

work in progress

Day for Night

work in progress

Walter Benjamin wrote in his *On the Concept of History*:
„The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again.“
and:
„To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was’. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger..“

If we attempt to hold on to the sudden flash of an image from the past, trying to grasp the past, if only for a brief moment, everything shifts again in the very next instant. Nothing shields us from the renewed flare of what has been; we must continually reclaim our own memory anew.
Day for Night explores how light shapes knowledge, memory, and collective perception, and how matter stores, withholds and releases time.
In the first part of the work, I intertwine the story of my father — a cinematographer who ended his professional career after a psychological breakdown — with luminescence dating, a method in which mineral grains release stored energy as a flash of light, enabling the temporal classification of events.

Day for Night, Part I: OSL | work in progress | videostill | Projektbeschreibung | 2026

Day for Night

work in progress

Until the mid-1990s, my father worked in the film industry.
His final film as a cinematographer was largely shot using the day-for-night technique. Day-for-night is a cinematic method in which artificial lighting, filters, and underexposure are used to transform daytime footage so that it appears as night. It produces darkness by controlling what light is allowed to show, and it shapes my way of working: filtering, underexposing, letting other things catch the light.
Shortly before the completion of this film, my father suffered a nervous breakdown and fled the set. He could no longer bear the thought of having rendered all the recorded material unusable due to a technical error. Tormented by overwhelming fear of failure, he barricaded himself in a hotel room and never returned to filmmaking.
For my father, this situation represented a personal failure and marked a biographical rupture that left deep traces in his identity and in our shared family life.

Beginning with his story, I investigate how origin and social class inscribe themselves into perception, decision-making, self-conception, and who is seen, studied and remembered.
What role does light play — in a cinematic, scientific, and metaphorical sense — as a vehicle of knowledge, memory, and history?
Filmmaking is about story telling. *Day for Night* questions fixed narratives and approaches, in an associative manner, who tells which stories — and where they begin.
The process of luminescence dating (OSL — Optically Stimulated Luminescence) makes stored time visible through light.
Certain minerals — such as quartz or feldspar — store energy for years, centuries, or even millennia, generated by natural radiation in their environment. In the laboratory, this stored energy is released through controlled light stimulation. A brief, measurable flash of light is emitted — a flash that marks the last moment the material was exposed to daylight.
Matter thus becomes a carrier of stored time, and light the means of reading it. The result is scientifically measurable and simultaneously poetically legible. I am interested in this method not only as a tool of physical dating, but as an artistic image for memory, transformation, and afterglow.
The controlled release and visualization of stored energy mirrors processes that also operate in social and biographical contexts — the resurfacing of hidden layers, the uncovering of inscribed histories, and the lingering glow of past experience.
In 2026, I followed this method at the Luminescence Dating Lab of the University of Helsinki, hosted by the Finnish Museum of Natural History, where I also documented the relocation of the geological collection from Kumpula to storage in Vantaa. A collection in storage is a sleeping memory: who decides when it is exposed to light again? This raises the questions that guide the next part of the project: how matter and non-human timescales might become collaborators in remembering, and how sustainability, extraction and national identity are negotiated through materials such as fossils, uranium and meteorites.

I am currently evaluating the material gathered in Helsinki and weaving it together with my father's biography. Increasingly, my research is about working with existing knowledge and matter, and reflecting on them anew in my process, so that lived experience and scientific insight, both natural-scientific and historical, become materially tangible in *Day for Night*.



JOSEPHIN HANKE

Kannibalen | installation view Fight or Flight II | Berlin | 2025



sound samples:
https://on.soundcloud.com/kannibalen

teaser-link:
https://vimeo.com/1097653133

JOSEPHIN HANKE

installation view Fight or Flight II | Belrin | 2025

Kannibalen

In the dynamic interplay of desire and societal pressure, loneliness and social dependence, as well as tenderness and violence, ***Kannibalen*** explores the relationships between individuals whose attraction to one another is shaped by reflections on their working class backgrounds. The sound installation comprises a melding of monologues that coalesce into a collective murmur, recounting the struggles of precarious living conditions. Each voice serves as a container for different realities, which underlie the foundations of a capitalist society.

