

Sophie Schmidt
Portfolio

Selected Works 2012-23



Prostheses as artistic entanglement – a feeler for concrete touch

Artist statement

In my artistic work, I begin with the body, a body that opens itself up and connects. The prosthesis as bodily complexification plays a central role in this. I build prostheses, bodily openings and transformation machines and connect them with painting, drawing and text. Hybrid, prosthetic bodies take shape in all these media. What emerges are cyborgs, although here I am referring to the feminine cyborg as conceptualized by Donna Haraway (Cyborg Manifesto, 1985).

To me, the prosthetic expansion of the body beyond the boundaries of its skin always means an entanglement, connection and empathy in the sense of a bodily complexification. I refer consciously to *bodily complexification* instead of bodily upgrade in order to break with the conventional prosthesis' promise of high performance. Accordingly, my prostheses are no technological products but rather utopian constructs. Harnessing the power of the imagination, they subvert the primacy of the head over the gut and question the concept of the purely reason-driven human being. A new combinatorics of the body becomes necessary to interweave with the world in a new way and to overcome the separation between thought and sensation and other dualisms. Hence the new combinatorics of the body leads not to extensions but rather to complexifications and openings.

With my prostheses and new possibilities for bodily combinations beyond corporeal boundaries, I strive to reach another kind of being-in-the-world and a new bodily posture. For, bodily posture and the establishment thereof implies a certain approach to the world. With humans this means head over gut. With *Vampyroteuthis infernalis*, the vampire squid, as described by Vilém Flusser and Luis Bec (*Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*, 1987), the posture is the opposite of ours: *gut over head*. This changes a lot.

The occidental perspective defines the body as a thing that is separate from the spirit, that lies freely at our command. This dynamic is inscribed in and reproduced by conventional understandings of the prosthesis. This standard prosthesis and its techniques produce a body that separates itself from its environment and social world. This leads to the usual dualisms of body/soul, subject/object, culture/nature, human/animal, man/woman and all their attendant hierarchies. As rational progressive beings, we devalue less rational bodies. We ascribe less value to a feeler that grazes and grasps its environment tactilely and through proximity than to an eye that recognizes from a distance.

Since the prosthesis is supposed to remedy a deficiency, the question arises as to what specific kind of deficiency. Do we need the prosthesis to optimize? Or does the deficiency lie more in a lack of social cohesion?

My prostheses are counterpropositions to the optimization model. My mosquito gymnastics is not a gymnastics of strength. It leads to a becoming-small, a becoming-tender, a becoming-breakable, a becoming-vulnerable. My prostheses stumble, slow me down, complicate things. They are friendly but also resistive. They destroy, laugh, scream, cry and fail. They are tender, small, helpless, and then once again big and mighty. They destroy and fail only to begin anew.

And, they prefer a feeler as eye.



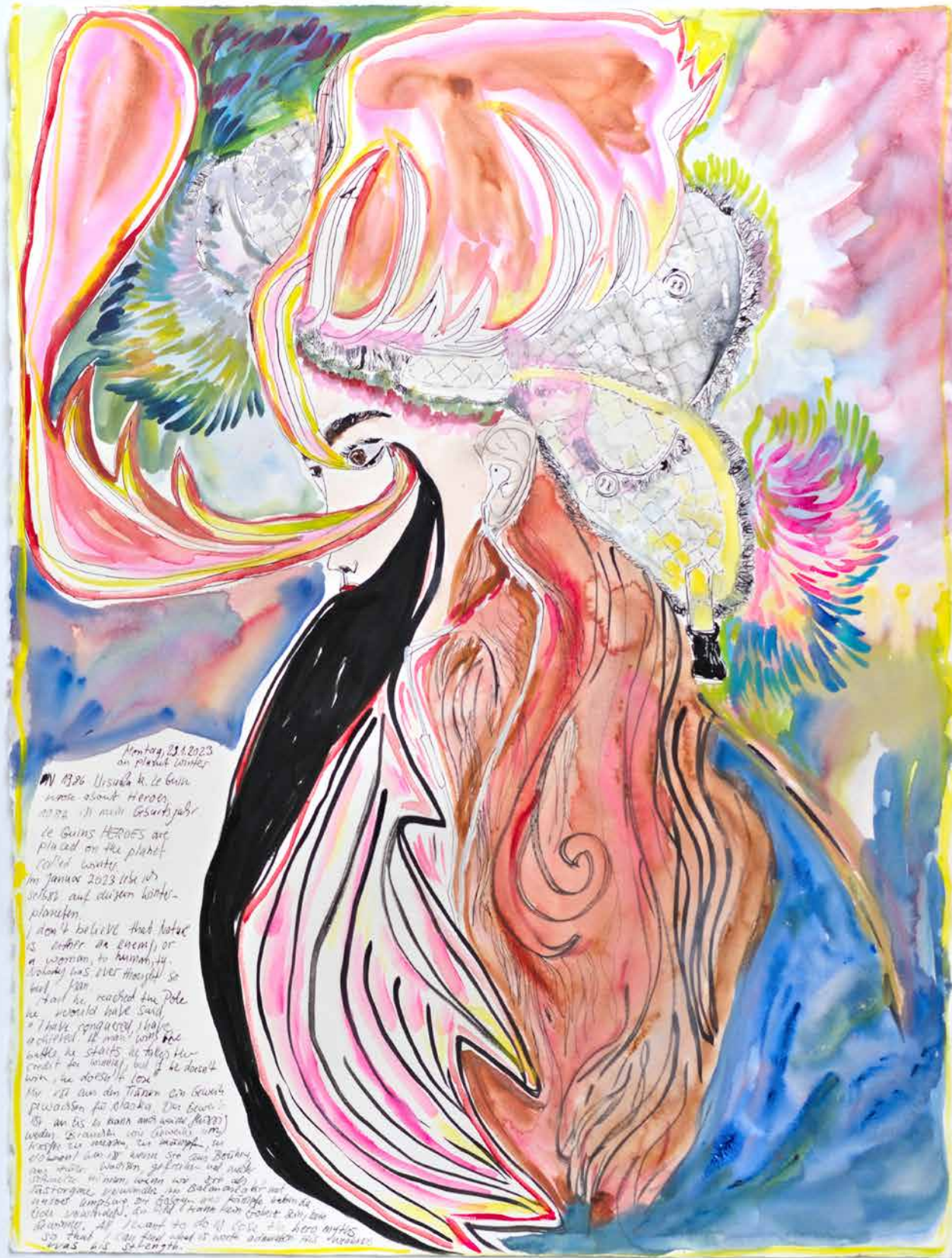


Complexification I, becoming mosquito

Performance with object (Branches, plaster, tape, plastic bags, vinyl tubes, lipstick, tampons, fork, cafetiera, shoe)

2022

Photo: Thomas Splett



Ein schweres Herz muss man sich leisten können

Kunstverein Friedrichshafen
 Solo show
 Drawings, wall painting, object and performance
 2023
 Photos: Kilian Bles

Im Januar 2023 lebe ich selbst auf diesem Winterplaneten
 Watercolor on paper, 76 x 57 cm
 2023



A heavy heart has to be affordable

Sophie Schmidt is a border crosser in many respects. Her expansive multimedia installations transcend all genre boundaries. Starting with drawings, collages, canvas paintings and murals, into which she often integrates her own texts, they also include sculptures made from all kinds of everyday materials such as sieves, branches, hoses, old wheelbarrows, or oil drums. The artist's impressive performances often push her to her physical limits as well. Trapped in fragile, usable sculptures – which she calls prostheses – she recites her, with personal experiences imbued texts, sometimes speaking timidly, other times singing fervently.

In her works, Sophie Schmidt translates her view of the world into a universal poetry that lends a fleeting encounter, a smell, existential human feelings such as fear, joy, loneliness, or desire, and even the most banal everyday situation a poignant profundity.

For her first institutional solo exhibition, *A heavy heart has to be affordable*, the artist has once again created an expansive installation that is also the stage for the opera of the same title, which will be performed at the exhibition opening. In diary-like sequences, Schmidt lets us participate in her poetics of the Everyday, for which in turn various borderline experiences collected on a trip to the United States are decisive. A travel scholarship took her first to Alaska and then to Chicago.

She has already processed the impressions she has gained on numerous journeys in her exhibitions and artist's books before. And this time too, she takes us to one of the most remote places in the world, to Anchorage, Alaska. „At the edge of the Round Lake. At the edge of the Round World.“ as written in one drawing of the exhibition. She takes us to her Airbnb on the Malibu RD, onto the eternal ice that centuries ago connected the continents and makes us feel the forces of nature in this place so pristine, so hostile to life, that humanity hasn't been able to subdue it.

Arriving in Chicago, everything that civilisation has to offer culminates. The American Dream collides with poverty and crime, no-go areas with a glittering skyline, and America's colonial past also manifests itself in the shocking contrast between the rich north and the poor south of the city.

The artist describes all this on a pictorial and textual level in the exhibition's collages, and drawings, interweaves it with texts by other literary figures, notes and an letter exchanges, and transforms it into an opera in which moods, body parts, organs, tear-antler prostheses, moose, snow, trees, architecture, Anchorage and Chicago take on a life of their own.

From the Pacific Ocean we thus follow Sophie Schmidt to Lake Michigan, to finally find ourselves at Lake Constance. During this journey, she shares with us her multi-layered and profound *world poetry*.

by Hannah Eckstein

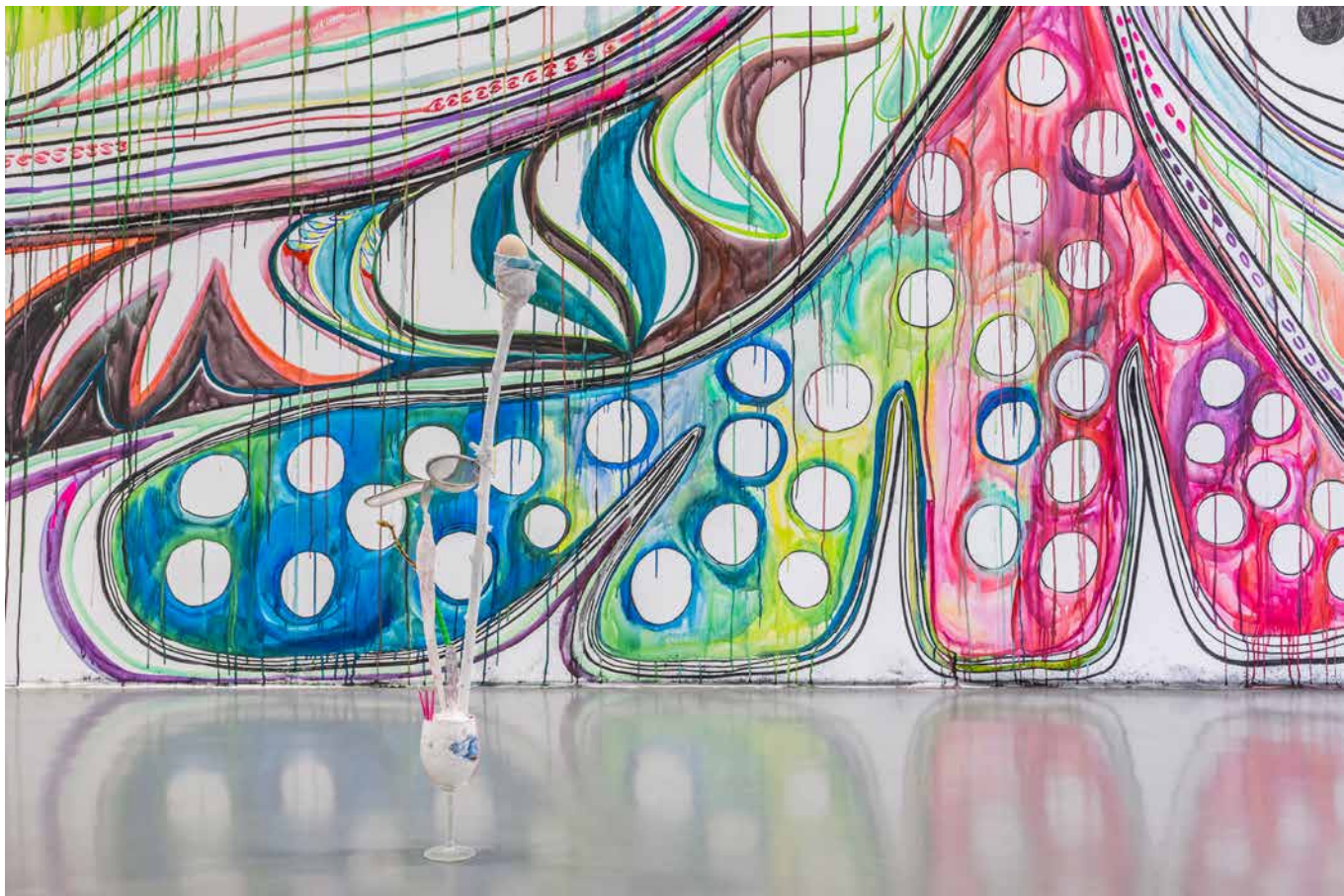
left:

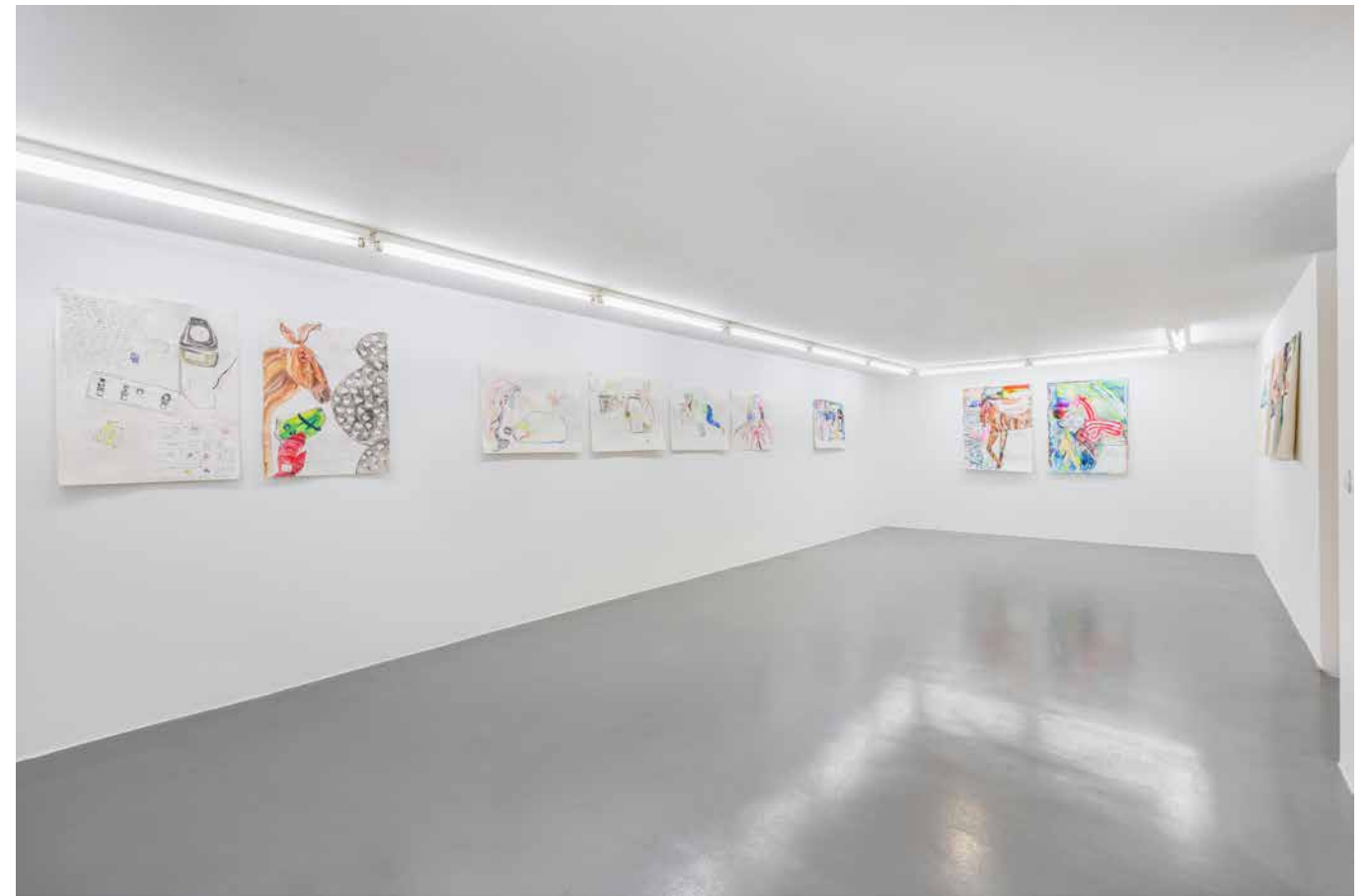
She is she ,wo is she, she she, see, ja see

800 x 107 cm

Photo prints, watercolor, ink on paper

2023





previous:

Ich bekomme ein Wimperngeweih aus Schneekristallen

105 x 78 cm

Watercolor and pen on paper

2023

above:

Meine Tränen werden zu Schneekristallen in Alaska (left)

Who am i? Whay am i? Where am i? What am i? (right)

105 x 78 cm both

Watercolor and pen on paper

2023

right:

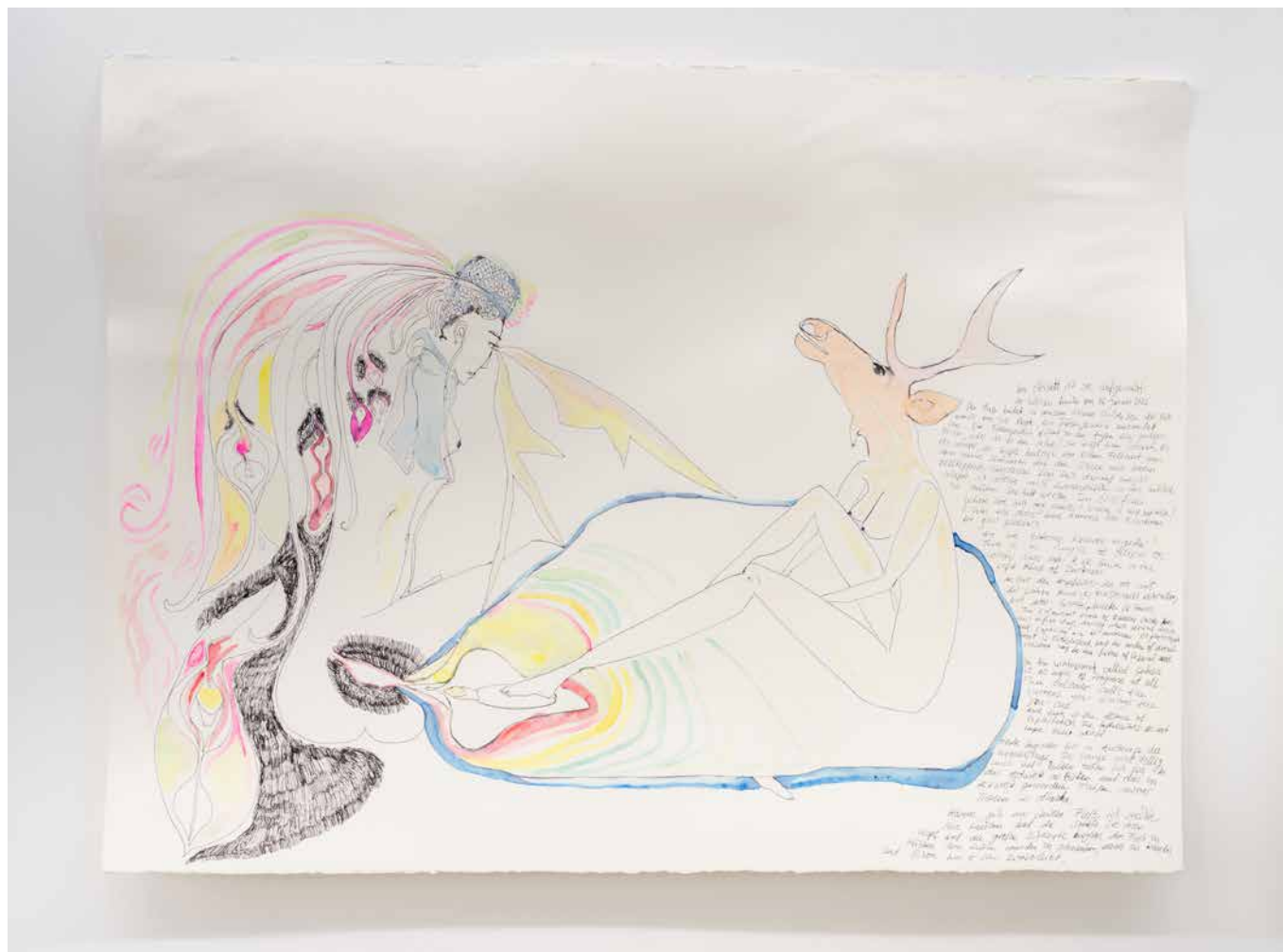
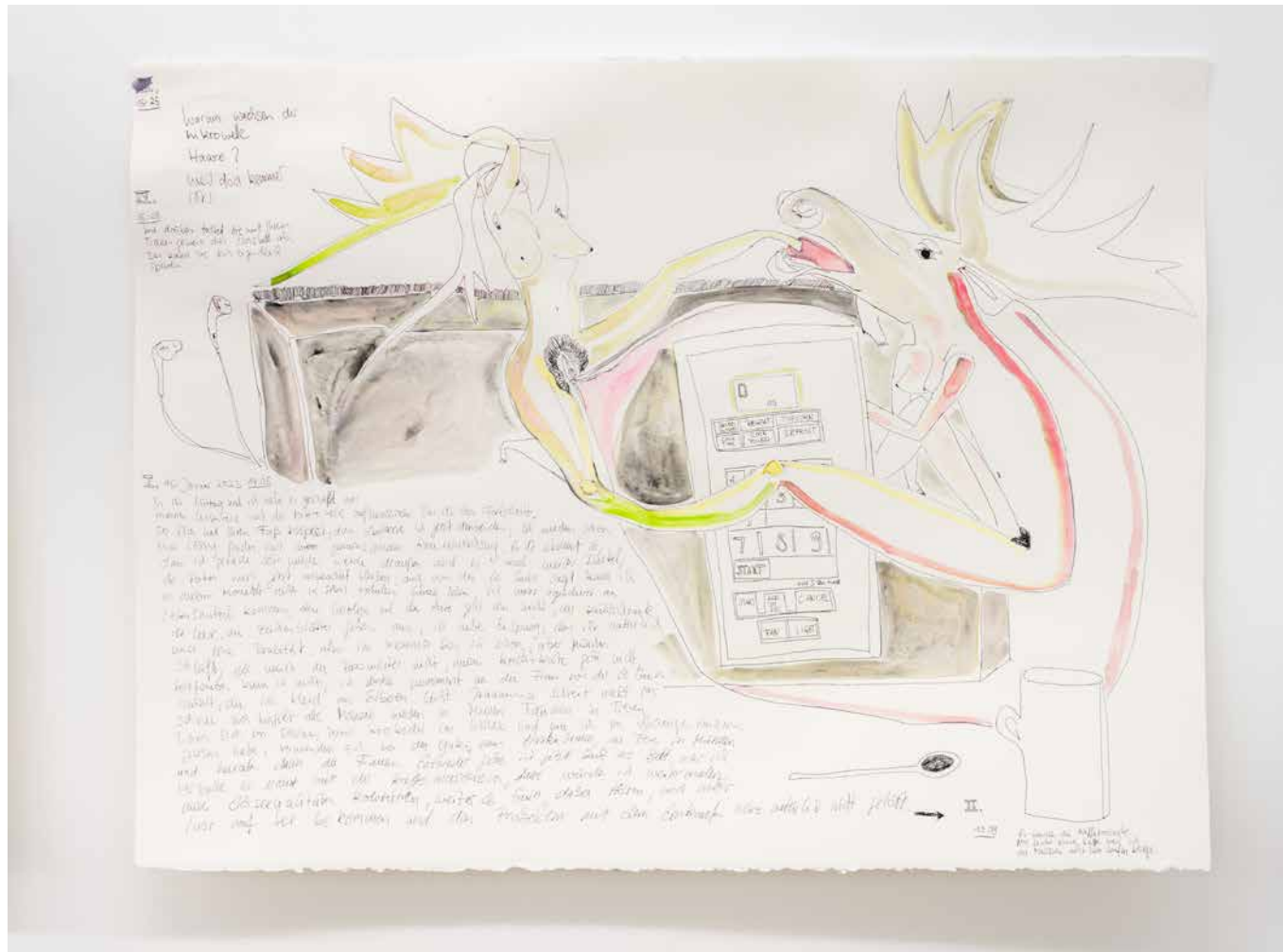
Jetzt ist es eben so, ich in Alaska.

