

Komplot in
collaboration with 019

SHIFT ENTITY
TATIANA VEJIC
MAX DENIS

curated by:
Thibaud Leplat
Camille Van Meenen

WARM SPRING 92

More Women
on Volcanoes

opening hours:
Thur.-Fri.-Sat. 2-6 p.m.

12.06.-12.07.
KOMPLOT
BRUSSELS

Komplot
Place du Conseil 4
1070 Anderlecht

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***Warm Spring 92* is an exhibition by Shift Entity in collaboration with Tatiana Vejic and Max Denis, blending narrative, installation, painting, and scent.**

Drawing on Donna Haraway's concept of the *thick present*, which suggests that past, present, and future are intrinsically linked and coexist not in a linear progression but in a deeply intertwined way, Shift Entity constructs a narrative in which immortality, or rather the survival of species, depends neither on transhumanism, speciesism, nor the quest for eternal youth. Instead, survival occurs through a complete surrender of the body, via hybridisation with the environment and beyond.

Shift Entity rewrites, using the words of Ariel Kyrrou, a *philofiction*¹ that imagines many alternative and co-existing realities. *Warm Spring 92* is not only a layered narrative, but it is an invitation for the visitor to reflect on the past, present and potential futures.

The project's narrative moves closer to a future in the Symbiocene era. Theorised by Glenn Albrecht, the Symbiocene sees mankind evolving in a quest for harmony with the living world through cooperation and interconnection, abandoning the dynamics of species domination and exploitation of nature. Technology in the Symbiocene era is, for example, rethought with a view towards collaboration and the transmission of knowledge through open-source technologies.

Warm Spring 92 can be interpreted as the staging of a tale in which the characters die out at the heart of a destructive and obsolete Anthropocene society, only to breathe new life into a world of hybridisation.

Pt. 1 More Women on Volcanoes

Warm Spring 92 continues the trajectory of *More Women on Volcanoes*, which took place last December at 019 in Gent.

In this two-part project, Shift Entity drew inspiration from the story of Katia Krafft, a French volcanologist and filmmaker who dedicated her life to studying and documenting active volcanoes alongside her partner, Maurice Krafft. The couple, who often took considerable risks, were caught in a pyroclastic flow and tragically died in June 1991. The Kraffts frequently declared their devotion would eventually consume them, that they were destined to die as close as possible to what they loved.

In Shift Entity's rewriting, Katia and Maurice foresee their end on volcanic ground and develop in anticipation a scientific project called permaSHIFT. This experiment involved studying the counter-intuitive ability of pyrophytic plants to regrow after extreme heat, fires, or eruptions, and applying this regeneration protocol to their existence through the hybridisation of their bodies with the plants.

In her laboratory, Katia succeeds in translating her consciousness into an entity called K. Reacting to environmental stimuli, K is a self-referential structure or organism that generates itself, inspired by the cybernetic program *Quine Relay* and natural copying systems. She becomes, in Haraway's terms, a cyborg. The six petals that make up K mirror those of the fire lily organism.

Tears, both joyous and sorrowful, become conditions through which we understand hybridised communication.

Pt. 2 Warm Spring 92

In *Warm Spring 92*, everything merges: times and spaces overlap, blend, and fold into one another. The exhibition becomes a layered field where speculative hybridisations emerge and grow.

We move between two temporalities. From Katia Krafft's laboratory from *More Women on Volcanoes*, where consciousness persists through the character of K, we shift to a projected post-eruption zone, a domestic ecosystem, speculative in nature, where hybridised legacies unfold.

We find ourselves in the spring of 1992, one year after the death of Katia and Maurice Krafft. Imagined as a time of regrowth, *Warm Spring 92* is a place where biological resurrection becomes obsolete, whereas a fertile ambiguity persists that invites interpretation without resolution.

At the heart of this space lies the conversation pit, a ground for shared consciousness, sensory exchange, and fictional activation. The domestic becomes a site of experimentation. Drawings, paintings, archival material and furniture are considered part of the ordinary realm, while speculative hybridisation emerges as a desired reality.

