

Moonshine

By Post Brothers

Proof of the existence of the information does in fact not exist in actuality but is based on probability.

As we all should know, the moon does not emit its own light. What we perceive as moonlight is a reflection of the sun on the craggy natural satellite in the night sky. Yet this light plays an oversized role in both our natural cycles and our cultural imaginary: it is an enchanted setting and protagonist in our myths, symbols, and narratives, full of mystery and romance. Yet this massive celestial mirror is also an image that we can set our clocks to. Exploring how mediated reality intersects with subjective experience, Christine Dahlerup's exhibition *The Moon* embraces this logic of indirect illumination—of derivative accounts and afterimages, of phase shifts and waning materiality—to weave stories of information lost and gained.

Christine Dahlerup works primarily with sculpture, text, and images, combining quick, sweeping gestures with sensitive observations of lived reality to confront routines and limits in our perception and cognition. Based in Copenhagen and Vienna, her practice is an investigation into the materiality and 'containers' of information, how every object, image, or sentiment is embedded with references, temporalities, and actions. Her works capture something of the fluctuations of time, matter, and memory, exhibiting a contagious wonderment in the everyday, where awkward moments and reflective impressions yield metaphors and images that confronts the gravity of things with a modest uncertainty. For the last years, she has been particularly interested in that age-old preoccupation of artists and that theme lingering above and below everything we do: death. Her work deals with death not only as a cultural symbol, phenomena, anxiety, and inevitable reality, but also as a dynamic that tells us something about how time is perceived and experienced, and how materials and images extend beyond their time and place as afterimages elsewhere. Here, the 'weightiness' of this morbid discourse comes into contact with the flatness of both the image and of emotional sentiment. As such, the undead or moribund routines of analogue photography as a second-hand account, and an interplay of light and darkness plays a prominent role in Dahlerup's thinking. Waxing poetic on how information is changed when relayed in new contexts, *The Moon* conjures the image of our satellite to acknowledge the power of perceptual distance and non-knowledge in cognition.

Key to Dahlerup's practice is a protracted inquiry into notions of authorship, cultural property, and legacy beyond one's life. *The Moon* probes how narratives about life and death are constructed, how they can deviate and be reimagined, and how ideas can be rebirthed and redeployed. This investigation led the artist to take a trip to New York City earlier this year to see the exhibition *Christine Kozlov* at the Academy of Arts & Letters, a retrospective of the groundbreaking conceptual artist curated by Rhea Anastas and the artist Nora Schultz in cooperation with the artist's estate. Typified by a restrained and consequential scrutiny into knowledge, communication, informational formats, seriality, time, and the persistence and degradation of media, Christine Kozlov (1945 - 2005) was at the heart of the emergence of conceptual art in New York: she established and participated in exhibitions at the Museum of Normal Art with Joseph Kosuth at the Lannis Gallery (1967), appeared in the most canonical exhibitions of the time, such as *Information* at the MOMA curated by Kynaston McShine (1970), Seth Seigelaub's *One Month* (1968) and Lucy Lippard's *Numbers Shows* (1969-1974), and was a member and collaborator of *Art & Language* in both New York and London. But like many women artists, then and now, her contributions to the practice and

scene have been overshadowed by simplistic narratives of a conceptual art 'boys' club' and she has largely been left out from canonized history. Though both her recognition and production significantly reduced after the 70s, she was 'rediscovered' as an innovator of conceptualism in the mid 90s by Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, and more recently with retrospectives at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds and the newly revived Academy of Arts & Letters in New York, her first and only solo exhibition more than 60 years after she emerged there.

In a text presented in the exhibition, Christine's *Kozlov Text* (2025), Dahlerup reflects on Kozlov's explorations into the materiality of mediation by ruminating on some of the elder Christine's most notable works, such as *Information Drift* (1968), a framed roll of audiotape said to contain recordings about the shootings of Robert F Kennedy and Andy Warhol; *Neurological Compilation: The Physical Mind since 1945* (1969) a transcription of the titles of neurological articles; and her sculpture *Information: No Theory* (1970), where a reel-to-reel continuously records the exhibition space, overwriting and erasing previous moments with every loop. Awash in analogical vignettes, detailed attention, and personal reflections, the text is not quite a review nor an essay by a 'good student', but rather is part of an ongoing habit by the younger Christine to think with and through other artists and their works, not simply appropriating or recontextualizing their practices, but also finding some insight into her own questions. Like the moon, something of Kozlov's brilliance shines in Dahlerup's practice, and the two Christines seem to share more than just a common name.

As visual evidence of her trip, Dahlerup presents the photograph *Works by Christine Kozlov* (2025), a black and white snapshot of a pair of artworks by the late artist from the exhibition. The works represented are Kozlov's *No Title (Black Film #1)* (1965) and *No Title (Transparent Film #2)* (1967), sealed 8 mm and 16 mm film canisters respectively whose contents are unknown and inaccessible to the viewer. The transparent film is (likely) a film leader, a blank reel attached to a film to assist in threading, while the black film is (assumedly) an overexposed print. Thus, in this presentation, there is a juxtaposition of a lack of information with an overabundance of information, with the leader functioning like a silent breath before a signal, and the black film serving as a density of data, a surplus of noise that teases visibility and intelligibility. Though there have been photographs corroborating the canisters' contents, the artist always presented them packed, so that the viewer not only had to trust the artist's claims but also could imagine infinite possible images within. In her photograph, Dahlerup keeps Kozlov's secret and tests how this logic of withdrawal can be multiplied. The edge of a plexiglass vitrine bisects the image, marking the objects as encased and removed from circulation, protected and preserved like precious relics. Though the straightforward document amplifies the fetishized museification of the objects, adding yet another level of distance from the contents, it nevertheless expands the 'idea' beyond its time and space. Here, Dahlerup tests photography's sympathetic magic, not only doubling its undead presence through the image's indexical resemblance but also capturing something of the artworks' power through contact, as if the artist's pilgrimage and her copresence with the artifacts has transferred something of their cryptic energy to the younger Christine that is embodied in the picture and now shared with us. Just as most of the artworks we've 'seen' are detached photographic documents, their

