

# **EARTH MEMORY**

MILLE KALSMOSE

# **EARTH MEMORY**

MILLE KALSMOSE



Copyright © 2023

by Mille Kalsmose Studio

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, write to the publisher or  
Mille Karlsmose Studio.

Printed in Denmark



**STATENS VÆRKSTEDER  
FOR KUNST**

KNUD HØJGAARDS FOND

**STATENS  
KUNSTFOND**

**NY  
CARLSBERG  
FONDET**  
NEW CARLSBERG FOUNDATION

FAMILIEN HEDE NIELSENS FOND

**CHAMPION IRON** 

Thanks to collaboration and support by Familien Hede Nielsen Fond, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, New Carlsberg Foundation, ALMA Space Observatory, Museo de Artes Visuales, Media Arts Biennial of Chile, Knud Højgaard's Foundation, Danish National Arts Fund, The Free Art Center, Horsens Art Museum, Champion Iron, Medical Music Laboratory with Peter Michael Nielsen, sound healer and shaman Alex Ashot Ikilikion, The National Workshops of Denmark, CCA Andratx, and NASA

Photographer: Jacob Steentoft,

David Stjernholm, Joakim Züger

Layout: Alette Avsnes og Mille Kalsmose

# CONTENT

06	EARTH MEMORY
12	RE-SOUNDING ORGAN LISTENING BACK IN TIME TRACES OF MEMORY SPATIAL MEMORY POINTS IN TIME
28	CONSCIOUS MATTER
38	COSMIC FAMILY COSMIC RELATIONS
46	LIQUID RELATIONS, LISTENING BACK IN TIME
52	ABOUT







# EARTH MEMORY

Earth Memory is a hanging installation, where archaic material such as rock drillings and brass pendulums from antique clocks as well as iron cores excavated from the underground are hanging above the viewers' heads from golden chains of various lengths and thicknesses. The drill cores are all of columnar shape, hanging like notes in a composed sort of interplay with their own rhythm.

There is a tension between the robust materials seen in the tall metal structure with heavy iron stones and brass pendulums hanging by thin and delicate golden chains that adds a certain lightness to the artwork about it. The warm, yellow color from the brass pendulums stand in contrast to the grey and blue hues in the iron stones. While heavy in structure, the long pendulums appear more like droplets of rain, fixed in the air the moment before it reaches the ground, or the stars at night from a close perspective.

We humans have a certain way of dealing with time through reason – but this command is only partly true. While dates and years are estimates, our perception of time and temporality will always be limited, largely dependent on each individual human being; "The finiteness of my own body is the only tangible measure I have." A

billion years seem incomprehensible, overwhelming even, which is how Kalsmoses work come into effect as figurative time portals, allowing a meta perspective of the perception and actuality of time.

Mille explores this interconnectedness between time and presence, human and earth, through a conversation between geology and subjective perspectives. For the work, Mille has used a mixture of brass pendulums from traditional grandfather clocks, and iron cores excavated from some of the world's oldest rock formations, where billions of compressed years can be categorized and classified through sedimentation and geological analysis.

The processing of the iron stones reveals multilayered sediments with subtle traces of the iron molecules that exist within the natural structures of the stones irreversibly imprinted through time. They are materials created long before the origin of mankind, and perhaps will exist long after our time on earth. This underlines the artworks focus on time, both as a man made concept, one we guide our daily lives by, but also something that marks nature in its own artistic way, showing the different ways mankind and nature are affected by the passing of time.











MILLE KALSMOSE  
EARTH MEMORY, 2021  
IRON, ROCKS, BRASS PENDULUM,  
CHAINS, ALUMINIUM FRAME  
600 X 300 CM







# **RE-SOUNDING ORGAN, LISTENING BACK IN TIME, TRACES OF MEMORY, SPATIAL MEMORY & POINTS IN TIME**

Re-Sounding Organ is created in collaboration with neurologist Peter Michael Nielsen and psychologist Alex Ashot Ilikian. Together with the two researchers, Kalsmose has investigated how to alleviate somatic pain and depression with sound vibrations. This has been done by exposing the body to specific sound vibrations, and after running numerous tests in psychiatric hospitals, the group has verified that the experiment has shown a healing effect on depression and somatic pain.

The sound installation Listening Back in Time is based on research from the space observatory ALMA in Chile, where Kalsmose participated in an artist-in-residence programme. The space observatory is a worldwide collaboration consisting of 66 precision antennas spread over an area of up to 16 kilometers. The work incorporates sound waves found from the far corners of the

universe, more precisely the Orion Nebula.

Traces of Memory, Spatial Memory, Points in Time and Untitled explores different understandings of the concept of time, of which Kalsmose is particularly interested in the so-called deep time. Deep time is a so-called geological expression of time that extends over an infinite number of years, in the past, and appears intangible and abstract compared to the time horizon we operate within in our everyday life.







