THE UN CANNY VALLEY

Atelier Van Lieshout
Chiara Ianeselli Carlo Benvenuto
Masatoshi Noguchi

Aslı Çavuşoğlu & Ersöz Ata
Yael Frank

Katharina Wendler Stefan Alber
Ginevra Bria Silvia Hell
Sarah Oberrauch Vincent Grunwald
Eugenia Lapteva Mrova

Herfurtner & Iselin-Ricketts & MacLean
Eugenia Lapteva Linda Kuhn
Sally Haftel Naveh Yael Frank
Max Rohr

EAU & GAZ

Intro
Peter Paul Kainrath

May 25th, 2017 – a plain building container fills the courtyard of Eppan's historic Lanserhaus; in the heat of the spring sun, there's nobody around but a muffled, declaiming voice from inside. After entering the container, a scene unfolds: traces of dirty footprints of countless visitors, a half-empty bottle of wine, a couple of sheets of paper scattered across the floor, three uncomfortable-looking wooden chairs and, sitting in the corner, the artist-philosopher Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield. He looks emaciated, dark circles of a sleepless night under his eyes, the relentless type who goes all out, yet whose mind remains autonomous. He is in the midst of the 22nd hour of a 24 hour reading performance, reciting from Baruch de Spinoza's *Ethik*, the Dutch philosopher who died 340 years ago. Dronsfield grinds down this philosophical masterpiece, challenging passing visitors with questions of how the reading of a text can modify both the body and thus its reality.

Dronsfield was a visiting artist of Eau&Gaz's third edition and one of many artists in residence from all over the world who found their way to Eppan thanks to an ambitious artistic endeavor.

Five years ago, the sister curators Kathrin and Sarah Oberrauch decided to create a new framework for contemporary art: not just an exhibition series, not the usual name-dropping hub of art world giants, but a genuine dialogue with their hometown, tackling extensive issues without losing the impact of immediate local effect. The fundamental requirements for this artistic-cultural project can be traced back to its given name: during France's late 19th century, 'Eau&Gaz' stood for the basic prerequisites of modern urban life, emblazoned on signs adorning the corresponding residential building facades.

Taking an undaunted and determined approach, the two curators have laid a solid foundation for art which concerns everyone. Preconceptions of an alleged contrast between the big international world beyond and a small home town's microcosm are no longer clear-cut: Eppan is also part of that world outside, a spot on the map to which Turkish, Afghan, Japanese, Lithuanian and many other artists direct their attention as searching, inquiring, creative contemporaries. Whether local or from abroad, each visitor can find a reference point in the themes and motifs of Eau&Gaz: topics span from the intimacy of space and the incessant drone of the media to international warfare. Let's imagine the power of juxtaposing a work depicting the artist's preferred amorous positions with a voyage through the Egyptian underworld; the harshness of gazing into the mirror of regional history when faced with songs of fascist and communist struggle sung by the local village choir; the brutality of phallic grenades made of ceramic, bending our conception of the war in Afghanistan; the magic of artworks which last mere hours only to disappear; the placidness which overcomes us after discovering how turning a switch becomes an artistic gesture. All this not for the benefit of jet-setting international scene, but interventions generated within a local community, proving far more accessible than what is usually expected of so-called contemporary art thanks to their openness, their permeability and familiarity. Each year, for the duration of a couple of weeks, the village is populated with artists from towns and cities of continents far and near, offering contours for a still abstract idea of globalization, while resourcefully implementing that often lauded dialogue between cultures, generations and convictions.

Eau&Gaz calls for us to claim and build basic conditions for a contemporary life beyond the spirit-crushing rut of commodification and generics.

The Uncanny Valley
Sarah & Kathrin Oberrauch

The Artist in Residence Eau&Gaz is leaving its usual habitat and exploring new venues. For its 5th anniversary, the residence takes place both at its familiar cultural centre of Lanserhaus in Eppan, South-Tyrol, as well as at FuturDome, independent museum, in Milan.

Built in 1913, the FuturDome building was home to the last remaining futurists during the 1940s and has remained a place of debate for new aesthetic currents. Its abandoned renovation site, decommissioned prior to the finishing touches, curiously mirrors this sense of anticipation.

During its temporary residence at FuturDome, Eau&Gaz sheds light on its own premises of collective living. By viewing its home location from a distance, Eau&Gaz examines mechanisms of displacement and exclusion.

Sigmund Freud once described *the uncanny* as something which is both familiar and unfamiliar. In its disturbing ambiguity, a slippage between waking and dreaming, it allows different shades of meaning to coexist. The exhibition *The Uncanny Valley* emphasizes the topographical dimension of the Freudian uncanny by looking into the privacy of the interior for a more general reflection on the question of social and individual estrangement, alienation, exile, and repression.

The compilation of artists is based on former and current participants of the residency program as well as various positions from South-Tyrol. After the temporary base in Milan, Eau&Gaz will head back to the Alps for its annual show in Lanserhaus in Eppan, South-Tyrol.

We call it *unheimlich*, you call it *heimlich*.

Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow

After the passage to the inner yard of FuturDome, Atelier Van Lieshout's Mini Capsule Hotel appears in front of you. The interior is not much larger than a double bed, equipped with the very basics: a mattress, sheets, blankets, a night light and an electricity outlet. This tiny blue sleeping box redefines the terms of dwelling, sojourn and rest. Encircled by residential apartments, its functionality becomes accentuated, inviting you to linger comfortably in its inner cell.

Shielded from the public, the home generates a refuge, a secure and homely interior. The German word *heimlich* is first defined as belonging to the house or family and thereby linked to domesticity or being at home. On the other hand, besides its meanings surrounding the familiar and congenial, *heimlich* also means *concealed and kept out of sight*. Etymologically, the English word *canny* carries a similar ambiguity, primarily meaning *knowing* or *wise*, but also *cozy* and *endowed with occult or magical powers*.

Both words, *canny* and *heimlich*, belong to two seemingly contrasting sets of ideas. However, taking into account their faceted meanings, their opposite, namely *the uncanny*, is neither a contradiction nor a dichotomy between the home and the foreign. Instead, it marks the possibility to merge the real with the unreal, the imaginary with the ordinary, to be the inversion of familiarity within unfamiliarity and vice versa.

Magical thinking and mystical remnants, existing long before the Enlightenment, are not, as believed, obsolete and overcome. Rather, following Sigmund Freud, the uncanny is repressed. The word's prefix *un* aligns with the *un*conscious. Both are distinguished by the fact that they lack a clear separation between their opposites, instead mutually intersecting and crossing over. In this interim between waking and dreaming, we face the uncertainty of a clear distinction. An overlapping of perspectives, or rather, modes of consciousness occurs; death has come back to live, the past returns to the present, what was missing to its place; the unpredictable begins to happen.

The phenomenon generally known as *uncanny valley* marks a breach of empathy when an artificially created character appears almost, but not exactly, like real human beings. Within this valley lurks the uncanny and the unfamiliar.

Presevering contradictions and conflicting expectations arising

from cultural differences and ambiguous (mis)information are the premises of living together without fear and anxiety. By looking at the historical territorial displacement of South-Tyrol (it is not a coincidence that Freud's essay was written in the same year of the Treaty of Versailles), it becomes apparent how quickly you can become a stranger in your own home, or transform what was foreign into home.

Throughout the exhibition, the visitor encounters scenes of estrangement or displacement, where the repressed resurfaces and haunts the place of familiarity as both frightful and familiar. The decommissioned renovated apartments at FuturDome emphasize this feeling of not quite being at home in your own home; the fundamental tendency of the familiar to turn on its owner, to suddenly become defamiliarized, surreal, as if in a dream.

Following the catalogue you will find a more comprehensive examination of the current participating artists Carlo Benvenuto, Linda Kuhn, Yael Frank and Silvia Hell. Also featured is a deeper discussion of Stefan Albers' site-specific installation, which deals with forms of displacement and transformation and their ambiguous relation to the magical.

Carlo Benvenuto was raised on Lago Maggiore in a house which is now his studio. Its furnishings and belongings play a key role in Benvenuto's photographic work, located on the ground floor of the exhibition. By reducing individual choices to a minimum, he lends commonplace objects a sense of mystery. In her text, Chiara Ianeselli, an independent curator currently working on her PhD in Analysis and Management of Cultural Heritage at IMT, points out the inherent transcendental elements of his complex body of work.

The artists Silvia Hell and Stefan Alber, both with backgrounds in South-Tyrol, but based in different parts of Europe (Hell in Milano and Alber in Berlin), investigate the shaping of territories. While Alber focuses on narratives of socioeconomic change and their influences, Hell is interested in deciphering patterns of topographies and their records. Katharina Wendler, an independent curator from Berlin, expounds on Alber's site-specific installation *Aeropalco* from 2019 in the context of fascist urban planning policies. Ginervra Bria, artistic director of FuturDome and independent journalist of numerous art journals, interviews Hell about her ongoing project *Air*, in which music notations and air pollution records overlap to create a new symphony for the city of Milan.

Artists Linda Kuhn and Yael Frank are presented on the two upper exhibition floors, as well as towards the end of the catalogue. Kuhn's installation works are based on social observations, probing socio-cultural interactions and the ambiguous effects of language. Eau&Gaz's longstanding author Eugenia Lapteva, who holds a BA and MA degree in Comparative Literature and Modern Literary Theory and is currently training to become a psychoanalyst, reads between the lines of Kuhn's work to uncover their implicit suspensions of time and place. Throughout the exhibition space, visitors may find traces of *Dimmerparty,* which function as visitors of the exhibition. Sally Haftel Naveh is an independent curator from Israel currently teaching in the preparatory program at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and in the curatorial program at Technion (Isreal Institute of Technology). Haifa examines the 'death problem' surrounding Yael Frank's *Last Hour of Cabinet I*, made entirely of aggregated 'Detolf' glass cabinets from Ikea, and a complementary, but autonomous video entitled *A Problem.*

The works of former artists from the Residency Program Eau&Gaz complete the exhibition: Mrova and Vincent Grunwald from the second edition are located in the side wing's second floor of FuturDome. Both artists examine the intertwining themes of isolation and affiliation. In addition to the current catalogue contributions, the text about Mrova and the interview with Vincent Grunwald from the second edition are reprinted, describing their researched based artistic practice.

An assembly of artworks from the fourth edition can be found on the basement level: Masatoshi Noguchi's wall installation *Tropical Bird* (2016) and *Hebdomeros* (2018) by Aslı Çavuşoğlu in collaboration with fashion designer Ersöz Ata. Last but not least, past the roof terrace and the amazing view over the rooftops of Milan looms the surrealistic painting of Max Rohr, mysteriously leading the gaze up into the clouds.

