

**KÜNSTLERHAUS
VEREINIGUNG**

K Ü N S T L E R H A U S



**WHEN
GESTURE
BECOMES
EVENT**

Exhibition Magazine
As part of the year of the neighborhood dialogue
Austria - Slovenia 2019/2020

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English

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KO GESTA POSTANE DOGODEK

WHEN GESTURE BECOMES EVENT

Tanja Prušnik

In the context of the Austrian–Slovenian Year of the Neighborhood Dialogue 2019/2020

With the second exhibition at the reopened and newly renovated Künstlerhaus, the Austrian Artists' Association continues with a 150-year-old tradition of transcultural exchange, proceeding with a new and contemporary form of dialogue. Correspondingly, due to my very own Carinthian Slovenian origins, the beginning has been initiated by the unique time of the artistic exchange between Slovenia and Austria.

Two invitations were received in parallel, from the Austrian Cultural Forum in Ljubljana and the Vienna-based SKICA, the first Slovenian cultural institute abroad, something I interpreted as a clear sign, a call for action. My sincere thanks go to Barbara Koželj Podlogar and Andreas Pawlitschek, as well as the Slovenian ambassador to Austria, Ksenija Škrilec.

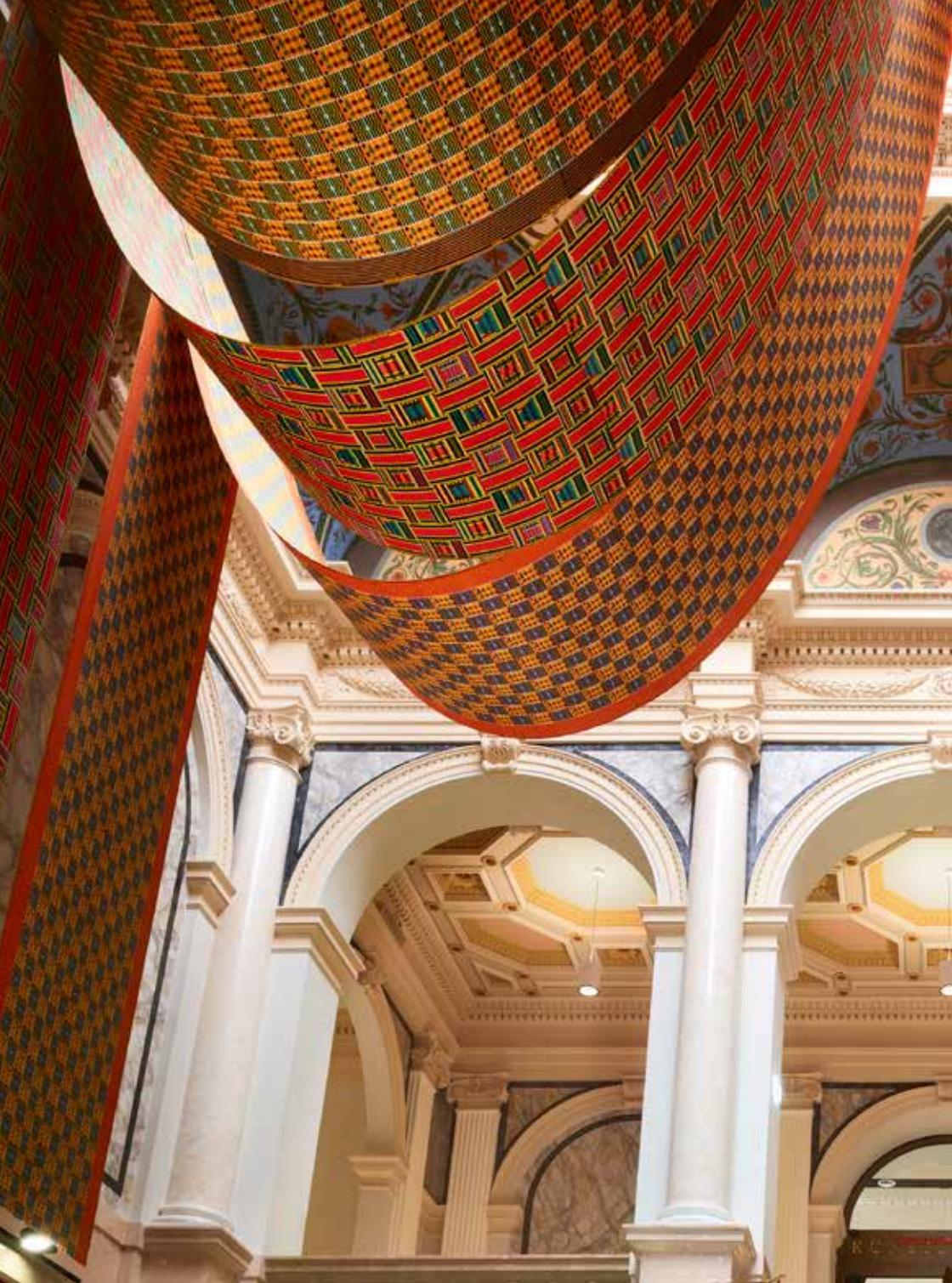
Bringing two countries into artistic dialogue ought to be seen as a significant opportunity, highlighting the commitment of artists of both countries and making their individual and collective agency visible. In this instance, as a Carinthian Slovenian who grew up bilingual and now lives in Vienna, the importance of language has become a particular motivator. The renunciation of the “other language” in the life of majority society erases the originally self-evident diversity of language, therefore restricting our worldviews. The same issues apply to the language of fine arts, seen as a “different” language, one which in fact has the potential to expand and refine views on life and the world.

The exhibition concept was developed together with Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein and with her utmost support, we have carried forth our inquiry into cross-border and cross-generational

spaces of action for feminist/queer cross-media art practices. We have invited Alenka Gregorič to be our curatorial partner on the Slovenian side. Cooperation partners MGML–Muzej in galerije mesta Ljubljane and City of Women supported the processes and will display the exhibition in Ljubljana in Spring 2021, placing it in a slightly different light.

Our exhibition seeks answers to questions of solidarity; questions about the (im)possibility of a dialogue—including conversations between generations; questions about building bridges between different artistic and social positions, between people and countries, between the institutions of cultural life; and about shutting down gender inequality.

Women were denied membership in the Künstlerhaus until the 1960s. Today, membership and gender equality of all sorts are a priority—something made evident also by electing a female president to lead the artists' association. Ko Gesta Postane Dogodek—Wenn die Geste zum Ereignis wird. Do we speak of solidarity as an attitude or an action? An analytical separation is certainly difficult. Women have always been seen as the keepers of language. Who better suited to pass on the voice, the “mother tongue”, to the next generation, if not women? Not necessarily screaming, nonetheless always perceptible even from afar, and also sustainable and evident in the language of art.



Anna Artaker, *THE CLOTH OF STATE*, 2020, Installation view



E-MAIL TO ALENKA AND FELICITAS

27. 10. 2020

Bojana Kunst

Dear Alenka and Felicitas,

In your invitation to participate, you asked me how curators, artistic directors, and decision-makers in the field of art could operate with more solidarity, especially in our current times, so precarious for artistic life.

Artistic precarity is closely linked to the nomadic, project-based, and flexible production methods that have marked so many approaches to creating art in recent decades, as well as the ways that numerous art institutions operate. Precarity is an integral part of the economization of art, which has brought global flexibility and the project-based production of events to the forefront, supported by various financial streams and means of support, with production shaped by the accumulation of projects and facilitating exchange and networking between actors in the field of art.

All artistic actors have felt this intensity in the past two decades, in production, in artistic work and in education; it goes hand in hand with the precariousness of artistic life. Precarity, this ontological feature of our existence, the fact that we human beings are deeply interdependent, has today been turned into a way of extracting our life force, contributing to our regime of governmentality. In this sense, vulnerability actually becomes a basic driver to *do even more* and, while doing so, almost manically manage our means of protection; we want to defend ourselves against what is at the heart of our existence: interdependence, vulnerability, and interconnecting with others. Lives are thus pushed into a state of constant management and self-organization, and the illusion of mastering one's own time and movement through space is, at the same time, undoing the foundations of political solidarity practices.

