

CRYSTALLINE MEMORIES OF DEEP TIME



Claus Spangsberg at the Rundetaarn, Copenhagen [Link].

With Connie (Svabo) on the last day of the exhibition – Crystalline Memories of Deep Time. Part of our ongoing collaboration around art-science, research-creation [Link], scholartistry [Link], creative-pragmatics [Link] – and mobilized through FNUG, her lab at University of Southern Denmark [Link], and Studio MS at Stanford [Link].

Artist Claus Spangsberg creates images at the intersection of art and science – [Link].

From the exhibition catalogue:

“Claus Spangsberg specializes in microscopy and crystallization, creating images using chemical substances, DNA, and amino acids. In the exhibition *Crystalline Memories of Deep Time*, he explores some of the oldest materials known to us and presents various meteorites and components from the biochemical processes of the primordial soup. Materials such as crystallized sulfur, amino acids, and enzymes are presented as large-scale microscopic images or displayed in specially constructed screens with polarizing filters, allowing beautiful colors and patterns to emerge from the materials’ structures.

What are the oldest materials we know of? With a palette of crystallized sulfur, enzymes, and meteorites, the exhibition explores the time before

Earth's formation and traces the earliest signs of life.

The journey begins before the solar system formed, when stardust from dying stars clumped together, later falling to Earth as meteorites. Crystalline Memories of Deep Time examines various meteorites and components from the primordial soup's biochemical processes. Materials like sulfur, enzymes, and amino acids are transformed into images and presented on custom-built screens. The exhibition also delves into LUCA (Last Universal Common Ancestor)—the concept of a single-celled organism as the last common ancestor—through 3-billion-year-old fossilized structures that testify to the earliest stages of life and the interconnectedness of all living things through deep time.”

Spangsberg works with materials that are the building blocks of life, and with the remains of the life of the cosmos. Mediating micro and macro, the ephemeral and the eternal, in marvelous metamorphoses.

In an archaeological sensibility focused, memory-like, on the remains of pasts in presents. In these extraordinary artworks we witness deep time beyond our secular comprehension, actuality in the connections between then and now.

In an innovative exploration of the archaeological imagination – working with what remains – where findings, interventions, microscopy, thin-sectioning, crystallization, mounting, viewing and photo-imaging produce art-works that mediate materials, science and comprehension, grasping the world.

Topic: *acheiropoieta* – forms, textures, structures, not-made-by-hand, that emerge from attention, engagement, intervention.

Topic: *deep time* – we are presented with temporal traces in an abyss of time.

Topic: *scale* – microscopic windows into vast realities.

Topic: *pareidolia* – where we find human pattern and meaning in what might be conceived as beyond-the-human.

Topic: *vitalism* – life processes in the very nature of materials.

Topic: *hylography* – natural materials conceived as writing-their-world.

Topic: *archive* – remains and traces organized and presented in-the-now, and with a view-to-the-future.

In all – a *post-humanism*, where the human is hybrid with its materiality, and a *post-phenomenological-materialism*, where experiences-of-the-world always extend beyond the frames and limits of the body, its cognitive processing, sensory engagement, and emotional evaluation.



