

## **Of sonic spaghetti and supernova – A forensic record**

It's close to how I imagine being swallowed into the belly of a whale. Or ingested into the unnavigably coiled recesses of a brain. Five minutes before, I was standing around in the dusk outside the venue in a huddle of other visitors. Just waiting to be admitted into a monolithic industrial building, loosely cradling a beer bottle and greeting anyone I vaguely recognised behind their masks, scarves and large coats. It is cold and damp, summer now little more than a lamentable anecdote. Curiosity about a new video piece by Josephin Böttger has brought us all to this remote location away from Hamburg's centre: now we were eager to get inside and at last participate in a live, in-person art event.

But no sooner do the heavy metal doors heave open, drawing us into the gaping darkness, than any shared, casual social familiarity evaporates. The crowd swarms out into the huge, very high and very dark cavern of a hall. But not entirely without light. Pulsating and flickering all around us are nervous splashes and jumping shafts of electric light. Multiple projections I'd assume, without knowing where they're coming from – except that this assumption feels more like a rationalisation of what's going on around us, since the sources of this all-enveloping luminescent vitality are hard to identify. And another thing: sound, very physical. A beat, pulsating, electronic, clattering, buzzing, whirring, clicking. As if the light were generating sound, and a plenty of it too. It feels like plunging into a very exclusive techno club, carnivalised industrial chic.

What makes this experience momentarily so strange is our utter deprivation of any kind of live music since Covid-19 shut down all the city's music clubs and parties seven months before. There is something delicious about entering circumstances so long denied, the thrill of re-living an addictive rush. Prior to Covid I personally hadn't ventured onto a proper dance floor for a very long time, but suddenly it feels like the most natural thing in the world to awaken to a smash-and-grab lust for dancing, to a pitching, convulsive, strident groove amidst a crowd of high-spirited people. I dream sometimes of flying over the roofs of a city or running at breakneck speed through a field or along a beach, neither of which I am in the least capable of, but are lived as very physical experiences while I sleep. This vast, towering dance space of an abandoned power station is like that: the site has its own remnant energy from the past, discarded and forgotten during its closure. It's also the energy of an improvised, illegal house rave on an abandoned industrial estate far from anywhere, a robust memory of something I'd never experienced. And the illicitness of it all is so alluring, so sexy. The sober fact that the event was perfectly legitimate and officially sanctioned, that we were all masked and had provided our contact details before entering seems quite irrelevant within this cloud of visceral intoxication. The sense of being beamed into a space of anonymous techno has also touched the other visitors as they fan out to find a spot where they can best join in whatever is about to happen next.

From then on until our release, some 40 minutes later, into the damp air of the dark and relatively drab autumn evening outside, we largely lose sight of one another. Here and there, a familiar face might flash up, illuminated by the sudden flicker of a flitting sliver of light, but maybe it was someone else's face after all. We remain aware and wary of one another as bodies, or maybe even zombies, shuffling about inside the hall, everyone trying to glimpse the meandering zones of visual activity projected onto the walls and surfaces of

the vacated industrial site without tripping up or colliding. The human silhouettes circle around me, anonymous witnesses to me witnessing the tumbling sequence of events. As such, they – like me for each of them separately – become participants and protagonists in this futuristic (or prehistoric) *son et lumière* event to the same degree as the pillars, beams, joists, fixtures, walls, floor and ceiling of the hall's architecture. This is different from other, now well-established notions of audience participation – thrillingly exemplified by projects of interactive theatrical experiment such as the acclaimed Catalan ensemble La Fura dels Baus back in the 1980s, where the collective response of free-standing audiences as autonomous physical components was necessary to propel the group's extravagant performances – because here, the audience is not being compelled or incited to do anything in particular. Like a playful Heisenberg experiment, the mere fact of our presence alters the shape and perception of what is visually and acoustically evolving around us. In some instances, we all unwittingly serve as further projection surfaces inside the monstrously geometric architecture. And because we are all drifting around the space on a fully unpremeditated and uncoordinated orbit without apparent hub, like detached blobs of black vegetation slowly rotating on the surface of a pond. Occasionally I notice small clusters of people vaguely clotted together in changing constellations, elsewhere single bodies are disconnected and free-floating. Generally, however, the human shapes are all no more than amorphous black silhouettes, either brilliantly highlighted against cascades of light or sombrely contoured against the deep shadows of the lugubrious hall.

