



Sophie Erlund Portfolio

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Within her artistic practice, Danish artist Sophie Erlund (b. 1978) researches architecture as a synonym for the human body and mind, creating sculptures, installations and complex soundscapes, which deal with the central theme of transition and understanding the world through the irrational mind.

Erlund has, in particular, been dealing with a continuously enhancing cluster of topics and questions raised by philosophers such as Hannah Arendt, Timothy Morton and Shoshana Zuboff. Her works are thus informed by her thoughts about the so-called symbiotic real, and a more-than-human perspective in the time of the second modernity individual, and its implications on the psychology of the digital age.

Her work has been exhibited in galleries and institutions across Europe and the US since receiving her BA Fine Art degree with honors from Central St. Martins College of Art and Design, London (UK) in 2003.



Sophie Erlund
Destined to Protect the Protective
06.07. – 22.08.2021

Sophie Erlund
Parliament of Entities, 2020
glazed ceramic, stone, wood, fur, glass,
rubber glove, found objects,
video (duration 08:20 min) dimensions
variable





Sophie Erlund
Parliament of Entities (detail), 2020
 glazed ceramic, stone, wood, fur,
 glass, rubber glove, found objects,



Sophie Erlund
Parliament of Entities (video stil), 2020
 video (duration 08:20 min)

[VIDEO LINK](#)



Sophie Erlund
Gentle Interdependence 1, 2021
 wood, glass, ceramic, acrylic glass, metal, electro-boards, enamel,
 ink, glass paint, acrylic, rubber
 115 x 115 x 15 cm / 45 1/4 x 45 1/4 x 6 in
 SE/WO 11





Sophie Erlund
Symbiotic Persona, 2020
wood, leather, machine chain, rubber glove
93 x 70 x 25 cm / 36 2/3 x 27 1/2 x 9 3/4 in
SE/S 44



Sophie Erlund
Core samples from the Technosphere VI, VIII, III,
 2021 concrete, pigment, found objects, Steel

#VI: 100 x 16 x 16 cm / 39 1/3 x 6 1/3 x 6 1/3 in
 Plinth: 60 x 16 x 16 cm / 23 3/5 x 6 1/3 x 6 1/3 in
 #VIII: 80 x 20 x 20 cm / 31 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 7 3/4 in
 Plinth: 28 x 22 x 22 cm / 11 x 8 3/5 x 8 3/5 in
 #III: 100 x 15 x 15 cm / 39 1/3 x 6 x 6 in
 Plinth: 60 x 16 x 16 cm / 23 3/5 x 6 1/3 x 6 1/3 in

SE/S 51, 53, 48





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Sophie Erlund:
Destined to Protect the Productive
06.07. – 22.08.2021

As the doors of society begin to creak open once again, we encounter one another with a transformed—indeed traumatic—awareness of *who* and *what* circulate through national borders, transportation infrastructure, architectural spaces, air vents and locks. Ours is now an explicitly more-than-human society, in which our relation to other beings is registered on our faces: masks declare recognition of the omnipresence of this *Other*—and implicitly, of a panoply of *others* and their various modes of existence. A single viral being emerges from the havoc wreaked on ecosystems and the frenzy of capital circulation that is capable of taking advantage of the global ecological niche that we have constructed. And as much as our fleshy bodies, our heavy metallic infrastructure is vulnerable to its effects.

The entanglement of the biotic with the technological realm is a central concern of Sophie Erlund's solo exhibition *Destined to Protect the Productive*, a title drawn from a passage of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* in which Arendt meditates on the question of who participates in or is served by the political realm. The domain of the political has always been configured in and through structures of economy which enfranchise some at the expense of others—from ancient hierarchies of production and exchange to capitalism's innovation of alienating labor from the individual who performs it, thus leveling (at least in principle) the field of who might attain the status of a political subject. With this exhibition, Erlund presses the issue of political participation beyond the human, into a domain of ambiguity as disconcerting as it is seductive.

