



MICHELLE-MARIE LETELIER

MICHELLE-MARIE LETELIER

Born in Rancagua, Chile, 1977. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Her installations, photographs, videos and drawings encompass orchestrated transformations of natural resources, alongside extensive wide-ranging, interdisciplinary research into the landscapes where their exploitation and speculation take place. Through her work, she places together different epochs, regions and societies, examining political-economic, historical and cultural aspects.

Michelle-Marie Letelier spent her early life in Chuquicamata, a space of copper deposits in the middle of the Atacama Desert mined since pre-Hispanic times, annexed by Chile in the Saltpetre War (1879-84), and home to the largest copper mine in the world. When the town was to be buried due to new mining policies, Letelier returned to document this process—a pivotal moment that ushered in her practice.

Since establishing in Berlin in 2007, she has focused her research on five resources: coal, copper, saltpetre, wind and, more recently, salmon. By applying, mixing and constellating their properties – such as electrical conductivity, crystallisation and liveliness –, chemical and physical transformation processes produce the artworks themselves, as well as their poiesis, beyond the extractive industry and its forms of control.

The work of Michelle-Marie Letelier carries heavy socio-political overtones; it is eloquently reflective especially in times of unveiled globalisation, the increasing scarcity of raw materials and the crisis of the neoliberal model.

THE BONE

Virtual Reality experience, approx. 15 mins
Screen City Biennial, Stavanger, Norway 2019



THE BONE

Screen City Biennial, Stavanger, Norway 2019



THE BONE

Virtual reality experience, 15 mins, 2019

Fiskepyren Ferry Terminal

Screen City Biennial, Stavanger, Norway



The Bone is an interactive VR experience inside the skull of a wild salmon, where certain elements and narrations are to be discovered. These narrations address ethical and ecological issues related to salmon farming, domestication and coexistence with this species, from a non-anthropocentric, eco-philosophical and indigenous perspective.

Located inside an intermediate world—between deep sea and universe; between present, future or past; between reality, dream or utopia—this skull is a sculptural/architectural construction. The experienter discovers two otoliths that grow interactively, revealing details about this salmon's life in the past, as well as reflections towards its cousins: the captive salmons. These reflections are presented as a voice-over from the wild salmon's perspective; the owner of the skull, in a way of the salmon's poetic flow of consciousness. The real and virtual space is welcomed by a Yoik sung by Sámi artist Ánde Somby, providing a unique echo and spaciality to this experience, which is installed inside an old fishing boat. The materiality of the real old wood sensually echoes the virtual skull, inviting the experiencers to a journey that departs from their position as fisher species, towards the poiesis of the fish' life.

This artwork has been commissioned by Screen City Biennial, co-produced by Interactive Media Foundation, co-created with Artificial Rome.

Link for video preview (temporary): https://www.dropbox.com/s/uhsbjam4llyei91/TheBone_roughCut.mp4?dl=0

- Script: Michelle-Marie Letelier & Martin Lee-Mueller
- Salmon's character voice: Martin Lee-Mueller
- Yoik singer: Ánde Somby
- Sound design: Christian Barth, Julian Ferreira da Silva
- Scientific advise: Professors Anne Karin Hufthammer, Arild Folkvord, Karin Limburg, Karin Pittman & Johnny Magnussen



