

Katja Loher
Will the Moon...?

galerie
andresthalmann

Katja Loher
Will the Moon... Ask the Tide to
Swallow the Land One Day?

Exhibition 22 March - 11 May 2013



(cover) **Visualisation of Will the Moon...?** 2013

(above) **Interplanetary Kisses** 2012, Visualisation for a solo project, Image courtesy of Andrea Liberni

KATJA LOHER

Katja Loher gehört einer neuen Generation von Videokünstlern an und gibt mit ihren Videoskulpturen eine innovative Stossrichtung vor. Sie befreit das Video von flachen Projektionsflächen und bettet es in ein dreidimensionales Gesamtkunstwerk ein. So schafft sie eine Symbiose der traditionellen Kunstgattung Skulptur und Video - dies scheinbar losgelöst von den technischen Gerätschaften wie Bildschirm, Beamer und Verkabelung. Loher sagt: „With my video sculptures, I try to free video from technology, because I see art as a language and technology is merely auxiliary.“

Aus der Vogelperspektive in der Greenbox aufgenommen, präsentiert Loher den Betrachtenden in ihren Videos surreale Welten, in denen reale Figuren in virtuellen Räumen taumeln, mit der Absicht, den ökologischen Kollaps der Welt zu verhindern. Ihre poetischen und gleichwohl perfektionierten Videoobjekte wachsen zuweilen zu raumgreifenden Installationen an. So zu sehen in der fast zeitgleichen Ausstellung *Miniversum* im Haus für Kunst Uri, Altdorf, dessen Installationsansichten in unserem Katalog abgebildet sind.

Ich freue mich ausserordentlich, mit *Will the Moon...?* die zweite Einzelausstellung mit Katja Loher in der Galerie Andres Thalmann zu zeigen. Mein herzlicher Dank geht an Katja Loher; sie gewährt uns mit diesen Ausstellungen erneut Einsicht in ihre geheimnisvollen Wunderwelten. Die Künstlerin überrascht uns immer wieder mit ihrer Energie und Kreativität, die ansteckend wirken und uns alle mitreissen.

KATJA LOHER

As part of a new generation of video artist, Katja Loher has created video sculptures that point in a different direction. She has liberated the medium from its two-dimensional projection surfaces to embed it into a three-dimensional, sculptural Gesamtkunstwerk. The result is a symbiosis of the traditional genres of sculpture and video – yet none of the usual technological paraphernalia such as screens, beamers or even wires are visible. As Loher states, „With my video sculptures, I try to free video from technology, because I see art as a language and technology is merely auxiliary.“

Recorded against a green screen and from a birds-eye view, Loher's videos present surreal virtual worlds in which real actors attempt to prevent the planet's ecological collapse. As her near-parallel exhibition Miniversum at the Haus für Kunst Uri in Altdorf, Switzerland, demonstrates – and the present catalogue illustrates – some of Loher's poetic and exquisite video objects have expanded into installations that occupy entire museum galleries.

I am delighted to present, Katja Loher's second solo exhibition at Galerie Andres Thalmann, and would like to express my deep gratitude to the artist. What a privilege to be granted such a long, close look at her mysterious and wondrous worlds. We continue to be amazed and thrilled by her infectious creativity and energy.

Carina Andres Thal

Carina Andres Thalmann
Galerie Andres Thalmann

Katja Loher

Will the Moon...?

In Märchen und Film dienen Kristallkugeln als magische Fernrohre in die Zukunft. Die Glaskugeln Katja Loher indes bergen vielschichtige Reflexionen unserer Welt. Ganz ohne Simsalabim. Man muss nur hinein schauen, schon offenbart sich ein farbenprächtiger Videokosmos voller Glanz, voller Leben.

Bubbles nennt die in New York lebende Schweizerin ihre selbstentworfenen Glaskugeln, die von einer Glasbläserin gefertigt werden. An Luftblasen und Seifenschaum erinnern die Bubbles nicht nur dem Namen nach. Fragil ist das sternklare Glas, wie schwerelos schweben dreidimensionale Videobilder im Innern. Tänzer in leuchtenden Kostümen formieren sich zu kaleidoskopischen Mustern und Ornamenten, auch zu Buchstaben und Worten, die sich zu Fragen reihen, poetisch, hintergründig, klug. Diese Fragen, inspiriert vom chilenischen Dichter Pablo Neruda, klingen lange nach.

