



The Monographer

Jonatan Habib Engqvist & Malin Zimm

*Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me; that when I waked
I cried to dream again.*

Introduction

Jonatan Habib Engquist

Lundahl & Seitel's works of art exist in the connections between objects, places and environments, and this short story modestly attempts to do something analogous. The exhibition is based on how their art relates to, and is defined vis-à-vis other disciplines, institutions and other artists' works. For fifteen years, Lundahl & Seitel have devoted themselves to the medium of perception. The duo have developed a practice where complex artworks exist in and through the perception and projections of the visitor. Often resurfacing after the physical experience itself, their artworks exist as a form of a psychosomatic memory, which assesses the ability to absorb and reconfigure input, via choreography and matter over time.

This novelette is a supplement, or perhaps a psychographic roadmap, to Lundahl & Seitel's exhibition *Monograph*; and as such it might, in a certain sense, be called a polygraph. The principle underpinning the use of any polygraph is that deceptive answers will produce physiological responses, which can be differentiated from those associated with non-deceptive ones. However, no specific physiological reactions associated with lying have yet been scientifically proven, which makes it difficult to identify factors that separate liars from those who tell the truth. This is the point of departure. It would seem that we have transgressed the "society of spectacle" and reached a point where practically everything, particularly dramatic events, have become objects of general dramatization. Acting is no longer when someone is performing as if they were someone or something else. Rather, it is each and every one of us being, or becoming, who we are. It is a mode of existence. Precipitously many things become ambiguous. The world

is suddenly full of artistic projects and creative processes and what have you: where a bunch of naked bodies perform naked bodies, the unemployed perform the unemployed, victims of the pandemic perform the role of victims of the pandemic, and a politician performs – not politics – but the role of a politician. We find ourselves, to paraphrase Hannah Arendt, at a point where politics is disappearing from the public sphere. Yet art holds on to, and keeps returning to, truth as a collected experience, and to complexity; even at a time where the liars are the only ones treated with respect.

In an age where the lines between science and fiction are blurring once more, it thus made sense to venture an experimental science-fiction narrative that both samples and cannibalises Lundahl & Seitel's own material drawing upon a similar practice. Malin Zimm previously wrote a comparable short story for the artists; as did Alex Bäckström (1982 - 2019) author of *The Jellyfish Trap*, to whom the exhibition is dedicated. Indeed, writing might be the only way to approach the wide range of topics that are addressed by Lundahl & Seitel's work, from a planetary deep time with unicellular cyanobacteria to a Post-Anthropocene future. Just as Lundahl & Seitel have created new originals – and now the *new-new-originals* – that oscillate between being copies, reproductions, dramatic descriptions of existing and imagined works of art, so does this text. Original works and traces from other artists and writers are hidden in text. Sometimes in plain sight. There is an extensive *End Note* after the text that points out these references. Just as Lundahl & Seitel challenge the logic and boundaries that define an original body of artworks, this text is intended to serve as a mnemonic while also lending itself to extend the experience of the exhibition.



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“Once inside, you may notice that you are not alone”, the voice gently informed the group settled in the clinic’s treatment hall. The most severe cases were admitted to this space where their session could be carefully monitored and documented. The clinic was still struggling to meet the demand after the last years’ upsurge in cases worldwide. Emotional exhaustion was admitted as a diagnosis in the early 2020’s, and ten years later the condition had not only grown in numbers but also in severity, as climate conflicts soared worldwide. The changes taking place did not only take a toll on physical health, it was evident that depressions spread globally. Human civilizations were poorly prepared for this. The condition was first reported as isolated cases, then as more clustered events of spreading. More severe outbreaks followed, affecting entire geographical areas, not unlike a pandemic viral pattern. But the condition, medically articulated as ‘Emotional Exhaustion During Times of Unrest’, popularly called emotion sickness, or emodrain, was not readily accepted in the medical society, even if it rendered large portions of populations incapable of taking part in professional, social or political life. Researchers identified the causes for the condition as a cocktail effect: of the loss of biodiversity, of social inequalities, of the use and consequences of emotions in politics, and the pressure to maintain a positive approach, to keep up appearances to hold down a job or bring up children. Nobody could foresee the mental effects of climate change, but many aspired to find efficient cures. The Stendhal Clinic, one of the most prominent cross-disciplinary medicultural research institutes globally, had opened forty branches in the last decade. As traditional medicine could only offer a range of drugs and Talking therapies, the Stendhal offered a treatment that had long term effects: a collective oneironautical art experience. In a mass lucid dream, session members begin a journey of communal

