

THIN PLACES

GOD HUMAN ANIMAL MACHINE

EXHIBITION TEXT

God Human Animal Machine is a group exhibition that explores the connections between material, digital, and spiritual realms, moving along the ‘thin places’ that run across them. It proposes a reading of the present through a correspondence with the Middle Ages—a time when divine authority structured knowledge and religious allegories encoded moral meaning into the natural world—and considers how contemporary digital infrastructures similarly exert an inscrutable influence on reality. Today, technical reproduction and digital mediation operate in ways that echo older logics of classification and representation. Algorithmic systems, artificial intelligence, and data infrastructures generate images, taxonomies, and simulations that blur the line between presence and absence, agency and automation. Contemporary computational models do not neutrally reflect reality—they actively shape it, constructing and classifying the world through mechanisms largely opaque to human understanding.

Inspired by medieval icons and bestiaries, *God Human Animal Machine* examines how such systems—whether spiritual or algorithmic—define the thresholds between species, bodies, and intelligences. In the Middle Ages, religious icons were not mere representations but technologies of mediation, collapsing the distance between earthly and divine presence through replication and strict adherence to established models. The power of these devotional objects lay not in uniqueness, but in faithful reproduction—each copy maintaining an essential connection to the ‘true image’, whether this original was understood as God incarnate or as an image miraculously made without the mediation of human hands. In many of the works in the exhibition, ‘incarnation’ is not a sacramental concept or merely symbolic representation—it is made real through the body’s flesh and blood. Wounds tear open the boundary between inside and out, piercing the dissociation between what is seen and what is suffered. This blurring of internal and external, visible and invisible realities, extends beyond the human form, recurring in the presence of animals, who appear throughout the show as symbolic figures, embodied, magical forces—mediators between worlds.

Sound is a central element throughout the exhibition—an invisible yet insistent presence that unsettles the dominance of the visual in contemporary mediation technologies and connects to Kunsthals own legacy of experimental sound practices. A temporal glitch links works across time, from biblical references to Fluxus and contemporary pieces. By radically questioning the boundaries not only between art and life, but also across artistic disciplines and languages, Fluxus artists explored spaces of intersection and exchange. Their embrace of multiplication over originality, and their pioneering use of audio-visual media, add an important layer to the exhibition’s focus on technologies of mediation, honouring Kunsthals roots in Fluxus experimentation.

Gallery 01

Aria Dean

Abattoir U.S.A.!, 2023

Single-channel video with sound.

10'50"

Abattoir, U.S.A.! surveys the interior of a virtual slaughterhouse. Animated using Unreal Engine—a 3D graphics tool for real-time environments—the film guides the viewer along a linear path through an impossible architecture: a seamless blend of 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-century design elements and non-Euclidean space, rather than a direct model of any existing building. The film is accompanied by a score by Evan Zierk, combining field recordings, pop melodies, samples, and algorithmically generated sequences. Influenced by Romantic classical music and Hollywood melodrama, the score plays a central role in shaping the film's emotional and narrative atmosphere. Dean was initially inspired by philosophers Georges Bataille and Frank Wilderson, who each reflect on the slaughterhouse as both metaphor and structure. The film builds on her research into slaughterhouses and industrial architecture, exploring how they reveal modernism's entanglement with death—conceptually, politically, and materially. Here, the slaughterhouse becomes both allegory and place, where the boundary between human, animal, and machine is continuously produced and undone.

Courtesy of the artist and Château Shatto.

Gallery 02

Nam June Paik

One Candle, 1988

Installation with live video feed, candle, security camera, CRT projectors.

In this installation, a single candle is filmed and projected in red, green, and blue onto the surrounding walls, multiplying the flame into overlapping images. As the colours intersect, moments of convergence create white light — not as blank space, but as a luminous core that gives the surrounding colours their depth and resonance. The white becomes a quiet structure within the image, allowing the projected light to vibrate more fully in space. The work creates an immersive environment where light becomes both subject and medium, offering a real-time simulacrum of the original flame.

Through colour separation and recursive imagery, *One Candle* becomes both contemplative and constructed. Paik invokes ritual to explore how spiritual presence is reimagined through the circuitry of media technology.