With art – which *Chains of Mania* certainly is – it is interesting how as a viewer you sometimes find yourself on your own, mentally disjoined from the world, at others you are acutely conscious of belonging to a crowd. Most light and video installations I have seen tend to let visitors roam in and out of a space at random. Like an open-format cinema without seats or schedule. Often we find ourselves looking at a fixed screen or arrangement of screens. Maybe with scattered objects and forms serving as additional projection surfaces. “People” – always the others – can disrupt your concentration on the projections, move in front of you or respond to their mobile phones or talk or simply nervously come and go. Audience attention span for video installations is notoriously brief. Here, in the disused Bille power station, not only does the fact of this being a rare event that also includes a performance artist and the singularity of the venue suffice to capture everyone's interest, but it is also the unusual occurrence of the audience being part of the visual panorama that casts a spell on me. I slide in and out of this shoal of viewing amphibians, both viewing and being viewed.

This is the sole body I belong to as I acclimatise myself to the greater body of sound and light we are engulfed by. At the outset our attention is steered towards a section on one side of the hall where we see a kind of in-built bungalow, maybe a works office. It is a flat-roofed duplex structure, each of its rudimentary sections furnished with a closed white door and an open window, a black square cut into the white wall. Moving somewhat awkwardly but purposefully between the huddles of viewers is a figure dressed in a white protective suit, pushing a trolley loaded with important-looking electronic equipment. Trailing behind the cart and the figure are lengths of weighty and seemingly endless cables. The figure is clearly performing vital scientific operations. But he/she cannot be further identified beyond this indecipherable yet authoritative function. The white suit and headgear call to mind the kind of personnel you see in news bulletins or documentaries reporting on incidents at a nuclear power plant (Fukushima), or forensic experts inspecting a major crime scene (Salisbury), or

all those workers filmed chemically disinfecting streets, subways and other tiled public places (Wuhan). The sight of someone wearing whole-body hazmat suits always flags alarm. Where are we exactly, what does this scientifically accessorised person signify?

It transpires that the trolley now gradually criss-crossing various zones of the hall is the source of the projections. Or at least of some of them, although it is not yet clear which ones. There is a lot of constantly changing light information invading this space, a wealth of luminescent data flying around. And all the time: the big electronic soundtrack, a driving pulse of cyberwork and operative energy. There are no words, no explanatory language, no commentary, no obvious beginning even. The technician and his/her cart with its blinking red light direct our gaze towards the small flat building. Already we are witness to all manner of brilliantly radiating rubble tumbling to the ground from above. And lava-like downpourings of glistening magma, or erupting upwards out of the floor – vertical, but neither solely from below nor from the heavens, just vertical.

Before anything much has happened (although it is an awful lot that is already happening all the time and all around us), I sense we have ventured into a completely new place. Let me pause for a moment: throughout this event I never definitively know whether the projected phenomena and images reveal this to be a very small place or one that is immensely large; whether we have been transposed, say, inside the hidden passageways within a human “soft machine”, or even into some parallel dimension of sliding dreams or even life’s memory; or again, whether we are approaching the blistering edges of a distant galaxy, which might or might not be ours, the event horizons of supernova. How would we know? Any of these associations, and none at all, keep suggesting themselves, and by the end of the evening I am still none the wiser. Which is fine by me, because from the outset I remain enthralled by a sense of desperately having to catch up with whatever it is that is unravelling before and around me. The most important aspect to this constant wandering/wondering is that there are no fixed, measurable dimensions. Attempts to assess the course of time, the scale of what we are viewing, the proportions of whatever it is that is generating the sonic environment, the magnitude and extent of the horizon that expands or foreshortens before us, have nothing to latch on to. All sense of order is shifting, sliding, warping, contracting, expanding, coiling, billowing, multiplying, collapsing. It is an unsettling and exciting experience.

