

## Create, preserve, destroy, conceal and reveal

(images and notes for the colloquium Poièse/Autopoièse, Toulouse University, 16-18 Oct. 2012)  
Arijana Kajfes

The title of the presentation comes from the defining characteristics of the Hindu deity Shiva. Poiesis is also the root of the word poetry. I will apply the word to my artwork in its meaning *bringing forth* in the widest sense and also the more narrow sense of self-generating, emergent or evolutionary systems, the dynamics of living systems where the system is the producer and the product.

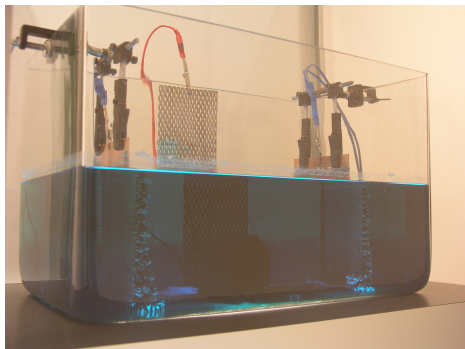


*Ignis Natura Renovatur Integra*  
Ritual action, 1989

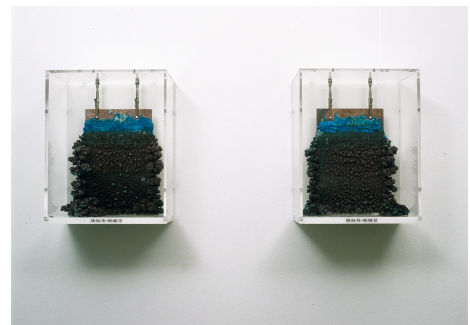


*The Clump*  
1000 SKR melted coins, 1988

Above are two works from my student years that I still refer to as personal manifestos. The first, a sacrificial act dealing with the materiality, perishability and transformative powers of the human body and in prolongation a body of work. The second concerning material (in this case money) as a producer of value. ART=CAPITAL (Beuys), the commodification of the art object, the process and meaning of distribution and exchange.



*4th Mass Transaction*, Stockholm 2007

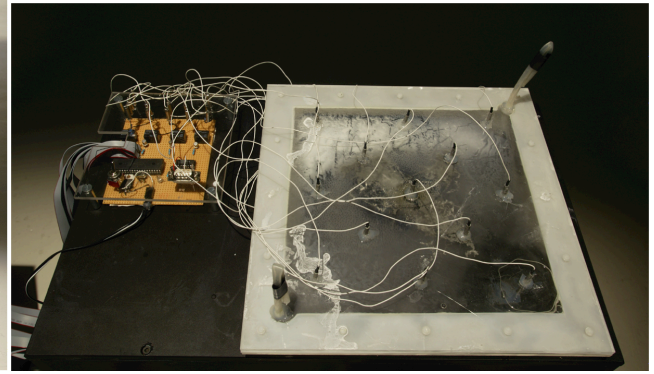
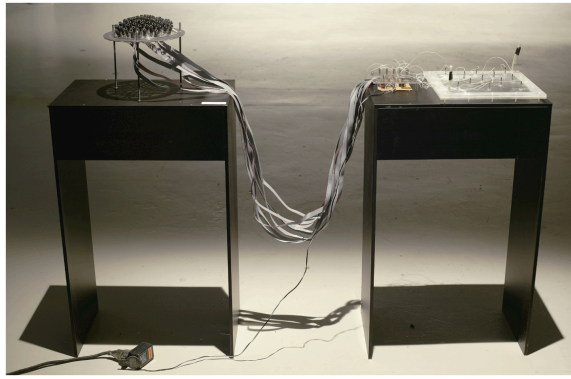


*Demonetized Deposit no.5-6*, Roskilde, 2005

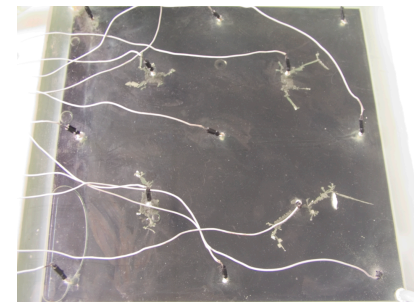
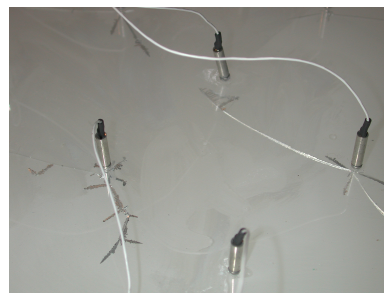
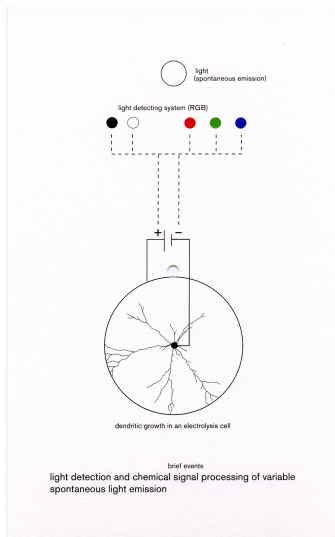
*The Clump* also became a performative, time-extended piece, where it was gradually dissolved in an electrochemical process, a transaction where the value once again was converted through ionization. The copper plates, to which the ions were transferred, are the final depositions of this symbolic transaction.

Later I used the electrochemical process to recreate an electrochemical computing device that was developed by Gordon Pask in the 1950's. This was part of a collaborative research process with the architect Pablo Miranda at Smart Studio, Interactive Institute in Stockholm in developing my project *Ocular Witness* (presented at Ars Electronica, 2006).

