



AHC : Newsletter #35 : January 2024

INTRODUKTION

De leger med en frossen laks, men glemmer at lægge den tilbage i fryseren. De synger Hotel California og skændes om, hvor ofte man egentlig bør være i kontakt med sin mor. De taler om limfjordsøstersen, som ikke længere bor i Limfjorden, men i Kina. Og så kaster hun en forbandelse over huset i håb om at fremskynde neopolitikkens død.

Kære læser. 1. februar udgiver Art Hub Copenhagen fire nye publikationer, og vi glæder os enormt meget til at dele dem med jer. Det er fire smukke og stærke værker: *Protect the Salmon* af forfatter og dramatiker Ida Marie Hede, *Resort* af kunstner Filip Vest, *Cafe Zero* af kunstner og kok Søren Aagaard og *Szwedzka 8* af kunstner, koreograf og heks Vala T. Foltyn. Du kan læse meget mere om dem, og hvor du kan købe dem, nederst i brevet her. Men allerførst får du her en forsmag på de tekster, som venter, med et uddrag af Vala T. Foltyns *Szwedzka 8*, som eminent fletter sin egen personlige historie og queer-teori med Nazi-tidens forfølgelser, samtidens politiske situation i Polen og middelalderens hekseprocesser. Vi kommer ind i teksten på et tidspunkt, hvor Valas nære ven og kollega Aneta Zukowska netop er gået bort, og hvor huset på Szwedzka 8, en århundrede gammel villa i Kraków, hjemsøger Vala og trækker hende tilbage til året 1943.

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They play with a frozen salmon but forget to put it back in the freezer. They sing Hotel California and argue about how often you should call your mum. They talk about the European flat oysters, which no longer live in Denmark but in China. And then she curses the house, hoping to hasten the death of neo-politics.

Dear Reader. On 1 February, Art Hub Copenhagen releases four new publications. They're fantastic texts, and we're thrilled to share them with you: *Protect the Salmon* by the author and playwright Ida Marie Hede, *Resort* by the artist Filip Vest, *Café Zero* by the artist and chef Søren Aagaard, and *Szwedzka 8* by the artist, choreographer and witch Vala T. Foltyn. You can read much more about them, and find out where to buy them, at the bottom of this letter. First, however, here's an extract from Vala T. Foltyn's *Szwedzka 8* as a preview of what's to come. Foltyn's piece brilliantly interweaves her own personal history with queer theory, Nazi-era persecution, the contemporary political situation in Poland, and medieval witch trials. As we join the text, Vala's close friend and fellow artist Aneta Zukowska has just passed away and the house at Szwedzka 8, a century-old villa in Kraków, haunts Vala, pulling her back to the year 1943.



Kitchen by Mikołaj Peretkiewich

TRAJECTORIES. TERRITORIES.

– an excerpt of *Szwedzka 8* by Vala T. Foltyn

Intense communication with the dead usually happens when one is grieving, shortly after losing a loved one. There is vigorous momentum where the portal remains open between the realms, and the two can stay in this limbo. I have been in that momentum since right after Aneta's passing. The one who transforms into another matter by departing from the human form and the one who is left alive share an experience of loss. They are both engaged in a transformative process where their ties are pulled apart, but they still want to hold onto it. This means that the one who is alive might be exposed to receiving messages in a variety of forms; dreams, hallucinations, visions, and meditations, which express the desire of the dead for things to be done or brought to a close as they themselves could not complete them. The one who is alive becomes a medium and might be given instructions or could be gifted with certain characteristics, tools, and talents, or even cravings for pleasures such as food, sex, and travel. Those who are alive might feel a certain obligation to perform. This bond is a form of care, a dialogue and an exchange.

When I started exploring the archives of the house, certain objects became magical and their functionality changed. I thought that their original purpose had shifted and opened a new possibility for my brewing. I delved into the cookbook left by Maria, and I always thought it was her gift to me. It always felt as if she and I were growing into each other. Our relationship became very tender and I often felt her caring presence in the house. Besides her recipes that became an inspiring force in my queer spells, and the vivid imagery that the book was designed with, I also started puzzling the missing pieces together, which led to amplifying the voice of the house. When still living in the house, back in 2017, on the occasion of Easter, I prepared the traditional żurek soup following her recipe. I was cooking and chanting to myself, and there was this moment where I felt so drawn into the sadness coming from the space of that kitchen. Something was unleashed and I spent some time exploring that feeling of sadness, sorrow, or even a silenced trauma. I kept chanting and started weeping, not really knowing where all this came from. I meditated on it while finishing up the soup.

