

## Liliane Lijn. Arise Alive

*My work is an exercise in seeing the world. [...] I want to feel alive in my work. I want it to breathe. I want its surface to be as skin, translucent, porous, emitting the fine moist heat of the living.*  
– Liliane Lijn

Over the course of more than six decades, Liliane Lijn has produced an oeuvre of impressive breadth: one that combines the visual arts with the literary avant-garde of the mid-twentieth century, incorporates insights from the field of science, and is motivated by an explicitly feminist thinking. Referencing physics and poetry, as well as Eastern philosophy and ancient mythologies, Lijn produces poetic works that are characterized by a fascination for innovative materials and technological developments. In her work, experimental procedures reminiscent of a science laboratory meet cyborg-like goddesses, in an attempt by the artist to make sense of the laws of heaven and earth.

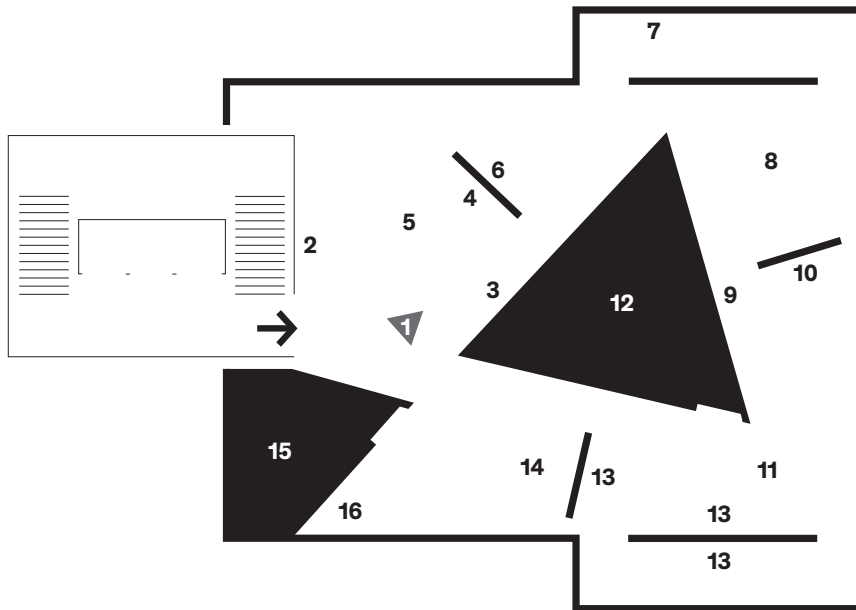
Liliane Lijn was born in 1939 in New York. In the late fifties, she moved to Paris to study art history and archeology, which is where she first encountered Surrealism. The Surrealists' focus on dreams and the unconscious had a major influence on the early years of her artistic output, but it was not long before she began to create kinetic artworks. Lijn was one of the first artists to work in this field, a pursuit that allowed her to investigate the effects of movement and light and the transfer of energy. Following a stint in Athens, she settled in London in 1966, where she still lives and works to this day.

It was in London that she began working on a book project that would go on to occupy her for many years and that was ultimately published in 1983 under the title *Crossing Map (1)*. This illustrated work of linguistic art—a hybrid of science fiction, autobiography, and ecofeminist manifesto—recounts the spiritual journey of an artist who transcends her material body. *Crossing Map* paved the way for a new artistic trajectory for Lijn, and in the seventies, she turned her attention to explicitly feminist themes. The minimalist character of her earlier works gave way to luminous colors and a more organic use of form. She also began to reflect upon how technological advances impact the human body. In various series of works, she attempted to articulate a redefinition of the feminine that would combine mythology with high-tech elements.

Lijn's formally varied oeuvre is unified by her enduring interest in some of the most fundamental questions: her desire to render the invisible visible, to understand how our cosmos works and how cultures emerge. Time and again, she has set out in search of origins—and has instead found opposites and polarities between which movement emerges and relationships take root. When energy flows, things come to life. It is this interest in vitality that distinguishes Lijn's category-defying oeuvre.

The exhibition *Liliane Lijn: Arise Alive* is jointly organized with Haus der Kunst München, in collaboration with Tate St Ives. It is the most comprehensive institutional solo exhibition of Liliane Lijn's work to date.