INSTALLATION VIEW  
'RENDERINGS'  
GROUP SHOW AT THE FREE ART CENTER  
COPENHAGEN , 2020





RE-SOUNDING ORGAN, 2017  
IRON, ALGAE, SPEAKER AND AUDIO  
173 x 68 x 50 CM















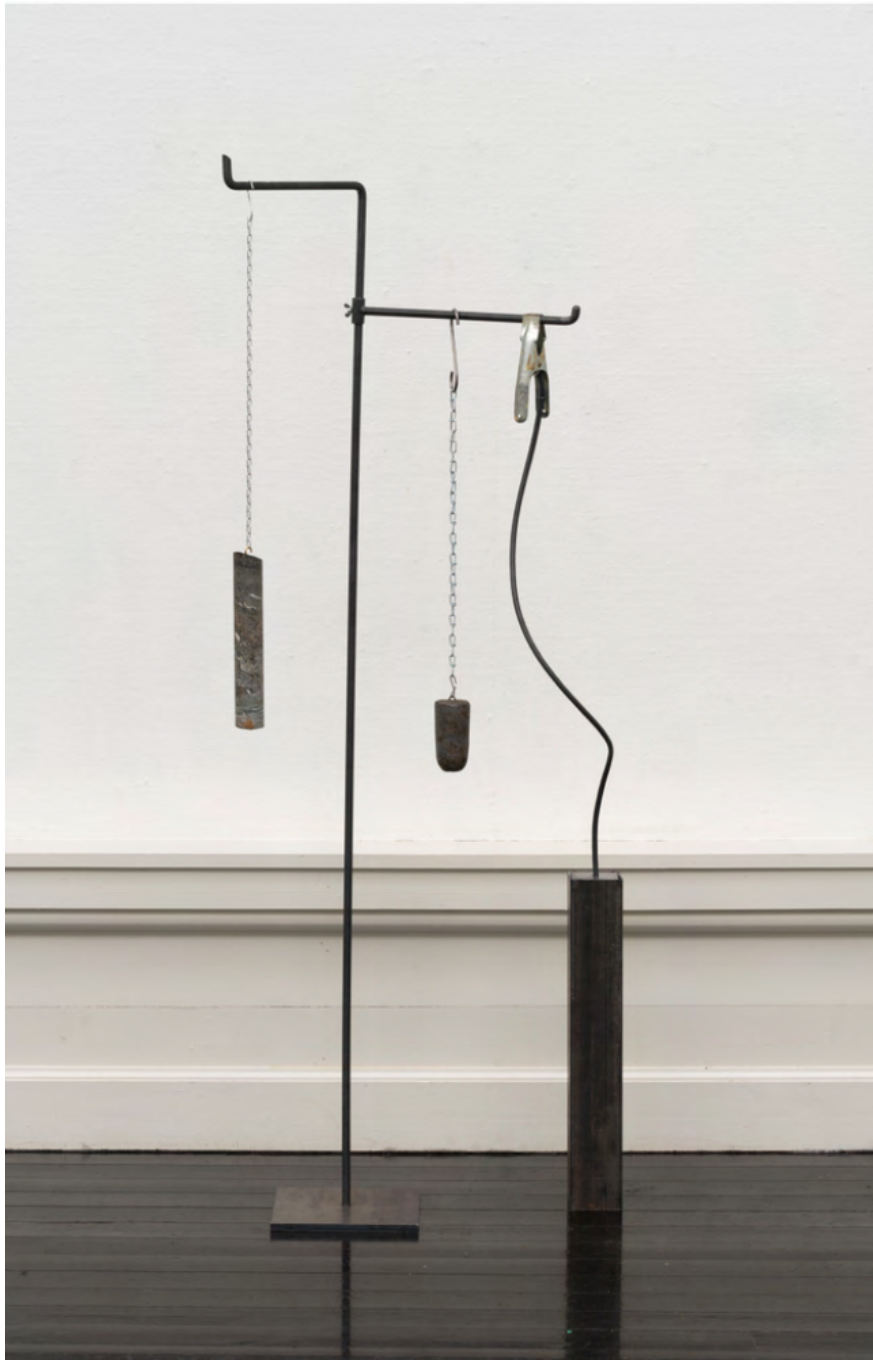


INSTALLATION VIEW  
'RENDERINGS'  
GROUP SHOW AT THE FREE ART CENTER  
COPENHAGEN , 2020





MILIE KALSMOSE  
TRACES OF MEMORY, 2020  
IRON CORES, BRASS WEIGHTS, IRON, CHAINS  
240 X 100 X 70 CM



MILIE KALSMOSE  
LISTENING BACK IN TIME, 2020  
NEBULAR, LED WEIGHTS,  
IRON CORES, LIGHTS  
170 X 30 X 30 CM

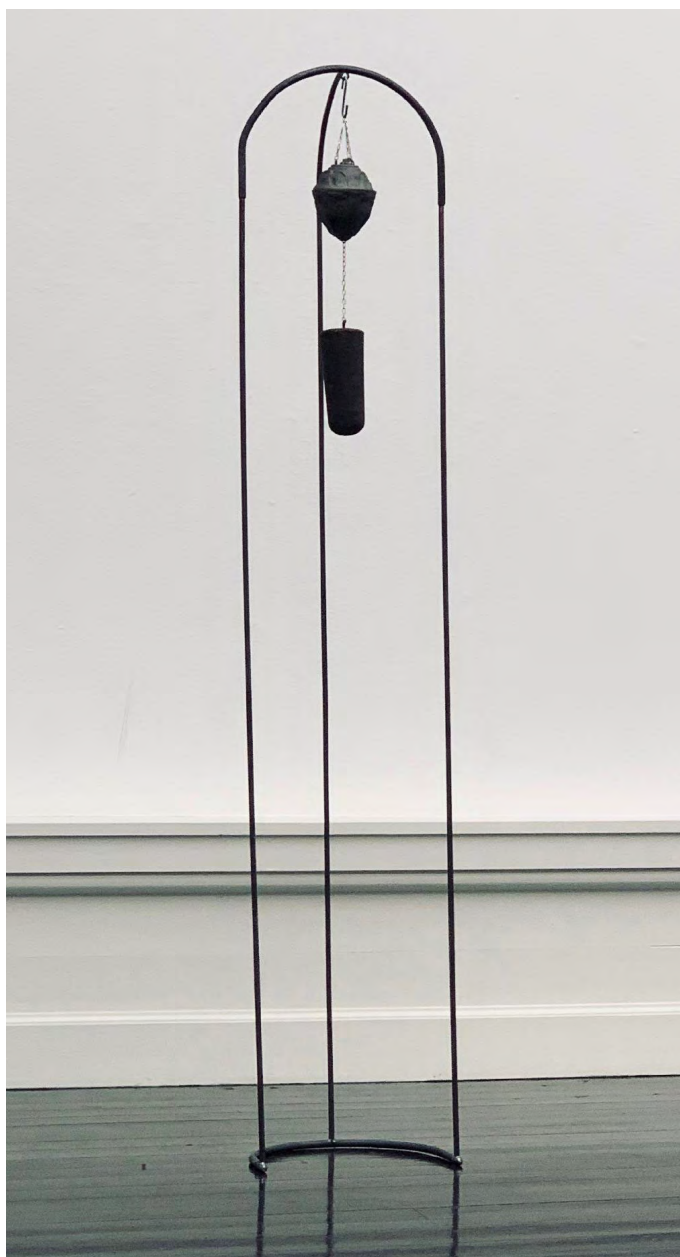




MILLE KALSMOSE  
SPATIAL MEMORY, 2020  
IRON CORES, BRASS WEIGHTS, IRON, CHAINS  
240 X 100 X 70 CM







MILLE KALSMOSE  
UNTITLED, 2020  
WEIGHTS, IRON, CHAINS  
170 X 25 X 70 CM



MILLE KALSMOSE  
POINTS OF TIME, 2020  
CLOCK PENDULUM, BRASS WEIGHTS,  
IRON, CHAINS  
170 X 110 X 110 CM







# CONSCIOUS MATTER

"Conscious Matter" is a large-scale sculptural installation, where the mineral Iron is a central element in the installation, revealing itself through both cultural and conceptual connotations. Using industrial and archaeological materials, such as rock, ironcores, and roundbares of steel, Danish visual artist Mille Kalsmose's work "Conscious Matter" insists on the inherent beauty of matter. The work brings to mind the alchemical process but is fundamentally about what Mille Kalsmose define as "Conscious Matter" with iron minerals as site for the more-than-human, a radical tool for decentering humanity and unveiling what is behind a reality that consists only of matter.

Continuing the artist's exploration of our inner vision and the idea of a reality, where everything is interconnected, the artist physically and metaphorically raises the materials of the underground to the sky, the same minerals that are part human existence and everything surrounding us.

The significance of iron in alchemy is believed to be related to the human self-insight, and here serves as a curated gathering of multiple layers of consciousness. Hanging around the metal structure are heavy iron chains and delicate

cotton treads, incarcerating the hexagon shaped structure, creating associations to the threads of human fate, the life cord spun by the Norns in the Nordic mythology or the three Moirai in Greek tradition.

Conscious Matter asks questions about life and death, what we are tied to in life, and what we may or may not be able to break free from? The thread is a symbol of beginnings and ends, however, spun around the installation, rather than marking a clear beginning and an obvious end, it rather indicates a cyclicity and circularity; the non-linearity of our lives and our fates.

The artwork is keeping something hidden and safely kept away, but is also revealing multiple stories and thought-provoking perspectives on the human existence through the various materials. The slender, yet solid iron scaffolding becomes a home to a variety of other iron elements, donated from an iron ore mine in North America, reaching from a simple to an elaborate state. Iron dust, ironstones as well as glass decanters filled with iron pigment and dark red blood. All are materials and elements included in the hexagon created within "Conscious Matter".