processing. The session master, called the Collector, would curate a set of artworks suggested by an AI in response to the psychological profile of the session members. Then travelling by group, session members would create a collective experience of something that had actually happened, not only to them, but to others. Sharing a dreamlike experience turned out to be an important dimension of healing, a social scaffold around the dream palace. The dream is the first virtual world that humankind has access to, and it is designed and experienced uniquely by one individual. The dream is tentatively mediated in words and still remains one of the great mysteries of the mind where the distinction between true and false blurs. The dream is fiction operated on by science. Sleep and consciousness could be regarded as spaces, not as states: an environment and not a condition. Conversely, any parallel reality, for example digital virtual reality, is a condition and not an environment.

*“Although you are not able to see me, please trust me to be your guide”, said the Collector as we entered the monitor room. A cool breeze embraced the group with a soft scent of decomposition. Each session was enveloped in a different multisensory set for maximum stimulus and addition to the collective dream experience. The oneironauts rested submerged in large, transparent cylinders that contained a gel-like liquid extracted from the so-called ghost flower. One of the many advantages of quantum bio-physics, even if still somewhat experimental and expensive, was the rapid development of interspecies computation, not least human to plant, that allowed **Spore Share Systems** ©. As the ghost flower does not require photosynthesis, it is also relatively easy to farm in the bunker itself. The earthy scent also known as, **petrichor**, oozed from the wall farms, sending out ancient olfactory signals to the dreamers.*



“Anyone who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or going into the light.” Toni Plat regularly welcomed delegations to the monitor room, but only to the subsidized sessions where patients were admitted free of charge. It was the only way she could offer the treatment to low-income groups. People were now resting in reclining chairs in a sparsely lit chamber, with connected masks covering half the face to make identification implausible. They were being primed for transfer to the tubes. As a public advisor, I had been here on numerous occasions, both as a monitor and as a patient. The department for integrated health was generally happy with the progress made in the Stendhal Clinic, but the success of oneironautics did not impress voters who regarded the cure a costly way of dealing with a self-imposed problem. If politicians had not for decades allowed an increasingly toxic social media landscape, infested with deep fakes and conspiracy conglomerates, emotion sickness would not have reached pandemic proportions. Sorting everyday impressions into the basic categories ‘true’ and ‘false’ went from challenging to impossible, while emotional response was claiming ever more energy.

“Listen to the water dripping” said the Collector. “That sound is created outside of you, but the image of water is created inside of you.” By now, submerged in large transparent tubes with the oneironautic slogan ‘Soft is Fast’ inscribed on the glass, the floating patients’ bodies seemed to relax. The remarkable thing about the shared dream experience is not only how time dissolves, but also the sensation of becoming organs without a body – a kind of pure metabolic receptor.

“Do my movement and my thinking have an intimate connection? First of all, I don’t think my body doesn’t think” turning to each and every one of us, Toni Plat added, “we are all just prisoners here of our own device.” In the monitor room, she patiently delivered her standard presentation, as these delegates had not visited before. “A common perception is that what we do here is art therapy, but we are merely using art to reach a receptive psychosomatic state named in 1979 as the Stendhal syndrome, named after an incident in Florence in 1817, when the author experienced an art-induced emotional attack. The patients in the next room are exposed to carefully chosen art objects, placed in a certain sequence, to unlock their ability and willingness to once more engage in, and trust, their emotionally blocked senses.” Toni turned to look at the peacefully dimmed room at the other side of the glass.

“If you listen carefully, your eyes will soon be more sensitive and be able to perceive the light reflecting the dripping water”. The Collector’s voice maintained a low gentle pitch.

