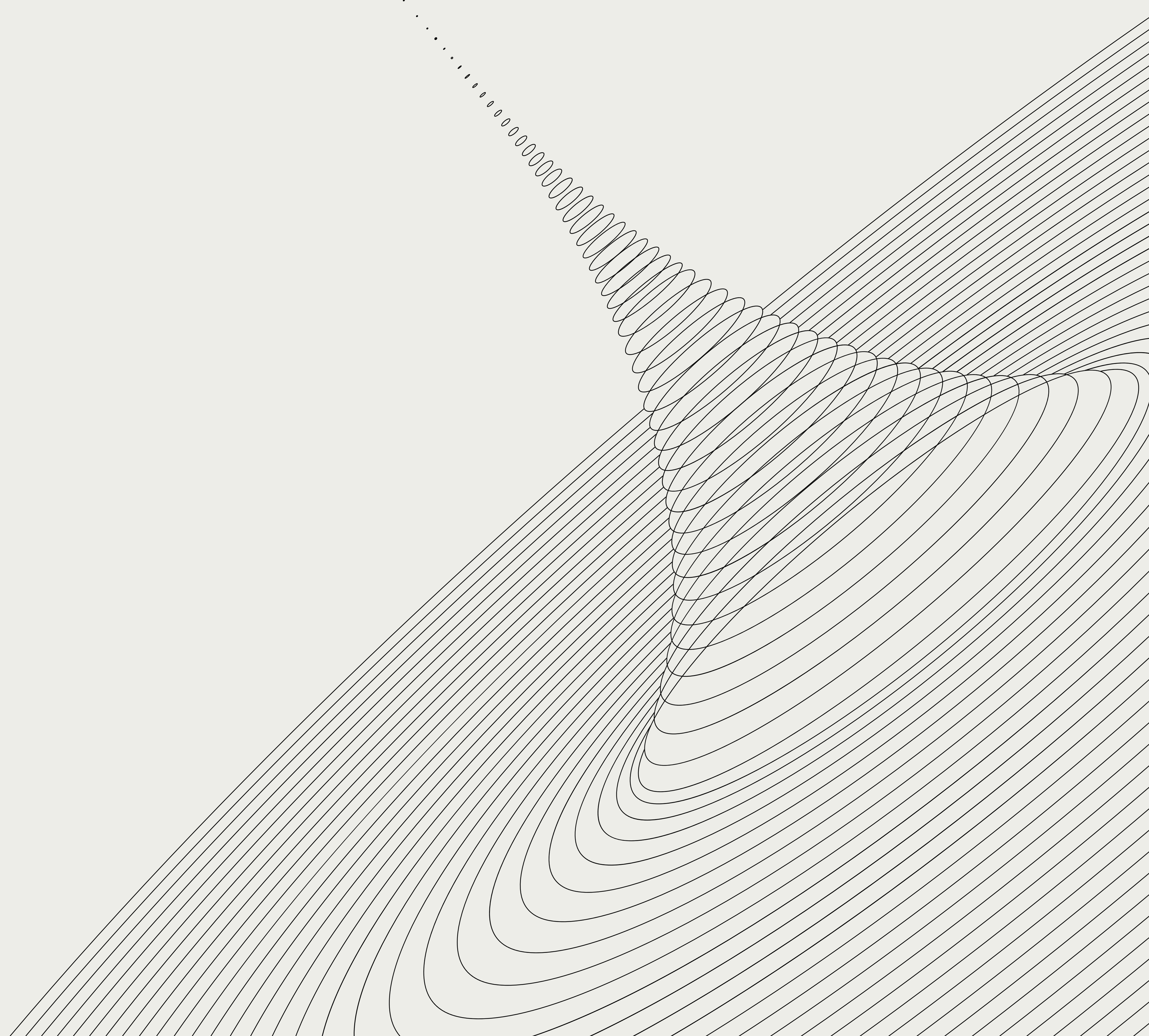EPILOGUE CODA

INTRODUCTION

From the end of May to the end of June 2025, Chitti Kasemkitvatana is in residence at Methone in Paris. Methone is a residency program that orbits between Paris and Athens, organized by Phenomenon and supported by the Kerenidis Pepe Collection. During this period, he is conducting research and presenting « Coda », the first part of a three-part interdisciplinary project titled « Epilogue ». The following phases of the project will take place throughout 2025 and 2026 at the Mae Fah Luang Art and Cultural Park in Chiang Rai and at Gallery Seescape in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

