

***Particles* – a video installation by Hanne Nielsen & Birgit Johnsen.**

The internationally renowned Danish video artists Hanne Nielsen and Birgit Johnsen (Aarhus, 1959/1958) have for more than three decades focused on the global, political reality where media images constitute a power factor in our society. In their conceptual works they are preoccupied with the borderlines between fiction and reality, and how our social behavior relates to historical and present-day issues in a world where absolute truths are non-existent, but where randomness, unpredictability and confusion are crucial to our approach to the world. The artists explain: "We want our work to create a frame for reflection on current global, critical conditions as well as the ethical, existential choices confronting us today. We often perform ourselves in our works; we believe that the performative connects the personal with the global and political aspects."

The raven, the falcon and the wanderer.

In *Particles* the artists perform as bird-like figures beamed down from somewhere in the universe: female clones of an ancient plague doctor with a beaked mask and a future scientist with big satellite ears and a broken swan's wing, both packed with all kinds of measuring equipment. Although they have lost the ability to fly, maybe they like Ikaros have come too close to the sun, which the broken wing and a comb of beeswax may indicate, both armed with modern drones allow them yet to rise above the ground providing them with the vertical perspective they need in order to travel through time and space and through micro- and macrocosm. With drones as an attached aid, the drones unfold a machine vision, flying in abrupt movements, watching, searching, perhaps monitoring, rising and disappearing into the sky. They wander through Tarkovskij-inspired mythical sceneries of desolated industrial areas with scrap piles of consumptions, abandoned fun parcs, overgrown castle ruins, rocky barren landscape and burning fields - to measure the state of our planet, which from crosscuts to tv images of ancient to current epidemics, smog and flooding seems very close to apocalyptic.

Apocalypse – dust, smoke, fog.

Particles in the sense of aeolian dust are the precondition for existence. But particles in forms of dust, smoke and fog may also refer to pollution, war, 9/11, terror, fire, climate change, poverty and lack of diversity or lack of transparency in antidemocratic and totalitarian processes.

In *Particles* we are presented with a wide range of possible interpretations in different reflection rooms, where redundant tv clips of political and historical events are intertwined with personal and mythical interpretations through time or through the plague doctor's crystal balls, allowing us to establish a more sensuous mediation of seemingly chaotic conditions. But there is still hope: from the most dark chaos theory there may emerge the most beautiful butterflies.