Establishing communities. FuturDome
Interview with Atto Belloli Ardessi
by Camilla Angolini

FuturDome is a non-profit, curator-run space in Milan, a project voted to enhance contemporary arts and design. As pivotal testing ground for architectural heritage renovations, FuturDome combines conservation interventions, advanced technological solutions and artistic incursions. Its aim is to create connections between different publics – residents, authors and cultural institutions – within an unexpected, customisable environment.

Where did the idea for museum living come from and how is it still connected to Isisuf – International Institute of Futurist Studies? Conceived by Isisuf – International Institute of Futurist Studies – the FuturDome project was developed as a non-profit museum space in a residential building. Through FuturDome, Isisuf offers a base within which artists, curators and creatives can develop, make and present innovative projects, in a space that recognizes the role and social and cultural value of artistic experimentation.

The FuturDome mission is to support artists through in-depth consideration of their artistic journey, publications and the presentation of their work to the public through exhibitions, screenings, performances and educational programs.

FuturDome is the heart of a new experience based on the active enjoyment of contemporary art by the building's inhabitants, who interact with the scheduled events or even open their homes to site-specific installations created by the artists.

This Art Nouveau palazzo was once the meeting place for artists from the Futurist movement who would gather here to work and

debate. It was here that some of them laid the foundations for new movements such as Concrete Poetry and Kinetic Art during the Forties. With the redevelopment of the building, we wanted to re-shape the concept of the living space, extending the fruition of art into the building's communal spaces.

The term "museum living" was specifically coined to define the unique FuturDome project, which represents the latest phase in a project of artistic regeneration. FuturDome interprets the redevelopment of a 1913 Art Nouveau palazzo through exploration of the contemporary avant-garde, intertwined with creative projects and site-specific designs, set in domestic spaces. The project is founded on a careful selection of emerging and consolidated talents, production methods and unseen projects.

How does perception of an exhibition change when it is held in visibly unfinished spaces? We are always struck by the reactions of artists when they visit FuturDome in person, having only seen it digitally beforehand. They immediately feel ready to transform it. At Futur-Dome, the incessant commutation of purpose, from public space to domestic unit, as well as the short circuit between permanent interventions and the welcome offered to artists in residence increases the perceptive functions of time and space for anybody visiting. These are the prerogatives that preserve the transitionary state of museum living and mark its unreal boundaries; the lines of a space devoted to the custody of what we believe can withstand the speed of change.

Tell us about being the artistic director of such an innovative project. One of the selection criteria for the artists we invite to work at FuturDome, and one that ties in with the historic DNA of Isisuf – International Institute of Futurist Studies, is that they must seek to blend and transform historical memory, contemporary sensibility and architectural experimentation. The building at Via Giovanni Paisiello 6 puts anything installed therein to the test, both in terms of its sheer size and the lack of neutrality of the space itself: unfinished living units that absorb expressive and representative energy. Therefore, a constant drive for exploration of the contemporary avant-garde compels us to directly assess and compare the conceptual scope of the work or project with its public worth every time. It is a dialogue that permeates what is essentially an eternal construction site from attic to cellar.

How did the collaboration with Eau&Gaz come about? The history that we embody as spokesperson of the present imposes a basic dialectic, a vision rooted in our past yet turned towards the future, time intended as projection, as the effects of selections that we make with profound admiration for those we collaborate with. In 2016–2017, FuturDome dedicated itself to promoting artists and institutions, as well as independent spaces that we have seen develop in sensitivity, tension and expression as they progress. In 2019, we wanted to focus on realities such as Eau&Gaz, which we have come to know over the years even before it was founded by Sarah and Kathrin Oberrauch. We met the Oberrauch sisters at various occasions such as Audition: a collective show curated by Kathrin at Ganda Castle in Eppan for the Transart Festival (2013). We began to see more of each other over the years, consolidating our shared vision. Then we decided to celebrate their unifying force, the complicity they manifest with artists and their typical spirit of observation, transporting the controversial border territory they are based in to the physical and irregular spaces of the FuturDome.

The exhibition The Uncanny Valley leaves space for ambiguity and hybrid constellations, in which past and present, rational and irrational, domestic and foreign end up under the same roof. How do you think that the FuturDome space fits in with these reflections and/or reflects these themes? It is an epic exhibition defined by the confluence of genres seen in the work of the artists who have been in residency at Eau&Gaz in the past five years. We all agreed to work at Futur-Dome so that the collective development of artists such as Stefan Alber, Silvia Hell or Yael Frank, to name but a few, did not feel rhetoric or distant but embodied that detachement, that feeling of returning that characterizes both independent spaces in Milan and Bolzano. A few days before the opening, once the exhibition has been installed, we are positive that the restless visions of a valley that also depicts our respective realities will tell us so much more. About ourselves too.

The Water Drop Effect
Carlo Benvenuto
Chiara Ianeselli
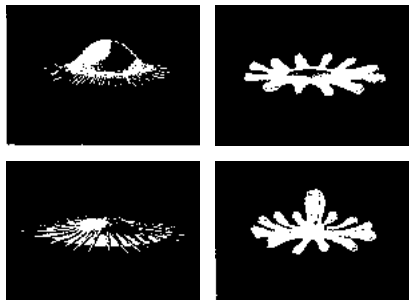
British physicist Arthur Worthington (1852–1916) was carrying out experiments investigating the splash of a drop of fluid since 1875. His perception of the event – and the subsequent annotations he carefully made, preserved in the Royal Society Archives – indicated regularity in the effects of the splash: tiny drops would form in a symmetrical way. 'For Worthington himself, the subject had always been, as he endlessly repeated, a physical system marked by the beauty of its perfect symmetry.' [1]

As Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison point out, scientists often set out to capture the world in its types and regularities, not peculiarities, in order to more clearly fulfill a perfect description of the world.[2] For almost twenty years, according to Worthington's system, there was no possibility of anything other than order, balance, symmetry. Why was all this time spent on observing a splash? The answer to this question is provided by Mr. Worthington himself:

The splash of a drop is a transaction which is accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, and it may seem to some that a man who proposes to discourse on the matter for an hour must have lost all sense of proportion. If that opinion exists, I hope this evening to be able to remove it, and to convince you that we have to deal with an exquisitely regulated phenomenon, and one which very happily illustrates some of the fundamental properties of fluids.[3]

It was only in 1894 that he was eventually able to photograph the instant of a splash of water into fluid – milk. The result suddenly contradicted decades of careful observation: an explosion of chaos and entropy.

The vision he had held up until that point was heavily contested: 'Thus the mind of the observer is filled with an ideal splash — an Auto-Splash —whose perfection may never be actually realized.'[4] He also noted that 'it is impossible to put together the drawings so as to tell

Figure 1 – Arthur M. Worthington, "Splash of a Drop", A Study of Splashes, London: Longmans, Green & Company 1908, Fig. 5, 9, 20, 24, drawings originally published in Arthur Mason Worthington and Robert Bellamy Clifton XXVIII. On the forms assumed by drops of liquid falling vertically on a horizontal plate, Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, 25, 1877.
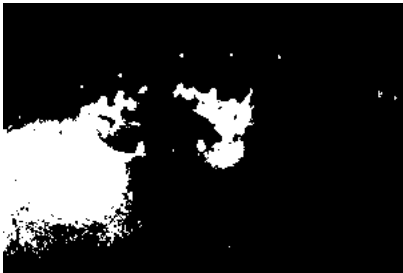
Figure 2 – Arthur Worthington, The Splash of a Drop, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1895 p. 6, The Online Books Page, Project Gutenberg

Time after contact = 0262 sec.

Time after contact = 0391 sec.

Time after contact = 101 sec.

a consecutive story, without being guided by some theory' [5], basically declaring that he was seeing only what he wanted to see. Worthington also noted that:

The reason that with ordinary continuous light nothing can be satisfactorily seen of the splash, is not that the phenomenon is of such short duration, but because the changes are so rapid that before the image of one stage has faded from the eye the image of a later and quite different stage is superposed upon it. Thus the resulting impression is a confused assemblage of all the stages, as in the photograph of a person who has not sat still while the camera was looking at him.[6]

Carlo Benvenuto's research shows several connections with Worthington's ways of proceeding. To Benvenuto, the choice of photography is as ineluctable as the impending photograph of 1894 was to Worthington: 'it can in a fraction of a second produce an image. The one printed on the film will be definitive and irrevocable.'[7] Analog photography indeed denies possibilities, affirming one, and only one, possible reality. Thus, what is revealed in Benvenuto's work is exactly the opposite of Worthington's discoveries: ultimate perfection, balance, harmony and symmetry inhabit his world. Photographs are used to describe what is not visible at first sight: a suspended architectural metaphysics where shadows and chaos are rarely seen, a magical realism. But there are no tricks or postproduction at work: editing, angles and lighting are decided in the moment of the shoot. His subjects, when captured by the camera, become perfection, a not easily visible purity, indeed, 'painting and drawing are like seeing with the eyes, while photography is seeing with the mind'.[8]

Worthington's obsession – 'the splash of a drop which is accomplished in the twinkling of an eye' – might seem, as the same physician describes, something infinitesimal and irrelevant to everybody else. The same applies to Benvenuto, whose entire corpus and objects of interest remain in the intimacy of his house in Stresa.

Particularly inspiring are the words of Paul Valery regarding the relationship between word and image, literature and photography. No matter how excellent a writer, how could he describe, for example, a face in such a way that it would not suggest as many envisionings as there are readers?[9] Photographs, and Valery uses the example of the passport image, identify unequivocally the features of a person, in such precision words could never reach. How does the work of Benvenuto relate to this? The

table, a constant architectural feature of his photographs, changes dramatically in each image, and it is able to take on different forms in the mind of the observer, becoming an intimate element, a different table for every person that is looking. Magically, the table loses all its characteristic connotations, becoming every table that has ever existed, a transcendental element. Thus, the powers of photography of unmistakable identification fall short. Benvenuto indeed is not reproducing reality, rather including it in his work, avoiding, by always keeping the scale one-to-one, any form of optical, human distortion: 'The estrangement is produced regularly when you become aware of something, it is produced whenever you add an element to your awareness of the world, you must inevitably update your thinking and deal with the new intruder.'[10] Some similarities seem to exist within the work of David Hammons, of which Dawoud Bey has noted that he 'is committed to creating works of art that exist in their own right; in their own time and space. Some of us may never see them. In fact, most of us won't. Yet the sense of myth created by the unseen is one of Hammons' concerns.'[11]

Time within the photographs is indistinguishable, but it seems the same, day by day, photograph after photograph, much like the age of their subjects, whose futures coincide with their past, photographs which also do not seem to be exposed to the process of aging. What would an archaeologist do in 1000 years, trying to reproduce the house in Stresa, where Benvenuto has been taking these pictures? Would an anthological exhibition be able to reveal the interiors of the house, as well as the atmosphere that governs it? What about the non-material realities, as Valery reminds us – 'photography accustomed the eyes to wait for what they must see, and therefore to see it; and instructed them not to see what does not exist'?[12]

While photography seems to bring the object close to us, taming its extraneity, including it in an ideal taxonomy of the photograph, in Benvenuto's work, objects become untouchable. Benvenuto's work requires an immanent space; a human who, in a necessity similar to Worthington's observations, is able to sit still in front of them for a long time in order not to see.