But precarity is not something that makes art workers equal, rather, it produces profound differences between precarious individuals. Art and those affected by its precarity are asymmetrical and establish a plethora of hierarchical relationships, although the affective mood, sense of vulnerability, and intensity of accumulation may be common feelings. This precarity does not have the same consequences for everyone, nor does it affect everyone in the same way. The degree of vulnerability, flexibility, uncertainty, and fear of the future depend on a variety of factors, including gender, local and geopolitical relationships, racial and economic relationships of power, political situations, health and illness, family background, friendships, and the environment in which we live. And these factors again establish different connections among each other. This is why solidarity within the art community can become problematic, especially when it is undertaken in a manner that obscures differences and emphasizes emotional equality above all, rather than the embodied and material diversity of how we are situated in given positions.

When precarity promotes networking and forms of support under the assumption that we are all in the same position, it effectually masks the actual and real differences in living situations and the various positions of actors in the field of art. At the same time, this kind of solidarity contributes to the consolidation of precisely those economic and ideological relationships that, in the vast majority of cases, establish these very differences in the first place (economic evaluation, geopolitical privilege, privileges of power, gender, and race, the privilege of the healthy and the able, etc.).

In her essay “Sisterhood”,¹ feminist activist bell hooks writes about the means of feminist solidarity. In it, she draws attention to bonding problems between women, which are organized around what we have in common, around a woman as a victim.

1
bell hooks: “Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Among Women”, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. South End Press, Boston, 1984, pp. 43–65.

This kind of advocacy of sisterhood is particularly present in the history of bourgeois female (mostly white and privileged) liberationists, where the basis for connecting among women is violence against them and the recognition of the common characteristics of women as victims. But, hooks convincingly argues, this kind of solidarity directly affirms the sexist ideology of violence against women, because women are primarily perceived exactly as they are in the attitude of those who provoke this violence: as victims, and thus it becomes a part of the ideological operations of inequality. In this context, support and proximity between the same kin(d) becomes a way of exclusion and erasure of differences. In particular, in such forms of solidarity, we cannot confront *the enemy from within*, confront our own positions and privileges along with differences and inequality between women. In this way, as hooks writes, it is precisely within this unconditional solidarity and love, sisterly affection, where the processes of sexism, racism, and class differences are able to perpetuate themselves. It is necessary to do the hard work of political organizing and to develop ways of actually dealing with differences, “prejudices, resentments, competitiveness” (hooks, 63). Only in this way is solidarity able to prevent oppression. It may not directly affect us personally, but that does not mean that we cannot be united in solidarity in practice. The feminist movement, like many other solidarity movements, can only be strengthened “when individual concerns and priorities are [not] the only reason for participation” (hooks, 62). Solidarity has nothing to do with support, with a sense of common problems and closeness, it is a “sustained, ongoing commitment” (hooks, 64), with difference and divergence at its core.

Solidarity as a *sustained, ongoing commitment* is a good description for possible and desired forms of solidarity within art, and here we can learn much from the history of feminism. The way in which bell hooks approaches solidarity among women could also be transferred to the field of art. In art, communities of support are often formed, particularly in difficult economic and political situations, e.g. when there is a political upheaval in cultural policy or radical economic cuts that further aggravate existing precarious relationships. Although it seems that the artistic field usually reacts in solidarity, this solidarity is often triggered by the recognition of, and equated with, the concept of sacrifice (political upheaval, economic upheaval, etc.), although there are potentially significant differences between the individual

initiatives, institutional environments, and lives affected by these changes. It is precisely these differences that determine how someone will be affected and what consequences it will entail; as a rule, they are closely related to sexual, racial, and class relationships, and that is why they impact us in different ways. For this reason, those who somehow manage to survive these changes are often closely linked to the prevailing ideological and aesthetic relationships of power and somehow remain in the field of visibility, while such changes are often not survived by organizations or individuals that were already extremely precarious and marginalized. But these are precisely the individuals who, in their actions and affirmation of life, do not accept the role of being a victim (marginalized only by the other), on the contrary, they are self-made and always maladjusted subjects, who demand that art should exist as a dynamic field of difference and plurality through which different ways of inventing and imagining the world are continually checked and provoked.

Therefore, if the recognition and maintaining of differences, which is prerequisite to a sense of commons, is to be at the core of solidarity, then the solidary decision-makers and those wielding power in the artistic sphere should not accept an outcome in which precarity and changes in cultural policy or means of financing have such radically different effects on the lives of cultural workers. Precarity affects us all, but with radically different consequences, and solidarity as a continuous and sustainable political practice is able to recognize this fact. In this vein, it is possible to think more courageously when we find ourselves in the role of decision-makers, and to address the responsibilities that come with our own privilege without redundant ornamentation. One of the key conditions for capturing precarity as a set of different existential states of interdependence is that we dare to radically undermine the existing ways of evaluating and making visible the artistic life surrounding affected individuals. These modes of visibility depend largely on the successful organization, management, and ability to keep up with the project-based economization of the field of art, powered by “I can do it as long as it’s possible.” How to make inequalities in the field of art visible, how to expose the disproportions of power distribution, and how to deal with them? I think these are some of the key issues raised by many contemporary political initiatives in the art world, but it will be interesting to see whether they will actually change the manner of production through intensive accumulation, or

whether they will really just dissipate the charm of uninterrupted productivity.

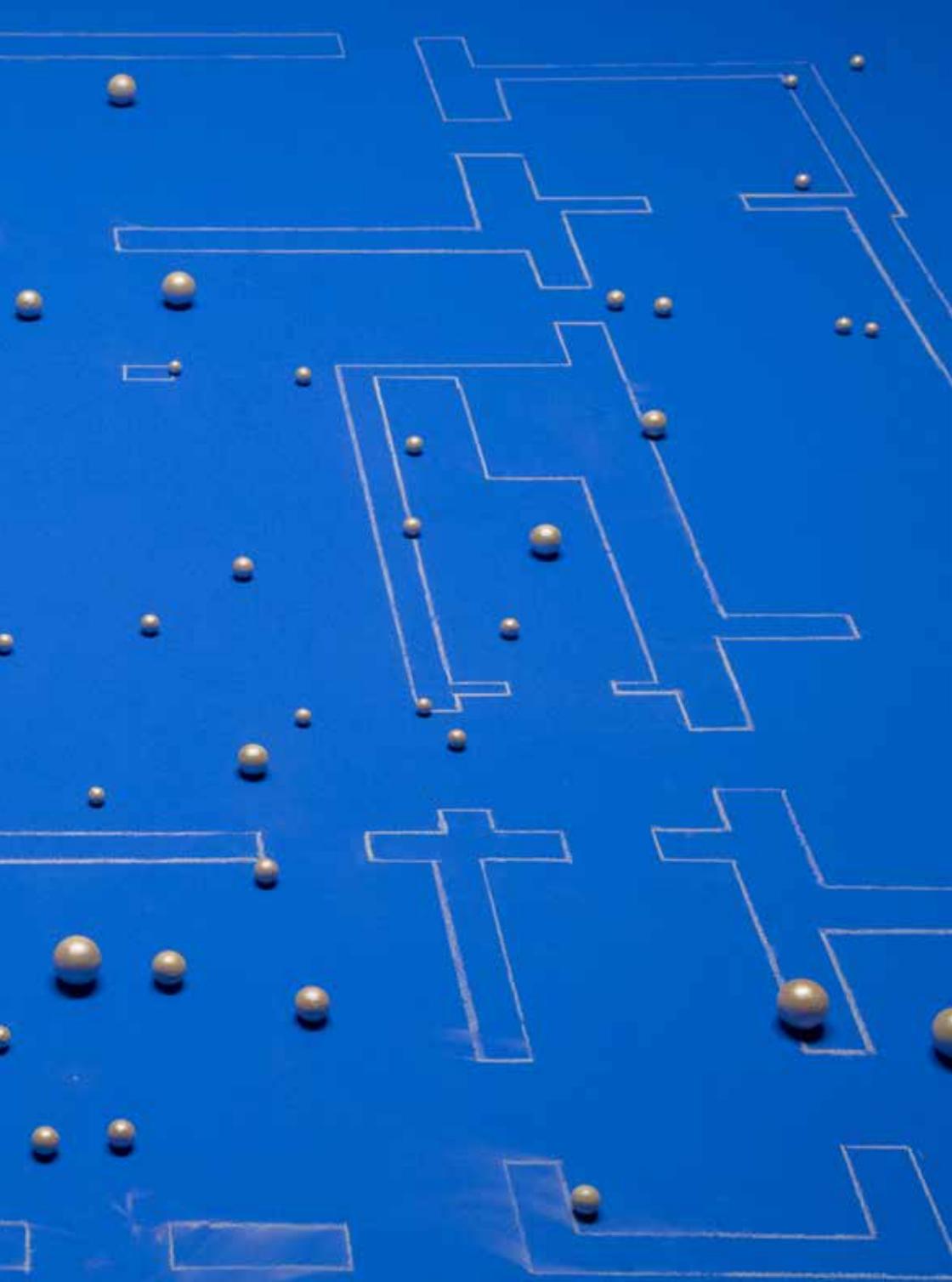
2
Mierle Laderman
Ukeles: *Manifesto
for Maintenance
Art 1969!: Proposal
for an Exhibition
"CARE"*, www.
queensmuseum.
org/wp-content/
uploads/2016/04/
Ukeles_MANIFESTO.
pdf Accessed on: 26
October 2020.