This work is a manifestation of Mille Kalsmose's delicate touch and her conceptual subtlety merged with the approach to the palpable matter of nature. Suggesting that the conceptual, the conscious and the tangible material aren't opposites. Instead of excluding one another, they enrich each other. The exaltation of matter points towards a world beyond the mere materiality, indicating a realm beyond what's visible to the eye and what's appealing to other human senses. By combining her sophisticated conceptual approach with a very direct approach to processing materials and objects Mille Kalsmose creates a vibrating, untamed work of art; a "Conscious Matter".

MILLE KALSMOSE  
DETAIL OF CONSCIOUS MATTER, 2018  
SCAFFOLDING STRUCTURE IN IRON, IRON  
CHAINS, YARN, GLASS DECANTERS FILLED  
WITH IRON ORE POWDER, IRON PIGMENTS,  
IRON TOOLS, AND BLOOD  
330 X 300 X 300 CM



















MILLE KALSMOSE  
DETAIL OF CONSCIOUS MATTER, 2018  
SCAFFOLDING STRUCTURE IN IRON, IRON  
CHAINS, YARN, GLASS DECANTERS FILLED  
WITH IRON ORE POWDER, IRON PIGMENTS,  
IRON TOOLS, AND BLOOD  
330 X 300 X 300 CM











# COSMIC FAMILY

# COSMIC RELATIONS

*By Richard Vine*

*Managing editor of Art in America*

Mille Kalsmose's work, *Cosmic Family*, carries her signature themes—personal identity and the connections between the self and others, especially family members—to a higher, more abstract level. Previously, the artist kept her explorations grounded, so to speak, despite a high degree of stylization. The work *Tribe and Ancestors*, deploy flat, featureless, vaguely humanoid forms, their skin-like fabric (silk or pig's hide) stretched drumhead tight and bolted to steel stands—a commentary on the paradoxical ways that family roles confine, erase, and yet lastingly sustain us. Perhaps the artist was seeking, consciously or unconsciously, an ideal metaphor to express the dynamic standoff between impersonal law—whether of society or physics—and unruly, idiosyncratic, psychologically fraught human nature.

If so, she may well have found it in *Cosmic Family*. Here, her anthropomorphic forms—flat as shadows, translucent as ghosts—are arrayed concentrically above curved metal floor elements that echo the trajectory of planets, the rings of

Saturn, and the nested heavenly orbits that once, in ancient and medieval cosmology, were thought to produce the imperceptible but all-pervasive Music of the Spheres.

That Pythagorean notion of a universe built on harmonious proportions is literalized at the center of Kalsmose's piece by a small speaker emitting sounds (actually radio and plasma waves translated to sound) recorded by NASA's Cassini spacecraft in the vicinity of Saturn between 2002 and 2017. Reinforcing this cosmic link are meteoric pebbles that extend some of the metal curves like ellipsis dots, implying infinity. These material components may be rough, incomplete, and brutish, but the form they evoke—the circle—is a timeless emblem of perfection.

So, too, the flat quasi-figures. The cosmic *musica universalis* was long believed to correspond to an inner *musica humana*, a music of the human body (even today we speak of “well-toned” flesh), synonymous with good health and sanity.





