

Stefanie Knobel
Selection of works 2016-2025

Stefanie Knobel is an artist working with the body, writing, and spatial situations. Since 2016, her research has focused on cotton, global capitalism, and colonial ties between Switzerland and India, linking these themes to issues like ecology and species extinction. Her latest solo exhibition *On Surfaces and Structures* (Coalmine Winterthur, 2025, curated by Annette Amberg) is the result of her years of critical confrontation with cotton and her specific examination of the Volkarthaus.

Untitled (On Surfaces and Structures)
2025









The building by the Winterthur architects Jung & Bridler was constructed from 1904 to 1905 as the commercial headquarters of the Handelshaus Gebrüder Volkart (Volkart Brothers Trading House), with a neo-Gothic exterior and English-style Art Nouveau interior details. Founded in 1851 in Winterthur and Bombay (today Mumbai) by the brothers Salomon and Johann Georg Volkart, the company was active in the global transit trade with colonial goods, quickly advancing to become a leading worldwide cotton-trade company, including the export of raw cotton from the Indian subcontinent. In the Volkarthaus, Stefanie Knobel juxtaposes various types of presence with the missing stories and histories.



All of the white exhibition walls installed in the basement level are covered in cotton cloth. The cloth itself is made of hand-woven, bleached Khadi cotton from the Chandrakanta Lalitmohan workshop in Islampur in the Murshidabad district of the Indian state of West Bengal, which the artist arranged to be sent to Winterthur. Historically, Khadi originates from the Civil Disobedience Movement against British colonial rule, involving a boycott of cheap imported cotton products from Britain and the simultaneous promotion of local textile production, which had been decimated under British domination.



Between the thresholds from the one exhibition space to the other, as well as in front of individual walls, are additional sheets of aluminium with terms «import», «cotton samples», «cotton warehouse», «seeds», «coal storage», «safe compartment», «archive room» and «private». These are all labels that were used in the original plans of the Volkarthaus to describe the functions and contents of the rooms. With an iterative and translational gesture, Stefanie Knobel appropriates the original script from the plans by repeatedly copying it by hand and then transferring it to the aluminium surfaces.

Untitled, 2025

Handwoven Khadi cotton fabric from the production company Chandrakanta Lalitmohan in Islampur, Murshidabad District, West Bengal, India.

8 aluminum plates with a selection of room labels in the Volkarthaus, based on the original plan by Jung & Bridler Architects, Winterthur, around 1904

Stefanie Knobel, *On Surfaces and Structures*
23.03.25 - 25.04.25

Photos: Guadalupe Ruiz

PANZERKAMMER

A Cotton Conversation 2025

The third part of the exhibition consists of a conversation between Stefanie Knobel and the artist Samrat Banerjee. Each of them talks, from their own perspective and based on their own experiences, about the economic and cultural significance of cotton.

They also examine the extent to which Swiss trading companies were able to profit from the global colonial economic system, and to what extent colonial narratives still impact us – both in India and Switzerland.



ers of Bengal had produced some of the world's most desirable fabrics, exported all over the world. Indian cotton fabrics and textiles dominated the global market in both quality and quantity just fifty years after the British seized Bengal, India's economic hub. For me the term "Khadi cotton" has been linked since my childhood to anticolonial resistance. And still nowadays, when there's a festival of any sort, people gift each other a new cloth, and it's important that it's Khadi.

Seen from a more global historical point of view, cotton is obviously connected to the American South and the transatlantic slave trade; and from this same historical perspective I'm also thinking about Eric Hobsbawm, who wrote "Whoever says Industrial Revolution says cotton."⁴ Often things are seen as disconnected and ahistorical. What I mean is that in terms of history writing we often stick to a linear and Eurocentric narrative.

What is your earliest memory of cotton?

Stefanie

My earliest memory of cotton is the Calida pyjamas that I got from my grandparents at Christmas or as birthday gift.

My grandparents both worked in cotton factories in Switzerland – my grandmother in the spinning factory, my grandfather as an assistant weaver. Since the early 19th century a lot of people worked in cotton factories in Switzerland, especially in rural industrial regions, like for example the Zurich Oberland. There the introduction of cotton factories led to a rapid growth of the population.⁵ Later, particularly in the 1970s, many Italians helped the Swiss Textile industry to flourish.⁶ Then, in around 1990, these large-scale cotton industries ceased operations ...

Samrat

... and it all went back to the Global South. When did you decide to work on the history of the cotton trade between India and Switzerland?

Stefanie

It was during my longer stay in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in 2015/16. I did field research in the Indian state of Maharashtra, in other words in the so-called "Cotton belt", where I interviewed cotton farmers. Also, I visited Khadi production workshops and handloom weavers in West Bengal. The presence of sweatshops – actually a European invention but something we nowadays almost only find in the Global South and that dominates the present textile industry – was not really a focus of mine, but was always there at the back of my mind. It was only when I came back from my stay that I came across the history of Volkart Brothers, or VB.

Did you have any idea during your childhood that a Swiss Cotton trading company like Volkart Brothers was also involved in large-scale cotton trading with India?

Samrat

No, that's not something that's remembered in India – people aren't aware of it. Until now, it's never been dealt with ... We didn't know that Volkart Brothers was actually a Swiss company. But we have Voltas Ltd., the fridge and air conditioning company, which has been very prominent in India since Independence. And you told me that Voltas originally emerged from Volkart Brothers ...

