

State of Matter a compendium



This publication accompanies the following exhibition

Fawn Krieger: State of Matter

Soloway

10 January to 14 February, 2021

348 South Fourth Street

Brooklyn, New York, 11211



Fawn Krieger has found us a way out of the 20th Century.

In 2017, after the US presidential inauguration, she began pressing fired clay into wet cement. With this series, *Experiments in Resistance*, Krieger has articulated a vocabulary of haptic pressure and provided a record of tactile impression and corporeal event. At a time of social tremor, Krieger has made of herself and her materials a living seismograph, to record the force and duration of these slips in our fault plane.

In Krieger's work, the event is eternal. What we see are ossified moments of material refusal, surrender, displacement, impression, transgression, and transmission. She calls her sculptures object theatres and hers is a radically condensed performance. The infinite variations and iterations of human conflict are distilled into the action of one body on another. The triumph and trauma of human endeavor is somehow rendered in the collision of these two material bodies. The concern is with relation itself. She is elucidating, with her experiments, an elemental dynamics of contact. The traits and tendencies articulated in these sculptures are both familial and tectonic, historical and molecular.

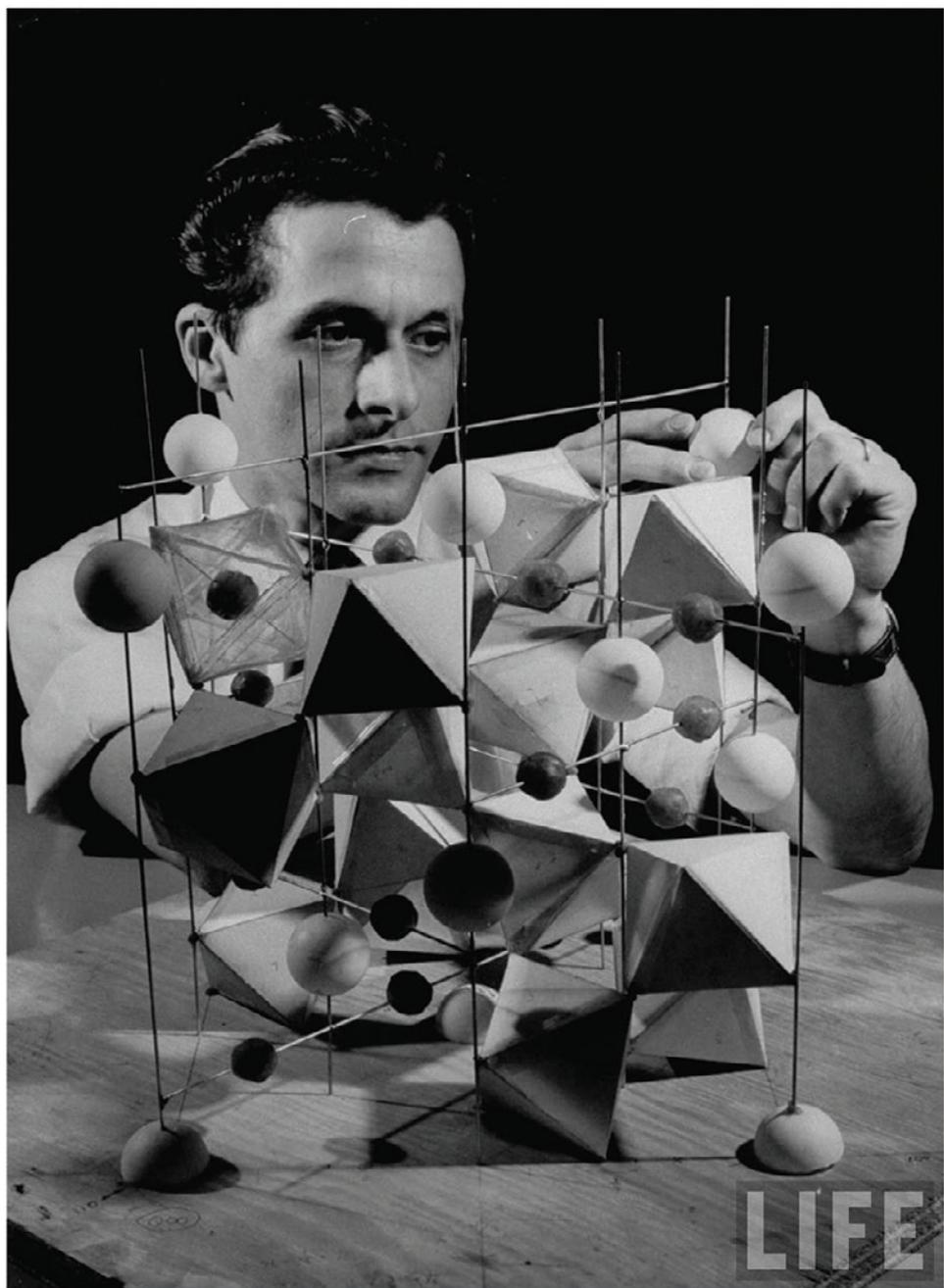
Krieger has described this series as the inverse of Einstein's Gedankenexperiment - thought experiment - where instead of playing out the theory in one's head to figure out physical problems, the theory is played out physically to figure out metaphysical problems. Her sculptures are not only a record of the events of relation, they set out a method of inquiry, a way of coming to know.