Katja Loher's Kunst spricht unmittelbar an – und bleibt zugleich so schwer fassbar wie eine lockende Spiegelung. Aufgenommen sind die Videos stets aus der Vogelperspektive, vor ihnen wird man zu einem modernen Gulliver, der unbeholfen über einem Mini-Paradies steht. Ähnlich ergeht es den Figuren in *Toybubble*: In zwei Glasblasen sind Videos je eines Tanzenden zu sehen. Die kurzen Tanzloops erinnern an computergenerierte Toys wie die Tamagotchi-Küken. Doch diese Toys wachsen über ihr programmiertes Verhaltensrepertoire hinaus. Sie entdecken ihr Gegenüber im Nachbarglas. Die Spielfiguren werden empfindende Wesen, die ihrer Kunstwelt nicht entkommen können. Die in Flaschen gebannten Geister und Menschen der Märchenwelt, wie sie in den *Erzählungen aus 1001 Nacht* ebenso anzutreffen sind, wie in E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Der goldene Topf*, klingen hier ebenso an, wie der Science-Fiction Klassiker *Blade Runner*, in dem vom Menschen geschaffene Roboterwesen ein Eigenleben entwickeln und daraufhin von den Menschen gefürchtet werden. Es geht um Kontrolle, um Menschen, die wie Maschinen funktionieren und umgekehrt, es geht um Einsamkeit und Macht, kurz: um die dunklen Seiten des Lebens. Und was im Märchen die Zauberei, das ist bei Katja

Loher die Technik, die das Gute ebenso bewirken kann wie das Böse.

Katja Loher komponiert ihre Wunderwelten mit Tanzprofis und Choreographen, mit Musik und Kostümen, die präzise aufeinander abgestimmt sind. Und mit modernster Videotechnik, die in ihren Ausstellungen unsichtbar bleibt. In vielen Wohnzimmern ist Unterhaltungselektronik ganz normal, doch Katja Loher inszeniert ihre Videoskulpturen nach der alten Artistenweisheit: einem perfekten Kunststück sieht man die Arbeit nicht an. Für die *Bubbles* gilt das ebenso wie für ihre raumgreifenden Installationen und die Videoplaneten, für die sie Wetterballons als Projektionsflächen nutzt. „Aggressive Beauty“ nennt Katja Loher ihr geniales Konzept, Kunstwelten zu erschaffen, die den Betrachter mit makellosen Bildern verlocken, näher zu treten, um ihn dann en passant mit gewichtigen Fragen zu konfrontieren. Ihre je für Zwei gedeckten Videotische laden dazu ein, Platz zu nehmen in der Kunst. In Gläsern und Karaffen und in tellerrunden Öffnungen sind Videos zu sehen: Nahrung für die Augen, die die Nahrung für Leib und Geist thematisiert. In *Last Supper?* tänzelt auf einem der Tellerscreens ein fröhliches Bienenballett als Sinnbild natürlichen Werdens und Reifens. Vis-à-vis verweisen Tabletten und Trockennahrung auf das von Wissenschaftlern prognostizierte Bienensterben und dessen mögliche Folgen für unsere Ernährung. In *Supper for Two* reihen sich getanzte Buchstaben auf den Tellerscreens zu Fragen, die im ersten Moment an den Abend-Smalltalk eines allzu vertrauten Paares denken lassen. Doch durch eine kleine absurde Note führen sie in die Abgründe des ganz normalen Lebens: „How many hours had your day?“, „What didn't you do?“

Parallel zur Präsentation ihrer jüngsten Arbeiten in der Galerie Andres Thalmann zeigt das Haus für Kunst Uri, Altdorf, unter dem Titel *Miniversum* eine Werkschau der Künstlerin. Speziell für beide Ausstellungen kreierte Katja Loher das Multiple *Are the Bees Looking for Gold?*

Alice Henkes



Katja Loher

Will the Moon...?

