

The Danish artist Henrik Plenge Jakobsen has created a film installation, *Littorina Littorea*, that comprises six short films. These were shot on islands in the Baltic Sea, specifically on Bornholm and on Färö and Lille Karlsø near Gotland. The ragged coastal landscapes with their many cliffs form the backdrop for mysterious scenes that show people carrying out enigmatic actions that appear to be ritual in nature or to refer to some unknown mythological realm. A woman is placing triangular mirrors in a dark landscape, a man is walking along with a long cane upon which eggs appear to be growing. A negative version of this egg cane appears on the bottom of the sea in one of the other films. A man touches a damp cliff side while another pours salt into the sea kneeling on a stony beach.

Littorina littorea is the name of a sea snail that was named by the Swedish botanist and zoologist Carl von Linné in the 18th century after an expedition to Gotland. The snail has lived in the area for countless ages and lent its name to an earlier stage of the Baltic, specifically the Littorina Sea, where, millennia before our time, the water level was much higher than it is today. The snail has been found in deposits in the geological intermediate zone that was then covered by the brackish waters of the Littorina sea, but which are now the coastlines of the Baltic. These landscapes, once submerged under the waters, evoke a world that predates civilisation, on the edge of history.

The Baltic constitutes an intermediate stage somewhere between lake and sea and as such displays unusual variations in salinity. The Baltic has been an important trade route and was much travelled in the Viking and Medieval ages when the area was both rich and powerful. The films take place on locations that are of biological, mythological, or historical significance for the Baltic. All the various tracks laid down provide a kind of sounding board for the films even though Plenge Jakobsen has no intention of pointing out a hidden connection or of reaching a single conclusive insight. Rather, the work reflects his own interests. He is interested in the Baltic, in zoology, hydrology, and geology, and in the friends and colleagues that appear in his film. In this way the films constitute a scene or setting for his own intuitive preferences.

The people appearing in the films are not professional actors; rather, they are personal friends and acquaintances of Plenge Jakobsen who, by virtue of their own personalities and distinctive characteristics, contribute characters whose actions lift them out of our recognisable universe, leaving them on the edge of the fathomable where they become phantoms of themselves.

The footage was shot on 16mm film and cut in an analogue process. The material properties of the celluloid film as it loops in the projector and projects its grainy image up onto the wall give the films a special tactility. Projected onto grey walls the films also seem to almost dissolve, causing the projections to appear like a kind of vision – much like the flickering figures they portray. The films' actions and objects point back

to Plenge Jakobsen's other body of work, in which the combination of performance and sculptural objects is a pivotal element. This is intermingled with references to film and art history with Northern European landscapes, Land Art, and early experimental films as obvious sources of inspiration.

Marianne Torp