URTĖ JANUS

Selected Work 2024-2025

Full portfolio is available here

FLOWING BODIES, DURATIONAL SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION,
UNDERGROUND WATER RESERVOIR, AUKŠTAITIJOS VANDENYS, PANEVĖŽYS, LITHUANIA
COMMISSIONED BY AV17 GALLERY, SUPPORTED BY THE LITHUANIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE (2025)

Flowing Bodies was a site-specific and site-sensitive installation, created specifically for underground water storage reservoir, part of a chain of reservoirs operated by Aukštaitijos Vandenys Water Company. Founded in 1960, the reservoir supplies water to northern Lithuania.

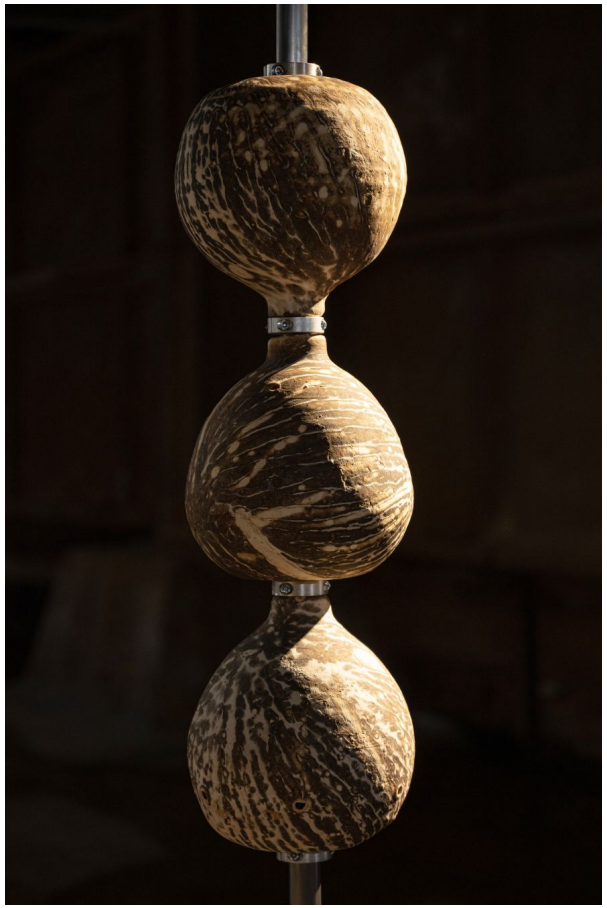
The commission required the work to respond to the site's history. Over a series of site visits, water was collected from surrounding wild sources, such as ponds and rivers, as well as the reservoir itself. The installation resulted in ceramic vessel sculptures containing the collected water, which was activated through natural additives such as sugars, salts, and plants growing above the reservoir, incorporating wild yeasts and microbial communities present in the air and on the plants' surfaces. The recipes drew on local food fermentation and preservation techniques, reflecting long-standing relationships between the invisible life and local communities.

Over the course of the exhibition, microorganisms present in the surrounding air and water multiplied and died. Processes of fermentation, decay, and putrefaction gradually filled the space with a sweet, sour scent that intensified over time, accompanied by the sounds of running water and the subtle fizzing and bubbling of bacterial metabolic activity.

The use of iron tubes was informed by on-site observations of pipe and plumbing systems, reflecting their role in the containment and control of water.