Films and fairy-tales often feature crystal balls as a kind of magic telescope that affords a glimpse of the future. No hocus pocus is involved, however, in Katja Loher's glass balls and their complex reflections of our world. All one has to do is look inside them to perceive a colourful, riotous video cosmos.

The Swiss artist, who resides in New York, calls this series of works Bubbles. Designed by Loher and hand-crafted by a female glass-blower, the fragile, perfectly clear glass orbs evoke air or soap bubbles. Three-dimensional video images float weightlessly about inside them. Luminously-clad dancers form kaleidoscopic patterns and ornaments, chains of letters and words that configure themselves into intelligent, poetic, subtle questions inspired by Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. They linger on in the mind of the beholder long after the visit.

Loher's art has great immediacy yet remains as elusive as a seductive mirage. Recorded from a birds-eye perspective, the videos turn us into modern Gullivers who clumsily tower above a miniature paradise. A similar fate befalls the characters in Toybubble. In a piece reminiscent of digital toys such as Tamagotchi chicks, two spheres each display a dancer in short video loops. Here, however, the toy characters rise above their designed repertoire of movements when they discover each other in the adjacent sphere and become sentient creatures trapped inside their art(ificial) world. The piece alludes to fairy-tale spirits and human characters that are to be found in the tales of One Thousand and One Nights, in E.T.A. Hoffmann's novella, The Golden Pot, or in Blade Runner, the science-fiction classic in which organic robots disobey the man-made rules and become humanity's terrifying foe. Loher's work is about control, about people who function like machines or machines that function like people; it is about the darker aspects of life, power and isolation. While fairy-tales rely on magic, Loher relies on technology – which can be used for good and bad in equal measure.

Using precisely co-ordinated and harmonised music and costumes, Loher composes her magical world in co-operation

with professional dancers and choreographers. While most of our living rooms feature highly visible electronic entertainment gadgets, Loher's video sculptures obey the old artistic principle that a perfect work of art will never betray the effort that has gone into its making. Her exhibitions, therefore, conceal the paraphernalia of cutting-edge video technology. This is as true for her Bubbles as for her room installations and her Videoplanets, in which weather balloons provide the projection surface.

"Aggressive beauty" is what Loher calls her brilliant concept of creating artificial worlds whose flawless images lure spectators in – only to confront them, seemingly in passing, with weighty issues. Her video tables set for two invite visitors to take a seat in the art world. Videos are projected in wine glasses, a carafe and circular openings the size of dinner plates: it is a feast for the eyes that strongly alludes to physical and spiritual nourishment. In Last Supper? a ballet troupe of merrily dancing bees stand for natural growth and maturing. Opposite them, pills and dried food allude to scientists' warnings of the impending extinction of bees and its likely impact on our nutrition. In Supper for Two the plate-screens display rows of dancing letters that assemble themselves into questions that may at first glance evoke an old couple chatting aimlessly at the end of their day. But a small absurd note leads the conversation towards the abyss of everyday life: "How many hours had your day?", "What didn't you do?"

In parallel to the presentation at Galerie Andres Thalmann of Loher's most recent pieces, Miniversum, an overview of her works is being held at the Haus für Kunst Uri in Altdorf, Switzerland. Especially for the two exhibitions the artist has created a multiple, Are the Bees Looking for Gold?

Alice Henkes





Spacebubble 2011, Edition of 5, Videosculture. Hand-blown glass bubbles and video screen embedded in an acrylic box, 36 x 36 x 25 cm







