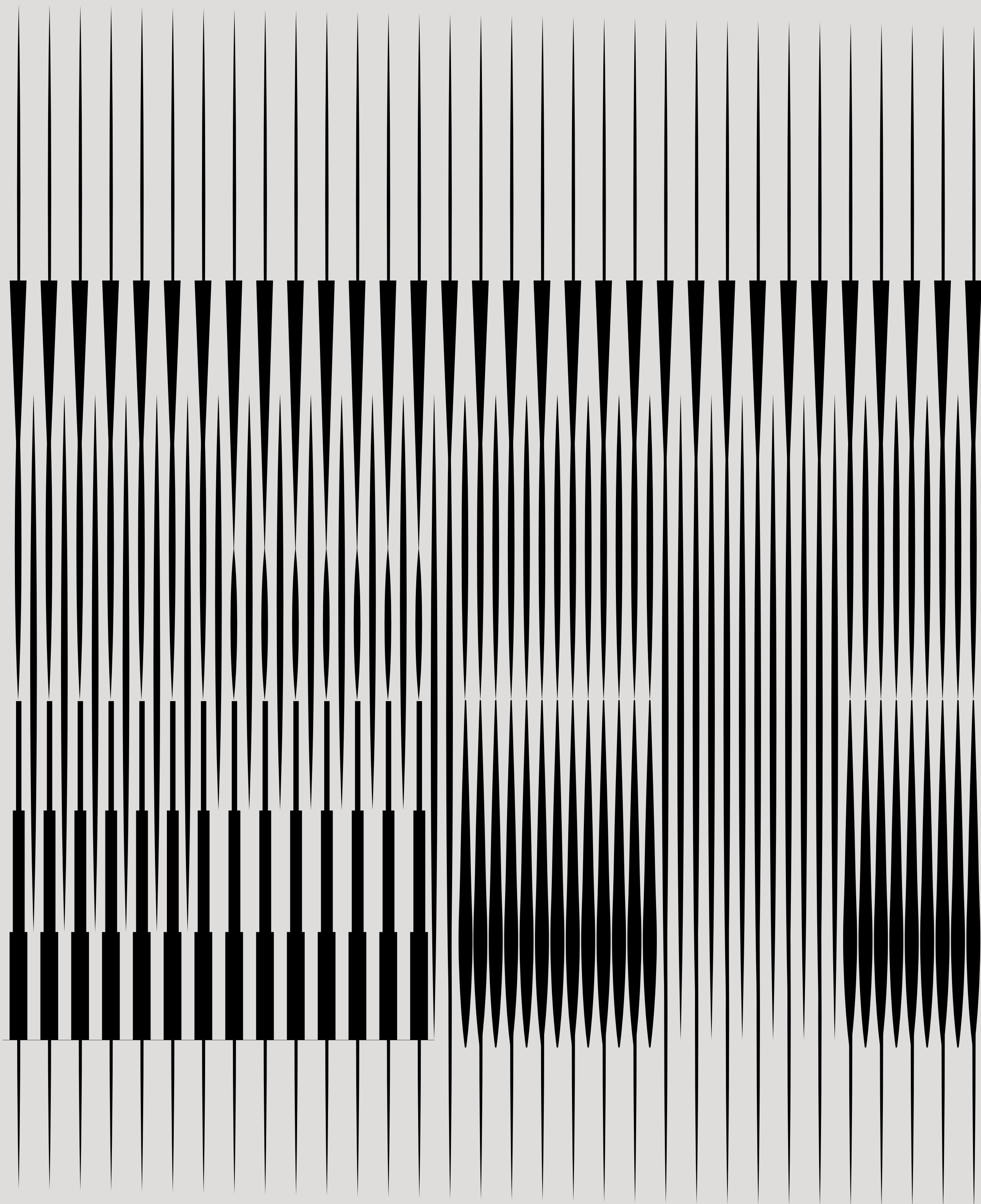
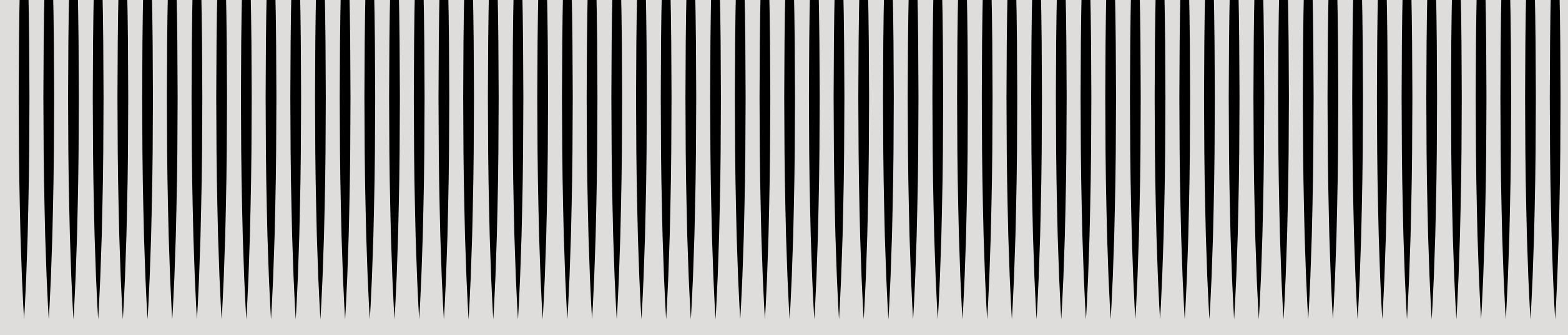


Sonic Acts Press



Catalogue 2022-2023



Sonic Acts Press is the publishing arm of Sonic Acts, an interdisciplinary arts organisation based in Amsterdam that has gained prominence with its biennial international festival, organised since 1994 – an intensive art, theory and technology gathering motivated by the changes in the ecological, political, technological and social landscape – as well as a series of research and commissioning projects, such as Re-Imagine Europe, initiated by Sonic Acts and organised in collaboration with ten cultural organisations across Europe; the three-year art, research and commissioning project Dark Ecology taking place in the Arctic region; and a globally touring film programme titled Vertical Cinema.

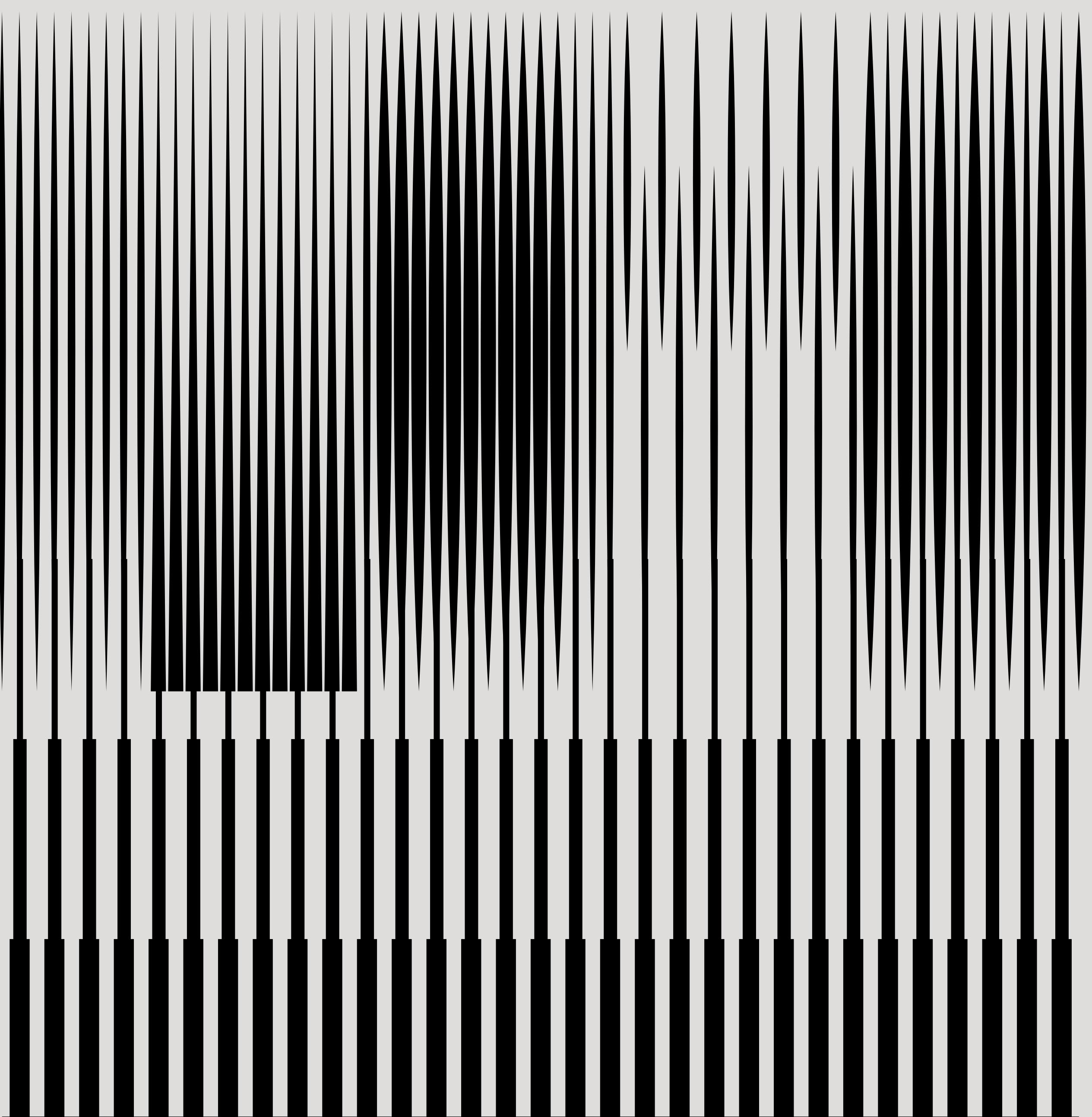
Over the years, the publications accompanying Sonic Acts Festival grew in size, depth and complexity, and broke away from the traditional form of a catalogue. To better capture the flexible approaches to making, learning and thinking, Sonic Acts Press has expanded to explore new publishing formats, from online and multimedia releases, to readers and magazines, most recently launching Ecoes, a new periodical magazine about art in the ‘age of pollution’.

Since its inception in 2001, Sonic Acts Press functions as a site for long-term knowledge sharing. The publications allow the compelling artistic and critical perspectives, showcased across the Sonic Acts Festival's wide-ranging programming, to reach further audiences than just the festival attendees. Intentionally, they blend academic thought, cutting-edge electronic music, and radical audio-visual performances with an in-depth examination of the context and forces around them, whether be ecological, technological, cultural, or historical.

Sonic Acts Press aims to increase the impact and reach of cross-disciplinary artistic research and experimentation. It publishes works that invite us to spend more time thinking about the essential questions of our time and provides a space for critical reflection and wonder. It is a publishing platform that maintains the printed page as a site for young talent, radically different visions, and the activation of the audiences' imagination.

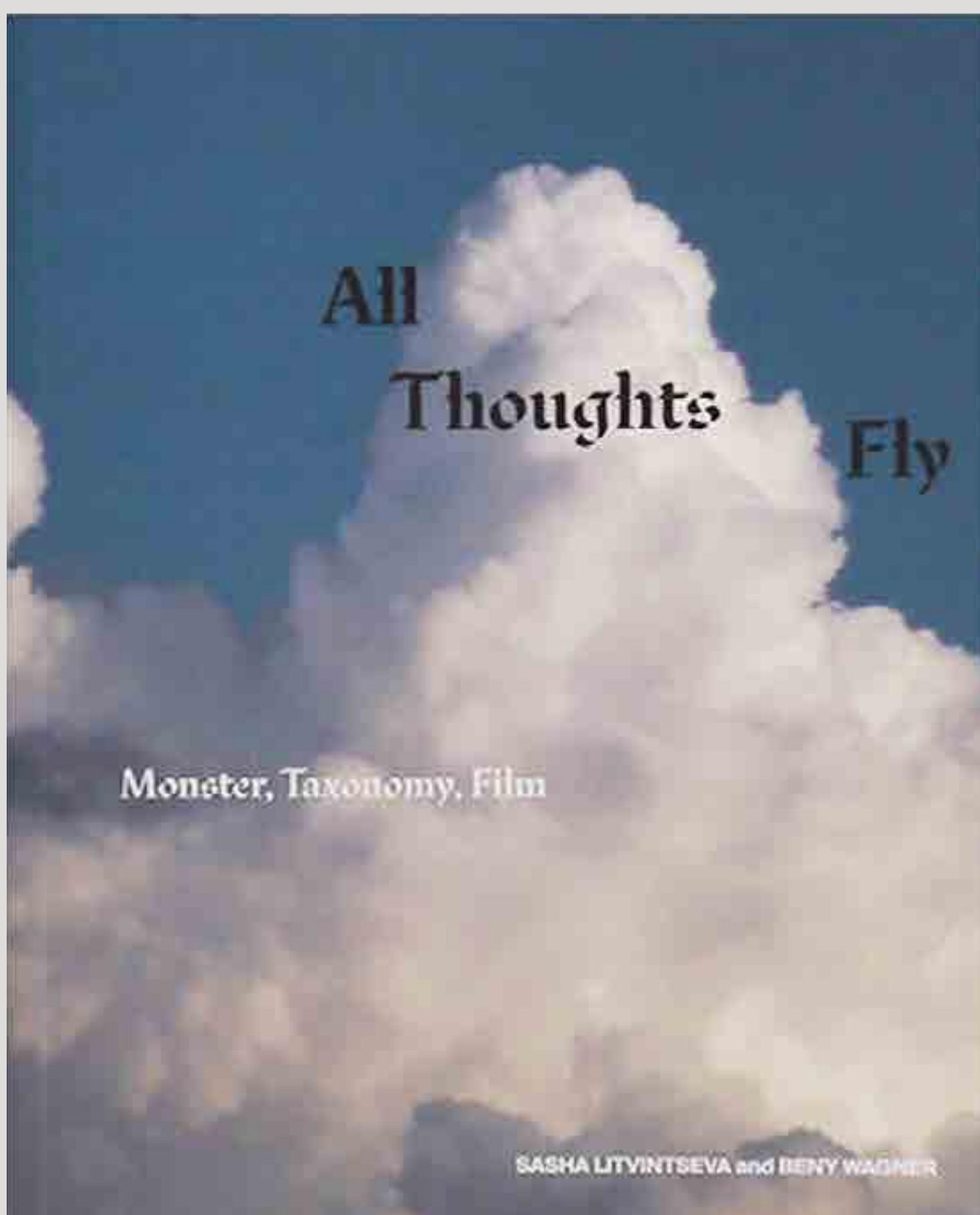


Off The Press!



All Thoughts Fly: Monster, Taxonomy, Film

Sasha Litvintseva, Beny Wagner



Editor: Elvia Wilk
Copy editor: Tashi Petter
Design: Christophe Clarijs
108 pp., 17 x 20 cm,
English, March 2021
ISBN: 9789082321678

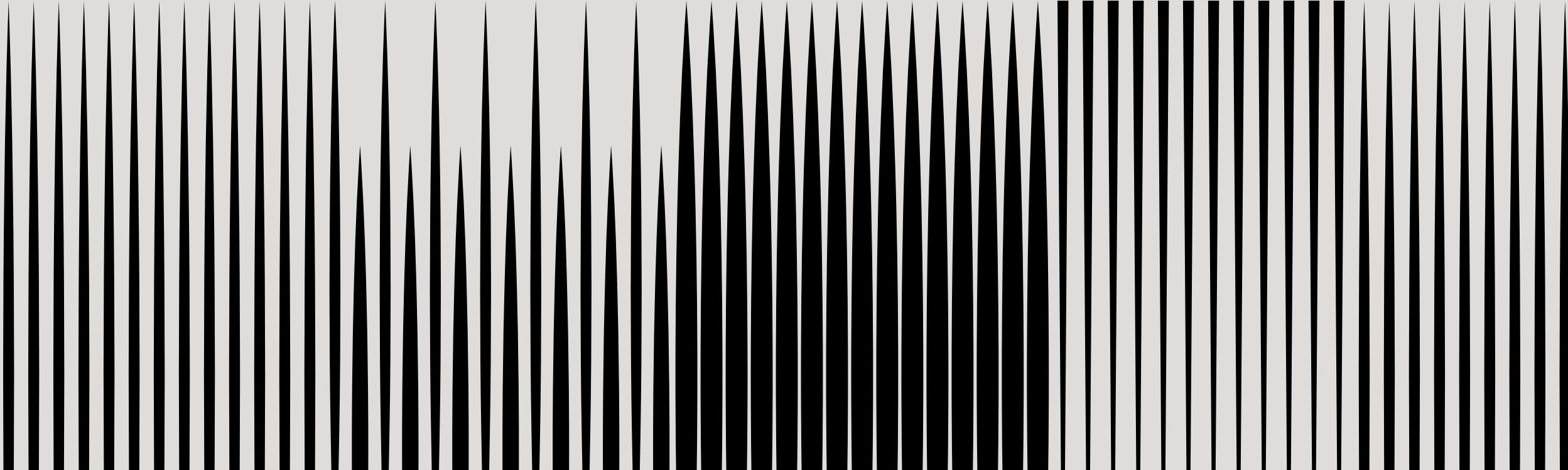
€ 16.00

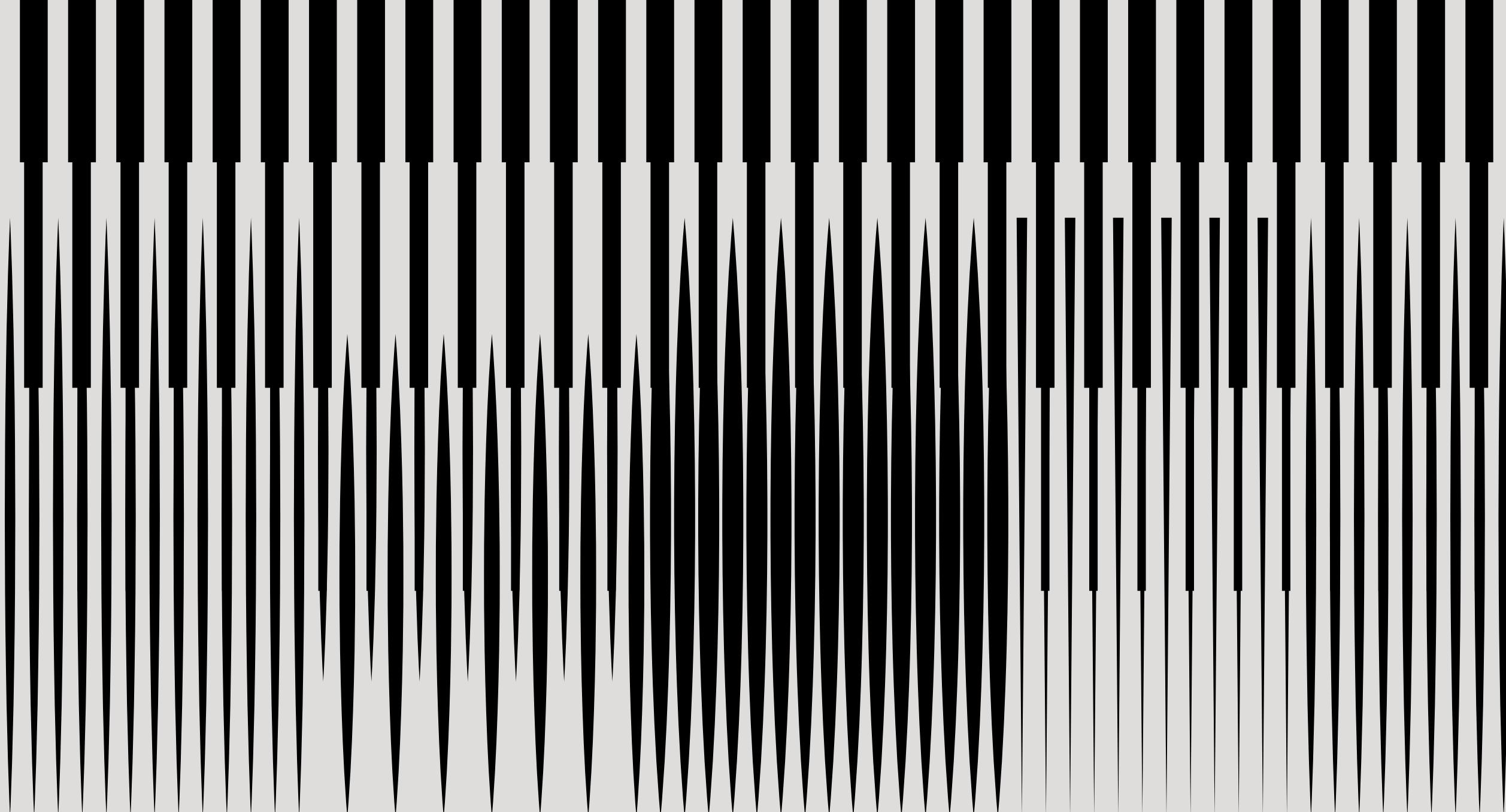
All Thoughts Fly: Monster, Taxonomy, Film is a narrative assemblage of prose and image. At once personal, historical and theoretical, the book continues the authors' inquiry into the curious presence of taxonomies of monsters at the heart of Early Modern European science. The word 'monster' comes from the Latin monstrare, meaning 'to show', 'to demonstrate', 'to reveal'. Picking up on this etymology, the authors explore monsters as prisms for modes of seeing and deciphering the natural world. When treated as a perceptual

apparatus, the monster also becomes a means of probing the medium of film and its relationship to indexicality, chance, corporeality, and metamorphosis. This book extends a multimedia project the authors began with their film *A Demonstration* (2020).

