



## PORTALS

Heinz Frank, Sharona Franklin, Vedran Kopljar, Hanne Lippard,  
Hunter Longe, Emile Rubino, Dardan Zhegrova.

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LambdaLambdaLambda hosted by Soft Opening, part of CONDO London

The group-exhibition *PORTALS* unites artworks that beckon us to traverse from one reality to another, whether through a vortex, door, aperture, hole, mirror, or other means. Portals delineate thresholds and liminality, introducing fresh possibilities for existence not solely tied to spiritual encounters but also emerging through the very experience of artworks, thereby influencing our perception of contemporary life.

Contemplating portals evokes awareness of an implied barrier, often establishing a distinction between inside and outside, laden with connotations like known/unknown or sacred/profane. Heinz Frank and Vedran Kopljar's works reveal diverse relationships between inside and outside, challenging these distinctions.

Portals have existed in the natural world, concentrated where magnetic energy converges—river banks, waterfalls, caves, trees, and mountain summits. Hunter Longe's sculptures, resembling ancient formations with embedded lights, transport us to unimaginably distant pasts.

Human behavior can also bring forth portals; places tied to intense emotions or experiences create a vortex or magnetic pull. This vortex, often symbolized as a spiral vacuum, opens into subtler dimensions beyond the space-time continuum. Emile Rubino, Sharona Franklin, and Dardan Zhegrova explore various facets of this phenomenon in their works.

Mirrors operate psychodynamically as portals, revealing internal realities that mirror external surroundings. They grant access to aspects otherwise unreachable, like one's own reflection. The resulting images mimic and jest at the viewer's self and immediate context, sharing similarities and disparities with what they aim to reflect which becomes apparent in Hanne Lippard's works on view.

Heinz Frank's drawings propose an equivalence between the rational and the emotional, combining sharp visual elements from architecture - stairs, pillars, towers - with the organic fluidity of animal representations.

They situate architecture as a technique of disciplining bodies and souls, also speaking to potential for struggle against its inhering rationalities. Both humans and animals appear in an evident state of shock or horror at their violent entanglements with buildings. Whether they are being sucked into architecture's machinery, forging lines of escape from it, or being forcibly expelled like ghostly apparitions, remains ambiguous. Sometimes bodies or body parts even appear as if trapped mid-way between animal and building, screeching, bleeding, eyes popping out of their heads. These are pointing to a way out of architectural autonomy and back in, to a technique of de-subjectification that seeks not to externalize the interior or vice versa, but to loop in the world, in so doing rendering a more complex topology of living beings and environments.

Sharona Franklin's *Drosophila Clock x* (2021), which features metal spoons holding pills arranged like stationary clock hands, the spoon handles meeting in the centre and extending outward so the bowls appear where one might expect to see numbers indicating the time on a standard produced clock; time here is marked not by seconds, minutes or hours but by a medication schedule.

With the phrase 'crip time', academic Alison Kafer refers to the imperative for a new way of thinking about and understanding time in a way that acknowledges different lived realities. By borrowing a phrase most often associated with disability studies, this sprawling show with 41 artists, almost all of whom experience disability, aims to explore what it means to have, care for and value bodies and minds with different needs – an approach in which definitions are often set aside in favour of seeing things anew and from different perspectives. Some works play explicitly with the notion of time itself.

*New Psychedelia of Industrial Healing* is a daily bio-ritual installation. The works enact a shrine meditating on 23 years of being a patient of bio-pharmaceutical and transgenic treatments for degenerative disease. Through durational performance and a reclamation of disability-narrative, biocitizenship and biopharmacology live cell altars are assembled, documented and connected through time in the medium of photography. Typically pharmaceutical and medical treatments are clinicized and dehumanized, while existing simultaneously in the bodies and homes of people with disabilities. Medical objects in pop-culture often represent tragic political implications, minimising the personal empowerment possible when living through the medical experience. Assembling domestic environments to embrace medical necessities is an enacted daily meditation Franklin presents in her photos prior to injecting her antibodies. In each image the syringe is assembled and photographed within a 10-20 minute span, as the antibodies are required to be between 2-8 degrees to maintain efficacy. The syringe creates a new psychedelia of visual meditations, interjecting tensions between the domestic or handmade and the techno-scientific.