Outline for The Bonding

16 mm film

2017-2019



Outline for The Bonding

16mm film transferred to HD, 2017-2019
5:20 min, stereo sound

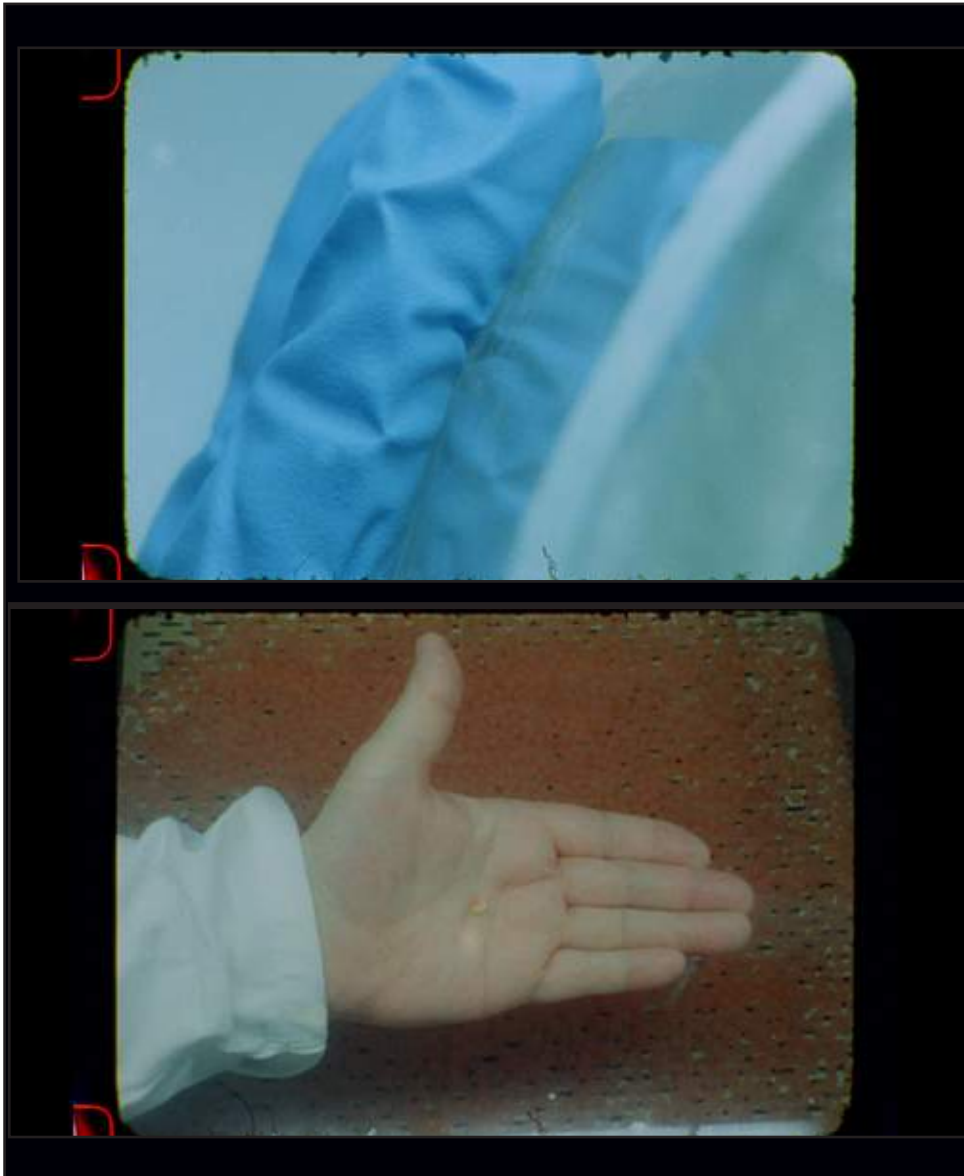
The Bonding will be a film documentation of an interaction between the artist and a farmed salmon, during its 2.5 year programmed life.

This artwork is the focus of the ongoing project *Transpose*, which explores the relationship between Northern and Southern hemispheres in relation to salmon aquaculture.

Letelier has worked with fishermen and scientists from the University of Bergen (UiB), in order to research the history of salmon aquaculture and current technologies, as well as to understand ethical and political contexts. Together with the UiB palaeontology department, they extracted otoliths from farmed salmon; unique crystals that serve as a chemical diary of a fish. Letelier then documented this process with 16mm film, reflecting on how the microscopic crystals of the film material arrange themselves under a photochemical process.