Stefanie

... Yes, Voltas, jointly promoted by Volkart Brothers and Tata, sell air conditioning units, so-called "Wheatermakers". But that's another story! During colonial rule, Volkart Brothers actually dominated many aspects of the cotton trade worldwide. Volkart knowingly and unknowingly contributed to the "creative destruction", to use Sven Beckert's term, of the Indian textile industry. Volkart had been active in the Indian cotton trade since 1851, initially utilising the services of Indian brokers.

In the last third of the 19th century it moved its purchases and its capital ever closer to the producers: 'Agents' in the employ of Volkart would purchase cotton

from local dealers, have it processed the firm's own gins then press it at 'Volkart's Press' and send it by rail to Bombay where it was branded by Volkart's age to be shipped to Liverpool, Le Havre, Bremen to be sold to mill owners who had a great trust in the 'VB' stamped on the bales.⁷

Samrat

I'm wondering how it is in Switzerland. Are people here in Winterthur aware of Volkart at all?

Stefanie

I only got to know about the company when I started to work on cotton in 2015. Even though the Volkarthaus and the former building at St. Georgenplatz 2 (today ZHAW) are very present in the city, the history seems to be rather invisible ...

Samrat

I'm curious about whether you found during your research anything about the relation of Volkart Brothers to the British? Enterprises like Volkart Brothers in Winterthur, the Rallis in London, the Siegfrieds in Le Havre profited from cotton by leveraging colonial infrastructure – railways, laboratories, legislative frameworks and the British-imposed cotton system – meaning they benefited from a system designed to serve colonial economic interests.

Stefanie

Volkart manoeuvred very cleverly between different interests and power relations, stressing their "neutral" position. In the City Archive in Winterthur, I found some documents written in response to the anti-colonial Civil Disobedience Movement of the 1930s and the boycott of foreign firms. In order to be able to continue their business without restrictions, Volkart emphasised their absolutely neutral stance.⁸

We also visited the Volkart Archive in the City Archive in Winterthur together. What did you encounter there?

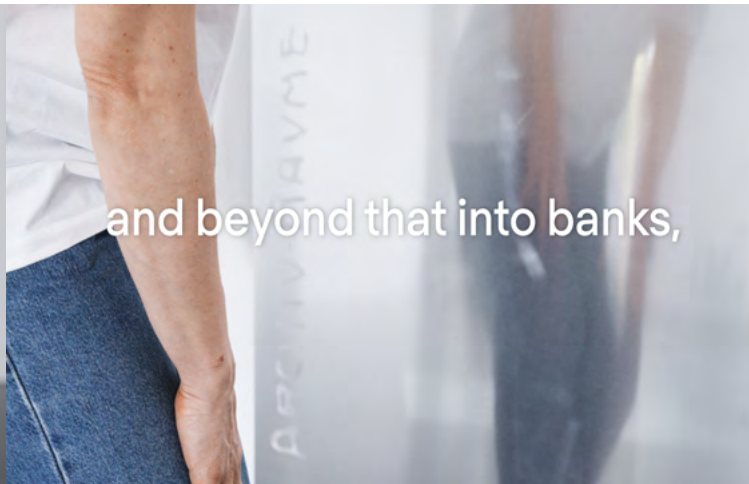
A4, double-sided printed
conversation with Samrat Banerjee
Design: Angela Wittwer

Stefanie Knobel, *On Surfaces and Structures*
23.03.25 - 25.04.25

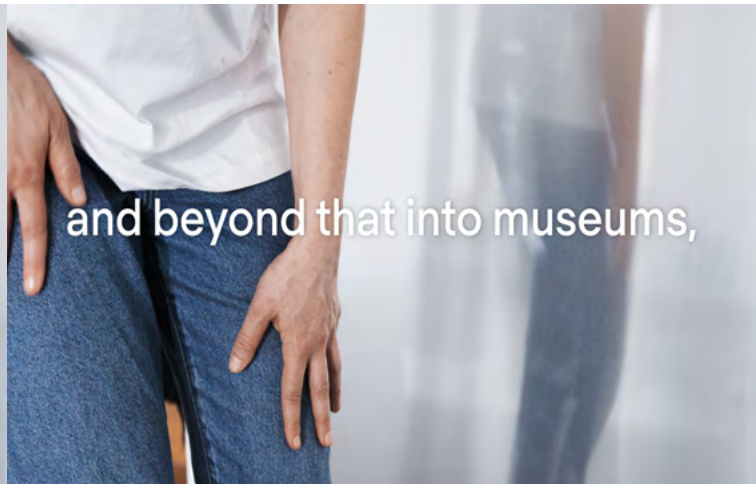
seeping in (On Surfaces and Structures)
2025



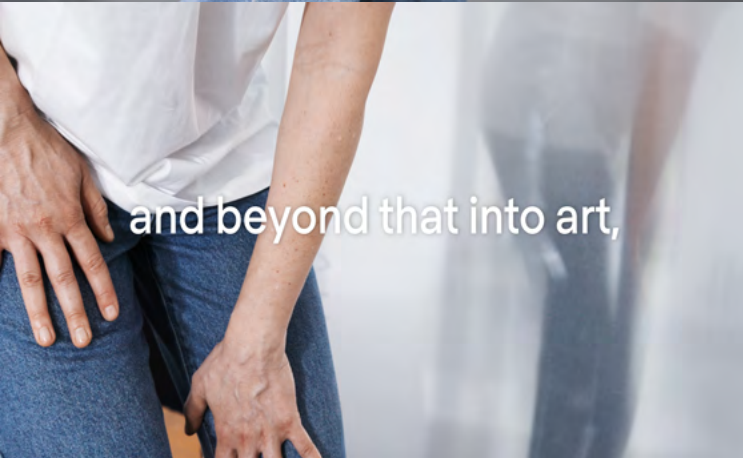
that flows into this house,



and beyond that into banks,



and beyond that into museums,



and beyond that into art,



And you weigh on me and
I weigh on you.







