

NICOLETA AUERSPERG



In her sculptural practice, Nicoleta Auersperg engages with the process of form-finding and permanently re-explores it. For her, the term not only stands for a sculptural process, but always for time-bound, social transformation processes and cultural phenomena that are constantly evolving and changing.

Born in 1991 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Nicoleta Auersperg studied Transdisciplinary Art at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna and Textual Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna as well as in the Glass Department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam.

Her work is exhibited nationally and internationally, can be found in public collections, and has been awarded prizes and grants. She is co-founder of the exhibition space GOMO and lives and works in Vienna and Berlin.



Detail: Loupe, 2020

Starting Five, 2023
solo exhibition at Bildraum 01, Vienna, AT
foto credit: Kunstdokumentation/Manuel Lopez



Starting Five

On the stock exchange, the value of things is relative. According to fixed but constantly changing rules and depending on real factors, sums are shifted back and forth like on a malleable playing field.

The rules of the basketball game seem much more reliable: "Starting Five" is the starting lineup of five players, consisting of Guards, Forwards and a Center.

Perhaps that's why it's almost eerie to see black-and-white pictures of the "Palais Ferstel," in which the stock exchange hall, which almost looks like a nave, was converted into a basketball court from 1951 to 1978. The "sacred halls of money" become "sacred halls of sport" – both also belief systems and places of ritualized encounter. And though very different, both also social meeting places dedicated to a collective action.

In her exhibition **Starting Five** at Bildraum 01, artist Nicoleta Auersperg focuses on the various connections between the different historical layers of the building. She not only makes the invisible visible, but also works out the poetic dimension of these connections.

The omnipresent architectural element of the building, the arch, is deconstructed and, contrary to its usual static quality, becomes a temporary object. An enlarged tension spring resembles a basketball hoop while referencing the exhibition space's dysfunctional stucco hanging rail. Glass objects hang precariously on "cocktail tables," in an ambivalent state between defense and a snuggling in. Cocktail tables recall contexts in which weighty decisions are made in a seemingly private setting. Fittingly, the antique burling glass was developed to prevent the glass from slipping out of the hand when touched with greasy fingers – metaphorically reminiscent of „greasy deals“ in the banking business. And of course the art market is also affected by market-specific speculation.

Nicoleta Auersperg playfully becomes the archaeologist of „Palais Ferstel“ – and of her own work. Between all the works are cross-connections to each other – as to the place itself. The material glass appears in various forms and functions.

For the artist, the concept of „form-finding“ is not only a sculptural process, but also one that stands for social transformation processes that are constantly changing. As, for example, the stock exchange, real estate and art markets and the principle of commodity value. It thus likewise touches on the concept of the „commodity fetish," which describes the (false) assumption of the „nature“ of the value of a commodity: A theory that becomes particularly relevant again in the current situation of inflation and rising electricity and food prices.

In this context, the title of the exhibition **Starting Five** also points to the initial situation of a game that can be played over and over again and, consequently, to the possibility of starting anew. Hannah Arendt speaks in this sense of „atality“ and includes the consciousness both for the shaping of one's own existence as well as of the shared world.

Text by Olga Hohmann





Encounter (s), 2023
powder coated steel, hand blown glass,
124×63×60cm

Encounter (g), 2023
powder coated steel, hand blown glass,
124×80×70cm

Encounter (k), 2023
powder coated steel, hand blown glass,
132×50×20 cm





Installation view:

Arches, 2023

Steel, textile cord, glass,
276×97×153cm

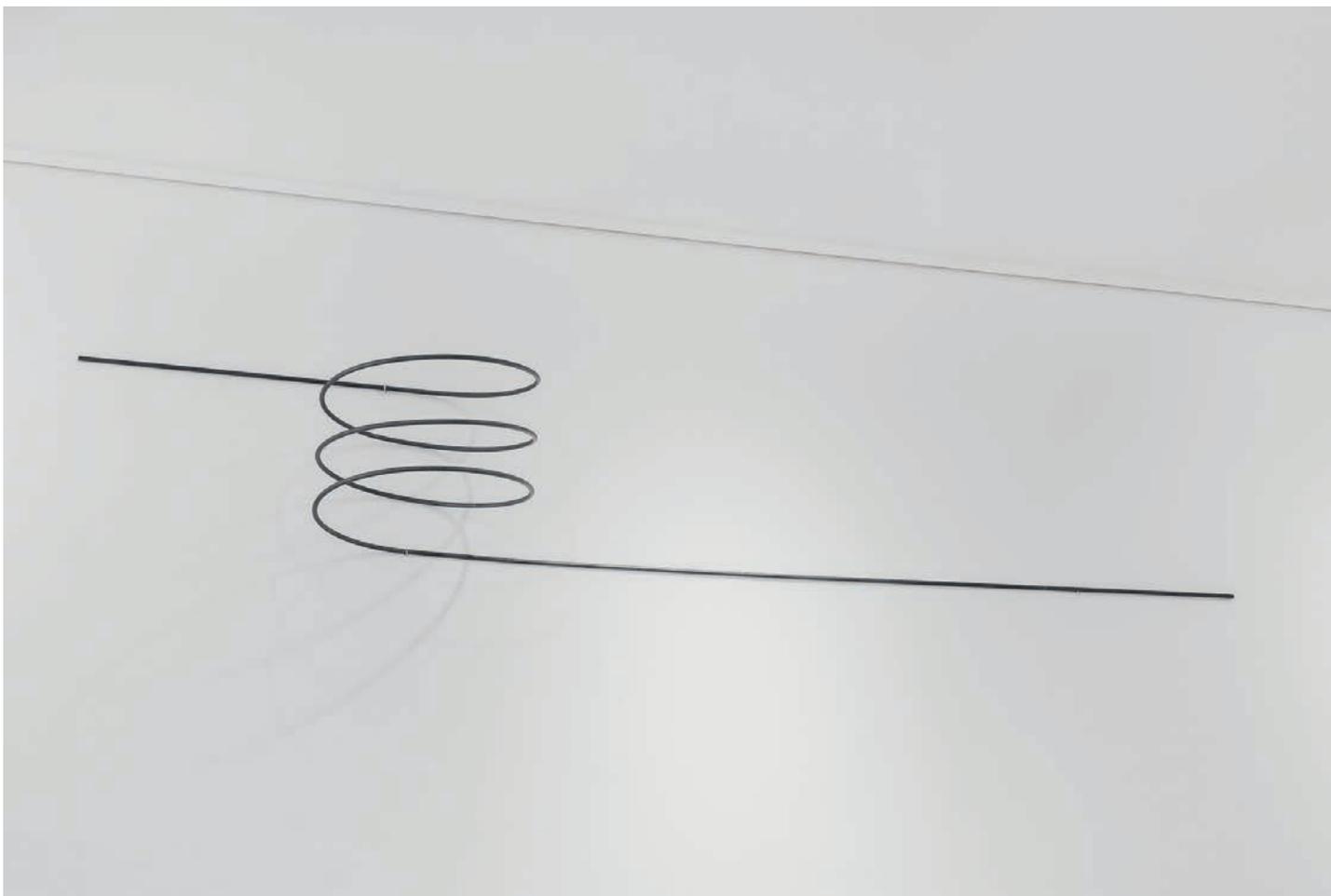
Detail:
Arches, 2023
Steel, textile cord, glass,
276×97×153cm



