



Skidan Sofya



Statement and CV

sofskidan.com

<https://www.instagram.com/sofskidan/>

Sofya Skidan was born in 1996 in Ukhta, Russia. She graduated from the Saint-Petersburg State University of Film and Television and Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia. She is also a professional yoga instructor, which is reflected in her choice of materials, techniques, and subject matter. Since 2022 lives and works in Bali, Indonesia.

She explores ways of perceiving the world as information, questions about intuition and transformations, reflections on speculative history, and the spectator's visionary experience. She is trying to navigate the boundaries between nature's discourse and the technogenic contemporary. Working with a large variety of media in site-specific installations, she infuses artifacts of a post-digital reality with elements nostalgic about the loss of a natural landscape. Tapping into the complexities of postcontemporary, Skidan raises questions around updated understandings of identity within today's technogenic culture, as well as the crisis of nature and the fast-approaching environmental tipping point in the age of the anthropocene.

SOLO SHOWS

Conjuring up stolen/trapped memories, Vosckhod gallery, Basel, 2023
Within this vast zone of the impalpable, Alisa gallery, Moscow, 2021
Transverse hyperspace, Fragment gallery, Moscow, 2018
Dynamic pieces, Rodchenko art school, Moscow, 2016

SELECTED GROUP SHOW

Write Your Name, Alisa art gallery, Dubai, 2024
loginality, Dubai, 2023
X-Nowness, Basel Art Center, Basel, 2022
Le cru et le cui, Ethnographic Russian Museum, Saint-Petersburg, 2021
Cosmoscow, Moscow, 2021
Archstoynie, Nicola-Lenivetz, 2021
Museum of artificial history, Darwin museum, Moscow, 2021
Future cities, Moscow, S-Petersburg, Krasnodar, N. Novgorod,
Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg, Public art festival, 2021
Porto design bienalle, Porto, 2021
Training Fantasy, Typography, Krasnodar, 2021
V-A-C.sreda, online, 2021
Springs.video. Streaming contemporary art, Lithuanian Council for Culture, 2021
20:20 time stopped, Moscow Museum of Contemporary art, 2020
15 minutes break, All-Russia Museum of Decorative, Applied and Folk Art
, Moscow, 2020
Garage.digital, online, 2020
Game club. The Coming World: Ecology as the New Politics 2030–2100,
Garage museum of contemporary art, Moscow, 2019
Presence, Sevkabel, Saint-Petersburg, 2019
Animal internet, Khodynka gallery, Moscow, 2019
Going Unconscious / Trembling / With eyes open / I see you / Surrender,
HSE art gallery, Moscow, 2018.
Boa constrictor eating an elephant, 25 kadr gallery, Moscow biennale, 2018;
Unseen photo-book festival, Amsterdam, 2017
8 level, Winzavod, Moscow, 2017;
Inside of the Art, the Pushkin museum and Tsvetnoy, Moscow, 2016;
About Rodchenko School. 10 Years, Multimedia art museum, Moscow,
2016;
Vienna photo-book festival, Vienna, 2016

AWARDS

Scholarship within the program of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art
in support of emerging artists 2019/2020;
Space design and video-art for play «Locker room talk» , winner of Black
Box residency in the Meyerhold center, 2019;
Nomination for the Kuryokhin prize, Best Visual Art Project, project
“Transverse hyperspace”, 2018

conjuring up stolen/trapped memories

wood, digital collage, dibond printing, silicone, organic elements, sand, plastic, herbs, painting, nets, 2023

There is memory and memory. There is personal memory, cultural memory, memory of malleable matter, electronic device memory, memory of a place. Remembering and forgetting have become essential political and social levers. Full memory of a device causes anxiety, requiring to delete or redistribute digital souvenirs between cloud storages, these reservoirs of outsourced memory. Tragedies leave tangible traces that are often deliberately erased and destroyed — only to be eventually found (re-called) and deciphered.

The word conjuring in the title of Sofya Skidan's project alludes to a kind of manipulation that memories are subject to — akin to enchantments and other forms of intentional transformation of the given. In her digital collages and installations, objects of different nature and origin melt into one another — wood, silicone, stones, plastic, sand, found human-made and non-human-made things. All of them are selected by the artist as bearers of particular memories. By manipulating these memorabilia, Skidan creates — or invokes — imaginary landscapes where the virtual and the real mix together indistinguishably. She seeks out objects and textures that question the notions of the native (would it be taiga for her?) and the foreign (tropical forest then?), of the inside and the outside, the human and the nonhuman — so that the difference between the figure and the background, the base and the detail bleaches away. The blurring of that kind does not so much discard as subtly question the existing categories of identity and belonging.



In these hybrid meta-landscapes the thing's provenance is erased. The artist subtracts the specificity of the object, de-territorializing it and melting it into her coherently constructed aesthetic world of colors, shapes, and textures. Thus she practices both the negative side of conjuration — conjuring-out all traces of presence — and the positive one, responding to the qualities of the elements and creating unlikely fantastical combinations. This world is beautiful and intimidating without being indifferent: it emerges and takes shape along the lines of sight.



However, the result of the enchantment is subjected to the same procedure of oblivion due to material, institutional, and infrastructural factors beyond the artist's will. The sculptures created in Bali are confiscated by European customs; the artist is denied a visa; new variations of her installations are lost on transoceanic flights. We are reminded of the rigid limits of privilege that mark out our fluid modernity. Ironically, the object that embodies fragile planetary connectedness and interdependence is doomed to a Kafkaesque bureaucratic gridlock and the timelessness of border zones. So in its place, the artist leaves its spectral trace, a commemorative drawing that points to a loss, a grapheme of fragility and yet resistance to oblivion.



how can you describe the weirdness that is not assembled enough? p.2

Installation, 2 parts of video-essays (7 min and 10 min), sound, sculpture

Sofya Skidan rethinks the realm of the sensorial referring to the study of magic, oriental religions, and technologies. Skidan's project ponders the interrelations between changing technologies and corporality as well as their consequences: the instability of the body, the erasure of the notion of a 'norm', the dilution of identity, the alienation of the virtual body – the avatar – from its physical counterpart. The video centers on the multiplying avatars of a cybershaman, whose body is used as a form of incantation. The heroine's body either grows out of the landscape, or merges with it constantly changing and mutating, gathering in new configurations. yet she disintegrates and slips away.

Only some elements return the viewers to the current moment of time, referring to the realness of this avatar. Otherwise, it is a virtual body, of numerous, imaginary, and unstable avatars, rather than a real person. An emerging, hybrid identity arises from Skidan's attempt to capture the elusive sensation of post contemporaneity.





within this vast zone of the impalpable

wood, digital collage, dibond printing, silicone, organic elements, sand, plastic, herbs, smells, 2021

The project features the works produced as the outcome of several years' research. Snapshots, scents and sculptures are linked by a lyrical thread made up of snippets of imaginary and/or real memories, 'which stick together but become tangible'. Sofya Skidan says, 'These works see natural spaces and sculptures blend into photographs and morph back. I put these fragments together from droplets of billowing allure, continuity of space and attempts to lift the layer of vulnerability from the structure of memory. There is no homogeneity to my works, historical and individual memories mutate, causing natural landscapes, mystical phenomena, body parts, textures, casts and sculptures to juxtapose onto imaginary meta worlds. They may have never come into existence or are already transforming into the landscape of the closest magical, mystical and/or hypothetical future.'