As woven capital,

flow through the textile work
hands of my grandparents,

into my body.

And you weigh on me and
I weigh on you.

Stefanie Knobel expands the tensions between the space, its history and the body (her own) in the video work *seeping in*, 2025. The video connects the motional sequence in the exhibition space with a text by the artist addressed to cotton in which she seizes on the fundamental significance of cotton for continental Europe as capital.

With this she lays bare the sinews of capital entrapment, right down to the level of cultural institutions – within the so-called «neutral» white cube – naming them in her own *white* body. The performance by the artist is, as an analogy, a moment of tentative interrogation – «writing the body with the body». With this Stefanie Knobel follows a specific grammar, drawing from previous performances and formed by the motions of textile workers, textile machinery and the structure of her own body. The movements result from an internal physical composition in which she addresses specific parts of the body. In friction with the hand-woven material, she moves – hesitantly and searchingly – vertically and horizontally, and towards the ceiling.

«I create a dialogue with the cotton, at the same time as seeking contact to the white cube as a 'value-producing apparatus'. The focus of my movements is the hyoid bone, which is connected to hearing and thus to attentive listening. I find myself in a highly entangled presence, in something unfinished, a search for how resistance can be made productive through the body,» as the artist describes her approach.



And as invisible capital,




you flow into all white spaces




into all secured white spaces,



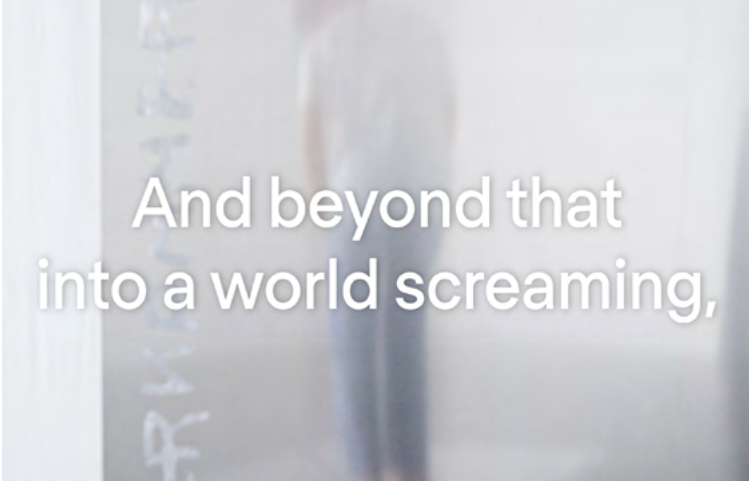
and beyond that
into my *white* body,



and beyond that
into the white space



of this house.



And beyond that
into a world screaming,



into a noisy absence.



Video, color, sound, 8.23 minutes, loop

Director, Performance: Stefanie Knobel
Movement dramaturgical support: Jessica Huber
Camera: Carlotta Holy-Steinemann
Editing: Laura Rodriguez Pérez
Color grading: Patrischa Freuler
Sound mixing/mastering: Vidyananda Bhaskar
Costume: Karolin Braegger

Stefanie Knobel, *On Surfaces and Structures*
23.03.25 - 25.04.25

Photos:
Videostills

[Videolink](#)





The House (On Surfaces and Structures)
2025

















Performance, 24.5.2025

Choreography: Stefanie Knobel
Performance: Stefanie Knobel, Charlotte Mathiessen,
Nina Richard
Movement dramaturgical support: Jessica Huber
Sound mixing/mastering: Vidyananda Bhaskar

Stefanie Knobel, *On Surfaces and Structures*
23.03.25 - 25.04.25

Photos: Guadelupe Ruiz, Gabriel Sandru

Scores for a Ganges River Dolphin and a Textile Worker #2
2025

Vor einem Indienaufenthalt lese ich von einer Schweizer Forschungsexpedition: Diese führt 1969 nach Indien und Pakistan mit dem Ziel zwei blinde Flussdelfine zu fangen und zu Studienzwecken in die Schweiz zu bringen.

Einige Jahre später erfahre ich, dass diese Expedition von einer Schweizer Stiftung finanziert wurde, die aus dem Baumwollhandel mit dem indischen Subkontinent hervorgeht.

*In ländlich-industriellen Regionen wie dem Zürcher Oberland verarbeiteten tausende Textilarbeiter*innen wie meine Grossmutter die indische Baumwolle zu wohligen Pyjamas. Zu jeder Feier schenkte mir meine Grossmutter ein neues Pyjama.*

*Als alle Spinnmaschinen gleichzeitig am Laufen waren, brachten diese ein ungeheures Heulen hervor. Der Lärm liess die Spinnerei erzittern und übertönte alle Unterhaltungen der Textilarbeiter*innen. Lucia und Maria erzählen mir im November in Wetzikon, dass in ihrer Spinnerei neben Italienisch auch Spanisch, Griechisch oder Portugiesisch gesprochen wurde, kaum aber Schweizerdeutsch, wie noch zur Zeit meiner Grossmutter. Das Heulen sitze immer noch tief in den Knochen, sagen sie mir.*