Four multimedia compositions comprise the show, marking out different approaches to a central problematic. Its rhetorical centerpiece, entitled *Parliament of Entities*, consists of a collection of clay sculptural objects arrayed in a circle around a central tower—figures which also feature in an animated video collage by the same title. The objects display naturalistic and partially recognizable biological forms—bits of fur, the semblance of a leaf, or a hominid foot. Some seem to creep or crawl along the floor by virtue of some unfamiliar mechanism of locomotion, while others struggle to hold themselves erect, resisting an impulse to spread out into a smear or a blob. Glazed in earth tones, and metallics, they bear an uncanny resemblance to living entities. This aura of closeness conveys undertones of disgust or aversion—an anxiety to set the elements of this variable sculptural assembly in their rightful place.

This desire is answered by an ominous chrome vessel set atop the central tower, poised to decant ceremonial libations, perhaps, or to cast surveillance camera's gaze upon on the collection of figures below. Erlund's title invokes Bruno Latour's idea of the Parliament of Things—a manifesto for imagining modes of political discourse that would extend beyond the human. If our capacities for listening were adequate, Latour urges, then we would be able to attend the subaltern voices,

agencies, and agendas of a myriad of things with which we share a world. Erlund's sculptural *manifestation* of this idea plays on the double meaning of the term: manifestation as epistemic demonstration and as political protest. In the eponymous video work, one witnesses the animated progression of the sculptural avatars as they swim and slither towards a point of assembly through carefully cropped fragments of our built environment (doorways, staircases, canals). Converging on the tower like dignitaries arriving at a United Nations meeting, stalked by paparazzi and inquisitive journalists, they inspire curiosity about their strategic agendas and alien modes of encounter. The final scenes of the video situate the *Parliament of Entities* within a broader context—a celestial perspective at once archaic and techno-futurist in its aesthetic. From the aerial view of a god or a satellite hovering above the scene, the assembly assumes the shape of a sundial, suggesting that in the geometric balance of time, each manner of being will receive its moment in the light.

Approaching the material legacies of postindustrial culture from another angle, an adjacent gallery, *Core Samples from the Technosphere Series*. A set of pillars cast in appealing shades of pink, lavender, and green concrete, black, organic, and metallic elements, upon closer inspection these objects are composites of human detritus—gears, fur, bits of computer hardware, electronics and industrial residues. These candy colored monuments are offered as speculative soil-cores of the Anthropocene: evidence of gross overaccumulation and rapid deposition. Their cute pastel colors cast into sharp relief the horror inspired by the variety and overabundance of source materials—one senses the freshness of a landfill that has not yet had time to compost and sediment, much less to be recycled into newly productive matter.

Two framed mixed media collages deepen our speculation of what might become of the entanglement of biotic and technological elements over time. *Gentle interdependence 2* presents a composite of computer parts and seemingly organic elements such as mushrooms and wood assembled into a system. One cannot be sure whether it is an electronic device gone feral by coopting the network mechanisms of fungal communication, or whether the biotic elements are busy metabolizing our technological ruins. *Gentle interdependence 1* offers a more ominous possibility, incorporating gears and chains into what appear to be the intimate biological space of flesh and cellular structures—an image resonant with the artist's interest in surveillance capitalism's penetration into the most intimate realms of life. The vitrines encapsulate alternative visions of possible futures in which the breakdown of distinctions between the digital, mechanical, and biotic have been achieved to strange and disturbing effect.

Finally, looking on at a distance from these scenes stand a pair of *Symbiotic persona* fashioned from machine chains integrated into stumps of wood. These rough, handmade objects, like the exhibition as a whole, traffics in tensions between aesthetics of the primitive and the high-tech, reiterating the question of whether the incorporation of the technical into the biotic constitutes a sublimation, a takeover, or a mutually driven metamorphosis.

