

*The Animal Sound Society is an artist pseudonym, an identity for a fictive community with a logo, a website, and a uniform. It is a 10-year-long research that comes to life through performances and workshops; a practice focused on listening to animals.*

# **‘ARISTOTLE ONCE SAID THAT LANGUAGE SEPARATES HUMANS FROM OTHER ANIMALS’**



Embroidered logo, 10 cm

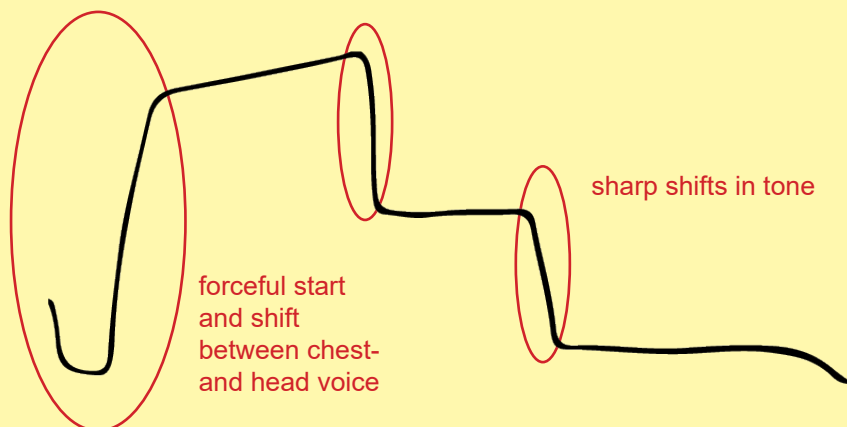
Looking through my portfolio, you will find that images, scrips and props are recycled, giving the impression that works overlap. Each performance is a separate event, yet, they are sometimes part of the same fictional universe.

# **‘SUPPOSE HE WAS RIGHT. THEN WHAT KIND OF SOUNDS MAKE US NON-HUMAN?’**

- The Animal Sound Society

# HOW TO HOWL • 2023

*Performance workshop, 45 min.* As we listen to, imitate, and respond to recordings of wolves, I use a loop pedal to record and play the sound of the howling audience, gradually building up a layered soundscape. By participating in a 'wolf-hypnosis', the audience gets acquainted with the Therian concept of 'shifting' i.e. mentally transforming into a wolf.

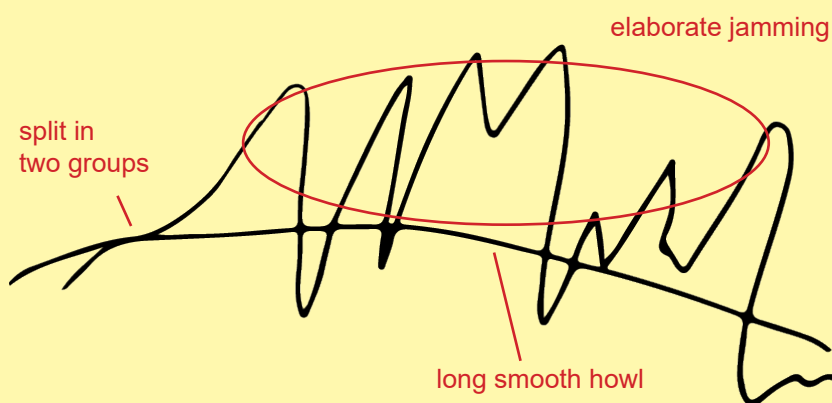


**EVERY TIME YOU  
BREATHE IN  
YOUR RIB CAGE  
EXPANDS**

**YOU ARE EXPANDING  
YOUR BODY AND MIND  
EXPANDING YOURSELF**



Performance with Helle THun, Friisland (LiveArt DK)



**YOUR SELF IS FFFLEXI-  
BLE**

**FFFFFF  
YOU SSSEE,  
YOUR IDENTITY  
IS ONLY AN IMAGE  
AND  
IT CAN CHANGE**

**IT WILL CHANGE**

**YOU WILL CHANGE-SCHH-  
HHH**

**BECAUSE YOU WANT  
TO CHANGE**

The hypnosis (performed by me) copies the structure and vocabulary of existing hypnoses on YouTube. Certain consonants are pronounced in a way that trigger ASMR-like sounds.