Sofya Skidan's works invite the viewer to reflect on the memory of bodies that are not necessarily living, on their density and fatigue in new temporal registers, in which the present is controlled from the future, and, therefore, turns out to be the past that is beyond our touch.



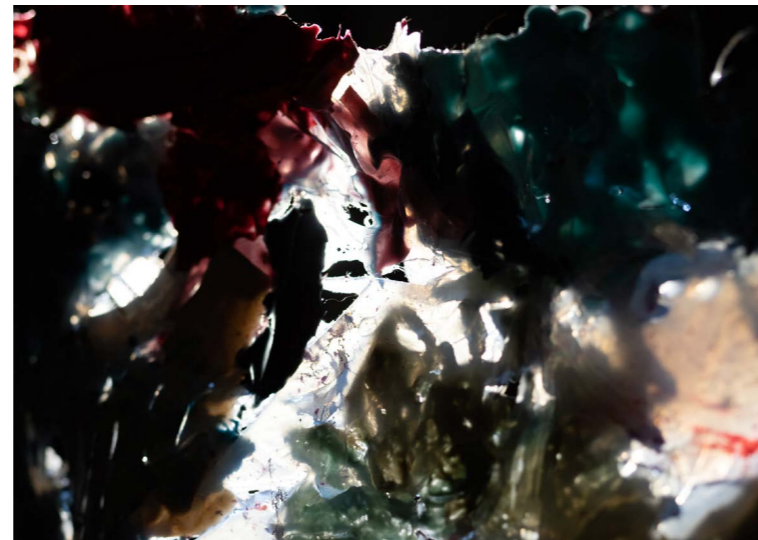
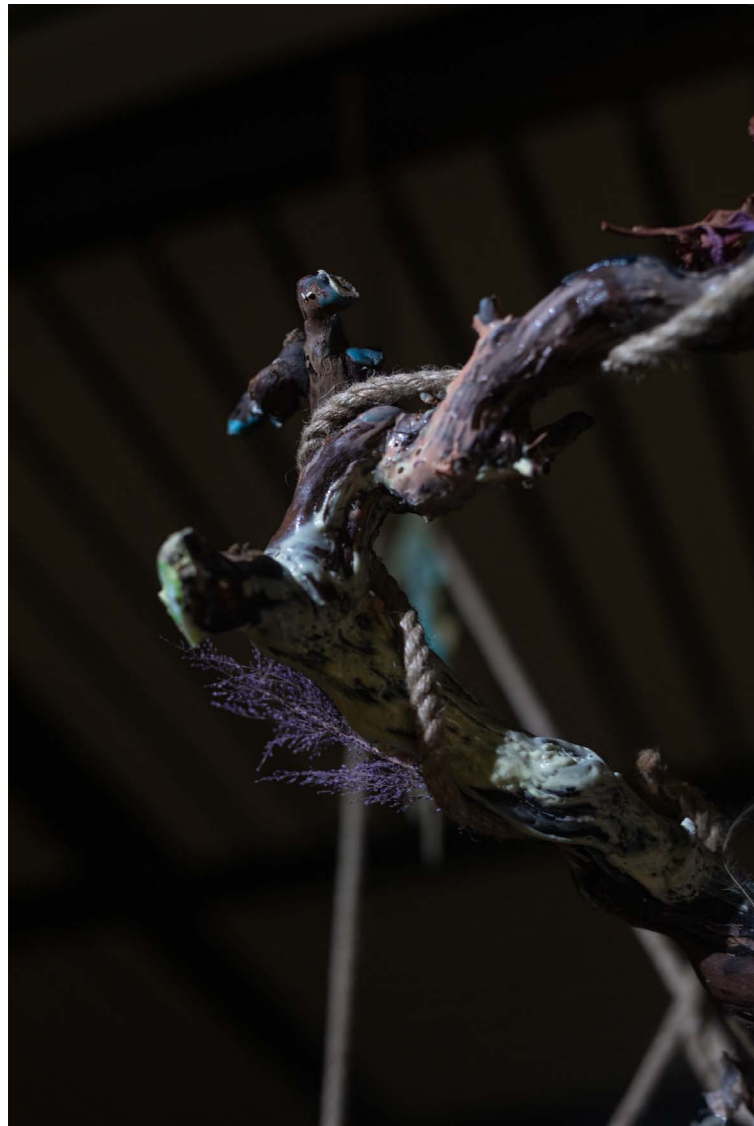


The name of this trap - viscosity, 2021

wood, silicone, organic elements, plastic, rope

The last exhibit in the Museum of Artificial History is an altar «The name of this trap is viscosity» made by Sofya Skidan. It is surrounded by installations of Darwin Museum depicting forest landscapes in which animals are hiding in the grass and trying to escape from predators. There are some installations in this section showing a balance of nature: it means that species composition in such a system stays the same. However, in Skidan's installation, one can find alive silicone clots with the plants covered with plastic.

The Sofya Skidan's sculpture shows the scenario of potential ecological misbalance which may be caused by the appearance of a new virus in an ecosystem. In this case, life forms can choose one of the two possible ways. The first one is to accept help from outside (to get vaccinated, for instance) and maintain an old order. The second one is to mutate alongside the virus in order to liberate our environment from natural and artificial disasters. Hence, skins of future life forms can be covered with clots of plastic or silicone. Their colour can be changed to unusually light and acid colours. Structurally such ecosystems change, too. All vertical hierarchies disappear. Hence, such terms like «predator» or «victim», «animal» or «plant» lose their sense. Such changes can't be treated as negative at the same time. Despite all the changes, such ecosystems tend to maintain biological balance.