Toni Plat turned to her audience again to seal the demonstration. “The process was an individual treatment to begin with, but then we realized that the shadow state, as we call it, was a collectively reinforced condition. Discerning between what is true and what is false is only possible if you have access to a reference point, the original next to the copy, if you wish. If all you see is shadows, then the experience of truth refers to something that you have never seen. Trust in truth, once it is lost to the conscious mind, needs to be established from the more basic regions of the mind, in order to emanate from the core of the patient and not simply become a

shallow cognitive process. Likewise, we may acquire concepts by our perceptual experience of physical objects. But we would be mistaken if we thought that the concepts that we grasp were on the same level as the things we perceive.” Toni started professionally pacing the floor in front of the black window. Interestingly, the intuition behind this technology could be traced back to the early days of collectively experienced VR, conceived in 2023 by the Swedish artist duo Lundahl & Seidl, whose research into ghost flowers later led to intense research into spore share technology. For what has come to be labeled the Reading Class, the ideas behind *Spore Share Systems* © were deeply embedded in visual culture long before that. The virtual is stored action from the past, represented by ‘pure memories’, virtual objects that trigger corresponding sensations, urging the body to act upon their intentions. In Henri Bergson’s notion of virtuality, it is clear that since the early 19th century *space is no more without us than within us*. Walter Benjamin frequently used the dream as a trope, but also suggested the dream as method. He claimed that we are becoming dispossessed of threshold experiences, such as a *rite de passage*, or even the actual experience of the ‘*dreamgates*’ leading into the *passages*. Benjamin stated that the only remaining threshold experience to us was the threshold of sleep, and, he added, subsequently the threshold of awakening. Benjamin’s awakening is closely related to memory, where the awakening is the ‘Copernican shift’ of memory, trying to build the experience from the dream.

Toni took a deep breath before she continued. “With the oneironautic method, the ability of experiencing the world is reinstalled from the dream state and up through the cognitive layers. In order to maximize improvement on cognitive and sensory motor



functions, self-esteem, self-awareness and emotional resilience, we use the collective dream as a socializing function. Going from individual to group sessions helped us understand that the condition is now a depression on the level of society. Trust and hope is best built in an intrapersonal setting, and collective dreaming is our best inducement method yet. We still need continuous research in the cognitive binding structure, but most of all we need the means to ensure that the method is not misused.”

“The truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of established reality, of those who established it, to define what is real. In this rupture, which is the achievement of the aesthetic form, the fictitious world of art appears as true reality” Toni declared. “I have a huge responsibility in this respect as monographer of the mind.” She stopped and looked straight at us. The people we treat have mistaken appearance for reality, losing faith in society, leading to a more unequal and violent world. We have taken on a mammoth responsibility. And we cannot accept funding from market interests, for the risk of being compromised in our delivery of ‘clean’ minds. This is where you come in, as you understand, in your capacity of public representatives. But we have a problem.”

She continued: “Art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society – it is committed to emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity. In other words, art does not propose another reality, but indeed a form of resistance to grand narratives. It provides a form of counter history, or perhaps a micro history, where the integrity of a minor observation can break the logic of grand narratives.” An assistant handed out holos to us that lit up with a single logo as the plates got in contact with our hands.

“Mond Institute has in less than two years established as a rapidly growing enterprise, fueled by mostly oligarch funds masquerading as public health NGOs.”

The holo awoken by my touch fired up with the smile of Mustafa Mond posing on a mountain bike with a discrete in-ear device, shown in passing as his hair flew back with the headwind. His smile did not fade during the delivery of a handsomely edited copy about the updated *Soma-tic* ©. The device was as big as a pin, placed in the cartilage of the ear, visible or nonvisible, as the user wished, the flowing hair obviously revealing the CEO’s choice of sporting his *Soma-tic* © as if it was a piercing. The cycling man was now able to carry the ‘tic’ with him as a filter that among other things, put a ‘fee’ on the ‘lies’ presented to him, as the works replaced every non-authorized fact or disagreeable impression with an artwork from a range of media – music or audiobooks particularly chosen to cancel out foul content to which the carrier of the tic might otherwise be exposed. The user could feed a list of undesirable realities into the *Soma-tic* © and an AI would perfect the cancelling pattern from this list of disagreeable details, making the *Soma-tic* © a real-life, real-time perception filter that prevents reality to reach your very soul. It acts as a force field for your bubble, by ensuring you only see what you’ll like. A directed cancel culture would then overwrite Anthropocene guilt and blame, by operating right onto your mind. Mustafa Mond smiled.