MILLE KALSMOSE  
COSMIC FAMILY, 2018  
SOUND INSTALLATION, METEORITES, SILK,  
IRON, FOUND WOOD, LEATHER, SOUND RE-  
CORDINGS FROM SATURNS' RINGS  
D 300 CM







The proportions of the body were, on an intimate scale, analogous to those of the planets and stars. Thus in Kalsmore's work, humanoid forms loom up like guardian spirits, even amid the floor-bound symbols of galaxies.

"Man is the measure of all things," said Protagoras, a skeptic in regard to pure mathematics and disembodied laws of nature. By populating her highly schematic installation with human surrogates, and by arranging the work's elements in patterns reminiscent of Russian Constructivism (a movement at once rigorously abstract yet deeply tied to utopian dreams), Kalsmose reminds us that we ourselves are the observers, the extrapolators, the formulators, of the very systems to which we are subject.







MILLE KALSMOSE  
COSMIC RELATIONS, 2017  
SOUND INSTALLATION, METEORITES, SILK,  
IRON, FOUND WOOD, LEATHER, SOUND RE-  
CORDINGS FROM SATURN'S RINGS  
D 300 CM







MILLE KALSMOSE  
LIQUID RELATIONS, LISTENING BACK IN TIME

SOUND INSTALLATION, LITHIUM SALTS AND  
RESIN, WATER, METEORITES, STEEL, LEATHER,  
GAUZE, FOUND REMAINS FROM DEMON-  
STRATIONS, NASA'S SOUND RECORDINGS OF  
SATURN'S RINGS AND LOUDSPEAKER,  
354 X 327 CM

# LIQUID RELATIONS, LISTENING BACK IN TIME

“Liquid Relations, Listening Back in Time” conveys themes of personal identity and the connections between the self and others, in particularly family members. The anthropomorphic forms— iron figures or family members of different heights and shapes, arranged concentrically above curved metal and wooden floor pieces— imitate the course of our planets, or Saturn’s rings. The idea of a cosmos built upon harmony and proportions is literalized at the focal point of the work with a small speaker emitting sounds from radio and plasma waves recorded by NASA’s Cassini spacecraft near Saturn’s rings.

Meteor stones underpin the cosmic connection while prolonging some of the metal curves like dots, alluding to infinity. “Liquid Relations, Listening Back in Time” is a symbol of a cosmic unity encouraging the viewer to see things from other perspectives and within a larger context and timeframe where everything is interconnected.





LIQUID RELATIONS, LISTENING BACK IN TIME

SOUND INSTALLATION, LITHIUM SALTS AND RESIN, WATER, METEORITES, STEEL, LEATHER, GAUZE, FOUND REMAINS FROM DEMONSTRATIONS, NASA'S SOUND RECORDINGS OF SATURN'S RINGS AND LOUDSPEAKER, 354 X 327 CM







MILLE KALSMOSE  
LIQUID RELATIONS, LISTENING BACK IN TIME

SOUND INSTALLATION, LITHIUM SALTS AND  
RESIN, WATER, METEORITES, STEAL, LEATHER,  
GAUZE, FOUND REMAINS FROM DEMON-  
STRATIONS, NASA'S SOUND RECORDINGS OF  
SATURN'S RINGS AND LOUDSPEAKER,  
354 X 327 CM







# ABOUT MILLE KALSMOSE

Mille Kalsmose is a Danish artist based in Copenhagen and New York. Her work spans from images to sculptural pieces and installation works. Mille Kalsmose's work gives shape and materializes what is invisible to the eye – this is a driving force and an indispensable desire throughout the work.

Combining the worlds of physics and science with existentialism and the intangible, Mille Kalsmose creates artworks that resonate on a multitude of levels. She has worked with a wide range of materials and explores the architecture of memory, identity, psychological mechanisms, and spiritual life conceptions, thus creating a union of the unconfined in highly tactile manifestations.

Mille Kalsmose's art is most often characterized by the use of iron, metal, stones and other sources of materials that are reminiscent of the earth we live in, and the resources we have excavated and used to build our lives on. This thought – that we have been given the capability to create the world that we live in – is interwoven with the Anthropocene idea that we are entirely interconnected with the world. And not just with

our relations and senses of belonging, but with everyone and everything created – both organic and man-made.

As a link in Mille Kalsmose's work, she makes a point of using found or recycled material in her art, such as the wood, clock-pendulums, rocks carved from Green Mining, and in some earlier work also paper, fabric and hide. The fact that we can see the geological striations on the pendulums made from core drillings, allows for a meta-perspective of time and the way the universe has been shaped, which directly translates to our interconnectedness with the planet and cosmos.

Kalsmose holds a MA from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and has studied at the Bio Art Lab at SVA, School of Visual Arts, in New York. Her work has been exhibited at KUNST-EN, Museum of Modern Art, Aalborg, ARoS, Aarhus Art Museum; MAVI, Museum of Visual Arts, Santiago, Chile, La Virreina, Centre de Imagen, Barcelona, Catalunya; ITAMI Museum, Hygo, Japan, Horsens Art Museum, Fundacion Valentin de Madarigada, Andalusia, Spain, The Free Art Center, Denmark among others.









# **COLLECTED MEMORY**

MILLE KALSMOSE



# **COLLECTED MEMORY**

MILLE KALSMOSE

SENAVISEN  
Posten

POLITIKEN

I feel lonely

POLITIKEN

Ekstra  
Bladet

FORHALL

POLITIKENS HUS

SEBEN

BOOKS

Rådhuspladsen



when I cannot recognize myself

Ekstra  
Bladet

POLITIKEN

POLITIKEN

BOGER

BOOKS

BOGER

BOGER

NETO

SENDEBUD  
44 92 92 00



Copyright © 2023

by Mille Kalsmose Studio

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, write to the publisher or  
Mille Kalsmose Studio.