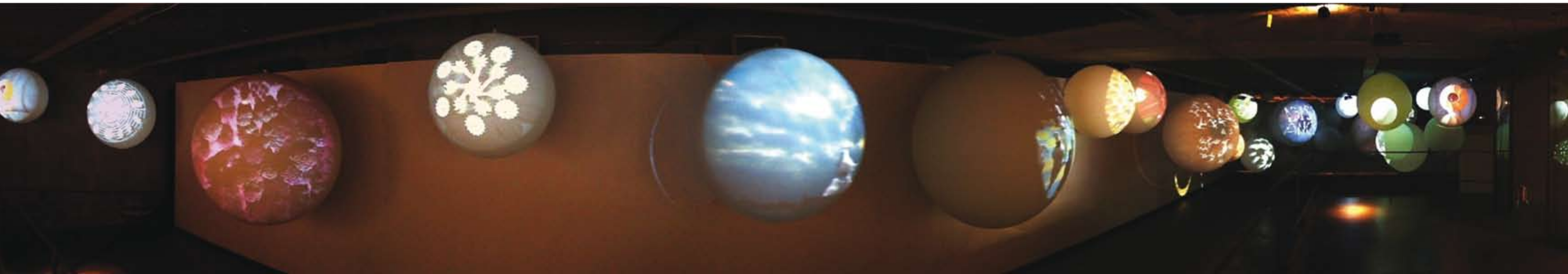




Last Supper? 2012, Edition of 5, Videosculpture. Acrylic table with embedded video screens, crystal carafe and 2 glasses, 90 x 90 x 75 cm © Fotografie F.X. Brun 18

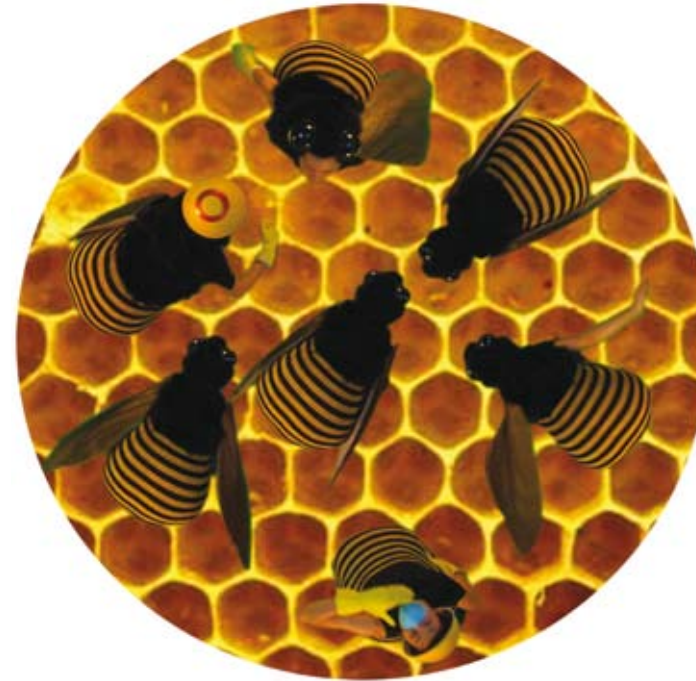


19 **Supper for Two** 2011, Edition of 5, Videosculpture. Acrylic table with embedded video screens, crystal carafe and 2 glasses, 82 x 82 x 75 cm





Are the Bees Looking for Gold? 2013, Videosculpture. Crystal carafe and video screen embedded in an acrylic box, Multiple, Edition of 33, 27 x 27 x 27 cm
© Fotografie F.X. Brun









Timebubble 2011, Edition of 5, Videosculpture with Philip Glass. Hand-blown glass bubbles and video screen embedded in an acrylic box, 36 x 36 x 25 cm