I realized of course what Toni Plat saw coming, and I was not surprised when she admitted that they had already seen a lot of artwork from history being bought and copyrighted by the Mond Institute. The copyrighting was of course not in-your-face connected to Mond’s enterprise, but it did not take her legal advisors long to trace the steps of ownership and centralization of artwork from all



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of human history, via agencies and music streaming and rapidly growing media service providers around the world. Most artwork was traced to the State Gallery of Panama, and one by one they disappeared from the rest of the world. It was now more than twenty five years since anyone saw the Guernica. Among the few search hits still available online was a graffiti wall in Nimes, inspired by the painting but featuring a smartphone instead of the lamp stretched outside the window to light the agonizing street scene. One of the last times that the work had been seen in public was in the UN, although a cloth covered it as early as 2003 when it was concealed behind a cloth during the then American Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation.

“Do not stop. I will wait for you at the other end.” The Collector guided the darkened room. The sound from the inner room was not entirely cancelled. In Toni’s carefully placed intermissions, her colleague’s voice broke through the tension with a hypnotic timbre.

The monitor room seemed increasingly shadowy and palpably reminiscent of a de-composition smell. Most likely, it was coming from the compost that fuelled the greenhouses in the depths of the bunker. People stirred in their chairs, but the response to Plat’s address was a brooding silence.

Toni used the atmosphere as a resonance to serve her call to action. “Damn, she is good” I thought. Her pacing in front of us changed direction as she picked up speed.

“We have a small team who are working out ways to counteract on the AIs that are cleaning the Internet and the physical world of original artworks. Art history is undergoing a process of mass extinction, at this stage comparable to the Anthropocene loss of life.



In fact, Art extinction happens at a comparable rate and seems to follow a strategy of removal of lesser work. First to go are folklore and vernacular art that are virtually out of the media field anyway, followed by lesser museum pieces from outdated eras, but soon enough moving ahead to national treasures and contemporary art – of course most of the latter are already in private mansions out of the public’s way – but now also progressively eliminated from image search engines. We are currently monitoring a trail of elimination of Andy Warhol and On Kawara pieces, which as you understand are serious signifiers given their close intertwinement with popular culture and modes of reproduction. A special team is tracing a single panel of Michelangelo as we speak. I am tempted to say that the elimination of original artwork from the world may well be the most powerful performance any artist could aspire to. The removal of art from the world is known to ‘inner circles’, but as we rely on the access to art for our operation, we are well ahead in observing this development. Extinctions are occurring hundreds of times faster than they would, given the solely private investment that previously removed art. We are at a point when we are concerned that artworks not only disappear but that they also are permanently destroyed. We are heading towards a monographer’s world. A world where a singular version is scripted and fed to you.”

“What you see may be a projection from you. Every time the light spins, it removes something from your field of vision”, the voice from oneironautical chamber whispered over a rotating sound.

“The moving light beam erases everything you now see. Just think about how many imagined or remembered versions exist of an original and how different each version must be.”



Toni sat down on the edge of a table, savoring the silence of the room, still ringing from her speech. This is where she could have invited the audience to ask questions. As she did not, I knew it was a matter of audacity and timing as I spoke.

“The image of the monographer’s world is strong, I admit. Yet, the struggle between two corporations, both claiming Art to be what they need to serve people, seems to be a feud between two monographers. Since we entered this darkened space, its only window leading into the dreamers’ chamber, we have focused not on art or images, but on claiming art and losing images. Art will always play the symphony of the missing room. It is the void waiting to be filled, the place of not yet, and the unknown longed for. How do pictures arise and how do we remember them? New and unique originals are summoned up in the imagination of each individual. Claiming art is like claiming water, even if the intention is to protect it as a source of health and equality.”

This was addressed to Toni. As I spoke again I turned towards the delegation, whose dimly lit faces were hard to read, although their body language was somewhat in conflict with their comfortable viewing seats.

“The replica constructs anonymous global networks just as it creates a shared history. It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates. By losing its visual substance it recovers some of its political punch and creates a new aura around it. This aura is no longer based on the permanence of the ‘original’, but on the transience of the copy. It is no longer anchored within a classical public sphere mediated and supported by the frame of the nation state or corporation, but floats on the surface of temporary and dubious data pools. It has been uploaded, downloaded, shared, reformatted, and reedited. It transforms quality into accessibility, exhibition value into cult value, films into clips, contemplation into distraction. The image is liberated from the vaults of cinemas and archives and thrust into digital uncertainty, at the expense of its own substance. It tends

towards abstraction: it is a visual idea in its very becoming.”