Printed in Denmark

**STATENS  
KUNSTFOND**

**B**  
BECKETT-FONDEN

**HM**  
RUSTFRI DESIGN

  
AUGUSTINUS FONDEN  
OPRISTET AF NIKOLAJ NIELSEN

POUL AF 1992  
JOHANSEN  
FONDEN

Thanks to the Danish Artfund, the Beckett Foundation, HM Rustfri Design, Poul Johannesens Foundation, L. F. Foghts Fond and the Augustinus Foundation, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Politikens Hus, Martin Asbæk Gallery, The Free Art Center, MANA Contemporary, NASA and UN Headquarters NYC

Layout: Alette Avsnes & Mille Kalsmose

Translation: Dan A. Marmorstein

Photography: Mette Caspersen, Thomas Andersen



# CONTENT

04	ABOUT COLLECTED MEMORY Signe Cecilie Nørregaard Joshumsen
13	BUILDING COLLECTIVE STORIES Jérôme Sans
19	WITHOUT THE OTHERS; WE'RE NOBODY Emilie Van Hauen
24	HUMANNESS: INNER STUDIES IN A COLLECTIVE CLOUD
28	MAGIC MATERIALISM
32	COLLECTED MEMORY AT THE UN
36	ABOUT MILLE KALSMOSE
37	PUBLICATIONS
38	BIBLIOGRAPHY

*"Collected Memory finds a very strong relevance in the current context of the 21st century marked by the obsessive return of the figure of the social body, the collective body in the post-covid era."*

*Jérôme Sans, curator and artistic director*









I feel lonely when I cannot recognize myself

Ekstra  
Bladet

POLITIKEN



# ABOUT COLLECTED MEMORY

*by Signe Cecilie Nørregaard Joshumsen,  
Exhibition Director, Politikens Forhal  
August 2020*

Mille Kalsmose provides space for the individual's personal story and voice in the exhibition 'Collected Memory', which can be experienced from August in Politikens Forhal and on light newspapers at central squares and traffic hubs in Copenhagen.

When Mille Kalsmose takes over Politikens Forhal, it will be with a large-scale installation created in brass and hundreds of neatly folded paper pages colored in a deep red color that leads our thoughts to an archive or a library. Here, the public is invited to share personal stories, which are archived and disseminated via the house's light newspapers at Rådhuspladsen, Nørreport, Vesterport and Hans Knudsens Plads. They emerge as social spaces or as a medium created with the hope of comprehending human existence with a view to our fundamental loneliness and common connection.

By utilizing the immediate decoding and attraction of known materials and objects, Mille Kalsmose invites us into the works, not as passive observers, but as active participants in the work's creation and development over time.

Mille Kalsmose was born in Horsens in 1972. She has an MA from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and has also studied Bio Art Lab at SVA, School of Visual Arts in New York. She is based in New York and Copenhagen. Her work has been exhibited at e.g. ARoS, Aarhus Art Museum, Museum of Visual Arts in Santiago, Horsens Art Museum, UN in New York and The Free Exhibition Building.











I FEEL

WITHOUT

FAN



LONELY

UT MY

FAMILY



















COLLECTED MEMORY, 2020  
BRASS, CHINESE PAPER AND  
NEWSPAPER  
DYED IN RED PIGMENT  
500 X 440 X 39 CM



# BUILDING COLLECTIVE STORIES

*by Jérôme Sans*

*Curator and Artistic Director*

How to consider the status of collective memory in our present times, whereas all our social and human references are constantly changing or mutating? Today, we live in an “all- memory” society, where new archiving methods or techniques are invented every day in order to protect us from “memory lapses” ...

Collective memory is one of the Danish artist Mille Kalsmose's major concerns in her long-term project *Collected Memory*, a series of sculptural and participatory cabinets sculptural pieces made of recycled brass shelves containing a myriad of memories written on folded rice and newspapers. Thought as a universal library and a living and vibrant archive of Humanity, the work will be exhibited in various forms in a wide array of contexts around the world. Mille Kalsmose addresses the sedimentation of individual memories, referring to the idea that these are systematically influenced by the social frameworks in which they are embedded.

In Kalsmose's project, memories take the form of paper archives alluding to the very nature of one's identity as well as they are an extensible source to enable the restitution or at least the questioning of

collective memory on another level. Through these works, she continues her exploration of psychological mechanisms, identity, the relationships between the self and the others, as well as human existence and its place at the thresholds of earthly ecosystems. Her global work, a constellation of installations including video, photography and new technologies, touches the crucial issue of social cohesion which assumes a singular role in the heterogeneous contexts shaping our contemporary societies. The latest iteration of *Collected Memory* consists of two large brass shelves cabinets housing folded Chinese paper stained hand-colored red pigment giving the impression of drops of blood. These subtly pleated scrolls are as many memorial archives of anonymous individuals.

Both a sculpture and an open library, it becomes the miniaturization of an architectural project as an image of our living spaces, between promiscuity and intimacy. For Mille Kalsmose, it is a question of examining the nature of what constitutes identity, in contrast to the usual stereotypes about nationality, blood relations or gender. These thousands of pages relate stories, experiences and statements



written by the participants who share their words through a QR code and an online database.

The work enables interaction with the audience through a physical and emotional act of writing a memory that one wishes to archive. The work itself becomes a receptacle and a living memory shared with a larger community. It invites us to connect with others through remembrance and common intimacy. As each written contribution is saved physically, fixed on paper and digitally in a database that people from all over the world can access and interact with it in order to consult them or spread their own individual experiences. This way, the artist blurs the boundaries between handwriting and digital writing, the physical and the digital world.

It is thus possible to interact physically or at a distance with the work, online. Each week, a selection of writings is being published in the national newsnight papers, at Rådhuspladsen as an extension of the work into the social, public and media sphere where they are invited to share individual and personal emotions collectively, blending the “small history” to the “Great” History.

This work is a diary of the world, which is no longer a utopia but a reality. It is a recording of collective memory, each page being added to a larger body, enriching a broader and more universal history of humanity. Memory is often hidden in the inner depths of society, through successive generations. The presence of a collective memory within the same group presupposes that all its members are bound by a common history and identity. Collected Memory finds a very strong relevance in the current context of the 21st century marked by the obsessive return of the figure of the social body, the collective body in the post-covid era. Kalsmose’s work turns the artist’s egotistical gaze towards collective and collaborative proposals.