Courtesy of MUSEUM MMK FÜR MODERNE KUNST Frankfurt am Main.

Edith Karlson,
***Vox Populi*, 2016-25**
Ceramic, rabbit excrement.

Vox Populi invites us into a strange and compelling world where animals become allegories, echoing the symbolic roles they have held throughout history—from fables and fairy tales to Christian art. Edith Karlson’s work evokes the age-old motif of the “savage hunt,” familiar from religious iconography, where animals chase and catch each other in an endless cycle. In *Vox Populi*, ceramic heads of various creatures—dogs, snakes, birds—are caught in the jaws of others, forming a chain of pursuit and consequence.

This sequence is more than a visual motif; it reflects ideas of cause and effect found across religions—whether karma, original sin, or divine justice. Karlson’s work speaks of this cycle’s strange inevitability with bluntness: “Every shit is related to the shit that follows and forms one continuous strand of shit that no one can avoid.”

Courtesy of the artist and Temnikova & Kasela Gallery.

Gallery 03

Terry Fox
***The Labyrinth Scored for the Purrs of 11 Different Cats*, 1976**
Sound installation, four channel version (2003).
70'00"

Between 1972 and 1978, Terry Fox created works that were methodologically linked to the use of symbols in the labyrinth on the floor of the cathedral in Chartres, which is composed of 11 concentric circles, 34 turns, and 552 steps. The numerical and geometric structure of the stone mosaic became the inspiration for many of his works, including this piece, his only composition for tape. The point of departure for the work is the idea that cat purrs resemble the sound of steps in the labyrinth. To realise it, Fox recorded the sounds of 11 cats that were exceptionally loud purrs—one for each of the circles in the labyrinth. The use of the cats to represent the 11 circles, along with Fox’s idea that 10 seconds of purring represent each of the 34 turns, allows the work to be interpreted as a process that reconstructs movement in space, with each section of sound corresponding to a given position in the labyrinth. As such, when this process reaches the centre of the labyrinth, the sound of all 11 cats can be heard simultaneously.

Courtesy of the Estate of Terry Fox.

Gallery 04

Mark Leckey

Carry Me into The Wilderness, 2022

4K video with sound.

6'09"

This video was made at the end of Covid lockdown, after months the artist spent looking through portals—watching the outside world from a distance while immersed in animated worlds alongside his young daughters. At the same time, he had been researching religious icons, drawn to the Byzantine idea that they are not simply representations, but windows that open directly onto heaven. The iconography of saints dwelling in caves proved especially resonant: hermits who had abandoned the world and cast themselves into the wilderness, believing that by denying the flesh they could draw closer to the divine and become spiritualised. This was Leckey's internal landscape when, shortly after restrictions lifted, he went walking in a park near his home. While listening to Judee Sill through his headphones, the sun broke through the trees and he was suddenly overwhelmed by the abundance of everything all at once, as though sensation had overflowed its limits. With the phone already in hand, he began recording the experience as it unfolded.

Courtesy of the artist.

Gallery 05

FOS

So far, so soft I, 2015-2025

Black semi-transparent textile.

A thin, semi-transparent black textile layer is suspended over two of the exhibition spaces, softly framing them through its architectural presence. FOS' work often explores the relationship between artistic object and its spatial display and this large-scale installation—both a framing device and a work in its own right—marks the delicate threshold between artwork and exhibition design. The piece alters our perception of space, modulating light and guiding the movement of bodies within it. This tactile architecture allows things to penetrate and breathe into one another; its softness and transparency echo the osmotic properties of a cell wall, acting as both filter and site of exchange between objects, bodies, and their surroundings. Reminiscent of oversized black nylon stockings stretched beneath the ceiling, the material evokes bodily—at times sexual—references that reverberate across other works in the exhibition. All the while, it hovers like a thin black cloud overhead, its openings resembling ruptures on a darkened horizon.

Courtesy of the artist.

The work is realised with the generous support of Kvadrat

Suzanne Treister

HEXEN 5.0, Historical Diagrams, 2023-25

Glicée Print on matte finished paper.