Over one year has passed since Bruno Latour proposed that the pandemic be viewed a "dress rehearsal" for the disruptions of climate change and the future habitability of our planet for human and other life forms. Viewing Erlund's exhibition through the motif of the dress rehearsal, the theatrical character of the sculptural ensemble and its video performance comes to the fore. In contrast to the ultimate staging of a play, the dress rehearsal aims to expose failure even as it gestures towards an ideal. *Who is missing from the cast? Where is the potential for breakdown within the system? And to what ends might these vulnerabilities be exploited?* Indeed, one can well imagine that Erlund's sculptures come and go, or move around at night, reassembling over the course of the exhibition with different political affordances and insights.

Text: Dehlia Hannah



Agieren im Konzert (Acting in concert) was recorded on site at Gut Kerkow in the Uckermark, where animals and people, machines and production share modes of operation. The symphony in four acts was composed in the studio and is made up of the various tonalities of animal, machine and human noises at both loud screaming-like levels and quiet, gentle depths.

Based on the thoughts of the philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), who pondered the mechanization and the associated man-machine metamorphosis, the symphony *Acting in Concert* tells a concrete story of the coexistence of people, animal and machine at Gut Kerkow. The ideology of sustainability in the human food chain, which Gut Kerkow is striving for, is thus made audible and analyzed in its historical and current context.

Agieren im Konzert (Acting in concert)

2019

audio

duration: 13:30 min.

Photos: Trevor Lloyd

Installation view: SpacedOut, Kerkow (DE), 2019

Listen: <https://sophieerlund.com/agieren-im-konzert-acting-in-concert>



Substantial mechanisms

2016

glass, leather, speakers, audio

duration: 11:48 min.

Photos: Mads Andreassen / Elephant Kunsthall

Installation view: Elephant Kunsthall, Lillehammer (NO), 2016

Listen: <https://sophieerlund.com/substantial-mechanisms>



Substantial mechanisms -a three- part audio interpretation of the british anthropologist Victor Turner's theory "Social Dramas". He described the psychological experience of transition in life to happen in three phases: The Separation, The Liminality and The Integration. Turner wrote the theory in 1964 as a culmination of decades of studying the psychology of metamorphosis.

Installation view: Elephant Kunsthall, Lillehammer (NO), 2016



Human motion

2018

wood, ceramic, steel

53 x 330 x 25 cm

Photo Eric Tschernow



A long anamorphic structure of carved wooden rock-like formations spans the room. Intertwined with what might be human form, or at least organic form are industrial machine parts, saw blades and chains. Despite the structure's static status it seems in full motion, as the eye rolls across the dozens of white ceramic tank-like belts of tubes carrying the loaded structure.





Lived synchronicity

2018

speakers, audio, double-sided projections screens, 4 videos

duration: 20:45 min.

Listen: <https://sophieerlund.com/lived-synchronicity>



Lived synchronicity, is a audio-visual installation using a mash-up narration of the text *To reverberate* by Eugene Minkowski from 1936. The original words are reshuffled and reassembled and create a build up and later decay resembling the distortion we know from pure audio. Accompanying the mash-up text is a composed sound environment of field recordings and digitally composed sounds and four videos projections. The projections were inset, like doors, in the doorways, and the visitor had to move through the image screens to navigate the different rooms of the exhibition space.

Installation view: PSM, Berlin (DE), 2018



The Human condition series, consists of 3 carved plaster panels: *Human design*, *Homo faber* and *The advent of automation*. Considering thoughts by philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) on automation changing the house-hold of nature and transforming the condition of further existence, the Human condition series (referencing Arendt's book by the same title) depict a scenery of human-machine metamorphosis.

Homo faber
2019

carved plaster, wood stain, framed
68 x 68 x 5 cm



Human design
2019

carved plaster, framed
68 x 68 x 5 cm



The advent of automation
2019

carved plaster, wood stain, paint, framed
68 x 68 x 5 cm



Music for moments

2019

audio,

duration 112:00 min.