About The Authors

Sasha Litvintseva and Beny Wagner are artists, filmmakers, researchers and writers. They have been working collaboratively in moving image, text, and lectures since 2017. Focusing on moving image as a tool for the active production of new worlds, their practice has been driven by questions about the thresholds between the body and its surroundings, knowledge regimes and power, modes of organising and perceiving the natural world. Their combined and individual work has been presented globally at Berlinale, IFFR, Courtisane, Cinema Du Reel, RIDM, Ann Arbor, Eye Film Museum, HKW Berlin, ICA London, CAC Vilnius, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Berlinische Galerie, MUMOK Vienna, Impakt Festival, Berlin Atonal, Wroclaw Media Art, Venice Art and Venice Architecture biennales, etc.





The word monster comes from the Latin *monstrare*, which translates as "to reveal," "to show," or "to demonstrate." What did monsters show Early Modern naturalists? Historians of science dealing with medieval and Early Modern monsters often focus on the function of monsters as portents. For many Europeans of this period, monstrosity was most directly experienced through the uncertainties of reproduction and the arrival of a deformed newborn was generally taken as a bad omen for the family, if not the whole village. Omens are inextricably linked to language and signs; it is only through interpretation that they are made meaningful.

Many of the monsters included in Aldrovandi's icononomies are such omens, catalogued together with their interpretation. The Ravenna monster, made famous through its many iterations throughout Renaissance Europe, is reproduced in the *Monstrorum Historia* with a description by a 1512 Florentine apothecary: "It had a horn on its head, straight up like a sword, and instead of arms it had two wings like a bat's, and at the height of the breasts it had a fin on one side and a cross on the other, and lower down at the waist, two serpents, and it was hermaphrodite, and on the right knee it had an eye, and its left foot was like an eagle's."⁷ Alongside this text there is a note by another contemporary chronicler which interprets the meaning of the monster's deformities as particular moral failings: "the horn [indicates] pride; the wings

35



Oil News 1989 – 2020

**Sam Lavigne,
Maryam Monalisa Gharavi**

Bound text, data scraped
from *Oil & Gas Journal*
headlines from the 1989
Exxon Valdez disaster
to the 2020 oil price shock.

1000 pages.

Oil & Gas Journal, founded
in 1902, is the petroleum
industry's leading worldwide
publication. *Oil News*
1989 – 2020 scrapes every
main headline from the
journal beginning with the
24 March 1989 Exxon Valdez
disaster—until then the worst
oil spill in U.S. waters—up to
the 2020 crisis in global oil
prices. The work enables
the narrativising of oil,
previously only grasped as
snippets of news headlines
never intended to be read
or accessed in their totality.



**Editor: Margarita Osipian
Design: Farah Fayyad
1000 p., 30 x 18 cm, English,
September 2022**

€ 100

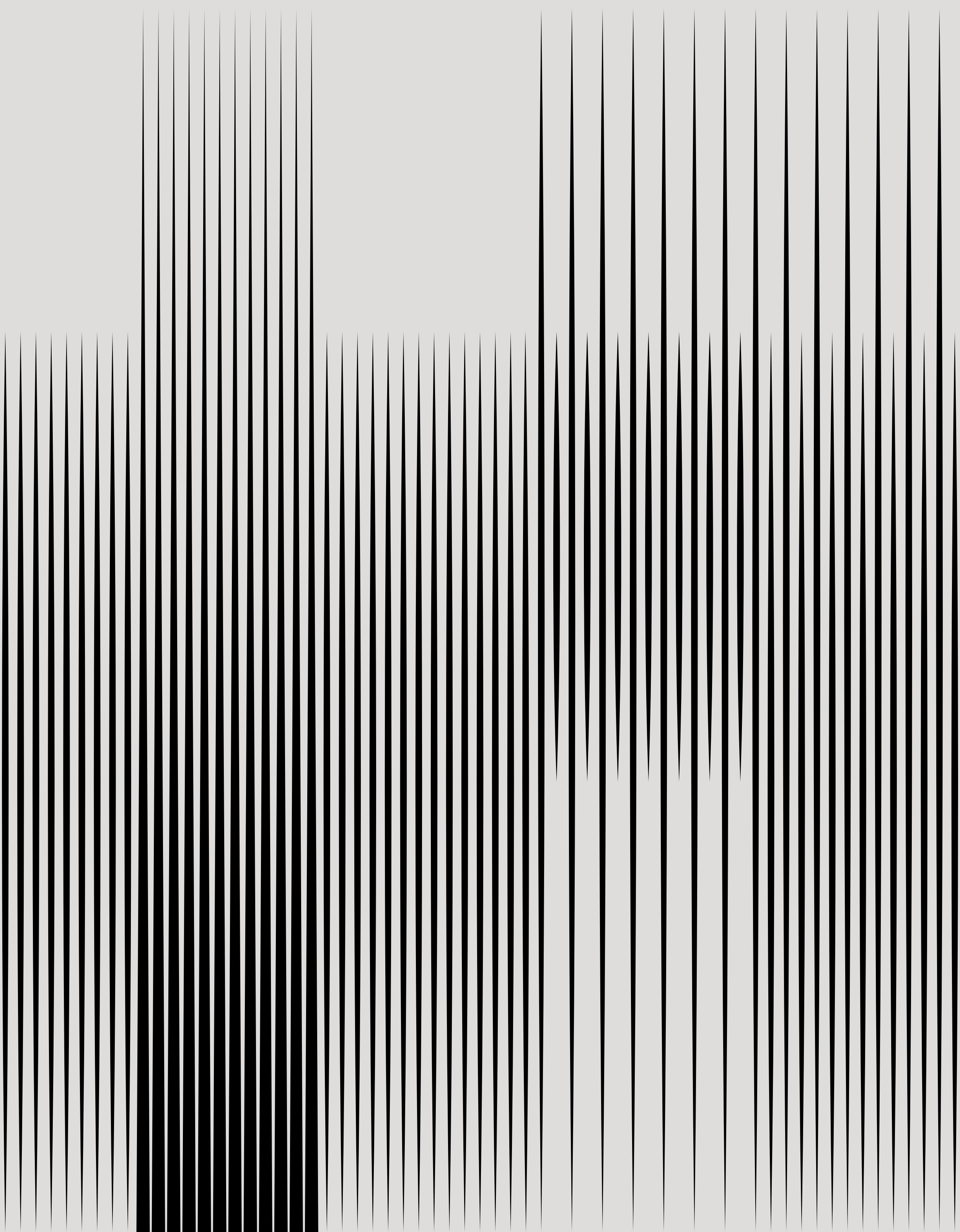
What does oil say when it tells on itself? *Oil & Gas Journal*, founded in 1902, is the petroleum industry's leading worldwide publication. Using a process called scrapism, defined by Sam Lavigne as 'reverse engineering the web for critical ends', *Oil News 1989 – 2020* scrapes every main headline from the journal beginning with the 24 March 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster – until then the worst oil spill in U.S. waters

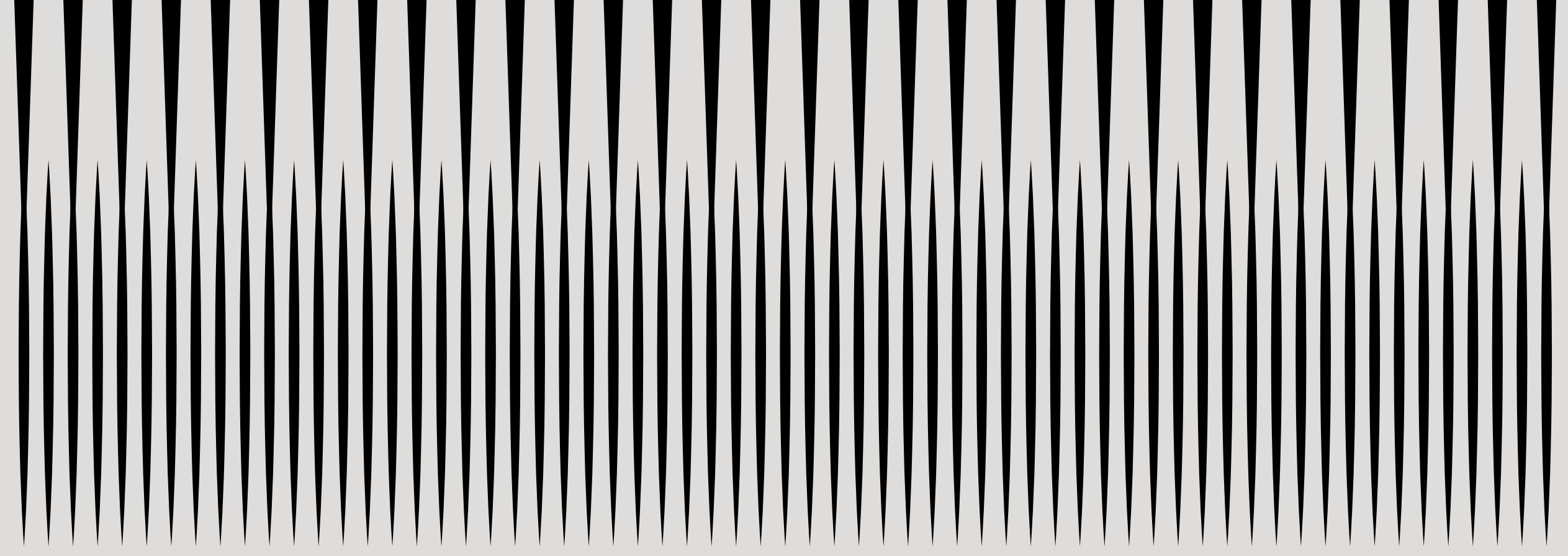
– up to the 2020 crisis in global oil prices. The multinational, multiconglomerate oil industry divulges myriad streams of data about its operations, which when looked at in both the macro (314,452 oil well deaths) and micro (distinct obituaries for each one) yield surprising and discordant findings. Oil News synthesises ‘oily’ data that reveals its own significance at the very moment it is divulged. Commissioned and published by Sonic Acts, the book enables the narrativising of oil, previously only grasped as snippets of news headlines never intended to be read or accessed in their totality. Oil ‘tells’ on itself while resisting attempts to totalize its profound impact on human life systems.

About The Authors

Maryam Monalisa Gharavi is an artist, poet, and theorist whose work deals with the paradoxes of our interactions with matter and immateriality; the seen and unseen. Within her practice, she explores the interplay between aesthetic and political valances, tracing the genealogies of what may otherwise be taken for granted, and diving deeper into what she sees as ‘twin’ extractive commodities: oil and data. Sam Lavigne is an artist and educator who plugs into the interlocking interfaces of data, surveillance and policing, as well as natural language processing and automation. From publishing a database of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) employees in response to the Trump administration’s family separation policy, to White Collar Crime Zones – a re-appropriation of a predictive policing algorithm – his work harnesses digital tools such as apps and information mining.

Sonic Acts Magazine -Ecoes





Ecoes, the new periodic magazine of Sonic Acts Press, is a port-manteau of the words ‘ecology’ and ‘echoes’. The magazine about ‘art in the age of pollution’ launches a new trajectory for the Press as its first serial publication presenting artistic research year-round and independently of the biennial Sonic Acts Festival or the intervening Sonic Acts Academy.

Ecoes centres loosely around alternatives to the anthropocentric view that sees Earth and the non-human world as an endless resource. It continues Sonic Acts’ focus on presenting compelling artistic and critical perspectives reflecting on the rapidly changing world around us. Malleable in form and size, the magazine dedicates its pages to works and practices that engage deeply with the past, future or afterlives of environmental harm, toxicity and waste.



ECOES #5



Editor in Chief: Mirna Belina

Assistant Editor: Hannah Pezzack

Copy editor: Andrea Rožić

Design: Rafaela Dražić

**192 pp., 16.5 x 23.5 cm,
English, June 2023**

ISSN: 2772-5685

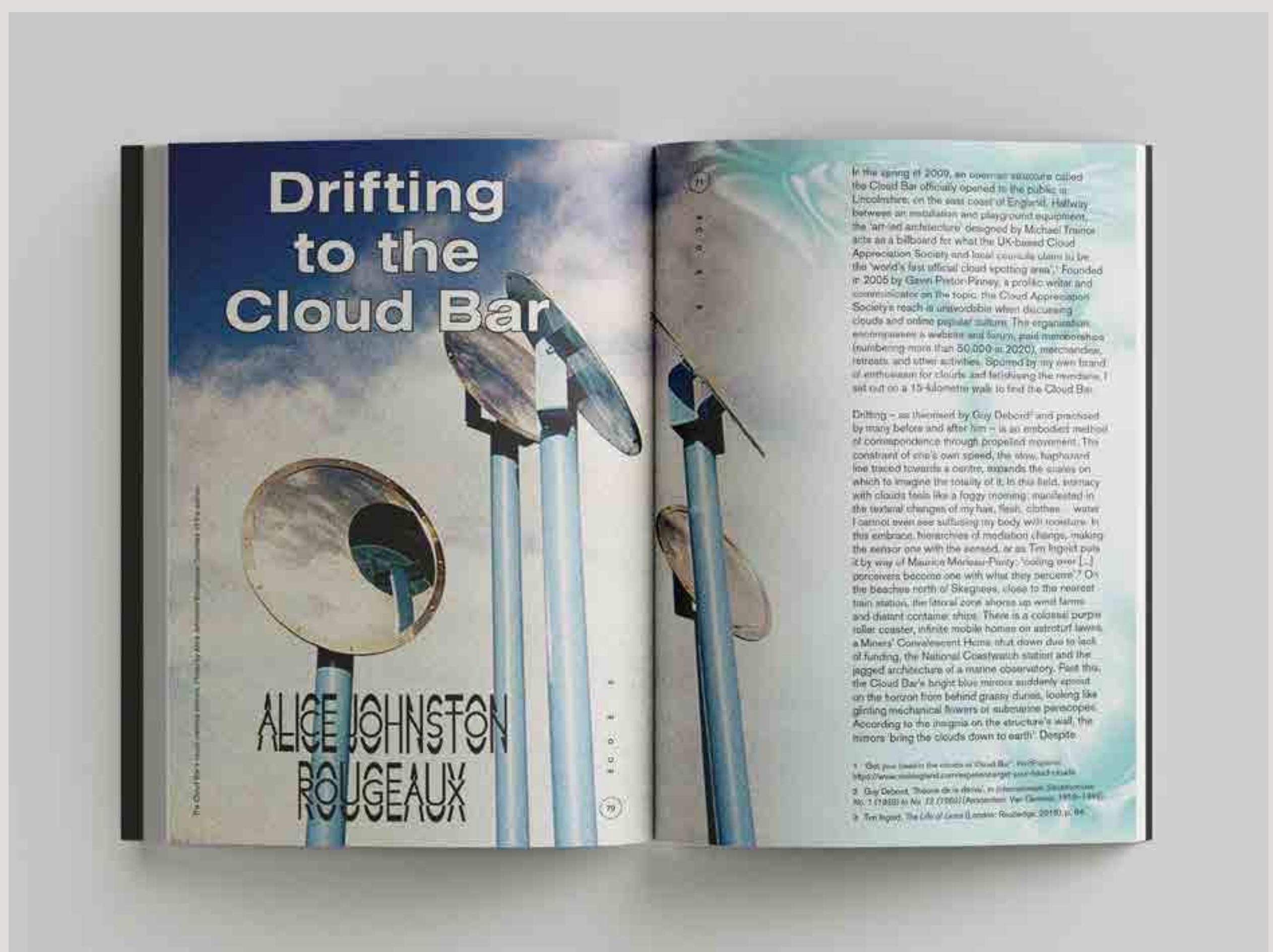
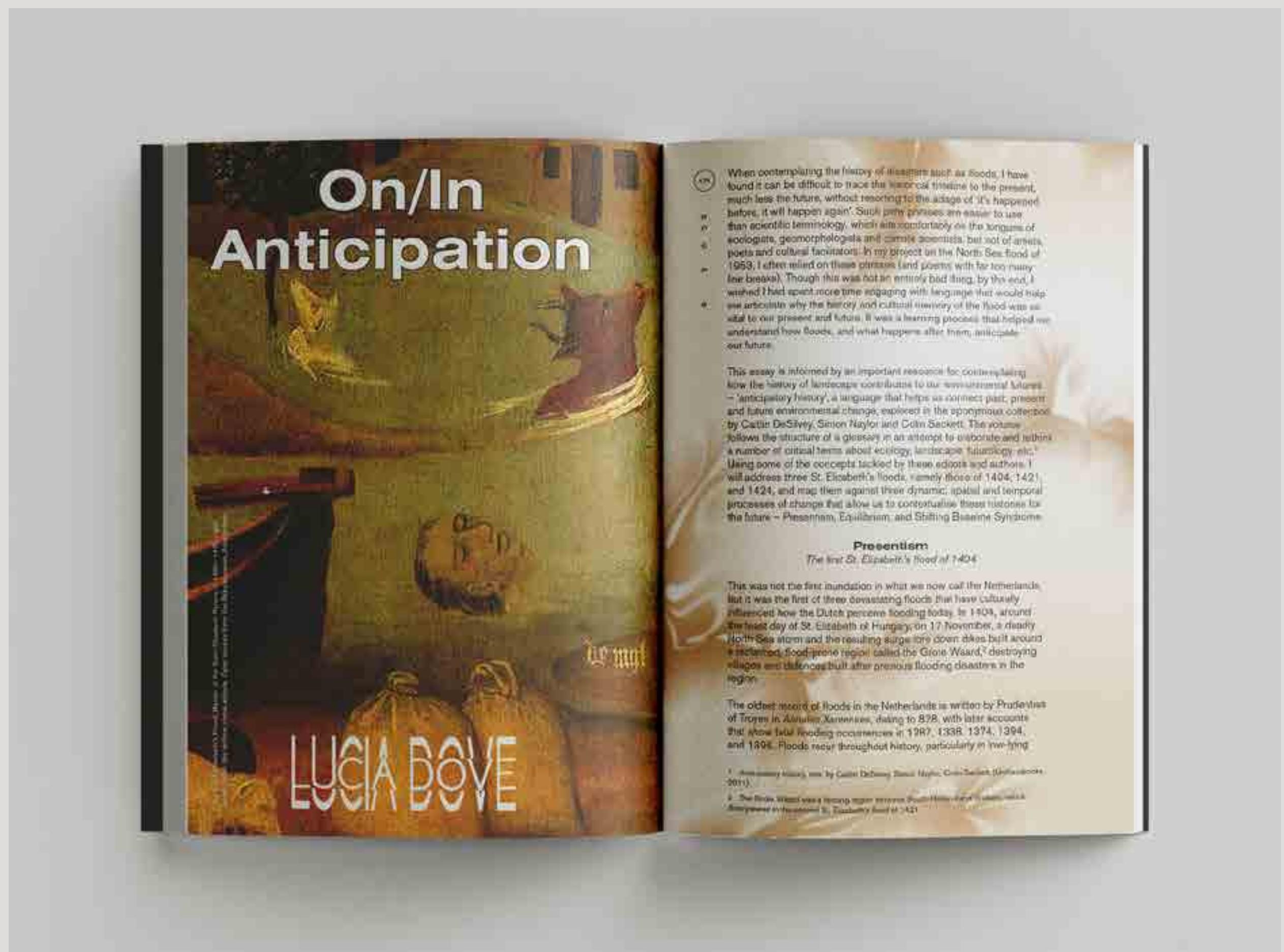
€7.50

Cycles of water whirl through this body of texts. Sometimes they are heavy with ‘toxic muck’ and sometimes as light as bubbles, crystals of ice, or the hair on coral larvae. Occasionally they will speak to a feeling, but will often address a very specific port. Most importantly, all of them are the results of artists’ experiments and artistic meandering around the topic of water.