Realities merge further, even with the artists' own practice. The laboratory and conversation pit include glimpses of editorial pieces from Shift Entity's previous projects, as well as research material that fed *Warm Spring 92*. Superimposed drawings referencing pop culture and cinematography build on the same fiction: pyrophytic plants, speculated meteorological elements, and imagined scenes.

Even in complete absence and quiet, there is always movement and conversation happening; the narrative exists and continues beyond our interaction with it. However, as visitors, we communicate with the abstract physicality of K's consciousness through the environment and our sensory experience with the scent activated in the space.

The melting crust and the scent trail

Across the two parts of the project, sculpture, painting, and scent take on an original form that becomes a prototype, an echo of Katia's experiments. Tatiana Vejic and Max Denis are invited to expand the narrative around K, the central character whose scientific hybridisation continues to evolve.

Vejic provides a narrative framework that fuses with the Earth's crust and lithosphere. K thus becomes a ductile material, reacting to and interacting with the heat of her environment. Vejic employed a scientific methodology, studying in detail the various pigment compositions used, tapping into the visual projections of Katia's gaze. Denis and Shift Entity collaborated on the design of the scents featured in the exhibition. Denis, experimenting with textiles, developed spatial strategies for scent diffusion.

As a second method of scent dispersion, a technical mode is developed that is activated by physical interaction with the visitor. Closeness and intimacy incite sensorial communication.

K is an organism: she exists to communicate, and scent becomes her language. The scent, intimately linked to memory, is inspired by cryptobiosis, a biological state

close to death in which an organism suspends its metabolism to survive extreme conditions, revealing a new dimension of resilience and transformation.

The smells and the created environment are not merely atmospheric; pleasant yet adverse, they support a landscape that is both real and imagined. By working with tangible and palpable reality, Shift Entity, Vejic, and Denis create a temporary condition, enabling a projection of the self into another mode of existence.

1. "A philofiction is not an escape from reality. It questions the inevitability of futures that seem promised to us."

More Women on Volcanoes / *Warm Spring 92* is a collaborative initiative between Komplot and 019 Gent, connecting the different artistic scenes in Brussels and Flanders and sharing knowledge and skills in relation to exhibition making. The project was initiated by an invitation from curators Thibaud Leplat and Camille Van Meenen. Part of the work was produced with the kind support of 019.

Shift Entity is a Brussels-based artistic duo made up of Axelle Devaux and Pierre-Clément Malet. Basing their work on the notion of *Shifting realities*, a self-meditation practice aimed at changing reality by writing highly detailed scenarios, allowing one to project their consciousness to an alternate realm. Shift Entity creates immersive installations inspired by their fascination for natural and counter-intuitive phenomena such as the mirages of Fata Morgana or pyrophytic plants. Through their work, they explore these themes by adopting spatial strategies, integrating collaborations with other artists and developing narratives that flirt with science fiction. Devaux and Malet both graduated from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels in September 2023.

@shift_entity

Tatiana Vejic is a pluridisciplinary artist. Her painting practice reinterprets naïve themes, intertwining them with depictions of vacant architectures, often elevated by her deliberate use of colour and compositional framing. She also develops writings rooted in family rituals, cultural beliefs, and the tension of navigating two distinct cultures. She has a BA in Philosophy (Paris-Nanterre University) and studied acting at Cours Florent Paris. She has a Master's degree from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, painting studio. She is the co-founder of *l'Oscillobat*, an artist-run space and a residency in Etterbeek, Belgium.

@tatianavejic

Max Denis, born in île de la Reunion, graduated from ENSAAMA Olivier de Serres with a degree in textile design. After starting his career as a photo stylist, he founded LYKS in 2018, a laboratory dedicated to experimentation in textiles and fashion. His passion for clothing is expressed through various collaborations, such as with the Villa Noailles, for which he created costumes for the opera celebrating its centenary in 2023. His work stands out for its exploration of the connections between textiles, memory, and scent, questioning how these intangible dimensions can be integrated into physical objects. Through an approach rooted in textile assembly and enhancement techniques, each creation becomes an opportunity to connect the materiality of fabric with the expression of a memory or the sensation of a lived experience.

@maxguntherdenis

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