Listen: <https://sophieerlund.com/musicformoments>

Music for moments is a 1:52 hr long audio installation, in 8 tracks. It exists in several versions - solo, conversation and interactive - created for individual moments. The work is a sound composition which is meant to accompany a setting and function as tonality layer, influencing the perception of the moment experienced. The piece is slightly different in each version for its individual purpose but they share the fact that they stay mostly out of the human vocal range in the tones used.



Outside insight paravent

2016

wood, acrylic paint wash, paper
variable dimensions

Photo: Mikel Escobales

Installation view: PSM, Berlin (DE), 2016



Outside insight paravent offers a disorientating, fragmented view of its surroundings by function of the alternating open frames of the screen and those where the frame is filled with double sided mirror. Alternating lines of asphalt on the outside and lines of sky imagery on the inside of the wooden frames of the screens direct the viewers eye simultaneously up and down while the view of looking ahead through the open frames and the reflection of the mirror of whats behind presents the viewer with an unsettling experience of multiple dimensions simultaneously.

Installation view: PSM, Berlin & Künstlerhaus Dortmund (top right), 2016



Evanescence
2016
wood, speakers, audio
duration: 8:33 min.

Listen: <https://sophieerlund.com/evanescence>



Evanesence is a 8:33 minute audio weave of industrial harbor sounds and synthesized harmonies, depicting the reverie of architectural structures and notions of the collective consciousness harbored in the multitude of disused ship warfs of the artist's native country.



THIS HOUSE IS MY BODY

2011

Audio - 8 channel composition played in a sound environment
with 7 focused speakers and a subwoofer

Dimensions variable

Photo: Hans-Georg Gaul

Installation view PSM, Berlin (DE), 2011

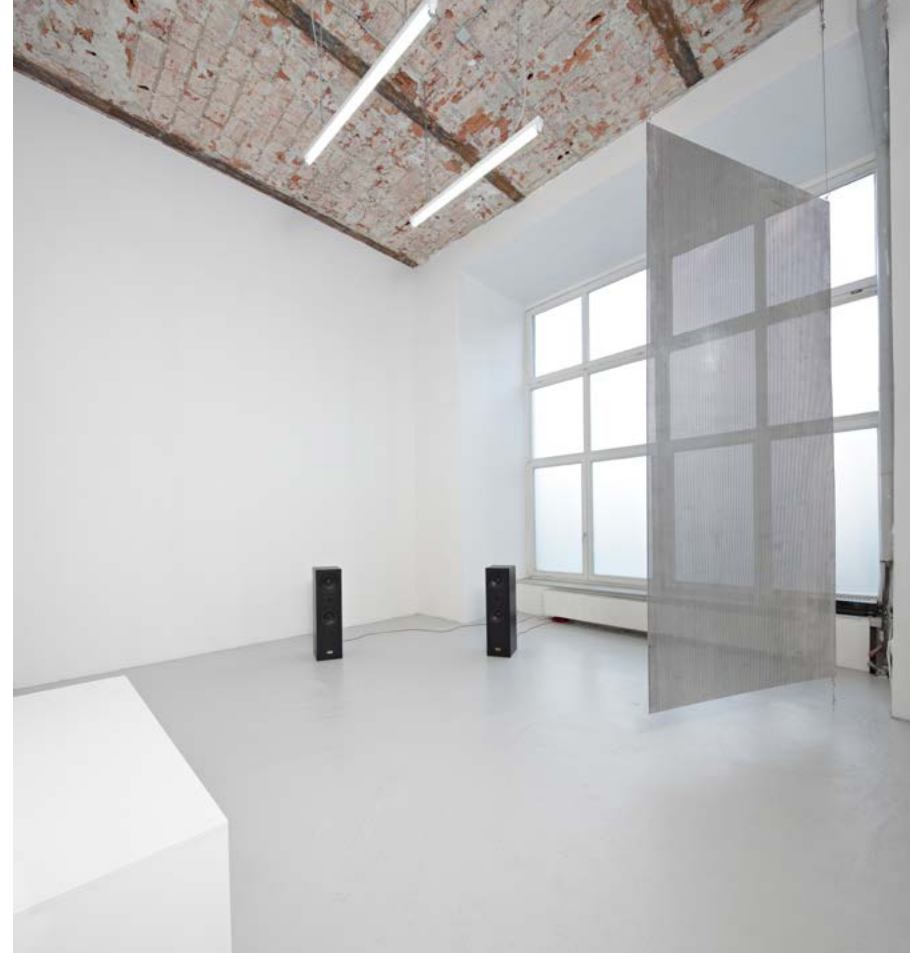
Listen: <https://sophieerlund.com/this-house-is-my-body>



