



**Body of Evidence**

by

Lisa Hennig-Olsen

*Matter as fallen light*

Group exhibition

April / May

2023

As we are flesh, so we are transient and ephemeral. Or are we?

**Body of Evidence** consists of multiple video essays and sculptures, exploring our current advancements in the Anthropocene.

The selected work for *Matter as fallen light* creates a space for a proposed future: pipe sculptures taking on a creature-like presence surrounded by emigrating prunes, a droning soundscape, and vertical TVs screening digitally morphing and disintegrating physical flesh in oil-looking dark matter – humanoids in digital wombs – looming as a monolithic spirit.

Research sources include: Neil Harbisson, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Kathryn Youssef, Erin Striff, Donna Haraway, Legacy Russel, Eugene Thacker, Ragnhild Nilsen, BBC World News and UNESCO

The extended collection of video essays will be available to view during the exhibition at **[lisahennigolsen.com/bodyofevidence](http://lisahennigolsen.com/bodyofevidence)**

**here**

I would like to invite you to take a moment to arrive in your body. In the now. Feel your chest rise and expand as you inhale, and softly release and fall as you breathe out. Staying with your breath, take a few more breaths in, and out. In, and out. You are here.

**Have you ever** looked up at the sky wondering how the birds fly so seamlessly in their flock, turning and diving in synchronised magnificence? Wondered how they communicate to master the movements identically in time? Why do animals seem to know danger before it is present? Do they have other senses than us? What can other species sense that humans cannot? Or can we?

If you could choose your own attributes, what would they be? What would you change? What would you acquire? How would it make you different? Different from who you are today? Would you reconstruct your body? Your senses? Your approach to life? Would new senses change your perception of the Universe? Change your lived experience? *Would you dare?*

**bygones**

a sanctuary  
of conducted corrosion

a reserve  
for eluded atrophy

a harbour  
of expelled obstruction

a mausoleum  
for ethereal percolation

Am I too comfortable in the Unknown?

There's a saying: *You shouldn't predict the end of the world, for either you will be wrong, or if you're right, no one will be around to congratulate you.*

Twinkle, twinkle little star(dust) ...

**Ashes to ashes**, dust to dust. We, human beings, are in the universe but also, we are the universe. We are constellations of particles. In a way, we are star constellations of our own. We are stardust. But dust is also pollution, traces of weather, dead skin cells in your living room, pollen, meteorites and exhaust gas. It can constrict our airways, and absorb and reflect sunlight – it is our environment.

**Dust brings news** from around the world, and from outer space. It tells us what is happening around us – how heavy the traffic is, which season is upon us, whether a sand storm has occurred, knowledge of a wildfire happening miles away, and it tells us what the emission levels from power plants are. It informs us of our implications and the state of nature.

**Scroll.**

**Scroll.**



Scroll.

What a precarious word. Far from parchment, today's scrolls are an infinitum of information, ads, and tone-deafening overstimulation. Breaking the perception of reality, the most enticing images diagnose my imagination. Desirable, seductive images stare back at me. I have created an album. A saved archive of influencing power. To be honest, I rarely go to it. Mostly, I just save. Participate in the continuum of clicking and archiving. **Our clouds are soon to be dripping, raining, with all of our information.** An unsustainable, unattainable idea.

Last Monday, I learned that digital information can be recorded in DNA. But how? Who understands how it works? Someone with more scientific knowledge. I try to wrap my head around it. One DNA can hold billions of terra bytes. Meanwhile, **my bedroom drawer holds two external hard drives about the size of the 90s Discman**, each capable of maintaining 2 terra bytes. My former University presented me with an unlimited Cloud upon graduation. With a (parentheses) that they own anything I upload. I am weak. I still use it, hope they won't claim my work. They probably won't, until I am famous. I am wondering when my unlimited cloud-space will be rendered outdated.

*Nipple. Face. Contortion. Futuristic pregnant belly. Digital aliens. Creatures. Skin suits. Trees. Teeth. Androids fucking. Questions of an album recording using the voice of a dead artist. Socrates. Toothpaste. Eyes. iPod Nano's called antiques. A digital munkelus. Munk lice. Skrukktroll. Scrunch troll (GoogleTranslate is not helpful). Masks. Mouths. Modified skin.* These are the themes of **my collected anthology.**

Can Neutral challenge the paradigm, when neutrality brings forward heteronormative, racially dominating, and capitalistic tendencies?

