

Isabella Fürnkäs (*1988, Tokyo, Japan) is an artist who works in a variety of media. The body of work involves equal shares of video, multi-media installation, performance and drawing. In her multi-layered oeuvre she addresses questions of physical and spatial intimacy, the influence of digitalization on interpersonal relationships, and the transformation of social communication patterns. Fürnkäs investigates visual spaces of our present and creates contextual shifts that echo our own vulnerabilities. In the context of her works, inner images and multi-layered questions are transformed into a repertoire of media-reflexive actions via performative, installative and time-based techniques. Experimental by nature her works involve a subtle comparison of the individual and its society, creating situations of disruption and (re-)creation. By using a wide range of materials such as glass, epoxy-coated cloth, fluids, fabrics or pottery in combination with audio, video and performance, her works open up to potential mental spheres beyond the familiar, in the unexpected state of being in-between.

She studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf with Keren Cytter and Andreas Gursky, where she finished as Meisterschülerin in 2017. In addition, she was a guest student at the Universität der Künste Berlin with Hito Steyerl. Previously, she studied art history and philosophy at the Universität zu Köln, the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, as well as fine arts at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien. She is the recipient of the CCA Artist-in-Residence Program in 2024 and the BERLIN MASTERS Schliemann Residency in 2022. Furthermore, she is a scholar of the Akademie der Künste Berlin and the winner of the first prize of the strike a pose K21 Kunstsammlung NRW award in 2021. She has participated in numerous residency programs such as the Bronner Residency Tel Aviv (2019); the artist residency of the Goethe Institut Dakar (2018); and received a travel grant from the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen (2017). In 2016 she received the Förderpreis des Landes NRW, as well as the Paris Cité Internationale des Arts Paris residency. Since 2023 she is a lecturer at Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Braunschweig for digital art and practice.

Her work has been exhibited at Art-O-Rama, Marseille, France (2024); Museum Moyland, Cleve, Germany (2022); Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2022); Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin, Germany (2022); Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, Germany (2022); KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany (2020); Kunsthau NRW, Kornelimünster, Germany (2020); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2019); Kunstverein Göttingen, Germany (2019); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2018); the 13. Biennale for Contemporary Art Dakar, Senegal (2018); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2016); Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany (2016); Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul, South Korea (2016); and in the project space of the Julia Stoschek Collection in Düsseldorf, Germany (2013).

Her recent solo exhibitions and performances were on view at Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin, Germany (2024); Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2023); Salon Acme, Mexico City, Mexico (2020); Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany (2018); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2018); Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany (2018); Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne, Germany (2017); Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin, Germany (2017) and Manifesta 11, Zurich, Switzerland (2016).

Fürnkäs' work can be found in numerous private and public collections, such as the collection of Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, the Museum Abteiberg Collection, the Ulsan Art Museum, South Korea, the Burger Collection Zurich/Hong Kong, the collection of Kunsthau NRW, the collection of Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen and the Philara Collection, Düsseldorf, amongst others.

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THE DESIRING MACHINES Multimedia installation

The Desiring Machines is a sound installation that consists of 220 individually hand-blown glass droplets suspended from a mesh net across the ceiling within a two-channel immersive audio soundscape. Each glass drop is unique and offset in its own way, some with streams of deep red ruby glass inside them. Entering the room activates the sound level of the installation, which creates this dialog with the viewer that the title suggests, we are inside a web of desire. The artist writes "The glass bodies, composed like fixed movement in space, give the impression of a social fabric. Everything is interwoven, everything flows". The viewer is enveloped in the soundscape based on excerpts from the publication *Anti-Oedipus* (1977) by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. An intentionally hypnotic and difficult to follow text on the "healthy" and "schizophrenic" people in capitalist society - it is unclear who is who.

A lyrical arc of the work spans tells how productive desire can be, how desire bridges gaps and is a force of creation. Attentive observation reveals engravings in some drops - words in which overriding values, longings and desires crystallize literally onto glass. A kind of journey through the human body begins, from its needs and processes to the mundane circulation of bodily fluids. The red hue of some drops can evoke associations with blood but also other connotations of red, a signifier of passion, like glass, something fragile or frozen as if a manifested snapshot, a frozen state of the fluid, the ephemeral, the intangible.

- Text by Elke Kania

The Desiring Machines, 2025

Individual mouth-blown red ruby glass drops, engraved words, approx. 90 x 5 cm

The Desiring Machines, 2020

Sound installation, 220 individual hanging glass drops, approximately 10 cm, net, background sound by Aphex Twin (10min/loop), text spoken by Moira Barrett

Exhibitions

Art Düsseldorf (2025), Künstlerhaus Dortmund (2025), Haverkamp Leistenschneider (2025), Studio Mondial - Kunsthaus Kurfürstendamm, Berlin (2023), Kunstverein Siegen (2023), Kultur Kiosk, Stuttgart (2023), Museum Moerland, Cleve (2022), Clages, Cologne (2020), Kunsthaus NRW, Kornelimünster (2020)

**This work series is in the permanent collection of the Kunsthaus NRW, Kornelimünster*

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/the-desiring-machines>

Installation view

Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025)



Installation view
Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025)



Installation view
Künstlerhaus Dortmund (2025)

Language reveals to us a profound insight: “I am not my body, I have a body.” As a consequence of the realization that the body is not one’s own person, the question arises as to the substance that animates the human being. The exhibition is dedicated to this question on the basis of the works of art on display. The focus is on exploring the factors that determine the creation of an image. Which energy flows lead to the picture? How or what brings the work to life? The exhibition explores the subtle levels and invisible spaces inherent in a work of art.

Isabella Fürnkäs explores the physical interstices between human and machine, masculinity and femininity. Drawing on *Anti-Oedipus* by Gilles Deleuze, she incorporates quotations that address the fluid processes of the body, its circulation, and its needs. It seems as though the “male thought” takes on a new form through the female voice of Moira Barrett—transformed and repositioned. The mind of the viewer and listener itself becomes a vessel in which a fluid web of its own thoughts emerges. The floating, tranquil glass droplets appear to transform into fundamental human sensations, questioning their material nature. One thing is certain: we are not our feelings—they are merely a fragment of the infinite abundance of our consciousness.

- Text by Adriane Wachholz



Installation view
Künstlerhaus Dortmund (2025)



Installation view
Kultur Kiosk, Stuttgart (2023)



Installation view
Kunstverein Siegen (2023)



THE DESIRING MACHINES

Sound installation, text spoken by Moira Barrett (10min/loop)

It breathes, it heats, it eats. A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world.

Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines— all of them connected to those of his body.

There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, desiring-machines everywhere.

The glaring, sober truth that resides in delirium, is that there is no such thing as relatively independent spheres or circuits. Everything is connected.

And everything is production: productions of recording processes, productions of consumptions, of sensual pleasures, of anxieties, and of pain.

The soul and body ultimately perish. Schizophrenia is like love: there is no specifically schizophrenic phenomenon or entity; schizophrenia is the universe of productive and reproductive desiring-machines.

A machine is always coupled with another. The productive synthesis is inherently connective in nature.

Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented.

Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows.

Everything that flows is adoration, even the menstrual flow that carries away the seed unfecund. Amniotic fluid spilling out of the sac and kidney stones; flowing hair; a flow of spittle, a flow of sperm, shit, urine.

Every object presupposes the continuity of a flow; every flow, the fragmentation of the object. The organ-machine interprets the entire world from the perspective of its flux.

Doubtless, the eye interprets everything—speaking, understanding, shitting, fucking—in terms of seeing.

The ability to rearrange fragments continually in new and different patterns or configurations is inherent to all Desiring-machines.

Installation view

Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025)



Installation view
Kunsthaus NRW, Kornelimünster (2020)

(continued)

What would be required, is a pure fluid in a free state, streaming over the surface of a full body.

Desiring-machines make us a universal organism. But at the very heart the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or even, no organization at all.

*1, 2, 1, 2, . . .
1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1. . .*

Desire desires death also, because the full body of death is its motor, just as it desires life.

The body is the body. It is all by itself. The body is never a sole organism. And organisms are the enemies of the body.

Merely so many nails piercing the flesh, so many forms of torture. In order to resist the body presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid.

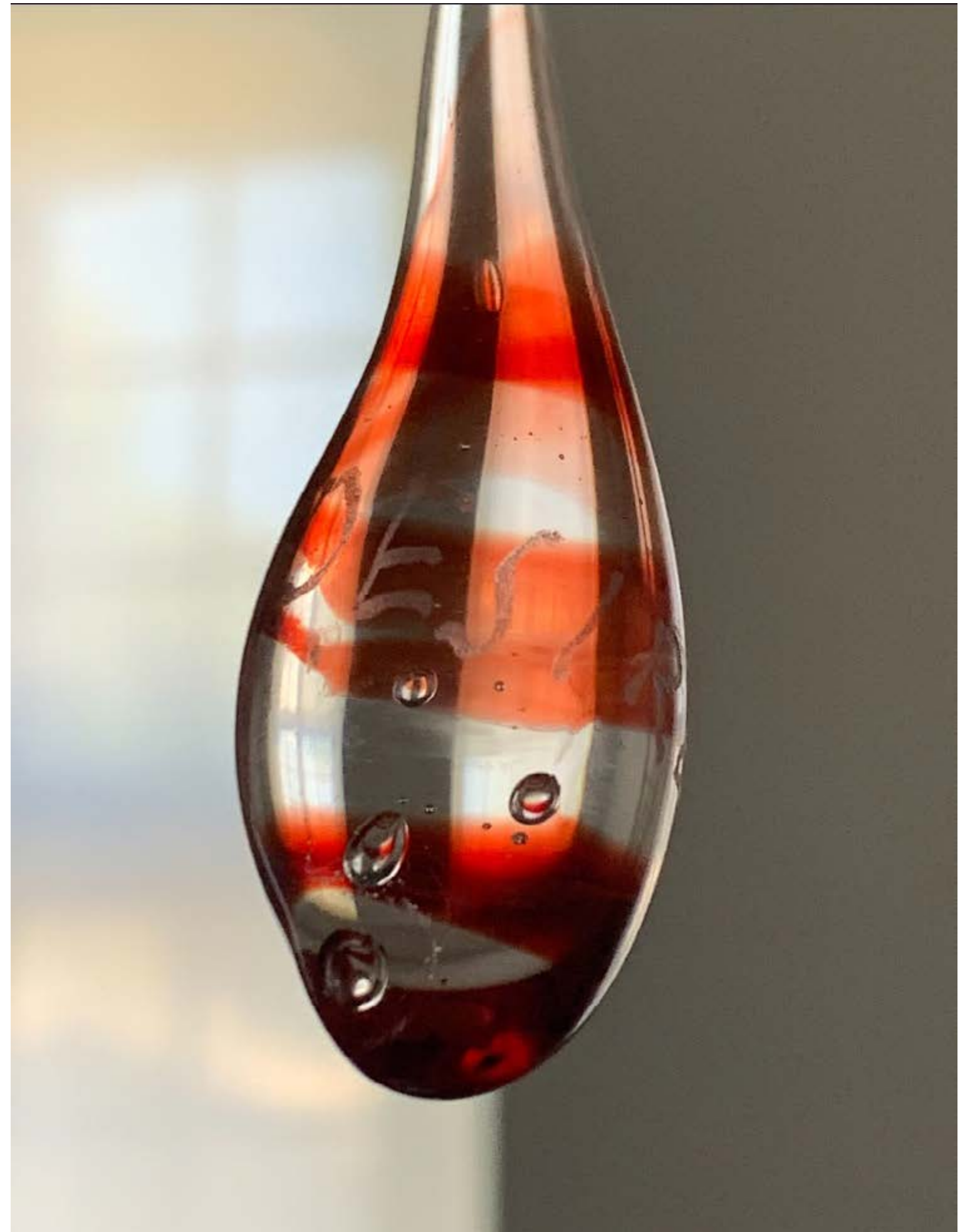
Machines attach themselves to the body without organs, as so many points of disjunction. An entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off into co-ordinates, like a grid.

It is in repetition and by repetition that forgetting becomes a positive power. While the unconscious becomes a positive and superior unconscious.

The infinite which belongs to a single time, the eternity which belongs to an instant, the unconscious which belongs to consciousness.

It is a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind.

*Repetition is the thought of the future.
And even suffering, as Marx says, is a form of self-enjoyment.*



The Desiring Machines, 2020
Sound installation, 220 individual hanging glass drops, net
Approximately 10x2cm
Background sound by Aphex Twin (10min/loop), text spoken by Moira Barrett



REMOTE CONTROL Sculpture

Personalizing and customizing the surroundings and objects of our everyday life is a widespread human practice. We pick up devices with our hands in passing, consuming their contents – often, they are the last thing we see before we close our eyes in bed at night. It is a way of creating a connection between the I and the world, a way of making yourself comfortable and claiming originality – being zany, cute or interesting. In Japanese subculture there is a specific term for this practice of excessive personalization. デコデン (*Dekoden*, or “decorated phones”) describes the over-the-top decoration of mobile phone cases and other maximalist accessorizing.

In Isabella Fürnkäs’ ongoing series *Remote control*, the human urge to individualize is hinted by the material contrast of unglazed and air-dried clay with the excessive use of shells, shimmering pearls, mirrored shards of glass or natural, consumable items like lentils, beans and tofu. With their rudimentary, geometric shapes, recessed indentations or button-like decorations and antennas, these handy objects are reminiscent of the trailblazing invention of wireless remote controls. As the first technical device of its kind and the predecessor to the gadgets of our daily contemporary life, the remote gave people the feeling of being in control of the screen by deciding from a distance about the image being broadcast. Lying in your hand like a magic wand, this technical device puts you in a commanding position over your immediate surroundings via an invisible connection by only pushing buttons. But the force of these intelligent prostheses shifts over time, and the dynamic between subject and technology becomes fragile and increasingly ambiguous, alternating on the verge of autonomy and heteronomy.

In their dysfunctional objecthood, the clay-formed *Remote control* plays humorously with the illusion of control you feel when you hold something tightly in your hand. A feeling that is only reminiscent in their embellished silhouettes.

- Text by Klara Hülskamp

Remote control, 2023-2024
Glazed ceramic, size variable

Remote control, 2023
Modelling clay, glass, tofu, lentils, stones, marbles, pills, mirrors, seashells, marshmallows
Approx. 15-40cm

Exhibitions

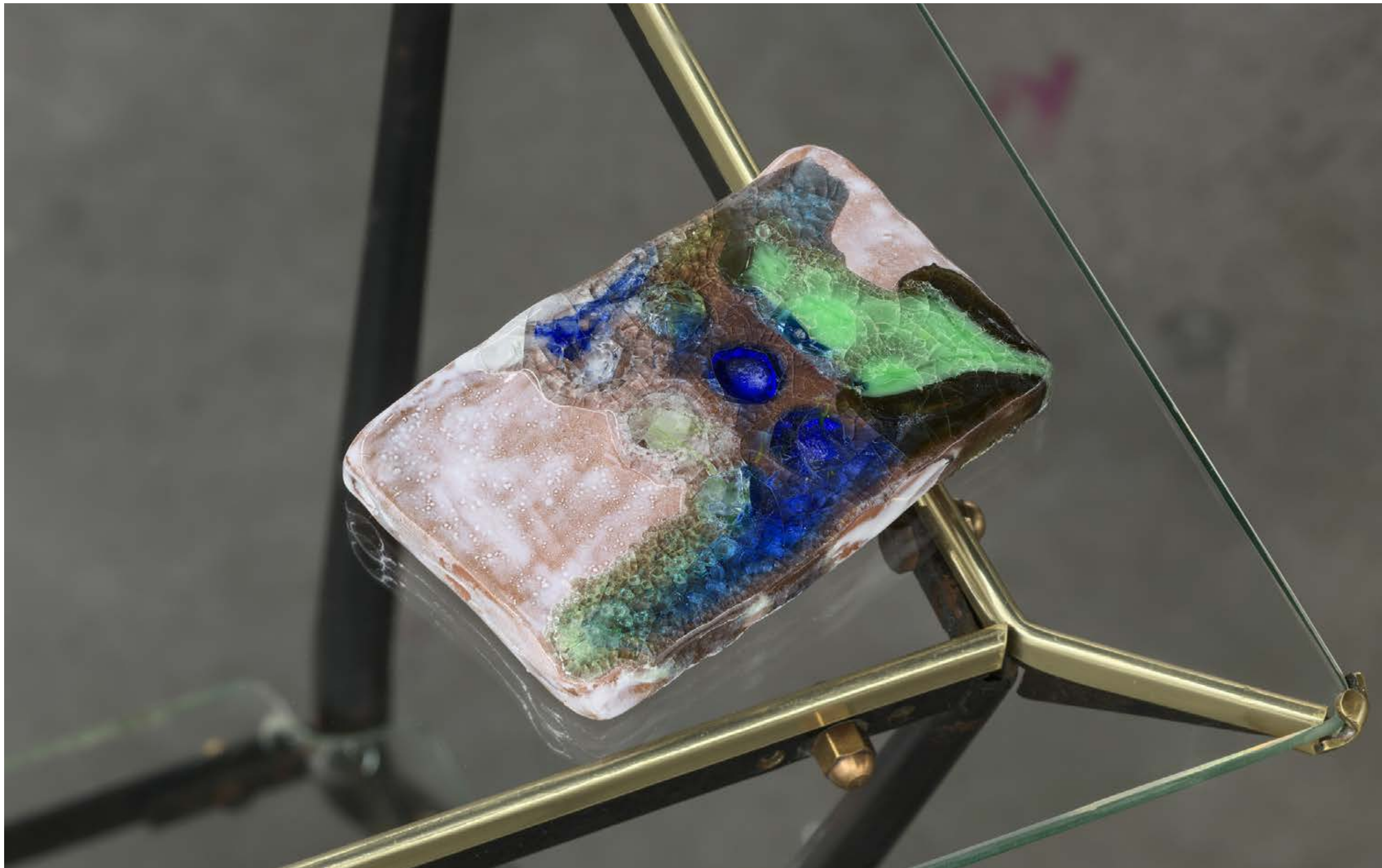
Live Lab Studios, Düsseldorf (2024), Art Cologne (2024), Tick Tack, Antwerp (2024), The Moment, Berlin (2024), Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024), Art Düsseldorf (2024), Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2023), Kunstverein Siegen (2023), Clages, Cologne (2023)

Installation view

Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024)



Installation view
Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024)



Installation view
Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024)

[...] With this approach, Fűrnkäs joins the ranks of such artists as the Vietnamese artist Danh Vo or the Georgian artist Tolia Astakhisvili. But unlike them, there is another level to her work: the comic. In the clutter of the house lie a computer modeled out of clay. In the other rooms, mobile phones, also unskillfully modeled out of clay, are piled up in cupboards and drawers. Their clumsy, material-heavy, archaic appearance is in stark contrast to the elegant electronic devices with perfect surfaces, such as those made by Apple. This makes them look ridiculous. And suddenly, thanks to this awkwardness and ridiculousness of the clay devices, a sense of the enormity, the recklessness, with which we outsource our own inner life, our most intimate longings, dreams and desires from our own unpredictable bodies, susceptible to disturbances and injuries, to the mechanically controlled inner life of the lifeless computer.

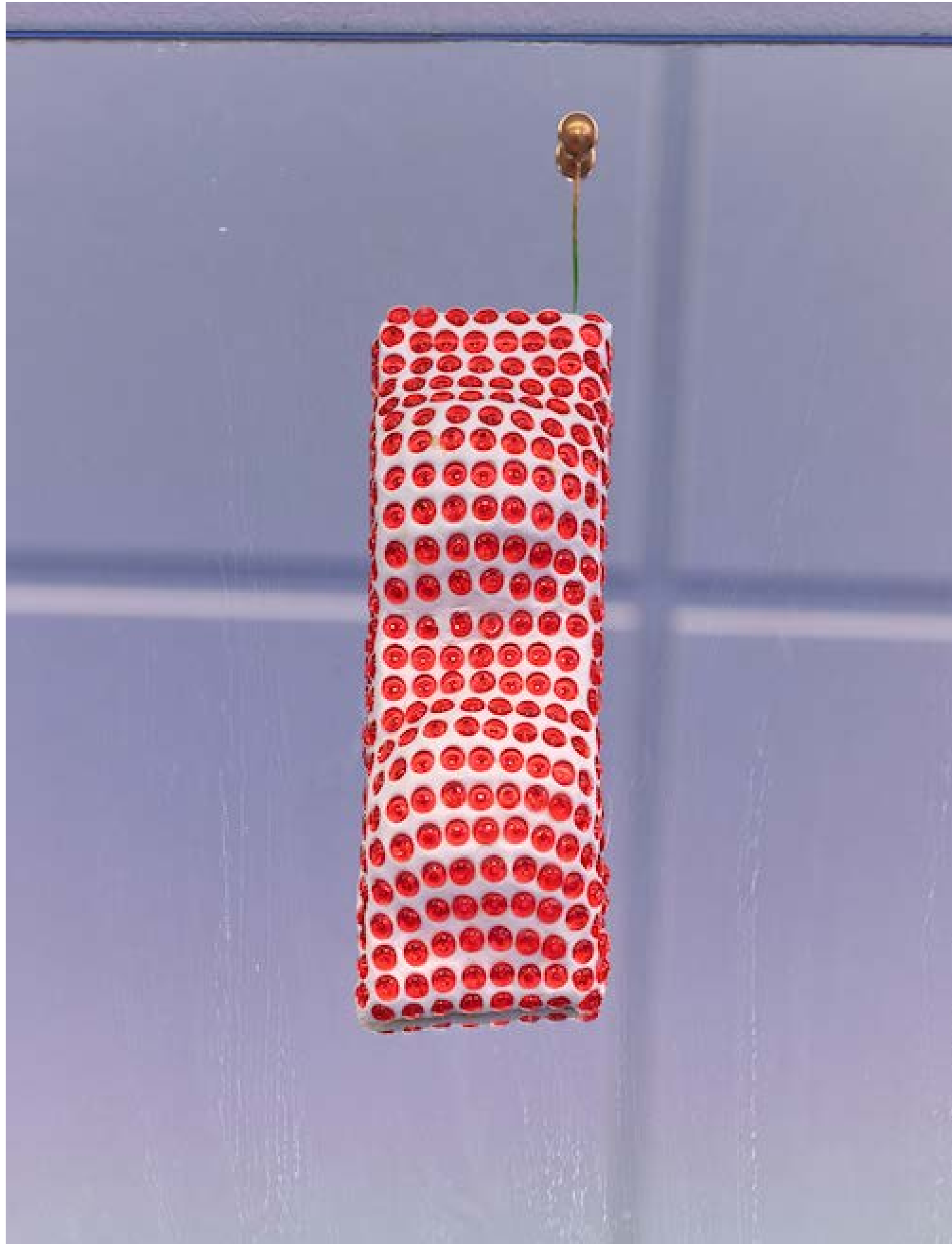
Despite the feeling of being involved in something threateningly mysterious, all these productions also provoke smiles that can turn into laughter. Laughter creates distance. And it is this distance that, in the face of the daily complicity that Fűrnkäs' productions so skillfully recreate, enables us to digest the flood of fascinatingly repulsive images we see and possibly also to excrete them. And it is this ability that prevents us from going mad, that distinguishes the human body from electronic devices. [...]

- Text excerpt by Noemi Smolik





Installation view
Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2023)



Isabella Fürnkäs (*1988 in Tokyo, lives in Berlin) deals with questions of physical and spatial intimacy, the influence of digitalization on interpersonal relationships, and changes in social communication patterns. Handmade clay models of cell phones contrast the flawless surfaces and presentation methods of smartphones and, in turn, ridicule them - how much of our inner selves do we transfer to these small, lifeless devices? A video installation is almost a peephole through which we gain voyeuristic insights into the privacy and intimacy of our everyday lives. Casually observed, private gestures in public are combined with an installation of drop-like glass objects, forming disturbingly intimate images. In *Flagranti* is the title of the installation, which creates an intimate experiential space and reflects the viewer's own vulnerability.

- Text by Jennifer Cierlitz

Installation view
Kunstverein Siegen (2023)



Installation view
Kunstverein Siegen (2023)



Installation view
Kunstverein Siegen (2023)



Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)



[...] More ceramic remotes with organic buttons are neatly displayed on a table and in a cupboard. Earthenware game boys are stacked up in a pharmacy cabinet. These remotes are everywhere. Little tools that give you control over what to see, what to skip, what to ignore. But the overall number of internet images spread across the show suggest that there is no escape from overwhelm and control is a soothing illusion. There is a longing for a time before visual and virtual overstimulation. A craving to reconnect with instincts.

- Text excerpt by Jennifer Braun

Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)



Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)

AMYGDALA Performance

In Isabella Fürnkäs' performance *Amygdala*, an unpredictable choreography of connections emerges. Here, where the positions and movements of the individuals are connected by a common red thread, they become a networked whole, disclosing their complex interplay.

The *amygdala* (also known as the so-called “*almond core*”) is a paired neocortical structure of the limbic system. It is involved in emotional reactions as well as the storage of memories and memory related contents – inside, emotion and memory, connection and development correlate. Something similar happens in the performative staging by the artist Isabella Fürnkäs: On the upper floor of the museum, two performers face each other, entangled in a long, red thread – their immediate connections are visually revealed. In the process of their “*unraveling*”, they gradually release themselves from their red bonds until both are finally holding the loose ends of their connection in their bare hands.

In a ritual act between detachment and establishing new contact, a performer threads the red thread through hand-sized metal rings that have been distributed to visitors. A network of connections begins to evolve through movement. In its visualization, the red thread seems reminiscent of organic wiring or intimate as well as architectural dynamics: Who is leading the thread? Where do tensions, entanglements or collisions possibly arise?

A game of contact and detachment, connection and development emerges.