In Vedran Kopljar's on-going series *Inner Space Portals (ISPs)* painting is viewed as an illusion driven by the viewers' desire to see what they long to see. The works in this series continue his ongoing interest in the relationship between image and perception, and the nature of painting as a model of Western thought. The *ISPs* conceptualise the visualisation between the inner body or metaphorical and poetic interior spaces. They offer a window into the phantasms of the (un-)real interior, into spaces that are both present and absent – spaces that represent a radical otherness, wavering between exclusion and participation.

In their materiality, the works oscillate between object and painting with the canvas surrounded by organic wooden frames. The frame is the portal, the canvas the 'other space'. The colours and shapes of the *ISPs* send out a myriad of overlapping and coexisting signals, triggering uncanny, surreal or affective imaginings of one's inner physicality. These paintings-as-objects are informed by images from medical books and three-dimensional anatomical representations of organs, cells and membranes. Cartoons and hentai-pornographic versions of Japanese manga and anime – also inspire Kopljar's imaginary biomorphic entrances, manifesting as spatial signifiers for something that is part of us but mostly inaccessible. Other references that influence the aesthetic of the works include adult thumb-sucking and the implied longing for a temporary return to a safe and warm place like the womb, and vorarephilia – the erotic desire to consume or be consumed by another person or creature.

The *ISPs* are manifestations of whatever the viewer experiences. Through the given (or depicted) illusionary space, Kopljar transforms images of imagined interiority into a material substratum. The works, in all their plasticity, are autonomous entities whose implications depend on the viewer's projections. As painted artefacts, they absorb embodied meaning and transform it into an abstraction. The titles of the works sound like something found on the internet. They are deliberately misleading, and they add another layer to the multitude of connotations that can be ascribed to what is ultimately just an illusion – oil paint on canvas that, on closer inspection, disintegrates into matter.

For Kopljar, this moment of collapse, when the spatial illusion disappears and the portal closes, is the key to one of the main characteristics of Western figurative painting: the longing for the possibility of entering realms that cannot be reached. The image as a representation of the real is only a projection of what we want to believe.

Hanne Lippard's mirror-works from her series of curses, *Echo Curses XX-XXV* (2021), reflect on the digital challenge of being stuck in digital loops, losing ones login-password, not being recognised as a human by the captcha puzzle, and other delightful digital cursed moments. The use of the word and phenomenon Echo in this series refers both to the online echo chamber, particularly found within social media, and the myth of Narcissus and Echo. In this myth Echo undergoes a physical transformation when she is rejected by Narcissus and disintegrates into a disembodied voice unable to repeat anything but the voice and words of others, losing her integrity as well as her physical body, as it often happens to bodies when they appear online. The mirrored backgrounds can be seen as visual reverberations, extensions of the parallel self.

Hunter Longe's on-going series of sculptures *Relics of an Evaporated Sea* consist of small-scale objects cast from cement and plaster mixed with magnetite sand, pigments and sediments. They are cast in discarded plastic packaging, and often directly in sand in the Arve riverbed or at the beach. Gypsum is contained in the objects in two forms: plaster (which is just gypsum) and the transparent crystal form called selenite, which is illuminated here by flickering LEDs. "Selenite" literally means "moon rock," as Selenē is the ancient Greek goddess of the moon, and its growth was thought to be dependent on the cycles of the Moon, which is not so far off when we learn of its geological formation. Like salt crystals, gypsum forms when shallow ocean water evaporates—a slow play between the moon (governing the tides) and intense heat from the sun, as liquid turns into vapor, leaving minerals forming in its absence. The fragments of selenite used in these sculptures were collected by the artist in both the Jura mountains and Alps in Switzerland, as well as in southern Utah in the United States. The latter was deposited around 165 million years ago along the edge of a shallow arm of the Panthassic ocean. While that from Switzerland dates back to nearly 250 million years as the Tethys ocean that covered much of modern-day Europe slowly evaporated.

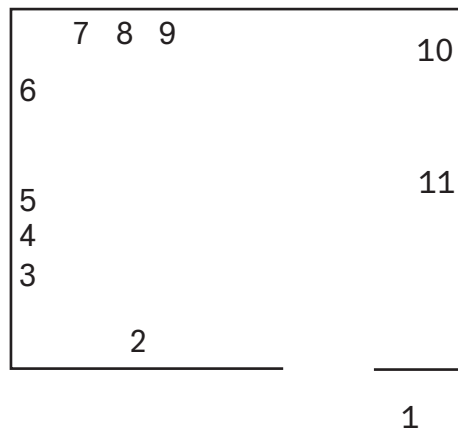
Amongst the many cultures and religions that have reliquary practices, a relic itself is most often either a physical remains, even a body part of a significant person/saint, or an object that came in direct contact with that person or being. In this light, the sculptures are quite literally relics, as the gypsum used in them is the actual mineral remains of enormously distant bodies of water.