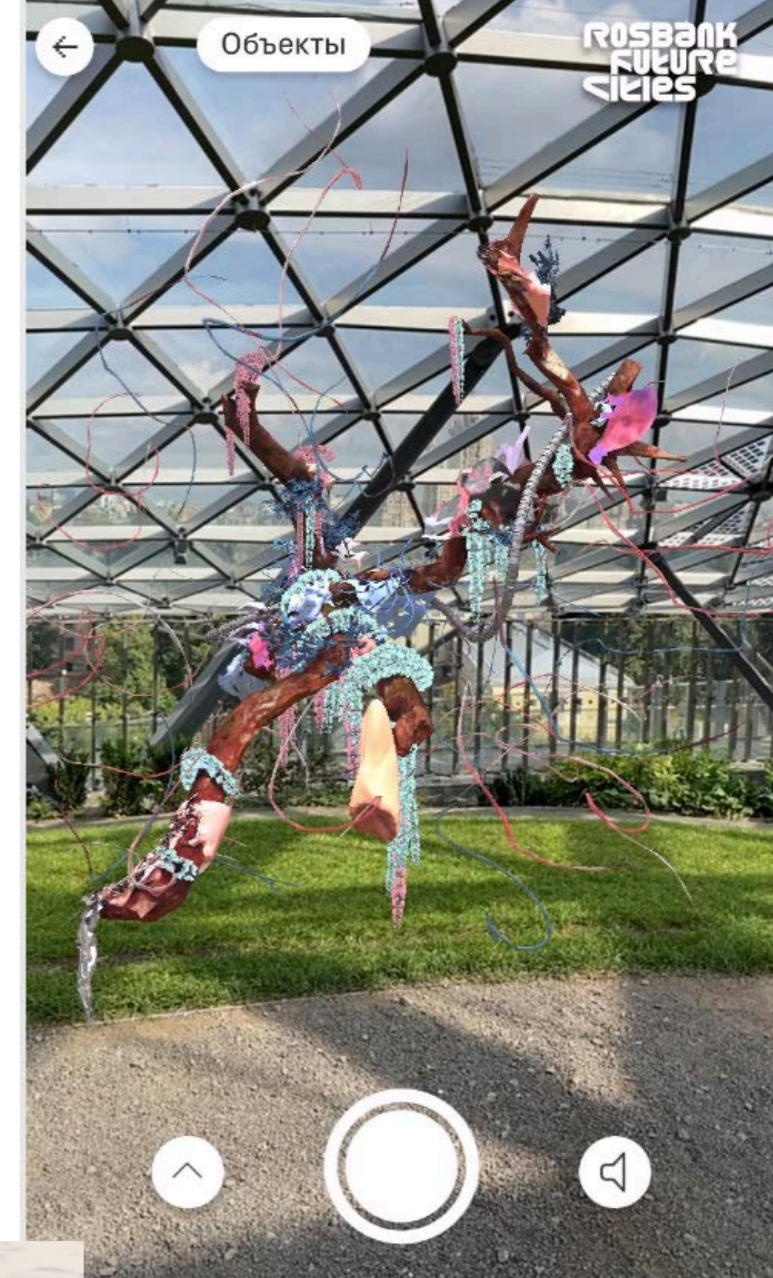
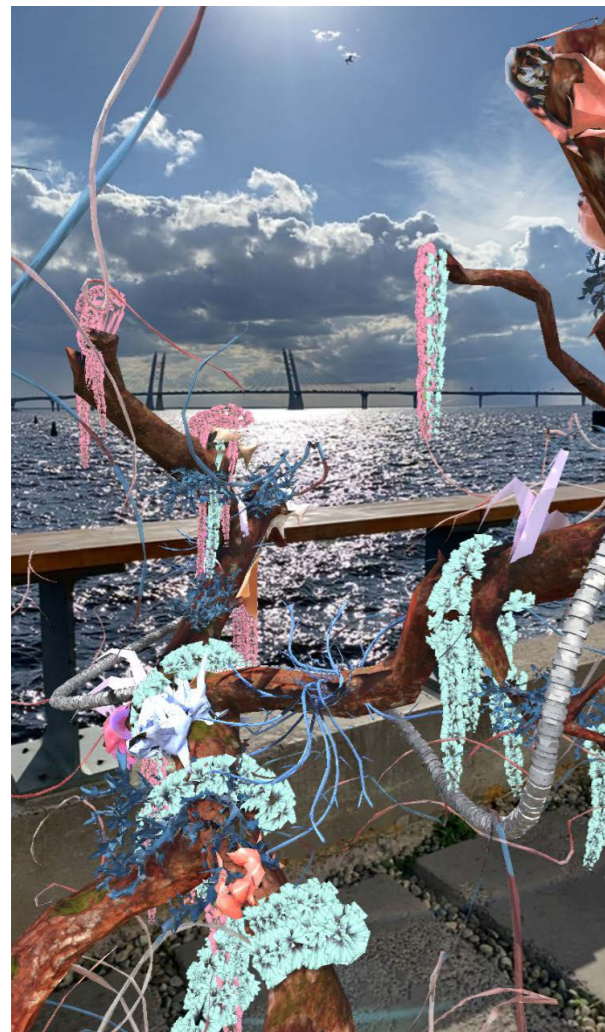


what is hidden does not need to be hidden, 2021

AR-sculpture, audio guide

Augmented reality technology is becoming one of the layers in a multi-level system of input and output, city control and distribution of data in a cityscape at different scales. Also it is repeating the logic of many digital structures with real topologies that constitute the complex integrity. It is replicated in historically completely different locations. The technological layer of the city, consisting of systems for controlling transport and pedestrian flows, online services from geolocation to food delivery, digital platforms and economies. But It also creates material types of infrastructures that are invisible in daily experience.

What is hidden does not need to be hidden includes the AR sculpture and the performative audio guide. The digital object in Sofa Skidan's work is an attractor that enhances the distribution of attention in an oversaturated urban environment. Skidan rethinks the situationist drift (the psychogeographic practice of studying the changing urban landscapes through unusual, random tactics of moving through them). Then she combines it with the Eastern traditions of meditation, focusing attention on an object to reconfigure the ways of perception and the state of consciousness. Meeting her work slows down the experience of interacting with the interface of the AR application and the surroundings of the city. The audio guide is recorded by the artist. Mediated by a technogenic environment, It will suggest ways to reorient yourself in a space.

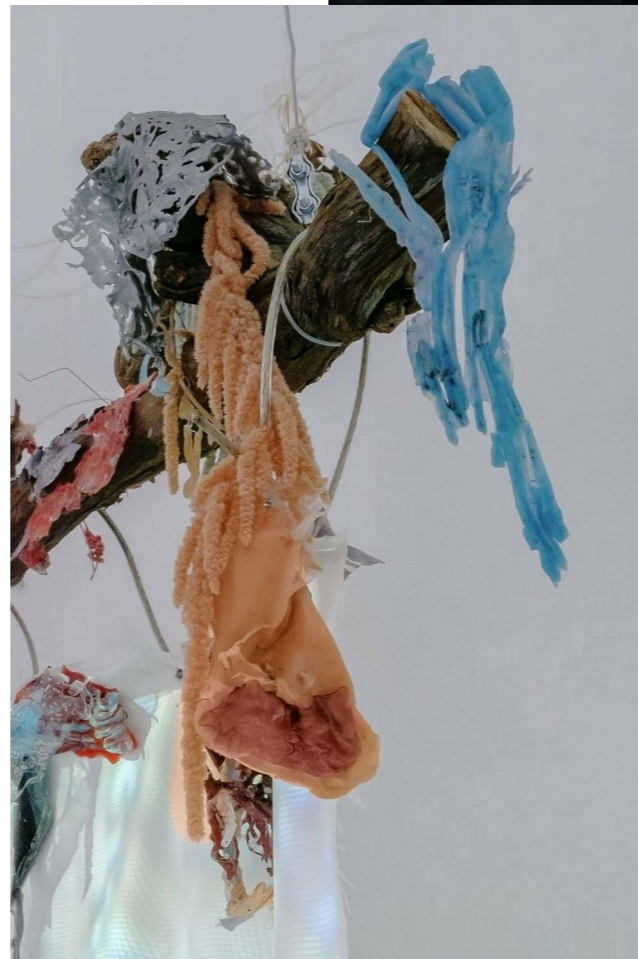


how can you describe the weirdness that is not assembled enough?