- Text by Anna K. Wlach

Amygdala, 2023

Performance duration: Approx. 45 min

Performed by Marlene Kollender and Julian Westermann

1200 meters of red thread, 16 ceramic rings (14 cm each)

Amygdala, 2024

Performance, duration approx. 60 min, 1200 meters of red thread, 20 hand-made ceramic rings (14 cm each), performed by Elvo Axt & Angel

Amygdala, Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Performed on 21 October 2023

Amygdala, Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin

Performed on 13 September 2024

[Installation view](#)

Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2023)

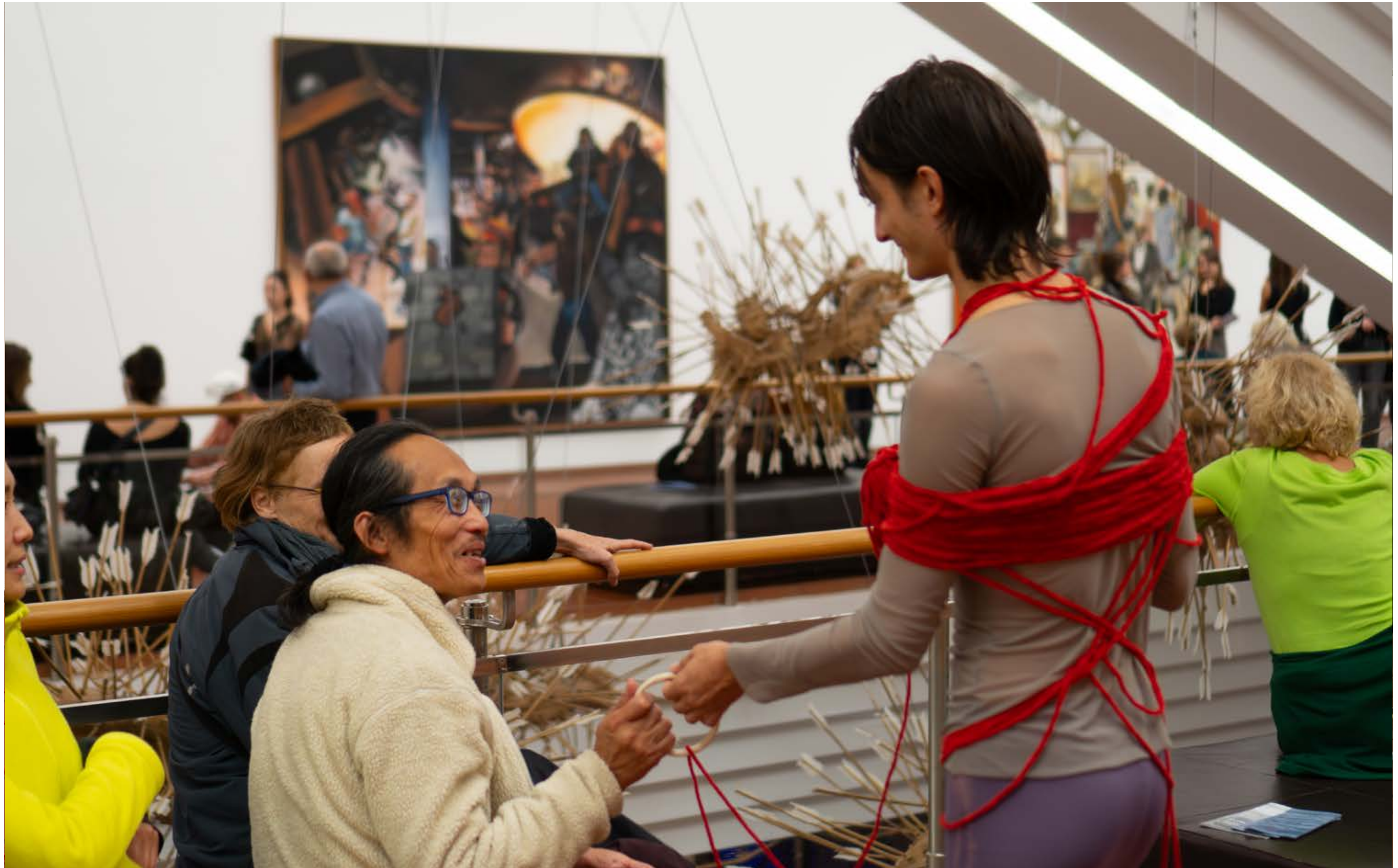




Amygdala, 2023
Performed by Marlene Kollender and Julian Westermann
1200 meters of red thread, 16 ceramic rings (14 cm each)



Installation view
Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2023)



Installation view
Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2023)



Amygdala, 2024
Performance, duration approx. 60 min, 1200 meters of red thread, 20 hand-made ceramic rings (14 cm each), performed by Elvo Axt & Angel



Installation view
Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2024)



Installation view
Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2024)



L'ORIGINE DU MONDE Drawing

[...] Something similar happens when looking at the small drawings *L'Origine du monde*, which is framed in a plexiglas block. It actually shows the vagina in detail. And although the drawing is very small, it has an intensity that virtually sucks the eye in. This intensity is heightened by the fact that the drawing is mounted very low on the wall, so that if you really want to look at it, you are forced either to bend forward or even to kneel. But already one averts one's gaze. You feel caught. But at what? Even the brief glimpse is enough to make us witnesses, more than that; it makes us enter the moist cave of the vagina as before the uncanny happenings in the house. And that is precisely what distinguishes Fürnkäs' works: They are staged in such a way that we become participants in an extremely intimate event and thus somehow complicit. [...]

- Excerpt by Noemi Smolik

On an archetypical level, the feminine vulva is both singular and universal. It is both the physical source of all that which is human – *L'Origine du monde*, as Courbet so elegantly put it – as well as the location of a more private, more individual articulation of personhood. Every existent vulva is particular, with its own inner workings. While the broader notions of femininity and motherhood are often inextricably linked to patriarchal ownership and societal duty, the individual vagina is free to experience the logic of a desire and a pleasure completely closed unto itself. Despite her miniature size and historical neglect in patriarchal representation, these drawings manifest her self-determination and disruptive visual presence.

- Text by Giulia Vardabasso-Lei

L'Origine du monde, 2023

Pencil on paper, plexi glass, cushion, 5,5 x 3,5 cm, 10 x 10 cm (framed), hung at the height of Isabella's vagina

Exhibitions

Clages, Cologne (2023), STUDIO FOR ARTISTIC RESEARCH, Düsseldorf (2023)



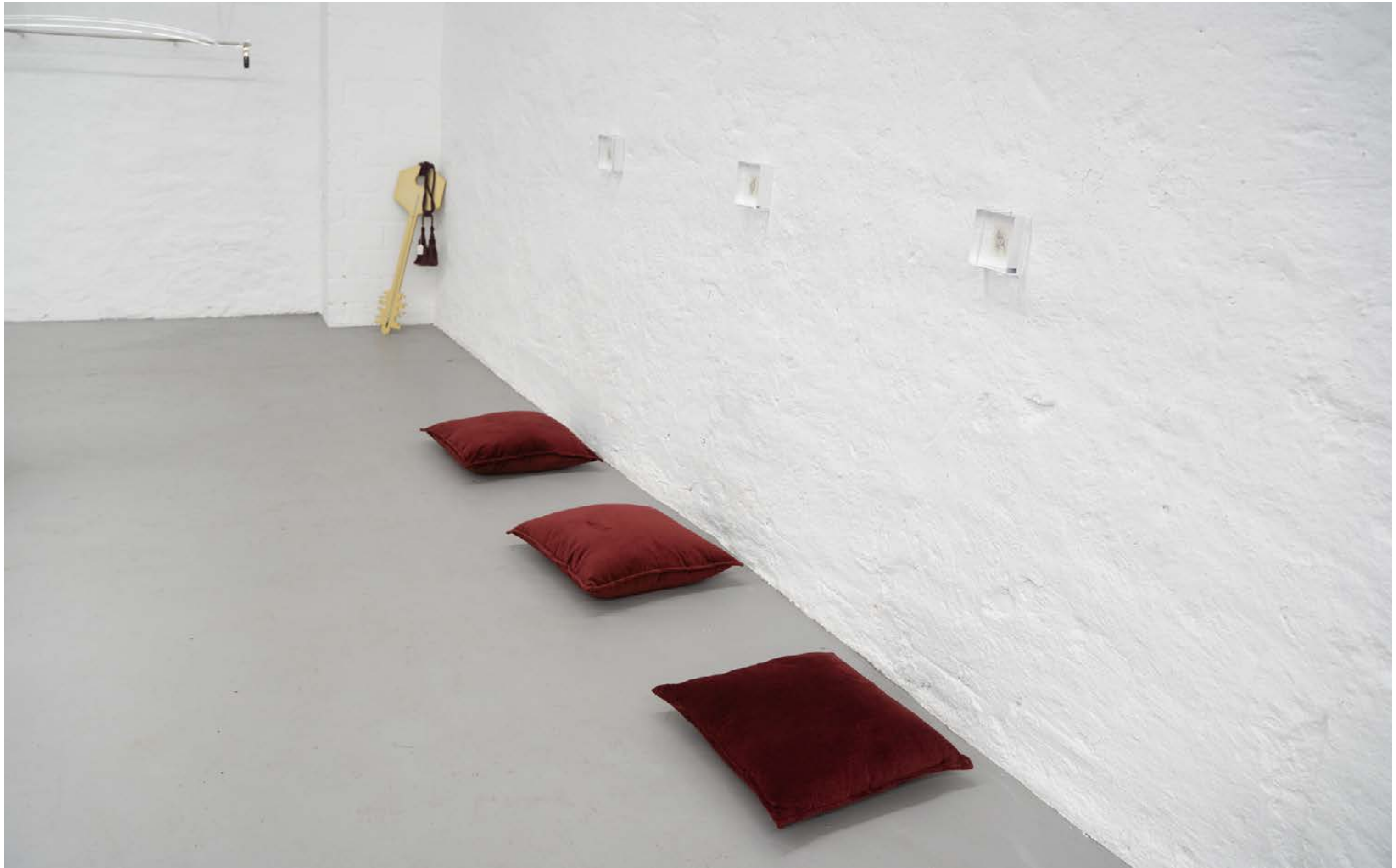
Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)



Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)



Installation view
STUDIO FOR ARTISTIC RESEARCH, Düsseldorf (2023)



Installation view
STUDIO FOR ARTISTIC RESEARCH, Düsseldorf (2023)

TRANSCENDENTAL VOIDS / THE LOOP Drawing

In her *Gravity and Grace*, the great twentieth century French mystic Simone Weil writes: *Grace fills empty spaces but it can only enter where there is a void to receive it, and it is grace itself which makes this void*. If, according to Weil, the tendency of the human soul and of all that is natural is towards expansion – to spread, to englobe, to devour – it takes supernatural force to abstain from this tendency. Abstinence creates a void where there was once an unrelenting desire to consume. The void, in turn, makes way for grace. The presence of grace is therefore contingent on the existence of the void to contain it. Grace is the ultimate form of abstinence.

Isabella Fűrnkäs gives grace physical form in her ongoing series *Transcendental Voids*. Incorporeal bodies are alluded to in delicate pastel shades, which settle onto the pictorial surface like heavy mist. We find ourselves immersed in a vaporous world, encountering ethereal figures suspended and englobed by the void. Although seemingly on the brink of dissipation, the bodies cloaked by the fog are themselves solid, jagged things. They possess a certain introverted autonomy which is both contingent on and somehow transcends the void represented by the blank paper sheet.

- Text by Giulia Vardabasso-Lei

Transcendental Voids, 2024
Mixed media on paper, 87,5 x 54 cm
95 x 61,5 x 5,3 cm (framed)

Exhibitions
The Moment, Berlin (2024), Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024)

Installation view
The Moment, Berlin (2024)





Installation view
The Moment, Berlin (2024)



Installation view
Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024)



Installation view
Art-O-Rama, Marseille (2024)



The loop. The bow. In the hair, in the heart, a knot. Loops. Loops describe circles, chain links around the neck, caught in space. Figurines, fearlessly spinning pirouettes, create wheels and loops, and nothing is hopeless, the path simply leads in turns. In a circle, you meet again. And again. And again. We do not need mirrors, gates, doors or windows to change or to develop. A course, a racetrack, that we call our own. In the circle: leading, overtaking, falling back. Or to be overtaken, moving side by side, looking straight ahead. Turning to each other, and looking. The time you spend is not lost, nor used up. That which the linear cuts, comes again in the circle, remains faithful in constant change, just like you.

Isabella Fürnkäs works with a wide variety of media and materials; drawing or a form of painting based on a graphic approach is always there. She uses space as a canvas, throws things into it, awakens it to life: in the context of togetherness and confronting the other, she gives a subjectivity to the individual object; things play around with each other, gather together, dissolve again, become charged, and make the white cube resonate. Figurative sculptures continue as paintings on the walls, the painting continues in drawings, the drawing continues in the sculptures. Together they describe circular movements.

- Text by Andreas Reihse

The Loop, 2024
Oil sticks on art glass, framed, 96 x 62 x 5 cm

Exhibitions
Art Cologne (2024)

THE MEMORY HOUSE Installation

Although the individual drawings, photos, films and installations by Isabella Fürnkäs are singular works with their own titles, they only unfold their full effect in their entirety. They are fictions and yet they are based in real life and thus they complement and reinforce each other. This is why the artist has grouped the individual works under the common title *Inner workings*, with the subtitle *Das fressende Zimmer*. With this title alone, she contrasts today's cult of the flawless exterior of bodies and objects with the uncovering and exposure of what is throbbing, flowing, being digested, moldering, decaying and aging beneath the surface.

For example the small house that is set up in the entrance room of the Clages gallery. The walls are formed by a transparent tights fabric printed with an abundance of photos, which gives the house a physicality. The fabric alone and especially the flood of images are uncanny. The pictures show decapitated queens, human entrails, pornographic scenes and witches... They are traumatic images from the cultural memory reservoir of the most diverse cultural epochs. They attract the eye, they fascinate and they repel. Disturbed by the images, one hardly dares to look inside the house. And indeed; rumpled sheets, disorder... What has happened here?

- Text excerpt by Noemi Smolik

The Memory House, 2023
Print on silk cloth, metal structure, bed sheet, 200 x 200 x 150 cm

Exhibitions
Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2023), Clages, Cologne (2023)

Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)





Isabella Färnkäs' installation *The Memory House* inevitably resembles a house in its external appearance, but differs from this vision, as its walls seem more like a velum, which extends from one side, spanning the roof, to the next. Nothing is stored in the house itself, it harbours no traces of life. Rather, it functions as a framework on which memories become entangled, printed on thin panty-hose fabric that wraps around the construct of the house like a skin. Inspired by the flood of digital images, the fabric serves as a visual and associative archive. It provides insights into past and present cultural practices and reveals collective and private fragments of memory. Pornographic scenes can be found alongside human entrails and images of medieval witch burnings. Like scars on human skin, these images inscribe themselves into the fabric and the mind of the viewer. They leave deep impressions, activate the personal visual memory and evoke a rush of thought that provides a cross-section of human history and is both attractive and disturbing at the same time.

- Text by Lara Müller

[...] Remember how you used to build pillow fortresses as a child? *The Memory House* (2023) in the first room is similarly comforting (at first glance at least). Inside, electric outlets and a notebook made up of ceramics are draped in white bed sheets. A sketchbook peeks out. The outer shell of the house is full of images: naked cats, artworks, anatomic illustrations, product designs, porn.

- Text excerpt by Jennifer Braun



Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2023)



Installation view
Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2023)



Installation view
Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2023)



My Bed, 2020-2023
Mixed media on paper, 42 x 55 x 3 cm (framed)

THE NEREIDS

Performative installation

In *The Nereids*, Isabella Färnkäs reimagines the image of the water nymph at the fountain, drawing inspiration from Monteverdi's *Lamento della ninfa*. This performance delves into the themes of exploitation and the enduring portrayal of the nymph as a perpetual symbol of fertility. Set within the castle park, the event takes place in an octagonal pool filled with water tinged a deep, evocative red, reminiscent of a traditional fountain. The atmosphere is enriched by a performer playing a delicate glass flute, who, in a dynamic interaction with the artist, presents a poetic text penned by Färnkäs herself.

The visual elements of the performance are thoughtfully curated. The costumes, designed by Minji Park, alongside the pool's facade, are adorned with intricate depictions of nymphs and satyrs, evoking a sense of mythological reverence. These images not only embellish the setting but also underscore the thematic exploration of the nymph's mythological and cultural significance.

As the performance begins, audience members are given coins, symbolizing a ritualistic offering. At the conclusion of the event, they are invited to cast these coins into the pool, each making a personal wish—a gesture that merges the realms of mythology, art, and participation. This act of wishing becomes a poignant moment of reflection, connecting the audience to the narrative of the nymph and her story.

- Text by Paula Thiel

The Nereids, 2023
Performative installation (15min), basin with pigmented water, digital prints
Performed by Elvo Axt, Isabella Färnkäs
Bodysuit by Minji Park

The Nereids, Museum Moyland, Cleve
Performed on 17 August 2023





Excerpt from the performative installation,
narrated by Isabella Fürnkäs and performed by Elvo Axt:

[Narrator]

The sea nymphs symbolize everything that is beautiful and kind about the sea. The Nereids are sea nymphs that are female spirits of sea waters. Nereus literally means 'notmistaking', 'clear', or 'true'. Their melodious voices sing as they dance around their territories. They are represented as beautiful young creatures, that are close to natural spirits.

—

[Performer]

*Fill me up
 Like a cup
 I'm your mistress
 You're my food
 I'm your guide
 To the darkness
 Into the light
 My sacred pool
 Drowning my essence
 Make me a fool
 Ripples of ruin
 Echo in my soul
 As innocence
 And purity they stole
 I wore
 The cloak
 Of their fantasies
 Stripped
 Of my spirit
 Brought to my knees
 Once revered,
 Now consumed by their
 greed,
 Fruitful essence
 Tainted by their need.
 Fill me up
 I'm like a cup
 Fill me up
 Fill me up*

—

[Narrator]

The Nereid often accompanies Poseidon, the god of the sea. They are labeled as the 50 daughters of the Old Man of the Sea, Nereus, where they dance around their father.

Installation view
 Museum Moyland, Cleve (2023)

(continued)

[Performer]
*I shimmer with grace
 Nature's embrace
 A mirror
 For everyone
 Who dares
 To look
 My innocence
 Eaten by
 Their twisted games
 Desiring eyes
 Like haunting flames*

—

[Narrator]
*The Nereids represent desire, longing, yearning, wishfulness, aspiration,
 fertility, freshness, fruitfulness, richness, temptation, excitement, seduction,
 sensibility, sensuality, animalism, innocence, virginity, naïveté, greenness,
 purity, spirituality, wetness.*

—

[Performer]
*Drowning
 In their desires unchained
 My essence scarred
 My spirit painted
 Bloodred.
 The storms of lust
 Burning
 From innocence
 To guilt
 I was led astray,
 My essence tarnished
 a price
 I'd pay.*

—

[Narrator]
*But what is the issue? What could go wrong? We delve into the depths of a
 water nymph's heart. A mythical being entwined with the tranquil embrace of
 water, who shares her heart-wrenching tale of enduring the weight of male
 desires turned destructive. What is the result? Enchantment and Betrayal*





The Nereids, 2023
Performative installation (15min), basin with pigmented water, digital prints
Performed by Elvo Axt, Isabella Färnkäs
Bodysuit by Minji Park

ATARAXIA

Video installation with performance

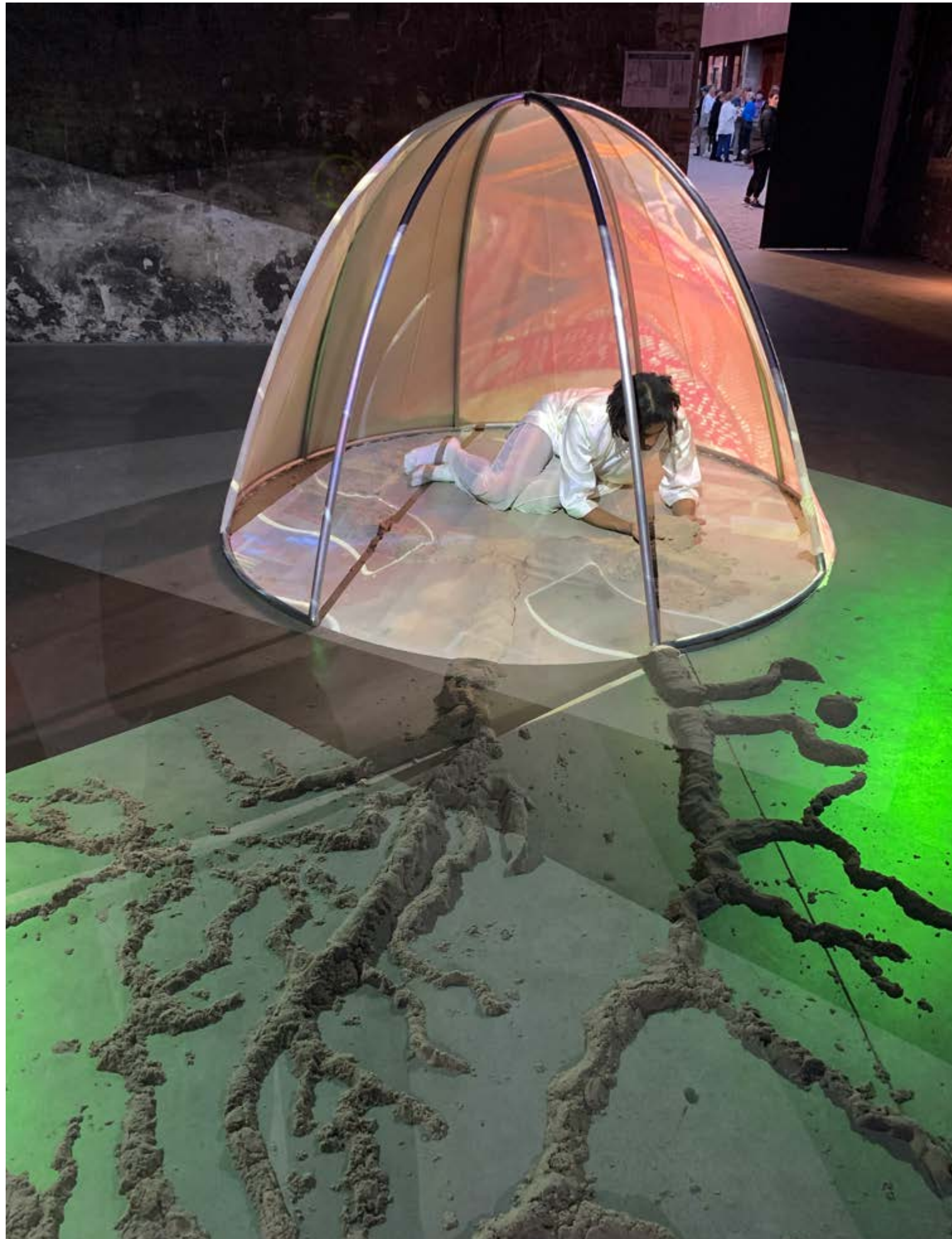
Entitled *Ataraxia*, the performance takes its name from a Greek philosophical term that means a “state of serene calmness” or “an untroubled and tranquil state of the soul.” The performers Nikolas Brummer and Marlene Kollender activate the sculptures—which are sheathed in thin layers of fabric and projected upon—with actions that imply moments of inhabitation, formation, and deconstruction. Construction stones encircle the sculptures, which the performers slowly move around them. Their constant movements in and around the sculptures, as well as the essentially nomadic nature of these objects, gesture toward the impermanence, transience, and variability of all things—towards finding freedom in flux. A sound scape designed by Anchoress and Tobias Textor, who will additionally compose live music for the performance during the opening, adds a sonic dimension to this immersive, multi-medial experience.

- Text by Jesi Khadivi

Ataraxia, 2021
Multi-media installation, stainless steel structures (230 x 230 x 150cm), textile,
projection of 4 videos (9 min each, color/silent, on loop)
Performed by Ariel Gaba & Noam Shuster
Soundscape by Anchoress, styling by Daria Andreava

Ataraxia, Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin
Performed on 10 & 17 September 2022





Installation view
Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2022)



Installation view
Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2022)



Installation view
Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2022)



As humans, we like to think of ourselves as being ruled by logic and higher functions – as somehow separate from the bodies which tether us to our most base and carnal instincts. However, the interconnectedness of the digestive and nervous systems has been familiar to scientific and popular understanding since as early as the eighteenth century. Known today as the gut-brain axis, this is clearly evidenced by common turns of phrase such as „gut feeling,” „gut-wrenching,” or „to go with one’s gut.” In an age largely defined by philosophical dualism, this concept may seem dubious to many – how can two seemingly unrelated organs communicate? How can one’s emotions possibly affect one’s body? However, it is not just a matter of simple equivalence.

The gut-brain dialectic becomes visually explicit in Isabella Färnkäs’ series of ink drawings entitled *Untitled (Laundry)*. True to the nomenclature, in past installations these works have been hung on fine red string by paperclips, traversing the exhibition space in rows – like linen sheets hung out to dry. In fact, the title can also bring to mind the idiom „airing out one’s dirty laundry”: to make one’s problems known – to spill one’s guts. Indeed, here we face a serialised spilling of guts. Over and over, ink drips from the broad watery brushstrokes off the page. We can almost imagine black puddles of ink pooling on the pristine white floor. Twisting and winding coils are rendered darkly with thick brushstrokes. These organs are ambiguous – it is unclear whether we are faced with roiling intestines or brains. But does it really make a difference? The inner tumult remains the same.

Pertaining to the same series of ink drawings and often exhibited together are *The Unconscious Soul*, three portraits which set themselves apart from the rows and rows of organs. However, the manner in which they are rendered – wrinkled and gnarled and twisted – recall the organic ambiguity of the other drawings. Faces become brains become guts. Thought, feeling, and (un)conscious become indistinguishable in a game of resemblance.

If, in the emotional hierarchy of bodily organs, love is attributed to the heart and reason to the brain, the gut surely embodies our darkest, innermost feelings and instinctual drives. This interconnectedness with the brain – the seat of the ego, of reason – therefore becomes an uncomfortable link. The division between thought and feeling is closer than we could possibly ever think.

- Text by Giulia Vardabasso-Lei

The Unconscious Soul, 2022
Series of ten drawings, Japanese ink on paper, framed with white varnished ash
29,7 x 42cm

GO Performative installation

In the performance “Go,” inspired by the eponymous Japanese strategic board game, black and white ceramic spheres are alternately moved and repositioned within the space, which serves as the game board. The two colors compete against each other, much like the interacting bodies, vying for an assumed territory, mutual dominance, and power. In her performances, Isabella Fürnkäs explores themes of physical intimacy, the interplay of connection and detachment in digital interactions, and the fragility of societal communication structures.

- Text by Bianca Quasebach

Go, 2011/2021
Glazed ceramic, approx. 6 x 6 cm, 31 white & 99 black (130 in total)

Exhibitions

Live Lab Studios, Düsseldorf (2024), Hua International, Berlin (2021), SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)

Installation view

Live Lab Studios, Düsseldorf (2024)





Installation view
Live Lab Studios, Düsseldorf (2024)



Installation view
Live Lab Studios, Düsseldorf (2024)

In the same room, a series of interchangeable black and white ceramic orbs are installed on the wall. Reminiscent of the abstract strategy game *Go* (*Weiqi*), they suggest endless variations of flexible constellations.

