

A THOUSAND HORSEPOWER

Mark Bain, Nina Canell, Lúa Coderch, Roc Jiménez de Cisneros, Rolf Julius, Lukas Marxt,
Fran Meana, Melanie Smith, Iza Tarasewicz

Curated by Sabel Gavaldon

Dates: 4 to 19 June 2016

Venue: Trinxet Factory, L'Hospitalet (Barcelona)

Address: Cta. Santa Eulalia 182-212, L'Hospitalet

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Website: <http://www.1000hp.cat/en/>

You're just in time. I hope finding the way to the factory wasn't too hard. You probably oriented yourself using the GPS on your smartphone. Your tablet's touchscreen is an inter-dimensional portal connecting faraway spaces and times. The technology it consists of contains a dozen rare earths — chemical elements such as dysprosium, europium, terbium, yttrium, and lanthanum— that have travelled the planet to be here. The tablets used by the first scribes were made of clay collected on the shores of the Euphrates. It is disquieting to think that humanity's written history goes back just over 5,000 years whilst the half-life of radioactive plutonium is of over 24,000 years. The idea makes one giddy, don't you think?

It is now 1981. A date like any other. But this year will see the emergence of a new field of research: nuclear semiotics. The US Department of Energy has called upon a heterogeneous group of thinkers and scientists — comprising physicists, engineers, anthropologists, psychologists, even a well-known science-fiction writer— to form the first Human Interference Task Force. Their duty is to discourage the inhabitants of the future to come close to the 85,000 cubic metres of radioactive waste stored in the desert of New Mexico, 600 metres underground. The challenge is to design a system of signage that might survive a catastrophic future, semantically speaking. A method to communicate with creatures we will never know anything about: "Do not dare to alter the peace of this temple."

It is an ecopoetic challenge: How might a poem, a drawing, or a sculpture account for human impact on the environment, as its effects echo throughout the millennia? What sort of poetry would have the capacity to document phenomena that vertiginously disperse in space and time, such as global warming, the financial market, or polystyrene particles in the ocean? Questions such as these force us to acknowledge the relativity of the human scale and point to other dimensions: from cosmic events to infinitesimal changes, from nanometric materials to planetary nebulae, from geological time measured in eons to information flows that disappear in a matter of picoseconds.

It is 1784. An insignificant date compared to the deep time studied in geology and paleoclimatology. But 1784 could be the year of the end of the world, as the chemist Paul Crutzen points out. James Watt designed the steam engine then, and an emerging industry began to deposit coal on a large scale upon the earth's crust. A point of no return in our planet's geohistory. A few years later, Caspar David Friedrich painted his "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog", where a man's figure —point of reference in the universe— stands, imposing, above a lush and violent mountain landscape. Two centuries later, it seems that the only image capable of expressing the contingencies of the present is the artificial crater of a uranium mine during a solar eclipse, or the ruins of a tyre factory in the middle of the Amazon rainforest.

An abandoned factory in the outskirts of Barcelona is not a bad place to meet and talk about time's elasticity. Needless to say, this exhibition does not take on James Watt. It doesn't even look to 1784.

Instead, it positions itself in an uncertain future. Or an unrecognisable present perhaps, which can only take the form of an archaeological site. Mechanical dinosaurs stripped of their skin pile up in such a landscape, where we find the remains of an unknown material culture, reminiscent of the prehistoric discoveries that the artist Robert Smithson described in an unusual tour of his suburban hometown, Passaic, in New Jersey. On second thoughts, a factory in L'Hospitalet is also not a bad place to speculate about the possibility of a non-linear history. A history where many different realities, scales, and strata of experience beyond the human can be acknowledged. A fiction where past, present and future collide. I hope the way to the factory wasn't too hard to find. You arrived just in time.

WORKS AND EVENTS PROGRAMME

MELANIE SMITH

Fordlandia, 2014

HD video, multichannel sound, 29 min 42 s

The film is screened on the hour

Fordlandia is the name of a rubber factory built by Henry Ford in the Amazon forest during the 1920s. Literally devoured by the jungle, Fordlandia is now a ruin of modernity, a monument to human arrogance. Melanie Smith's curious camera runs over a landscape brimming with flora and fauna, and documents the emerging ecologies that have re-emerged from the ashes of this old industrial colony.

— Melanie Smith (1965, Poole) lives in Mexico City since 1989.

ROLF JULIUS

Iron Dancing, 1992

Three iron sheets, speakers

43 x 43 cm each

Ash (Volcanoes), 1993

Four clay plant pots, ash, speakers

18 x 50 x 50 cm

Rolf Julius referred to his practice as "small music". Using field recordings that collect the trivial sounds of crickets, frogs, rain, electronic hums, and buzzes, his music takes the form of minimal objects and installations that often integrate speakers prepared with ash and pigment. Julius' compositions explore the dimensionality of sound and make tangible its capacity to affect different materials, bodies, and spaces, thus conveying the vibrant materiality of the world around us.

