

Beth von Undall  
Sinthome

04/12–05/05/2024  
Opening: 04/11/2024, 7pm

Künstlerhaus Bethanien  
Showroom  
Kottbusser Straße 10  
10999 Berlin

*The dream of those who dream concerns those who are not dreaming. Because as soon as someone else dreams, there is danger. People's dreams are always devouring, and threaten to engulf us; the other's dream is very dangerous. Dreams have a terrible will to power and each one of us is a victim to the other's dreams. Even the most gracious of young girls is a terrible devourer, not because of her soul but because of her dreams. Beware of the other's dreams because if you are caught in the other's dreams you are done for!*  
— Gilles Deleuze

'Sinthome' is a psychoanalytic term denoting a psychotic subject who establishes a personal negation of their condition; idiosyncratically freeing themselves from within rather than by coming to terms with their symptom as an issue with reality. The 'sinthome' is a way for the subject to leave the constraints of *reality* and let the world take place through a personal imaginary. In other words, for the sinthomatic subject, the map decides the territory, not the other way around.

The exhibition takes the dream and its relationship to artificiality as its starting point. The central piece is titled *Synth-homme*. In French *synth* means artificial, and *homme* means man. When Lacan first theorized the sinthome, he alluded to this specific linguistic pun: the creative self-determination of the sinthomatic is also the production of a new and artificial subjectivity.

*Synth-homme* is an object consisting of 32 mirror pieces arranged in the form of an 8×4 matrix. A number of led diodes have been arranged across the 32 positions, with each diode enabling an illusion of a thin and inwardly disappearing line. The matrix form itself is a cornerstone of the mathematical field of linear algebra and an essential part of the algorithmic methods used in machine learning and artificial intelligence research.

To expand the perspective on mind beyond notions of mathematical form, the exhibition presents as well a silent video work titled *Sally and Anne* and a programmatic sound piece titled *Mouth*. The video narrativises a type of psychological test used to screen three- to four-year-olds for a lack of what psychologists refer to as a "theory of mind" – the capacity to ascribe mental states to others. If a child lacks such a "theory", the common conclusion is that they will not be able to develop the fundamental social skill of empathy.

*Mouth*, on the other hand, has no narrative but consists only in utterances and speech-like sounds that are streamed from a single board computer utilizing a digital model cloned from asmr-recordings of the artist own mouth.

Supported by the Danish Arts Council and Knud Højgaards Fond.

## Synth-homme

Mirror foil, acrylic glass, glue, wiring, LEDs  
124.5cm x 205cm

## Mouth

Single board computer, speakers, software  
Approx. 40cm x 50cm x 40cm

## Sally & Anne

HD video (no sound)  
5'13"