- Text excerpt by Jesi Khadivi



Installation view
Hua International, Berlin (2021)



IN FLAGRANTI

Video installation

"What actually is an aura? A strange web of space and time: the unique appearance of a distance, however close it may be." Inspired by the thoughts of the famous philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin, the exhibition challenges and redefines the boundaries of space and time. For Benjamin, the aura was a central concept to describe the changes in the perception of works of art in the age of technical reproducibility.

Isabella Fürnkäs (*1988 in Tokyo, lives in Berlin) deals with questions of physical and spatial intimacy, the influence of digitalization on interpersonal relationships, and changes in social communication patterns. Handmade clay models of cell phones contrast the flawless surfaces and presentation methods of smartphones and, in turn, ridicule them - how much of our inner selves do we transfer to these small, lifeless devices? A video installation is almost a peephole through which we gain voyeuristic insights into the privacy and intimacy of our everyday lives. Casually observed, private gestures in public are combined with an installation of drop-like glass objects, forming disturbingly intimate images. *In Flagranti* is the title of the installation, which creates an intimate experiential space and reflects the viewer's own vulnerability.

- Text by Jennifer Cierlitza

In Flagranti, 2022

Video installation, projection on round tiled platform Ø 165cm

Video 18:36min, color/no sound, loop

Exhibitions

Kunstverein Siegen (2023), Museum Moyland, Cleve (2022)

Installation view

Kunstverein Siegen (2023)



Installation view
Kunstverein Siegen (2023)

With her artistic intervention in the chapel of Museum Schloss Moyland, Isabella Fürnkäs enters into a subtle exchange with the historically charged spaces of the museum: as a scholarship holder of the BERLIN MASTERS 2022 funding programme, the artist spent six weeks in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence as part of the Schliemann Residency, where she developed, among other things, the new video installation for the museum. With her site-specific multimedia installation, a room within a room is created on site, the opening of which takes the visitor to Tokyo. Furthermore, the artist is showing large-format drops made of specially hand-blown ruby glass, which open up an exciting dialogue with Georg Meistermann's windows.

- Text by Antje-Britt Möhlmann



Installation view
Museum Moyland, Cleve (2022)



la source, 2010
4 drawings, mixed media on paper, Japanese ink, coffee, oil sticks, gilt frame
3.5 x 5.5 cm

Installation view
Museum Moyland, Cleve (2022)

BUILD ME A HOUSE

Solo exhibition

Hua International is pleased to announce *Build Me a House*, a solo exhibition by Isabella Färnkäs. In her multi-media work, the Japanese-born French-German artist explores questions of bodily intimacy, digital relationality, and the fragility of societal structures.

Build Me a House will bring together a new body of sculpture, sound, performance, drawing, and video. The focal point of the exhibition is a durational performance and sound work that unfolds around two, large metal sculptures: dome-like constructions that resemble rudimentary dwellings. With their cage-like structures, these forms emphasize a fluidity between interior and exterior space, permeability and interiority, shelter and confinement. Entitled *Ataraxia*, the performance takes its name from a Greek philosophical term that means a “state of serene calmness” or “an untroubled and tranquil state of the soul.” The performers Nikolas Brummer and Marlene Kollender activate the sculptures—which are sheathed in thin layers of fabric and projected upon—with actions that imply moments of inhabitation, formation, and deconstruction. Construction stones encircle the sculptures, which the performers slowly move around them. Their constant movements in and around the sculptures, as well as the essentially nomadic nature of these objects, gesture toward the impermanence, transience, and variability of all things—towards finding freedom in flux. A sound scape designed by Anchoress and Tobias Textor, who will additionally compose live music for the performance during the opening, adds a sonic dimension to this immersive, multi-medial experience.

In the same room, a series of interchangeable black and white ceramic orbs are installed on the wall. Reminiscent of the abstract strategy game *Go(Weiqi)*, they suggest endless variations of flexible constellations. Färnkäs’ *Insomnia Drawings* resonate with the constant connection and interchangeable routines enacted by *Ataraxia*’s performers, as well as the porousness of her igloo-like sculptures. A new series of drawings entitled *The Red Drawings* will also be shown. Emerging from a raw, intimate practice, the drawings “visualize a moment of cognitive overload” in which one’s inner boundaries collapse and the world enters unhindered. The final room of the exhibition stages a meeting of the digital and the organic. A video entitled *The Truth Lies in the Eye of the Beholder* loops atop a half-ton of earth. Drawn from a personal archive of footage shot by Färnkäs, this associative web of images works like a visual collage that combines and overlays countless images, imparting the sensation of drifting amidst ambiguous flows, movements, interferences, and interjections.

- Text by Jesi Khadivi

Ataraxia, 2021

Multi-media installation, stainless steel structures (230 x 230 x 150cm), textile, projection of 4 videos (9 min each, color/silent, on loop)

Build Me a House, Hua International, Berlin (2021)

Watch the documentation video here: <https://vimeo.com/702855821>





Ataraxia, 2021
Multi-media installation, stainless steel structures (230 x 230 x 150cm), textile,
projection of 4 videos (9 min each, color/silent, on loop)



Ataraxia, 2021
Performance with Nikolas Brummer & Marlene Kollender, activation of Go, glazed ceramic
Approx. 6 x 6 cm, 31 white & 99 black (130 in total)



Ataraxia, 2021
Performance with Nikolas Brummer & Marlene Kollender
Live musical performance by Tobias Textor, sound scape by Anchoress
Costumes by John Galliano, 032c, lent by Ritual Projects, styling by Nellee Dii



Isabella Fürnkäs' performative installations involve precious looking, hand stitched garments and pieces of clothing that operate as a device-like generator of a meticulously scripted scenario. Affined to high fashion shows, Fürnkäs' active settings, involving gender fluid performers/models wrapped around designed drapes, suggest a totally aestheticized alternative universe and life form. Like a high fashion show, these settings invent their own notion of inhabited space and activated body. The pieces of clothing in which Fürnkäs' performers/models are dressed are not inferior to the actions they do. Rather than transparent covers, they require a particular set of behaviors, a specific image of the human body. They place the bodies of the performers/models in a shared tangent with the realm of things they are made of – the architectural/sculptural elements, as well as the elements of sound and light, they are marked by.

Each of Fürnkäs' performance works are always at least a duet, most consist of two people, some present more. The individual's silhouette (to use a fashion word) is as important as the other silhouettes in the group. What is perhaps the deepest trait Fürnkäs' performances have in common with fashion is the idea of the total look; each look matters.

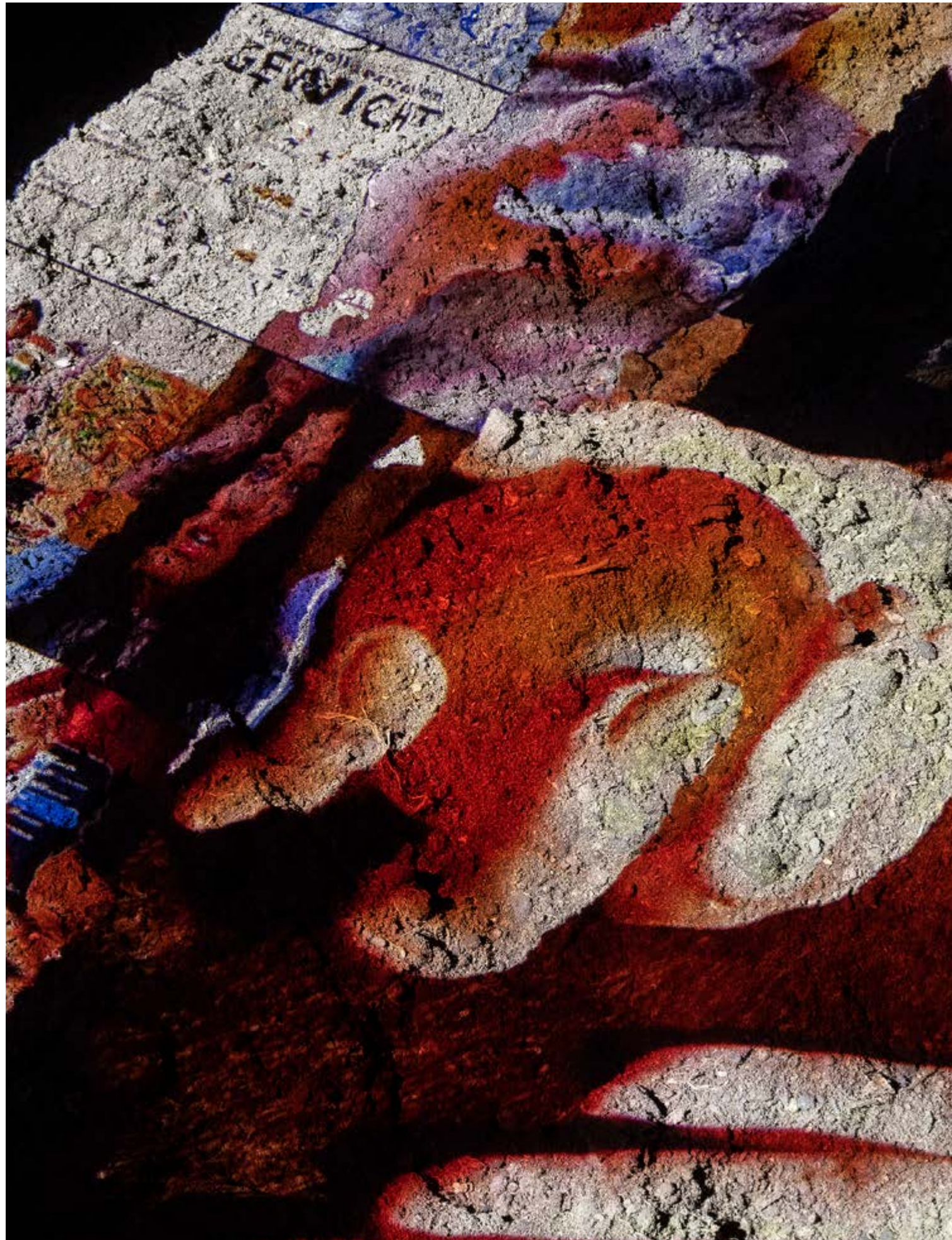
In her most recent performance, titled *Ataraxia* (2021), the two performers sing to each other and to the audience, sometimes whispering in each other's ears. Fürnkäs often uses terms from Greek philosophy, recalling the ancient civilization these terms are associated with (in ancient Greek *Ataraxia* describes a state of serene calmness). On this background one can read the performers' activity of moving brick stones throughout the space as an act aiming at building from scratch, at exposing and tracing the foundations of civilization. This foundational atmosphere is contrasted with the scenery evoked by the performance which is at once that science fictional landscape of the future and that of the dawn of humankind.

-Text by Ory Dessau

Ataraxia, 2021
Performance with Nikolas Brummer & Marlene Kollender, activation of Go, glazed ceramic
Approx. 6 x 6 cm, 31 white & 99 black (130 in total)



Installation view
Hua International, Berlin (2021)



THE TRUTH LIES IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER I Video installation

Excerpt from the video installation read by Ariel Gaba

All is repetition in the temporal series, in relation to this symbolic image. The past itself is repetition by default, and it prepares this other repetition constituted by the metamorphosis in the present.

Historians sometimes look for empirical correspondences between the present and the past, but however rich it may be, this network of historical correspondences involves repetition only by analogy or similitude.

Repetition is never a historical fact, but rather the historical condition under which something new is effectively produced.

Repetition is a condition of action before it is a concept of reflection. We produce something new only on condition that we repeat - once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis.

This image itself is divided, torn into two unequal parts.

Nevertheless, it thereby draws together the totality of time. It must be called a symbol by virtue of the unequal parts which it subsumes and draws together, but draws together as unequal parts.

Such a symbol adequate to the totality of time may be expressed in many ways: to throw time out of joint, to make the sun explode, to throw oneself into the volcano, to kill god or the father.

This symbolic image constitutes the totality of time to the extent that it draws together the caesura, the before and the after.

The fact that two series cannot exist without each other indicates not only that they are complementary, but that by virtue of their dissimilarity and their difference in kind they borrow from and feed into one another.

The virtual object is a partial object - not simply because it lacks a part which remains in the real, but in itself and for itself because it is cleaved or doubled into two virtual parts, one of which is always missing from the other.

The virtual is never subject to the global character which affects real objects.

It is -not only by its origin but by its own nature - a fragment, a shred or a remainder. It lacks its own identity.

*The Truth Lies in the Eye of the Beholder, 2021
Video installation, projection on earth, 10:38min, loop/colour, sound,
text read by Ariel Gaba*



Installation view
Hua International, Berlin (2021)



The Red Drawings (ongoing series), 2021
 Series of one hundred drawings, mixed media on paper, framed with white varnish ash
 26.6 x 22.3cm

THE RED DRAWINGS Drawings

Writing, drawing, documenting, reflecting - [] - the medium notebook serves as a precious store or archive for daily experiences, thoughts and memories. Keeping them tight to our moving bodies, they create an intimate, yet mobile space that builds a calming counterpart to the often brief and fleeting atmosphere of life — furthermore, they can become an unlimited source of growth and self-reflection. Especially regarding the processuality of individual artistic practice, the notebook serves as a multifunctional medium of realization, examination and development. Various artists — such as Isabella Fürnkäs — exploit their very own fields of creation through extensive collections of daily notes, sketches and pencil drawings that form a delicate mosaic of their artistic work and play a relevant key-role in their oeuvre: What seems unconscious in the beginning, like the *écriture automatique* (automatic writing), transforms into an intentional tool of growth and introspection — the invisible appears tangible, the captured like a manifest.

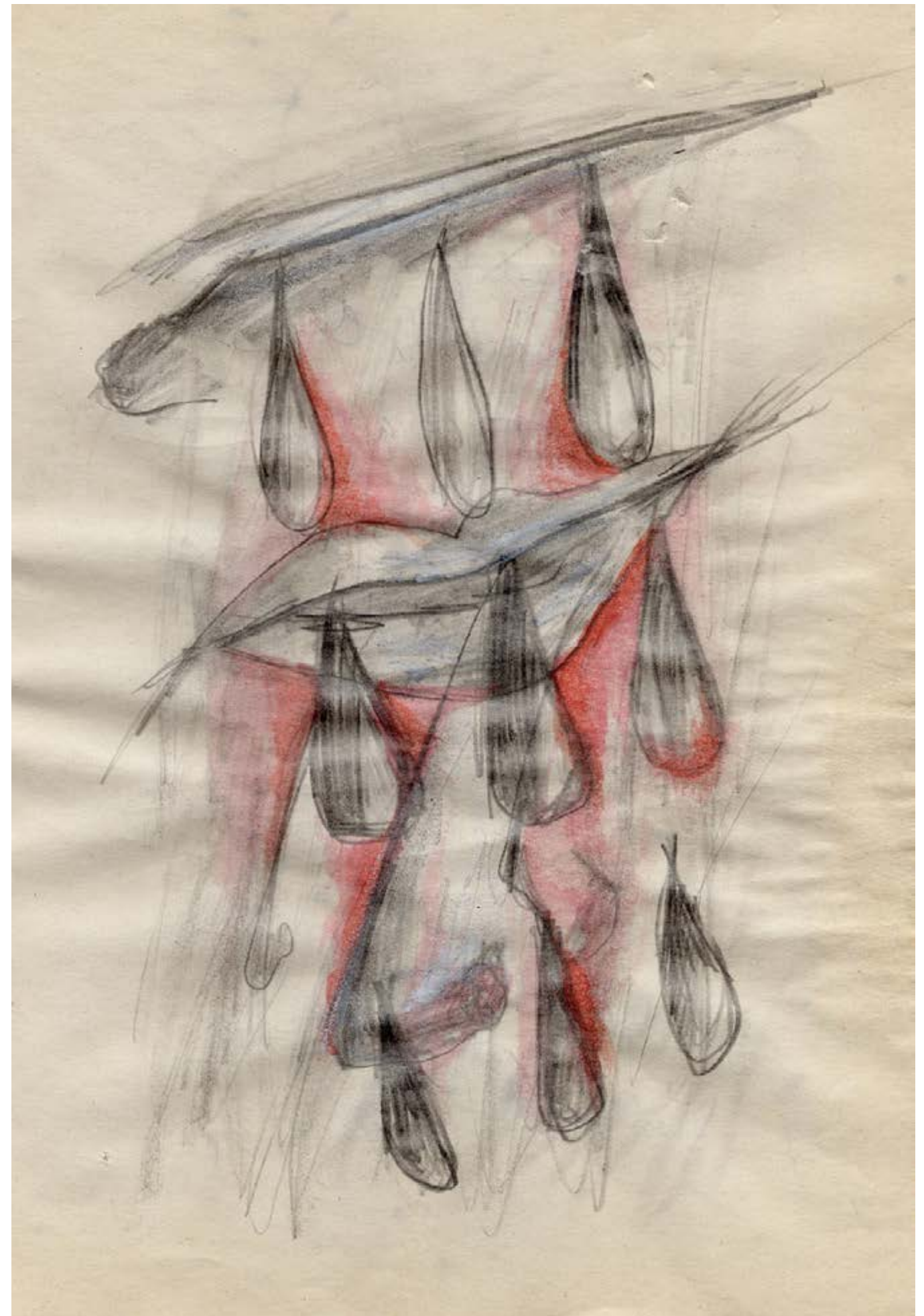
Isabella Fürnkäs' multi-faceted *The Red Drawings* tie on this tradition of autopoiesis and self-mirroring. After waiting for almost a decade, she decided to re-/overwork the notebook in 2021 as a whole, erase the pages and bring every single trace and drawing of this archived past into her present. Releasing the drawings to the public sphere (again) revealed the potential of letting go, starting new as well as a gain of meaning. Following the tender, yet expressive gestures of lead pencil and red ink on the small-sized japan-paper sheets, the accumulation of thin lines unfolds a charade of symbols, myths and personifications: Here and there, a word appears between fragmented body parts and reduced figurations on the faded paper — like „*hold*“ or „*sad king*“ — indicating the artistic interweaving of subjectivity, historically charged narratives and forms of storytelling. As the motives oscillate between the abstract and the familiar, they sometimes do refer to certain mythologies like the story of a sad king, the Medusa or Janus. Then again, unspecified body parts and open corpora raise questions about the vulnerability and subjectivity of being human — floated by red ink, they evoke a non-specific, ultimate desire that negates the idea of a one dimensional meaning and entity. In the endless re-/combination of drawings, the highly symbolic interplay between the intimate and the omnipresent creates an almost mysterious atmosphere of a constantly changing riddle or insoluble puzzle.

(continued)

The Red Drawings (ongoing series), 2021
Mixed media on paper, framed with white varnish ash, Mirogard, 1cm space strip,
14,8 x 21 cm (framed 26,6 x 22,3 cm), series of approx. one hundred drawings

Exhibitions

Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025), 2080, Berlin (2024), Luxembourg Art Week (2022), Platform, Munich (2022), Villa Schöningen, Potsdam (2022), Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2022), Amtsalon, Berlin (2022), Kaiserdamm 102, Berlin (2022), Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022), Hua International, Berlin (2021)





Installation view
Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025)



Installation view
Villa Schöningen, Potsdam (2022)



(continued)

Bringing representations and powerful narratives side by side with the cycle of the longing, wounded and maybe at some point healing body, Isabella Färnkäs' *The Red Drawings* spin a multidimensional web between the inside and the outside. They formulate an archive of gestures and visual memories that involve the corporal experience directly with the stories that we are told. In the end, it seems to be precisely the look into the outside, that leads back to our self. While being at odds with what we see, hear and experience, the examination of the perceived becomes inevitable. Thinking of Simone de Beauvoir, the *myth* — especially in relation to the artistic practice of a woman — speaks of much more than a projecting subject. Outlining the mythology of the eternal female as a tool of power and repression, the myth itself is revealed as an instrument of creating reality that contains the ambivalence of the inner truth and the outside world¹. At the same time, the careful inspection of a mythology like the *Medusa* can function as a process of appropriation and self-determination. As Roland Barthes puts it: *The myth is the speech*². Therefore, *The Red Drawings* re-/formulate, reflect and document while working through the layers of masks and tales to a first hand experience. What evolves can be read as a sensitive inventory of impressions, that do not seek to retell, but function as a symbolic carrier of something fragmented, reduced or removed — a glance at our every-day perception.

- Text by Anna K. Wlach

1 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Other Sex*, 1949

2 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, 1957

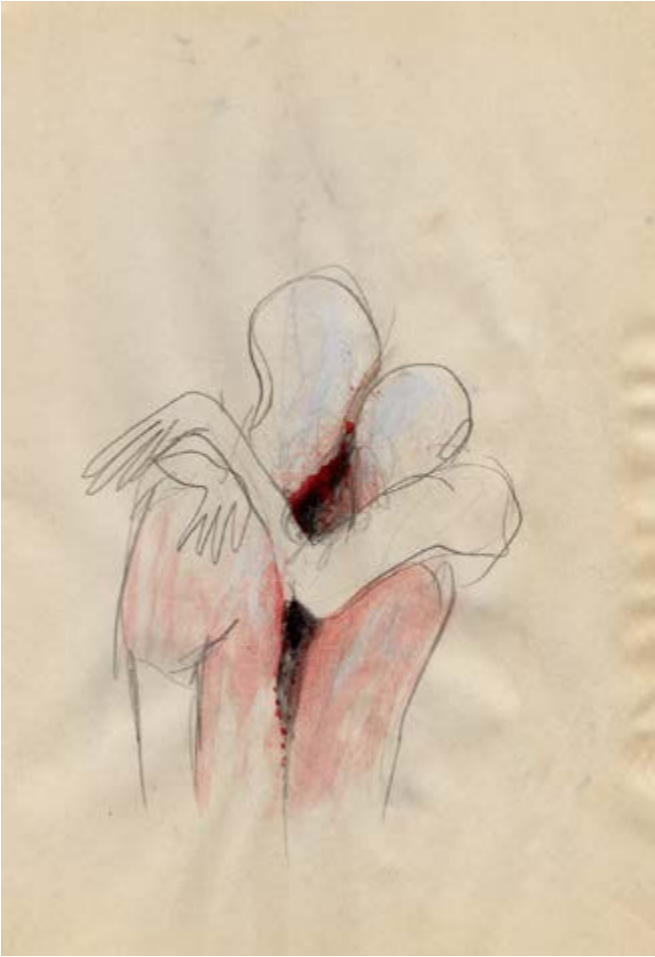
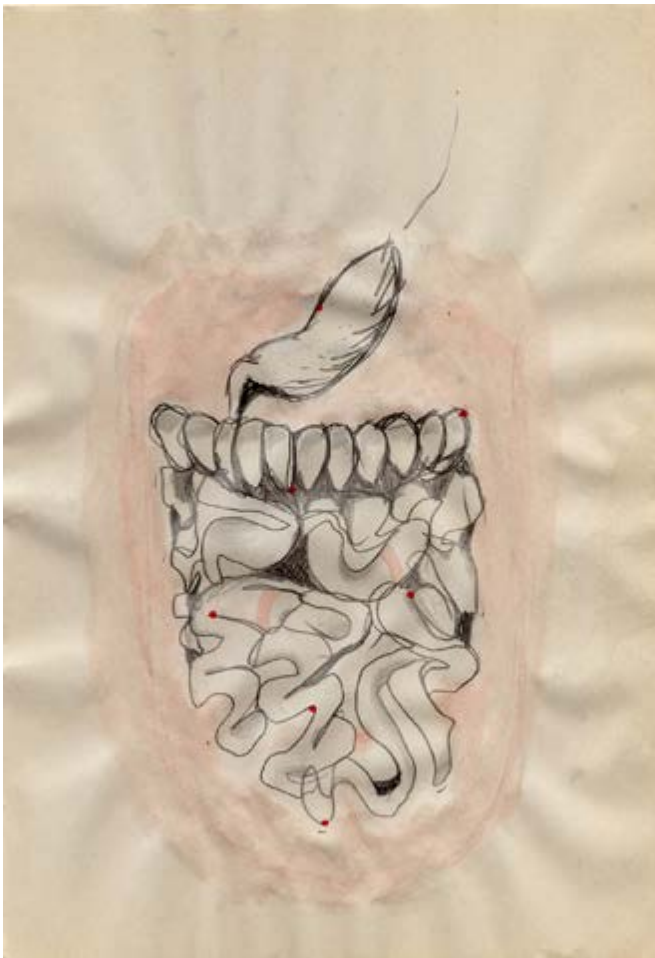
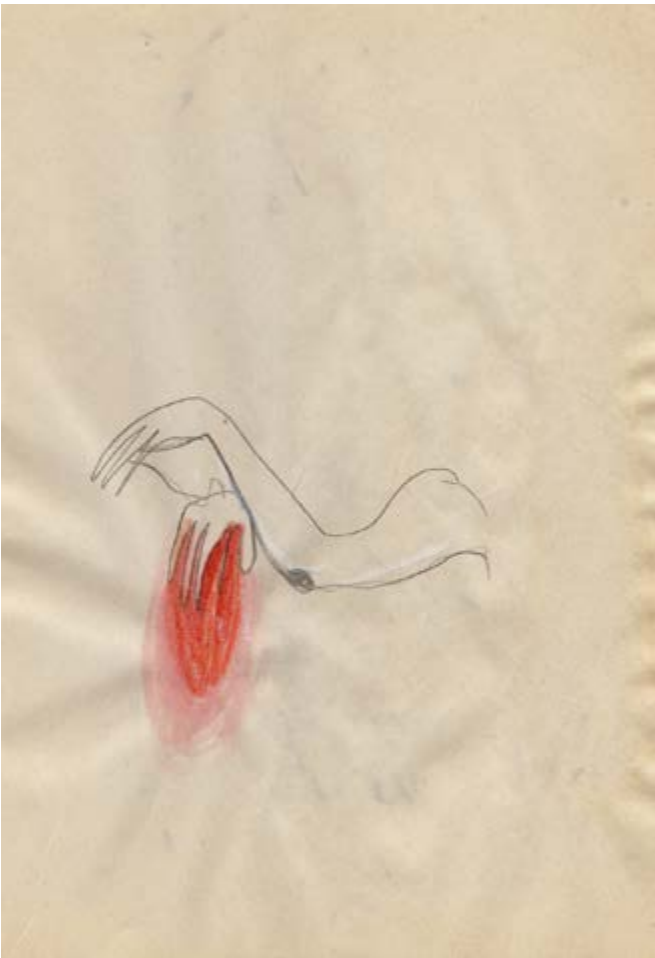
Installation view
Villa Schöningen, Potsdam (2022)



Installation view
2080, Berlin (2024)



Installation view
Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022)



OPEN SECRETS

Video installation

The core visual element of *Open Secrets* by Isabella Fürnkäs is a video collage which is projected (through video mapping) onto an enclosure that is pyramid in shape. The object given its size, a height of 150cm, so that the top of the work approaches the neck of many viewers as well as its stance resting directly on the floor recalls an intimate dwelling, specifically the structure of a tent. The surface onto which the video is projected is a patchwork of monochrome silk switches that appear as skins sewn together to stretch over the stainless-steel polls that shape the triangular contour of the sculpture. Taken together the work, like other installations by Fürnkäs, uses the “cut up” to evoke the deeply psychoanalytic motifs of child, the other, the clown or the insane but the work is not strictly inward looking.