— Rolf Julius (1939, Wilhelmshaven - 2011, Berlin) was a musician and artist.

NINA CANELL

Brief Syllable (Flat), 2015

Carpet, telecommunications cable

10 x 197 x 159 cm

The cross-section of a telephone cable is a paradoxical object. It is at once fossil and communication channel. It is both residue and a possibility of contact. An object that is frozen in time, but that we know has been pierced by powerful electric discharges. Through minimal gestures, the work of Nina Canell

registers the intensities —often imperceptible— that run through matter, questioning the human need to transform it into a form of memory.

— Nina Canell (1979, Växjö) lives in Dublin.

FRAN MEANA

The Immaterial Material, 2014

Metal shelves, photographs, concrete

Variable dimensions

This work revisits the enigmatic wall paintings left behind by a pedagogical programme introduced among the miners of Arnao, in Asturias. Designed in 1912, they were used to teach workers the principles of geometry, geography, and grammar. They are the material formalisation —set in stone— of a set of relations marked by industrial labour and the exploitation of natural resources. Meana's sculptures may be read as a translation of these friezes, while incorporating the noise and loss of information involved in the process.

— Fran Meana (1982, Avilés) lives in London.

IZA TARASEWICZ

The Means, The Milieu, 2014-2016

Steel, hemp fibre, ochre, caoutchouc, Reishi mushrooms (*Ganoderma lucidum*)

Steel modular structures hang from the ceiling and intertwine with hemp and rubber rope, forming a dense web that colonises the architecture of the factory like a parasitic organism. At the same time, the piece hosts an underground culture of mushrooms and tinder fungi that grow at an imperceptible rate in the midst of this entanglement, establishing new filamentous ramifications and connections. It is a factory within a factory, a conversation we cannot hear, an entropic discussion among inscrutable forms of life.

— Iza Tarasewicz (1981, Kolonia Koplany) lives in Kolonia Koplany.

LUKAS MARXT

Double Dawn, 2014

HD video, 219 min 21s

The film is screened at 30 min past each hour

This film proposes to experience, in real time, the first rays of the sunrise followed by a solar eclipse inside a uranium mine. We see an open pit in a planet with two suns. A wound on the land, transformed dramatically by human activity. Through a sustained still shot, the viewer's real time comes into contact with the deep time of cosmic events and geological processes.

— Lukas Marxt (1983, Schladming) lives in Cologne.

Sunday 5 June, 19 to 20 pm

THE ARCHISONIC, by Mark Bain

Seismic sensors, oscillators, and 8,000 watts of sub bass, strategically distributed in the factory, turn the architecture of the space into an enormous infrasonic instrument. A device that detects, amplifies, and transmits back to the building the inaudible intensities that run through its construction materials. *The Archisonic* is an invitation to feel the multiple reverberations —historical, material, affective— spreading through space and time.

— Mark Bain (1966, Seattle) lives in Amsterdam.

Saturday 11 June, 11 am to 11 pm
MOC, by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros

A piece for four audio channels and a video projector that explores the notions of deformation, viscosity, and indeterminacy. A musical experience prolonged in time (720 minutes), built upon patterns that imperceptibly dilate and transform. Permanently elastic sonic structures, half way between stasis and flow, are accompanied by stroboscopic bursts of indefinite colours projected in high definition.

— Roc Jiménez de Cisneros (1975, Barcelona) lives in Barcelona. Together with Stephen Sharp, he is the founder of the computer music project EVOL.

Friday 17 June, 19 to 20 pm
SKETCHES, by Patrícia Dauder

A tour of both Patrícia Dauder's exhibition and the Trinxet Factory
In conversation with Sabel Gavaldon and Albert Mercadé

