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**South likes: Lina Selander at Kunsthall Trondheim,
Trondheim**



Lina Selander, *Silphium*, 2014, installation view. Photo: Marius Meli/Kunsthall Trondheim

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Silphium

Kunsthall Trondheim, Trondheim, Norway

6 March – 27 April, 2014

Silphium, the new film presented by Lina Selander at Kunsthall Trondheim, deals with the history of a little-known plant, which is now believed to be extinct and was widely popular in ancient times. In fact it seems that silphium's export sustained the economy of the Greek settlement of Cyrene, in today's Libya, to the point that the image of this plant was imprinted on cyrenian coins. Silphium was believed to be a panacea, beyond being used as contraceptive, aphrodisiac and abortifacient, and its use was so widespread that it was considered worth of its weight in silver. Since all the efforts to cultivate silphium failed, its exploitation lead to the extinction of the plant, as well as to the decline of the city of Cyrene. Lina Selander's film treat this subject with an essayistic register, making wide use of archival material from the Stasi archive and museum in Berlin as well as from the Museum of Natural History and Archaeology in Trondheim. In the sequence of images, the story of silphium overlaps with visions of the human struggle to control the environment. But the account of the expansion, the development and the subsequent failures and decline are projected into a historical narrative and translated into memories. For eventually the forgotten fate of an extinct plant is a reminder of events that are recorded deep down into the genetic code of Mediterranean culture: the rhythm of "rise and fall" in stories of lucrative sea-trades, of encounters between cultures and exhaustion of resources, of control and defeat, of prosperity and crisis.

www.kunsthalltrondheim.no



Lina Selander, *Silphium*, 2014, installation view. Photo: Marius Meli/Kunsthall Trondheim



Lina Selander, still from *Silphium*, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Kunsthall Trondheim



Lina Selander, still from Silphium, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Kunsthall Trondheim



Lina Selander, still from Silphium, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Kunsthall Trondheim

