

YNGVE  
HOLEN

13.5  
-14.8  
2016

KUNSTHALLE  
BASEL

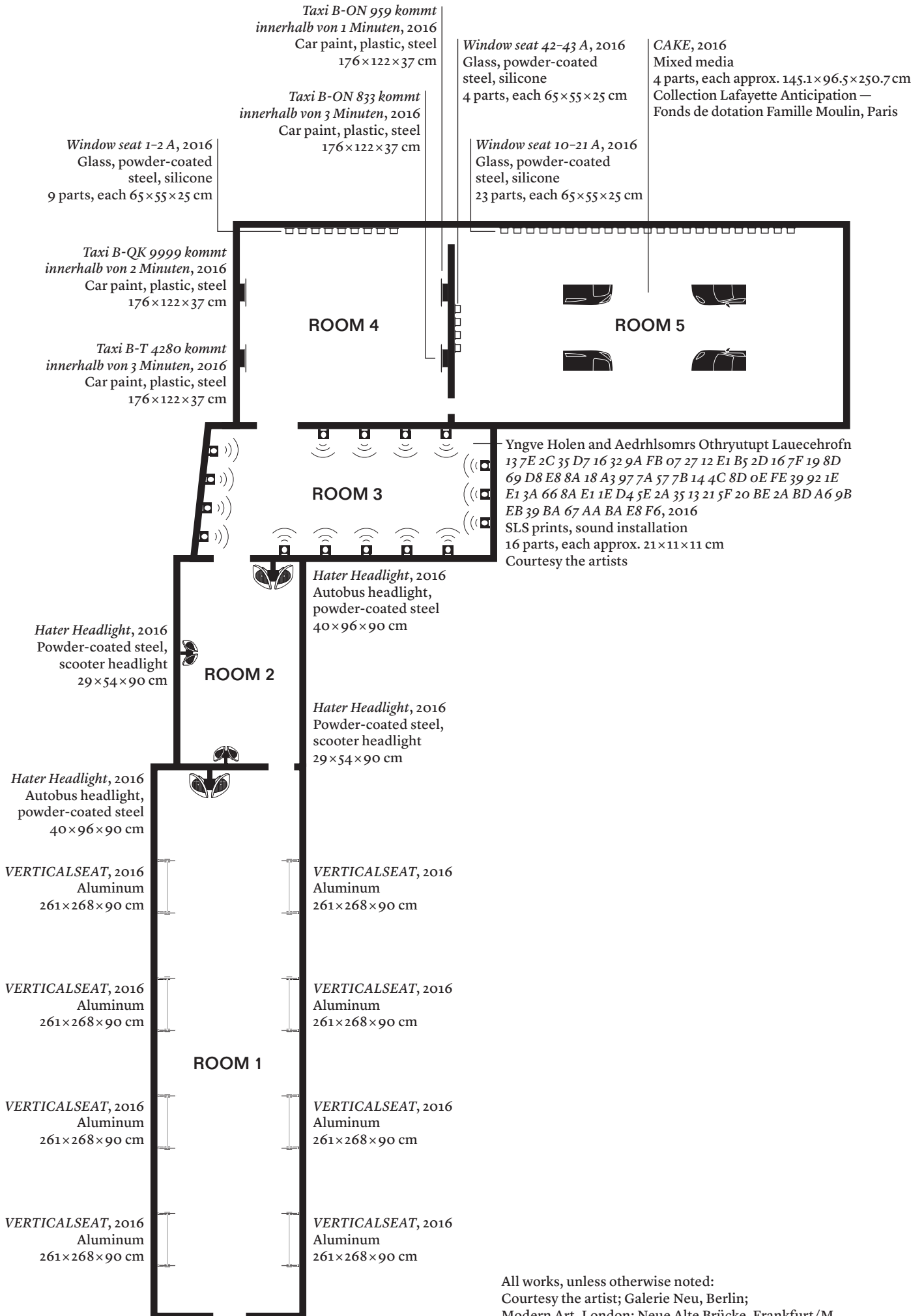
VERTICALSEAT

The human body, it is often said, is conspicuously absent in the work of the Norwegian German artist Yngve Holen (b. 1982). Yet everywhere in his oeuvre, the implications of the body—its subjectivity, messy corporeality, and imbrications in a culture of consumption—are evoked. Disemboweled washing machines, bisected water coolers, MRI-scanned and 3D-printed smashed cell phones: Holen has used them all in previous works. His predilection for things that are at one remove from the humans who make, buy, or use them is shaped by an interest in the technologies that define our everyday surroundings, from transportation and plastic surgery to industrial food production and security systems. In *VERTICALSEAT*, his largest institutional show to date, Holen presents an array of new objects that magnify the corporeal questioning that sits at the heart of his practice. **EN**

*VERTICALSEAT* refers to the eponymous standing chair (although back support with a seat belt might better describe it) that budget airlines are lobbying to introduce in order to transport more people in a reduced amount of space. The scheme speaks to one of the many ways society's stratification of wealth and power continues to have concrete implications for the body. Holen's work points to the connections between the proliferation of new technologies and our ever more iron-clad cultures of control.

ROOM 1

The exhibition opens with a series of works made from fences typically used to protect the well-off (their homes, airports, borders) from foreign intruders. Titled *VERTICALSEAT*, like the exhibition itself, they announce from the start Holen's preoccupation with human boundaries—physical and perceptual, but also financial and ethical. They also engage with a number of artistic traditions, from the geometric grids and industrial polish of Minimalism to the legacy of the ready-made, and even the conventions of display of large-scale painting.



All works, unless otherwise noted:  
Courtesy the artist; Galerie Neu, Berlin;  
Modern Art, London; Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt/M.

## ROOM 2

The fences of the previous room give way to the artist's appropriations of autobus and scooter headlights. The wall-mounted lights suggest both the gaze of anthropomorphic yet alien eyes and surveillance technologies. Cannibalizing everyday objects may be Holen's method, but the act always underscores the way these things reflect our needs and anxieties, including the desire to intentionally design resonances between machines and our own bodies.

