

ENG
Yalda Afsah
Surge
28.03.2026 - 24.05.2026



With the exhibition *Surge*, Yalda Afsah presents her first exhibition in Denmark at Kunsthall Thy. Her two videos *Curro* (2023) and *Jarramplas* (2025) come from two different bodies of work. While *Curro* approaches human beings through their relationship with animals, *Jarramplas* opens a new series that focuses on rituals as well as communal and social dynamics.

Curro begins with a view of a vast landscape in which wild horses are being driven together. On the edges of the scene stands an observing audience. An atmosphere of calm and latent expectation connects everyone present. Then the viewer sees the confinement of the tightly herded wild horses, which become nervous even at small gestures, such as the pace of a walk or the swing of an arm. Two men each restrain a horse in a very tight embrace in order to trim its tail and mane. The forced closeness leaves the flight animals visibly marked by the situation.

The nighttime detonations with which the video *Jarramplas* begins appear both festive and threatening. The streets that later appear in daylight resemble a siege. At first, individual youths gather here; soon the crowd stands tightly packed, throwing turnips and ducking from projectiles flying back toward them. The crowd repeatedly loosens and condenses until the confusing situation suddenly comes to a halt and all gazes turn toward the center. The target of the attack remains unseen: it is the Jarramplas, the performer of a cattle thief protected by armor, who is symbolically driven out of the Spanish town of Piornal every year.

Such rituals are often found in rural areas, where communities are characterized by long-term ties and continuity across generations. Their coexistence is often shaped by complex rules, codes, and hierarchies that are difficult for outsiders to interpret. This is still perceptible today in the region of Thy, whose farming population was long governed from the estate Boddum Bisgaard. Horses were indispensable here as working animals, and the hardy turnip was considered reliable food in times of uncertain harvests - an everyday element that gains an unexpected symbolic presence in the video.

Afsah's artistic practice recalls an anthropological approach: she explores the nature of human beings, their relationships to the environment, and the cultural influences that shape their actions. Both video works share an aesthetic decision that clearly distinguishes them from documentary films. The precise selection of images and lighting isolates seemingly minor actions. The sound was separated from the original recordings and added to the videos afterward. The smallest noises - such as heavy breathing, the cracking of a twig, or the patting of a horse's back - become audible, as do sounds that seem not to fit the scenes, thereby denying the viewer any clear certainty about what is happening. Reduced to what can actually be perceived, it becomes apparent how strongly the viewer searches for orientation.

Bio

Afsah's works have been shown at various international exhibitions and film festivals, including Manifesta 13, the Locarno Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, as well as at the Berlinische Galerie, the Institute of Contemporary Arts London, and the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein. She has had solo exhibitions at Molitor in Berlin and the Mönchehaus Museum, at JOAN, during the residency Between Bridges, at the HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark in Graz, at the Kunstverein München, and at the CCA Berlin. In 2023 she received the Hans Purrmann Prize. Afsah teaches at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HfBK Hamburg).

Kunsthall Thy's exhibition program 2025 is supported by:

