

Art Viewer

MANON and Mélodie Mousset at Last Tango

[March 31, 2018](#)



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Artist: MANON and Mélodie Mousset

Exhibition title: MANON: Der Wachsaal / Mélodie Mousset: Intra-aura

Venue: Last Tango, Zurich, Switzerland

Date: February 2 – March 24, 2018

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For its last exhibition at Röntgenstrasse, Last Tango has paired artists Manon and Mélodie Mousset. With 35 years between them, their work has a common denominator: the use of their own bodies in identity puzzling ways. Both artists expose themselves heavily in their work, be it through the sensual and at times witty self-narrativizing universe of Manon or through Mousset who explores the unsettling merge between the digital and physical. Triggering our most primitive fears and desires we come to experience similar motifs: gold, MRI scans, mother-daughter relationships and the human in crisis.

MANON

Der Wachsaal

Today considered a pioneering figure in performance art and photography in Switzerland, Manon presents an entirely new large-scale installation titled *Der Wachsaal* in the downstairs space. The title “Der Wachsaal” recalls an observation room of a psychiatric hospital and features up to twelve beds. Reminiscent of the bed, pill and water seen in one of her former works *Das lachsfarbene Boudoir* (1974-2011) this work takes this idea a step further and hints at dark times. The metal, bodiless and motionless beds evoke personal pathos and anguish, as if they were relics of a distressing memory.

In the upper space Manon presents works from the photographic series *Hotel Dolores* (2008-2011). A selection of some nine large-scale photographs from the 170-photograph series, most of them are being shown in Zurich for the first time. The setting for this body of work is that of abandoned spa hotels in the town of Baden. A place with a touch of wonder, this extraordinary location became Manon’s dream backdrop. Its early 20th century heyday richness long gone, Manon pushes the voyeuristic potential of the space. Manon enlivens past memories by stylizing the interiors with some of her fetish objects, truly taking hold of the feminine imagination. A sober reverie on time’s passing, *Hotel Dolores* evokes ephemeral pleasures and emotions that have come to a standstill.

Manon’s still-lives in the adjacent space similarly deal with the topic of fading youthfulness and frivolity, unveiling textural imagery and mixing contemporary together with aged objects. Art historian Jean-Christophe Ammann described Manon as an erotic phantom, zombie, dominatrix, mourner, a sculptor and Pygmalion in one. The still-lives reveal some of these myriad of characters, with fragments coming from the world of burlesque to the scholarly.

Mélodie Mousset

Intra-aura

Merging personal narratives into her work and full of surrealist fantasy and humour, Mélodie Mousset’s practice portrays life expanded by discovery and metamorphosis. Her psychologically probing and viscerally introspective sculptures are an artistic investigation into the fragmented body and the elusive self. Her work is at times a whimsical reflection on how we think about the body with the intention of showing how the biological relates to the contemporary idea of the artificial (such as with virtual reality and MRI).

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For various of the works shown at Last Tango, the point of departure was her mother's potentially hereditary schizophrenia which led her to pose the question: Where is this dysfunction in my body? How can I free myself from it? Her first approach to solving such a question resulted in MRI body scans and ultimately 3D print-outs of her internal organs. Her mode of expression found shape as sculptures, with her brain, kidneys, lungs, heart, bladder, spleen, uterus, stomach, liver, pancreas and gallbladder all reproduced in marble (*Organes*, 2015) as they were last seen inside her body and in bronze (*Hanger*, 2015) as a recomposed self-portrait in the form of a clothes rack or as wearable jewellery.

Another endeavour led her to take a two-month long cargo boat trip across the Atlantic to Oaxaca City in Mexico during which she polished her organs. Upon arrival, her trip turned into that of a mind-bending kind wherein she took part in rituals with different shamans. Film footage of this multi-layered and buzzing journey are presented at Last Tango for the first time.

In the exhibition depictions of the body unfold in various other ways such as *Surgeons* (2016) consisting of bronze sculptures of dislocated crawling hands similar in appearance to the spiders of Louise Bourgeois. The spider encompassed several meanings for Bourgeois, who often made reference to it as a simulacrum of her mother.