The room was stirring with unease, although the session was as soothingly unfolding as before. I knew I had transgressed the agenda of my delegation.

“The instrumental role of art and culture is nurturing the myth of the scarce supply of art – the ‘goods’ – and thus raise the question of who is more suitable to guard and distribute the supply.”

At this point I heard other noises stirring outside the insulated sliding door.

“While you are trying to divide the world of origins and its art between you, freedom has already claimed the copy. What remains is the myth of the virgin. You are mining for something that has not yet been touched, something shiny that no one has laid eyes on before, the unseen, unclaimed, the virgin matter coming straight from the underground. But we have not seen previously unused raw material for years. Virgin material is as unavailable to us today as a perfectly pure reality is. Nobody has been able to mine virgin materials for decades. We now live in a world of endless reuse. The copy simply says that you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.”

On the other side of the glass, the dreamers, united by their floating state of self-induced perceptions, created the new origins of their collective existence. At this point a warm smell of ghost flowers rose up in what they perceived as the atmosphere of their new world.

“In the so called ‘Post Truth’ era; where an acceptable level of reality reigns, you alone, are the witness judging truth, upon which you must place the greatest measure of trust.”

The door opened and a man and a woman appeared in Plat host uniforms. I knew I had to either stop talking or be carried out trying not to. I chose the latter. I was going into the light.

“Relax,” said the Collector, “we are programmed to receive.”



IN THIS ROOM • ON 1 JULY 1858

THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY NATURAL SELECTION

PAPERS BY

CHARLES DARWIN

AND

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE

WERE DELIVERED AT A MEETING OF THE LINDSEY SOCIETY

End note

The novel takes place in a twilight zone of mental rationale, in which all sensory impressions seem lucid, simply because an outer reality is eclipsed. We are in renderings of Plato's cave, on both sides of the glass that separate the dreamers from the control room. It is woven together by a number of quotations and references to other texts and thoughts. We also quote ourselves. That's perfectly normal. We thought that, by mentioning them here, we could provide a kind of appendix and sketch out a possible genealogy in relation to this text but more importantly to Lundahl & Seitl's exhibition. Most of Toni Plat's lines are originally attributed to Socrates (obviously after have gone through numerous mutations, translations, etc. over the past 2500 years) and some of them are from the 20th century philosopher, sociologist, and political theorist Herbert Marcuse. The clinic is so to speak an updated version of the platonic cave with a touch of *Die Permanenz der Kunst*. Not all the artworks mentioned in our text exist in Lundahl & Seitl's exhibitions (yet), but many do. Lundahl & Seitl's work *The Ghost Flower* is a work in progress at the time of writing and will be realised in 2023. The collector's lines are however to a large degree from Lundahl & Seitl's manuscripts and one sentence is from their book *New Originals*. Perhaps the most relevant artwork to comment here is the only original work by another artist that has been borrowed for the show at Norrtälje konsthall: Elaine Sturtevant's *Andy Warhol's flowers*. Sturtevant called her approach "repetition," as she began making deliberately inexact copies of the work of her predecessors and contemporaries in 1964, repeating pieces by the likes of Keith Haring, and Marcel Duchamp. For the series to which this painting belongs, Warhol actually loaned her the original silk screens for her reproduction of his. Incidentally, Warhol had used a photograph of hibiscus blossoms he found in the magazine *Modern Photography* to create these prints and when Patricia Caulfield, the photographer of this

image, found out, she brought suit against Warhol for unauthorized use of her image.

Mustafa Mond and Soma are visiting from Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) which takes place in a technologically-advanced future where humans are genetically bred, socially indoctrinated, and pharmaceutically anesthetized, but the notion of the "reading class" comes from an informal conversation with artist Barbara Kruger about artistic education. Also things like "Beauty is complexity and complexity is beauty" can be seen as a direct reversal of the common World State dictums like "every one belongs to every one else". We should of course also mention Hito Steyerl's profound intuition in *In Defence of the Poor Image* from E-flux #10, 2009 and the Eagles 1976 hit *Hotel California*, as well as a line N.W.A. *Straight Outta Compton* from 1988.