*body facing the corner, look diagonally far away, speak loudly but calmly*

The world as we know it is dangerous.

*turn head, look directly at audience*

Are you a danger to our society?

*lean head backwards, laugh hysterically*

Ah ha ha ha ha ha, ah ha ha ha ha ha, ah ha ha ha ha ha, ah ha ha ha ha ha

*sharp in breath, raise head back up, stare at audience*

*turn head, look diagonally far away, shout sharply but short*

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck

*turn head, look directly at audience, sing uncannily*

... the ██████████

**The world is** an uncanny place when billionaires are racing to space with their speculations of Armageddon in sight. Can we avoid hysteria? Can we listen to nature's language, and better our home through the synergy of humanity and nature? Can our constructed environments focus on decay rather than disposal, and if so, what does that mean for humanity?

We are constantly looking for the elixir of life, pushing boundaries of our physical bodies and health through altering and manufacturing new bodies and digital prosthetics, finding new ways to cure diseases, methods of enhancing our capabilities, and pre-determine the dispositions of posterity. It may bring about a positive new reality, and **it lies close ahead**. Isn't it our responsibility to pin down and interrogate the ethical implications of our developments now?

*As Earthlings, does our oneness not unfold through diversity?*

Soil. Oil.

Solid. Porous.

Carbonization.

Remains, remnants.

Remains, remnants.

History in flames polluting our present.

Thick. Smooth.

Prehistoric bygones.

Paraphernalia.

Ancient memories transformed.

Anaerobic traces of the Hominin.

Sedimentation of performative gestures.

*Will I be a fossil? Will I be fuel, as we know it?  
What will become of my bodily remains? Of my  
spiritual ones? How will the Anthropocene alter my  
fossil to-be state and use? Do I have any agency in  
this?*

**Are you experiencing** the uncanny feeling of being aware of the implications and consequences of your actions, and their world-altering reverberations?

As both the cause and recipients of climate crisis, who do we look to for rescue? Improvement? Salvation?  
**Astronauts or archaeologists?**

“I honestly don’t understand why I even get invited, it feels like all they want is to be spotlighted.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Greta Thunberg on government leaders who invite her to climate change forums, *I Am Greta* (2020)

Performativity is a well-known aspect of politics. As the UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in February 2020: “The climate crisis is the biggest threat to our survival as a species and is already threatening human rights around the world”. In other words, caring for the environment is no longer, if it was ever, enough. Action is needed. Today, 12 companies own more or less everything. These conglomerates control the pharmaceutical industry, media industry, and consumer industry from fashion brands to food. These are companies with billion-dollar yearly revenue – a revolting inequity. Their interference in daily life is intricately interlaced. There have been a number of initiatives due to external pressure on these companies to aid change. But when does it become performative?

### **new soil**

Looking ahead, I see compost.  
How can we find equanimity when the scores of our daily routines are decomposing? Do we orchestrate temporal compositions? Or do we wait till all is compost – letting nature use our failures as additives for new structures?

### **still here**

I would like to invite you to take a moment to acknowledge the present. Feel your chest rise and expand as you inhale, and softly release and fall as you breathe out. Staying with your breath, how do you feel? Take a few more breaths in, and out. In, and out. Can you make a change?  
You are still here, (for) now.



**Body of Evidence** is a living project, a collection of fragments, shaping temporal commas and periods within the findings of my, Lisa Hennig-Olsen's, continued research and investigation of ethical and philosophical questions of our being ...

### **epilogue**

In a howling, pining, echoing cosmic blizzard of debris, hibernating Sapiens are floating with hope of a new horizon ...

### *Acknowledgements*

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### *Matter as fallen light*

**Opening Night April 22nd 2023**  
**Closing Night May 7th 2023**  
**Monday to Sunday 9am–10pm**

**Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery**  
**66 Fifth Avenue at 13th Street**  
**New York, NY 10011**

**Curated by Kaegan Sparks**

