierson Amsterdam, AGALAB - Center for Printing Technology 2019 in Amsterdam and Frans Masereel Center Kasterlee Belgium and with support of the Mondriaan Fund.

The Allard Pierson Museum manages the cultural assets of the University of Amsterdam and has a rich special collection of printed works from protoscience, occultism and alchemy. Due to the freedom of religion and tolerance of the Netherlands, many scholars and religiously persecuted people poured into the country in the 17th century to print books in Amsterdam's printing works that would have been banned elsewhere.

During my research and examination of the collection of the Allard Pierson Museum, I noticed the wood print of a hand in the prayer book *Rosetum exercitiorum* (1494) by the Christian mystic Jan Mombaer. The picture shows the hand psalter (Chiro Psalterium), a late medieval meditation and memory technique that uses the hand as a memory aid. The mnemonic technique of the hand psalter is comparable to the use of the rosary and also arouses associations with yogic mudras and consciousness techniques. Furthermore, this picture contains a musical philosophy for the hierarchy of musical instruments, which explains how playing the instruments, i.e. not only the music, but also



Holy Freaks woodcut on handmade paper, 60 x 80 cm, 5 + 2 AP, 2019
20 x 30 cm, 5 + 2 AP, 2019



Exhibition view **Holy Freaks** in CmdP at the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam

Sofie Dederen

HOLY FREAKS

Occasioned by the question as to what print will look like in sixty years' time and what part it will play then, Karin Ferrari developed an iconic story that has similarities to her earlier work, a story about the 'magic warfare' in 2016–2079. It's about the Internet war between Lana Del Rey as 'supreme' and the dark digital powers that have controlled the world since 2016. The Great Meme War can only be won by a secret coven taking back control by activating traditional printed media types (like woodcut that operates independently from the control of digital surveillance technologies) and distributing the word of truth and freedom. Underlying Ferrari's story is the concept of 'Trash Mysticism', referring to the trashed Corpus Hermeticum—a collection of esoteric treatises from late Antiquity. It is ancient wisdom, transformed into various guidelines to understand and deal with our difficult existence on earth. The Corpus is supposed to guide readers to liberation and mystical, intuitive knowledge. During the Enlightenment these treatises sank into oblivion, the 'lost knowledge of the imagination', as the quantifiable became the norm: numbers, the 0 and the 1 that today define and control the world.

The woodcuts Ferrari made for her installation contain pictures from books in the Allard Pierson Special Collections. Ferrari combines them with digital icons and the logos of powerful companies such as Starbucks. They are collages of images from the era of the mystical that are combined with contemporary symbols from the virtual world. These collages tell a hidden meta-story about the battle between dark powers and redeeming mystics. Chiro Digitalis, the hand as a meditative tool, the redeeming act of placing the hand, has now been replaced by the everyday act of using our smartphone. This replacement tells us something about the relationship between hand, head, and tools—or rather, what consequences this relationship has for our thoughts and actions. In Ferrari's work, print also has an important role as an interface, but a mystical one: ex-votos that are the



Exhibition view **Holy Freaks** in CmdP at the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, 2019

liberating interfaces in the Great Meme War. They constitute a contemplation of the importance of information distribution and the reality beyond the quantifiable.

Karin Ferrari's artistic work can be read as a quest for symbolic meaning in our contemporary, popular, digital image culture—as an attempt to deal with our hesitant attitude toward cyberspace. It can also be viewed as a lament over the disappearance of all that is mystical from our experience of the world, while at the same time capitalist strategies are putting the mystical at the service of the powers that be. Ferrari's digital works of art can literally be called an analysis of imagery that takes place behind the façade of the Internet and the digital world. Ferrari builds her works from hidden symbolism in pop culture and social-media platforms. Since 2011 a large part of her work can be found on the YouTube channel 'DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH)'. Her documentaries and semi-scientific research focuses on speculative stories of political paranoia, esoteric utopias, and the occult. She creates layered work that is characterised by a critical approach, while on the other hand it playfully embraces subjects such as conspiracy theories, ancient aliens and monsters, opening the third eye, journalists transforming into reptiles, and subliminal messages in music videos. By speculating on the possible connections between symbolism and contemporary icons such as the world wide web and theories about the mystical, Ferrari creates fictional documentaries that try to answer the question about the influence that this symbolism and the cyberworld have on Western society as it is now. Karin's work is an artistic contribution to fake news, disinfotainment and visual consciousness.

— Sophie Dederen, director of Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgium

Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam and Frans Masereel Center, Kasterlee in collaboration with AGA LAB Amsterdam, with support of the Mondriaan Fund, Creative Industries Fund NL, Pictoright Fund und Prince Bernard Cultuur Fonds



Orbis Terrae
 woodcut on handmade paper
 30 x 20 cm, 5 + 2 AP, 2019



Exhibition view, Karin Ferrari. **Un.Holy Haus**, Galerie am Stadtplatz Wörgl, 2023. Foto: David Schreyer
 Door of Marvellous Power, wall mural, 300 cm x 280 cm, wallpapered plots, 2023



DECODING THE WHOLE TRUTH (Part II)

For quite a while Ferrari's chosen artistic medium was video. Her experimental docu-fiction series DECODING THE WHOLE TRUTH claims to reveal the symbolism and subliminal messages in images of global media culture. The video series is inspired by the weird part of YouTube of the early 2010s. Ferrari got the idea to create her own theory fictions and reveal hidden messages in images of global media culture in 2010 while spending one night binge watching reptilian shapeshifting news reporter on YouTube.

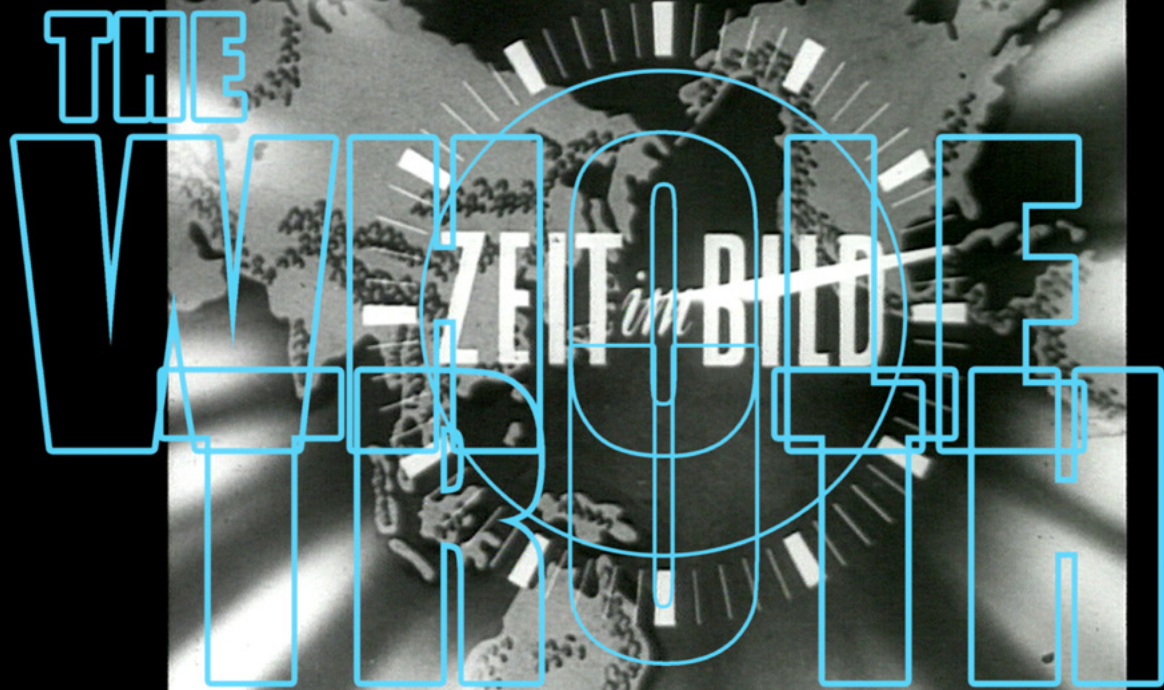
DECODING Filmography

The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way by Lady Gaga, 24 min, 2020/2023
DECODING Taylor Swifts LWYMMMD, 25 min, 2019
DECODING The iPhone Xs: A Techno-Magical Portal, 13 min, 2018
DECODING US TV News Intros – Pt. 1., 8 min, 2018
DECODING The FIFA World Cup Logo, 11 min, 2018
DECODING The Mysteries of Antarctica (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 11 min, 2017
HYPERCONNECTED THE WHOLE PICTURE, 4 min, 2017
DECODER La Terre, 2 min, 2017
DECODING Die Intros der ZiB (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 20 min, 2016
DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 20 min, 2016
DECODING Reuter's Business As Usual For Siemens in Russia, 10 min, 2014
DECODING Azealia Bank's Atlantis (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 27, 2013
DECODING Lady Gaga's Bad Romance (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 19 min, 2011

'In her video works, Karin Ferrari approaches the ubiquitous changes in the handling and perception of information or disinformation on the internet. Conspiracy theories, fake news, modern myths, so-called 'urban legends', pseudoscientific theories and esoteric utopias are experiencing a boom thanks to the internet and are setting the scene for current debates. Witty and ironically, the artist picks up these contents. As a digital flaneur, she wanders through social media, YouTube and relevant blogs or databases, constructing 'mystery-docus' video works on various topics, skillfully interweaving facts with falsehoods, speculation, and rumors into a compelling artistic Zeitgeist analysis.' (Jury statement, RLB Art Award 2018)



Video installation, Karin Ferrari, ALIENS, SEX + PARANOIA, Künstlerhaus Bregenz, 2019, Bild: ORF Vorarlberg
 Video installation, Eau & Gaz, Lanserhaus, Eppan (IT), 2018



DECODING Die Intros der ZiB (THE WHOLE TRUTH)

Experimental docu-fiction, German, English subtitles, 25 min, 2016

LINK https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_w_pB-4odE

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News reports are required to be neutral, but the opening graphics of the news are anything but neutral. The opening graphics stage the news. They are intended to convey the impression of being up-to-date, objectivity and competence, they suggest authority and want to arouse interest.

The short film DECODING Austria's News (THE WHOLE TRUTH) (original title: DECODING Die Intros der ZiB (THE WHOLE TRUTH)) claims to reveal a surplus of meaning hidden within the opening credits of Austria's main national television news magazine Zeit im Bild. The video is inspired by counter-cultural YouTube videos on the threshold of academic theory, political paranoia and speculative fiction. The narration focuses on the symbolic abstractions of the world globe and of time in the news' opening graphics, because these images are representative of the respective dominant world view and Zeitgeist. DECODING Austria's News (THE WHOLE TRUTH) was created with the support of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture for Pixel, Bytes & Film an experimental TV art program of the Austrian national TV channel ORFIII and broadcast on the Austrian national TV channel ORFIII.



Video still, DECODING US TV News Intros - Pt. 1



DECODING US TV News Intros - Pt. 1

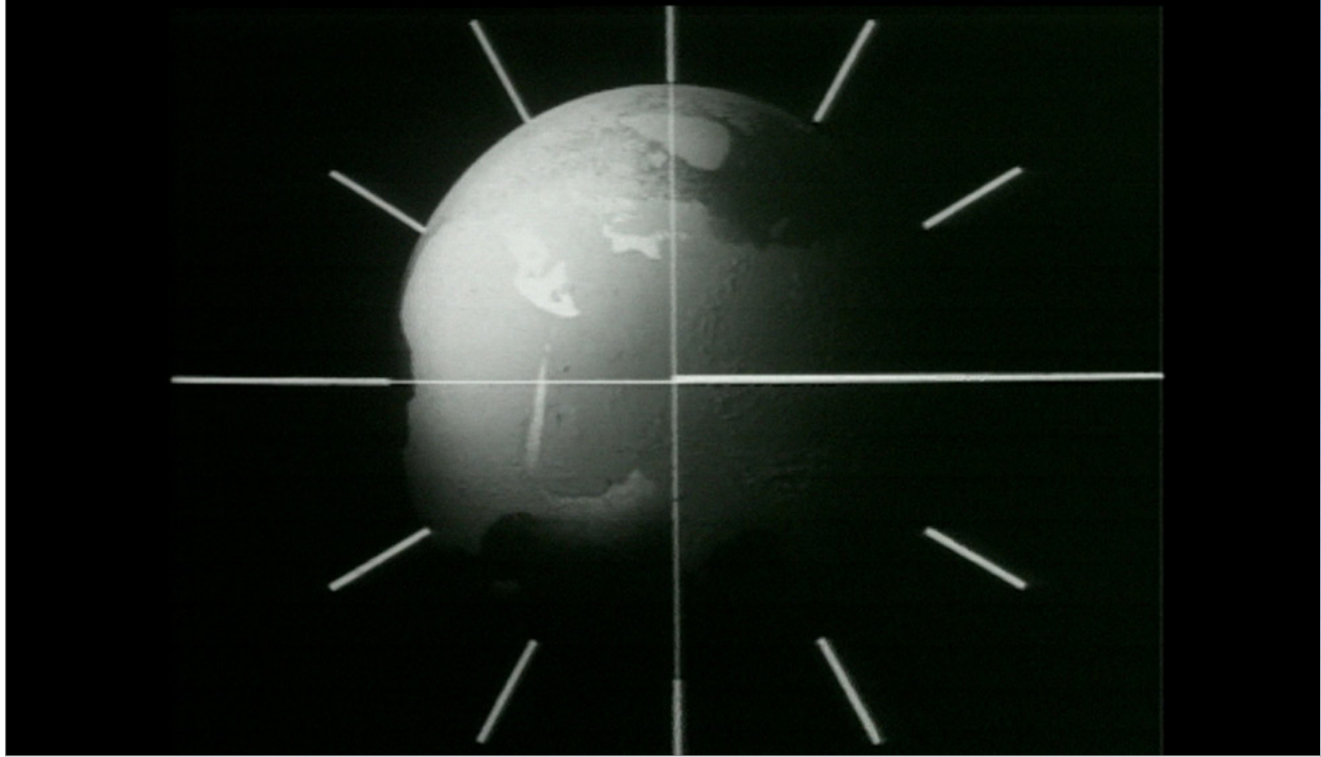
Experimental docu-fiction, Englisch, 8 min, 2018