"Epilogue" explores the cultural variations and sociocultural processes involved in the production of time in society, with a particular focus on the northern provinces of Southeast Asia, including Tai Kra-Dai ethnic groups, Lua, and other indigenous communities living in mountainous villages and cities. This ongoing project is "driven by an enduring curiosity about the nature of (multi-layers of) space, time, and matter in the universe, [in which] the artist explores these questions through the lenses of philosophy, Buddhism, astronomy, and physics, responding with a fluid artistic language over the years." (Esther Lu, "The Mountain Algorithms" exhibition handout, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan, 2024). The project dives deep into the ghostly temporality of the entanglement of "what was / is / to come," understood as a dynamism of forces in which all things are constantly diffracting, influencing, and acting inseparably.

"Coda," a prelude rendition in Paris, will present a selection of both early and recent works —mostly sketches and pieces that gesture toward the coexistence of different temporal layers within a single moment, and the multidirectional flow of time between past, present, and future. Coda intertwines the artist's ongoing research into scientific inventions from the Enlightenment through the early 20th century in France with cultural artifacts and mythologies from the northern provinces of Southeast Asia, alongside works informed by his recent explorations in quantum physics.

Chitti Kasemkitvatana is a Bangkok based artist, independent curator and educator. His methodology relies on research-based art practice that relates to the use of archival fragments and spatial practice. Applying the new materialist lens, he focuses on entangled ideas in sociocultural history, especially on the moment in which various spheres become "porous". His artistic operation involves transmission of collective memories via object-device and conversion of data that entails an active process of construction of time in society.

His recent exhibitions include, notably, "The Mountain Algorithms", Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (Kaohsiung, Taiwan, 2024), "The Spirits of Maritime Crossing", a collateral event of 60th La Biennale di Venezia, Palazzo Smith Mangilli Valmarana (Italy, 2024), Thailand Biennale, Wat Pa Sak and National Museum Chiang Saen (Chiang Rai, 2023), Bangkok Art Biennale, The Prelude: One Bangkok (Bangkok, 2022), and "Stories We Tell To Scare Ourselves With", MOCA Taipei (Taiwan, 2019).

Phenomenon

the universe is not locally real

CHITTI KASEMKITVATANA
Untitled (the universe is not locally real), 2023
LEDflex letterset on clear acrylic sheet
Dimension : 185 × 21 cm
Edition of 1/3
Kerenidis Pepe Collection

Chitti Kasemkitvatana's project "Cinematic Ensemble of Kailash", to which this work belongs, explores the sociocultural and geophysical dimensions of Mount Kailash, seen as the earthly manifestation of the mythic Mount Meru—the cosmic axis in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology. The project examines the mountain's physical aspects, such as geology and ecology, in relation to human beliefs, using the concept of "bhava" (becoming, existence) and its Thai counterpart, "Bhap" (image, view). By applying a new materialist approach, the ensemble looks at both the material and spiritual dimensions of Kailash. This includes the geological features, pilgrimage routes, sacred structures, and artifacts that shape religious practices, as well as the emotional and sensory experiences of pilgrims. The project reveals how the physicality of Kailash intertwines with cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Untitled
(48°52'11"N 2°21'09.49"E) 2025
Vinyl text and sculpture
Dimensions variable

