

descriptions of what she encountered on that trip around Scandinavia, tinged with an undercurrent of melancholy and sadness over their imminent break-up and her own failed suicide attempt.

GALLERY 2

Gallery 2 is occupied in its entirety by the series *Subway Writers* (2011/2014), presented as a continuous line throughout the room, and continuing into Gallery 1. Picking up on the 'Coda' in *Les Goddesses* and one of the key moments in *Hemlock Forest* – where Davey recreates a scene from Chantal Akerman's film *News from Home* (1977), shot by Babette Mangolte on the NYC subway – Davey's *Subway Writers* surreptitiously captures ordinary commuters engaged in the act of writing whilst travelling on the New York subway; each lost in their own private thoughts in that most public of places.

GALLERY 3

In this room Davey shows two more 'grid-compositions' consisting of photographs of the Wollstonecraft letters, as well as from Mary Shelley's diaries. In these works, the close up images of words on the page are each juxtaposed by a contrasting diptych: In the new work, *Mary, A Fiction* (2016), there are two pictures of trees, one of which is a detail from a 19th century painting on display at Bergen Kunsthall's neighboring art museum KODE, and the other taken on Fløyen, a popular hiking area on one of Bergen's surrounding mountains. In *We are Young and We Are Friends of Time* (2012), Davey has included two photographs taken in her twenties while she was still living in Canada.

This room also includes portraits of the Davey sisters, made in 1979 before she left Montreal, as well as a new triptych, *3 Women* (2016). The central image is a fragment of writing in Mary Wollstonecraft's hand, a passage from her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). It is flanked by an image of a Louise Bourgeois publication on the left, and a portrait of a reputed de Gaulle ancestress from the 18th century, on the right.

GALLERY 4

Les Goddesses (2011) is in many ways the prequel to *Hemlock Forest*. The film collapses together the lives and personalities of Davey and her five sisters, with those of the daughters of Mary Wollstonecraft. Davey's film shows the artist pacing her New York apartment, reading aloud from notes she has written, then recorded on to tape, and which she plays back into her ear through an audio prompt. It's a remarkably intimate, at times awkward device, wherein the slight but profound gap between the act of listening and then of speaking generates a sense of both

distance and proximity, intimacy and occlusion. Set in the domestic spaces of her home but encompassing relationships and connections that span continents and centuries, the film flickers between various states of interior and exterior, inside and outside, the demands of life, and the life of the mind. As Aveek Sen writes in a new essay on her work, both *Hemlock Forest* and *Les Goddesses* "seem to move restlessly between two unresolved anxieties ... between risking what is too easy and risking what is too difficult."

BILLBOARD AND EDITION

Moyra Davey has made a new work for Bergen Kunsthall's billboard space, on the back of the building. It is based on a photograph she took in the actual 'Hemlock Forest', just outside of New York City. The same image has also been used for a new print edition, made especially for Bergen Kunsthall and available to purchase in the bookshop.

Moyra Davey

Damascus Hemlocks, 2016

Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta paper
Size: 27,9 × 35,6 cm, Image size: 20,3 × 25,4 cm
Edition of 40 + 8 APs
NOK 3200,-

Publication

Moyra Davey

A new publication, including texts by Moyra Davey and Aveek Sen, will be produced on the occasion of the exhibition and be available from early 2017. Published by Bergen Kunsthall and Dancing Foxes Press

Guided tours

Every Sunday, 2pm
27 October, 6pm Members tour
30 October, 1pm Workshop and tour for families

Platform:

Saturday 29 October at 2pm

Moyra Davey in conversation with Martin Clark

Platform:

Saturday 10 December: "On Reading"

A one day Platform event in connection with Moyra Davey's exhibition, including talks, readings and performances with: Moyra Davey, Hannah Gregory, Travis Jeppesen, Karolin Meunier, Aveek Sen, NOVEL, Studio for Propositional Cinema, Steven Warwick / Heatsick and others.

BERGEN KUNSTHALL

MOYRA DAVEY HEMLOCK FOREST

Curated by Martin Clark and Steinar Sekkingstad

28 OCTOBER 2016 – 8 JANUARY 2017
BERGEN KUNSTHALL

"Hemlock Forest" is the first exhibition in Scandinavia by the New York-based, Canadian artist Moyra Davey. The exhibition takes its title from Davey's most recent film, co-commissioned by Bergen Kunsthall and La Biennale de Montréal, and presented here for the first time.