## Level 4



*I want to turn reality inside out, to push the material to its limits so that it manifests qualities of an opposite nature.*  
– Liliane Lijn

**Level 4** brings together a selection of artworks produced by Liliane Lijn over a period of six decades. From her early drawings to kinetic pieces and artworks that engage with language and poetry, the display traces a trajectory that extends all the way to her decidedly feminist works—first produced in the late seventies before becoming more prominent in the eighties—in which she sought new forms of the feminine. In her works, which are often organized into groups and series, Lijn addresses themes such as dreams and the unconscious, experiments with light, energy, and movement, and embarks on a search for origins and personal beginnings. In so doing, she continually undercuts simplistic, dualistic thinking, oscillating between heaven and earth, body and mind, science and spirituality.

### Early Drawings

Lijn's artistic career began with drawing. One of her first works, from 1959, is titled *Two Worlds (2)*. In it, a stark, rigid triangle creates an empty center of negative space, enclosed by a mass of entwined bodies; it is a wild and chaotic scene, a kind of primordial soup. Lijn herself associates the triangle with the mind, and the void at the center with clarity of thought, while in her imagination, the circle represents a powerful corporeality and an ever-ambivalent emotional world. Lijn's marked interest in dual structures, which would go on to characterize her work in various guises, is already clearly articulated here.

In the same year, she created *The Beginning (2)*—a graphic artwork that is similar to *Two Worlds* in terms of its formal aspects—, which depicts on a round piece of paper a maelstrom of clouds and mountain-like formations encircling a dense, flaming center—in Lijn's own words, products of an “unconscious whirling around and separating out from a fiery and as yet condensed central core.” This drawing constitutes the energy source of her entire artistic practice; it is the “primordial work” at the genesis of her oeuvre. It anticipates Lijn's engagement with energy and dynamics, as well as her search for mythological origins and her striving to depict them.

The *Sky Scrolls (3)*, on the other hand, which were produced in 1959/60, provide an early example of Lijn's interest in Eastern philosophy and astronomical constellations and cosmologies. These works draw on ancient Chinese precursors, which Lijn had studied at the Musée Cernuschi in Paris. These landscape-format watercolors, which are intersected by lateral stripes, each shows a skyscape featuring fantastical, enchanted details, which upon closer inspection reveal themselves to be mythical creatures emerging from the cloudy plumes of color. As in *The Beginning*, in this work, too, Lijn shows the viewer a dynamic world caught in a perpetual process of becoming.

## **Poem Machines**

*I would make machines to liberate the word.*  
– Liliane Lijn

Created in 1962, *Vibrographe (4)* ushered in a new phase in Liliane Lijn's artistic career. Two metal drums covered with Letraset lines rotate, powered by a motor, with the movement giving rise to patterns of interference. Here, movement is no longer depicted, as it is in *The Beginning*, for example, but is instead rendered a constructive element of the work. The inspiration source for this early, motorized work was an exhibit at the Palais de la Découverte, a science museum in Paris, which fascinated Lijn during one of her visits.

In her *Poem Machines (5)*, Lijn took this principle even further. She realized that the letters of the alphabet are also comprised of lines, and that whole words can be translated into oscillations. To this end, she extracted single units of meaning from poems penned by her poet friends. For *Arise Alive*, for example—the *Poem Machine* from 1965 that lends this exhibition its name—Lijn used a poem by Leonard D. Marshall, setting terms such as “FEAR,” “FRIEND,” “ARISE,” and “ALIVE” in motion.

In these works, Lijn literally divorces language from its context and juxtaposes the supposed subjectivity of poetry with the stoic, mechanical movement of the machine. She accelerates the words, hurls them into the space, and “frees” them—not just from their original context, but also from their fixed meanings. As they rotate, the words disintegrate, becoming energetic oscillations—of another, living form of poetry.

In her dynamic and visual treatment of language, Lijn's *Poem Machines* stand at the intersection of two of the key artistic movements of the mid-twentieth century: kinetic art and concrete poetry. However, the text montages of Beat poets like William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin (friends of Lijn's) also form a productive relationship with these works. As such, Lijn's *Poem Machines* are early examples of the interdisciplinary nature of her practice, and of her appreciation for the functionality and aesthetics of machines.