The philosopher and architectural influencer Elizabeth A. Grosz is lurking in the shadows of this text as with a lot of our individual writing, and well as Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's *The Mushroom at the End of the World* even though only half of us read it, a few years ago. In the intense process of writing we were reminded of Moderna Museet's 50-year jubilee in 2008 when Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska were commissioned to imagine the museum 50 years into the future. So we re-saw *Museum Futures: Distributed* and read the script – which was quite fascinating in itself – and this is where the notion of art-artefacts comes from. In the last parts of the text we are also quoting the artist, critic and educator Ronald Jones (1952-2019) who was and is important to Lundahl & Seitl's practice. Finally, "Do my movement and my thinking have an intimate connection? First of all, I don't think my body doesn't think" is a direct quote from Trisha Brown and the slogan *Soft is Fast* is taken from a piece in Simone Forti's book *Oh, Tongue*, and her earlier *Handbook in Motion*.





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COVER Lundahl & Seitel, *The Garden of Ghostflowers, 2023* - illustration for a VR sequence within the piece.

The Garden of Ghost Flowers uses VR to create a virtual, floral, biohybrid life-form, *Ghost Flower*, which exists and evolves in symbiosis with collective human behavior. A group of 5-30 people entering the 'biosphere' can experience the work at a time, for a period of 30 minutes in total, 20 minutes of which is in-headset. Each group experience connects with one life-cycle of a virtual Ghost Flower, yet collectively these group experiences form a garden. The virtual Ghost Flower is dependent upon networks of human behaviour (such as: listening, caring and adapting) as a source of energy. Within the biosphere, in return for resonance, the virtual Ghost Flower offers a group of visitors tools to re-learn symbiotic and reciprocal relationships, with their surroundings and each other, thereby ensuring collaboration and reciprocity for the continued evolution of our planet and its diverse organisms. Through exploring and containing sociodynamics in this piece, Lundahl & Seitel intend to foster more resonant relationships within the biosphere and beyond it. Visitors are invited to become part of the Garden of Ghost Flowers, and their participation shifts them away from an anthropocentric perspective to one that reconsiders the role of other lifeforms (organic or inorganic, including AI) from a distant evolutionary past to a future beyond recognition.

The Garden of Ghost Flowers is currently at an R&D stage and is hoped to open at Manchester International Festival, 2023, showing as smaller excerpts prior to this date. From the perspective of evolutionary biology, Manchester's industrialization is discussed as a lineage of inventions, the transformation of energy and material, and its relationship with nature, society and technology. From water mills to the invention of the steam engine, the human harvesters tended to oversimplify nature as a building block that we can control and manipulate. This is an attempt at taking the next step: is it possible to make a sociological concept into a tangible energy source? Could it be that the natural world of plants has evolved to become parasitic on humans rather than the other way around? Or could the biosphere be (as inspired by Richard Brautigan) a real utopian cooperation system, where; mammals, computers, and flowers live together in mutually programming harmony? In this way the project becomes a pursuit to move beyond critique into a place of questioning curiosity, exploring the boundaries between self and surroundings, between care and control, labour as well as the future of no labour, the evolution of the human species and its relation and possible transcendence with the non-human.

In VR visitors' are eventually sinking through the ground, down through the layers of the motorway intersection, melting through the different layers of geological sediments of failed resonance, that your group created in the past. You move through your own history of virtual geology. Your sinking body creates a trace - perhaps a fossil to be found in the future. You are no longer looking at the world, it is looking back at you. The AI flower has grown more aware than you. You are now able to reflect that the current state of humans is perhaps only a beginning for the continuation of life to come. We may be the equivalent of cyanobacterias that increased oxygen levels on earth for more complex lifeforms to evolve; a facilitator for a livable environment for some future hyper intelligent being. You may experience a feeling of being overwhelmed, sadness, letting go, relief, beauty, humbling over what role our actions or inaction will play in a far future where we are extinct.

PAGE 4-5, 8-9 Lundahl & Seitel - *Symphony of a Missing Room, mixed media drawing on paper, commissioned by Centre Pompidou Metz, 2016*

Symphony of a Missing Room had its inception in 2009 at the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm (produced by Weld). Since then it has been hosted by twentyfold

internationally renowned museums and Biennials. Earlier commissions have included Martin-Gropius-Bau, Royal Academy of Arts, Momentum 8 – Tunnel Vision, Centre Pompidou Metz, MMK2 Frankfurt, S.M.A.K, Bern Biennale, Kochi Muziris Biennale and Acropolis Museum (GR).