Shortly after the showers of white and pale gold igneous rubble and luminous rain we have our second encounter with a human entity, dimly discernible through the square window of the white building. This figure too is clad in white protective gear, also sporting an oversized, spherical white helmet like a spaceman or someone affiliated to the visionary band The Residents. The figure is pulling down the blind in one window, then in the second. The blizzard of white light gradually peters out, the soundtrack shrivels to scratchy electrical interference like switching between distant frequencies. And suddenly, a bloated white sphere floats out from the centre of the room where we’re standing and drifts towards one of the doors in the flat building. The doors and windows instantly turn black. The white ball nestles perfectly within the black space at the top of the door, a snapshot inversion of Malevich’s *Black Circle and Black Square*. Not for long: as the gleaming circle flickers in the doorway a long white tentacle approaches unannounced from the right, unfurling as it closes in on the disc. For a moment we catch sight of the white-clad cosmonaut inside the flat edifice, walking behind or past the semi-transparent, fluttering globe suspended in the

doorway. Like a hunter in sight of its prey, the white tentacle menacingly becomes a noose, coiling itself in several loops around itself.

Within just a minute these few identifiable elements have begun to build a narrative. What is that honey moon thing doing there in the doorway? What is the figure inside this flat house up to? Where has this ominous tentacle come from and what is its hostile agenda? All the while, the flat light cast on the edifice has become a fluttering carpet of marbled white. The soundtrack continues as a scratchy, fizzling signal in search of a meaningful frequency.

The figure now emerges from the house through the image of the white circle in the black doorway. The large white globe of its helmet momentarily appears identical to the white moon. Wrapped around it are squirming layers of rope or tubing, not unlike the white tentacle still performing arabesques above the building. This figure is also pushing a trolley bearing clumpy objects, packages or rolls of something. Once over the threshold, the ropes enveloping the helmet drop flaccidly to the ground. Like the tentacle overhead they are projected onto the helmet of the figure. But just as we're watching the figure grapple with the unwieldy coils of tubing, real and projected, a second figure suddenly drops to the ground from above, several feet to the right, a clone of the first one – assuming there is an original from which copies are generated – and now stands in the second black doorway. This clone immediately starts unravelling the unmanageable coils of tubing in which it too is wrapped. We now see this is a woman and she is not wearing a full helmet like the first but a futuristic bonnet. Her face is the only source of glowing colour in the room so far. For a moment this head brings to Medusa mind, the snake-haired Gorgon. Should we avert our eyes? Too late, whatever the consequences.

She is now being watched side-on by the first figure. Colleagues, clearly. The clone abruptly vanishes, but only to be replaced by a second clone that drops down onto exactly the same spot and continues to disentangle this envelope of loops. She has even more to deal with than her previous colleague. The spectacle of their labours begins to amuse me. I am reminded of myself leaping out of bed in the morning, too late for some urgent appointment, and hurrying to dress. Trying to push arms through twisted or knotted sleeves, hectically snagging my feet in trouser legs, tripping over shoes that won't go on the wrong feet, tearing part of a shirt that's back to front... In spite of making good progress, she is now brusquely replaced a third clone, also busy solving the riddle of the endless coils of tubing. She too departs, sliding away to the right. The electric, crackling fuzz and clacking sounds of small wooden balls rolling down tracks and hitting walls still fill the space. The first cosmonaut is still standing in the doorway on the left, now alone. After a pause another clone drops to the ground in front of the right-hand door. Followed by another and another, and then three more, all at once. Six of these white-clad figures, all unwrapping the white tubing wrapped around them, tightly packed onto a single spot in the doorway. Maybe one of these virtual Houdinis will find a way out of their corporeal labyrinth. But before they do, they all vanish in a flash.

Then something strange – stranger – happens: left to her own devices, the first cosmonaut removes the big white helmet-orb from her head (yes, this too is also a female figure, the counterpart to the previous clones) and casts off the tubing around her body. Oddly, this tubing is not just another projection: the tubes that fall to the floor and unravel at the figure's feet are real. Real? As physical as we ourselves are inside this slightly cold space, as

physically present as the figure in her white space suit standing in the doorway. This will form a constant pattern of dialogue throughout the video performance: we are shown elements and motifs that are both physically, three-dimensionally real in almost melodic interplay with projections of the same, sometimes in lieu of, sometimes concurrently, sometimes puzzlingly alternated. And the world this is being staged in is for a long time just black-and-white, maybe tinged with yellow/pale gold, nonetheless as quaintly modern-looking as a composition by the pioneering sci-fi illusionist, Georges Méliès. And at times, similarly funny in all its earnestness.