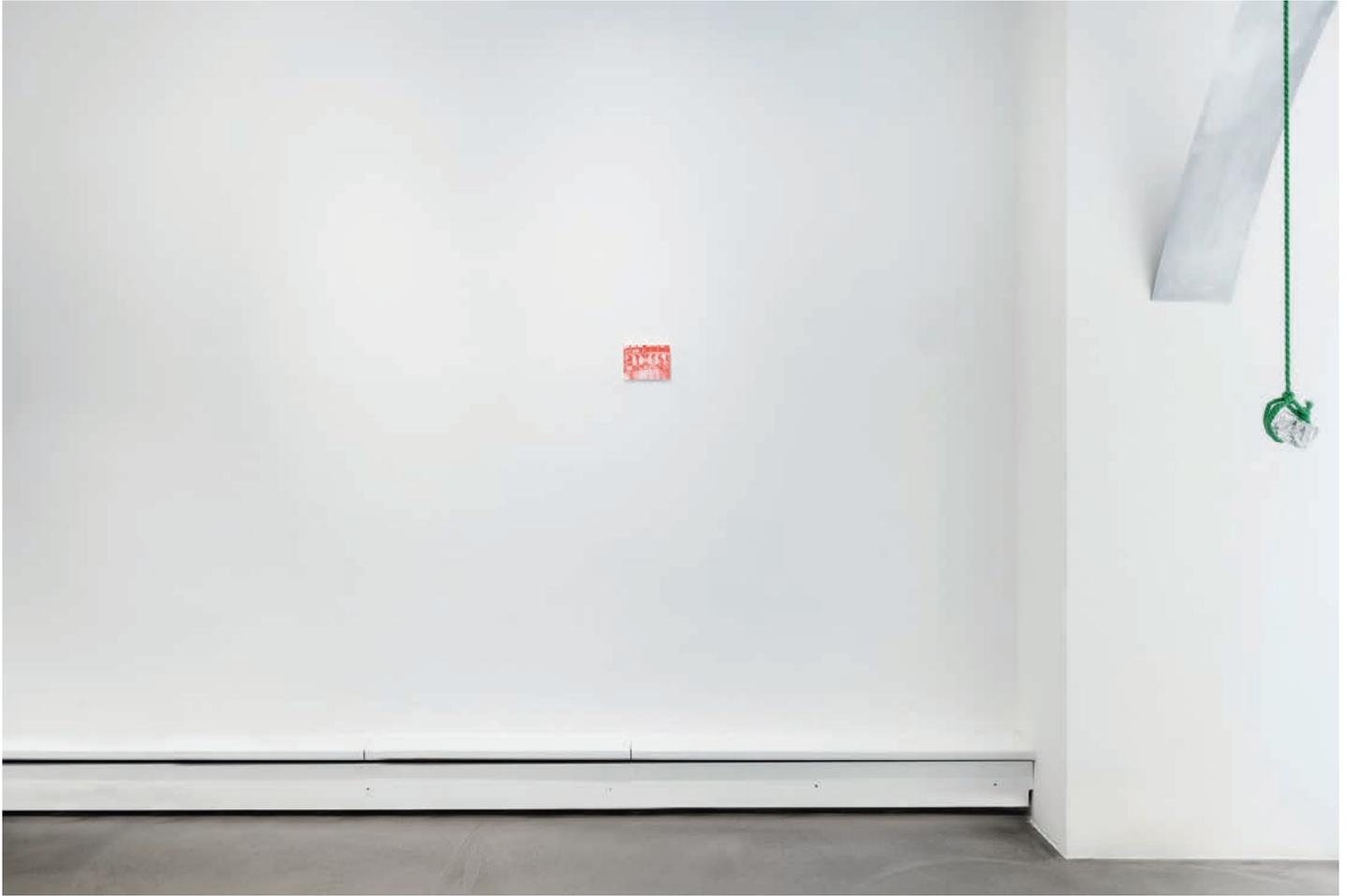


Detail:
Arches, 2023
Steel, textile cord, glass,
276×97×153cm





Twist, 2023
Bent steel,
270cm x 40x40cm



Installation view:

Starting Five, 2023

Screen print on Bristol board mounted on cherry wood

17×13×2,5cm



Close up:

Starting Five, 2023

Screen print on Bristol board mounted on cherry wood

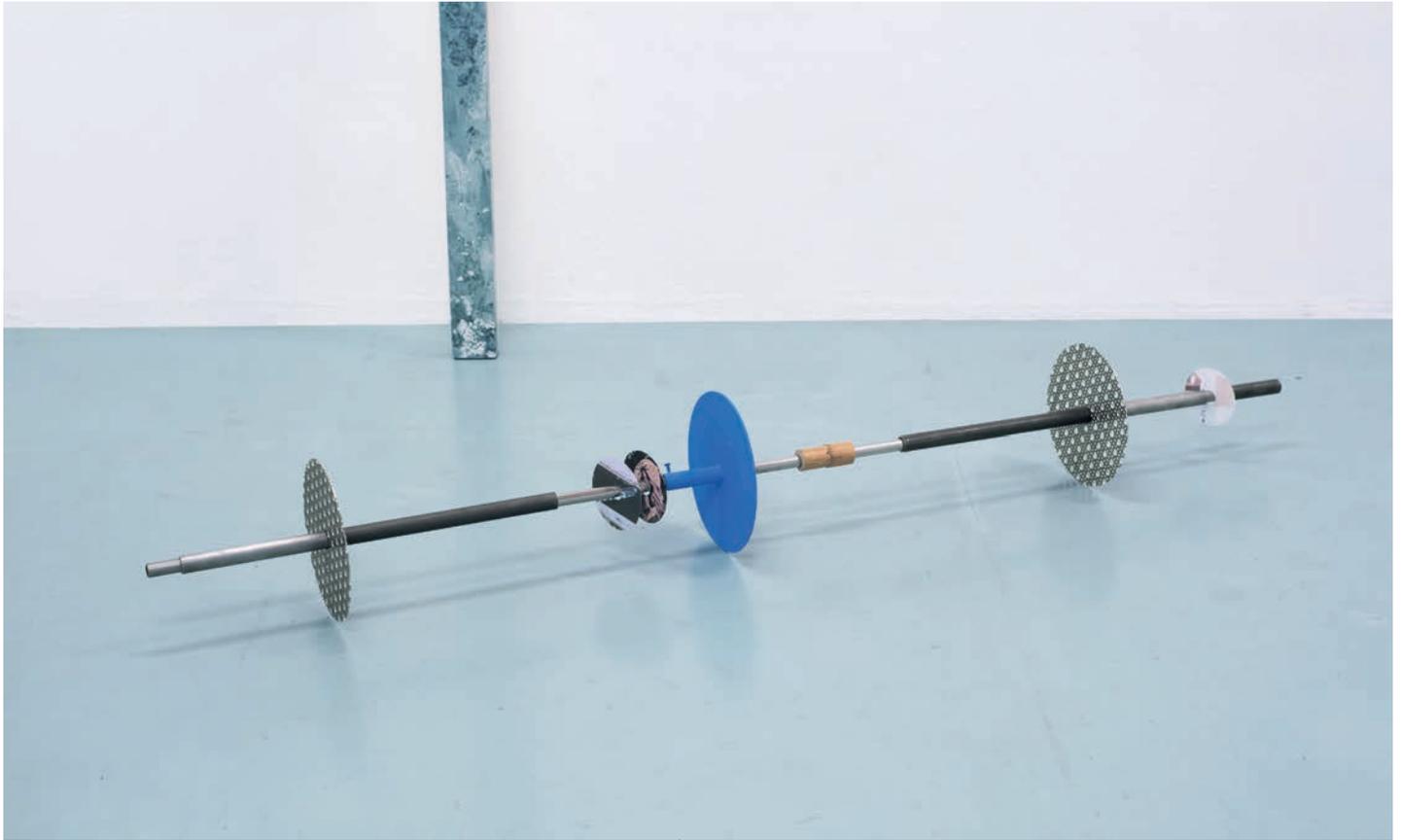
17×13×2,5cm

Serie: Wiener Gewebe, 2022

group exhibition „things ontop of other things“ at Kunstraum SUPER, Vienna, AT

with Elisabeth Windisch and Mara Novak

curated by Bianca Pedrina



Based on my interest in the cultural technique of weaving, I have been working on Viennese wickerwork (Wiener Gewebe) and consequently on the Café Haus chair no. 14 by the Thonet company.