57 x 76 cm

Watercolor and pen on paper

2023





previous:

Fingernagelglück am Chicagosee (right, 100 × 66 cm)

Knoblauch, Knoblauch, lass dein Haar herunter (left, 68 x 100 cm)

Photo prints, watercolor, ink on paper
2023

left:

Es wurde die Kaffevariante (above)

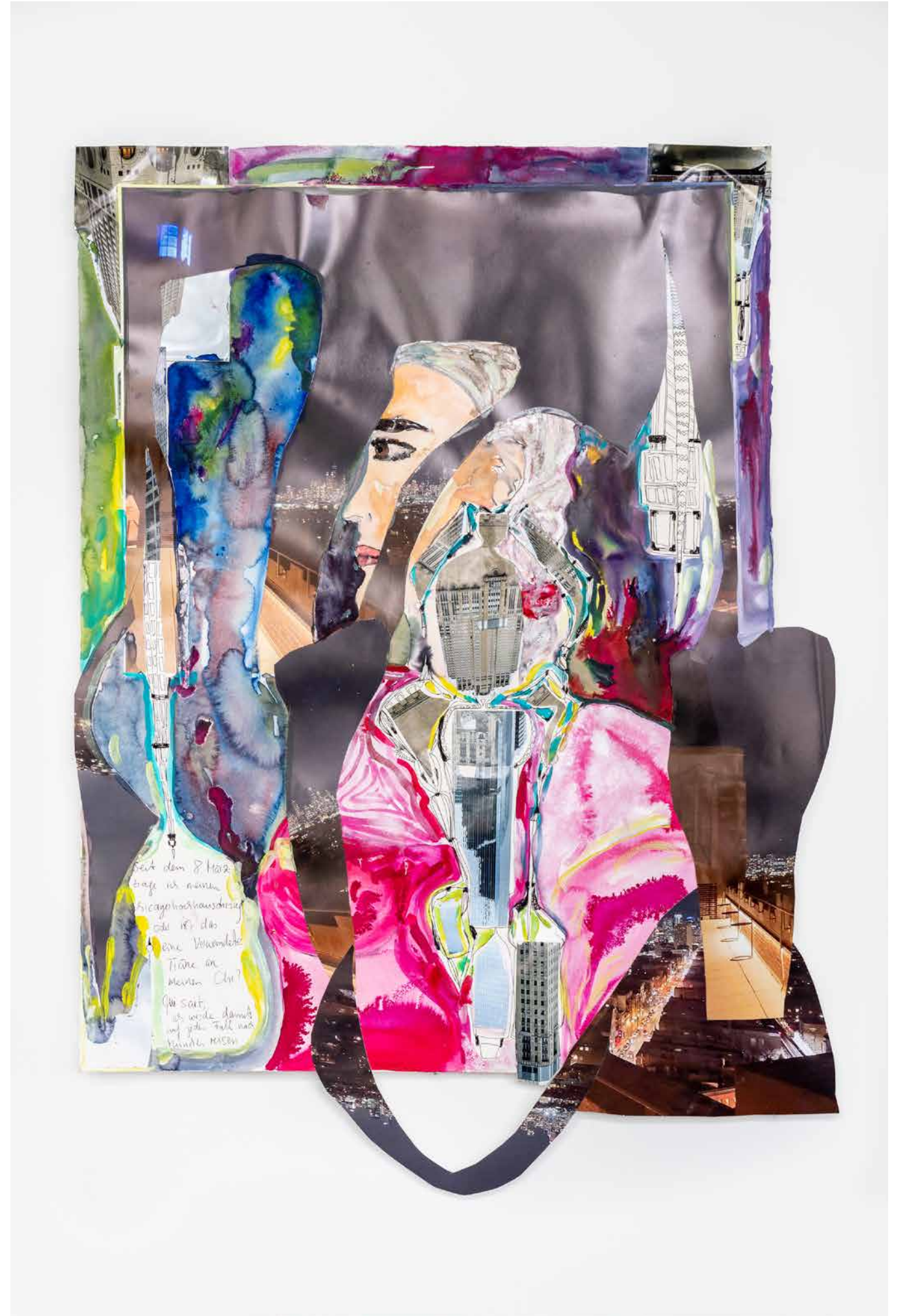
Im Elchsbett ist sie aufgewacht (below)

57 × 76 cm
Watercolor and pen on paper
2023

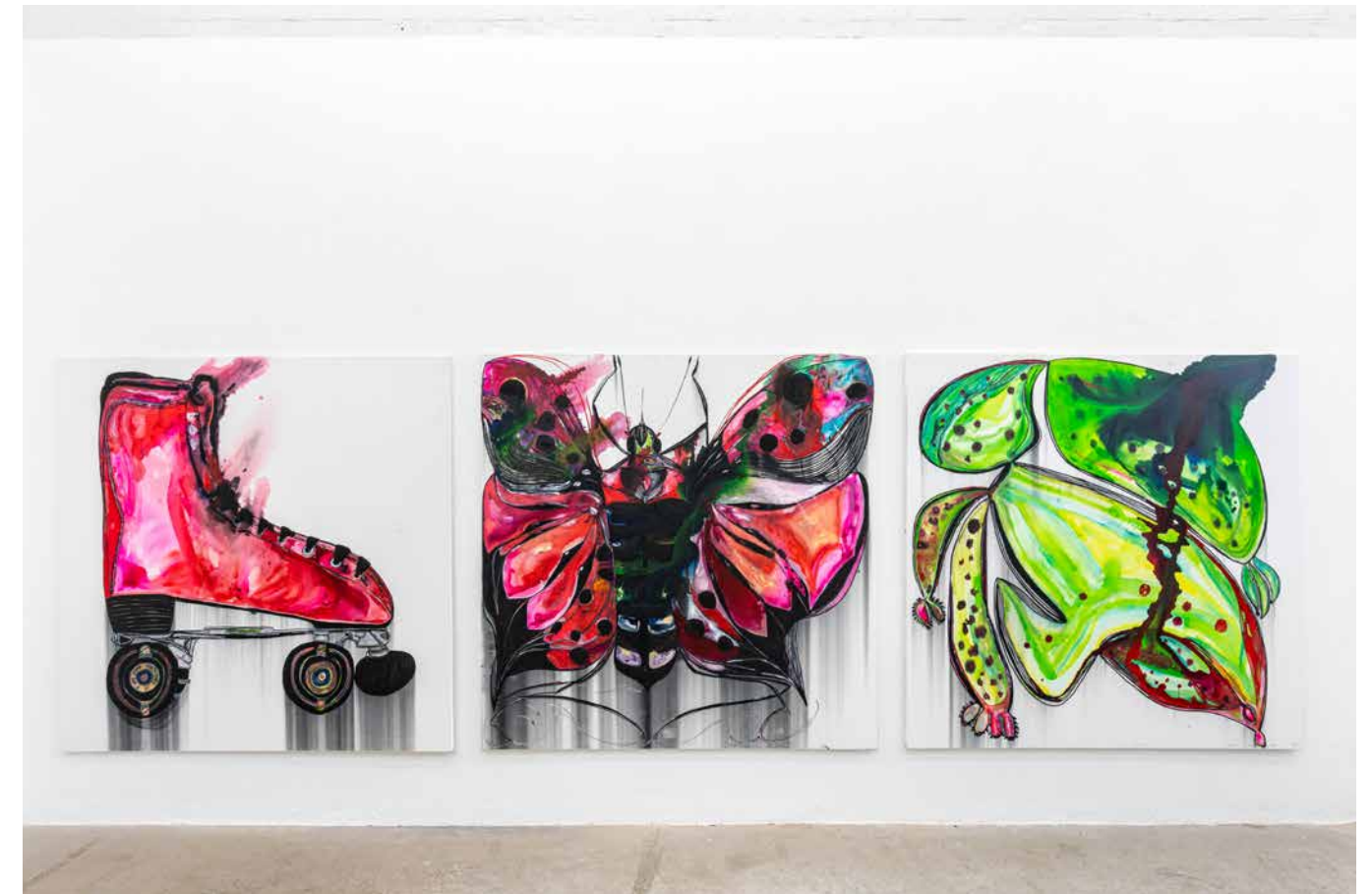
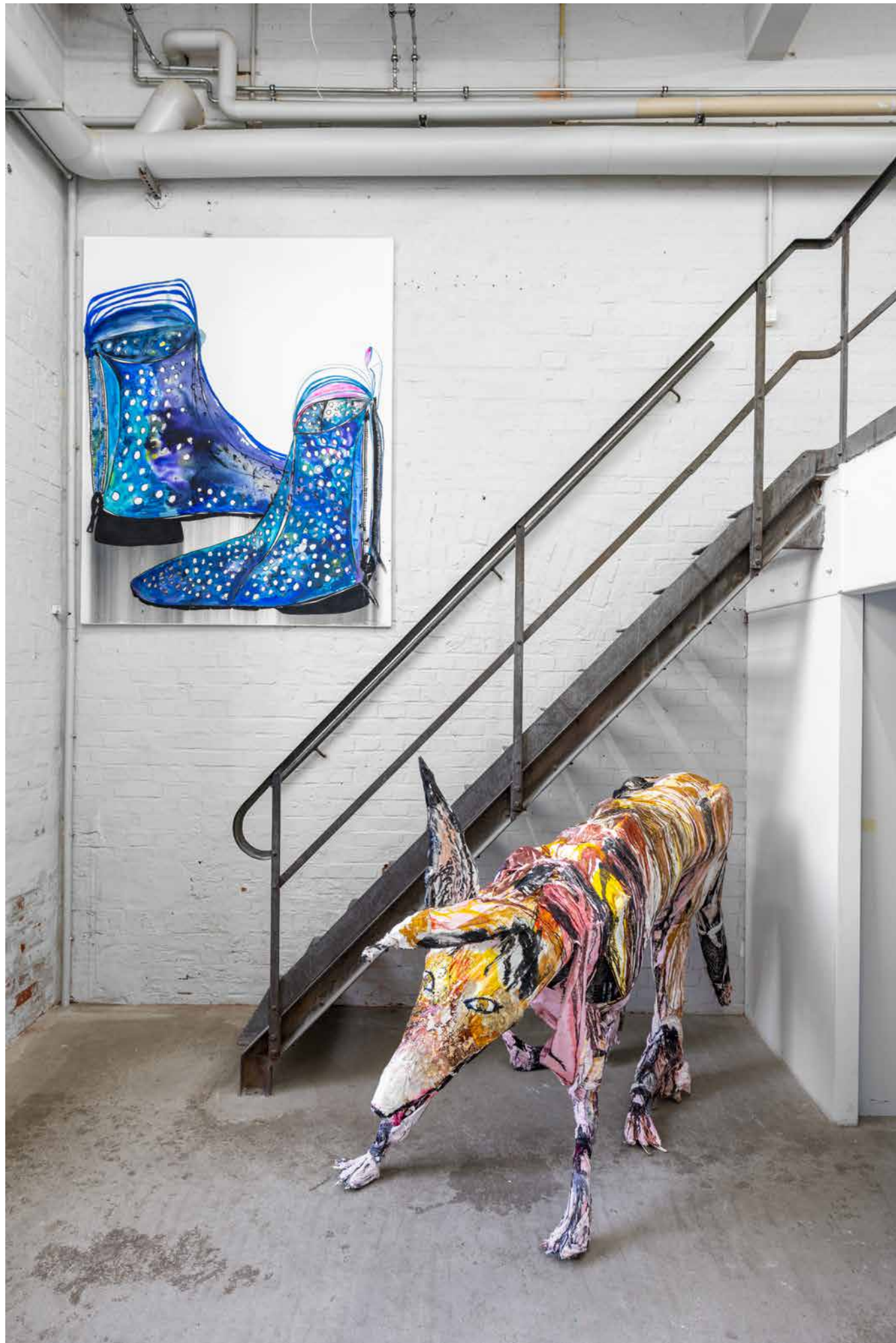
next:

Chicagohochhausobring

86 x 60 cm
Photo prints, watercolor, ink on paper
2023

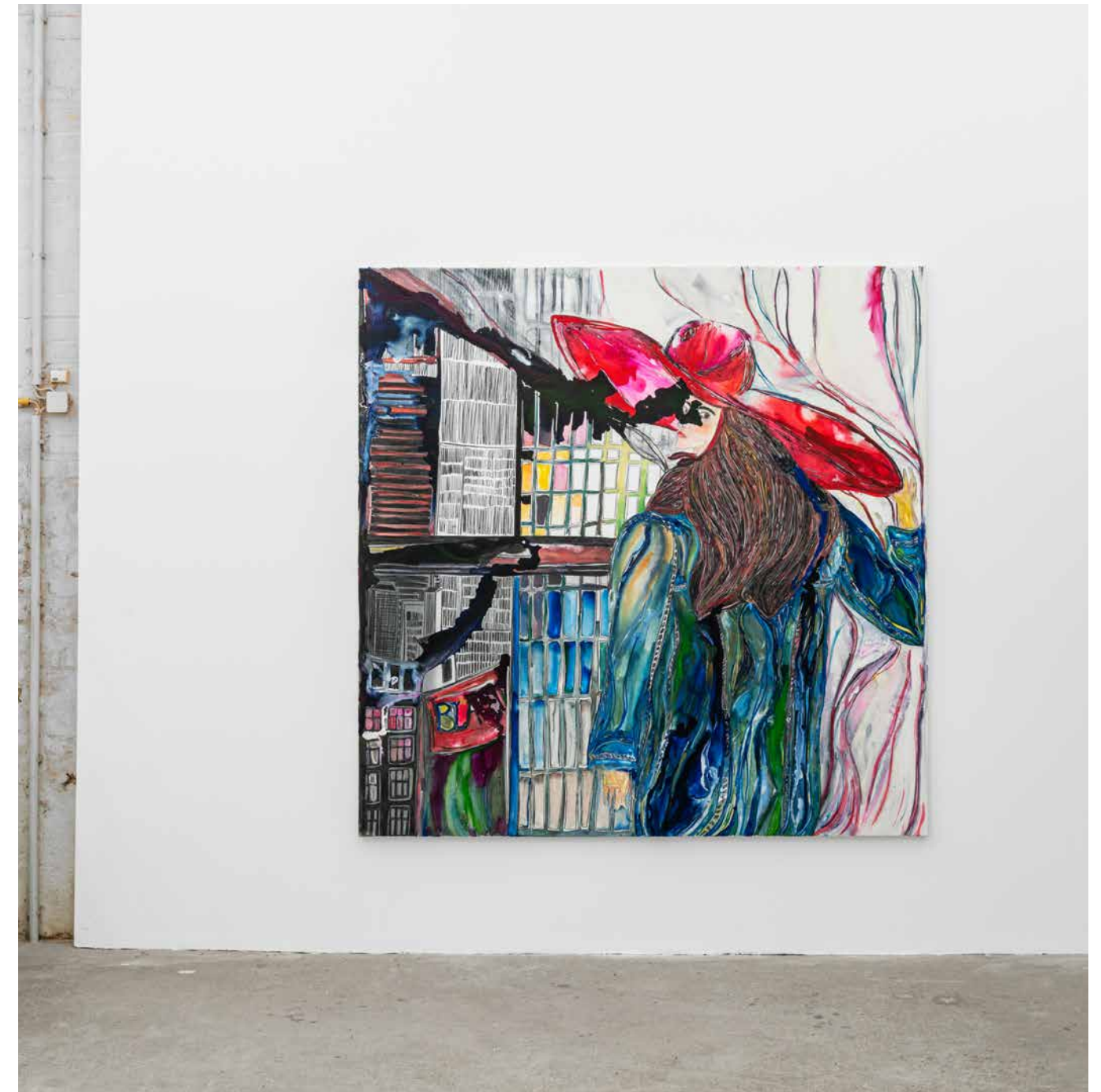
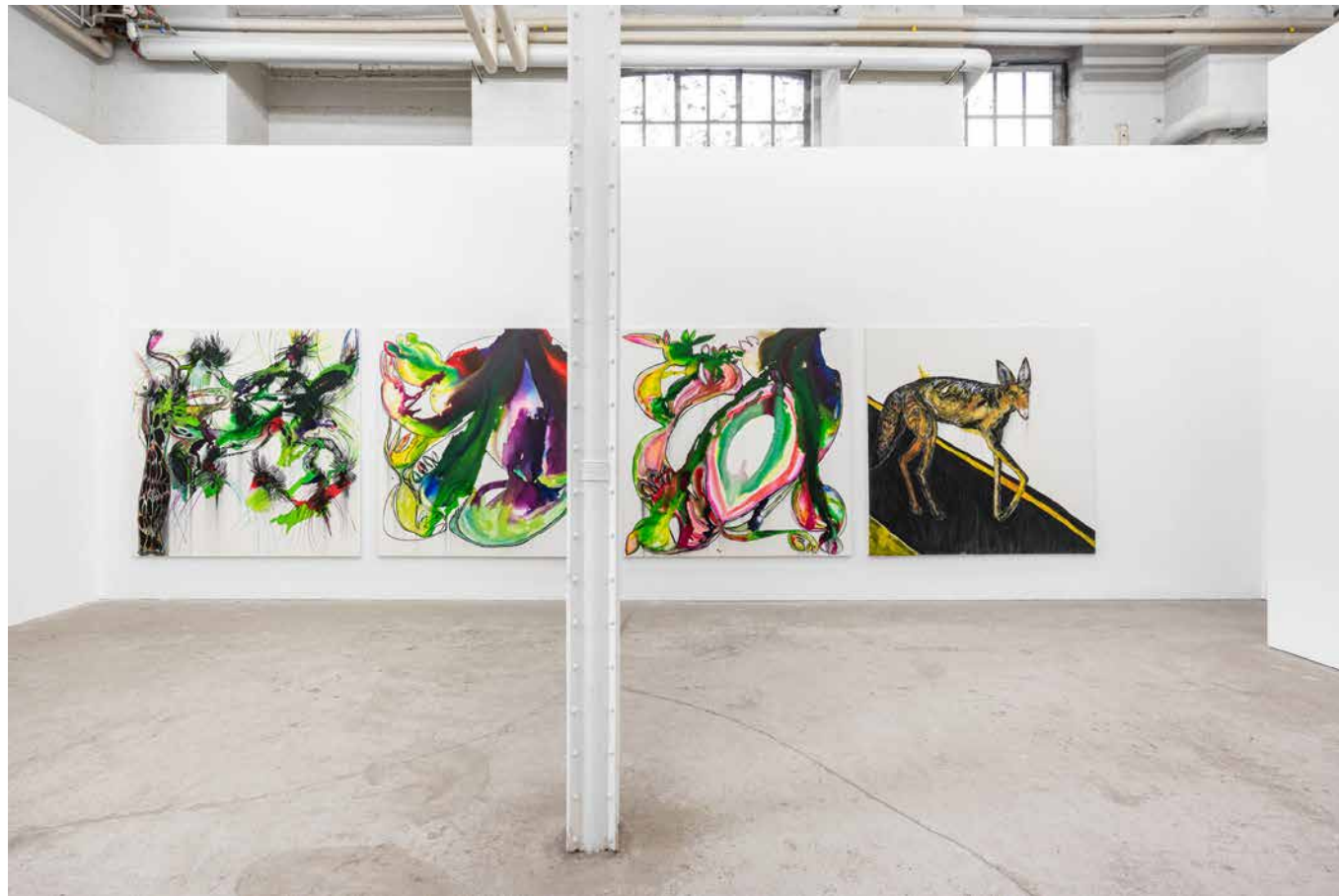






So weit wir auch fahren, so nah
wir auch kommen

Galerie Tobias Naehring, Leipzig
Solo show
Paintings, object and performance
2022-23
Photos: dotgain.info



Los Angeles, Pasadena, Aug. 30th

The cactuses bloom at the midnight hour. Midnight fruit. We ate you when the coyote came, cut through your red skin, thrust our tongues in, rolled them in your flesh.

The coyote prowls through the city's buildings at night, cactuses cast their shadow on the walls of houses, their long trunk branching into several tongues, they lick the tar of the blacktop, they lick the coyote's fur.

His howling presses its impression in the fat pillows of the city. They're big and plump when heavy heads sink down into them by night, when dreams don't find their flow, cause air conditioners keep them frozen there.

What happens if we open buried wounds, if the tar tenderizes and uncovers its deep layers. If the earth narrates its wounds, if she cries and we demolish our knowledge, layer by layer, so we can discern her voice. If we listen, and if the AC is unplugged for dreams. If we thaw out our dreams. We have to thaw them out now.

by Sophie Schmidt,
translated by Whiliam Locke Wheeler



above:

Lackschuhe, 30. August 2022

200 × 160 cm

Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas
2022

left:

Blauer Schuh mit Reißverschluss und Erdbeeren, 9. August 2022

200 × 160 cm

Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas
2022

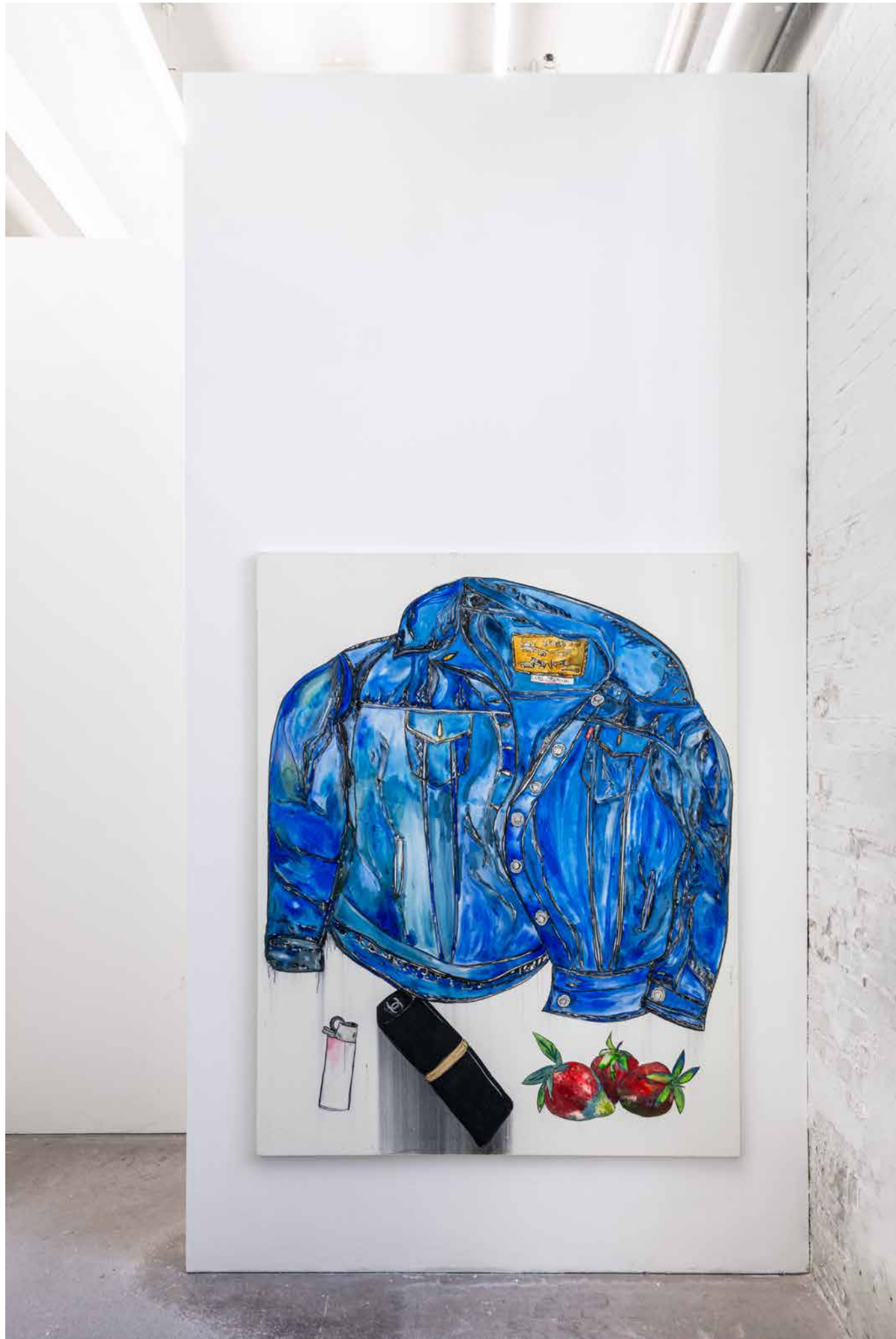
next:

Jeansjacke mit Erdbeeren, 22. Juni 2022

Küchengeräte, 1. August 2022

200 × 160 cm

Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas
2022





above:

Pastasieb mit Erdbeeren, 3. August 2022

200 x 160 cm

Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas

2022

left:

Kaktus im Liebesakt, 23. Oktober 2022

200 x 200 cm

Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas

2022

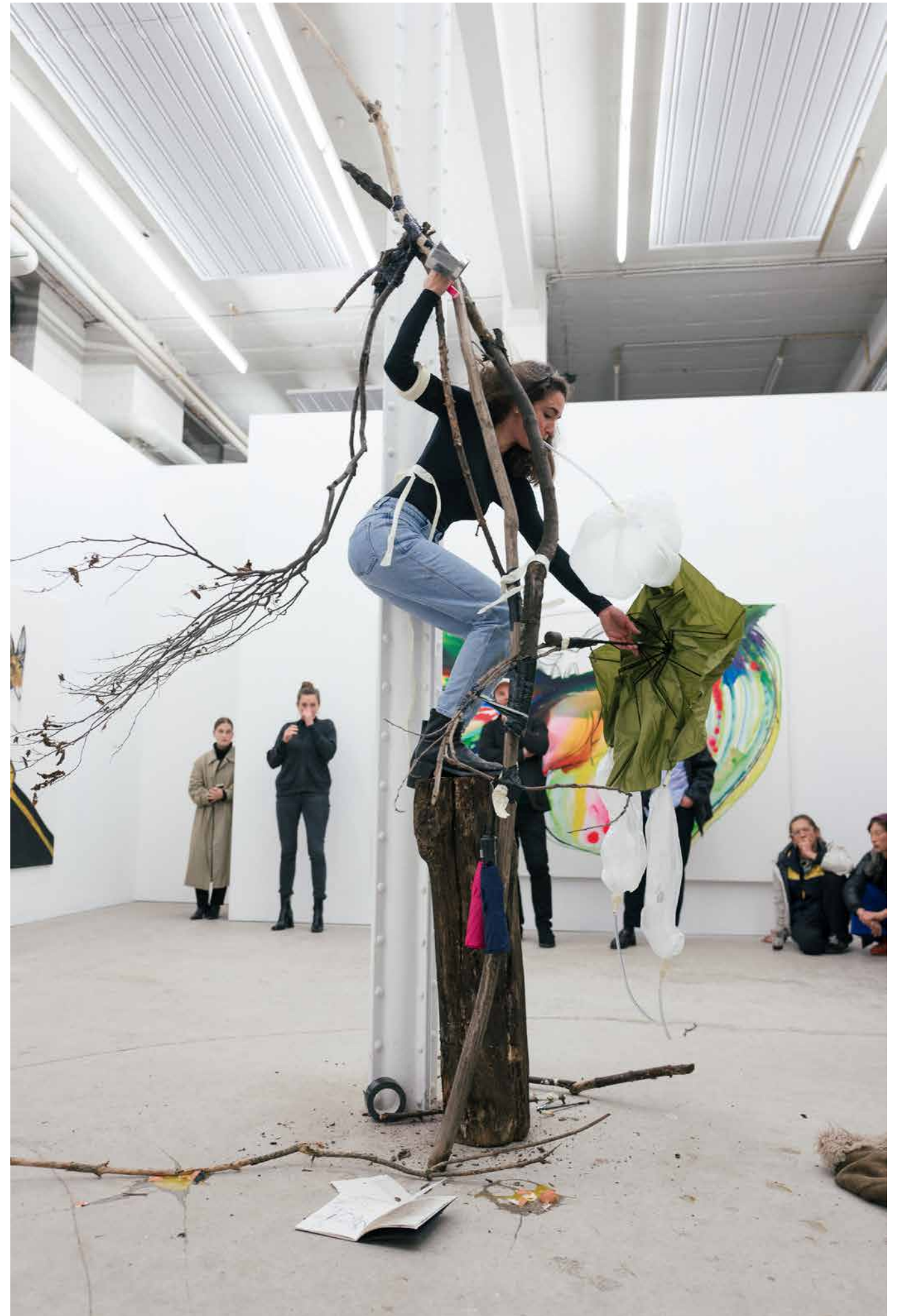
next:

Gelbe Caffettiera, 19. Juni 2022

200 x 160 cm

Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas

2022







Cyborgprozession

Technical University (TUM)
Munich
2022
Photos: Thomas Splett & Nikolai Gumbel





Cyborg Procession from TUM to the Propylaea at King's Square, Munich

The Cyborg Procession took place in summer 2022 and is understood as a trans-disciplinary artistic project developed as part of the seminar “Cyborg architecture as utopian bodies” in the Gender Studies in Architecture department at TUM Munich together with Lili König (singer) and the students of the Lehrstuhl für Architecture.