Excerpt from hypnosis and howling scores

# THE ANIMALS WERE NEVER ALONE I • 2019

my first work about *The Animal Sound Archive*

video documentation: <https://youtu.be/En-EDDYyvlq>

Performance, 45 min. Recordings from the archive are played on speakers, mixing with the sound of the public space. An amplified voice shouts out instructions and the audience participate in choreography and reading scripts.

Credits in video documentation



## 'WALKING A LITTLE BIT FASTER...'

A public space performance that functions as a rupture in the everyday life, a synchronized action where the past and the present overlap.

## 'DISTANCE 5 METERS...'

We have created a fictional story about an existing scientific archive. Can we make it come to life through movement?

## 'ALMOST HOLDING HANDS!!'



a scientist walking in a circle holding a scientist

in a circle holding a scientist

Performance, Blågård's Plads, Copenhagen 2019.

# THE ANIMALS WERE NEVER ALONE I • 2019

my first work about The Animal Sound Archive

Detail, 1 out of 40 pieces, 30 x 40 cm. Wooden sticks and cardboard with scripts on one side and printed photos of scientists on the other.

It is the fourteenth of June,  
two thousand and nineteen,  
sixteen fifty-four,  
sunny, no clouds, no moon,  
a very light wind from the west.

We are standing in the courtyard  
of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts

There used to be birds here.  
Do you remember the birds?

We!  
We wear the masks of the scientists  
who recorded the animals!  
We have a high-quality sound system!  
We play the recordings  
of the Animal Sound Archive!  
All animals are gone,  
but some of them were recorded.  
We downloaded their voices.

The animals were never alone.  
There was always somebody there,  
somebody silent,  
carrying a recorder.

Do you remember the goats?  
They screamed like humans sometimes.

Do you remember the Syrian woodpeckers?  
Do you remember the domesticated guinea pigs?

The wolves came back to Denmark

year two thousand and twelve

They had started to colonise Europe.  
Moving along belts of vegetation,  
they chose to travel in silence,  
undocumented.

The Danish government built a fence.

Now there is only a fence,  
separating us, humans  
along the border of Germany.

Do you remember the dogs?  
Do you remember those small annoying dogs  
that never stopped barking?  
They stopped barking.

Do you remember the dogs  
that howled like wolves?  
Now there are only humans  
howling to each other

There used to be rabbits.  
Do you remember the rabbits?  
Yes, the rabbits were silent,  
but not all the time.  
Do you remember what they sounded like?

The animals were never alone.  
There was always somebody there,  
somebody silent,  
carrying a recorder.

We wear the masks of the scientists  
who recorded the animals

Nobody has asked us to come,

but here we are:

Carl Heinz Frommolt

Günter Rainer

Tembrock Günter

etcetera etcetera

Do you remember the pigs?  
In two thousand and nineteen,  
There were thirteen million pigs in Denmark.  
Do you remember them?

Do you remember the old-striped tit-babbler?  
Do you remember the black-cheeked lovebird?  
Do you remember the horses?

Do you remember the arctic foxes?  
Do you remember the African penguins?  
Do you remember the bald eagles?  
Do you remember the cows?

Do you remember the cats?  
It was your favorite animal.



# THE ANIMALS WERE NEVER ALONE II • 2022

my second work about The Animal Sound Archive

essay-website: [www.tierstimmenarchiv.dk](http://www.tierstimmenarchiv.dk)

Performance, 45 min. This work is based on an essay written as a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure, designed as an interactive website. It revolves around a meeting with Karl, the curator of the existing Animal Sound Archive, and its online database; [www.tierstimmenarchiv.de](http://www.tierstimmenarchiv.de). I project it on the wall, asking the audience on how to proceed.

The Animals Were Never Alone II > a Choose Your Own Adventure Essay > by Maria Lepistö and the [Animal Sound Society](#)

6:43:41 PM

19 years ago, 1999

June 26

on a Russian island called Insel Mednyi.

It is 18:40 in the evening,

cloudy, weak winds.