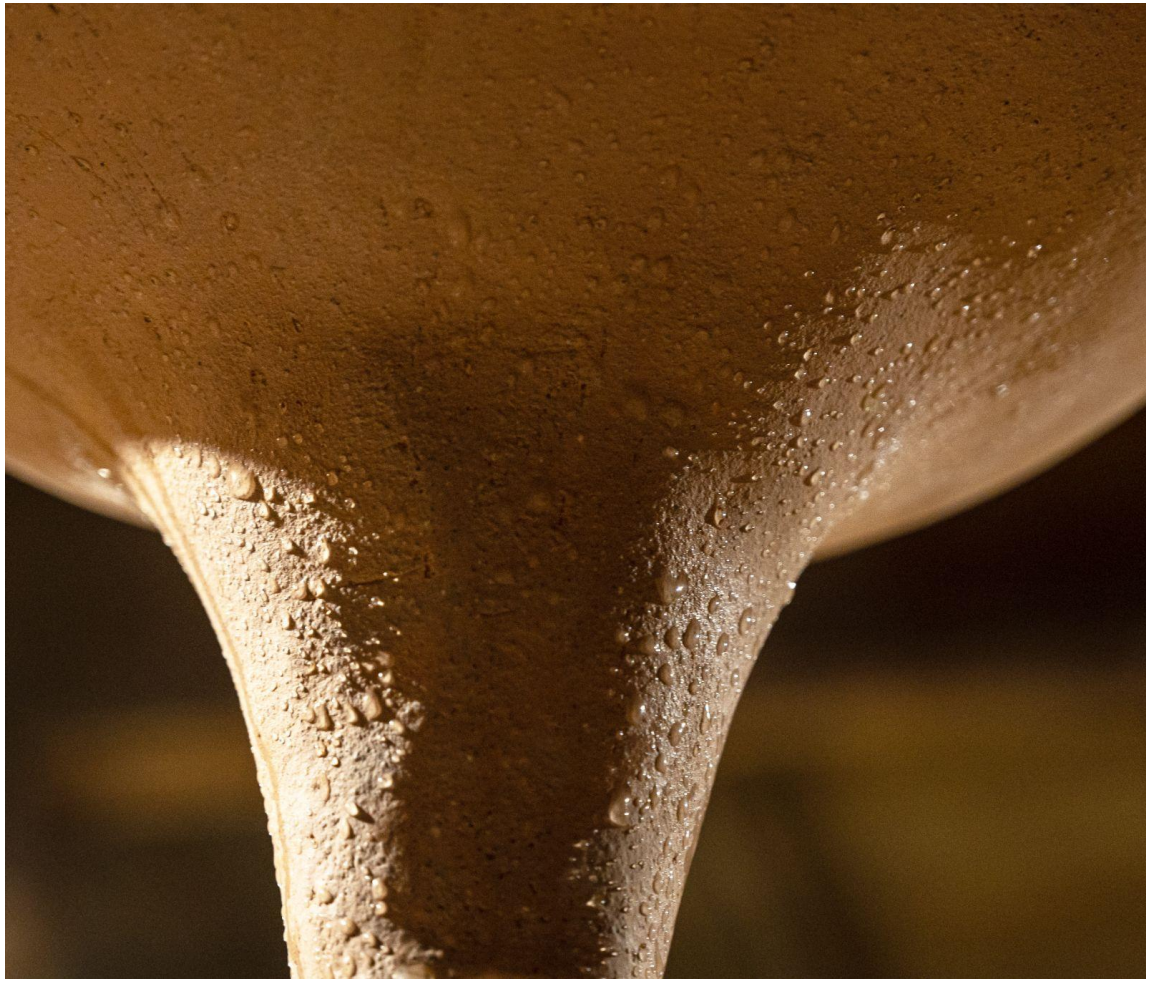
Flowing Bodies (2025), installation view

Ceramics, raw iron bars, local water, airborne and waterborne bacteria, fungi, and yeasts.
Photography: Paulius Zidonis



Each type of vessel was created in collaboration with local craftsmen who possessed ancestral material knowledge, using clay waterproofing techniques that predate modern glazes. The marbled vessels were produced by dipping hot clay, straight from the kiln, into liquid bread sourdough starter. The chemical and thermal reaction between the hot clay and the starter produced marbled patterns. While today these patterns are largely ornamental, historically the technique was used to waterproof clay for storing water and food. The sculptures also functioned as fountains, filled with fermenting liquids. Over time, microbial activity converted sugars in the liquid first into alcohol and then into acetic acid, gradually increasing the liquid's acidity, eroding the containers, and causing iron bars to rust.