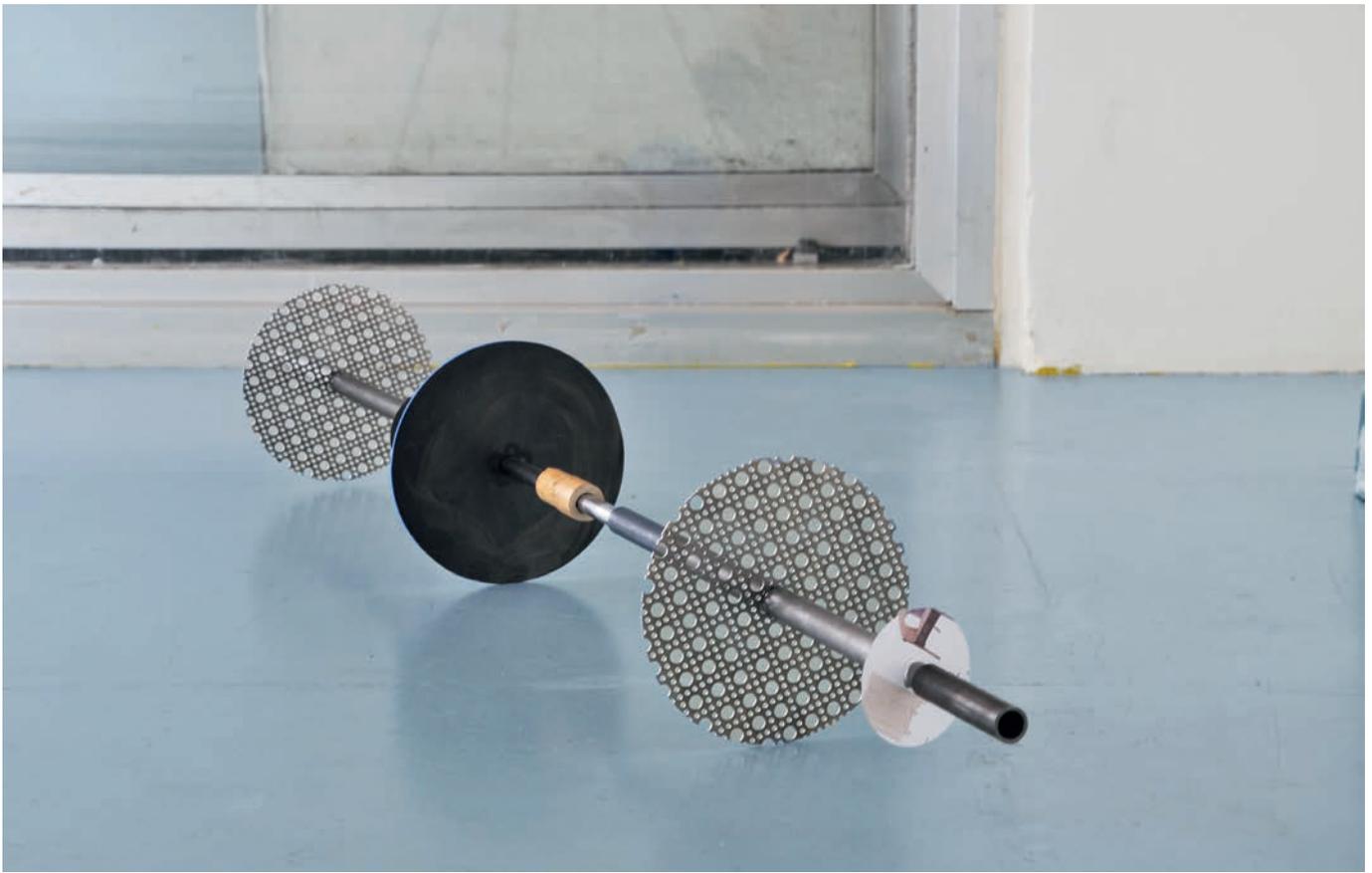
This chair was in its time, and according to the company homepage still is, the most sold chair worldwide. In the 19th century the company had trading offices all over the world. This object is therefore a prime example of the industrial production methods and the global trade that was formed at that time and which has evolved and continues to this day. And which consequences we are now facing.

In the sculptural series **Wiener Gewebe**, I have focused on the material the wicker work is made of: rattan. Based on this material, which originated in Asia and was initially used as packaging material in transport ships, I have conceived three works.

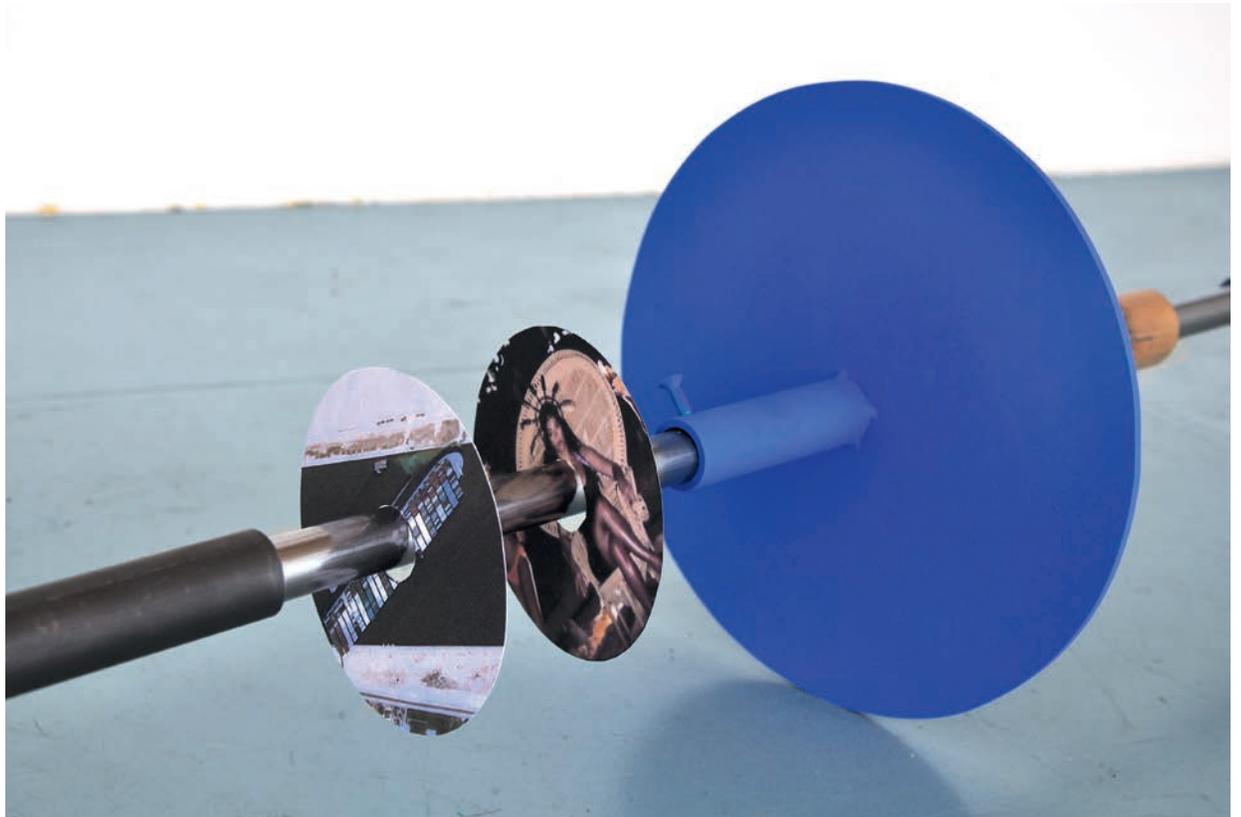
Each of these works contains the material rattan in a different state of manufacture: the whole plant dried, processed into peddgree and as a strand.

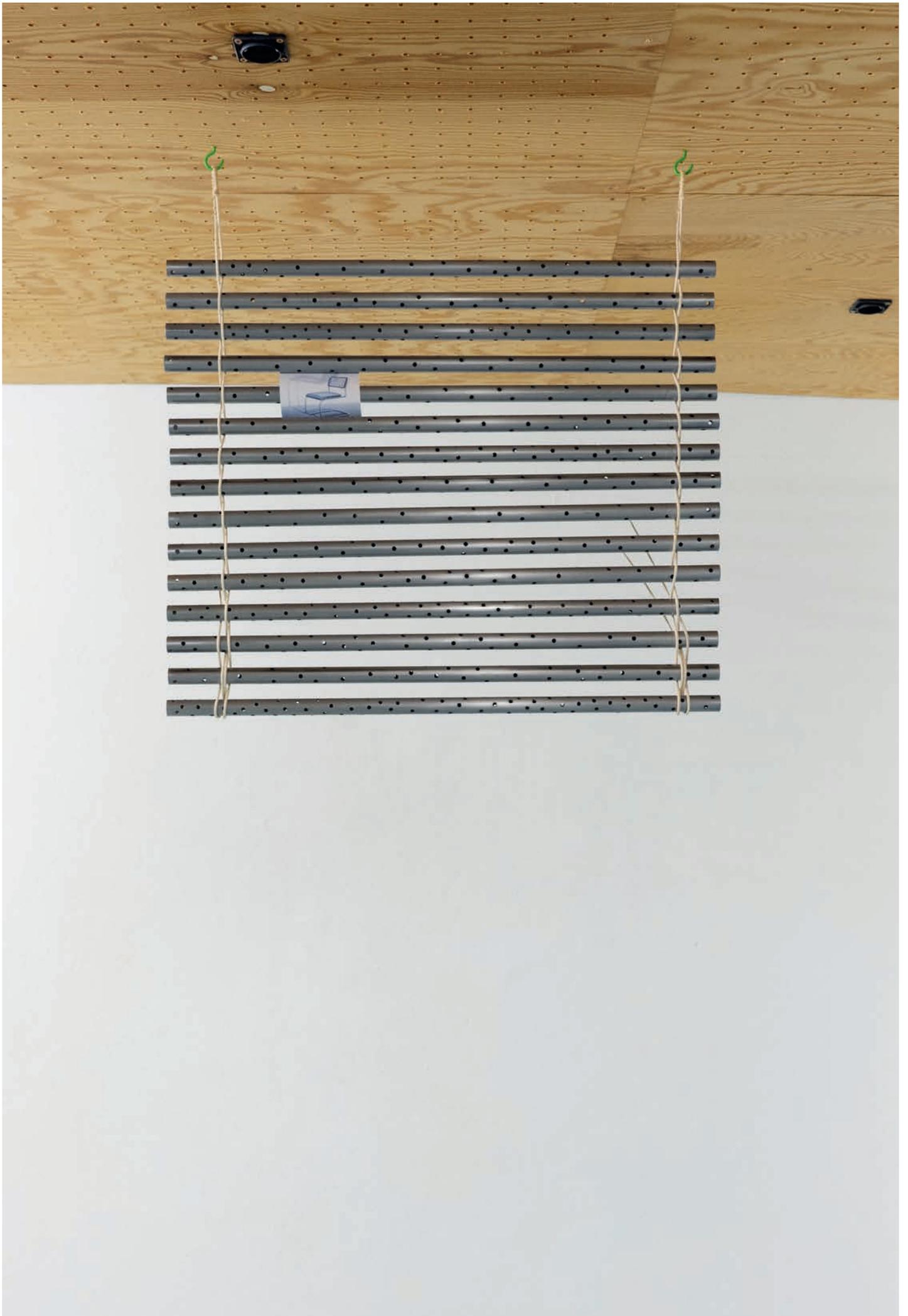
I have "woven" different research material into the works. On the one hand, this refers to the colonial history of the plant and, on the other hand, creates a link to our present time.