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tetiul3ECM>

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“With the series DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH) Karin Ferrari operates an alternative semiotics of media pop culture and everyday life. The short videos analyse visual languages and reveal hidden messages and symbols. In DECODING US TV News Intros (THE WHOLE TRUTH) Pt. 1, Ferrari examines the opening credits of various American news programs whose symbolism are linked to Freemasonry, the Illuminati, and powers that work in secrecy and influence the media. Ferrari satirises the speculative narratives of a disinfotainment industry, which positions itself with fake news, alternative facts, and conspiracy theories in opposition to its slandered mainstream media and „liar press,” and undermines informed opinion through emotionalised “rumor-based” reporting.“

— Severin Dünser, curator Belvedere 21 - Museum for Contemporary Art, Vienna



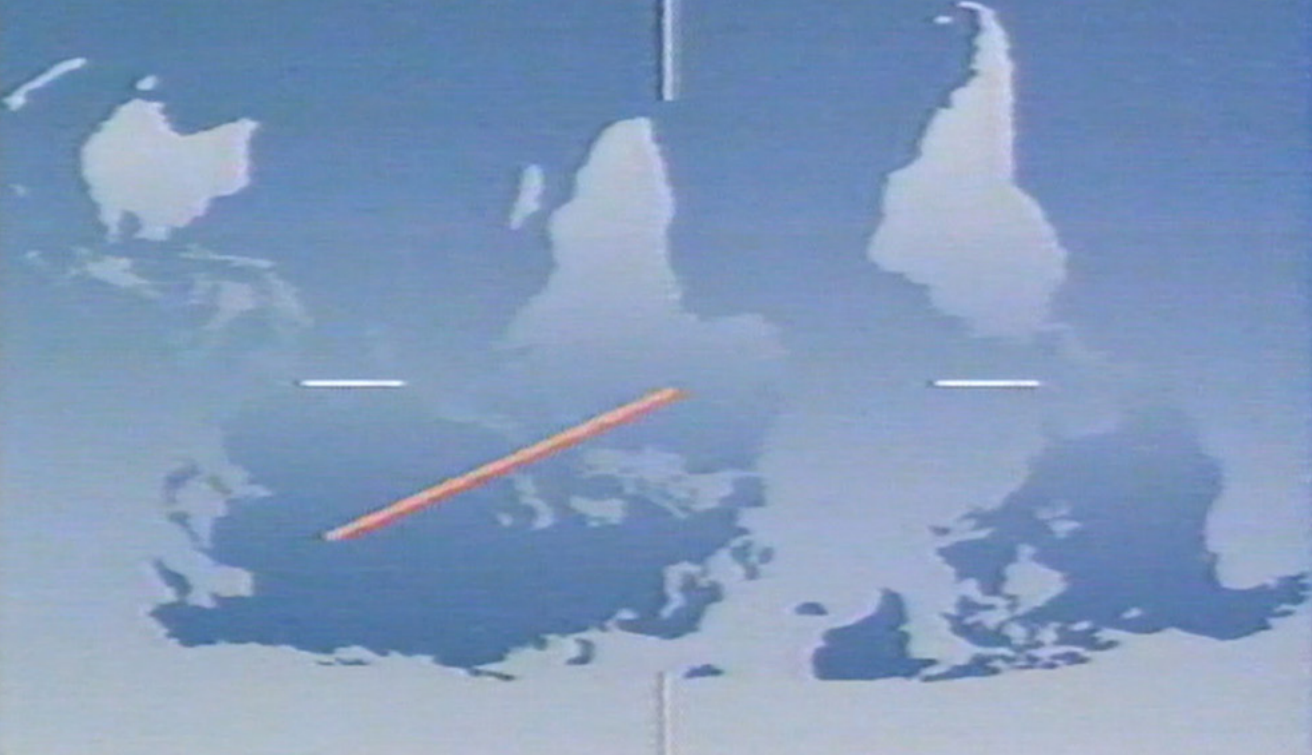
Jürgen Tabor

DECODING Global Media Culture

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In her research, Karin Ferrari works with some of the most significant and at the same time most confusing developments in contemporary media cultures. The spread of fake news and suggestive infotainment techniques, the circulation of rumours and conspiracy theories in social networks and similar phenomena form the background and context of her work. These are phenomena that are booming around the world in a time of crises, especially a crisis of confidence in the objectivity of the public media.

Ferrari's work is intricately laid out in itself. They adapt the strategies of suggestive media practices in order to demonstrate and expose their seductive power at the same time. In the DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH) series (since 2011), Ferrari picks up on TV, music and product clips that are components of national and global media culture: Katy Perry and iPhone clips, intros from popular news programs. We have seen them so often that they are part of the collective memory. But do they hide secret messages and manipulative suggestions that we only perceive unconsciously and therefore allow them to work unchecked? Ferrari's works promise to decipher this secret content and play with the fascination for mysterious, speculative narratives about reality, because, despite all skepticism, there could be a real core in them.

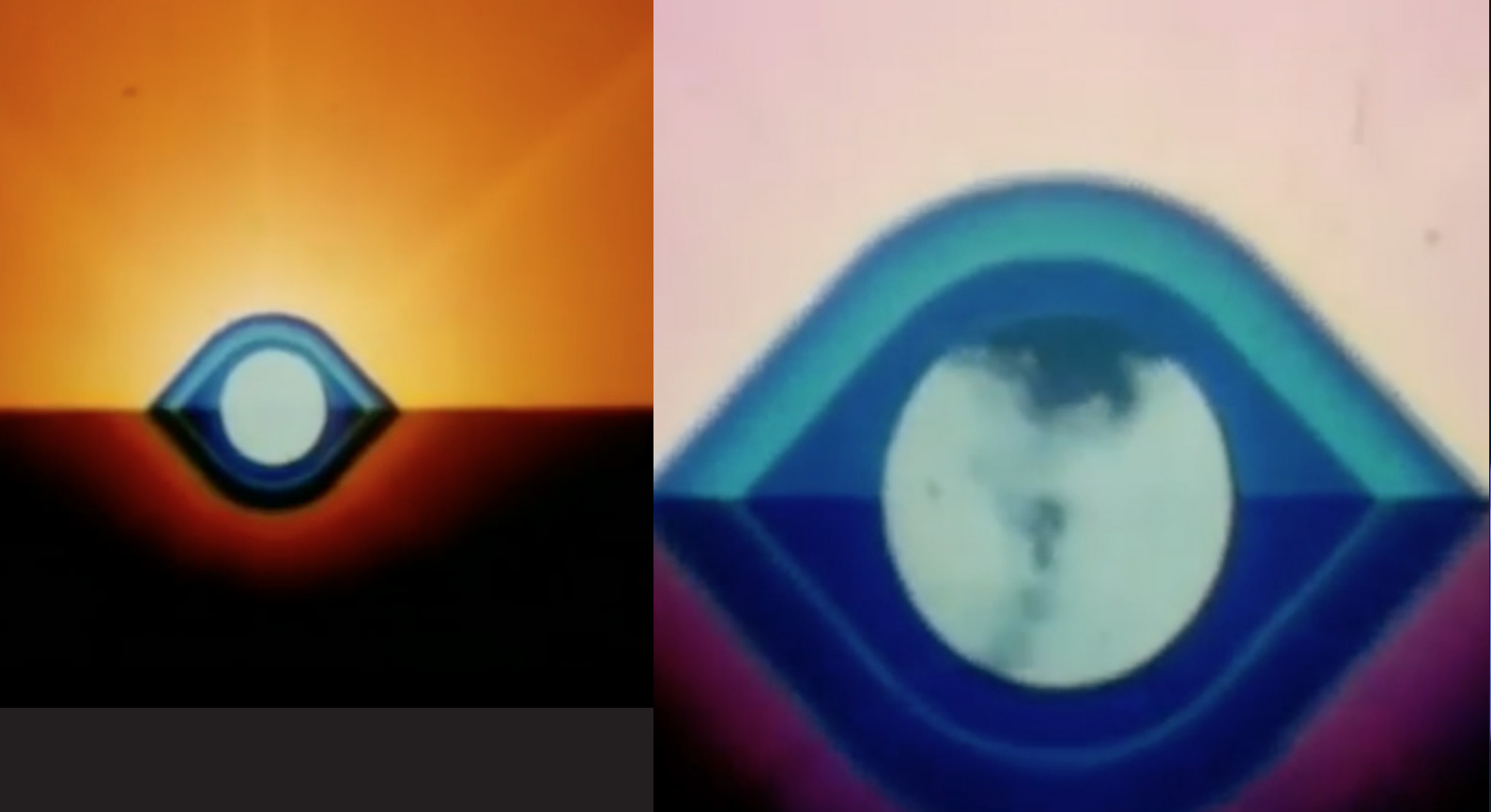


Video stills, DECODING Die Intros der ZIB (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 2016

The video DECODING The ZIB intros analyses the opening credits of the ORF television news program “Zeit im Bild” over the past 60 years. The changing view of the globe, a trademark of the intros, reflects the changed geopolitical worldview. The positioning, appearance and dynamics of the logo - for a long time an abstract combination of an electronic and a human eye - in turn conveys the self-image of the country’s central news broadcast as an authoritative, ordering, unifying medium that generates and shapes reality via information. In addition to the suggestive power of these generic symbols, Ferrari refers to other mechanisms that are presumably integrated in the intros - the alchemical principle of micro- and macrocosm, the principle of self-fulfilling speculation or the technique of predictive programming. With the classic styles of objective reporting, the video tempts you to take the explanatory models as plausible if they weren’t so absurd in one place or another that you can’t help but fall away from your belief and think the whole thing through again.

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— Jürgen Tabor, curator of Collection Generali Foundation at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg
On the occasion of the video acquisition into the collection of the city of Innsbruck



Videostills, DECODER La Terre - Band Annonce, 2017



DECODER La Terre - Bande-Annonce

A fictive blockbuster trailer for a pseudo sci-fi documentary

French, English subtitles, 2 min, 2017

The work was made with support of the Forum Culturel Autrichien, Paris, the Federal Chancellery for Art and Culture and INA: Institut national de l'audiovisuel

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwc5cQT5i1U>

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It's quite common for television news to use cosmo-technological metaphors in their opening sequences in order to mediate authority and up to dateness. Historic french television news opening sequences have a distinct utopian aesthetic. DECODER La Terre is a collage film made entirely of French TV news opening sequences, in the genre of a trailer for a sci-fi blockbuster movie.



Videoinstallation, **DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH)**, Eau & Gaz, Lanserhaus, Eppan (IT), 2018

Videoinstallation, **DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH)**, Triennale Coup de Ville, Sint Niklaas, Belgien 2016



DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH)

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Experimental docu-fiction, English, 16.9, 20:00 min, 2016

LINK https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9HCT0k_PHw

"Is Katy Perry's music video the encrypted representation of archaic ritual magic, with which an occult elite secures its power? What role does the pop star play in this?"

The rhetorical form of DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH) by Karin Ferrari, is clearly inspired by a rich vein of independent documentaries on YouTube which purport to uncover or correctly analyze the symbolic manifestations of major conspiracies in our public life. Set in Memphis - Egypt - and suffused with hieroglyphic imagery, an ultra light pop-music video by the eponymous American star receives a dogged, and deadpan, analysis in a voiceover supplied by the artist. Like the underground media whose idioms it highlights, Ferrari's argument is by turns weirdly convincing and highly implausible.

