

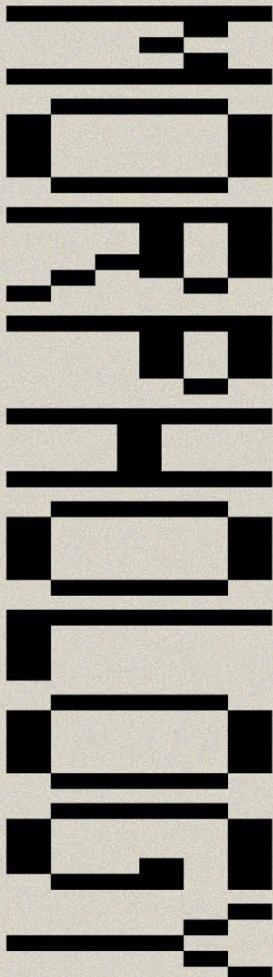
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PETER NELSON
彼得·倪森

TOBIAS KLEIN
簡鳴謙

IN COLLABORATION WITH
ALVARO CASSINELLI



形態之韻

OPENING RECEPTION
13.12 2-6PM

EXHIBITION PERIOD
13.12.2025
-24.1.2026

2/F MAI ON IND. BLDG. 17-21 KUNG
YIP ST. KWAI CHUNG HONG KONG



The exhibition is supported by



SIGGRAPH ASIA 香港
2025 HONG KONG 15-18 DEC



香港大學美術博物館
University Museum and Art Gallery
The University of Hong Kong

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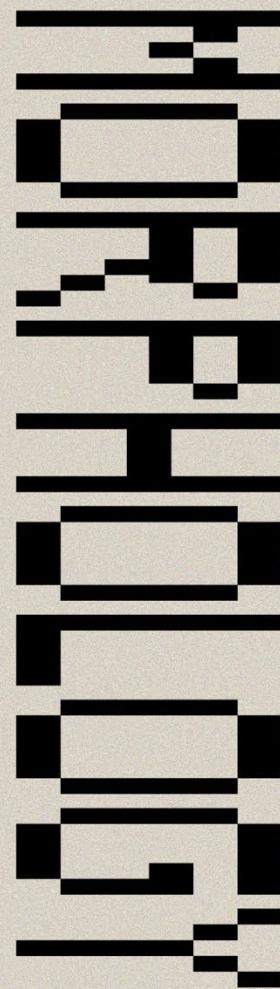
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MORPHOLOGY

Peter Nelson and Tobias Klein (in collaboration with Alvaro Cassinelli)

Artist's Reception: 13 December 2025 (Saturday), 2-6 pm

Exhibition Period: 13 December 2025 to 24 January 2026

Supported by
SIGGRAPH Asia 2025
The University Museum and Art Gallery (UMAG)

Hanart TZ Gallery
2/F Mai On Industrial Building
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Hanart TZ Gallery is pleased to present "**MORPHOLOGY**", duo exhibition of **Tobias Klein** and **Peter Nelson**, opening on **13 December 2025 (Saturday), 2-6 pm**.

The Slippery Morphology of the Aesthetic Rock Chang Tsong-Zung

Tobias Klein and Peter Nelson are intellectually adroit artists and professors who took up the subject of the 'aesthetic rock' (or 'scholar's rock') for their creative work early. To admire a naturally formed rock as an artistic object is peculiar, even though it is instinctive for humans to be attracted by strange objects. The long tradition of the 'scholar's rock' in China is well known, and it is usually associated with the painting tradition of *shan-shui*, 'mountain-water' landscape, where the rock is deemed integral to the morphology of the mountain. But today, in the age of excessive material production, when much of worldly goods are industrially made, the question of the 'form' and constitution of the aesthetic rock, the 'thing' that is a 'non-product' and yet considered 'aesthetic,' deserves further scrutiny.

As geological formation, the only valid morphological element of a rock is its crystalline structure, while the outer shape of the rock comes by accident of Nature. It is identified as an 'aesthetic rock' by virtue of the connoisseur's gaze alone. Hence the rock becomes an object of contemplation, a presence that alerts the human to the world we live in. But what is special about the 'form' of the aesthetic rock that makes it stand out from the

anonymous rock-world from which it emerges? What, for example, did the great Song dynasty artist-connoisseur Mi Fu (1051-1107) see in the rock that made him bow in excitement and cry out that it was a venerated friend he had sought for two decades?



Tobias Klein, *Cloud Rock IX*, 2025,
1 Taihu rock and stainless steel, 37.5 x 13.1 x 16.2



Peter Nelson, *Chasing the world*, 2025
Ink on paper, 36.5 x 67 cm

For manufactured products we know what is 'beautiful' because they are made to be 'beautiful,' in the sense that they are meant to meet our expectations. An object found in nature does not know our expectations. The morphology of an aesthetic object found in nature could either reflect the morphology of desire, or that of regret. Perhaps this is why Su Dongpo, a contemporary of Mi Fu, praised an aesthetic rock for its 'ugliness' because it presented a form that was beyond his grasp. The essence of the aesthetic rock, its 'being,' is not just its material spatial form but also the temporal encounter with the connoisseur who grasps its transformative potential. Mi Fu the great connoisseur cried out in joy to celebrate the transformative moment that revealed the morphological form of an aesthetic object. With this revelation the rock also revealed Mi Fu to himself.