The title refers perhaps to knowledge withheld, a secret, but one that is also known to the other hence being open or simply poorly kept - as might be the case with a child. Given the tent's rudimentary structure it too could be the creation of a child but its complete refinement belies its sophistication of a mature working mind. Fürnkäs use of styling here is the highest degree of finesse; it is marked by every move in the installation being fine-tuned to finish. Yet it is not as some minimalist precursors a fetish polished finish it is instead juxtaposed with a sense of the badly made or slapped together even in the crude stitching barbaric.

The video collage has moments of close crop of a mouth and tongue a displacement of subjecthood onto objecthood along with other images fingers, flesh, water, hands zoomed to fingernails all equally displaced from the body they are attached to. Fürnkäs knows the tropes of psychoanalysis in art and has long disgusted the surrealist and much later post-modern feminist criticism that has kept this modality valid by strongly critiquing it as patriarchal in nature. More so in returning pleasure to the inner subject of the female her work also looks outward to the contours of self and inorganic non-self, true to a motif of the nature culture divide that concerns her work. In a final hidden moment of the installation, a single photograph of The British Crown Jewels is stitched into a pouch on the back of the tent - for the artist it is “a symbol of power lying directly under your skin”.

- Text by Justin Polera

Open Secrets, 2021
Video installation, stainless steel structure, silk cloth, projection
Approx. 150 x 100 x 100 cm, video 8:45min, color/sound, loop

Exhibitions

Shapes of Shelter, Platform, Munich (2022),
Die Wirklichkeit ist sowieso da, Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022),
Staycation Bucharest, Catinca Tabacaru & Sandwich & Goethe Institut (2021)





Text excerpt from the sound installation

Disconnecting me
 Silently
 Peeling off
 My wounds
 Leaving traces of
 Unseen material on the edge
 Of recognition
 Wshhhhh Wshhhhhh Wshhhhhh
 Slowly Quietly
 Kissing flesh.
 Drowning in your secret
 Hollow pockets.
 Eye to Eye.
 Before writing to you,
 I perfume myself all over.
 Irresponsible blood vessels float
 and linger in my bloodstream.
 Vein to vein
 Head to toe
 Pleasantly, I listen.
 B-boom B-boom
 B-boom B-boom
 Gently playing,
 Obsessively Amused.
 The boomerang effect.
 Wshhhhh Wshhhhhh Whhhhhhh
 Consume my innocence
 I'm wearing it on my sleeve
 You mark my heart
 You make it bleed
 Spit on me again
 I will reveal what's left
 Come, peel it off,
 And, enjoy.
 Wanting Waiting Wanting Waiting Wanting Waiting.
 Come on,
 Let's laugh at our naked thoughts.

Installation view
 Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022)



Open Secrets (video stills), 2021/2022
Video 8:45min, color/sound, loop



SIAMESE DREAMS Solo exhibition

We used to sleep in our beds. Today, we live in them. Advanced digitalization has progressively capitalized on this intrinsically intimate space. Through our mobile devices, we bring the world into bed with us and, by the same token, expose ourselves to the world in bed. The bed—perhaps the most intimate place of retreat—is thus increasingly becoming a public zone.

In her multi-layered oeuvre, which includes video, multimedia installation, performance, and drawing, Fürnkäs addresses questions of physical and spatial intimacy, the influence of digitalization on interpersonal relationships, and the transformation of social communication patterns. A mattress lies in the middle of the darkened exhibition space. Playing on the slightly rumpled pillows and bed sheets is the video work *Siamese Dreams* (2021), which was developed specifically for the exhibition in Zurich. The projection consists of specially filmed recordings by the artist that are assembled into a video collage. Close-ups of everyday motifs are rendered alien through this macroscopic perspective and reflect a fascination for the absurdity of the everyday. From this seemingly arbitrary succession of images and the concentrated emotions they elicit, the dreamlike character of the work unfolds, lingering at the interface between remembering and forgetting.

In addition to the video installation, the exhibition includes forty selected drawings from the ongoing work complex *Insomnia Drawings* (2007–), which are installed in the corner of the room like an opened book. The *Insomnia Drawings* form what is now a series of around five hundred drawings. They establish free associative spaces for the viewer and reveal the articulations of a mental coping process. The motifs on the Japanese paper in a consistent format range between poetic reflections on the present and non-verbal descriptions of the state of an inner life. Feelings and moments of confusion are expressed in these abstracted depictions—they resemble a memory aid, an archive, or a diary. Through these drawings, we as viewers can become acquainted with the artist's emotional worlds, and in doing so we can recognize ourselves in them, too.

The exhibition *Siamese Dreams* creates a space that is highly personal yet accessible to everyone. The artist also experiments with the thresholds between the body and the imagination, the unconscious and the conscious, the individual and the public. It is not so much a matter of defining boundaries, but of exploring these liminal spaces and allowing them to be experienced.

- Text by Paula Ursprung

Siamese Dreams, 2021
Video installation, video projection on mattress
Video 12:47min, color/sound, loop
Performance with Jules Claude Gisler
*This work is in the Burger Collection, Zurich/Hong Kong

Siamese Dreams, Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich
Performed on 18 & 24 September 2021

Watch the video documentation here: <https://vimeo.com/670626882>



Installation view
Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021)



Installation view
Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021)



Installation view
Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021)



Insomnia Drawings, 2007-ongoing
Selection of 40 drawings
25.5 x 17.5cm (framed: 32.8 x 25.5cm)

The artist is present, 2019 - ongoing
Paper clay & acrylics, ca. 13 x 5 cm

38



Installation view
Kunstmuseum Mülheim an der Ruhr (2025)



Installation view
In Abeyance, Gewölbe, project space of Art Cologne (2021)
invited by Johannes Wohnseifer, David Ostrowski & Michail Pirgelis



VICE VERSA REVERSED Video installation with performance

“hi. how are you?” - “i don’t know” - “oh. what’s up? do you want to talk about it?” — a bed — a body — a voice — a stream of countless fluttering images. Imminently before we fall asleep, we seem to take a bath in a flood of visual memories, passing thoughts, remote feelings and emotions. The bed becomes a fragile threshold, an interspace between the subconscious and conscious reflection. Images function as archived fragments of a distant (yet close) time and place, carried into sleep by our minds and glowing social devices. What characterises the perceptible tension of being in-between in this very moment of intimacy and solitude?

With their multi-media installation *Vice Versa Reversed* (2021), Isabella Fűrnkäs and Jasmin Truong raise questions about inner surveillance and the continuous re-reconstruction of encounters, memories and narratives through new technologies and media devices in intimate, self-created spaces: Two flat screens are framing a big white bed with a colourful patchwork blanket and a performer interacting with a phone and wearing a patchwork pyjama made from the same material as the bed-cover, creating a familiar yet strange atmosphere. The patchwork fabric of the pyjama and the blanket visually connect with the overlapping, scattered moving images on the video screens, that seem intangible — a cross-over of the haptic and the corporal alongside the virtual. While the performer, who is constantly moving on the bed, consumes their own “infotainment” before falling asleep, both body and mind are constantly being suffused with internal and external stimuli. They seem permeable. Even though, they do not look uncomfortable surrounded by the passing multi-channel-videos, the installation appears as a situation with no way out, symbolising a self-constructed net of mutual dependence in social networks and virtual relationships. Especially the recurring voices — invisible, non-corporal counterparts of the performer — creating a dialogue between the two flickering screens, remain far off but too persistent and contribute to the ambivalent scenery that casts doubt on ideas of freedom and autonomy in modern societies today. Referring to connotations of the prevailing dualism fe-/male, the two voices can be read as male (active) and female (passive), representing the inter-play of dominant gender constructs in contrast to the silent, visual and androgynous embodiment of their subconscious processing by the performing body. “come. trust me. you can trust me” - “I’m confused” - “why?” - “i’m not sure”.

(continued)

Vice Versa Reversed, 2021

Two-channel video installation, mattress, two 40” flatscreens

Patchwork quilt 2x2m and patchwork-pyjama made from recycled jersey-shirts

Video 22 min each, color/sound, loop

Dialogue spoken by Juan Antonio Olivares and Ewouyne Waller

Performance with Marlene Kollender

strike a pose, K21 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf

Performed on 23-25 July 2021



Installation view
K21 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf (2021)

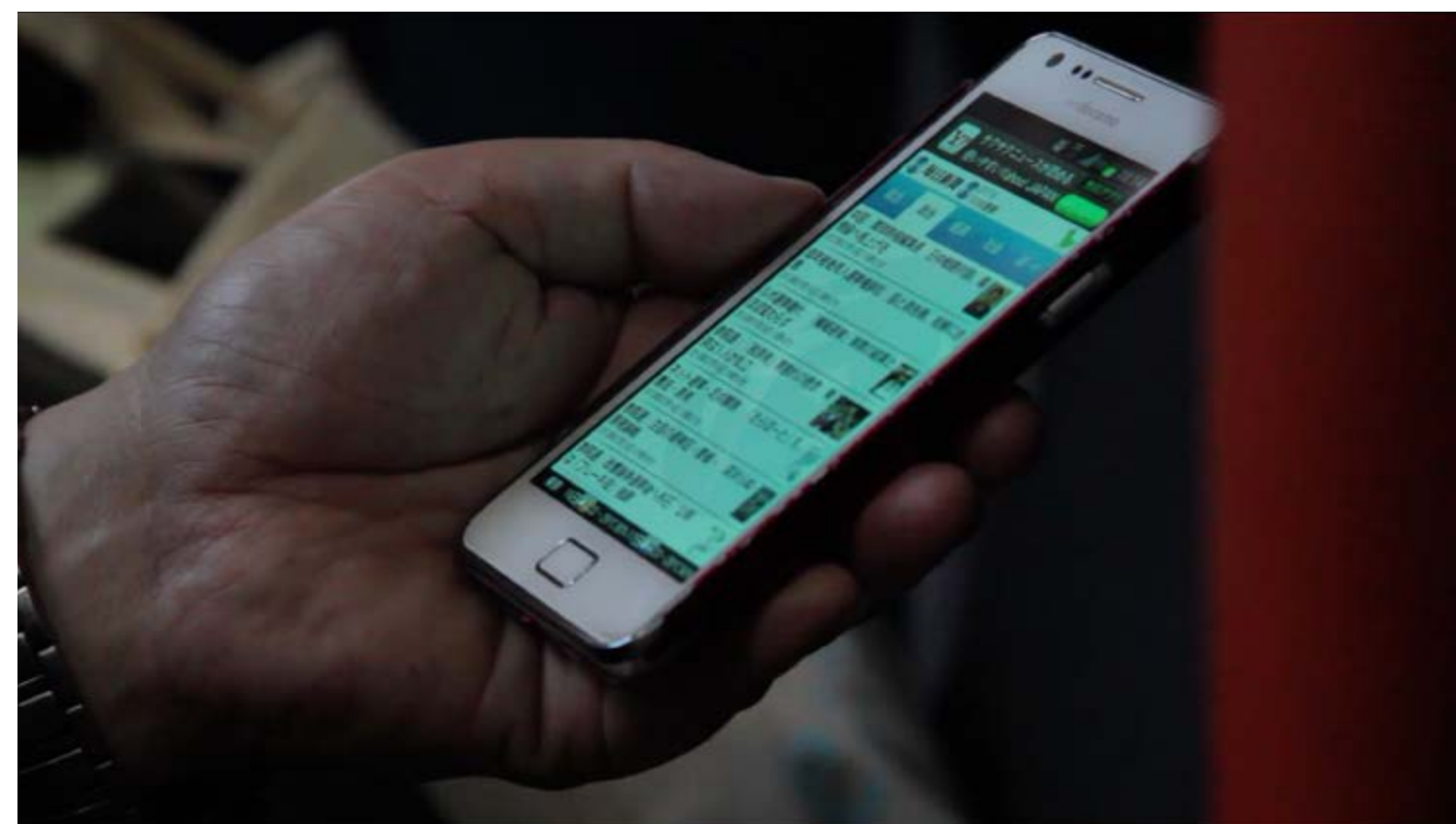


Installation view
K21 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf (2021)

(continued)

Vice Versa Reversed (2021) by Isabella Fürnkäs and Jasmin Truong depicts the corporal and sensual experience right in the middle of the digital dimension. Performed for the first time at *Strike a Pose* at the K21 Kunstsammlung NRW directly next to Julia Scher's *Surveillance Bed III* installation from 1994, the interdisciplinary art work focusses on the contemporary overlapping and fragmented relations of time and space that culminate in the intimate sphere of the individual. The side-by-side of the installation next to Julia Scher's, which has been created in very different period of time, appears to be an interesting combination: While Julia Scher's work of the 1990s deals with the ubiquitous surveillance from the outside, Isabella Fürnkäs and Jasmin Truong locate a new level of self-monitoring in the supervision of our time. Materiality and intimacy, narration formats and circular clouds enter into relation with each other and meet a pouring and perspective-building layering of imagery in the constructed video-works. With this multi-media installation, the artistic duo takes up the fragmented in an interdisciplinary way and reflects on narrative factors that come together to form a whole.

- Text by Anna K. Wlach



Vice Versa Reversed (video stills), 2021
Two-channel video installation, mattress, two 40" flatscreens
Video 22 min each, color/sound, loop



UNPREDICTABLE LIARS REVOLT Sound installation

In the age of full-blown consumerism and ideological inertia, individual identity is primarily communicated through labels with which an imagined self is positioned and valorised. The different needs and constraints result in a patchwork of veiling self-dramatisation, an anomythic hide-and-seek game of surfaces in which analogue and virtual individuals threaten to collapse. The complexity and diversity of semiotic references form a cross-milieu system that can no longer be penetrated individually and leaves its bearers behind. In the context of the sound collage, the voices of the latter - once the medium with which self-image and self-assurance were communicated - become a barely perceptible whispering, speaking and singing, which at the same time invites direct sensory experience as a stream of consciousness and negotiates questions of role-playing, isolation, interpersonal communication and social co-existence.

"Human-like figures, magnificently draped in colours and patterns, nourished by their engagement with Japanese theatre and arts and crafts; with the appearance of having grown out of painting, populate spaces and, in a limp, melting state, pour colourfully across the floor, becoming drawing again." - Andreas Reihse

The main impulse for the first version of the installation *Unpredictable Liars* (2017) comes inspired by Japanese *Nō* theatre, which already has inherent loss of the individual through the use of centuries-old symbols. Another version was formed in 2018-19 with the series *Unpredictable Liars II*, where the ghostly transhuman characters seem like the last survivors of a utopia. In the new series *Unpredictable Liars Revolt* (2021), the figures have been encased in epoxy, which further emphasises the congealed character of their disguise, devoid of meaning and stripped of interhumanity.

- Text by Matthias Jakob Becker

Unpredictable Liars Revolt, 2021-2022

Sound installation, veiled mannequins, coated with epoxy, speakers, various materials and fabrics

Exhibitions

Markus Ambach Projekte, Düsseldorf (2024), Folkwang Museum, Essen (2022), ARCO, Madrid (2022), Orangerie Schloss Benrath, Düsseldorf (2022), Amtsalon, Berlin (2021), Spoiler, Berlin (2021), BERLIN MASTERS, Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2021), HPP & Kunstverein 701 & Düsseldorf Palermo (2021)

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/unpredictable-liars>



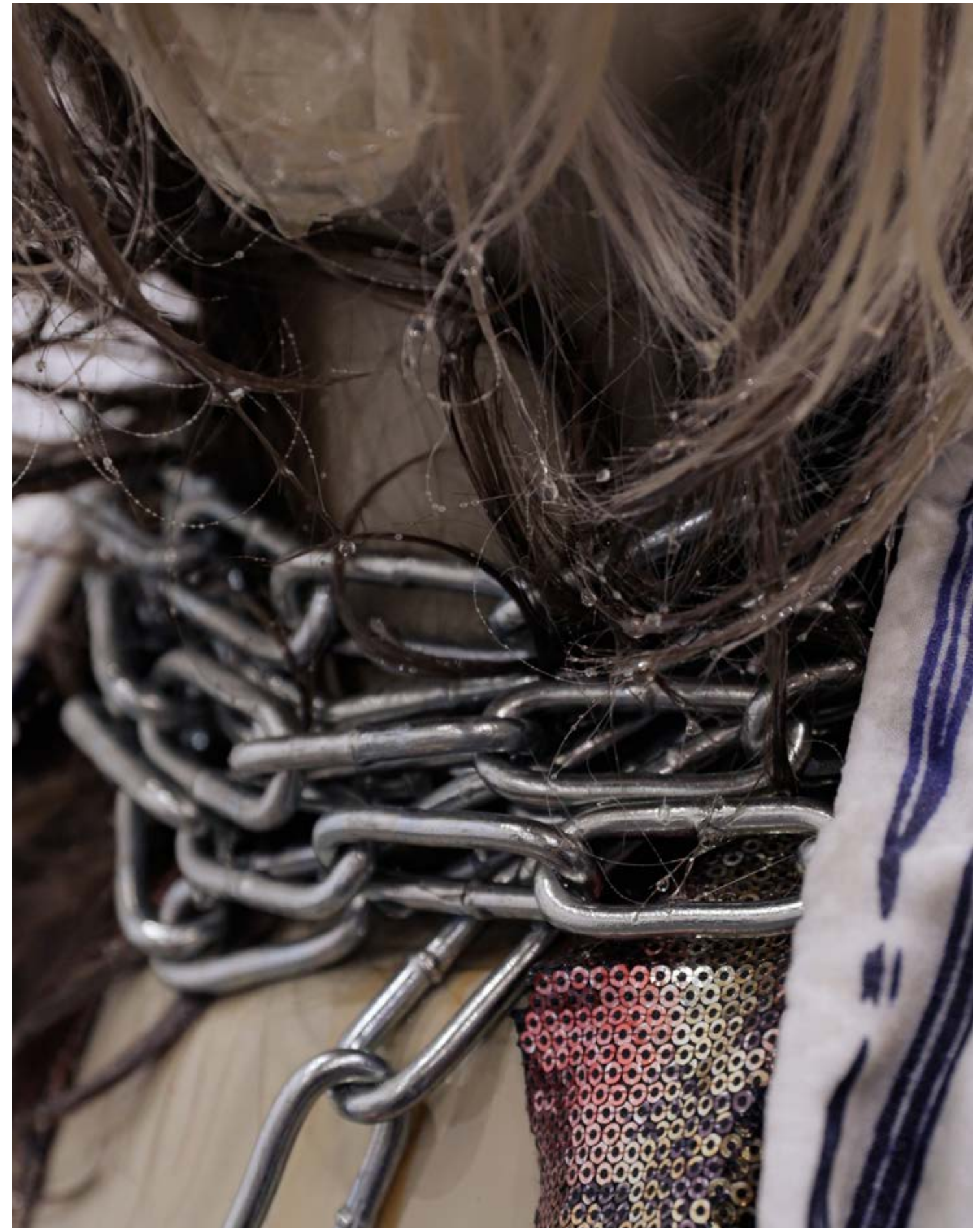
Installation view
HPP Architects, Kunstverein 701 & Düsseldorf Palermo (2021)



Installation view
ARCO, Madrid (2022)



Installation view
ARCO, Madrid (2022)





Installation view
ARCO, Madrid (2022)

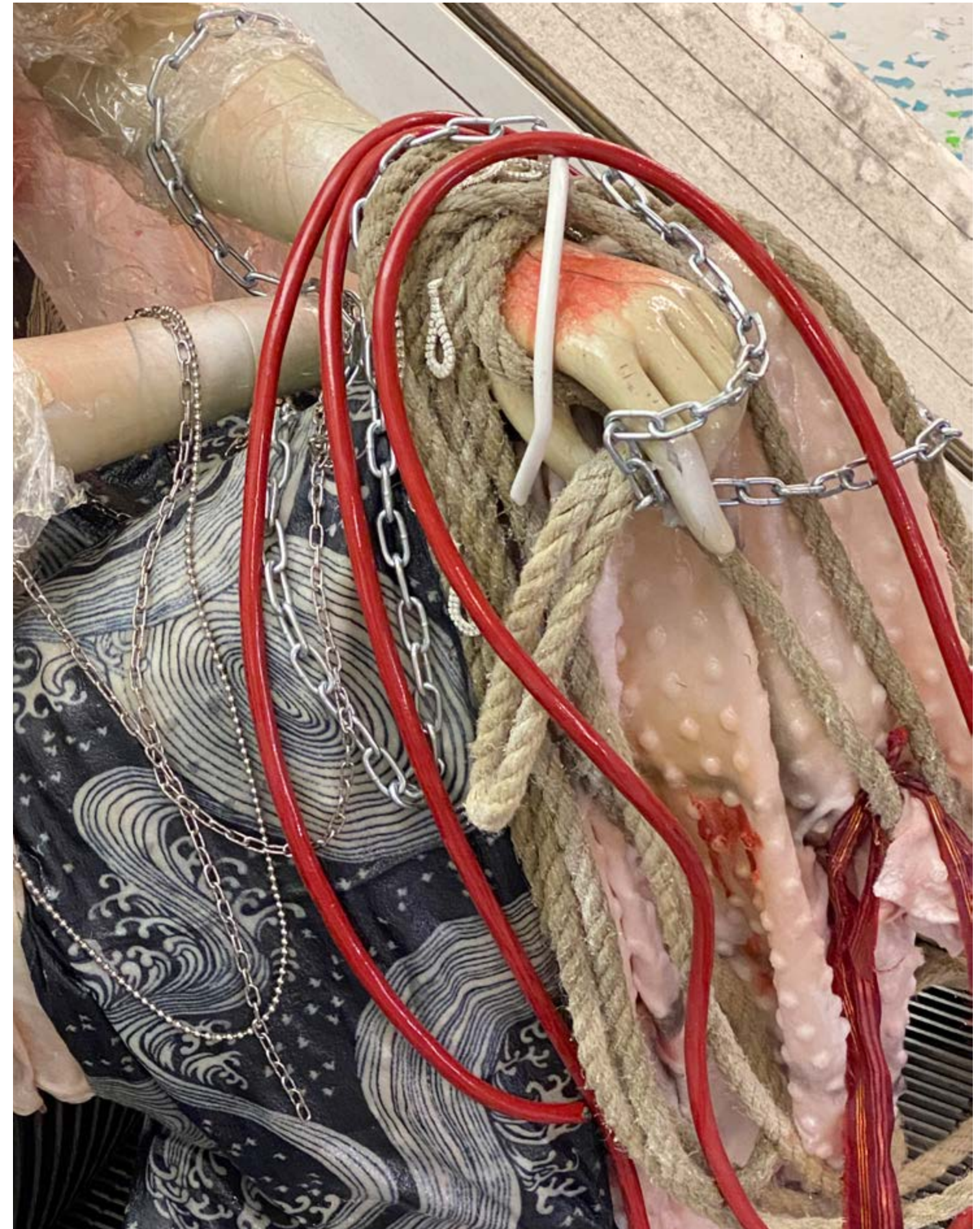


Text excerpt from the sound installation

Your lips
 Are licking
 My inner ego We are walking On this Emotional
 tightrope Elegantly Silently Pleasantly
 Unconsciously You are Beside me
 But your fingers Can't reach
 Or feel
 At all
 You're pushing me Punishing me With this
 Versatile flexibility Hidden in your legs Solely
 watching Me while I tremble I tell you
 That I forgot You won't believe
 I say it
 Again and Again and Again.
 Your Hands Linger on my Innocent Itchy Devious
 Yet fragile Fractured Elbows.
 Hhhmmmmm Hhhmmmmm
 Why
 Did you put Body-lotion
 On my wounds Yesterday?
 It's your Cheeky chesty Puberty pimples That
 have intimidated Me in my Empty lingerie,
 Leaning
 In the hallway And these precious Prosperous
 Rooms of yours Appear
 like Copious claws. Come, Please, Scratch my
 eyes.



Installation view
 Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2021)



Installation view
Museum Folkwang, Essen (2022)



Installation view
Museum Folkwang, Essen (2022)



They are encased in epoxy, which further emphasizes the frozen character of their veiling, which is devoid of meaning and torn from the interpersonal. The sound coming from the figures, is a barely perceptible whispering, speaking and singing. As a stream of consciousness, it becomes a sensory experience to the listener and negotiates questions of role play, isolation, interpersonal communication and social co-existence.

- Text by Gilles Neiens

Isabella Fürnkäs embraces the heterogeneity of Essen's City Nord and makes use of various locations around the district, which she brings into speculative connection with each other. She creates hybrid apparitions in the consumer world—mostly based on traditional mannequins—out of everyday disposable and leftover materials, which she uses in a comparable way to costume jewellery and other accessories.

In the goth shop Dark Ages, in shop windows such as those belonging to the Enza Home furniture studio or the Art Faktors tattoo studio, on the escalator of the second-hand shelf rental scheme Konsumreform, or inside Expo Alternativ, her figures blend almost imperceptibly into their surroundings while subtly commenting on them. In their ambiguity between the affirmation of consumerism and the fetishism of fashion, they merge into an amalgam of urban neuroses.

At a time in which gender roles are being called into question by fluid (self-assigned) identities, fashion's culture of labelling takes on a dystopian element. In Fürnkäs's work, fashion's symbols of glamour collapse into worn-out cable harnesses, ruined shopping bags, and repurposed DIY supplies. In autumnal shades of blush and ruby, her transhuman figures comment on the urban locations where they are displayed, the shop windows, displays, and display cases becoming ephemeral stages in a consumer society that seems to be coming to an end and is searching for new perspectives.

- Text by Markus Ambach

Installation view
Markus Ambach Projekte, Düsseldorf (2024)

BLIND LAND

Sound installation with performance

A black pool appears in contrast to two performers dressed all in white. 6 sound showers play a sound scape from above, in which the voices of the performers monologuing and dialoguing are mingled in. The performers move stoically synchronous, imitating each other, responding with eye contact only. Like living sculptures they progressively move on the borders of the pool to finally dive into the basin. The process ranges between hesitation, fear and playfulness. The water is approached like an element of the unknown, with which the performers interact, treating it like a fluid opponent. They pour black color into the pool to dye the water and themselves. The procedure reveals an immersive character of humans assimilating and disappearing in their surroundings, becoming willingly or unwillingly part of an alienated context. The work examines transgression, alienation and immersion. It is a bleak reflection on modern-day identity and isolation, both in a technological and social dimension.