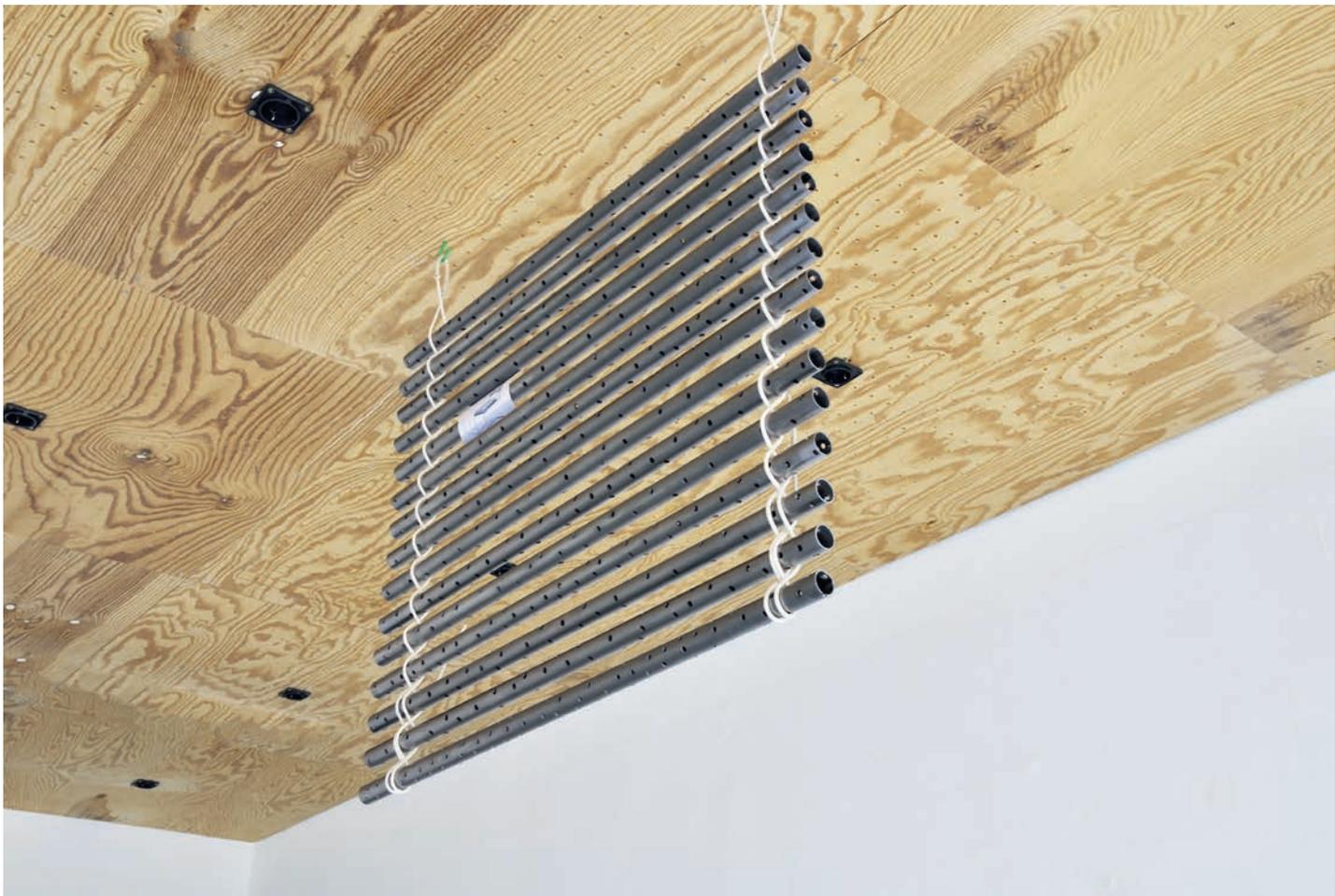
In this way, the series **Wiener Gewebe** becomes an analysis and reveals backgrounds. It makes the invisible visible. But also speaks of resilience, of the potential of subversion and the possibility for change.



Wiener Gewebe (Stab), 2022
Steel, rattan, spraypaint, digital print,
ca.160x20x20cm