THIS HOUSE IS MY BODY researches architecture as a synonym for the human body and mind. It consists of recordings from demolition of different public and private buildings in Berlin over a period of 3 years. Using contact microphones, the recordings are not of the sounds in the air, but the vibration in the physical materials of the building; a technique, which reveal a very guttural, physically perceptible sound.

The installation is an 8-channel composition being played by directional speakers in an empty space. These directional speakers create an acoustic architecture in the way they are adjusted, which allows the viewer to negotiate the content on a formal level. The immateriality of this acoustical material becomes a quasi-sculptural mass in an expanded definition of sculpture.

Installation view PSM, Berlin (DE), 2011



The rationally unattainable certainty

2014

audio, movement sensors, speakers

dimensions variable

Photo: Hans-Georg Gaul

Installation view: PSM, Berlin (DE), 2014

The rationally unattainable certainty, 2014 is a sensor activated sound scape, triggered by the motion of the visitor in the exhibiton. Very tiny movement sensors are hidden in walls, doorways and pedestals of the show. As the visitor navigates the exhibition space to view the other sculptures a series of sounds, like laser beams, water trick-ling, a heart-beat, a muffled drumming and other less perceptible sound are triggered and create a sound layer to the experience of the space. Slowly it becomes apparent to the visitor that she is composing live sound herself as she moves across the room. Finally the piece is a 210 hour long audio image of how the exhibiton was navigated and negotiated through its span of 6 weeks.



A gentle monumentalism

2017

carved plaster

191 x 367 x 12 cm

Photo: Ariel Reichman

Installation view: Social Geometrism,
Reinbeckhallen, Berlin (DE), 2017



A gentle monumentalism is a wall installation of 75 individually carved plaster block, hung in a rasterized explosion view, slanting in from a 12 cm thickness on the left side to a thin sliver of 1cm on the far right side of the grid.

Installation view: Social Geometrism, Reinbeckhallen, Berlin (DE), 2017



Eternity mirror

2012

acrylic glass, human hair

122 x 62 x 3 cm

Photo: Hans-Georg Gaul



Moss mirror

2013

wood, moss

85 x 65 x 5 cm

Photo: Hans-Georg Gaul



Exhibition installation view: *The rationally unattainable certainty* 2014
PSM, Berlin (DE)
photo: Hans-Georg Gaul



Unity house

2013

wood, plexi, enamel paint, fur, moss, linen, brass

165 x 80 x 120 cm

Photo: Hans Georg Gaul

Installation view: PSM, Berlin (DE), 2014





Bullet

2014

foam, paint, wood veneer

120 x 55 x 70 cm

Photo: Hans Georg Gaul

Installation view: PSM, Berlin (DE), 2014





Exhibition installation view: **Udvandring**, 2009

PSM, Berlin (DE)

Photo: Jens Ziehe



Spatial uprooting and also social 'wandering' from one phase of life to the next, were at the center of the exhibition *Udvandring* in 2009. In 1964 the ethnologist Victor Turner described such life transitions as 'social dramas', which he divided into three phases: the separation, the liminality - the 'in-between' - and integration. Sophie Erlund's engagement with a private social drama describes in particular the in-between, the conflict of her private role as a woman in collision with her professional positioning as an independent artist.