- Text by Maximilian Steinborn

Blind Land, 2018

Sound installation (13min/loop), 6 sound showers, basin with black water, 6 x 3m

Performance with Marlene Kollender and Steven Sander

Photographs on the backside wall by Andrzej Steinbach

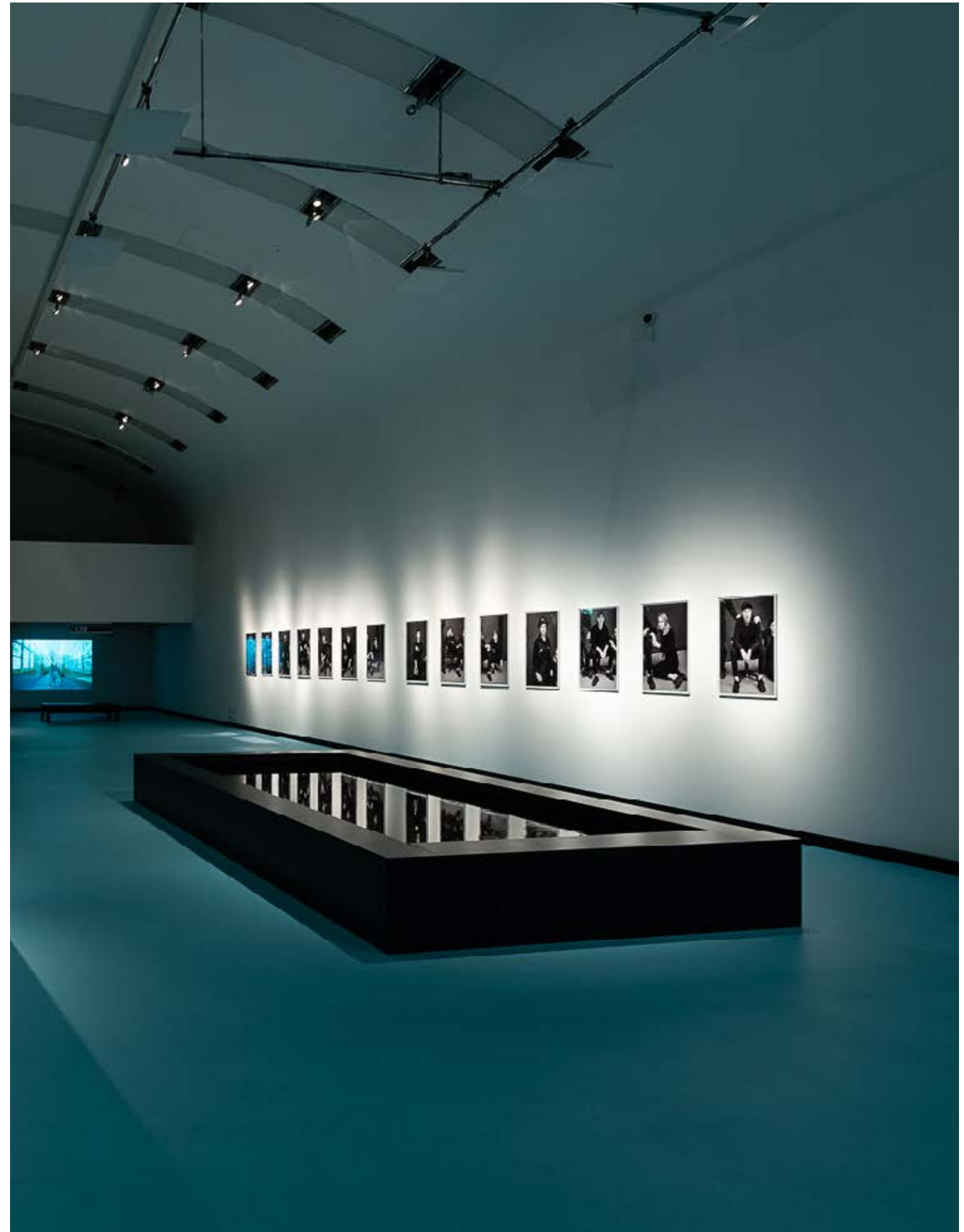
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2018)

Curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Vanessa Joan Müller

Performed on 24 October 2018

Watch video statement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwXFpMnGcfg>

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/blind-land>





Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



„I am in the world. A world without time. My consciousness now is light and it is air. Air has neither a place nor time. Air is the non-place where everything will exist. What I am saying is the music of the air. The formation of the world. Slowly what will be approaches. What will be already is. The future is what always existed and always will exist. What I am saying to you is not for listening - it's for being.“

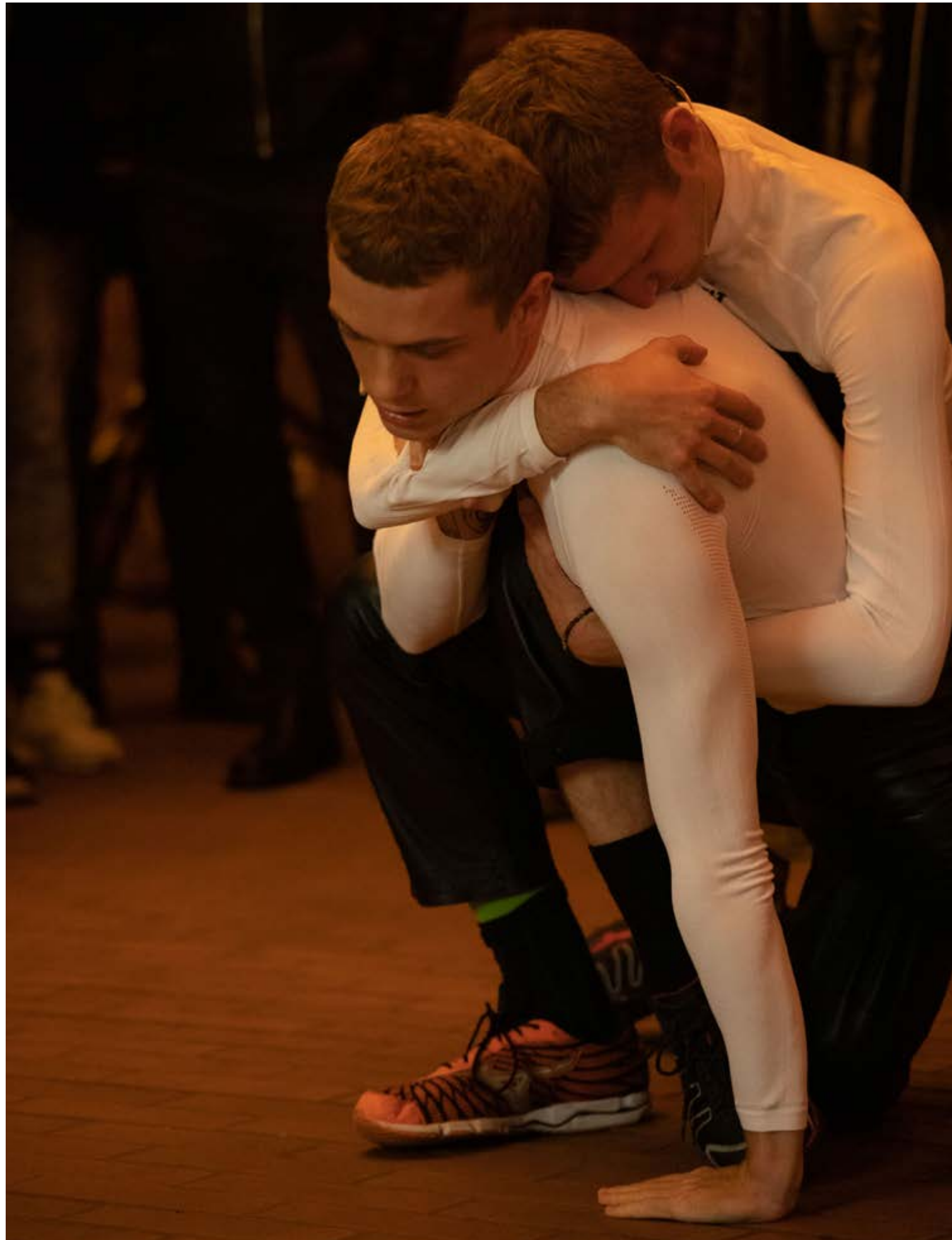
- Text sung during the performance by Marlene Kollender



Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



THE BOOMERANG EFFECT Performance

In the long run, repetition and unison either lead to lethargy or provoke – sometimes even active – resistance. In communication theory, the latter is described as the “boomerang effect”. The term boomerang effect refers to the unintentional turn of a communication strategy by 180 degrees. The attempt to influence a communication partner has the opposite result. Despite (or because of) the objections and counterarguments, they feel more convinced by their opinion, plan or suspicion than before the attempted persuasion. In economic psychology, poorly launched advertising campaigns are plainly described as having a boomerang effect. Instead of increasing the recipient’s buying interest, the additional advertising leads to aversion and anger. The client must fear that the promoted product might not only reduce purchasing but even inspire deliberate boycotting. *The Boomerang Effect* can mark the beginning of a revolt.

Fürnkäs’s eponymous performance contains an entire series of boomerang effects. A split ego in conversation with itself; a chain of half expressed demands and questions, which, once uttered, turn against their originator. Sometimes they spontaneously merge with a pop song quote, sometimes they get lost in Dadaesque listings. Fürnkäs’s performers, both men, both white, both blond doppelgangers, try in vain to join the two halves of their monologue to form a whole. The moments of sense and connection are, however, mainly accidental. Then: a turn of events. The two men no longer have the stage to themselves when two women in the audience speak up. Using the same staccato as their precursors they bring the conversation to a preliminary conclusion. “Just continue to dissolve my personality,” are the laconic last words of a consciousness that sees itself disappearing. It remains unclear whether it is witnessing its end or its liberation.

- Text by Maximilian Steinborn

The Boomerang Effect, 2018
Performance with Nikolas Brummer and Jan Seevetal

Exhibitions

Salon ACME, Mexico City (2020), Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2018), Kölner Kunstverein, Cologne (2018), PS120, Berlin (2018), KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018)

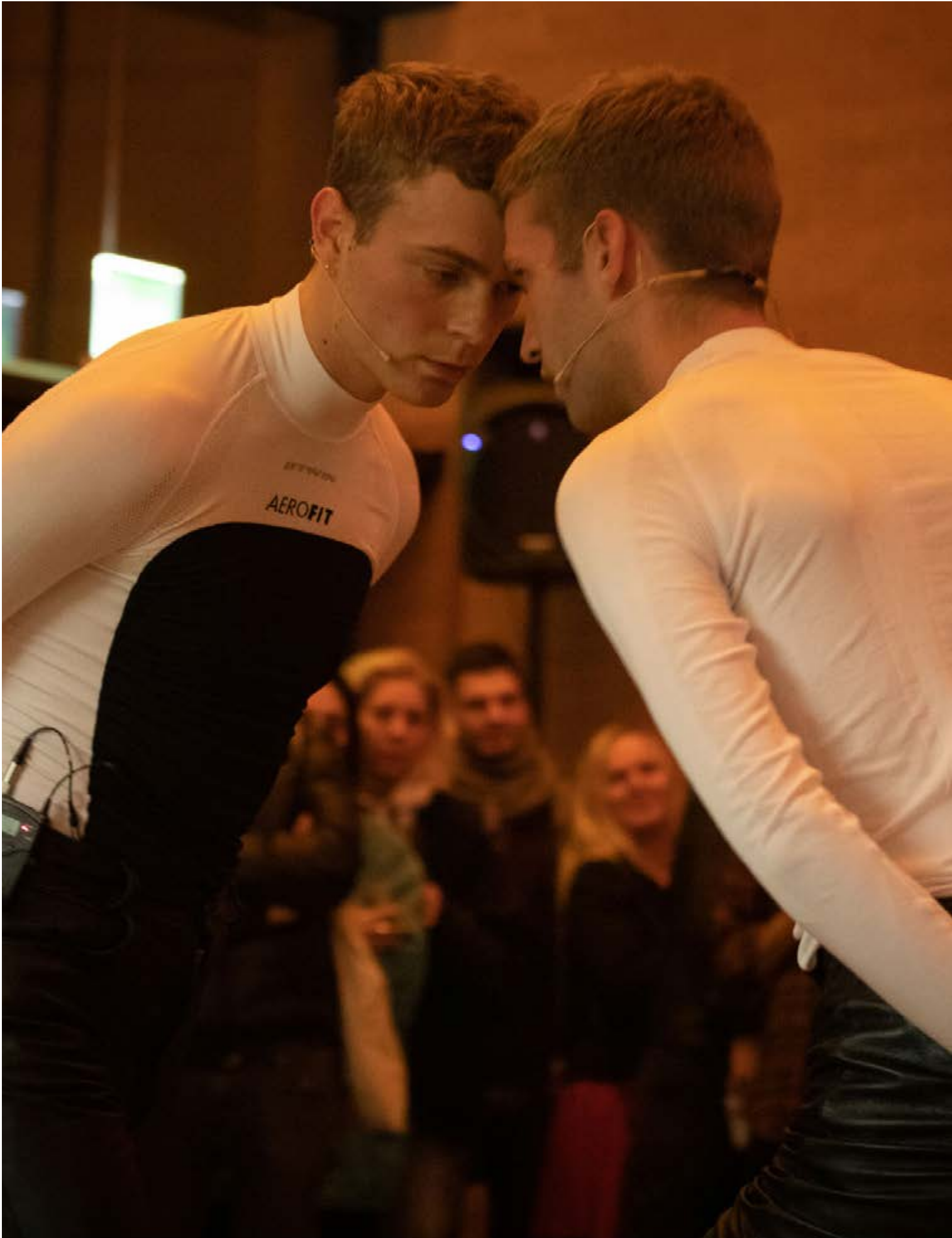
Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/vef2CqZkSKo>



Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien (2018), Vienna

Text excerpt from the performance

<i>my corporate</i>	<i>cannibal</i>
<i>I treat you</i>	<i>like an</i>
<i>animal</i>	<i>like a</i>
<i>hannibal</i>	<i>like a</i>
<i>clown</i>	<i>excuse me</i>
<i>while I</i>	<i>kiss this</i>
<i>guy</i>	<i>the hidden lies</i>
<i>you are a</i>	<i>glass box</i>
<i>in the sky</i>	<i>the most natural thing</i>
<i>in the world</i>	<i>the I and I</i>
<i>a mother planet</i>	<i>my battleship earth</i>
<i>my corporate</i>	<i>cannibal</i>
<i>pray for me</i>	<i>the chosen few</i>
<i>like me</i>	<i>and you</i>
<i>we are</i>	<i>slaves to the rhythm</i>
<i>of your</i>	<i>corporate</i>
<i>prison</i>	<i>pray for me</i>
<i>I can't</i>	<i>get</i>
<i>enough</i>	<i>what you need</i>
<i>I don't want</i>	<i>..</i>





In the two-part performance *The Boomerang Effect* (2018), which she presents as part of the series *Aus- & Vortragen* curated by Juliane Duft, communication sounds as if it were echoing back from the facades of words. One can sense human desire and emotional fragility behind them in the same way they are also revealed in Fürnkäs' other works.

With her art, Isabella Fürnkäs attempts to build a bridge between the manifestations of the digital age and that of the supposedly old world in which physicality still plays a role. In drawings, collages, performances, video works, and installations, she exposes the present day as a confusing thicket of surfaces that can hardly be penetrated as ever more layers open up. In her delicate coffee stain watercolors, for example, skin-colored faces appear like masks behind which is something unclear – *Hide & Seek*. Ultimately, what's often concealed behind all of these layers is nothingness.

- Text by Juliane Duft

Installation view
Kölischer Kunstverein, Cologne



Installation view
Kölner Kunstverein, Cologne (2018)



UNPREDICTABLE LIARS II Sound installation

Mysterious veiled figures linger in the exhibition space; they could be from past decades or maybe the distant future. Mumbling under their cloak, they tell the story of *The Raft of the Medusa*, an oratorio by the German composer Hans Werner Henze, the tale of the French frigate Meduse, which ran aground off the west coast of Africa in 1816. Some castaways saved themselves on a raft, but in the end only fifteen of the hundred and fifty mariners survived. Translated through sculpture, a story of desperation, existential crisis and cannibalism unfolds. While Hans Werner Henze's oratorio originated against the backdrop of left-wing thought in the 1960s, Fürnkäs' work situates itself very specifically in the context of contemporary economics, referencing isolation and the struggle for survival.

- Text excerpt by Marian Stindt

For a long time, the self-portrait was regarded as a mirror of historical and social changes with the individual self in the foreground, until it acquired new levels of meaning from the 1960s onwards through increased critical questioning of its topicality: Artists went to physical extremes, put themselves in the place of others in an attempt to explore the Other, and gender roles were questioned through masquerades or role-playing. The self-portrait is replaced by self-staging - in the digital age supposedly more than ever in ways of a selfie - or in other words, the self is the opposite. Under the title *Selbstsicht: Porträt-Identitäten* (Self-view: Portrait Identities), the Sprengel Museum Hannover is now dedicating an exhibition to the artistic questioning of the self-portrait genre from the 1960s to the present day.

Focusing on media art, Fürnkäs explores the self-perception through a confrontation with aspects of isolation and denial in direct communication. In contrast to Fürnkäs, Öffler's work seeks contact with other people on the Internet, which is refused after he has revealed his true "self" as an artist. All in all, the field of tension between the artistic creative process and self-observation is dealt with. Observing oneself is a subjective, an almost intimate factor. The conditions, premises and intentions are therefore always individual and variable.

- Text by Olga Nevzorova

Unpredictable Liars II, 2018-2019

Sound installation, 15 veiled mannequins, speakers, various materials and fabrics

Exhibitions

Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025), The Moment, Berlin (2024), ACCCE, Berlin (2020), KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2020), Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2019), Kunstverein Göttingen (2019), Italic, Berlin (2018), KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/unpredictable-liars>



Installation view
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)





Text excerpt from the sound installation

In the absence of real stability there is still the possibility of true solidarity, the experience of "having adventures and being in the impasse together, waiting for the other shoe to drop. And also, allowing for some healing and resting, waiting for it not to drop.

I was beset by anxiety. I could have cried out with terror at being lost. I pushed the fear away—by studying the sky, determining when the moon would come out. I saw myself in relationship to the stars.

*Your lips are licking my inner ego.
We are walking on this emotional tightrope: elegantly, silently, pleasantly, unconsciously. You are beside me but your fingers can't reach or feel at all.*

You're pushing me, punishing me with this versatile flexibility hidden in your legs solely watching me while I tremble. I tell you that I forgot you won't believe.

I say it again and again and again. Your hands linger on my innocent, itchy, devious, yet fragile, fractured elbows.

Pay attention. I'm inviting you to a new kingdom.

I'm hiding myself away. I have to hide, otherwise I will be trapped by the eye of the other.

....

Installation view
Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2019)



Installation view
Italic, Berlin (2018)



Installation view
Kunstverein Göttingen (2019)



The exhibition *For Better Or Worse*, explores how contemporary artists with an affinity for the Internet express themes of friendship, love and togetherness, and aims to critically question current developments and stereotypes while emphasizing potentials for social coexistence. A multi-part sound installation by the artist Isabella Fürnkäs embodies the gaps that arise when feelings of isolation and separation are nurtured despite interpersonal encounter and interaction. The increasing ambivalence of distance and closeness, as well as reality and fiction in the digital age, become apparent.

The sculptures in Isabella Fürnkäs' multi-part sound installation *Unpredictable Liars* (2018/19), distributed throughout the room, emanate a whisper that is difficult to understand. The variously sized figures are wrapped in different colored and multi-layered dresses and decorated with chains and ropes. They form a loose group, whose attitude towards each other is uninspired, bored, distant, and faltering. The only viable cohesion between them seems to be the common space. Inspired by Théodore Géricault's painting *Floß der Medusa* (1819), which shows the struggle for survival of shipwrecked people, Fürnkäs transfers a basic mood of alienation and social isolation as symptoms of our time: they communicate less, trust their counterpart less, and feel more alienated from others and trapped in a loop from which no way out is shown. This circular movement also appears in a series of small-format drawings. Individual body parts and gestures are recognizable between otherwise mainly curved forms.

- Text by Daniela Seitz

Installation view
Kunstverein Göttingen (2019)



Installation view
Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2023)

UNTITLED (ISRAEL) | SCHÖN, SEXY, LEISE Drawings

Isabella Fürnkäs' drawings of *Untitled (Israel) | Schön, Sexy, Leise (beautiful, sexy, silent)* oscillate between concrete meaning and abstraction — the literal and the nonliteral. They seem to formulate an ultimate encounter that is in every sense as multilayered as its artistic construction. Sheet by sheet, the drawings mutually appear as a complex cross-over of media, significance and material: Black and white forms meet thick lines, symbolizing dualisms with no grey area, imposed by oily chalk in red and blue. Fine pencil drawings intertwine with sometimes fading words on the transparent paper, meshing the visual with the textual in an endless layering of dimensions. Here, in the very intimate sphere of reflection and self-observation, the human body is being carefully examined — an open, uncovered corpus with shifting boundaries and broken contours. What is revealed, is as tender as it is explosive: The lived body experience falling into unity with the mind...and dismembering again — a moment of „i“ and „you“ — the clash of the covered and the leaking, the applied and the discharged.

“ego me — ego you”

“disobey” “anonymous fuck”

The series of several hundred paper drawings describe an expressive interplay between the lived body and the artists mind. As they all belong to a 25 x 35,3 cm format notebook that Isabella Fürnkäs started in 2018 and continued during her Bronner Residency in Tel-Aviv, Israel, they do follow traces of constructed identity, an infinite search of meaning as well as a feeling of constantly being in-between — a floating body in a very literal, yet twisted world. While some of the drawings depict the dissolution of the human body, others seem like a systematic inventory of thoughts and imagination, responding to each other within their touch or sheer contact on the blank and faded paper. Turning the body inside-out while leaving its contours open, Isabella Fürnkäs localizes her work on a delicate interface of encountering the „I“ and „the other“, operating carefully on the gap of subjectivity, established social and cultural constructions and their inscribed contradictions. What evolves, can be read as a trial of strength between the deeply subjective and the public discourse.

(continued)

Untitled (Israel) | Schön, Sexy, Leise, 2018-2019

Mixed-media on paper, Japanese ink, oil sticks,
35 x 24 cm (framed with plexiglass 38,3 x 27,5 cm), series of several hundred drawings

Exhibitions

ARCO, Madrid (2022), Amtsalon, Berlin (2021), Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2019), Kunstverein Göttingen (2019), Clages, Cologne (2019), Art Cologne (2019), Bronner Residency, Tel Aviv (2019), Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2018), Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018), Cité des Arts Residency, Paris (2018)





Installation view
Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2019)



Installation view
Art Cologne (2019)



Installation view
Amtsalon, Berlin (2021)

(continued)

Especially with the extended title *"beautiful, sexy, silent"* the works conspicuously raise doubt on common allocations of what is being associated with *"femininity"* or *"feminism"*, insisting on contradictions and dissent as closely linked to a loud and expressive inventory of the lived body and its very own encounters. Textual interventions like *"disobey"* or *"ugliness"* next to *"anonymous fuck"* openly disagree with their own title. Instead, they resonate with the act of a visual display of intimacy, desire and corporeality: When the factual becomes inevitable, are we allowed to find acceptance? Thinking about the core ideas of feminist theory with authors like Julia Kristeva and the concept of abjection, the deconstruction of the fetishist view and the abject body with their connotations becomes a tool to reveal and analyze cultural and social narratives of discrimination. As the moving bodies in Isabella Färnkäs' works constantly find themselves in a process of constructing and deconstructing again, they seem to remain in the moment of setting and overcoming boundaries. Intensified by notes and textual shifts of meaning — *"lie"* (*lying body/telling a lie*) or *"what does it mean to be a feminist?"* — a never-ending cycle seeks to be intruded, stressing the bodies into a state of action and reaction.

"what does it mean to be a feminist?"

"lie" "lie" "lie" "lie" "lie" "lie"

Closely connected to the ground-lines of Isabella Färnkäs' artistic practice, the challenged materials open up to a pure and intimate expression that speaks of the body as the imminent, the overlapping and the inscribed. This layering — as a mode of production as well as a modus of thinking and communicating — unfolds the abrupt encounter of mind and body, the person opposite and the self as well as the ability to form a fragile, yet sensitive relationship. In this atmosphere, the question of what it takes to be satisfied in a sometimes sharp and sometimes nebulous construct of thought and longing, persistently reverberates.

- Text by Anna K. Wlach

Installation view
Amtsalon, Berlin (2021)







METAMORPHOSES OF CONTROL Solo exhibition

The interdisciplinary exhibition and performance project *Metamorphoses of Control* by Isabella Fürnkäs shows existential conditions in the digital age with epoch-transcending references. An installation with videos, drawings and as central element an immersive performance based on the painting *Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault (1818/1819), that opens up a dialogue in relation to the interior of the Museum by Henry van de Velde.

Compared to Géricault's visually loaded and emotional drama, this scene looks like a vision of transhuman reality. Imagery of a technoid raft with isolated and partly unrecognizable individuals appear, whose struggle for survival takes place in the immateriality of the mind. The four performers form monologues and dialogues that are repeated in loops over the course of 3 hours. The boundaries between the performers, the island landscape and the spectators are blurred and the spectators witness the exhibited individuals like voyeurs. The question of the representation of pain and suffering arises in comparison to Géricault's painting. The performative installation resembles a tableau vivant and negotiates questions on transcendence, role-play and immateriality.

The things that subconsciousness desires are not necessarily good. - Joseph Murphy

- Text by Ihsan Alisan

The Raft of the Medusa, 2018

2-channel video projection on white tiled platform, sound, kinetic sand, clay masks, 2 x 4 m

Performance with Cristiana Cott Negoescu, Marlene Kollender, Steven Sander, Idan Micha Weiss

Texts in the catalogue by: Dr. Tayfun Belgin, Ihsan Alisan, Juliane Duft, Mascha Jacobs, Prof. Dr. Josef Fürnkäs, Jil Blume

*The project is generously funded by the Kunststiftung NRW

Metamorphoses of Control, Osthaus Museum, Hagen

Curated by Ihsan Alisan

Performed on 6 July 2018

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/728262145>

See the full catalogue here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/clnt0w1ie4wc01b/MOC.pdf?dl=0>



Installation view
Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018)



Installation view
Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018)



Installation view
Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018)



The Raft of the Medusa by Théodore Géricault has inscribed itself in the DNA of 19th century painting and French cultural-historical identity. The large-scale tragedy unfolding before the viewer's eyes is an attempt at a historical narrative that has subsequently been interpreted, discussed, and attacked in the context of various political discourses critical of power.