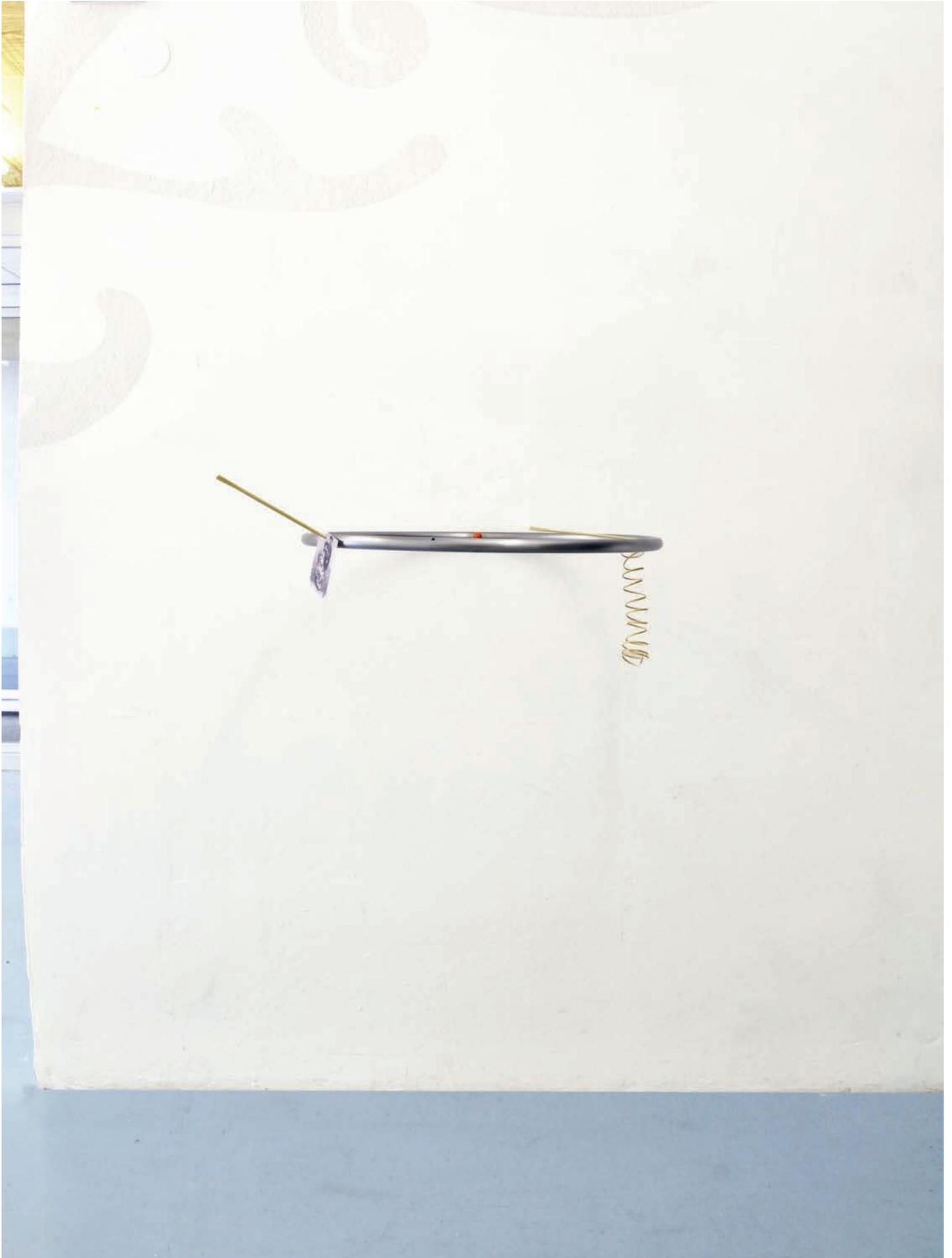




Wiener Gewebe (Jalousie), 2022
Steel, rattan, spraypaint, digital print,
70×66×2 cm

Wiener Gewebe (Ring), 2022

Steel, rattan, chopsticks, spraypaint, digital print,
55x55x7cm





Leave to rise, 2020
part of „The Forage“ a sculpture route in the public space
during Corona Lockdown /organized by AE projects, Berlin
Setting: works placed in front of closed Columbia Theater

plaster, pigment, wicker, plywood
objects vary from: 25×25×40–40×13×50cm



Leave to rise is a series of sculptures that takes up the Covid-19 Lockdown phenomena of excessive bread baking. During the Corona Lockdown yeast became a scarce good only available at selective bakeries. At grocery stores the shelves for flour were almost as empty as the ones for toilette paper. Dough rising baskets, special baskets made out of wicker in which the dough is left to rise, were sold out. Instagram was full of proud people smiling next to their bread creations. It seems that in times where „staying at home“ became common sense people started to think of rye, spelt and sour dough. What remains when the not „system-

relevant“ part of us gets send into short-time work and the additional time is not able to be spend with the usual leisure distractions? The digital? Taking part in the transformative process of leavening and watching dough getting bigger and bigger may be an effective way to feel oneself as a productive individual. Furthermore it trains the impatient ones of us in patience — a skill highly useful during Covid-19 restrictions. As usual for my works **Leave to rise** incorporates process translated into static sculptures. I transform objects that catch my attention, this time the dough rising basket, questioning their use and functionality. Materials that refer

to traditional sculpture or handcraft are getting mixed and used in a non habitual way.

Displaying the sculptures in front of the closed doors of the former Columbia theatre which is now used as a concert-hall emphasises on the situation of the cultural scene during pandemic.



Leave to rise, 2020
plaster, pigment, wicker, plywood
25×25×40-40×13×50cm







Aus der serie 1+1=3, (Fortress) 2020

concrete, steel
305×36×6cm

Fortress is a sculpture which I produced during the two weeks scholarship at Sommeracademy Salzburg. The sculpture refers to the venue of the Academy which is situated on a steep mountain looking down on the city of Salzburg. It used to be an imoregnable fortress and the bishops seat.

The steel structure – a found object and supposed ladder, is being hold vertically by the slim concrete cast. The reinforcing steel protrudes from the concrete cast into the room and gives an idea of an inner structure.

The question of functionality arises – who holds and helps whom?





Hot To The Touch, 2019
solo show, Musa, Startgalerie, Wien Museum
mouth blown glass, steel, laquer, wax, UV- print on steel,

Foto: Peter Mochi



Mouth blown glass, steel and wax are the inherent materials of the exhibition **Hot To the Touch**. As the title indicates, all materials have in common to respond to heat. The traces of that process are unfolded. The welding seams on the steel sculptures are visible and the mouth blown glass pieces seem to be still hot and able to slip of their platforms.

The sculptures refer back to objects of the public space: to anti trespassing panels, the human version of anti pigeons spikes, defensive seating objects and flagpoles. My observation of the public space, especially my interest in defensive

architecture, is already inherent in older works. (see **Einbein**). In **Hot To The Touch** I connect my observations of public space with the unique process of glass blowing. I take up the properties of the material, the movements of the glassblower and the process of moulding and transform them into static sculptures.

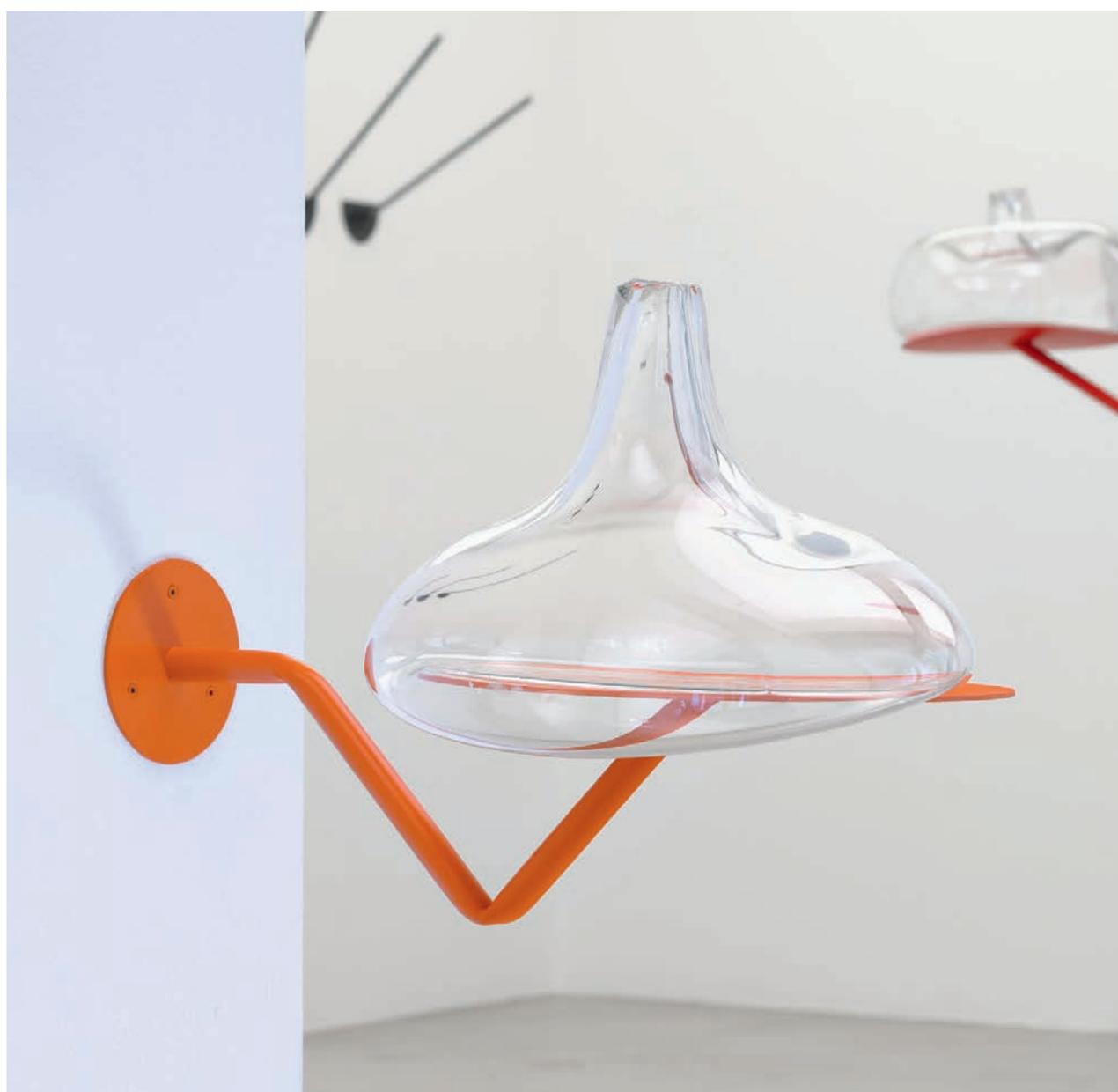
The question is how we are shaped by the subtle changes that take place in the public space and what kind of traces these changes leave behind. And lastly whether if that which is no longer visible through the changes, the absent as well as the traces of absent, may be of

particular interest for the consideration of a social and cultural analysis.