The history of feminist art can help us in this, too. I currently often return to the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles and her *Maintenance Art Manifesto 1969!*² In this manifesto, the artist, known for cleaning museum stairs and shaking hands with New York sanitation workers, describes the problems of art by distinguishing between two systems that could be closely linked to modern problems of precarity. The first is *development*, described by the artist in the following words: "pure individual creation, the new, change, progress, advance, excitement, flight or fleeing." The second principle is *maintenance*, which is to, she writes: "keep the dust of the pure individual creation, preserve the new, sustain the change, protect progress, defend and prolong the advance, renew the excitement, repeat the flight." Mierle Laderman Ukeles adds some important verbs to the nouns in this short passage of her brilliant text. To the states of being, she adds tasks that all result from reproductive work, care, and maintenance, things we need to perform in order to maintain, continue, live, and repeat. And exactly this work is the work of solidarity, especially in precarious times. I wish the work of those who you are asking me about could actually take place in such a way more often.

Looking forward to your exhibition.
With best wishes,
Bojana



Constanze Ruhm, *Pearls Without a String*, 2020, Stage photo by Vitòria Monteiro



PEARLS WITHOUT A STRING

Constanze Ruhm

*Consul: "The sun is shining, life is good, let's go to the jeweller."
Doris: "No, I really can't."
(Dreams, Ingmar Bergman 1955)*

BANDOG-BANBITCH

It is a sunny day and an aging man reproaches the young woman of his desires for shying away from a proposed walk to the jeweler because she must feel ashamed of him. He angrily insists that she should not complicate matters unnecessarily, because he knows exactly what she desires. His initially friendly, uncle-like manner transforms in a flash into the aggressive attitude of an insulted tyrant. She rather half-heartedly rejects his accusations and the two make their way to the jeweler after all, where a pearl necklace that caught the man's eye some time ago is to be bought. The jeweler, it seems, is also an old acquaintance, and in a submissive voice, he affirms that the necklace is still available.

With utmost caution, as if the jewels would shatter into a thousand pieces if handled improperly, they are lifted up and presented to the young woman for her consideration. We hear the loud ticking of a clock we hadn't noticed before, all eyes are on the necklace, and a highly tense, almost breathless moment ensues. Doris is cornered by the two men, the jeweler standing in the foreground, his gaze fixed tenderly on the necklace, the consul behind her, towering over her menacingly. There is no escape from this image, the choke collar she will be made to wear like a dog on a chain is ready to be placed around her neck.

"Look Miss," the jeweler says, "they are living beings, with a personality" (just as she, a young woman, is a living being with

a personality; but she may soon pass into the possession of the consul, who is sure to drive out her living being and personality). Asked whether she would like to try the necklace on, she steps in front of the mirror and slightly opens her neckline; her expression shows desire, but also fear; will she be strangled with this necklace? The man's face is reflected in the mirror, half hidden by a large candlestick that casts a shadow, and for a moment it looks disfigured, as if torn to shreds, for a split second we see the grimace of a monster. The title of the film is *Dreams*, but at this point it becomes clear that it is, in fact, a horror movie filled with nightmares. Doris looks in the mirror at the pearls around her neck—she is now a bandog, a bitch on a chain. The man, now satisfied, has stepped behind her, saying that it is “a great day”, that she only has to “express her desires” and he will “execute them, as far as possible.” A transformation takes place in her face, she has changed, accepted her new role, the choke collar suits her nicely, the clock stops ticking. She'd like chocolate cake, she says, with cream.

FALLING APART

While patriarchal power relations are still intact in this short scene, the second film referenced in the installation, *X LOVE SCENES / Pearls Without a String*,¹ tells a different story. Here, the hegemony of the violent narrative of the patriarchy is dismantled on every level, its monologue of domination interrupted. Here, the pearls, once strung together to form a suffocating choke collar, fall apart—the “plot” of patriarchy is torn apart like the string of a necklace. The pearls are released as other voices, as subjectivities, as living beings with “personality, power, and presence,” as Bergman's jeweler puts it.

Breaking this thread is what feminists have fought for in theory and practice, historically and currently, and locally and

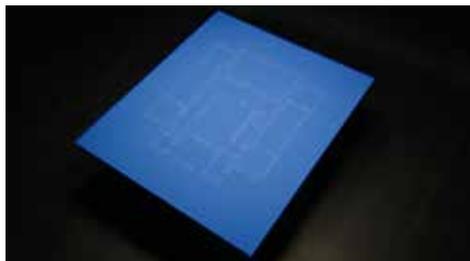
1

X LOVE SCENES / Pearls Without a String, Constanze Ruhm, 2007, 58 min.



Constanze Ruhm
X LOVE SCENES / Pearls Without a String, 2007
Set photo, courtesy of the artist

internationally. The pearls are transformed into metaphors of new possibilities, of the contingency of political, feminist action; they refer to new and polyphonic narratives that take place outside the monologue of patriarchy; they speak of collective action, of solidary forms of life, of self-empowerment, and sometimes of revenge. These pearls thus become the material of random, deliberate, planned, unplanned, playful, combative, hesitant, cautious, assertive, collective, individual, human, animal, and other gestures that are now performed by all those who have been excluded from the narrative for too long; they—the pearls—are chosed and cast onto a newly opened playing field, which is, at the same time, conceived as the open spatial model of the exhibition. The bluescreen blue of the model indicates the possibility of continually rethinking the image, of redrawing the abstract sketch of the floor plan of the exhibition rooms. Casting the pearls (the gesture) leads to an event (to a place in the exhibition where a work is displayed, to the coordinates of curatorial action). Thus the constellation of artistic works throughout the exhibition spaces is based, not least, on the random results of this casting of pearls. It is not a curatorial master plan that was at work here, rather, the joint reflection and action of many has led to the definition of a floor plan, produced a constellation, transformed random gestures into a temporary matrix for the most diverse artistic events, which together spell out forms of solidary action, the formation of community, complicity, and cooperation on the basis of complexity and diversity.





Constanze Ruhm
Video stills from *Pearls Without a String*, 2020
Video, 72 min, color, sound
Courtesy of the artist

WHEN GESTURE BECOMES EVENT

Alenka Gregorič
Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein

The leitmotif of this exhibition is on the emancipatory potential of art as a platform for a practice of solidarity, along with the gestures, possibilities, and imponderabilities that result from and are thus associated with such a practice. In line with the ideas of Diane Elam, the group show aims to develop a new vocabulary of “groundless solidarity”, a solidarity that wholeheartedly embraces variety and diversity.

What could this new vocabulary be based upon? What could this nascent concept of “groundless solidarity”, currently still a glimmer on the horizon, look like in its fully developed form?

The concepts of the sociologist Heinz Bude offer valuable inspiration, which is implicitly reflected in the exhibition. In his book *Solidarity: The Future of a Great Idea* (originally published in German as *Solidarität. Die Zukunft einer grossen Idee*), Bude proceeds from the premise that today, solidarity can no longer be achieved through class struggle or division of labor, but only by individuals coming to a realization of their own vulnerability. *We are all vulnerable*—a sentence that seems so trivial, yet is deeply and disturbingly relevant, particularly in the times of today.

Of course, vulnerability is not limited to human beings alone. Both strength and weakness, it extends across the entire planet Earth and its diverse forms of life, and thus applies on an almost universal scale. Hence, Bude sees “solidarity without ground” as a venture that we must embark upon, on both global and personal levels. Even before we have come to trust such a path, it can show us the way towards new forms of community that are marked by mutual care and support.

The sixteen artists of this show face the challenge and explore the question of whether, and under what conditions, an individual

1

See also Judith Butler, *When Gesture Becomes Event*, Turia+Kant 2019.

gesture can interrupt a seemingly natural course of action and then become not only an event, but also a connecting force.¹

Sixteen polyphonic, critical, constructive, and imaginative voices draft a feminist vocabulary spanning strategies, forms of action, and utopian endeavors, a language to help rethink collective action, cooperation, solidarity, and our shared existences.

The fundamental aim of this exhibition is not to write down rules or make a list of examples defining solidarity, but rather to provide insight into the many possible gestures of social cohesion that reach beyond momentary measures, rather than arising merely in response to external influences and factors, such as injustice or inequality in social and political space. The issues surrounding respectful attitudes and consideration for others, the quest for harmonious forms of coexistence—all this raises questions to which there are no clear answers. The exhibition *When Gesture Becomes Event* was conceived as a sort of handbook offering suggestions, patterns, and sketches, an overview of different notions on how to act in solidarity in the context of art and artistic creation.

Given the circumstances, the design and groundwork of the exhibition were carried out in several phases. We started having discussions with the participating artists during what we now call the “pre-Corona days”, inquiring into the framework of our research question—the concept of solidarity as a fundamental human characteristic. During the “interim Corona days”, our research took on completely new dimensions, resulting in new perspectives being included. Over the course of the lockdown and massive restrictions to public life, we stayed in touch, continuing a lively dialogue with the artists, reconsidering the basic premises of the exhibition in light of the new and fundamentally different



Ursula Mayer
Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality, 2020
LED Screen, detail

circumstances. The intensity of these thought processes and exchanges manifests itself in the entire orientation of the exhibition. It is expressed in a kind of meta-narrative, reflecting the process of joint contemplation of a new reality and the reexamination of all the things that, prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, had been taken for granted without a second thought.

The exhibition architecture was designed by Dorit Margreiter and is based on the spatial concept of Constanze Ruhm's film *Pearls Without a String*, which was specially developed for the exhibition's display. We embraced the intervention proposed by Ruhm with an enthusiasm that has endured to this day. The trailer to the film accompanied us throughout our preparatory work and is now presented as a film installation at the show. As a plateau, dynamic metaphor, and performative constellation, it represents the explosive and transformative potential of conceptual and physical gestures in post-human relationship networks. It depicts an artistic gesture, an offer that—like a roll of the dice—presents the practice of exhibition-making as a collective effort, in which artists, observers, and curators move beyond immediate modes of proximity to try out—together—various ways of being inter-linked, being in touch, and of partaking in a “sustained, ongoing commitment, with difference and divergence at its core.”²

2

See Bojana Kunst,
“E-Mail to Alenka and
Felicitas”, p. 8.



Katharina Cibulka, *SOLANGE (Netz 14)*, 2020, Installation view, Photo: Michael Strasser

A photograph of a building under renovation. The building is covered in white scaffolding and plastic sheeting. A large red statement is written on the side of the building. The statement reads: "AS LONG AS THE HOPE WE SPREAD IS STRONGER THAN THE FEAR WE FACE, I WILL BE A FEMINIST." The building is surrounded by other classical-style buildings and a paved plaza. The sky is blue with a few clouds.

AS LONG AS THE
HOPE WE SPREAD
IS STRONGER THAN
THE FEAR WE FACE,
I WILL BE A FEMINIST.

KATHARINA CIBULKA¹

SOLANGE (NETZ 14), 2020

Künstlerhaus façade

1

In cooperation with:
Vivian Simbürger,
Tina Themel,
Margarethe Clausen,
Marie Themel

How much longer do we have to stand up for equality? Tracing one of feminism's key issues—the quest for social justice—Katharina Cibulka's project *SOLANGE* (German for “as long as”) takes aim at a broad social spectrum of gender-specific inequalities. It interrogates existing power structures and promotes female empowerment. The research Cibulka conducts to generate the contents of *SOLANGE* is based on conversations and discourses initiated through various media platforms (including the Instagram account @solange_theproject). Answers to the question of how long we will remain feminists are then condensed into sentences and embroidered onto dust nets in one-meter-high letters made of pink tulle. The resulting slogans prove rather controversial, highlight problems, and imply hope for change—transformed into constructive provocations that are not about blame or judgement.

On the one hand, thus use of embroidery, a traditionally female dominated craft, on the other hand the construction site, a male dominated space—*SOLANGE* concisely and directly points out existing injustices, each one connected with challenges that influence the development of the art project, and vice versa.

As of yet, only clearly formulated notions of social injustice have been embroidered onto the dust protection net. This time, however, the artist stood back, and while wrapping up the challenging year of 2020, formulates a new feminist demand that is turned into a positive call for action. Underlining this confidence and hope are equal components and important facets of feminist and socio-political work.

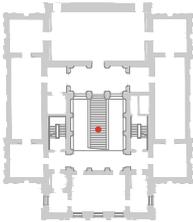


SOLANGE (Netz 14), 2020
Embroidery on scaffolding protection net
with pink tulle and cable ties, 1400 X 1500 cm
Courtesy of the artist

ANNA ARTAKER

THE CLOTH OF STATE, 2020

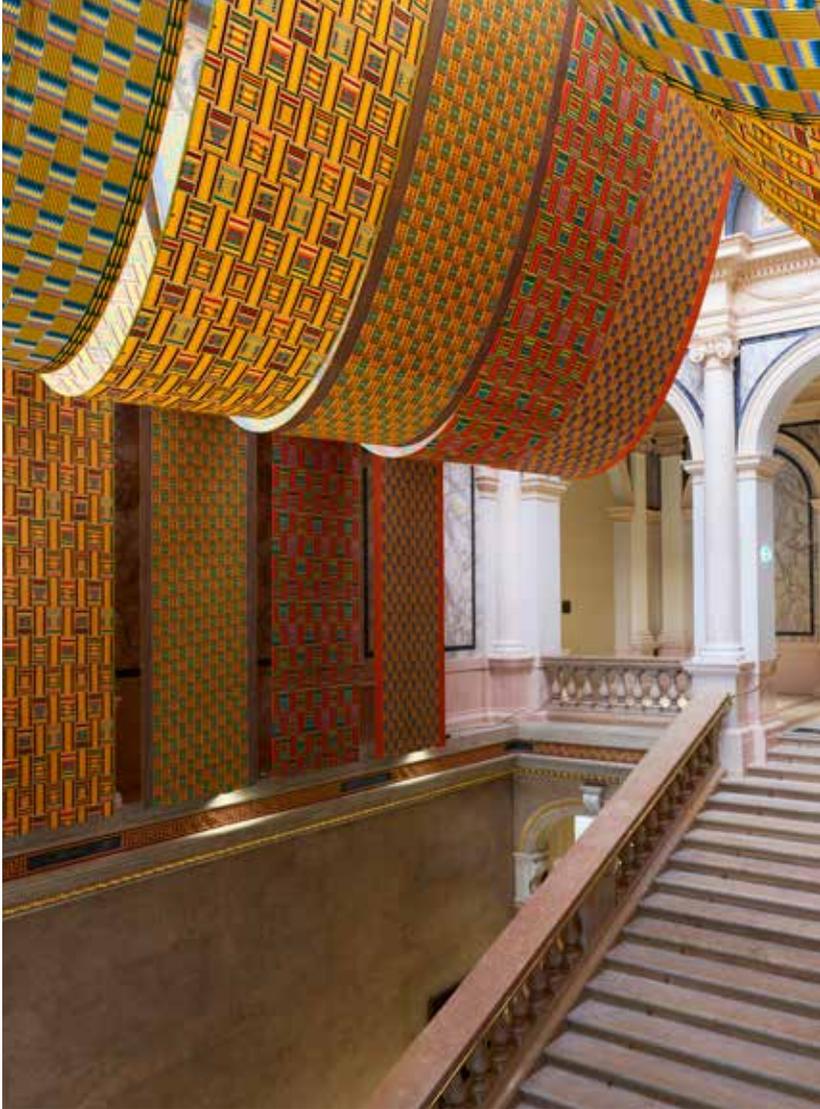
Grand Staircase



AP Photo /
Manuel Balce Ceneta

Anna Artaker's installation references a controversial show of solidarity that illustrates the difficulty of making appropriate and anti-racist gestures. On June 8, 2020 Democratic members of the US Congress donned Ghanaian kente-cloth stoles before kneeling in silence in memory of George Floyd, the African American killed on May 25, 2020 by a white police officer kneeling on his neck. This performative move, organized by the Congressional Black Caucus, was widely discussed in the media, criticized by both sides of the political spectrum, and objections were voiced by many people of color. In the 1800s, kente-cloth came to symbolize Black independence and opposition to British rule. The textile originated in what is today Ghana and later became a symbol of African American identity in the United States.