7:35 min video, sound, essay, sculptures, installation, 2021

«How can you describe the weirdness that is not assembled enough?» - interdisciplinary project, which draws on the study of magic, of oriental religions, and of technologies to reconsider the realm of the sensorial. Skidan's project ponders the interrelations between changing technologies and corporality as well as their consequences: the instability of the body, the erasure of the notion of a 'norm', the dilution of identity, the alienation of the virtual body – the avatar – from its physical counterpart.

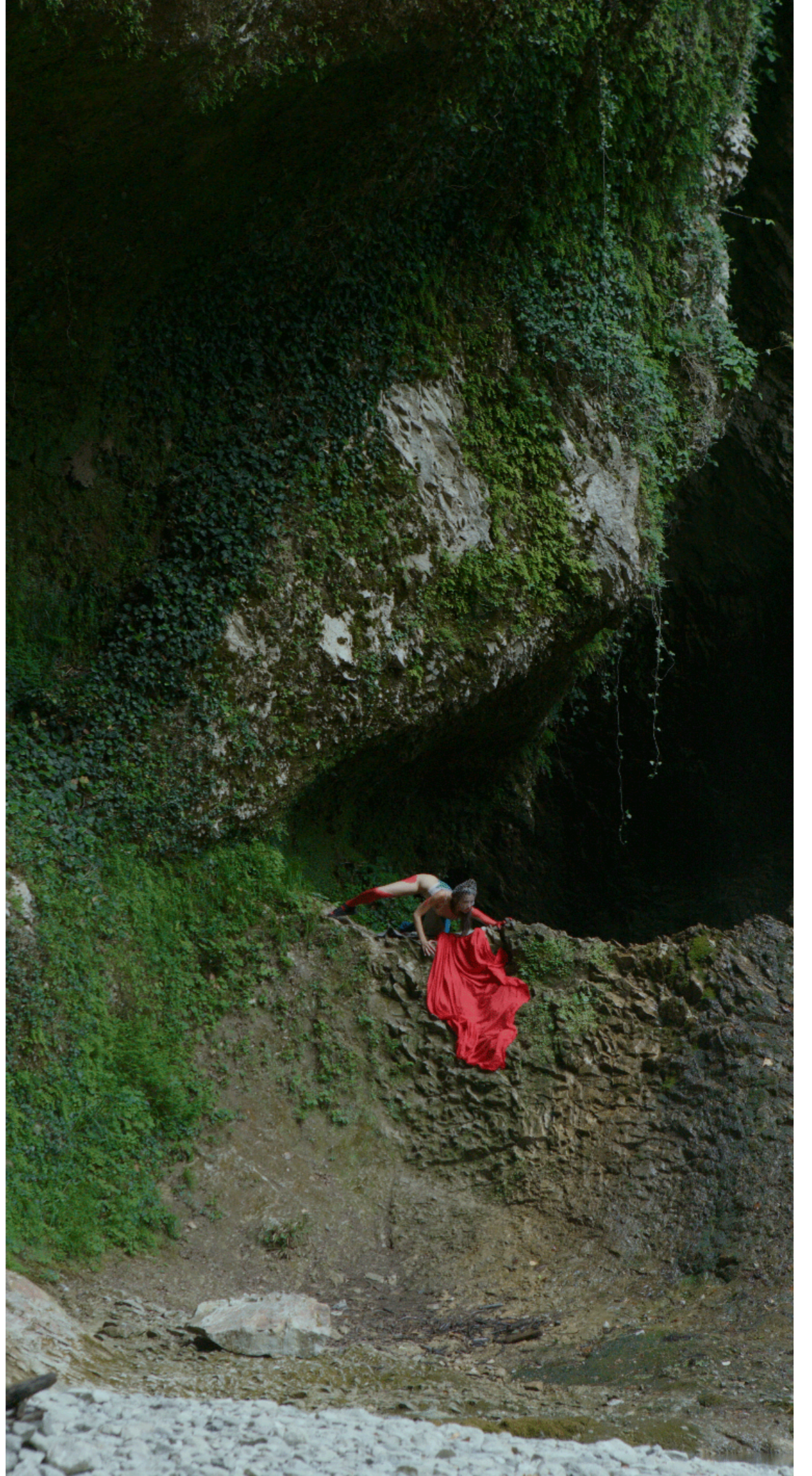
In the first part of her project How can you describe the weirdness that is not assembled enough, Sofa Skidan explores the mutual mutations and interweaving of the body, technology and what we used to call nature.



The heroine's body either grows out of the landscape, or merges with it. Her body is constantly changing and mutating, gathering in new configurations, her identity is also difficult to grasp — she disintegrates and slips away. Only some elements return the viewers to the current moment of time, referring to the realness of this heroine. Otherwise, it is a virtual body, of numerous, imaginary, and unstable avatars, rather than a real person.

The landscape, at first glance, is ideal, but it is imbued with a sense of weirdness — what we might call “pristine” is also mutating and changing, demanding new approaches and communication tools.