In her virtual reality experience *HanaHana* (2016) the body takes shape as an endless form. Set in a timeless world the user has no skin and has the power to reproduce hands in an endless chain. The title refers to the Manga character Nico Robin who eats a "Hana-Hana" fruit as a child giving her the superpower to infinitely sprout body parts. Most of us assume that we know what it feels like to own, control, and be inside a body. But is this not an illusion? And how would it feel if "you" were replicated as multiple bodies, human, and non-human? *HanaHana* brings us that bit closer to understanding what it's like to be a bodiless entity.

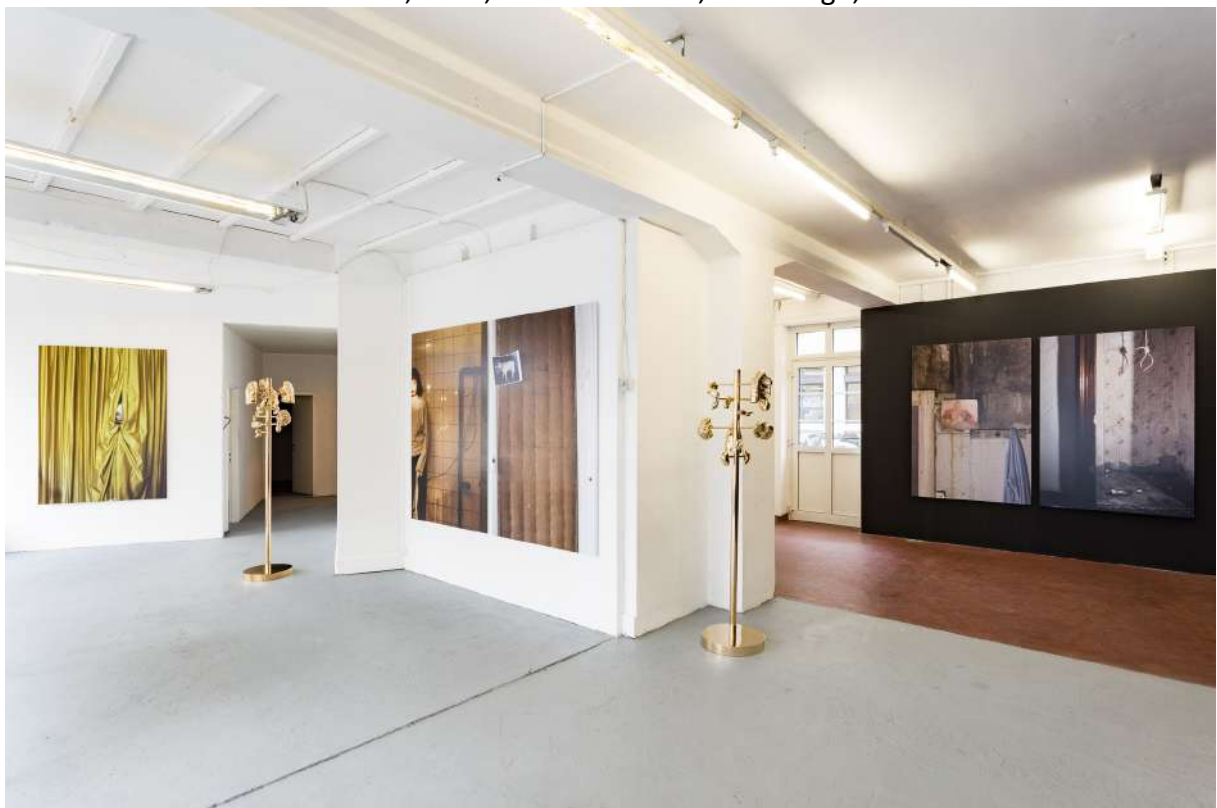


MANON and M  lodie Mousset, 2018, exhibition view, Last Tango, Zurich

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M  lodie Mousset, *Hanger*, 2015, bronze 194 x 50 x 50 cm, edition 3 of 7