Scores for a Ganges River Dolphin and a Textile Worker #12
2025

Ich stelle mir vor, wie das Heulen in meine Knochen eindringt. Ich laufe mit geschlossenen Augen durch die Gegend, so lange bis sich der Klang körperlich fortsetzen kann. Ich stelle mir vor, wie sich der Gehörgang bei Flussdelfinen zur Gänze mit Wasser füllt und für Schall eine vorzügliche Leitfähigkeit bekommt. Die Flussdelfine betreiben durch kleine Bewegungen des Zungenbeins Echoortung und können sich dadurch fortbewegen und miteinander kommunizieren. Ich fühle nach meinem Zungenbein und wiederhole an ihm einzelne Bewegungen. Doch als ich in den Labyrinthen meines Körpers umherwandere, stosse ich auf lauter Gegensätze. So sehr ich dem Heulen Raum geben möchte, so sehr versuche ich seinen ausbreitenden Schall zu stoppen. Das Heulen verfolgt mich. Ich renne in die Landschaft hinein. Keine Wüste, aber eine weitverzweigte Flusslandschaft. Ich ziehe mein Pyjama aus, komme mit dem Wasser in Berührung, höre hin, mein Zungenbein bebt.

tausende Textilarbeiterinnen.
Pyjamas. Zu jeder Feier schenkte mir meine Grossmutter ein neues Pyjama.

komme r

Als alle Spinnmaschinen gleichzeitig am Laufen waren, brachten diese ein ungeheures Heulen hervor. Der Lärm liess die Spinnerei erzittern und übertönte alle Unterhaltungen der Textilarbeiterinnen. Lucia und Maria erzählen mir im November in Wetzikon, dass in ihrer Spinnerei neben Italienisch auch Spanisch, Griechisch oder Portugiesisch gesprochen wurde, kaum aber Schweizerdeutsch, wie noch zur Zeit meiner Grossmutter. Das Heulen sitzt immer noch tief in den Knochen, sagen sie mir.



Forschungsexpedition:
zwei blinde Flussdelfine
gen.

iner Schweizer Stiftung
dischen Subkontinent

Überland verarbeiteten
che Baumwolle zu wohligen
es Pyjama.

achten diese ein
n und übertönte alle
n mir im November in
riechisch oder Portugiesisch
meiner Grossmutter.

Ich laufe mit geschlossenen Augen durch die
können sich fortbewegen kann.

Ich merke wie sich der Gehörgang bei
Wasser und für Schall eine vorzüglich
Die Delfine betreiben durch kleine Bel
Echoes und können sich dadurch fort

Ich fühle mich meinem Zungenbein und
Bewegung als ich in den Labyrinth
stetig auf der Gegensätze. So sehr ich

Ich versuche mich seinen ausbreitende
Heulen und mich. Ich renne in
er eine weitläufige Flusslandschaft
komme mit dem Wasser in Berührung





In connection with the exhibition object, a handwritten text on the wall (performance score), Stefanie Knobel will be showing a performance in which she interweaves the movements of the river dolphin with the movements of textile workers using her own body as a soundtrack.

The performance will be followed by a discussion with the artist and guests: Former textile workers at the Streiff spinning mill, Maria Gallelli and Lucia Passaseo, will explain work processes on a spinning machine that were important for Stefanie Knobel's performance. Anna Hans Häni also reports on the feminist regulars' table GRUPPO DONNE ITALIANE, founded in 1986 with Marianna Bassu.



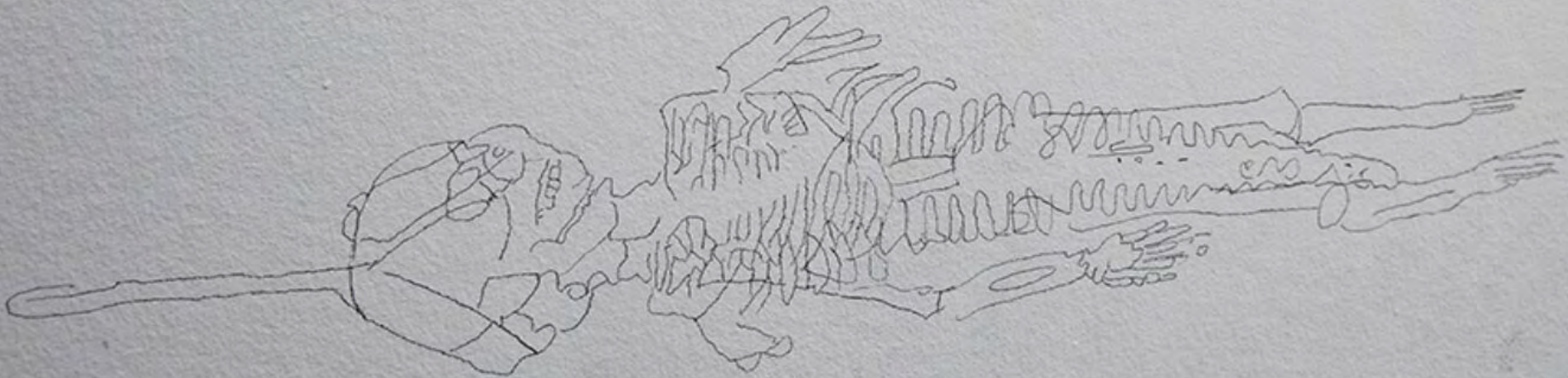
Performance Scores, Performance
pencil on wall, in collaboration with Vidyananda
Bhaskhar,
Movement dramaturgical accompaniment:
Jessica Huber

Live performance on 07.02.25

The Poverty Business. Art Is A Class Act!
Helmhaus Zurich
24.01.25 - 23.03.25

Photos:
Sarai Aron

Kommunizieren und sich fortbewegen. Beide
Bewegungen des Zungenbeins gebunden.