HEXEN 5.0 presents a critical, historical and mystical exploration of new global developments in terrestrial and interplanetary technologies, science and communications, corporate and governmental forces, the ecosystem and climate crisis, recent and traditional fields of knowledge and spirituality, contemporary countercultural and futuristic movements, new directions in science-fiction, and proposed possible solutions for an ethical survival of the human race. The visual structure of the works is largely based on alchemical drawings of the 13th - 18th centuries, entwining these subjects into a holistic mystical space where they become differently animated and resonant. In alchemical drawings, science, art and religion co-exist, echoing the recently converging fields illuminated in some of the prints, such as Spiritual Ecology, Nexus thinking and Earth System Science, fields which may lead to better solutions for the climate crisis and for returning the planet towards a self-regulating system.

Courtesy of the artist.

Petrit Halilaj

Poisoned by Men in Need of Some Love (Falco Peregrinus, Falco Berigora), 2013/2020

Iron, cow excrement, soil, glue, brass.

Petrit Halilaj's sculpture re-creates, by hand, many of the taxidermy animals once shown in Kosovo's former Natural History Museum. Founded in 1951, the museum was emptied in 2001; an official decree banished every specimen to damp, hidden basements so the Ethnographic Museum could take its place. Between 2011 and 2013 Halilaj traced the scattered collection in Pristina's cellars—birds slumped, fur matted, glass eyes clouded—and began rescuing what remained. Each new creature is modelled from earth mixed with animal dung, some brought from the artist's native village. Working from old photographs that captured the animals before exile, he sculpts copies of photographic copies of already dead originals. The results feel at once absurd and tender: fragile earth phoenixes rising from bureaucratic neglect.

Courtesy of the artist and ChertLüdde.

Simon Dybbroe Møller

Retinal Rift I, Retinal Rift II, Retinal Rift III, 2025

C-print, frame.

Aimed at a human, a camera flash can make eyes glow vampire-red, evoking collective memories of horror films, party photos with glassy stares, and grainy tabloids touting paranormal activity. Yet this effect is neither photographic noise nor a magic trick. Pupils only seem black—they are shadowy windows into a blood-rich interior. The flash fires faster than the iris can contract, bounces off the retina, and returns to the lens at the speed of light. The photographic "red-eye," then, is reflected light tinged with the crimson hue of our blood—a flare filtered by the very fluid that nourishes the retinal neurons translating visual data into signals for the brain. Simon Dybbroe Møller's photos are records of the act of seeing itself—each image a depiction of human optics and the camera's own logic. They reveal the mechanics of an organic eye captured by a mechanical one: an encounter between the

machine-like and the weirdly human—a kind of symbiosis. *Retinal Rift* offers a glimpse into that abyss, a shared threshold, an uncanny intelligence.

Courtesy of the artist and Palace Enterprise.

Nina Beier and Simon Dybbroe Møller

The Industrial Revolution, 2012

Replicas of the Rodin sculptures (The Hand of God, The Secret, Two Hands, Hand of Pianist, The Cathedral), bronze, plaster, resin, acrylic, paint.

Nina Beier and Simon Dybbroe Møller's collaborative piece consists of a collection of Rodin hand studies—some museum replicas, others crude knockoffs. The plaster, bronze, and composite casts have been severed from their bases, the cuts painted blood-red. Scattered across the floor, they resemble monstrous amputations, discarded horror film props, or saintly relics. Around the time of the Industrial Revolution—when machines divorced labor from the body in the drive for productivity—Rodin's fingers shaped the virtuoso hand of a pianist, or the impossible hand of God: an unfathomable force manifesting in a single human limb. But in Beier and Dybbroe Møller's work, the hands, detached from any authorial whole, speak to sculpture's deep ties to the body, materiality, and labour. Unlike the painter's inspired stroke, the sculptor's imprint was once considered too physical—too close to the real. Casting, this most ancient form of duplication, preserves that physical trace while allowing it to be repeated, multiplied, and mechanized. The paradox of this proximity is both the subject and the spectacle of *The Industrial Revolution*.