THE CLOTH OF STATE is a canopy made of strips of fabric printed with kente patterns. It spans the staircase of the Künstlerhaus, welcoming and sheltering visitors. The title, however, refers to the baldachin placed or carried over the throne of the monarch, thus exemplifying the privileged position most visitors to the exhibition are likely to occupy in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement. Austrian mainstream society is white, allowing its members to choose whether or not to deal with racism—while people of color do not have that choice.



THE CLOTH OF STATE, 2020

Installation – Baldachin made with wax print fabric with traditional kente patterns, designed in the Netherlands and made in Asia
Courtesy of the artist



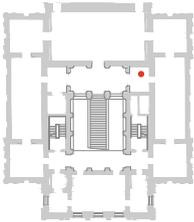
THE CLOTH OF STATE, 2020, Installation view



MAGDALENA FREY

JUCHITÀN – FRAUENNETZE, MEXICO 2012

Grand Staircase, right



Juchitàn is a film by Magdalena Frey about one of the very last matriarchal cultures of our time. Stringing together everyday moments and situations of the people of Juchitàn, Mexico, the film montage takes an artistic documentary approach, activating fragments, quotations, and gestures to their full potential. Under what conditions can an individual gesture transform into a collective force? How can we trust in its strength?

Members of three generations of the Zapotec community recount everyday events and situations from their personal present-day perspective. The film depicts themes using images, sounds, and interviews—we see local market stalls, meet market women (the businesswomen) and their children, we watch their husbands work, farming, for example. And we look out at the sea—a timeless metaphor of infinity.

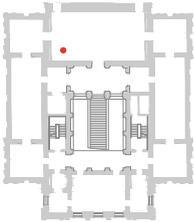


Video stills from *Juchitàn – Women's networks*, Mexico, 2012
Film, 30 min
Courtesy of the artist

THE GOLDEN PIXEL COOPERATIVE

HALF OF THE SKY, 2020

Great Hall



“When I see the blue sky and then close my eyes, I perceive the sky as yellow. Before I became aware of afterimages, I found the blue to be normal. And now that I am infected with feminist thought, I can no longer see anything as I did before.”¹

Initiated by The Golden Pixel Cooperative, this collaborative work opens up the exhibition space, drawing inspiration from the kite festivals organized by the Bauhaus, festive processions with kites and costumes created as artistic contributions. As an homage to the underappreciated female Bauhaus artists, each kite is dedicated to a queer feminist role model.

They were designed by guests and members of the cooperative in a discursive setting, which took place online or in groups of two due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the final event documented in the video, the participants came together in a public space to fly their kites together. The voice-over text is a collage of quotes from conversations between participants about the role models they chose.

In cooperation with the art education department of the Künstlerhaus, visitors are invited to design kites over the course of the exhibition and take part in a procession themselves. Part of the creative process includes reflecting on our role models and emancipative practices. The flying kites represent an updated gesture that brings us closer to the practice of the Bauhaus and focuses on the connection between art and life, creating soaring aftervisions of our role models.

1

Quoted from a conversation between Gerda Lampalzer and Nathalie Koger at the symposium “Veränderte Verhältnisse | Altered Affairs” (Valie Export Center Linz, 2019).

Participants:
Iris Blauensteiner
Dorottya Csécsei
Faika El-Nagashi
Anna Haidegger
Nathalie Koger
Lee Nevo
Luiza Margan
Christiana Perschon
Elena Peytchinska
Marlies Pöschl
Steffi Rauchwarter
Frida Robles
Simona Obholzer
Mona Schwitzer
Miae Son
Katharina Swoboda
Alexandra Tatar
Lisa Truttmann
Seda Tunç



Video stills from *Half of the Sky*, 2020
Video-Installation – 4K video, 12 min, color, stereo, German with English captions
Courtesy of The Golden Pixel Cooperative



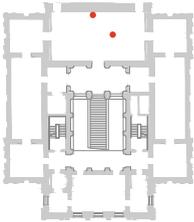
Half of the Sky, 2020, Installation view



MARJETICA POTRČ

THE WORLD IN THE AGE OF STORIES, 2020
THE HOUSE OF SOCIAL AGREEMENT, 2017

Great Hall



The drawings used in this work were made possible by the Headlands Center for the Arts.

The World in the Age of Stories presents a series of three diagrammatic drawings that visualize and conceptualize the agency of rocks, microorganisms, and humans on Earth. Physical inorganic matter, living organisms, and the presence of humans are woven into coexistence and mutual dependence.

Potrč's drawings depict three stages of development: the birth of the world before the Age of Stories; the Age of Stories as the collectivity and responsibility following the Age of Exploitation; and lastly, the world without humans. Each drawing centers around the figure of a woman: an indigenous woman dreaming of the world, a Medusa-like image, and the Venus of Willendorf.

The drawings are accompanied by a simple wooden structure, *The House of Social Agreement*, held together by fiber rope and inspired by the palafitas, the wooden houses of the people of Amazonia. This structure represents the general social agreement that society only exists because people work together. The figures drawn on the structure show how the ideas of a social contract impact human life—from the signing of a peace agreement to fleeing war and natural disaster.



The World in the Age of Stories
(Part 2: The Age of Stories: Humans in a Borromean Knot), 2020
 Acrylic paint on wall

The World in the Age of Stories (Parts 1–3)
Part 1: The Birth of the World before the Age of Stories, 2020
Part 2: The Age of Stories: Humans in a Borromean Knot, 2020
Part 3: The World after the Borromean Knot Is Untangled, 2020
 Ink on paper, group of 3 drawings, each 76 x 112 cm, AP

The House of Social Agreement, 2020
 Wood, fiber rope, and drawings on wood

All works courtesy of the artist
 and Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin/Stockholm/Mexico City



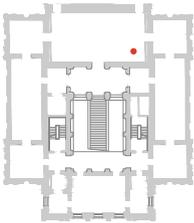
The World in the Age of Stories, 2020; The House of Social Agreement, 2020, Installation view



LANA ČMAJČANIN

THE NATURE OF STATISTICS, 2014-2020

Great Hall



The Nature of Statistics draws on illustrations and aesthetics of herbariums dating back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the times of first-wave feminism and the beginning of the struggle for women's rights and solidarity.

Eight herbarium sheets are inscribed with the places and dates of birth of women named for fruit, such as Jagoda (strawberry), Dunja (quince), Višnja (cherry), and Malina (raspberry), and flowers, like Iris, Ruža (rose), and Liljana (lily). The remaining space is filled with statistics showing just how unbearably narrow the frame of activity imposed on the lives of women—a little over half of the global population—really is.

The decorative and reproductive symbolism of the flora, which has captured the female role in society throughout history, is juxtaposed with the brutal facts of current statistics and accompanied by the names of women who experienced domestic violence, rape, restricted access to education, unemployment, economic dependence, and who are unable to participate in politics in their everyday lives. The images create a space for the personification of the true nature of its elements, freeing these voices from the normalization of oppression and disempowerment.