FEATURING

Alice Johnston Rougeaux, Anastasia (A) Khodyрева, Annika Kappner, Arie Altena, Brackish Collective, Éric La Casa, Hannah Pezzack, Hannah Rowan, Jac Common, Karen Bakker, Katy Lewis Hood, Lucia Dove, Maud Seuntjens, Philip Vermeulen, Rita Wong, Stefanie Hessler, Tarek Atoui, Therese Keogh





ECOES #4



Editor in Chief: Mirna Belina
Copy editor: Andrea Rožić
Design: Rafaela Dražić

**158 p., 16.5 x 23.5 cm,
English, December 2022
ISSN: 2772-5685**

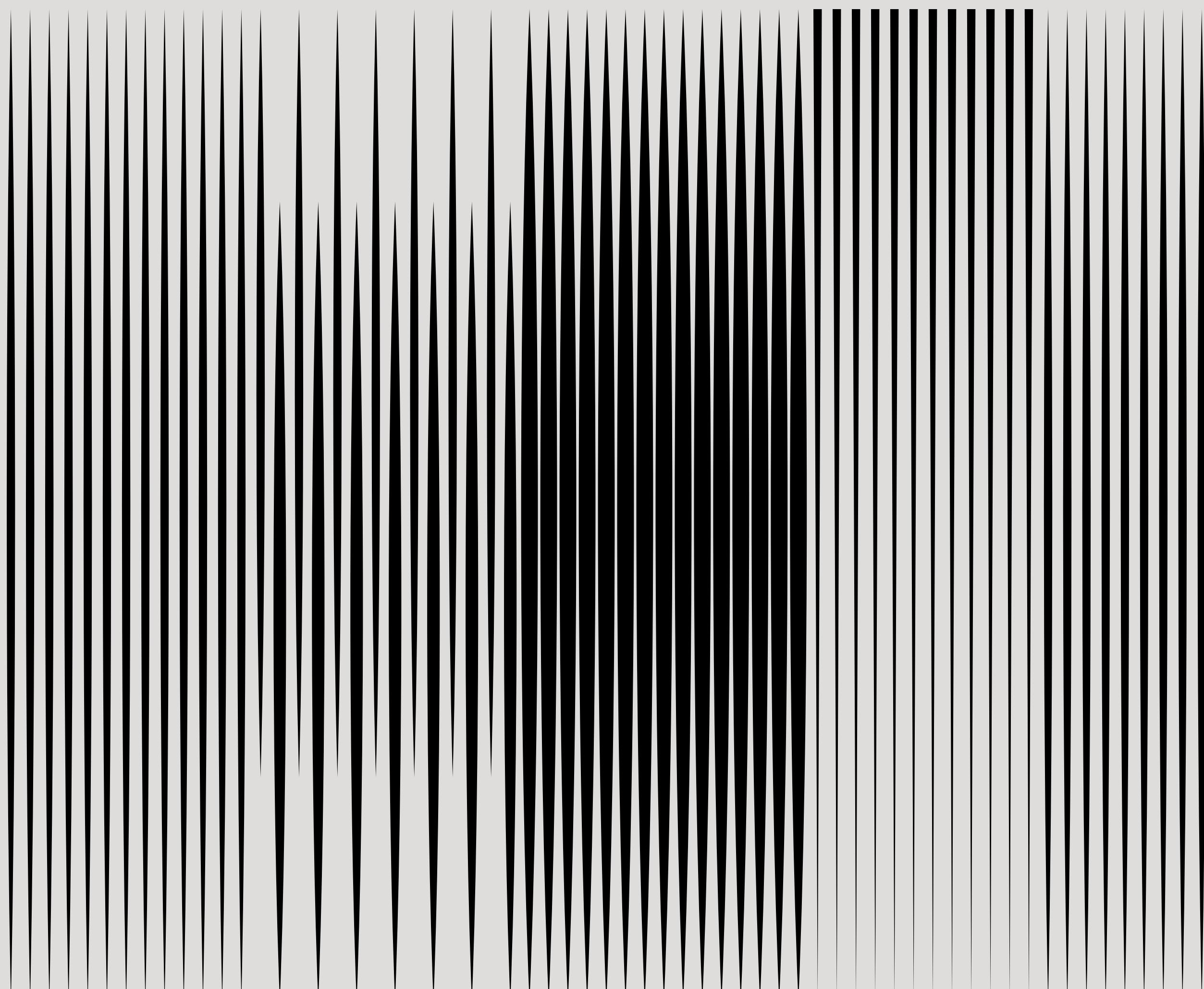
**€ 7.50
(Sold Out)**

With the ‘feature well on oil’ that dives deep into ‘petrocapitalist noxiousness’ of our time, and various artistic research programmes organised by Sonic Acts — such as Overexposed and Underexposed — Ecoes #4 dives head first into complex personal stories told by artists that transform and inspire different perspectives of reality. From personal experience of cancer treatment, caregiving and the contamination that it produces to building relations with mounds, piles and heaps all around us; from long-lasting consequences of

a massive oil spill from MV Prestige in 2002 in A Coruña, Spain, to ecological colonialism in Israel, using Aleppo pine to cover destroyed Palestinian villages; from complicating restoration of the seminal oil pool sculpture by Noriyuki Haraguchi in Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art to powerful poetry by Russian queer feminist poet Galina Rymbu that ‘historicises the chokehold on oil, gas, and grain supply, now crystallised in the invasion of Ukraine’. Fourth edition of Ecoes might not be a light read, but it is visually exciting and presents powerful artworks that grew from pain, toxicity, illness and ‘crude capitalism’.

FEATURING

Anguille Vannamei — Noam Youngrak Son,
Sarah Fitterer, Erik Peters, Fred Carter, Inas Halabi,
Jeff Diamanti, Luke Fischbeck (lucky dragons),
Marit Mihklepp, Miriam Matthiessen, Samia Henni,
Sarah Rara (lucky dragons), Shirin Sabahi



writer-artist, Peeter Laurits, who has influenced me deeply. He asked me if anyone at the Estonian Academy of Arts talked about the heart. Weirdly enough, nobody! There were times when it was difficult to trust tenderness, because it leaves you vulnerable, but then again, even though building different shells is useful, it also closes the entrances and exits for movements of thoughts and growth.

I recently met with Cocky Eek, one of the most inspiring teachers and artists during my time at KABK. She told me about the feeling of falling into yourself. Then you know you're on right track. It is different for everyone, but in the end, aligning with myself – which also includes my microbial community body – means trusting the openness, chance encounters, and search for direct contact. This also gives various shapes to attention and supports a change of perspective – letting the office chair sit on me, observing how a slime mould

would interpret a musical score, or listening to a stone rocking in a church.

VDD: You have described your work as 'mapping the extinct forms of communication'. So, among other things, you have had interviews with the aforementioned chair, conversations with a slime mould, and collaborations with microbes. How does one begin such communications? Are there questions you ignore?

MM: My recent muse, Peeter Laurits, said that we can communicate with other life forms through empathy and imagination. I would add to the mix practicing stillness and listening through the whole body. As with any relationship, I enjoy the reciprocity. If I don't understand language, I turn towards other forms of communication; what the eyes tell, stories coming through other body parts, the intonation of the voice – there is so much there and it is often truer. The same goes for my attempts

89
E C O E S

at engaging in a conversation with trees, stones, or water. It is interesting that we, humans, seem to understand a bacterium or a stone much less than they comprehend us, even though the definitions of 'understanding' might radically differ.

Are there questions I ignore? I haven't talked about money with stones.

VDD: What was the most surprising conversation you had during the FieldARTS residency?

MM: FieldARTS was flowing like a river, with lots of water and movement, both bodily and imaginative. My highlights were a visit to Texel and NIOZ, especially the Zeeviercentrum (seaweed centre), an encounter with



Piles in the port of Amsterdam, July 2022, FieldARTS residency. Photo by Marit Mihklepp. Courtesy of the artist.



E C O E S

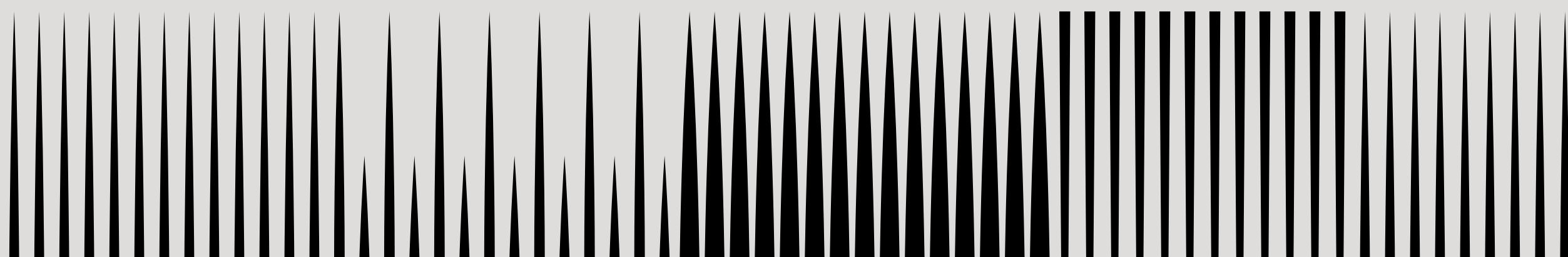


Kelp knot in seaweed centre, the Zeeviercentrum at Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), Texel, the Netherlands, 2022, as part of the FieldARTS residency. Photo by Marit Mihklepp. Courtesy of the artist.

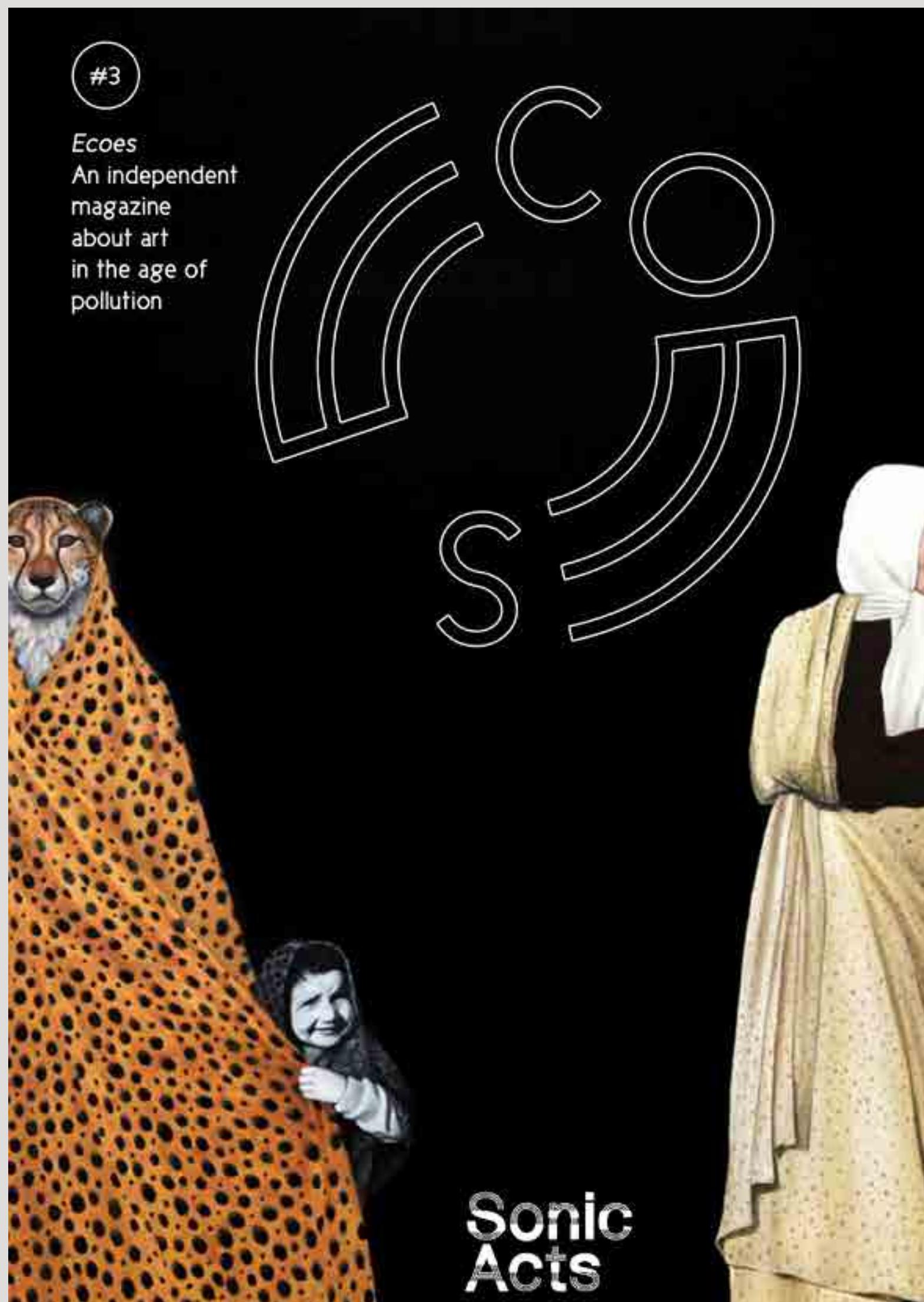


Untitled (A Polluted River in the Shape of Human Body), Luke Fischbeck, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.