The project resonates in synchrony with the current world’s state which valorized the primacy of the collective entity as a bulwark against individualism. The notion of the social body through collective experience is more relevant than ever.

The individual must relearn to exist and vibrate through the crowd. In fact, the metaphor of the social body designates the interdependence of the parts within the social whole. But they depend on the needs that each one feels and can only satisfy by and with others as well as by collective action and the laws that govern us all as a single body. Nor can we reduce contemporary history to individual memory, the others form the basis of our memory.

Mille Kalsmose constantly refers to the representations that a group accepts and shares of its past, present and future: a collection of memories, conscious or unconscious, an experience lived/or mystified by a living collectivity. Multiple memories coexist, such as the memory of events and sensations that we do not experience, that are not of our time and yet, in some cases, would be self-activated or activated by us. Then, collective memory is never interrupted, always in action, it expands as the metaphor of life and of the artwork which is in itself a living body.

Moreover, the work also lies in the tension of the materials themselves, paper and brass, between fragility and solidity, immutability and malleability. Folded, sinuous, infinitely malleable, the papers represent individuals that are subject to social pressures when trying to maintain their individuality. This reminds in a way the works of blood from 1988 by

Felix Gonzales-Torres who referred to intimate memory with a significant fragility of materials as well.

Universally regarded as the fundamental symbol of the principle of life, with its strength, power and brilliance, red is the color of blood, which has all its symbolic ambivalence. This sanguine, organic color, crosses all her work as a red thread that connects and sews together each of the stories diluted on this ocean of pages. Carefully arranged, these overflowing archives could also evoke a plethora of official acts, a myriad of book slices in our libraries and the weight of paper's reams in our offices and homes. Inflexible brass frames are possibly associated with the idea of rigid standards and social norms that compose the framework in which the individual must find his or her place. In this sense, the installation also shows how the memory of people and events builds the space around us.

Collected Memory is a work that is silent from the outside yet filled with voices as painting has always been. Mille Kalsmose gives back to art this notion of an evolutionary window open to the world so as to continue the story. Each sheet of paper represents as many scenarios, like as many colors in a painting. The artist seems to give back to the work its orality through its multitudes of entangled and fragmented stories.









Each contribution is a piece of an individual story, a fraction of the collective history. Collected Memory is a permanent exquisite corpse where all the stories are connected; a simultaneously silent and loud landscape from which countless voices rise. The “exquisite corpse” is an experimental collective historical writing game invented by the Surrealists consists in composing a text or a drawing with several people without anyone being able to consider previous collaborations, in a similar process to Kalsmose’s one. Thus, the work unfolds from one story to another so that each individual case blends into the collective history, constantly reoriented, augmented, filled with new experiences.

In fact, Kalsmose’s project is being constantly activated by the participants in order to build together a story that is perpetually revived. All these fragments of stories with no beginning and no end make it possible to reconstruct as many stories where things can be grafted together, amalgamated with each other, to tell a new History in a changing world. The artist does not refer to the romantic celebration of History but to the semantic, semiological historic plurality that is always reinvented and rewritten. Each of these new disparate pieces creates a homogenous whole: it is the mystery of the work of art, as in Jean-Luc Godard’s endless films.

The work goes against the expected notion of commemoration associated with a ceremonial dimension, but instead reveals the condition of the social body, which is a living body, always in a perpetual state of movement. In contrast to the nostalgic, sometimes depressing character of a solemn ceremony, the work honours in the post-covid times the need to create new collective rituals from which an incredible and powerful positive energy emanates; Against collective amnesia, the artist wonders about how to tell the collective memory, immersed in the heart of the history that is just being written.

Far from being crystallized in the past, it is a continuous ongoing recording of today’s human memory. This fragmented, non-linear history does not end. Still in progress, it is continuously written and interpreted by several people through a plurality of readings and meanings.

Mille Kalsmose believes in the unifying essence of creation and art as an experience in its own right that links and connects individuals and stories together. Collected Memory is a story to be followed...







# WITHOUT THE OTHERS, WE'RE NOBODY

*by Emilia Van Hauen*  
*Cultural Sociologist*

Collected Memory can contain this vulnerability, by containing all the stories that people all over the world can tell.

Without the others, we're nobody. So concisely can mankind's history be penned. For without the community, the individual does not exist. What we all knew instinctively, COVID-19, and our tackling of its world-encompassing outbreak have managed to corroborate. Suddenly, we've been robbed of many of the groups that we – on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis – took for granted. Some people have experienced isolation, while others gathered even more closely together. But nobody remained unaffected. And now we're in the process of assembling the narrative about what happened and about who we are. Today.

We've chosen, in our modern society, to organize ourselves according to efficiency, optimization, maximization, and measurability, rather than according to friendliness, closeness, presence, and love. Despite the fact that countless studies (among these being the Harvard Study of Adult Development) bear out that good relationships are those that give

rise to healthy and happy lives, results remain our primary yardstick of success: measurable results that can be set into formulas and can be used to generate graphs. Ostensibly as part of an attempt to control the uncontrollable: namely, life. And this is supposedly why it appears so that never before have we seen so insanely many cases of anxiety, stress, depression, and insomnia, running across the different generations, while younger people, particularly, are grappling with self-inflicted injuries and loneliness.

For us, as human beings, we rarely understand ourselves best through Excel spreadsheets. Narratives are the currency that can be exchanged for meaning and accumulation. So that we can obtain ontological security, a sense of certainty about our own being, which our relationships and our contributions ought to furnish us with, as a matter of course, but which today has become a volatile capacity. And we're suffering. And longing.

After feeling ourselves to be a part of a meaningful, larger, and stable context. Once upon a time, we were eminently qualified members of the latently bound communities into which we were born, whe-



re the hierarchy, the rules, and status were given from the moment of our birth. This provided peace, a shared sense of strength, and social and creative constraints. Today, we're floating around in free neo-tribal communities, with rules that we are obliged to adopt on our own, with tasks that we have to create ourselves, and all this must be borne forth by a common trust in each other. This is beautiful. Wonderful. Creatively explosive. However, it's also very vulnerable and transitory.