BIOGRAPHY

1979	Born in Zurich, Switzerland					
2000-2001	Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, (Fine Art Academy Geneva), Geneva, Switzerland					
2001-2004	Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst, (Fine Art Academy Basel), Basel, Switzerland					
2004	Hochschule für Gestaltung, Diploma Dept. of Art and Media Art, Art Academy Basel, Basel, Switzerland					
Since 2004 - Present	Lives and works in New York, USA and Basel, Switzerland					
SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITONS						
2013	Galerie Andres Thalmann, Zurich, Switzerland Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, USA C-Space, Beijing, China					
2012	MuBE, Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, São Paulo, Brazil					
2011	Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado, USA Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno, Italy Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, USA Galerie Vernon, Prague, Czech Republic					
2010	Galerie Andres Thalmann, Zurich, Switzerland					
2009	Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno, Italy Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, USA Dumbo Arts Center, New York, USA					
2008	Christinger Contemporary, Zurich, Switzerland Substitut, Berlin, Germany					
2007	Scène2, Senones, France Tony Wuethrich Gallery, Basel, Switzerland Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal, Switzerland Galapagos Art Space, New York, USA					
2006	Forum Vebikus, Schaffhausen, Switzerland Dublin Fringe, Dublin, Ireland					
2005	The Artist Network Gallery, Soho, New York, USA The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia Tony Wuethrich Gallery, Basel, Switzerland KKL Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland					
SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS						
2013	<i>Miniversum - Katja Loher, Peter Sauerer</i> , Haus für Kunst Uri, Altdorf, Switzerland					
2012	<i>Nature's Toolbox</i> , The Field Museum, Chicago, USA					
		2011	<i>Augmentations</i> , Municipality Gallery Netanya, Netanya, Israel <i>Dialogicos</i> , Lourdina Jean Rabieh Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil <i>Photography as Object</i> , Martha Schneider Gallery, Chicago, USA Index Festival, New York, USA <i>Art at James Bond Villa - Curated by Galerie Andres Thalmann</i> , Zurich, Switzerland <i>Going Places</i> , iaab-Projektraum „Basement“, Basel, Switzerland <i>On What?</i> , Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, USA Architecture Museum, Basel, Switzerland <i>NETinSPACE</i> , Maxxi - National Museum of the Arts of the 21st Century, Rome, Italy <i>TINA B</i> , Festival for Contemporary Art, Prague, Czech Republic <i>TINA B</i> , Porsche Center, Padova, Italy <i>La Biennale di Venezia - 12th International Architecture</i> , Arsenale Nord, Venice, Italy <i>Convergences - New Sculptural Media</i> , Armory Center for the Arts, Altadena, USA <i>Post Dimension - A Journey in the Contemporary Art</i> , Torrione Passari, Bari, Italy <i>Siggraph Asia 2009</i> , Yokohama, Japan <i>Light Switch</i> , Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, USA <i>TINA B</i> , Festival of Contemporary Art, Prague, Czech Republic <i>Euroserie</i> , Modern Art Gallery, Taichung, Taiwan Found Museum, Beijing, China Biennale Chongqing, China <i>Dialogue of the Generations</i> , Kunsthalle Palazzo Liestal, Switzerland <i>Wondering Where the Ducks Went</i> , Galleria Tiziana di Caro, Salerno, Italy <i>SUMMERTIME 08 - The Big Group Show</i> , Galleri Christoffer Egelund, Copenhagen, Denmark <i>Primacy</i> , Threshold Art Space, Perth, UK <i>Art Is My Playground</i> , Tershane, Istanbul, Turkey <i>New York City Panorama</i> , Flux Factory, New York, USA <i>Biennale Parallel</i> , Tershane Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey <i>798/Dashanzi Art Festival</i> , Beijing, China <i>NO1 Artbase</i> , 798 Area, Beijing, China Forum & Elzbieta Koscielak Gallery, Lesnica Castle, Zamek, Poland <i>iaab Choices</i> , Art Space Riehen, Basel, Switzerland			