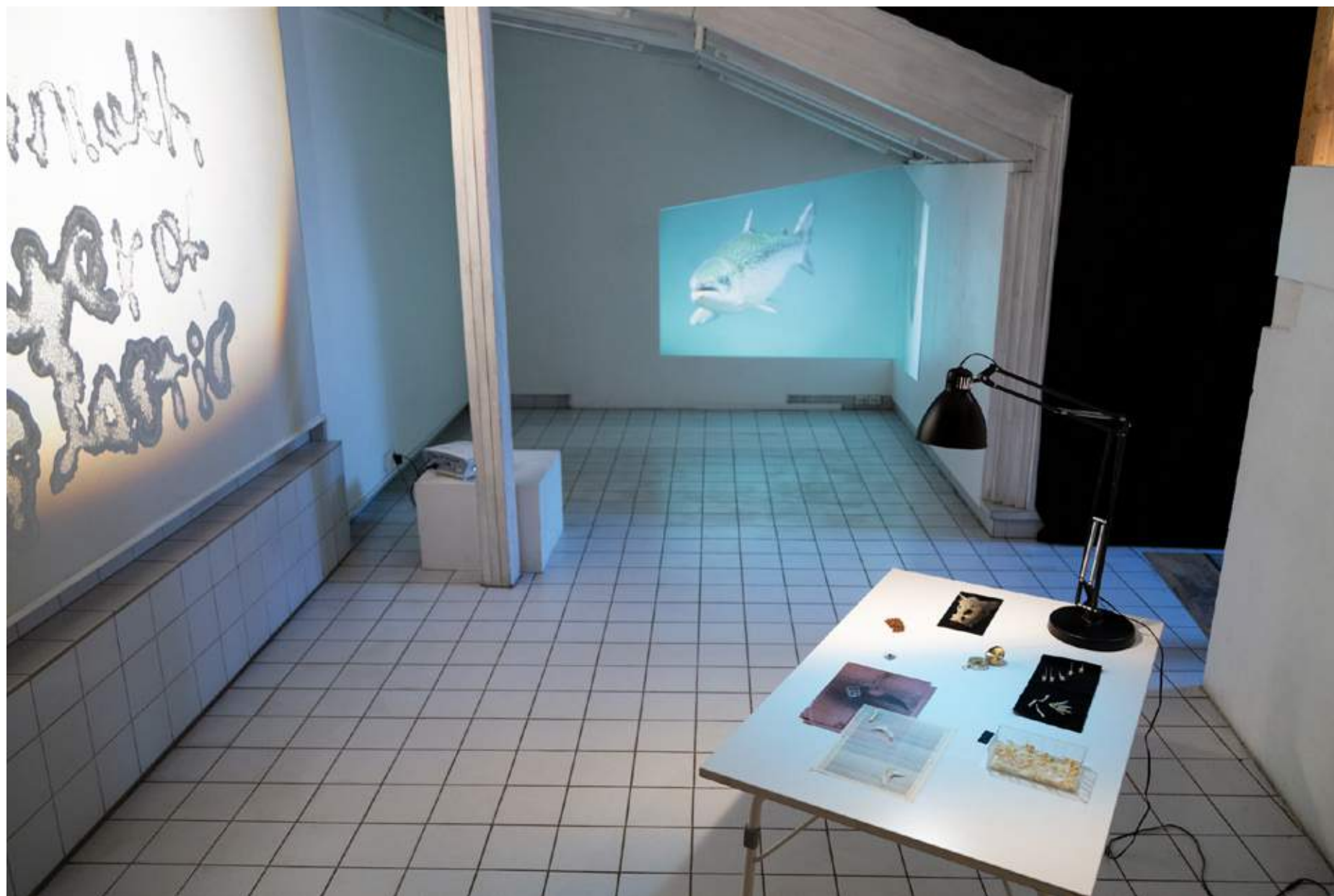
This outline aims to translate the techno-antiseptic Cartesian environment constructed for a captive salmon, through a grainy, imperfect 16mm film aesthetic. It is accompanied by an extract from a conversation with Sámi artist Ánde Somby in Tromsø, 2019.