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M lodie Mousset, *Surgeons*, 2016, bronze, 30 x 30 x 50 cm, edition of 3

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M lodie Mousset, *Surgeons*, 2016, bronze, 30 x 30 x 50 cm, edition of 3



M lodie Mousset, *Surgeons*, 2016, bronze, 30 x 30 x 50 cm, edition of 3

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MANON, 2018, exhibition view, Last Tango, Zurich

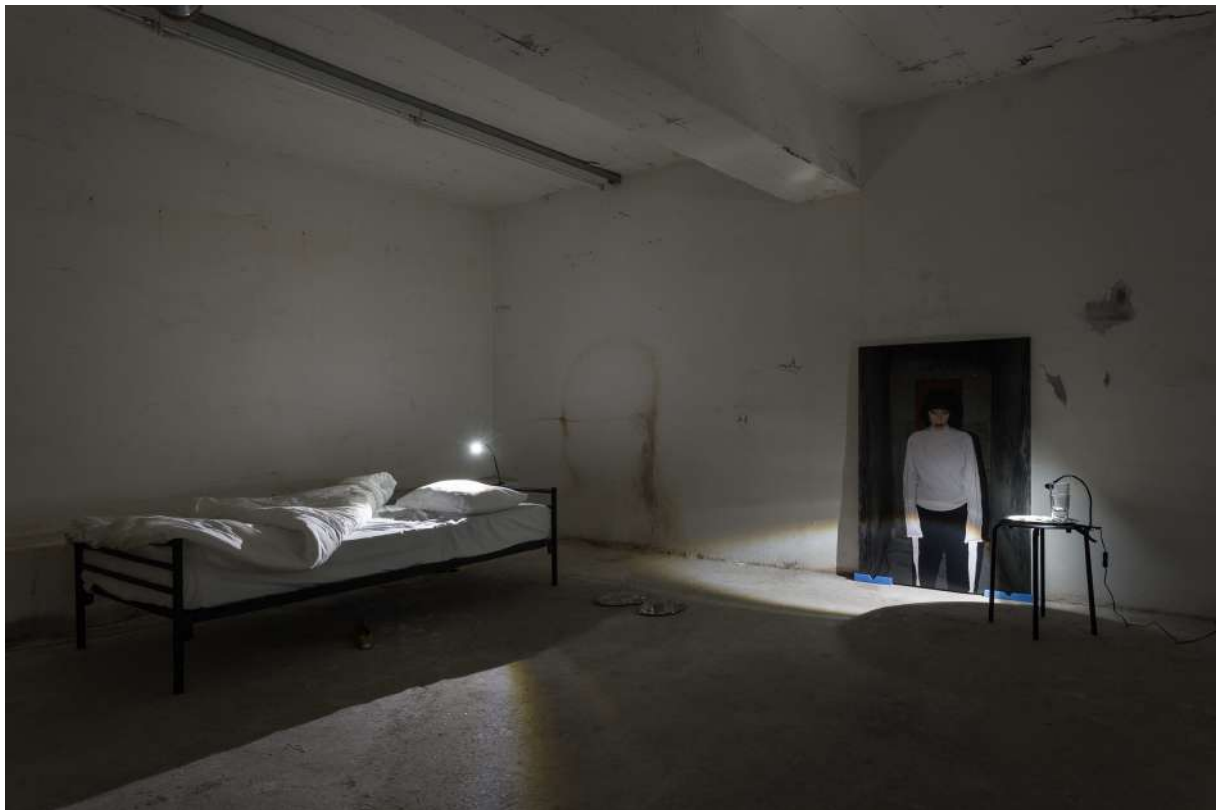


MANON, *Ohne Titel*, 2017, C-Print auf Aluminium, 84 x 126cm, Edition of 3 + 2 E..A

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MANON, 2018, exhibition view, Last Tango, Zurich



MANON, *Der Wachsaal*, 2018, mixed media installation, dimension variable;
MANON, *Zwangsjacke*, 2014, C-Print auf Aluminium, 126 x 84 cm, Edition of 3 + 2 E..A.