[1] Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, New Yok, Zone Books 2007, p. 11.

[2] *Ibidem*.

[3] Arthur Worthington, *The Splash of a Drop*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895, p. 1.

[4] *Ivi*, p. 58.

[5] *Ivi*, pp. 74-75.

[6] *Ibidem*

[7] Carlo Benvenuto, "La fotografia è uno specchio che riflette sempre la stessa immagine" in *Fermo Immagine*, a cura di Spenuso e Mezzocut-mis, Mimesis, Sesto San Giovanni 2008, translated by the author, orig: "nella natura specifica della fotografia; essa permette in una frazione di secondo di produrre un'immagine. Quella impressa sulla pellicola sarà definitiva e irrevocabile".

[8] Carlo Benvenuto in a private conversation with the author, 10 of January 2019.

[9] Paul Valery, *Discorso sulla fotografia*, a cura di Raffaele Lucariell, Filema Edizioni, 2005, Italiano con testo francese, p. 2.

[10] Carlo Benvenuto, in "Le cose del mondo", interview by Massimiliano Gioni, published on ..., access on 16 February 2018 at http://www.trax.it/carlo_benvenuto.htm,

translation by the author ("Lo straniamento si produce regolarmente quando si prende coscienza di qualche cosa, si produce ogni qualvolta si aggiunge un elemento alla propria consapevolezza del mondo, inevitabilmente bisogna aggiornare il proprio pensiero e fare i conti con il nuovo intruso").

[11] Dawoud Bey, "David Hammons: Purely an Artist", *Uptown*, 1982, p.16.

[12] Paul Valery, *Discorso*, cit., orig: "La photographie accoutuma les yeux à attendre ce qu'ils doivent voir, et donc à le voir; et elle les instruisit à ne pas voir ce qui n'existe pas", p. 20.

Atelier Van Lieshout – Mini Capsule – 2002 – Front Entrance Square – 245 x 150 125 cm – Collection Hans Oberrauch

Carlo Benvenuto – Senza Titolo, 2019, C-Print, 26 x 62 cm – Courtesy Galleria Mazzoli

Masatoshi Noguchi – Tropical Bird – 2016 – mixed technique – 150 x 97 cm

Scale of uncertainty_uncertain balance_Modern phonetics initially focused on the analysis of γράμματα by means of articulation, dividing between labial, dental, palatal, velar, labiovelar, laryngeal etc., with such descriptive precision that a phonetician who was also a doctor wrote that if the subject in question truly articulated a certain laryngeal sound in the manner described in phonics literature, it would cause his death by suffocation – 2019 – aluminium and brass – 207.2 x 8 x 8 cm

Stefan Alber

Stefan Alber – Aeropalco – 2019 – chipboard, plaster, colour – approx. 80 x 520 x 480 cm

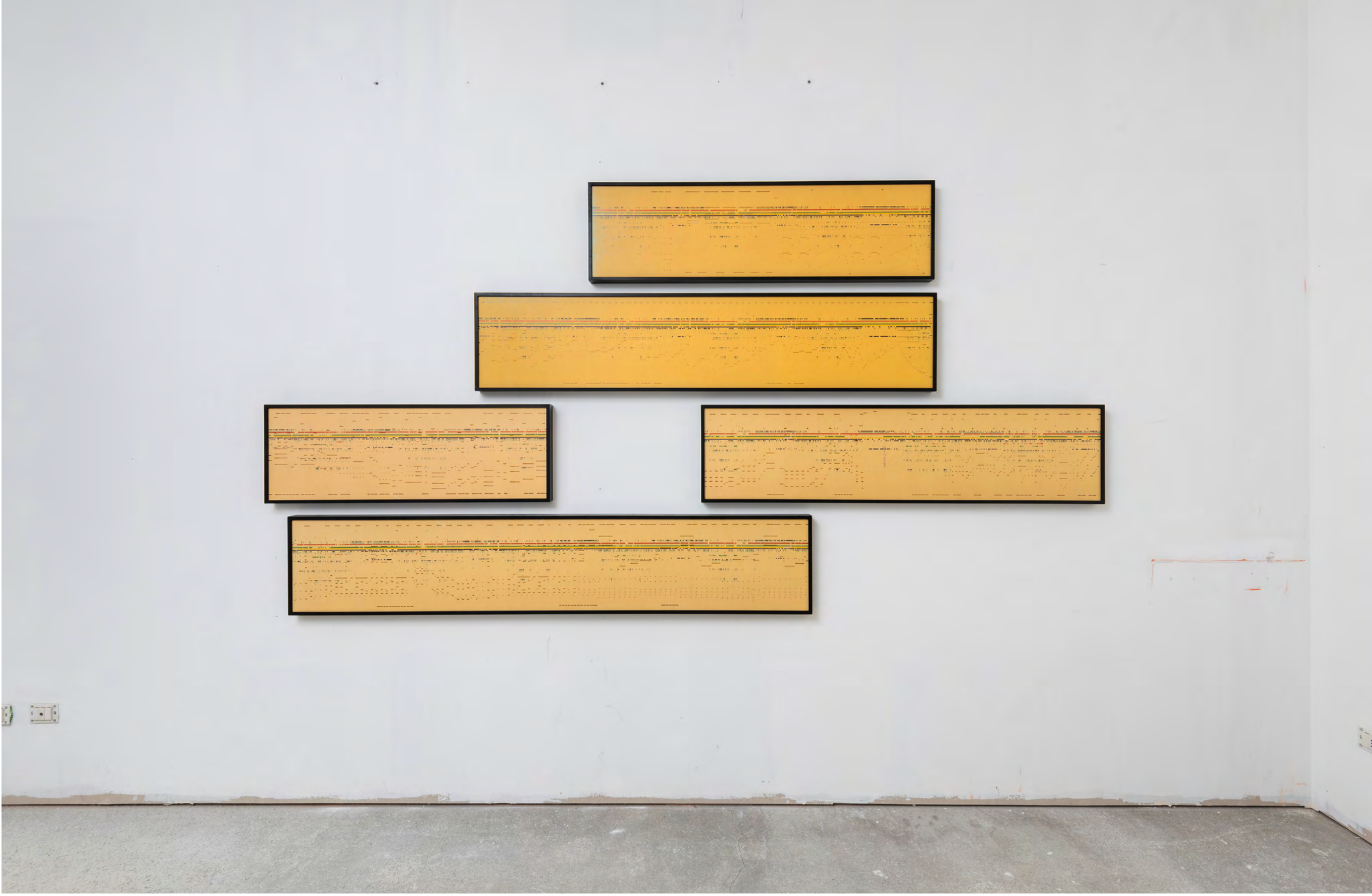Stefan Alber – Renaissance (Park Avenue Hotel) – 2014 – wood of a weathered bed frame – 106 x 80 x 48 cm

Stefan Alber – Little Ceasars I–V – 2018 – decorative element of a weathered bed frame – MDF ground plan of the Little Caesars Arena in Detroit framed – each 58 x 47cm
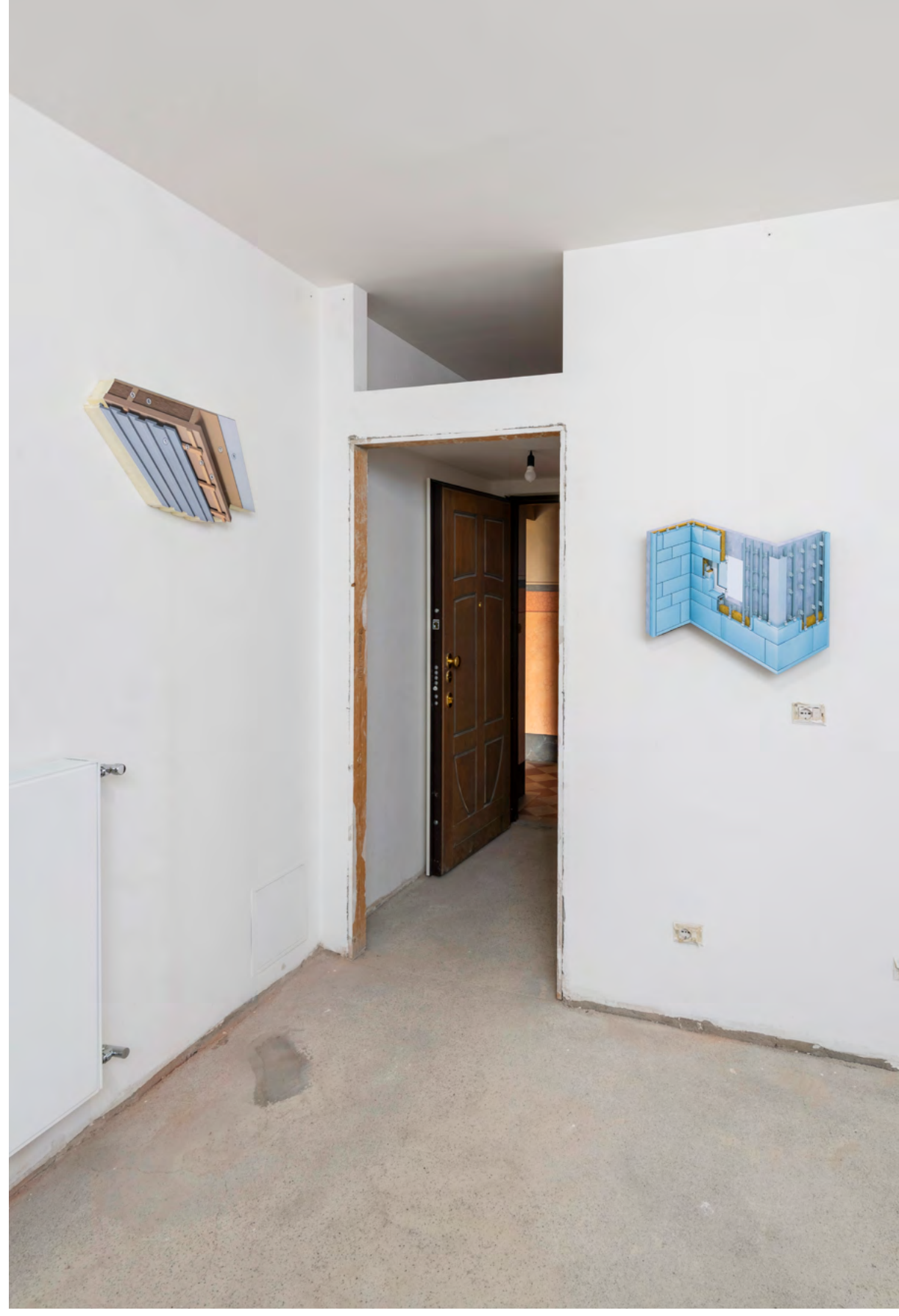
Stefan Alber