The colors of the series call up what became of Einstein's revelations. They are the colors of the Atomic-Era, of the frenzied assertion that our future had become only brighter, once it held our inevitable, self-inflicted, annihilation. The colors describe an aesthetics of dissonance, and this chord that they strike, sounds a splitting, a cognitive schism. Taking them out of their historical circumstance, Krieger introduces them into her investigation of material contact. In her embodied universe, all consequences are evident, undeniable. Confrontation appears here, as a means of recognition, of reintegration.

With her recourse to the material, Krieger has found a way out of our locked groove of discovery and ruin, progress and annihilation. She thinks of the material collisions in her work, in terms of gravitational singularity. Her sculptures are made up of two geological substances, particles that may not have touched since they were first formed, when they were bound and then severed through extreme pressure at the beginning of time. The event we are seeing is the moment when they find one another again, and negotiate a process of reunification. The pressure and resistance, the confrontation and displacement, the rupture and trauma, are all a part of coming together again.

Fawn Krieger has found redemption in materialism. In her radical attention to what is, she has discovered a universal tendency. Every atom, human body, planet, and star is an instance of the reunification of particles, split apart and thrown into diaspora in the moment of their birth.

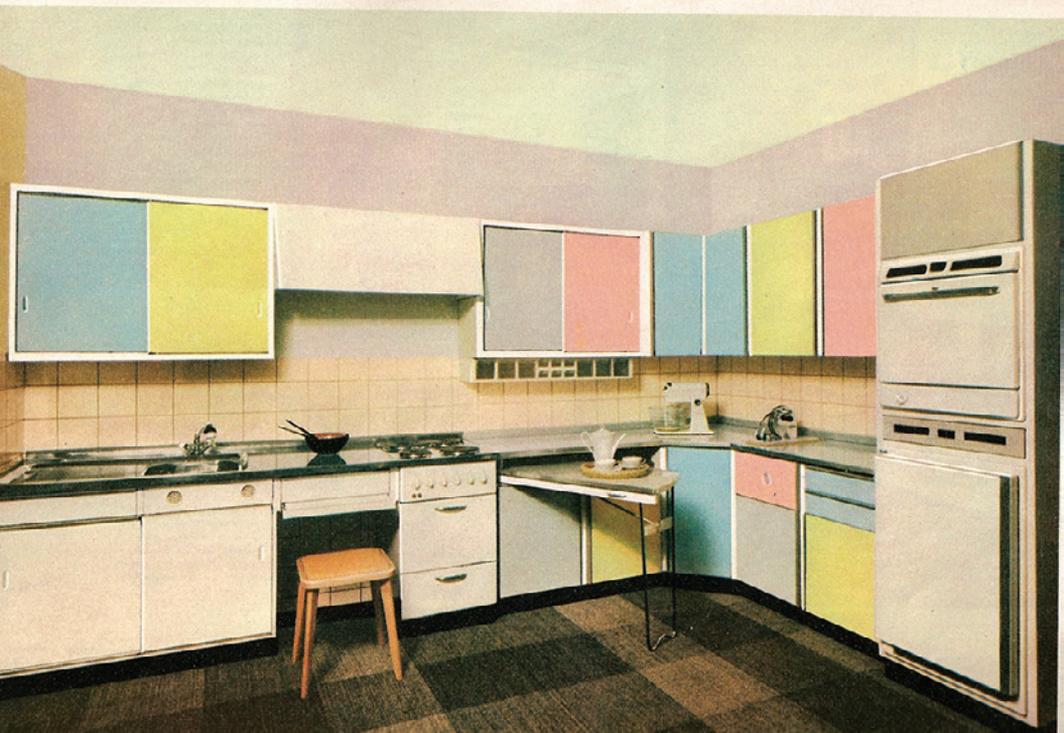
All matter is reunion.