One of these moments, where the hauntings of the house made me travel in time, brought me to the year 1943, when one of the tenants was murdered by Nazis. Władysław Brietmeier (1915-1943) was a geographer at the Jagiellonian University and a member of underground teaching and the anti-occupation society (1). Władysław was married to Zofia Truszkowska, who was the only daughter of Truszkowski. Their son, Andrzej Brietmeier, was the heir to the house and the one from whom I rented the premises. In Władysław's student journals, found in the university archives, I read about the festivities held in the garden of Szwedzka 8, where students gathered after classes to eat and have fun. I continued the tradition of hosting gatherings in the garden; somehow it became a safe place for the queer community. It sheltered queer desire and often provided a tender surface for poetry, performance art, and dance parties. As Władysław was a geographer it was no surprise that on 2 January 2022, I found myself travelling to Nuremberg. I was to visit the Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds (Reichsparteitagsgelände) together with Berlin-based composer Wojtek Blecharz. We had been commissioned to work on that site by the Musik Installationen festival, to create an installation piece to speak with and against the complex histories of that space. We wanted to honour the lives of queer people who were persecuted by Nazis. The site was designed in the 1930s by Albert Speer—a horseshoe-shaped building that resembled but was larger than the Colosseum in Rome—to hold the annual Nazi Party Rallies. It was built by forced labour workers from Central and Eastern Europe and it was filmed several times by Leni Riefenstahl, a close associate of Hitler. I walked on the stairs of the Zeppelin Tribune where Hitler spoke to the masses. Despite all the shadows of that place, the cruel history, and the discomfort I had from being in this place, I felt grounded and calm. There was a strong force of lightness entering through my feet. I recognized it—the haunting voice of Szwedzka 8.

I heard from many artists that they would never agree to work such a location. I thought the opposite: I carried this personal history from the house in Kraków. I had this spiritual call to bring the ghosts of Szwedzka 8 to Nuremberg and reconfigure the past. I believed that my artistic practice was meant to be performed in those spaces—to bring a queer closure, a queer constellation of things, a witching methodology for unheard voices to be unleashed.

I worked on the Queer Magick Intervention (2) for several months with composer Wojtek Blecharz and later invited Phyllis Akinyi and Sall Lam Toro to join the project. We received dramaturgical support from Joanna Ostrowska and Laure M. Hiendl. The project to me was an urgent response to the trajectories of violence of the Nazi era, which are also tied to the current rise of homophobia in political discourses in Poland and other Eastern European countries. A queer constellation was being drawn as an entry point of our performance score: Phyllis Akinyi was working with the ghost of Sylvin Rubinstein (3) a queer flamenco dancer persecuted by Nazis, and Sall Lam Toro was paired with the queer Dutch artist Frieda Belinfante (4). My performance ritual engaged with the archives of Szwedzka 8 as I was interested in drawing a constellation of biographies that carried the trauma of persecution and violence. We gave it an urgency for healing and transformation. Maria, Helena, Władysław, Zofia, Frieda, and Sylvin offered us the possibility to reinvent the space that represented the failure of humanity. We are relocated to Nuremberg to perform witchcraft and undo the history tied to this place. We were to unfold new queer futures.

1/ Breitmeier Władysław (1915-1943), MA in Geography at the Jagiellonian University (1938), was active in the Geographer's Circle. In 1938/39, as a volunteer assistant at the Geographical Institute of the Jagiellonian University, he studied the morphology of the Ropa Valley. In 1943, he was imprisoned in Jasło, and then transported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where he died on 28 November 1943. See: Stanisław Gawęda, *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w okresie II wojny światowej* (Jagiellonian University during the Second World War), (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1986).