The Cyborg Procession started at TUM and ended at the Propylaea at King's Square. There, the pillars of the Propylaea were re-dedicated. A *Taufmaschine zum Atmen auf Rädern* (Dedication Machine for Breathing on Wheels) was used for the renaming ritual. Strings were tied to the pillars, spanning between them. String games with conspecifics were played (see Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 2016). At the end of the procession we assembled in the Propylaea Hall and sang “Dona nobis pacem” in chorus.

The Cyborg Procession's point of departure is the body and its utopian potential for transformation.

In the occidental tradition the human body functions as a benchmark for the conception and perception of rooms and architecture. Classical architecture in its orientation to antiquity privileges the male body as its benchmark and, concomitantly, the human being as the measure of all things. In the seminar we critically engaged with this occidental conception and tradition of the body and reflected on alternative body concepts, transposing these onto a utopian architectural body. The act of dedication in the Propylaea renames “homo” as “humus” (see Haraway, 2016) so that we can understand human Being as interspecies coexistence. Coexistence as being connected with the tentacular, the earthly interconnected and interreaching, not with the heavenly gods and their ideas of progress. We looked for new and different forms of social togetherness, a communication of participation that overcomes hierarchies and integrates all kinds of beings.

We were fueled by the feminist approaches of theorists like Rosi Braidotti, Karin Harrasser, Ursula K. Le Guin, Silvia Federici and Donna Haraway.

We thus posed hybrid, participative and queer bodies as countermeasures to humanist body concepts as architectural benchmark. With these new and different bodily measures, we stood in opposition King's Square in Munich, to its classical architecture as well as its National Socialist history in order to unleash the utopian potential inherent in the new benchmark of a cyborg body. Donna Haraway's conceptual figure of the feminine cyborg (Cyborg Manifesto, 1985) was our point of reference.

by Sophie Schmidt



beacon

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Luft zu Haut
Sophie Schmidt





previous:

Schneehuhnfrau II (Sind es deine Zähne, die dir aus dem Schopf wachsen?)

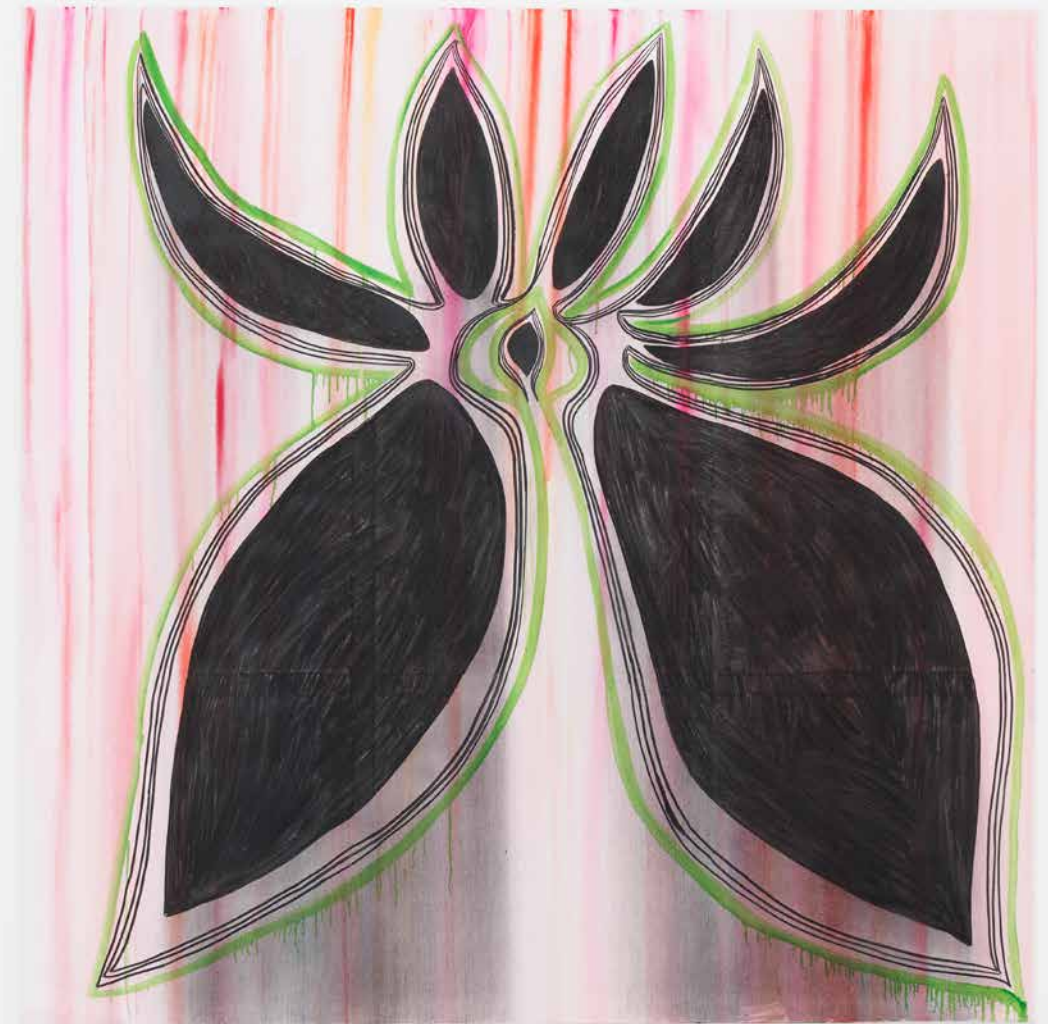
Schneehuhnfrau IV (Lass uns nochmal tanzen)

above:

Schneehuhnfrau I (Dein weiches Fell, das aufsteigt bis zur schneeigen Hornspitze)

right:

Schneehuhnfrau in Samt



Luft zu Haut

Solo show

5 paintings (acrylic, crayon, chalk and snow on canvas)

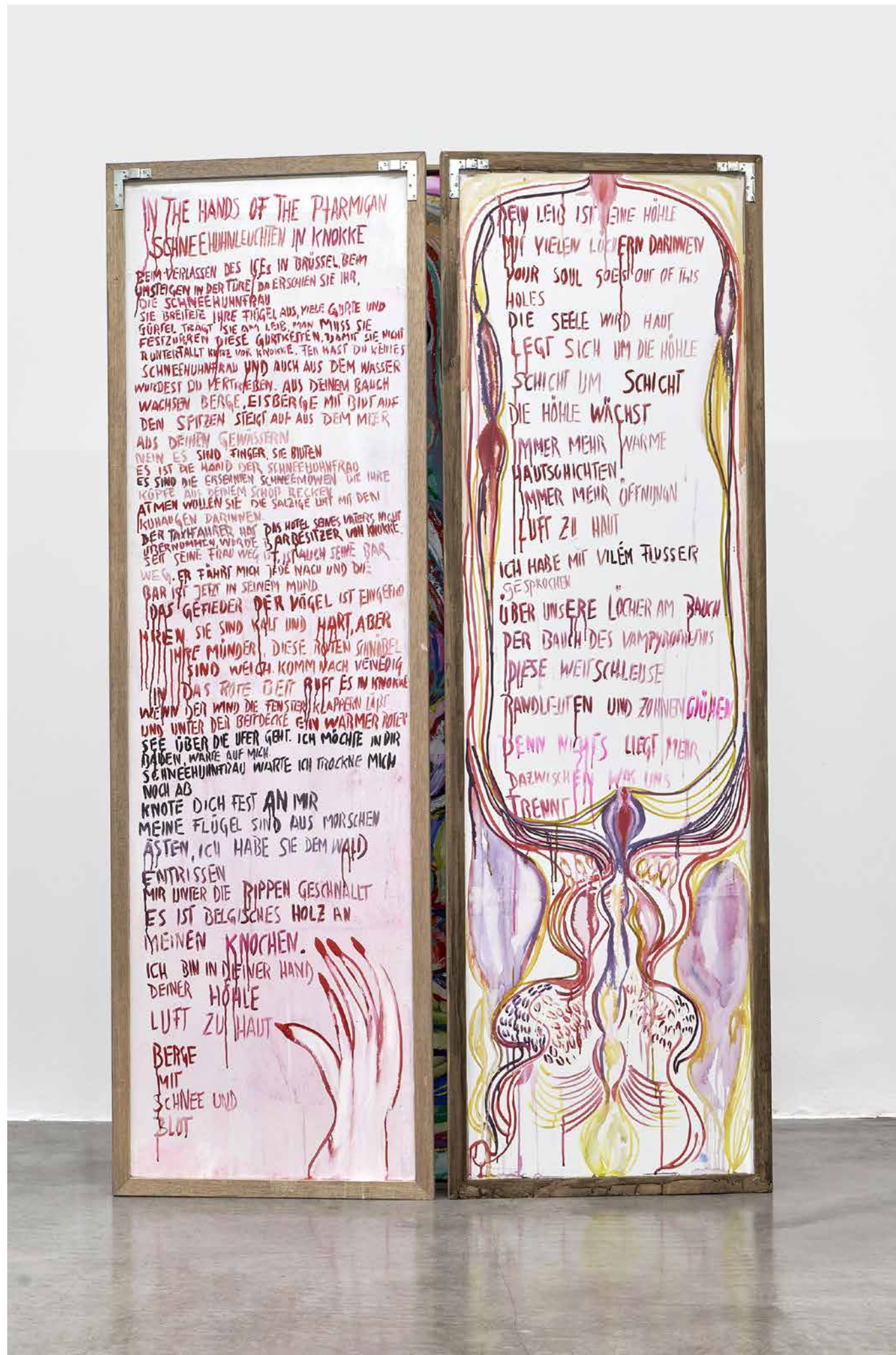
200 x 200 cm each

Beacon, Munich

2022

Photos: Thomas Splett

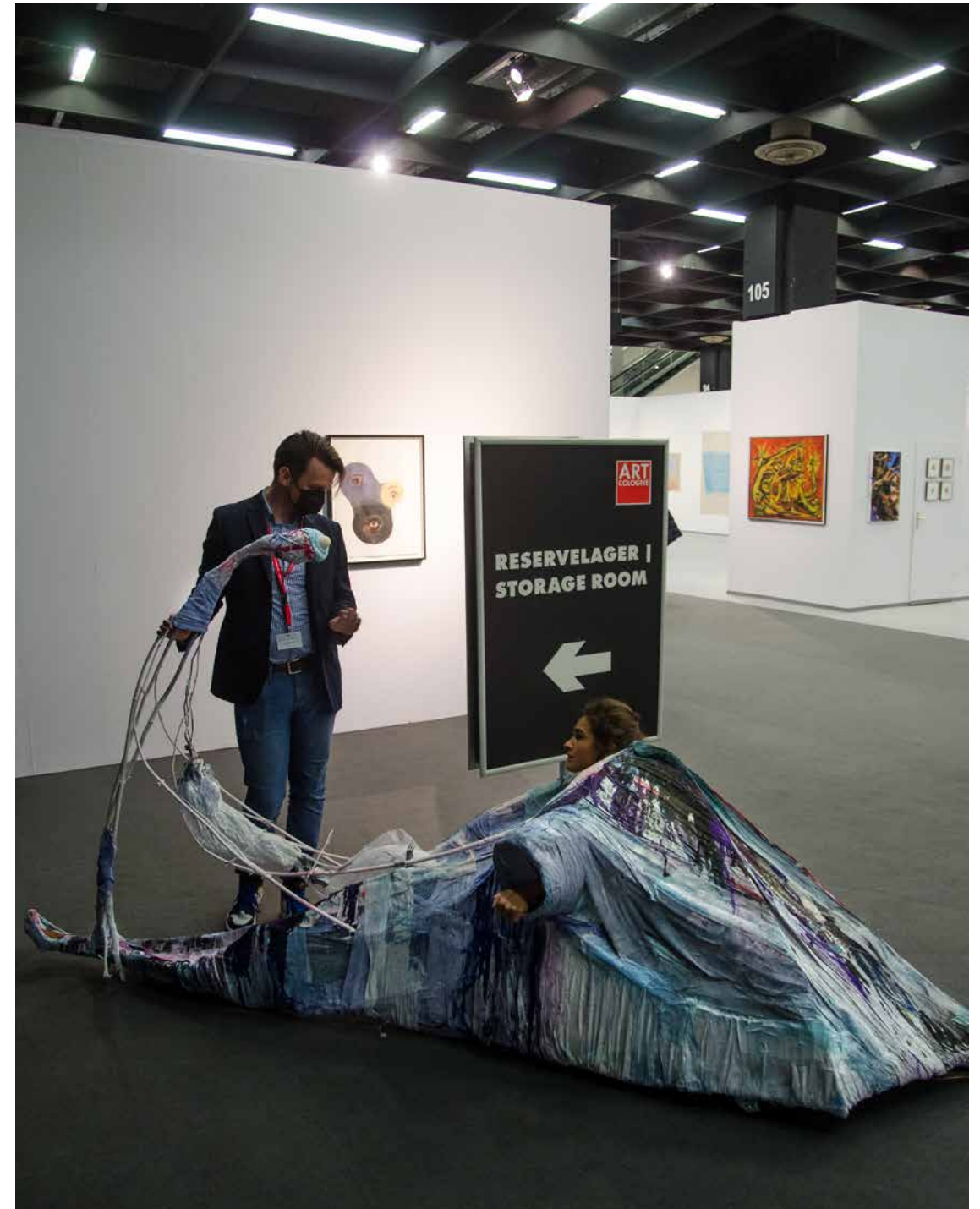




Tryptichon und Schneehuhn

Objects and sculpture
 Mixed Media
 Galerie Kunst und Kunz, München DE
 2022
 Photos: Sigfried Wameser





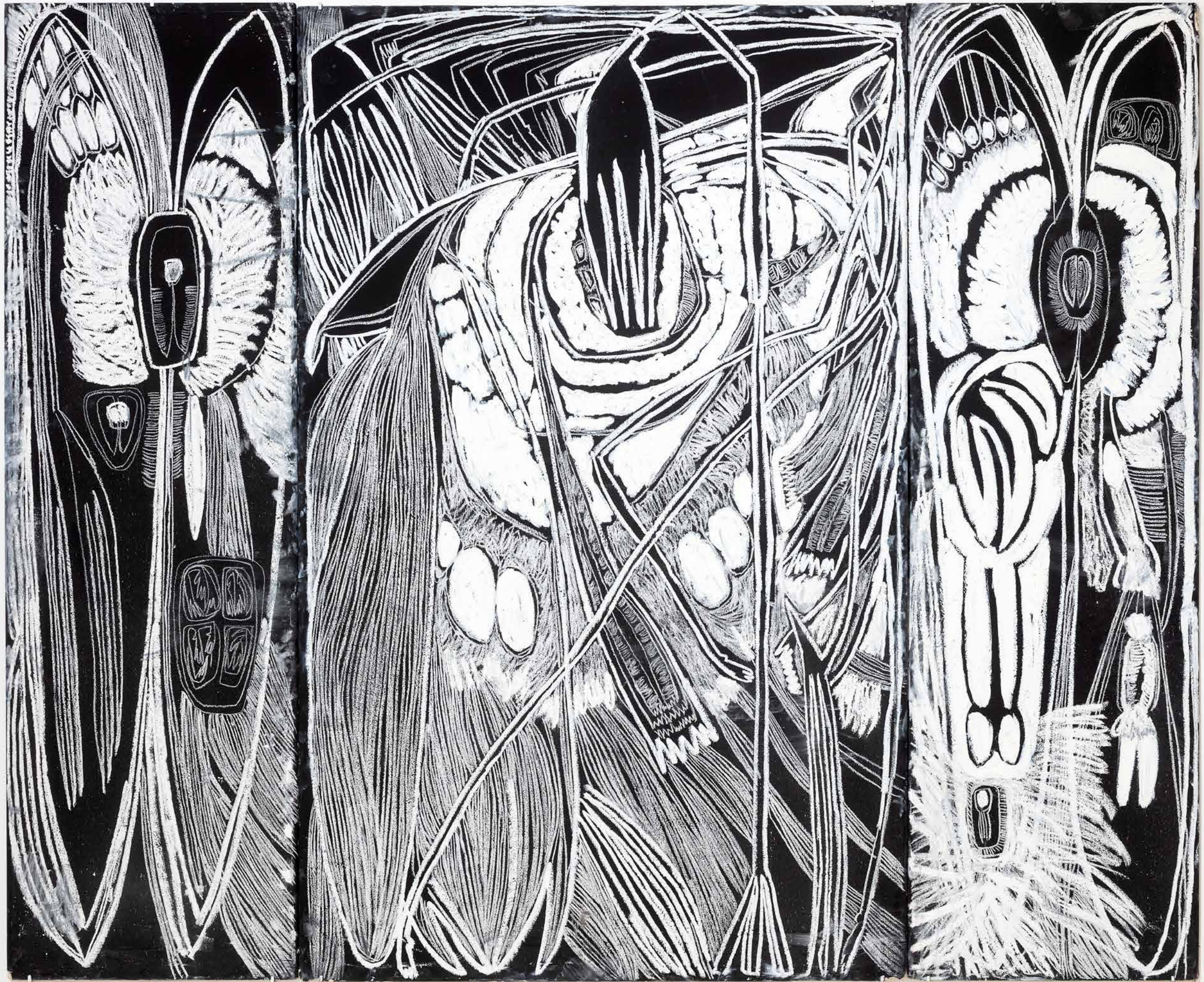


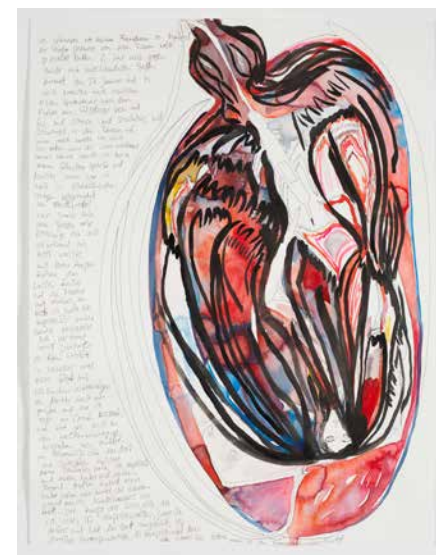
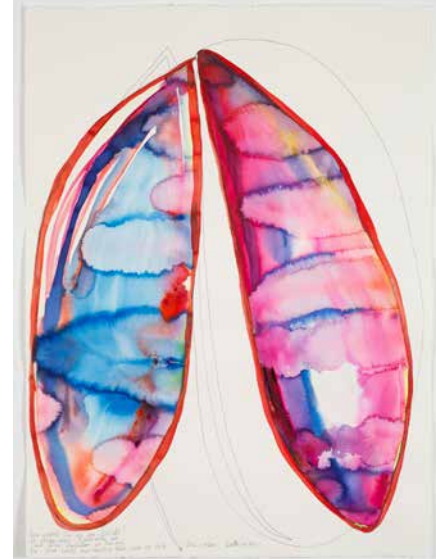


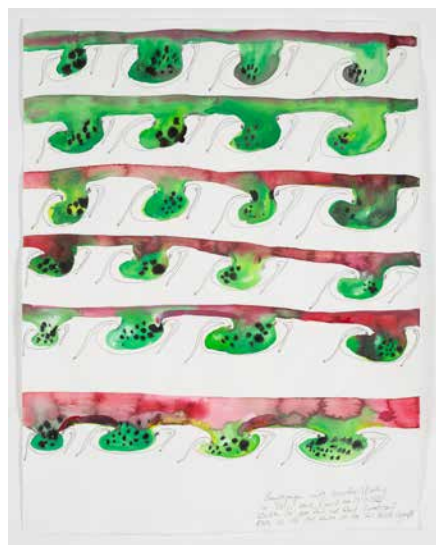
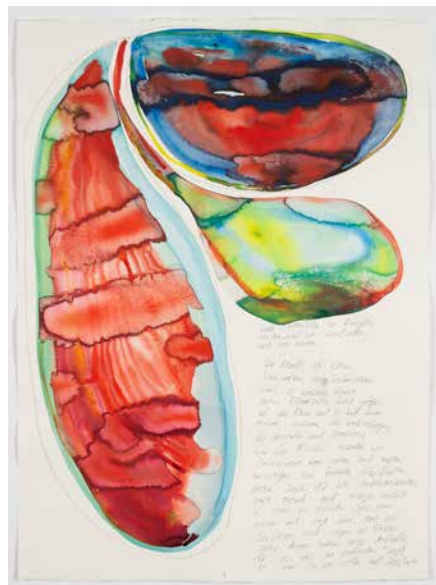
Moby Dick in Cologne

Art Cologne, Kunst Knuz Gallerie Editions, Cologne
Performance with Objekt (wire, plaster, vinyl tubes, branches, metal)
2021
Photos: Wolfgang Burat Courtesy

The performance was staged in the context of the annual art fair Art Cologne. „Moby Dick“ relates to different aspects of the performance, both the unpractical size of the object, but also the dominance of patriarchal structures of the art market.







Schwindelaquarelle

Drawing series
Watercolor on paper
Different sizes
2022
Photos: Constanza Meléndez





My mouth is full of tongues - Schneckenzahnzungen, Schlangenzüngelei, Teethtongues and Mothertongues