Der Chic moderner Gestaltung ...



You said they had discovered a machine to destroy everything that draws breath on earth; they were now trying to agree on a method of accomplishing this task quickly and cleanly; preferably while having a cocktail. They are trying to break out of the formula poor wretches. Who can blame them for that? Who has never wanted to do that?

Halldor Laxness, from Under The Glacier



...and the nineteenth century dies hard all centuries do that is why the last war to kill it is so long, it is still being killed now in 1942, the nineteenth century just as the eighteenth century took from the revolution to 1840 to kill, so the nineteenth century is taking from 1914 to 1943 to kill. It is hard to kill a century almost impossible...

Gertrude Stein, from *Wars I Have Seen*





Landauer's was a Romantic, non-doctrinaire anarchism which, although rooted in the ideas of Proudhon and Kropotkin, went unashamedly against the grain of the anarchist orthodoxy of late 19th and early 20th century Europe. Central to his thinking is a fundamental comprehension that the capitalist state by its very nature is not something that can be "smashed" — rather, as he famously declared in 1910, it is "a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." Rejecting the historical materialists' reification of the state and society he argued that in reality "we are the State and continue to be the State until we have created the institutions that form a real community." He maintained that although externally imposed the state lives within each and every human being, and can only perpetuate itself as long as human beings exist in this 'statual' relationship which makes its coercive order necessary; following thinkers like Étienne de la Boétie he therefore insisted that all it takes is for human beings to step out of this relationship, this artificially-created social construct of reality, and the state is rendered obsolete, it disintegrates.

James Horrox, from Gustav Landauer (1870-1919)



Sahl said that behind the names and the attributes are attributes that cannot be penetrated by understanding because the real is a raging fire. There is no way there. There is no choice but to plunge into it.