The full moon that was hitherto synonymous with the cosmonaut's helmet now expands in size to become a circus spotlight on the figure. Then the entire surroundings turn black. The flat house and its doors and windows have disappeared, leaving just the white figure inside the bright disc of light. In the swelled, luminous cone we also notice that the light is filled with writhing worms. Or tubes? Maybe the same tubes that were previously wrapped around the bodies of the clones. Cloned tubes? Like a sample of living matter examined through a microscope, this image draws us into a world of tininess, maybe the object of the cosmo-scientist's investigation, or indeed some form of virus? (How can one escape such associations in these pandemic times?) Have we been made witnesses to the *chains of mania* of the video environment's title, the object of this otherworldly research?

Against the monotonous whirring of electronic static with intermittent, arid clacks of slides shifting inside a mechanical carousel projector, our scientist picks up the two objects stashed all this while on her trolley and shoulders them. As it turns out, they are tightly coiled rolls of tubing, the same kind she and her cloned colleagues were previously struggling with. With an arm thrust through each roll, she walks off to the left and into the dark. But only briefly does she remain invisible: the cone of light pursues her as she slowly leaves the scene by the small flat house and traverses the space of the large hall.

The stage has been expanded for the first time. The white-suited scientist/technician surrounded by the audience follows her at a distance with her trolley. Collectively, we gradually begin to wheel round, matching the movement of the two scientists. A second white moon appears above the large cone of light, inside it more of those convulsing worms. Things now get a bit complicated: unpredictably, the large spotlight abandons the figure and shifts back to another low building located on another side of the hall. The orb rotates autonomously for a while until suddenly lassoed by a long tentacle from the left. This tentacle wraps itself thickly around the cone like a length of spaghetti whipped up on a fork. Yet out of this bundle of revolving tubing wrapped around the white sphere pops the bonnet, the head and then the shoulders of the scientist. She too is rotating, but counter-clockwise, all the time maintaining a serious scientific expression. Her whole body gradually emerges like a pupa from its cocoon. As the figure succeeds in methodically unravelling the sheath of coils around her, more strands of spaghetti arrive to wrap her up. Around her feet and knees, around her shoulders, then her torso. Until she is again fully sheathed within behind all the coils of tubing. The tubing increases in size, so she also increases her dimensions to counter the snaking spaghetti. Sometimes all we see of her are her eyes and the reddish hues of her face beneath her white bonnet as she seeks to overcome these multiplying layers of wrapping. We are watching a crossover between Oscar Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett* and an evolutionary dance. Then, all this morphogenetic toil abruptly disappears, replaced by a series of flat, abstract geometrical shapes.

The soundtrack has now swelled to include different ranges and sonic hues and forms. There are clangs and the hollow resonance of massive metal being struck. Ghosts erring inside the former locale of large-scale, very mechanical production. Moog-like oscillator sounds, swishing, some sizzle and crack, erratic blippings, zappy convulsive waves, a change in mood that accompanies a phase when the light images now travelling freely across the space of the empty power station show forms that resemble templates for constructing car chassis, yet constantly morphing into solid blocks of rectangular light, singly or splitting into pairs, shifting from horizontal to vertical and back. These planes slide over great pillars and beams, slip across the high walls of the old building. The shoals of visitors switch direction to follow the images, we go with the flow. This phase of mutating geometry ends dramatically with a single, immaculate slab of white light that runs down one wall and over a part of the floor. Who could not be reminded of the scene in Stanley Kubrick's *2001* when we first see the large, tomb-like monolith standing on the surface of the deserted planet, blackly reflecting the pale gleam of a sunrise? Caught by surprise, I am prompted to laugh: such a delicious but simple tongue-in-cheek bow to the master of futuristic suggestion.

Authorial wit aside, this brief pause and moment of cinematic allusion ushers in the threatening alien arrival of another very large tentacle descending from the ceiling. From Kubrick to Ridley-Scott. A classic ruse: in certain genres humour often gives way to horror. We feel exposed as the tentacle snakes its way into our line of vision. First one, then numerous others start dropping from the ceiling, all around the room. Multiple projections surround us with descending tubes, secreting squirming, twitching heaps of white-yellow tentacles. But no sooner have they hit the ground than they go into reverse and coil back upwards, out of view. To be replaced by three identical vertical slabs of perfect white light, the shape of doors. Indeed, they are doors, like the ones we saw earlier in the opposite corner of the hall. Doors to what or from where? Two of them mysteriously open, each revealing a scientist in white protective gear, maybe a couple more of the various clones we were watching earlier, this time tugging and attempting to stack lengths of yellow tubing. Above the doors single tentacles descend again, hang and sway in expectation of new developments. While the two figures are busy sorting and organising the tubing in the doorways on either side, the central door opens and a third white figure appears, pulling a length of tubing with her. I can see there is a whole lot more of this yellow tubing inside the room she is emerging from, and that she is vigorously hauling it out into the open. I blink: smallest details tell me that the room is not another flickering illusion. It is a real door that has opened, true darkness that erupts into view. Stepping out, this figure too is anything but flat and made of light. The snaking coils of tubing are physical, have weight, actively share the same space as us. Could they shoot out, also ensnare and entwine us? The interplay of projected and real menace catches my breath.