Silvia Hell (Detail) – Markgraf II / Italy / Vatican City State / A Form of History – 2011–2013 – aluminum – (Courtesy Maria Rovero)

Silvia Hell – Markgraf II / Austria / Switzerland / Germany / Italy / Vatican City State / Hungary / A Form of History – 2011–2013 – aluminum – various dimensions – (Courtesy by the artist, Maria & Giacomo Rovero & Privat Collection)

Vincent Grunwald – ISOLATED – 2016 – isolation material, digital print variable size – Collection Finstral

Mrova

Mrova – survival gold (for europe) – 2015 – 28 emergency blankets – 160 x 40 x 120 cm

Mrova – 2015 – landscape portrait – pigment print on paper – 150 x 230 cm

Temporal and spacial interlacing
in two works by Stefan Alber
Katharina Wendler

In 1938, staged as a major media event, Adolf Hitler travelled to Rome by train – incidentally, his only official state visit to Italy – in order to demonstrate unity and solidarity of the two totalitarian systems alongside Benito Mussolini. A year previously, the latter had already announced the "axis Berlin–Rome" as well as specially erecting an aisle of new buildings for the Führer's visit (including a station pavilion for his arrival), whose monumental style and lack of ornament leaned towards the National Socialist architecture of Northern Europe as part of Mussolini's comprehensive urban planning policy.

These policies, implemented vigorously by the Italian government during the 1920s and 30s, both within Italy itself as well as its colonies, pursued not only an aesthetic of power and the representation of the regime, but also the function of pursuing social and societal management. In addition to laying down visual axes in the cityscape and refurbishing and reviving classicist styles and constructions of classical antiquity, rational, functionalist architecture was implemented in the creation of schools, post offices, town halls, party offices and railway stations.

Simultaneously, the Italian government also pushed the construction of a modernist planned city, about 7000 km south of Rome, in Colonia Eritrea (later: Italian East Africa). Parts of the Eritrean capital Asmara – in effect under Italian

occupation from 1893 to 1941, first ruled by the military, later by civilians – were architecturally redesigned in order to provide Italian immigrants with an infrastructure for urban life, while at the same time guaranteeing the segregation of the Eritrean population. Hundreds of buildings, including opulent department stores, luxurious cinemas, bars, restaurants and hotels were created on site (by Eritrean forced laborers), bringing exaggerated examples of futuristic and rationalist architecture to East Africa; styles whose vision did not collide with Mussolini's overall plan, but which appeared too virtuoso for the cityscapes in the homeland.

In Asmara, the civil engineer and architect Giuseppe Pettazzi was commissioned to build a petrol station for the Italian car manufacturer Fiat (for which he had previously built several garages and warehouses). For the design, he chose a double-aisle construction with a central tower resembling an aircraft during take-off. The roof surface with a total length of 30 meters does without supports, likening it to a pair of wings flanking both sides of a two-storey building, which, with all-round glazing and a curved canopy, in turn mimics a cockpit. Pettazzi supplied this design after Italian armed forces bombed large parts of Ethiopia with chemical weapons and poisoned gas attacks for months during the Italian-Ethiopian war in 1935 (killing thousands and thousands of innocent civilians). Completed in 1938 (and de-

clared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2017), the building grotesquely reflects the Futurists' fascination with technological progress, machines, dynamics and speed. Here, the veneration of aviation in connection with patriotism, aviation heroism and propaganda – in short, an aestheticization of war – manifests itself in a colonial context as a symbol of power and domination in architecture.

For his contribution to the exhibition *The Uncanny Valley*, Stefan Alber deals with the radicality and progressiveness as well as the abysses of futuristic ideology and practice. Pettazzi's petrol station is the starting point for his in-depth research into futuristic architecture as well as colonial gestures, transferring abstracted parts of it back to the exhibition context in Milan. To this end, Alber has reconstructed the gas station's roof on an altered scale, placing it within the exhibition space as proverbial wings that can now be walked on.

In order to enter the adjoining rooms, visitors are required to cross these surfaces and also avoid the struts of the former roof construction, forcing on-site attention and caution. In crossing this level, they symbolically take on the perspective of the civil engineer Pettazzi, who is said to have supervised the Eritrean workers while standing on his own roof design. In a figurative sense, however, they also enter the insecurity of an aircraft wing, which is not accessible under normal circumstances (or only in the rare case of an emergency landing).

In this sense, Albers' work *Aeropalco* combines several visions of space and of local and contemporary history. Through the artist's individual perspective of the present reality, the absurdity of futuristic ideas in Eritrea during the 1930s is converted into a place where futuristic artists still lived and worked in the 1940s. Here, the work encounters viewers whose crossing of the surface becomes a

both playful and subtle reminder of the fundamentally quite democratic core of urban infrastructure: organized, yet free movement in space.

A further example of Albers' work decidedly examining local and social conditions and the history of artifacts and buildings is *Renaissance (Park Avenue Hotel)*, 2014–2019, a detailed replica of the Park Avenue Hotel in Detroit. It was built in 1925 as a luxury hotel and closed in the late 1960s in the wake of the city's industrial decline. After several decades of vacancy and various failed phases of reutilization (including a retirement home and a homeless shelter), the building was finally demolished in 2015 to make room for a new sports arena. The history of the building reflects the socioeconomic circumstances of Detroit on various levels.

The building material for the sculpture comes from an old, partly weathered wooden bed frame that Alber found on the wasteland of the former hotel. By weaving together several temporal dimensions, its material illustrates the radical changes that both the building and its surroundings have undergone over the decades.

On the one hand, the title 'Renaissance' alludes to the architectural style of the building, while on the other hand taking up a term which has become a public buzzword for the city's strategies of revival. Alber, too, furthers the complexity of the site's development in his new series *Little Arena* by correlating the ornamental decorations found on the bedstead with the architectural floor plan of the newly built arena, again initiating a strange spacial overlap of past and present.

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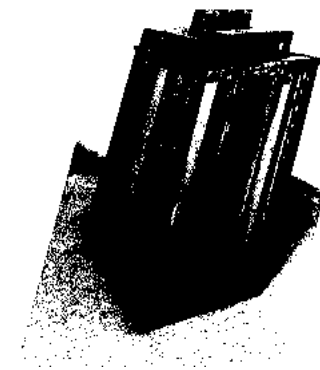
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Scored Air
Silvia Hell
Ginevra Bria

The *Air* series was designed to quantitatively trace the polluting substances found in the air in Milan. Just like any European text, the data, time and decades are read from left to right: along this vector, Silvia Hell has established five air quality bands on the basis of the values provided by Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of May 21st 2008. The perforated piano roll paper is therefore a record that superimposes the original automatic classical music function with the power to reinterpret the data on air pollution that is printed on its surface: the same air that passed through those holes in the early twentieth century, reproducing the actions of an absent pianist. The absence of a human executor and the overlapping of univocally legible codes to make them repplicable brings together two different systems of interpretation and two reproductions of documentary sources in a single vehicle.

What was the motivation and driving force behind Air*?*
I have been working with air since January 2018. But I have long felt the need to tackle our growing intolerance to the city air, and my studies on air are my response to this sensation. I have lived in this city since starting the Academy in 2002, but I grew up in large open spaces. One day, as I left Milan for a visit home, I remember feeling deeply moved, just the smell of grass made me want to cry. It was then that I had to face up to the fact that there was something very wrong with my life in the city. So, I read

the European directives on air quality, translated into all the languages of the member states. All my systematic research is based on sources that are accessible to everybody, yet people often don't read them because the language used is so technical that they can at first seem inaccessible to the non-expert.

What were the overall objectives of this systematisation and how did it develop?
The legislation sounded so rigid and detached to my ears that it was decidedly unengaging. It literally didn't affect my sensitivity to the issue in any way. So, I started singing the words, despite never having sung legal texts before, only literary passages. I started with the legislation in English because I thought it had an additional, looser sound than the Italian (which I know too well). My aim was to learn the clauses by using a more profound emotional approach as opposed to a rational one. I sang the legislation to a blues tune and it lasted almost three hours in total. It's a very long document. I recorded it and I would listen back to it when I cycled anywhere. Those phrases started to resonate with me in some way, I began to remember them, not completely or continuatively by any means, but as passages and fragments. It was important to preserve traces or combinations of what I was learning. For example, the tone of a word might be expressed differently because the music at that moment suggested a certain emphasis or timbre.

Was the final result of this project immediately clear to you?
Rationally speaking, I had no intention of working with data again on this project as it felt too cold and detached in comparison with my inner turmoil. I wanted to use a different approach. Even though the fixed format of diagrams representing data is much more than an infographic for me. As I listened back to my recordings, I noted a formula that occurred

repeatedly. There was a phrase that kept coming up: all data and measurements must be made publicly available to enable free access.

Air took inspiration from this freedom of access to the data and the extreme simplicity with which anybody could find information about the state of the air they breathe and, therefore, the life they are living. Each region is obliged to monitor its air and save the data in an archive. Whenever creating a synthesis or image of collected data, it is vital to be able to make decisions, to translate and interpret. For example, you have to analyze parallel documents and trace an exact period of time to offer a forecast of the future: one imminent deadline is that by 2020, some of the harmful substances found in the air and shown in this data will have to fall within certain parameters for the good of public health. These are the substances that I tracked.

How did the Air *project change as you interpreted and reproduced the data?*
In just five minutes, I received an email with a list of data gathered hour by hour and day by day that established the levels of the various substances I was investigating every year. In the grid that I created, every millimeter corresponds to a day, in which seven substances are denoted by seven colors and positioned in the air quality band corresponding to the daily average. I knew from the beginning that I wanted to render the elements I found visually. I originally imagined the transferral of data from song to paper as a three-dimensional aluminium structure, with the data printed on narrow steps similar to a keyboard. Visually, it would have been the size of a pentagram. But then somebody mentioned that the shapes of the graphs resembled perforated piano rolls and so I decided to use those instead. The relationship of interest from an artistic perspective often lies in that connection between two different worlds that somehow reside in one other and can be read as one.

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Vincent Grunwald
Interview by Sarah Oberrauch

In addition to you artistic work, you are also active as a curator and publisher. What profit do you draw from the various tasks? Are there strategies and objects that span across all three sectors?
Combining and arranging things and contents and composing information play a role both in my art and in my curatorial and publishing practice. The point is to compress values of image and text material and give them a special way of perception. The material can be produced both by myself and by others. In a world of massive circulation of goods, images and information, in my understanding, it is part of the artistic production to put spots on relevant excerpts and to stage the selected area.

The building industry is a central theme in your work. Time and again, there are questions about the aesthetic paradigms of functional structures. To what extent do you see ideologies or social visions represented in this?
The physical structure of a landscape always also represents the underlying power structures and aesthetic paradigms. Buildings arise where there is space, material possibilities and the need for them. In urban areas, not every resident builds a house, but there exist special legitimating mechanisms and power relations that only allow a small part of the population to design the built space. Politics also have a decisive role in form-finding. Most recently, possibilities of energy effciency are dealt with by means of encouraging certain technologies on the market. Therefore, suddenly you see roofs that consist of solar panels, and so their exterior appearance was completely changed by a technological achieve-

ment. Something similar happens when the insulation of building is encouraged and subsequently houses undergo external insulation. The houses are magnified in size and change in materiality.

What is the vision you have for Berlin?
Berlin is a city whose scars and their transition states have always impressed me. But the difference between the Berlin where I grew up and Berlin as it is today is so big that it is difficult to picture them at the same time. It is mainly the dissonance between conflicting ideologies which makes the visible urban space an area of historical experience. When I think of the future of Berlin, I imagine how buildings from the 90s are even more visibly exposed to decay and the first insulating layers have turned green and black from moss. The plastic and acrylic surfaces are dull and milky. I hope that a sense and an appreciation of precarious aesthetics and architecture arrive, and that the preservation of buildings and infrastructure is not only interested in mainstream aesthetics and taste, but niches and counter-proposals, also those that have randomly developed, shape the cityscape.

In your work, you deal a lot with security management. Where does this interest come from? How did you come across this issue?
One question that constantly occupies me is how aesthetics is constituted, i.e. which social, political or economic developments lead to which type of work. Since the term security is a very soft term that is used in a very contradictory fashion, but nevertheless a whole industry relies on it, it seemed interesting to

me to investigate, to question or to use the world of forms created there. Especially the field of security printing with the way things are designed and manufactured and what function they have to fulfill contains a universe whose shoals can only be partly interpreted due to the strict confidentiality. The proximity to arts and graphics makes it appear logical to relate it directly to them. Complex, difficult-to-reproduce graphics or information layers manufactured with different materials which serve to maintain value and allow a universal identification are therefore a special area of shaping with many inherent potentials, even subversive ones.

What was the most absurd thing you have encountered during your research?
It was less research than a road trip I took to various people and companies active in the field of security printing and related areas during which there were strange situations. Since the trip was a special low budget project, I used to stay in a tent with my cameramen (Konrad Mühe and Florian Goldmann) near the locations, so that the contrast between the offcial appearance and the real conditions was always particularly great. At some meetings, I was even allowed to visit the testing of previously introduced banknotes. Since many companies or their representatives are instructed to secrecy, it was particularly difficult to find interview partners at all. The talks were then marked by an uncommon intensity. I was charmed by the precise choice of vocabulary subject to exact distinctions between subject matter that was just hinted at and that which was precisely expressed in order to never disclose more than necessary. This threshold between risk and friendliness as well as the special shape of the language had an almost transcendent, playful quality.

Your works often correspond very well with the exhibition space. However, they are rarely, if ever, site-specifc interventions. Why?

A coordinate in my artistic practice is the concept of variable, i.e. the interchangeable element, relating to material or images we could also speak of a pattern or an example. The fascination about how specific concretizations can be omitted and yet a precise image can be created is a constant in my work. When designing a scale with universality and the concrete forming two extremes, one might wonder where on this scale an artistic work can be placed and what impact this might have. General remarks are often adhered by aloofness, since a direct link can be made only in an abstract manner, but this opening and strenuous gap of abstraction is also a fertile field of utopia, because its borders are not clearly defined.

You often work in collaboration. Are these limited to artists and friends or do you also work together with businesses? What advantages do you see in collective work?
The work on artistic projects is often linked to the development of a form of production, as the result and the process are interdependent. Collaborations provide the opportunity to create extraordinary results that would be impossible on your own by pooling various skills. Specifically intercultural or nomadic settings allow for entirely new forms of cooperation. It is rather unimportant to me with which form of organization such as a business, a group or a person the cooperation develops as long as it corresponds to the objective pursued in the context.

Mrova
Eugenia Lapteva

'I'm drawn to the hidden stories of people that aren't represented in history; to the issues that get swept under the carpet and camouflaged in the landscape' Mrova

Negotiating the capacious and complex terrain of Mrova's practice is by no means an easy matter. She operates at the intersection of art, philosophy, social and political theory, activism and hacking, carving out a unique space in which the conditions of possibility for collective subversion and ethical action are deconstructed and reconfigured. The presented works include: the videos *Landschaft Macht Kapital*, which depicts a performative intervention by the artist in nature as well as photographic works and small-scale installations by Mrova. I observe, read and listen carefully to the complete collection of Mrova's exhibited works and find myself propelled by a sense of gravitas, beauty, hope and unanimity; one that is laced with an urgent concern for the brutal inequalities and injustices of the past and present. In each work a disjunction seems to occur: The golden flag marked with the words 'Land' 'Power' 'Capital' – in German the title also reads 'Landscape makes Capital' – swerve solemnly over the undulant, open South-Tyrolean landscape.

Indeed, between myself and each of the above works there is a disproportion – a moment of absolute uncertainty – which grants me the chance to intervene in the meaning, and, as such, to participate in the future of the work. One could say that the work of art, in this regard, has the form of an event. For example, when engaging with the film *Landschaft Macht Kapital* I have an experience that cannot be fully grasped and therefore compels me to respond to the work by remaining open to the unknowability of what is to come. What will happen as more and more European countries increase their border controls and shut their doors to the millions of displaced asylum-seekers and refugees? What is the meaning of solidarity and hospitality today? How do we create spaces of resistance? The indeterminacy of the event is humbling in so far as it robs me of any power to identify the future of the artwork, myself and the world of others; it opens me to the incalculable.

Let me try to gloss these last remarks by recalling some of the thoughts of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida on the relationship between the eventfulness of art and hospitality.

In *A Taste for the Secret* (2001) Derrida writes, 'Opening oneself to what comes can be a way of exposing oneself to the future or to the coming of the other, to the coming of what does not depend on me'. He calls this meeting with the other a chance event. A little further on he continues, 'And this relation to the event or alterity, as well as to chance or the occasion, leaves us completely disarmed. and one has to be disarmed'. According to Derrida, only if I lack a certain strength can something truly happen; that is to say, there has to be a weakness, a limit, for there to be a future as such: a relation to the incalculable, the other, i.e. justice.

'If there is pure hospitality, or a pure gift, it should consist in this opening without horizon, without horizon of expectation, an opening to the newcomer whoever that may be.' By the same token, Slavoj Žižek in *The Neighbor* (2006) explains that 'To recognize the Other is thus not primarily or ultimately to recognize the Other in a certain well-defined capacity ("I recognize you as... rational, good, lovable"), but to recognize you in the abyss of your very impenetrability and opacity.'

Thus the moment of responsibility, as Derrida astutely points out, supposes a break with knowledge – a sort of interruption of self, or 'passive' decision'. Perhaps this is why Derrida suggests that an act of hospitality can only be poetic. For what turns out to be interrupted, in the event of hospitality, much like in the event of the work of art or poetry, is nothing less than the very notion of truth as revelation and complete transparency. Mrova's practice, by insisting on the eventfulness of art and opacity of mean-

ing, appeals to our fundamental and unconditional obligation as fellow human beings to respond to the singular and distinctive happenings of today and thereby remain vigilant about the course of our shared future. In her artworks we find allusions to hidden power structures, histories, memories, geopolitical and economic relations, all of which open up a way of thinking about the ambivalent event of hospitality and solidarity as a poetic experience.

I end with a passage from Derrida on the task of a philosophy of deconstruction: 'If there is a categorical imperative, it consists in doing everything for the future to remain open. Herein lies something that resembles an ethical dimension, because the future is the opening in which the other happens, and it is the value of the other or of alterity that, ultimately would be the justification – to leave a place for the other to come if she comes. It is the ethic of hospitality.'
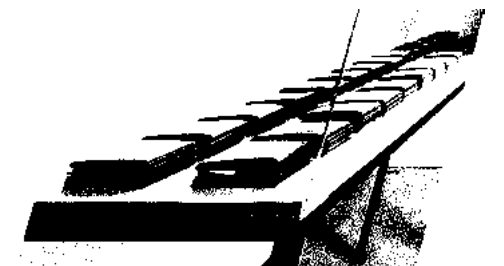
The Art of Being Lost
in the Work of Linda Kuhn
Eugenia Lapteva

In Rebecca Solnit's *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* – a beautifully written meditation on the relationship of getting lost and the art of living with uncertainty and mystery – the author quotes Thoreau: 'Not till we are completely lost, or turned around, –for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost, – do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. Not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.' Getting lost, Solnit writes a little further on, is not about losing what is familiar, but rather, about the unfamiliar appearing. In other words, an experience of being lost, of losing our way; what we might call, in slightly different terms, a withdrawal from reality into a psychic state of ambiguity and non-purposeful activity, is essential to the discovery of self and empathetic receptivity to others.