## Works with Letraset

Lijn's work with Letraset symbols also inspired her to create two series of works on paper: *Electronic Symbols* (6) (1966–70) and *Neurographs* (7) (1971). In these graphic compositions, it is not primarily letters that form the foundation of the works, but the signs typically used in electrical blueprints to designate wires, voltage, and resistance; as such, the works navigate questions of communication and exchange and how information is interpreted.

Lijn was inspired to create her *Neurographs* by her poet friend Sinclair Beiles, who wrote a manuscript titled *Deliria* during a stay in a psychiatric clinic in 1971. These writings led Lijn to think about the human brain as an "organic machine," a concept that can be productively related to her later, technically animated sculptures. In pieces such as *Dream Machine*, *Mind Home*, *Paranoia*, and—not least—*Electronic Goddess*, electrical symbols transform into components of neural circuit diagrams, which reflect the relationship between human beings and machines and the complexities of human imagination.

## Koans

In 1965, in close relation to the *Poem Machines*, Lijn began a series that would go on to play a pivotal role in her oeuvre and to which she continues to add to this day: her *Koans* (8) series. Instead of cylinders, for these sculptures she uses cones that spin around on top of motorized platforms. The surfaces of the cones bear letters, words, or mathematical formulae, and in some cases also simple, concentric lines. In reality, these lines consist of sheets of fluorescent Plexiglas, which divide the cones into uneven elliptical sections. Illuminated from within, they appear to the viewer as lines, which move rhythmically along the length of the spinning sculpture, calling to mind the orbital paths of celestial bodies.

With these works—in which the figure of the cone unites the circle and the triangle from her first drawings—, Lijn significantly expands the associative sphere: the concept of the koan (incidentally a near homophone of "cone") first and foremost references a riddle from Eastern philosophy, which is intended to help empty the mind during meditation and aid concentration. Additionally, though, for Lijn, these cones are a reference to Hestia, the Greek goddess of the hearth, who was symbolized by a cone-shaped mound of ash. A decidedly feminist revisiting of ancient mythology would become central to Lijn's oeuvre throughout the eighties.

## Drawings from the Seventies

In several series of drawings produced over the course of the seventies, Liliane Lijn drew lines of connection between broader conceptions of movement and dynamics with the unceasing flow of the unconscious and principles borrowed from the field of cartography. While her *Flow Lines* (9)—minimalist pencil drawings produced between 1975 and 1977—employ an automatized script of the unconscious and use recurring graphic marks to present the process of mark-making itself as a ceaseless flow and a practice of directing energy, her *Lunar Traces* (9) from 1978 tentatively begin to embrace the use of color. For these works, Lijn took inspiration from the earthen tones of the barren, moonlike landscape she had witnessed in Carboneras, a coastal village in Andalusia.

With her *Windows (Starskins)* (10) series, produced in 1979, Lijn's practice departed the earthly realm. As she had done for *Sky Scrolls* precisely twenty years earlier, Lijn turned her gaze toward the heavens. These drawings purport in their very title to map the surface of stars, to depict their "skin"—while knowing full well that stars are primarily composed of hydrogen and helium, and that what we see in the night sky is in fact pure light. In order to create the effect of a glowing skin, Lijn rubbed countless layers of luminous pastel onto the paper surface, before blending and brightening them by working over them with lighter pastel tones.

## **Female Figures**

The series *Female Figures* (11), the first of which was produced in 1979, represent a turning point in Liliane Lijn's oeuvre. Where she had previously worked in her sculptural practice with predominantly abstract shapes and depictions of bodies, in these figures, her engagement with the human body became more explicit. Almost life-size, positioned directly on the ground without the use of plinths, these sculptures inhabit the same space as the viewer, as equals, as if one were entering into a dialog with them.

These figures also invite us to reflect upon contemporary conceptions of humanity and the gendered associations we often make. Lijn deliberately fabricates her female figures out of industrial materials like aluminum or steel, which would otherwise provoke more traditionally masculine connotations. However, she then tends to combine these with soft textures, such as the feathers featured in her *Feathered Lady* from 1979, or the synthetic fibers of a brush in the sculpture *Heshe*, produced one year later. This play with dualisms and oppositions is also reflected in the notion of twin figures: in both *Queen of Hearts*, *Queen of Diamonds* (1980) and *Gemini* (1984), we are confronted with dual identities that are opposite yet interconnected.