— Nadim Samman, curator 5th Moscow Biennale for Young Art



Video still, DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 2016

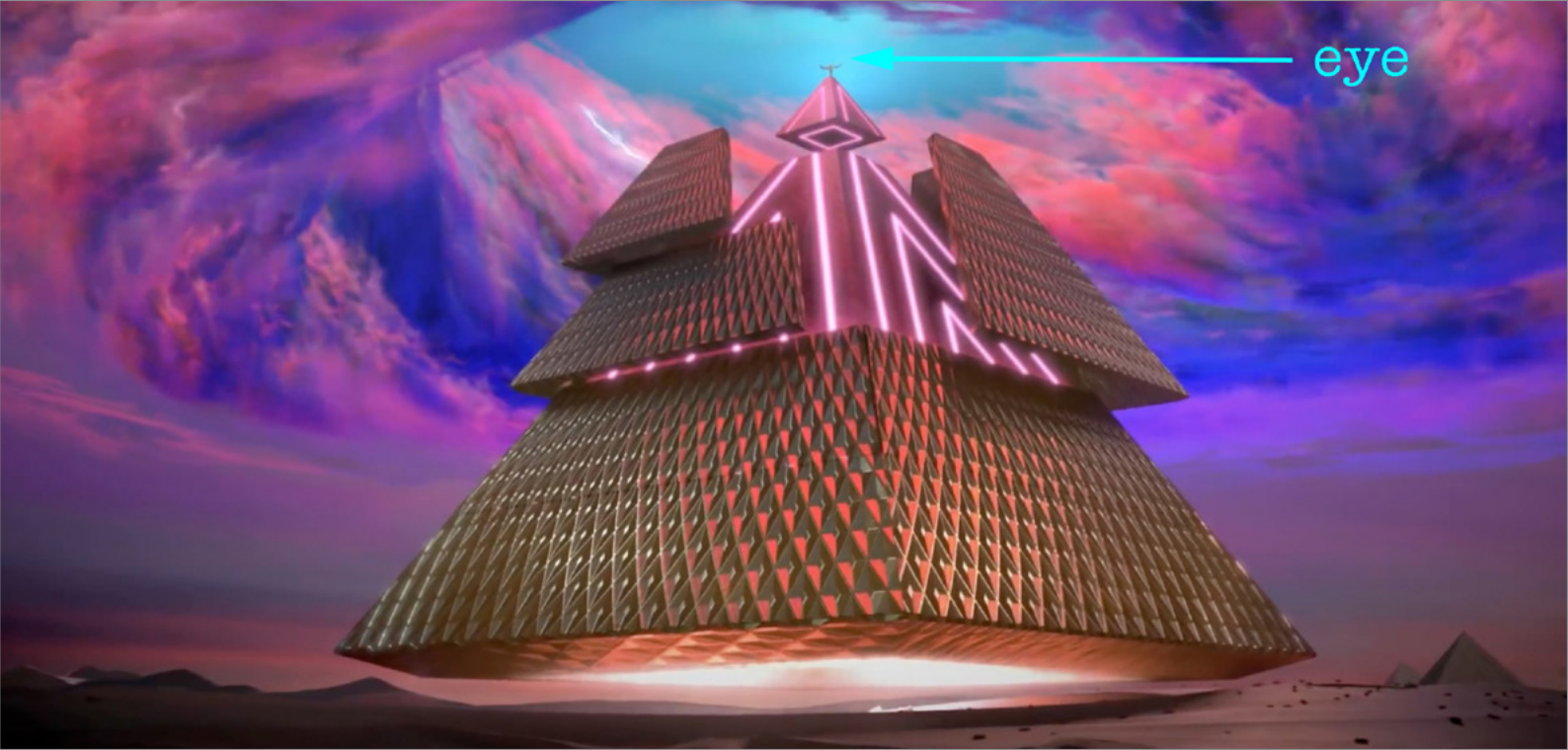
Gary Lachman

Return of the Rejected

Dark Horses

In “Katy Perry’s ‘Dark Horse’ (The Whole Truth)” (2018), Ferrari takes the viewer on a guided tour of the occult, Hermetic iconography that she suggests saturates what may otherwise seem an ostensibly innocuous pop video. Some of the symbols she detects are obscured from the casual view; others are emblazoned in plain sight. To viewers unused to such close reading, Ferrari’s esoteric decoding may seem little more than obsessive nit-picking, the kind of symbol hunting that paranoiacs, determined to find “signs” everywhere, are prone to. For Ferrari, what may strike the rest of us as harmless attention-grabbing eye-candy, which is at the worst annoying, are really potent insignia. They form a secret alphabet speaking of the designs of an elite cabal to establish a hierarchical world state along the lines of the Illuminati, who, by all accounts, are much more popular and powerful now than they ever were in eighteenth century Bavaria. Back then they hailed from Ingolstadt. Nowadays, they come from outer space, the “dog star” Sirius, in fact.

How much Perry’s interest in these matters goes beyond the dictates of producing an eye-catching video in a highly competitive market is unknown, at least to me. (If it is anything like the occult interests of some pop stars I’ve known, I suspect it is not that deep, but I could be wrong.) As we’ve seen, magical imagery and ideas have been at home in the pop world for decades now and have served her predecessors very well, if their sales figures are anything to go by. In the song, Perry asks “So you want to play with magic?” and apparently many do, suggesting, perhaps, their level of seriousness.



Video still, DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 2016

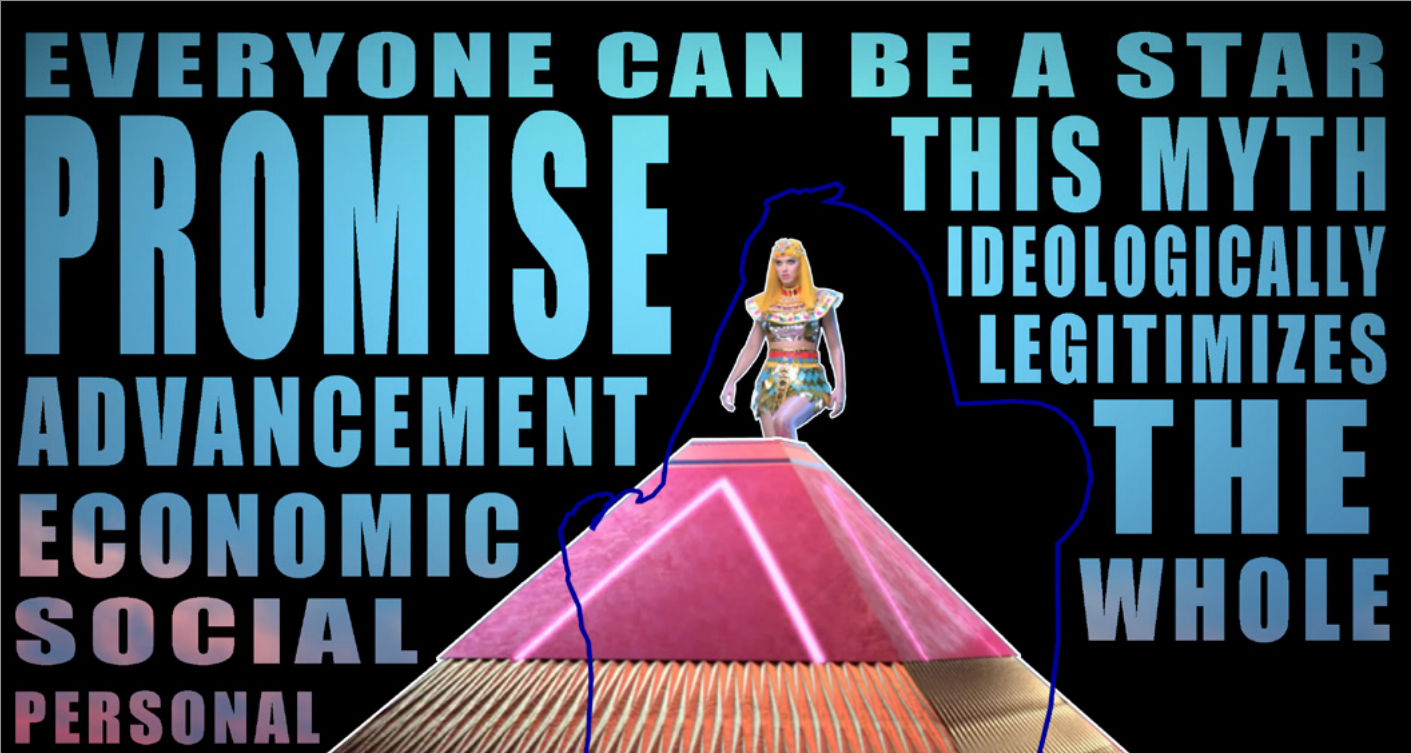
But how much Ferrari herself believes in what she reveals is also debatable. Interviews she's given are less than clarifying, and her admissions to being a bit "psychic" and to have spent time in a "satanic cult", suggest her tongue is firmly in her cheek. Yet how firmly, is unclear. But then, in a world in which we are not quite sure what is "real" or "true" anymore, given "post-truth", "alternative facts", and all that, this seems to be the point. Like many of the weird YouTube videos in which Ferrari finds inspiration, the viewer is caught and drawn in by the disturbing suggestion of plausibility that is the secret ingredient in any number of conspiracy theories. As the American philosopher and pioneer parapsychologist William James said of the phenomena he examined, there is never enough evidence to convince the outright sceptic, but always enough to keep the true believer hot on the trail. The same can be said for the captivating, if not totally convincing material with which Ferrari works her own magic.

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Is that Horus Before Us?

To spell out all the signs and symbols Ferrari unearths in "Dark Horse" would require more space than I am allowed, and would also spoil a viewer's enjoyment in getting them, well, from the horse's, that is Ferrari's, mouth herself: the deadpan voice in which she delivers her findings is part of the experience. But a few things can be mentioned.

Perry's video takes place in a fantasy Egyptian tableau in which an eye-catching Eye of Horus appears in numerous forms and settings. (We may recall that Hermes Trismegistus was also known simply as "the Egyptian".) Eyes, sight, vision, and other ocular themes permeate the video, and we recall that "occult" simply means "unseen". Yet, in this occultly informed performance, practically everything is in view of the "All-Seeing Eye", a Masonic emblem of the eye of God that Ferrari reads as a kind of Hermetic panopticon, a surveillance system that observes everything but which is itself out of sight.



Video still, DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH), 2016

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In the Great Seal of the United States, the Masonic All-Seeing Eye rests atop a pyramid, its radiant gaze taking in the scene. For Ferrari, this mystical vantage point is a symbol of the pervasive observation surreptitiously enforced by the hierarchical socio-political system with which pop stars like Perry and others are in cahoots. Just as for our ancestors, the gods looked down on mere mortals from the heavens above. So, too, today's deities are celebrities who not only reside above us but are actual "stars" themselves. This is an echo of the ancient Egyptian belief that, once free of the frail earthly body, the worthy dead – pharaohs and other masters – became immortal heavenly bodies themselves. Aleister Crowley, for whom Horus was an important figure, was always good for a memorable one-liner. In his "Book of the Law", the template for the coming age of "force and fire", he – or his extra-terrestrial communicant Aiwass, whom, Crowley tells us, dictated the "Book of the Law" to him – said that "Every man and every woman is a star." Or can be, in our free-for-all grapple for celebrity.

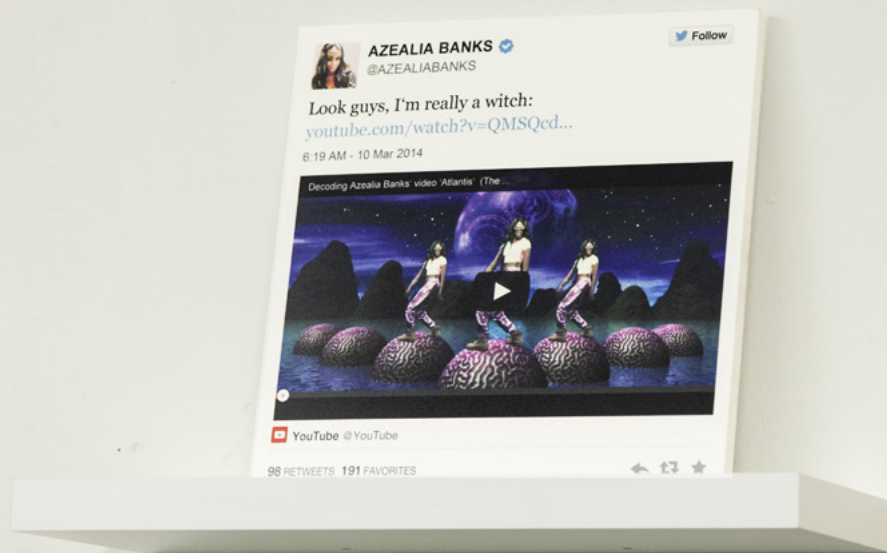
This is a promise, Ferrari said, made by the powers that be to the rank and file, as encouragement to climb the economic pyramid, or at least to try to, and so maintain the very socio-political order that oppresses them. Fame, glory, power and wealth await the winners, while, as Crowley said, "The slaves shall serve." The slaves here wear Perry's own Pharaoh brand men's underwear – like Jay-Z she has diversified her portfolio – the suggestion being that while they think they too can be stars, the system that they believe can deliver this promise actually holds them firmly in place.