From this perspective, subjected to what the ethical philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has called 'the audacious dreams of a restless and enterprising capitalism', the following question begs to be asked: At this very moment in time, do we have permission to engage in activities without immediate purpose or profit; that is, to be in the world otherwise and aimlessly? Perhaps we can extend this question even further: Is there room to get lost in the landscapes of our social and psychic worlds, mapped and adapted, as it were, by the array of sat navs,

GPS, self-trackers, digital platforms and live status updates? Virtual voices of action haunt us from within, imploring us to 'keep busy and carry on'. Like a motivational refrain they emanate from the internalized echo chambers of influencers, bloggers, vloggers and other manuals for improvement in all aspects of life.

Linda Kuhn's diverse artistic work plunges us straight into the heart of some of these questions and beyond. Her subtle interventions and carefully constructed installations arguably put us in touch with a different experience of social time: time without explicit content and reason. Both *Flow* (2015) and *Dimmer Party* (2017) invoke atmospheres of play, alluding to the experience of getting lost in a time-space marked by ambivalence and impermanence. *Flow* presents a set of jigsaw puzzles which feature the texts written by Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who coined the concept of 'flow' in the 1970s to designate a feeling of complete absorption or concentration with a particular activity or situation. In *Dimmer Party*, the dimmable lamps, accessories, champagne glasses and background music emulate the languid mood of leisure and amusement. But a complexity lies beneath these deceptively playful surfaces – what might, at first glance, seem like a simple rendition of the conditions of entertainment – Kuhn's artworks, it seems to me, go further by bringing into

experiential relief the complex double nature of being lost. The immersive experience of the jigsaw puzzle or party, of which we are reminded at first, appears to be at variance with the felt uncertainty of our actual encounter with the work of art in the 'here and now' of the exhibition. Let me try and elucidate more clearly what I mean by this.

On the one hand, on the level of content, Kuhn's installations represent two kinds of doing where time recedes into the background: time is taken up, as it were, by the activity at hand (at the party, we get lost in the music, the softly dimmed light, the enjoyment of socializing, drinking, escaping into a world of satisfaction; similarly, while engaged in the jigsaw puzzle our attention is dominated by the occupation, consumed by the search for the missing puzzle piece); and yet, on the other hand, by placing a particular demand on our bodily and mental response to the environment as viewers, the works in themselves invite us into a very different relation to time and space, one which seemingly makes us feel out of sync with the represented experience. Standing within the installation, contra the actual activity, we are struck by the uncanny presence of time. The felt slowness of looking at the work of art – wondering what it means and where it is taking us – forces itself upon us, causing us to lose our way. Kuhn plays with our sense of time and space and in so doing brings the viewer into interaction with a plurality of temporalities, and greater awareness of the ways in which we structure our engagement with self and others relative to our experience of time and space.

Our daily lives and relations in the modern West are organized, indeed colonized, by the pressures of clock time. As writer and psychoanalyst Josh Cohen astutely points out, today the anxious demands for perpetual activity, be it work or leisure, are woven into the

guilt-ridden fabric of existence. 'Nothing is ever fundamentally "off" and there is never an actual state of rest'. For those of us living under the sway of this so-called 'tyranny of doing', the fantasy of total control looms large. Yet the promise of peace seems to hinge on a paradox: work frantically in order to get a break only so that you can remain active: to follow, like, upload, improve and adjust; to keep up to date with personal projects, exercise routines, diet regimes, latest Netflix series, political debates, the list goes on. In our modern consumer culture, as Cohen proposes, individuals operate an endless to do list in a constant fast forward mode. But what if we were to stop doing – controlling – and start being?

Kuhn's idiosyncratic approach echoes this prevailing dilemma and challenges the privileged place afforded to the overactive and task-oriented life in our culture. Her creative practice furnishes us with valuable ways of thinking about the ways in which our social and psychic experiences are organized vis-à-vis technology, and what might go missing in our subjective experience of self and others as a result of this relentless distraction and choice. In the encounter with Kuhn's works of art, time and purpose become suspended, as if to provide an intermediate region of being which sits boldly between states and within indeterminacy, resisting the violence of binary logic (off/on, right/left, male/female, active/passive). This leitmotif also animates Kuhn's piece *We Dare to Say Many Things at Once* from 2015, comprising a series of delicate watercolors in which two different words with similar pronunciations are faintly embossed. Thrust into ambivalence when reading 'No' and 'Know', 'Bye' and 'Buy', for example, the viewer hovers on the edge of one meaning or another, and is never able to settle into the security of either. A neutral space opens up, liberated from the value-laden categories and presuppositions of meaning and purpose.

This gesture has political and psychological implications. It brings into focus what happens when we allow ourselves to stay with an experience and do not evade it by organizing it into the cognizable. Then, and only then, might something quite unexpected and novel about ourselves and the world of others slowly emerge inside us. Being lost, as Kuhn's artistic works beautifully stage, to recall the words of Solnit, is to welcome what is unfamiliar within the familiar with empathy and thus be able to inhabit this space of uncertainty peacefully.
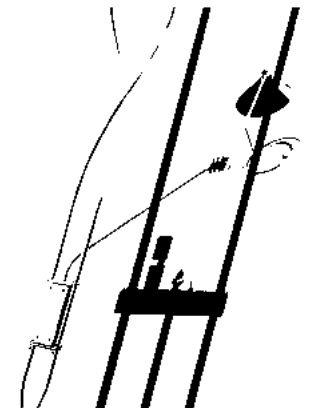
So funny you could cry - On Echoes of Death in the work of Yael Frank
Sally Haftel Naveh

Central to her artistic practice, Yael Frank deploys humor as strategic means for subverting conventions, regardless of genre of medium. Travesty and comedy are ways for her to expose and undermine received notions and power mechanisms that are written into the fabric of thought and society, divesting them from their vested authority while suggesting other, unexpected alternatives of considering enduring issues and complexities. The cathartic release associated with humor thus offers an escape from entrenched ideologies, foregrounding instead the underlayers of a discourse that often remain inaccessible and silenced.

In the exhibition *The Uncanny Valley*, Frank juxtaposes two recent works of hers, both ambitious in scale: *A Problem*, a video which animates three sets of dental jaw models engaged in an existential conversation, and *The Last Hour of Cabinet I*, a large-scale sculptural arrangement composed from Ikea cabinets rearranged as a devotional tableau vivant. While autonomous, the two works combine to spawn an environment that is disturbing, morbid and parodic, where inanimate objects come to life. The overall spectacle relates to the 'death problem' – the haunting fact of the demise that awaits us, the most fateful eventuality in a person's life and its only unshakable certainty.

After it has been secularized and cleansed of spiritual, ritualistic or metaphysical connotations, death has become, in modern societies, an unspeakable taboo, a private event that has no place in public life. And yet, death is a constant in the cultural baggage we carry, forever resurfacing in the undying pathos of religious representations as in the imagery and vocabulary of pop culture; in the existential helplessness of the Theater of the Absurd as in the loss of a sense of self in digital culture.

Frank, who delivers a satirical and anti-heroic feat with regard to this hopeless problem, would rather look this meaninglessness straight in the eye, to strip death of the veils of loss and pathos that still shroud it, being as it is the product politicization. Turning death into a hackneyed, bothersome joke, she draws inspiration from a variety of sources, from Christian iconography and the plays of Brecht and Beckett to reality TV, animated cartoons and talk shows – blending 'high' and 'low' into an absurd display that tries to decipher the death phenomenon in our culture.

With *A Problem*, she brings us something of a muppet show raised from the dead. Created in stop-motion technique, the work animates its three dental-appliance protagonists from their place on a glass cabinet in a shop for dental supplies. Projected on to the wall, they assume gigantic proportions, observing from up high the sculptural complex laid out below them. As a trio of dark oracles, their verbose, authoritative voices echo throughout the exhibition, delivering

a pompous yet empty text, a sequence of clichés that could have been pieced together from any number of existing sources. The text they deliver revolves around some unnamed socio-political problem, using a hollow rhetoric meant to engage listeners and call them into action. Despite the uncompromising and resolute tone, the text is in fact hyperbolic, pointing to its own inherent absurdity.

Across from it is a heart-rending yet minimalist-looking sculptural installation, *The Last Hour of Cabinet I*. Constructed entirely from Ikea 'Detolf' glass cabinets, the artist has subjected these to a range of manipulations – dismantling, bending, re-assembling and soldiering – to recreate them in the image of a pathos-filled scene at the height of its drama: family members and friends surrounding their loved one in his final hour. The multi-participant composition is modeled on the Dormition iconography in Eastern Christianity (the virgin Mary on her deathbed), but with a mechanic redundancy that strips it of its sacred pathos. Not only is a mass-produced, highly ubiquitous object being personified to represent a family in its charged moment of pain and grieving, this personification is directed at a momentous religious symbol of universal gravitas.

While completing each other, the two works differ greatly in tone, with *The Last Hour of Cabinet I* appealing to our emotions, as *A Problem*, with its intellectualized reasoning, appeals to our logic and judgment. The space that unfolds between the two is hence an interpretative one, leaving the viewer with the freedom to decide what preceded what: Did the political crisis narrated by the jaws lead to the unique tragedy of the sculptural complex, or is it the other way around, with the mythic and universal codification of the mortuary scene lying at the root of the unending succession of humanitarian catastrophes that defi-

ne humanity from its very beginnings? Either way – and despite the satirical presentation – each of them manages to validate its own narrative, absurd as it may be.

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Cornelia Herfurtner, David Iselin-Ricketts & John Allan MacLean – Flipping the Stationary Car Appendix (Portal); Flipping the Stationary Car Appendix (Incline), 2017 – Anaglyph Digital Inkjet Print, framed with museum glass, 114,5 x 76,9 cm , 132,2 x 88,9 cm 2017

Linda Kuhn

Linda Kuhn – We dare to say many things at once – 2015 – installation, 6 watercolours in wood frames – each watercolour – 62,5 x 88 cm

Linda Kuhn – Dimmer Party – 2017 – Installation, 6 dimmable floor lamps, accessory, drinking glasses with engravings

Linda Kuhn – FLOW – 2015 – installation, 3 pieces, each with a jigsaw puzzle with 1000 pieces, wood, each between – 70 to 90 x 86 x 66 cm

Linda Kuhn

Yael Frank

Yael Frank – The Last Hour of Cabinet I – 2018 – manipulated Ikea Detolf cabinets – variable dimensions – With support by Artis, The Ostrovsky Family Fund, The Rabinovitch Fund, and the Pais Institute in Culture

Yael Frank – A Problem, 2018 – stop motion animation – 9 min loop

Max Rohr – Good times ain't gone nowhere – 2007 – oil painting on canvas – 110 x 80 cm – Collection Hans Oberrauch

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In his pictures, objects and installations, <u>Stefan Alber</u> deals with the complexity of both the relationships and boundaries of photography, painting, sculpture and architecture. Starting from a space, an object or a situation, Alber develops specific questions concerning processes, production techniques, habits of seeing, or social contexts. In doing so, he experiments with the effectiveness of materials and surfaces by bending, folding or combining them like a modular system, with modules from found and everyday objects. Many of his works are based on models, site art history or social events. The search for site-specific circumstances plays an overarching role in his work.

stefanalber.de

<u>Camilla Angolini</u> Born in Treviglio, Italy, 1997. After realizing that everything in this reality is relative, she dropped her scientific studies and ventured on in a field full of questions with no defined answers. She has been studying art and design at the Free University of Bolzano since 2016 and she is now spending a semester at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf before graduating. She hopes at some point she will figure out what she wants to do in life. In the meantime, she tries to communicate with others through her works that revolve mostly around the questioning of things that are taken for granted.