The two sculptures *Domenstic Brainscape* and *Nabo*, which translates in her native Danish to 'Neighbour' (top left image) make reference to the architecture of the Danish architect and designer Arne Jacobsen and function as models for a psychological state.

The delicate, framed text work *Before baby girl* (bottom left image) is an emotionally shared letter written to the artist first born daughter during pregnancy, exposing the fears and uncertainty in this moment of transition in life.



Betwixt and between

2009

chains, metal, wood, rope, motor

hight variable, diameter: 90 cm / hight variable

Photo: Hans-Georg Gaul

Installation view: PSM, Berlin (DE), 2009

In the work *Betwixt and between*, a motor drives a small wooden swing back and forth in a slow, hypnotic motion. Isolation comes to a head here, and is palpable for the viewer through symbols of physical anxiety and visible emptiness.



SOPHIE ERLUND

Born 1978 in Denmark. Lives and works in Berlin, DE.

EDUCATION

2001 - 2003 BA Fine Arts Honours, Central St. Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK
2000 Project Workshop under Per Elbke. Polytechnical Institute of Copenhagen, DK
1999 - 2000 Sculptural Technique under sculptor Karen Højsgaard-Nielsen, Copenhagen, DK
1998 - 1999 Sculptural Department, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, US

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023

Nature is an event that never stops, PSM, Berlin, DE

2021

Destined to Protect the Productive, PSM, Berlin, DE

"The 37th Session" with Office of Erbulian Strategies, PSM, Berlin, DE

2019

Acting in Concert, SP A C E D O U T, Kerkow, DE

2018

Reverberation, curated by Elisa Rusca, La Rada, Locarno, CH

Lived Synchronicity, PSM, Berlin, DE

2017

Co-existing with extraordinary fragility, CCA Andratx, Majorca, ES

2016

SHIFT, Elephant Kunsthall, Lillehammer, NO

2014

THE RATIONALLY UNATTAINABLE CERTAINTY, PSM, Berlin, DE

The repeated failure of following a rule, F.D.13, St. Paul, US

THIS HOUSE IS MY BODY, Tongewölbe T25, Ingolstadt, DE

2012

Primordial eternity, New Contemporaries at Art Cologne with PSM, Cologne, DE

2011

THIS HOUSE IS MY BODY, PSM, Berlin, DE

2009

Udvandring, PSM, Berlin, DE

2008

Newa, PROGRAM - initiative for art + architectural collaborations, Berlin, DE

2005

THIN CITIES, Joachim Gallery, Berlin, DE

2001

SELF-TITLED, Gallery R21, Copenhagen, DK

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019

Finger my Fern, presented by EVBG (Marie Beckmann & Julie Gaspard, SALON, Berlin, DE

Le Lucky, hosted by Josep Maynou, HVW8, Berlin, DE

Tauchgang, Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne, DE

Were We Never Fish, an evening with Sophie Erlund and Stephen Kent, TIER – The Institute for Endotic Research, Berlin, DE



Were We Never Fish, an evening with Sophie Erlund and Stephen Kent, NOMAD residency, Rovijn, HR
2018

TOMBER, invited by Sarah Ancelle Schönfeld, VERY project space, Berlin, DE

Night shift, invited by Ossian Fraser, Bar Babette, Berlin, DE

Patterns of the invisible, curated by Konstanty Szydłowski, Hilgemann Projects, Berlin DE

2017

Silent Empire, curated by Janine Eggert and Sibylle Jazra, Funkhaus Berlin, DE

Social geometrism, Kunst am Spreeknie, Berlin, DE

Cabinet, curated by Adam Milner, David B. Smith Gallery, Denver, US

Daydreamers, curated by Elisa Rusca & Stephen Kent, Templin Ferienpark, Templin, DE

2016

Never shown on purpose, curated by Hannah Beck-Mannagetta & Ulrich Vogl, Circle 1 Platform for Art and Culture, Berlin, DE