Courtesy of the artists

Vivian Caccuri

Automotivo, 2016-25

Wood, carpet, subwoofer, dice, cowrie shells.

Vivian Caccuri uses sound as both medium and metaphor, exploring how sensory perception is shaped by history, class, and cultural conditioning. *Automotivo* is a mobile sculpture: a pair of custom subwoofers housed in a car trunk-like setup, shaking dice and cowrie shells to the pulse of low frequencies. These small objects—associated with divination, risk, and ancestral knowledge—vibrate in rhythm with music that resonates through public and informal sonic cultures. The playlist we hear spans genres tied to Brazilian street sound systems and celebration: funk automotivo, reggaeton, cumbia, technobrega, and baile funk. These styles share deep bass and repetition, often blasted from modified car trunks wired directly to the vehicle's battery—part speaker, part celebratory ritual device.

Courtesy of the artist and A Gentil Carioca.

Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Reba Maybury and Joanne Robertson

Day of Wrath, 2020

4K video with sound.

3'22"

In this work, Sidsel Meineche Hansen and Reba Maybury reflect on the circulation, during medieval witch trials, of illustrations of witches engaged in demonic sexuality, alongside contemporary misogyny and its online presence. Referencing the writings of Jordan Peterson —whose polemical views on masculinity have resonated with alt-right and incel communities —Hansen and Maybury have rewritten his “12 Rules for Life”, accompanied by illustrations created by Maybury’s male submissives, who lend their fantasies and drawing styles to the artists’ ideas. *Day of Wrath* opens with a reimagining of Carl Theodor Dreyer’s 1943 film of the same name, in which a Danish “witch” is led to her execution—its solemn procession set to *Dies Irae*, a 13th-century chant from the Catholic Mass for the Dead. Collaborator Joanne Robertson adds an improvised vocal performance over a reversed Gregorian rendition of the hymn, enhancing the work’s ritualistic and haunting atmosphere.

Courtesy of the artists.

Sidsel Meineche Hansen

Hook N.17, Hook N.23, 2023

Bronze, wax and cast.

Sidsel Meineche Hansen’s *Hooks* are made in wax and cast in bronze based on the design of rudimentary meat hooks—tools designed to pierce and suspend animal flesh. Made using traditional lost-wax casting, they evoke both artisanal craft and bodily violence. In medieval Europe, such hooks were common in kitchens and butchers, used in feasts to display and prepare meat. But they also appeared in religious imagery—depictions of hell, of divine punishment, or as instruments of torture. In biblical texts, the hook becomes a symbol of judgment, restraint, and control over evil. Hansen’s hooks carry this tension: to hold, they must first break into the skin; to carry, they must transfix. Suspended in bronze, they hold bodies not beside but within them—mid-air, in-between states—charged with the echo of flesh, punishment, and the feeling of being pierced.

Courtesy of the artist, Christian Andersen, Sylvia Kouvali, and Édouard Montassut.

Tonhalle

FOS

So far, so soft II, 2015-2025

Black semi-transparent textile.

Nam June Paik

TV Dog, 1993

Plaster dog, camera, monitor.

This installation features a plaster dog watching its own live image on a closed-circuit monitor. The figure references the iconic mascot of the record label His Master's Voice (HMV), originally painted by Francis Barraud. Paik reimagines this emblem through one of his characteristic live video loops, replacing the gramophone with real-time surveillance to examine the self-reflexive nature of electronic media.

By turning the dog's gaze inward, *TV Dog* explores feedback and perception in an age where machines watch us even as we look into them—returning our gaze.

Sophia Al Maria and Lydia Ourahmane

A Blessing and A Betrayal, 2024-2025

Powder-coated forged metal, stained glass (16 glass panels).

A Blessing and a Betrayal uses a medieval staining technique to frame a passage of ChatGPT-generated text reimagining the story of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 28). The glass panes are filled with mock marginalia and gothic blackletter inscribing lines of “criptural” verse—a neologism that collapses the sacred authority of scripture into the encoded language of AI. The artists’ dialogue with the machine produces a counter-dream to Jacob’s biblical vision, which seals his covenant with God and grants him dominion over the land. In this version, Esau—tricked out of his birthright—undergoes a spiritual awakening, finding meaning in dispossession and choosing wilderness over inheritance. His vision turns inward, toward a form of belonging untethered from ownership. The dream-space—traditionally a site where God reveals themselves—becomes here a parallel to AI, imagined as a measure of the technological unconscious. Might AI function as a new kind of mediator, like the angels on Jacob’s ladder, bridging the human and the nonhuman, language and divination?