<u>Ersöz Ata</u> was born in Dierburg, Germany, in 1980. He studied furniture, ceramics, fashion and textile design in Turkey and specializes in fur and leather product design. Besides his personal affairs, he has been working as a designer and consultant for different brands in related sectors for over ten years. His life and production phases lie in Istanbul, however, his creations and designs can be found primarily in Europe and Russia.

cargocollective.com/ersozata

<u>Atto Belloli Ardessi</u> is the artistic director of Isisuf (International Institute of Studies on Futurism), an organization which anticipates and follows the micromovements of contemporary art based on the Futurist experience. It carries out critical interventions in the field of modern and contemporary plastic arts and design, curating exhibitions, essays and publications. Adressi develops projects related to visual art, architecture, literature, music and design. He has taught at the Politecnico di Milano and at the Istituto Europeo di Design (IED moda lab) where he has been involved in visual communication methodology and trend analysis. He is creative director of the communication and architectural agency A-septica, with offices in Milan and Eindhoven.

www.futurdome.org

<u>Carlo Benvenuto</u>, born in Stresa in 1966, lives and works in Milan. Carlo Benvenuto's research is determined by the desire to communicate as little as possible. The artist works at home, surrounded by his furniture and belongings, reducing individual choices to a minimum. Benvenuto's photographs capture what is available to him on a one-to-one scale, making use of neutral backgrounds to create a rarefied atmosphere of subtle suspense. The absence of surrounding elements mysteriously transforms such commonplace objects as an electric guitar or a teacup, all cloaked in soft light of unquestionable pictorial quality. The framing denies any expressive purpose, its minimal approach pursued by a thoroughness on the verge of perfection. In Benvenuto, modus operandi, form and composition along with skillful lighting and chromatic balance perform a fundamental union, disclosing the artist's admiration for classical painting. His beautiful compositions wisely and gracefully call out the order that we frequently try to impose on chaos.

<u>Ginevra Bria</u> is a writer and an independent curator, lecturer, art critic and essayist. She is a researcher at the Isisuf-Belloli Vieira Archives and curator at FuturDome, an independent museum founded in Milan in 2016.

www.futurdome.org

<u>Aslı Çavuşoğlu</u> (born 1982) lives and works in Istanbul. She received her BA in Cinema-TV at the Marmara University, Istanbul. Recent solo shows include The Place of Stone, New Museum, New York (2018); Red / Red, MATHAF Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar (2016); The Stones Talk, ARTER, Istanbul, (2013); and Murder in Three Acts, Delfina Foundation, London (2013). Recent group shows include Manipulate the World, Moderna Museet, Stokholm; Colori, Castello di Rivoli, Torino (2017); Manifesta11, What Do People Do For Money, Zurich (2016); Saltwater, 14th Istanbul Biennial; Surround Audience, New Museum, New York (2015); The Crime Was Almost Perfect, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2014); Signs Taken in Wonder at MAK Museum in Vienna (2013); and Performa 11, New York (2011).

aslicavusoglu.info

<u>Cosimo Filippini</u> was born in Lugano, Switzerland. In 1999, he moved to Milan, where he graduated in Economics for Arts, Culture and Communication from Università L. Bocconi in 2004. In 2006, he began working as a photographer, at first collaborating with Václav Šedý, photographer of art and architecture, with whom he had the opportunity to further study the use of the view camera. From 2010 onwards, he specialized in photography of artists, exhibitions, and artworks, collaborating with several galleries and institutions, including Archivio Giò Pomodoro, Bros (Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Skira editore, Expo2015), Adrian Paci (Civica Scuola di Teatro Paolo Grassi), Joan Mitchell Foundation, Luca Pozzi (Fermi L.A.T. at C.E.R.N., Museo Reina Sofia), and Ivo Soldini (Casa Rusca – Locarno, Pinacoteca Giovanni Züst). The relations he established with these figures and institutions prompted Filippini to engage in a reflection of his own work by undertaking his current artistic practice, leading to exhibitions in Switzerland and Italy. In 2018, he was granted an artist residency at the Viavai Project supported by ProHelvetia, and participated in VIR – Via Farini in Residence in Milan. He is a member of Visarte Schweiz.

cosimofilippini.com

<u>»Flipping the Stationary Car«</u> is a group work by the artists Cornelia Herfurtner, David Iselin-Ricketts and John Allan MacLean from 2015 to 2017, which in addition to an anaglyph 3D film of that title, including a series of preview/ detour exhibitions – 'cadaver', 'swan choir of flat tires' and 'between the lines' – as well as the magazine contribution 'dirty hands O.B.E.' .

flippingthestationarycar.com

<u>Yael Frank</u> was born in Tel Aviv in 1982, where she lives and works. Frank is a multi-disciplinary artist; her work investigates the emergence of power structures that can be manifested through notions of happiness. Frank earned her BFA from the Cooper Union School of Art in New York (2008) and her MFA from the Bezalel Academy in Israel (2012). Recent exhibitions include solo shows A Problem at the Tel Aviv Artists' Studios in 2018, curated by Sally Haftel Naveh. Selected group exhibitions include Recovery Plan – Join or Die at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, curated by Doron Rabina, 2018; Table Manners at the Genia Schreiber University Art Gallery, Tel Aviv University, 2018, curated by Nirith Nelson; Neoandartal at the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon in 2017, curated by Udi Edelman; Citizens, at Petach Tikva Museum, Israel, in 2016, curated by Netta Gal Azmon.

www.yaelfrank.net

<u>Adriana Ghimp</u>, born in Moldova in 1996 and at 15 moved to Italy. She now lives in Bolzano studying art at the Free University of Bolzano. Her artistic practice starts with works which touch upon the complexity that existence implies by isolating phenomena that open dynamic processes of creation inside the viewers' mind. Her works deal with philosophical themes always reached through personal experience and closely investigated. Her approach is interdisciplinary and experimental using different mediums such as video installation, printed media, and performance. As an aspiring artist, she collaborates in different artistic realities, such as the recently born collectives Sidewalk Trento and Sidewalk Bolzano, which aim to create a space for expression through Open mics events. As well as collaborating with the artist residency Eau&Gaz, Ghimp works within a private collection assisting with art shows, archiving and organization.

<u>Katrin Gruber</u> (1985) works as a designer in South-Tyrol. After obtaining her BA degree at FH Vorarlberg, she completed her master's program in Information Design at the Berlin University of the Arts in 2013. In her thesis Vor-richtung, she examined the philosophical term of the tool and its influence on human creation and design. Over the course of her studies, she worked for a number of different employers; her most recent freelance work took place in Berlin for the art magazine monopol. Since her years in Berlin, she has had many design opportunities to assist artists in their catalogue production processes and other communication tasks, as well as developing project concepts and their realisations.

katrin.gruber@58kg.it

<u>Vincent Grunwald</u>, born 1984 in Berlin is freelance artist. His work is shown internationally. He studied at UdK Berlin (University of Fine Arts) and UNA Buenos Aires (National University of Arts), Argentina. Since 2008, he runs the publishing house AKV Berlin together with 3 colleagues. His works were shown recently in New York, Buenos Aires and Athens.

<u>Sally Haftel Naveh</u> is a contemporary art curator and BA and MA graduate of Art History from Tel Aviv University, Isreal. From the late 1990s onwards she began working as a curator and gallery director in commercial galleries such as Bineth and Braverman Gallery. She has been an independent curator since 2008, curating shows for alternative and

nonprofit spaces in Tel Aviv. She worked as a curator and director at Tel Aviv's municipal gallery Kav 16 – Community Gallery for Contemporary Art (2010–2013). She also curated public art projects such as Loving Art. Making Art for the municipality of Tel Aviv and large-scale group shows for different museums such as Re: Visiting Rockefeller, Rockefeller Museum of Art, Israel Museum, and 8 Cube, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, as well as solo shows by Nevet Yizhak, Orient Express at L.A Mayer Islamic Museum of Art, Jerusalem, and Tal Frank, Tie Break at Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. She teaches in the preparatory program at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and the curatorial program at The Technion, Tel Aviv extension.

sallyhaftel.com

Silvia Hell, born in Bolzano in 1983, lives and works in Milan and received a degree in painting at Brera Accademy, Milan. Her research is situated in actions and ways of thinking, instituting forms of tension within methodology, between the conventional objectivity of the referent and original models of presentation and formalization of the real. The resulting work proceeds through points of balance and testing, oscillating between extremes of thought and systems. For instance, in A Form of History, the complex reconfigurations of Europe between 1861 and 2011 are subject to a political re-mapping aimed to convey a spectrum of values in a single aesthetic form with the clarity and simplicity of visual intuition. Exhibitions include solo shows at A+B, Increasing the Wind Pressure, 2018; VRS (piano focale a soggetto mobile) in 2015; A Form of History, 2011; group shows A Sandbox in the Desert,

2016; Slash, 2016; Even a Birch Can Be Real, 2015; and Oltre il pensiero. Quattordici ricerche attraverso ia materia in 2013.