Collected Memory can contain this vulnerability, by containing all the stories that people all over the world can tell.

If we want to, it can become the domicile of the modern ritual, which spins all of our stories together into a common narrative about humanity, thereby becoming a library of compassion. A portal leading into the greatest longings, the most comprehensive rendition of this incarnation, and maybe even the next, so that the work is not only of this world but also spans across timelessness, because we humans are always, first and foremost, our relationships. Without the others, our energy would simply dis-

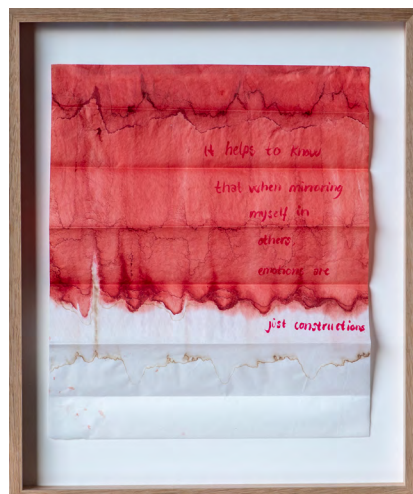
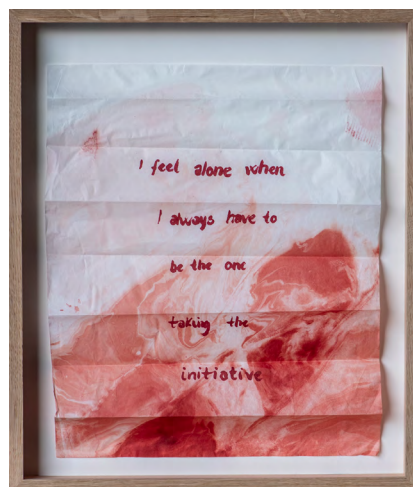
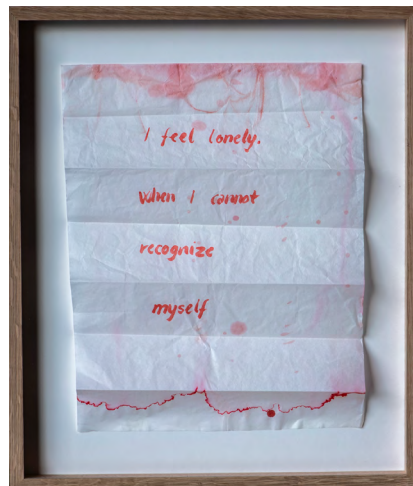
appear forever, out into the darkness. Here, however, it becomes placed inside, with love in the friable pages, and preserved for all times by the golden metal. Because relationships are the first thing we meet and the last thing we leave behind.

It would be fabulous to be afforded the chance to perform a sociological curating of the work, *Collected Minds*. On so many levels, it not only tells the story of modern people but also gathers together the whole history of wo/mankind, in a single work. And to be afforded the chance to articulate this in words – both by making use of the work itself and by making use of its words – in the context of the knowledge we possess about human communities would be something utterly special.



MILLE KALSMOSE, 2020  
CAN YOU BE BORN LONELY?  
PIGMENT, RICE PAPER, FRAME  
50 X 43 X 5 CM











# HUMANNESS: INNER STUDIES IN A COLLECTIVE CLOUD

Part of exhibition "Work It Out!"

Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg

2022

Humanness: inner studies in a collective cloud is an interactive artwork in continuation of the Collected Memory series. This artwork is centered on questions of identity, the workplace and our role in the digital era. The work is part of the exhibition Work It Out! at Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg.

Set on a dramatic and visually striking stage, Humanness: Inner Studies in a Collective Cloud explores through archives, physically and digitally, how we live in a dual existence of both of these worlds. The participants are the driving force in creating meaning and matter in the artwork, where they write their intentions on one of the thousands of individually folded papers in the archive, or participate from anywhere in the world, online through a link. The statements will flow through the screens put up at the site, and permanently stored in the digital archive of collectedmemory.world, a global platform of individual voices.

In her work Humanness: Inner Studies in a Collective Cloud Mille Kalsmose addresses the individual, who, now more than ever, exists in an interconnected state of relations. The work creates a space for deceleration, which allows the participants to centre their attention and reflect on their life. The installation creates a hub for journeys - new and old, internal and external - to cross and connect both people and diverse institutions.

"I believe that we, as humans, are made of a particular set of data, consisting of particles, that are constantly in flux. If this is correct, then we are living algorithms, and algorithms can be rewritten. Because I wasn't brought into this world with the algorithm of my dreams, I try to find the way to optimize, and rewrite, myself, so I can become a programme that inspires other programmes to find their dream algorithm." - Mille Kalsmose















# MAGIC MATERIALISM

**Solo show at Martin Asbaek Gallery  
2023**

'Magic Materialism' is fundamentally about seeing; seeing ourselves, seeing the world as well as seeing behind the reality that consists only of matter, and through our inner vision catch sight of the invisible reality, where I am part of we, and we are part of the co-thinking body of the world.

The solo show 'Magic Materials' at Martin Asbæk Gallery, presented works from Mille Kalsmose's recognized series Collected Memory, which is an on-going network of sculptural installations that

houses an archive as well as a database of the participants' ideas, visions and hopes. Collected Memory is an archive of humanity's shared visions, a world diary, our collective history.

90 6 May 19









# COLLECTED MEMORY AT THE UN

**Solo show at UN Headquarters in New York City  
2019**

The first work of the Collected Memory series premiered at a summit held in the United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2019. The Summit was an intergenerational platform where technology met humanity, providing pioneers, entrepreneurs, Fortune 500 companies, thought-leaders and youth to unite in action around the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

As the first contributors to Collected Memory, the summit participants could write down their visions and hopes for the planet, how they would like to contribute to them, and what it would take for them to achieve their hopes.

Collected Memory presents a body of artistic research connected to current science on consciousness and the enormous untapped potential that lies within our consciousness. The artwork embraces diversity and underlines the importance of a more sustainable, responsible and conscious way of living.