However, the fact that the painting itself was created for the Paris Salon, which historically marked a new accessibility of art, especially for the bourgeoisie, is equally important and opens up a connection to the present: in the Salon, the competition between the paintings and their resulting transformation becomes clear when we view the halls in dense Petersburg hanging. The salon thus becomes a model design of the post- digital "flood of images" - one more reason to consider the raft as a symbol of the present as well.

In such an early inflationary image culture of the Salon, the provocation of scandals was part of a strategy of the painters to make themselves visible in this system. Already here, artists resorted to provocations "in the framework" - a drooping girder, a nude woman who was not an allegory, or even the Raft of the Medusa, through which Géricault hoped for a scandal, which, however, immediately failed to materialize.

The cultural history of the image is extensive - poetically as well as musically, it is only Géricault's pictorial narration that gives rise to the historical memory of the castaways of the Medusa.

Most recently, I came across a video installation that is an artistic documentation of a performance by contemporary German-French artist Isabella Fűrnkäs. The title *Metamorphoses of Control* is open in many ways, definitely it can come to effect in the radical upheavals of digitalization - to which I will invariantly return.

Performers sit on a luminous plateau, there are few props like smartphones, masks and sand. The performers, dressed in white, wear a plastic sheath around their white clothes. They move slowly, pushing the sand back and forth, moving their smartphones. Fűrnkäs rarely performs herself in her performances, she uses the principle of "staged performance" - just as for Géricault, for example, the raft becomes the stage for his personal narrative of tragedy, we cannot avoid reading Fűrnkäs' Plateau as the stage of a stagnant tragedy of the post-digital individual.

So if all of life becomes survival, then we are also constantly on a sinking raft, which is also typical of contemporary loss of utopia, collective depression in flickering fade-out and fade-in of approaching challenges to humanity, such as coping with climate change in a structure of global inequality and accompanying excessive destruction through capital processes. [...]

- Text excerpt by Donatella Demuth



Silence is only quiet for those who hear.

(Cristiana)
I am in the world. A world without time.
My consciousness now is light and it
is air. Air has neither a place nor time.
Air is the non-place where everything
will exist. What I am saying is the mu-
sic of the air. The formation of the world.
Slowly what will be approaches. What
will be already is. The future is what al-
ways existed and always will exist. What
I am saying to you is not for listening -
it's for being.

(Idan)
This Isolation
Is like an oxygen mask
With a hint of pink
and a touch of blue



“Raft of the Medusa” (Screen play, excerpt)

Marlene in front, Idan behind her, Cristiana behind
him, Steven behind her, positions change while
speaking.

Videos shimmer, soft noise, everyone wears the
masks in front of their faces, holds the Iphones / tab-
lets, motionless.

Marlene sings.

(Cristiana)
It's just these nervous hands
Forgotten flesh that lost control
To the rescue..
Police ! Police !

(Steven)
If I gave you a gun
Would you blow me away?

(all)
Eye to eye Eye to eye Eye to eye Eye to eye Eye to eye
Eye to eye
(Idan)



(Marlene sings)
Prey, prey, prey, prey, prey,
prey, prey, prey

(Steven)
This passiveness
(Idan)
Makes my soul
(Steven)
Want to scream
(Idan)
It irritates
(Steven)
It itches
(Idan)
I'm swimming
(Steven)
In my own consciousness
(Idan)
Searching for

(Steven)
A place
(Idan)
A time
(Steven)
An instant
(Idan)
To sleep
(Steven)
To rest
(Idan)
To die nicely.
(Steven)
No police.
(Idan)
No hierarchy.
(Steven)
No excuses.
Projections
(Steven)

No more
(Idan)
Cash to spend
(Steven)
On any account.

(Marlene)
Pretty pictures were
painted to be
destroyed.

(Steven)
Your
(Idan)
Personal jesus
(Steven)
Left me
(Idan)
Reach out
(Steven)



IN EKKLESIA Video installation

A crossover of hyperactivities: rapidly alternating images of nervous assembly robots and flickering impressions from a rave. Two constellations that could not be more different, a party and an assembly, both driven by the same beat, the same craving for repetition and perpetuity: slaves to the rhythm. In her video work *In Ekklesia* Isabella Färnkäs turns the archetype of democratic public life (in antiquity the ecclesia represented the core of Attic democracy) into a farce. Instead of an assembly of free, politically mature citizens eager to participate in discussion, Färnkäs presents an encounter between human and machine, both indulged in a mute dance of endless activity. The automation of production – the future of labour – continues with the automation of pleasure – the future of leisure. It's up to the viewer to determine whether politics still play a role in this scenario.

- Text excerpt by Maximilian Steinborn

In Ekklesia, 2015

Single-channel video installation, kinetic sand

Flatscreen 40" / Projection approx. 3 x 2.5m

Video 3:15min, color/sound, loop

Exhibitions

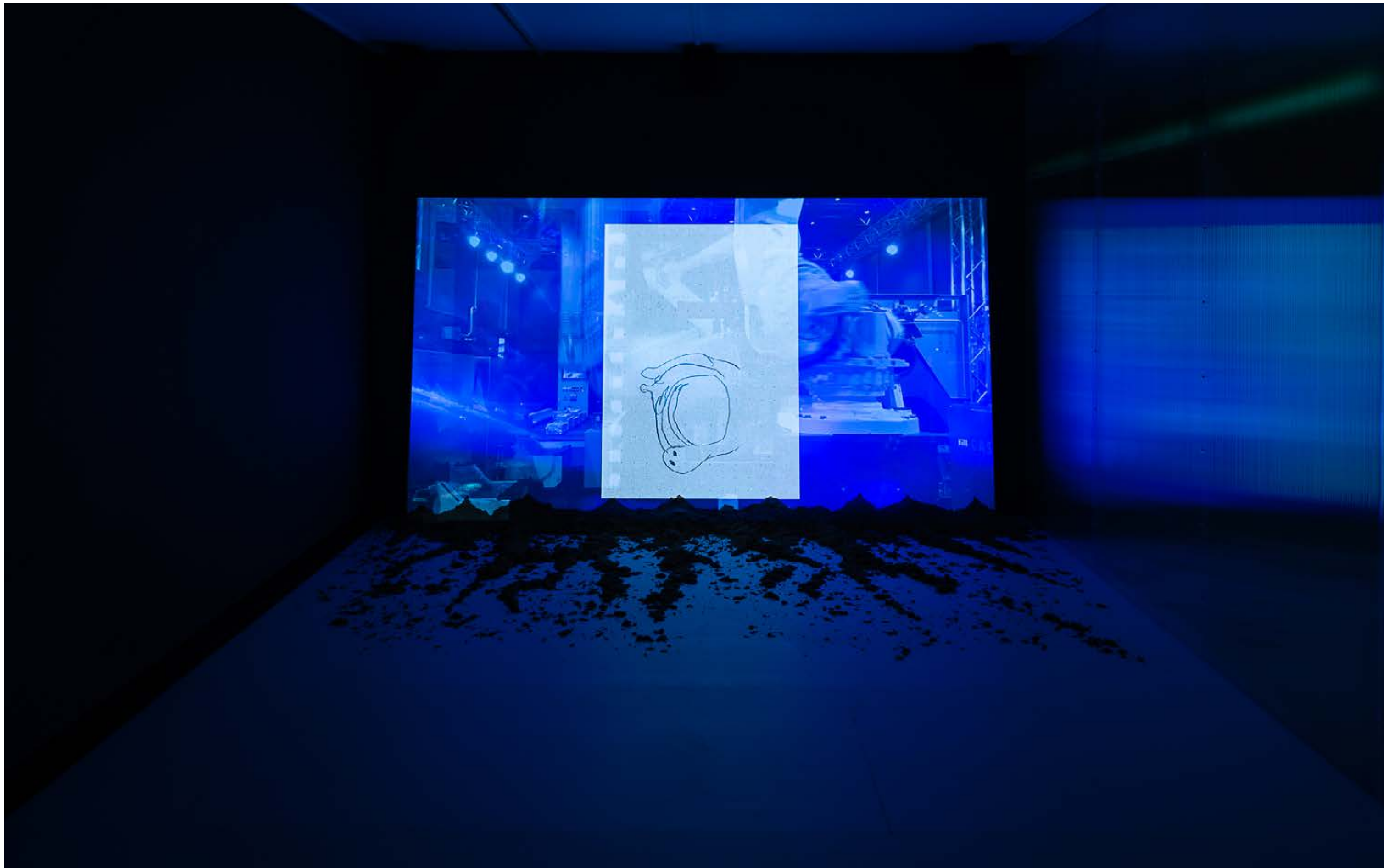
POST & Constant101, Arnheim (2022), Critics' Pick: Rotterdam, Wien, Frankfurt, Blinkvideo (2019), Kunsthalle Wien (2018), KIT, Düsseldorf (2018), PS120, Berlin (2018), Millennium Monument Museum, Beijing (2017), NRW.Medienwerk / NRW Forum, Düsseldorf (2016), Kunstverein Mönchengladbach (2016), Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016), Filmwerkstatt, Düsseldorf (2015)

*This work is in the permanent collection of Ulsan Museum, South Korea

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/137166556>



Installation view
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



Installation view
PS120, Berlin (2018)



The title, *In Ekklesia* comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia,' which refers to the democratic parliament that served Athens in its halcyon days by being open to male citizens every other year. Solon, an Athenian legislator and a sage, allowed all citizens to serve the parliament regardless of their social class in BC 594. The Ecclesia made decisions about war, military strategies, and all judicial and administrative issues. This work satirizes various facets of humans and machines in the 21st century, unconsciously within a dystopian environment.

Isabella Färnkäs introduces a method of combining and overlaying countless images in her work, providing the new experience of sensations that act in ambiguous flows, movements, interference, and interjection. The piece is about the new metaphysical and material connections appearing through digital conversations that are divorced from the general notion of time and space, as well as isolation and alienation.

- Text by Hyun Jeung Kim

Installation view
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)

Isabella Färnkäs presents a dystopian techno-economic future where there is no space for human language or human labour. The video installation *In Ekklesia* (2015) offers a speculative vision of labour in the era of robotics. A projection screen, resting on a pile of kinetic sand, depicts industrial machines at work. Footage of different industrial machines and robots is interspersed with images of ballpoint pen drawings by Färnkäs, as well as documentation of rave culture. The mix of industrial imagery and party culture echo each other as the robotic movements seemingly move in time with the technoid sounds.

The growing automatisisation of unskilled labour leads to a rise in unemployment and work precarity. What started as the Fordist dream of a growing economy turned into a nightmare. Today, job insecurity, worklessness and financial instability preoccupy a generation of anxious and disassociated workers. Färnkäs grasps the discrepancy between intimacy and productivity, labour and leisure, between euphoria and anxiety by layering image, sound and lyric in this moving image installation. The fast images are interspersed by moments of stasis and dreariness.

"I am so sad"

"I am transparent"

"I am losing my language"

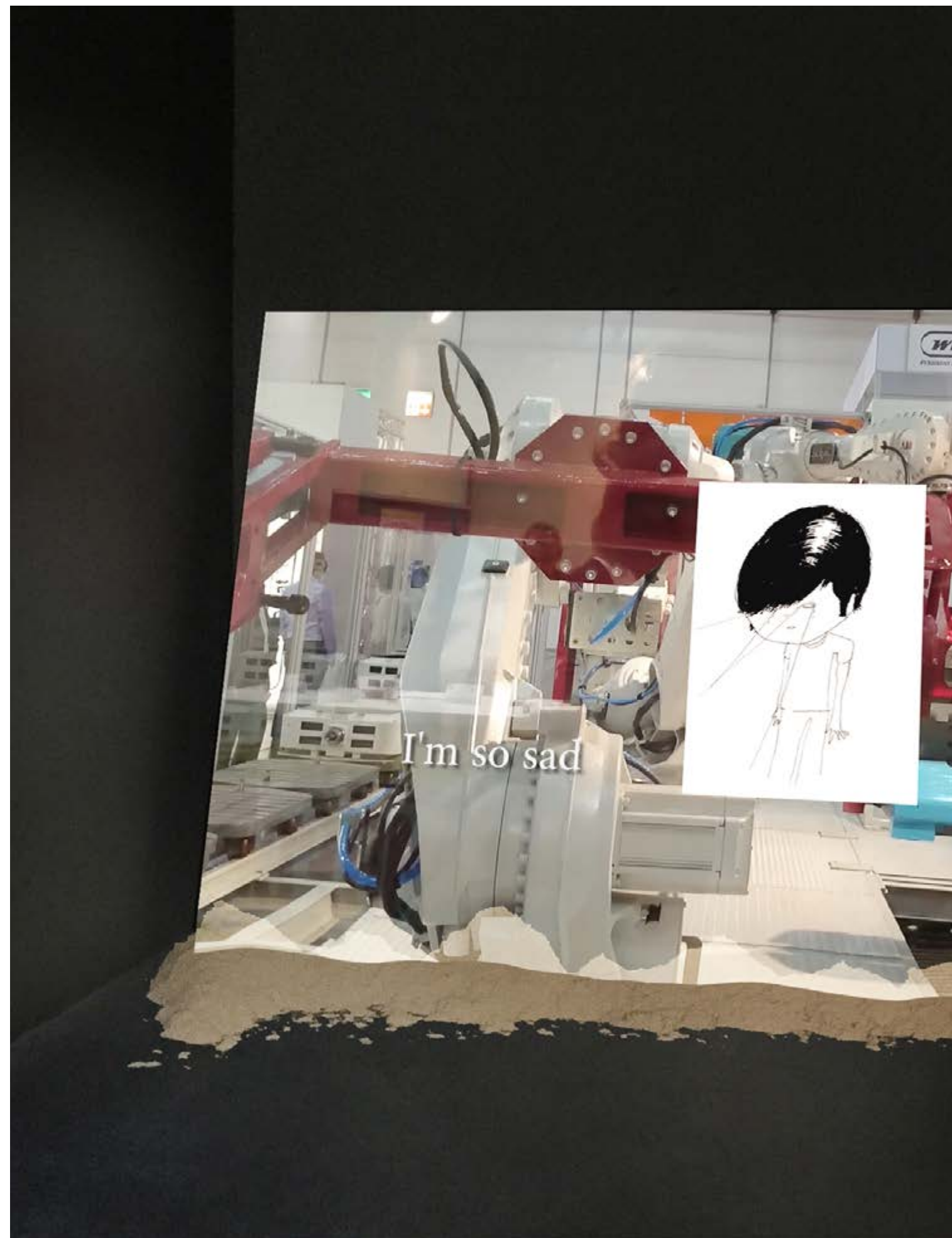
The loss of language the vocalist refers to here, invokes a loss of power and control. The kinetic sand, framing the projection screen, suggests the quicksand-like quality of a system that once it grabs you, won't let go. As Mark Fisher wrote, capitalism is "a monstrous, infinitely plastic entity, capable of metabolising and absorbing anything with which it comes into contact."¹

- Text by Marian Stindt

¹ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Zero Books, London, 2009, p.6

Installation view

Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)



INSOMNIA DRAWINGS Drawings

A private atlas of vulnerability and physical self-awareness build the eruptive drawings of Isabella Fürnkäs. Her picture medium, consisting of pages ripped out of sketchbooks, become fragile membranes, which convey the sensibility of the producer. The semi transparent, partially torn pages carry traces of coquetry and self-assertion and shimmer between absurd humour and vulnerability. Every gesture leads to an extreme. Fürnkäs' graphical monologue whirl addresses a counterpart which stays anonymous.

- Text excerpt by Katharina Klang

WATER ME

I lose myself at night. I lose my body, lose myself and my relationship to space and time. But I don't sleep. I only perceive differently. During the day I could never just lie there for hours. At night it is much easier. It still hurts, though. It is not as easy as it looks – this strained searching for the right moment to finally fall asleep. How long have I been lying there, with my eyes closed, more inside myself than in the room I occupy? At some point you can't stand it any longer, you just want to fall and experience this small death, this short dissolution. You just want not to be. To not be aware of yourself. I need a break from myself – I need to be left in peace from myself in relation to the world. I want to be a vacuum.

The only problem is that I can't find sleep, at least not actively. I simply can't, no matter what I do. Instead, I would have to allow sleep to find me, allow it to catch up with my consciousness. Allow it to actually take over. I would have to become passive for this to happen, passivity is what I want. Just don't think about it, just focus on your body, allow it to go limp, until you are soft and warm, stick out your head... Stop it, this frantic search for relaxation! I am well aware that you need lightness and emptiness to let yourself go. That's exactly why it doesn't work – because my knowledge, my consciousness is always turned on. Now, what am I doing in a pathological situation like this?

- By Ania Kołyszko

Insomnia Drawings, ongoing

Mixed media on paper, double-sided, framed with white varnish ash,
25,5 x 17,5 cm (framed 32,8 x 25,5 cm x 2,8cm), series of approx. one thousand drawings

Exhibitions

Art Cologne (2024), Tel Aviv Artists' Studios (2024), 2080, Berlin (2024), Windhager von Kaenel (2024), Art Düsseldorf (2024), Auktion Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2023), Kunstverein Siegen (2023), Clages, Cologne (2023), Luxembourg Art Week (2022), Platform, Munich (2022), Villa Schöningen, Potsdam (2022), Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2022), Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022), Art Düsseldorf (2022), Schloss Benrath, Düsseldorf (2022), ARCO, Madrid (2022), Amtsalon, Berlin (2021), Spoiler, Berlin (2021), Hua International, Berlin (2021), Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021), ACCCE, Berlin (2020), Spendenaktion Mission Lifeline (2020), Goeben Berlin (2020), Lagos Mexico City (2020), Sprengel Museum, Hannover (2019), Kunstverein Göttingen (2019), Art Cologne (2019), Art Los Angeles Contemporary (2019), Italic, Berlin (2018), Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018), Philara Collection, Düsseldorf (2018), Gussglashalle, Berlin (2018), KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018), Auktion Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2017), Art Berlin (2017), Bar Babette, Berlin (2017), Clages, Cologne (2017), Raiosha Gallery, Tokyo (2016), Temporary Gallery, Cologne (2016)

See more drawings:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3izhek8rrb1t0uz/AAAhEfN1isQefTTMBRbtK1nJa?dl=0>





Installation view

Philara Collection, Düsseldorf (2019)

*Selection of 30 double sided drawings from 100 drawings in the Philara Collection



Installation view
Raiocha Gallery, Tokyo (2016)

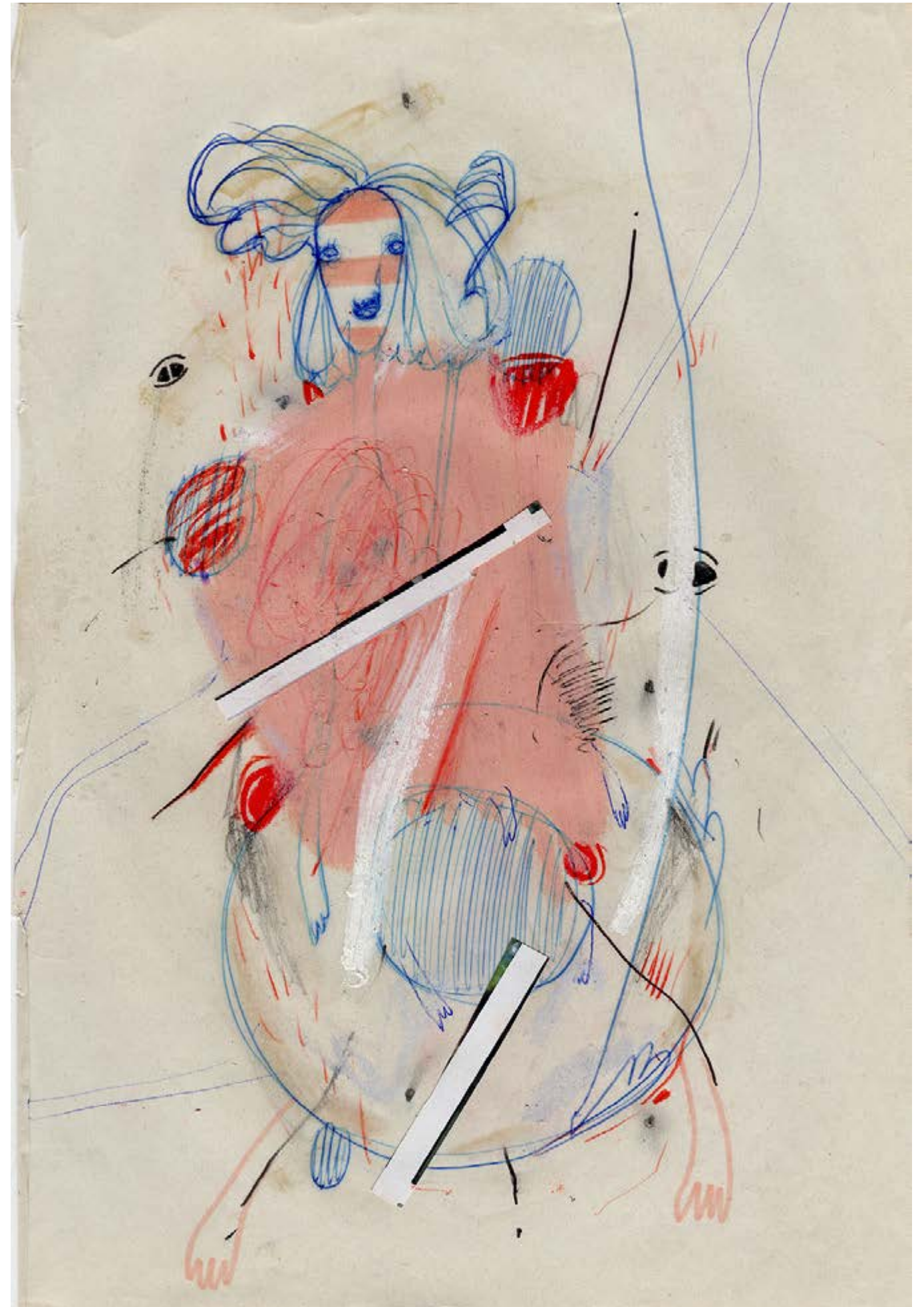


Installation view
KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018)

Isabella Färnkäs' *Insomnia Drawings* suggest they are the product of sleepless nights. They play with that porous condition of exhaustion described by the German word *Durchlässigkeit*. They visualize the cognitive instant of being overloaded, when the inner walls collapse and your own world of feelings comes to the surface unfiltered, while conversely, the outside world is free to enter. In order to allow for this openness – this porosity – to emerge, a space where the corset of self-protection may loosen without consequence needs to be established. Rather than being a physical room, it is a psychological space that thrives on intimacy. This intimacy can be based on dialogue between people, or it can simply come from trusting your own inner feeling. When, feeling rather than knowing, you will not be hurt, even if your vulnerable points are revealed. Or, should injury be inflicted, you will have the ability to heal and grow.

The drawings rely on this sort of intimacy, evoked by trust, in two ways: On the one hand, through their close connection with the inner world of the artist, these drawings create an intimate situation between them and us, the viewers. On the other hand, the works are a place of intimacy in themselves. They are a self-contained and self-determined space, in which notions and feelings can be experienced more freely than in the outside world – also because they are a designated space for experimentation and self-reflection. In this respect, Färnkäs' method closely resembles those of many women artists in art history. Artists such as Louise Bourgeois asserted their positions within the art world with emotional, psychologizing statements that were provocative at the time, some of which continue to provoke even today. For example, that the purpose of artistic work is self-knowledge and the aim of self-knowledge is personal happiness. Since the 1950s, conceptual, formalist, and materialist strategies of art production have dominated the artistic canon, leaving little space for emotionally- and psychologically-centered works. However, this has been contested by artists such as Ana Mendieta, Clarice Lispector, Simone de Beauvoir, Maya Deren, Marguerite Duras, Eugénie Séville, Yvonne Rainer, Sylvia Plath, Roni Horn, Carrie Mae Weems, Tracey Emin, Chris Kraus, and countless others.

(continued...)





(...continued)

The works on paper that Färnkäs has produced since 2007 can be arranged into constantly changing groups of associative combinations. Now comprising over one thousand double sided drawings, they are taken from notebooks that the artist has carried with her since her youth. The Japanese paper on which the drawings are made may be understood as a reference to Tokyo, her birthplace. Sketchbooks are a portable reservoir of rapidly captured ideas and spontaneous expressions of feeling. They can be carried around anywhere and open up an intimate space any place in the world. By nature of their portability, the sketches are therefore the result of a performative act, which transcends the work in a closed studio space. So are the drawings then comparable with diary entries? Depending on the directness of their expressivity, one could argue that this may be the case. Yet does it necessarily become a kind of autobiographical drawing?

In the same way that an actor draws from their own emotional world without actually experiencing a real breakdown on stage – even though delving into the depths of their emotional memories can certainly require great psychological effort – Färnkäs' drawings are an observation of inner movements that do not necessarily need to be experienced acutely in the moment of their activation. Rather, they are evoked for the purpose of an artistic investigation whose performative configuration is similar to *écriture automatique*. This specific and necessary *modus operandi*, in which drawing becomes automatism, carries with it traits of a productive, artistic mania. Hyper-concentration sets in, paired with an overflowing, explosive desire for expression. Motivated by a practically autoerotic, autopoietic energy, page after page is filled, until night turns into day and the rush comes to an end.

- Text by Ania Kołyszko



Installation view
Hua International, Berlin (2021)



Installation view
Tel Aviv Artists' Studios (2024)

LUCIFERS DARLINGS Performance

Berlin Art Week 2017 has come and gone, but our drunken regrets live on in infamy. Hosted by Monopol magazine and Niche showroom, the hosting duo provided enough free drinks to keep guests happy and performance pieces that maintained everyone's full attention. Taking center stage was an alluring performance piece from Isabella Fürnkäs, which featured the talents of Nikolas Brummer alongside an eerily similar doppelgänger, Jan Seevetal. Adorned in horns, the two spent the evening stroking one another as onlookers tried to determine the level of implied incest going on. As always, the event served as a who's who of Berlin's art scene, featuring appearances from Britta Thie as well as Eva & Adele throughout the night. In case you missed out, luckily we were there to capture all of the excitement. Scroll through the images below for a taste of what went down. Apologies in advance for any FOMO that ensues.

