

Spooky Action at a Distance

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Spooky Action at a Distance

Bus Projects, Melbourne

9.01.16–30.01.16

Amalie Smith, Amitai Romm,
David Stjernholm, Rasmus Myrup
and Valérie Collart.

Curated by
Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen

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Spooky Action at a Distance was Albert Einstein's nickname for the concept of 'quantum entanglement' – an incredible consequence of Danish physicist Niels Bohr's theories on quantum mechanics, describing how entangled particles instantaneously influence each other regardless of distance. Today practical experiments placing two entangled particles on different continents have proved Bohr's theories to be correct – when the state of one particle is altered, the other instantly changes its state too.

Curatorial statement

According to philosopher, physicist and feminist Karen Barad the concept of *quantum entanglement*, in a ghostly sense, offers disorienting perspectives of the discontinuity of time, space and matter and gives reason to ask whether our lineary understanding of space and time, history and nature is to be narrated otherwise. As we are starting to recognize the effects of the Anthropocene era – that man-made technology radically changes not only the climate, but also our understanding of what it means to be a sentient human being – we are slowly moving towards a decentering of man and an understanding of our part, as a species, in a larger system.

In the 21st century the spread of the internet has opened digital platforms that displace and abolish site specificity, distance and time differences orientate us towards the processual and the network-based. Vast information flows have become an integrated part of our biotope as our bodies fuse with smartphones and other devices that establish parallel, virtual existences in front of and through screens, blurring the boundary between the physical and the virtual. We are experiencing a shift from an object-based understanding of art to a more network-based aesthetic in a move towards the re-materialisation of the internet.

The exhibition *Spooky Action at a Distance* presents works by artists Amalie Smith, Amitai Romm, David Stjernholm, Rasmus Myrup and Valérie Collart. The invited artists work with sculpture, installation and digital works to investigate the relationship between physical and digital spaces, and the embodiment of information and transitions between the two, three and four dimensional.

The video works *Serpent* and *Twisted Column* by **Valérie Collart** take issue with traditional views of the artwork as either a spatial object or an image surface. Instead Collart reflects on the potential that exists in the transition and meeting between media. The works are created using photo documentation of existing or fictive sculptures, 3D generated imagery, as well as scans of painted textures. Collart's works extend beyond spatial and temporal dimensions in a constant fluctuation between flatness, illusion and surfaces.

The temporary architectural interference *Exfoliation* by **Amitai Romm** exploits a literal short-cut between two dimensional surface and three dimensional form, to create a series of transportable and adaptable parasites on the gallery space that equally interpret and measure it. Made from laser-cut sandpaper, they seek to estrange both their own material and semiotic properties and their institutional contexts by virtue of a simple circular diagram that is cut, distorted, linked and dispersed.

For the double video projection *Michankos* **Amalie Smith** has worked with a contemporary dancer to interpret a Greek folk dance first developed as a response to the many cases of divers' disease on the Greek islands in the late 19th century. The dancer in Smith's video wears a motion capture suit that tracks her movements and animates a digital figure of a diver on the bottom of the sea. The videos play from two Raspberry Pi computers connected by an ethernet cable, with one computer adjusting to sync with the other.

In his site specific sculptures *Blocking Formation of Processed Wood and Geological Material (After Castor)*, made of coloring pencils and lava rocks, **Rasmus Myrup** hijacks the strategy that beavers employ in the production of dams by examining, and translating it. Myrup reduces their emblematic dams to their most denoted form, and produces a Homo Sapiens Sapiens version of their non-human expression, the beaver dam.

David Stjernholm's work *Gone Phishing* is a series of wall hung traps containing pneumatic tubes suspended in midair. Inside each tube are shredded documents picked up on the streets of the financial district in Osaka, Japan. *Gone Phishing* resembles how information on the internet is being divided into smaller units, encrypted, sent, and seconds later retrieved by the receiver, and how vulnerable and exposed data is when in this in-between state.

The question of how we relate to the physical and digital layers of reality is an issue of relevance, especially when it comes to the perception of art, often consumed through digital representation. The rhizomatic structure of the internet simultaneously connects and disrupts us all and the endless browsing and staggered emails across time zones has been a constant player in the planning and the concept of the exhibition.

This project weaves two independent exhibition spaces together: *Værelset* (the Room), a temporary exhibition space based in Copenhagen, and Bus Projects in Melbourne. *Spooky Action at a Distance* is the final stage of the exchange project between the two. In 2014 I invited Kim Brockett to curate a show for *Værelset*. It led to the site specific show *held in a half globe, as if by cupped hands* by Kate Meakin and Virginia Overell in May 2015. Since then, Kim and I have been planning a reciprocal exhibition of Danish artists in Melbourne.

Therefore I especially want to thank Kim Brockett for her unquenchable optimism and everlasting trust in the project. Also a special thanks to Bus Projects for the invitation and for making the project possible.

On behalf of the artists, my sincere thanks to The Danish Arts Foundation, Dannebrog Foundation and Avnede Fonden for their support of this exhibition, as well as Creative Partnerships Australia and the donors who supported the Australian exhibition in Denmark. This project would not have been possible without their involvement, generosity and vision.

Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen, Melbourne 2016

1.

Gone Phishing, 2016

David Stjernholm

Pneumatic tubes, nylon mesh, cable ties, sensitive documents

2.

Exfoliation, 2015

Amitai Romm

Latex impregnated paper, clay, zinc stearate, silicon carbide, phenol resin, aluminum

3.

Serpent, 2015

Valérie Collart in collaboration with Sebastian Brink

MPEG-2 Video loop 26:41 min

4.

Twisted Column, 2015

Valérie Collart in collaboration with Sebastian Brink

MPEG-2 Video loop 37:10 min

5.