Much of Davey's work centers on the everyday of her own life – as an artist and filmmaker, as well as a writer and a reader. Initially known for her work in photography – which she has been making over the last three decades – in recent years Davey has developed a series of essayistic film works, layering intimate personal narratives onto highly engaged explorations of particular authors, artists and texts.

The new film, *Hemlock Forest*, can be considered a sequel to Davey's highly acclaimed earlier film, *Les Goddesses* (2011) (also included in the exhibition), revisiting and developing a number of the themes and narratives she introduced in that work, some five years later. The two films literally bookend the exhibition, between which Davey presents new and existing photographic works. These include black and white prints made during the late 1970s and early 1980s, depicting her family, as well as a number of compositions of unframed, folded photographs – an important component of Davey's practice that she began in 2009. These 'mailer' works are printed, taped, stamped and addressed by the artist, before being sent through the postal system to friends or colleagues, before being displayed in the gallery with the marks of their journey still clearly visible.

GALLERY 1

Hemlock Forest (2016) begins as Davey searches for a definitive filmic subject while reflecting on the value of a life lived versus a life recorded. At the same time, she examines her own artistic strategies alongside the work of the influential Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman. During the making of *Hemlock Forest*, Akerman took her own life. The filmmaker's unexpected death soon engulfed Davey's awareness, prompting a broader exploration of Akerman's and her own biographies, amidst references to Davey's earlier work, as well as a number of other artists and authors includ-

ing Karl Ove Knausgård and Henrik Ibsen. Drawing again on her own family history (as a mother, an artist, and one of six sisters), the film goes on to address more universal themes of compulsion, artistic production, life and its passing.

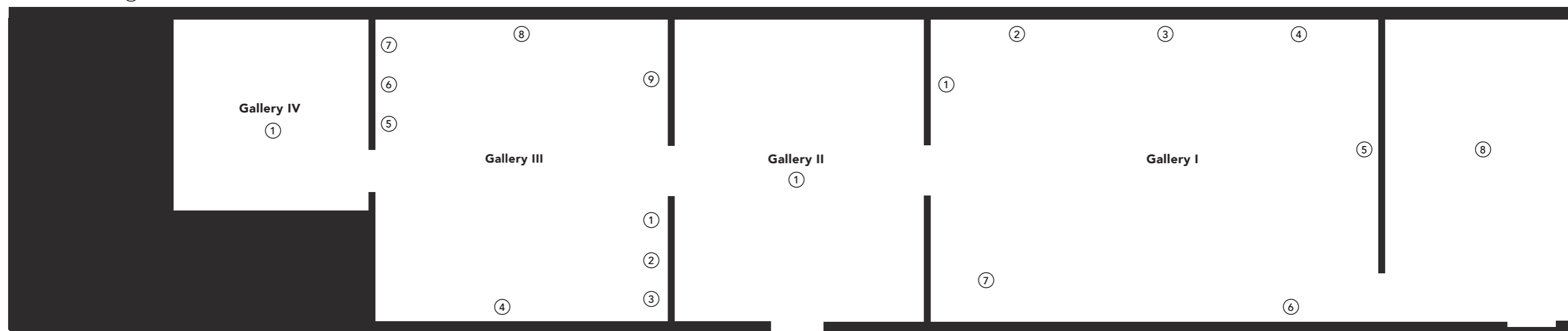
In Gallery 1, Davey also presents photographic works spanning three decades and including photographs made by her partner, Jason Simon, and their son Barney. These works expand on some of the themes and motifs that are explored in *Hemlock Forest*, as well as including photographs that appear in the film itself.

In a new series of 'mailers', Davey has used photographs taken during a research visit to Bergen in 2015 to produce a number of new compositions featuring images of forests and trees, some of which have been heavily reworked in digital post-production. The theme of the forest runs throughout the exhibition in a way that Davey herself has described in a recent interview as a twofold entry point to the new film: "I was preoccupied by the idea of truth and the highly subjective nature of my narrations. I liked the title *Hemlock Forest* because it suggested two things, the forest as a beautiful refuge, but also hemlock as a poison. In the film there's a lot about opiates and alcoholism, poisons that we humans gravitate toward."

