



Kristian Kragelund Strm und Drang

09.03-10.24.2026

Kristian Kragelund's first solo exhibition in New York at island gallery centres on a series of thermal markings on milled aluminium and a set of idiosyncratic glass structures. The show employs the computer virus as both a formal and discursive framework, examining the speculative relationship between loneliness, apathy, and architecture.

Over several years, Kragelund has studied thousands of lines of source code from community-generated viruses from online archives and fringe forums, some dating back almost three decades. Many emerged from spheres affiliated with incel and alt-right subcultures. He discovered that authors often embedded confessional diary entries within their code-declarations of love, loss, longing, and despair. The malware was designed to destroy its host, meaning that its intended victims would never read the code. Each work presents natural language extracted from a different virus, preserving the formal qualities of programming syntax and code as a literary form; these messages suggest traces of authorship within a moment where artificial intelligence is increasingly complicating what it means to be human.

Atop the generic dark carpeting Kragelund has installed throughout the space, two glass structures will likewise occupy the gallery floor. Both modular and precarious in their arrangements, and identical in materiality, they suggest the simultaneous potential for retraction and expansion through the cannibalisation of their counterpart. The growth of one entity becomes contingent upon the demise of another. The sequential titling, Disposition1-2, references terminology used in the field of infrastructure theory, where "disposition" denotes the unrealised or latent capacity of a basic system- such as transport networks, energy grids, or digital architectures. The term is used to identify underperforming sectors and sites for further optimisation, extraction and, ultimately, exploitation.

The exhibition's title, Strm und Drang, is lifted from a phrase found within one of the viruses examined during Kragelund's research, and references the German proto-Romantic literary and artistic movement of the late eighteenth century, Sturm und Drang ("Storm and Stress"). Popularised by Goethe, the movement rejected the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, order, and intellectual restraint. Today, Sturm und Drang is commonly used to describe periods of intense emotional, social, or political upheaval.

```

db ' --> How Can You Think Freely In The Shadow Of A Church? <-',10,13
  Of A Church? <--',10,13
db ' --> You Cannot Sedate, All The Things You Hate <-',10,13
db ',10,13
db ' --> Your Infected <-',10,13,'$'

bdaymsg db ',10,13
db ' Happy Birthday Christine Moore *kiss* I''ll be home',10,13
db ' In less then a month now... June29th, Can''t wait!!',10,13,'$'

time dw 0h ; some space for the time
date dw 0h ; some space for the date
dot_dot db ". ",0 ; changeing directories
comfile db "*.com",0 ; load up *.com hehe
db 100 dup (90h) ; make it 666 bytes
finished label near ; just a label man
code ends ; end code segment
end start ; end / where to start

```

;

-----> How Can You Think Freely In The Shadow Of A Church? <

Kristian Kragelund, Acurev, 2026
 Thermal markings on aluminium
 33.7 x 27 x 1.3 cm (13 1/4 X 10 5/8 x 1/2)



```
;-----  
;                                     - Strm und Drang -  
;-----  
;
```

```
.radix 16  
.code  
org 100h
```

```
virus_start:
```

```
retf
```

```
v_name      db "[Strm und Drang] (c) "
```

```
exe_files    db "*.EXE",0
```

```
exe_header   db 16 DUP(0)
```

Kristian Kragelund (1987) is a Danish artist based in London, UK. He received his BA (Honours) in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins in London, UK and MFA from Columbia University in New York City. His work has been exhibited widely internationally and his work is held in private and public collections including The Danish Arts Foundation and as a permanent public commission in Whitechapel, London.

His practice examines how value and power asserts itself within the structural formations of everyday life, and explores the potential of archival and material debris as ambivalent artefacts of a contemporary human condition. Through a curiosity and research-driven engagement with the social consequences of technology, infrastructure and the built environment, Kragelund's work seeks to identify and unravel often overlooked sites where power and systemic control are enacted through the dynamics of capital, politics, and ideology.



Kristian Kragelund, Disposition2, 2026
Dimensions variable



Kristian Kragelund, *Disposition1*, 2026
Grey-tinted tempered glass panels and metal brackets
83 x 60 inches







The phrase ‘Sturm und Drang’ (usually translated as ‘storm and stress’) began life as the title of a five-act play by German writer Friedrich Maximilian Klinger, which premiered in Leipzig in April 1777 – a romantic drama set against the backdrop of the American Revolution. Despite the play receiving little attention, its name fast became the catchphrase for a whole cultural movement happening in Germany at the time. Inspired by their period’s revolutionary zeal, a generation of writers, artists and composers – including Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Caspar Wolf and Joseph Haydn – rejected the order and rationality of the dominant Enlightenment culture.