## ROOM 3

At the midpoint of the exhibition, the body appears with a directness that Holen ordinarily eschews. For the room-filling installation, he collaborated with Aedrhlsomrs Othryutupt Lauecehrofn (b. 1986), whose various names are part of the Norwegian-born artist-musician's strategy. Born Lars Holdhus, he legally changed his name to Lars The Contemporary Future Holdhus, or TCF, and finally to Aedrhlsomrs Othryutupt Lauecehrofn, or AOL, as part of his work exploring technology, artificial intelligence, and human interaction. Together Holen and AOL extend a project that the latter began in 2015, documenting the vocal chords of different individuals through sound, MRI, and 3D printing technologies. The result is an uncanny installation in which digital prints of the faces and vocal chords of the two artists communicate, transmitting a composition created with the recorded sounds of each saying "A" and "O" (the two vowels that, when spoken, create the most dissonant forms in one's vocal chords).

## ROOM 4

Here Holen expands a series of works that he began in 2015. They are made using the facades of CT scanners, machines that create tomographic images from computer-processed X-rays, allowing doctors to see inside bodies without cutting them open. Holen's versions are produced using the industrial tooling for the Siemens SOMATOM Force model, except that his are painted in colors that the commodity industry uses to emphasize diversity and "choice" (Race Red, Black Sand Pearl). The surfaces of these newest works in the series have been sliced open at the sides—subjected to the very act that

medical imaging machines are meant to make unnecessary—and painted in the light ivory (RAL color number 1015) of German taxicabs. Again transport is at stake, as well as the class and labor implications of a society in which there are those who drive and those who get driven.

## ROOM 5

Hand-blown colored glass works introduced on one wall of the previous room continue here. Evoking the *nazar* amulet that is believed to ward off the "evil eye," the glass-works have been cut into the shape of Boeing Dreamliner windows and mounted on steel supports. Combining the handmade (a product of a blower's breath) and the industrially formed (copies of airplane window frames), as well as a superstitious object dating from antiquity and the aviation industry's most innovative window design, Holen's project is a study in contradictions. If boundaries, protection, the body, and transport come together again in this series, the amulet reference reflects the critical bite at the center of Holen's practice. Common in societies with persistent inequality, the *nazar* is a superstitious object thought to help manage class anxiety and economic asymmetry. It is designed to protect against destructive envy, but is also a symbol of the fear produced by inequality.