The Nature of Statistics, 2014–2020
 Projected images – slide projector, 35 mm slides, color
 Courtesy of the artist

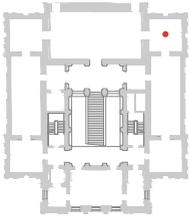


The Nature of Statistics, 2014–2020
Projected images – slide projector, 35 mm slides, color
Courtesy of the artist

NIKA AUTOR¹

NEWSREEL 62 – FAMILY AND WORKER, 2015/2019

First Corner Room on the right



Two artworks by the Syrian artist Mahmoud Hammad titled *The Family* and *The Worker* were on display in Slovenj Gradec in 1966 as part of the international exhibition *Peace, Humanity and Friendship among Nations*. When the show was over, however, all that was left was a small photo in the exhibition catalogue showing the black-and-white outlines of four silhouettes. The vanished images dictate the questions posed in Nika Autor's *Newsreel 62*: What did the pictures of the worker and the family look like? What kind of image can we envisage today, nearly half a century after the exhibition, with Yugoslavia now disappeared from the map and Syria possibly about to suffer the same fate? Was the missing image a foreboding of the future, did it reflect the here and now—in the then and there? Was it about a better tomorrow or did it point its viewers to yesterday? Did it portray horror or delight with its surprisingly imaginative content?

1

In collaboration with
Andreja Hribernik and
KGLU (Koroška galerija
likovnih umetnosti)

Autor's work shows us documentary material and film recordings from the 1960s that are filled with optimism. Juxtaposed with this is a documentary recording of unbearable humiliation and loss of human dignity, showing refugees from a country whose artists once graced the exhibition space in Slovenj Gradec with their work.

Bagdad, Irak
P. 2001
Super

FOCUS DES BARRAGES
DAMAS
1971

Monieur.

Après avoir reçu l'invitation à la
participation à l'exposition de 10 décembre,
et qui suite de la demande d'y participer,
de l'Ambassade de Yougoslavie à Damas,
malgré le retard, nous nous sommes
permis de vous envoyer la sollicitation
descriptif afin de se baser comme base de
référence à la suite de la page de cette sollicitation

HAMMAD, Mahmoud - 1925, Damas,
la famille de la Libération

Video still from *Newsreel 62 - Family and Worker*, 2019
Video, HD, 30 min
Courtesy of the archival material + Hammad + Forsberg = KGLU



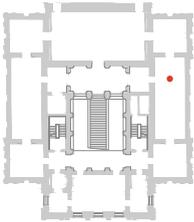
Newsreel 62 - Family and Worker, 2019, Installation view



ANNA JERMOLAWEA

THE PENULTIMATE, 2017

Right Side Gallery



Anna Jermolaewa's installation *The Penultimate* displays a series of bouquets—a cartography of flowers and plants as symbols of political events. Carnations, roses, an orange tree, cedars, tulips, cornflowers, lotuses, saffron crocuses, and jasmine—still lifes of plants adopted by popular liberation movements to represent revolutionary potential and the struggle for change in the face of adversity.

“[T]he military coup against the dictatorship in 1974, which the population welcomed with red carnations (...) was followed in 2003 by the Rose Revolution in Georgia, in 2004 by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, in 2005 by the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and in 2007 by the (unsuccessful) Cornflower Revolution in Belarus. Also characterized as ‘color revolutions’ by the international media were the Saffron Revolution of 2007 in Myanmar, the Jasmine Revolution of 2010 in Tunisia, and the Lotus Revolution of 2011 in Egypt.”¹

1

Müller, Vanessa
Joan: *Anna Jermolaewa. Portfolio*, in:
Eikon, 2018, No. 101,
pp. 42–45.



The Penultimate, 2017

Installation – chairs, vases, carnations, roses, orange tree,
cedar, tulips, bluets, saffron, crocuses, jasmine, lotus.
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Charim



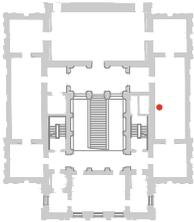
The Penultimate, 2017, Installation view



POLONCA LOVŠIN

POLLINATORS COLLECTIVE, 2016

Right Side Gallery



Polonca Lovšin's work examines the relationship between humans and the natural world. The two main focuses of Lovšin's *Pollinators Collective* are the manual pollination of plants and people working together as a collective. Air pollution, intensive agriculture, and extensive use of pesticides are decreasing pollinator and bee populations. If this decline continues, we humans will have to help nature reproduce, if the human species wants to survive.

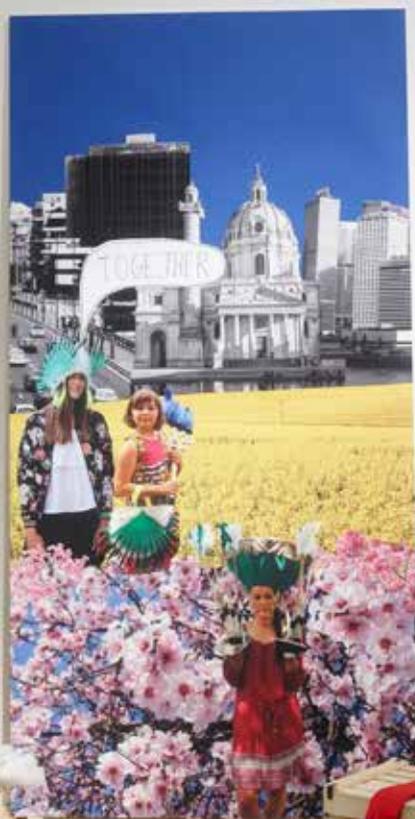
Lovšin's project presents a vision of a near future in which people act in place of nature (as bees and other pollinators) in order to sustain the environment. The artist's collection of tools for the manual pollination of plants includes helmets, gloves, rackets, and other everyday objects, enhanced with feathers and fur and ready for immediate collective action.



Pollinators Collective, 2016
Photo
Courtesy of the artist



Pollinators Collective, 2016, Installation view





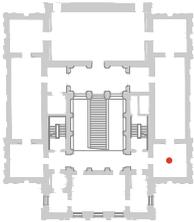
Right side Gallery, Installation view



URSULA MAYER

ETERNAL VOMIT GROUND OF REALITY, 2020

Second Corner Room on the right



Ursula Mayer's *Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality* is an HD video loop showing a hybrid digital avatar of transgender model Valentijn de Hingh. Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" is used to update an icon of the post-human condition, while pointing to a future fusion of nature and culture.

In an era of rapid technological progress and climate catastrophe, all values, rules, and basic definitions are in a constant state of flux. We are no longer autonomous, finite identities, but instead are "becoming" through our relationships with non-human beings and machines. In *Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality*, ash is used to paint the walls. Here, the space of technology and biology defines the shape of a new realm governed by the element of ash as worthless industrial waste or, in Sanskrit just the opposite, a "divine manifestation of power".

Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality draws on scientific, technological, and biological hypotheses, such as the Gaia Paradigm, as metaphors or symbols of new social and political models. Rosi Braidotti examines James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, which advocates a return to holism and the concept of the whole Earth as a single organism. Lovelock named his theory after Gaia, the personification of the Earth and one of the primordial deities of Greek mythology. In *Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality*, digitally animated planet Earths create a visual expression of a Gaia cyborg, a gesture against technocapitalism.

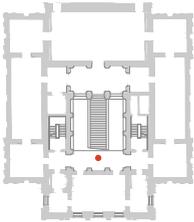


Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality, 2020
LED screen, 300 x 200 cm
Courtesy of the artist

MAJA SMREKAR

96% OF ALL MAMMALS ON EARTH ARE HUMANS AND LIVESTOCK, 2020

Gallery



Since the beginning of our civilization, humans have caused the loss of 83% of all wild animals and 50% of all plants; 70% of all birds on earth are farmed poultry, leaving a mere 30% in the wild. The whaling industry, going back some 300 years, is responsible for the decline of 80% of marine life. Furthermore, 60% of mammals on earth are livestock—mainly cattle and pigs. The remaining 36% of mammals are humans, while 4% are wild animals.

A brutal summary and illustration of the above statistics would show a cow next to a cow next to a cow, then a pig next to a pig next to a pig, then a horse, and then a human, while the latter tries to figure out answers to questions such as: How can we get a grip on our rapidly growing environmental problems before we cross the point of no return? How can we set out on the next great quest for survival, the one that follows agriculture, industry, and information technology?

Maja Smrekar's work *96% of all Mammals on Earth Are Humans and Livestock* puts the fundamental dilemma facing our civilization into a nutshell by presenting viewers with three gym vault benches upholstered with felt. The objects pose a simple choice: use them and become part of the chain of destructive activity by vaulting over them; or not to jump, thus breaking the chain. Irrespective of their decision, the gesture of each participant becomes an event.