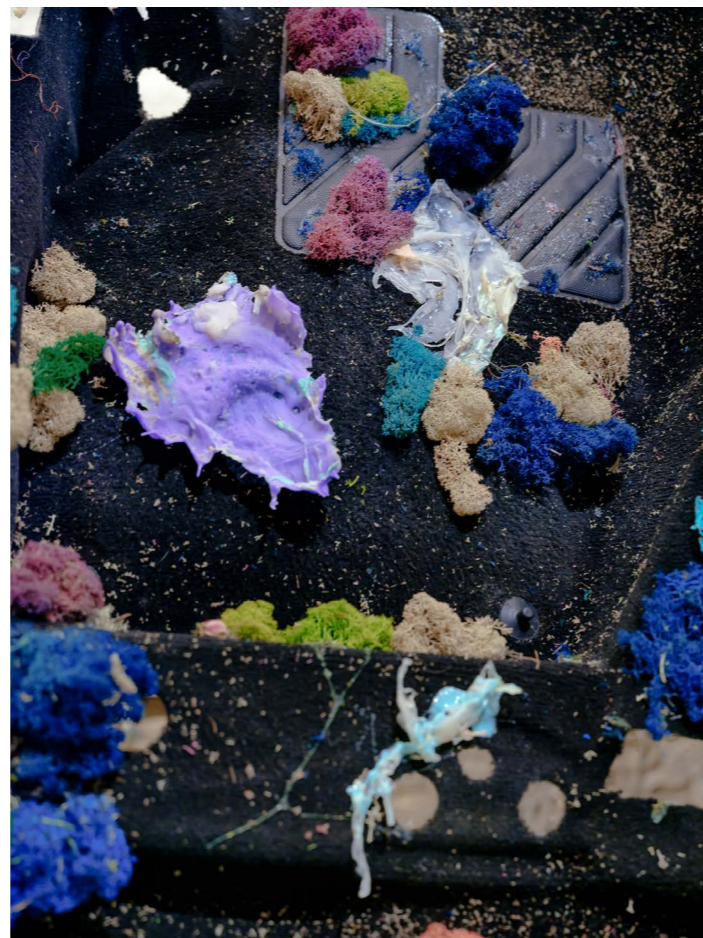
Natural and man-made elements merge into a sculpture, becoming almost indistinguishable, heightening the question of the possibility of nature as such. The audio track — music and monotonous intermittent speech — creates a pulsating rhythm which immerses you into a meditative state, and reminds of non-verbal methods of communication, trance and rituals as ways of interacting with phenomena which transcend boundaries of the human.



when you try to remember something, the landscape will remember it for you

wood, silicone, organic elements, plastic, car carpeting, odors, moss, rope, 2021

Through recreating memories of growing up in Komi, the artist went on to create a series of site-specific mystical altars, assembled from a combination of synthetic and natural materials such as carpets, moss, polymers, silicone prints and organic elements. In her work, Skidan constructs environments and situations that explore the experience of manifestation between the magical, the human and the non-human. Wondering how terrain space can manifest itself through natural materials, smells, soil, and mosses that creep into memory and activate associative thinking, Skidan makes her own set of casts of Komi natural textures that recall the northern forest and the man-made artifacts of the local city landscape. Collecting artifacts of memories, the artist constructs an altar of hybrid mutations, a space in which memory no longer belongs to you until the end, but mixes with myth, personal experiences and mysticism.

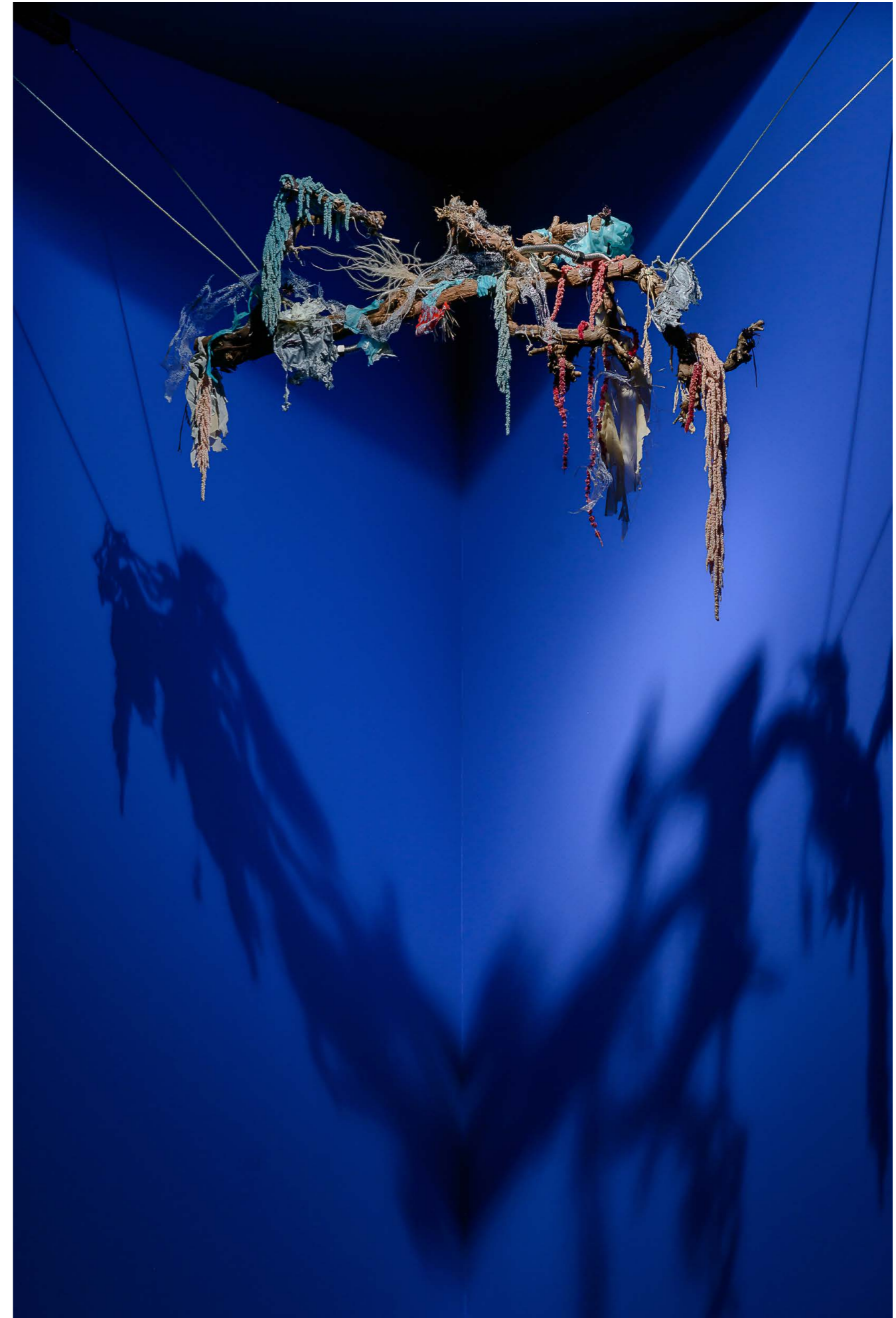
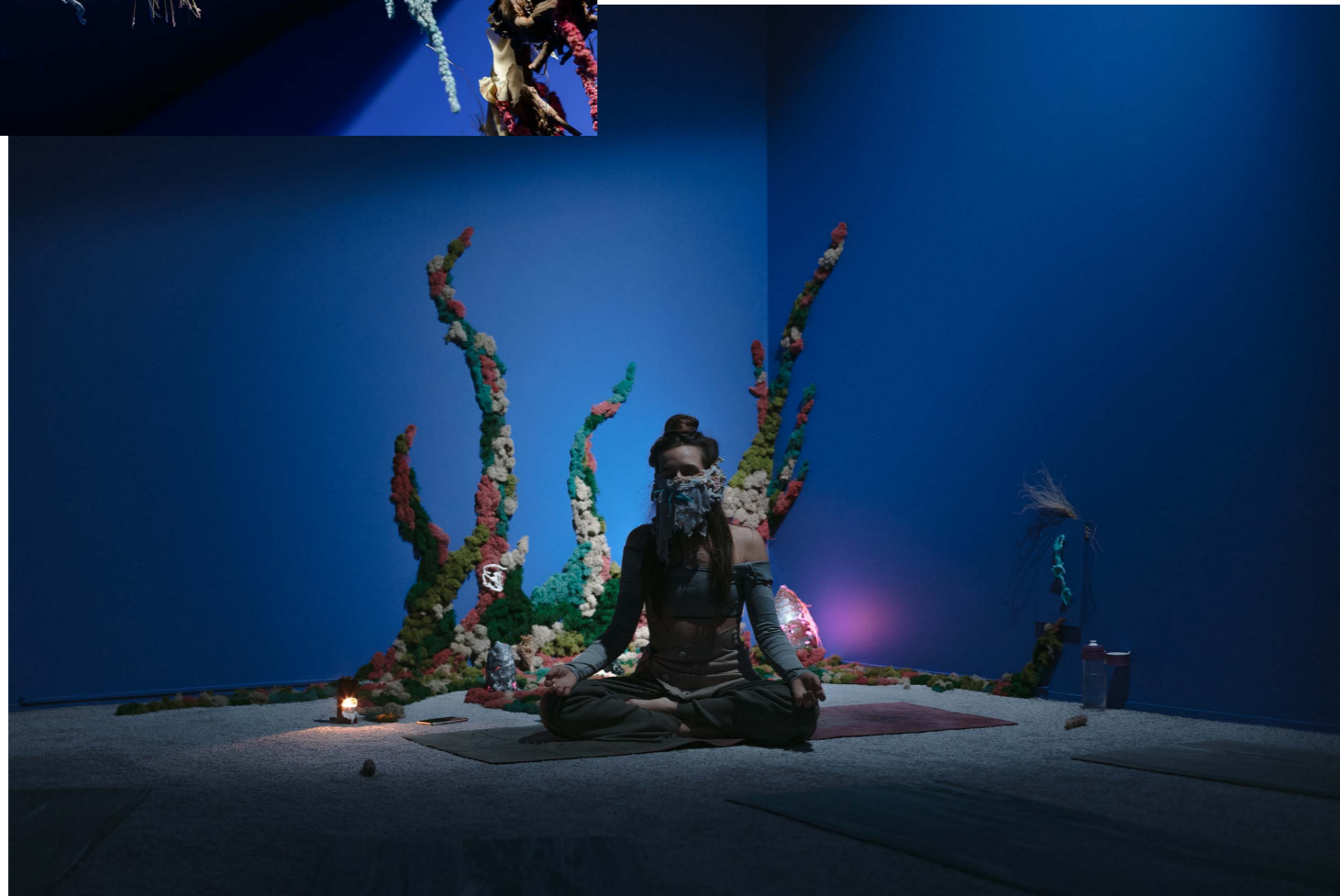