The heads of all these figures are made of optical glass prisms of the kind used in the periscopes of tanks. Prisms—which Lijn has been working with since the sixties—refract light, splitting it into the colors of the rainbow. In an analogous fashion, the iridescent and hybrid *Female Figures* complicate simplistic, gendered associations, shattering and rearranging them.

## **Separate Room: Conjunction of Opposites: Lady of the Wild Things and Woman of War (1983–1986)**

*Listen, my heart ticks like a bomb. Smell the smoke of the mushroom  
on my breath. Look, I am the Medusa. [...] I am the image of she.*  
– Liliane Lijn

Shown for the first time at the Venice Biennale in 1986, *Conjunction of Opposites* (12) marks a highpoint in Lijn's artistic production during the eighties. This performative installation—to which a separate room in the center of the exhibition space is dedicated—presents two female figures engaged in a dialog: *Lady of the Wild Things* from 1983 and *Woman of War* from 1986. Both sculptures form part of a series of works that Lijn refers to as *Cosmic Dramas*, and in which sound, movement, and a range of lighting effects combine to create a theatrical *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Lijn's first considerations regarding "performing" sculptures date back to 1980. At that time, she came across a photo of a lost painting that she had made in 1959 and then forgotten: the vision of a mythical bird goddess set against a stormy sky; a kind of lost genesis of her own artistic endeavors.

Both sculptures, which Lijn brings together in *Conjunction of Opposites*, reference mythological figures that are conceived as polar opposites: in Lijn's conception, *Lady of the Wild Things* embodies an early Greek tutelary goddess of nature. Her incarnation of this ancient deity takes the form of a figure that is designed with great technical sophistication and is highly artificial in appearance, with the ability to translate acoustic signals into dynamic light patterns—an archetype of absorbing or receiving, dressed in strikingly technical garb. In contrast, *Woman of War* stands for active, externally directed energies such as aggression and rage. During the course of the performance piece, this bellicose figure sings in Lijn's voice, uttering a warning to humanity—to which her counterpart responds with light signals.

The figures featured in *Cosmic Dramas* constitute the culmination of Lijn's critical confrontation with female archetypes and their representations in the contemporary world. The connection that emerges here between the divine and an industrial aesthetic is not the product of chance: in Western cultures, female deities have been systematically repressed—with divinity being transformed into a strictly male concept. For Lijn, this archaic, female force is expressed in the technical devices of our time. Her goddesses, at once cyborg-like and flamboyant, thus embody a "conjunction of opposites" in which differences are made productive: as a field of energy spanning two opposing poles; a force field of exchange and energy transfer.

## Drawings and Paintings from the Eighties

*I wanted to express the female form and find a kind of archetype. I started by drawing without thinking.*  
– Liliane Lijn

In addition to her engagement with female forms in her sculptural work from the late seventies onwards, Lijn also addressed this theme through the mediums of painting and drawing. In series of artworks like *She (13)* (1984–86) and the *Inner Portraits (13)* (1985–89), she endeavored to capture the various aspects of the feminine through visual means and to redefine these on her own terms. In the process of doing so, Lijn tended to follow her intuition: instead of pre-planning her compositions, she employed mark-making techniques that, similar to the automatic writing of Surrealism, sought to open a door to the unconscious. The vivid color palette employed in her *Windows (Starskins)* series is further intensified here.

Lijn's large-format paintings in particular combine mythological figures and archetypes of the feminine with personal reflections on her own identity. During a period of profound personal turmoil for the artist, these artworks provided her with a vehicle for introspection that allowed her to explore the role of archetypal qualities within her own psyche. For example, the triptych *Transformation of the Bride Into the Medusa* (1987) depicts a moment of self-empowerment—in which the seemingly inert and almost flower-like "bride" gradually morphs into an animalistic "Medusa," a sinister snarl of innumerable writhing tentacular limbs. *Good Mother Bad Mother* (1989), on the other hand, is a visualization of the maternal archetype: both its capacity for care and nurture and its destructive potential.

## Net Heads and Torn Heads

One recurring motif in Lijn's work is that of the head as the home of the mind, sight, and imagination. From the mid-sixties to the eighties, she worked with glass prisms of varying sizes, which acted as metaphorical representations of heads in her sculptures. In the second half of the eighties, inspired by the increasingly free and organic forms generated in her drawings, Lijn began to look for alternate kinds of heads.