Performance Scores, Installation
pencil on wall, sound track (12' loop)
in collaboration with Vidyananda Bhaskhar,
Movement dramaturgical accompaniment:
Jessica Huber

Live performances on 15.11.24, 15.12.24, 05.01.25

[Performance-Reel](#)

Auswahl 24, Aargauer Kunsthau
16.11.24 - 05.01.25

Photo:
Caroline Minjolle

A heavy, heavy duty - where the cotton lies
2023





A heavy, heavy duty - where the cotton lies engages with the former Schönauf Spinning mill's cotton storage building, now set for partial demolition. The installation evokes cotton's history, highlighting exploitation, factory work, and Switzerland's colonial past. It links Zurich Oberland, India, Iran, and Indonesia, exploring cotton's role in economic, ecological, and social change through history, research, and personal accounts.



Intervention, Installation (with Angela Wittwer)

Installation, Audio-loop, 23 min.

Booklet,

Voice: Anna Katharina Müller (Deutsch)

Schönauf, Wetzikon

29.10.23 - 22.12.23

Photos: Angela Wittwer, Stefanie Knobel

The Soaking Space [der Einweichraum]
2022

Soaking is a softening process that is done by adding water or liquid. Water causes a change in consistency. What happens when you soak the past?

*Site-Specific installation and intervention in the
former Spinning Mill of Adolf Guyer-Zeller and later
weaving factory now the Neuthal Museum*

Silicone on Cotton

Neuthal Museum

2.10.-30.11.2022

Photos: Eugenia Mashenko





Technotropies of the otherwise
2023/24



তিন নদী
শরীত
মাত্র





Technotropies of the Otherwise explores the future of living underwater, inspired by the Sundarbans mangrove forest, which will soon be submerged due to rising sea levels. The work imagines humans migrating into the ocean, training to breathe underwater and adapt to this new environment. The audience experiences an immersive performance with video, light, and music, simulating the rhythms of an aquatic future.

Film, Installation, Performance

Gessnerallee, Zürich

Premiere: 30.3.2023

Performances: 31.3, 1.4., 5.4, 6.4.2023

Concept: Samrat Banerjee and Stefanie Knobel

Choreography, Video direction: Stefanie Knobel

Performance and Co-Choreography:

Uma Banerjee, Clarisa Bledsoe, Malika Khatir, Shatakshi Nandy

Music: André Veigas Pereira

[See full Credits](#)

[Critique](#)

[Documentation](#)

[Trailer](#)

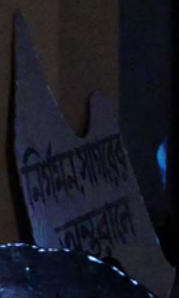
Photos: Kai Simon Stöger, Videostills

Khanri is a collaborative program by the Chander Haat collective India and The Institute for Plant, Animal, and Human Migration, which is founded in 2021 by Samrat Banerjee and Stefanie Knobel. The program features Sting by Chander Haat and Technotropies of the Otherwise .

Khanri examines the resilience of the region's ecosystems and questions whether humanity can adapt to life underwater, sparking a dialogue on ecological vulnerability and the urgent need for sustainable coexistence amidst environmental shifts.



Two 2 Channel Video installations
wooden boards , audio
Khanri - A Tapestry of Ebb and Flow,
Chander Haat, Kolkata, India
17.1. - 21.1.2024
Photos: Kausik Kumar





L'OPOPONAX
2022 (2019)







The title L'OPOPONAX refers to the medicinal plant of the same name, the so-called sweet myrrh, which until the 1950s was mainly used in connection with hysteria diagnosed in the uterus and the female sex. From the biomedical present, the diagnosis of hysteria based on stereotypical ideas may have disappeared. Nevertheless discrimination based on binary notions embedded in algorithms is ubiquitous.

The video shows a choreography based on breathing in front of the painting *Une leçon clinique à la Salpêtrière* (1887) by André Brouillet, which shows the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot demonstrating his patient's hysteria to a group of male medical students.

With her work, Knobel presents a counter-design to the image of the disease. In the incessant whispering of hysteria, in connection with the animals, the trees and the water, the clouds and the moon, the performers begin to interact with the painting and in doing so formulate a clear critique - they create a draft for the future and an echo at the same time.
(Text: Katrin Sperry)



Performative intervention
in front of the original of André Brouillet
«Une leçon clinique à la Salpêtrière» on
18.12.2019
at Université Paris Descartes, Paris

eponymous video work
DESCRIBE YOUR PAIN FROM 1 TO 10
Grand Palais, Bern
03.09.-15.10.2022