Solo show
Apartment der Kunst
Munich DE
2021
Photos: Thomas Splett

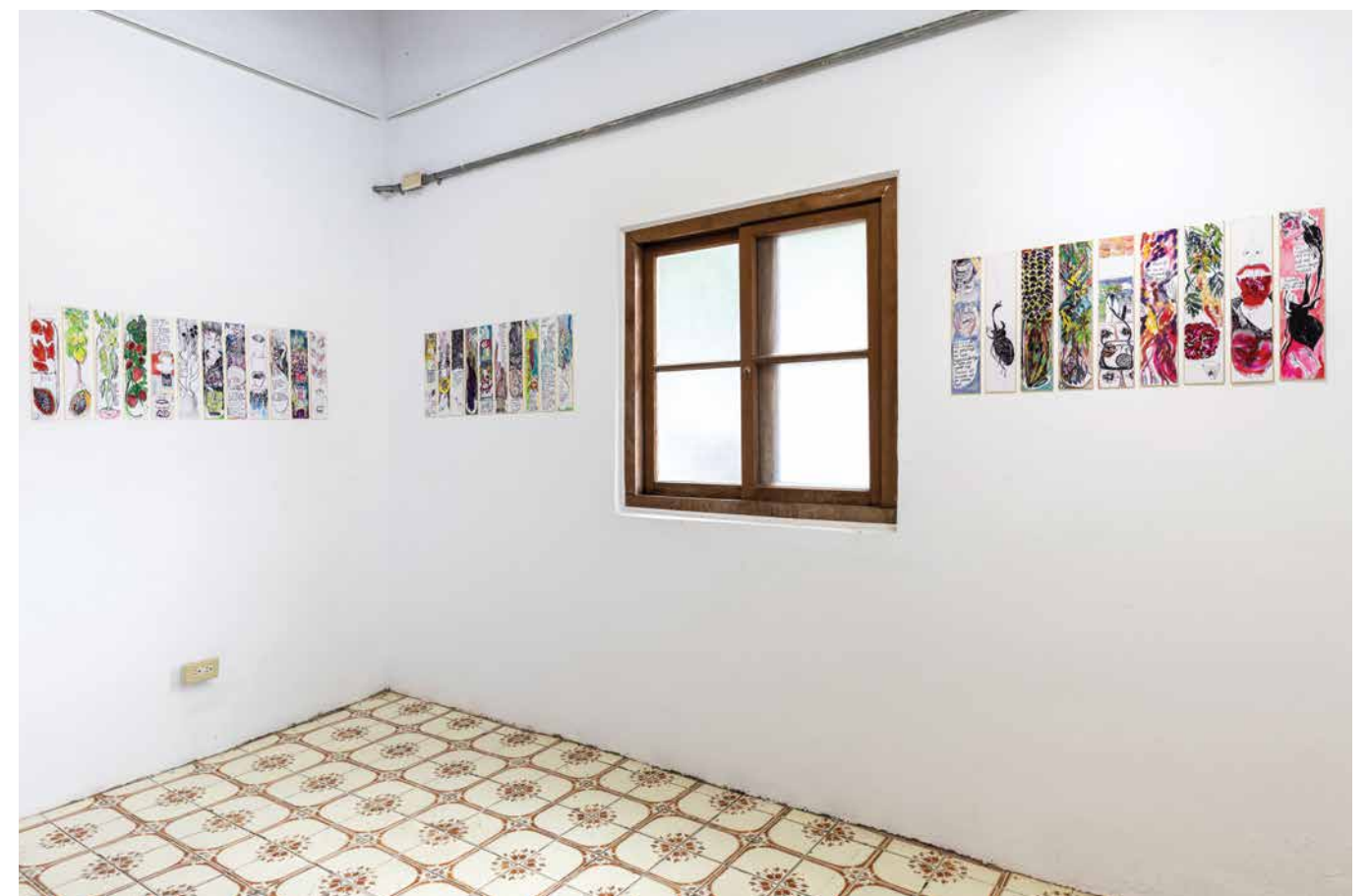


Bauchvorhangöffnung

Solo show
Galerie Tobias Naehring
Berlin DE
2021
Photos: dotgain.info

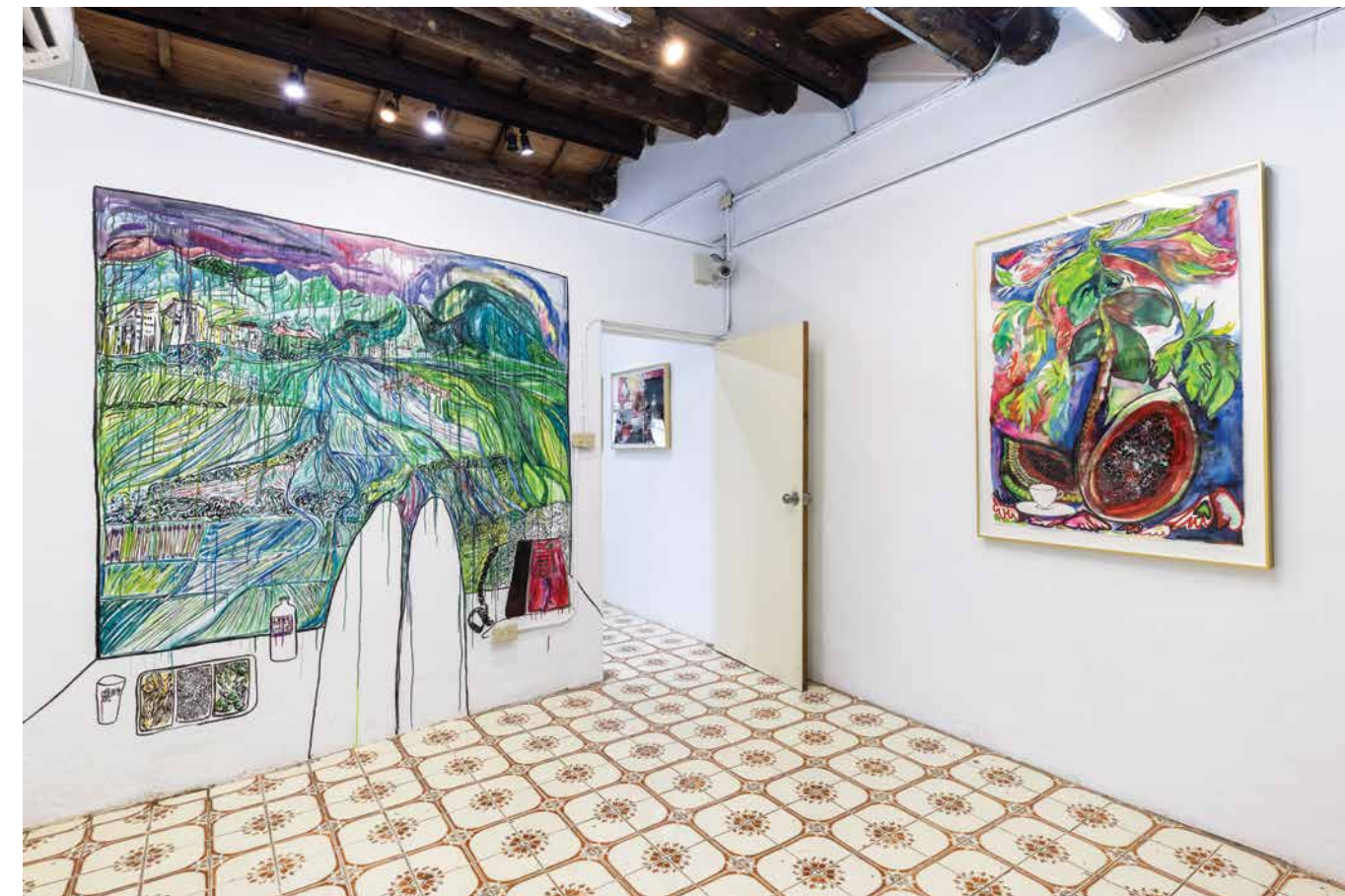
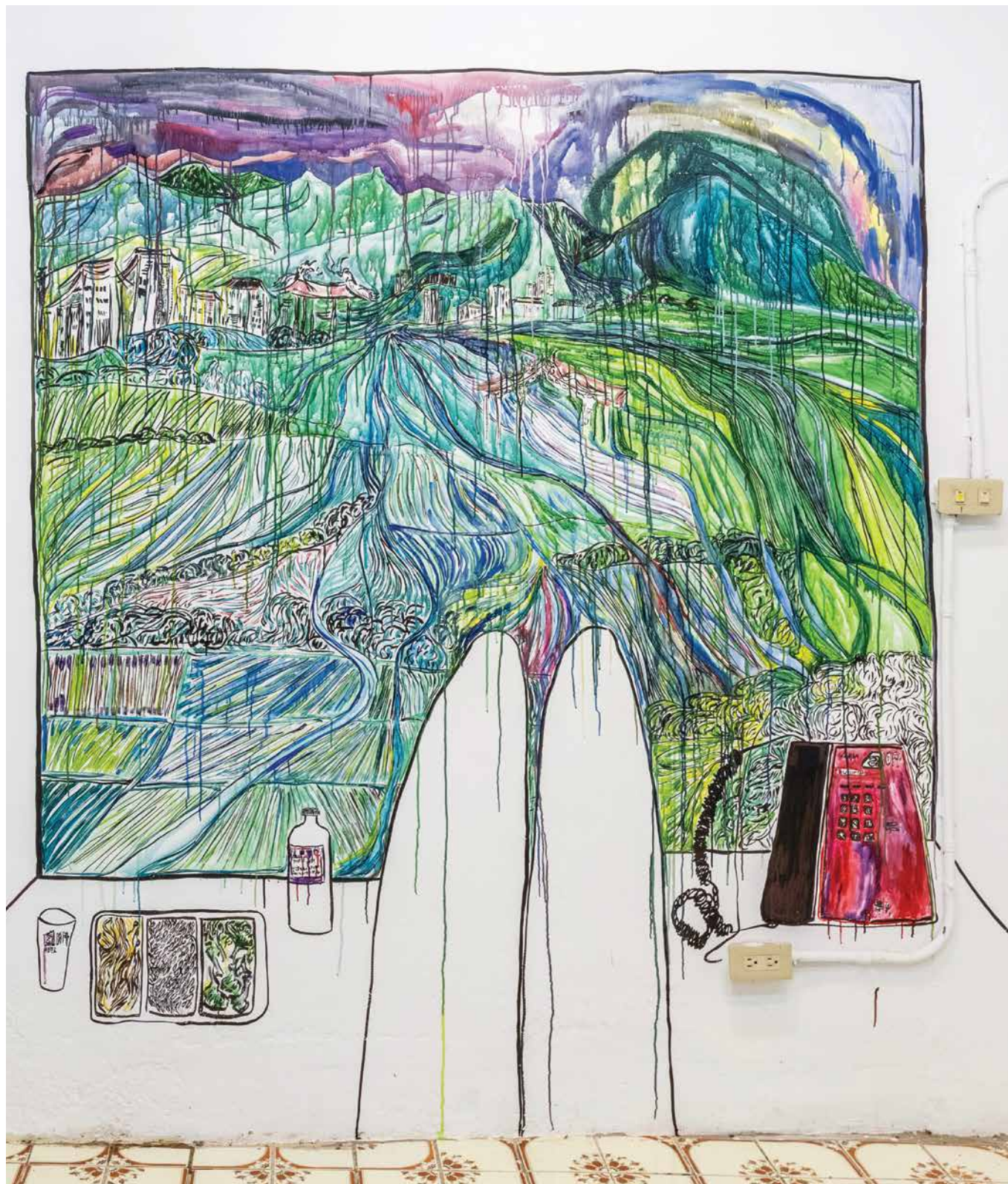






How much Venice water do you
carry in your legs, still?
And how much Taipei water do
you feel in the fields, now?

Solo show with performance
Frontier Gallery No. 9, Treasure Hill Artist Village
Taipei TWN
2021
Photos: Chong Kok Yew



previous:

Papayafrau

Wall painting in two parts, part 1

Water colours and ink on wall

2,50 x 3,00 meter

2021

above:

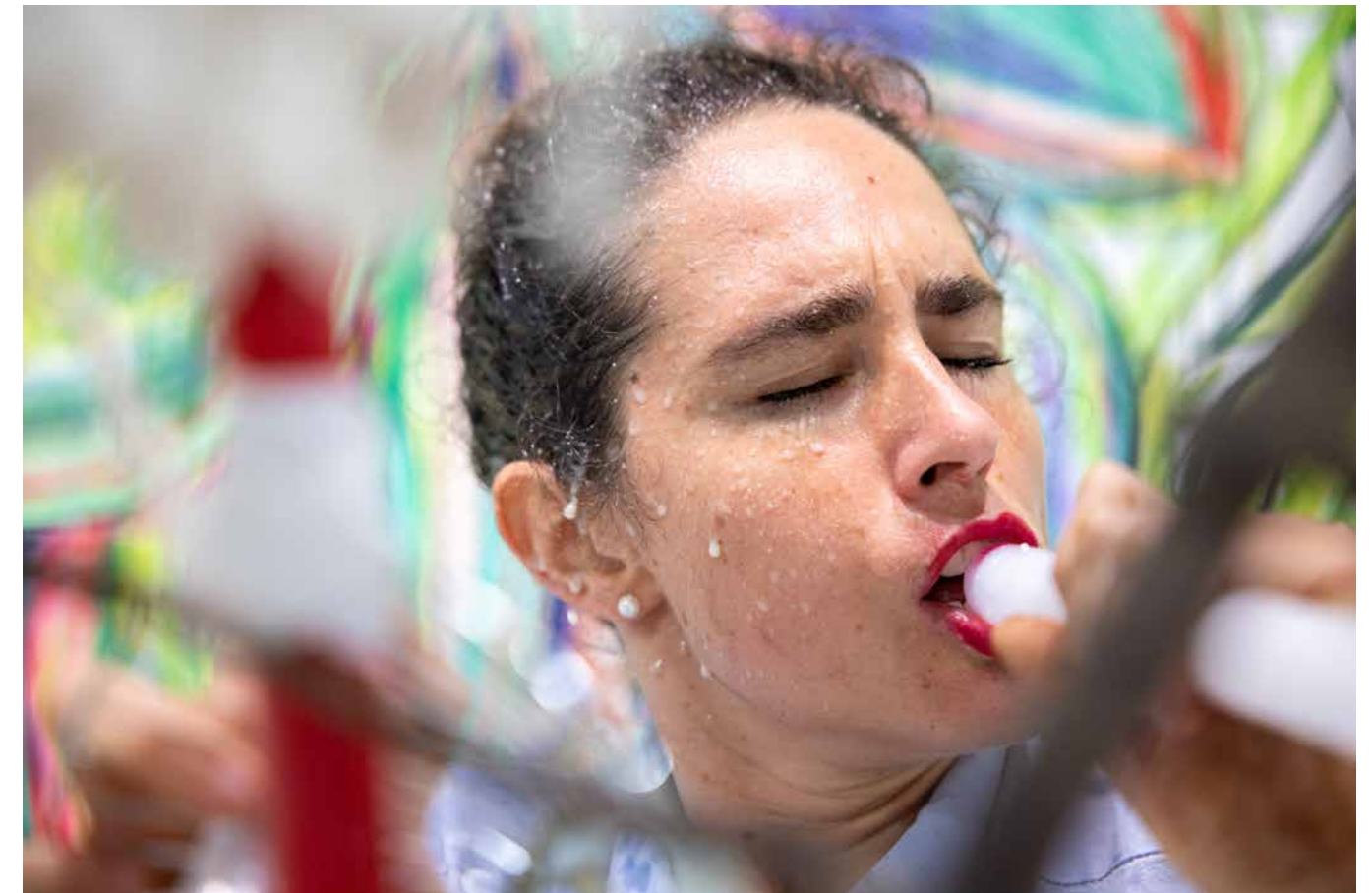
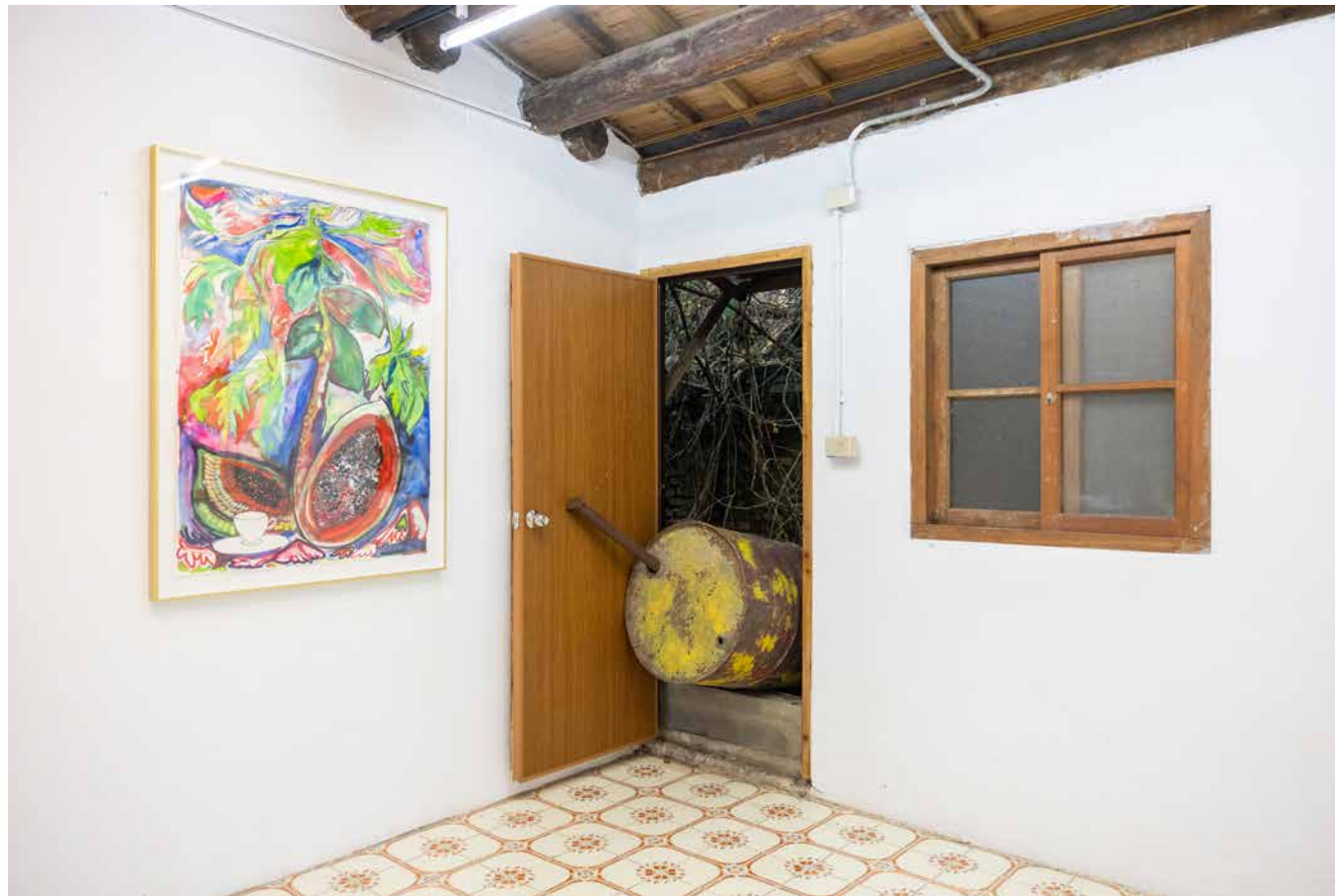
Taipehfeldwerdung mit Kniebergen in A Loft Hotel

Wall painting in two parts, part 2 (above)

Water colours and ink on wall

2,50 x 3,00 meter

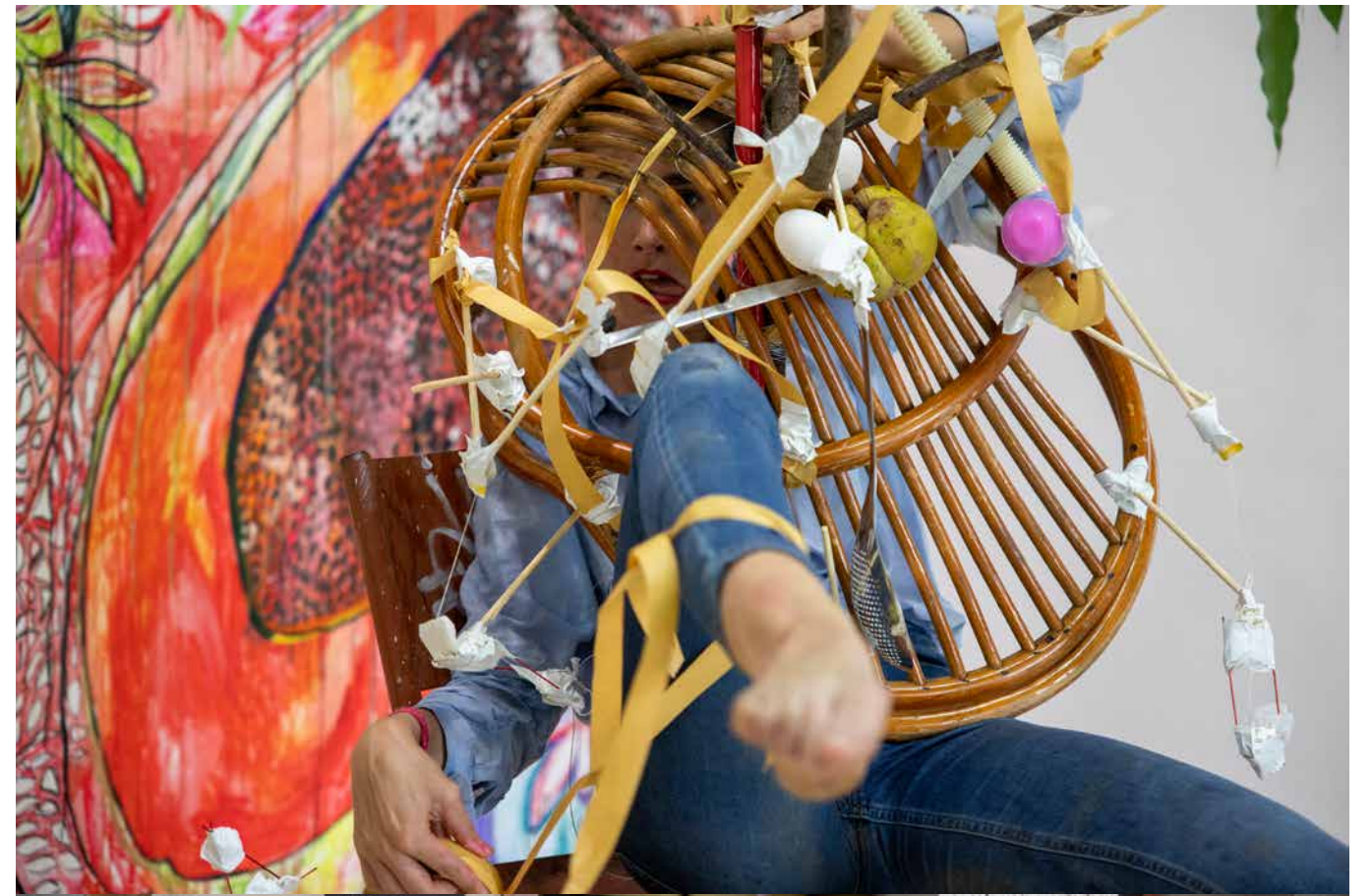
2021

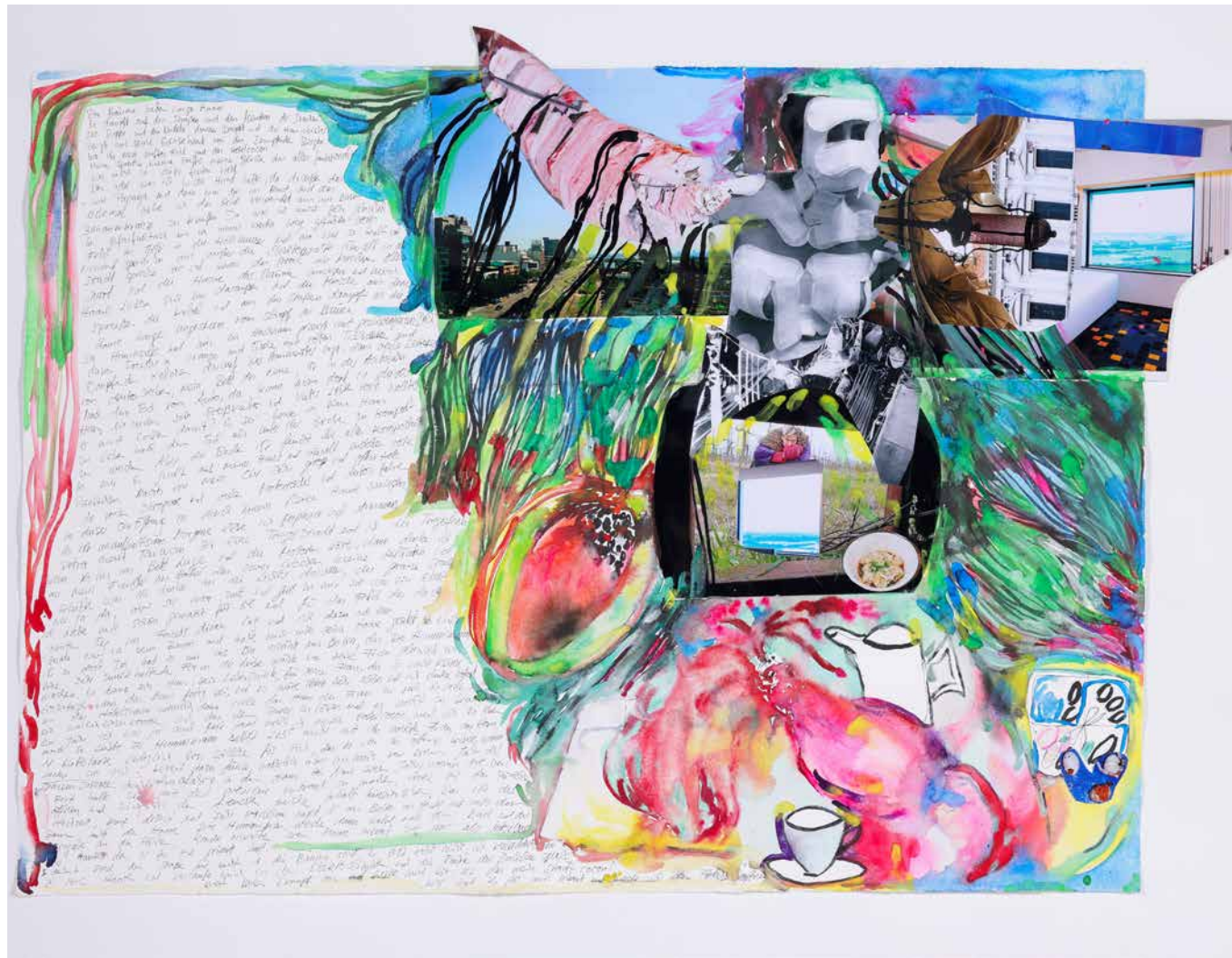


How Much Venice Water Do You Carry In Your Legs, Still? How Much Taipei Water Do You Feel In The Fields, Now? shows artistic works and texts by Sophie Schmidt which were made in 2021 as part of two residencies (German Study Centre Venice and Taipei Artist Village, Taiwan).

Various elements become connective tissue linking her journeys first to Venice and then to Taipei: the water of the two island cities as well as isolation, only being able to leave the hotel room temporarily under special pandemical conditions, or not at all. Hence her artistic engagement revolves around questions of being in the world as an existential, physical and psychic exploratory process into spaces of one's own and spaces of the strange and unfamiliar. The pictures, collages, performances and text miniatures in this book give insight into inner happenings that are tightly interwoven with the stage of outer happenings observable from the bed, on this side and the other side of the window. Motionless in the body, but emotionally in upheaval, two main motifs characterise the works, which expressively pulsate with brushstrokes kept mostly within red tones: firstly, the juxtaposition of Renaissance Venice and contemporary Taipei, and secondly, body extensions and prostheses. Liquidating borders, body and world link, interleave, marry, melting into leaves, fruits, birds, fishes, landscapes, architectures and spaces, becoming ornamental, flowing and hovering, penetrated by omnipotent water at once seemingly joined by the body and yet also flowing through it.

by Carina Herring,
translated by Whilam Locke Wheeler





above:

Draußen, hinter dem Fenster: Die Bäume haben lange Haare, es dampft aus den Straßen und den Mündern der Drachen

Watercolour, ink and photo on paper

78 x 106 cm

2021

right:

Hier vor dem Fenster dampfen die Felder, auch das Zimmer ist feucht hier innen

Watercolour, ink and photo on paper

78 x 106 cm

2021

next:

Wieviel Venedigwasser ist noch in deinen Beinen, Ursula?

Watercolour, ink and photo on paper

65 x 50 cm

2021

Here in front of the window the fields are steaming, and the room is moist too.