Klein and Nelson are both interested in exploring the fluid relationship between the geomorphological depth of natural objects and the limits of tools employed for navigating the abyss of these objects. For their current series of works the artists start with a found rock or a random flip of the paint brush, which then inspires the search for the morphological structure of a hidden aesthetic form. The tools used in the days of Su Dongpo and Mi Fu were poetry and calligraphy, today the artist's tools are narrative tales and digital machinery. These two artists demonstrate how new technological equipment can help to extrapolate playful ideas and engage potential aesthetic objects, with the aim to reveal hidden seeds of transformation that is the secret of Being itself.



Peter Nelson, *Standing*, 2025, Ink on paper, 42 x 77.5 cm

Peter A C Nelson (b.1984) is an artist working at the intersection of traditional art practices and digital technologies. Originally trained in painting and drawing, his diverse practice spans painting, computer games, animation, and interactive technologies. As an art historian and game scholar, Nelson's work explores how technological shifts mediate our relationship with landscape imagery and the physical environment. As a writer and producer, he develops large-scale performances that focus on the relationship between mythology and technology.

Peter A C Nelson has been developing this new suite of paintings for the past 6 years. Nelson has refined his practice to a combination of improvisational ink painting on rice paper and technical drawing. His ink paintings serve as an exploration of the unnamed, the irrational and the non-specific, whereas his technical drawings are an attempt to rationalise and articulate what the ink paintings suggest via fragments of science fiction, horror or computer-simulated growth algorithms. Nelson began this body of work in 2022 when he decided to change from doing technical drawings by hand to using a robotic drawing machine. This automation allowed him to spend more time focusing on the intimate act of ink painting and to deepen the complexity of his technical drawing by linking the robot to his computer graphics practice. This series of paintings is paired with three short stories that the artist has developed. Together, the paintings and stories form a cosmogony, quietly exploring technogenesis, the silent religion of utilitarianism and irrational encounters of the body.



Tobias Klein, *Cloud Rock VI*, 2025,
1 Taihu rock and stainless steel, 41.5 × 22.9 × 23.5 cm

Tobias Klein (b.1979) is an architect and artist whose work articulates a syncretism of contemporary CAD/CAM technologies with site and culturally specific design narratives, intuitive non-linear design processes, and historical and cultural references. Through his works and writings, he established the notion of Digital Craft as an operational synthesis between digital and physical materials and tools, opposing the traditional dualistic separation of digital workflows and analogue making.

Tobias Klein's sculptural practice operates at the intersection of ancient Chinese cultural traditions and contemporary digital fabrication.

Central to his works in the exhibition are *Gongshi*, or scholar's stones—geological formations shaped over millennia, traditionally collected as portals to meditation and windows into deep time. Klein's 3D-printed scaffolds introduce ambiguous technological structures that feel strangely organic, echoing the Neo-Confucian concept of *Li* (理) patterns existing simultaneously at micro and macro scales without separation between technological and natural, ancient and contemporary. His stone works explore morphology as an ongoing dialogue between geological time, cultural memory, and technological intervention.

The morphology Klein explores is ultimately about transformation without hierarchy, about patterns that connect microscopic and cosmic scales, about time made somehow comprehensible through objects that simultaneously contain deep history and active becoming.



Collaboration of Alvaro Cassinelli and Tobias Klein

Alvaro Cassinelli (b.1972) is a multidisciplinary researcher, new media artist, inventor, and educator working at the crossroads of art, science, and technology. With a background in physics and engineering, he approaches creation from first principles—developing inventions that function both as scientific instruments and as new mediums of artistic expression. His practice is guided by a sensitivity to the **aesthetics of the machine**—acknowledging a form of existence that transcends mere efficiency or utility. His "paraphysical inventions," or "serious toys", often reveal more than they accomplish functionally, finding a second life as artworks in their own right.

In this collaborative work, Alvaro contributed by activating Tobias's artworks through responsive mechanisms that reveal or amplify their already latent narratives. In **Kunst.Werk.Stein.Schlag (KWSS)**, miniature sophisticated electronic thumpers prolong the work of natural erosion. The artificial aggressors cover the surface of the rock, kicking its surface and producing a sound reminiscent of industrial mining - however, an effective modification of the shape would paradoxically take geological times. Similarly, **Sternwerk** emerged from passionate discussions about the impossibility of the human mind to grasp the cosmic scales that shape the universe. The work exposes the shortsightedness of technological acceleration and the pretentious exploitation of celestial labour: a billions-year-old meteorite has been enslaved by the machine, forced to serve as a heatsink while a cheap microcontroller mines bitcoins—a process that would itself take this contraption billions of years to complete as the process resets when a drop falls from the rock.