

OLGA SHAPOVALOVA

Born in 1988 Tashkent, Uzbekistan SSR
Lives and works in Vienna.
<https://olyashapovalova.wixsite.com/olgashapovalova>

2005-2010 - Saint Petersburg State University, Journalism department
2012-2015 - Rodchenko art school of photography and media art
2018 - now - Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Performance Class

Olga Shapovalova is an artist, curator and cultural producer currently based in Vienna, Austria. With a background in journalism from Saint Petersburg State University and studies at the Rodchenko Art School, she is now pursuing a degree at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her artistic practice revolves around rethinking feminist concepts and exploring “girl power” through a subversive gaze that incorporates themes of sexuality, embodiment, and perception. Her work draws on humor, nostalgia, trauma, reflections on death, and solidarity, often materialized in sculptures, installations, and multimedia works. Olga’s curatorial practice emphasizes conceptual experimentation, fostering critical dialogue and collective engagement. She introduces unconventional exhibition frameworks that offer fresh perspectives on contemporary art discourse. Her projects include A...cademy of Fine Kink at Semperdepot (2023, 2024), The story of an young artist at Exhibit Studio (2023) and many more.



SELECTED SHOWS:

- 2025

Hidden Wounds, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
- 2024

Parallel, Vienna,
Kostbar, Kusnstlerhaus, Vienna
Skulpturenpark Parallel, Gmunden (AT)
La Clemenza di Tito, Wiener Festwochen
Art School Horror Story, KBG, Vienna
- 2023

ID, Nomad Gallery, Milan (IT)
Parallel, Vienna
Callings from the deep. Das Weisse Haus, (AT)
- 2022

Horror Vacui, Büro Weltausstellung, Vienna
Dimensions Variable, Hietzing, Vienna
Back to Athens 9, International Art Festival, Athens
Reflection on Caliban and the Witch, FOTO WIEN
- 2021

Terrarium, Red Carpet Showroom Karlsplatz, Vienna
Pavilion Russe, Haze Gallery, Berlin, (DE)
Resign and sing, Anna Nova, Saint Petersburg
On Climate Changes, Forum Austriaco di Cultura Roma, (IT)
Undoing Landscape, ERSTE Stiftung, Vienna
I know I care, Notes on female reproductive labor, VBKÖ Vienna
- 2020

Light at the end of the tunnel, AA Collections Vienna (AT)
Parallel, Vienna (AT)
- 2019

I Know I Care - Notes on female reproductive labor, Wienwoche, Vienna
- 2018

One can not be too careful. Special Feminist Version, Brighton (GB)
- 2015

NordArt, Kunstwerk Carlshütte, Büdelsdorf, (DE)
Football/Hockey, Regina gallery, Moscow
What to say when there is nothing, Udarnik, Moscow
- 2014

Cats, New Manage, Moscow
Voice of Moscow, cultural foundation «Ekaterina», Moscow
Shumotron, Museum Erarta, St Petersburg (RUS)
Among Strangers, Gallery Arch, Vladivostok
- 2013

Heavy Metal, Regina gallery, Winzavod. 5th Moscow Biennale, special project (RUS)

CURATORIAL PROJECTS:

- 2024

PFFV x A...cademy of Fine Kink, Vienna
- 2023

The Final Show, Exhibit Studio, Vienna
My reality is not your reality , Vienna
A...cademie of Fine Kink, Vienna
Having a good time, Exhibit Studio, Vienna
I can(not) handle it, Exhibit Studio, Vienna
- 2021

Don't we all need vac(cin)ation?, Dessou, Vienna
Koefferausstellung, Kazan-St. Petersburg
Wunderkammer/Cabinet of curiosities, Red Carpet Show Room Karlsplatz , Vienna
- 2025

ASoP*scholarship program of the BMEIA in cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
- 2022

AkBild Project Funding
- 2019

ÖH AkBild Project Funding

SHOLARSHIPS:

PUBLICATIONS:

- ART MAGAZINE

<https://www.artmagazine.cc/content128264.html#>
- LES NOUVEAUX RICHES

<https://www.les-nouveaux-riches.com/olga-shapovalova-terrarium/>
- RUNDGANG.IO

<https://rundgang.io/olga-shapovalova-terrarium/>
- CULTURAL EVOLUTION, ST PETERSBURG TV

<https://topspb.tv/programs/stories/514112/>
- KUNST IM SCHAUFENSTER – QM&A ARTIST COLLECTIVE: »REAL STORIES«

<https://thegap.at/golden-frame-qmaa-artist-collective-real-stories/>
- THE GAP #185, 2021

<https://thegap.at/golden-frame-qmaa-artist-collective-real-stories/>
- LICHTBLICKE: KURZE FILME UND KUNST DURCH DIE SCHEIBE

<https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000124455236/lichtblicke-kurze-filme-und-kunst-durch-die-scheibe>
- VOGUE.COM

<http://www.vogue.com/article/russia-fashion-brand-narvskaya-dostava-feminism>
- DER SPIEGEL

<http://www.spiegel.de/video/russland-vor-der-wahl-die-rolle-der-frau-video-99015689.html>
- BBC3

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p05vb22n/stacey-dooley-investigates-russias-war-on-wom-en>

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work navigates the intersections of memory, power, and transformation, shaped by my experience of losing home twice—once with my family, and again alone, due to political circumstances. This sense of uprootedness seeps into my practice, where themes of displacement, loss, labor, and mythology intertwine through sculpture, photography, video, and installation.