It was within the context of this search that Lijn created *Net Heads (14)* in 1986, a series of graphic works on paper in which she uses images of nets to depict the human head. Here, too, she references ancient iconography, with the net-like structures inspired by the oldest Sumerian pictogram for tree, which also symbolized life. Lijn combines these nets with segments of a circle, and in one instance with a triangle, thereby returning once again to the fundamental geometric forms found in her earliest drawings.

Created between 1987 and 1990 and derived from *Net Heads*, the ***Torn Heads (14)*** series translates the concept of an open, ruptured head into a sculptural format. Made from blown glass, the heads in question look as if they have been violently torn open and boast great gaping orifices with edges that curve outwards. Lijn associates these openings with bodily orifices, open wounds, and the female sex organ. In contrast to the heads made of prisms, which are evocative of the senses of sight and intellect, the blown-glass heads with their feathers and wire mesh act as an expression of emotional states, pain, and the experience of violence.

### **Separate Room: *Electric Bride (1989)***

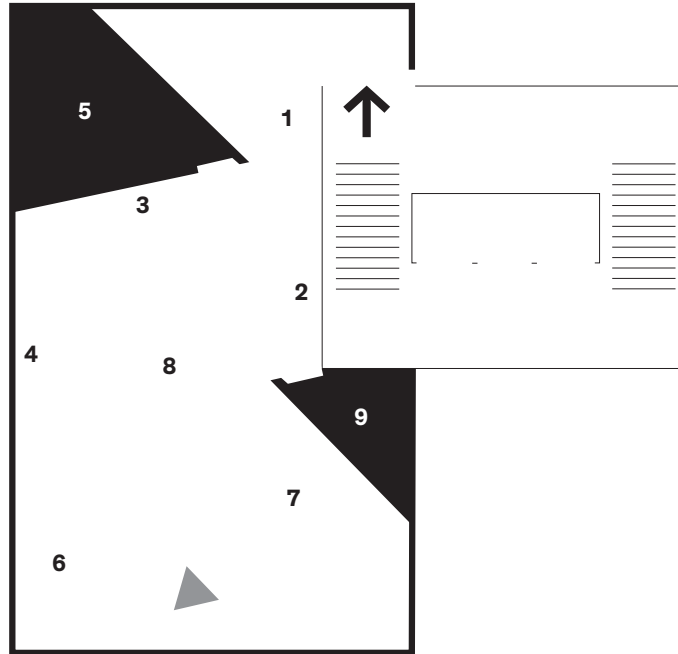
***Electric Bride (15)*** (1989) is the final figure in Lijn's *Cosmic Dramas* series and depicts yet another female archetype: the bride. This expansive figure, which is presented here in a separate room, is confined in a steel cage, to which she is attached by red-hot wires. In comparison to Lijn's other robotic sculptures, the form of this figure feels more organic: her throbbing head is made of blown glass, and her body is composed of myriad layers of mineral mica. In the voice of Japanese singer Shirai Takako, the bride whispers a poem in which Lijn references the legend of the Sumerian goddess Inanna and her descent into the underworld.

It was during a visit to a transformer substation that Lijn first came up with the idea for this artwork. Lijn perceived in the colossal electrical transformers a repressed feminine archetype, which she then sought to articulate through her *Electric Bride*. The artwork can also be interpreted as offering a counterpoint to the art-historical topos of the bachelor machine, with which Marcel Duchamp, for example, was so occupied at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in which the bride is defined exclusively by the male gaze. Lijn counters this with a figure that is autonomous and forceful—the very inverse of a regressive male fantasy.

### ***Sweet Solar Dreams III (2002–22)***

With ***Sweet Solar Dreams (16)***, Lijn returned, as she entered the new millennium, to one of the key themes occupying Surrealism: dreams and the unconscious. Each of the three sculptures in this series is identically constructed: a head in profile view, nestled in a synthetic pillow, each of which is itself surrounded by a range of different materials. The figures' eyes are shut, and the heads appear to be sleeping. Each of the sculptures represents a specific stage of the sleep process: dozing off in the evening, the deep sleep of the dead of night, and, in the artwork shown here, the light slumber of the morning hours. On the audio track, we hear Lijn's own voice recounting the events of a dream—her battle with a gigantic bird, which is alluded to by the white feathers that encircle the head on its pillow like a corona. The realistic profile figures featured in *Sweet Solar Dreams* are all casts of the artist's own head. In the late nineties, Lijn abandoned abstract archetypes in favor of using her own body, fragments of which have found their way into her sculptures over the years.