Quite manically, as the title suggests, the figures' struggle with the tubing, with these recalcitrant pipes continues. I too have fought epically like Ahab with an immensely long garden hose after watering plants and trees, trying to rein it back in and corral it into a domesticated and practical bundle. But the hose develops strange invisible muscles and a contumacious willpower to push against my controlling purpose. This same tensile, despotic autonomy is familiar to anyone who has rolled up metres and metres of mic cables or extension leads. What are these yellow pipes doing? Do they endlessly reproduce themselves? Are they communicating between different parts of machines, or between

sealed off sections of our minds? Tubing of this type is an integral function of gigantic industrial processes, the ducts and arteries of surging energy and elemental substances. Such tubes poke out of freshly set concrete on building sites, twirl around machines in intensive care units in hospital wards. Are they the highways linking our mental engines, lending direction to the traffic of our memories or the streams of lived experience that feed our dreams, that order our subconscious? As they flap and flounder ungovernably back and forth they resemble wildly swarming spaghetti junctions of transmitted signals. In fact, this tireless but comic combat with the insurgent spaghetti has the heroic dimensions of a crusade, one which will surely end in an unresolvable stalemate. Rather than warriors, the white-overalled scientists act like techno-psychologists, earnestly repairing the persistent leaks and breakages in the convolutions of a brain. However valiant, they can't do much.

Anyone who has followed Josephin Böttger's work over previous years, knows how much pleasure she derives from the figure of the scientist engrossed in experimental laboratory work, on the periphery of Frankenstein, but also intent on exploring and questioning the frontiers of what we know, or believe we know: she tirelessly records activities in sleep observation institutes, monitors bees, investigates lunar surroundings, studies the volcanic core of unfathomable building sites, or from high above surveys traffic arteries coursing through the city. Her imagined scientists and lab technicians remind me of 1950s sci-fi fantasies, but also of Jules Verne and Georges Méliès, of Stanley Kubrick or Chris Marker – so much to choose from...

The soundtrack now gets increasingly musical, with accumulating ticking and slapping rhythms, banks of singing winds, winding its way up to a climax when – all the lights go out. We hear just the same white noise and dry rustling thrumming. After a moment's darkness a new, slightly disconcerting visual element enters the hall in the form of a kind of hi-tech vertebral column which gradually adds segments and grows in length. Here and there, the scientist walks through the projection, her body outlined briefly by the bright torch of the pulsing spine. Which now, for the first time, introduces new colour into the hall: a fountain of rusty red and green hues that course up and down the extending shaft. The spine twists from vertical to horizontal, then pushes out towards a wall, rotating like a giant drill bit. All around us the great columns of the vast hall light up with ascending black stripes that gyrate upwards to the ceiling. With her head now back inside the large helmet-globe, our white cosmonaut slowly strides through the space. We shadow her as she proceeds. She unfolds and consults a large map or diagram, looking for a path through the mechanical labyrinth. The acoustic landscape has become more insistent, introducing new sounds in different registers. Another shift in lighting abruptly casts the entire architecture of the cavernous hall in an extraordinary projection of architecture. The very structure of the space is diagrammatically illuminated in its constituent components: we find ourselves entering the draft plan of the building, a blueprint of radiant light. The interior of the building has been cloned as a synchronous doppelgänger that camouflages the original. We are walking through a simulation of the terrain almost – but only almost – perfectly superimposed on the original. There is a sense of lost gravity, a rootlessness of the location which could now be almost anywhere in the universe or in the fathomless orbits of the psyche. There is stuff to discover, stuff to fix. As Mark Fisher says in his hauntological reference to depression: this place is a "state of mind, a (neuro)philosophical (dis)position". The inner architecture of the soft apparatus of consciousness is as impenetrable as the outer universe, inhabited by spectres of the past, by a nostalgia for lost futures.