Inspired by the artist's exploration of the neighborhood around Porte Saint-Denis, this work—part of an ongoing series of text pieces translated into selected languages—takes as its starting point the phrase 'The universe is not locally real', the headline from the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physics report. Rendered in Latin, the phrase echoes the scriptural language often found on public monuments throughout Paris. The accompanying mobile sculpture, made from materials sourced in the same neighborhood, is a reinterpreted tung (ตุง), a large, hand-woven ritual banner from northern Thailand's highlands used during festivals, often extending several tens of meters, that evokes spatial relationships and the diffraction of data.
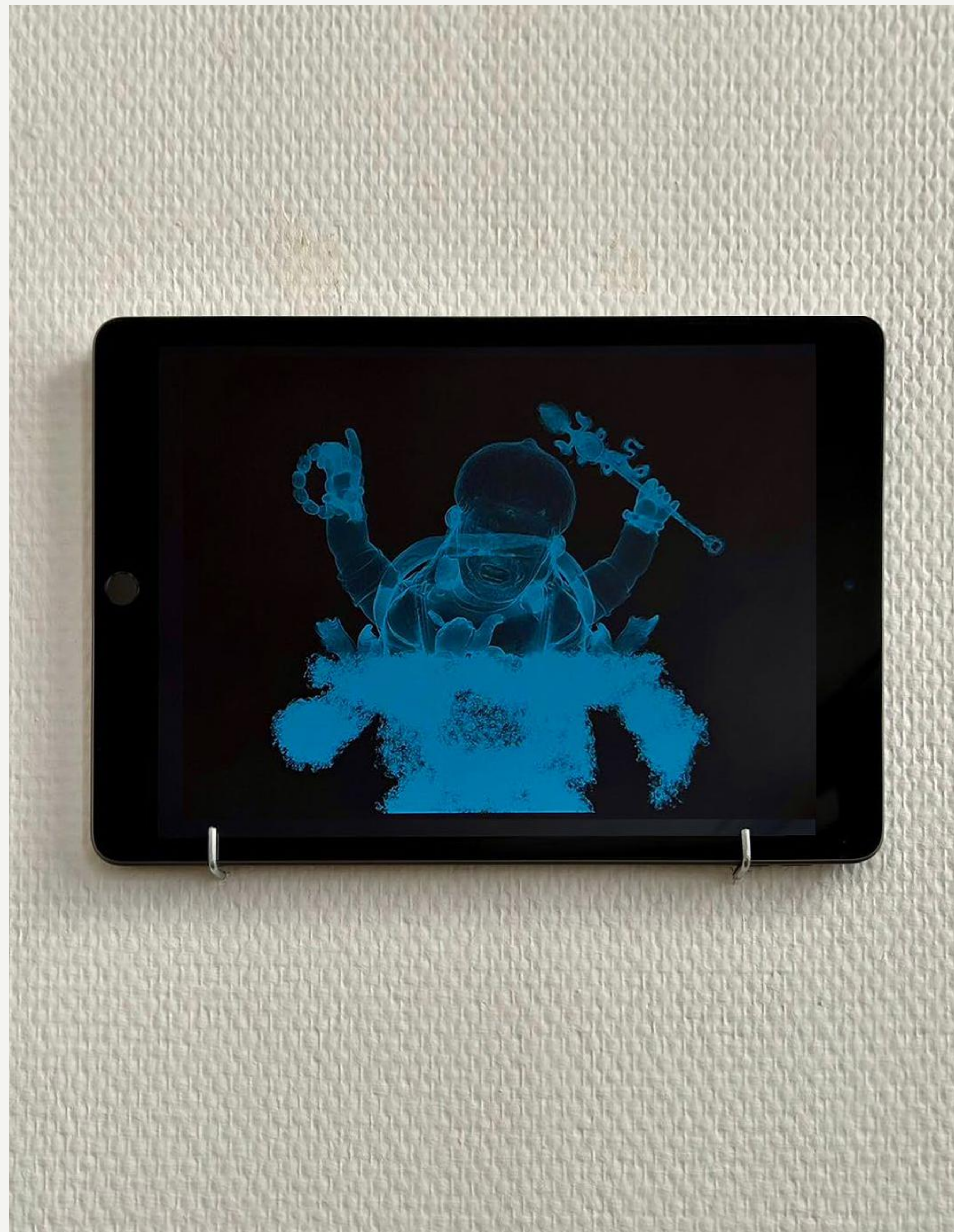
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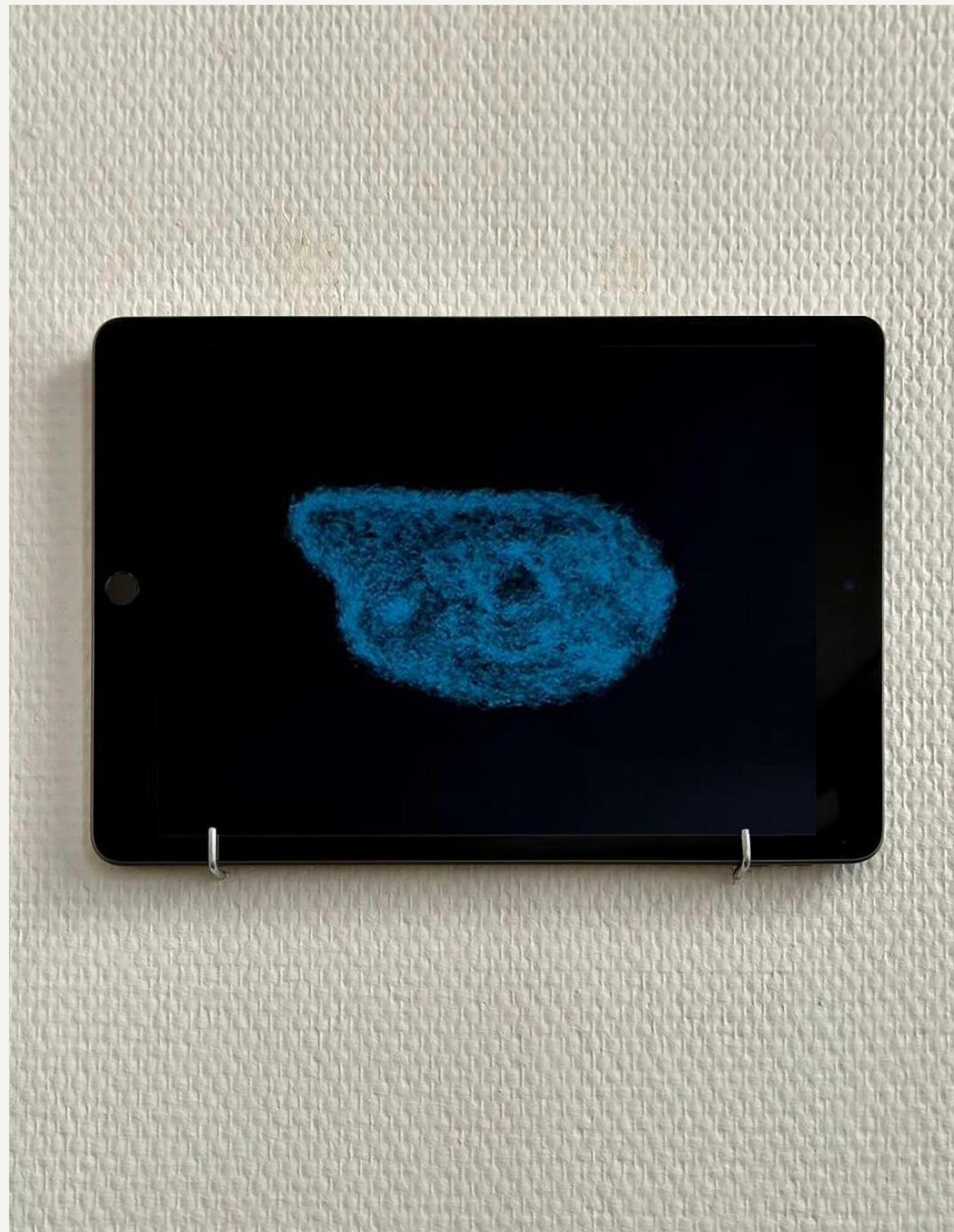
Kala Ensemble
2023–2025
Video animation on iPad, color, silent
Duration: 5'10''

