

as we synch, 2025
smells like kin, 2025
stuff change, 2024
what does your gut rehearse to tell you, 2024
vibroacoustic ethnographies, 2024-2025
after swallowing, 2024
planeta kampus, 2022-2025
metabolising climate, 2025
fermentation vessels, 2024
climatic stories of diatoms 2024
non-vision 2023
bug 2023
ars for nons 2022



The international duo sikau/pubalova (NL), formed in 2020, is made up of artist, coder and researcher Denisa Pubalova (CZ) and artist-researcher and mezzosoprano Dr. Lea Luka Sikau (DE). Ever since, they curiously explore the intersection of media art and experimental opera. Commissioned by the European Commission, S+T+ARTS, Science Gallery Bangalore, Ars Electronica Festival, LABoral and Transmediale Berlin, their installations invite humorous-tragic reflections on societal shifts. Multisensory immersion in smells, vibration and sound invites audiences to attune to their senses beyond the visual, and to step into an uncanny playground.

Denisa Pubalova (she/her) is a media artist, a researcher on environmental philosophy, critical posthumanism, and technological infrastructures, and a critical coder fascinated by interspecies communication and post-anthropocentric narratives. Dr. Lea Luka Sikau (she/her) was Harvard University's Mellon School Fellow for Performance Research and holds a PhD on post-humanism opera rehearsal from the University of Cambridge. As a media artist and stage director, she focuses on post-Anthropocentrism, having worked with artists such as Rimini Protokoll, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley and Laetitia Sonami. She is the curator for sound art and music at the Center for Art and Media, ZKM, in Germany.

as we synch, 2025

as we synch is a multisensory installation that explores metabolic and microbial rhythms. A hanging membrane vibrates gently with sonic textures recorded through hydrophones—capturing processes of human and posthuman decomposition and fermentation in Goffertpark and beyond.

Collaborating with fermentation researchers, the artists interweave field recordings of traditional fermentation production with speculative lab cultures. The installation invites visitors to inhabit cycles of transformation, where cyclical patterns stretch beyond the human toward a more-than-human temporality.





smells like kin, solo exhibition, 2025

Every day, you digest living microbial cultures – cheese, dough, yogurt, sidra – as fermented fluids and foods. Smells like kin started with inquiries into these processes of „eating life“ as an art science collaboration, gathering traditional and laboratory fermentation practices, microbial communities both inside your body, in Asturias and beyond. The suspended silicone membranes— moulded on the concrete floor of LABoral comprising its bacterial cultures—evoke scoby, a living organism that ferments tea into sweet-sour taste.

The exhibition invites your microbes – collective organisms fermenting the fluids in your body – to smell, touch, rest, and listen. Can you synchronize with the fermented rhythms surrounding you?



smells like kin, solo exhibition, 2025

The artists recorded sounds, vibration and smells, and reconstruct fragments of their year-long research: apple press vibrations, chorizo making, moulds growing in cabrales caves, dosa batter bubbling, flesh decomposing. Morcilla is fermenting in Asturian kitchens, while laboratories are producing blood taste and smell from fermented soy.

Rethinking kinship (consanguinidad) and questioning inherited ideas of connection, the artists present bonds based on sensory processes and microbial relations. The project is part of Studiotopia, an initiative funded by Creative Europe that explores the intersection between art and science to shed light on the pressing issues of our time.



Everyone emits and has heard bowel sounds. Nonetheless, their metabolic acoustics remain stigmatized; their sonic richness is often silenced. stoffwechsel / látková přeměna is a multi-sensory installation exploring the acoustic and haptic quality of gut feeling. It brings our guts in to collective resonances and viscerally encourages them to synchronize with each other. stoffwechsel / látková přeměna sounds out how we can attune to one another, not via breath or heartbeat, but through our gastrointestinal systems - asking to get closer to yourself, think outside your own rationality and to experience your body as an ecological system.

In an inflatable bath of sounds, the audience's gut sounds are experimented with and woven into a composition - or gutscape - that affects our internal organs and nurtures multi-organ communication. Beyond semantics, this space enmeshes sounds with intuition, opening up to the hidden interplay of collective subconscious processes, affects and decision making that define our gut feeling.



Getting closer to the sonic gutscape facilitates the emergence of a relation with our bodies outside of the traditional stigma surrounding it. The installation consists of an inflatable of five meters diameter, made of PVC and an outer silicone layer with actuators hidden beneath. These interact with the touch of the visitor, intensifying the sonic experience of the listener through haptic stimulation.