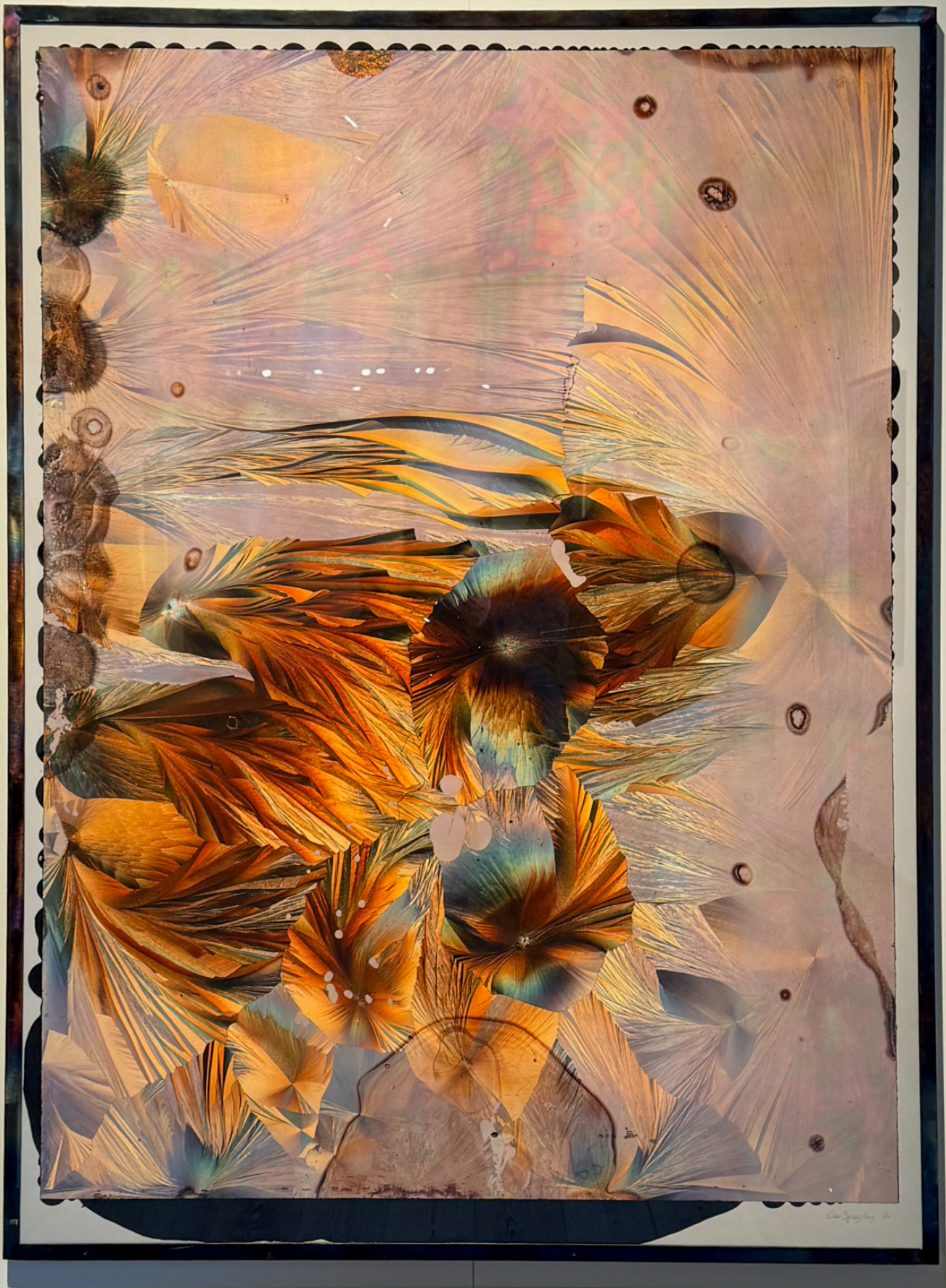
L-Lysozyme



Erg Chech 2. Found in the Sahara in 2020. 4.5 billion years old. The meteorite comes from the crust of a planet that was destroyed in collisions in our solar system before things settled into the way we see them now.



Proline. Photo by Connie Svabo.



Sulphur. A material implicated in the formation of the first organic molecules, the beginnings of life on earth. Melted between two glass plates, self-organized into layers and patterns.



Aletai. An iron-nickel meteorite found in northern China, formed deep within the core of an early proto-planet some 4 billion years ago. Crystallized over tens of thousands of years of cooling. Lightly etched thin section by Claus Spangenberg..



Ascorbic Acid.

Video by Connie Svabo



Traces of the life-history of the universe. This meteorite fell near the town of Murchison in Australia on September 28 1969. Embedded in its dark matrix are pale

clusters of minerals – presolar grains – formed in the later stages of ancient stars that shone long before our sun formed. Some are 7 billion years old – half the age of the universe. Murchison is also rich in organic compounds – many amino acids, including several that do not occur naturally in terrestrial biology. Photo by Connie Svabo.