122



ECOES #3



Editor in Chief: Mirna Belina
Copy editor: Andrea Rožić
Design: Rafaela Dražić

**232 p., 16.5 x 23.5 cm,
English, April 2022
ISSN: 2772-5685**

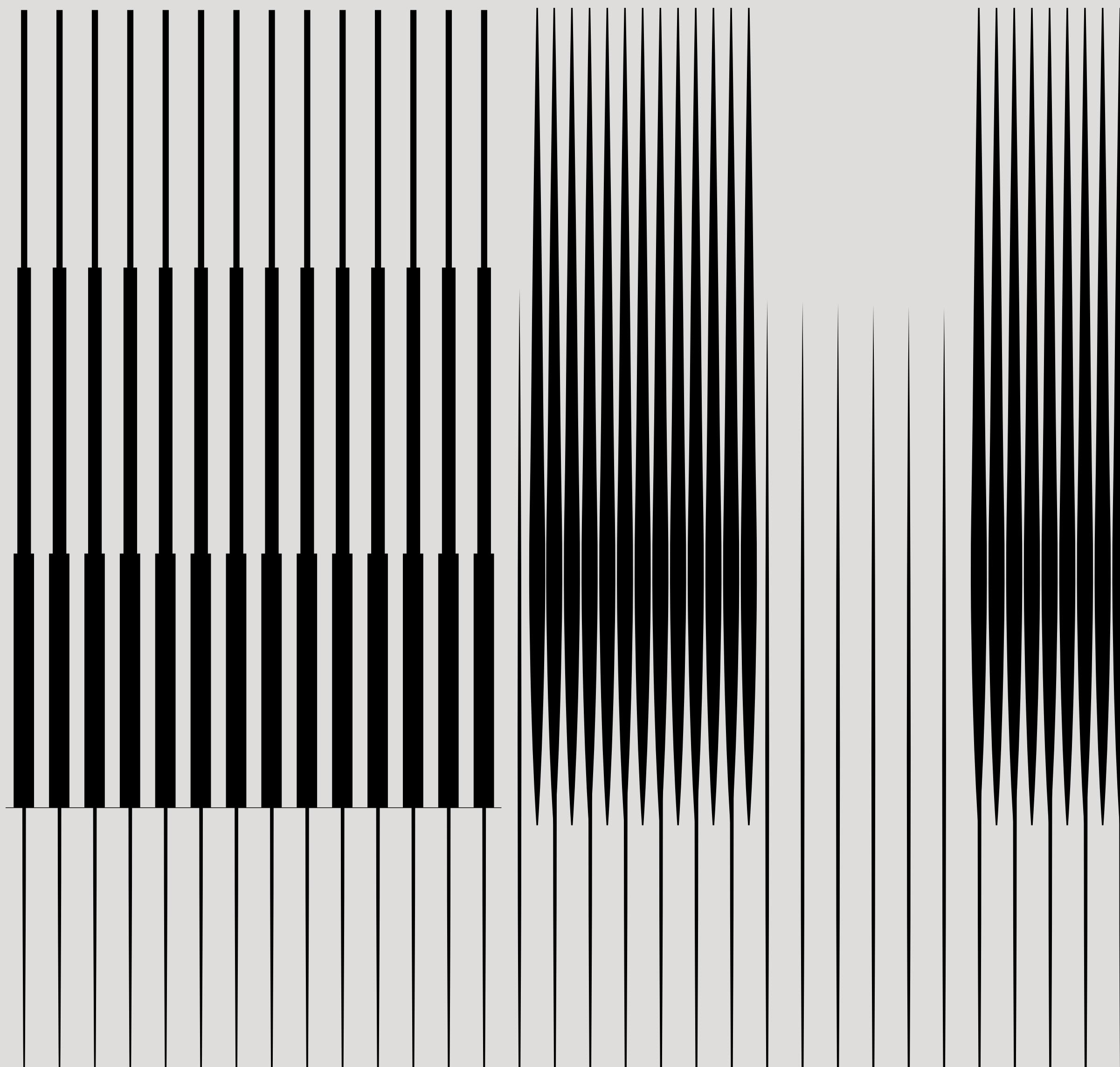
€10

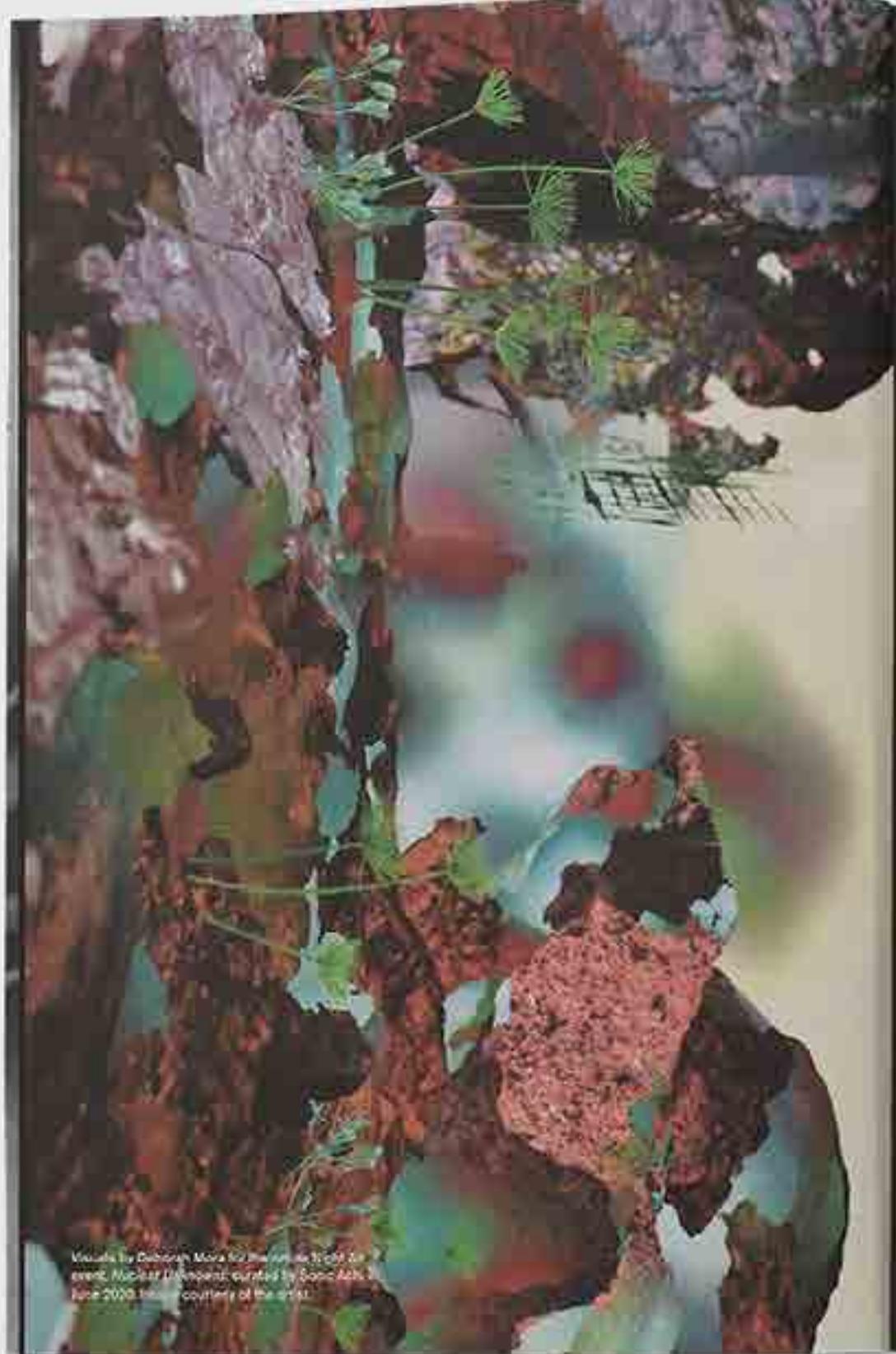
With the 'feature well The third installment of Ecoes considers the upcoming edition of Sonic Acts Festival 2022. Images and texts combine to reveal the elemental forces, synthetic or natural, that create tension in the world around us. Legacies of toxic infrastructures and hazardous waste, ways of reclaiming and refiguring definitions of 'normal' and 'natural', multi-scalar and multi-sited journeys of microbes, eels, glaciers, and unstable polder grounds that house nuclear infrastructures are visited throughout the pages of this voluminous

issue. Contemporary theoretical discourse and speculative fiction on weather as a tool to destabilise knowledge traditions, interviews with artists whose practices invite us to look and listen anew, and one inlay, a map to move within non-normative time — all gather to create a rigorous, diverse, and visually striking edition.

FEATURING

Dani Admiss, Antonia Alampi, Angeliki Balayannis, Louis Braddock Clarke, Zuzanna Zgierska, Yolanda Ariadne Collins, Sophie Dyer, Sasha Engelmann, John Grzinich, Andreas Kühne, Mary Maggic, Kyveli Mavrokordopoulou, Agnès Villette, MELT (Ren Loren Britton & Isabel Paehr), Aura Satz, Noam Youngrak Son, Andrea Galano Toro, pantea





Leaving Traces

Mirna Delina

In their beautiful essay *Never Odd or Even – A Wobbly Map for Time Travel*, Ren Loren Britton and Isabel Paehr, or MELT, write about non-normative ways of experiencing time. They embrace time that runs in non-linear ways, 'in loops, circles, palindromes, discontinuities, slowness'; crip time, Trans* time, Sick time, kinship time. Their spacetime map expands from this magazine onto a transparent inlay tucked away between the pages, which can be used as an overlay for the website where the project extends into even more complex experiences of time.

These past two years with Covid challenged, among other things, our perspectives of time. Time mostly stood still while speeding up; it was broken, exhausted, sick, kept shifting intensities, and came with long-term effects. This planetary event – caused by interventions into animal habitats – shares some similarities with the time of climate catastrophe, with similar patterns of uneven consequences experienced between different humans and non-humans; while some were already living in the future, some were fortunate enough to be lagging behind the time of crisis.

This tragic image is beautifully embodied in Naeemeh Naeemaei's dreamy 'family' portrait from the *Dreams Before Extinction* series, *Mom, Aunt and I (Aeatic Cheetah)*, on the cover of *Ecoes* #3, that reminds us of the catastrophic

STICKY
OVEREXPOSED
PANTEA AND OTHERS

MIND(S)

'Climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination [...] now that the stirrings of the earth have forced us to recognize that we have never been free of nonhuman constraints, how are we to rethink those conceptions of history and agency?'

Author: Gisela Tietz-Delina, Department of Climate Change and the Environment, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 2020, p. 9 and 118.

Silence of The Leopards, from *Dreams Before Extinction* series, Naeemeh Naeemaei, mixed media on canvas, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

ECOES #2



Editor in Chief: Mirna Belina
Copy editor: Andrea Rožić
Design: Rafaela Dražić

**94 p., 16.5 x 23.5 cm,
English,
December 2021
ISSN: 2772-5685**

€7.50

This issue of Ecoes explores the resonating terms and phrases used to express the complex experience of living in a polluted world. The magazine dives deep into the taxonomies of monsters, the unlikely afterlife of discarded clothes in Senegal, the visual evidence of plant responses to polluting substances, the Mesopotamian Marshes as a system of control and resistance, and artistic reflections on making work in a climate of dread and anguish.

FEATURING

Victoria Douka-Doukopoulou, Elizabeth A. Povinelli,
Lisa van Casand, Sasha Litvintseva, Beny Wagner,
Devin Hentz, Ameneh Solati, Russell Haswell,
Hugo Esquinca, Angeliki Diakrousi, Yara Said



ECOES #1



Editor in Chief: Mirna Belina
Copy editor: Andrea Rožić
Design: Rafaela Dražić

**135 p., 16.5 x 23.5 cm,
English, April 2021
ISSN: 2772-5685**

€7.50

The first issue of Ecoes brings together artists that focus on mining, microplastics, the origins of the blues from an Indigenous perspective that sees humans as entangled with the environment, Cold War toxic legacies and depleted uranium, invasive species and deadly clouds in one of the epicentres of extractivist operations in the Russian Arctic.

FEATURING

Anika Schwarzlose, Brian D. McKenna, Sissel Marie Tonn, MELT (Ren Loren Britton & Isabel Paehr), Maryam Monalisa Gharavi, Devin Hentz, Angela Chan, Ameneh Solati, Arjuna Neuman, Sarah Kanouse, Kyveli Mavrokordopoulou, Carson Fisk-Vittori, Rosa Whiteley



All images by Alassane Cissé - courtesy of Devin Hentz

**DEVIN HENTZ:
SITUATING FASHION**

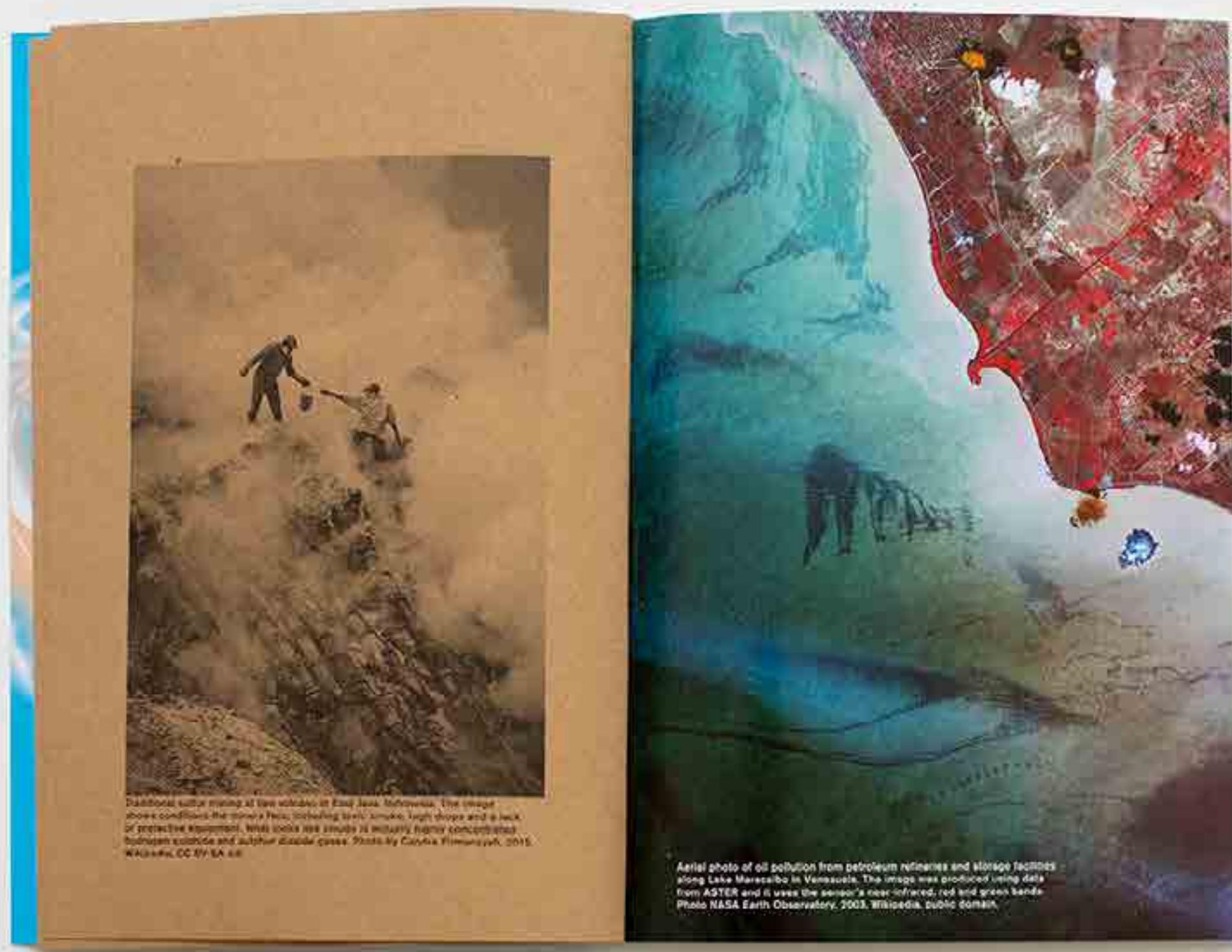
Victoria Douka-Doukopoulos
Pim Sem Benjamin

Devin Hentz's interest in the thobe, a white sleeveless garment typically worn by men in Senegal, can be seen as a material biography produced by the threads running through her practice. The garment in the pictures – styled by Hentz, altered by her tailor Aissaou Cissé – follows Hentz's interest in the situated moments, both in time and material, where dress practice and fashion overlap. The former is atemporal, with deep connections to ethnography and anthropology, and the latter is seasonal and, plainly put, fashions without discounting the significance of culture. Like all of Hentz's work, this project blurs the line between gender norms and modesty, which is culturally embedded in this garment.

Hentz is a researcher and writer with a background in philosophy and a strong interest in theory. She is adamant about maintaining a physical practice, whether through image-making, styling or collaborating with local tailors. Hentz is passionate about engaging actively with people and their techniques and skills as a way of situating herself in her current context. Senegal's extensive infrastructure of tailors and robust fabric trading economy fascinated Hentz even before she moved to Dakar. She sees possibilities to engage with local communities to maintain a route back to certain knowledges, especially since the global fashion industry is adapting sustainability in an attempt to change as little as possible. On the contrary, Hentz is interested in engaging with ecological thinking to question the worldwide fashion industry's existence, all while understanding how important it is for the local economy to adapt, for its benefit. In the Global North's terminology.

The thobe also captures Hentz's dedication to thinking with people. While speaking about the process of altering the thobe, she mentions a anecdote about finding a hard time communicating with her tailor because she doesn't speak the local language well enough. Rather than an obstacle, she sees this constraint as part of the process.

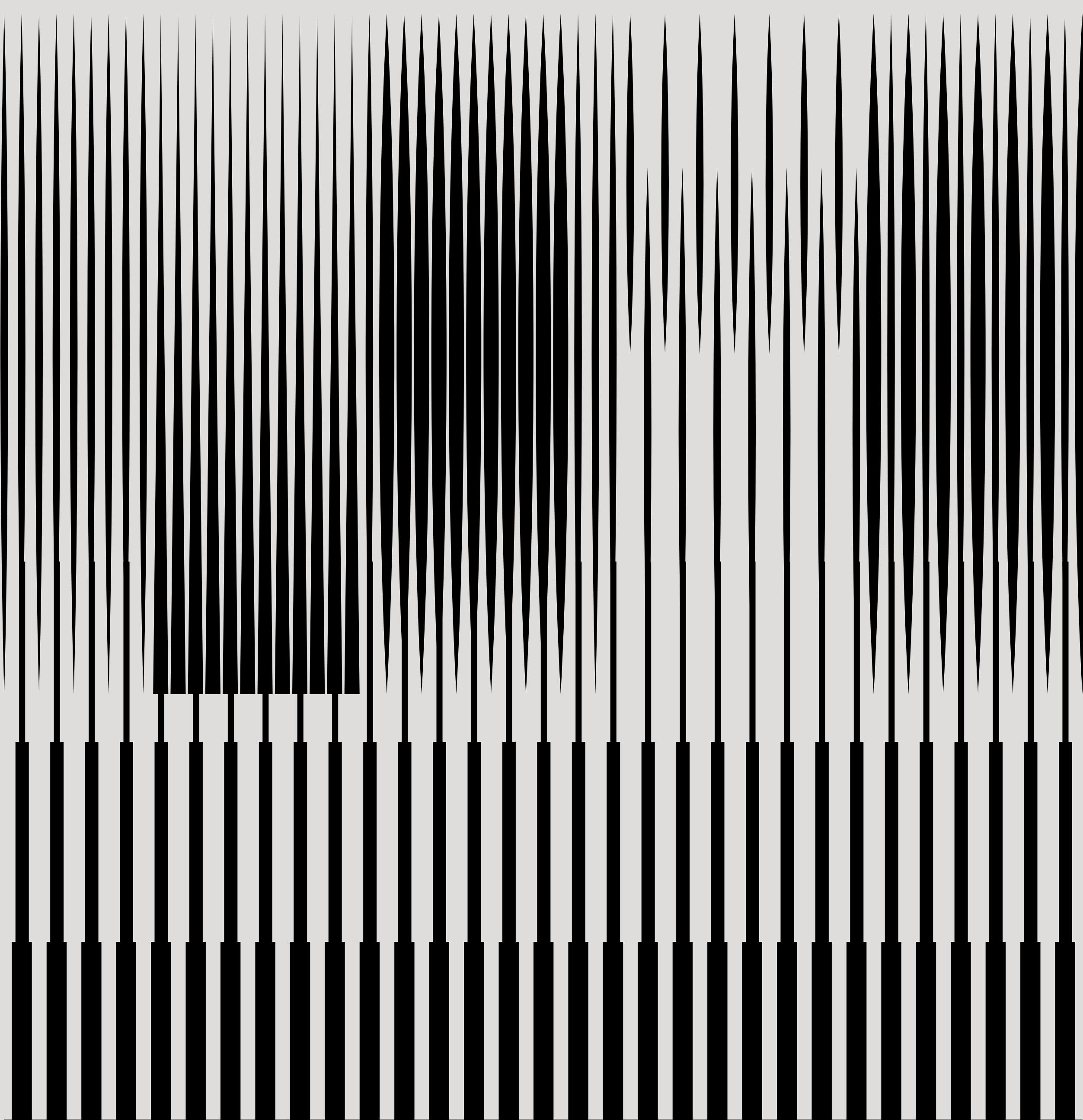
Hentz originally learned fashion's language when she was a model, showing her to be at the system's centre and observe all of its moving parts: designers, stylists and make-up artists, all in the process of visualising a vision. Fashion has a particular way of speaking, Hentz notes, and a historical precedent in making us believe the conversation just finished. When fashion says 'it's been done' or 'something is passé', the highly complex, opaque material farmers, textile manufacturers, fashion brands, magazines and so on must respond to stay part of the conversation. To avoid being

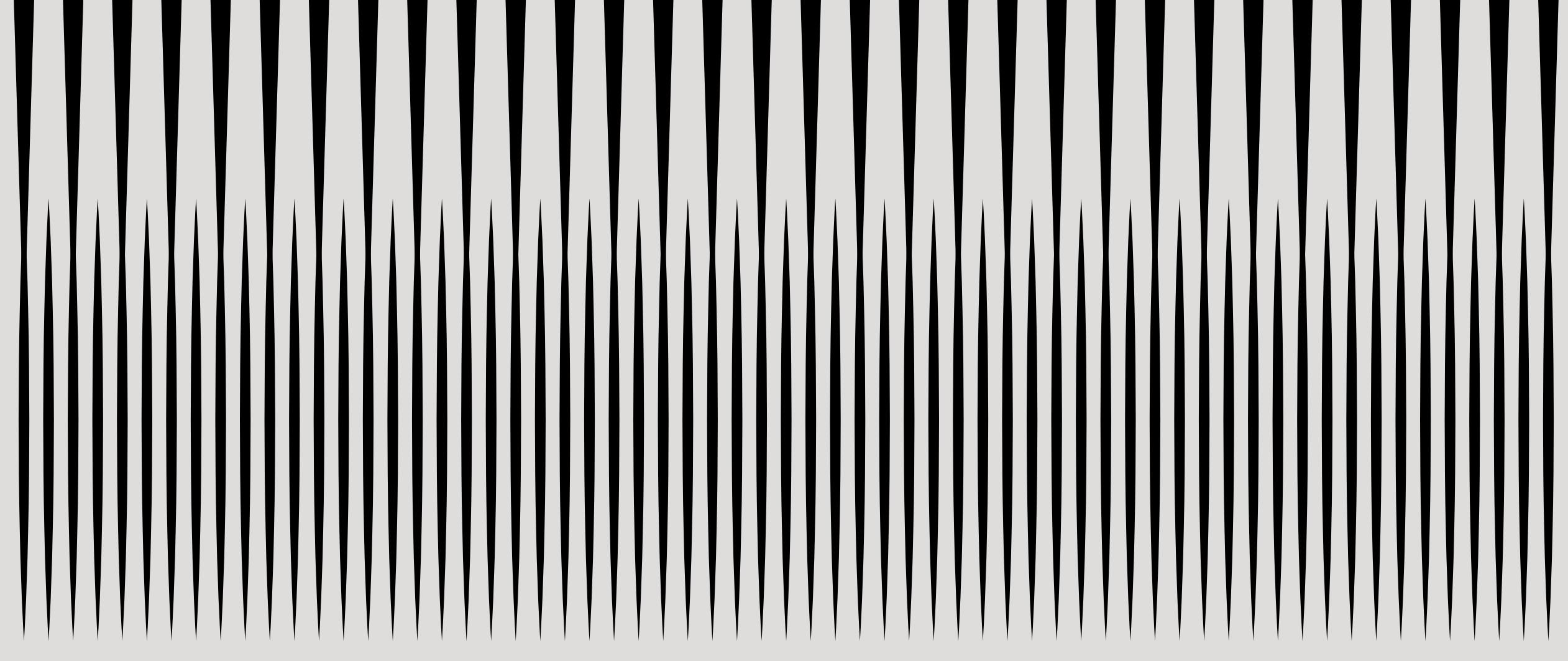


Traditional salt mining at the salines of East Java, Indonesia. The image above confronts the viewer's fears, depicting salt mining, high slopes and a lack of protective measures. Note the red stains in the image, highly higher concentrated hydrogen sulfide and sulphur dioxide cause. Photo by Casyka Filmowicz, 2015. CC BY-SA 4.0

Aerial photo of oil pollution from petroleum refineries and storage tanks along Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela. The image was produced using data from ASTER and it uses the sensor's near-infrared, red and green bands. Photo NASA Earth Observatory, 2003. Wikipedia, public domain.