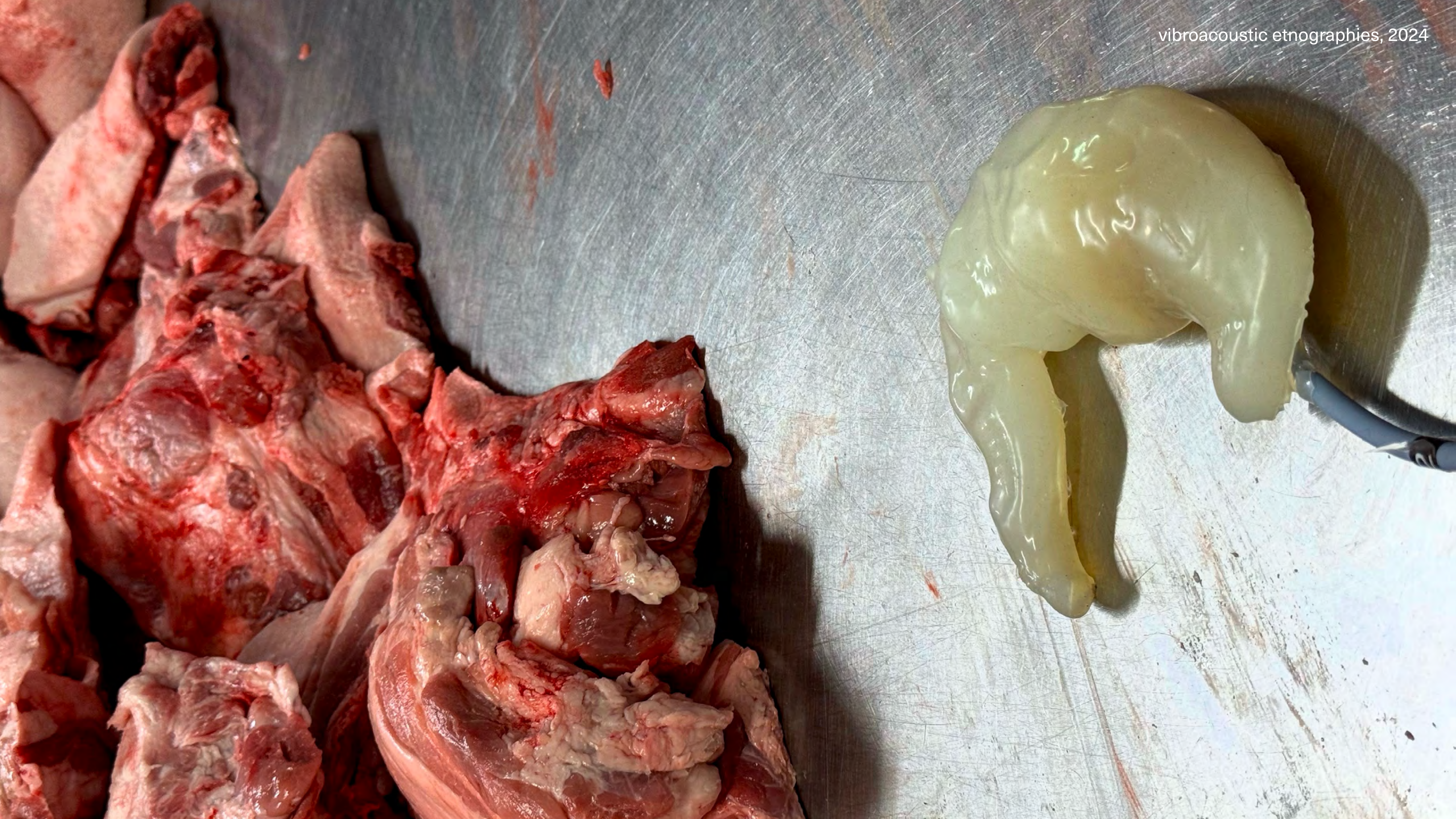
Surrounding the inflatable, the audience finds silicone cushions which they can put on top of their guts. Encapsulating a self-built hydrophone – which makes you hear the sound of blood running through the veins – they allow to transcend the capacities of our ear to listen to amplified internal movements in real-time. These sounds are intertwined with a looping electroacoustic composition of thirty minutes duration. The sonic space, which creates the feeling of being absorbed in intestines, is threefold: (1) spatialised composition with a dome-like immersive quality, (2) vibrotactile quality of lower frequencies expressed via subs and actuators and (3) live sounds of interacting audiences.