— Gary Lachman

From: Return of the Rejected: Postmodern Occultism and Popular Culture
in: Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism



Video installation **The Lost Goddess. DECODING Born This Way** by Lady Gaga, Museo Civico di Brunico, 2023



AZEALIA'S TWEET, Bar du Bois, 2014. Photo von Phillip Gerlach



Her hair is done up to horns. The form of the horn is repeated by the crystals coming out of the ground. The horns mislead to think that she represents the devil, who resides deep in the earth.

The two-fold horn hasn't always been associated with evil. Ancient cultures conceived it as a symbol for female power. Goddesses from Babylon and other cultures were depicted with horns.

DECODING Azealia Banks' Atlantis (THE WHOLE TRUTH)

Experimental docu-fiction, 26:00 min, 2013

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DECODING Azealia Banks' Atlantis (THE WHOLE TRUTH) interprets the excessive Seapunk symbolism in Azealia Banks' music video Atlantis as a metaphor for a traumatic megasystem formed by modern capitalism and the cataclysms of Earth's history. A parallel narrative is superimposed onto the original footage of the music video, told through inter-titles, in which the iconographies of the devil, prehistoric earth and fertility goddesses and their decline, the great flood, and the rise and collapse of capitalism all exist within a grand symbolic framework.



Video installation **Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism** Ferdinandeum, 2019. Photo: Wolfgang Lackner

DECODING Taylor Swift's Look What You Made Me Do

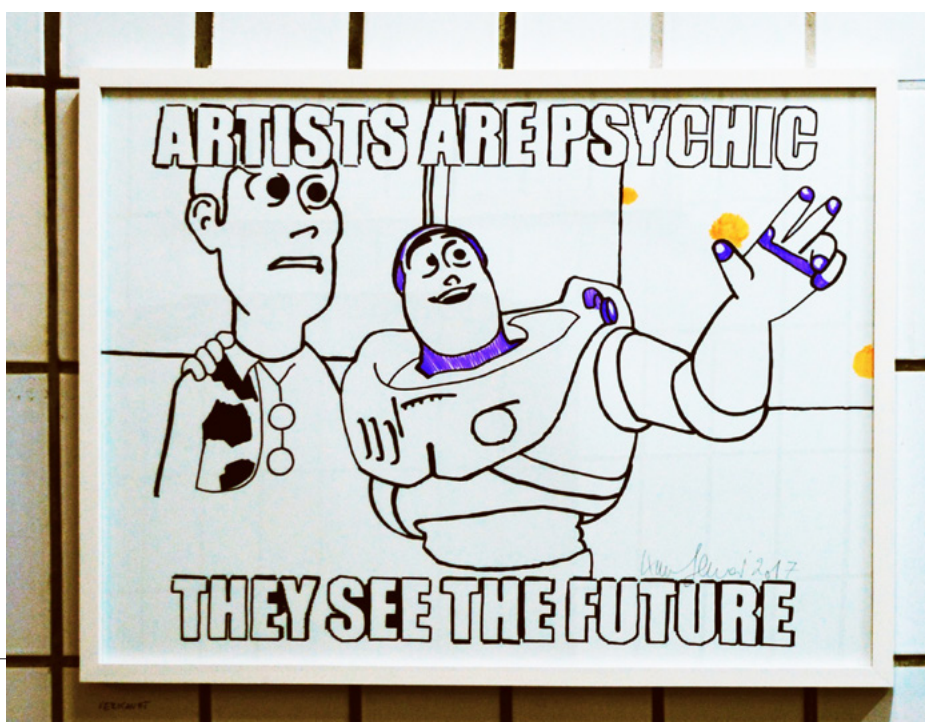
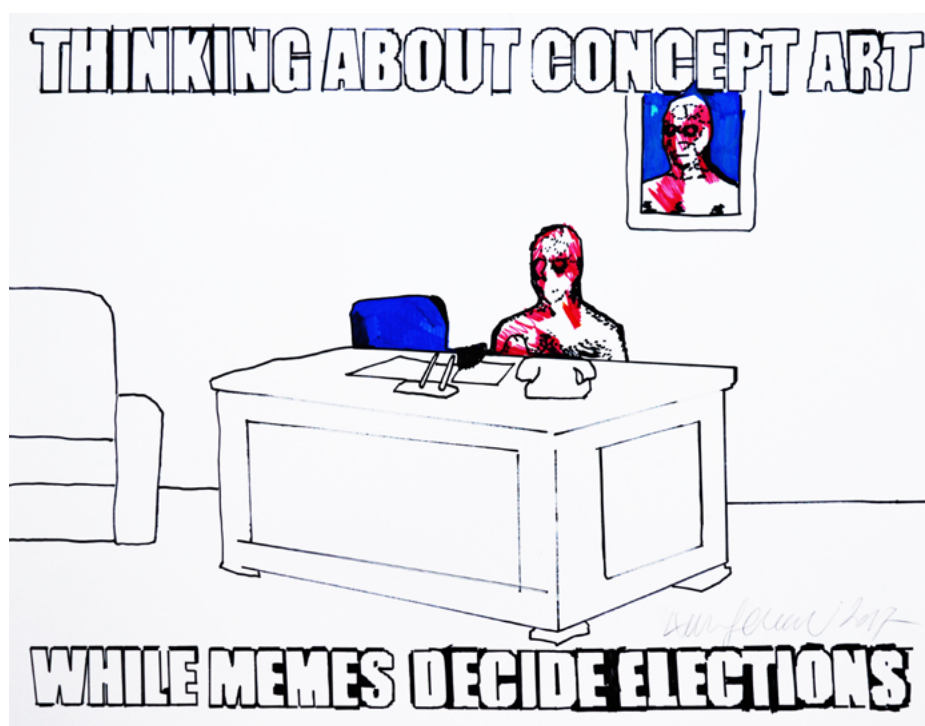
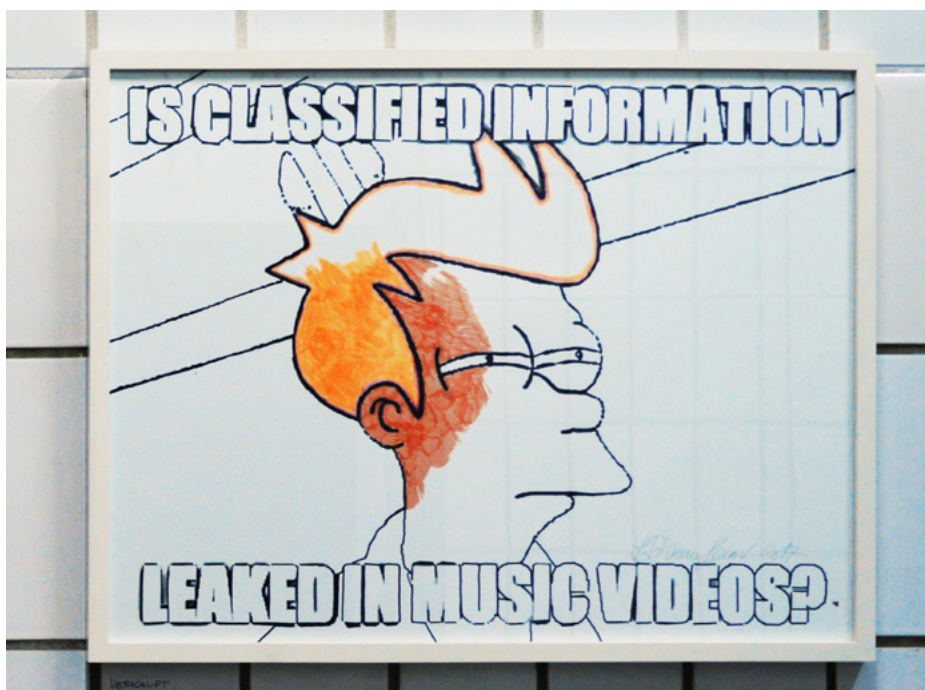
Experimental docu-fiction, German, 25 min, 2019

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Does Taylor Swift's music video *Look What You Made Me Do* contain the galactic origin myth of a black magic cabal whose members see themselves as descendants of Lucifer? According to this interpretation, the video appears to reveal the secret history of our universe. It takes us millions of years back to the Orion star system, where psychotronic magical warfare created the karmic conditions for the planet Earth.



Exhibition view **Karin Ferrari. Aliens, Sex + Paranoia**, Künstlerhaus Bregenz, 2019





Mega Meme, billboard for PREMIERENTAGE, Innsbruck 2019



The Joy of Paranoia

Performance - Lecture

Online Symposium der KU Linz - Katholische Privat-Universität Linz, November 2020

LINK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2TcBrQ6X1Y>

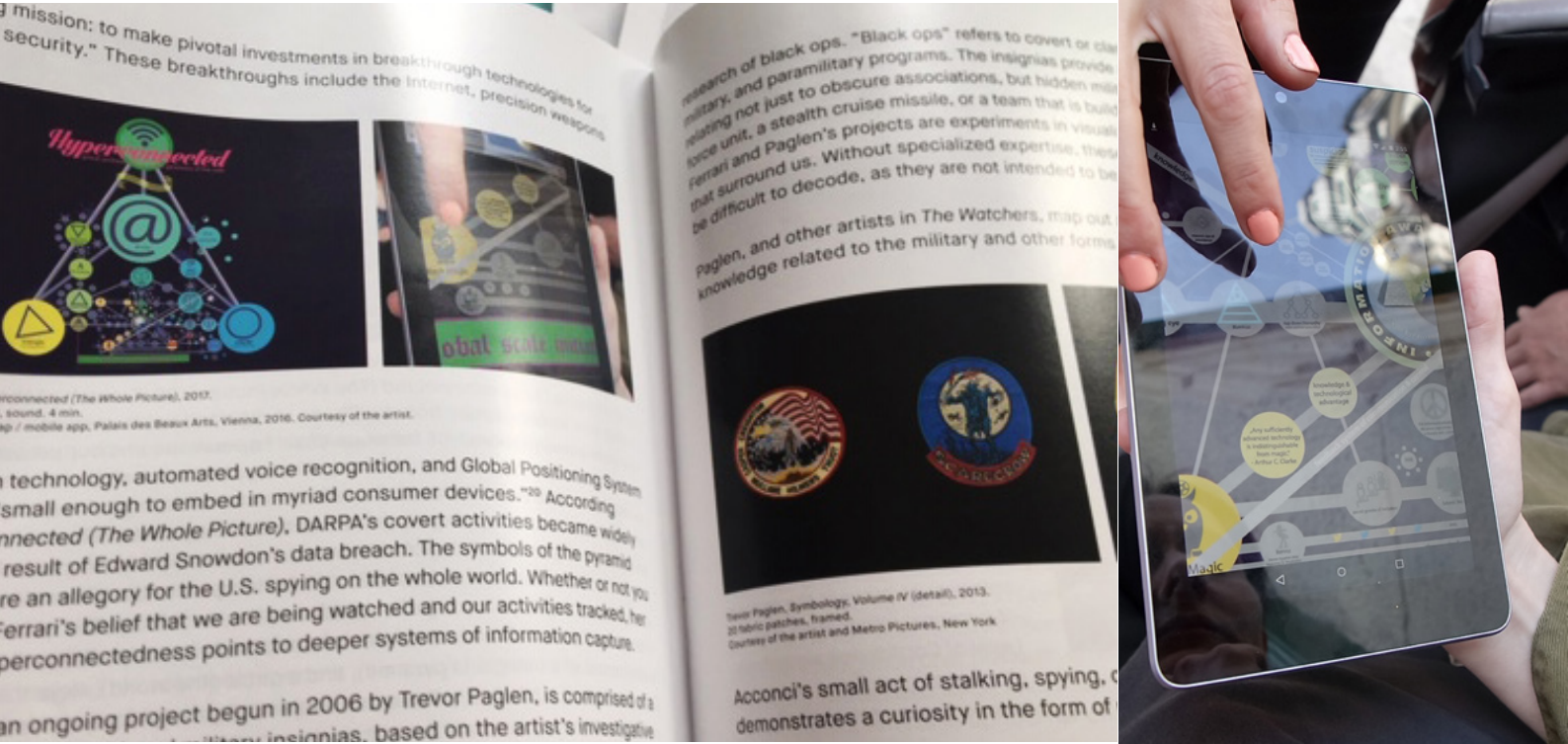
DIES ACADEMICUS: Conspiracy Theories. Chemtrail, corona and climate change ... that can't be a coincidence! Michael Butter (Tübingen), Daniel Hornuff (Kassel), Jan Skudlarek (Berlin) and Karin Ferrari (Wien) ask about the typical patterns, appearances and aesthetic codes of conspiracy theories.