#dansinnit, Hasenheide 9, Berlin, DE

Ærø Dog Days, Sound and Performance Festival, Ærø, DK

MIRRORS, curated by Adriane Wachholz Künstlerhaus Dortmund, DE

2015

Outside insight, ARTISSIMA ART FAIR with PSM, Turin, IT

CHROMA KEY, curated by Anna Frost and Andreas Schlaegel, PSM, Berlin, DE

2014

One eyed date, curated by Andreas Schlaegel, Autocenter, Berlin, DE

Vexations at Northrop Auditorium, curated by Amara Antilla & Sandra Teitg, Minneapolis, US

2013

New contemporaries with PSM, Cologne, DE

U-Turn, ArteBA with PSM, Buenos Aires, AR

THE ORACLE - WHAT IS YOUR PROPHECY FOR THE FUTURE? curated by Melissa Steckbauer and Mathilde ter Heijne, The Wand Gallery, Berlin, DE

Signals and codes, Tete, Berlin, DE

PRO-CHOICE, curated by Petunia, Fri Art - Centre d'art de Fribourg / Kunsthalle Freiburg, DE

2012

Imaginary travels, curated by Laurie Dechiara, AMERIKAHAUS, Berlin, DE

Higher Atlas, 4th Marrakech Biennale, curated by Carson Chan & Nadim Samman, Marrakech, MAR
Boessner Art Award, Märkisches Museum Witten, DE

2011

Metrospective 1.0 - A cross section survey, presented by Future Gallery und PROGRAM - initiative for art and architectural collaborations, Berlin, DE

Life in a house with wooden billows, PSM@Dohyanglee Gallery, Paris, FR

2010

Icons silent auction, patroned by Victoria Miro gallery, London, UK

No food, no drink, no sticky lollies, curated by Franziska Leuthäusser, Stadtbad Wedding, Berlin, DE

Induction, featuring: John Coletti, Sophie Erlund, Kensuke Koike, Nathan Peter, Marco thiella, Angeliki Tsotsoni, Chiara Zanella, Berlin, DE

Hostile aestetik takeover, curated by Hannes Gruber, Amelie Grözingen, Lotte Möller, Sebastiaan Schlicher, Apartment, Berlin, DE

THRILLER, curated by Xavier Mazzarol and Eric Stephany, Berlin, DE

Step toward home, curated by Rebecca A. Layton, Dam Stuhltrager Gallery, Berlin/New York, DE/US

The kindness of cronies, featuring - Eric Legris, Gitte Schäfer, Xavier Mazzerol, James Krone, Daniel Jackson, Delia Gonzalez, Sophie Erlund, Paolo Chiasera, Marit Neeb, Yorgos Sappountis, Louis-



Philippe Scoufaras, Nathan Peter, Saadane Afif, Wiley Hoard, Ethan Hayes-Chute, Arne Glauche, Øystein Aasan, Maeghan Reid, Ryan McLaughlin, Benja Sachau, Anastasia Douka, Marcus Knupp, Ignacio Uriarte, Brent Wadden, Stefan Pfeiffer. *HOMEWORK*, Berlin, DE

Dialogues w/ Agnieszka Stone, Forgotten Bar Project/ Galerie im Regierungsviertel, Berlin, DE

2009

Cronies, *HOMEWORK* Paul-Lincke-Ufer 39/40, Berlin, DE

7x2, PSM and Katarina Bittel Gallery, Berlin, DE

2006

A TIMELY REVIVAL, Biorama-Projekt, Joachimsthal, DE

Sophie Erlund & Nobuhiro Fukui, Joachim Gallery, Berlin, DE

2005

SPRING SALON BERLIN 2005, Salon AG, Berlin, DE

2004

ITS PERSONAL, Red Gate Gallery, London, UK

2003

Degree show, Central St. Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK

2001

PERSONAL SPACE, Gallery Udstillingen Ahornsgade, Copenhagen, DK

2000

Grand Opening Show, Gallery R21, Copenhagen, DK