The idea is when people write down their vision for the world, fold the paper and put it back into the artwork, it activates them both physically and sensorially. In addition, the plan is for the collected data to be used in G20's inspiration bank where collected ideas and visions are aimed to inspire people to make a difference.











# ABOUT MILLE KALSMOSE

Mille Kalsmose is a Danish artist based in Copenhagen and New York. Her work spans from images to sculptural pieces and installation works. Mille Kalsmose's work gives shape and materializes what is invisible to the eye – this is a driving force and an indispensable desire throughout the work.

Combining the worlds of physics and science with existentialism and the intangible, Mille Kalsmose creates artworks that resonate on a multitude of levels. She has worked with a wide range of materials and explores the architecture of memory, identity, psychological mechanisms, and spiritual life conceptions, thus creating a union of the unconfined in highly tactile manifestations.

Mille Kalsmose's art is most often characterized by the use of iron, metal, stones and other sources of materials that are reminiscent of the earth we live in, and the resources we have excavated and used to build our lives on. This thought – that we have been given the capability to create the world that we live in – is interwoven with the Anthropocene idea that we are entirely interconnected with the world. And not just with our relations and senses of belonging, but with everyone and everything created – both organic and man-made.

As a link in Mille Kalsmose's work, she makes a point of using found or recycled material in her art, such as the wood, clock-pendulums, rocks carved from Green Mining, and in some earlier work also paper, fabric and hide. The fact that we can see the geological striations on the pendulums made from core drillings, allows for a meta-perspective of time and the way the universe has been shaped, which directly translates to our interconnectedness with the planet and cosmos.

Kalsmose holds a MA from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and has studied at the Bio Art Lab at SVA, School of Visual Arts, in New York. Her work has been exhibited at KUNSTEN, Museum of Modern Art, Aalborg, ARoS, Aarhus Art Museum; MAVI, Museum of Visual Arts, Santiago, Chile, La Virreina, Centre de Imagen, Barcelona, Catalunya; ITAMI Museum, Hygo, Japan, Horsens Art Museum, Fundacion Valentin de Madarigada, Andalusia, Spain, The Free Art Center, Denmark among others.

# PUBLICATIONS

Synliggørelser,

Rasmussen, Nikolaj Friis, Den Frie / Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art

Unexpected Encounters - Possible Future,

Opstrup, Kasper and Budzinski, Nathaniel

The Shape of Us - New Materialism,

Pollack, Barbara • Blegvad, Maria Kappel • Hjort, Daniel • Gutman, Natalia • Vine, Richard and Van Hauen, Emilia

The Shape of US,

Møller, Julie Horne • Jepsen, Sophie Skau • Grzywacz, Maria • Vine, Richard • Gutman, Natalia • Hjort, Daniel and Brok, Anne-Lill Bøndergaard

Cool Calm & Collected,

Erlend G. Høyesten & Maria Kappel Blegvad, ARoS

Re-Sounding Organ,

Gutman, Natalia, CCA Andratx, Spain

Mnemic Archives (My Survival),

Pollack, Barbara, Beijing

Tribe (My Survival),

Vine, Richard, Beijing

Searching for a Mother,

Olsen, Claus Hagedorn-, Horsens Kunstmuseum

The Core,

Serritzlev, Angelika Dahl-, Gentofte Hospital

Site-Seeing,

Ravn, Aukje Lepoutre, Traneudstillingen

How Am I - Danish and Indian contemporary art,

Ross, Trine • Bukdahl, Else Marie og Chair, Anirudh, Kastrupgårdsamlingen



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2020 Sans, Jérôme: *Building Collective Stories*, Curator and Artistic Director  
Joshumsen, Signe Cecilie Nørregaard: *About Collective Memory*, Exhibition Director, Politikens Forhal
- 2019 Supreme scale and sensuality – sculpture through the lens of Mille Kalsmose and Alicja Kwade, I DO ART  
Mille Kalsmose overrasker med banebrydende udstilling BO BEDRE  
Relations are Sensations about Cosmic Communities, POV International, Emilia van Hauen  
Hornung, Peter Michael: *Kunsten tager på kollektiv udflugt ud i det kosmiske*, Politiken
- 2018 Siggaard, Anne: *Man er blot et redskab*, Magasinet Kunst  
Høyersten, Erlend G & Maria Kappel Blegvad: *Cool, Calm & Collected*, ARoS  
Weirup, Torben: *Dansk kunstner har succes i New York*, Berlingske Tidende  
Rikke Luna & Matias: *En kommentar til Kunsten.NU's snævre blik på kunst af kvinder*, I DO ART  
Jepsen, Sofie Skaú: *Ugens kunstner - Mille Kalsmose*, Kunsten.NU
- 2017 Glasius, Maira Juel: *Hun skabte en jernfamilie for at udfylde tomrummet i sin egen*, Jyllands-Posten  
Grzywacz, Maria: *Når Alger giver genlyd*, IDOART  
Kalsmose, Mille: *Re-Sounding Organs*, COLT Magazine
- 2016 Borup, Jan Falk: *Kunsten vender tilbage i Storestrandstræde*, Kunsten.NU
- 2014 Olsen, Helene: *Searching for a Mother*, Magasinet Kunst
- 2013 Jerslev, Anne: *Searching for a Mother*, art publication, Barcelona
- 2012 Bo, Michael: *Alle mine selvmord har gjort mit til den, jeg er i dag*, Politiken  
Højgaard, Heidi: *Kusntner udstiller egne selvmord*, Kristligt Dagblad  
Ross, Trine: *All My Suicides, The Quest for a New Identity*, art publication
- 2010 *Personal Identity in Contemporary Art*, Disturbis online Magazine, Barcelona
- 2009 Kirkeby, Ole Fogh: *At forville sig ind i en organisation*, Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School
- 2007 Kalsmose, Mille: *Girl with pram*, Wonderlang-mag, Copenhagen  
Sønderby, Lone: *Alice i eventyrland på speed*, Q-Magazine, Copenhagen