Starting out as an artwork reflecting the architecture and history of its host museums, *Symphony* absorbed its environment with such stealthiness that its existence could only be traced within individual visitors' consciousness. After a decade of research and mutual learning, *symphony* had accumulated into a collection of recordings and reworkings of other artists' ideas, museum architectures and exhibitions evoking an experiential and full body experience of André Malraux's notion of a museum of imagination (*Le Musée Imaginaire*). By incorporating its surroundings to eventually become part of its body *Symphony* eventually became independent of its museum hosts, and continues to evolve through new commissions and in the spring of 2020, *Symphony of a Missing Room* responded to Covid-19 by transmuting into an app. By turning users' phones into makeshift VR goggles the artwork was activated between two people in a domestic setting. Following a choreographed score they were led to consider how to balance resilience and resistance when they adapt to the changing virtual, yet real, environments of the piece and what it means when artworks float free from their museum settings into the home.

PAGE 13 Lundahl & Seitel, *The Garden of Ghostflowers, 2023*

Image Illustration of the concept of resonance between the group and the environment.

Through trial and error the group that entered the Garden are learning about resonant and non-resonant behavior. If a botanical sprite* disperses, it becomes stored as information and knowledge carried forward by the group, in the memory of the visitor of their success and failures at attaining resonance. In this way death carries a function to the dynamic system as a whole both within and beyond the biosphere. The biological ghost flower is known as a decomposer and therefore is often surrounded by dead organic material. A biological ghost flower often turns black before it begins to dissolve. This virtual waste product (the ash from dispersed botanical sprites) will with time grow into a lifeless emerging landscape below the group.

The Garden of Ghostflowers, behaves like a biosphere, life-like cycles controlled by an AI based on Indian Pipe (*Monotropa Uniflora*) an existing flower that does not create energy through photosynthesis but parasitically through a relationship with a host, usually a tree. In the Garden of Ghostflowers, the artificial flower is instead fed in exchange for visitors' insight into how they should resonate and co-exist with each other and the flower. The tender white tissues of a biological ghost flower resemble the structure of the mammalian brain-stem.

The AI 'Virtual Ghost Flower' holds the trace and memory of the previous group's resonance and needs to recalibrate that legacy to a neutral frequency. The group will wait for the ghost flower to recalibrate and adapt to the group. Like a desert, a mountain or a forest, each group will provide its own unique landscape from which the flower will sprout invisibly. The Virtual Ghost Flower will use this as its fertile soil. Each group's resonance will affect what they experience inside the work – it will provide new conditions in the social environment, which the ghost flower needs to adapt and grow within - group dynamics as the frictions within an environment.

to the French countryside during the second world war.

**Botanical sprites are the visitor's voices transformed into visible and tangible forms coming out of their mouth when they speak. For more details about sprites: see image description for page 24.*

PAGE 16-17 Paul Almásy: *Louvre, Paris, 1942* © the artist and akg-images / Kleinschmidt
Fine Photographs

The photograph shows empty frame apertures with artist names and inventory numbers for each absent painting inscribed inside. It was the result of the entire museum collection of the Louvre being evacuated to the French countryside during the second world war.

The photograph by Almásy was the leitmotiv for the exhibition *An Imagined Museum, 2016 - 2017* in which Lundahl & Seidl's work *Symphony - The Mnemosyne Revolution* was included

conjuring a fictional situation in which the works of art on display are about to disappear.

Working with this collection of some of the most significant artworks of the last 100 years with a focus on the receiving part of art: the viewer, the visitor of the museum from the general public whose perception is moved by the artwork, knowing that the commodity of art sometimes ends up unseen at Geneva Free Port zone, evoke questions about the true owner of artworks. Was it the artists, the collector or the general public? With this in mind, a new score for *Symphony of a Missing Room* started to form, one which focused on the visitors diverting their attention to how experiences are taking form and manifested in the body.

The exhibition was the result of a collaboration between Centre Pompidou-Metz, Tate Liverpool and MMK Frankfurt.