Link for preview: <https://vimeo.com/359246758>



5 Kilograms of Eye-Opener

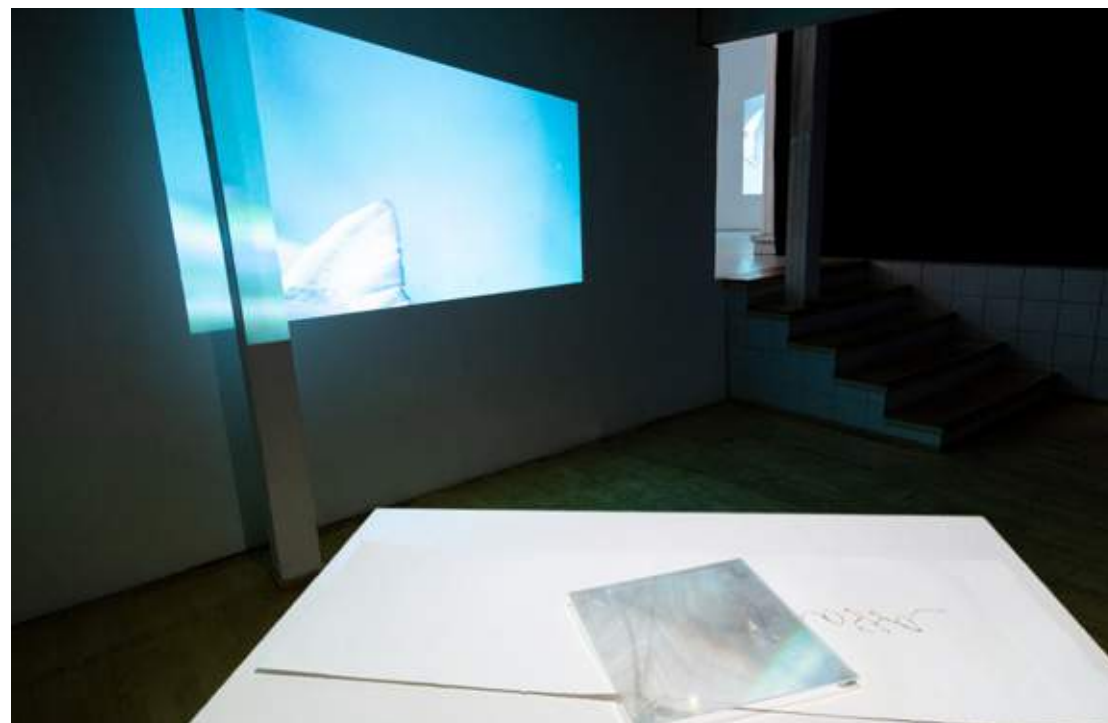
Small Projects, Tromsø, Norway 2019





5 Kilograms of Eye-Opener

Small Projects, Tromsø, Norway 2019





5 Kilograms of Eye-Opener

Solo exhibition, 2019
Video-projections, crystals-projection, performance, diptych on paper, objects
installation
Small Projects, Tromsø, Norway

The salmon and the coalfish

*It was in the fall, when the salmon had already finished spawning
and was gone far down the river.*

Then it met the coalfish that swam up. The salmon asked:

- "Where are you going?"

- "I'm going up the river", said the coalfish

- "Are you going up the river? What kind of look do you have in the river?"

- "I have a beautiful enough look", said the coalfish - "I also have a shiny side".

- "You have no fat", said the salmon.

- "I have fat in the liver," said the coalfish.

*- "Hey, hey, and with that fat you're going up the river! A little more fat I had in
my flesh when I went up, but see how I look now!"*

*The coalfish began to think: the fat in my liver probably doesn't keep me up to
the river source.*

*And then it returned and left no more in its way. The place where they met, is
still called Seistry, near Seida.*

G. Balke, Karasjok

5 Kilograms of Eye-Opener marked a farewell of a 1-month residency at Troms fylkeskultursenter, in the frame of *Transpose*: an ongoing project that explores the relationship between Northern and Southern Hemispheres, in regard to Atlantic salmon aquaculture, landscape management and manipulation towards living marine resources. A significant element within this exhibition was a dialogue with the architecture of the space, based on Sámi aesthetic elements.

Caliche Crystals

Stavanger Concert Hall, Norway 2019





Caliche Crystals

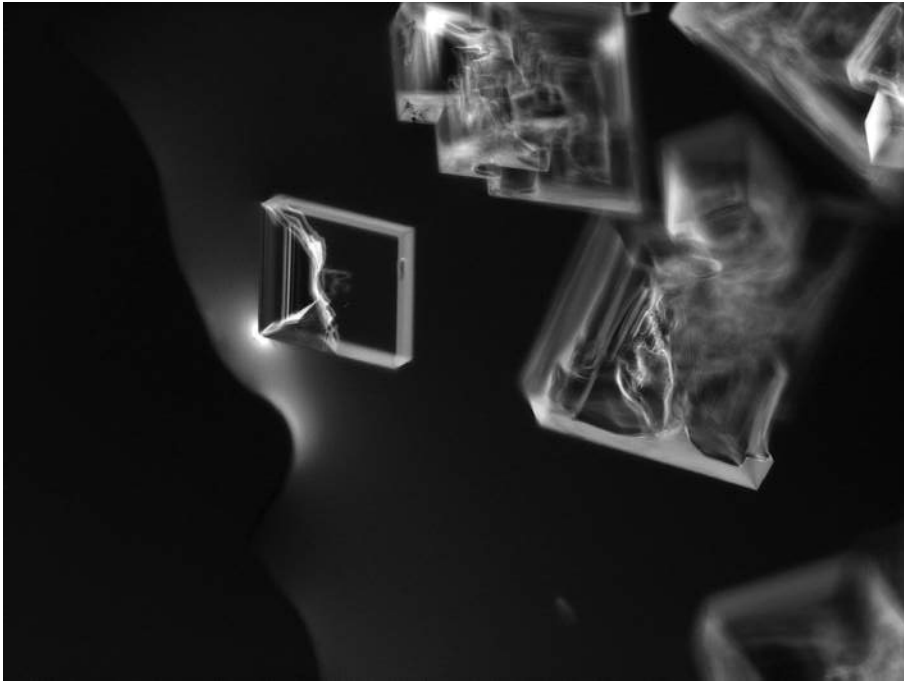
Telefunken-Hochhaus, Berlin, Germany 2018