				2005	<i>Greenhouse</i> , Alexander Clavel Foundation Cultural Development Prize, Villa Wenkenhof, Riehen, Switzerland <i>Art Digital 2005</i> , M'ARS National Centre of Contemporary Arts, Moscow, Russia <i>Ernte 2005</i> , Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen, Switzerland <i>Regionale 6</i> , Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany	
					ART FAIRS	
					2012	<i>Impulse</i> , Pulse Miami, Solo booth, presented by Scaramouche Gallery, New York, USA <i>Houston Art Fair</i> , Solo booth, presented by Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, USA
					2011	<i>Art Stage Singapore</i> , Solo exhibition, presented by Galerie Vernon, Prague, Czech Republic <i>Artefiera</i> , International Art Fair for Contemporary Art, Bologna, Italy <i>Salone Internazionale del Mobile 2011</i> , Design Week, Milan, Solo exhibition, presented by Galerie Vernon, Prague, Czech Republic <i>Kunst 10 Zurich</i> , Solo booth, presented by Galerie Andres Thalmann, Zurich, Switzerland <i>Artissima 17 International</i> , Fair of Contemporary Art in Torino, presented by Galleria Tiziana di Caro, Salerno, Italy <i>VOLTA Basel</i> , Lightbox, Solo exhibition, presented by Vernon Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic <i>SCOPE BASEL</i> , presented by Vernon Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic <i>MIART</i> , Milan Contemporary Art Fair, presented by Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno, Italy <i>Salone Internazionale del Mobile 2010</i> , Design Week, Milan, presented by Vernon International, Prague, Czech Republic <i>Art Verona On Stage</i> , Solo exhibition, presented by Galleria Tiziana di Caro, Salerno, Italy <i>MIART</i> , Milan Contemporary Art Fair, presented by Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno, Italy <i>Art 39 Basel</i> , Main Fair, presented by Tony Wuethrich Gallery, Basel, Switzerland <i>Istanbul Contemporary Art Fair</i> , presented by Tershane Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey <i>Diva Digital & Video Art Fair</i> , New York, USA
						SELECTED UPCOMING MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS
				2013	LOT, Land of Tomorrow, Louisville, USA San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, USA The Leonardo, Salt Lake City, USA Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, USA Museo de la Ciudad de Cuernavaca, Mexico City, Mexico	2010
				2014	Figge Museum, Iowa, USA	
						AWARDS AND GRANTS
				2010	Nominated for Art Credit Award, Basel-Stadt, Switzerland	
				2009	Artist in Residence, Beijing, China. Awarded by iaab: International Exchange & Studio Program, Basel-Stadt, Switzerland	
				2008	ValiART-Award by Valiant, Bern, Switzerland Audiovision and Multimedia Grant, Canton Basel, Switzerland Artist in Residence, Berlin, Germany, Awarded by the Cultural Department Schaffhausen, Switzerland	2009
				since 2007	0-1 Artist Visa, Artist in Residence, New York, USA Alexander Clavel Foundation Cultural Development Prize, Riehen, Switzerland Artist in Residence, New York, USA. Awarded by iaab: International Exchange & Studio Program Basel-Stadt, Switzerland	2008
				2006	TPC CreaTVty Award for New Media, TPC Production Center Zurich, Switzerland Art Credit Award, Basel-Stadt, Switzerland	2007
				2004		2006