Sonic Acts Academy Almanacs



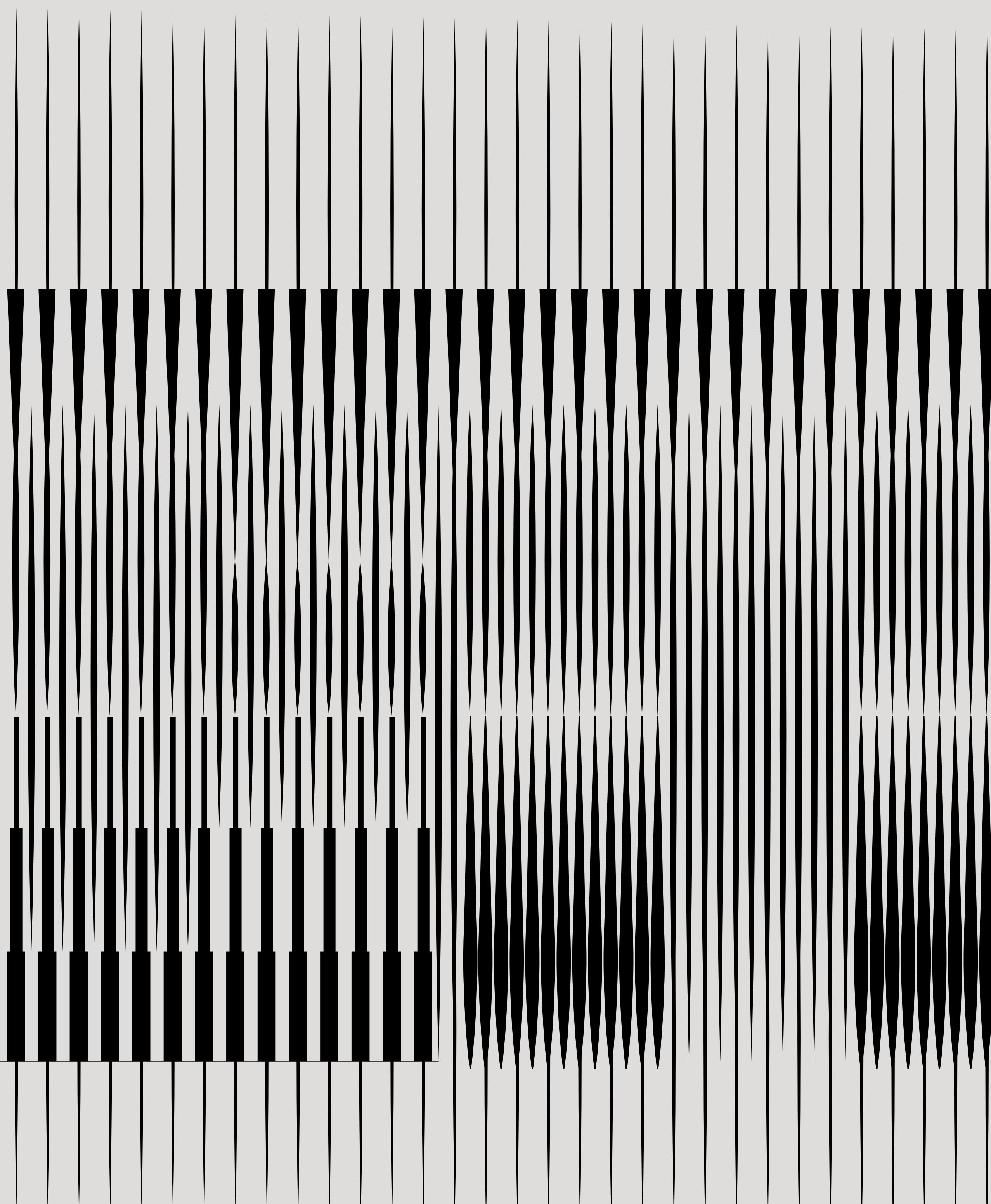


Appearing in conjunction with the three editions of Sonic Acts Academy (2018–2020), this collection of small publications provides an in-depth look into the processes of artistic knowledge.

It presents insights into the kind of practices that diffuse the distinction between theory and practice. Ranging from a zine, to a reader, and a magazine, the series highlights experimental formats and works-in-progress, allowing the printed page to match the pace of research. Sourcing contributions from a wide array of disciplines, the publications showcase visual and textual narratives alongside contemporary discourse focused on decolonial, feminist, and queer methodologies.

Sonic Acts Academy was established in 2016 as a smaller-scale version of the biannual Sonic Acts Festival and with a focus on artistic research, experimentation, and young artists. Over three editions, and through a diverse programme of seminars, keynotes, discussion forums, exhibitions, sound performances and film screenings,

Sonic Acts Academy developed into a new platform with a strong focus on educational practices and critical examinations of ‘knowledge production’ in contemporary art. The Academy worked closely with leading art schools in the Netherlands and abroad, including the Sandberg Institute, Utrecht University, ArtEZ University of Art, Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, Goldsmiths University of London, etc.



Sonic Acts Academy 2020 Magazine



Editor: Mirna Belina

Copy editor: Jason Coburn

Design: The Rodina

**108 p., 19.5 x 28.5 cm, English,
February 2020**

ISBN: 978-90-823216-6-1

€6

(Sold Out, PDF Available)

Critical essays, interviews and visual interventions in this volume navigate the messy world of climate crisis and oppressive capital-ism. Through various contributions, the magazine brings together different facets of diverse disciplines that imagine what (and for whom) a future worth living is. It pairs photographs, drawings, manuals, and film stills that highlight the strategies of visibility and mobilisation that art enables.

The featured critical essays and rigorous discourse shift our attention towards listening to ecocide, humanity's extractive relationship to the cosmos, and the damage sensed by more-than-human ensembles.

CONTRIBUTORS

Terike Haapoja, T. J. Demos, Nabil Ahmed, Anja Kanngieser, Dehlia Hannah, Nadim Samman, Roc Jiménez de Cisneros, DESIGN EARTH (Rania Ghosn, El Hadi Jazairy), Lukáš Likavčan, Daniel Mann, MÆKUR (Maia Urstad, Eva Rowson and Anton Kats), Amie Galbraith, Ting Ding, DeForrest Brown, Jr., Hugo Esquinca, Maika Garnica, Sadaf H Nava, Helen Pritchard, Jara Rocha, Femke Snelting, Laura Benítez Valero, Marja Ahti, Kali Malone, François Bonnet, Lag OS, The Rodina

Ecology as Intrasectionality

→

This essay was first published in *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 2019).

T. J. Demos will give a lecture at the opening of the Sonic Acts Academy conference on 22 February.

T. J. Demos

Climate change protesters outside the Australian embassy in London, where Extinction Rebellion London group staged a demonstration against the Australian government's response to the wildfires on 10 January 2020. Photos by Gareth Morris.

A surge of recent art has engaged ecology in newly complex ways, including by confronting environmental injustice and social violence in aesthetically provocative forms. Consider the visual culture abetting pipeline blockades and Indigenous sovereignty struggles, including at Standing Rock; the creative social engagements motoring the recent campaigns to remove arms and drug dealers and petrocaptalist climate deniers from the governing bodies of cultural institutions; and the social media feeds and direct actions driving recent Extinction Rebellion mobilisations.¹ Building off the insights of political ecology, my work addresses such practices by approaching ecology as a mode of intersectionality, insisting on the inseparability between environmental matters of concern and sociopolitical and economic frameworks of injustice. Intersectionality – emerging from a long history of African American activism and antiracist, antisexist politics, more recently codified in the Black feminist legal theory of Kimberlé Crenshaw and underscored within multiple struggles for decolonisation² – refuses to divide overlapping systems of oppression (such as those tied to race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability) and thereby challenges the essentialisation of one or another term in isolation.

Ecology, in my view, functions similarly as a site of indissoluble relationality that highlights and indeed is constituted by, interaction (or even 'intra-action', in the sense posited by Karen Barad, whose theorisation within the field of feminist science studies rejects the separateness and purity of originary categories, arguing instead for a political ontology of being-in-relation³). Just as carbon pollution materialises differential sociopolitical impacts – and there is indeed no way to account for toxicity outside of its disparate consequences – so too does economic inequality produce unequal vulnerabilities

14

T. J. Demos



civilization creates its own pattern in the sky based on stories and people that are deemed important.

Planetary Ark

Planet Earth is in the midst of its sixth mass extinction of plants and animals, with as many as 30 to 50 percent of all species heading toward extinction by midcentury. Climate change and uncertain futures define a new normal on Earth. Animal species at (or past) the brink of extinction are sent out in a cubicle on a Planetary Ark. The animals march into the Empire State to embark on their journey. Scientists on board believe humans have an ethical obligation toward all life-forms: no to extermination, extinction, and genocide. The anthropocentric version of the ark includes "sacrificial" animals that were launched into space on scientific experiments to test the human body's ability to survive spaceflight. Laika, one of the first animals in space, was never expected to survive and died within hours from overheating. The Planetary Ark—or "ship of fools"—is also a place of refuge for scientists and environmentalists, after denialists have dismissed global warming as "nonsense" and a "hoax" and omitted the words "climate change" altogether from all government communications. In this microcosm, travelers embrace their fellow travelers with remarkable care, so a few thousand years later their offspring form a new creature made entirely of the merger from all forms of life on the spaceship. The ark takes seriously the relations between people and other critters, animal or not. Its return to Earth appeals for a radically altered sense of subjectivity and terrestrial values.

Pacific Cemetery

Already in 1966, a *Life* magazine photo essay alerted its readers to the "growing clutter of space trash" and observed, just as cities had become clogged with animal waste and garbage, space trash could eventually become the proper concern of extraterrestrial street cleaners. Over the coming decades, thousands of satellites will be launched into space and eventually decommissioned after 15 years of operation. More than 1,400 nautical miles from the nearest land, Point Nemo is already the cemetery of defunct spacecraft. The cemetery includes the Soviet-era MIR space station, the Jules Verne ATV, European Space Agency cargo ships, and a SpaceX rocket. The US designates Point Nemo as the Strategic Trust Territory of the Space Age, building on the precedent of the Pacific Proving Grounds. In 1947, the US secured an agreement with the UN, designating the islands of Micronesia as the Strategic

Territory. The US conducted nuclear testing at such sites between 1946 and 1962. Yet the directive stated that the US should "promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants, and to this end shall . . . protect the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources." Dubbed the "Oceanic Point of Inaccessibility," Point Nemo becomes the landfill of the Space Age. In a vortex spiral island, decommissioned satellites and other space debris are brought back from orbit. Point Nemo Pacific Cemetery doubles as a transforming project, recycling defunct space objects into bits of sovereignty to house climate refugees from Pacific Islands. Such low-lying coastal countries are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise, and the loss of physical territory implies they no longer meet the UN criteria for statehood. The first submerged Pacific Islands become a US Strategic Territory, not unlike the Marshall Islands, where the US buries its space trash and promotes economic advancement and right to self-determination of such planetary refugees.

Cosmography, Cosmopolitics, Cosmorama

The three geographic fictions constitute Cosmorama; they reshape the registers of humanity's relationship to the cosmos, namely, those of aesthetic knowledge, political relations, and scientific curiosity. The media devices of speculative fiction and the spectacle are tools to make explicit, as if viewed through a magnifying glass, those same politics that shape planet Earth and the extraplanetary.

First, *Cosmorama* is cosmography; it is a form of unified and aesthetic knowledge responding to the current ecological crisis as well as to the newly opened extraterrestrial spaces of human occupation. Alexander von Humboldt's influential treatise *Cosmos* had achieved such a synthesis of the geographic and the cosmographic, drawing together heaven and earth.¹ Humboldt's vision of the globe presents a totality of scales and sciences on Earth in an assemblage of studies in astronomy, geography, and geology. His "portrait of nature" draws together a physical geography of the Earth and of outer space—cosmic nebulae and planets. Humboldt reimagines the big picture by visualizing connections and dependencies across local, planetary, and cosmic scales. Humboldt did not choose Earth as the vantage point from which to look out into the expansive space. Instead, he took up a position in extraterrestrial space to approach Earth like a visitor from a foreign planet.² Cosmography is important because it uses visual agency to synthesize scientific knowledge into a holistic representation.

Second, *Cosmorama* is cosmopolitics; the scale of extraterrestrial geography has the power to explicate politics of the cosmos, as suggested by Isabelle Stengers. Historically, the cosmos is a premature closure of a political sphere, whereby cosmopolitanism and cosmology have sought to establish power and legitimate authority through the ever-imminent promise of equal citizenship and the ventriloquizing of the heavens. Far from understanding the cosmos as "an Earth finally united, in which everyone is a citizen,"³ Stengers, following Latour,⁴ insists that "politics keep the cosmos open and ever reconciling" to reach outside the human and terrestrial realm. The cosmos becomes a critical concept because it counters both anthropocentrism and geocentrism in the old sense of Earth being the center of the universe and of man being the highest being there is. Thus, for Stengers, to engage in cosmopolitics is to *design* simultaneously the spatial and political assemblies. Cosmopolitics is the tool to build a world from a situated location where practitioners operate—a practice without the dogma of expertise. In her "Cosmopolitan Proposal," Stengers advocates for the notion of thought experiments that "slow down" reasoning and create an opportunity to arouse a slightly different awareness of the problems and situations mobilizing us.⁵ Fictions are put forth as thought experiments for science speculation. Stengers asks, "What if they were crafting tales that disclose their epoch's capacity to feel that there are other possible ways for a world to consist?"⁶ Science-fiction author Ursula Le Guin observes that the metaphors of fiction are ways of seeing reality with "spaceships faster than light, the weird worlds and alien beings, the intolerable or utopian societies, the dooms envisaged, the glories imagined . . . They are the medium to describe what in fact is going on, what people actually do and feel, how people relate to everything else in this vast sack, this belly of the universe, this unending story."

And last, *Cosmorama* is the site of spectacle. Similar to earlier image machines—panorama and diorama—the cosmonoma is a form of popular entertainment, a peep box or rarely show through which the spectator views a set of scenes—of distant lands and exotic subjects. The peep box or room was often decorated to resemble theatrical scenes. It put the cosmos on stage: it materialized gods, magnified minuscule creatures, pulled faraway things and placed them near. The show was accompanied by spoken recitation that explained or dramatized what was happening inside. In the New Space Age, the cosmos is once again something that needs to be collected, put together,

however provisionally, and *Cosmorama* gives form to such an ephemeral common world. *Cosmorama* is a series of scenes that might be deemed inappropriate to be discussed explicitly and on Earth: a mise-en-scène that challenges the transformation of space into grounds for private profit. *Cosmorama* hacks the popularized spectacle-machine to render sensible the uncanny underbelly of both the New Space Age and the event of the Anthropocene. In doing so, it re-centers the political in technological and environmental narratives. Its most obscure tactical work might be to remind us that terrestrial politics are also and always a politics of the cosmos.

Cosmorama was commissioned for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale U.S. Pavilion "Dimensions of Citizenship," curated by Niall Atkinson, Ann Lui, and Mimi Zeiger.

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¹ Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883).

² Peter Sloterdijk, "On the Emergence of the World System," *In the World Interior of Capital: Towards a Philosophical Theory of Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013).

³ Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitan Proposal," *Making Things Public*, ed. B. Latour and P. Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 994–1003.

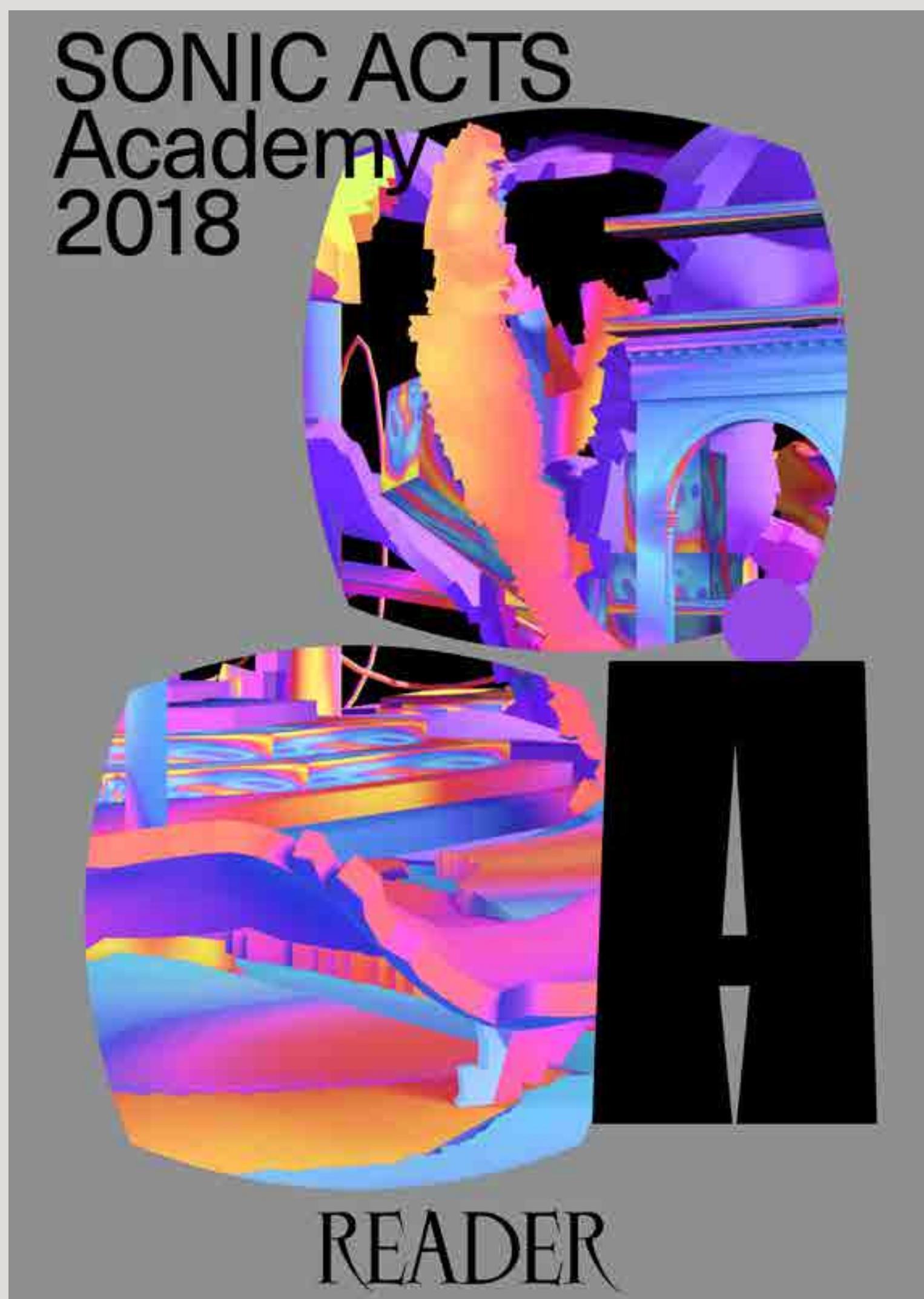
⁴ Bruno Latour, "Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics? Comments on the Peace Terms of Ulrich Beck," *Common Knowledge* 10, no. 3 (2004), 450–462.