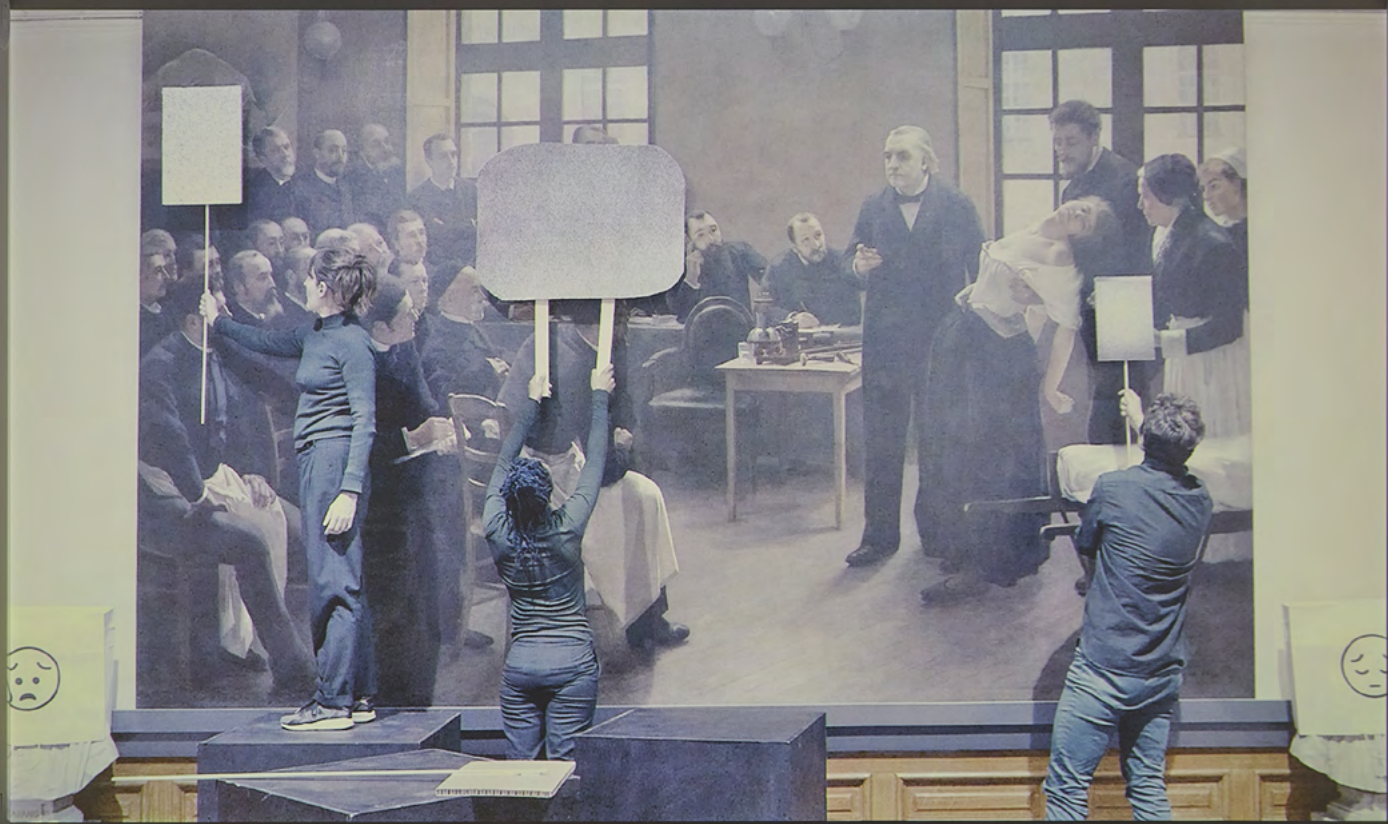
Auswahl 22
video installation with Opoponax scent
Aargauer Kunsthaut
3.12.2022-2.1.2023

Concept, Choreography, Staging: Stefanie Knobel
Performer*s: Carisa Bledsoe, Christine
Bombal, Kai Simon Stöger
Camera: Christin Berg, Lena Mäder
Soundsources: Pharmakon

Fotos: Hugo de Almeida Pinho, Deidre O'Leary

Photos following page: Exhibition Views
Aargauer Kunsthaut,
Foto: David Aebi

[Videolink](#)



SPEIS UND TRANK

2425 m.ü.M.

46° 34' 34.417" N 8° 25' 17.803" E 46°

2023



I spent the summer of 2023 preparing food and drinks for the restaurant of the Institute Furkablick on the Furka Pass, 2425 metres above sea level.

Right from the start, it felt like the mountain was plunging towards the sea, the wind and the weather changes passing through my body and the food. SPEIS UND TRANK is a language work in the form of single piece menu card that creates an interface between the human bodies and the larger environment .



Language work

Foil embossing on SBR rubber,
metal rings, tassels
Institut Furkablick
Hotel Furkablick, Realp

SPEISEN

AUSGETROCKNETER SEEFISCH	4000.-
LUFTANHALTENDES LUNGENFLÜGEL	2.-
ÄHFLÜSSIGE BLUTWURST IM GORE-TEX MANTEL	30.-
SonnenWarme Fleischbacke	6.-
ÜRRER WALDSPINAT	0.50.-
IEFSEEEMMEL	1'000'000.-
SCHRIGE GELENKE IN REGENWASSERSUPPE	5.-
NNENGEBLEICHTER BLÄTTERTEIG	4.-
SHAUCHTE GLASNUDELN	8.-
ERSCHWEMMTE PLATTE	28.-

GETRÄNKE

RÜHENDES HITZEWASSER
DURSTIGE KUHMITCH
SCHWER ATMENDER KAFFEE
SCHWEISSBIER
EISGROTTENTROPFEN
GETROCKNETE SPEICH
SAURE MEERBRISKE
ABGAS SCHLUCKERL
MANGANKNOLLENTÉE
GLETSCHERSCHWEISS

Writing the body with the body
2020



They are on the loom.

They are behind the punched card
programs of calculators.

before exhaling
assemble the breath at the cervical
vertebra
breathe the assembled mass of air out
through the mouth



und eine schnur werde durch die scheibe
geführt, woran sich weitere scheiben
reihen werden.
and then a string is pushed through
the disc, on which other discs
are strung.

Giant Loom
Performing Star

Polyester Perform
Perform Internationale Textile
Performer
Mimetics Corporation
Performance
Fidelity Industries' Performance
Performance Plus
Cotton Optimiser



A manifestation for the
quasi-public #8



262

fortgewischt. ab und zu werde die zeit
aufgelockert und das gewebe aus-
einandergetrennt. dadurch werde sich
krankheit einsenken können, die sich,
gemengt mit fiebrigen fadenwürmern,
rasch vervielfachen könne, und der
baumwoll- oder *karpash*-faden werde
sich wurmartig, so lange, bis sich
das geschwulst nicht mehr weiter zum
wurm hin selbst auffressen könne,
an ihr fortsetzen.