City as both a material reality and as an image, a concrete jungle where dreams are made from both inside and out. New York looms large in our narratives around art, it is a site of a hegemonic 'canon' that is continuously renewed through the nostalgic fantasies of its pilgrims. Yet this is somehow always late and at a distance, everyone from your newly arrived colleague to the Lenape people (the original inhabitants of Manhattan), will surely tell you: "it was better before..." New York is both very partial and specific yet operates with the pretence of being universal, a centre that everything else orients around and projects itself into. Dahlerup's projected digital photograph *Pre* (2025) is an engrossing snapshot taken by the artist of the Manhattan Bridge with its endless stream of commuter cars. Amidst the Beaux Arts triumphal arch and colonnade at the Manhattan entrance, a massive swarm of pigeons promulgate, forming a momentary abstract assemblage and serving as evidence of the reality that cities are filled not only with dense populations of humans. The flying rats also perch atop an empty LED traffic sign, a blank site for public communication that anticipates delays and disasters. The frozen picture has an almost cinematic staging, it's just so New York, a frenzy of activity with an overabundance of information, yet also it is somehow a readymade generic image that could be captured at any metropolis. Here, we have dense flows of bodies and information, a movement of lives and stories, and the infrastructural systems for doing so, as well as anachronisms of a constantly rewritten city and discordances between luxury highrises and streetlevel exchanges. It is an image that is frozen yet active, meaningless yet loaded with information, pictorial yet pixelated. The title, *Pre*, refers to the preparatory nature of the flows, an anticipation, a moment before further cognition or narrative. Dahlerup intercedes in the projected photo by mounting a strip of metal in front of the lens, leaving an unfocused band across the image. This introduction of a subtle glitch in the transmission not only invokes our own cognitive and visual blind spots, but also refracts the ephemeral materiality of the display like a prism, pushing a fuzzy logic through a physically present disturbance in the indexical and silent representation.

Echoing the strip and the skyscrapers in the projection, Dahlerup's *Beaches* (2025) is a set of narrow rectangular sculptures where the artist has carved sporadic compositions of divots into MDF planks. Here, litoralism meets literalism, where the bevelled edges and blanched surfaces give an appearance of coastlines with clear borders, functioning as an abstraction of the beach and all the associations we may have with the shoreline. Like footprints in the sand, the inscriptions seem to rhyme with the trajectories of the birds in the photo, as if they are mapping movements and the consolidation of bodies. One can project narratives onto the trails and assemblies, but they also are simply indexical imprints, traces of time and labor by the artist, an archaic way of saying "I was here."

With the *Beaches*, lengthy handcrafted work is juxtaposed with the mass-produced industrial immediacy of the MDF boards, which in their repetition and basic form recall the 'primary structures' of the minimalists, but with a 21st century prefab fakeness. The carvings reveal the MDF's density of particulates as akin to sand, but also somehow recall the grain of analogue images and the pixelation of our platforms. In *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, the philosopher Vilem Flusser compares the punctiform pixel worlds that appear on computer screens with

grains of sand that can be reunited, merged, and compressed by computational assemblage. The task of transmitting information crucial to society and to individuals, once organized around the linear consciousness of writing, has now scattered into swarms of particles and quanta, bits and bytes. Diagnosing this shift from language to code, Flusser argues that such changes in the world around us also fundamentally changes our consciousness, and that this dispersal and gathering of matter is perhaps closer to how information has always chaotically distributed itself within the physical world. These grains of sand, Flusser tells us, "need to be calculated and composed, which is to say, condensed into images, that is, a visionary level of consciousness", a hallucination that turns accident into purpose and produces unexpected, improbable situations. In this respect, the engraved boards present not traces, but traces that could be, imagining an infinite possibility of (im)possible images, where borders between things dissolve and new forms of the 'real' can emerge from this heap of data.

Each of Dahlerup's sculptures are dusted with a powdery layer of white spray paint, as if they mark a morning dew or a new layer of sand. Frozen and fixed like a snapshot, they call upon sand as an iconic image of time, change, renewal, and impermanence, of the beach as a temporary form in constant transition. Looking down on these landscapes, we have a god-like apprehension of the world below, not only spatially, but also temporally. In this respect, one can see affinities between the *Beaches* and Kozlov's *Information: No Theory*, where new information erases the old, capturing a forever moment, a temporal state where time loops upon itself, rewriting reality. "Time has passed", as Agnes Varda says in her 2008 film *The Beaches of Agnes*, "except on beaches, which are timeless."

Thus, *The Moon* teases the constantly rewritten half-life of information, its material forms of mediation and its temporalities, and how it can be conveyed, distributed, (mis)understood, and (re)imagined. Through her thinking around authorship and impermanence, materiality and experience, Dahlerup provides a testament to the evolving relevance of conceptual art in our system-oriented and increasingly mediated world, while also giving a keen reflection on the inner and outer worlds of artists in general. Where others may aspire to a static timelessness and blinding visibility in their works, Dahlerup shoots for the moon and opts for dimness and fragility in perception, exploring presence in midst of an obsolescence and cessation of information, its death. This has as much relevance to artmaking as to our identities and forms of knowledge in general but also is a mature assessment of our fleeting effects on the world. Michel Foucault ominously predicted that changes to the fundamental arrangements of knowledge could signal a death of the 'human' as such. We are a "face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea", perhaps soon to be "erased".