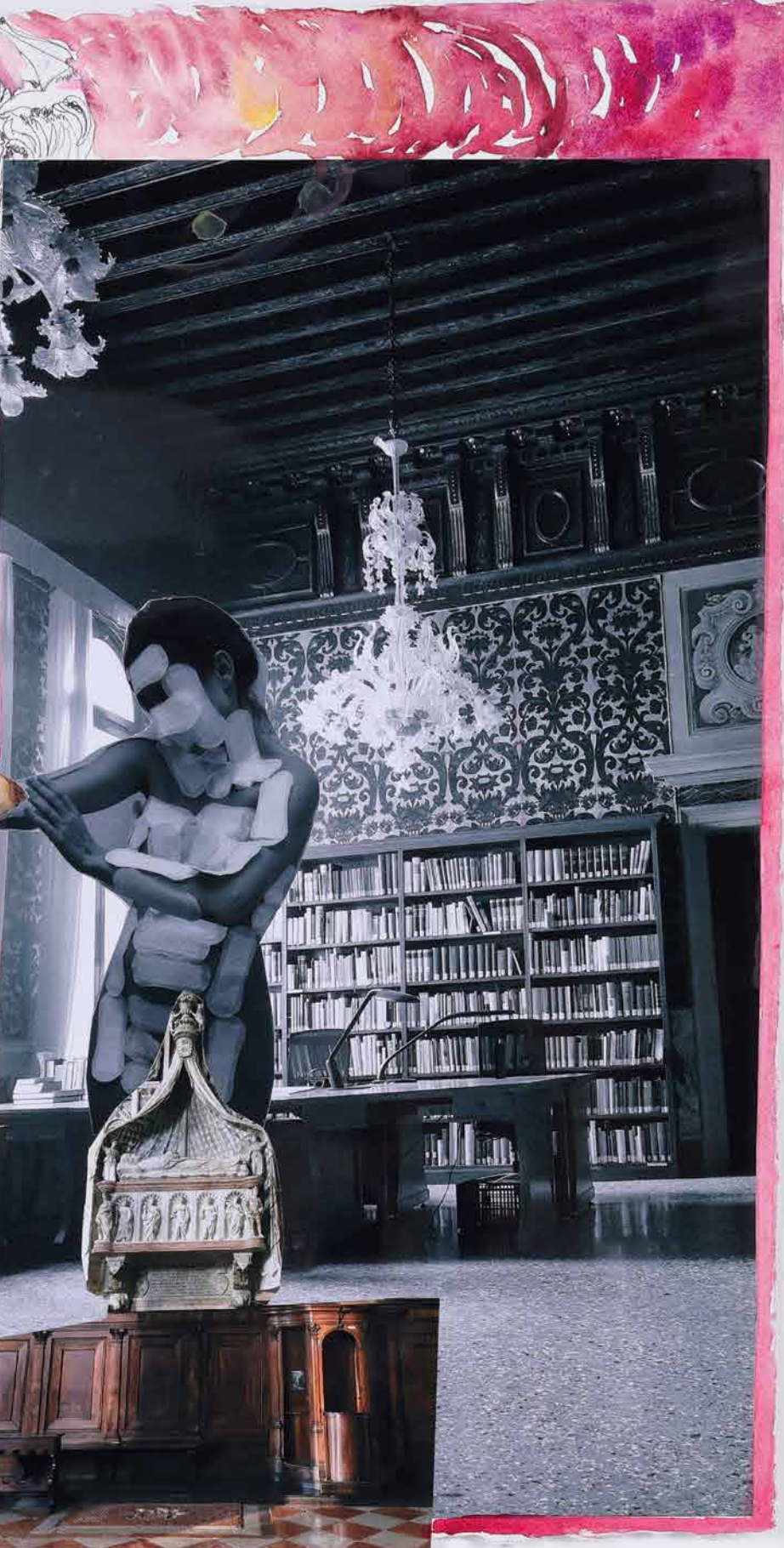
We went for a walk in the sewage system of Munich, in the underground canals near the Isar. I was naked; you held me in your arms. Mice were living in my bowels, and they crept out of me, and then Cosimo was standing in front of me. My entire entrails were full of these mice, and I pulled them out of me, but they wanted to go back. Here in front of the window the fields are steaming, and the room here inside is also moist. I've turned on the air-conditioning to ventilate, have stuffed all the plastic dishes and cups into the pink garbage bag and cleaned the wash basin with the towel, then washed my nighty and hung it up in the wardrobe to dry.

Here clothes stay moist. Even the bed never gets quite dry after already fourteen nights, despite air-conditioning. My skin brush lies together with the brushes at the window, and I'm waiting for the sun after the steam.

St. Ursula brings me clarity with her raised hand and her fingers and her finger conditions for marriage.

But what am I to do with the mice there in me, and everything always happens so unexpectedly.

by Sophie Schmidt,
translated by Whilam Locke Wheeler



Hellige Ursula! Bist Du bereit?
Ich hab's dir Radicchiofari und
komme im dem Palazzo zu dir
besuche dich in deinem Trapezbalk
Der Beichtstuhl mein blind ein
Hoh du schienst Guedel's in dem
in Asten mit dem Felder 2 und dem

Früher in Pacht, wobei Gedr
waser ist noch in dem Becht
Ursula? weisst du dich sicher in
deiner Augenblicke borgen mit
vor dem Fenster? Was mich in dir in
deinem Schlaf. Unsere Hände sind dann
in komme am Venedig in deine Hotel-
Zimmerweidung ist Strauch, gleich mit
meiner Radicchiofuntabla
Habe keine Angst Ursula wenn
Deine Beine taub werden oder
wegtreten. Ich habe meine Beine
längst angeschlossen
und trage das

Beichtstuhlleid.





Venedigvogelmaschine

Performance with sculpture (newspaper rack, chair, radicchio, lamp, forks, knives, tape, cigarettes and coffee strainers)

Palazzo Barbarigo della Terrazza, Venice

2021

Photos: Nikolai Gumbel



above:
Radicchiofrau
Watercolor and charcoal on canvas
160 x 200 cm
2021



right:
Drei Vögel bei San Tomà
Ink on paper
70 x 50 cm
2021



above:

Aufforderung mit dem Fuß, in der Bibliothek des Palazzo Barbarigo della Terrazza

Watercolor and ink on paper

21 x 29,7 cm

2021

right:

Vogelbegegnungen mit Fischen in Venedig

Watercolor and acrylic on canvas

200 x 160 cm

2021

next:

Schlafende Löwen und Frau, herzessend und träumend, oder Ursulas Traum

Watercolor and ink on paper

50 x 70 cm

2021



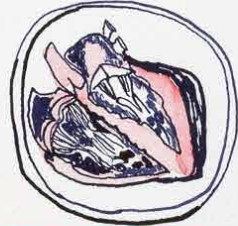


DA ERSCHLAFEN SIE
und bekamen die schönsten Kätzchen
der Welt. Prohm voller Schlaf

LÖWENOPER
VOM AUSSTERBEN UNSERER ART

HE-RESTREICHEL-MASCHINE

WPP







previous:

Schutzmantelmadonna mit Vögeln

Vogelzeltwerdung

Ink and watercolor on paper

70 x 50 cm

2021

Photocredit: Matteo De Fina

above:

Die Wasserheiligen

Acrylic and watercolor on canvas

200 x 160 cm

2021

right:

Vögel am Markusplatz

Acrylic and watercolor on canvas

160 x 200 cm

2021



above:

Die Radicchiofrau
Watercolor and ink on paper
50 x 70 cm
2021

right:

Radicchiofrau auf Sant' Erasmo
Sant' Erasmo, Venice
Videostills: Nikolai Gumbel
2021

next, left:

Selbstporträt mit Vögeln
Charcoal on canvas
200 x 160 cm
2021







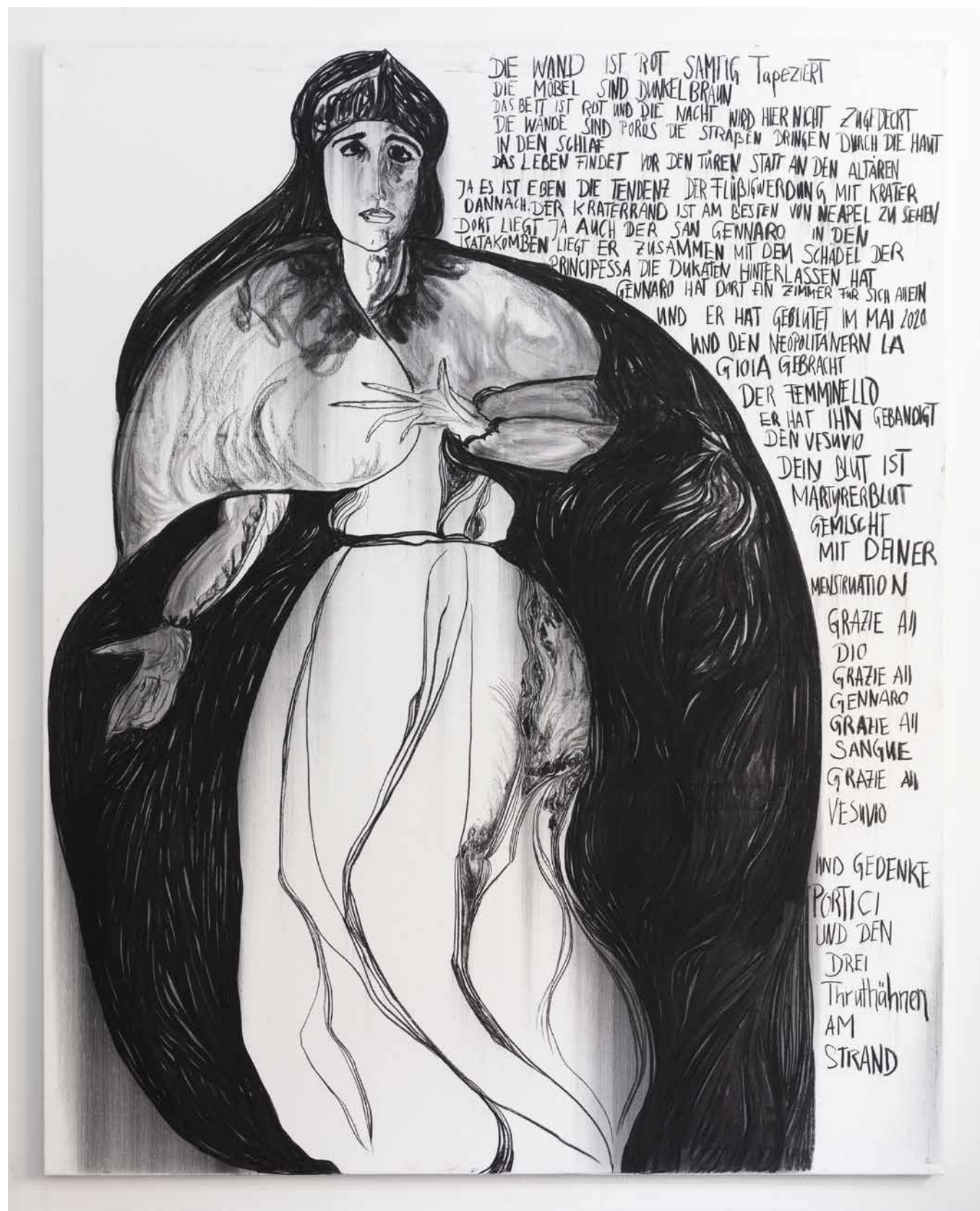
Knieberge

Galerie Tobias Naehring, Leipzig
Solo show
Paintings, objects and performance
2020
Photos: dotgain.info

left & above:

Schutzmantel

Wire, sticks, gauze, bandage, acrylic ink
160 × 190 × 100 cm
2020



San Gennaro, the Italian patron saint of the androgynous, lives in a “room of one’s own” in Sophie Schmidt’s new works according to the accompanying text. In the essay of the same name, which is fundamental to feminism, Virginia Woolf declares that an accomplished author has to unite masculine and feminine qualities in herself, and that, consequently, creativity encompasses both genders. As femminiello, San Gennaro combines both genders in himself, and in Schmidt’s large-sized charcoal drawing, he appears to be blessing in a flowing garment with an almost baroque theatricality. At the same time, he shows the facial features of the artist. A distinct sex, without being socially constructed, is discredited as a limitation. Dissolving boundaries and bodies are essential topics in Schmidt’s works, beginning by overcoming the genres of paintings, drawings, sculpture, performance and culminating in the transformation of organs and body parts. Feet breathe, lungs fly, the stomach replaces the head. Her works often oscillate between conflation and separation, devotion and distinction, vulnerability and protection.

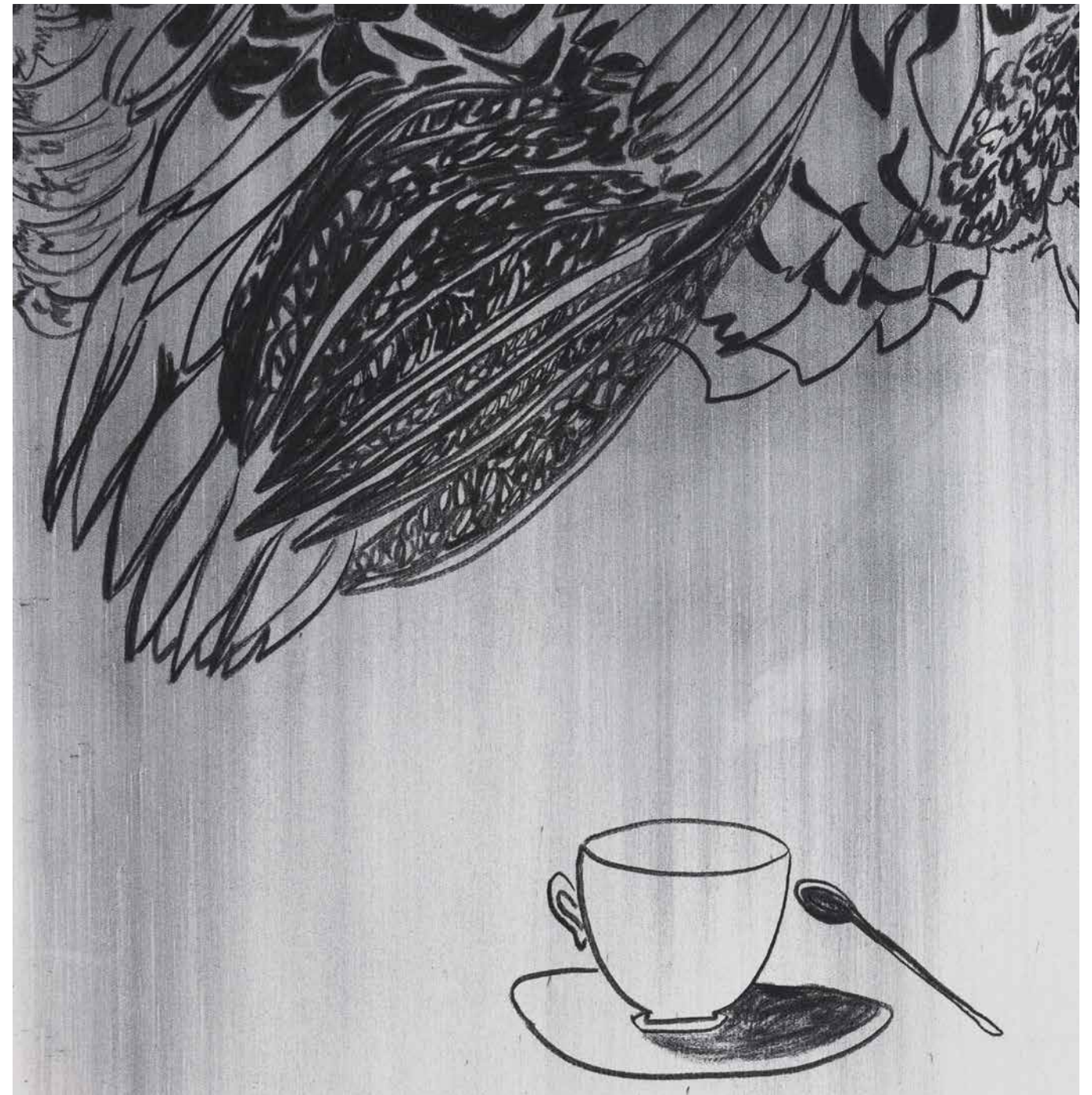
Accordingly, she initially feels that her locomotion machines are a second skin or a protective cocoon, and she blends in with them. Yet, while moving, they reveal their instability, they break and even hurt the artist. Meanwhile the destruction is an act of emancipation: “Get in, drive, break, free yourself. And so forth.” Only after this process, she says, she can breathe freely. Her fragile installations, that she constructs by assembling kitchen strainers, umbrellas, tights, hair dryers and plaster bandages, are made to be used, they are not for eternity. Her artificial limbs which she makes out of the same materials and calls body expansions and prostheses to overcome separation, dissolve her physis and bring her into contact with the world. In her performances, she exceeds her pain threshold and those of the viewers. She devotedly sings opera arias to explain her works and then ends up in one of her plastics in which she sucks in milk through tubes and this uncontrollable apparatus denies her the enjoyment of a cigarette, once the symbol of feminine emancipation. Her likening for fragile eggs, that she places in her installations, and insects is symptomatic. Their protective exoskeletons of chitin, their fragile legs and sensitive antennae, whose direct feeling she prefers to distant seeing, inhabit Schmidt’s imagery and smoothly transform themselves into sexual organs and vegetable materials. Exact observations in nature as well as intense investigations into cultural history, literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis feature here recognizably.

In the works she has created this year, Schmidt further develops her own cosmos. Her fascination for nature can be found in the seed heads and flower-like shapes which appear to have come from botanical textbooks and whose fragile beauty grows out of a Venetian chandelier. This beauty appears to be uncanny and violent when a hornet devours a cricket lying helplessly on the back, a flock of jet-black birds seem to motionlessly wait for something with their pointed beaks, and two turkeys with splendid feathers harass a hen. And the body of the artist is metamorphosized into a landscape or the eponymous knee mountain (Knieberge) if she observes her bent knees from her own perspective.

by Julia Dellith,
translated by Ulla Stackmann



previous:
San Gennaro
Charcoal on canvas
200 x 160 cm
2020



left:

Kronleuchter

Sticks, plaster cast, rabbit wire, acrylic ink, candles, lamp, potato press, lipstick, teabags, mini whisk, nutmeg reive, cigarette, cotton swab, lemon press, egg
700 x 230 x 260 cm
2020

above, detail:

Die drei Truthäne aus Portici

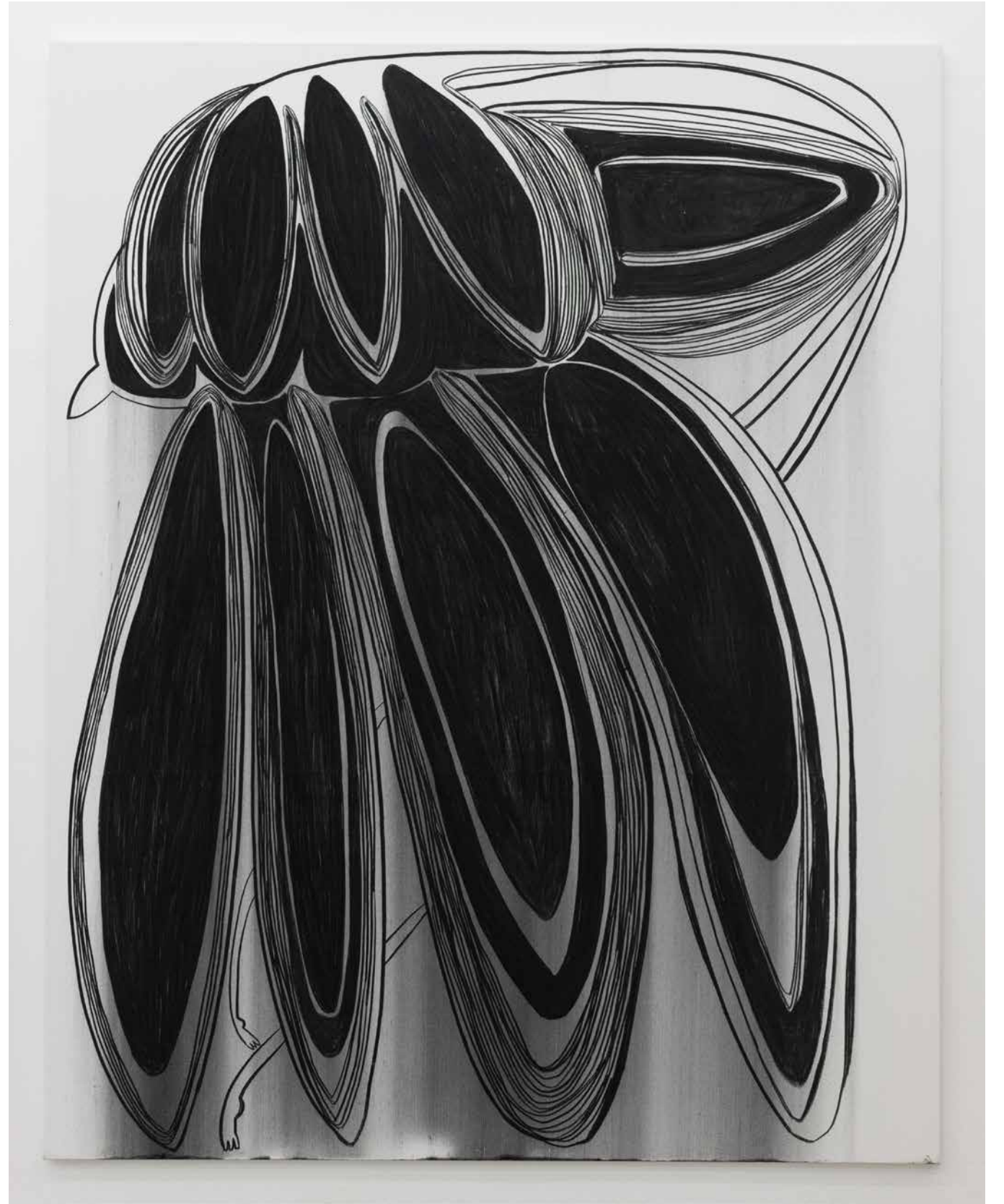
Charcoal on canvas
200 x 160 cm
2020

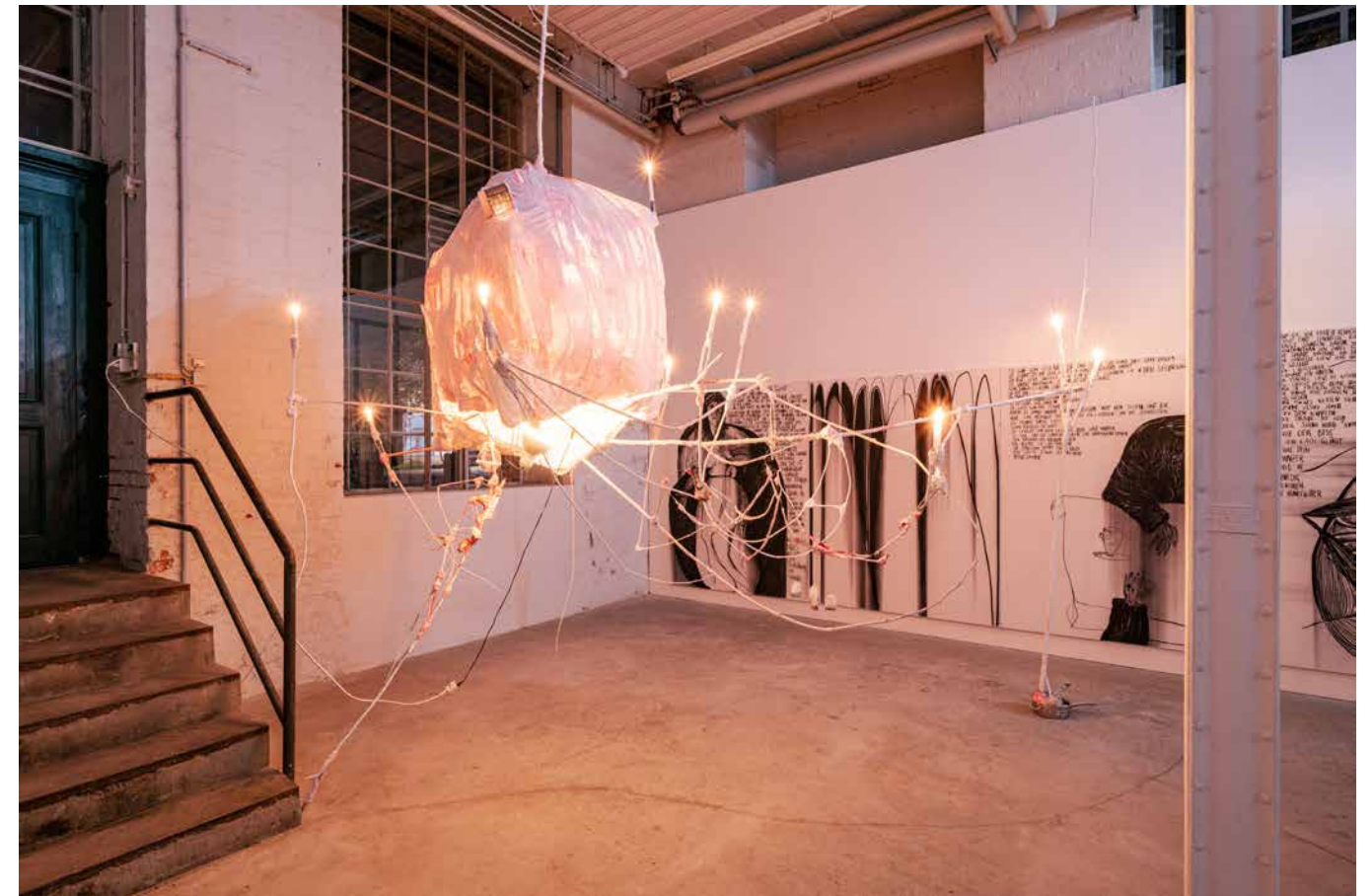
next:

Vögel

Krumbiel mit Vulkaneiern

Charcoal on canvas
200 x 160 cm
2020





next, left:

Kerzenständer mit Gehstock mit Ei

Steel, gauze bandage, sticks, paint roller, matchbox, tin opener, painted steel, sieve, candle, acrylic ink, egg, cement

80 × 30 × 40 cm

2020

Photo: Nikolai Gumbel

next, right:

Kerzenständer mit Flamingogefühl

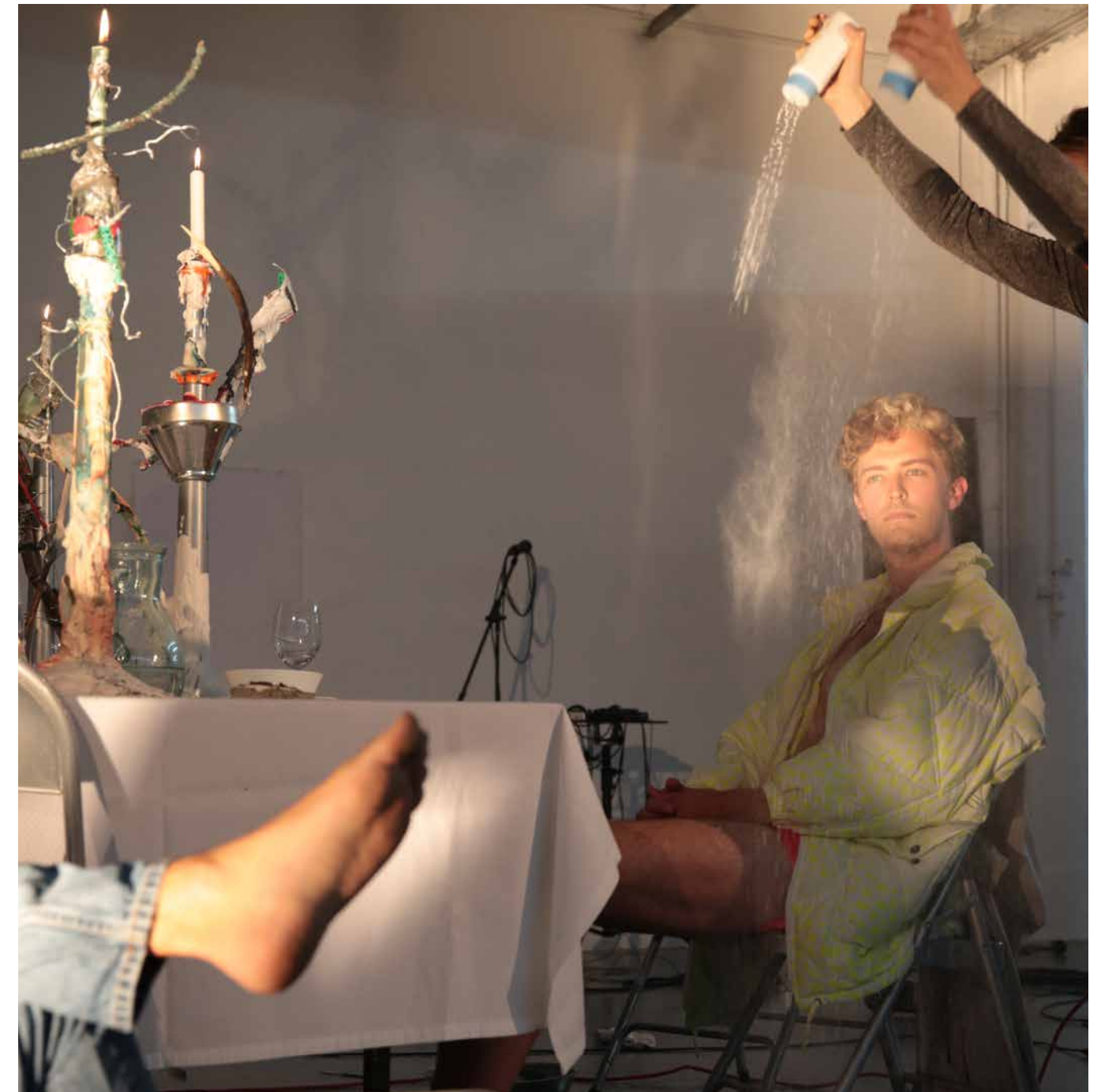
Steel, red cabbage, gauze bandage, cement, acrylic ink, glas, candle, matchbox, sticks

80 × 60 × 65 cm

2020

Photo: Nikolai Gumbel





Die Beschneidung des Vesus – Eine Tischung

Opernperformance mit dem Opernkollektiv DIVA,
Angela Stiegler mit Samuel Fischer-Glaser, Nikolai Gumbel, Sophie Schmidt & Lili König
Lothringer 13, München
2020
Photos: Constanza Meléndez



"I was already so unbelievably excited the evening before and could hardly sleep. The conversation with Diva, the pigeon at the bathroom window and the happiness that had lifted me (not to mention the Rosé) amplified the excitement infinitely. I really meant what I said at the end about how Diva is faring during corona, that Diva suffers but also yearns with the other Divas for the moment of the performance. This feeling burns in me and fills me up till I'm overflowing with longing." (DIVA)

"The greater the Diva, the greater the sore throat!" (DIVA)

In 2020 Samuel Fischer-Glaser, Nikolai Gumbel, Sophie Schmidt and Angela Stiegler founded Opernkollektiv DIVA. Our shared background lies in visual art. As opera collective, we collaborate experimentally and transdisciplinarily in artistic projects. This collaboration gives rise to performative operas that bring together different media.