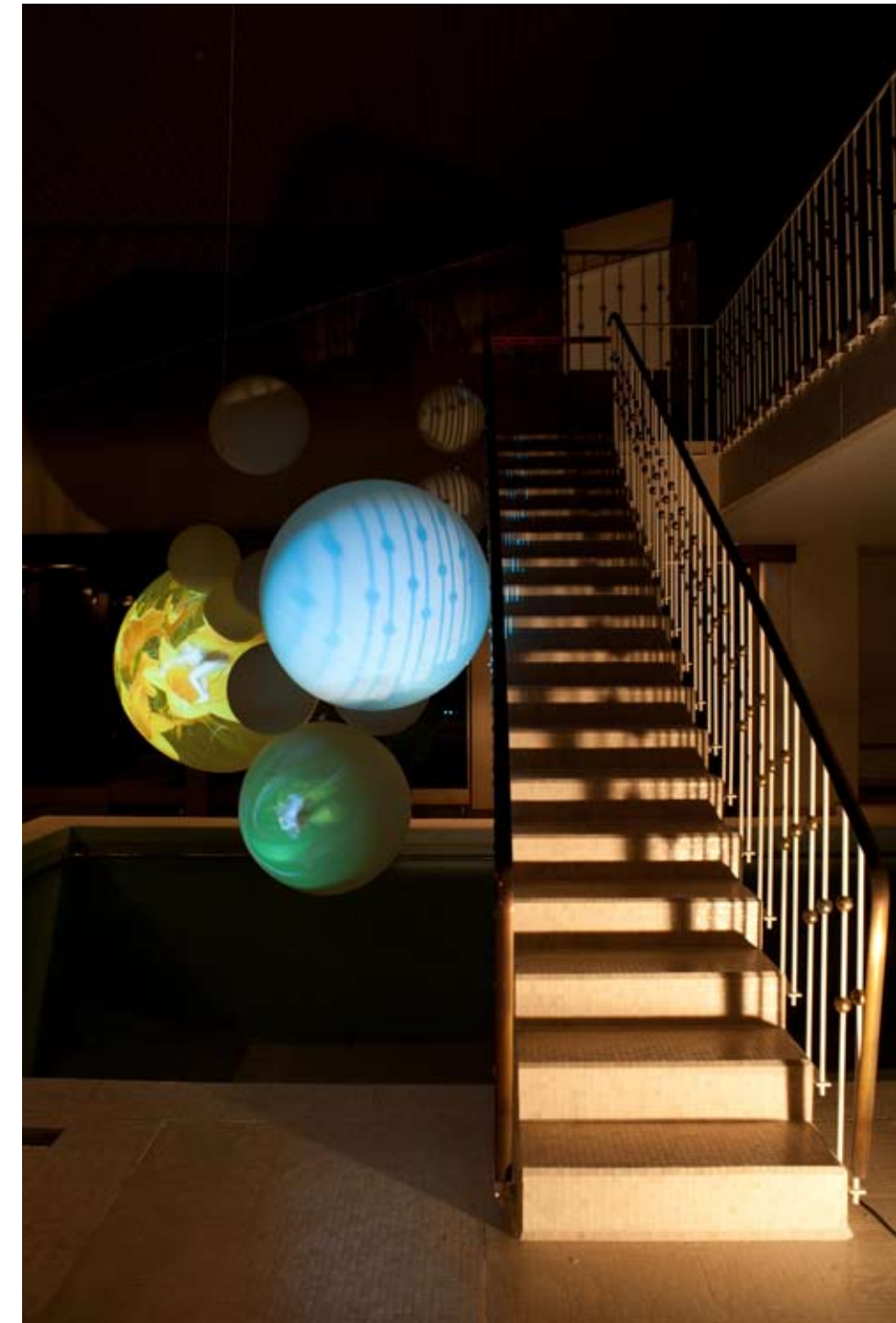
COLLECTIONS

Burkard & Partner AG, Basel, Switzerland
9.6 Conceptual Worlds, Basel, Switzerland
21c Museum, Louisville, USA
Credit Suisse Collection, Switzerland
eN Arts Collection, Tokyo, Japan
GC. AC - Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea of Monfalcone, Italy
Horsecross Collection, Permanent Collection of Digital Art, Perth, UK
PAMM Miami Art Museum, Miami, USA
Sara Lahat Private Collection, Herzliya, Israel
Private Collectors in Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Germany, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland and USA
PUBLICATIONS
Galerie Andres Thalmann, Katja Loher - Will the Moon...? Zurich 2013.
Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, Interplanetary Constellations, São Paulo 2012.
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BIT, Brooklyn Independent Television, Neighborhood Beat, featured artist.
Peter Stohler: TOMOGRAPH, Interviews with artists. Arnoldsche Art Publisher, Stuttgart 2009.
Tershane Gallery: Art Is My Playground, Istanbul 2008.
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Robin Blanck: Aufbruch am Ende von Raum und Zeit. In: Schaffhauser Nachrichten, 05.07.2008.
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The Artist Network: 798/Dashanzi Art Festival, Beijing 2007.
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Denise Langenegger: Interview, DRS1 Radio, National Broadcast Switzerland, New York 2006.
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Peter Pfister: Honey Sucking Helicopters and Airy Dreams, AZ Schaffhausen, November 2006.
Ann-Katrin Harfensteller: The special look through a peephole Basellandschaftliche Zeitung, August 2006.
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Andrei Vorobei: Swiss video installations on show at the Hermitage Museum. In: St.Petersburg Times, 23.12.2005.

COLLABORATORS

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Andrea Liberni, Architect
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Derik Trujillo, Creative Technologist
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IMPRESSUM

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Images courtesy of Katja Loher

Translation: Margret Powell-Joss

Designed by Lisa Robertson

Printed in Konstanz by werk zwei Print + Medien Konstanz GmbH

Edition: 1400 Exemplare

ISBN: 978-3-9523863-8-5

The Artist and her performers backstage in her studio,
New York, 2010 © Robert Whitman

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