

Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof

Céline Mathieu
Nectar
23.8. – 09.11.2025

● EN The exhibition 'Nectar' looks into the act and choreography of regurgitation: something that was ingested is brought back up, as it were, vomited. Vampire bats do it; they fly out, find an open wound on an animal and drink its blood, their spit keeps the blood runny. The bats go back to their cave and regurgitate some of the blood to feed those who didn't fly out that night. An act that exceeds family bonds; it is friendship, and kin sustenance. A found handycam points at a pigeon's nest right outside the Kunstverein's entrance, it's titled 'Grim Passion'. In the space, an adapted sound gate lifts and lowers to adjust the sound levels, responding to the noise outside the window. The windows are whited out with buttermilk, a membrane filtering the daylight; the piece is called 'How long can milk sit out'. Cables run through the space, feeding a sound composition that is split into higher and lower frequencies, cutting out most of the mid-range. The audio piece was formerly aired on different radio stations, and here, has found an installative and technical shape with the help of sound designer Nicolai Johansen. 'Sounds touching' is composed of manipulated sounds of myself and friends. There is 'Feed', a projection of a dysfunctional human heart, its aortic valve regurgitating. A discarded Togo sofa resurfaces after having been in an exhibition years ago, the one that prompted the curator to invite me. It has been stored on a Berlin terrace, weathering since and is now bought back, titled 'Her mouth making small gobbling movements'. On it, tiny blood takers lay, and in the institutions' safe three bars of gold stay hidden from sight, together they are titled 'I performed some sort of surgery on myself'. The exhibition's poster, always printed in excess, lies at the entrance, free to be taken away. A robotic arm keeps an irregularly ringing metallic heart in motion, together titled 'His strength subsumed into that of his wife' — the most unplayable instrument, this Swatch heart-shaped object. A found Super 8 roll of my parents captured in movement before they were apart, is mounted onto a hook in the space, it is titled 'My mother standing still'.

And trying the text in a stanza:
dry-eyed
in the narrow enclave
i lured-forced myself to be
tactful and lighthearted
a throaty
giggle
alluding to areas of
intimacy,
reaffirming our
exclusive bond
i nurse
abolish
early like
how tears can
disintegrate contact lenses.
The door read
"Glissez, mortels, n'appuyez pas"

I passed on jointly credited, collaborative, paid commissions to friends, adding to the infrastructure of the Kunstverein. For one, 'Spit on the books that are mine', for which I asked BOOKS at to hand-pick publications, adjacent to my practice and this very exhibition. The books are for sale. And of my friend, carpenter Jan Omer Fack, I asked for a duplicate of the bed frame he had just made. With that, a lamp (following the curved movement of a

regurgitation), a side table and a desk of his making, give form to a bedroom, called 'Two drops of buffer to each specimen'. The bedroom is installed long-term in the back of the Kunstverein, for its bats to use. It becomes a permanent functional installation, whilst a showroom of his work, too. It might be worth emphasizing my interest in slippery authorship, in the circulation of thoughts and materials, in networked linkages, in economy and intimacy, in institutional critique, in odd provenance, and in the display of affection.

Lastly, 'Friends, stirred like sleepers', only exists as a speculative group show, on the space of this page. I imagine works by artist friends in an adjacent room. I imagine a bag in a bag by Hrefna Hörn. A while ago, Sabrina Seifried presented a series of transfer printed t-shirts in a vitrine in Brussels; I'd show one of those too. The white t-shirts, of which I would have one nonchalantly lying, or framed, however she prefers, show a scanned part of a photo of Victor Hugo's window displays, which he referred to as his weekly paintings. In this setup, I would present a necklace by Joëlle Laederach, too, which usually lines my collarbones, but it works well autonomously lying there with its resin-like PVC coated shackles. I'd have an odd little drawing by Mathias MU present, one that feels like sprouting Manga. Recently re-acquainted film producer Vincent Stroep's supermarket receipt got soaked in berry juice at the bottom of his bag, and it looks like it was licked by purple flames, that would be on the wall. I'd project a Super 8 shot video by Magdalena Frauenberg of a watch moving up and down, filmed through a vitrine, framing in it the reflection of the street behind her, the watch eerily hovering in time.

Exceeding the term of the exhibition in time and space, the final regurgitation is an economical one. It will nourish the institutional neighbour, Kunstverein für Mecklenburg und Vorpommern in Schwerin, where my upcoming exhibition will take place in April 2026.

by Céline Mathieu

Exhibition, exhibition text and sound by Céline Mathieu.

Curated by Klara Hülskamp.

Hosted by Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof. Book selection by BOOKS at on the invitation of the artist.

Bedroom elements commissioned from Jan Omer Fack.

Sound installation technical support and research by sound designer Nicolai Johansen, audio collaboration with fragments by frequent sound collaborator RIP DRARI, and possibly piano segments by uo ray'm, or a piano rehearsal of Esther Blockbergen, morphed and babbled over by me.

Referenced artists: poster distribution alludes to Felix Gonzalez Torres; pointing at a birds nest references a work by Patrick Carpentier that my best friend Myrthe van der Mark told me about.

Speculative group exhibition featuring Hrefna Hörn. Sabrina Seifried, Joëlle Laederach, Mathias MU, Vincent Stroep and Magdalena Frauenberg.

Assisting hands of Anna Lorbeer.

Intermittent long-distance technical support: Elouan Le Bars.

Courtesy of the artist and Gauli Zitter.

Translation: Johanna Glover.

Design: JMMP.

Supported by the team of Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof: Elisa Nessler, Raffaele Pola, Anna de Courcy, Ida Kehrein, Lore Lüdorff

The program of the Kunstverein is made possible by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.



Hamburg | Behörde für
Kultur und Medien

The exhibition is kindly supported by the Hamburgische Kulturstiftung and the Fischer-Stiftung. A collaboration with the ligeti zentrum.

HK Hamburgische
Kulturstiftung

Fischer-
Stiftung

ligeti
zentrum

Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof

List of works

Grim Passion, 2025

found handycam pointing at pigeon nest

Feed, 2025

video projection of a regurgitating human heart

Her mouth making small gobbling movements, 2025

formerly exhibited, balcony stored, bought back discarded Togo sofa

I performed some sort of surgery on myself, 2025

medical blood self-tests components by the sofa, and three bars of gold in the institutions' safe

His strength subsumed into that of his wife, 2025

heart-shaped object by Swatch, robot

Sounds touching, 2025

audio file, adapted sound gate, speakers splitting high and low frequencies, technical and installative collaboration with sound designer Nicolai Johansen

Green insides, 2025

audio collaboration with fragments by frequent sound collaborator RIP DRARI, and possibly piano segments by uo ray'm, or a piano rehearsal of Esther Blockbergen, morphed and babbled over by me

Spit on the books that are mine, 2025

temporary book store with a hand-picked selection adjacent to the exhibition and my practice, commissioned from Matt Hinkley from BOOKS at

My mother standing still, 2025

found Super 8 footage of my parents before they separated

How long can milk sit out, 2025

buttermilked windows

Two drops of buffer to each specimen, 2025

bedroom for the long run, with furniture commissioned from carpenter Jan Omer Fack

Friends, stirred like sleepers, 2025

speculative group exhibition