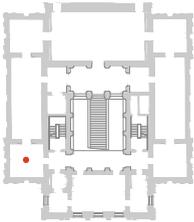


96% of all Mammals on Earth Are Humans and Livestock, 2020
Interactive installation – gym vault benches
Courtesy of the artist

CONSTANZE RUHM

PEARLS WITHOUT A STRING, 2020

Second Corner Room on the left



A pearl necklace is broken, falling to pieces (maybe a man once placed it around a young woman's neck, like a collar on a dog). The pearls—now free, without a string—are thrown by human and non-human actors, part of a playful performance, onto an open field which is the likeness of a floor plan of the exhibition spaces of the Künstlerhaus.

These random casts create new possible spatial constellations for the works exhibited in *When Gesture Becomes Event*. The torn string symbolizes the active interruption of the patriarchal monologue; the pearls embody the potential of artistic practices as feminist interventions. However, there is no curatorial master plan, in fact there is no master at all. It is collective thinking and the actions of the many that bring forth the order.

Drawn up by these improvised gestures, a new floor plan evolves, a playing field for resistance, a rehearsal space for a wide range of artistic events. This creates space for a variety of acts of solidarity, provides a platform for queer and feminist communities and collaborations based on multiplicity and diversity.

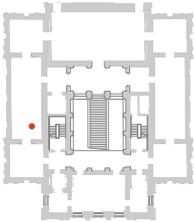


Pearls Without a String, 2020
Video, 72 min, color, sound
Courtesy of the artist

RENATE BERTLMANN

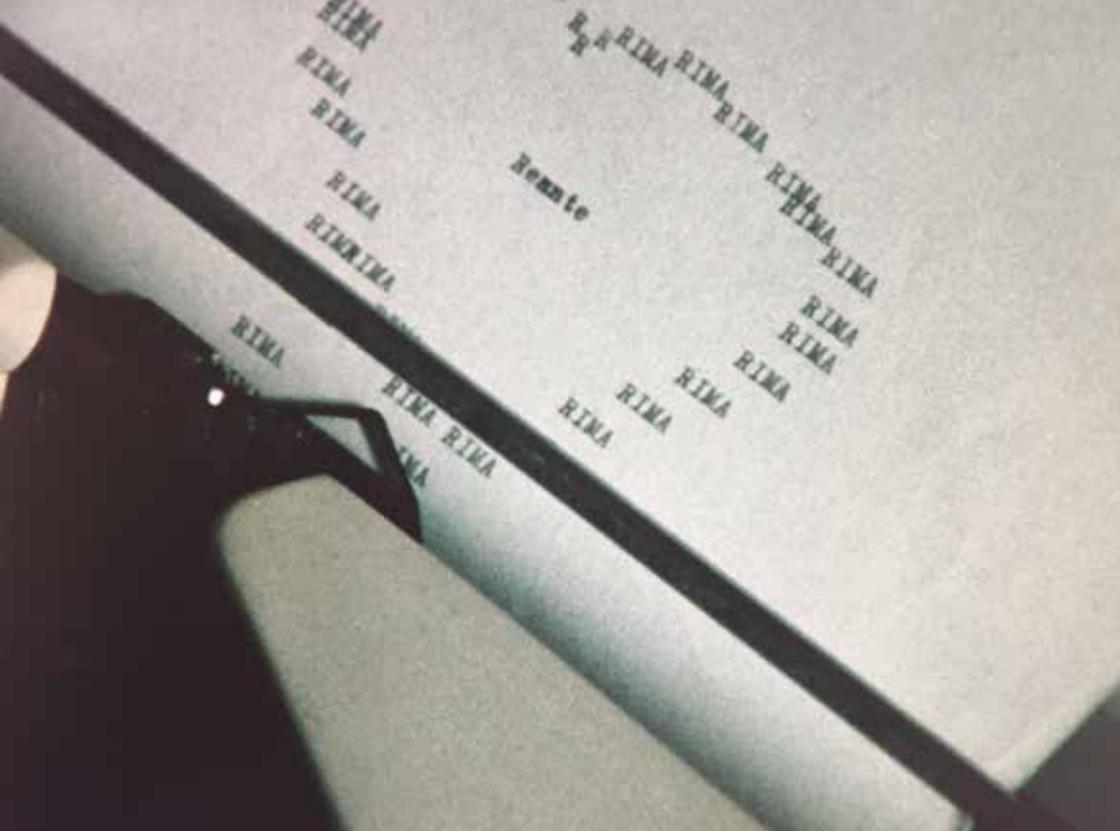
PERFORMING VISUAL POETRY, MOSCOW 1977

Left Side Gallery



Renate Bertlmann's film *Performing Visual Poetry* shows Rimma Gerlovina and Renate Bertlmann sitting opposite each other, working on their typewriters to make an invitation to participate in their joint performance, *Visual Poetry*. One Russian and the other Austrian, their seats are marked with the signs WIEN and MOSKAU. A paper scroll is fed through their typewriters, its ends glued together to form a loop. Gerlovina and Bertlmann fill this scroll with short prose, abstract arrangements, and figure poems.

They then switch seats and continue to write on the opposite typewriter. They read passages to each other and communicate animatedly about the content. Finally, the artists extract the paper scroll and play with its flexible, ever changing, almost snake-like form, wrapping it around their bodies. A short while later, Gerlovina and Bertlmann leave the room, the paper loop flowing from the two typewriters stays behind, forming a place where language, sculpture, and performance meet.



PERFORMING VISUAL POETRY, Moscow 1977
S-8 film, ca. 23 min, b/w, movie still
Courtesy of the artist and Richard Saltoun Gallery



PERFORMING VISUAL POETRY, Moscow 1977

S-8 film, ca. 23 min, b/w, movie still

Courtesy of the artist and Richard Saltoun Gallery





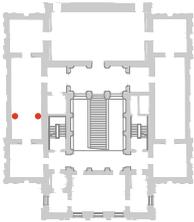
PERFORMING VISUAL POETRY, Moscow 1977, Installation view



DORIT MARGREITER

JULI, LYNNE, SABINE, ALENKA, FELICITAS (ZENTRUM), 2020

Left Side Gallery



Dorit Margreiter analyzes and outlines the (im)possibilities involved in creating alliances between queer feminist actors, artists, and curators, particularly when it comes to interacting with institutions, artistic production, and exhibition spaces. For protagonists, she positions five real and fictional mirroring objects at the center stage. The starting point for Margreiter's lettering sculptures is the artist's preoccupation with typography, particularly with the neon sign "Brühlzentrum" (Leipzig, 2004) from which the ongoing multi-part *zentrum* project evolved. Margreiter updated its 1960s design, derived a versatile vocabulary of visual and linguistic representation from it.

The individual mirroring objects are coated with acrylic paint and clad in Margreiter's alphabet, each spelling a name—Alenka, Felicitas, Juli, Lynne, and Sabine. They refer to the institutions and curators who have produced a part of *zentrum* in the past. The names turn into images and projection surfaces and, while mirroring themselves and reflecting each other, they open up a space for a wide range of collective, solidarity-based exhibition practices. The artist intends to increase the permeability between the space of the image and that of the viewer, thus providing a common social space in which various actors can meet and interact. A crucial factor in this practice is the gesture of switching from hegemonic assembly to symmetry, which provides room for interaction, exploration, and multilingual existences.

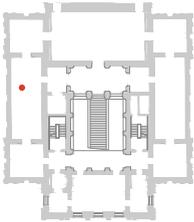


lynne (zentrum), 2020
sabine (zentrum), 2020
juli (zentrum), 2020
Acrylic laquer, mirror, 140 x 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Charim Galerie

MARUŠA SAGADIN

SCHLECHTE LAUNE OHNE KIOSK UND KÜCHE, 2020

Left Side Gallery



Lara, Luisa, and Juliana are benches arranged to create the atmosphere of a public square. Each seating surface is the length of a body, unobstructed by armrests or other hostile, anti-sleep embellishments; supported by figurative arms, legs, and breasts. When approached, the sculptures seem to exaggerate, mirroring the visitors and holding on to their appearance. The group of sculptures encourages people to use the space, to invite their friends over to sleep, smoke, hang out, and socialize. In the same spirit, moving beyond merely providing a place to sit, the work creates a stage for artist Juliana Lindenhofer's sound performance.