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MANON, *Der Wachsaal*, 2018, mixed media installation, dimension variable



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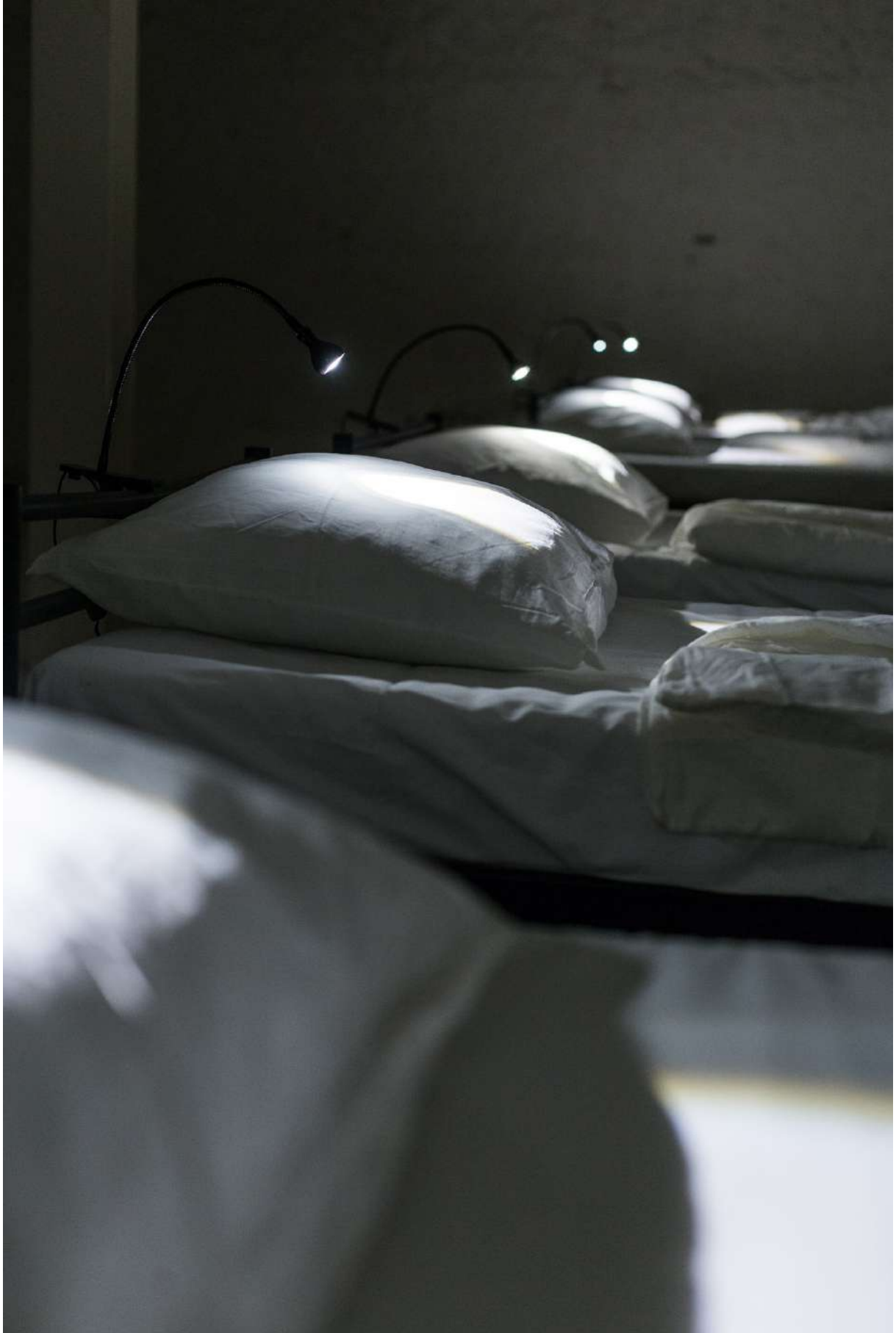


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MANON, *Zwangsjacke*, 2014, C-Print auf Aluminium, 126 x 84 cm, Edition of 3 + 2 E..A.