The opera is a place for artistic encounter. We view it as a medium that opens up and activates visual art for other fields like literature, music and theater. Our work is processual. The opera performance results from a relatively short intensive rehearsal period. There is no preexisting script. The libretto and content are more the product of our conversations and of the material itself, for costumes, props or installative stage designs. The material for the subsequent performance emerges out of the rehearsal situation.

Writing counts as a fundamental part of our Opernkollektiv DIVA. We develop our own texts in which we attempt, for instance, to write from the body instead of about the body. Then these texts are transposed to create the opera's libretto and

are afterwards set to music and translated into spoken word and song. One such work came into existence in *Fructa*, Munich, in February 2020, an opera about the skin called *Sans Soucis* (*Sans Soucis* is a brand name for cosmetic skin cremes). Beginning with our own skin, we built second skins for ourselves in the form of multifunctional costumes which we later performed in.

Since 2021, the diva's body has become the site of our collaboration. As bodies are always also determined by language, as shown by body politics, we wish to produce new bodies through the expression of language: a diva body as imaginative potential, as world-creating power. The diva body thus also functions as a metaphor for us as individuals. Donna Haraway's metaphor of the female cyborg, as conceived in her *Cyborg Manifesto*, is a crucial figure for these diva bodies.

Since the moment we found ourselves living in different places, in Venice, Marseilles and Munich, we have oriented ourselves toward the pigeon. The pigeon links us to one another as winged bodies and especially as carriers of messages. Pigeons too are domestic, cosmopolitan, and they share their living space with us. The Diva is in search of other bodies and their possibilities for opening up human living spaces. With the help of Donna Haraway we too wish to tell interspecies stories, to open ourselves up for new connections, for becoming-with, a becoming with the pigeon: "Pigeons, people and apparatus have teamed up to make each other capable of something new in the world of multi-species relationships. (...) Pigeons are competent agents – in the double sense of both delegates and actors – who render each other and human beings capable of situated social, ecological, behavioral, and cognitive practices."*

The Diva body assembles different cities, gathers many stories, has wings and feelers, turns garbage bags into costumes, two-dimensional figures into actors, strawberry ice cream and radicchios into microphones and voice measuring devices. It examines the power of volcanoes and climate change, investigates the potential of beetle feelers and brings Sahara sand, the Calanques, Leonrad Square, Venice and a classroom into contact with one another. The diva body can fall in love, cry and laugh, scream and snarl, bark and sigh, cheer and wail. The diva body is determined by the everyday, the incidental, while in the process also being a dramatic impassioned body, a playful body that turns everything into a stage, itself becoming a stage. There is no beyond to the diva body, because "on it we sleep, live our waking lives ... on it we penetrate and are penetrated" (as in the body without organs, developed by Deleuze und Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*).**

Artist Statement – Opernkollektiv DIVA

Samuel Fischer-Glaser, Nikolai Gumbel, Sophie Schmidt and Angela Stiegler,
translated by Whiliam Locke Wheeler

* Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), Chapter 1: "Playing SF with Companion Species," p. 15f.

** Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 150.







Da warf sie ihre Zunge raus, es gab
keinen schöneren Vorhang.
Eine Oper über die Tragik des
menschlichen Körpers

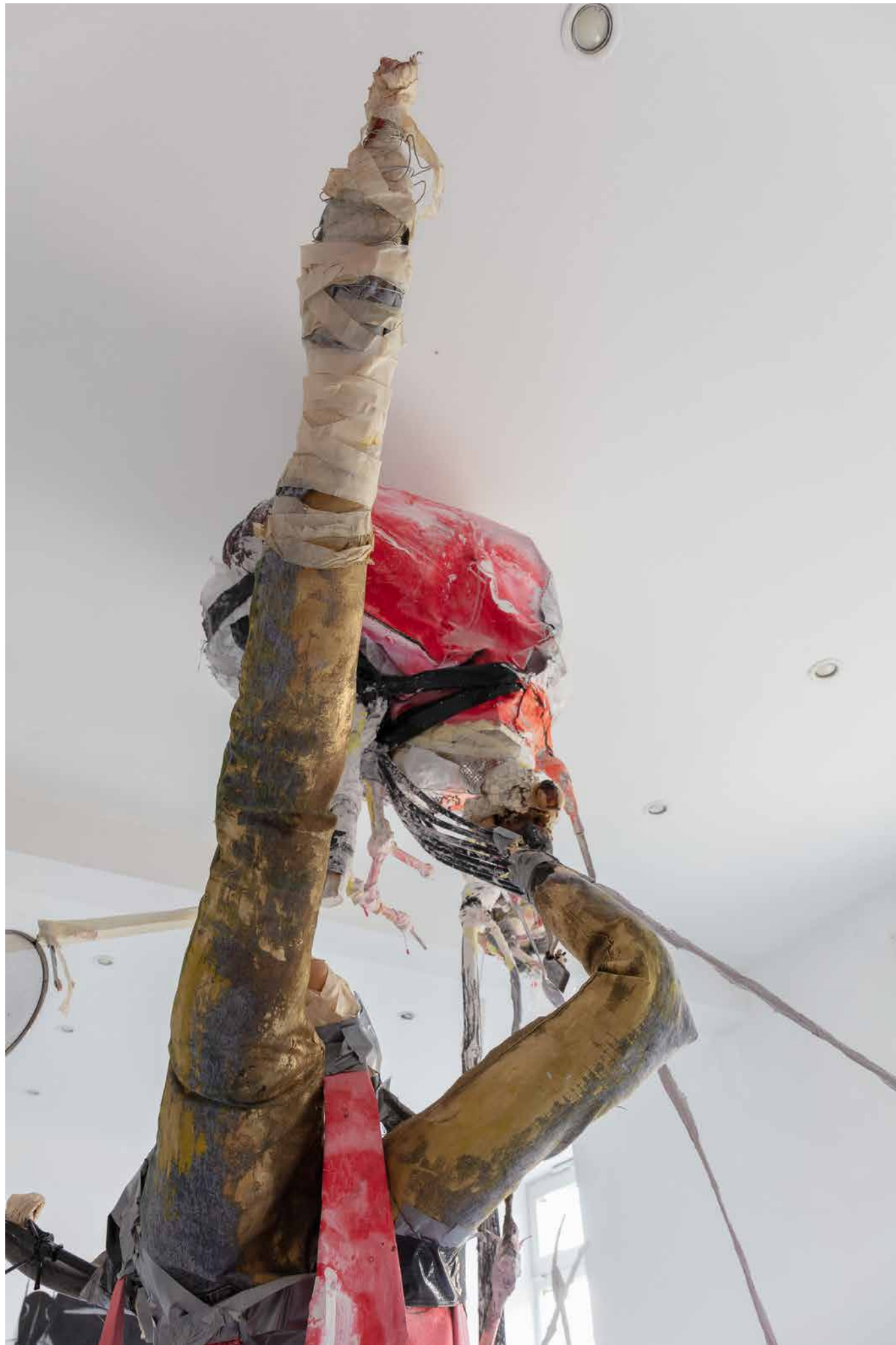
Fructa space, Munich
Solo show
Installation and performance
2020
Photos: Thomas Splett



Käfer
Sculpture (mixed media)
Ca. 300 x 300 x 250 cm
2020

right:
Käferpriester I & II
Charcoal on canvas
200 x 160 cm each
2020

next:
Mücke
Plaster, sticks, forks, knives, acrylic paint, sieves, tubes, cigarette etc.
Ca. 100 x 70 x 300 cm
2020

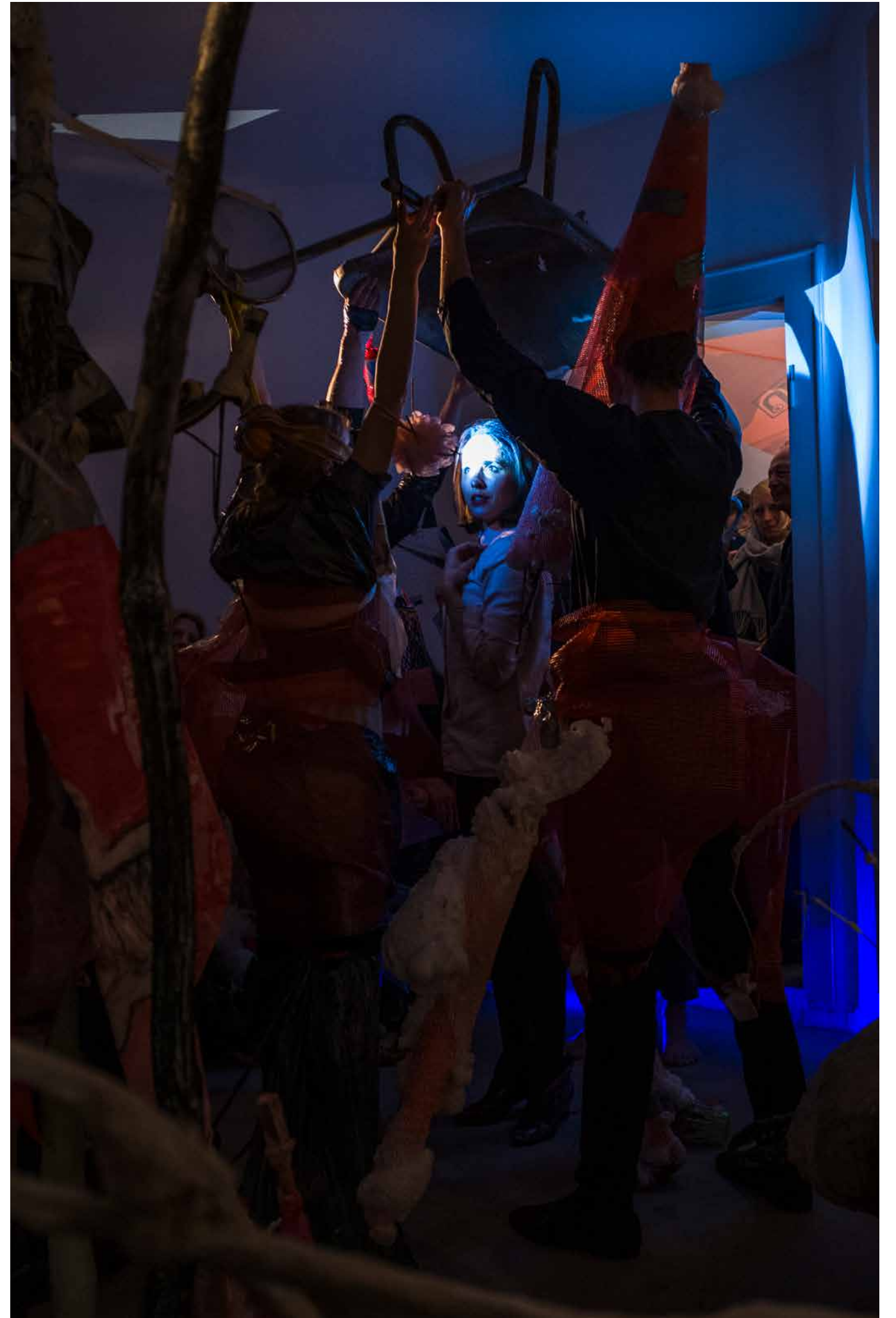


Sans Souci: Erster Akt der Oper *Über die Tragik des menschlichen Körpers*

Opernperformance mit dem Opernkollektiv DIVA,
Angela Stiegler mit Samuel Fischer-Glaser, Nikolai Gumbel, Sophie Schmidt & Quirin Brunmeier
fructa, München
2020
Photos: Mathias R. Zausinger

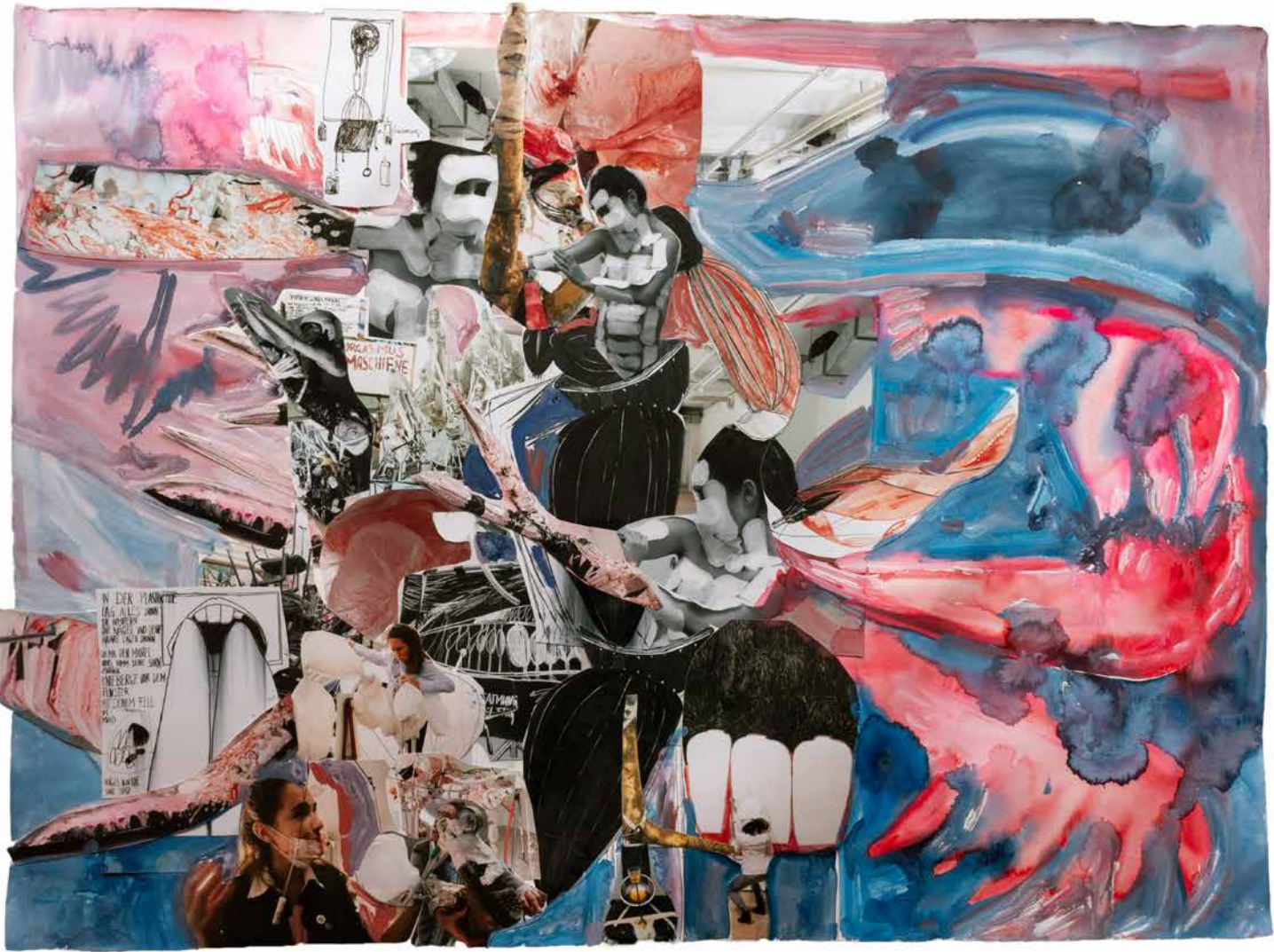
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7887860>
PW: Oper



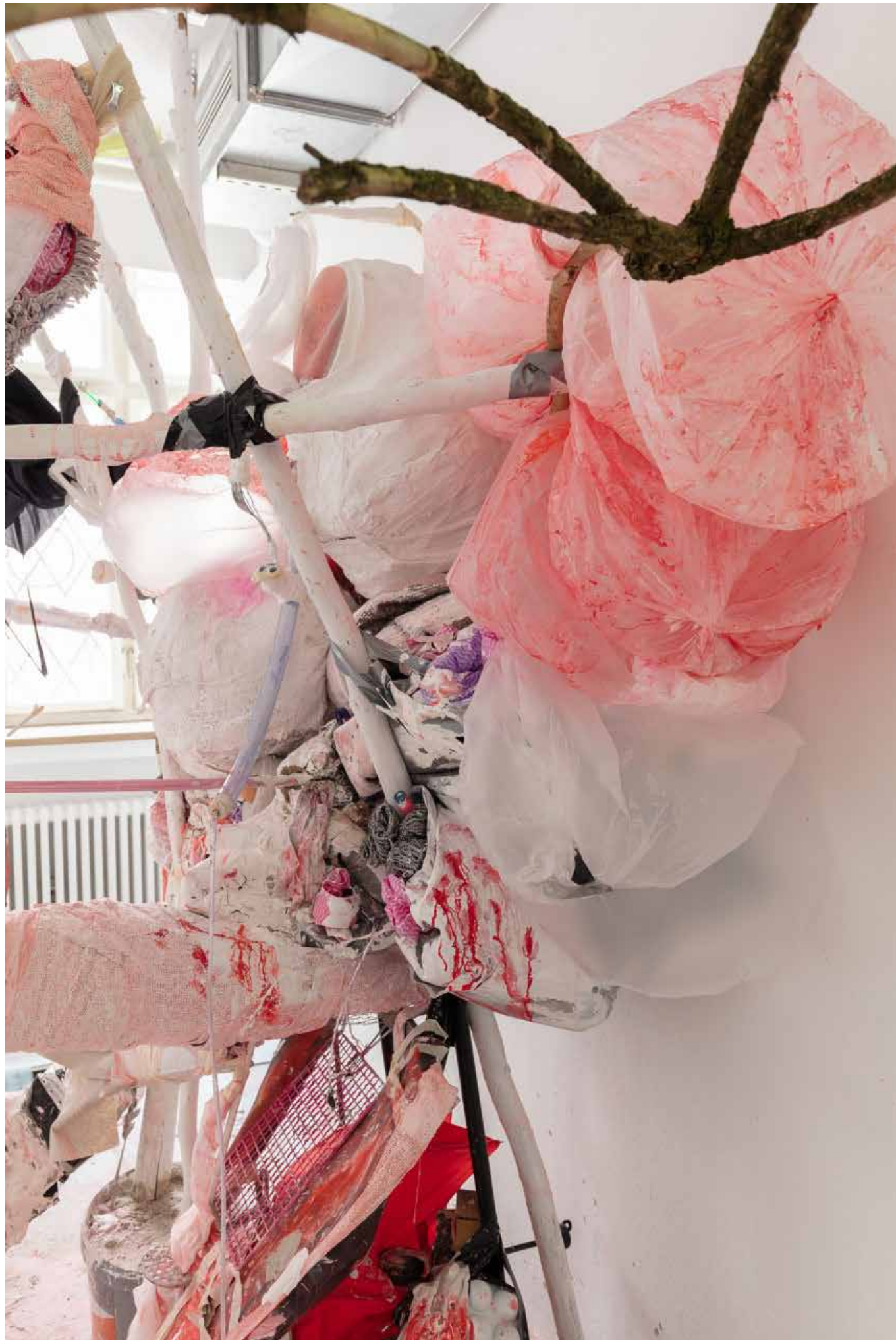




left:
Käferpriester I
Charcoal on canvas
200 x 160 cm each
2020





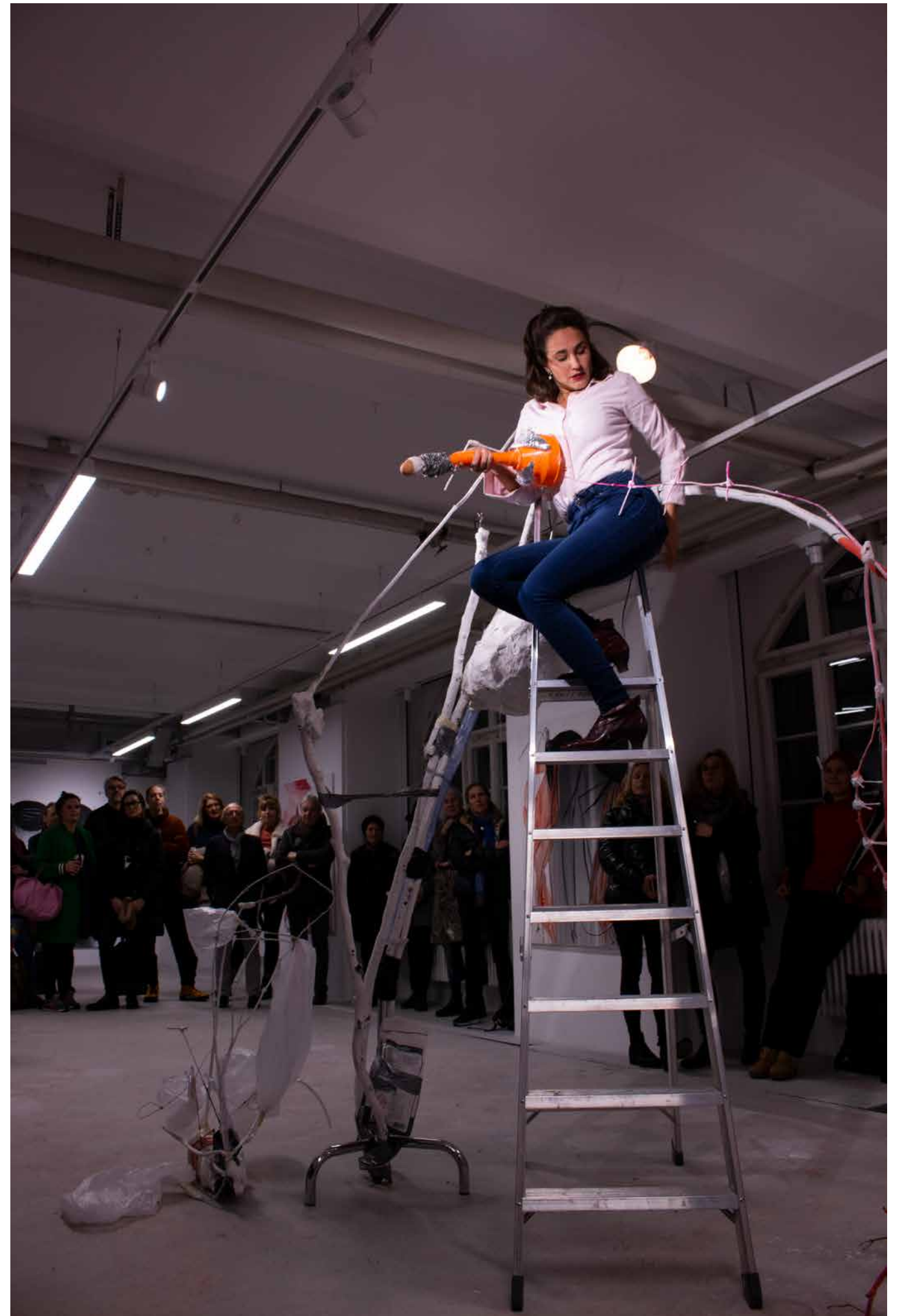


Krebsbesingung

Installation with performance and paintings
Point of no return Kunstarkaden, Munich
2019