263



396

397

Writing the body with the body consists of fragments taken
from performance texts by Stefanie Knobel, which are
juxtaposed with a series of pictures created for this volume.

Performance as a book
text, images
400 pages
Edition Fink/Primeur, 2020

A manifestation for the quasi-public #1- #5
2018, 2019

By doing a breathing performance,
life itself becomes the object of
added value.

The air will not accumulate, not
reproduce itself,
not be air-conditioned.

The air is wrong. The air is bad.
The air is dead.

It will be scorching.





The performance *A Manifestation for the Quasi-Public* explores the perspective of one's lungs. An audio of textile noises fills the space with a breathing score, interrupted by spoken text. The performer moves between the floor and standing, creating a narrative where non-living elements like CO2 emissions blend with the body, transforming from background noise into something demanding.

Breathing is shown as fragile, not taken for granted.

Soloperformance, 35 min.
breathing score, spoken and projected text,
textiles noises

Performances #1–5:
6. International Moscow Biennale for Young Art,
11.09.2018

Living Room by Pro Helvetia at
Art Basel,
Basel, 15.06.2018

My grammer and (y)ours?,
OnCurating Project Space,
Zurich, 04.10.2018

Auswahl 18, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau,
06.01.2019

Digital Ecologies, Center for Contemporary Art
'Ancient Bath', Plovdiv (BL), 5.5.2019

[Videolink](#)

la molécule (in the screen)
2017, 2018, 2019



The flickering of the screen transfers you into a kind of twilight state.

Your movements accord entirely with hers,
your arms are driven by the same rhythm.



The video *la molécule* (in the screen), was based on a performance filmed on January 18, 2015, at Tanzhaus in Zurich. In the video, several persons work together to create a sequence of shared gestures. Inspired by Yvonne Rainer and her famous performance, *Trio A* (1968), the artist incorporates simple, fragmentary movements that explore action and examine their own performativity.

Dressed in identical outfits, the bodies are interchangeable, and their way of moving is reminiscent of the regularity and systematic character of a machine. The rhythm, however, is disrupted by the uneven ground that makes it difficult to shift body weight. The symmetry, initially established by a set of mirrors, is unsettled by the entrance of several similar bodies, diffracting the first entity. The words spoken by a voice off-screen contribute to the difficulty in identifying a subject, thus creating an opaque first person. Here, Knobel references Roland Barthes and his research on the "neutral". The neutral allows us to let go of the binary habitus for the sake of a zone of conflict or undecidability. The neutral undermines both the notion of identity and the search for meaning. (Text: Fanny Gonella)

Video/Video-Installation
 HD 16:9, Farbe, Stereo, 18 Min.
 2 colored basket balls
 Concept, Choreography, Text, Editing:
 Stefanie Knobel
 Performer*s: Désirée Meul,
 Eirini Sourgidiaki, Stefanie Knobel
 Voices: Marie-Theres Hölig
 (german version),
 Marion Aeschlimann
 (french version)
 Camera: Gabriel Studerus

Wie werden wir uns wiedererkennen,
 Künstlerhaus Bremen,
 Bremen 8. 11. 2017 – 28. 1. 2018

Vous me rappelez quelqu'un, FRAC Lorraine,
 Metz, 22. 3. 2018 – 17. 7. 2018

Auswahl 19, Aargauer Kunsthhaus,
 Aarau, 16. 11. 2019 – 15. 1. 2020

Video (german version):
[Videolink](#)

Foto: Fred Dott | Künstlerhaus Bremen





geomythic opera
2020



geomythic opera is a performance with two grappling dummies that merge with the human body and voices during choreographed sequences. The dummies are not just tools of submission but embody characters, like the Earth threatening humanity or a geneticist prioritizing money over healing body politics. The dialogues, inspired by Sylvia Wynter's work, are reimagined for the performance.

Solo poerformance, 25 min.
2 Grappling Dummies with Polyester
embroidery
Voices: Samrat Banerjee,
Stefanie Knobel

Vebikus Kunsthalle Schaffhausen/
Das feministische Kapital
14.06.2020
Fotos: Axel Crettenand

Audiodokumentation:
[Soundcloud](#)

TipTui - Performance Undercover
2019



If performance legitimizes knowledge and social relations (Jon McKenzie), Tuis (Bertolt Brecht's anagram for intellectuals) connect art, business, morality, and freedom. In this exhibition, polyester fabric conceal cotton – the material at stake. Breathing sounds make the windows vibrate. The artist delves into cotton's colonial ties and Brecht's Turandot, or the Whitewasher's Congress, written in 1953 highlighting how Tuis profit by hiding cotton's true value, critiquing embedded racism and the performative effects legitimizing our contemporary social relations.

tip toe, tip tip tip toe

Solo Exhibition

Installation, 5 Channel-Audio, Polyester
(Polyester woven in Bangalore,
printed in Surat)

Audio: 11 Min.

Voices: Anna-Katharina Müller, Stefanie Knobel

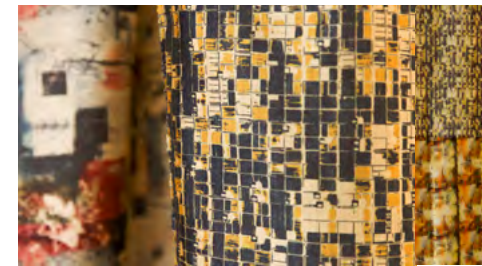
Raum:Station, Zurich, 25. 4. – 12. 5. 2019

Cité Internationale des Arts Paris,
6. – 7. 10. 2019 und 29. 10. 2019

Fotos: Esther Nora Mathis

Audiodokumentation:
[Soundcloud](#)

The Tuis are convinced that the denial of cotton to the people through white washing is by far the best strategy.