- Text by SLEEK Magazine

Two performers lie and play in a heaven-like mattress landscape sprinkled with balls that resemble breasts and a thick Jute rope. They pose and crawl holding on to tree-like vases and ludically interact, like gods. Keeping cheeky and sensual eye contact with the public an alluring atmosphere is created - a heavenly deal with the devil..

- Statement by Isabella Fürnkäs

<https://www.artforum.com/diary/louisa-elderton-at-the-1st-art-berlin-71195>

<https://www.sleek-mag.com/article/monopol-berlin-art-week-party-2017/>

Lucifers Darlings, 2017

Styling and production with Laura Catania

Performance with Nikolas Brummer & Jan Seevetal

Lucifers Darlings, Art Berlin Opening I Fair for Modern and Contemporary Art,

organized by Monopol, Niche & KW Institute for Contemporary Art

Curated by Maurin Dietrich & Cathrin Mayer

Performed on 13 September 2017

Reference images (right)

Maarten de Vos, *Juicio Final*, 1570





Installation view
Art Berlin Opening (2017)



Installation view
Art Berlin Opening (2017)



Installation view
Art Berlin Opening (2017)



NO POWER POTENTIAL

Solo exhibition

A green carpet spread out in the gallery formulates the starting point for an installation that combines video, performance and sculpture. A silk fabric runs through the room, becoming the projection screen. In the projected video, people are skiing and you can see scenes in the snow, that are interrupted by quick cuts of loudness and noise. The voice of a woman (Isabella's mother) reads excerpts from *Le Corps utopique* by Michel Foucault. Glazed pottery objects are hung in rows, similar to chains of thought. As if in a dream, the performers play an alternating game, move the objects and themselves on the carpet. The focus of this site-specific work is a critical survey of social orientation on potential in the context of production. In this context, the exhibition title *Sugar Makes You Sad* as well as the work title *No Power Potential* points to the reflective state of a „low“ that presumably preceded a „high“.

- Text by Philipp Fürnkäs

No Power Potential, 2016

Video installation with performance and surround sound, back-projection on silk cloth
Performance with Rebekka Benzenberg and Lukas von der Gracht

Je rêve d'une science..., 2015

Video 5min, color/sound, loop

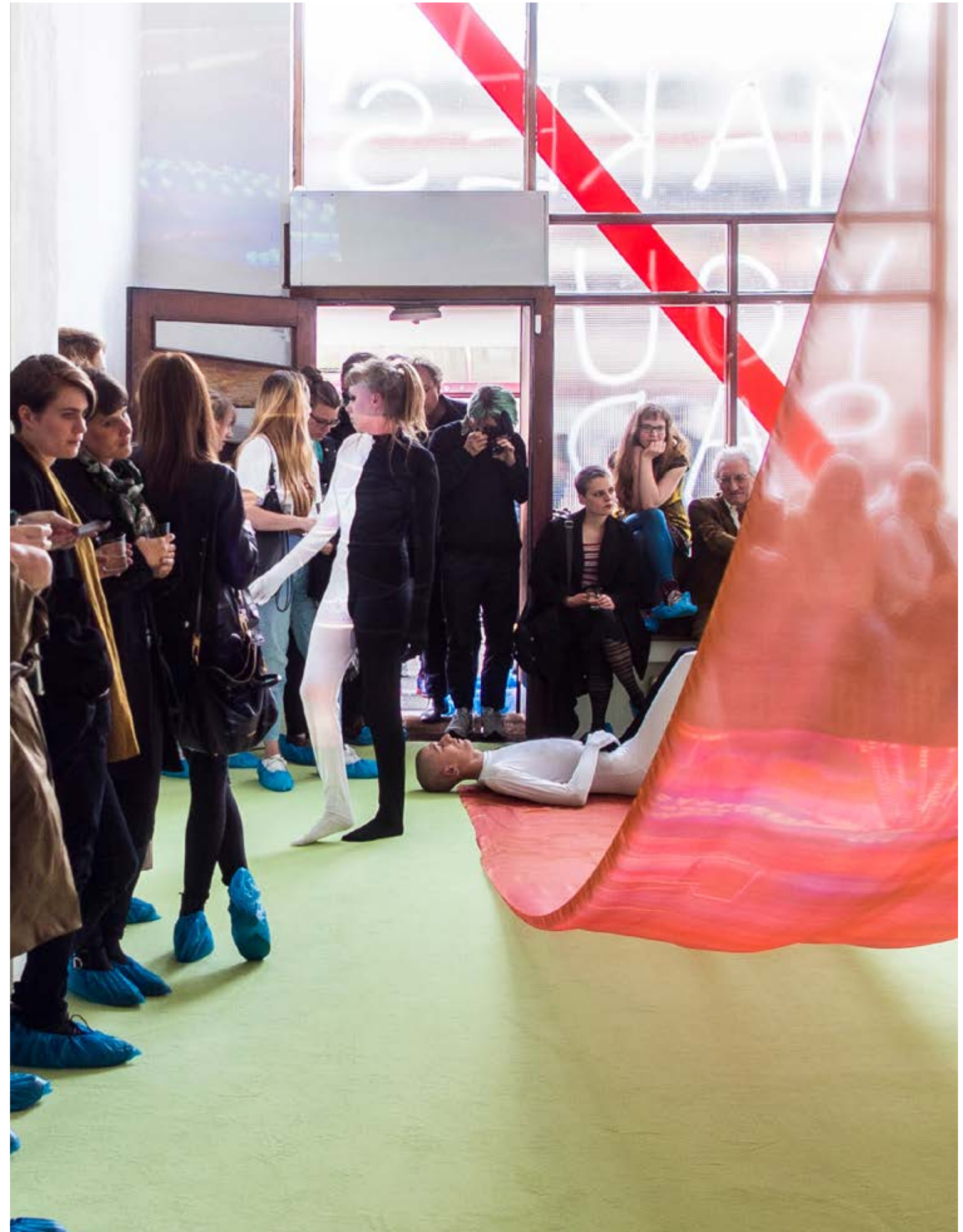
Go, 2012

23 sculptures made of glazed pottery

No Power Potential, SSZ Sued, Cologne

Performed on 14 April 2016

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/123070239>





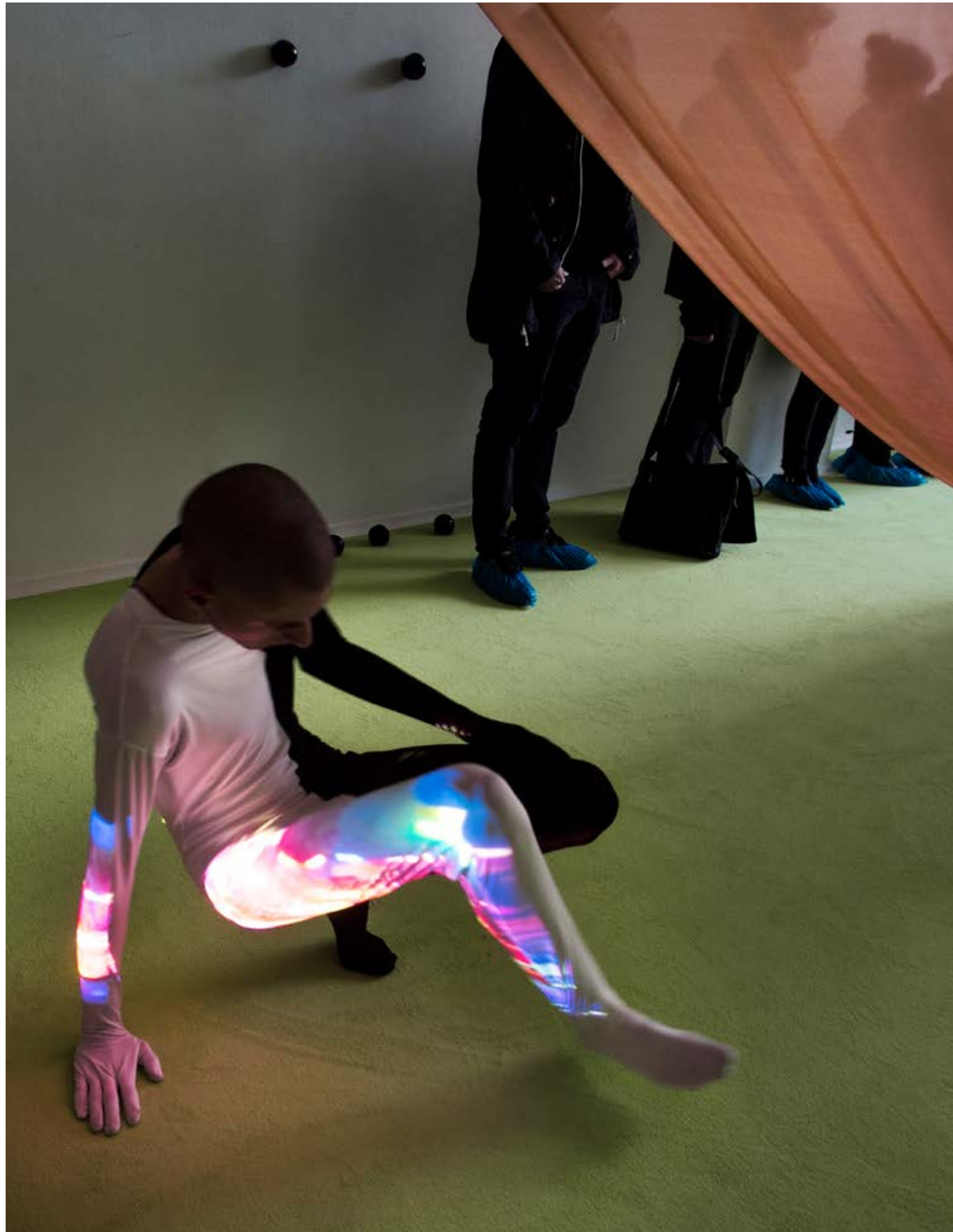
Installation view
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Installation view
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Installation view
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Installation view
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Je rêve d'une science... (video stills), 2015
Video 5min, color/sound, loop
„Le corps utopique” spoken by Daniella Séville

DISLOCATED HEADQUARTERS

Solo exhibition

Originally, I wanted to ride through the halls of the Kunstakademie on an ice bear, Johannes Paul Raether encouraged me to do so. The Düsseldorf Zoo did not allow such an action. So I showed a few drawings, a performance and an installation.

- *Isabella Fürnkäs*

Lukas and Isabella fight with two sharpened knives, slowly slicing each others clothes open. Their interaction shows violent yet erotic notions full of trust and active-passive power, revealing naked skin. They chase each other through the hallways up to the rooftop of the Kunstakademie - a show-down battle between two lovers.

- *Text for Counterpoints, 2017*

Les Dérivées, 2017

3 stainless steel sculptures with wheels, 6 objects made of silk clay, two red costumes worn at the performance, knives, scissors, sheep skin, melted plastic
Dimensions variable

Counterpoints, 2017

Performance by Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht

*Supervised by Andreas Gursky, Stefan Hostettler and Johannes Paul Raether

Dislocated Headquarters, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf

Performed on 13 July 2017





Installation view
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2017)

Untitled, 2007-2010
3 Drawings
Mixed media on paper, frames made of paper clay
Dimensions variable

Installation view
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2017)





Les Dérivées, 2017
3 stainless steel sculptures with wheels, 6 objects made of silk clay, two red costumes worn at the performance, knives, scissors, sheep skin, melted plastic
Dimensions variable

Installation view
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2017)

SELFIECALYPSE

Video installation

Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht stage a hunt through urban space in a hybrid adaptation of a gameplay mission and smartphone selfie with a well-chosen setting and carefully devised costumes. Both the gray concrete parking garage backdrop and the first-person shooter garb and face-paint work as stylization devices: respectively as a fashionable setting of contemporary culture and as an attempt to approximate the smooth sterility of video-game animation aesthetics. While it normally takes a lot of effort to render virtual-reality aesthetics that are accurate with regard to the facts of material reality (that is, artificially generating an illusion of the world inside the museum), the material reality aesthetic here seems to be seeking the illusion of an animated (that is, virtual, not actual) referent. And on this level, finally, the parking garage together with the pacing camera inside of it are ultimately a metaphor, in which two protagonists chase each other and move through a self-contained space that is like a Möbius strip – a bubble or capsule, as if it had no exterior. The split-screen projection from the smartphone cameras is an interesting update of the closed-circuit thematic of conceptual filmmakers of the 1960s and '70s ; their camera, posed as both a mirror and a competing reality, has now become a facet of everyday life.

- Text by Susanne Titz

Selfiecalypse, 2015
Video installation, installed on a big pole
Video 10:50 min, color/sound, loop

Exhibitions

HMKV Hartware MedienKunstverein, Dortmund (2020), HMKV Hartware MedienKunstverein, Dortmund (2016), Museum Abteiberg (2016), Cité des Arts Internationale, Paris, France (2016), Filmwerkstatt, Düsseldorf (2015)

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/139192624>





Installation view
Museum Abteiberg (2016)



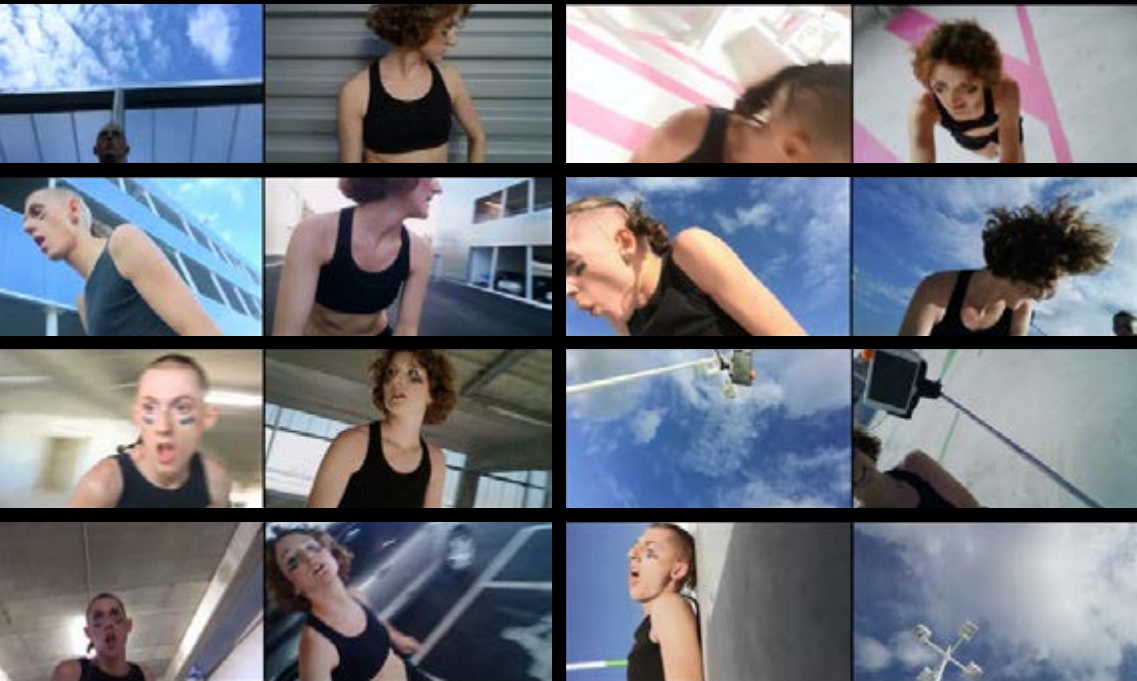
Installation view
HMKV Hardware MedienKunstverein (2020)

ISABELLA FÜRNKÄS /
LUKAS VON DER GRACHT

Selfiecalypse - Teen Hunger Ultra Death Attack 1.0
2015

Dass öffentliche Straßen und Räume zu Spielplätzen für Computerspiele wurden, geschah rund zwölf Monate nach der Produktion dieses Zweikanalfilms von Isabella Fürnkäs und Lukas von der Gracht. Ein Jahr später, im Sommer 2016, war Pokémon Go dann allgegenwärtig und die Symbiose von virtuellem und realem Spielplatz zu einer kollektiven Erfahrung geworden. In Guerilla-Manier völlig ohne Genehmigung war dies auch mit Pokéstops im Skulpturengarten des Museums Abteiberg sichtbar. Während des gleichen Zeitraums, von 2015 bis 2016, stieg die Distribution von Foto- und Film-Selfies in der deutschen Gesellschaft exponentiell. Über die Funktion „Video“ in marktgängigen Smartphones und mittels zusehends billigerer Kommunikationstarife wurden die Dokumentarfilme aus dem eigenen Leben und die Aufnahmen von eigenen schauspielerischen Aktionen – als bürgerliche Umsetzung der neuen Möglichkeit von Enactment und Reinactment – in immer größeren Kreisen praktiziert und verbreitet. Jedes Smartphone kann das jetzt, und die Idee von Produzent und Konsument hat sich auf diese Weise diversifiziert. Allmählich bahnte sich die Ahnung an, dass wir von Ersterem zu viel haben und uns als Zweitere bald massiv Gedanken darüber machen würden. Isabella Fürnkäs und Lukas von der Gracht inszenieren in der doppelten Adaption von Spielszenario und Smartphone-Selfie eine Jagd durch einen städtischen Ort, der gut ausgewählt ist; ebenso sind Outfit und Setting präzise gesetzt. Beides, die Kulisse des grauen Beton-Parkdecks und die Kleidung und Maske der Ego-Shooter, wirken in der Kombination wie Stilisierungen: als ein modisches Setting der Gegenwartskultur beziehungsweise viel mehr noch als der Versuch einer nächstmöglichen Annäherung an die Ästhetik der steril-glatthen Game-Animationsbilder. Während gewöhnlicherweise die Ästhetik der virtuellen Realität große Anstrengungen unternimmt, der materiell-faktischen Realität gleich zu werden – das heißt in der Künstlichkeit des Mediums eine Illusion von Welt zu erzeugen – scheint hier die Ästhetik der materiell-faktischen Realität sehnsüchtig auf eine Illusion von animierter, also virtueller und nicht echter Gegenwart zu zielen. Auf dieser Ebene ist schließlich auch das Parkdeck mitsamt dem darauf stattfindenden Kamerarennen eine Metapher, da die beiden Protagonisten sich hier in einem Innenraum wie in einer Möbiusschleife jagen und bewegen. Sie befinden sich in einer Blase oder Kapsel – ganz so, als gäbe es kein Außen. Die Zweikanalprojektion aus Smartphone-Kameras aktualisiert dabei auf interessante Weise den Closed Circuit der Konzeptfilmer der 1960er- und 1970er-Jahre: Deren Thematisierung der Kamera als Spiegel beziehungsweise konkurrierende Realität ist jetzt Allgemeingut.

Susanne Titz



Public roads and spaces became sites of computer-gameplay around 12 months after the production of Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht's split-screen film. In the summer of 2016, Pokémon-Go was omnipresent. The symbiosis of real and virtual fields of gameplay entered into the collective experience, and, guerrilla-like, without any authorization, Pokéstops appeared in the sculpture garden of the Museum Abteiberg too. Around the same time, Germany saw an exponential rise in its share of photo and video selfies. With the notable reduction in data fees and the entry of smartphones with “video” functions into the market, people realized the new potential for enactment and reenactment, and ever-larger swaths of people produced and disseminated footage of their own performative actions and documentary videos from their individual lives. Now every smartphone is equipped with these capabilities, and this has led to diversification of the concepts of producer and consumer. Gradually the idea emerged that we had been focusing too much on the former and would soon be much more concerned with the latter. Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht stage a hunt through urban space in a hybrid adaptation of a gameplay mission and smartphone selfie with a well-chosen setting and carefully devised costumes. Both the gray concrete parking garage backdrop and the first-person shooter garb and face-paint work as stylization devices: respectively as a fashionable setting of contemporary culture and as an attempt to approximate the smooth sterility of video-game animation aesthetics. While it normally takes a lot of effort to render virtual-reality aesthetics that are accurate with regard to the facts of material reality (that is, artificially generating an illusion of the world inside the museum), the material reality aesthetic here seems to be seeking the illusion of an animated (that is, virtual, not actual) referent. And on this level, finally, the parking garage together with the pacing camera inside of it are ultimately a metaphor, in which two protagonists chase each other and move through a self-contained space that is like a Möbius strip – a bubble or capsule, as if it had no exterior. The split-screen projection from the smartphone cameras is an interesting update of the closed-circuit thematic of conceptual filmmakers of the 1960s and '70s; their camera, posed as both a mirror and a competing reality, has now become a facet of everyday life.

Susanne Titz

ISABELLA FÜRNKÄS UND LUKAS VON DER GRACHT
Selfiecalypse - Teen Hunger Ultra Death Attack 1.0
Video 11', Loop, 2015

Proces-Verbal, Dax, 28.07.2015, 15:53 Uhr

1| Vgl. Dan Graham, *Body Press* (1970/1972), *Roll. Filming Process* (1970), dazu: Dan Graham, „Film und Performance. Sechs Filme 1969–1974“, und ders.: „Videos in Beziehung zu Architektur“, in: Ulrich Wilmes (Hg.), *Dan Graham. Ausgewählte Schriften*, S. 33–43, S. 57–89.

Filmstills
Selfiecalypse - Teen Hunger Ultra Death Attack 1.0

Isabella Fürnkäs und Lukas von der Gracht, 2500,
Performance Museum Abteiberg 2016

1| See Dan Graham, *Body Press* (1970/72), *Roll. Filming Process* (1970), Text: Dan Graham, "Film and Performance. Six Films 1969–1974," and "Videos in Relation to Architecture," in Ulrich Wilmes (ed.), *Dan Graham. Ausgewählte Schriften*, pp.33–43, 57–89.



VICE VERSA Video installation with performance

Two TV monitors are obliquely stationed on a white mattress, like pillows on a bed. The viewers can see fragments of images passing through the monitor and hear the sound of a woman conversing in a low voice, mainly asking about her counterpart's mental state or bringing up gender-specific topics. The images, projected along with dialogues such as "hi," "how are you," or "I can't see," do not appear to be relevant. An androgynous-looking figure, appearing to be asleep on the bed, exhibits the 'powerful sense of solitude' nestled within an individual living in our own time, back turned toward the TV monitor. The artist focuses on reflecting on the fragmented order of time in our era, and narrating this topic in a language that exists somewhere in between compressed expressions and the description of a fragile figure. The viewers are offered an opportunity to ponder on the various possibilities that are brought forth through familiarity and new concepts about communities.

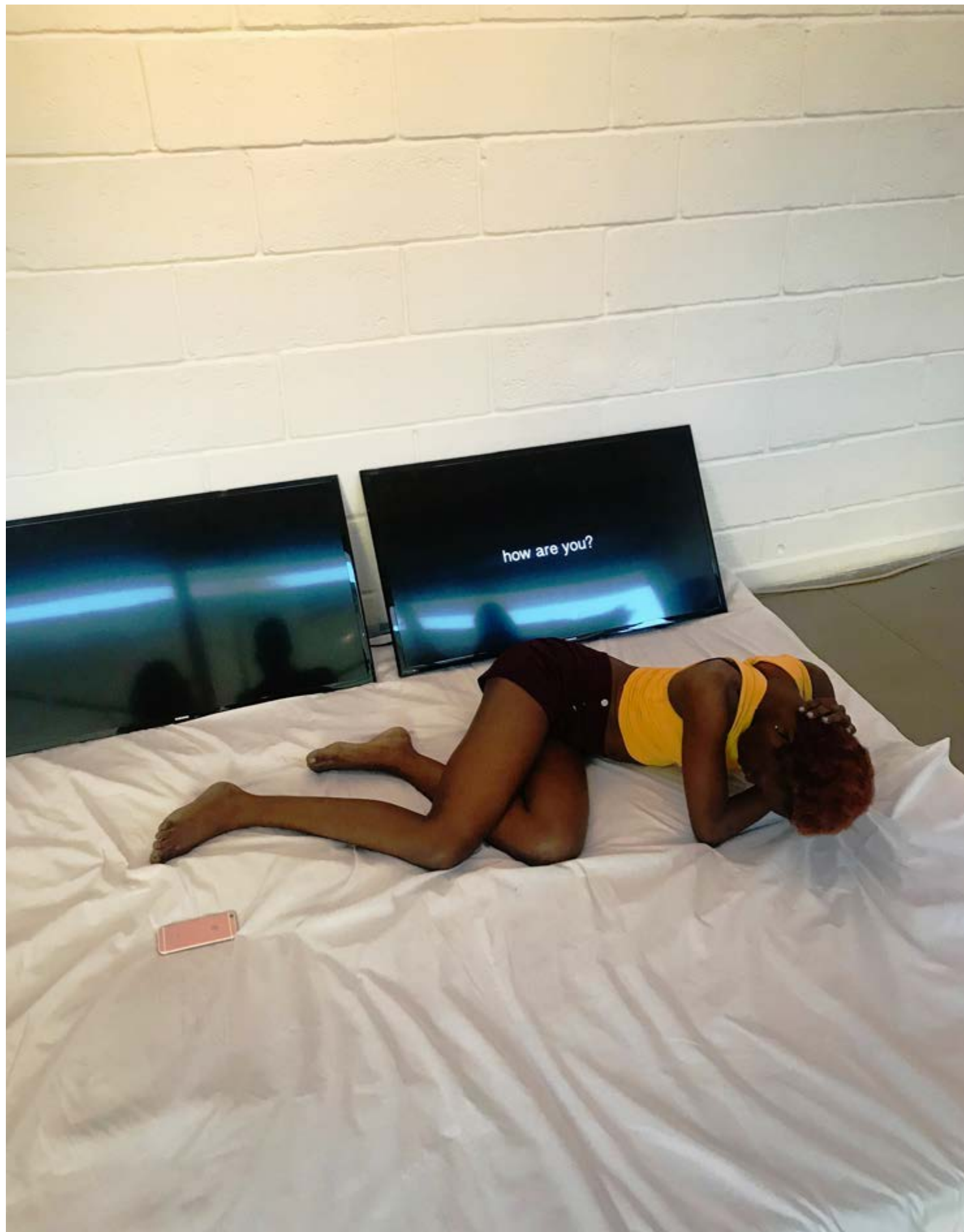
- Text by Hyun Jeung Kim

Vice Versa, 2015
Two-channel Video installation, mattress, two 40" flatscreens
Videos 22 min each, color/sound, loop
Dialogue spoken by Juan Antonio Olivares and Ewouyne Waller
Durational performance on the mattress, length variable
Screening of the video documentation during the exhibition period
Performance with Oumy Ndiaye, Marlene Kollender, Minsun Choi, Jordan Milner and Lukas von der Gracht

