

## BERGEN KUNSTHALL

# JOACHIM KOESTER

## BRINGING SOMETHING BACK

26 JANUARY – 18 MARCH 2018

For the exhibition “Bringing Something Back” at Bergen Kunsthall, Joachim Koester has connected all the galleries in an immersive installation comprising 16mm film projection, digital video, photography and audio works. Set in a staged exhibition “topography”, the works are presented within architectural constructions that combine partly transparent dividing walls, horizontal platforms, vitrines and hovering projection screens. The exhibition charts a physical journey between individual works and their distinctive narratives, each one offering a gateway into unfamiliar territories, situated by culture and history.

Koester’s work is characterized by a distinctive kind of storytelling in which ideas, chains of association and narrative segments are expressed through various works positioned in the exhibition space such that particular physical and conceptual pathways are laid out for the viewer. One goal for Koester is that we should be able to experience the exhibition physically, and sense what it is about, simply by making our way through its topography. Koester himself calls this “inhaling the exhibition”.

The exhibition includes seven film- and video works, spanning Koester’s choreographed films, where he employs actors and dancers, as well as his formally concise experimental films, partly based on the language of early Structuralist filmmakers. In *Maybe this act, this work, this thing* (2016), two Vaudeville actors are working on a new act. Spurred by the development of the cinematic apparatus, they attempt to transform themselves into a film machine, by “becoming” cogs, wheels, moving belts, and quivering electricity. Like several of Koester’s recent works, the film is anchored in the idea that traces of history and events can be found within our nervous and muscular systems as forgotten memories which can be awakened through movement and gesture. Fol-

lowing this train of thought, *Maybe this act, this work, this thing* is a kinaesthetic echo of the birth of the film medium and the cultural shifts it induced.

The historical and cultural implications of technological inventions are also touched upon in works such as *Of Spirits and Empty Spaces* (2012) and *Howe* (2013). In these films the technological revolution of the sewing machine is told through the figures of Elias Howe (1819-67) and John Murray Spear (1804-87). Spear was a spiritualist, socialist and activist who in 1861 initiated a series of séances, attempting to invent a new kind of sewing machine through a trance dance. At the time, Elias Howe had already developed, and patented, a successful and widely distributed sewing machine. Trying to bypass Howe’s patents Spear’s quest was informed by an almost desperate desire to find an alternative to corporate industrial production. A machine that would revolutionize the relations between the sexes by giving women an opportunity to make enough money to take control of their lives.

Throughout the exhibition, Koester turns with equal interest to the spiritual and consciousness-expanding as to the technological and the historically rooted, focusing on the limits of perception and the hidden sides of apparent reality. *The Hashish Club* (2009) draws from the cultural history of hashish (cannabis). The 16 mm film of an abstract animation of hashish plants, connects to Koester’s interest in ‘Le Club des Hashishin’, a Parisian group of the late 1840s that was centred around a fascination with drug-induced experiences. Its members included key figures of the French intelligentsia, such as Charles Baudelaire and Eugène Delacroix. Hashish was supplied to the club by Dr Jacques-Joseph Moreau, a psychologist who compared the effects of the drug to the symptoms of mental illness. In *Tarantism* (2007) another kind of ‘altered state’ is evoked through a condi-

tion resulting from the bite of the wolf spider, originally known as the tarantula. The film is based on a popular belief and condition from southern Italy, where it was thought that the bite of the tarantula caused — and was cured by — a frenzied dance.

Throughout the exhibition visitors are invited to lie down and listen to a series of hypnagogic soundworks made in collaboration with the artist Stefan A. Pedersen. In these works a non-retinal psychogeography is invoked through the use of incantatory words and sounds that summon up physical sites entirely within the imagination. Another collaborative project takes the form of a series of “exhibitions within the exhibition”, assembled by curator and writer Yann Chateigné Tytelman, and presented in custom-built vitrines. Like contained ecosystems or aquariums, each of these boxes contains books, objects and natural elements; drifting, speculating and expanding on ideas drawn from Koester’s works.

As an introduction to the exhibition, a new group of photographs continues Koester’s ongoing documentation of the praying mantis. An insect that is said to be able to connect with the spirit of the person who watches it, the mantis connects many of the thematic threads within the exhibition. With its ‘performative’ mimetic faculties, its ability to blend in with the environment and its ‘alien’ physical features and movements, the mantis echoes the motion of both the machines and the human figures that otherwise occupy the exhibition.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a new publication launched in autumn 2018, co-published with Camden Arts Centre.

**Joachim Koester** (b. 1962, Copenhagen, Denmark) lives and works in New York and Copenhagen.

Curated by Martin Clark and Steinar Sekkingstad.

*Maybe this act, this work, this thing* (2016) was commissioned as a collaboration of Bergen Kunsthall, Camden Arts Centre and STUK | House for Dance, Image and Sound. Supported by Auguste Orts; Beckett-Fonden; Carlos and Francesca Pinto; Knud Højgaards Fond; On & For Production and Danish Arts Foundation.

The exhibition has been organized in association with Camden Arts Centre and supported by Danish Arts Foundation.