Squatter Traffic Red, 2019
steel, laquer, mouth blown glass
66×41×29cm



Squatter Mandarin, 2019
steel, laquer, mouth blown glass
66×41×29cm





Squatter Traffic Yellow, 2019
steel, laquer, mouth blown glass
38×31×24cm

Formgeber, 2019

steel, heat marks
50x90 cm

Verschlüsse, 2019

wax
6x7x4cm, 5x4x3cm, 8x8x3cm



Einbein, 2019
bent and welded steel,
30×41×30cm, 30×40×30cm,
30×39×30cm



Expansion in space, 2019

bent and welded steel,

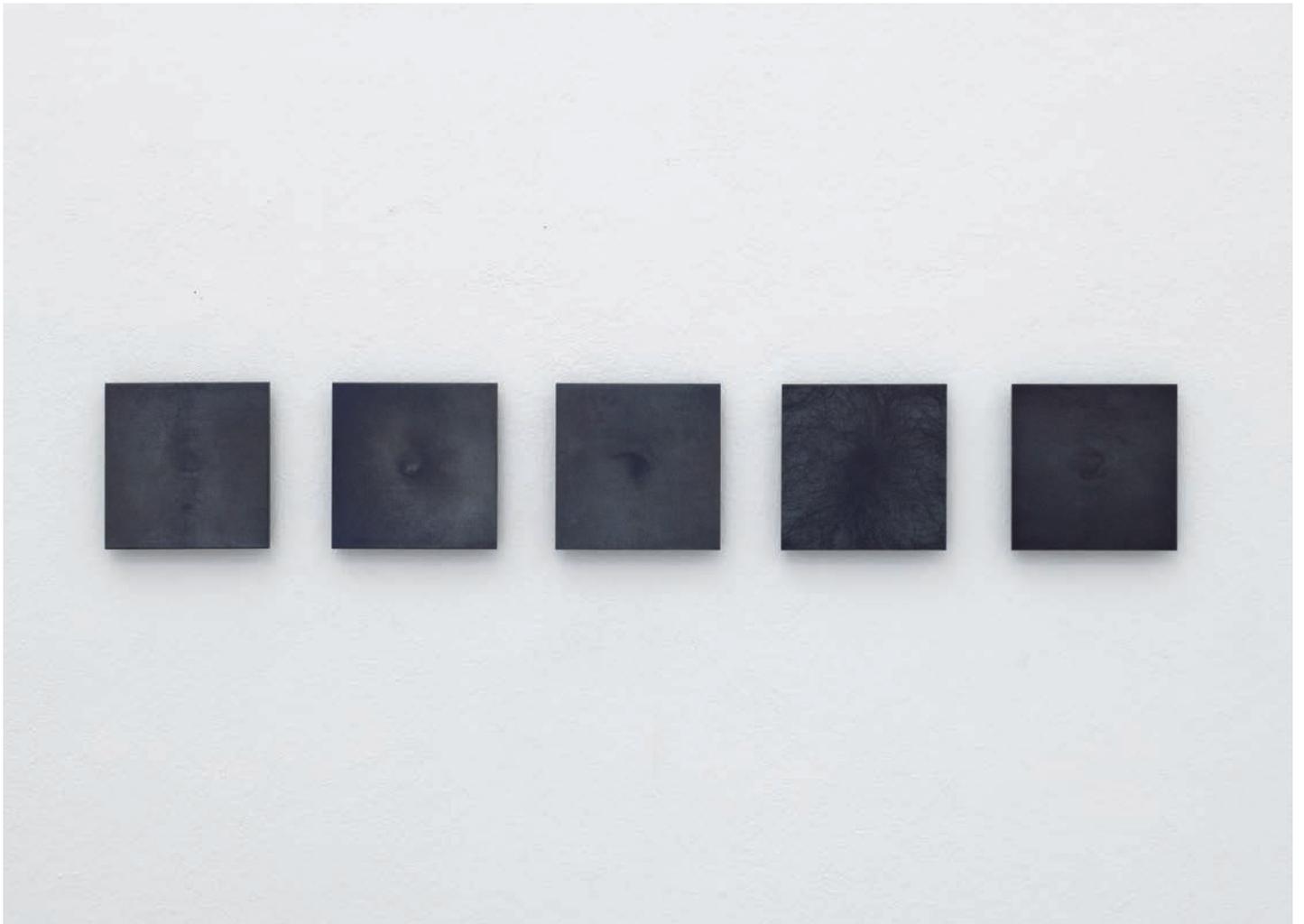
150×43×43cm, 160×54×53cm, 100×48×48cm





Hanging, 2020
steel
66×10×60cm

Nabel, 2019
Uv-print on steel,
12×12cm



Aus der Serie 1+1=3 (Baustelle), 2019

Kunstverein Ve.sch
glass, silicon, roof lath
60x130cm

Foto: Peter Mochi

1+1=3 is an ongoing series of works in which I use my material language to strongly reflect and incorporate the situation and background of the exhibition's venue and space. **1+1=3** (BAUSTELLE) was made for a group exhibition in Lower Austria. The space was a former warehouse and at that time also a construction site of a family home. I used on site found objects mixing them with studio materials. In positioning the works partly outside of the defined exhibition space I blurred the line between inside and outside and between construction work and art work.



Aus der Serie 1+1=3 (Baustelle), 2019
Kunstverein Ve.sch
glass, silicon, terazzo
90×120cm



Vice Versa, 2018
and/or—but, yeah*, Kunstraum Lakeside ,KL
steel, varnish, water, milkpowder, plastic bags, cord
218×130×80cm







Einbein, 2019
Berlin Project Space Festival 2019
bent and welded steel
30×35cm

Reading Performance with Aline Sofie Rainer and Theresa Kanz.
The viewers were invited to use the sculptures during the reading performance.



A cello responds to a reading performance.
A mask thinks of Virginia Woolf, shielding every gaze.
Sculptural seating objects that could hurt you from their other side.
Linear drawings that tell stories of longing to be loved and fleeing into another world.
Watching the three of us, only a small detail distinguishes us from you.



My observation of the design and architecture of public parks, transport stops and of public areas with no specific use like corners, pointed out to me that the design and architecture of public space mirrors a social-political status quo: Benches with armrests may look convenient at first sight but hinder people of lying down, small metal pyramids put on door steps may look like an aesthetic feature but discourage people from sitting down and having a rest, metal bars put up in public corners prevent homeless people to settle themselves. These are examples of a phenomenon that is known as defensive architecture.

The objects **Einbein** are useable sculptures, transportable seating objects that become „activated“ by the beholder. By doing so the defensive part- the welded spikes, faces downwards and becomes eliminated.



Tambo, 2018
Master show University of applied Arts, Vienna

aluminium, steel, laquer, tape, milkpowder, water
book: 28 pages, digital print



The work **Tambo** is based on intensive research into the material milk powder. A material that I connect to my country of birth, Argentina. I was interested in the socio-cultural and economic background of global milk production and consumption.

The highly industrial and controversial production of milk can be seen in the high subsidies that result in tons of milk powder being produced annually in Germany and their storage in huge warehouses across the country. My intensive research is visible in the artist book that I have produced for the exhibition.

In **Tambo** my interest for this material meets an object that has become completely alien to the highly efficient production of milk, the one-legged milking stool.

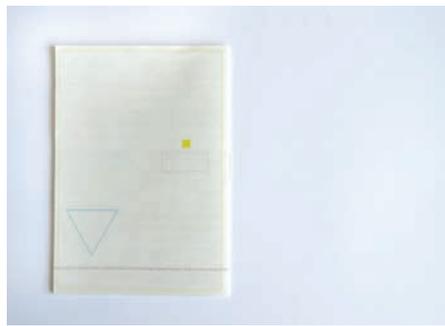
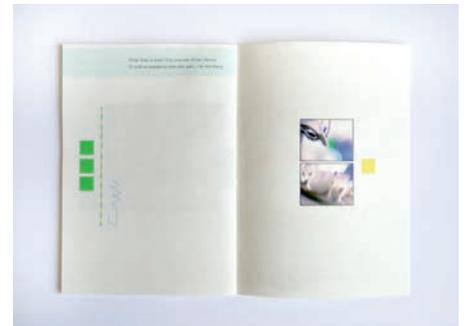
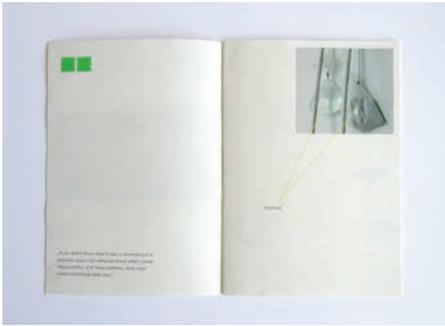
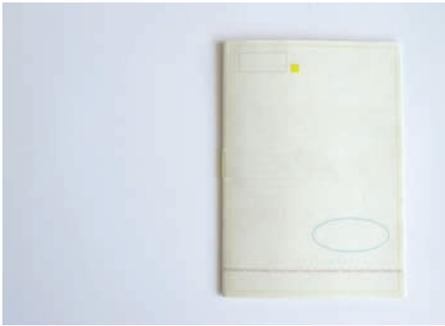
The sculptures also reveal themes that are recurring in my artistic practice: The question of function or disfunction, the traces of human (production), working with stability/instability and capturing processes in static sculptures.