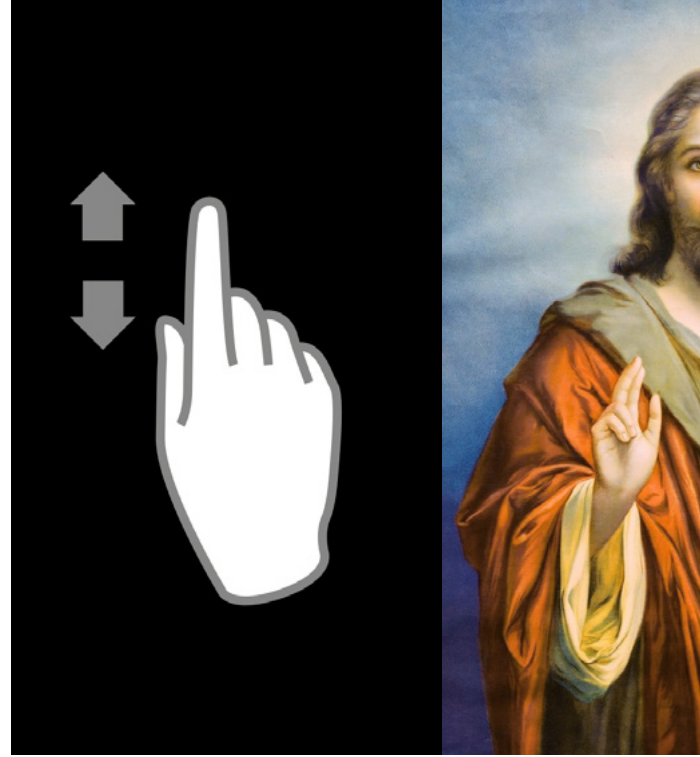
The Ultimate Guide to TM (Trash Mysticism)

Lecture-Performace in the exhibition 'Karin Ferrari. Trash Mysticism', Ferdinandeum, Tiroler Landesmuseum, Innsbruck 2019

Trash Mysticism is a term the artist uses to describe her field of research: a kind of DIY spirituality emerging from our screen culture. It involves speculative narratives at the intersection of academic theory, esoteric utopia, and paranoid political imagination. "The Ultimate Guide to Trash Mysticism" was a performance-lecture and expansive light projector projection on Meme Magic and Chaos Magic, New Age and Alt-Right, Alchemy and YouTube channelings. The lecture-performance took place in the installation of her solo exhibition at the Ferndandaeum.



Katalog, THE WATCHERS, 8th Floor / The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, New York, 2019
 Mobile App HYPERCONNECTED (THE WHOLE PICTURE), Palais des Beaux Arts Wien, 2017





WiFi Board (Summoning Ada Lovelace)

Light box, 100 cm x 100 cm x 20 , 2017 and participative performance
in the solo exhibition THE MAP IS THE TERRITORY, Galerie Jünger, 2017

The WiFi Board merges contemporary and ancient occult communication technologies. It's based on the OuiJa board, a divining tool used to talk to spirits. The OuiJa is a flat board marked with the alphabet and graphics. It uses a planchette where the participants of the séance put their fingers in order to spell out a supernaturally transmitted message from beyond. In Ferrari's work the moving fingers of the participants on the planchette refer to the scrolling gestures on mobile user interfaces and touch screens of modern communication technologies as well as the awe produced by modern techgadgets and their mystifying complexity and aura.

During the séance Ada Lovelace, English mathematician and writer regarded as the first computer programmer, was summoned and asked for consultancy. (The message that came through was the well meant advice to invest into the sex robot industry.)

The image on the WiFi Board combines icons from digital culture and Eastern religious imagery such as the abstract cosmological depictions of Mandalas on Thangkas. Thangkas are religious Tibetan paintings. Literally translated the word Thang ga means door of marvelous power. In the Tibetan image tradition of the Thangka, the devotional image is considered to be a medium through which the depicted can be accessed through meditation.

"Both cyberspace and magical space are purely manifest in the imagination. Both spaces are entirely constructed by your thoughts and beliefs. Korzybski says that the map is not the territory. Well, in magic, the map is the territory. And the same thing is true in cyberspace. There's nothing in that space you didn't bring in." Mark Pesce



Tiroler Landesmuseen · added 20 new photos.
24 April · 🌐

Wir sind Stars? Hier die Gäste der gestrigen Eröffnung von „Mehr als Worte“ im #Volkskunstmuseum auf dem roten Teppich. Karin Ferrari hinterfragt mit ihrer Performance „Subliminal Mess“ das falsche Versprechen der Celebrity Kultur, dass jeder in die Fußstapfen eines Stars treten kann.



Like Comment Share

You, Peter Mekutatatokushi, Wolfgang Lackner and 110 others like this.

33 shares



Perpetuating The Myth of Universal Success

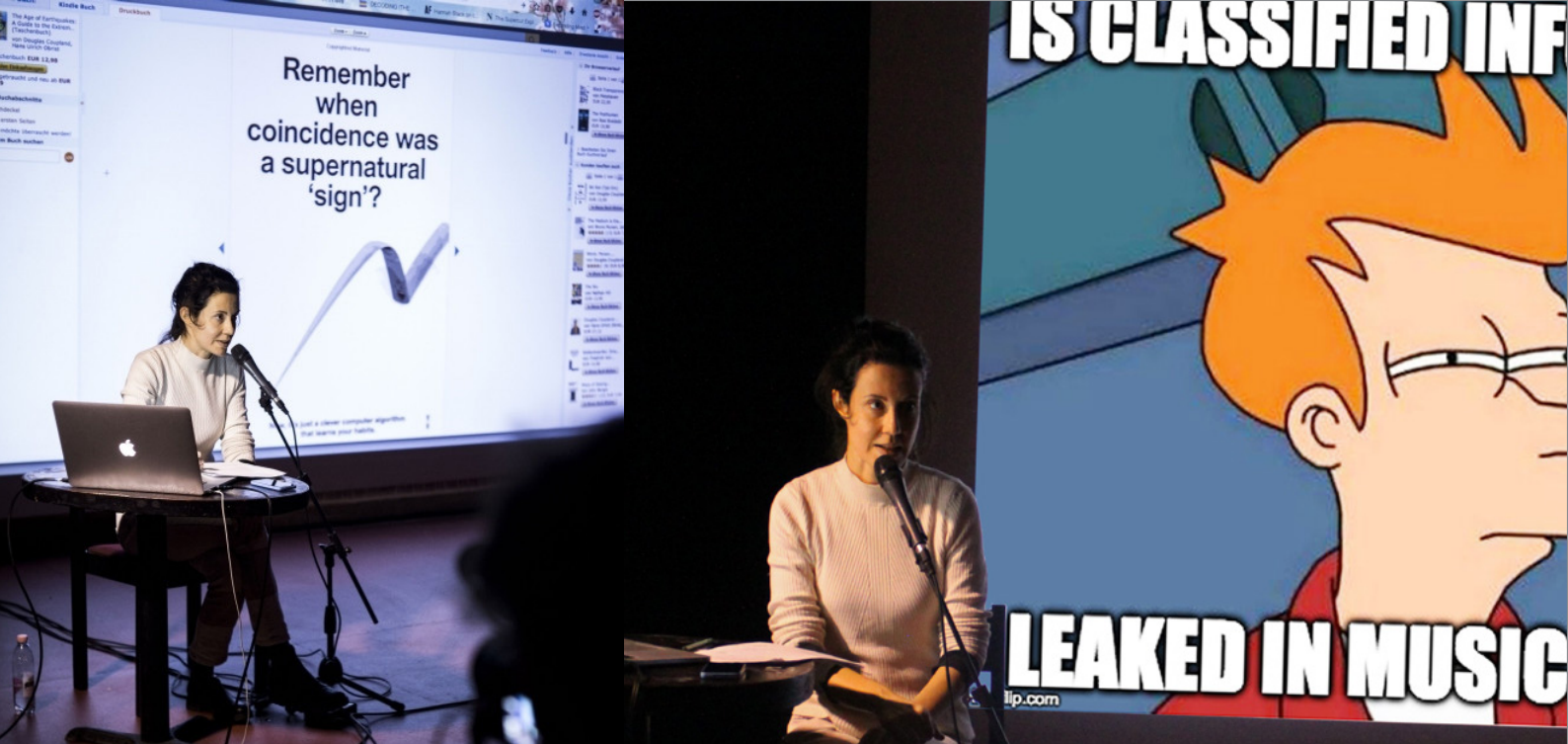
Installation, Screening, Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum, Innsbruck, 2015

Subliminal Mess

Logo Wall, Red Carpet, Participatory Performance, Tyrolean Folk Art Museum, Innsbruck, 2015

The Tyrolean Folk Art Museum commissioned Karin Ferrari to contribute to the exhibition Signs and Symbols. She created a site-specific installation featuring a 50-meter-long red carpet and a logo wall in the museum's entrance hall. The logo wall simulated a publicity campaign promoting the artist and the museum's sponsors. The red carpet gave the illusion of leading directly through a glass wall into the cloister. Ferrari's film *DECODING Katy Perry's Dark Horse (THE WHOLE TRUTH)* was screened on the red carpet in the cloister. A red carpet and the social function of celebrities are central themes in Ferrari's decoding of Katy Perry's music video.

During the opening, the artist performed a participatory piece by taking photos of the visitors in front of the logo wall.



Lecture/Performance, Predictive Programming - Is Media Leaking the Future?
 Trafo Galeria Budapest, 2017. Photo: Csányi Krisztina

KARIN FERRARI: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUTUBE CONSPIRACY THEORIST

BY CHRISTIAN PETERSEN

We run an online magazine, so of course, we're interested in what's happening with art on the web. Every other Wednesday online gallerist, founder, and curator of Digital Sweat Gallery, Christian Petersen, selects a Web Artist of the Week.

Karin Ferrari was one of my favorite discoveries from this year's 2017 edition of The Wrong digital art biennale. Her work emulates the conspiracy theory videos that have become a ubiquitous part of YouTube culture. Ferrari so perfectly captures the mood and aesthetic of these videos that the line between artistic creation and genuine belief becomes completely blurred.

Many viewers, unaware that these videos—a decoding of Illuminati symbolism in an Azealia Banks' music video, for example—were created by an artist, accept them at face value. The YouTube comments sections are a testament to how seriously and thoroughly Ferrari approaches her works' creation. Fall down the rabbit hole Ferrari has excavated, and you'll find her videos are ripe for generating complex conspiracy theories of their own!

Though Ferrari's videos focus on a relatively small corner of the web, they deftly provide unique and unexpected insights into the nature and meaning of the internet and contemporary culture as a whole—even if we are left with more questions than answers.



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Christian Petersen: When did you first become aware of the existence of the internet?

Karin Ferrari: I was held captive in a satanic cult as a spiritual medium and came into contact with the internet quite late.

CP: Can you describe your early experiences of the internet?

KF: I was the administrator of the closed group Facebook page for the satanic cult.

CP: When did you first understand the creative possibilities of the internet?

KF: 2009. I got caught up deep into the rabbit hole of the weird part of YouTube. I worked at a museum for applied arts at that time as a curatorial assistant for design. After watching, for the whole weekend, badly produced educational videos with trashy techno background music about various Alien species living among us I realized that this touches me way more deeply than most white cube art products.



CP: What was your favorite product of popular culture when you were a kid?

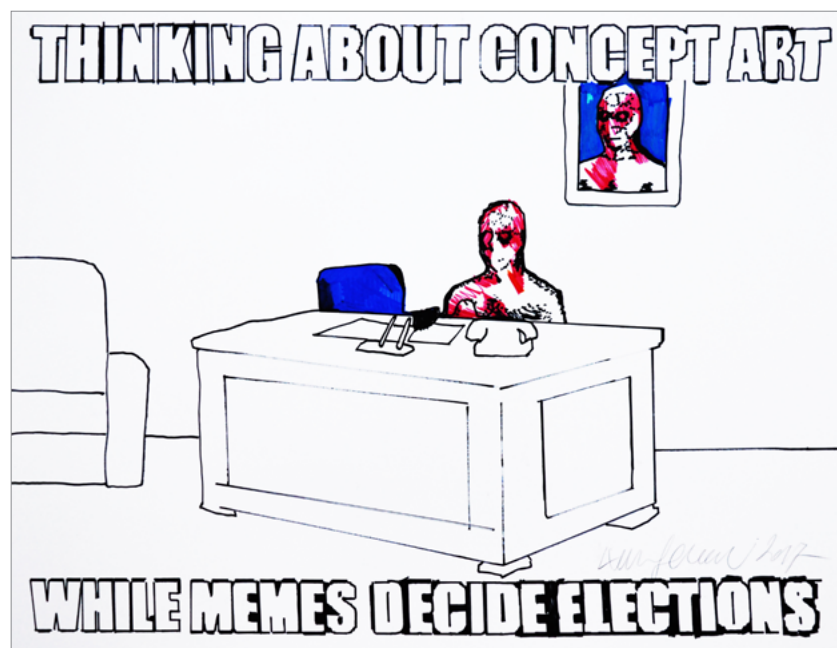
KF: I liked He-man so much. I remember running around the apartment and shouting “By the power of Greyskull!” in Italian. For a very long time I considered him to be a grown up girl who did not turn into a woman.