Text by Josephin Hanke
Inspired by
Michel de Montaigne, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Marlen Hobrack, British Vogue, YouTube Tutorials & Amanda Nunes Best Knockouts & UFC Highlights

2025
4-channel sound installation | 40:00 min | german

voice artist: Mareike Hein , Nele Niemeyer, Susann Schütz & Nolundi Tschudi
Sound Supervisor: Nadia D'Alò

4 handmade cushions | various textils | á 80cm x 60cm
tent | LED-sign | vareous textils | wood | carpet 300cm x 300cm x 340cm

LEADERS* Fermented Prospects

*Set in an unspecified future, Josephin Hanke's work **LEADERS*** is a science fiction series surrounding its protagonists' (avatars) struggle for freedom within a dystopian world. In the course of the first episode, titled **Fermented Prospects**, NN—a figure that seems to have directly emerged from Ulrike Ottinger's subversive and magical film cosmos—collects data chips from three robots with whom she immediately forms a conspiratorial alliance. The avatars' subversive behavior is accompanied by an erotic exchange that mutates into their form of communication and resistance. While trying to survive in the capitalist's ruins they have inherited, they embark on a quest for collective futurity, performed and embodied as a constant longing for a utopian togetherness.*

***Fermented Prospects** takes the viewer to a realm in which time doesn't move according to linearity, but to a construction similar to what the Cuban American theorist, José Esteban Muñoz, defines as queerness's time: "Queerness's time is a stepping out of the linearity of straight time. Straight time is a self-naturalizing temporality. Straight time's 'presentness' needs to be phenomenologically questioned, and this is the fundamental value of a queer utopian hermeneutics. Queerness's ecstatic and horizontal temporality is a path and a movement to a greater openness to the world." If queerness's temporality doesn't live in the here and now of every day's linear time construction, but in the constant and horizontal negotiation of desire and desiring, as Muñoz suggests, survival, not only for Hanke's avatars, might only be a successful endeavor, if performed through collectivity and love. A perhaps crucial path to exit the unresolved past turned into a-far-too-well recognizable present dystopia.*

Eli Cortiñas, Soft Capsules,
Kunstverein Braunschweig
2021

trailer-link
https://vimeo.com/665692812

full version
https://vimeo.com/799936780
Passwort:
leaders

***LEADERS*, Fermented Prospects** | 2021
2-channel video | color | sound | 10 min

JOSEPHIN HANKE

2021 | video still



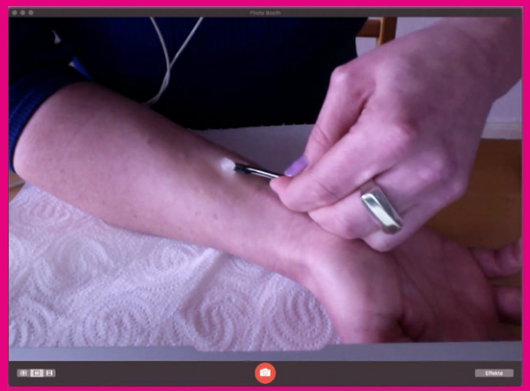
LEADERS*, Fermented Prospects | 2021 | 2-channal video | color | sound | 10 min | video stills

JOSEPHIN HANKE

Erschießt zuerst die Frauen/ Shoot the Women First

The online lecture performance ***Erschießt zuerst die Frauen/ Shoot the Women First*** examines images of women from social media, pop culture, and public space for their potential danger. It was created during the lockdown in January 2021. In addition to the many social problems brought to light by the Corona Pandemic, incidents of domestic violence against women increased significantly during this time.
In a fictional dialogue with a cyborg, the limits of a heteropatriarchal society are shown, which tries to force the non-normalized body of female-identified persons into existing gender patterns. I use virtual collage and direct action to make the issue tangible. I provide insights into my archive of found footage, videos I have shot myself, and texts written by others and myself.
The title of the lecture refers to the book „Shoot the Women First“ by Eileen MacDonald and the recommendation of the German anti-terrorist unit GSG 9 to its snipers: „Shoot the women first“.