**Opening:**

26.1. 20:00

**Platform:**

27. 1. 14:00

Joachim Koester &amp; Jelena Martinovic

**Tours:**

Every Sunday at 2pm

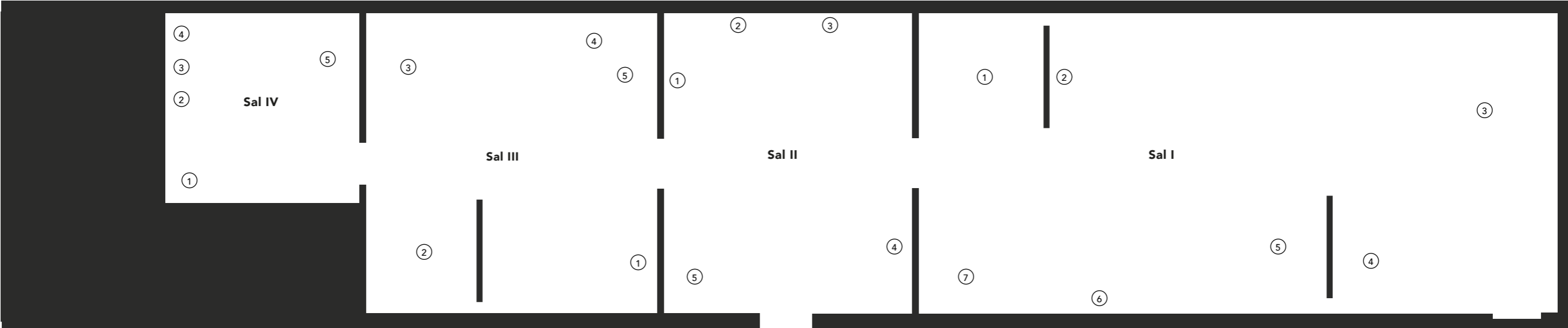
Torsdag 25. januar kl 18:00 for medlemmer

Søndag 28. Januar kl 13:00 for barnefamilier

**things that SHINE and THINGS that are DARK**

On **Friday 9 March from 20:30**, in collaboration with the Borealis festival for experimental music, an evening of live performances will take place in connection with the exhibition, featuring contributions by Jenny Berger Myhre, Raven Chacon, G. E. K., Sandra Mujinga / NaEE RoBErts and others. The evening begins with two ‘live meditations’, drawing on Koester’s recent work with hypnagogic sound installations, summoning up physical sites entirely within the imagination, lulling participants into becoming one with an artistic yet utterly unseen world. Based on new texts by Koester, the meditation will be lead by New York based hypnotherapist Shauna Cummins, with live music from Bergen based musician Craig Wells.

**There are limited places for the meditations – sign up when you buy your event ticket at Borealis:**  
<http://www.borealisfestival.no/2018/en/>



SAL IV	SAL III	SAL II	SAL I	
1 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>Butterflying</u> , vitrine 1 Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout.	1 Joachim Koester <u>The Hashish Club</u> , 2009 16mm black and white film loop, 6.06 min. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City, Greene Naftali, New York, and Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	1 Joachim Koester <u>H. Grandis</u> , 2018 Aluminum print. 91,5 x 119,5 cm Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	1 Joachim Koester and Stefan A. Pedersen <u>Drifting through Passaic</u> , 2016 Audio, 14 min. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City	5 Joachim Koester and Stefan A. Pedersen <u>Mantis Meditation</u> , 2018 Audio, 15 min. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City
2 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>Negative Holisms</u> , vitrine 2 Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout.	2 Joachim Koester and Stefan A. Pedersen <u>Department of Abandoned Futures</u> , 2016 Audio 25 min. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City	2. Joachim Koester <u>Mirror Mantis</u> , 2018 Aluminum print. 30,5 x 30,5 cm Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	2 Joachim Koester <u>HOWE</u> , 2013 16mm film installation, 4:23 min. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City, Greene Naftali, New York, and Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	6 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>The Mantis</u> Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout.
3 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>Negative Holisms</u> , vitrine 3 Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout.	3 Joachim Koester <u>Tarantism</u> , 2007 16mm black and white film installation, 6.31 min Courtesy of the artist	3 Joachim Koester <u>Idolomantis Diabolica</u> , 2018 Aluminum print. 91,5 x 119,5 cm Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	3 Joachim Koester <u>Maybe this act, this work, this thing</u> , 2016 HD video installation, 20 minutes Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City, and Greene Naftali, New York	7 Joachim Koester <u>Praying Mantis</u> , 2016 16 mm film installation, 3:44 min. Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen
4 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>Negative Holisms</u> , vitrine 4 Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout.	4 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>Becoming intense</u> Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout.	4 Joachim Koester <u>Schizocephala Bicornis</u> , 2018 Aluminum print. 91,5 x 119,5 cm Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	4 Joachim Koester <u>Of Spirits and Empty Spaces</u> , 2012 16mm film installation, 6:50 min. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City, Greene Naftali, New York, and Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen	
5 Joachim Koester and Stefan A. Pedersen <u>Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles: Patterns, Shimmers, Scenes</u> , 2016 Audio, 21 min. Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City	5 Yann Chateigné Tytelman <u>Othering</u> Vitrine installation. For more information please refer to the vitrine handout	5 Joachim Koester <u>Reptile brain or reptile body, it's your animal</u> , 2012 16 mm film on monitor, 5:36 min Courtesy of Jan Mot, Brussels and Mexico City		