

LONDON

## Laura Grisi and Germaine Kruip

The Approach

By Gabrielle Schwarz ☞



View of “The Mirrored,” 2023. From left: Laura Grisi, *Spiral Light*, 1968; Germaine Kruip, *The Illuminated Wind, Udone-shima*, 2023; Laura Grisi, *Le dimensioni immaginarie* (The Imaginary Dimensions), 1977; Germaine Kruip, *360 Polyphony, Brass*, 2023. Photo: Michael Brzezinski.

When Germaine Kruip came across the work of Laura Grisi in early 2022, she was struck by the affinities between their respective artistic practices. They were born a generation apart—Grisi in Greece in 1939 and Kruip in the Netherlands in 1970—and never met; the older artist had died in 2017. But they shared so many preoccupations: time, space, and perception; nature and geometry; culture and spirituality. Both artists had channeled these interests into objects and installations made using a range of environmental and technological materials including (but not limited to) wind, rain, air, film, photography, neon, and live and recorded sound. Aesthetically, their approaches synced up, too: both minimal, even austere, yet also playful and theatrical. Grisi’s *Volume of Air*, 1968, for instance, was an empty white room, approximately 117 inches cubed, lit with strips of neon tubing. Kruip’s so-subtle-you-could-miss-them interventions in museums and galleries have often featured slowly rotating lamps and mirrored panels, resulting in a continual interplay of illumination and shadow.

For this exhibition, “The Mirrored,” Kruip placed five of her own pieces alongside four of Grisi’s. The installation was meticulously arranged to emphasize formal and Conceptual echoes. On opposing walls in the main space, for instance, were two rectangular projections: Grisi’s film *Wind Speed 40 Knots*, 1968, in which she measured and documented the effects of high winds in different geographic regions, and Kruip’s *The Illuminated Wind, Udone-shima*, 2023, essentially a blank white “screen” of light. The brightness of the work varied according to data being collected in real time from a wind meter located on a deserted volcanic island around ninety-three

miles south of Tokyo. Extending the meteorological theme was Kruip's *A Shadow Cloud, at the still point of the turning world*, 2005–, consisting of slides of found photographs of a silhouetted cloud against a mountainous landscape, with a projector clicking away in a corner of the room. On another wall, on either side of the entrance door, Kruip paired a 1977 work on paper by Grisi titled *Le dimensioni immaginarie* (The Imaginary Dimensions), which uses a hexagon to explore the artist's hypothesis about multiplication of forms in four-dimensional space, with her own *Hexagon Kannadi in Six Parts*, 2023. The *kannadi* is a (traditionally circular) metal-alloy mirror handmade by craftsmen in the small town of Aranmula in Kerala, India. Kruip specially commissioned these unusually shaped specimens to generate a dialogue with Grisi's piece.

Can a real dialogue take place when one of the interlocutors is no longer living? In the center of the display—a few feet away from Grisi's neon sculpture *Spiral Light*, 1968—Kruip suspended *360 Polyphony, Brass*, 2023, three slender brass beams manufactured by the Bremen, Germany–based instrument maker Thein Brass. Visitors could strike the beams with a beater, causing them to issue sounds that mingled and reverberated for minutes on end. The concurrence of multiple tones or melodies was presented here as a metaphor for the back-and-forth of Kruip and Grisi's artistic voices. But it seems to me that Kruip's sensitive installation was more like a musical remix than a conversation, sampling, combining, and reordering existing work. This was particularly evident in the show's second room, where *The Measuring of Time*, 1969, a silent film showing Grisi sitting in a desert and counting grains of sand, acquired a soundtrack courtesy of its neighbor, Kruip's looped film *A Square Without Corners*, 2020. While watching Grisi undertake her interminable task, I listened to a Balinese high priestess recite quotations about the universe and infinity from sources such as Emily Dickinson, Albert Einstein, and Kazimir Malevich. (The reading was in a mix of languages; the film's only visual component is an English translation of the quoted passages.) In this moment, the distinctions between one artwork and another were entirely—if temporarily—dissolved.

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