CP: Did you question authority when you were young?

KF: I was a very happy sweet child. I don’t know where this came from but there was a phase when I couldn’t stop thinking “God is bad, the devil is good.” These thoughts just popped up sometimes. I must explain I come from a traditionally Catholic region. South Tyrol, it’s in the Italian Alps. Cows and churches everywhere. It’s beautiful. I was six years old and the religion teacher brought us to church for our first confession. And amongst the other children making up fake crimes in order to have something to talk about, there I was having a theological crisis. The priest was cool about it. I guess because the devil is at the innermost core of their secret teachings.

CP: You studied painting at college. What were your paintings like and how did you transition to digital art?

KF: Yes, I am an academic painter and still draw. I experimented with materials, surrealist narratives, and gestural abstraction. My new drawings incorporate internet imagery, the aesthetics of digital image production, and neotrash materialism. They are inspired by vapor wave aesthetics



CP: When did you first become interested in alternatives to mainstream thinking?

KF: As a child I loved to be upside down and stare at the ceiling until it started to look like a floor.

CP: When did you first become aware of the idea of hidden symbolism in mainstream culture?

KF: On a Sunday afternoon during summer break there was a broadcast of “They live” by John Carpenter. “They live”... I wonder if that’s a reference to images as well, that images are alive.

CP: In another interview I read you describe yourself and life with three words: Aliens, sex, and paranoia. Can you explain these choices further?

KF: Being alive is about exploring the unknown. Meeting otherness. Sometimes it scares you, sometimes you want to fuck it.

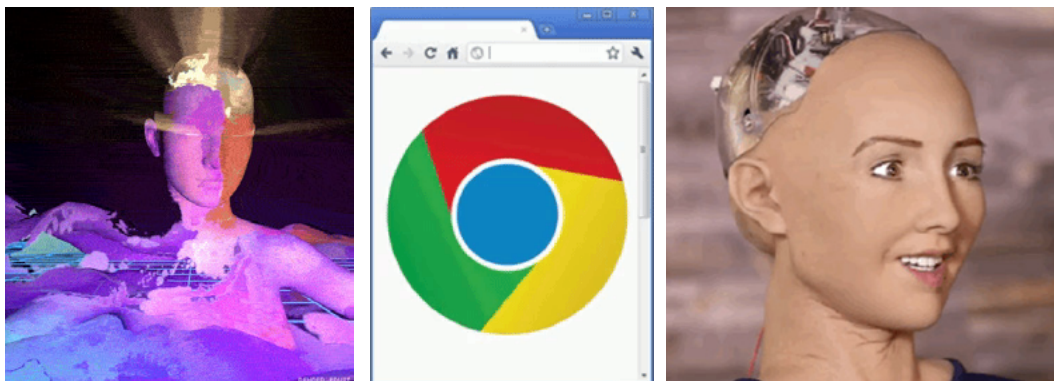
CP: Is paranoia a reasonable/logical reaction to the modern world?

KF: Yes. Paranoid imagination is a natural backlash against paranoid politix—they are part of the same coin. For me as an artist, paranoia is interesting because it shows how powerful the creative mind is, bending the world towards our beliefs. We do that all the time without even realizing. It’s always the same principle in magic, meme magic, advertising, and quantum physics: attention creates reality.

CP: The internet vastly expanded a relatively small subculture of conspiracy theorists. What factors do you think caused this?

KF: The internet is a veritable conspiracy theory generator, and at the same time it operates the invisible stalking gaze of global surveillance programs, military espionage, data-mining, micro-targeting, etc. The internet is a creepy echo chamber for several recursive levels of communication and control. The Google Chrome browser compresses this wicked dynamic into one icon: three superimposed sixes spinning like a whirlpool around their circular center (does the circular center represent the empty gaze of a non-sentient artificial super-intelligence from another dimension, reigned by chaos and decay, that spreads into our human realm through infected technological devices?). I assume everyone knows that the numerical value of www is 666.

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CP: How would you describe your work?

KF: I examine images and symbols of pop culture and everyday culture in order to analyze the present. My video series DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH) reveals hidden messages in music videos and TV clips. It is inspired by counter-cultural YouTube videos that try to understand “what’s really going on.” I deal with and create speculative narratives on the threshold of academic theory, spiritual utopian desires, and paranoid political imagination.

CP: When and why did you first decide to make work exploring that world? What was the motivation behind your *The Whole Truth* series?

KF: After binge watching videos about reptilian shape-shifting news reporters in the weird part of YouTube I wondered why nobody is making art with this stuff and decided I was going to be the one. There is a huge creative and imaginative power. I like to call these speculative narrations that bloom in the New Internet Age “trash mysticism” because they are a sketchy version of Western esotericism and occultism. These narrations and explanations might not always be literally true and sometimes even delusional. Nonetheless they are symptomatic for our present, its opaque powers structures, the repressive structures of academic knowledge production, the challenges of new media, and the collective craving for something otherworldly, something new.

With my *DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH)* series I want to blow people’s minds. And on a meta level for the skeptics and art people I want to provide the experience to witness firsthand how information and attention influences perception. When I proclaim “the whole truth” in the title of my videos I refer to a bigger reality. A reality that includes the realms of possibilities and imagination as well. And it is there, in the imaginative realm, where the worlds of human agency, technology, natural laws, animals, objects, and facts converge.

CP: Knowing that you’re an artist makes it harder to define your “true” level of belief in the theories in your videos. Can you talk a little about the balance between your actual beliefs and your creativity?

KF: I believe everything. To maintain emotional stability I go jogging everyday. And I am a bit psychic. During (intergalactic) telepathic communication messages appear as mental images, smells, and other substitutes. These have to be translated back into human language as precisely as possible. I get facts mixed up. It just happens. I guess that’s why the secret military space program didn’t want me. But I am still good enough to make art.

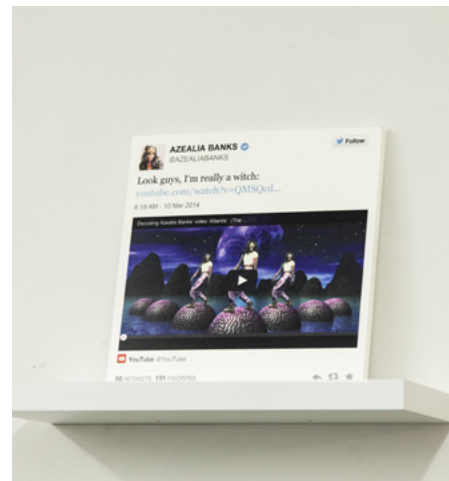
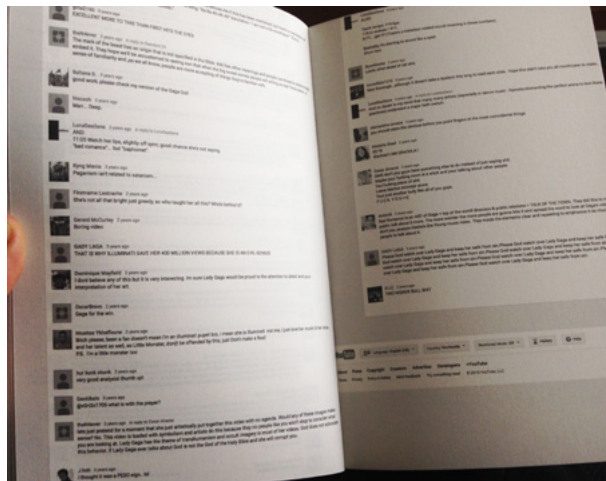
CP: Can you talk a little about the differing reactions to your videos from “regular” YouTube users and “art” people?

KF: Some people are more impressed about research that consists in opening the book on the right page than having read the whole volume. Because it’s proof that I’m magic.

CP: Where do YouTube comments fit into your work? Do they become part of it?

KF: I put my videos on YouTube. This way they feed back into the realm were they came from. Yes, I consider the comments themselves part of the artwork. I published them as screenshot images in the philosophy book *Epidemic Subjects – Radical Ontology* (ed. by Elisabeth von Samsonow). When Azealia Banks tweeted about my *DECODING* of her music video “Atlantis,” I produced her tweet as an object. (Photo: Philippe Gerlach, 2015)

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CP: Do you think the term “conspiracy theory” is used to reduce people’s desire to consider certain ideas?

KF: The term conspiracy theory has definitely been and is still used as a verbal weapon. Historically you can trace that back to 1967 when the US government used the term to de-legitimize critique on the Warren Commission, naming Lee Harvey Oswald as the only murderer of Kennedy.

CP: Why do you think a lot of people are so hostile towards conspiracy theories and alternative ideas?

KF: That’s a good question. I can only talk for myself, but I think generally nobody likes to be told that they’re wrong. It’s mind blowing to realize that every single person walking on earth believes and does the right thing from his or her perspective. It’s incredible. Especially if one considers all the idiots that cross one’s way. It was challenging to find a gentle way and artful strategies to broach the issue of conspiracy theories and explanatory schemas that differ radically from dominant views. In the end there is little left one can say is true with certainty once one starts questioning the world and one’s own beliefs. I mean, I have never met anyone claiming to be part of the Illuminati, in contrast to Hybrid Reptiles. I have met Reptiles (ex-boyfriend, etc.). However it was impressive when I started to face my own biases and complicities in the reproduction of repressive power structures. And I consider myself a good person.

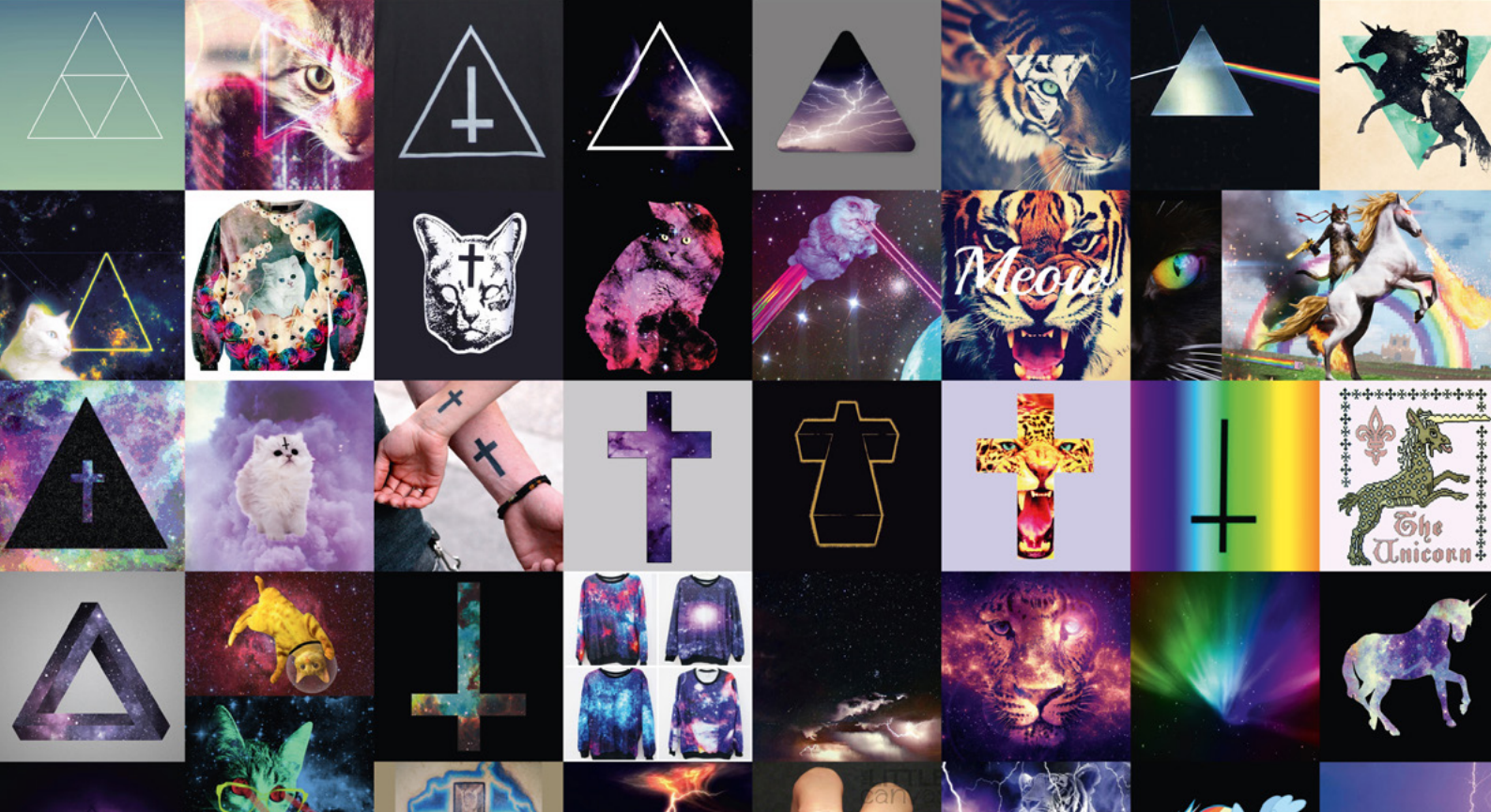
CP: What are your favorite and least favorite conspiracy theories?

