On Mara - *GenAI Video Duology*

    Mara (2025)
        visual: Sachiko Hayashi + AI
        sound: from *The Heavenly Sophia* by Don Mandarin
        sound remix: Sachiko Hayashi
        additional sound sources:
            Carin Lundhquist (voice)
            St.Celfer and Nina Sobell (from a live performance to the visual of Mara at
            VEKKS, Vienna, February 2025)

    Mara - Eclipsed Fragments (2026)
        visual: Sachiko Hayashi + AI
        sound manipulation and sound collage: Sachiko Hayashi
        sounds and sound sources:
            Nina Sobell
            Don Mandarin (The Heavenly Sophia)
            Jair-Rohm Parker Wells (Echos from the Water's Edge)
            Fluffy Crumb

Artist Statement: GenAI Video Duology *On Mara*

On Mara is a two-part video series of GenAI-generated imagery. Both videos explore associations and imaginative interpretations of the mythological figure Mara from Norse folklore—a female presence said to bring nightmares (*night-Mara*) by sitting on sleepers' chests and suffocating them. While both works engage with the same mythological figure, each arises from a distinct origin and pursues a different thought process around the figure Mara.

Mara (2025)
The first video, *Mara*, centers on the nightmare itself. Rather than recounting the folklore directly, it renders the myth into a domain of experience of a nightmare, a psychological inner landscape where memory and fear converge into oppressive yet cathartic repetition. It evokes the disorienting and claustrophobic entrapment of nightmares, where mythological and personal terrains merge, presenting Mara not as an external figure but as something lived within the psyche. She appears less as a fixed form than as a shifting psychological presence, unfolding within the subconscious.

Mara – Eclipsed Fragments (2026)
The second video builds on my earlier CD-ROM works, *Nyx* (1996) and *The Norns* (1998–2000), tracing conceptual threads between past and present practice. Here, as with the other mythological female figures in my earlier works, Mara serves as a lens through which the philosophical and historical connotations of "woman" are deconstructed and reconstructed. The work examines how inherited narratives—mythological, cultural, and symbolic—are imposed upon women, and how these meanings come into tension with lived, embodied experience. The video opens a reflective space in which these narratives are unsettled, fragmented, and reconfigured, engaging with the complex cultural, historical, and symbolic meanings attributed to women.

Across the two videos, the *Mara* series explores and reconstructs the nature of the nightmare through which the mythological figure of Mara is reimagined. Each video engages this process differently; one unfolds from within the nightmare itself, while the other works through reflective reconfiguration. Together, they produce a layered and evolving engagement with the figure and her meaning.

11 January, 2026
Sachiko Hayashi