Tambo is a Spanish term used in Argentina and Uruguay and denotes a milking station. This naming refers to the one-legged milking stool of my emigrated great-grandfather that I found in his former house in Argentina.









Artist Book „Tambo“



Auf Autobahnraststätten freue ich mich wenn es an der Kassa Marzipanröllchen gibt.
Sie sind weich.
Gerne drücke ich mit meinen Fingern leicht hinein.
Danach lege ich sie wieder in die Reihe.
Es interessieren mich potenzielle Verbindungen.
So wie bei Milchpulver und Wasser.
Objekte finde ich auch interessant.
Ich kann nicht genau sagen nach welchem Raster sie mir auffallen.
Es hat immer irgendwie mit ihrer Funktionsweise zu tun.
So auch mit dem einbeinigen Melkschemmel.
Der ist so funktionslos ohne Mensch.
Liegt einfach da.

Englisch:

I am always happy when there are marzipan rolls at the cashier of motorway service stations.

They're soft.

I like to push my fingers gently into them.

And then I put them back onto the shelf.

I am interested in potential connections.

Like between milk powder and water.

I find objects interesting as well.

The pattern in which they attract me -I cannot really say.

It always has something to do with how they function.

Just like the one-legged milking stool.

It is so functionless without a human.

Just lies there.

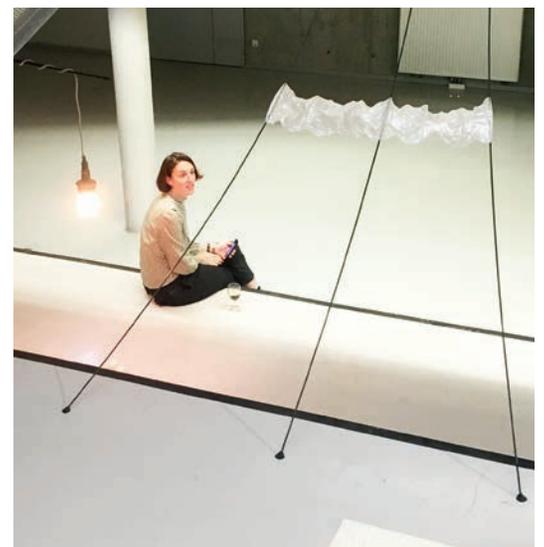


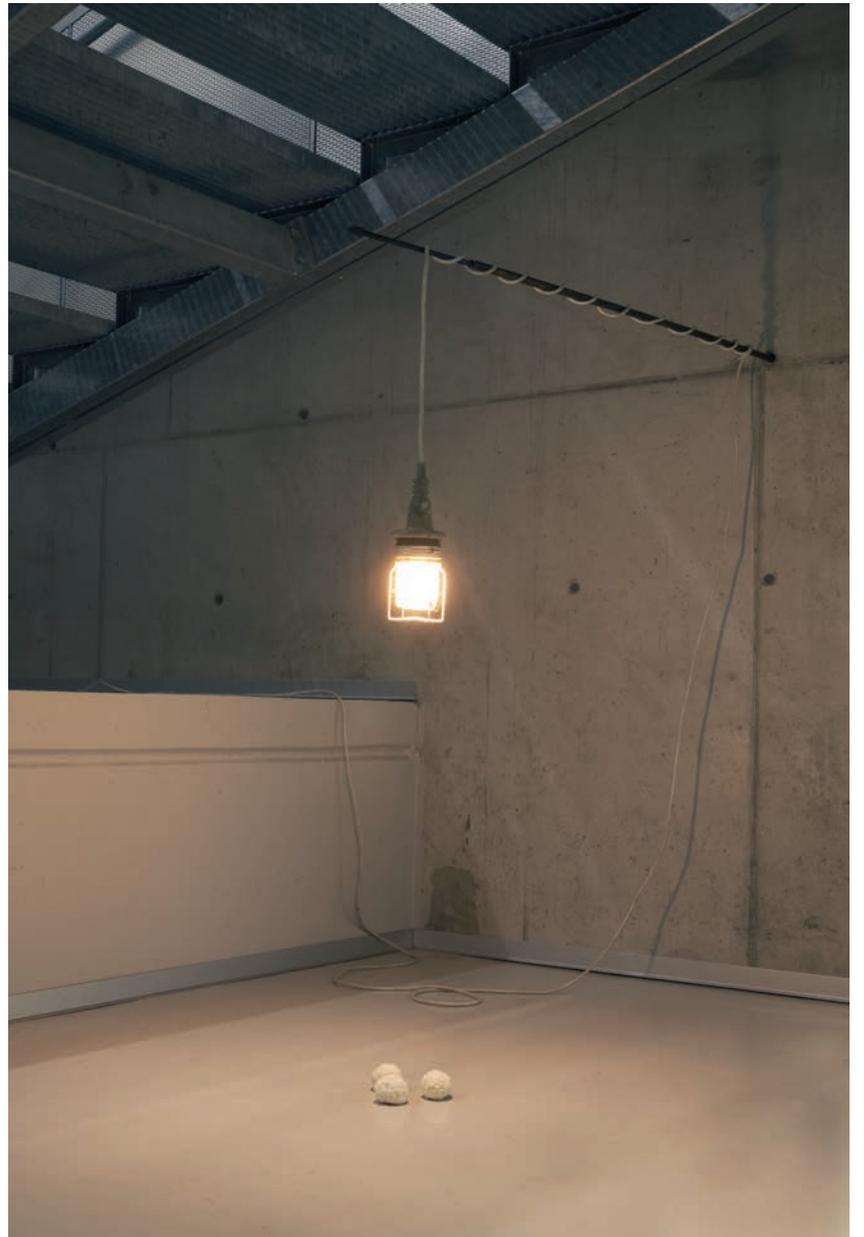
Fisematentchen, 2018
Exhibition: Andromeda Minus Triangula,
PFERD-Forum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Wien
Studenthousing