Blocking Formation of Processed Wood and Geological Matter (After Castor), 2016

Rasmus Myrup

MÅLA coloring pencils, lava rocks

6.

Michanikos, 2015

Amalie Smith

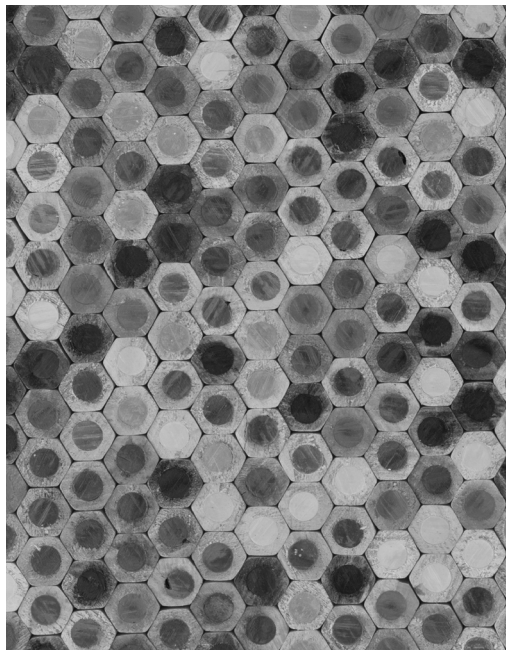
2 channel HD video loop, 4:17 min, sound

Dancer: Sophia Mage



Michanikos is a Greek folk dance, danced on the island of Kalymnos since the 19th century. Michanikos literally means 'mechanical' but the dance is also known as 'The Sponge Diver Dance'. A lead dancer takes the role of a sponge diver suffering from decompression sickness, and unable to control his own legs, he shakes and stutters on his feet. In order to collect sponges on the seabed, the Greek sponge divers were the first to use industrial diving suit invented in the mid 19th century and subsequently the first to experience decompression sickness – an unexplained phenomena that killed and injured thousands of healthy young men for over half a century. Casualties amongst 19th century sponge divers can be understood as a consequence of the changing working conditions at the time of industrialisation and of the physical changes felt by the human body entering new and undiscovered environments.

The Beaver Dam Theory is the sceptics' response to a theory put forward by conspirators and dubious archaeologists, which often circulates on the internet. The idea is, that since there are similar pyramids in South America, Egypt and China, and the same geometric markings, the same double spiral petroglyphs, and the same burial mounds show up in different places around the world, there must once have been a global civilisation, and that this civilization, be it advanced humans or exotic aliens, is now long gone and wiped from human memory, after it spread its superior knowledge around the world. On the other hand 'The Beaver Dam Theory' points out that for millions of years, beavers have been able to build almost identical dams across multiple continents and even a species divide. Beaver dams from Central Russia to Western America are similar, without a mysterious global beaver civilisation having created it. Similarly the pyramids can be explained as the logical solution to building very, very large structures, as a result of similar thinking, needs and desires within the same species. Humans in ancient China and humans in ancient Mesoamerica were not connected by telephone or the internet, but by the worldwide distribution of the human species.



Pneumatic tubes are systems that propel cylindrical containers through networks of tubes by compressed air or by partial vacuum. They are used for transporting solid objects, as opposed to conventional pipelines, which transport fluids. Pneumatic tube networks gained popularity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for offices that needed to transport small, urgent packages (such as mail, paperwork, or money) over relatively short distances (within a building, or at most within a city). Some installations grew to great complexity, but were mostly superseded. In some settings, such as hospitals, they remain widespread and have been further extended and developed in recent decades.



Artist's bios

Amalie Smith (DK b. 1985, lives and works in Copenhagen) holds an MFA from the The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts 2010-15 and also graduated from the Danish Academy of Creative Writing in 2009. Working in a field between literature and visual arts, between 2D and 3D, and between the narrative and the phenomenological, her works span from text over photography to video, 3D-modelling and installation. She has published six books of fiction since 2010 and has received the Danish Crown Prince Couple's Rising Star Award 2015. www.amaliesmith.dk

Amitai Romm (DK b. 1985 in Jerusalem, lives and works in Copenhagen) holds an MFA from the The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, 2007-2014. Romm is interested in the relation between information, materiality and language, through use of digital as well as traditional sculptural techniques. He is also part of the transdisciplinary studio Diakron. www.amitairomm.com and www.diakron.dk

David Stjernholm (DK b. 1986, lives and works in Copenhagen) holds a BA from the The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture and is currently studying his MFA at The School of Visual Art at the same institution. Stjernholm's working methods and processes can be seen as results of a time when many crafts, disciplines and profession, are either arising from, or actually taking place in front of a computer. He is the founder and curator of the exhibition space *Formic*, presenting works by contemporary artists for a colony of European fire ants. www.davidstjernholm.com and www.formic.com

Rasmus Myrup (DK b. 1991, lives and works in London) is currently studying his MFA at Funen Art Academy. Rasmus Myrup is also founder of the exhibition platform *Weekends*. Myrup's practice raises, among others, the question of the relationship between human and non-human, by finding ways to approach the effects non-humans have on our physical and aesthetic environment. His work for this exhibition is part of a series of works in which he makes a denoted version of an object or structure that another species has produced. www.rasmusmyrup.com and www.weekendsweekendsweekends.com

Valérie Collart (FR b. 1981, lives and works in Copenhagen) graduated from the National Superior Fine Arts school, Villa Arson, Nice in 2006. Collart's work is principally based in sculpture and photography where she experiments within the limits of the mediums to reflect on their permeability. Collart's practice raises the question of whether the work's existence is image-based or object-based, or can be both. *Serpent* and *Twisted Column* are made in collaboration with Sebastian Brink (DK b. 1974). www.valeriecollart.com

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