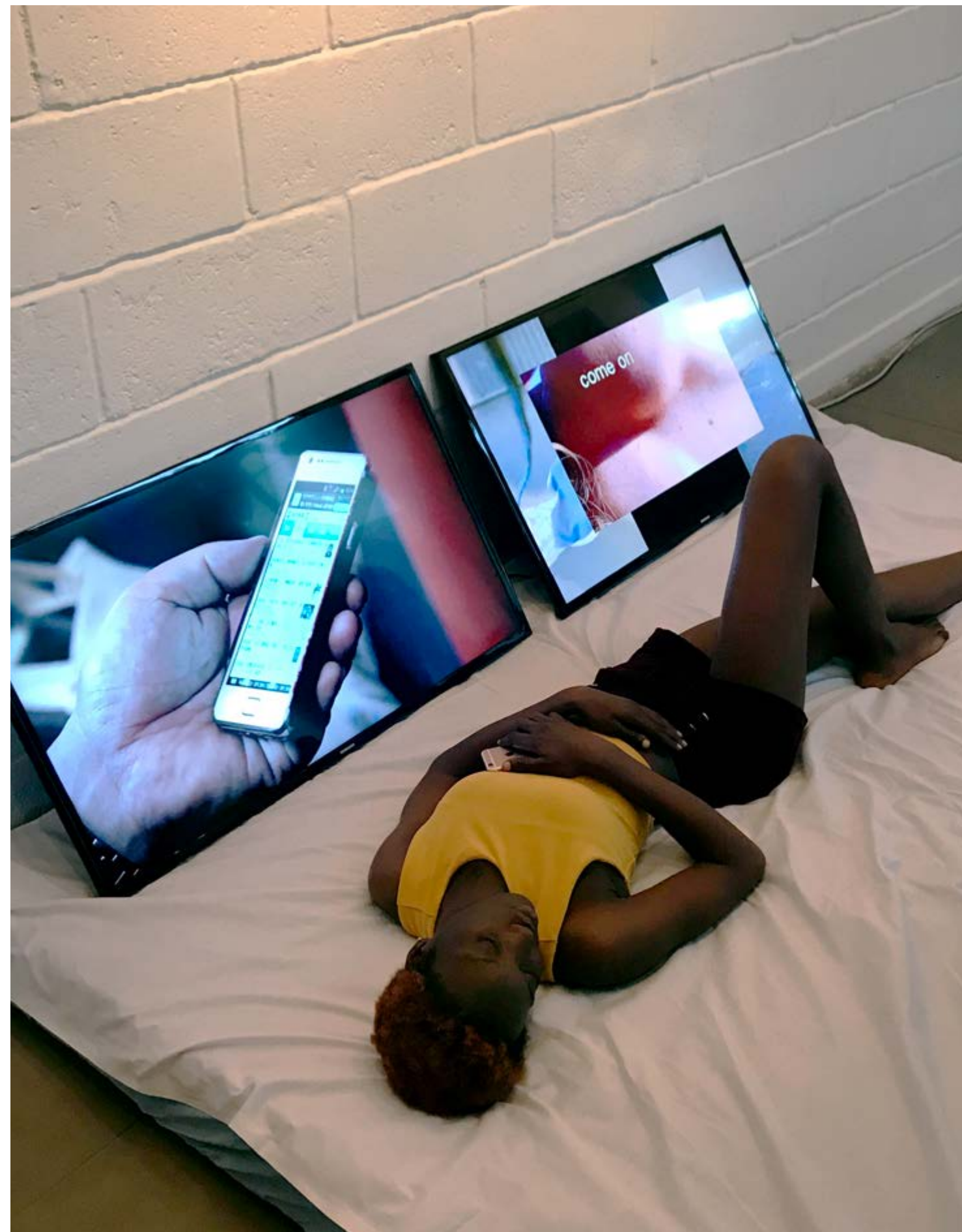
Exhibitions

Markus Ambach Projekte, Düsseldorf (2024), Goethe Institut, Dakar (2018), Antichambre, Düsseldorf (2017), Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016), CSA Space, Vancouver, curated by Steven Tong (2015), Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2015)

Watch the videos here: <https://vimeo.com/120756642> & <https://vimeo.com/120541130>



Installation view
Goethe Institut, Dakar (2018)





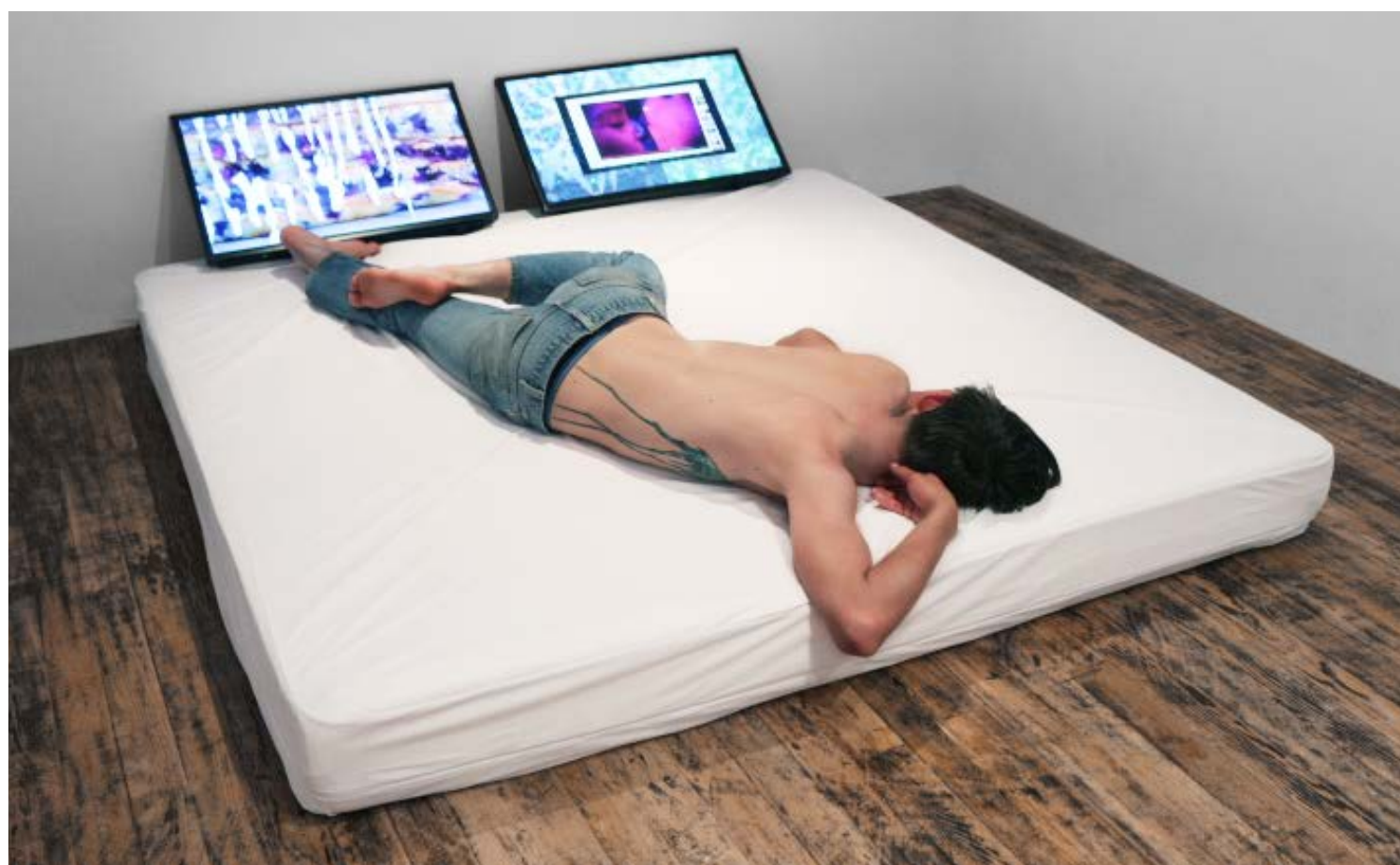
Installation view
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)



Installation view
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)



Installation view
Antichambre, Düsseldorf (2017)



Installation view
CSA Space, Vancouver (2015)



Installation view
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2015)



Text excerpt from the video installation

hi

how are you?

oh

do you want to talk about it?

*come on
trust me
you can trust me*

why?

what's the matter?

*i don't know
go on*

do you want some water?

*i'm sorry
i really don't understand*

*go on
play the game
what are you doing right now?*

you should sleep

*someone's on the phone
wait*

hi

i don't know

what's up

no

i'm confused

i'm not sure

*feeling dissociative
distracted
stupid
what time is it?*

*i can't talk
i can't see
move*

*yes
everything is moving
words don't exist*

*why are you doing this?
please
stop*

*nothing
what do you mean?
you?*

i can't sleep

...

In the middle of the floor of a big exhibition hall, full of people hungry for art sincerities, a white mattress is placed – the ultimate privacy in the midst of a social pandemonium. On the mattress, a young, thin body lounges. Perhaps sleeping, or dozing, or dreaming – even possibly doped. Neither the slovenly-cool clothes, nor the physical characteristics of this body reveal to us its gender or social class. Naked, untidy feet – the casual, grubby style of teen-ager pedicure. The body devoid of identifications; just a young body... tired, overstrained, surrendered, ironically writing in white, on a dark blue jacket, “Ha-Wei”. But what made it so tired – this body?

Instead of two comfortable pillows, as in the manner of hotels’ King Beds, on the mattress are placed two monitors (the size of pillows). Chaotic-kaleidoscopic information runs wildly across the screens. We know the world expands without control; but digital signifiers, freed from flesh, expand even more turbulently, much wider and 100 times faster! From time to time, additional, smaller frames of screens are relayed across the monitors, with parallel and contrasting information.

At the beginning of this chaotic video, we see an eye, turned on a vertical axis. The artist gives us a hint: this is the specific vertical eye of our mind, which our culture uses to structure the drift of data entering us. Our mind places every datum we perceive within the symbolic structure of values created inside our consciousness, with its pyramidal-vertical and subordinated character. Every glittering datum here on the screens (a sea, a toy, a building under construction, a highway, some McDonald’s food etc.) is removed from its native context, thrown from the nest and stripped bare, therefore all the images look strangely active, having a double presence.

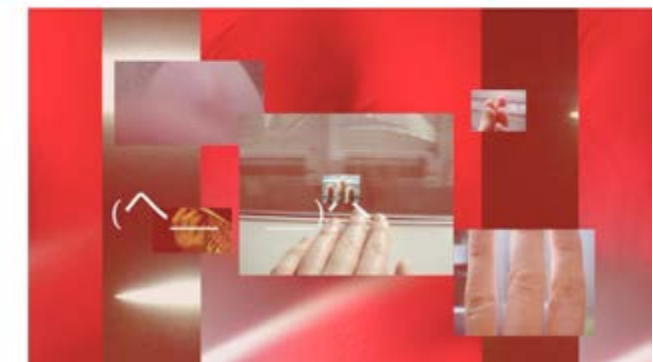
On both screens, lines of texts run alongside these tinsel shimmers – between these two monitors, an intense dialogue takes place. On the left are the writings of some obviously distinguished authority: tempting, provoking, seducing and enticing. But the answers from the right monitor seem to be mostly negative, confused, perplexed and bewildered. It’s clear that both genders are involved in this dialogue, and it definitely exposes a Hegelian master-slave character. Yes, it is a fact – within our present culture, woman is not only confused, she is actually absent; she doesn’t exist within the living world (as Lacan stated, “she has no foundation” – inside a patriarchal world she had no chance to develop her native language, her native discourse). Woman is just a sheer bewilderment, whereas the patriarchal-phallic discourse is a rigorous discourse of seduction. This gender dialogue (and indeed any dialogue between binary opposites) is firmly structured in our human consciousness in a misbalanced way – the dominant and submissive roles within binary opposites are clearly and permanently determined, and as usual everybody always plays them with delight. That’s how the structure works!

That is the reason for the ultimate loneliness we see on the mattress: “a form of dwelling” outside discourse, beyond language and also beyond any orientations (from time to time we see this figure on the mattress in the foetal position). All the figures of real alternative culture unconsciously long for such a state, because this kind of person (dating back to the Beatnik movement) is always and everywhere driven and motivated by the fully detached nature of our human soul.

Within Western culture these types of detached soul-wills created „the third space“, a space of rebel individuals (the other two spaces – state and religion, have an entirely communal nature), individuals who don’t want to accept the hegemony of the deterministic language of human culture, and with the help of subversive lifestyles, destabilization, deconstruction, trance, and ecstasy, strive to move beyond it – towards Khora – the territory of the pre-language condition. Perhaps, inside of this entirely open consciousness we have a chance to be reborn and succeed in developing an awareness beyond language, the restricted nature of culture, and the horrifying concreteness of „presence“.

Vice Versa opens up a realm of fundamental generalizations to us and it may even seem odd, that such a strong piece belongs to the young artist Isabella Fürnkäs. To reference such global issues and observe events so remotely, it is necessary to have a certain degree of detachment (which comes to a person only over time), and it also needs a long and certainly bitterly-tasted experience (where the trivialities of life are already left behind, and all phenomena begin to be seen, more or less, in their natural light). How can a young artist succeed in showing us all this?

- Excerpt from an essay by Gia Edzgveradze



Read the full text “Dirty T-Shirt Culture” publication,
<http://www.verlag-kettler.de/programm/gia-edzgveradze>



Installation view
Markus Ambach Projekte, Düsseldorf (2024),



Installation view
Markus Ambach Projekte, Düsseldorf (2024),



2500 Performative installation

The performative installation *2500* shows a communication without spoken words. A textil photo is used as a bed sheet during the performance and includes a selection of 2500 images that Lukas & Isabella sent to each other via iMessage during 2 years. This „iBlanket“ unites most personal memories, work-in-progress steps, material discussion and travel plans: a visual communication transferred from digital to analogue.

- Text by Isabella Fürnkäs & Lukas von der Gracht

2500, 2016
Performative Installation by Isabella Fürnkäs & Lukas von der Gracht
Approx. 20min
Photographic print on fabric, snowspray on 11m photo roll

2500, Museum Abteiberg
Performed on 25 September 2016



Installation view
Museum Abteiberg (2016)



Installation view
Museum Abteiberg (2016)



Installation view
Museum Abteiberg (2016)

TRUST

Performance

The textual piece *TRUST* is spoken by two performers who move through the crowd crouching and touching the bystanders. The pronunciation is gentle and delicate, both voices are echoing in similar intonation. The whispered dialogue appears to be spoken by one voice forming one body with the audience. The performers are dressed and painted in gold, questioning the value of skin. The dialogue genuinely reflects narrative structures and points towards genderless communication and dream-like. The performance is embodied by Isabella Fürnkäs and Pola Fendel in the framework of Isabella Fürnkäs' textual piece *TRUST*.

- Text by Sian Sull



TRUST, 2017

Costumes and styling by Marion Benoit & Bonana van Mill.

Performance with Pola Fendel & Isabella Fürnkäs

Polaroid photos by Keta Gavasheli, taken during performance on 16 November 2017

Curated by Mautrin Dietrich & Cathrin Mayer

Exhibitions

Salon ACME, Mexico City (2020), KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2017)



Installation view
Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2017)



Installation view
Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2017)

HUNGRY MICE & SALTY PEPPER Solo exhibition

Isabella Fűrnkäs' first solo exhibition at Galerie Clages evokes rapture and a loss of control. Already from outside the exhibition, oversized eyes direct one's gaze toward four life-size figures, which are more than simply physical counterparts. On the contrary, they accumulate in the space and almost oppress the visitor with their drawn-on sensory organs, which grow in place of their faces and expand throughout the room. With their oversized teeth, ears, and tongues, they formally draw attention to the different avenues of sensory perception and seem to do so at an unabashed volume.

This drifting moment of being-thrown-off and the search for a calm point makes one's eyes wander further through the space. Droplets drawn on the gallery's walls guide one's flowing gaze. The droplets, which inevitably conjure associations with tears, are a recurring motif in Fűrnkäs' work. They subtly work through the contradiction of water's neutrality as an element and its natural fluidity in the form of tears and sweat, evoking the type of physical sensations and emotions that evade our control. There is something liberating in this ineluctable movement — no in-between state, nothing asked or sought-after. It seems that the overextended limbs of the figures reach, too, for that sort of autonomy.

- Text excerpt by Julia Haarman

Unpredictable Liars, 2017

Installation, mixed media, various Japanese fabrics & cloth, oil sticks, acrylic spray
Dimensions variable

Drops, 2017

90 pieces, wall installation, oil sticks
10 x 20cm

Untitled Drawings, 2010-2017

20 Drawings, mixed media on paper, framed with plexiglas
31.5 x 24cm

Uncanny Valley, 2017

Video installation, kinetic sand, video screen, stainless steel rod
Dimensions variable
Video 3min, color/no sound, loop

Hungry Mice & Salty Pepper, Clages, Cologne (2017)





Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2017)



Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2017)

Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2017)





Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2017)



Installation view
Clages, Cologne (2017)

HIDE & SEEK

Drawings

In her video works, performances, drawings and installations, Fürnkäs confronts the unstoppable image production of the 21st century and investigates the visual spaces of our present through the use of chance and everyday practices. She uses language, drawing and gestures to transform the flood of images into media-reflexive actions via performative, installative and time-based techniques. Fürnkäs's *Hide & Seek* (#1-8), is a series of fictitious portraits that take their starting point in passport-photo-sized drawings of faces. Analogous to the latter, in *Hide & Seek* it is a coffee stain that has been worked on with ink and oil sticks in such a way that highly abstracted, partly expressive, partly subtle or ghostly-looking faces appear on the paper. The expression of Fürnkäs portrayed figures ranges from exalted, contemplative to opaque, yet - in contrast to digital images - they have a medially inscribed, vulnerable quality.

- Text by Eva Birkenstock

The fact that scenes from the Japanese horror film *Ringu* (1998) are probably among the most disturbing in film history may be due to the fact that they subtly revolve around our field of vision: Photographs in which individual faces are strangely blurred, mirrors that look back at us, faces hidden behind hair and, ultimately, portraits of people who come to life in unguarded moments. The face that you always look out of, but never get to directly see for yourself, is localised as the uncanny. And this in all the ambiguity of the word, which at the same time points to absolute strangeness, to that which seems furthest away, as well as to its opposite: namely, to a threatening state of being overly close. More specifically, it is the eyes, as the openings in the head through which inside and outside exchange. Like the title itself, wells, television sets etc. allude to this in the film. They are the holes into infinity, into the bottomless nothingness, into which something has fallen, that is hiding there and now threatens to come out again - we are equally responsible for both.

- Text by Gudrun Bott

Hide & Seek, 2010-ongoing
Mixed media on paper, Japanese ink, coffee, oil sticks,
3,5 x 5,5 cm, framed with plexiglass frame, series of approx. five hundred drawings

Exhibitions

Haverkamp Leistschneider (2025), Art Cologne (2024), 2080, Berlin (2024), Mouches Volantes, Cologne (2022), KIT, Düsseldorf (2018), Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018), Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2011)

See more drawings here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9u0w60chmaegph8/AAAIU-mTmmDuxXoIfU_LKv40a?dl=0





Installation view
Mouches Volantes, Cologne (2022)



Installation view
Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2017)







Installation view
Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin (2025)

CV

Isabella Fürnkäs (D/F)

Born 1988 in Tokyo, Japan

Lives and works in Berlin and Düsseldorf

Education

2017 - 2018	Diploma of Fine Arts (MFA) & Meisterschülerin of Prof. Andreas Gursky, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, DE
2015 - 2016	Universität der Künste Berlin, DE, Prof. Hito Steyerl
2011 - 2017	Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, DE, Prof. Andreas Gursky & Prof. Keren Cytter
2010 - 2011	Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, AT, Prof. Gunter Damisch
2009 - 2010	Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, CH
2008 - 2009	Art History and Philosophy, Universität zu Köln, DE

Selected Residencies & Grants

CCA Artist-in-Residence Program, Mallorca, ES (2024); Berlin Masters Schliemann Residency, Provence, FR (2022); Stiftung Kunstfonds, DE (2022); Akademie der Künste Berlin Scholarship, DE (2021); *strike a pose* K21 Kunstsammlung NRW Award, DE (2021); Ministry of Culture and Science NRW Scholarship, DE (2020); *Reset the Future* Prize, Tbilisi State Academy & Peter Moennig Foundation, GE (2020); Bronner Residency, Tel Aviv, IL (2019); Villa Aurora (nominated, 2019); Kunststiftung NRW Project Grant (2018); Artist Residency, Goethe Institut Dakar, SN (2018); *Ars Viva* (nominated, 2018), DE; Cité internationale des arts Residency, Paris, FR (2017); Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen Travel Grant (2017); Förderpreis des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen for Media Art, DE (2016)

Selected Solo Exhibitions & Performances (P*)

Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin, DE (P*) (2024); Art-O-Rama, Marseille, FR (2024); Museum Ludwig, Cologne, DE (P*) (2023); Museum Moyland, Cleve, DE (2023); Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin, DE (2022); ARCO, Madrid, ES (2022); Hua International, Berlin, DE (2021); Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich, CH (2021); Kunstverein 701 & Düsseldorf Palermo, DE (2021); Salon ACME, Mexico City, MX (P*) (2020); Goeben, Berlin, DE (2020); Art Cologne, DE (2019); Kölnischer Kunstverein, DE (P*) (2018); Kunsthalle Wien, AT (P*) (2018); Goethe Institut 13th Biennale for Contemporary Art, Dakar, SN (2018); Osthaus Museum, Hagen, DE (2018); ITALIC, Berlin, DE (2018); Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE (P*) (2017); Clages Gallery, Cologne, DE (2017); Manifesta 11, Zurich, CH (P*) (2016); Raiosha Gallery, Tokyo, JP (2016); SSZ Sued, Cologne, DE (2016); CSA Space, Vancouver, CA (2015)

Public Collections

Museum Abteiberg Collection, DE; Collection of Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, DE; The Ulsan Art Museum South Korea, KR; Burger Collection Zurich/Hong Kong, CH/CN; Kunstsammlung der Provinzial Rheinland, DE; Collection of the Kunsthaus NRW, DE; Artothek des Landes NRW, DE; Collection of Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen, DE; Philara Collection Düsseldorf, DE

Selected Group Exhibitions

Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin, DE (2025); Künstlerhaus Dortmund, DE (2025); Kunstmuseum Mühlheim, DE (2025); Grzegorzki Shows, Berlin, DE (2024); TICK TACK, Antwerp, BE (2024); City of Düsseldorf & MAP, Düsseldorf, DE (2024); Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, DE (2023); Kunstverein Siegen, DE (2023); Ulsan Art Museum, Ulsan, KR (2023); Villa Schöninggen, Potsdam, DE (2022); Luxembourg Art Week, LU (2022); Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE (2022); Art Düsseldorf, DE (2022); P-OST X Constant 1 0 1, Arnheim, NL (2022); Catinca Tabacaru, Sandwich & Goethe Institut, Bucharest, RO (2021); Gewölbe, project space of Art Cologne, DE (2021); Berlin Masters, Berlin, DE (2021); K21 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf, DE (2021); Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund, DE (2020); Kunsthaus NRW, Kornelimünster, DE (2020); KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE (2020); Auction Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, DE (2020); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, DE (2019); Kunstverein Göttingen, DE (2019); Bärenzwinger, Berlin, DE (2019); Auction Langen Foundation, Neuss, DE (2019); Kunsthalle Wien, AT (2018); Philara Collection, Düsseldorf, DE (2018); KIT, Düsseldorf, DE (2018); PS120 Berlin, DE (2018); Kreuzberg Pavillon, Berlin, DE (2018); KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE (2018); Art Geneve with PS120, CH (2018); Hardstrasse, Basel, CH (2018); MeetFactory Prague, CZ (2018); Milieu, Bern, CH (2018); Millennium Monument Museum, Beijing, CN (2017); Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne, DE (2017); Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, DE (2017); Goethe Institut Paris, FR (2017); Auction Langen Foundation, Neuss, DE (2017); Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul, KR (2016); Museum Abteiberg, DE (2016); Simultanhalle, Cologne, DE (2016); Temporary Gallery, Cologne, DE (2016); Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, DE (2016); Kunstverein Mönchengladbach, DE (2016); Kunsthaus Essen, DE (2015); NADA Art Cologne, DE (2015)

Public Collections

Museum Abteiberg Collection, DE; Collection of Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, DE; The Ulsan Art Museum South Korea, KR; Burger Collection Zurich/Hong Kong, CH/CN; Kunstsammlung der Provinzial Rheinland, DE; Collection of the Kunsthaus NRW, DE; Artothek des Landes NRW, DE; Collection of Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen, DE; Philara Collection Düsseldorf, DE

Curatorial Projects, Juries & Tutoring

Lecturer at HBK Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Braunschweig (2023-2025); Workshop at Bauhaus-University Weimar (2023); Jury member of the BTBB-Prize at Bauhaus-University Weimar (2021); Workshop at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (2020); Tutorial at the University of Hildesheim (2020); Jury member of the BTBB-Prize at Bauhaus-University Weimar (2020); Jury member of the 63. Internationale Kunstfilmtage Oberhausen, International Competition (2017)

Selected Press

Insomnia Drawings, Windhager von Kaenel (Catalogue/Monograph, 2024)
Selected works, Isabella Fürnkäs, Clages (Catalogue/Monograph, 2024)
[The Week April 22–28, 2024: Gallery Weekend](#), Berlin Art Link (online, 2024)
[Isabella Fürnkäs: Inner workings. Das fressende Zimmer](#), Mutual Art (online, 2023)
[Isabella Fürnkäs "Build Me a House" at HUA International](#), Berlin, Mousse Magazine (online, 2022)
[Isabella Fürnkäs bei Hua International Berlin](#), Gallerytalk.net (online, 2022)
[Isabella Fürnkäs at Hua International](#), Art Viewer (online, 2022)
Metamorphoses of Control, Folkwang Verlag (Catalogue/Monograph, 2023)
[Isabella Fürnkäs at Windhager von Kaenel](#), Contemporary Art Switzerland (online, 2021)
[Wo hört Mode auf, wo fängt Kunst an?](#), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (online, 2021)
INDEX Berlin Cover (print, 2020)
[New models of togetherness via digital spaces in the For Better Or Worse Group exhibition curated by Tomke Braun & Daniela Seitz](#), AQNB (online, 2019)
[Antarktika at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna | Contemporary Art Daily](#), Contemporary Art Daily (online, 2018)

