

IRENE PÉREZ HERNÁNDEZ - THE WHEEL SERIES II

Exhibition in the context of the German Mill Day 2023 at the Kobisenmühle St. Georgen in the Black Forest



Wheel series II 2023, glazed ceramic, 30 x 30 x 8cm

For the Mühlentag in the Kobisenmühle in St. Georgen I present my work *Wheel series II*. The piece is part of the larger body of work entitled *The Wheel*. My aim with *The Wheel* project is the creation of works which centre on the dialogue of geographical space and identity formation, focusing in particular on my familial origins and the place where I live today.

The places where I have lived have always provided great inspiration in my work. Upon moving to St Georgen im Schwarzwald in 2019, the unique geography and culture of the region have come to be important elements of the pieces I create. For example, recent works including *Peineta* and the *Loop IV: Endless Shellac Series* which have explored the history of vinyl record production in the region.

Wheel series builds on a long standing interest in the circular and the cyclical in my work. Formally, this has been expressed by my continued return to the loop as a form. For me, loops evoke various associations ranging from the commercial to the cosmological: cycles of economic circulation, material transformation, and of birth, death and rebirth.

The Wheel project employs the aestheticised form of a millstone wheel as an extension of the metaphor of the loop. This metaphor is extended across a series of sculptures centering notions of social exchange. This historical element of the work gestures towards present-day narratives and relationships of proximity, using the wheel/loop as a means to explore aspects of both spatial and economic mobility.

Wheel series II as presented in the Kobisenmühle in St. Georgen is inspired by a wheel that exists in Kobisenmühle which I have interpreted in a dynamic sculpture composed of modules made of clay and bread. The bread modules are symbolically very important in the work. Historically, residents of the Black Forest used to grind their own flour and make their own bread. Bread was one of the most valuable of foodstuffs because it could be stored in order to get through the long snowy winters experienced by the region. These bread sculptures are expressive of the social exchange dimension that animates *The Wheel* project. They have been made in collaboration with the local baker in her bakinghouse of her farm.

The first sculpture of *The Wheel* project is entitled *Wheel series I* and was shown recently at the Kunststiftung Erich Hauser in Rottweil in a group show called *Eine Runde Bowl*. *Wheel series I* comprises two wheels connected by a Möbius belt. One of the wheels is turned by a motor within a pulley system. The belt in the work evokes the generic loop form, but takes inspiration from the pulley system used in a flour mill that has been part of my family's home in Spain. The work, therefore, interweaves personal, historical, ecological, and cosmic loops.

The third sculpture of the *Wheel series* will be shown at the show *Kunschtstücke* the 15th of October 2023 in Furtwangen. *Wheel series III* will be a wheel measuring approximately 70 cm in diameter, and composed of a group of wooden hammers. All the hammers forming the sculpture previously belonged to an old workshop in St. Georgen. The workshop from which the machinery is drawn currently lies in a state of dormancy and transformation, similar to the situation of my family's flour mill in Spain.

The celebration of *Mill Day* in Germany provides an opportunity to present my work *Wheel series II* with hopes of opening an exchange dialogue between my past and present homes and the industries that have built and sustained them.

The Wheel project is funded by a NEUSTARTplus scholarship from the Kunstfonds / NEUSTART KULTUR Foundation of the BKM.

Irene Pérez Hernández is a Spanish artist living and working in the Black Forest in Germany. In 2008, she graduated with a MFA Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London. Exhibitions of her work include Alt Space Loop Seoul, Decad Berlin, UMU Murcia, Simultanhalle Cologne, Tenderpixel London, CCCC Valencia, CDAV Havana. She has been awarded residencies at Kunstverein Global Forest, Cambridge School of Art, and Grove Bury St Edmunds. In 2021 she received the Kulturpreis Schwarzwald-Baar. For 2023 she received a stipend from Stiftung Kunstfonds Bonn. Her work is in the collection Fondo de Arte UPV.