A Northern Fur Seal and a man called Karl...

If you want to try to get in touch with Karl, go to [15](#)

19 years ago? That doesn't seem right. Go to [30](#)

Welcome! introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35  
36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74  
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If you are ready, you may proceed to 8  
Sure? You might wanna go here first. Go to 25

tierstimmenarchiv.dk

Karl, is that you?

OK

'ARE YOU...?'

'EUHHH... ARE Y

'YEAH?'

'NO!'

'KARL!'  
'KARL!?'

'KARL!!!'

Screenshot from my website, p 96 (out of 154 pages in total)

Performance, Charlottenborg Kunsthal, Copenhagen 2022. Quotes from amplified voice.

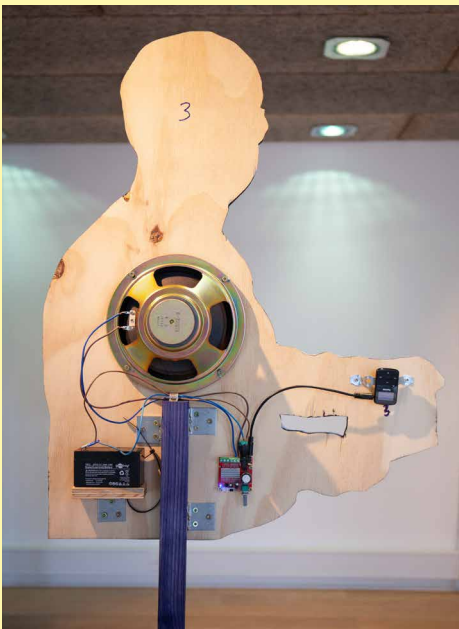
# THE ANIMALS WERE NEVER ALONE III • 2023

my third work about The Animal Sound Archive

*Installation, various dimensions:* printed images on wood, speaker drivers, amplifiers, mp3-players, batteries, disco ball motor. Infographic sculptures with built-in speakers that also function as scenography during performances. As part of a sound installation with a total of 9 speakers, they play an edited collection of field recordings where scientists are whispering metadata in German.



**‘SOMETIMES WHEN KARL CAN NOT SLEEP, HE GETS UP AND TAKES A WALK IN THE FOREST, FINDS AN APPROPRIATE FOX HOLE, CRAWLS INTO IT AND FROM ITS EARTHY DARKNESS HE LISTENS TO THE SOUNDS AT NIGHT...’**