Interfacing the non-
2018, 2019



I stay nowish.

I will stay hereish.

I remain hereish.

Interfacing the Non- resists dominant narratives in nature/culture, digitality/humanity, and materiality. The mixed-media installation explores cotton's colonial entanglements and its role in modernization. Weaving, text, textile, and breath are central to this performative practice. White cotton, covered in glistening silicone, serves as a backdrop to hand-choreographies on monitors, reflecting daily movements and creating unfinished, evolving relations.



Mixed Media Installation

Silicone on cotton and windows, 3 videos with
hand gestures on monitors, text

my grammar and your(s)?,
OnCurating Project Space, Zürich,
21. 9. 2018 – 13. 10. 2018

Digital Ecologies,
Center for Contemporary Art
'Ancient Bath' and SKLAD, Plovdiv (BL),
05. 05. 2019 – 30. 06. 2019

Kunstkasten Winterthur
05. 10. 2019 – 10. 10. 2019



warp and weft
2017



The Singing Voice: It is a loom, Merchant.

warp and weft is an installative textile-technology-fiction.
Here, a figure has a loom in her body and collects
„other stories“ in order to resist the „one story“ about the
ongoing Capitalocene.

Merchant: I want to use this technology for my own purpose.
I will take this loom from your body.

Installation

Text: „Oh my silly, silly, silly mind! (co-written
with Samrat Banerjee)

Laser on cotton

(Cotton woven in Bhagalpur, Bihar, India)

Eine Ausstellung für Dich / An Exhibition for
You, Helmhaus, Zürich, 21.9. – 19.11.2017

Auswahl 18, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau,
1.12.2018 – 6.1.2019

Fotos: Esther Nora Mathis

hereish and nowish
2017





There is something inside my body that hinders the process of immunization.

hereish and nowish is a live installation featuring five breathing techniques that emphasize unavoidable corporality. The seven-hour performance (in 60-minute loops) allows visitors to enter and exit freely, fostering communities and connections among them. The breathing techniques, inspired by a loom, blur the line between body and technology, giving life a material force beyond work and reproduction.



Live-Installation

Choreography: 60 min.

Performance: 7 hours

Dramaturgy: Désirée Meul Performer*innen:
Anna Lena Lehr, Tabea Magyar, Désirée Meul,
Nina Tshomba

Eine Ausstellung für Dich / An Exhibition for
You, Helmhaus, Zurich, 21.9. – 19.11.2017

Fotos: Esther Nora Mathis

Video/Performancedocumentation:
[Videolink](#)

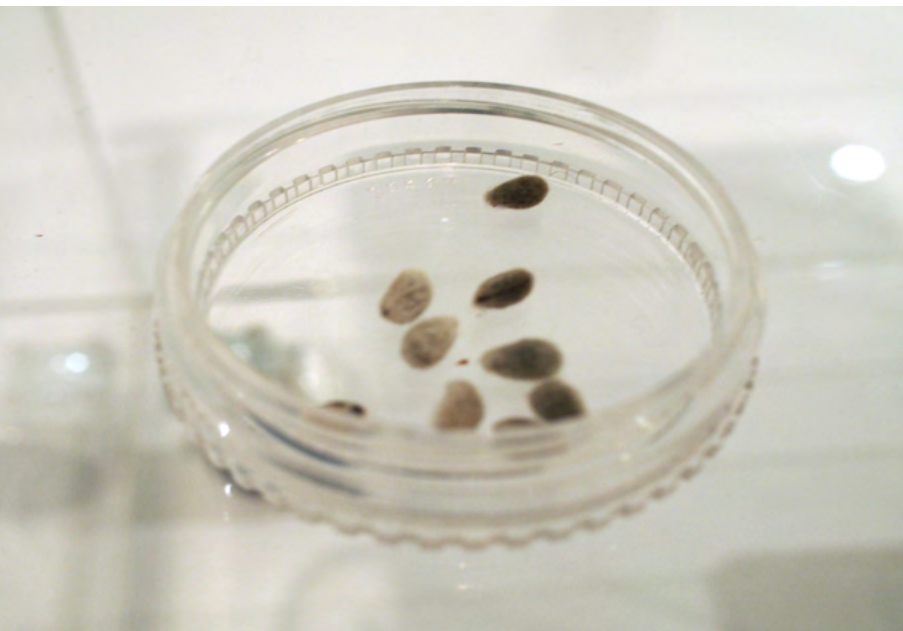
Fotos: Esther Nora Mathis

A heavy, heavy duty
2016



the machine and above all the cotton fibre is on hand always ready to go, soaked impregnated, compressed, prepared, narrowing to a thread.

A heavy, heavy duty is a textile-fiction installation blending global cotton production with synthetic and chemical substances. It creates a sci-fi landscape where fertilizers, dry ice, and hormones impact bodies and resistance. The work weaves sound recordings with historical references, interviews, and legends, exploring cotton's colonial entanglements and Switzerland's textile history. A textile-disco and walk invite visitors to dance and reinterpret the "Spinning Jenny."



Exhibition

(with Angela Wittwer)

Installation, Audio-loop, 49 min.

Booklet, diverse materials

Voice: Anna Katharina Müller (Deutsch)

Les Complices*, Zurich, 11. 11. 2016 – 03. 12. 2016

Photos: Angela Wittwer

Audio documentation:

[Soundcloud](#)

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