⁵ Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitan Proposal," *Making Things Public*, ed. B. Latour and P. Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 994–1003.

⁶ Isabelle Stengers, *Gaia, the Urgency to Think (and Feel)*, 2014, <https://osmihomesdeslegaia.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/isabelle-stengers.pdf>.

⁷ Ursula K. Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places* (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 170.

Sonic Acts Academy 2018 Reader



Editor: Mirna Belina
Copy editor: Jason Coburn
Design: The Rodina

**144 p., 17 x 24 cm, February
2018**

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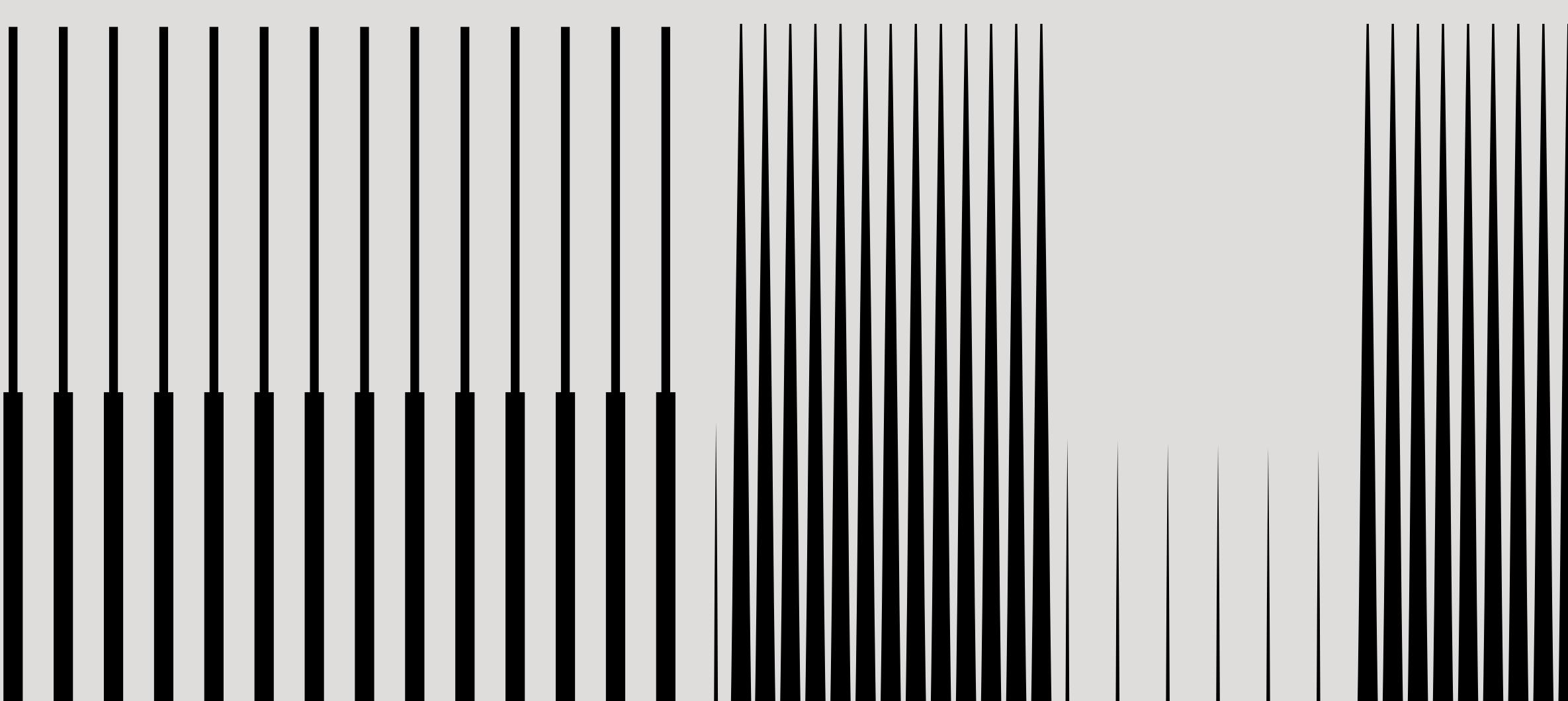
€9.50

Taking the form of a reader, this publication is both a playground and a radical syllabus. It presents artistic and theoretical practices that focus on experimental educational practices and the critical examination of knowledge production in the field of art. Among others it contains: a speculative essay on the role of museums from the year 2030 (by Nora Sternfeld); a mediation on composer and mathematician Catherine

Christer Hennix; one episode from Nicole Hewitt's project *This Woman Is Called Jasna*, a speculative history in nine instalments covering 20 years in the life of a woman from Vukovar who works at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague; an essay on the history of the container – the synecdoche of logistics – as part of a global system of capital by Charmaine Chua; research about sinkholes that have rapidly started appearing in the past decades on the shores of the Dead Sea by Sasha Litvintseva and Daniel Mann; and *Aisteach*, an imaginary archive of the Irish avant-garde curated by renowned sound artists Jennifer Walshe.

CONTRIBUTORS

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SINKHOLES IN SIGNIFICATION

SASHA
LITVINTSEVA,
DANIEL MANN

24.02. SAT 17:30
Film and a lecture at the
Symposium
o Dansmakers
This Is Not a Hole:
Sinkholes in Signification
Sasha Litvintseva,
Daniel Mann

Sasha Litvintseva (Russia/UK) is an artist, filmmaker, and researcher whose work is situated at the intersection of geological, embodied, and historical temporalities and materialities. Her work has been exhibited worldwide including at the Berlinale Forum Expanded, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Wrocław Media Art Biennale, and Institute of Contemporary Art, London. Solo shows and retrospective screenings

include at Union Docs, Courtisane Film Festival, and Close-Up Film Centre. A graduate of the Slade School of Fine Art, she is currently working on a PhD proposing the concept of geological filmmaking at Goldsmiths, where she is a founding member of the Screen and Audiovisual Research Unit and Associate Lecturer in Media Arts. She is also an independent curator of contemporary moving image and co-curator of the November Film Festival.

Daniel Mann (US/UK) is a London-based filmmaker and writer. He is currently completing his PhD thesis at Goldsmiths on image warfare and the integration of habitual media into armed conflict. Mann's films have been shown internationally. His latest feature film, *Motza el hayam* (Low Tide), was premiered at the 2017 Berlinale Forum and received the Best First Feature Award at the 2017 Haifa Film Festival.

SONIC ACTS Academy 2018

66



Top: An 8,100 TEU Evergreen container vessel docked in the Port of Oakland (p. 79, p. 80). Photo by Charmaine Chua (2014).

Bottom: A 12-metre Evergreen container is lowered by a spreader device onto a truck chassis in the Port of Hong Kong. Photo by Charmaine Chua (2014).



Sonic Acts Academy 2016 Zine



Editor: Femke Herregraven,
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Copy editor: LGOC,
Amsterdam
Design: Femke
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2017

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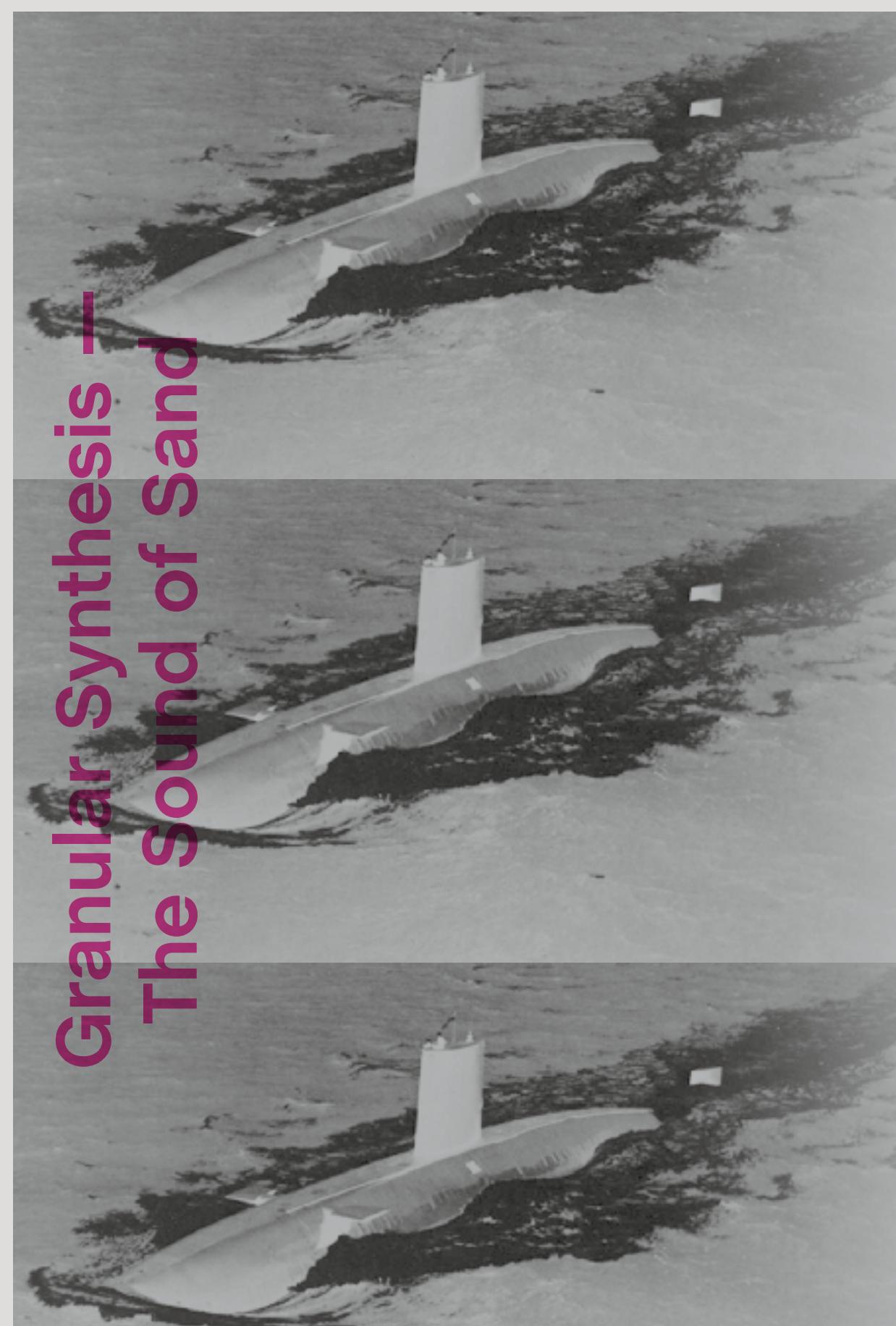
€7

Published on the occasion of the inaugural Sonic Acts Academy, this zine-style publication highlights artistic practices as vital to understanding the complexities of our contemporary world. The wide range of works challenge the sterile forms of knowledge presentations by celebrating the histories, textures, and patterns of hands-on and intuitive working methods. The strong visual character of the zine grounds the texts, essays,

and manifestos firmly into the visual and avoids re-framing artistic research practices within a scientific vernacular or methodology. With an experimental typographical approach and stripped of traditional formalities, the zine offers a loud, deconstructed experience of artistic research strategies and processes.

CONTRIBUTORS

#Additivism (Morehshin Allahyari, Daniel Rourke), Thomas Ankersmit, Louis Henderson, Ewa Justka, Anton Kats, Okkyung Lee, Yoneda Lemma, Maryanne Amacher Archive, M.E.S.H., Anna Mikkola, BJ Nilsen, Sally-Jane Norman, Dick Raaijmakers, Daïchi Saïto, Susan Schuppli, Raphael Vanoli, Ana Vaz, Jos Smolders, Frans de Waard (WaSm)



Granular Synthesis
The Sound of Sand

In June 2013 a group of us—artists and curators—travelled to Plymouth in the UK to tour the decommissioned nuclear-powered submarine *HMS Courageous* anchored at 3 Basin, HM Naval Base Devonport. Our visit was part of larger research project about nuclear culture spearheaded by London-based curator Ele Carpenter and commissioned by the Arts Catalyst. My particular interest has always been to understand how science is worked out culturally, that is to say, how the objects, technologies, and practices of science are narrated in ways that makes them 'consequential' for culture and society more broadly. I joined this fieldtrip through my research on Chernobyl, specifically from an interest in the ways in which evidence for events that operate beyond the threshold of natural human perception express themselves and can be rendered visible or audible.

Early Monday morning, on 28 April 1986, Cliff Robinson was about to begin his shift at the Forsmark nuclear power station in Sweden. When he passed through the plant's radiation detector he triggered its alarm, signalling the dangerous presence of radioactive contamination. After repeated attempts to enter, the alarm's warnings were finally silenced. His job was to monitor radioactivity throughout the power station. When he completed his rounds that morning, he returned to see a growing queue of workers waiting to pass through the detector. Each time one of them walked through it the alarm emitted its seemingly temperamental caution. 'No one could get through because the alarm kept going off.' Realising that something much more serious might be happening, Robinson grabbed a shoe worn by one of the waiting workers and placed it on the germanium detector in the lab. 'Then, I saw a sight that I will never forget,' he says. 'The shoe was highly contaminated. I could see this spectrum rising up very quickly. And it was just amazing, because there were many radioactive elements there that we normally didn't see in the cooling water at Forsmark. I remember vaguely that I had some idea that perhaps a nuclear bomb had been exploded somewhere'.²

When the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority received notification from Forsmark later that morning reporting unusually high levels of radiation despite no evidence of any breakdown at the plant, concerns that an atmospheric release of radioactive isotopes had taken place somewhere else were immediately raised, including the possibility of the detonation of a nuclear bomb. Soon other Swedish plants were also reporting extremely high levels of radiation. Baffled, the Authority began plotting reports of contamination in Sweden and reactor locations throughout the region as well as charting wind patterns on a map. Several Soviet nuclear power plants including Chernobyl rapidly emerged as likely sources. Indeed, given Chernobyl's considerable distance from Forsmark, initial speculation pointed to a Russian plant close to the Swedish border. The scale of the accident would have to have been massive if radioactive isotopes originating from as far away as the Ukraine were to have migrated north-west

Susan Schuppli

The Fluid Outside: The 3D Additivist Manifesto

The operation of civilisation, especially in its Imperialist and capitalist guises, can be understood through the domination, appropriation, and control of that which is considered 'Outside'. The troubling success of Colonialism can be traced to what Karl Marx called a 'primary accumulation' of labour from colonised and enslaved peoples. As well as the subjugation of human labour, growth has been maintained through the consumption of 'cheap nature' in the form of using animals for work, the annexation of land for agriculture, and the mining and burning of fossil fuels such as crude oil. As Luciana Parisi

and Tiziana Terranova have argued, the female body is amongst the most contested of Outsides. Through the subordination of sexual reproduction to the regulations attached to marriage and family, the female body becomes a 'fluid Outside, which in turn lends energy to the thermodynamic cycle.' Simply put, 'the fluid Outside' is anything we consider to be alienated as 'nature'. A term that has been applied to every subjugated resource, animal, and people as the rampant work of 'progress' has proceeded.



Prototype Ideophone I

Dick Raaijmakers

The loudspeaker as Loud Speaker

The loudspeaker in its role of Loud Speaker consists of an electro-mechanical system at the end of a long, straight-lined route that always starts out from the same point: that of the Soft Hearer. The Loud Speaker will, in such a circuit, reproduce the patterns of vibrations formulated and sent out by the Soft Hearer as accurately as possible. Such a progression with the Soft Hearer at one end and the Loud Speaker at the other, allows the acoustic information to pass in one direction only. Indeed, the Loud Speaker is authoritarian—it amplifies the speaker and silences the hearer. The loudspeaker as Loud Speaker indoctrinates. It is, essentially, a one-way communicator, for there is no possibility of dialogue or contradiction. Loud Speakers can be useful, instructive and necessary, but most of the time they are irritating, deafening, and hostile. However, the real danger to our privacy in this society does not lie in the loud-mouthed presence of Big Brother's Voice in all its manifestations, but in the ever-present possibility of being watched over and spied upon by Soft Hearers.

The Loudspeaker as an Illusionist

There are two types of auditory illusions. The first is the illusion of recognition, in which case a certain minimum of information is sufficient to bring about recognition and identification with a performer, an instrument or a piece of music. Continued information of this kind, even on a very small scale, insures a particular kind of listening enjoyment.