I work with materials that hold traces of history and decay—burned wood, hair, bread and fabric—objects that appear fragile but carry the weight of time. My works often document loss, not as a singular event, but as a slow, inevitable process of erosion and forgetting. Landscapes become surreal, homes become ruins, and once-familiar places turn unrecognizable.

At the same time, my work engages with domesticity and the expectations placed on women. The body is often absent, yet its traces remain—through labor, objects, and imposed roles. The tension between purity and danger, submission and rebellion, strength and softness is a recurring motif. Objects disguised as something light turn out to be heavy; rituals of care transform into acts of disappearance.

I am drawn to materials that hold ritual, myth, and history, allowing them to exist as both artifacts and speculative objects. Many of my works feel like remnants of an unknown mythology, merging the past with imagined futures. Some reference Slavic traditions, where hair and labor carry deep symbolic power, while others reflect on political machinery, displacement, and exile.

At the core of my practice is the search for what remains after loss. What happens when home no longer exists? And who decides what is worth remembering and what is left to disappear?



HIDDEN WOUNDS

Hidden Wounds is a project that reflects on the resilience and transformation of people and art during conflicts. I grew up in St. Petersburg, where the memory of the Leningrad Blockade was heavy and deeply ingrained, shaped by stories of survival and endurance from its residents. This experience, along with the inspiring actions of Ukrainians covering their sculptures to protect them during the Russian-Ukrainian war, deeply resonated with me. As the daughter of migrants and someone who has experienced migration throughout my life, I understand what it means to survive while carrying the weight of displacement, trauma, and accumulated experiences. Much like a dismissed or homeless person, shaped by their burdens and resilience, this project reflects the enduring strength required to adapt and transform in the face of adversity.

A sculpture covered with layers of materials such as tarpaulin, plastic sheeting, and sandbags creates a new skin, transforming fragility into armor. These layers reshape and redefine forms, capturing the burden of collective memory, the act of safeguarding, and the strength required to endure. The process goes beyond protection; it represents a metamorphosis, granting sculptures new narratives and identities while preserving their essence.

One prominent part of the project is the intervention with the bronze statue „Old Centaur with Riding Eros“ at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. This allegory of old age was covered with tarpaulin and sandbags, symbolizing the fragility of art and the heavy legacy of decisions made during conflicts. The work serves as a reminder that, while peace exists here, war continues elsewhere, leaving scars on people, culture, and art.

Hidden Wounds highlights the duality of protection and transformation. Just as people carry the weight of their experiences and develop resilience, this sculpture embodies the scars and strength needed to endure. The project stands as a symbol of survival, reminding us of the lasting impact of conflict on both humanity and culture.







DEATH IS WALKING

This work is a meditation on death, femininity, and the weight of the present moment. Death traditionally carries a scythe, a tool of harvest, severing life from the body. Here, the scythe is transformed—its blade replaced with a long braid of hair, an extension of the body itself. This is a direct reference to my other work, Meditation on Death, continuing the dialogue on impermanence, fragility, and the passage between worlds.

The imagery evokes a feeling of foggy morning stillness, the last day on earth, where time stands still just before the final breath. It is about the world today—where death is not just a metaphor but a presence we cannot escape. It is about depression, the slow erosion of self, the heavy weight of existence in a collapsing reality.

At the same time, this work speaks to the place of women in society—expected to be soft, to nurture, to endure, even in the face of destruction. The braid, historically a symbol of femininity, tradition, and continuity, here becomes a weapon, a burden, a symbol of inevitable endings.

Death walks quietly, its presence felt but not always seen. The world fades into uncertainty, and we are left standing in the mist, caught between past and future, life and loss.





THE COUNTRY OF THE CRIMSON FORESTS

...And when she opened her eyes, she couldn't believe what she saw.

The forest—once green, alive, rustling loudly with leaves—had turned an unnatural purple. It was eerily silent, as if time had stopped, as if someone had simply adjusted the Photoshop settings and cranked the Magenta slider all the way up.

The sun burned overhead. Beads of sweat formed on her forehead. Seeking shelter from the summer heat, she stepped into the forest—her forest, the one she had loved since childhood, where she knew every bump, every stump. But this was no longer that forest.

Instead of cool, fresh air, she felt heat wrapping around her body, intensifying with every second. It was difficult to breathe. A suffocating lack of oxygen. It felt as if she was standing in the middle of a wildfire—yet nothing burned. The overwhelming brightness of the red foliage blinded her, and sweat poured down her face. She ran. Out of the woods, out of here—faster.

What had people done to nature? The changes spread at an unstoppable speed, altering everything in their path. Tears streamed down her face, mixing with sweat, but it was already too late. Too late to change anything.

