

Pond Brain  
Jenna Sutela  
2026

Deep in the vast nurseries of our galaxy, ancient water resides in its atomic form. Hydrogen emerged in the Big Bang and oxygen in the cores of stars more massive than the Sun. Parallel to this Earthly realm, intergalactic ponds materialize above the stars. A pond seems to say, “as above, so below,” as it turns its image of the world upside down.

Jenna Sutela’s *Pond Brain*, 2026 presents sounds from her instrument-fountain of the same name. The water-filled bronze bowl can be played, or activated by touch and friction. Forged as the artist’s neuroplastic portrait, *Pond Brain* resembles a spouting bowl orchestrating feedback loops of sonic vibrations and dancing droplets.

The title alludes to a pond as a homeostatic controller, as once described by ‘alt’ cyberneticist Stafford Beer, who saw ponds as living brains of sorts, adapting and transforming in response to uncertainty and chaos. Likewise, Sutela is interested in multistable dynamic systems enmeshing with their environment – a world made of brains.

Similar to musical instruments, the human brain produces oscillatory patterns governing neural communication. *Pond Brain* reflects this: the bowl’s vibrations interact with otherworldly resonances drawn from oceanic and interplanetary audio libraries – star pulses, dolphin vocalizations, and beyond – shaping one another in an ongoing exchange. With each incoming cycle, a new brain is born and reflected back into its mirror image.

The edition of 70 unique resin records with pond flora inside is released as part of PAN’s Entopia series. Since the grooves are malleable, each play sounds different.

Thank you Victor Shepardson for software and sound engineering, Enyang Urbiks for recording, and Ville Haimala for mixing. Mastered, cast, and cut by Disc Archive in Berlin.

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*Pond Brain*, the installation, was co-commissioned by Helsinki Biennial and Copenhagen Contemporary, 2023.

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