Steel, pigmented Ricepaper, Milkpowder, Lamp
site specific

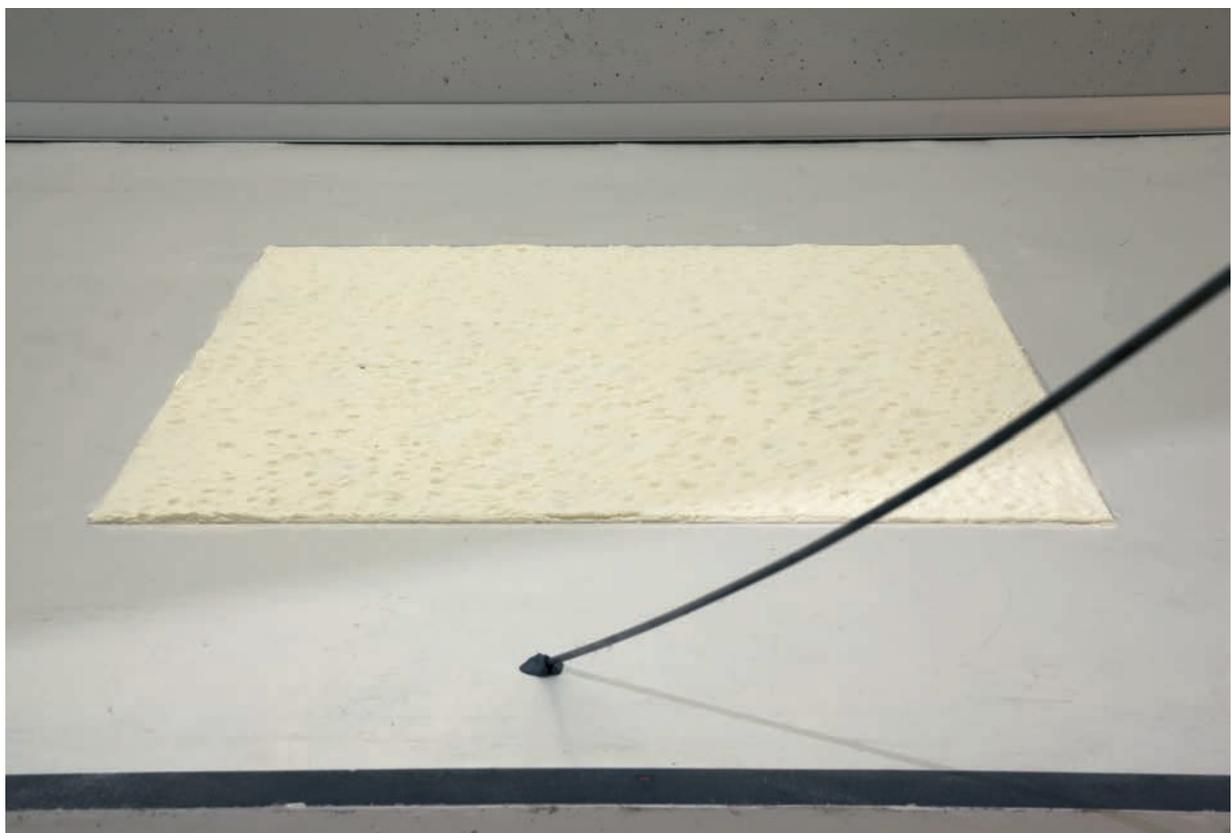
I was invited for an exhibition using the semi-public space of a student residence in the outskirts of Vienna.

The atmosphere of the building was shaped by brutal concrete, harsh light and an architecture that failed by not fulfilling the buildings needs as a student dormitory. The residents hurry into their dorms avoiding the communal areas. With ***Fisematentchen*** I created a warm spot in the building, a small intimate place with the possibility to sit down and rest inside a sculpture.









Aus der Serie 1+1=3, 2018 (no need for Perseus)

silicon, bamboo, varnish
250×170×40 cm

The work explores the question of how form and content relate to one another, how they are mutually dependent. The title refers to my interest in depictions of spear throwers on ancient Greek vases, as well as the overrepresentation of male superheroes.

No need for Perseus shows how material behaves, it is a play between abstract shapes and can be seen as an instruction to use.





Reifen, Stäbe, Gips und Wasser, 2017

Exhibition: Grenzerfahrungen, curated by Angela Stief, alte Post, Vienna

steel, bamboo, plaster, water, plastic bags, laquer
circles: 55/85 cm diameter, sticks: 230 cm

The hoops that are coming out of the wall create a connection to the architecture of the space and refer to an abstract form as well as to acrobatic props. Two bamboo spears are leaning against the wall. Attached to them there are plastic bags filled with water and plaster. You rediscover the two materials in their mixed and hardened state on the hoops as small sculptures. By their shape they induce an image of movement.





steel, laquer, plaster
hoops: 55/85 cm diameter







bamboo, plastic bags, water and plaster,
wicker
bamboo sticks: 230 cm

Securing and Hanging, 2017

materialperformance with water and plaster



Two people are in a room. One person hangs from a rope attached to the ceiling. The viewer only sees their lower body from the hips down, as the rest is covered by a cone made of fabric.

The cone is filled with plaster. From a viewer's perspective this isn't visible but perhaps implied. The second person in the room is the securing element. The attachment of the two people with the rope is similar to that of two climbers.

A water trough is placed on the floor at a certain distance from the securing person. The two people are placed diagonally to and at a certain distance from each other, on the room's axis. This positioning

gives rise to a conceivable triangle in the space. If the securing person moves, this will affect the hanging one. In this sense it is a system of action and reaction, of dependence.

Slowly, in eight steps, the securing person walks toward the water trough. Both people carry out a sequence of movement. The closer the securing person gets to the water trough, the lower the human-funnel hangs. Both people move in this way until the securing person makes the final step, into the water. The hanging person thereby reaches the floor.

At that moment, the funnel inverts itself.

It reveals the material it holds. At this point, the securing person is standing in water while the hanging person is surrounded by plaster.

The work is an exploration, a sampling of space with bodies through movement. The bodies, homogenous through their white color and geometrical through the shape of the funnel, change their position and thereby work into the space.

The absurd or bizarre moment of the final step into the water and the resulting inversion of the funnel is simultaneously an inversion of space, but also a disclosure of material. The plaster and the water do not meet.



Geometrische Körper, 2013/2020

cherry/beechn wood, stainless steel screws, mouth blown glass
15×55×15 cm, 22×66×24 cm, 25×50×30cm, 20×45×20cm, 20×65×25 cm

Exhibition view:

Pride and Prejudice, Arts and Crafts – A Love story, Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna, AT



The work consists of five wooden moulds and glass objects which were mouth blown into the moulds. The shapes are known as the platonic solids and mentioned in Platos dialog „Timaios“ in which he described the creation of the world by means of this five geometrical shapes and the five elements, water, earth, air, fire, and ether. In order to blow glass you need heat (fire), sand (earth), water and air.

In my work the mouth blown pieces, normally in glass factories the final outcome of a production, will never get as geometrical as their shaper, the mould. In factories wooden moulds have their certain purpose, they play part in the productional process to „serve“ the final

glass piece. They are mainly made out of massive and expensive wood like cherry or beech to ensure a long productive life; put together considering sap and heartwood with joineries, and then placed into a water basin. There they soak and vegetate until they get woken up from beauty sleep in order to get blown into, burnt and afterwards put back into liquid. This productional loop continues until layer per layer is burnt down to shapelessness and the mould loses its function.

What a drearily live compared to the wild, hot, untamable glass. The final consumer of a glass object hardly ever gets to see the shaper of the piece. Not without reason factory workers engrave names or

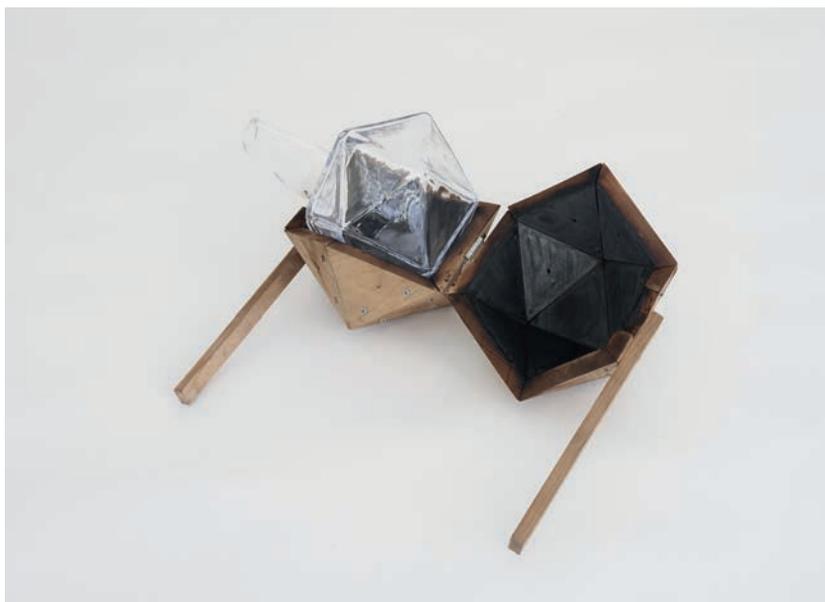
numbers as, Rambo or Jaqueline into the moulds. If not joined together in the right way and put into water wood becomes quite stubborn and follows its own rules. In my work wood and glass are no rivals, nobody serves the other but rather the productional cycle gets completed in putting the created piece back into it's mould.



Geometrischer Körper (Oktaeder), 2013
cherry wood, mouth blown glass, stainless steel
48 × 23 × 28 cm



Geometrischer Körper (Tetraeder), 2020
beech wood, mouth blown glass, stainless steel
36 × 43 × 36 cm



Geometrischer Körper (Ikosaeder), 2020
beech wood, mouth blown glass, stainless steel
63 × 45 × 36 cm



Geometrischer Körper (Hexader), 2020
beech wood, mouth blown glass, stainless steel
51 × 30 / 38 × 23 cm



Geometrischer Körper (Dodekaeder), 2020
beech wood, mouth blown glass, stainless steel
75 × 45 × 26 cm