Photos: Thomas Splett

Performance photos: Nikolai Gumbel & Olga Wiedenhöft







previous:

Molch mit rotem Bauch und Rückenbein

Watercolor, charcoal and acrylic on canvas

200 x 160 cm

2019

left:

Krebskäfer

Watercolor and acrylic on canvas

200 x 160 cm

2019

above:

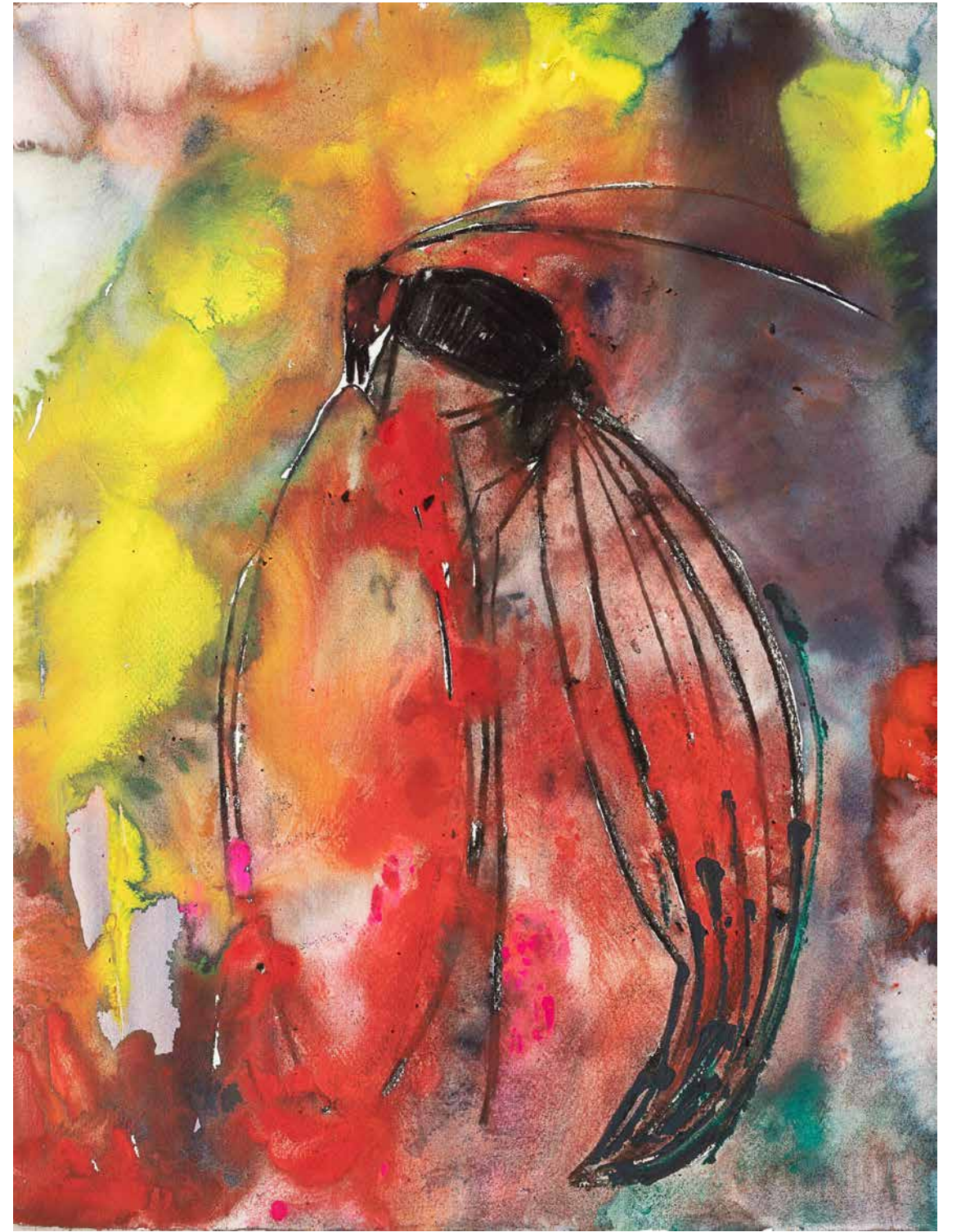
Einsiedlerkrebse in der Fühlerflut

Watercolor and acrylic on canvas

140 x 120 cm

2019







Das Isarland wurde weit
und es ging tief
mit Isarflößen an den Rändern



Die Tomatenfrauen sind da

Installation with paintings (watercolor, charcoal and acrylic on paper, 200 x 450 cm each)

Performance

NachbarN - Menschen in der Gotzingerstraße, Munich

2018

Photos: Thomas Splett



left:
Münchner Tomatenfrauen
Watercolor and charcoal on canvas
140 x 120 cm
2019

above:
Tomatenfrau
Watercolor, acrylic and charcoal on canvas
160 x 200 cm
2020



Nose-hole-scars and Zonenglühnen dazwischen

Performance and installation
Tent, Rotterdam
2019
Photos: Anna Łuczak



Here we see the event of transformation.

We see the prosthesis' intervention into her body. The prosthesis prongs penetrate, through the back skin, deep into her belly. The prosthesis forces her to bend over. It forces her from the vertical into the horizontal. But she rears up. Her legs want to triumph one more time. They multiply into swarms. They become claws and hold on tight to the back skin. They claw their way into her. Single spindly leg groups try to escape shakily, but the belly is already opening. It's too late. Lungs leak out. They duplicate themselves. They multiply into swarms. They penetrate the legs, expel them from the body. Lungathons now flood the feet. Even claw feet can't survive anymore. Outer lights transpire in the clutches. The legs' shine creates further legs. Always more and always longer. The lung maelstrom spreads, swallows her body whole. Zonal incandescence spreads over the skin on the prosthesis puncture. Fur lungs form, glandular paths and eggs. Toothly tongues mingle with the lunglungs-lungslungathons. The world will now be licked with the tongue. The legs light up, they get dense and denser. They get mossy and soft. They get furry. They get flat. They become part of the zonal incandescence. They become a warm skin carpet. They crack. Legs break. Tongue teeth break. They become toothly lungs. They shred their way through lungathons. They shred their way through last leg leftovers. They swallow themselves up.

by Sophie Schmidt,
translated by Whiliam Locke Wheeler

Nose-hole-scars and Zonenglühen dazwischen

Performance and installation

Chalton Gallery, London

2018

Photos: Javier Chalderon



DIESE VIELEN HARTE DER ALL
KLAR IST DAS JA WOH WOH GEM
SILBERT
DIE ZWEIFBERGE VOR DEM GEM
UND ZWISCHENDRIN SPITZTES SICH ROT
AUF
WIE AUCH DIE NASE
MIT IHREN NASENLOCHNARBEN
UND DOCH IST SELBST DER
NABEL IST DE NARBE
NARBEL BLUTIN
DAZWISCHEN GIBT DAS TRENNT
DER ROTE PUNKT LIEGT IN DER
SCHLEUSE
WIRD AUS NOCH ZWEL NASENLOCHERN
DAS BAUCHLOCH
WEIL DER NABEL
SICH NACH BEN
ATMET
UND NICHTS
LIEGT MEHR DAZWISCHEN
WAS EUCH TREINT
DIE OHREN
KÖNNEN SICH BERUHREN
DENKE AN NE
BAUCHLOCH



previous:

Aber diese vielen Haare überall

200 x 250 cm

Acrylic, chalk and pastel chalk on canvas

2018

above:

Es ist die Nasenlochhaut, die trennt

200 x 200 cm

Acrylic, chalk and pastel chalk on canvas, part of the installation and performance

2018

right:

Und sie konnten sich näher kommen die Ohren und der Kopf wurde klein und der Nabel wurde groß

200 x 200 cm

Acrylic and chalk on canvas, part of the installation and performance

2018





right:

Dein Randleuchten ist wunderschön

78 x 57 cm

Watercolor, pigment and egg on paper

2017

previous:

Fußleuchten, weil es die Lindung gab

Die Vergänglichkeit ist mein Rand zu dir

78 x 57 cm

Watercolor, pigment and egg on paper

2017



OPER: Tragik des menschlichen Körpers
und die Verwandlung.



Ohrenkontakt

Zanerkell

Zanerkellmaschine

Schrock mit Li.

Tannedüngele Rücken doppelstülper Probleme mit Gehstoe

ÜBERBAU oder die Nasenhaut.

Problematik mit der Prothese

Nasenkontakt problematik

2 Busen fallen du Nasen entlauf



Über die Tragik des menschlichen Körpers

Performance and installation
Jan Van Eyck Academie, Maastricht
2017
Photos: Lotte Meret Effinger



right:
Lungenumstülperin mit Rückeneinbuchtung
200 x 160 cm
Acrylic on canvas
2017



above:
Krumbiel, Lungenumstülper mit Standbein
200 x 200 cm
Acrylic on canvas
2018

right:
Lungenumstülperin mit Bauchigung
200 x 160 cm
Acrylic on canvas
2017

next:
Lungenbrütler
100 x 200 cm
Chalk, wall paint on wood
2017
Photo: Romy Finke

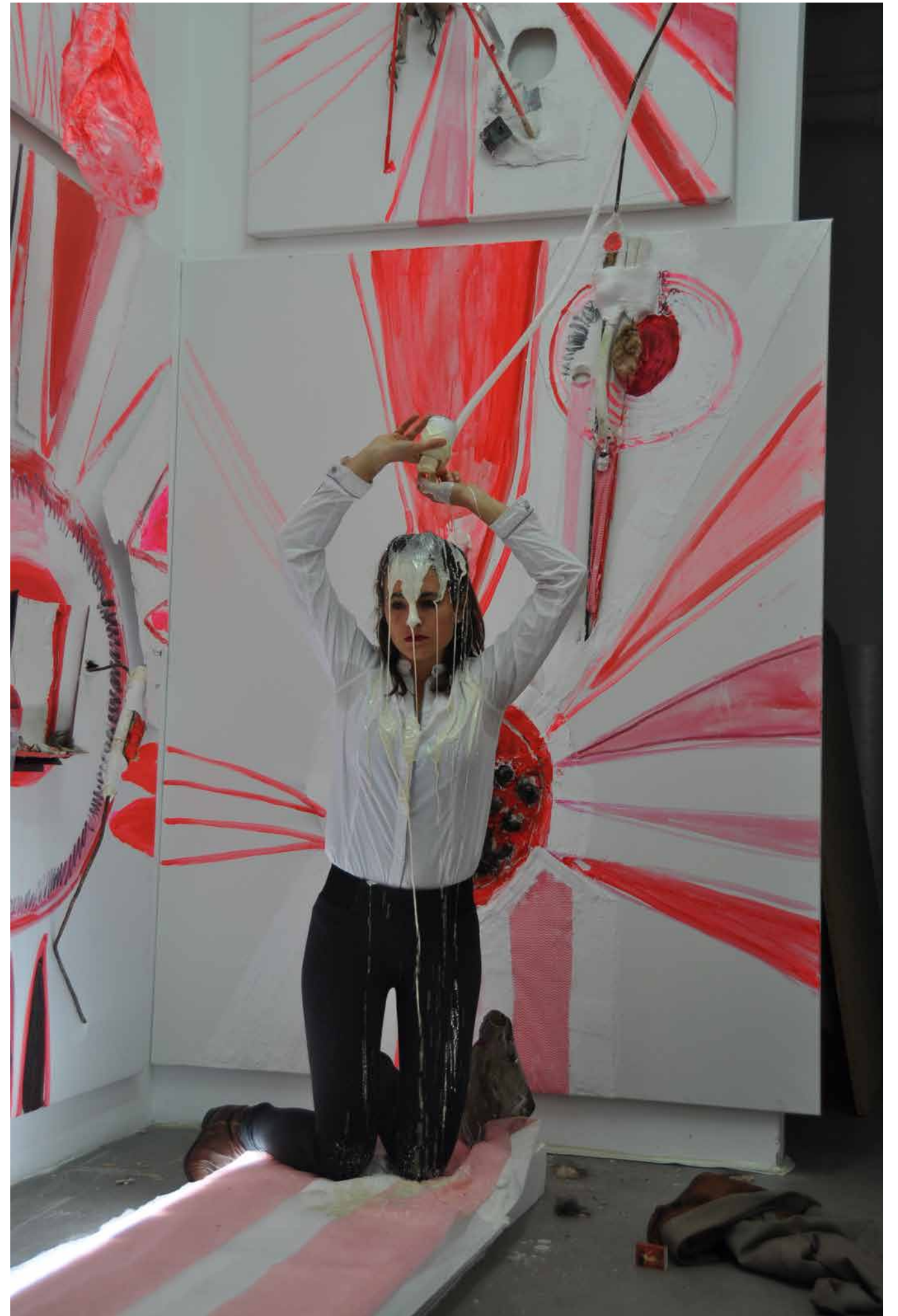




Gurkenfresserzahnung vor der Urmuttermilchlegung

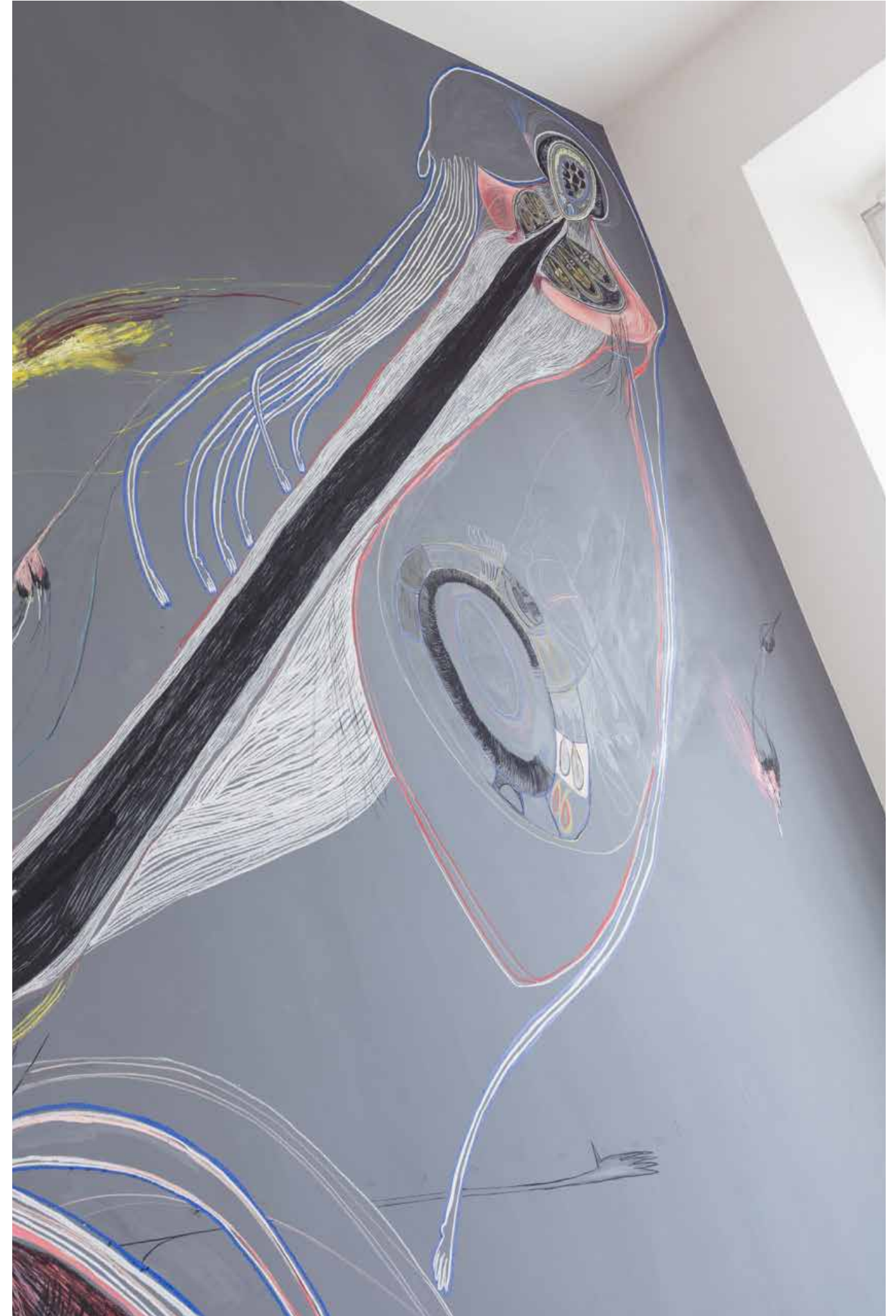
Tanja Pol Galerie, Munich
Solo show
Performance and installation
2017
Photos: Mariella Maier





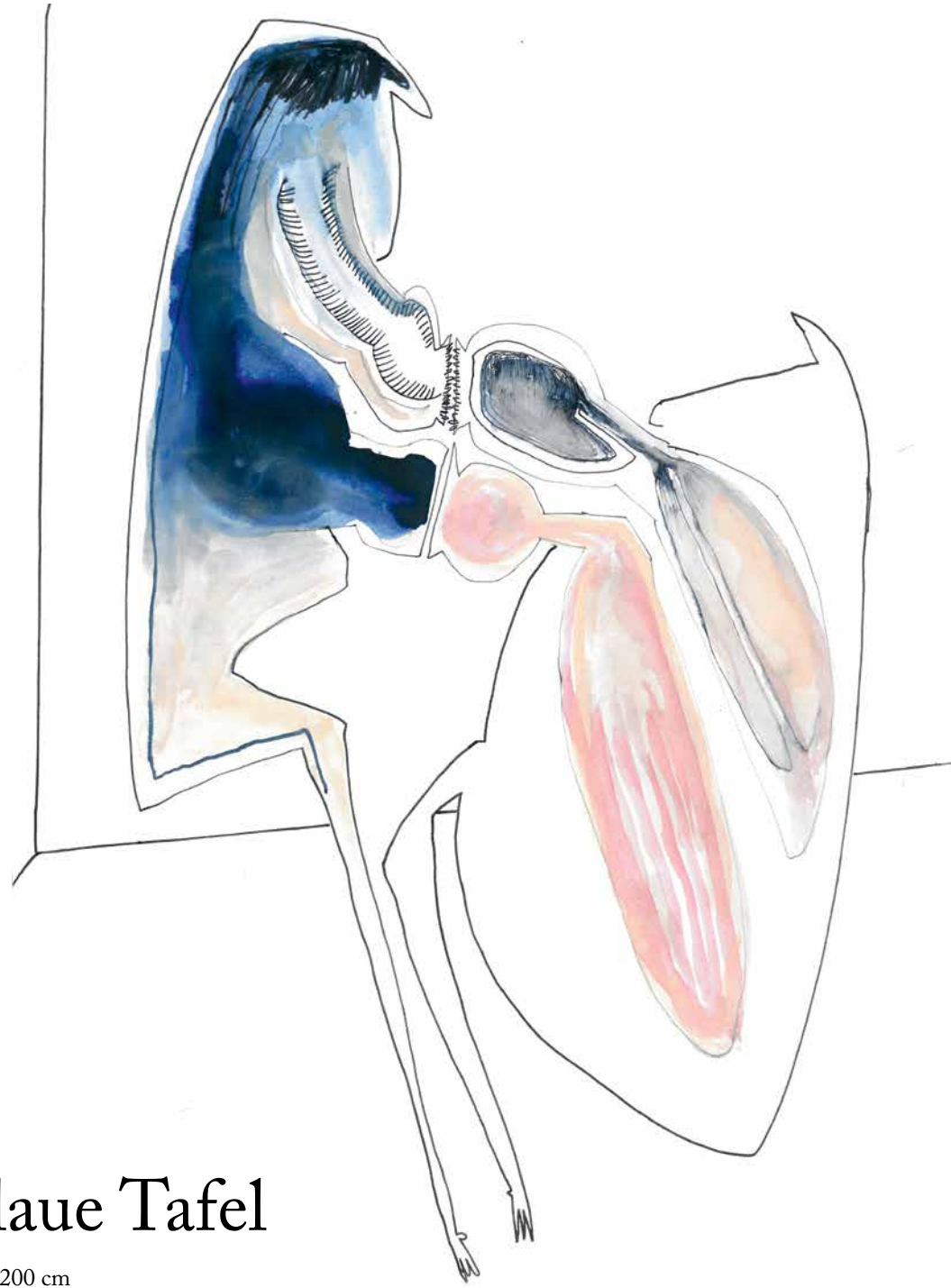






Engländerin im Empfängnisstz

800 x 1.000 cm
School chalk, oil crayon, charcoal, acrylic and pastel on wall
Graduation show, Academy of Fine Arts, Munich
2017
Photos: Thomas Splett



Blaue Tafel

200 x 200 cm
School chalk and acrylic on wood
2016
Photo: Philipp Rap





Vom Lungenfüßler zum Tausendlünger

Performance with Scarlett Eisert Schmidt and Kurt Schmidt
Caberet Voltaire,
Manifesta 11, Zurich
2016
Photos: Nikolai Gumbel

Tausendlügler

Drawings (selection)
Ink, charcoal and acrylic on paper
Various sizes
2015



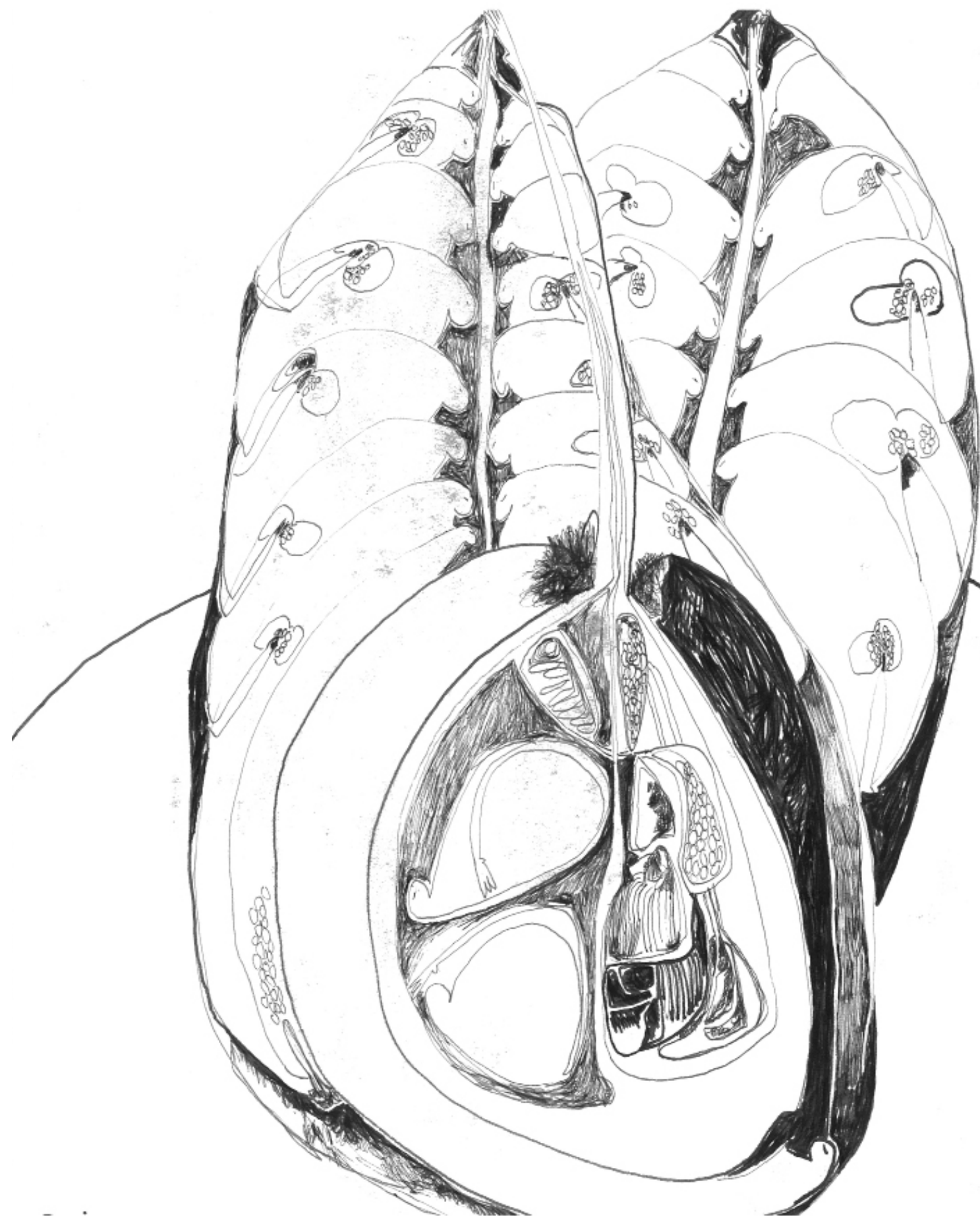
10) Sage ja die Beine
sind eine Belastung, auf sie
dürfen Füße werden, Tentakel