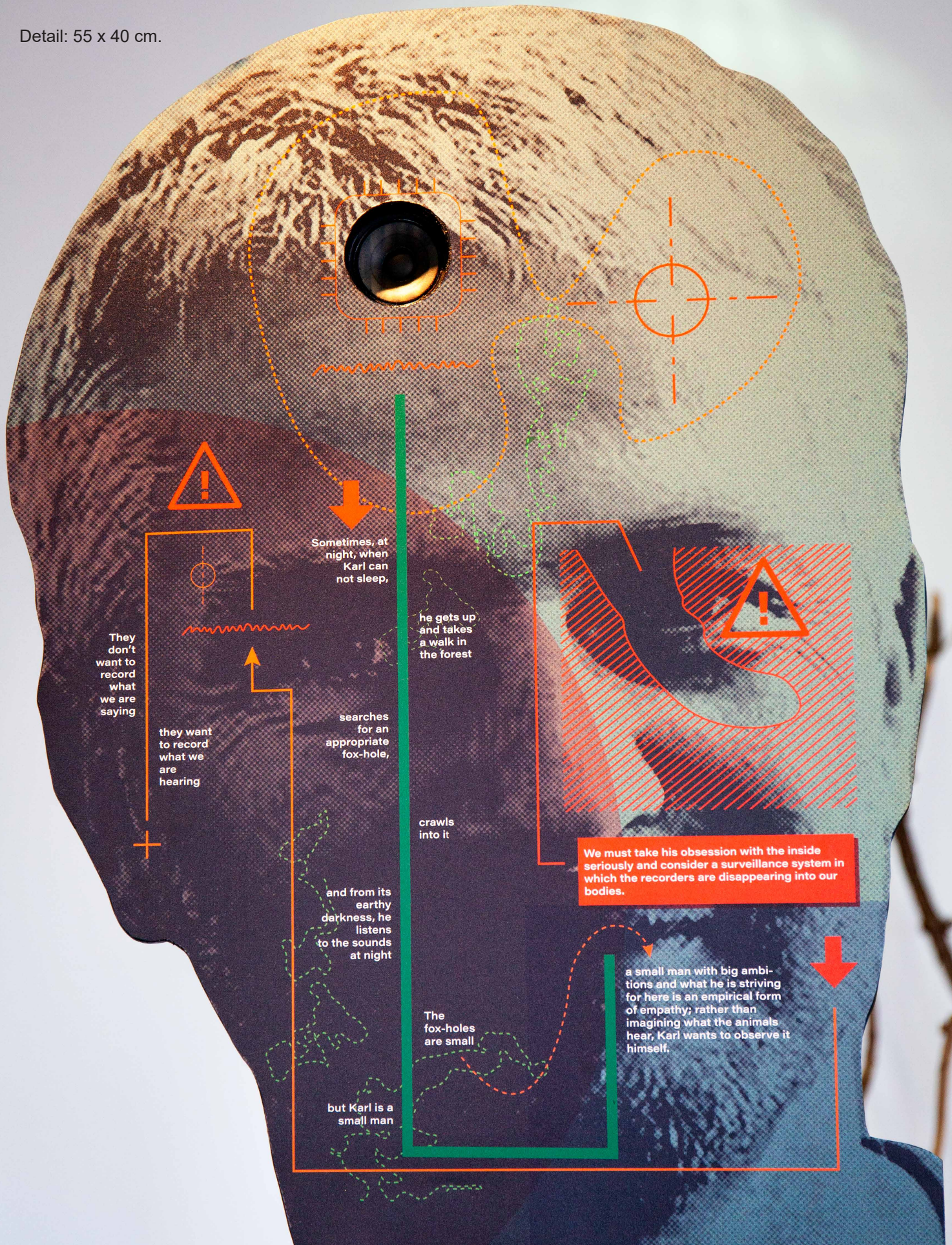


Infographic table and rotating image, infographic speakers and quote from print, Friisland (LiveArt DK)

# THE ANIMALS WERE NEVER ALONE III • 2023

my third work about *The Animal Sound Archive*

Detail: 55 x 40 cm.



# THE ANIMALS WERE NEVER ALONE III • 2023

my third work about *The Animal Sound Archive*

*Props, various dimensions: fake fur, cushion foam, microphones, sender/receivers, chicken wire, metal thread, plaster, fluid tripod head, wood, wheels.* The wolf in fur is a wearable mask and functions as a recorder, live streaming outside sounds into the room. The wolf in plaster functions as an instrument with a hollow structure that resonates when being touched and moved around.

**‘WE MUST TAKE HIS OBSESSION WITH THE INSIDE SERIOUSLY AND CONSIDER A SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM WHERE THE RECORDERS ARE DISAPPEARING INTO OUR BODIES’**



microphones  
hidden in the ears



The props are inspired by bioacoustic research at the Humboldt University in Berlin. The idea is to get a better understanding on listening from a wolf's perspective, studying how the outer ears affect the reception of sound. The original wolf head recorder is made out of a real wolf skull.



metal wire  
sticks out

**‘THEY DON’T WANT TO RECORD WHAT WE ARE SAYING. THEY WANT TO RECORD WHAT WE ARE HEARING’**



Excerpt from monologue used in performance and prop. Exhibited at Friisland (LiveArt DK).



video documentation: <https://youtu.be/ao2khFQZIK8>

*Performance, 20 min.* The Animal Choir is a choir of people who, at some point in their life, learned to imitate an animal. The choir arrives as a pop-up event, carrying speakers and microphones.

Credits in video documentation

## 'IMITATING IS A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING ANOTHER BEING'

-Miyuki Inoue

We imitate because we are curious about another. It is a form of understanding that comes from within our own bodies.

