

How to Howl

Artist: Maria Lepistö Venue: Udstillingsstedet Sydhavn Station When: 26/4 – 26/5 2024

As a performance artist, I've spent over a decade experimenting with animal sounds and the human voice. Two years ago, I found an online community of people who identify as wolves, sharing YouTube videos with instructions on how to howl. Although identifying as a wolf seems like an impossibility to me, I started to play with the idea of becoming a wolf 'on stage', as a performance artist. I learned to howl, and in 2023, I held howling workshops/performances both in Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Now I have been invited to perform a variation of this performance at Udstillingsstedet Sydhavn Station at the opening of the exhibition *Jægerer og samlere*. The exhibition offers a compelling new context for this performance. It thematically explores our ancestral heritage as hunters/gatherers and how we struggle to make sense of our own identity as humans.

This will also be the first time I perform this piece outdoors in a public space. I want to use this opportunity to open up a discussion about what voices and sounds are allowed to take up space in our society. My practice of howling outdoors has been met with a mix of fascination and suspicion, and sometimes people howl back to me. What sounds alienate us and what sounds connect us to our surroundings, to each other?

The performance is framed as a social howling séance and takes place in the Metro station lobby, where I invite the audience to participate. It will make use of the specific architecture of the S-train station, incorporating the already existing soundscape and playing with voice projection and echo against the concrete. Using a loop pedal, I capture the howling voices of the audience, gradually building up a layered soundscape.

Additionally, I will create a series of textile banners. They are to be part of the scenography, showing short texts with instructions and information. The used font is specially designed for easily read signs along highways. Here, the aim is to catch the attention of the many passers-by of the S-station, inviting them to join in. After the performance, these banners will be installed as a part of the exhibition.



Museum Night at Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam 2023: Interactive Howling Performance, staged as a pop-up intermission in the middle of a dancefloor on Amsterdam Museum Night. During the performance, I recite quotes by Wolf Therians, people who imitate wolves and guide a Wolf Transformation Hypnosis.