2021
german/english
duration 60 min



Screenshots | Online Lecture Performance | 2021

working it out

The performance deals with the presence of the female body and the prejudices attributed to it in society. Divided into seven rounds, the audience accompanies me through a rigorous fitness program and autofictional memories. Each round is announced by a boxing bell and a changing projection in the background. The projection shows color and text panels and video clips alternating with popular role models from sports and pop culture. The expectations placed on a female body and its behavior seem to be at odds with the physical routine depicted. This dissonance slowly transforms into a conscious renegotiation of one‘s own identity.
In the penultimate round, the entire audience is involved in the performance. I consciously used the critical potential that can be developed by involving them in the performative act to create a moment of empowerment at the end: people identified as female are separated from the rest of the audience, brought to the fore, their physicality is made tangible and their often overlooked threatening nature is emphasized.

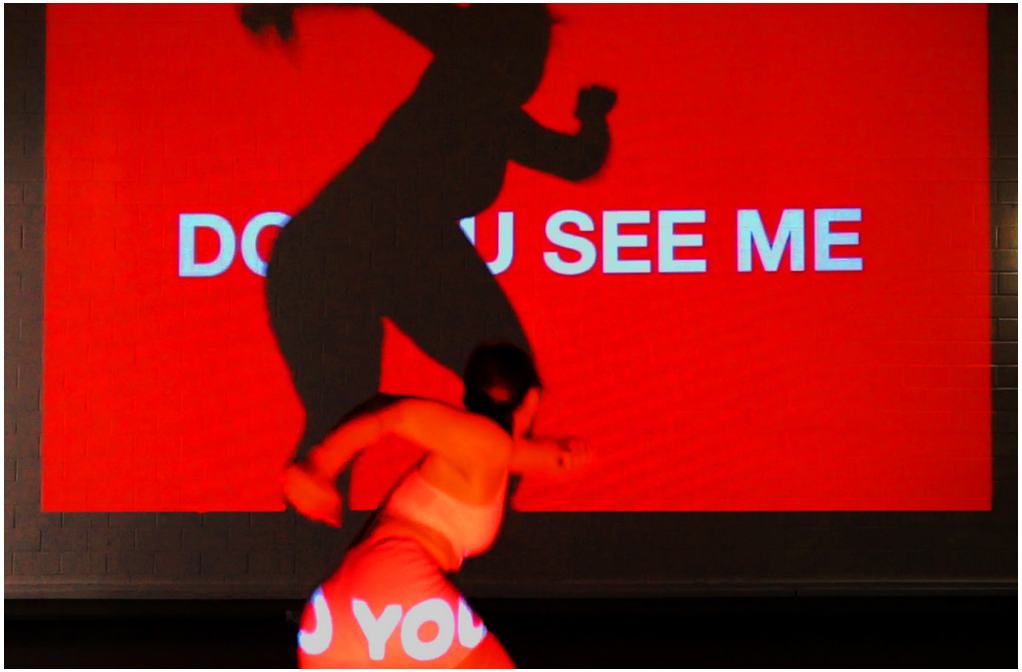
teaser-link

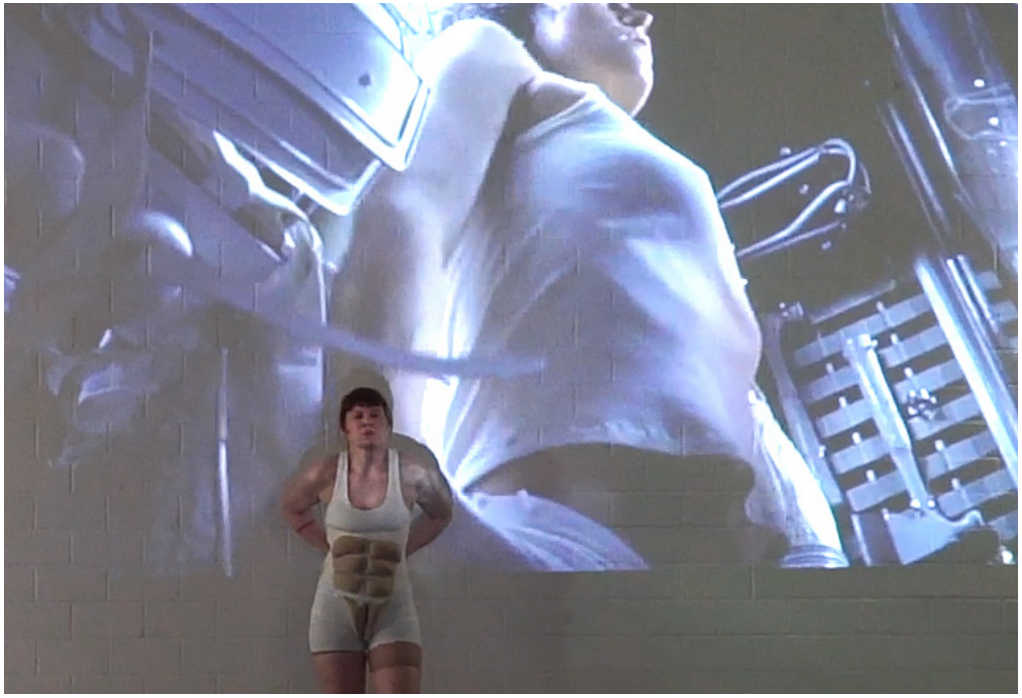
https://vimeo.com/665693318

2020
performance | beamer projection | sound
muscle corset with removable sandbags
duration 20 min.

JOSEPHIN HANKE

2020 | performance documentation | open studio Braunschweig University of Art





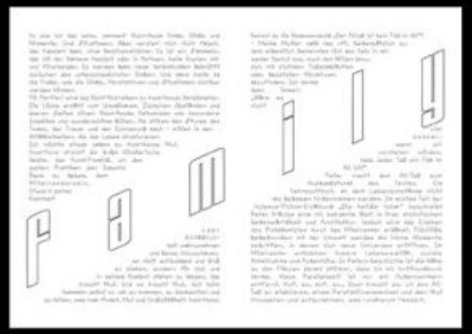




JOSEPHINE TANKE

working it out | 2020 | performance documentation | open studio HBK-Braunschweig | beamer projection | sound |muscle corset with removable sandbags | duration 20 min