The brown vessels were produced by coating the clay with a thick layer of whole milk before firing, which gives them their characteristic brown colour. This technique is also an ancient local waterproofing method, likely using ingredients commonly found in every household.



Each clay waterproofing method resulted in variations in porosity, with the clay never fully sealed. This caused the liquids within the vessels to seep through at different rates and in varying patterns. Over time, the microbial life, minerals, toxins and other compounds present in the collected water seeped through the clay, producing evolving colours, patterns, and mould on its surfaces, as well as ever-changing scents and sounds.

INCUBATION, MA ART & ECOLOGY RESEARCH PROJECT,
ALSO PRESENTED AS DURATIONAL INSTALLATION, PART OF STILL LIFE EXHIBITION,
EDITORIAL PROJECTS GALLERY, VILNIUS, LITHUANIA
COMMISSIONED BY EDITORIAL PROJECTS GALLERY,
SUPPORTED BY THE LITHUANIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE (2024)

Incubation (2024), installation view, Goldsmiths Graduation Show

Charcoal and chalk drawings on raw canvas, steel frames

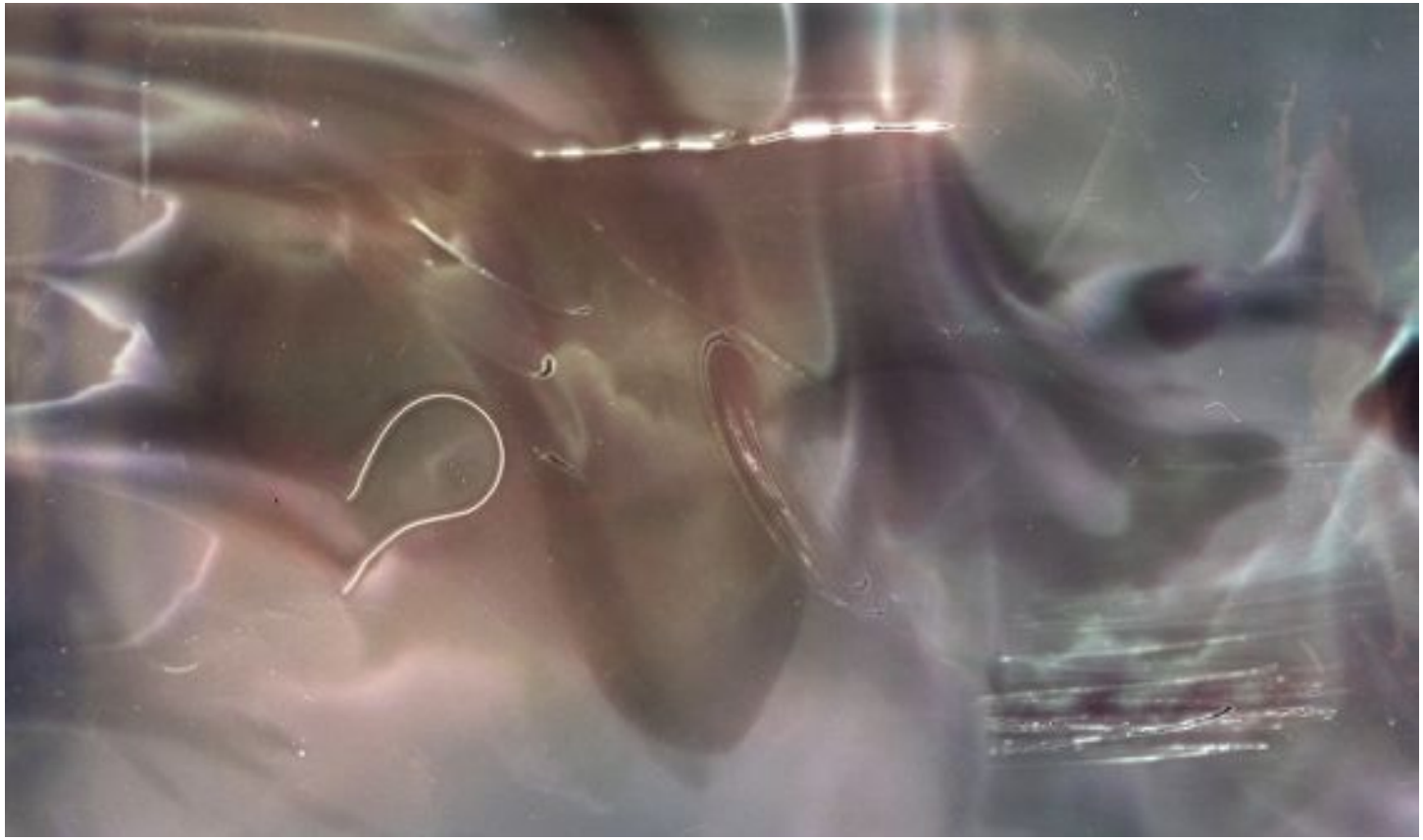
Incubation was a research project conducted during the MA Art & Ecology at Goldsmiths. It traced a Zechstein deposit that covers much of northern and central Europe—an ancient Permian sea that evaporated, leaving salt deposits which supplied the region with salt across the ages. The deposit is tunnelled by chains of salt mines, some dating back to prehistoric times. In modern times, some of these mines are used as deep storage repositories for uranium and radioactive waste. One of them also houses the Boulby Underground Laboratory, which searches for dark matter and conducts microbiology experiments on microorganisms that have survived in underground salt deposits for thousands of years, providing insights to studies of extraterrestrial life.