Level  
**3**



*The main concern of my work has been and is “energy transfer.”*  
– Liliane Lijn

Light and energy, the material and the immaterial: these are, broadly speaking, the most fundamental elements of Liliane Lijn's artistic practice. **Level 3** focuses on her artworks from the sixties and seventies—in particular those in which she explores the visible and invisible properties of light. In her wall-mounted artworks, sculptural works, and experimental installations from this era, Lijn makes use of light and motion as compositional tools in their own right, with the help of innovative materials like Plexiglas and synthetic polymers. In the mid-sixties, she began using optical prisms to separate light into its spectral colors. In one simple but striking gesture, color is rendered visible in its truest form: dispersed light—a torrent of tiny particles.

### **Early Works with Light and Plexiglas**

Liliane Lijn was already working with molten colored plastic when she created her *Fire Drawings (1)* in 1959, for which she would heat what was known as Tefelstuck, a polymer-based ski wax, and drip the melted wax onto paper. In *Fire Lines (1)*, created just one year later, the artist made use of Plexiglas sheets as a surface for the very first time. In this particular artwork, she caused the heated wax sticks to vibrate above the panels in such a way that the melted material collected in delicate filaments atop the transparent surface, similar to drip paintings. The result is a multidimensional composition in which the colorful web of lines is doubled by virtue of the shadows it casts.

In *Cuttings (2)* (1961), Lijn deepened her exploration of the interplay between light and shadow. But this time, instead of applying lines to Plexiglas sheets, she sawed directly into the material. In an inversion of sorts, the shadows cause the incisions to appear not as depressions but instead as relief-like protrusions. The *Cuttings* are also akin to the *Drillings (2)*, in which Lijn drills holes into Plexiglas blocks from several different directions. Here, too, the ensuing shadow play causes the cavities formed by the drilling not to appear as empty spaces, but as concrete, tangible forms that crisscross the apparent vacuum of the Plexiglas block. Lijn herself speaks of an “architecture of the void” when referring to this illusion of mass.



Throughout the sixties, Lijn used motors and projectors to broaden the scope of her experimentation with synthetic materials and light. For *Reflection Tableau 4 (3)* from 1962, she spattered transparent polymer droplets onto a Plexiglas cylinder, which was then lit and made to rotate. These droplets act as lenses that focus the light. The inspiration for the artwork was drawn from a boat trip taken by the artist from Italy to Greece, during which she studied the way in which the water droplets on the porthole of her cabin moved and reacted. She would then go on to further elaborate on this principle in *Echolights (4)* (1963), in which she paired a Plexiglas block equipped with polymer lenses with a projector with a revolving lens. The rotating light source casts an ever-shifting pattern of light and shadow against the white-painted rear of the Plexiglas block. For *Cosmic Flares (4)* (1965–66), Lijn ultimately opted to replace the expensive Plexiglas block with a thin sheet, working instead with the empty space between the sheet and a white background. Instead of one single light source, in this instance, she used a number of small spotlights installed in the frame of the artworks. These spotlights were programmed to turn on and off sequentially, illuminating a spiral formation of polymer lenses that in turn generates different patterns depending on the angle of incidence of the incoming light—a phenomenon Lijn associates with the “rhythm of cosmic forces.”

### **Separate Room: Liquid Reflections (1968)**

Liliane Lijn’s experimentation with light and movement culminated in the groundbreaking artwork *Liquid Reflections (5)*, which was inspired by her interest in astronomy and physics. *Liquid Reflections* is comprised of a hollow, rotating Plexiglas disk containing water. The spinning causes the liquid to condense into droplets that act as natural lenses. Placed atop the disk’s surface are two Plexiglas spheres, the motion of which is determined by two opposing forces: the centrifugal force of the rotating disk and the centripetal force of its concave curvature. Illuminated by a fixed light source, the spheres are transformed into magnifying lenses that give rise to a dynamic and unpredictable interplay of light and shadow. They orbit across the transparent surface like celestial bodies and, in miniature, offer us a glimpse into the mysteries of the universe.