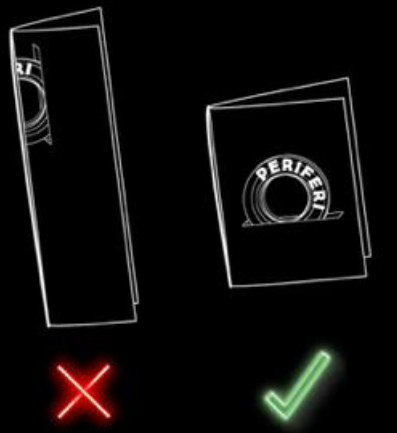




Periferi #2 family.pdf PDF



Periferi #1 empathy muscle PDF



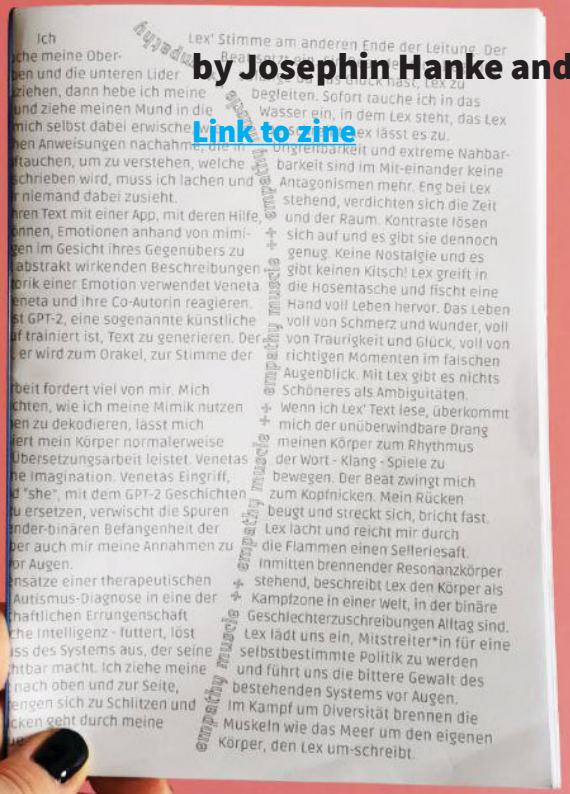
How to Periferi

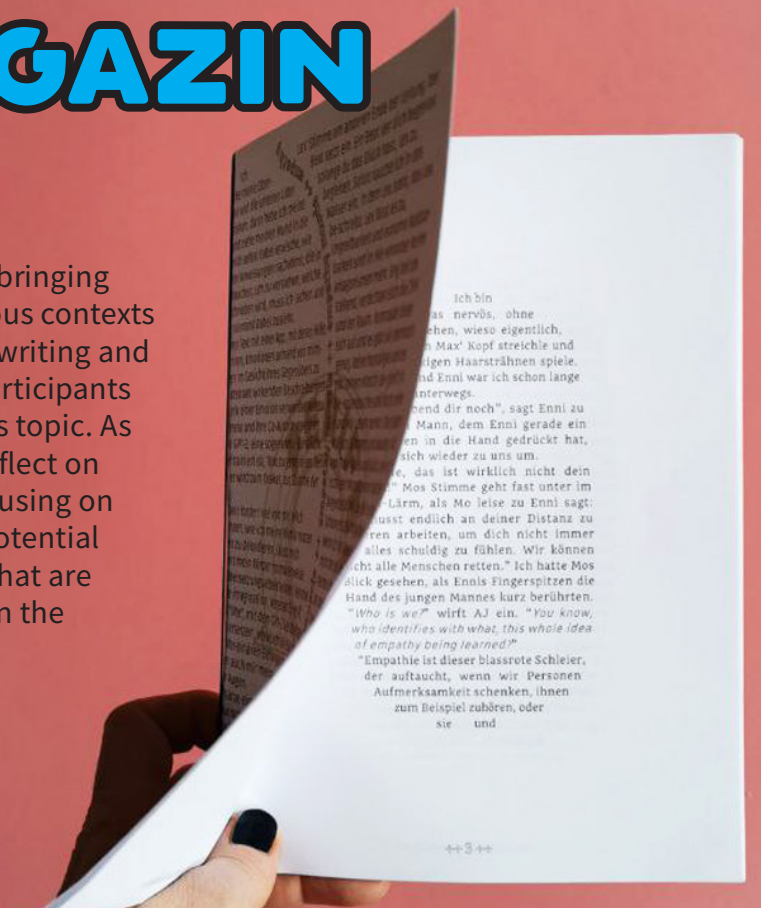
PERIFERI MAGAZIN

by Josephin Hanke and Magdalena Emmerig

Link to zine

We see ***Periferi*** as a space bringing people together from various contexts for a two-month period of writing and exchange. We invite our participants to engage with each issue's topic. As a group, we explore and reflect on the medium of writing, focusing on the utopian, speculative potential of textual work. The texts that are created will be published in the ***Periferi magazin***.





JOSEPHIN HANKE

Periferi # 1 empathy muscle | 2021 | samples