Courtesy of the artists.

Sidsel Meineche Hansen

Missionary, 2023

Chandelier, ten pendants, crystal glass and stainless steel.

Missionary is a text-based sculpture formed from blown crystal glass letters, suspended like a chandelier—industrial in structure, yet emitting no light. The term itself carries a dual meaning: referencing both sexual convention and religious duty, particularly within the context of Catholic missionaries and nuns. The term “missionary position” entered common usage in the 1960s and ’70s to describe face-to-face, male-dominant heterosexual sex. While its etymology is ambiguous, it is frequently traced—through colonial mythologies and ethnographic anecdote—to Christian missionary incursions into Indigenous communities, where it was purportedly upheld as the “civilized” sexual posture. This framing exposes a nexus of colonial violence, moral imposition, and sexual hegemony—where white, patriarchal, Christian values were projected onto colonized bodies under the guise of moral uplift. *Missionary* interrogates these entanglements of sexuality, religious dogma, and imperial domination, holding these histories in suspension—inviting us to read what is revealed, and what remains implied.

Courtesy of the artist and Berengo Studios.

Mark Leckey

Enter Thru Medieval Wounds, 2025

4K video with sound

9'54"

First published in *Heavy Traffic V* (Autumn 2024), Mark Leckey's kaleidoscopic, transhistorical exploration of the *Eikonomachia* ("image struggle") was first adapted into a radio play—with sound design and production by the artist—and now appears in this video version. In the piece, Leckey idiosyncratically traces the magical and diabolic power of representation and its entanglement with human flesh. From the Christian doctrine of Incarnation—which, in Byzantine times, justified the defence of images against iconoclasts by arguing that Christ is God's first image—to a violent hooligan episode in the early 1980s in which the artist's eyes are gouged out, echoing the martyrdom of Saint Lucy, the work makes the body's unruly flesh—and the violence that can rip it open—the inescapable ground on which the image must be reckoned. This telling of the transubstantiation of the world from text to image, implicit in the doctrine of Incarnation, is here realised through language, with a voiceover on a mostly black, iconoclastic screen.

Courtesy of the artist.

coyote

Reynard, 2025

4K Video with sound.

11' 05"

The title of the work alludes to the medieval tales of Reynard the Fox, an anthropomorphic fox and cunning trickster. The video is an omnidirectional recording, with multiple cameras mounted on a motion capture actor who mimics the locomotion of a fox while moving through an urban environment. The work reverses the logic of motion capture by turning the actor into the camera operator, creating a distorted depiction of the cityscape. The soundtrack consists of naturalistic foley sounds. The deadpan trickery of Reynard produces a blurry, unstable image—telling a tale through the shifting lens of moving image technology.

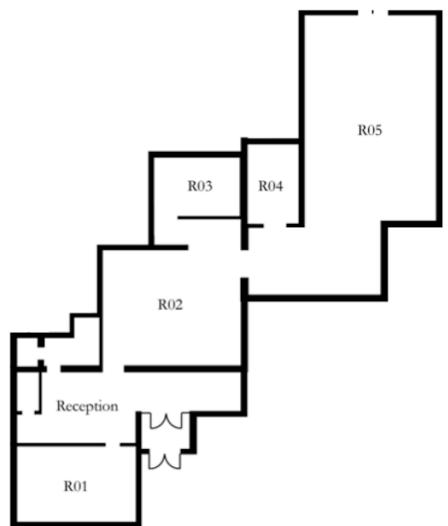
coyote (est. 2017) is an artist collective based between Copenhagen and Stockholm.

Courtesy of the artists.

BACK PAGE

MAP

Example... but with 'gallery' instead of 'room' – we will not place the artworks on the map – just the gallery number.



TONHALLE