Anticipating many aspects of Romanticism, they prized individual freedom, conveyed extreme emotional states and sought to shock their audience. Their symphonies were in minor keys, full of unpredictable melodies and dramatic tempo changes, their paintings of storms and glaciers revealed the destructive power of the natural world, and the plots of their novels were driven by the psychic vicissitudes of tormented, often lonely and always male, protagonists. The movement was an assertion of German culture against French classicism, of the Volk against the feudal overlords, as well as an expression of nascent middle class values. Its most famous product was Goethe’s 1774 novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, about a sensitive young artist who is rejected by the woman he loves and eventually kills himself.

For almost a century the words ‘Sturm und Drang’ remained firmly attached to this short-lived if influential movement. Then, in 1857, they were introduced to a wider English audience by Charles Kingsley, the well-known writer and clergyman, in his novel *Two Years Ago*. Kingsley was a founding advocate of the ‘Muscular Christianity’ movement that encouraged fitness, discipline, social duty and patriotism. He used the phrase ‘Sturm und Drang’ in his novel to sum up everything he despised, mocking Elsie Vavasour, his caricature of an overemotional and self-absorbed artist.

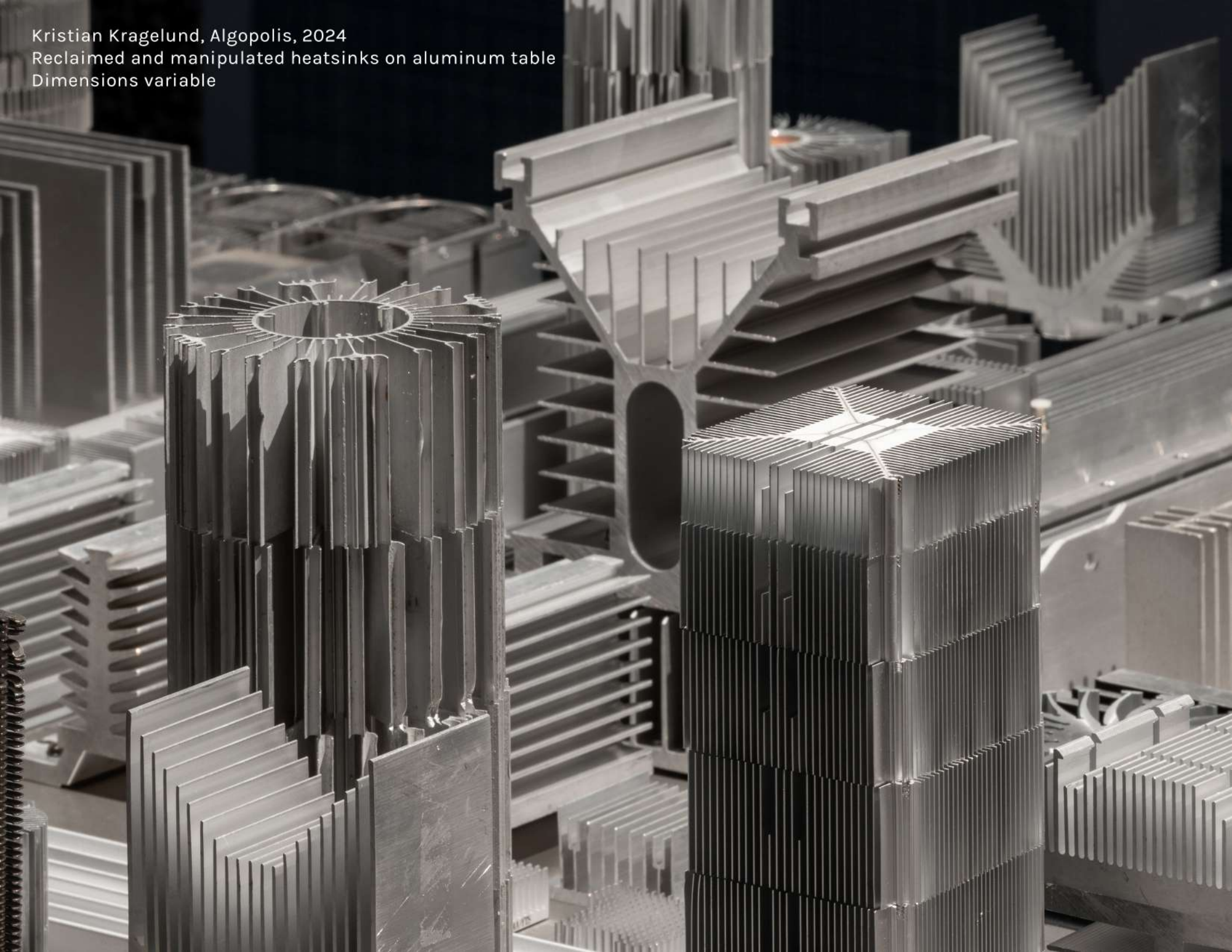
Applying this foreign historical reference to a contemporary English context, Kingsley freed the term from its original meaning. It was only truly popularised, though, in the early twentieth century after the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall included it in his pioneering studies of adolescence. Having heard of the late-eighteenth-century literary movement while working in Berlin and Leipzig as a young man, Hall felt ‘Sturm und Drang’ perfectly encapsulated the difficulties of teenagerhood as he perceived them: steep mood swings, extreme uncontrolled behaviour and fraught parental relations.