I applied the process to create *The Dendroid*, one of the ocular machines, using photo receptors and light-to-current devices as signal processors, so that light is transformed to energy and image is created by distribution of energy (ionization) in a thin layer of tin chloride solution. I refer to the plates as samples of *image energy* (Virilio).



*Occular Witness\_The Dendroid* (ver.1 w. Pablo Miranda), 2004



Page from the book *Occular Witness* / samples of image energy

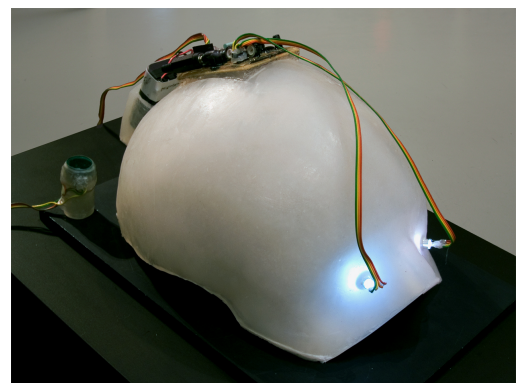
The project *Occular Witness* was presented as an installation and a book. It was a precursor to art research which had not yet become fully established at the time, therefore I sometimes call it my pseudo-Doctorate, having borrowed some useful elements of traditional research: advisors, disputation and written dissertation but completely freely adapted to the art context and closer to the paranoid-critical method of Dali and the writings of Duchamp.

The word *ocular\** was invented by me for the project and I was later asked to present it in an edition of the Swedish cultural magazine *Glänta* with the theme *Encyclopedia of the Future*.

\*ocular: *adj.* (see *occult* and *ocular*) that which passes the visual system and simultaneously remains hidden, invisible to the observer. The term *ocular* is used when the apparently real is difficult to identify, considering reality as it is depicted through mediated layers of electromagnetic transmissions (signal transmission through implants, external or extrasensory sources). The smallest component in the *ocular* context is usually a photon, referring to the light energy that passes the body and leaves traces in the flash of a moment. (*Encyclopedia of the Future*, *Glänta* 3.08)



*Occular Witness (the rotating book)*, 2006



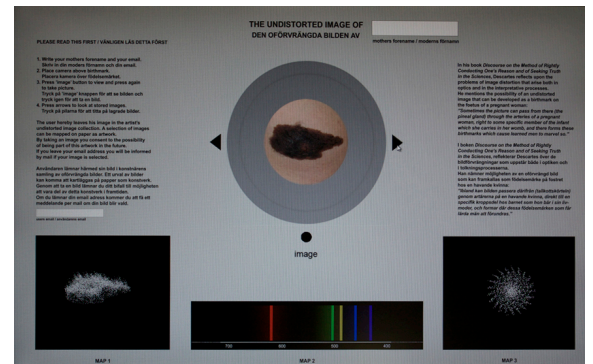
*Occular Witness\_Momochrome* (w. Fredrik Bridell, Alberto Frigo), 2004



*Monochrome* (above) is another ocular machine from the installation. A play on the VR helmet, a popular device at the time. This wearable object reads reality at lowest resolution (pure color). The thimble (instead of a glove) contains one of each color sensor (RGB). When pointing in space, instead of enhanced hyperreality, it feeds back a reduced image of the environment, a non-representation of reality for those overwhelmed by visual input.



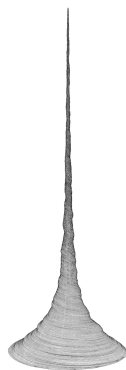
*The Undistorted Image of*, installation 2010



Detail of interface in the Photo Booth (programmers: Carl-Johan Rosén and Mari Adele Arcuri )

The *Undistorted Image of* (above) is a more recent installation dealing with the deconstruction of image. Based on a proposition by René Descartes in his studies on optics, where he states that there may be a possibility of a direct image transfer (where the image is not affected by reason or the optical system) when a pregnant woman looks at something and the image is transferred, through the arteries and passing the pineal gland, to the skin of the foetus creating a birthmark. The installation is based on a designed software that can store images of people's birthmarks and make an analysis of them in 3d, with spectral color bands and by exploding the image into free-floating pixels.

The public artwork *Maelström* (below) is the piece I have been invited to show in the exhibition of the colloquium and it is a sculpture realized from a 3d modelling of rotating spheres to create a vortex shape. The full scale sculpture has been modelled directly from the 3d files, using 3d milling techniques and then cast into stainless steel.



*Maelström*, 2009-11 from 3d model to final placement in Gävle, Sweden (3d modelling: Sverker Nordqvist)

This work is related to an earlier work, *Genus 0* where I looked at the behaviour of spherical bodies, their expansion in space and studied ideas in physics for pushing the limits of the visible three dimensions. Playing with galaxy formation and black holes on an embodied, human level, I invited a pizza baker and a potter to perform with the outset of spherical bodies and their topology. *Genus 0* is a mathematical

(topological) concept that counts holes or rips in a continuously changing form (ex. cup or torus/donut is genus 1). In parallel I developed a 3d animation loop to visualize the possible transformations of a sphere.



*Genus 0 (Hold Infinity in Your Hand for a Moment)*, 2005 (remake from 1999, right image/3d modelling: Daniel Westlund)

Lastly a sound sample from my most recent work *Mother Tounge*, also visually based on a rotational system (Gray code, a rotary 8-bit binary encoder) which triggers sounds of human speech. Recording the sounds of the phonetic alphabet, I developed a software, with my programmer Fredrik Bridell, that can randomize the individual sounds in different speeds to create new sound constellations (words). I use the machine performatively to answer questions from the public.



*Mother Tounge*, performance 2011 (programmer: Fredrik Bridell)