KF: I like the gnostic revisions of Christian texts and ideas. Erik Davis called it the first metaphysical conspiracy theory: the snake in Eden was not the bad guy—finally the snake provided Adam and Eve with a knowledge upgrade. Monocausal fear-based scapegoat ideologies are dull and predictable. But truly alarming is the preemptive logic of paranoid politics. (Detail Hyperconnected , Karin Ferrari 2016)



CP: Can you talk a little about the process of creating your videos?

KF: Usually someone points out a suspicious pop music video packed with Illuminati symbolism. I mean, I don’t believe in the Illuminati in the literal sense, at least most of the time. But there is definitely a cluster of symbols drawn from the tapestry of western Occultism and rooting back to ancient Egypt that keeps reappearing in contemporary design in high budget pop music video productions. For me the predominant message shines immediately through the video but it takes me months of unsystematic research and cosmic downloads until every detail of the video is completely decoded. It’s like a puzzle where all the pieces fall together.



SYMBOLIC SYNTAX OF LASER SPACE CATS AND UNICORNS

Poster, 64 cm x 80 cm, 2013

Poster featuring a cross-table of popular visual motifs from early 2010s urban subculture: triangle, cat, cross, cosmos, laser, tiger, rainbow, and unicorn. These symbols were everywhere—on T-shirts, album covers, and all over social media. Symbolic Syntax of Laser Space Cats and Unicorns is a visual attempt to systematize these eight motifs and explore all 64 possible combinations.

Kunst | Artstore

Verborgene Sehnsüchte entschlüsseln

Karin Ferraris Kunst bewegt sich an der Schnittstelle von Popkultur, Medienkritik und subversiven Narrativen. Eine Art von Mystik des Konsumkapitalismus.

von [SALTO Artstore](#)

15.12.2024



Karin Ferraris Werke greifen tief in Mechanismen visueller Verführung ein und regen dazu an, die uns umgebenden Bilder und Symbole zu hinterfragen, die oft mehr verraten, als auf den ersten Blick sichtbar ist. Ferraris künstlerische Arbeit bewegt sich an der Schnittstelle von Popkultur, Medienkritik und subversiven Narrativen. Sie interessiert sich vor allem für die verborgenen mystischen Sehnsüchte, die sich in Konsumkapitalismus, Technologien und unserer gebauten Umwelt manifestieren. Ihre Arbeiten eröffnen damit eine faszinierende Perspektive auf die Verbindung zwischen modernen Lebenswelten und tief verwurzelten menschlichen Sehnsüchten.

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SALTO Artstore: Karin, deine Arbeiten setzen sich intensiv mit aktuellen Phänomenen wie Fake News, (Des)Infotainment und visueller Wahrnehmung auseinander. Wie bist du zu dieser thematischen Ausrichtung gekommen und was inspiriert dich an den visuell geprägten Narrativen der Popkultur und globalen Medienkultur, um die sich deine Arbeiten bewegen?

Karin Ferrari: Es gibt diese Geschichte, dass das Friedenszeichen absichtlich von der CIA auf den Kopf gestellt wurde um seine symbolische Kraft und damit die Friedensbewegung zu schwächen. Wie weit diese Geschichte wahr ist weiss ich nicht - abgesehen davon dass es wirklich wahr ist, dass es dieses Gerücht gibt und dass es mich sogar ohne Internet Ende der 90er im Meran erreicht hat. Was ich damit sagen will, es gibt eine faszinierende, oft paradoxe Wechselwirkung zwischen Medien, Information, Unterhaltung, Bildern und Wahrnehmung. Das verblüffende daran ist, dass es dabei oft ziemlich egal ist, ob etwas wahr ist oder nicht. Sobald wir an etwas glauben, beginnt diese Überzeugung, die Welt um uns herum buchstäblich zu verzerren. Dieser wirklichkeitsstiftende Effekt ist ein mächtiger kreativer Akt. Kreativität ist nicht nur Sachen machen. Kreativität ist auch sehen und tun. Wie man sieht, was man sieht.

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(c) Karin Ferrari

Deine Werke sezieren die Symbolik unserer Konsumgesellschaft und regen oft dazu an, verborgene Bedeutungen hinter alltäglichen Bildern zu entdecken. Was möchtest du mit dieser dekonstruktiven Herangehensweise beim Publikum auslösen? (Hast du das Gefühl, dass die Menschen durch deine Arbeiten mehr Misstrauen gegenüber den ihnen präsentierten Bildern entwickeln, oder lassen sie sich manchmal eher von den "Theorien" mitreißen, die du visualisierst?)

Es gibt diese ikonische Szene im Carpenter-Film *They Live*, in der sich der Protagonist die Sonnenbrille aufsetzt und dann die Welt so sieht, wie sie wirklich ist - einschließlich bislang unsichtbarer Botschaften in Werbebildern und Geldscheinen. Die Analogie der Sonnenbrille im Film ist, dass die Brille Ideologie entlarvt und damit die wahre Realität erkennen lässt. Zum Glück ist absolute wahre Realität nicht mein Problem, als Künstlerin meine ich. Das Potenzial meiner Arbeiten besteht vielmehr darin, eine Vielzahl unterschiedlicher Brillen in allen möglichen Farben und Modellen anzubieten. Oft wird dabei auch deutlich, dass Menschen bevorzugt die Brille wählen, die eh ihre bestehende Sichtweise bestätigt. Was mich wieder an den Carpenter Film erinnert. In *They Live* gibt es diese absurde Szene, in der sich eine Kampfszene zwischen dem Protagonisten und seinem Freund endlos in die Länge zieht, weil sein Freund sich weigert, die Sonnenbrille aufzusetzen. Die Szene dauert tatsächlich zehn Minuten - Carpenter wollte hier wirklich einen Punkt machen, und sein Pessimismus ist absolut berechtigt.

Deine experimentellen Doku-Fiktionen Decoding behaupten, versteckte Botschaften in Musikvideos, Werbespots und Nachrichtentrailern aufzudecken. Sie bewegen sich an der Schnittstelle zwischen der Wissensproduktion digitaler Subkulturen, paranoider politischer Fantasie und esoterischen utopischen Visionen. Könnte es sein, dass du dich nach einer so intensiven Auseinandersetzung manchmal dabei ertappst, alles um dich herum entschlüsseln zu wollen? (Wie hat deine künstlerische Auseinandersetzung mit diesen Themen deine eigene Wahrnehmung der Welt und der Symbole, die uns umgeben, verändert?)

Meine Arbeitsweise ist definitiv obsessiv und ich weiss das auch gezielt einzusetzen. Wenn ich mich auf ein Thema konzentriere, wird das wie ein Brennpunkt, auf den sich alles zu fokussieren scheint. Informationen, Geschichten, Fakten finden mich wie von selbst. Es ist beinahe so, als ob ich selbst zu einem Medium werde – wenn auch kein besonders gutes. Ich öffne ein Buch auf der richtigen Seite, das passende Instareel poppt in meinem Feed auf usw. Genau das ist ja auch der zentrale Punkt meines Werks, dass wir alle eigentlich non-stop die Welt um uns herum interpretieren, filtern und damit auch mitgestalten. Man könnte sagen, als Künstlerin interessiert mich Realität als Material.

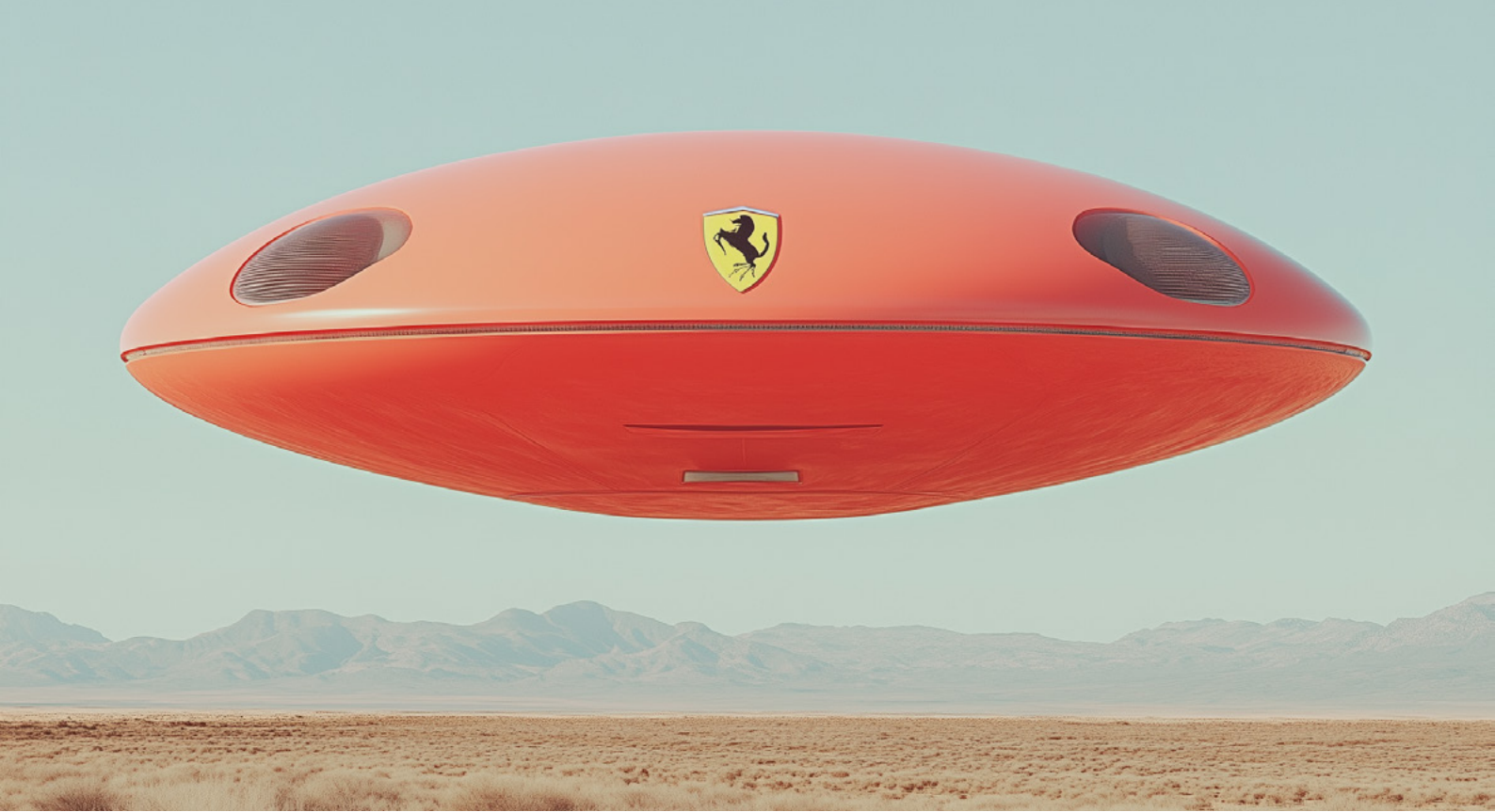
Im Jahr 2018 begannst du dein fortlaufendes Forschungsprojekt Archi_Fictions of Ecstasy – ein essayistisches Theorie-Fiktions-Kunstprojekt über pseudo-sakrale kommerzielle Architektur, das auch als das Künstlerbuch Rooftop Temples of New York City beim Verlag für moderne Kunst veröffentlicht wurde. Was hat dich ursprünglich dazu inspiriert, dich mit pseudo-sakraler Architektur in kommerziellen Räumen wie Casinos, Banken oder Freizeitparks zu beschäftigen?

Mich fasziniert wie sich mystische Motive in unseren Alltag einschleichen. Nachdem ich jahrelang mit den aufgeladenen Bildern und Symbolen in Popmusikvideos und anderen Bildern der globalen Medienkultur künstlerisch gearbeitet habe, hat sich meine Aufmerksamkeit dann irgendwann auf unsere gebaute Umwelt gerichtet. Während Recherchereisen in Südostasien im Zuge einer BMKOES Artist in Residency in Yogyakarta ist mir aufgefallen, dass die Grenzen zwischen sakralem und profanem Raum äußerst porös sind. Ich habe religiöse Riten und Symbole in Hotels, Einkaufszentren, Banken und so weiter bemerkt. Aber pseudo-sakrale Architektur findet sich auf der ganzen Welt. Auch in Südtirol. Banken sind besonders eifrig, religiöse Symbole zu übernehmen. Über der Wall Street in Manhattan schwebt eine Pyramide. Die zierte auch das Cover meines Buchs ‚Rooftop Temples of New York City‘. Wenn man die Sprache und Rituale der Finanzwelt untersucht, bemerkt man, dass sie von Spekulation durchzogen sind – sowohl finanzieller als auch abergläubischer Natur.