We make a bold pop-up statement - yet we hide behind a curtain, that prevents the performers from directly facing the audience. We want to give them an experience of voyeurism; we want to be heard - but not exposed.



Performance, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam 2016



## 'THE ANIMALS ARE THE ORIGINAL COMPOSERS. WE ARE A COVER BAND'

- The Animal Choir



Embroidered logo, worn by performers.



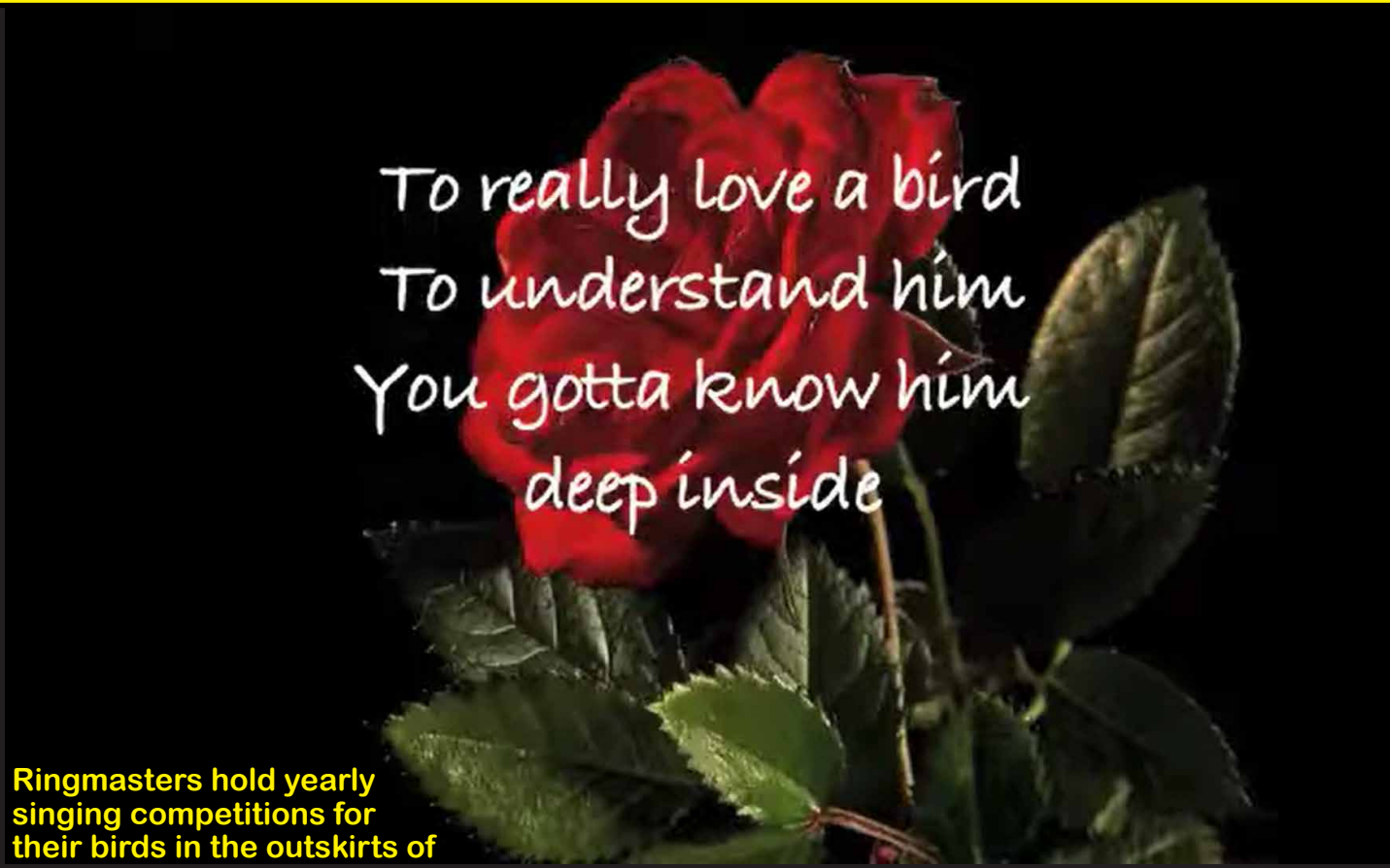
# BOB MARLEY IS THE NAME OF A BIRD • 2017

my first work about The Surinamese Singing Bird Community Ringmasters

video documentation: <https://youtu.be/bkc-dDJqq7M>

Performance, 15 min. A montage of pop songs, field recordings, vocal interpretations of bird songs, Karaoke and a monologue based on conversations with bird owners of The Surinamese Singing Bird Community Ringmasters, Amsterdam.