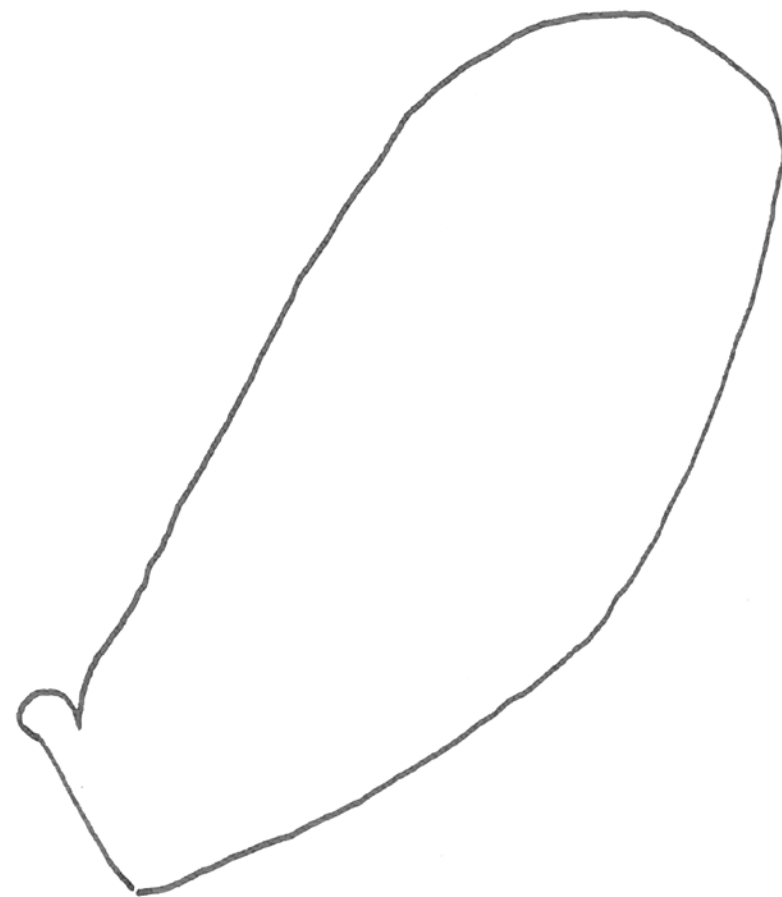
Annäherungen im
EMPFANGNISITZ

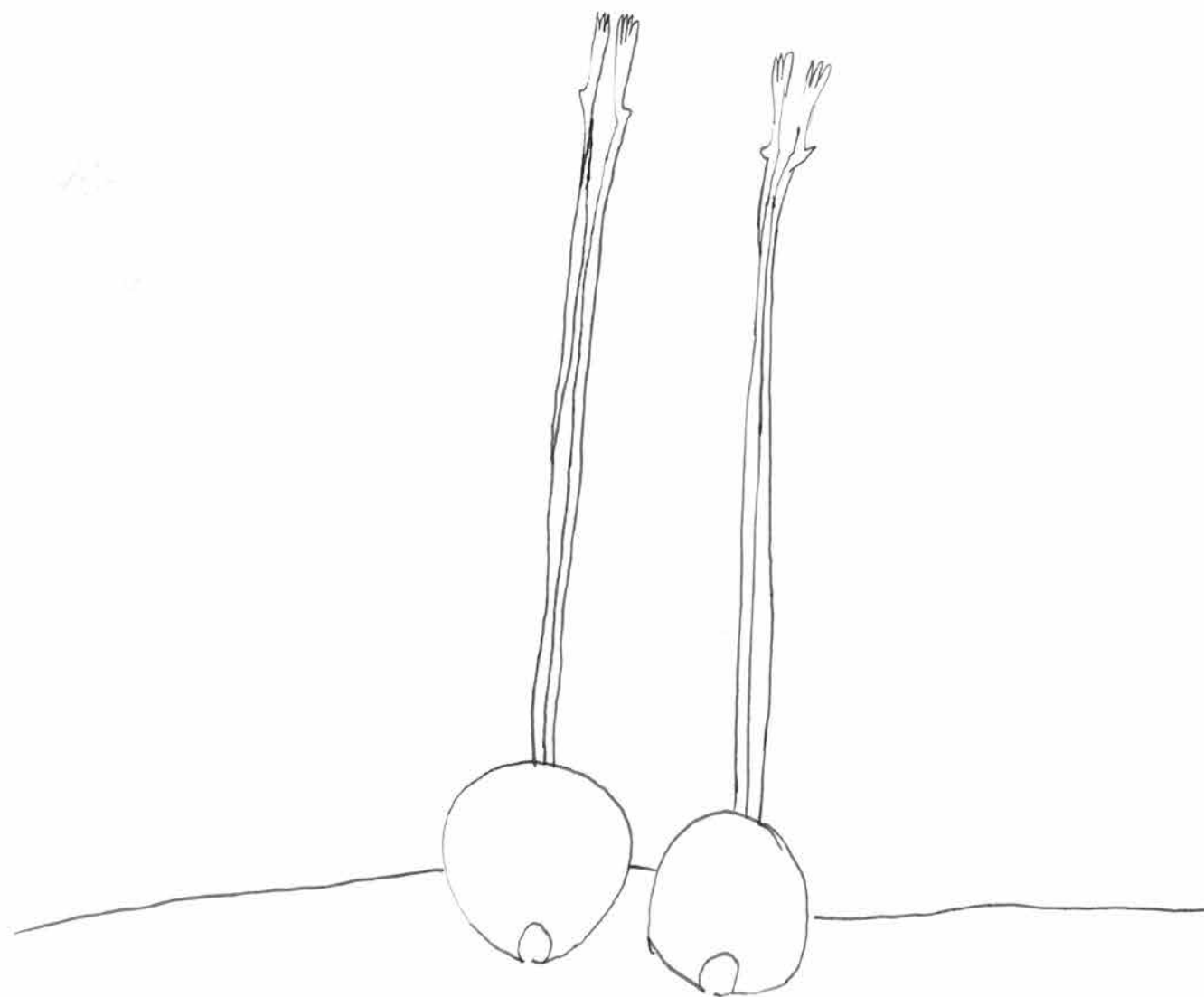


Ich glaube bei mir
wirds ein Sturzflug

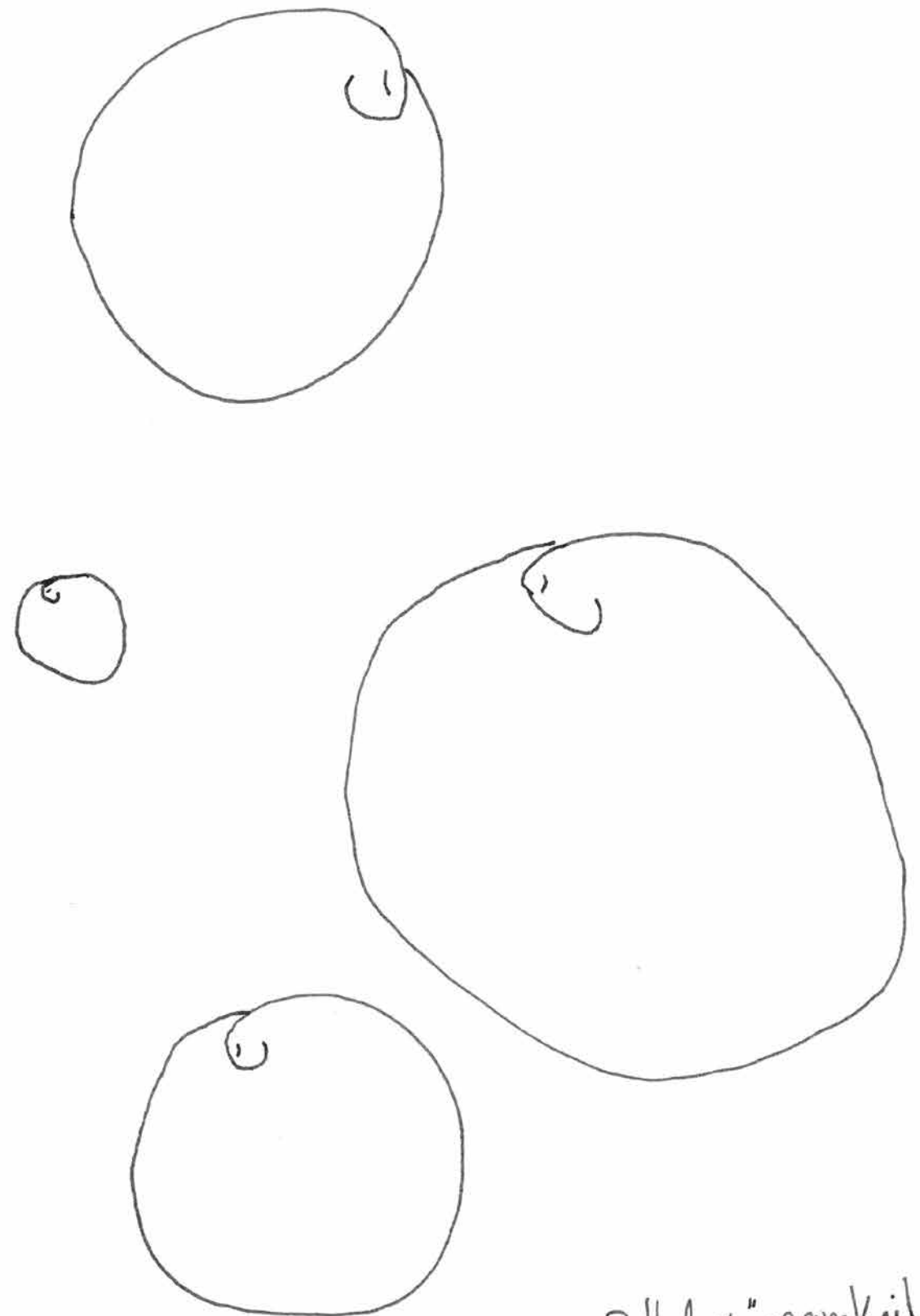








Sagen Sie mal, warten Sie auch?
Ja aber ich weiß nicht recht auf was.
Ich auch nicht.



Selbstgenügsamkeit

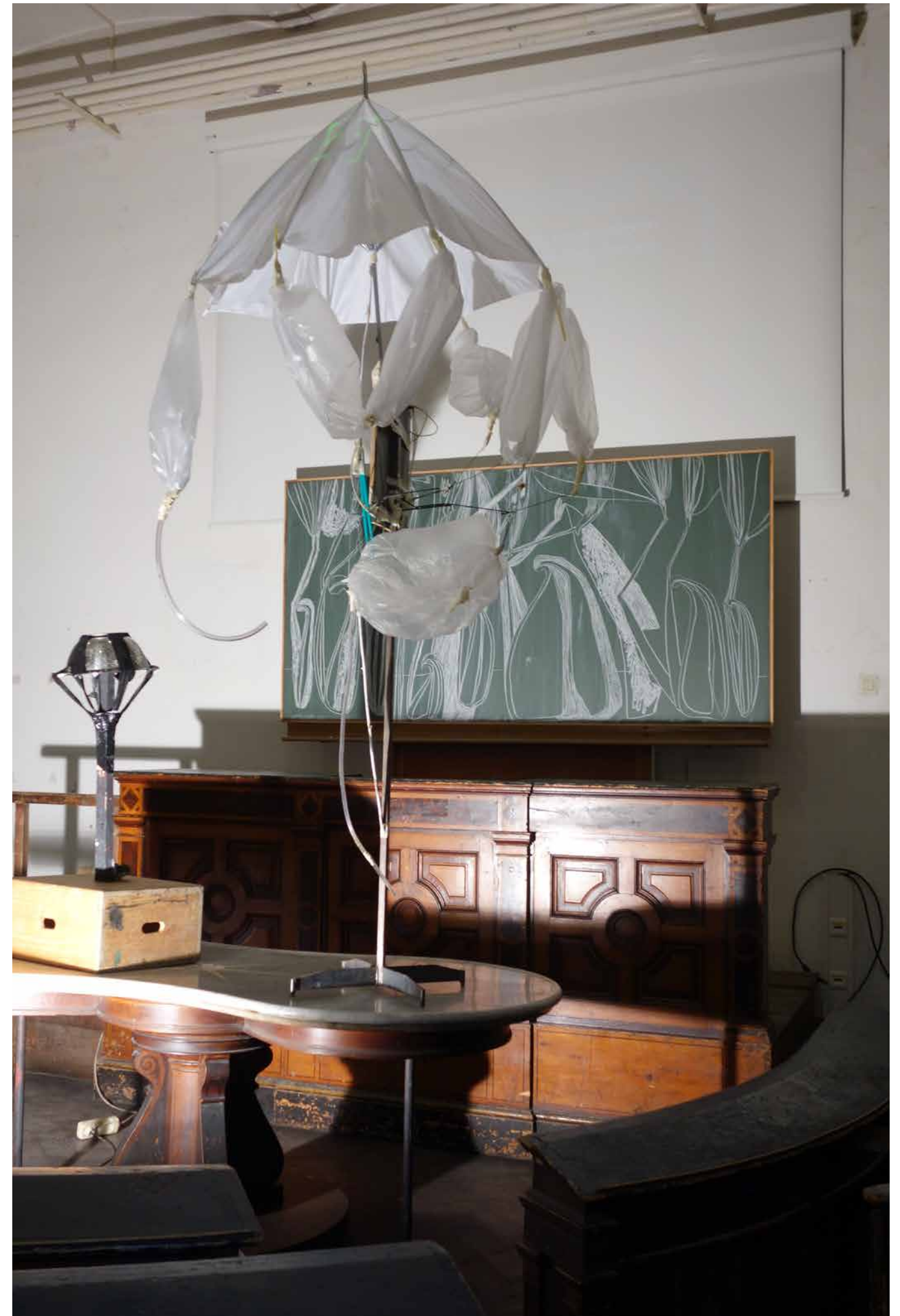
Lungenfüßler

Performance
Anatomiesaal, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
2015

My first blackboard painting was developed in the anatomy hall in the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. It shows primary steps of the evolution of the centilung. Centilungs find their lungs inverted from belly to foot, so the lungs become lung wings. On the blackboard, the development of the lung is depicted during conception, as the prestep to the centilung.

I gave a lecture on the centilung before the blackboard painting was made and again after. Then I performed the mosquito gymnastics on the dissecting table in order to reach the state of the centilung through the stage of the mosquito.

Becoming mosquito and becoming centilung are dilations. They free the human from his one-sided determination on the vertical form of existence. They free him from his one-sided determination of the bodily functions. Becoming mosquito and then centilung, means a recombination of organs, such as the nose-to-foot-breathing. They always mean a connection of body and prosthesis in the sense of a physical dilation. The academy hall was the adequate place for that.



Mosquito Gymnastics

1. Knee bends: moving from the vertical toward the horizontal (1. mosquito feeling).
2. Nose-to-foot ventilation by means of prosthetic shoe.
3. The belly prosthesis is needed to get close to the snake (1. Snake feeling).
4. With belly prosthesis they betake themselves into the horizontal. Nose-to-foot ventilation is always involved.
5. Breath externalization occurs. Lung eversion occurs as well. And they become lungipedes.
6. Lung doublings transpire. And more lung doublings. And they become centilungs.
7. The nose regresses. It's no longer needed.
8. Lung doublings expand into wings. The foot folds in. It's no longer needed. Only to drag, on the ground, from time to time, a romp of sorts. (2. Mosquito feeling)
9. Now the lungs are lung wings. It's uplifting. (3. Mosquito feeling).
10. The head gets small, the nose is gone and legs are only for folding in. All of this from time to time, because it brings them joy.

by Sophie Schmidt,
translated by Whiliam Locke Wheeler



Body-widenings

2013-15

The body does not end with the skin. It rather opens and connects constantly, also with the prosthesis.

The body widens into life. Many new dilated bodies emerge, entering new interactions. The bodies grow beyond their border. The dilated body exists for a certain time and then dissolves.

The human equally widens with the prosthesis and practices other stances of body and world. The stomach has to go up, the head needs to go down. The potential of transformation lies in the question of posture, of posture of the body to the world.

My prostheses are prostheses of communication too. They are evasions and embodiments of what is inside. They help with any kind of stumbling, also with an inner stumbling. *Gebstock mit Ei* (*Walking stick with egg*) for example helps with balance.





Interaktion 2
Performance
Academy of Fine Arts Munich
2013



Interaktion 3
Performance
Academy of Fine Arts Munich
2013



Interaktion 4
Performance
Academy of Fine Arts Munich
2013

Walking Stick with Egg:

Eggness in the Belly

Einheit, or oneness, is Ei(n)heit, or Eggness, plus N, which equals nose.

Meaning oneness without egg and nose is unthinkable. Oneness, therefore, is breathing, internally, proceeding through the belly and expressing itself in inhalation and exhalation. It happens in the stable belly oscillation, like the egg, thus lying on the body's middle axis. The nose never ever breaks an egg, but the foot always does.

by Sophie Schmidt,
translated by Whiliam Locke Wheeler

Prostheses

Objects being used
2014



Raucherhilfe
mit Sophia Mainka



OP 2

Installation and performance
Academy of Fine Arts Munich
2014

In the surgeries I operate, thus I build surgery rooms. In the surgeries I connect humans with the prostheses. The surgeries are physical interventions, in which the inside is turned outside and vice versa.

These surgeries are soul-surgeries on the body. The psychoanalytical approach regarding only the soul is unsatisfactory.

Before a surgery, the entire body is examined in all components and then recombined in the process of the surgery. Our organs and limbs are badly organized the way they are. Movement fails. The prosthesis is a remedy.

What doesn't work with the prosthesis alone, needs to be fixed surgically.



The Grounds of Body Symmetries

There's always something between the doublings, or else they wouldn't be doublings. They'd be singlecities, melted into a body. The doublings, though, yearn for singlecities. Or else we wouldn't constantly flap our legs over themselves, fold our hands, cross our arms. But the ears, they can't do that, there's always a head between them. Meaning the ego gets overrated, the knee, underrated, and even sometimes forgotten. Seldom does anyone give the knee as grounds for what they said. Usually it's the head, which keeps the ears from cozying up to each other. Pity, the grounds given for something said would be closer to the ground if we would give grounds with the foot. Then the grounds would have their feet on solid ground. One should make mental leaps, as shown by those of the body, with leg and foot, or else with everted pedal lung. Think of the trammel and its nice long legs, made to jump with ease.

The Hands

But the hands need their sense of touch to come from the gut. Put everything into the sluice.

The Foot

If the foot had tentacles:
The egg doesn't need them, it's closed in on itself, like the gut. Since the belly doesn't stumble by accident.

The Navel

It lies very centralistically.
It's the tragedy of the world in the gut. The tragedy of the world is the gut. And naturally the navel is the scar. For, where is it that we come from? The scar is the navel, just without lung: the navel ends on L and L stands for lung. Hence the navel is the beginning of the lungipede. There eversion happens because transformation happens there. It can even result in a centilung. This is very desirable, but is only achievable from time to time and is often accompanied by a very uplifting mosquito feeling.

by Sophie Schmidt,
translated by Whiliam Locke Wheeler



Schlafmaschinen

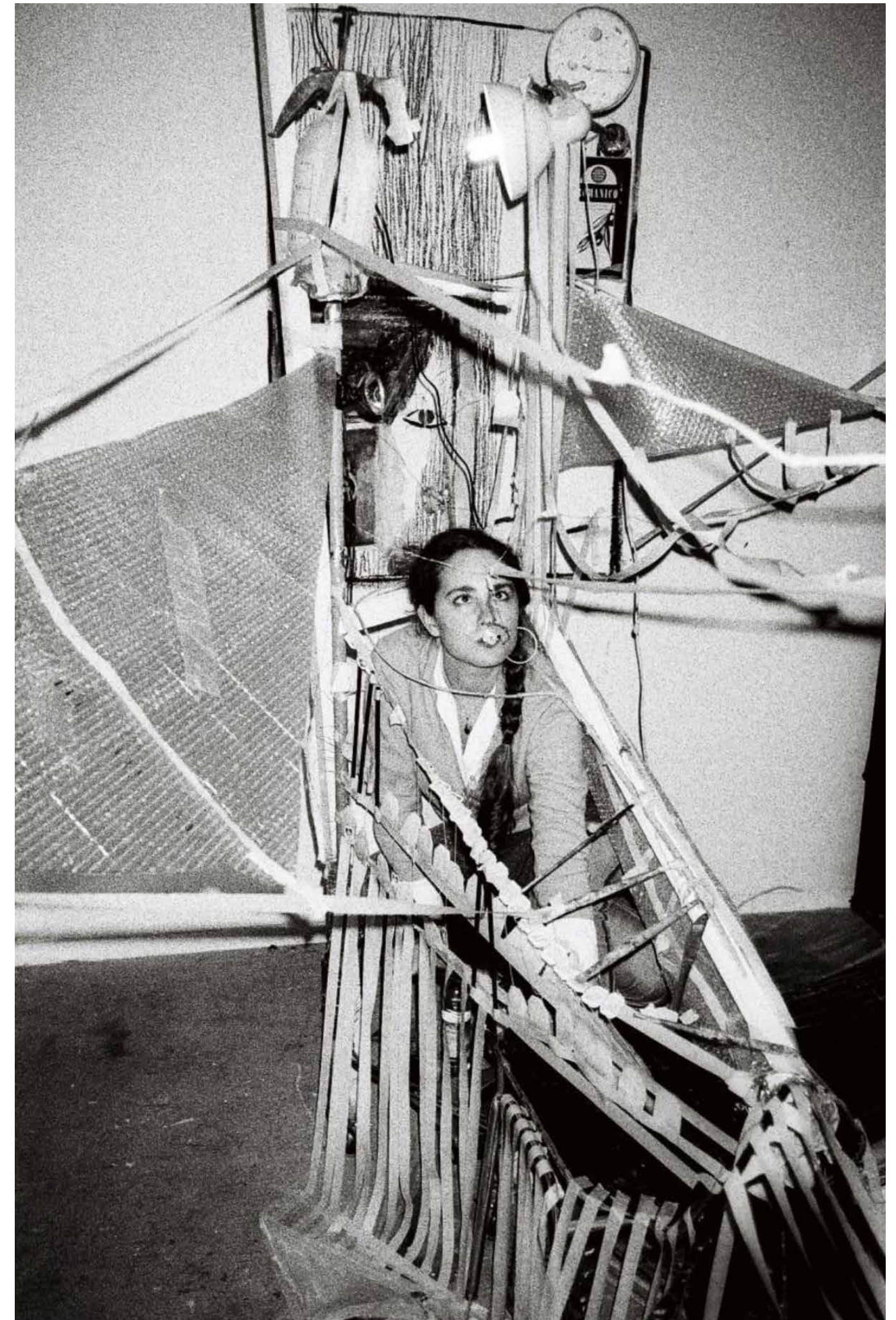
Collages (selection)
21 x 29,7 cm
2014

Du bekommst mild wenn ich
Dich besänftigen darf

Mild-
Duck







Moving-machines

Installations and performances
2013

My moving-machines are installations. You can climb in and ride them. They serve as elaborate costumes, tailored to my body, which I internalize through a ritual. In the performance, they come into movement: in an act of becoming one with the machine and the fight against it, they eventually are destroyed through my movement.

Through that, the installation undergoes a metamorphosis. The latter serves as the basis for a new installation, which again is subject to the cyclic processes of building, riding and destruction.

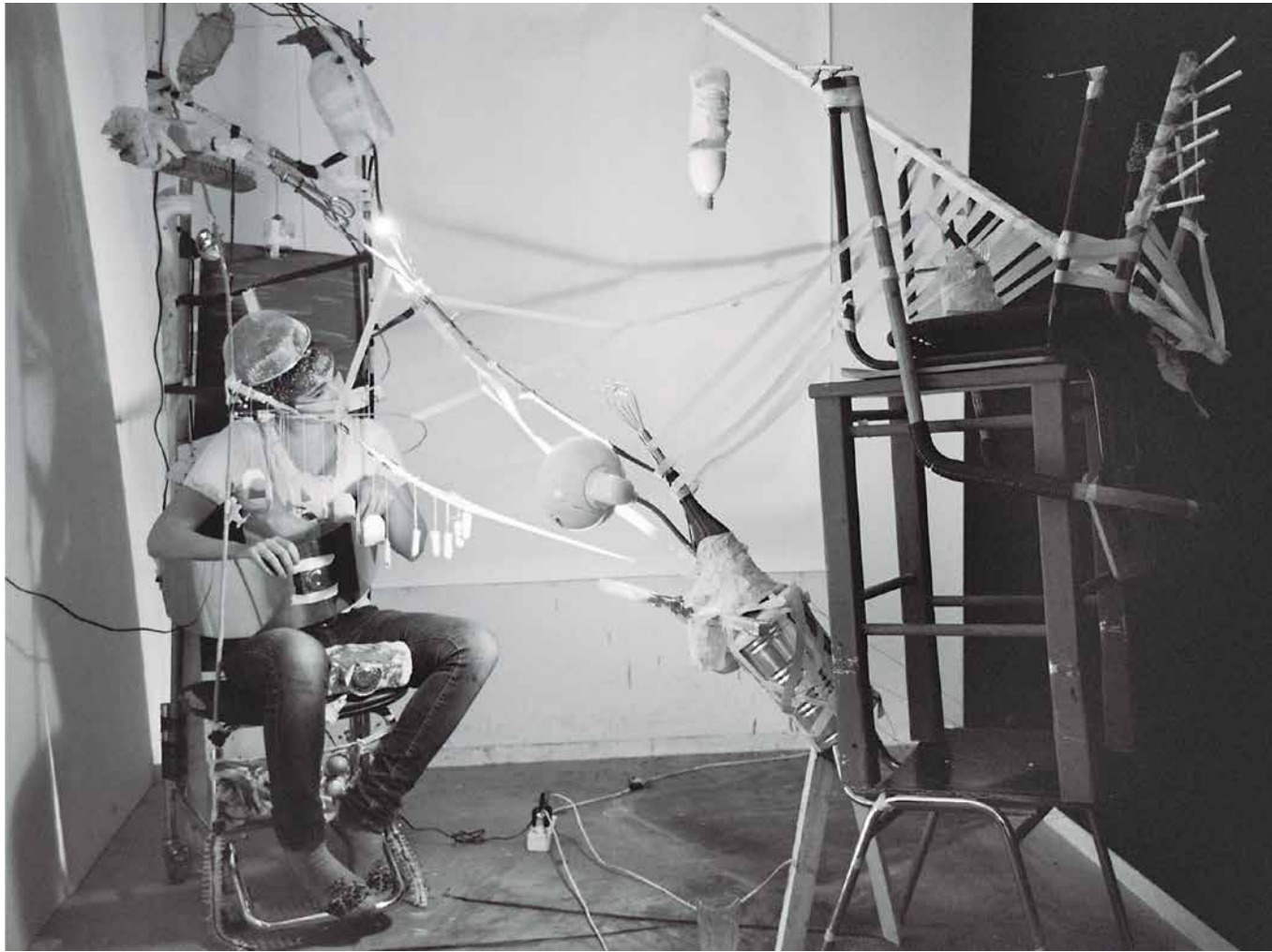
right: *Flugmaschine*

next:

Erster Fortbewegungsversuch
AkademieGalerie, Munich
Photos: Gisela Andras







above: *Orgasmusmaschine*

right: *Akademiedusche*





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