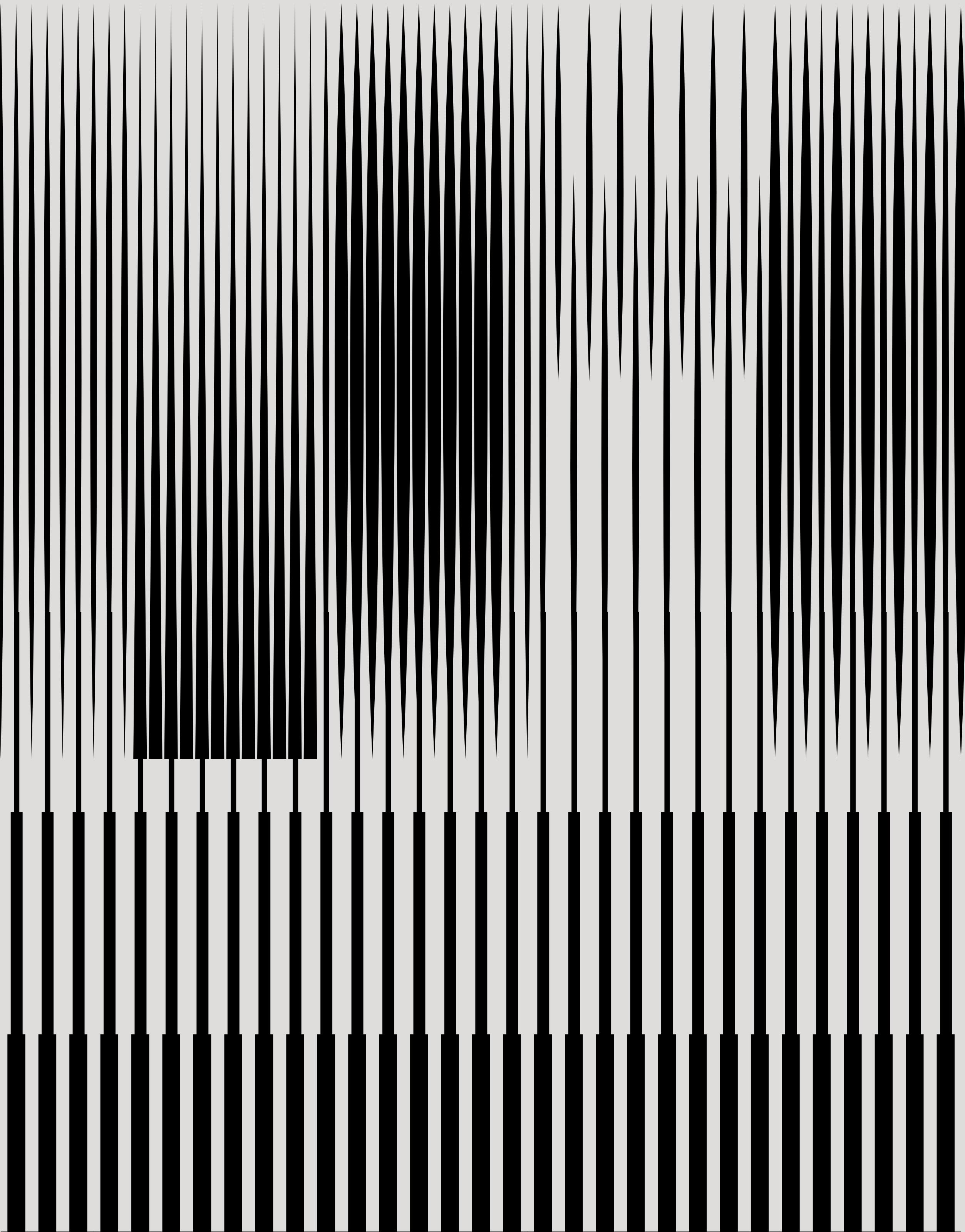
The history of sound recording teaches how much may be detracted from Caruso before reaching the point that the sound of a Caruso record is no longer identifiable with the singer himself. This of course does not negate that the sound of a Caruso record is highest fidelity based on its own standards, and that so long as that is so, a rattling, tinny horn can move thousands of opera lovers to tears even today—for Caruso sings!

The second type is the illusion of spatial realism: stereophonic techniques enable the listener, in his strategically placed seat, to evoke or extinguish a panoramic view over something larger than himself; thus, at a flick of the wrist, a bourgeois ideal—to master the world on a living-room scale—is adequately realized.

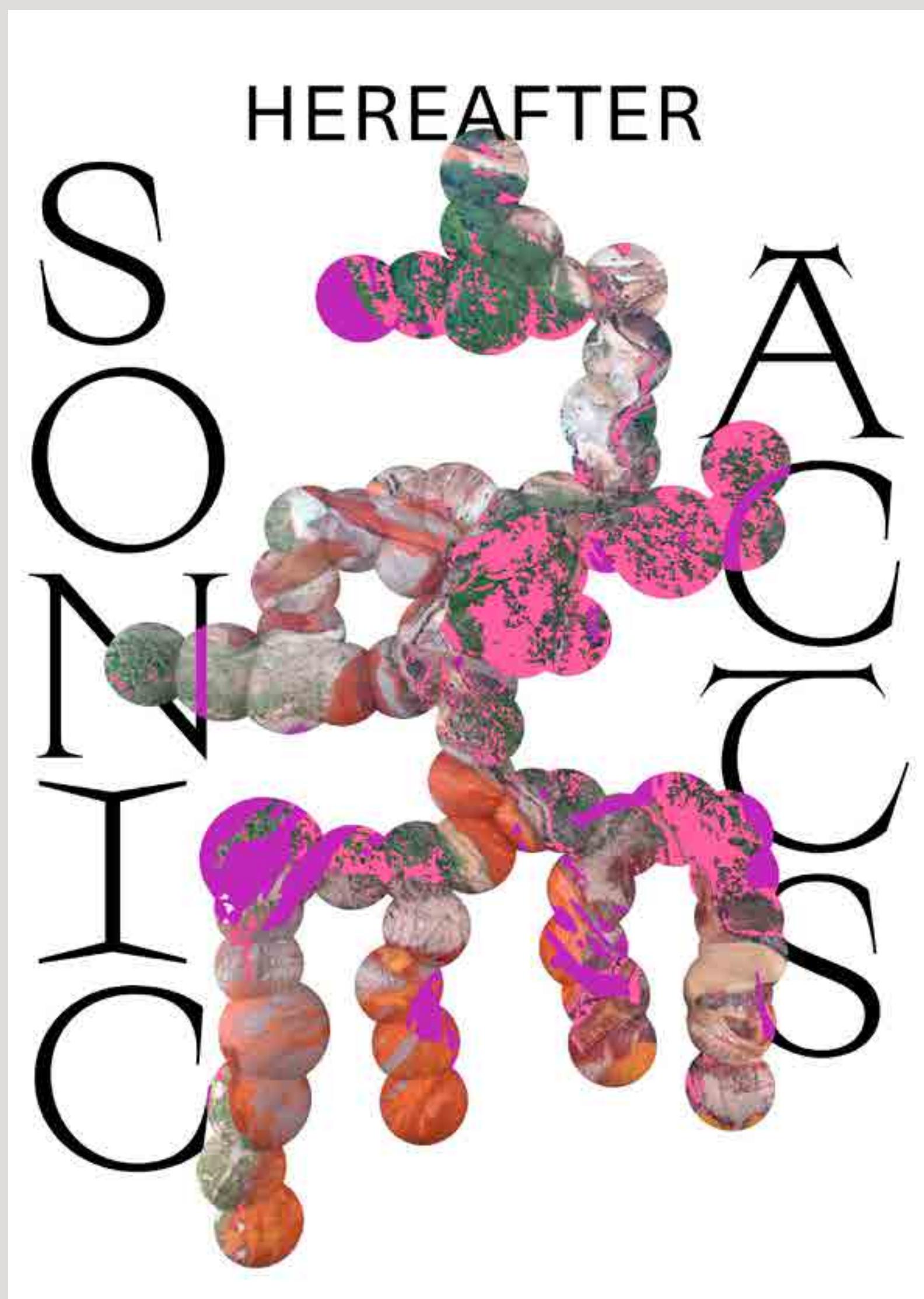
It is remarkable that the position of the listener vis à vis the stereophonically placed loudspeakers is reminiscent of a meticulously dosed radiation treatment: stereophonic speakers are, in fact, 'warm' loudspeakers. On the one hand they function as acoustic living-room fixtures, on the other hand they serve to convey 50, 100 or 200 watts in the form of musical warmth to the listener, to whom this warmth—with the muses themselves as its source—is a constant confirmation of his position as the musical lord of his own petty-bourgeois manor. Thus the fox-terrier of His Master's Voice allows himself to be deluded by the first type of illusion. Just as the tears well up Pavlovian fashion—in the eyes of opera lovers at the first Caruso scratches, so the saliva of recognition fills the mouth of that little cocked-headed dog ('What do I hear? Surely that is my Master's Voice!') at the very first signs of the illusion. It would have been more appropriate if the hall-mark of His Master's Voice had kept up with the times by, for instance, portraying a dog on its back, basking in the warmth of two speakers.

#Additivism

Backlist Highlights



Hereafter



**Editor: Mirna Belina
Copy editor: Jason Coburn
Design: The Rodina**

**320 p., 17 x 24 cm, English,
February 2019
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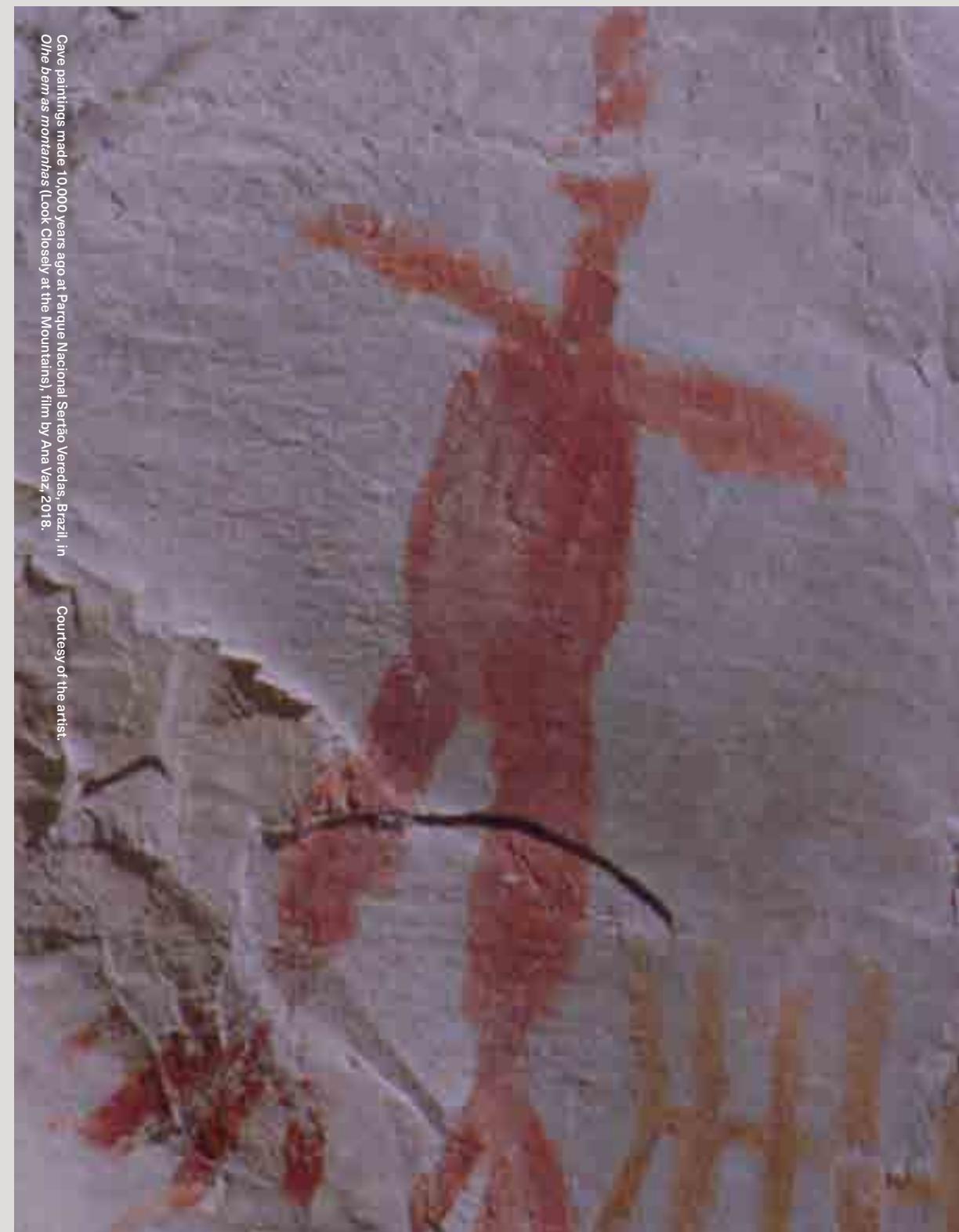
€19.50

This book draws from our quarter-of-a-century festival ‘celebration’, but it is not dedicated to ‘looking back’ on the way Sonic Acts, along with the world, has changed. Rather, it is devoted to finding ways of confronting and surviving the brutality of now. It contains a rare selection of critical essays on contemporary political and climate realities, colonial legacies of European projects, and racial and gender

biases of contemporary technologies. Visual and textual contributions highlight an evocative approach to writing, merging field notes and memoir, to accurately capture the processes of making work fuelled by research. It also contains tender contributions that embed modes of discourse within the visual, in order to gauge the complexities and interconnections of this crisis and re-imagine a different reality.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Cave paintings made 10,000 years ago at Parque Nacional Sertão Jurema, Brazil. In *One born as monarca* (Look Closely at the Mountains), film by Ana Vaz, 2018.

Courtesy of the artist.

I cannot help but think of the large and lasting influence of Maya Deren's cinema. Her daring propositions of denaturalised and mutually reciprocal relationships between the machine, the psyche, and the territories it experiences are exemplary of this very alliance between body and machine: 'to think of the mechanism of cinema as an extension of human faculties is to deny the advantage of the machine.'⁴ In the case of Deren's cinema, what we experience is a reciprocal alliance between the dancing-breathing-watching body and the machine as an accomplice, transforming our perception of conscious and unconscious relationships between the mind and the image, the image and the body, always as phenomena rather than event.

This ontological relationship between the body and the image traverses myriad territories and temporalities, from caverns to screens, always engaging in particular forms of subject-making. Whether moving or still, depictions of bodies in images or images made from particular bodies are in and of themselves cultural forms of producing subjects, forms of negotiating between subject and object, between seeing and being seen.

'Human beings see themselves as such. However, the moon, a serpent, a jaguar, and the mother of smallpox see them as a tapir or as a peccary, who they kill', writes the anthropologist Gerhard Baer about the Machiguenga people living in the forests of south-east Peru.⁵ Following this line of anthropological perspectivism, jaguars see blood as beer, the dead see crickets as fish, vultures see the worms of rotten meat as baked fish.⁶ Hence, *being is existing in relationship to*, not relatively but relationally in a perspectivist enmesh of partial realities.

Cinema is a perspectivist medium, a medium able to produce infinite partial realities; building *artifices as worlds*, *world-forms* made from myriad perspectives. And it is due to this cyborg alliance with the machine, that it is able to transform human perception, allowing for *realities to mutate into chimeras* and *chimeras into realities*.

The Death and Birth of the Monster

The annals of a simplified history of cinema seem to have consistently wanted to tame the unfathomable capacities of the 'intelligent machine' in order to capture its spell as a means to fix, imprint, master, and unify idealised versions of realities, both through fiction and the fetish of the *vérité*. The dogmatists of fiction or the purists of documentary cinema

⁴ Maya Deren, *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film* by Maya Deren (Kingston, New York: Documentext, 2005).

⁵ Gerhard Baer cited in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *A Inconsistência da Alma Selvagem*, my translation (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2002), p. 350.

⁶ Ibid.

"ITS RESIDENT AUDIENCE AND HEADS OF STATE WAS THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN FEDERATION AT THE MEETING HELD IN LONDON [UK] WHICH HAD ASSIGNED SOUTHERN TRINIDAD AND GRENADA WITH HEZ PRACTICE, GUYANA AND HICL."

"THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN FRIENDS OF AFRICA (I.A.F.A.) WAS A PAN-AFRICAN ORGANISATION ESTABLISHED IN RESPONSE TO THE ITALIAN INVASION OF ERITREA [AFRICA] IN 1935. ITS FOUNDER FOUNDING MEMBERS INCLUDED C. L. R. JAMES, ANTHONY ASHWELL BARRY, CHARLES JONES (A. & A. BRAITHWAITE), JOHN KENYATTA AND GOSSELIE PROUDHSE, WHO RECALLED TO SUPPORT ERITREANS [AFRICA] FREEDOM FROM COLONIAL POWERS."

"THE CAMPAIGNING OF THE I.A.F.A., ALONGSIDE OTHER PAN-AFRICAN GROUPS EVENTUALLY LEAD TO THE 5TH PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS IN MANCHESTER [IN 1945]."

BRAUCH: HAGIMAH ADI, PAN-AFRICANIST, AUTHOR, INDIAN

GETTY IMAGES OWNS THE RIGHTS TO THESE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE RALLY THAT THE I.A.F.A. ORGANISED IN DRAFFORD SQUARE [UK] ON 25 AUGUST 1935.

* "PROTEST AGAINST THE ITALIAN INVASION OF ERITREA, LONDON, 1935. THIS WAS ONE OF THE EARLY MARCHES AGAINST ITALIAN AGGRESSION."

(1935) IN DRAFFORD SQUARE, LONDON, ENGLAND
PROTEST AGAINST THE ITALIAN INVASION OF ERITREA

"PEOPLE ON THE PLATFORM"

"THE CLOUDS ARE ABOVE US"
BY PLACIDE MONBOULOU

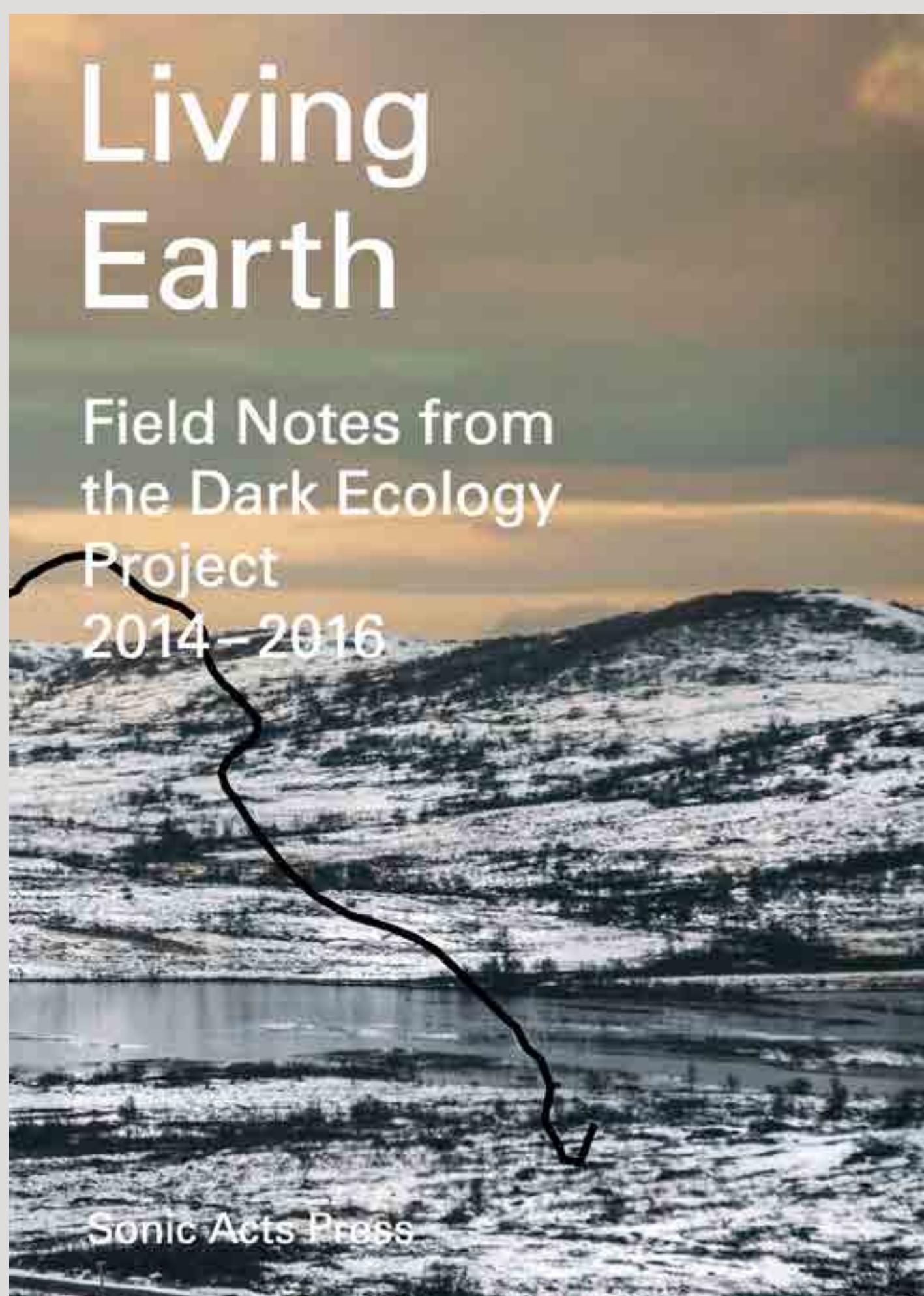
"SPEECH OF A MAN AGAINST THE EMPIRE IN ERITREA"