what does your gut rehearse to tell you?, 2024

the instructions are hidden inside the food — waiting to be digested, absorbed, and transformed within your gut. stay still for a moment. can you hear your metabolic acoustics? listen deeply. can you attune to the bowel sounds of the person next to you? if not, maybe they are holding out on us. give them a gentle nudge or a knowing glance. listen to the material textures of our gutspace: watery, howling, crisp, breathy, flickering, flowing, bubbling. this sonic richness is often ignored and stigmatised, left to swirl in silence. but tonight, this soundscape surrounds us, echoing from the outside in. as pauline Oliveros said, 'the more we listen, the more we learn to listen.'

take in the textures, flavours, shapes, colours, and smells of your meal. how do these sound to you? as they are driven by the physical movements and chemical breakdowns within your body, what sonic composition would they create? share and participate in the experience. you'll find chewy, textured cushions hanging in the space. press them gently to your belly, and let your inner bowel join this collective resonance. conclude by applauding each other's guts — we've created this piece together. what does your gut rehearse to tell you? there's a book — write down what your intestines want to communicate.



after swallowing, 2024

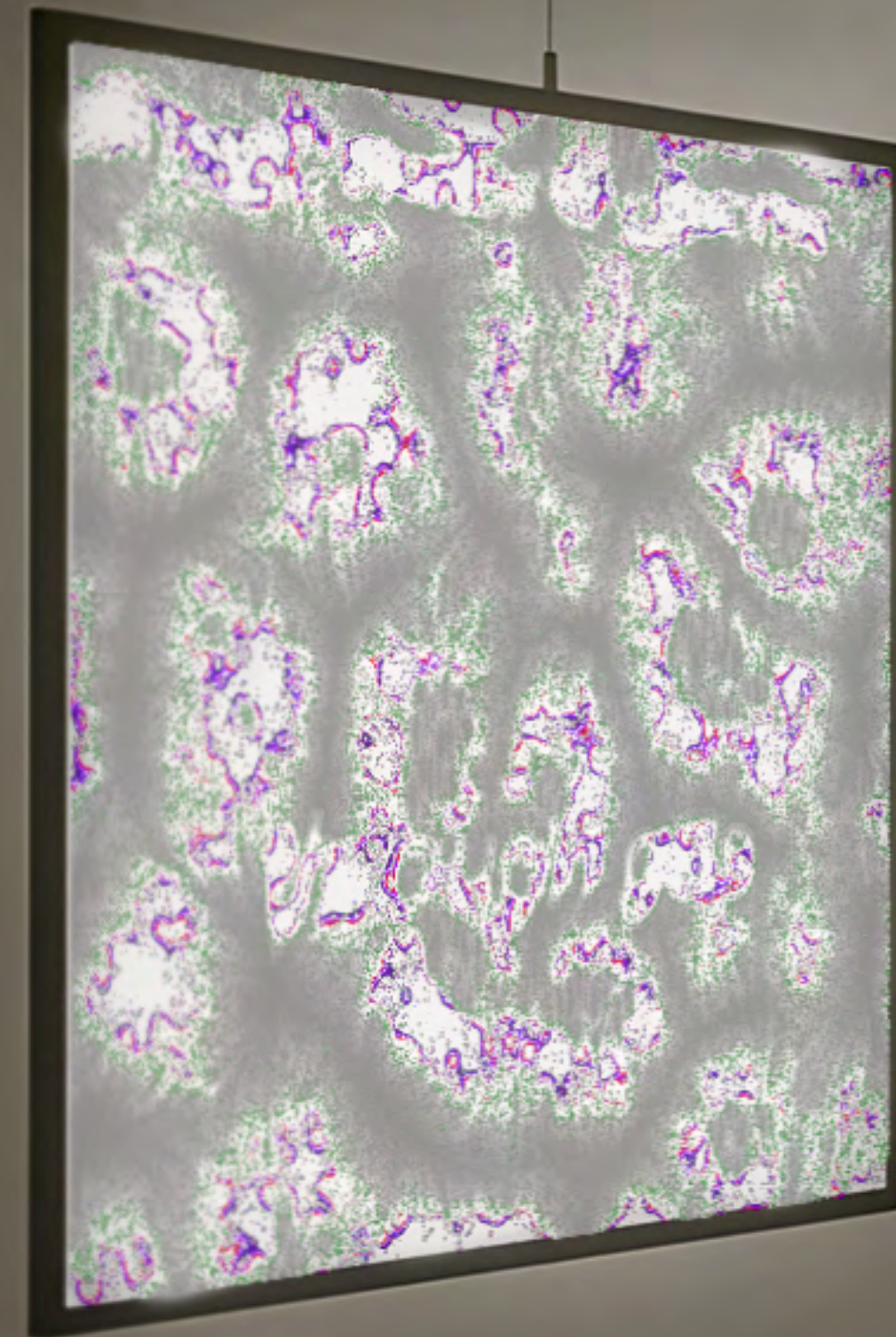
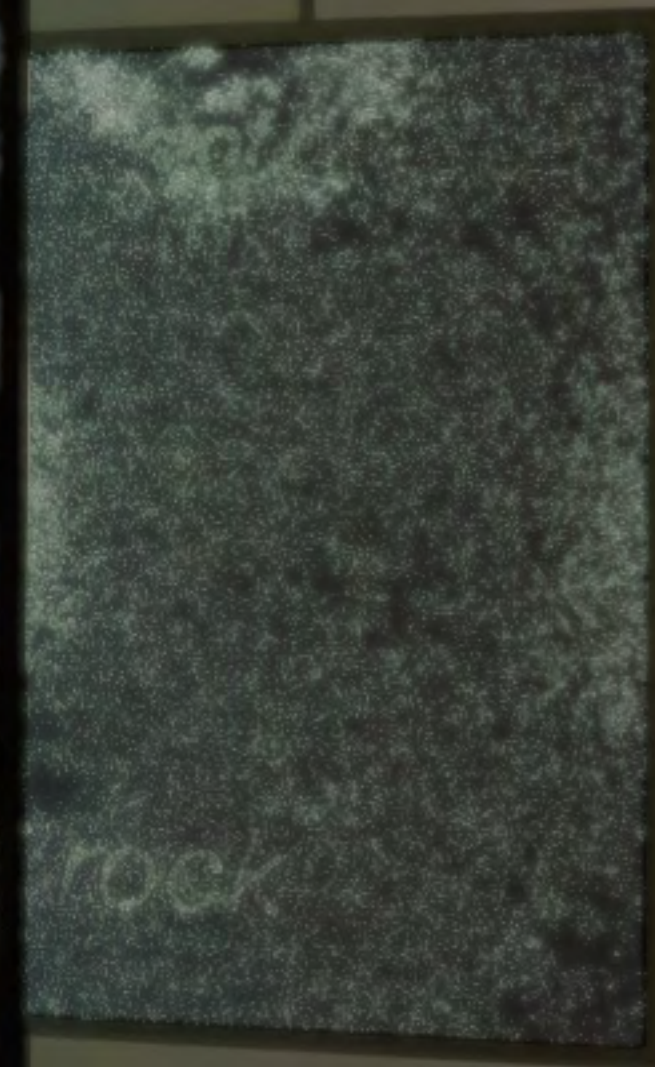
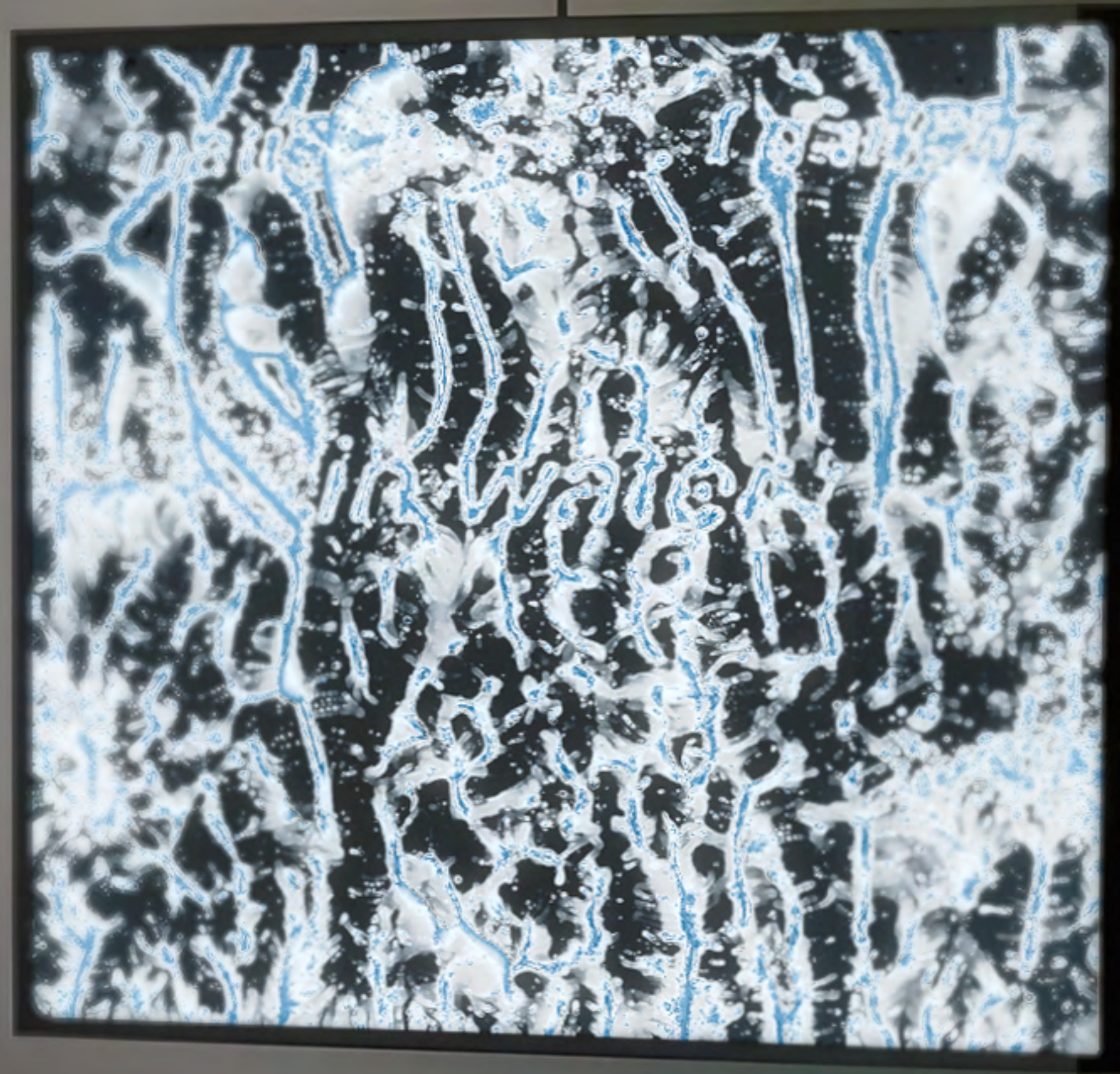
In this performative work, Pubalova and Sikau examine the medicalized history of guts with philosophies of making connection and rehearsing multi-organ communication. Diagnosed with the irritable bowel syndrome and gastric mucosa, Sikau has been engaging with the paradoxical signals of her gut since childhood. But whereas gastric mucosa is a diagnosis, the irritable bowel syndrome (affecting 10-15% of the population in Europe) is merely a description of ambiguous symptoms which so far cannot be successfully addressed within the healthcare system. Untraceable via visual means such as colonoscopy or gastroscopy, the duo was curious to approach their gut through sound technologies and performance. In relation to the physical constitution of this organ, the semipermeable quality of its serpentine lines undergo significant transformations within the clinical environments – with one of the extremes being a lifelong ostomy (which is an artificial outlet for the bowel).