Sunday 19 June, 12 to 14 pm
DÉBUT, by Lúa Coderch

On the other end of the telephone line, Marc asks: "Do you know how fast homing pigeons fly?". The answer — I know because I googled it earlier — is that an adult specimen travelling at an average of 90 km/h can cover over 800 km in a single day. A pigeon is an animal most of the time. Under appropriate conditions, a pigeon can be a relation between two points. A vector of intensity. It can also be the possibility of an accident. An interference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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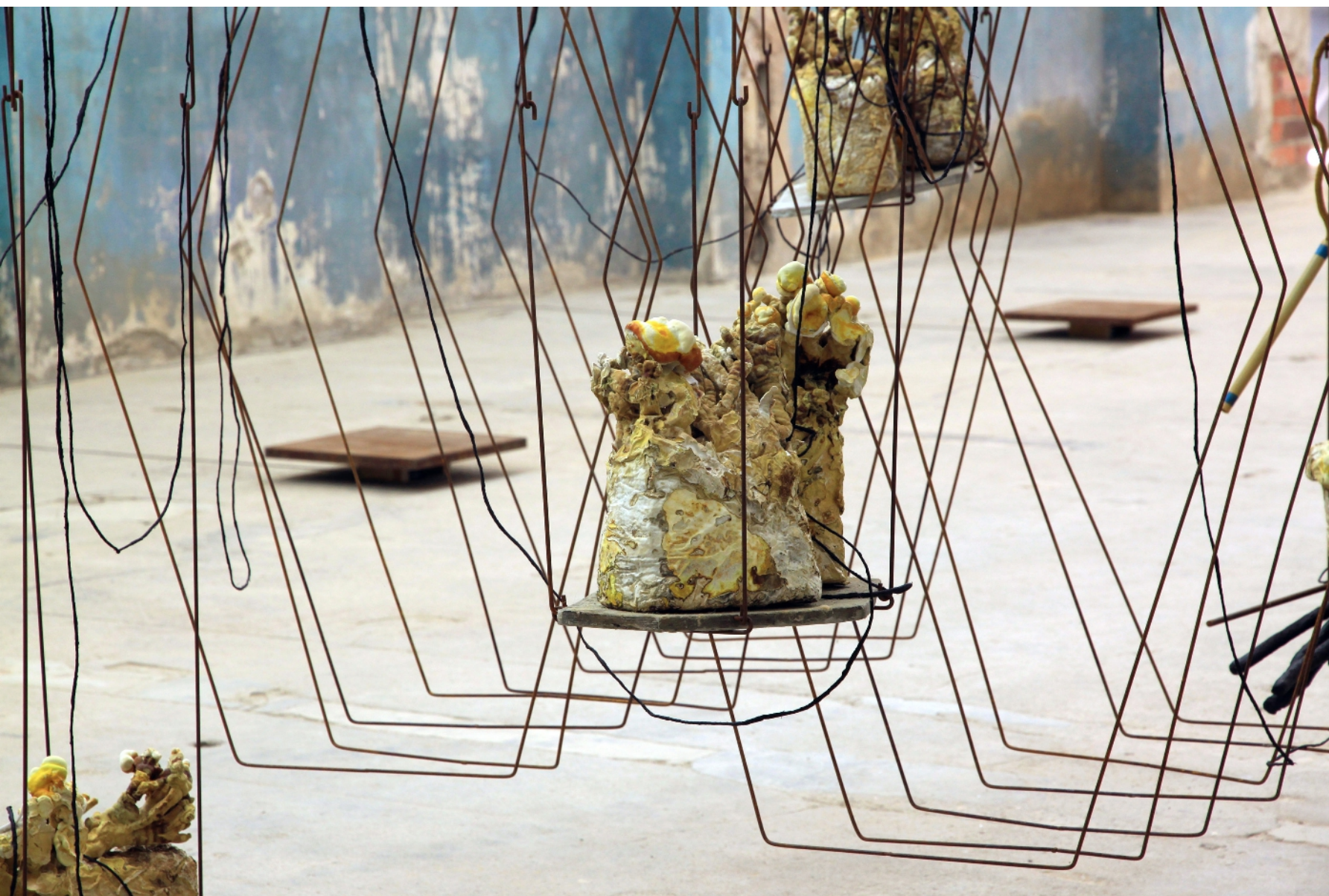


Exhibition view of A THOUSAND HORSEPOWER

Photo by Eva Fabregas



IZA TARASEWICZ: *The Means, The Milieu*, 2014-2016
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MELANIE SMITH: Fordlandia, 2014

Photo by Eva Fabregas — Courtesy of the artist and Peter Kilchmann, Zürich



Exhibition view of A THOUSAND HORSEPOWER

Photo by Eva Fabregas



FRAN MEANA: The Immaterial Material, 2014

Photo by Eva Fabregas — Courtesy of the artist and NoguerasBlanchard, Madrid



LUKAS MARXT: Double Dawn, 2014

Photo by Eva Fabregas – Courtesy of the artist



NINA CANELL: Brief Syllable (Flat), 2015

Photo by Eva Fabregas – Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Marzona, Berlin



ROLF JULIUS: Iron Dancing, 1992

Photo by Eva Fabregas – Courtesy of estate rolf julius, Berlin



ROLF JULIUS: Ash (Volcanoes), 1993

Photo by Eva Fabregas – Courtesy of estate rolf julius, Berlin