Domesticity and femininity transform into public infrastructure, a category restrictively limited to masculine manifestations. Fashioned from heavy, durable materials, *Lara, Luisa, and Juliana* confidently assert their public nature. Their only decorations are traces of their utility. An ashtray perched on top of one sculpture represents a memory of a forgotten age of communal space, an excuse to congregate. The pavers of the floor show traces of footprints, discarded chewing gum, scuff marks, and dirt. Pigment-soaked concrete replicates the texture of fabric, glossy paint adorns the surfaces like makeup. Another sculpture, *Romana*, features a triumphal column standing for urbanity, diversity, and anti-romanticism. It is a gathering of economic castaways, too big for the indoors and too small for the outdoors.



Schlechte Laune ohne Kiosk und Küche, 2020

O.T. (Juliana), 2020

Sculpture – concrete, pigments, wood, paint, 150 x 60 x 53 cm

O.T. (Juliana, drei-beinig), 2020

Sculpture – concrete, pigments, wood, paint, 195 x 65 x 55 cm

Selbe Schuhe, andere Wohnung (Luisa), 2020

Sculpture – concrete, pigments, wood, paint, 125 x 53 x 53 cm

O.T. (Lara), 2020

Sculpture – concrete, pigments, wood, paint, 193 x 68 x 53 cm

O.T. (Romana), 2020

Sculpture – wood, paint, 220 x 50 x 60 cm

All works courtesy of the artist and Christine König Galerie, Vienna



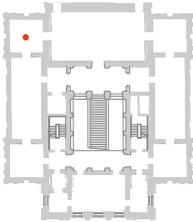
Schlechte Laune ohne Kiosk und Küche, 2020, Installation view



ROBERTA LIMA

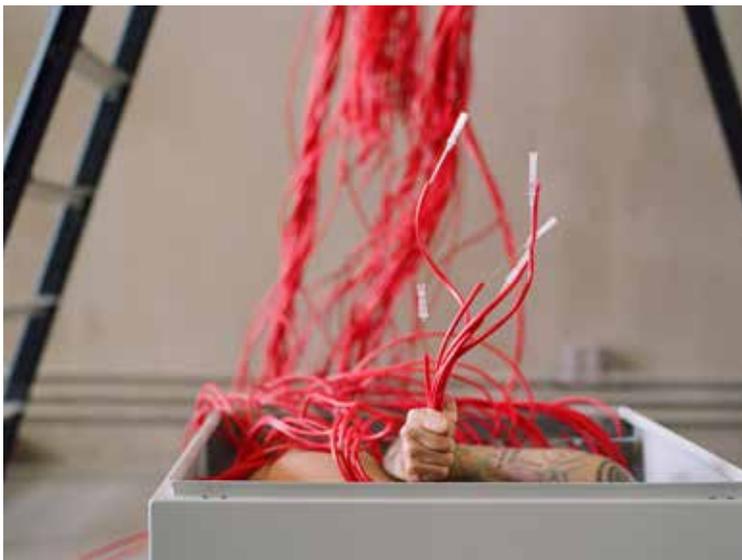
GHOST PLANT, 2020

First Corner Room on the left



Inspired by the incredible structures found in nature and our surroundings, Roberta Lima's *Ghost Plant* embodies systems of support and connectivity. Far from "fighting for light", the different species of forest trees benefit from each other when sharing the same space. Their roots are intertwined and their symbiotic relationship with fungi creates an underground economy, an immense network dubbed the "Wood Wide Web". In *Ghost Plant*, the body stands on its own, the collective stands for empowerment.

The installation at the Künstlerhaus is composed of video screens, photographs, and objects, juxtaposing the concept of the Wood Wide Web with artistic production and communication processes. A centrally positioned object made of electrical wires creates a sculpture that is intrinsically linked with the video installation. The cables are a visualization of the efforts to establish new connections with unfamiliar contexts. Ultimately, the struggle of the body stands for its resilience.



Ghost Plant – Seed, 2020
C-Print, 125 x 165 cm

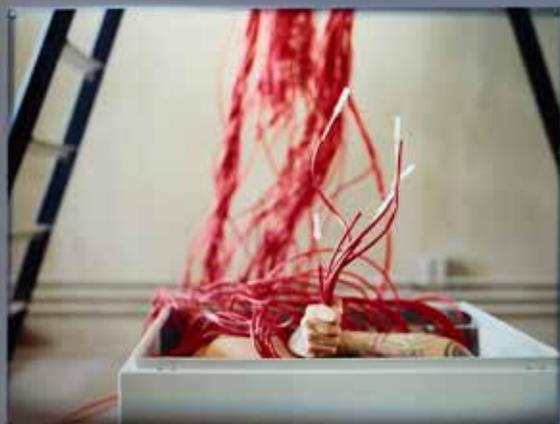
Ghost Plant – Flower, 2020
C-Print, 165 cm x 125 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Charim Galerie



Ghost Plant, 2020, Installation view





BIOGRAPHIES

In alphabetical order

Anna Artaker *1976, Vienna
Lives and works in Vienna
www.anna-artaker.net

Nika Autor *1982, Maribor
Lives and works in Ljubljana and Maribor
www.autor.si

Renate Bertlmann *1943, Vienna
Lives and works in Vienna
www.bertlmann.com

Katharina Cibulka *1975, Innsbruck
Lives and works in Innsbruck and Vienna
www.katharina-cibulka.com
[@solange_theproject](https://solange_theproject)

Lana Čmajčanin *1983, Sarajevo
Lives and works in Vienna
www.lanacmajcanin.com

Magdalena Frey *1963, Graz
Lives and works in Ladendorf
<https://ma-frey.com>

THE GOLDEN PIXEL COOPERATIVE
Association for moving images, arts, and media. Founded in 2015, based in Vienna.
www.goldenpixelcoop.com

Anna Jermolaewa *1970, Leningrad
Lives and works in Vienna
www.jermolaewa.com

Roberta Lima *1974, Manaus
Lives and works in Helsinki
www.robetalima.com

Polonca Lovšin *1970, Ljubljana
Lives and works in Ljubljana
www.lovsin.org

Dorit Margreiter *1967, Vienna
Lives and works in Vienna
www.doritmargreiter.net

Ursula Mayer
Lives and works in Vienna and London
<http://www.ursulamayer.com>

Marjetica Potrč *1953, Ljubljana
Lives and works in Ljubljana
www.potrc.org

Constanze Ruhm *Vienna
Lives and works in Vienna
www.constanzeruhm.net

Maruša Sagadin *1978 in Ljubljana
Lives and works in Vienna
marusa.sagadin.at

Maja Smrekar *1978, Ljubljana,
Lives and works in Ljubljana
www.majasmrekar.org

IMPRINT

Editor

Künstlerhaus, Gesellschaft bildender
Künstlerinnen und Künstler
Österreichs
Karlsplatz 5, 1010 Vienna
T +43 1 587 96 63
office@k-haus.at
www.k-haus.at
facebook.com/kuenstlerhauswien
instagram.com/kuenstlerhauswien
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Cover THE GOLDEN PIXEL COOPERATIVE
Half of the Sky, 2020 video still,
Courtesy of THE GOLDEN PIXEL
COOPERATIVE

Back cover Anna Jermolaewa
The Penultimate, 2020, drawing

Layout Leopold Šikoronja
based on a design by Christian Satek

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Exhibition

WHEN GESTURE BECOMES EVENT

Künstlerhaus, 07.12.2020–05.04.2021
Muzej in galerije mesta Ljubljane
20.4.–20.6.2021

Curators Alenka Gregorič and
Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein

Design Dorit Margreiter

Organization Peter Gmachi

Production Vinzent Cibulka, Lenka
Đorojević, Rudolf Felder, Peter
Gmachi, Franz Zdradził with Art
Consulting & Production

Communication, PR, and Art

Education Alexandra Gamrot,
Nikolett Hernádi, Julia Kornhäusl

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KGLU (Koroška galerija likovnih
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Alenka Gregorič and Felicitas

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Mikl, Blaž Peršin, Marjeta Malus,
Vendome Management Gmbh

Symposium

Künstlerhaus, 5.3. and 6.3.2021

A Model of Solidarity:

**Understanding, Questioning, and
Rethinking our Responsibilities**

Marina Gržinić, Anna Jermolaewa,
Jens Kastner, Bojana Kunst,
Marjetica Potrč, Lea Susemichel,
Maja Smrekar

Performance

Elisabeth von Samsonow,
The Useless Metaphysicist