Chiara Ianeselli (Italy, 1989) is an independent curator based in Rome. Ianeselli graduated in Cultural Heritage at the University of Trento and has since been involved in the organization of exhibitions in various galleries and institutions, associations and platforms, including Vessel. She worked as an assistant for the curatorial department of dOCUMENTA (13), assisting projects that included The Hypnotic Show by Marcos Lutyens, Raimundas Malašauskas and Sissel Tolaas, as well as The Worldly House, among others. For the 2012 edition of Artissima in Turin, she held the position of assistant to Francesca Bertolotti, the fair's head of curatorial projects. She worked as production assistant for the Lithuanian/Cyprus Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale. Ianeselli also curated Lutyens's first solo show in Italy and coordinated the performance In Touch with the Centre Georges Pompidou in 2014. She was chosen for the de Appel Curatorial Programme 2014/2015, where she collaborated with the Tropenmuseum. She was also involved in the 14th Istanbul Biennial, working as the production manager for Neurathian Boatstrap. Recently, she initiated Les Gares, a project researching anatomical theaters of Europe through the medium of art in Gare de l'Est (2017), where she worked with the Fondazione Burri. In 2017, Ianeselli coordinated the Villa Lena Foundation in Tuscany. She is currently a PhD student of Analysis and Management of Cultural Heritage at IMT School for Advanced Studies in Lucca.

Peter Paul Kainrath Born in Bolzano, South-Tyrol, Italy, piano training in Bolzano, Vienna and Moscow, active as concert pianist. From 2001 to 2012, artistic director of the Contemporary Music Festival KLANGSPUREN Schwaz Tirol, currently artistic director of the Festival of Contemporary Culture TRANSART and the International Piano Competition Ferruccio Busoni, both located in Bolzano, and Deputy Director of the International Foundation Manifesta based in Amsterdam. Since 1982, he works as a publicist for RAI Südtirol and has produced more than 300 radio broadcasts. He has been working as a director and creator of television documentaries since 1996.

KOI KOI is born from the idea to bring handmade and customized green design to city homes. The Kokedamas, handy mini-worlds, become natural elements which interact with the surrounding architecture, with contemplative care given to both the plants and ourselves. We design and craft everything from single objects to more complex installations with the same attention to detail and a strong vision of the whole, making our cre-ations unique and personal each time. In the KOI KOI Laboratory, we work with materials such as soil, moss and different types of plants; however, in order to maintain these delicate equilibria, light and water become fundamental resources that tie our efforts to ancient rules.

Linda Kuhn's installations focus on how social conditions are reproduced in everyday objects and leisure activities. Her research examines the aesthetic visibility of leisure and its pleasure in the domestic space. In 2017, she was invited

to the Leisure Studies Association Conference in Leeds, UK. Her work has been exhibited in Berlin, London, Vienna and Munich. In 2018, she showed her work in the exhibition Hibernation at Bärenzwinger in Berlin. She lives and works in Berlin.

linda-kuhn.de

Eugenia Lapteva is a London-based writer and editor. Born and raised in Stockholm, she completed her BA in English and European Literature at University of Sussex and her MA in Comparative Literature and Modern Literary Theory at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is the editor of the journal Odiseo and has written for notable publications such as Tank, The White Review, ELLE, Odiseo, Husk and Under the Influence, writing particularly on modern culture, psychoanalysis and the ethical relationship. Her main research interests revolve around the nature of human subjectivity, language and love, and the impact of new technology on human relations today. She is currently training to be a psychoanalyst in London.

www.eugenialapteva.com

Daniele Maffioli Torriani, born in Milan in 1986, made of Milanese and Austrian blood, but with a nomadic heart, like food that I like to cook for my parents, guests, with an eye for things of Italian tradition and Mediterranean, using only excellent ingredients, food and wine. After graduating in International Relations, Torriani turned to the world of food & beverages, gaining important experience in the catering industry. Catering for both private and corporate clients, his work includes communication and marketing within event organisation. Expo 2015, Sa-

lone del Mobile, Fuori Salone, Fashion Weeks, MiArt. Have been, and continue, training gyms in the development of flavors and tastes, where Milan meets the world.

Mrova lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and also at times in Vienna, Austria. She acts as situation designer, (visual) researcher, and filmmaker. The emphasis in her practice lies on mediating social and political issues, places that played key roles in recent historical events, and researching tactical (inter) passivity. Her current research focuses on documentary forms of representation and strategies of deconstruction of power by means of highlighting hidden or repressed memories and fragmentary archives. She works mostly with video, photography, graphic design, sound, radio/air frequencies, sensors, and at times intervenes in public spaces. An important part of her practice is the exploration on the intersection of art, theory, activism and hacking, and providing a platform to discuss the opportunities arising from the work on such intersections. She organizes workshops and invites people to participate. Open-ended projects are an important part of her focus – because such work is created in the process of collective contribution, the results cannot be determined in advance, a process which undermines the standard notion of (artistic) singular authorship. In this sense, her work process is similar to that of a hacker, someonewho works with open-source ethics: intervene in the established system, (re)program the core, leave it open/ make it accessible, and allow others to contribute or make changes. Mrova graduated cum laude from the Department of Interaction Design/Unstable Media at the Rietveld Acade-

my, Amsterdam, and with distinction from the Film and Art Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.

connectedisolation.net

Masatoshi Noguchi was born in Tokyo in 1988 and completed his BA at the sculpture department of Musashino Art University. Based in Berlin since 2013, he has been running the space Wind and Pillar since 2016. Recently curated exhibitions include VERY FAR and Shin's Psychedelic Breakfast as well as a theatre program entitled The 5—5 Legged Stool. He primarily works with sculpture and installation, with a recurring interest in the 'hidden'. His recent solo shows are Blind Masseur at Ranzan studio in Saitama, Japan in 2019, and Dragon Pharmacy at Projektraum Ventilator, Berlin in 2018. His works were exhibited at Eau&Gaz's annual show in Bolzano, Italy in 2018, The Ew, ho hoe hoe ho Art Show 2016 (Year of the Monkey) at Namisagashitekkara Kyoto, Angel's Backstage (2015) at Wönnichstraße 28 in Berlin, and Internet Yami-Ichi (Internet Black Market), 3rd Transmediale 2014 at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.

Elisabeth Obermeier studied Visual Arts in Düsseldorf and Berlin, as well as Cultural Theory and Art History at Humboldt University Berlin. Her research focuses on the history of knowledge and epistemology, as well as related notions of environment, milieu and technology. Accompanying all her interests are theoretical engagements with the image. She has been working at the Cluster of Excellence Matters of Activity since 2015 and is also a freelance translator in Berlin.

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Kathrin Oberrauch was born in 1981 in Bolzano, Italy. She has been active in the art scene for several years. After earning her degree in New Media at Merz Academy in Stuttgart, Germany, she pursued her education further, receiving a second degree in Spatial Strategies at the Weißensee Academy of Art in Berlin in 2013. She has worked as an independent curator and producer for various institutions, including: HaRiviera (Tel Aviv), Singapore Pavilion (Venice), Istanbul Biennial, Darb1718 (Cairo), Associate Arte all'Arte (San Gimignano), Arte Continua (San Gimignano Le Moulin Beijing), Arte Pollino (Basilicata), Forum Factory (Berlin), ArtBus (New York), Goethe Institute (Bangalore), Kunsthaus (Meran), Transart Festival (South Tyrol), and Freies Museum (Berlin). With Marion Oberhofer, she founded the Mimikry Production Collective in 2006. The collective's curatorial practice aims to create possibilities for aesthetic production and question forms of representation as well as modes of display. Since 2009, she is the curator of the contemporary art collection Finstral and the private collection of Hans Oberrauch. In 2014, she co-founded the Artist in Residence Program Eau & Gaz in St. Michael, Italy.

mimikry.info

Sarah Oberauch is based in Berlin. She studied Philosophy and Ethics at Humboldt University and Fine Art at the University of the Arts in Berlin. Her artistic practice and curatorial interest arise from daily life phenomena and their intertwined politics. Since 2014, she runs the artist program Eau&Gaz with her sister Kathrin Oberrauch. Besides that, she organizes exhibitions for various spaces. Sarah Oberrauch's works and installations result from her personal response to a specific environment. Drawing on real life observations and imaginative scenarios, Oberrauch creates short but thought-provoking visual vignettes which portray a setting or situation from an unusual point of view. Her approach is often coupled with humoristic interventions which lend her work a surreal quality and subversive impact. Recently curated exhibitons: SoftArchitecture, Friedberg (D), Dubbed, Cairo (Off-Biennale/Something_Else)

sarahoberrauch.com

The South Tyrolean artist **Max Rohr** lives and works in Florence, and has deliberately chosen to turn towards the timeless genre of painting. Nevertheless, as a contemporary painter, he must deal with the omnipresent development of artistic discourse as well as traditional knowledge and the accepted maxims of art theory. An avid gardener tends to his flowers by night, when the star-shaped objects on the firmament seem to fall prey to the rolled-up leaves of the plants: So far, this is what we see. The enigma of Max Rohr's gardener, who, within the concreteness of his nature possesses the essential characteristics of the abstract, is based on the concept of substance articulated by Baruch de Spinoza. Bodies, flowers, stardust: we are all created from only one substance; attributes of nature in continuous regeneration.

Joep van Lieshout (1963, Ravenstein, Netherlands) Atelier Van Lieshout is the studio founded by sculptor Joep van Lieshout. After graduating at De Ateliers, Amsterdam, Van Lieshout quickly rose to fame with projects that travelled between the world of easy-clean design and the non-functional area of art: sculpture and installations, buildings and furniture, utopias and dystopias. In 1995, Van Lieshout founded his studio and has been working solely under the studio's name ever since. The studio moniker exists in Van Lieshout's practice as a methodology toward undermining the myth of the artistic genius. Over the past three decades, Van Lieshout has established a multidisciplinary practice that produces works on the borders between art, design, and architecture. By investigating the thin line between manufacturing art and mass-producing functional objects, he seeks to find the boundaries between fantasy and function, between fertility and destruction. With this body of work, comprising both autonomous and commissioned artworks, he has gained a strong international reputation.

www.ateliervanlieshout.com

Katharina Wendler studied Cultural Sciences, Art Management and Psychology (BA) at Leuphana University Lüneburg, as well as Art History (MA) at Humboldt University Berlin and at the University of Iceland. After assistantships at galleries Daniel Marzona and Konrad Fischer, Berlin, i8 Gallery, Reykjavik, and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Tampa, Florida, she was the director of the exhibition space SAFN Berlin (2013–2017) and head of studio for Karin Sander (2016–2018). She currently works as artistic associate at the Faculty of Art and Design at Bauhaus University Weimar, where she is curator of the university gallery, as well as a freelance exhibition maker and author. In early 2018, she initiated the dialogue-based exhibition series __in conversation with__.

katharinawendler.com

FINSTRAL Longo PLANK KELLEREI BOZEN CANTINA·WINERY AUTONOME PROVINZ BOZEN SÜDTIROL PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI BOLZANO ALTO ADIGE

RENNER BenQ IUTA Deutsche Kultur