Sahl al-Tustari

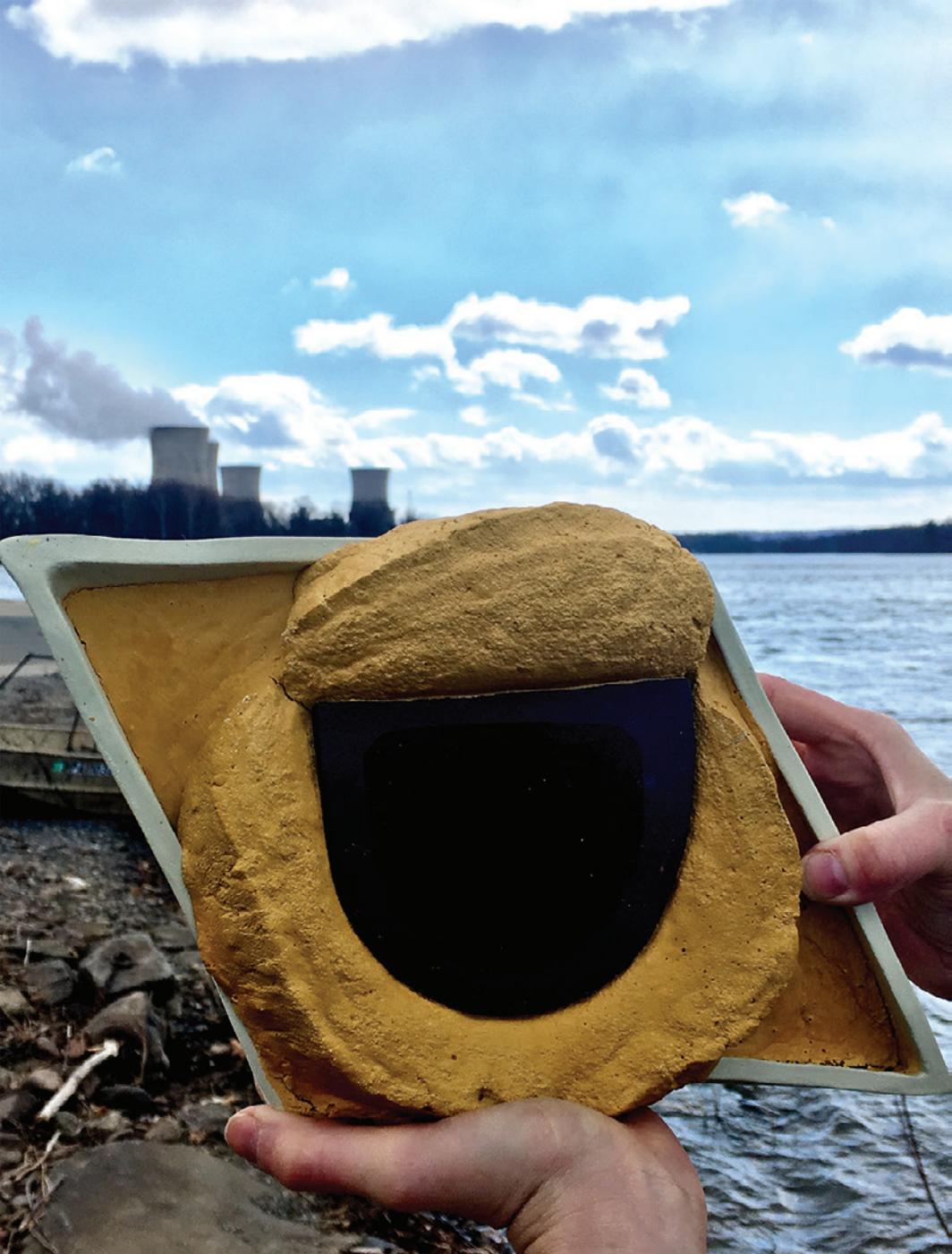


Society is held together by our need; we bind it together with legend, myth, coercion, fearing that without it we will be hurled into that void, within which, like the earth before the Word was spoken, the foundations of society are hidden. From this void—ourselves—it is the function of society to protect us; but it is only this void, our unknown selves, demanding, forever, a new act of creation, which can save us—"from the evil that is in the world." With the same motion, at the same time, it is this toward which we endlessly struggle and from which, endlessly, we struggle to escape.

James Baldwin, from Notes Of A Native Son









What did Bloom see on the range?

On the right (smaller) hob a blue enamelled saucepan: on the left (larger) hob a black iron kettle.

What did Bloom do at the range?

He removed the saucepan to the left hob, rose and carried the iron kettle to the sink in order to tap the current by turning the faucet to let it flow.

Did it flow?

Yes. From Roundwood reservoir in county Wicklow of a cubic capacity of 2,400 million gallons, percolating through a subterranean aqueduct of filter mains of single and double pipeage constructed at an initial plant cost of £5 per linear yard by way of the Dargle, Rathdown, Glen of the Downs and Callowhill to the 26 acre reservoir at Stillorgan, a distance of 22 statute miles, and thence, through a system of relieving tanks, by a gradient of 250 feet to the city boundary at Eustace bridge, upper Leeson street, though from prolonged summer drouth and daily supply of 12 1/2 million gallons the water had fallen below the sill of the overflow weir for which reason the borough surveyor and waterworks engineer, Mr Spencer Harty, C.E., on the instructions of the waterworks committee, had prohibited the use of municipal water for purposes other than those of consumption (envisaging the possibility of recourse being had to the impotable water of the Grand and Royal canals as in 1893) particularly as the South Dublin Guardians, notwithstanding their ration of 15 gallons per day per pauper supplied through a 6 inch meter, had been convicted of a wastage of 20,000 gallons per night by a reading of their meter on the affirmation of the law agent of the corporation, Mr Ignatius Rice, solicitor, thereby acting to the detriment of another section of the public, selfsupporting taxpayers, solvent, sound.

What in water did Bloom, waterlover, drawer of water, watercarrier returning to the range, admire?