Occupying the center of the space is *CAKE*, a large-scale sculpture made from the ultimate object of desire for the nuclear family that also craves luxury and speed: the Porsche Panamera. The vehicle is cleaved in four like a cake distributed into equal shares, thus continuing Holen's serial dissection of objects that populate our everyday. The gesture is apparently simple (in reality, it required an impressive technical feat), but startling for the way it reveals the seemingly sentient "mortality" of something thought of as wholly inanimate—*only* a machine. The resulting object, splayed and totally inoperable, sits with a strange splendor. Its engine, split leather seats, cracked windows, and other mechanisms visible, the car appears like a specimen of an extinct creature. The equal yet useless division of such a luxury asset provokes the question: Is it possible to redistribute resources in a world of increasing inequality?

Holen's is a peculiar form of cultural anthropology. Throughout the exhibition, industrial objects, inhuman in their futuristic sheen, are sliced open or re-presented in ways that raise questions about how humans and the human-made reconfigure each other in our age of technological acceleration. Comprised entirely of newly commissioned works, the exhibition highlights the artist's different approaches to thinking about the object and its absent but implicit human users.

Yngve Holen was born in 1982 in Braunschweig, DE; he lives and works in Berlin.

*VERTICALSEAT* is made possible through the generous support of the LUMA Foundation. It benefits from the additional support of the Gaia Art Foundation, the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, and Royal Norwegian Embassy, Bern.

*CAKE*, 2016, was realized through a special collaboration with Lafayette Anticipation, Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette; their technical expertise and co-production support made this complex and ambitious project possible.

**LUMA**  
FOUNDATION

L A F A Y E T T E  
A N T I C I P A T I O N  
Fondation d'entreprise  
Galeries Lafayette

gaia  
art foundation

**OCA**  
Office for Contemporary Art Norway



Norwegian Embassy

Thanks to  
Maria Bukhtoyarova, Anna v. Brühl, Mark Dickenson,  
Maximilian Dietz, Ida Eritsland, Matthew Evans,  
S.E. Botschafter Thomas Hauff, Maja Hoffmann,  
Guillaume Houzé, Bergljot Hovland, Alexis Jakubowicz,  
Jonas Janczik, Kyle Joseph, Peter Kuchinke, Jimi Lee,  
Jarmo Malinen, Aude Mohammedi Merquiol,  
Dirk Meylaerts, Ryan Moore, Laurence Perrillat,  
Hans-Martin Puchert, Antti Ojalammi, François Quintin,  
Alessa Rather, Alexander Schröder, Stuart Shave,  
Karl Storms, Per Törnberg, Thilo Wermke  
and  
Aalto University, Math and Speech Department,  
Helsinki; diagnostikum berlin; Diamond Pauber,  
Massa (IT); Storms, Brussels

## GUIDED TOURS THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

Every Sunday at 3 pm guided tour, in German

15.5.2016, Sunday, 3 pm  
curator's tour, in English

## EDUCATION / PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Children's tour *I Spy with My Little Eye!*

29.5.2016, Sunday, 3 pm  
14.8.2016, Sunday, 3 pm  
A tour and workshop for children,  
from 5 - 10 yrs., in German

Magazine Launch *ETOPS III*

14.6.2016, Tuesday, 7 pm  
Yngve Holen and Matthew Evans present  
*ETOPS III*, in English  
*ETOPS III* is made possible by Hessische  
Kulturstiftung and its launch is co-hosted  
by the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Bern.

Presentation *Lautstark*

21.6.2016, Tuesday, 6.30 pm  
An audio guide tour conceived by pupils of  
Gymnasium Bäumlhof, Basel-Stadt,  
in German

In the Kunsthalle Basel library you will find an associative selection of publications related to Yngve Holen and his artistic practice.

More informations at [kunsthallebasel.ch](http://kunsthallebasel.ch)