In a large wall-montage, Davey's images of trees are combined with, and partly overlapped by, a selection of framed black and white photographs, including portraits she made of her sisters from the late 1970s – which movingly echo two photographs by her son Barney, showing his friend Eric smoking in Davey's apartment – and a group of works depicting smoke trails, by Davey's partner, artist Jason Simon.

Mary, Marie (2011) refers to Mary Wollstonecraft, the 18th century writer, advocate of women's rights, and mother of the author Mary Shelley. Davey's continued interest in Wollstonecraft is a driving force in both of the films shown in the exhibition. In *Mary, Marie* the images are close-ups of words, found within the book *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, published in 1796, which contains a series of letters Mary Wollstonecraft wrote to her beloved Gilbert Imlay. They include

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GALLERY I

- 1 Moyra Davey
Kate & Jane (single image), 1979
Unique. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 2 Moyra Davey
Dark Trees, 2016
Unique. 12 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each; 94 x 94 cm overall.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 3 Moyra Davey
Mary, Marie, 2011
Edition of 2. 12 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 44 cm; approx. 94 x 182 cm overall.
Collection Fotene Demoulas and Tom Cote.
- 4 Moyra Davey
The Fair Courts of Life, 1979
Unique. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 5 Moyra Davey:
- Mixed Trees, 2016
Unique . 6 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- Blue, Purple, Green Trees, 2016
Unique. 6 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.

- Red Trees, 2016
Unique . 6 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- Blue Trees, 2016
Unique. 6 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- Smoking 3, 1987/2016
Edition of 5. Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta paper. 36 x 28 cm; 30 x 25 cm image size.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- Smoking 2, 1987/2016
Edition of 5. Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta paper. 36 x 28 cm; 30 x 25 cm image size.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- Smoking 1, 1987/2016
Edition of 5. Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta paper. 28 x 36 cm; 18 x 28 cm image size.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- Jason Simon
Untitled (Spirits), 1996
7 gelatin silver prints. 36 x 28 cm each.
Courtesy the artist.

- Barney Simon-Davey
Untitled (Eric Smoking), 2014
Unique. Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta paper. 40 x 51 cm; 28 x 43 cm image size.
Courtesy the artist.

- Barney Simon-Davey
Untitled (Eric, after Hervé Guibert), 2014
Unique. Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta paper. 40 x 51 cm; 28 x 43 cm image size.
Courtesy the artist.
- Moyra Davey
Jane, 1979
Unique. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 6 Moyra Davey
Hoardings, 2016
Unique. 12 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each; 94 x 94 cm overall.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 7 Moyra Davey
Subway Writers, 2011/2014
Unique. 75 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 44 cm each; overall dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 8 Moyra Davey
Hemlock Forest, 2016
Edition of 5. HD video with sound.
41 minutes, 15 seconds.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.

GALLERY II

- 1 Moyra Davey
Subway Writers, 2011/2014
Unique. 76 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 44 cm each; overall dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.

GALLERY III

- 1 Moyra Davey
Striped Shirts, 1979/2012
Edition of 3 + 1 AP. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 2 Moyra Davey
Claire, Lou, Gerald, Geoff, 1979
Unique. Gelatin silver print . 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 3 Moyra Davey
Lou (Feathers), 1979
Unique. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 4 Moyra Davey
We are Young and We Are Friends of Time, 2012
Edition of 2. 14 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 44 cm (13 parts), 44 x 44 cm (1 part);
approx. 94 x 272 cm overall.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 5 Moyra Davey
Tattoos, 1979/2012
Edition of 3 + 1 AP. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.

- 6 Moyra Davey
Lou, 1979/2012
Edition of 3 + 1 AP. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.

- 7 Moyra Davey
Lou & Kate, 1979/2012
Edition of 3 + 1 AP. Gelatin silver print. 51 x 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 8 Moyra Davey
Mary, A Fiction, 2016
Unique. 14 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each; 95 x 188 cm overall.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.
- 9 Moyra Davey
3 Women, 2016
Unique. 3 C-prints, tape, postage, ink.
30 x 46 cm each; 30 x 141 cm overall.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York.

GALLERY IV

- 1 Moyra Davey
Les Goddesses, 2011
Edition of 5. HD video with sound. 61 minutes.
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy, New York

BILLBOARD

- B Moyra Davey
Damascus Hemlocks, 2016
Billboard 213 x 309 cm.
Courtesy the artist.