Its universality: its democratic equality and constancy to its nature in seeking its own level: its vastness in the ocean of Mercator's projection: its unplumbed profundity in the Sundam trench of the Pacific exceeding 8,000 fathoms: the restlessness of its waves and surface particles visiting in turn all points of its seaboard: the independence of its units: the variability of states of sea: its hydrostatic quiescence in calm: its hydrokinetic turgidity in neap and spring tides: its subsidence after devastation: its sterility in the circumpolar icecaps, arctic and antarctic: its climatic and commercial significance: its prepon-

derance of 3 to 1 over the dry land of the globe: its indisputable hegemony extending in square leagues over all the region below the sub-equatorial tropic of Capricorn: the multiseular stability of its primeval basin: its luteofulvous bed: Its capacity to dissolve and hold in solution all soluble substances including millions of tons of the most precious metals: its slow erosions of peninsulas and islands, its persistent formation of homothetic islands, peninsulas and downward tending promontories: its alluvial deposits: its weight and volume and density: its imperturbability in lagoons and highland tarns: its gradation of colours in the torrid and temperate and frigid zones: its vehicular ramifications in continental lakecontained streams and confluent oceanflowing rivers with their tributaries and transoceanic currents, gulfstream, north and south equatorial courses: its violence in seaquakes, waterspouts, artesian wells, eruptions, torrents, eddies, freshets, spates, groundswells, watersheds, waterpartings, geysers, cataracts, whirlpools, maelstroms, inundations, deluges, cloudbursts: its vast circumterrestrial ahorizontal curve: its secrecy in springs and latent humidity, revealed by rhabdomantic or hygrometric instruments and exemplified by the well by the hole in the wall at Ashtown gate, saturation of air, distillation of dew: the simplicity of its composition, two constituent parts of hydrogen with one constituent part of oxygen: its healing virtues: its buoyancy in the waters of the Dead Sea: its persevering penetrativeness in runnels, gullies, inadequate dams, leaks on shipboard: its properties for cleansing, quenching thirst and fire, nourishing vegetation: its infallibility as paradigm and paragon: its metamorphoses as vapour, mist, cloud, rain, sleet, snow, hail: its strength in rigid hydrants: its variety of forms in loughs and bays and gulfs and bights and guts and lagoons and atolls and archipelagos and sounds and fjords and minches and tidal estuaries and arms of sea: its solidity in glaciers, icebergs, icefloes: its docility in working hydraulic millwheels, turbines, dynamos, electric power stations, bleachworks, tanneries, scutchmills: its utility in canals, rivers, if navigable, floating and graving docks: its potentiality derivable from harnessed tides or watercourses falling from level to level: its submarine fauna and flora (anacoustic, photophobe), numerically, if not literally, the inhabitants of the globe: its ubiquity as constituting 90% of the human body: the noxiousness of its effluvia in lacustrine % marshes, pestilential fens, faded flowerwater, stagnant pools in the waning moon.

James Joyce, from *Ulysses*





Prometheus

THERE ARE four legends concerning Prometheus:

According to the first he was clamped to a rock in the Caucasus for betraying the secrets of the gods to men, and the gods sent eagles to feed on his liver, which was perpetually renewed.

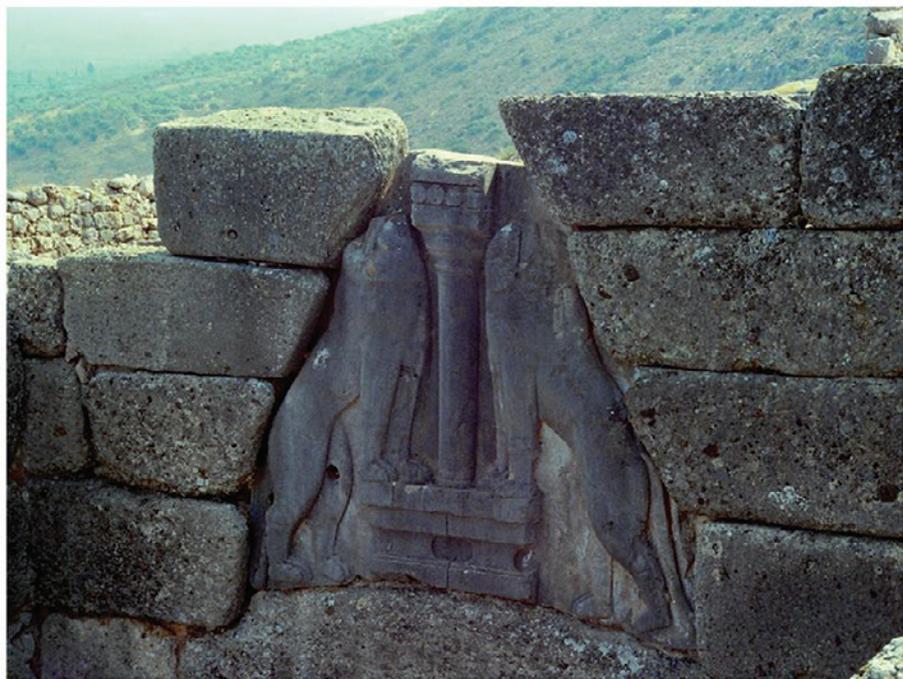
According to the second Prometheus, goaded by the pain of the tearing beaks, pressed himself deeper and deeper into the rock until he became one with it.