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Würdest du sagen, dass pseudo-sakrale Architektur die Sehnsüchte der Menschen nur instrumentalisiert, oder steckt darin auch ein Potenzial für etwas Spirituelles oder Utopisches?

Ha, das ist eben die Frage! Eine Bubble-Tea-Techno-Utopie ist durchaus möglich meiner Meinung nach. Aber nur, wenn wir mutig in den Black Mirror schauen und akzeptieren was wir da sehen und wirklich wollen: dass wir alle Chaos in uns tragen, mit dem Kosmos zu kommunizieren und eine Umarmung.



A UFO is also really just a car. 2025.



Karin Ferrari – CV

Karin Ferrari explores hidden spiritual desires within consumer technology and the built environment, reinterpreting and recontextualizing images and symbols from media culture. Working across a wide range of media, she is based in Vienna.

Her work has been exhibited internationally at venues including 8th Floor/The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation (NYC), Belvedere 21 (Vienna), HAU Berlin, Museion Bolzano, Art Omi (Ghent/NY), Pori Art Museum (Finland), Allard Pierson Museum (Amsterdam), WRO Media Biennale (Poland), Antarctic Biennale 2017, The Wrong Digital Art Biennale 2017, and the 5th Moscow Biennial for Young Art. She has held solo exhibitions at Galerie Jünger (Vienna) and participated in group shows at Galerie Burster Berlin and Krinzinger Schottenfeld. Her works have been broadcast on ARTE and ORF III. Her works are distributed via 6x6 Project (NY/Berlin) and her YouTube channel.

Ferrari has received numerous awards, including the BMKOES research grant for artistic work with AI (2024), the Austrian State Grant for Media Art (2020), the Land Niederösterreich graphics prize (2021), the Innsbruck Artist Prize (2020), the Benno Barth Award (2019), and the RLB Art Award (2018).

She has participated in residencies in the USA, Europe, and Southeast Asia, including Art Omi (2019), BMKOES-supported residencies in Paris (2017) and Yogyakarta (2018), AIR Krinzinger, Croatia (2023), and CCA Andratx, Mallorca (2025). Her works are held in public and private collections in Europe and the US.

Solo Shows

2025 *Paranjolly Symphony. How The Towers Learned to Dance*, Rigo Gallery, Museo Lapidarium, Novigrad, Croatia
2023 *Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation*, RfdInsel, Heart of Noise Festival, Innsbruck, *Un.Holy Haus*, Galerie am Stadtplatz, Wörgl
2022 *Haunted Landscapes of Desire*, E/// Eschenbachpalais mit Galerie Jünger, Vienna
2022 *Temple of Ga Ga*, BRUX, Innsbruck
2021 *The New Holy*, KOER Tirol, Art in Public Space project, Innsbruck
2020 *Rooftop Temples of New York City*, Galerie Jünger, Vienna
2019 *Trash Mysticism*, Ferdinandeum, Tyrolean State Museum, Innsbruck
2019 *Aliens, Sex and Paranoia*, Künstlerhaus Bregenz
2017 *DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH)* Cité des Arts, Paris
2017 *The Map Is The Territory*, Galerie Jünger, Vienna

Awards

2025 BMKOES Research Grant for Artistic Work with AI
2021 Award of the State of Lower Austria at the Austrian Graphics Competition
2021 Special Mention at the Vienna Short Film Festival for the short film *m h y t n i x*
2020 Award for Artistic Achievement from the City of Innsbruck
2020 National Media Art Scholarship, BKA - Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service, and Sport
2019 Benno Barth Award
2018 Main prize of the RLB Art Award RLB Kunstbrücke, Innsbruck
2017 Nomination Walter Koschatzky Art Award, Albertina

Residencies

2025 CCA ANDRATX | Contemporary Art, Andratx, Mallorca
2024 Borgo del Sole, Villetta San Romano, Tuscany
2024 AIR Burgendland, Friedensburg Schlaining
2023 Krinzinger Artist in Residence Kuberton, Croatia
2019/2020 Research Stay in New York City
2018 Art Omi International Artists Residency, Ghent, New York
2018 Artist Residency BKA - Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service, and Sport, Yogyakarta
2017 Artist Residency BKA - Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service, and Sport Cité des Arts, Paris
2016 Artist Residency Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgien

Collections

Artothek of the Federal Government, Federal Chancellery of Austria
Art Collection of the Raiffeisen Landesbank Südtirol
Collection Museion Bolzano
Art Omi Archive, New York
Collection of the State of Tyrol
Collection of the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol
Collection of the City of Innsbruck
Collection of the State of Vorarlberg
Ursula Blickle Video Archive Collection, Belvedere / 21er Haus, Vienna
Frans Masereel Center, Kasterlee
Private collections

Group Exhibitions (selection)

2025

Freedom Games, EXPO-Lódź, Poland
Weltgeschehen, Teletext, ORF, ARD
Stealth, Verdurin, London
City Trip 2, Cultural centre De Steiger, Menen, Belgium
Screening Reflections: iPhone Fever Dreams 16+, Go Short Film Festiva, Nijmegen, NL
Nature | Feeling | Form, Castel Belasi Museum, Trentino, I
Screening DECODING The iPhone Xs, Sirup, Linz
Open Studio AiR Burgenland im Kulturzentrum Eisenstadt
JANUS Teil 1 Galerie Jünger, Wien

2024

Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation beim Dokfest Kassel, 41. Kasseler Dokumentar- und Videofest
AIR 2023 Vienna / Hungary / Croatia / Sri Lanka, Krinzinger Schottenfeld, Vienna
Fingerspitzengefühl Karin Ferrari + Lee Nevo, Galeria Carceri, Kaltern, Italy
When We Move It's A Movement, Kunstraum Innsbruck
We Could Be Witches, Fish Factory Penry, UK
Summoning the Ghostly, Endotic Reserach (TIER), Berlin
MUTA, Pori Art Museum, Finland
Looking elsewhere being there, CerModern Arts Center, Ankara
Land(wirt)schaft oder It goes not on a cow-hide, Maurachhof, Kitzbühel

2023

Trienala Ladina 2023, San Martino in Badia, Italy
Geister, Dschinns und Avatare, (kuratiert von Petra Poelzl), HAU Berlin
Break The Charm, Galerie Burster, Berlin
Kortfilmfestivalen, (kuratiert von Neil Young) Norwegian Short Film Festival, Grimstad
The Gym, Kampnagel, Hamburg
I've seen the future baby, it's sexy, Kulturni centar Kula, Belgrad

2022

The Gym, Soho Studios Ottakring, Vienna
I've seen the future baby, it's sexy, Skuc, Ljubljana
MUTA, The Museum of Teletext art, Helsinki
Planten un Blomen, Stand Galerie Jünger, Art Vienna, Orangerie Schönbrunn

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2021

Techno, Museion für Moderne und Zeitgenössische Kunst, Bozen, IT
Screening m h y t n i x, REVERSO, 19th Media Art Biennale, WRO Art Center, Wrocław, PL
Screening m h y t n i x, Diagonale - Festival des österreichischen Films Graz
Screening m h y t n i x, Vienna Shorts Film Festival

2019

THE WATCHERS 8th Floor / The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, New York
Cmd P for (reality) 2079 Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam
LINZ FMR Biennale for Media art, Linz, A
26th European Film Festival Palić, Serbia
Screening DECODING The iPhone Xs, Diagonale - Festival des österreichischen Films Graz

2018

The Value of Freedom (curated by Severin Dünser), 21er Haus - Museum for Contemporary Art, Vienna, AT
Magic Circle (curated by Katharina Brandl and Daniela Brugger), Kunst Raum Niederösterreich, Vienna, AT
Souvenir (curated by Fabio Santacroce / 63rd - 77th STEPS e Giusy Ottonelli) Spazio Murat, Bari

2017

Antarctic Biennale (curated by Nadim Samman), Antarctica Biennale Ship, Antarctica
Postinternet.Art, The Wrong Biennale, Digital Art Biennale
Chance Meeting, SCCA - Center for Contemporary Arts, Ljubljana
Revealing Reflected Refractions, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, New York City

2016

Deep Inside V Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow

Coup De Ville, Triennale Sint Niklaas, Belgium

Back To The Future Papay Gyro Nights, Videotage, Hong Kong

Frame Out Festival Museumsquartier Wien

THE WHOLE TRUTH DISKO at the War Party, Royal Military Museum, Brussels, Belgium

DECODING (THE WHOLE TRUTH) Blickle Kino, 21er Haus - Museum Contemporary Art, Vienna

Lecture-Performances, Workshops and Teaching

2025

Artist Lecture, The Culty Side of Consumer Culture, Verdurin London

Karin Ferrari & der Trash Mysticism, Podcast ÄNDERN leben mit Paul Campbell

2023

Concert/Performance Karin Ferrari + Francesco Fonassi, Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation, Heart of Noise, Innsbruck AT

Concert/Performance Karin Ferrari + Francesco Fonassi, Freaky Fairy Flux Foundation, Spettro, Brescia, IT

Freaky Fairy Flux, Workshop at Summer School Kunstraum Innsbruck, AT

2022

Inventing The Rooftop Temple: Unlearning Architecture. Karin Ferrari in conversation with Marlene Wagner, KdW, Linz

Lecturer for artistic design, University Innsbruck, Faculty of Architecture

2021

The Power of Images, Key Note at Filmfestival Cologne, DE

Artist Talk, Art University Münster, DE

2020

The Joy of Paranoia, at the online Symposium "Conspiracy Theories." KU Linz - Katholische Privat-Universität Linz

2019

Talk: Friedrich von Borries, Karin Ferrari, Martha Kirszenbaum, Lisl Ponger with Angela Stief, Vienna Art Week

Lecture Performance The Ultimate Guide to TM (Trash Mysticism), Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck

Artist Talk, Kunsthalle Wien

Machine Cult / Occult Machines, subnetTALK, Salzburg

2018

Artist Talk (invited by Fabio Santacroce / 63rd - 77th STEPS e Giusy Ottonelli) Spazio Murat, Bari, IT

2017

Lecture Performance, Predictive Programming (curated by Bori Szalai, lecture-performances by Serafin Alvarez,

Karin Ferrari and György Szimán in the context of the series Thought Sculptures) Trafo Galeria Budapest

Artist Talk and Screening Academy Fine Arts Vienna

2016

Workshop, Applied Demonology Coded Cultures Festival, University of Applied Arts Vienna

Workshop Hyperstition with Mark Fisher, Armen Avanessian, Karin Ferrari, Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck

Selected Publications and Articles

Salto Artstore, Verborgene Sehnsüchte entschlüsseln, Salto Magazine, 2024

Eva Gratl, Mit größter Sensibilität und Genauigkeit, Dolomiten, August 2024

Claudia Aigner, Wiener Zeitung, Die Penthäuser der Götter, 17. Dezember 2020

Eva Rottensteiner, Beyond the Profane, franzmagazine, 12. Februar 2021

Rooftop Temples of New York (Hg. Karin Ferrari), Verlag für moderne Kunst.

New Decameron, (Hg. Macushla Robinson) Yonkers International Press New York

Pop Leaks, Maximilian Lehner, Kunst und Kirche, 01/2021

The Watchers, Ausstellungskatalog, 8th floor, Rubin Foundation, New York

Der Wert der Freiheit, Belvedere 21, Verlag für Moderne Kunst Wien

Karin Ferrari Trash Mysticism, Mit Vorworten von Wolfgang Meighörner und Johannes Ortner und Beiträgen von Rosanna Dematté und Gary Lachman Hg: PD Dr. Wolfgang Meighörner, Tiroler Landesmuseen-Betriebsgesellschaft, 2019

Christian Petersen: Karin Ferrari: Portrait of the Artist as a YouTube Conspiracy Theorist, Artslant Magazine, 2018

Karin Ferrari: weird wired viral, in 'Epidemic Subjects – Radical Ontology', Elisabeth von Samsonow (ed.), The University Chicago Press for Diaphanes, 2017

Nadim Samman: Karin Ferrari, in: 5th Moscow Biennale for Young Art, Katalog, 2016

Sarah den Hond: Karin Ferrari, in: Coup de Ville 2016, Borgerhoff & Lambergits, 2016

Karin Ferrari. Occult Coloring Book. Eigenpublikation, 2015 - 2019

Claudia Slanar: Karin Ferrari – Flavor Flower in: 'Mehr als Worte. Zeichen. Symbole. Sinnbilder. Katalog Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum', Hg. Wolfgang Meighörner, Athesia Tappeiner Verlag, Bozen, 2015

Karin Ferrari: Intelligent Timelines, in: 'World Best New Art', Georg Leutner (Hg.), Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nürnberg, 2006

