



I'm the Polar Bear Speaking through You* to Humanity

2011 - ongoing (work in process)

Video 19:06 min

Originally created for the exhibition *Iceploitation* (Tromsø Kunstforening 25.03 - 30.04 in 2011) where it was shown in a twelve minute version together with the audio track of an dialog (subtitled in english) between me and my grandfather regarding his childhood memories with polar bear cubs in his hometown, the arctic harbour town Hammerfest, in the pre-war years to World War II.

Excerpt from Kitty Kristensen - *I'm the Polar Bear Speaking through You* to Humanity* (2017);

...(The choice of me becoming the object in the sentence emphasises the acknowledgement of the communication between the polar bear and I happening on equal terms, or at least not on human terms.)...*

...The man-made mirrors that we look into to examine our behaviour are usually manipulated, as the human being will always go to great lengths to avoid having to realise and address our shortcomings...

...The human experience of what is reflected in this mirror, being non- verbal, relies on the senses and not on the intellect. Verbal language, one of the human capacities that traditionally has been viewed as setting us apart from other species, establishes and reinforces a hierarchal relationship and makes it impossible for nature to communicate with the human being on fair terms...



Stills and installation view
from *Iceploitation*, Tromsø
Kunstforening, 2011.
Poster designed by Kaja
Czy Andersen.



This spring, at the time the ice was starting to melt in Tromsø, North of Norway, the archival project »Iceploitation - Superhuman effort isn't worth a damn unless it achieves results« (referring to a quote from explorer Ernest Shackleton) was presented at Tromsø Art Gallery. The project was initiated by the Art Academy in Tromsø and Tromsø Art Gallery in cooperation with the German based (film) curator Madeleine Bernstorff. Artists and art students based in Tromsø worked collaboratively on the project led by Bernstorff, and the group process was also accompanied by Norwegian based artist Kristin Tårnesvik. During the preparation for an exhibition, as well as a fanzine, a seminar, a film screening and an intervention into the touristy Polar Museum, based on, among others, studies of photo archives located at the Polar Institute and Tromsø University Museum, different questions were being raised by those people involved: What is

lost in traditional history writing, archive compilation and canon creation? What is included, and what is excluded? How is history written? And whose history is told?

In the process of making »Iceploitation« the responsive and accommodating environment of Tromsø Art Academy, »the self-organized-politicized-experimental-complex«, was working as a breeding ground. Commenting on the process Bernstorff point out that collaboration never has to be taken for granted: »For me it actually is this special situation of working collaboratively which created all the energy for the different aspects of the project. The original set-up of Tromsø Art Academy allowed for this collaborative structure, but this structure could never be taken for granted and always has to be fought for.« As a result of what Bernstorff categorize as a »fight« the project is transformed: what first

seemed as a critical (discursive) approach turns out as a more playful and humoristic approximation. The »Iceploitation« group (artists and art students Liv Bangsund, Ane Elene Johansen, Ingrid Bøe Sørensen, Camilla Fagerli, Kaja Cxzy Andersen, Kjetil Kristensen, Maija Liisa Ingebrigtsen, Tor Erik Bøe and Sjur Nyvold) create what could be characterized as a new archive connected to the arctic: an archive that distorts the unfriendly, unapproachable and heroic and makes visible the friendly, approachable and anti heroic, at the same time highlighting the inherent claiming, nationalizing and colonizing aspects of arctic discourses.

Excerpt from the text *Iceploitation* by Hanne Hammer Stien in Springerin, [Issue 4/2011](#)