According to the third his treachery was forgotten in the course of thousands of years, forgotten by the gods, the eagles, forgotten by himself.

According to the fourth everyone grew weary of the meaningless affair. The gods grew weary, the eagles grew weary, the wound closed wearily.

There remained the inexplicable mass of rock. The legend tried to explain the inexplicable. As it came out of a substratum of truth it had in turn to end in the inexplicable.

Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir
Franz Kafka
From The Complete Stories









Even if Kafka did not pray - and this we do not know - he still possessed in the highest degree what Malebranche called "the natural prayer of the soul": attentiveness. And in this attentiveness he included all living creatures, as saints include them in their prayers.

Walter Benjamin, from Franz Kafka, On The Tenth Anniversary Of His Death





GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY.

GEBURTS-GROTTE.

GROTTE DE LA NATIVITÉ.





All images collected or made by Fawn Krieger

All text collected or written by Jenny Nichols

FRONT TO BACK:

Experiment in Resistance 62 (2019) at Jacob Riis Park

Video still from the making of *Experiment in Resistance 52* (2019)

X-Rac, an electric calculator to analyze the atomic structure of cadmium niobate, Life Magazine, Photo-AI Fenn, April 1954

Theatre Play image by Dick Fickle, from *Things to Make and Do*, 1974

Experiment in Resistance 27 (2017)

"Pastellküche," *Film und Frau, Heft 11* ["Pastel Kitchen" from *Film and Woman*, Issue 11], (ad for Resopal Werbung, a laminate company), Hamburg, 1960

"Green Village", Bushwick, Brooklyn

Film still from *Stalker*, 1979, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky

Tilting, an Image from *Bunker Archeology*, by Paul Virilio, 1997

Experiment in Resistance 97 (2019) at Jacob Riis Park

Palestinian youth practice parkour in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, CNN, 2012

Partial cover from *Our Earth*, a "How and Why Wonder Book", 1960

Ceramic heat shield tiles on the Space Shuttle Discovery

Mexico City, 2016

Arecibo Observatory, Puerto Rico, Associated Press, 2020

Experiment in Resistance 47 (2018) in front of Three Mile Island's concrete cooling towers

Experiment in Resistance 51 (2019) in front of a limestone stalactite wall at Indian Echo Cave, down the street from Three Mile Island

Cone Mosaic tiles from Uruk/Warka, Mesopotamia, c. 3,500 BC, Pergamon Museum, 2009

First fire, 2020

The Lion Gate at Mycenae, 1250 BC

Clay model of a sheep's liver used for instruction in liver divination in a Babylonian Temple School, c. 2000 BC

Eva Pel on her phone, 2017

Großsteingrab Kleinenkneten (megalithic grave), Lower Saxony, Germany, c. 3,500 BC, 2012

Old Jewish Cemetery, Prague, in use between 1400-1786

Grotto of the Nativity in Jerusalem, Palestine, color lithograph, by W. E. Robertson, 1908

Fawn Krieger in her NY studio, photo: Sabrina Mandanici, 2020

Film still from *Der Golem: Wie er in die Welt Kam* [*Golem: How We Came into the World*], 1920, Directed by Carl Boese & Paul Wegener

Experiment in Resistance 88 (2020) at Jacob Riis Park