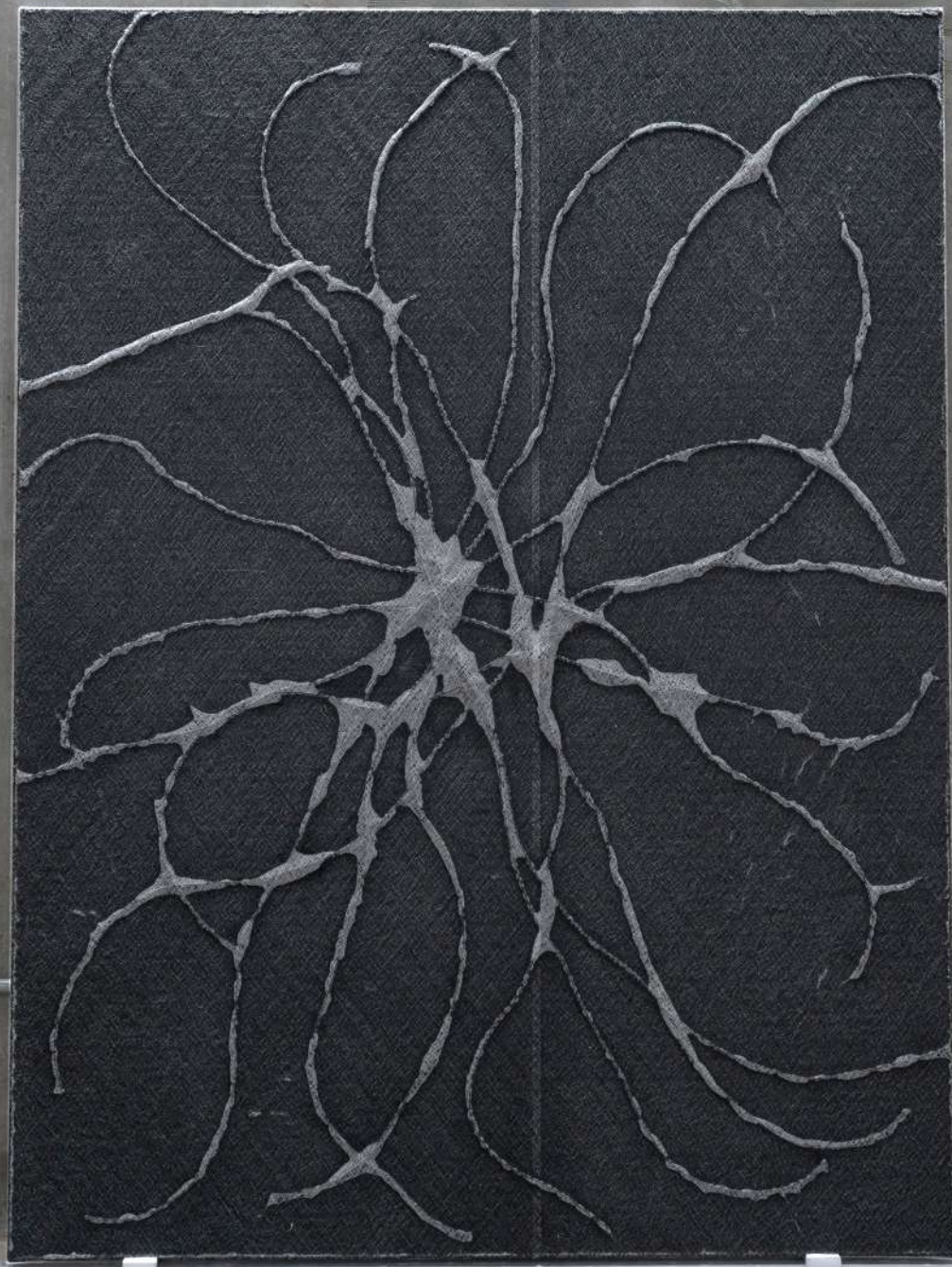
Today, among journalists and cultural commentators, especially in the US, ‘Sturm und Drang’ is used all the time to describe chaos or upheaval in any situation. In October last year, David Wallace Wells bemoaned ‘all the Sturm und Drang of Trump’s policies’ in *The New York Times*. During an interview at San Diego Comic Con on the forthcoming *Avengers* film, director Joe Russo said ‘there’s a lot of Sturm und Drang and anger inside of’ Doctor Doom. And in May’s *Artforum*, Harmon Siegel described art critics in the 1960s filling ‘the void’ left by Greenberg and Rosenberg ‘with the sound of Sturm und Drang’. Storm and stress are ever-present in the world of American letters.