[1935] COOK CAN GOVERN:
THEIR IMPACT,
WORKS OF
CLINT JAMES

"WALK" MIGHT BE C. L. R. JAMES,
WALK CLIMATE UK (IMAGE FROM PRESSPA)



Living Earth – Field Notes from Dark Ecology Project 2014–2016



Editor: Mirna Belina
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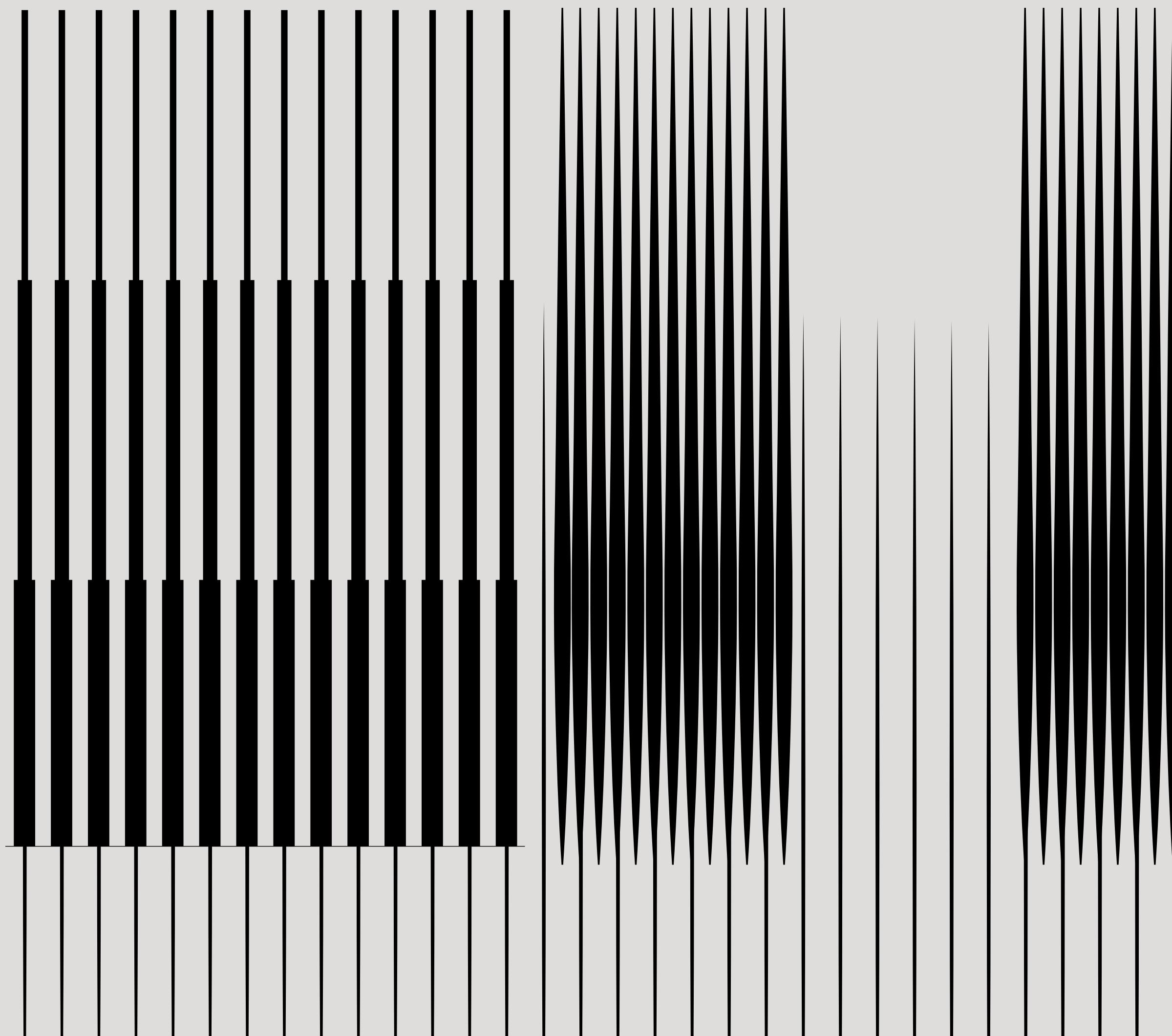
256 p., 17 x 24 cm, May 2016
ISBN: 9789082321623
€19.50
(Sold Out, PDF Available)

This publication is a chronicle of Dark Ecology, a collaborative project between Sonic Acts and Norwegian curator Hilde Methi, held from 2014 to 2016 in different places around Norway and Russia. The project included research trips to the Barents Region: from Kirkenes and Svanvik in Norway, to Nikel, Zapoljarny and Murmansk in Russia. Inspired by Timothy Morton's concept of 'dark ecology' and his philosophy

of ‘ecology without Nature’, this publication rethinks the relationship between nature and art. Through a wide range of contributions, it addresses contemporary critical thought around the consequences of the Anthropocene, while also documenting and presenting the artistic work commissioned for Dark Ecology.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Top—On the road between Nikel and Murmansk. Photo by Lucas van der Velden, 2015. Middle—Propeller graveyard in Murmansk harbour. Photo by Rosa Menkman, 2015. Bottom—Panorama of Murmansk from the feet of the Alyosha, a 35.5-metre-high statue overlooking the city. Its full name is ‘Monument of the Defenders of the Soviet Arctic during the Great Patriotic War’. Photo by Rosa Menkman, 2015.

Interview with the Dark Ecology Curatorial Team

18

This makes these regions a particularly difficult terrain to navigate, also in a spiritual sense. There's a strong urgency to act defiantly while at the same time it is vital for the success of this project and the wellbeing of the travelling party to remain respectful at all times. This is a delicate balance that sometimes seems impossible to maintain.

LV In a way Dark Ecology is also an attempt at ‘unbordering’. Making and doing on a very small and personal level (not a political or bureaucratic level), using the region as a reflection device for testing new approaches and ideas to understand the world in a different way.

HIM Making this border zone into a temporary space for artistic intervention is in my view more important than talking about the border or provoking the border regimes. It's about being present and about insisting on the ability of art to direct our senses, make us listen and see. The ‘activism’ of Dark Ecology is to expose and cultivate the poetical, to stimulate reflection and conversations in, and from, this highly political territory.

MB Dark Ecology experiments with the ‘festival’ format.

For one, it involves ‘curating the audience’. Could you share some ideas about the concept of ‘the Dark Ecology Journey’? **GK** Indeed, we carefully handpick a group of about 50 people for these Journeys. Roughly two thirds consists of people we invite ourselves: artists who are presenting a new work or who come along to think about and work on a new piece, keynote speakers, our Sonic Acts team, the production crew, a documentation crew, and so on. The remaining one third is selected from a list of applicants who respond to our open call. Some are curators, some are artists, some are academics, some are scientists, some are activists, and some are organisers. These people are the only ones who experience the entire Journey. Most of the events we programme along the way are open to the local public as well. Although not necessarily conceived as such, it is my experience that our bright red and yellow tour bus and its very peculiar load are often as much a spectacle for the local audience as the artworks and performances that are presented, usually for the duration of the visit only. It is therefore not entirely clear to me who the audience actually is. But in terms of people experiencing the Journey in its

Dark Ecology — Outside the Comfort Zone

19

Tim Dodson stated that technological progress in the Barents Sea would enable oil companies to move ‘deeper and more broadly into the Arctic’ in his talk ‘The Gateway to the Arctic’ at Arctic Frontiers.³

A key event, as pointed out in the most recent report by the industry coalition organisation Konkraft called *Northwards*, is the resolution of the long-standing offshore border dispute between Norway and Russia in 2010: ‘The agreement enables petroleum operations on both sides of the border, in a promising area in terms of its resources.⁴’ This event has been important to the social contingency of these ‘bordering’ natural resources, as they are also products of cultural, economic and political work.⁵ Through actively intervening to secure what Ben Anderson calls a ‘workable future’ in the uneven geographies of oil and gas developments in the Barents Sea,⁶ Norwegian statecraft has been performed through extensive territorial mapping processes that—in its rhetoric—prevent Russia from setting the operational and environmental standard. Five minutes after the treaty that ended the border dispute between Russia and Norway was officially ratified, Norway’s Petroleum Directorate started surveying the seabed of the entire area for oil and gas deposits (through seismic air guns), and it was officially opened up for petroleum-related activities in 2013.

‘New Norway’

During an interview that I conducted the same year with Erik Solheim, a former Minister of the Environment (2007–12, Socialist Party), he emphasised that with these mapping tactics Norway can avoid problems with Russia. The agreement was considered to be a positive step because there is ‘all reason to believe that Norway will have better control and technology and systems to handle [all aspects of petroleum development], and therefore building up a parallel enterprise as a whole can lead to more responsible management of oil resources on the Russian side.’ Understood as an anticipatory logic, this suggests that if Norway maps all its resources, the government would be in a better position to face an uncertain future with its Eastern neighbour. Still, as Solheim emphasised, there are many uncertainties, and certain conditions will have to be in place:

3. Available at www.arcticfrontiers.com.

4. Konkraft, 2016, Nordover, report available online at: www.konkraft.no.
5. Gavin Bridge, ‘Resource Geographies 1. Making Carbon Economies, Old and New’, in *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 35, no. 6, 2011, pp. 820–34.
6. Ben Anderson, ‘Preemption, Precaution, Preparedness: Anticipatory Action and Future Geographies’, in *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 34, no. 6, 2010, pp. 777–98.



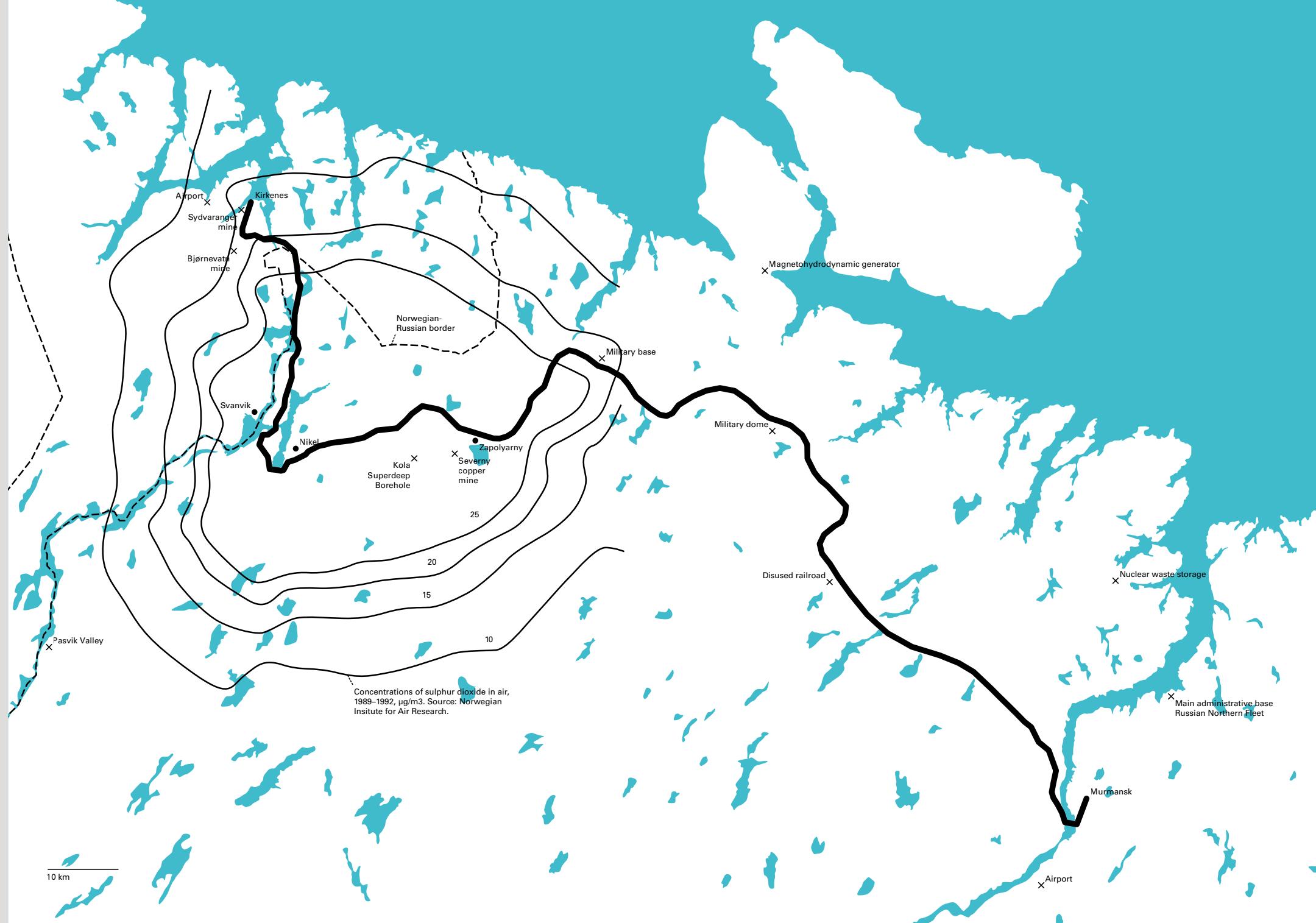
Top—Exploratory drilling in Shтокман field, one of the world’s largest natural gas fields. It is located in the north-western part of the South Barents Basin. Source: <http://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2012/december/article151657>. Photo © Gazprom, 2012. Bottom—The world’s first offshore ice-resistant stationary oil platform (MISP) Prirazlomnaya in the Pechora Sea, operated by Gazprom Neft, 2013. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prirazlomnoye_field#/media/File:MISP_Приразломная_змой.jpg. CC BY-SA 4.0. Photo by Krichevsky.

Berit Kristoffersen

220

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221



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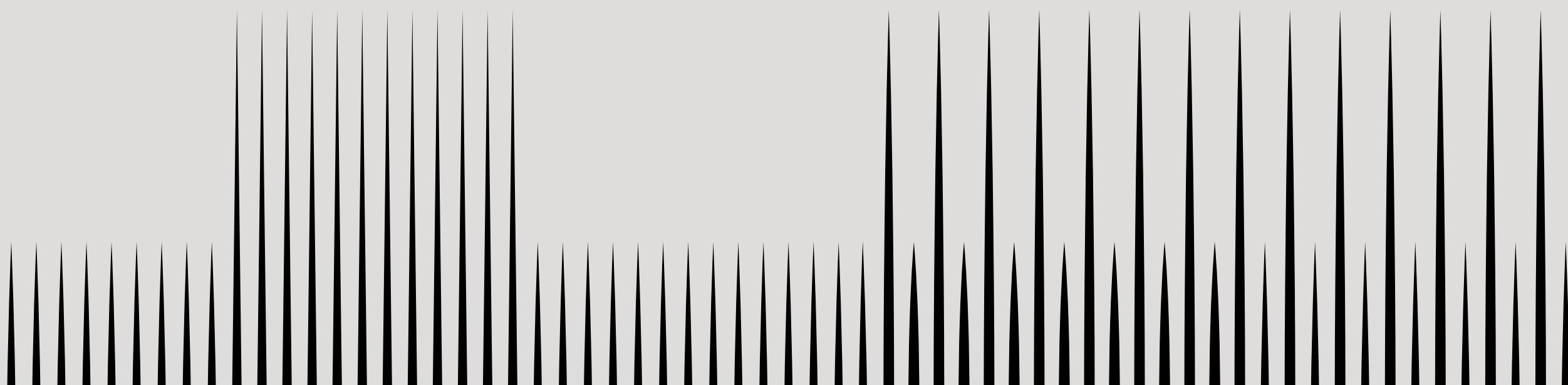
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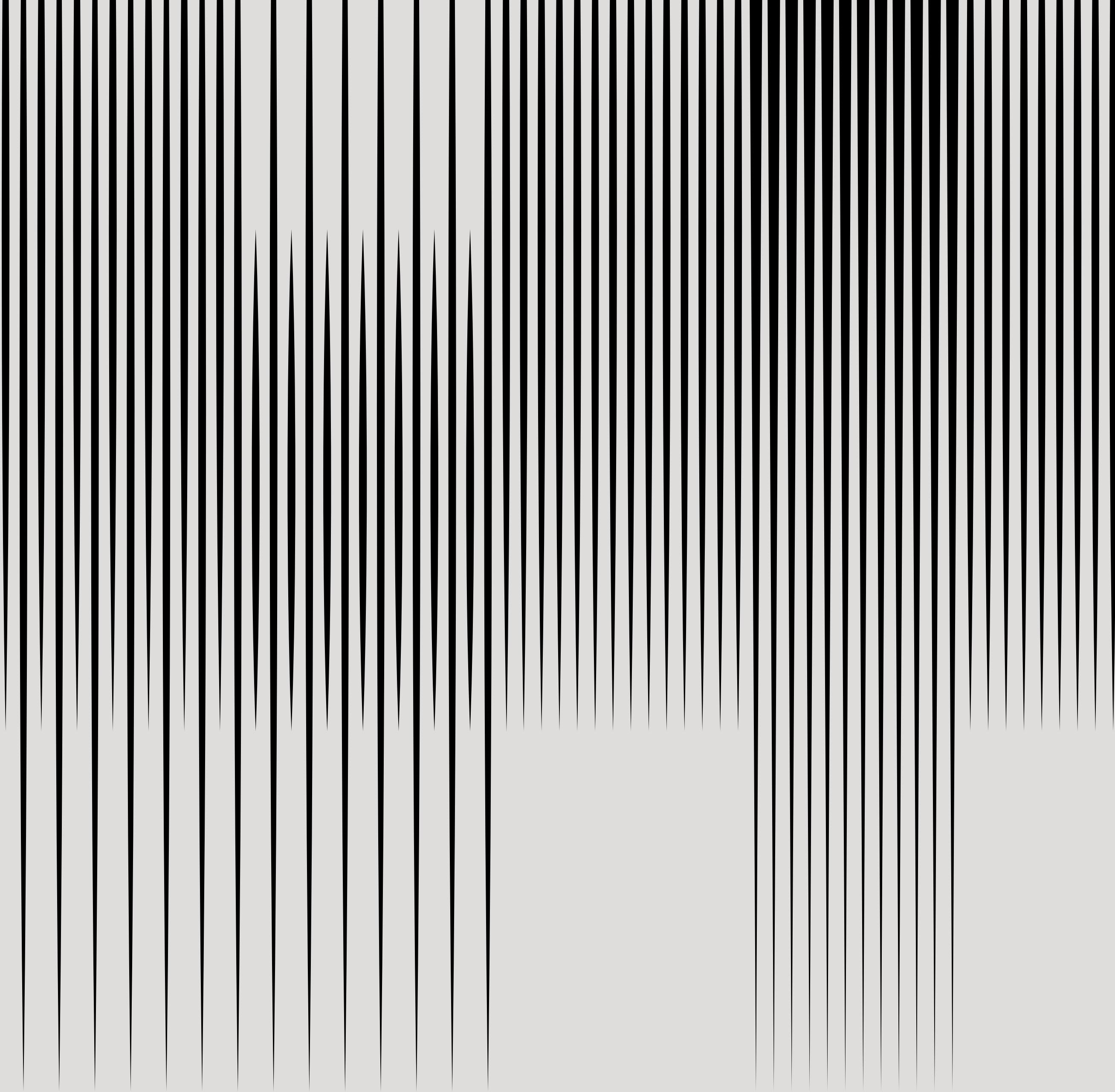
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