The video images depict various ancient deities and symbolic faces associated with time, such as Kala Face, the personification of time and destruction, and Kirtimukha, the protective "Face of Glory" motif, from diverse civilizations across northern Thailand, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, China, and Tibet, alluding to the cyclical nature of time through processes of particle transformation.

EXCAVATING ENTANGLED TIME

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE QUANTUM OTHERWISE

PATHOMPONG
MANAKITSOMBOON

When we think of archaeology, we often imagine the careful excavation of buried objects —fragments of pottery, bones, structures—unearthed by hand and brush from layers of earth. In this traditional sense, archaeology is a practice of recovering the material past —not only what has survived, but also what has been forgotten, buried, or neglected. Yet beyond its traditional role, archaeology can also be understood as a way of uncovering systems of meaning, excavating the silent architectures that shape how we think, remember, and narrate history.

This invites us to reconsider what it means to do history—not as a passive act of uncovering, but as an active mode of negotiation between what is visible and what is obscured. What if the past were not simply behind us, laid out in neat succession, but scattered, entangled, and still responsive—more like a quantum field of potentials than a linear timeline? If archaeology becomes conceptual, then time itself becomes unstable. The past becomes an unfinished resonance—an unfolding presence, where even discarded fragments may return with renewed resonance.

Michel Foucault's rethinking of archaeology responds directly to such questions. For him, archaeology was not a metaphor, but a method—a systematic practice of tracing how discourses emerge, operate, and shift. History, in this formulation, is a terrain of discontinuities, not of progress. It is marked by ruptures, silences, and thresholds, which he calls epistemes—the conditions that govern what can be said and thought. When Foucault writes, "The problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a discourse back to its origin, but of archaeology, of describing the archive" (Foucault 1972), he redirects our attention away from lineage toward structure. Describing an archive always risks reinscribing it; every excavation is also a form of reconstitution.

Such concerns reverberate in media archaeology, which turns this discursive focus toward technologies, formats, and platforms. Instead of following the story of invention and innovation, media archaeology listens for what was excluded: the failed devices, obsolete interfaces, strange machines that never became mainstream. Siegfried Zielinski, one of the key figures in media archaeology, calls this the "deep time" of media—a geology of technological sediment that resists teleology (Zielinski 2006). He writes, "There is no history, only histories," suggesting that the past is plural, fractured, and always partial. Accessing these fractured pasts requires methods that can tune in to what the dominant timeline silences: undercurrents, interruptions, and peripheral signals.

Zielinski's variantology offers one such method. Rather than seeking a singular origin, it turns toward the unusual and the peripheral. It encourages us to examine forgotten pathways, overlooked ideas, and alternative trajectories. It is a search not for the origin but for the outlier, not for the universal but for the strange. Variantology invites us to think of history as a field of possibility, where speculative futures and failed pasts coexist. When we begin to think like this, we find ourselves echoing ideas from quantum theory—particularly

entanglement and superposition, which describe systems in which states do not exist independently but in relation. Histories, too, can be understood as entangled. Every telling is an act of collapsing a field of possibility into one version, one account, one memory.

The quantum metaphor unsettles familiar categories. From this perspective, time is not linear but probabilistic. What was, what is, and what might be are never fully separate. Instead, they interfere, echo, and sometimes contradict. The observer, whether an artist, a historian, or a writer, does not simply recover the past but participates in shaping how the past materializes. If time is entangled, then the act of narrating history becomes a question of power: who gets to define which past becomes present.

Building on this entangled view of temporality and authorship, Karen Barad's theory of agential realism adds another layer to the conversation. Instead of seeing individuals as fixed and autonomous, Barad argues that entities emerge through their relationships—with others, with matter, and with meaning. Knowledge is not something static or separate; it is shaped through interaction and entanglement. History is not simply retrieved but enacted through interpretation. Each act of interpretation becomes an intervention in a field of possible meanings. Barad also challenges the division between matter and meaning, showing how the two are always connected. Meaning never exists apart from its material context, and material processes are inherently interpretive. Speculation is not about escaping reality—it is an ethical response to its complexity. Embracing uncertainty allows for new ways of engaging with history, along with new responsibilities, once we release the pursuit of total objectivity (Barad 2007).

This shift in perspective prompts a broader reconsideration of time itself. Outside of Western thought, many ancestral cosmologies have long understood time as spiral, recursive, or ceremonial. Myths and rituals are not mere traditions; they are techniques for holding together multiple temporalities. Rather than placing myth in the past, these systems allow it to coexist with the present, to speak again and again. Theravāda Buddhist cosmology, for example, introduces the concept of a kalpa[1], which is often translated as an aeon or world cycle, that structures time not as a linear progression but as a vast, recursive unfolding of cosmic history. Here, time is conceived not as singular, but as layered with repetitions, echoing cycles, and latent futures. The notion that multiple enlightened beings may emerge within a single kalpa reveals a temporal logic in which past, present, and future are not discrete phases but overlapping potentials.

Rather than a linear progression, this cosmological framing offers a metaphorical counterpart to the principle of superposition in quantum theory, where multiple outcomes exist in parallel until observation collapses them into a single reality. The kalpa becomes a

speculative structure of time: a container of many pasts and many futures, entangled and unresolved. Sacred temporality, seen through this lens, resists both chronology and closure. Ritual, likewise, functions like a quantum state—active, contextual, and waiting to be observed.

Viewed through this comparison, one might suggest that these practices, through their own cosmological logics, resonate with what quantum theory calls superposition where multiple realities overlap and await collapse through attention. In this sense, we might think of myth as doing something similar to quantum superposition, allowing different layers of meaning and moments in time to exist side by side, resonating across generations.