vulnerability, lifted

Installation, UF-print, silicone, fabric, clay, organic elements, mixed media, 2020

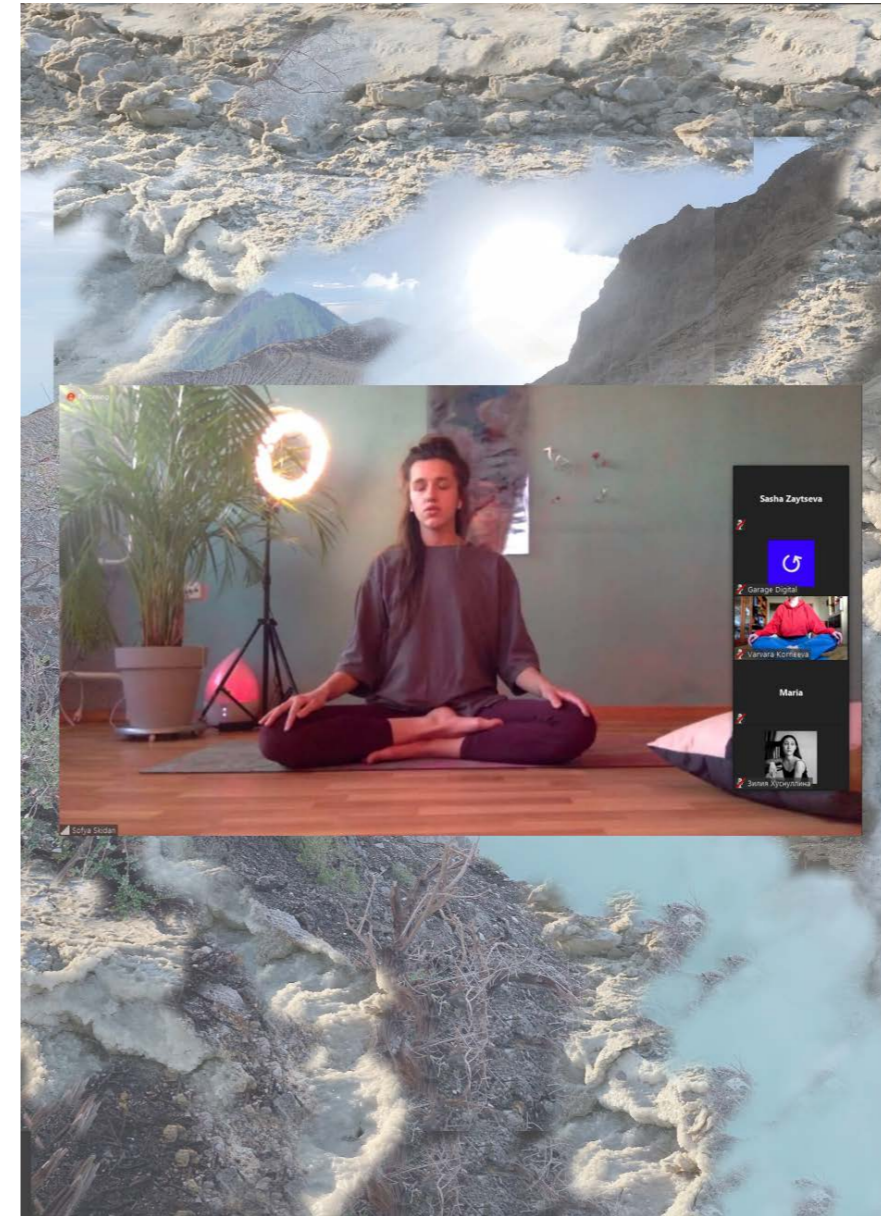
The installation comprises a dimly lit area, building on the idea of mystical and atmospheric spaces. The flooring is done with fitted carpeting, which serves to better ground the viewer within the installation. The room is lit with a cold outerspace vibe to promote concentration and close examination. Some objects you encounter invite communication: to smell, to carefully touch, to observe, to be near.