Caliche Crystals

Architecture Building - Technische Universität Berlin, Germany 2018





Caliche Crystals

photo series, 2018
digital C-Print on Hahnemühle paper, mounted on foamboard
3 polyptychs, 8 pieces each, 19 x 25 cm each

performance, 2018 - 2019
in collaboration with Kalma
microscope, saltpetre, videomapping

Caliche Crystals is part of a long-term project called *Caliche Winds*, which explores the historical trade and wind-sailing maritime route of sodium nitrate (natural saltpetre), or locally called "caliche".

As an ongoing exploration that started in 2014, since 2016 *Caliche Crystals* has been developing as a close collaboration together with platform Lab:Present at the Technische Universität – Berlin and visual performer artist Kalma. This collaboration is currently conceiving outputs, where the central concept is the experiencing of saltpetre crystals formations, in dialogue with architectural spaces and historical narratives.

In 2018, three new series from microscopic captures have been produced, thanks to the support of the Technische Universität – Berlin, in the frame of the Festival of Lights. One of these captions was projected towards one of the highest buildings in Berlin, the Telefunken.

Link for video documentation: https://youtu.be/rz32a0aFF_g

In 2019, a new performance including an organ improvisation by Nils Henrik Asheim was commissioned by Screen City Biennial at the Stavanger Concert Hall in Norway.

Link for video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/374976891>

Caliche Crystals extends a real-time perception of the dynamic and symmetrical growth of sodium nitrate crystals. It suggests a reflection about the molecular geometry of this resource, which has been subject of scientific controversy regarding its natural sedimentation in the Atacama Desert: is not clear if it has been formed by sea spray and oxidation, or as consequence of volcanic activity.

Leaks

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile 2018



We Knew

Kunstnerhuset Lofoten, Svolvær, Norway 2018





We Knew

Water, saltpetre, overhead projector
Variable dimensions, 2:30 min approx.
2018

This is an ongoing performances series of 'poetic animism' that has first taken place during a residency at Kunstnerhuset Lofoten (Norway) in the frame of the project *Transpose*, which explores the relationship between Northern and Southern Hemispheres, in regard to Atlantic salmon aquaculture, landscape management and manipulation towards living marine resources.

Sentences are extracted from various sources: poetry, dreams and philosophical texts. Here, the sentence "We knew something was going to happen" is only recognisable for an instant before becoming a liquid smudge on glass, about to be crystallised.

Link for video documentation:

<https://vimeo.com/256562340>



Offshoring Pathways

CNB Contemporánea, Buenos Aires, Argentina 2017



Offshoring Pathways

CNB Contemporánea, Buenos Aires, Argentina 2017



The Prediction of Tarapacá

Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago, Chile 2014



BLOCK MÁGICO explora las vivencias personales de los artistas y sus memorias. Esta muestra busca interrogar los procesos y poéticas de la memoria como medios de posición, resistencia y transformación frente a la realidad. Se unen al poder de la memoria, las fuerzas y energías invisibles de la magia, la vida oculta del secreto y las apariencias de la escritura. Se pone atención a estos poderes y a sus interacciones con el peso de una historia nacional densa y sus posibles reparaciones en el presente, transitando por las complejas líneas de la memoria, el olvido, la recuperación y de la pérdida.

Si uno de sus deseos es que este espacio sea un lugar de encuentro, un espacio que se pueda usar para experimentar y experimentar de los artistas en el espacio de las estructuras individuales y colectivas. ¿Cómo las conexiones entre la memoria y la imaginación pueden transformar los espacios de la memoria y el olvido?

MICHELLE-MARIE LETELIER



The Prediction of Tarapacá

Kunsthall 3,14, Bergen, Norway
2014

MICHELLE-MARIE LETELIER

www.michellemarieletelier.net
studio@michellemarieletelier.net

+49 (0) 170 535 9877

Greifswalder Strasse 207
10405 Berlin
Germany