In the esoteric realm, flickering lights are often indicative of the presence of spirits. While selenite's metaphysical property is considered to be an activator of the third eye. And with this intuitive part of the brain activated, Longe's sculptures seem to transport us to the otherwise unimaginably distant past, while somehow simultaneously evoking potential futures.

Emile Rubino's *Primordial Chaos* shows the interior of the artist's washing machine while the twirl image effect dumbly mimics the anticipated movement of the appliance—an ode to the daily vortexes that pull our life apart and keep it together. Like many of Rubino's domestic pictures, *Primordial Chaos* plays with the lowbrow animism of all the little machines that take up space to free up time; little machines which not unlike images inevitably acquire some of our livingness. The title of the work is a nod to Hilma af Klint's first abstract paintings—a series of small canvases which illustrate the birth of the world and the dualities that she believed were essential principles of life.

Emile Rubino's pictures play with photography's declarative register. Working through the semantics of picture-making, its discourses and histories, he directs our attention towards the photograph as both an object and a depiction—a thin yet capacious container. By drawing out photography's contextual relationship to care and labor, his pictures, which often involve a mix of analogue and digital processes, question the notion of 'the photographic' and its social implications.

The plush sculpture from Dardan Zhegrova's on-going series of *Your enthusiasm to tell a story*, resembles a human character carrying a sound device hidden inside its body. It recites a piece of poetry, which in turn becomes an essential part of its identity. Both speaker and listener, source and recipient of the words, the doll's abstract soliloquy allows no distinguishing between the self and the other. The doll thus exemplifies the central motive of Dardan Zhegrova's work: the constitution of a real-imagined self by means of a fiction that is able to allow desire and liquify borders still present in the real world.



1. Hanne Lippard  
*Echo Curse XXV*, 2021  
Laser-engraving on mirrored plexiglass, 17,7 × 11,6 cm
2. Emile Rubino  
*Primordial Chaos*, 2023  
dye sublimation on aluminum, stainless steel frame, 38,3 × 30,4 × 2 cm
3. Heinz Frank  
*UMRISS "DES SOHN". [OUTLINE OF "THE SON"].*, 1976  
pencil, crayon, chalk on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 23 × 31 cm (framed)
4. Heinz Frank  
*DAS BEIDERSEITIGE AM EINSEITIGEN. [THE BOTH-SIDED ON THE ONE-SIDED.]*, 1985  
pencil, crayon, chalk on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 23 × 31 cm (framed)
5. Heinz Frank  
*LOCH! DER MUND, DIE ÖFFNUNG DIE INS NICHTS FÄLLT.FÜRWAHR. [HOLE! THE MOUTH, THE OPENING THAT FALLS INTO NOTHING. FORTRUTH.]*, 1981  
pencil, crayon, chalk on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm, 23 × 31 cm (framed)
6. Sharona Franklin  
*Drosophila Clock x*, 2021  
Silver, brass, aluminium, mixed metal, expired pharmaceuticals, wood, foraged bone, antler, photographs enamel, 50 × 50 cm
7. Hunter Longe  
*Relic of an Evaporated Sea XVI*, 2023  
Selenite, flickering LED, magnetite sand, gypsum cement, graphite, pigments, 8 × 7,5 × 6 cm
8. Hunter Longe  
*Relic of an Evaporated Sea XII*, 2023  
Selenite, flickering LED, magnetite sand, gypsum cement, graphite, 13,5 × 5 × 5 cm
9. Hunter Longe  
*Relic of an Evaporated Sea XXVII (for Brian)*, 2023  
Selenite, flickering LED, magnetite sand, gypsum cement, pigments, squid ink, 11,5 × 9,4 × 3,4 cm
10. Dardan Zhegrova  
*Your enthusiasm to tell a story (green)*, 2022  
Mixed media and sound, appr. 200 × 100 cm: Dimensions variable
11. Vedran Kopljar  
*ISP (Brod)*, 2023  
Oil on wood, oil on canvas, 34,5 × 28,5 × 3 cm