One part of the project will be the artist's performance-workshop, dedicated to the living through psychological and sensory experience. The workshop is structured as a performance lecture. During the workshop, it is proposed to try out several meditative and bodily techniques, the purpose of which is to try to allocate resources between experiencing fatigue and letting go of the usual patterns of movement and thinking. These practices can (but are not required to) bring the participant into the world of his consciousness and psyche, where both can see the common breath flowing over the space of admissibility.



addiction to becoming, addiction to non-becoming
performance-lecture , 2019

The artist offers participants a physical experience that will immerse them in a denser present. In a complex and rapidly changing world of multiple truths and post-truths we often need a break—a refuge that would allow us to explore ourselves on a new level—a level different from our everyday but still addressing the workings of memory. The artist, the music, and the space will act as mediators within the participants' memory, guiding them along their own process of becoming in the context of the discussion of a digitalized world and encouraging them to try and understand how our brains and bodies register information. Participants will discuss the ways in which the integration of online reality into the daily routine has changed our psychophysical perception and whether we can become stalkers of our own consciousness.



addiction to becoming, addiction to non-becoming.

Off the grid

zoom performance, 2020

A performance / workshop focused on lived psychological and emotional experiences in the virtual space, something which has become the new reality in this time of self-isolation.

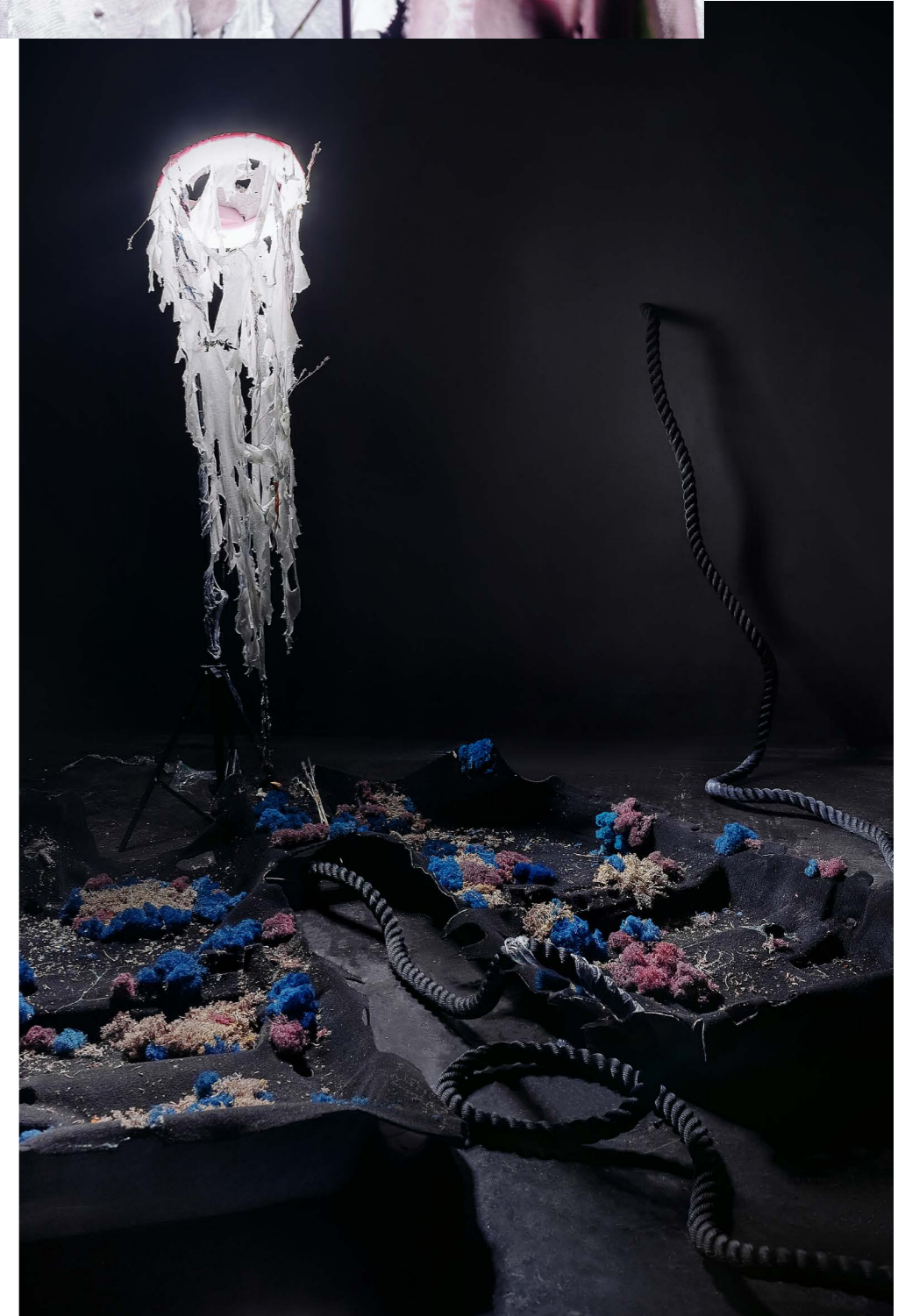
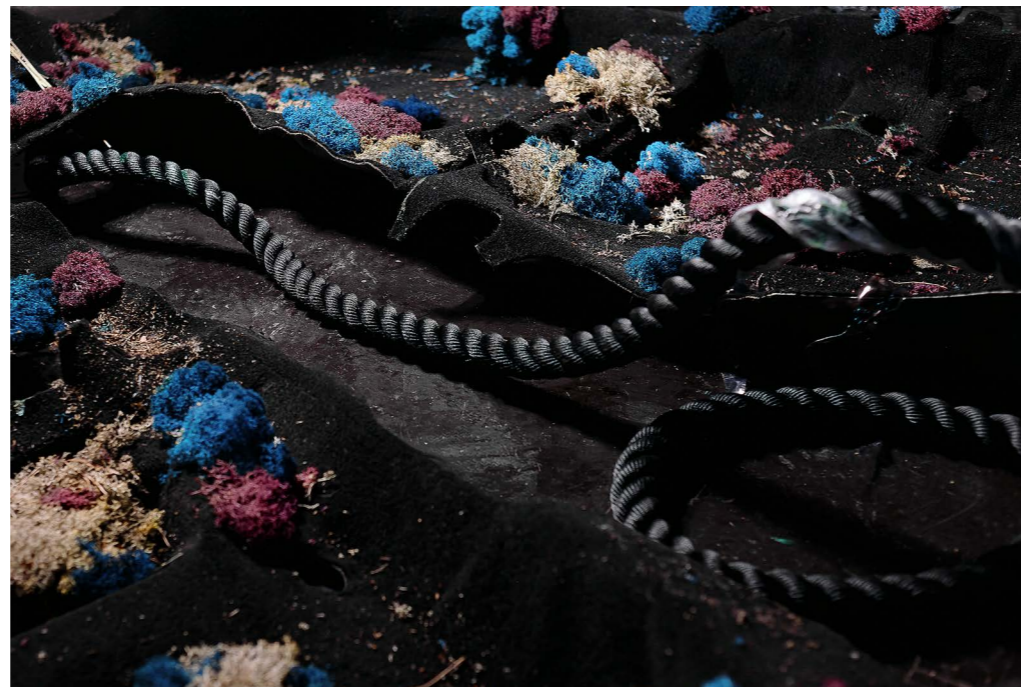
Not an invitation to relive or rewrite the experience of the migration of one's social life (including its emotional and sensual aspects) online, the performance will encourage participants to look within and see how their conscious selves have changed in the current circumstances. The artist believes that the excess of online events and the redistribution of resources from the outer to the inner dimension represent an attempt to correct viscosity. Entering this matrix does not represent an affirmation of humanity, but instead its loss. In connecting to cyberspace, humans do not penetrate it but are captured by the space and experience a vulnerability of connection that affects sensibilities.