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MANON, *Der Wachsaal*, 2018, mixed media installation, dimension variable

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Mélodie Mousset, 2018, exhibition view, Last Tango, Zurich



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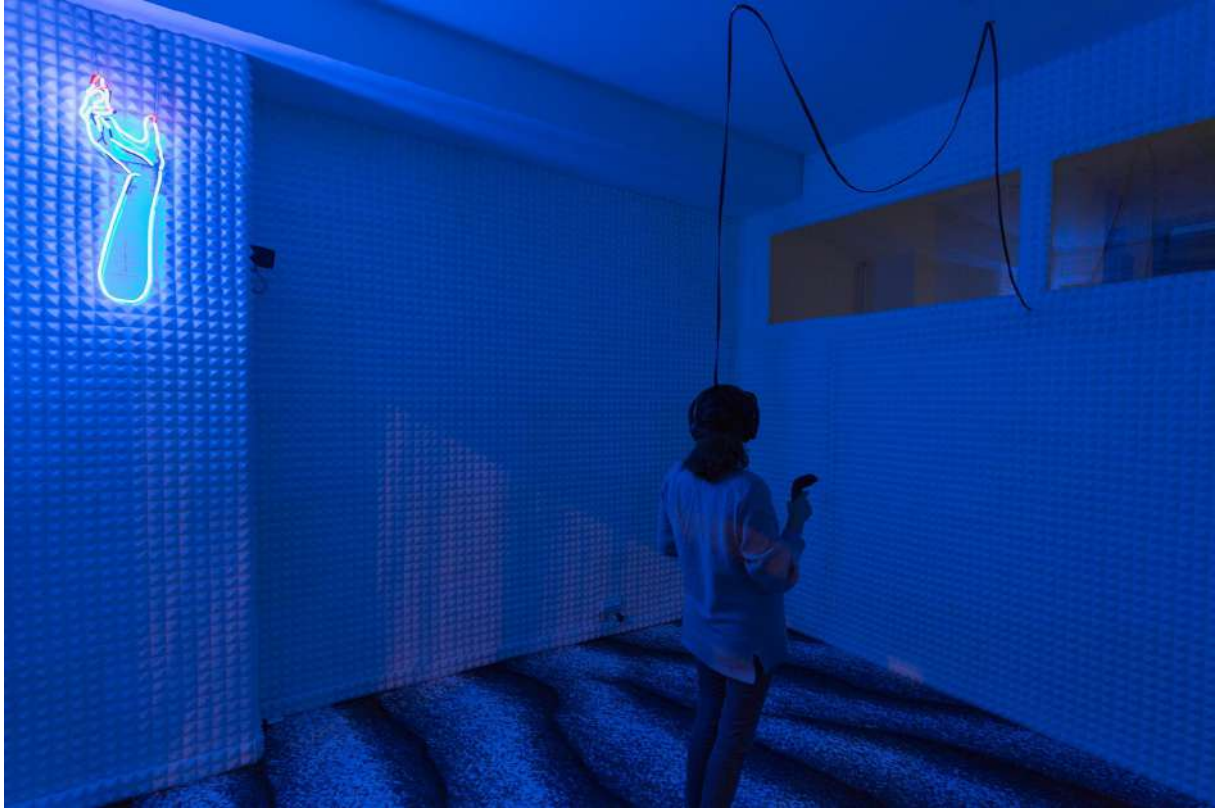
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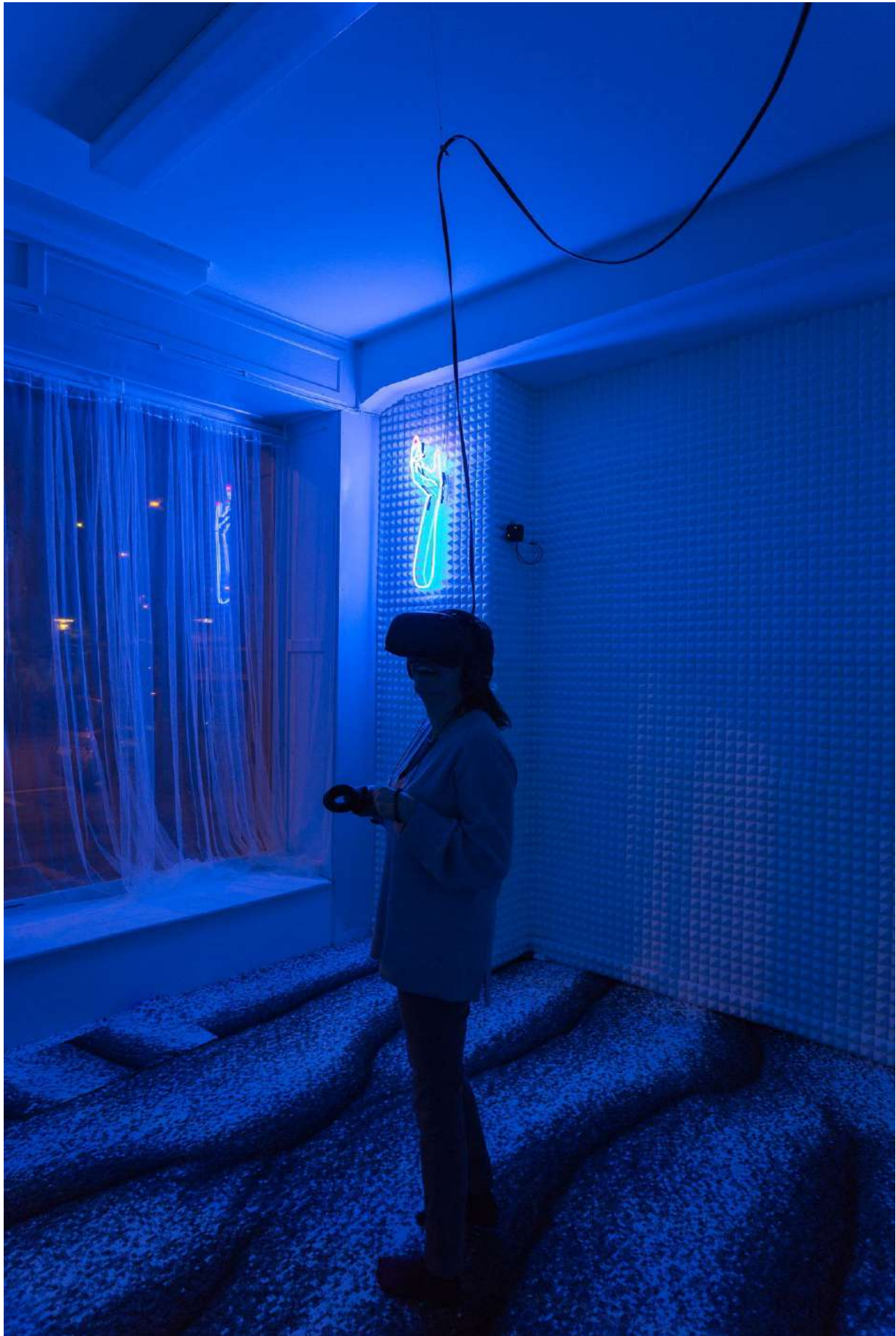
Mélodie Mousset & Naë Baron, *HanaHana*, 2016, VR experience, Dimension variable

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Melodie Mousset, *HanaHana Neons*, 2017, Neon light, 85 x 23 cm

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Mélodie Mousset & Naë Baron, *HanaHana*, 2016, VR experience, Dimension variable

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Mélodie Mousset & Naë Baron, *HanaHana*, 2016, VR experience, Dimension variable

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Mélodie Mousset & Naë Baron, *HanaHana*, 2016, VR experience, Dimension variable