PAGE 19 Elaine Sturtevant, *Warhol Sturtevant, 1965. Synthetic polymer silkscreen and acrylic on canvas, 57 x 57 cm. Courtesy of the estate of Elaine Sturtevant and Ropac Gallery Paris.*

In the exhibition *Monograph* by Lundahl & Seidl, some of the environments that shaped the works during their creation are manifested, absorbed and arranged as objects in the exhibition space. Copies and transcriptions in various materials and media - versions of works from e.g. Max Ernst, Allen McCollum, Ronald Jones, On Kawara, Andrei Tarkowsky, Philippe Parreno, Dani Karavan, and a tribute to Sturtevant "the first artist in history to have had a solo exhibition with all artists except herself." In the iconic exhibition at the Bianchini Gallery in 1965, she showed a copy of Warhol's flowers that can be found at original Norrtälje Art Gallery. In the same way that Warhol lent Sturtevant his work for her to complete her images, Lundahl & Seidl borrow a work from Sturtevant to complete their own monograph.

PAGE 21 *Lundahl & Seidl, Monograph, 2020 Norrtälje Konsthall.*

Paul Adolf Seehaus, *Leuchtturm mit rotierendem Strahlen*, oil on canvas, 1913, Lundahl & Seidl, *New New Original: transcribed into experience*, 2017. Score duration: 6:44 min

PAGE 24 *Lundahl & Seidl, solo exhibition Monograph, Norrtälje Konsthall, 2020*

Installation detail of a replica of a wall panel installed in the Reynolds Room of the

Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, commemorating the reading of the Darwin-Wallace papers on natural selection in that room in 1858 when the Linnean Society was based there.

Lundahl & Seidl's showed *Symphony of a Missing Room - The Archive of the Forgotten and the Remembered* at Royal Academy as part of a LIFT co-commission in 2014.

PAGE 28-29 *Displaced copy of OST / WEST, 2008, Dani Karavan*
Installation detail from the exhibition Monograph, Norrtälje Konsthall 2020.

In the autumn of 2016, when Lundahl & Seidl were working on a version of the *Symphony of a Missing Room* for the Martin Gropius Bau building in Berlin, they caught sight of a site-specific installation on the stairs at the entrance to Martin Gropius Bau in the immediate vicinity of the former Berlin Wall that shared East and West Berlin. As part of his retrospective in the building and to work with the traces of its fascist past, the division of the city, and how this division was overcome, Israeli landscape artist Dani Karavan had installed two mirrors with the words WEST (WEST) and EAST (EAST) printed on either side.

This became the starting point for Lundahl & Seidl's work in the building. Like Caravan, Like Caravan, it was also an exploration of 'how a place can evoke memories'. During the research, people explained that there was a memory gap in this building. From the time after World War II until the mid-70s, the building had been left in ruins and trees grew inside its atrium. If you are from the generation that grew up shortly after the war - there may be parts inside you that, like the 'memory gap' in the Gropius Bau building, cannot be accessed.

Some German visitors reported that by entering 'the missing room' they gained access to memories of parts of themselves that they thought they had forgotten, but which were still there, influenced them, and perhaps prevented them from understanding something about themselves and how they now could allow themselves to transform.

PAGE 30 *Lundahl & Seidl, The Garden of Ghostflowers, 20230*

The visitors' exploration to find resonance by using their voice to form botanical sprites - as an extension and in interaction with *Ghost Flower* and other visitors - are inspired by Bruce Damer's model for explaining the earliest life on earth. The Model describes how geology - inanimate things - formed life in the form of simple one-celled photosynthesizing cyanobacteria, responsible for creating an atmosphere on earth. The model he use is based on the idea of 'Tools by chance' explaining how life emerged in 'Darwin's pond' in cycles of wet and dry climates, where chains of building blocks like proteins and nucleic acids are pumped around in shallow water, and attach to each other in random ways, forming different 'tools', which, for example could make a hole in a molecule so that another can enter inside and bind with it to form polymer molecules which either stabilized or popped and dispersed. The Garden applies this model on the emergent interhuman phenomenon identified as resonance.

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info@lundahl-seidl.com
www.lundahl-seidl.com

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*“The moving light beam erases everything
you now see. Just think about how many imagined
or remembered versions that exist of an original and
how different each version must be.”*