Because access to these mines is restricted, the Embodied Imagination technique (Bosnak, 1970) enabled access to these sites by mobilising both body and imagination.This process resulted in a series of drawings depicting cross-sections of mines and uranium storage barrels, alongside representations of psychedelic plants traditionally used in dream incubation—an ancient healing practice originating in Asklepios temples in Greece, where dreams played a central role in medicine. These ancient dream practices directly inspired Robert Bosnak in the development of Embodied Imagination.

Incubation (2024), installation view, part of *Still Life* duo exhibition with Paweł Olszewski, Editorial Projects Gallery, Vilnius, Lithuania

Steel meat-curing shelves, steel meat hooks, found objects cured in rock salt

The ***Incubation*** project was further developed and presented as a durational installation, commissioned by Editorial Projects Gallery in Vilnius, Lithuania. The work engaged the chemical properties of salt, both decay and preservation, while referencing its historical significance in food preservation. Traditional meat-curing methods were adapted to treat found objects, including discarded personal belongings, items collected from friends' attics and cellars, and objects discarded in public spaces, alongside psychedelic, dream-inducing plants, alluding to the Embodied Imagination method used to engage with subterranean salt formations. The installation foregrounded intense material transformations through decay, particularly in relation to anthropogenic waste that resists natural cycles and may persist long beyond human lifespans.



The Seventh Dream (2024), published in the *Journal for Art & Ecology*, film still.

Kodak Portra 400 film, tears, dreams, rock salt.

Text read by Pia De Laborde Noguez.

The Seventh Dream (2024) is a short film that culminated the *Incubation* project and its associated research on salt, developed through the use of Embodied Imagination methods and dreamwork. The film was produced by immersing Kodak Portra 400 analogue film in saline solutions composed of rock salt from the Zechstein deposit and human tears, resulting in visual imagery evocative of 'mineral dreaming.' This process traced the chemical memories of both minerals and human bodies, manifested through shifts in color and surface alterations as the film's silver bromide layer interacted with the saline solutions. Drawing on early surrealist and experimental cinema, as well as cross-cultural histories of dreaming, it followed a feverish journey of a female protagonist who repeatedly falls asleep, entering dream after dream, while searching for a way back to the waking world, a threshold that only her tears can cross.

The film was created for the Journal of Art and Ecology and can be viewed here.