

Mungo Thomson  
*Time Life*  
January 14 – March 4, 2023  
Opening Reception: Saturday, January 14  
Karma, Los Angeles  
7351 Santa Monica Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 900

Karma is pleased to present *Time Life*, a solo exhibition of eight short videos by Los Angeles-based artist Mungo Thomson. The exhibition will open Saturday, January 14th and run through Saturday, March 4th, 2023.

Thomson's work is an ontological inquiry into the nature of our shared reality, embedding cosmic scale and geological time into everyday objects. *Time Life* is a body of work that has occupied the artist for almost a decade: a series of stop-motion animations that use reference encyclopedias, photo books, how-to guides and production manuals as their raw material. The project imagines these books being scanned by a high-speed robotic book scanner, the type used by universities and tech companies to digitize libraries, and proposes such a device as a new kind of filmmaking apparatus. *The New York Times* called *Time Life* a “thrilling accomplishment, adding a new chapter to the long conversation about photographs, mechanical reproduction and ways of seeing.”

Presented as distinct chapters, Thomson's *Time Life* videos take as their subjects a wide array of human activity, from cooking to exercise to gardening to art. Highly choreographed, their thousands of images are displayed at a high frame rate, just faster than the brain can process, as these analog documents pass into their digital afterlife.

*Volume 1. Foods of the World* (2014–22) examines the images, recipes, and book objects of several spiral-bound cooking series. *Volume 2. Animal Locomotion* (2015–22) examines a fitness book series from 1989, and evokes Eadweard Muybridge in reverse, building a motion picture from step-by-step instructional stills of people moving, rather than capturing still images from people in motion. *Volume 3. Flowers (Nahbild)* (2015–22) is a blur of photographs of flowers in multiple gardening guides at a range of focal distances. *Volume 4. 1000 Questions* (2016–22) asks every question in a 1992 book set called Understanding Science and Nature, from “How Big are Atoms?” to “How Does a Cruise Missile Fly?”. *Volume 5. Sideways Thought* (2020–22) is a motion study of the complete works of Auguste Rodin, made by aggregating every possible photographic view of Rodin's sculptures found in books on his work. *Volume 6. The Working End* (2021–22) is a compendium of animations made from instructional books on knot tying, from practical utility knots to purely decorative ones. *Volume 7. Color Guide* (2021–22) is an immersive, pulsing study of a single 2021 Pantone book: 2,161 swatches of color, photographed in macro at eight colors per second. Finally, *Volume 8* (2022) is an encyclopedic tour through 4,200 specimens of seashells from the collections of the Smithsonian, the British Museum, and Harvard University, among others, morphing into one another.

Thomson exploits the dualities of the digital and the analog, the video and the book, and the automated and the handmade, binding them each together. He exposes the moment of digitization as a moment of transformation in which information is sublimated into a new mode, like a solid becoming a gas. This moment is frozen, opened up, and zoomed in on, and is revealed as an entrypoint into a startling and profound conversation about history, cultural material, technology, and perception.

Time Life features musical soundtracks by Andrea Centazzo and Pierre Favre, Laurie Spiegel, Sven-Åke Johansson, Lee Ranaldo, Ernst Karel, Pauline Oliveros, Adrian Garcia, and John McEntire.

An evolving project more than a decade in the making, Thomson's *Time Life* videos were first exhibited at Karma in New York between March and April of 2022. *Time Life's Volume. 5 Sideways Thought*, was exhibited by Galerie Frank Elbaz in Paris in 2022 and is presently featured in Sculptures, a solo exhibition at the Aspen Art Museum. For Karma Los Angeles, Thomson premiers Volume 8, the newest chapter in his Time Life video series.

To accompany the exhibition, Karma will launch *Time Life*, a publication on Thomson's project featuring texts by Hal Foster and Lisa Gitelman. JRP|Editions will also be releasing a major new monograph on Thomson's work, featuring an interview with artist Laura Owens and texts by critics Tim Griffin, Donatien Grau, Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer and the artist.

Karma and JRP|Editions will be hosting a book signing with Thomson for these two new publications at Karma Los Angeles on Saturday, February 18th, from 1-4pm in conjunction with Frieze Los Angeles.

Mungo Thomson has had recent solo exhibitions at Karma, New York; Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris; and Isetan Shinjuko, Tokyo. Thomson's work is held in the public collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museo Jumex, México City; FRAC Île-de-France, Paris; GAMeC, Bergamo, Italy; and BY ART MATTERS, Hangzhou, China, among others.