my tail has left a trail of slime —

the trail stays in the sky

installation, fabric, organic elements, selfie lamp, clay, auto carpet, moss, 2019

This installation is a kind of an altar which could be assembled after the downfall of human culture. Its elements are memories, “memories as a method of liberation from the given”. The site-specific installation includes elements of imaginary mythologies and technogenic remains of the digital world of the future, in which un-human physicality becomes a natural continuation and naturality mutates into physicality. Using man-made materials from our civilization (such as plastic and sheeting material of vehicle interiors) together with natural artifacts (moss, stones), the artist raises questions about thinking life and the life of thoughts in a world punctuated with a feeling of loss of natural harmony.



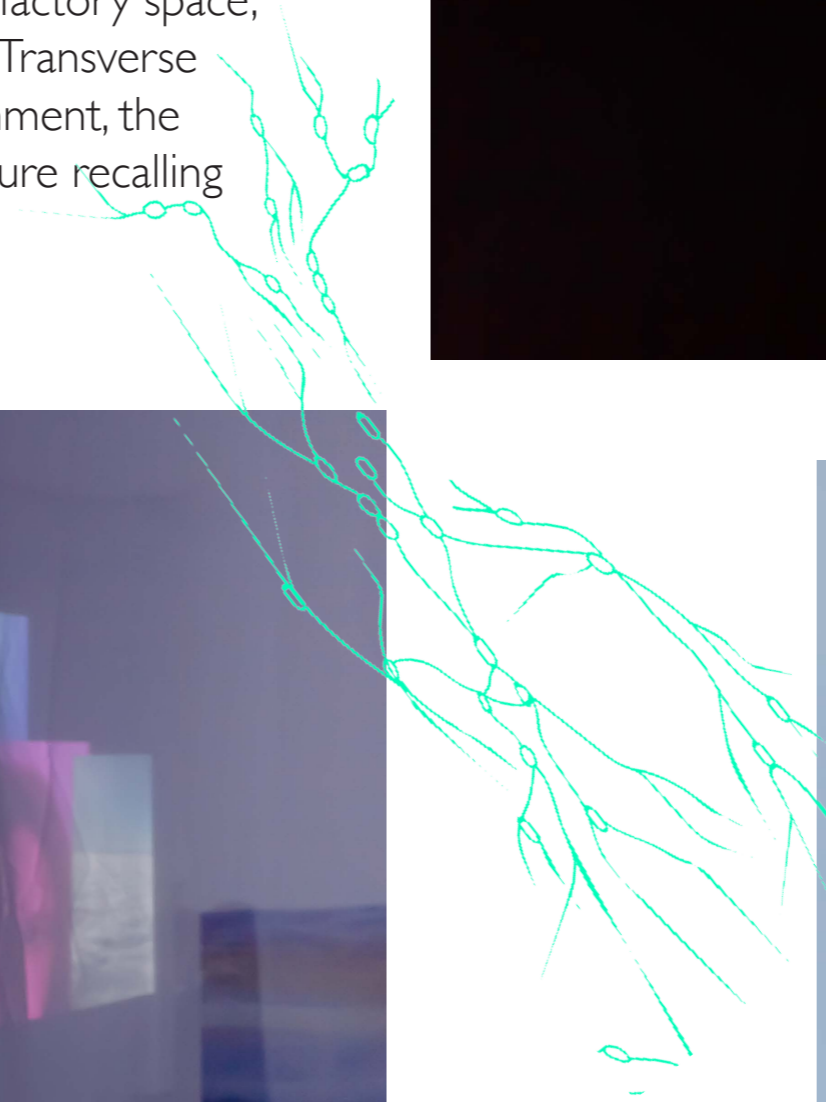
transverse hyperspace

video-essay, UV-print, photo-sculpture, installation, smells, texture, mirror,
2018

Organised as the dimly-lit transit space of a laboratory, the exhibition restages selected aspects of the transitional state of culture on its way to a dystopian world of the future (“the world without us”), with the help of recovered artefact-ruins.

Skidan’s pieces together the landscape of forthcoming world from scraps of information left behind after unknown events, supplemented by video installation and objects. Through video-essay she constant reipscription of one’s self within the digital landscape as a guest in a landscape’s memory.

Installation includes the various means of sensory perception, olfactory space, haptic sculptures, immersive video environments. The world of «Transverse hyperspace» is the alive laboratory with ruins of a digital environment, the speculative memories of an artificial intelligence of the of the future recalling and a sensitive tracks of the nature.





During exhibition artist offered new strategies for mental orientation to erase boundaries the alienation of the body and represented new identity. The show was accompanied by three collective performance sessions, combined with lectures about the dark ecology and post-humanism, in addition to performances by guest lecturers and sound artist. These served to connect the main points of the exhibition, with the attendees immersed in different layers of perception, physical exploration and intellectual drift.





eupsychia

installation: steel, wood, printing on fabric, natural rubber, 2017

The space of Eupsychia combines elements of Eastern practices aimed at achieving samadhi, a state of meditative consciousness, as well as attributes of material culture, focused on issues of existence in anthropogenesis. Today, the relationship between body and space is coming to a new level. The outer shell is transformed into a tool that helps to connect with a new reality. Eupsychia was created with pertinent problems in mind: redistributing the flow of information, neutralizing undesirable ideological attitudes and blocking standardized perceptions of the world. The installation includes two objects. 1. A modern yoga bench helps to perform deeper asanas due to its additional angle. The bench is made of steel and is covered with a mat of natural eco-friendly rubber. 2. A costume made of linen, cotton, and synthetic mesh. The mesh elements of the suit cannot be tracked by surveillance systems. The symbols used in the drawings on the floor, suit and yoga mat refer to different spiritual traditions.

* Eu - Greek. good, absolutely, right ** Psychia - Greek. soul, spirit, breath