With Alina Ozerova and Miyuki Inoue



To really love a bird  
To understand him  
You gotta know him  
deep inside

Screenshot of Karaoke video: our remake of 'Have You Ever Loved a Woman'

Ringmasters hold yearly singing competitions for their birds in the outskirts of Amsterdam.

The birds don't sing like they do in Suriname. They have been trained to sing an ideal bird song - in fact, their songs are recorded and edited; badly articulated sounds are removed, refining the syntax and improving the clarity of the message.

Can bird songs be intellectual property? And if so, who do they belong to?

**'THAT WAS A GOOD SONG  
I WANNA BE CLOSE TO YOU  
I WANNA MAKE BABIES WITH YOU  
AND I NEVER GET TIRED OF LISTENING TO YOU'**



Performance at Centrum voor Beeldende Kunst, Amsterdam 2017.

# FRANK SINATRA IS ALSO THE NAME OF A BIRD • 2018

my second work about The Surinamese Singing Bird Community Ringmasters

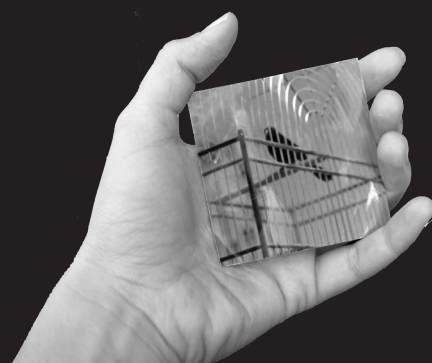
video documentation: <https://youtu.be/Avl4EcSXJjw>

Performance, 25 min. A monologue with a video projection of men watching singing bird competitions in an intimate and dark staging with a fake grass carpet. A pocket torch and printed photos are used as props.



'TIT  
TIT, TIT  
PIJE PIJE FJUTI FU  
FU FU  
FIJE FIJE FJUTI  
FU TU FU  
FIJE FIJE FJUTI  
FU TU TU  
FJUTI FJUTI, TIJE  
TIJE  
FUWE TU TIJE TIJE  
FUTI  
FU, TU.  
TU TU TUE!

TU TIWU WHIU  
KUTI U TUE TUE TU  
PIJE PIJE  
FU TI FU TU TU FU  
TI FU  
TU TU  
PIJE PIJE, FIJE FIJE  
FJUTI FJUTI FJUTI  
FJUTI FU  
TIT  
TIT, TIT'



'..AND HE WILL RAISE  
HIS VOICE AND WE  
WILL LISTEN  
BECAUSE IT IS A  
VERY STRONG VOICE

A VOICE THAT IN-  
VENTS, FORMULATES  
AND ARTICULATES  
WELL CRAFTED  
STATEMENTS

**ON THE  
SPOT!'**



The birds refuse to be translated, and so do the men. It was a tactic used by people of Suriname against colonizers. Now we are strangers. Can we resist the urge to translate?

The birds sing their songs to mark their territory and we are told the competitions are about dominance, but it's also about patience and listening.

Screenshots of video and prop used in performance. Galleri Q and Sounding Bodies Symposium, Copenhagen 2018

# ABOUT THREE PEOPLE AND THE SOUNDS THEY MAKE • 2014

video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QVvvgEq-l4>

Video, 10 min. A video portrait of three of the members of the Animal Choir; Ina, Julia, and Masaki.



**'NOT REALLY WALK-  
ING AROUND - MORE  
LIKE SITTING, KEEP-  
ING ONE POSITION  
AND CONCENTRATE...'**

- Masaki Komoto



Almost everybody knows somebody who has learned to imitate an animal. I search for a place, a social context where it makes sense.