### **Works with Prisms**

*Each prism radiates a certain presence of which I am aware. When related to another prism of a different form there is the beginning of a field of forces.*

– Liliane Lijn

In 1964, Lijn came across some optical glass prisms for sale at a flea market in Paris. Following a period of experimentation, and intrigued by their manifold industrial and military applications, she decided to start using them in her work. Prisms refract light according to wavelength: they divide white light into its spectral colors, allowing each color to be perceived separately. Prisms are also used in astronomical spectroscopy to gather information about the composition of distant stars.

In *Rites of Passage (6)*, a series of artworks created between 1971 and 1976, Lijn’s experiments with prisms—which had previously been more formal in nature—adopted a theatrical or stage-like character. These sculptures composed of multiple pieces address the topic of transformation and the process of transitioning between different states of consciousness. Inspired by sculptures from Egyptian temples and the ancient ceremonies outlined in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, they call to mind set designs for dramas yet to be written. Despite their high degree of abstraction, the pillar-like figures, each of which has a small prism for a head, have an unmistakably bodily appearance. In this way, artworks like *In the Valley of Darkness* (1973) and *No Other* (1976) represent a threshold of sorts: they anticipate Lijn’s segue into producing her life-sized and decidedly figurative artworks created from the late seventies onwards. One prime example of this is *Four Figures of Light (7)* (1978), a series of freestanding sculptures with prisms for heads that use the simplest of formal methods to evoke the human body.

Closely related to these works are Lijn's *Prism Stones* (1978). For works like *Saurian*, *Firespine*, and *Kori*, the artist affixed prisms to stones that she had collected in the Lake District in North West England and along the coast of Cornwall. In these works, precisely rendered, handmade artefacts are combined with naturally occurring stones that have been abraded into roundness in long, slow geological processes spanning many millennia. The result of this process is a collection of abstract heads with gills and crests made out of prisms, which in turn relate to Lijn's later head sculptures.

### **Separate Room: *Denslens* (1974)**

Created in 1974, the sculpture *Denslens* (9) is remarkably straightforward in terms of its design and construction, comprising only a cylinder wound with wire and a lens. When observed from the right position—which is only possible for one person at a time—the lens magnifies and refracts the light emanating from the surface of the cylinder, thereby generating a vivid spectrum of colors that shifts as the cylinder rotates. This movement is, however, only observable from a specific angle and distance, both of which are determined by the focal length of the lens. Given that what is observed here by the viewer has no material existence, but rather is an effect triggered by this specific pairing of coil and lens, Lijn thinks of this artwork as an event. And one's perception of this event should, she says, induce a “state of pure concentration, a meditative state of mind.”

### **Beyond the exhibition space:**

#### ***Words to Walk on* (1993)**

Another of Liliane Lijn's works is on display on the external staircase leading to the entrance of the mumok building, having been adapted especially for the venue. Lijn has also regularly made works in the realm of applied arts, creating, for example, jewelry, furniture, and carpets. A text work is exhibited on the steps of the staircase, an artwork that is based on a carpet design from 1993, *Words to Walk On*. Lijn interweaves key terms from her artistic practice—such as “she,” “flow,” and “light”—into the carpet's design and merges these with the motif of flowing water. This work constitutes a striking example of the significance afforded to language and poetry in Lijn's oeuvre, and how she expands these into physical space. It also serves as a prime example of the countless works realized by the artist in public spaces throughout the course of her career.

#### ***Shimmering* (2024)**

*Shimmering* was created for Haus der Kunst in Munich, which was previously home to the exhibition *Arise Alive*. The artwork has now been installed in the entrance hall of the mumok building, which is illuminated from above and connects the museum's multiple floors. In the open space between the glass ceiling and Heimo Zobernig's *White Cube* (2002), at the same height as exhibition level 4, an object made from silvery, shimmering fabric hangs suspended from a pole, its drape similar to that of a skirt. The object is activated by a motor at regular intervals, causing it to spin ever more rapidly, thereby lifting the fabric into the air and transforming it into a whirling figure. The silvery material starts to glisten, seemingly dissolving into a flurry of light and movement. In *Shimmering* and related works like *Gravity's Dance* (2019) and *Spinning Dolls* (2015), Lijn evokes the cosmic forces that mobilize matter and mind. The artwork conjures thoughts of the gravitational pull of black holes, the ecstatic whirl of the Sufi dervishes, and, of course, Lijn's own drawing *The Beginning*, which depicts matter whirling around a fiery core.