Text by Michael Kurtz

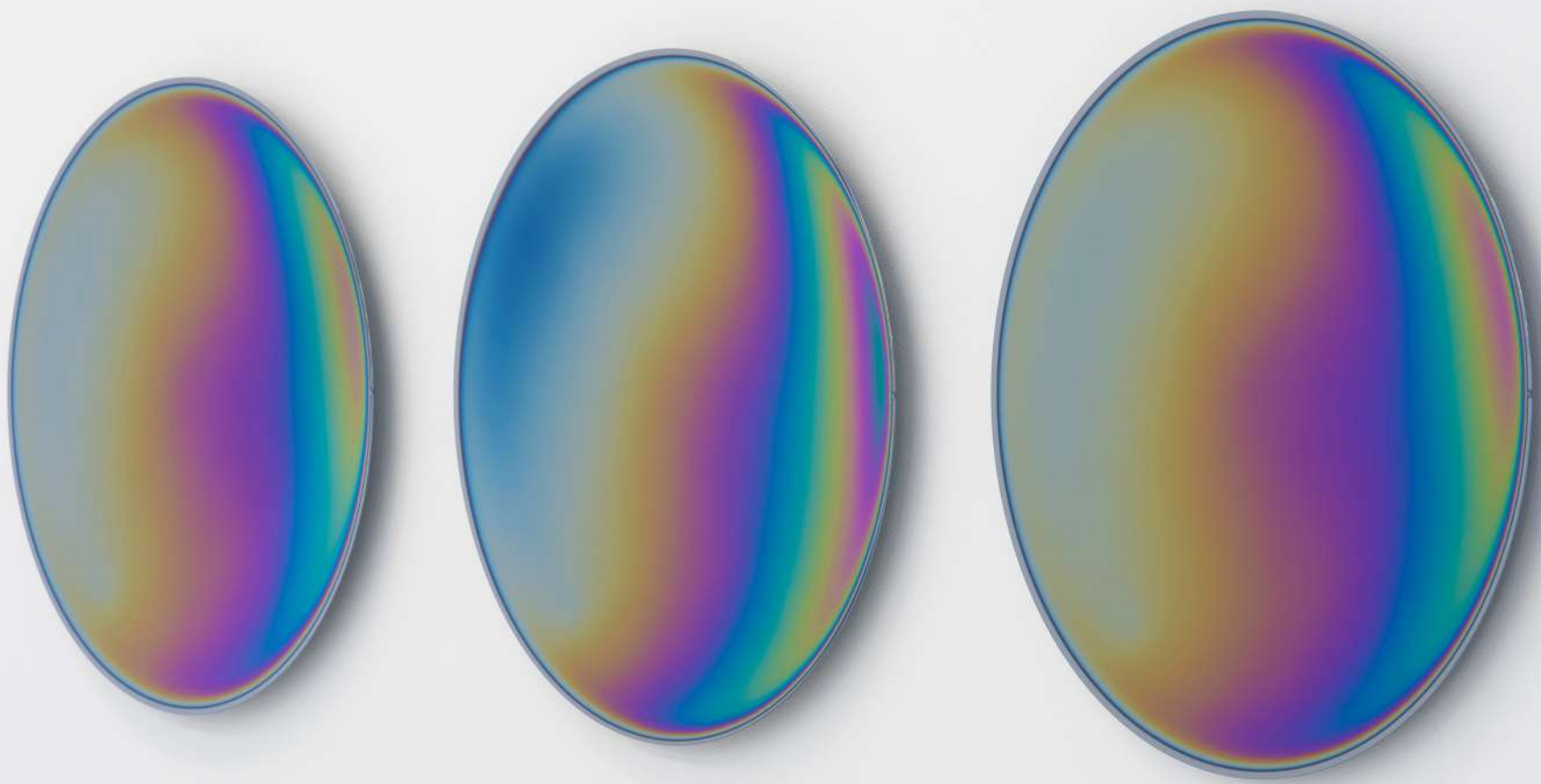
past works

Kristian Kragelund, Algopolis, 2024
Reclaimed and manipulated heatsinks on aluminum table
Dimensions variable





Kristian Kragelund, *Untitled_StrainL_01C*, 2025
Fibre-optic cable, oil, resin and fibreglass on canvas
200 x 150 cm



Kristian Kragelund, Untitled_Artefact12-14
Rejected and malfunctioned silicon semiconductor wafers on mount
30 cm diameter each