2/ The project was curated by Laure M. Hiendl and Bastian Zimmermann as part of the festival Musik Installationen Nürnberg from 7-10 July 2022. The project was realized with scenography and technical support from Rudyard Schmidt. Costumes were made in collaboration with Nicolas Navarro Rueda and Sarah Baron.

3/ Phyllis worked on the archives of Sylvin's performances. Sylvin Rubinstein (1915-2011) was born in Russia and raised in Poland; he and his twin sister Maria were celebrated flamenco dancers in the 1930s. Under the stage names Dolores and Imperio, they danced in Europe, New York, and Australia. When the Second World War broke out, they were living in Warsaw. One year later they were confined in the Warsaw Ghetto. The sister and their mother were murdered in a death camp, and Sylvin escaped via Miejsce Piastowe and Krosno to Berlin having obtained false papers from Kraków. See, for instance, Kuno Kruse, *Dolores & Imperio: die drei Leben des Sylvin Rubinstein* (2000).

4/ Frieda Belinfante (1904-1995) was a queer musician and conductor born in Amsterdam to Jewish family. During the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Frieda joined a Dutch resistance group. She/they forged identity documents for people hiding from the Nazis and their collaborators and helped to plan an attack on Amsterdam's population registry. She/they fled to Switzerland and after the war, she/they moved to California and worked as a conductor for the Orange County Philharmonic. Her/their former partner Henriëtte Bosmans wrote a poem to Frieda and it served as a material for Sall Lam Toro to work on their sonic alter of remembrance. For an interview with Belinfante, visit: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504443>



Musikinstallationen Reichsparteitag Tag 1-6. Photo: agency FRTWTY



Photo: Dara Bram



Filip Vest: Resort

RESORT is an exhibition and performance by Filip Vest that took place at Møstings in 2023. This publication features the script of the performance piece, which is about a couple who have gone on holiday to a resort to fix their relationship. They begin a role play, pretending to be two strangers meeting in a hotel bar. But as they try out different scenarios, they slowly lose control of the game and their sense of self.

Retailers: AHC, SKITSE, and Thiemers Magasin

Vala T. Foltyn: Szwedzka 8

In this book, Vala T. Foltyn—artist, choreographer, and witch—weaves together ghosts and other presences that have passed through Szwedzka 8, a century-old villa in Kraków whose history is a testimony to queer love and resistance. A powerful meditation on silencing, loss, and mourning, Foltyn's text takes the reader beyond the local to times and spaces of magic and transformation in a communing with the living and dead.

Retailers: AHC, SKITSE and Charlottenborg Art Books





Ida Marie Hede: Protect the Salmon

PROTECT THE SALMON is a play by author and playwright Ida Marie Hede, commissioned for the exhibition *iwillmedievalfutureyou2*. In a neutral scenography, two characters, a man and a woman, are talking to each other. The two are employed at a cryonics clinic, and are surrounded by both the dormant bodies of the past and the abstract possibility of future life. As time- and space travelers, they take turns telling each other anecdotes and memories, and recounting intimate situations from their lives, trying to understand our current, past, and future societies.

Retailers: AHC, SKITSE and Thiemers Magasin

Søren Aagaard: Cafe Zero

CAFE ZERO – a nomadic smoke and fermentation house with no seasons is a performance by Søren Aagaard commissioned by AHC for Performa Biennial 2023. The performance is a long-form theatrical sci-fi cooking that gels into a dining experience. A pop-up restaurant with a hot and a cold tent inhabited by a group of five nomadic chefs – performed by Jackie Gordon, Scott Alves Barton, Erica Wides, Markus Oxelman, and Aagaard himself. While preparing the dinner the group of chefs entangle in a long staccato ping-pong discussing the menu, banter, break into song, share recipes as well as thoughts on inhaling microbes and the unpredictable seasons.

Retailers: AHC and SKITSE



KALENDER

CALENDAR

AHC : Open Call : Research Hosting 2024 : Deadline : 05.02.24

AHC : Free Lunch Series : Julie Riis Andersen & Rebecca Krasnik : 20.02.24 : 12.00-13.30

AHC : www.arthubcopenhagen.net : info@arthubcopenhagen.dk : Halmtorvet 27, 1700 DK-Cph V

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