This layered sense of time aligns closely with the entangled, non-linear temporality suggested by quantum thinking. Both challenge the modern Western notion of time as singular, empty, and progressive. Both resist the idea that history unfolds in straight lines. Might we say that these practices have always already theorized what it now calls speculative time?

If we take this seriously, the archive becomes less a static repository than a volatile system that is alive with signals, gaps, and noise. To work with history is not to uncover a stable truth but to navigate a field of relations, contingencies, and exclusions. This is the space of speculative historiography. In other words, it is an approach that treats the past not as a fixed sequence of events, but as a performative engagement with what remains possible. Art takes on this role—not to depict the past, but to reroute it, remix it, or make it leak into the now.

Perhaps history is less a story than a choreography—an ongoing performance of relations across time, space, and matter. Thinking with archaeology, variantology, and quantum theory draws us into this instability, urging us to embrace contradiction, simultaneity, and emergence as foundational conditions of knowing. It is a way of listening to the field, attuning to the frequencies of the forgotten, and tracing the outlines of what might still become. It does not resolve but resonates. This approach refuses closure. It welcomes ambiguity. It asks us to unlearn mastery and dwell in multiplicity. And in doing so, it insists that memory is never complete, that time is always in motion, and that meaning must be made—and remade—together.

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APPENDIX

[1] A kalpa (Pāli: kappa) is an immense cycle of cosmic time in Theravāda Buddhist cosmology, often described through metaphors that gesture to its near-incomprehensible duration—such as the time it would take to wear down a mountain by brushing it once every hundred years with a piece of silk. Each kalpa allows for the arising of multiple enlightened beings. In the current era, known as the Bhadrakalpa, four Buddhas have already appeared—Kakusandha, Konāgamana, Kassapa, and Gotama—with the future Buddha, Metteyya (Maitreya), yet to come. This layered temporality, where multiple Buddhas appear within a single cosmic cycle, reflects a nonlinear, recursive view of time. A striking material manifestation of this cosmology can be found at Wat Phra Phutthabat Si Roi, located in Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai, Thailand, where a stone bears what are believed to be the superimposed footprints of all four past Buddhas. The site, and its legend, encapsulate how sacred geography and myth can hold together overlapping temporalities within a single symbolic space.

(Above)
Site observation by DDMY Studio
Wat Phraphutthabat Si Roi
(Temple of Four Buddhas' Footprints)
Saluang, Mae Rim, Chiang Mai

(Left)
Collection of Musée des Arts et Métiers

Engraving depicting the south face of the Porte Saint-Denis in Paris. Frontispiece of Francois Blondel's Cours d'Architecture, second edition. Paris, 1698. Also appeared in vol.1 of the first edition in 1675. Source: Wikipedia.
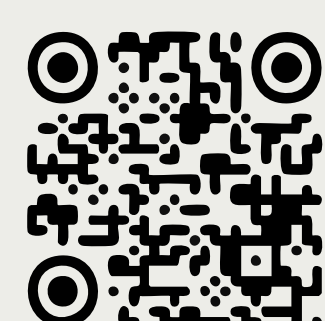
PHENOMENON KERENIDIS PEPE COLLECTION

The Kerenidis Pepe Collection of contemporary art was founded in 2006 in Paris by Iordanis Kerenidis (Research Director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research in quantum computing) and Piergiorgio Pepe (Ethics and compliance professional and lecturer at Sciences Po, Paris). It encompasses a variety of initiatives, including acquisitions, organization of exhibitions and projects such as Phenomenon, research on the ethics of collecting, publishing of artist books and catalogues, and other supporting actions. The Kerenidis Pepe Collection has organized Phenomenon since 2015, a biennial program for contemporary art on the island of Anafi, Greece and, with the Association Phenomenon, a series of related activities and projects, mostly in Paris and Athens.

METHONE

Methone is a residency program that orbits around Athens and Paris. Its objective is to create entanglements amongst scholars, artists, places, and times, that lead to open-ended reworkings of the respective situated contexts. The form of the residency changes each time to meet the needs of the residents and the local communities. Methone is named after the street of the residency's Athens location. It is also an egg-shaped moon of Saturn and a mythological character.
Methone is organized by Phenomenon, with the support of the Kerenidis Pepe Collection.

WORKROOM

The Workroom is the project space of the Kerenidis Pepe Collection, inaugurated in 2022 and situated in the 3rd arrondissement in Paris. A series of events, exhibitions, and readings are held there on occasion.

CREDITS

EBOOK

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