After chalking a number of enigmatic shapes and patterns on the floor, the white figure just stands there, motionlessly observing her surroundings. Like a large motor gearing into action, the glistening edifice around her begins to emit pulsating rhythms, weaving a fabric of beat and electronic music every bit as complex as the three-dimensional sculpture of light vibrating around the immobile figure. The sonic architecture accompanying Josephin Böttger's work is the invention of the (equally) maniacal inventor of eclectic lo-tech electro pop, the hugely talented musician and composer, Felix Kubin. Kubin has contributed to Böttger's video works (and vice versa) on numerous, memorable occasions; their imaginations and sense of lateral humour seem perfectly matched to conjure up such astonishing walk-through landscapes of post-industrial ethnology.

The figure is now isolated in the broad expanse of the rear of the hall. She is immersed in a reverberating architectural grid, a bewildering map of the mind, a matrix of obsession. Blue and green lines and shadows mix with the white geometric drawing of all verticals and horizontals. A chugging, blood-pulsating, percussive groove fills the space, like the amplified sounds of streams of data and electrical synergies. All this sonic fabric is veering towards a climax. When it peaks, all noise instantly cuts off. In its place: a single sine tone, collective tinnitus or the zero point of all mental activity. Simultaneously, the room turns shockingly black. But a moment later we return to the single vertebral column suspended at the centre of the surrounding blackness with no spatial coordinates, held in pure thereness.

A number of sharp thuds mark a firing-squad succession of narrow shafts of light that catch the white figure from various angles. A hovering, whirling ethereal music circles around the room, interspersed with more thuds. The cloned architecture returns, maybe a replica of the first illuminated diagram of the space. But now the grid twists and contorts into fluid trapezoids that shed any reference to the concrete hall we are in. As our white cosmonaut turns to depart, the matrix detaches itself from the cloned original and erases all the fixed points of orientation we previously held onto inside the hall. Everything swims, rotates and converges. The green, blue and white vectors of this flowing geometry join up to construct a stunning model of single-point perspective. All the rays of light now converge to a central point, focused on (or flowing from) the heels of the departing cosmonaut. Our heels as the fulcrum of our energy: a futuristic play on the motif of Achilles. Something reminds me here of Steven Spielberg's *Encounters of a Third Kind*, how the single figure is drawn away towards an unanticipated rendezvous of an extra-terrestrial or intrapsychic nature. The music stops. After a rude moment of silence, the light goes out. We are left in darkness and silence. And stranded within this black vacuum of unheimlich ambiguity. That is it. Performance and installation over.

As the hall's general lighting is switched on, our eyes acclimatise to the old dilapidated industrial shell of a disused power station – impressive enough on any other occasion as a “cathedral of a past industrial age”, but somehow quite insipid and deflating after such a tour de force of sound and luminescence. And there we are, a schtum Greek choir now mundanely visible in our motley winter coats, masks and scarves, standing about somewhat bewildered and stunned. Also caught out in the sober functional light of the hall are the figures of the impressively stoical lone performance artist, Carolin Jüngst, the projectionist and project's author/maker, Josephin Böttger, and the soundtrack's composer, Felix Kubin, all looking quite as dazed and disoriented as one would on returning from such a cosmic

journey. Everyone mills about for a short while, as much as the mores of social distancing permit, quietly chatting and congratulating, before people gradually peel off and evaporate into the dark dank October night.

It strikes me that Josephin Böttger brings an inspired and excitingly unpredictable dimension into the field of video installation or video environments. *Chains of Mania* is an extraordinary piece, and at the same time just a further trophy in her idiosyncratic development as an artist. She heavily underscores the meaning of “specific” in the so easily adduced term “site-specific art”. The event actually felt as if the former Bille power station had been built foresightedly to host and stage Böttger’s work of multiple projections. Exploring a subtle hybrid of bricolage, collage and pastiche, she creates ostensibly narrative settings that are equally abstract and physically sculptural, cerebral yet sensuous, as well as anecdotal and comic – at times even verging on the hilarious. I have always been taken by her lo-tech, yet sci-fi expeditions into absurdity which reveal philosophical depths and a surreal love of detail. Projected light is Böttger’s flying carpet: on the shining beams of her obsessive imagination we are transported into the prolific, untamed realms of dream and otherness.

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