As such, the project intends to apply these theories to the gut as queer organ that, beyond its material form, inherits a queer slippage between ‘physiological matter, metaphor or figuration, and “gut-level” feeling states’. Whereas a lot of artistic and research process currently oscillate around the microbiome, this project sees some avenues for research with relation to our guttural capacity to attune to sounds, thereby potentially enhancing our wellbeing by hearing beyond the ear.











Art for Nons (Lea Luka Sikau, Denisa
Půbalová, Antje Jacobs)
BUG 2023
3D-printed telescope, plastic, marble, live video,
sound
Courtesy of the artists

BUG offers an encounter between a human
spectator and a bug. When a visitor peers into the
instrument resembling a telescope, which is pointed
into a "manhole", they will first see a video that
appears to be surveilling an underground sewage
system and the wildlife it contains. The screen
then quickly transforms into a live video feed of the
visitor's own eye, peering into the "telescope".

While a telescope typically observes distant objects
or phenomena in space, Art for Nons turns the
telescope downwards, maintaining focus on what is
here, now. In this work, the "manhole" is a symbolic
link to the underground, which is usually isolated
from humans' experiences on the Earth's surface,
and contains a flourishing ecosystem in which rats
and mice, algae, viruses, insects, and bugs thrive.

BUG comments on humanity's drive to control
nature, and reverses the position of the spectator
into a surveilled subject. The artists point out how
our relationships with more-than-human species
are being guided by our digital encounters with
animals, such as pet surveillance apps or bug night
videos on YouTube. They argue that these digitally
mediated encounters commodify nature and
support hierarchical systems between humans and
other species. BUG challenges our urge to control,
dominate and exploit nature, and guides us towards
deep awareness of other-than-human species.