In my photo project “The Country of Crimson Forests,” I address the environmental crisis in Russia. But this is merely the tip of the iceberg—beneath it lie far deeper, systemic problems: class struggle, corruption, authoritarianism, and state violence.

The project takes inspiration from Luigi Ghirri's reflection on photography—not as a medium that “offers answers,” but as one that “asks questions about the world.” In the same way, my work does not just document destruction; it invites the viewer to reflect on the irreversible consequences of human actions and the dystopian reality they may soon create.

Using Kodak Aerochrome infrared film, which transforms green into shades of pink and red, I construct a vision of a future Russia—a landscape ravaged by radiation, toxic waste, and mutation. The rolling hills and endless fields in my images may look untouched at first glance, but in reality, they are landfills, sites of ecological disaster, and monuments to state negligence.

This is not fiction. This is a possible future—one where environmental destruction, fueled by corruption and negligence, has turned the world into something unrecognizable. A country of crimson forests, where the price of greed is no longer just political—it is biological, irreversible, and deadly.



STABILITY

A burned house, barely standing, precariously balanced on broken bricks. "Stability" is an ironic title—this house is anything but stable. It teeters on fractured foundations, its structure weakened, its surface charred. It is a home that has been destroyed, displaced, abandoned, yet it still remains, holding onto an impossible balance.

This work speaks to loss—of home, of homeland, of certainty. It is about the fragility of what we once believed to be permanent. The burned wood carries the weight of destruction, of something that can never be restored, while the broken bricks underneath suggest instability, collapse, and forced adaptation.

Nostalgia lingers in ruins. The idea of home is often stronger than its reality, persisting in memory long after it has been reduced to ashes. What does it mean to lose home? And what remains when all that is left is its fragile, unsteady shadow?



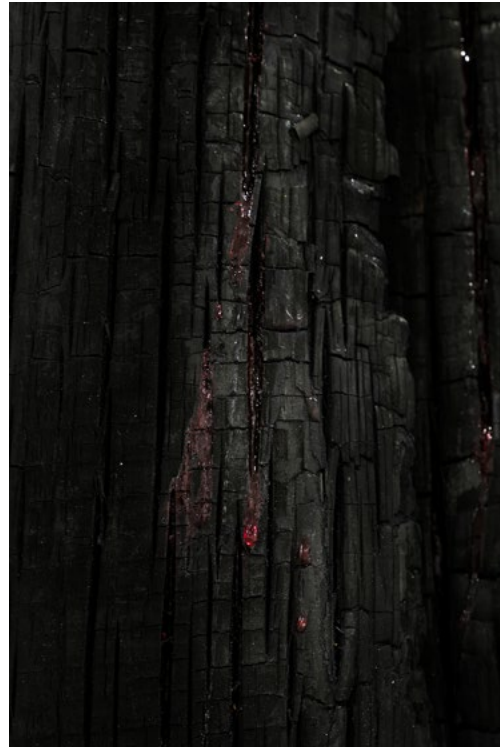
Material: wood, stones.

BLACKER THAN BLACK IS MY SOUL (BLEEDING)

My project is a sculptural composition made of burnt wood, assembled in the shape of a nalichnik—a traditional decorative element of wooden architecture. However, this nalichnik does not adorn a living home; instead, it resembles a boarded-up window, symbolizing an abandoned, lifeless space. It is the image of a lost home, a ruined past, now lingering as a ghost in memory.

Yet, even within this charred, frozen wood, life remains. Blood seeps from the cracks and gaps between the boards, like a weeping icon. Here, blood is not a symbol of death but of lineage, of life's cyclical nature. Like menstrual blood, a reminder of the potential for birth, it signifies that even in loss, there is renewal, that even in darkness, life continues to pulse.

"Blacker Than Black Is My Soul (Bleeding)" is a work about a home that does not disappear, even if it is destroyed. It remains within us, in our blood, in our memory, continuing to exist despite its absence. This piece is a reflection on pain as a potential source of strength and on how vanished homes continue to speak to us through both material and immaterial traces.



Material: wood, menstrual blood.



Olga Shapovalova

Terrarium

 tsarbaba



TERRARIUM

Hair has always been surrounded by myths and beliefs about its magical power, especially when it comes to women's hair. Across many cultures and religions, women are expected to cover, hide, or control their hair—tying it back, braiding it, taming it. In Russian, the word “распущенная” (which translates to “fallen woman”) is directly linked to “распущенные волосы”—loose, unbound hair, hair that is not controlled or restrained. This linguistic connection reveals how the perception of a woman's virtue is tied to her ability to discipline her own body, to gather, to conceal, to remain within accepted boundaries.

In this installation, I transformed the exhibition space into a terrarium, an artificial environment in which creatures are observed, studied, and contained. Inside this space, I placed two enormous braid-like creatures—living entities trapped in an enclosed world. These braids allude to the natural feminine force that patriarchal society continuously seeks to domesticate, to bind into knots, to turn into something ornamental and manageable. Like exotic animals in a display case, femininity is placed behind glass, simultaneously admired and controlled, desired and restricted.

The braid, historically a symbol of strength, connection, and heritage, is here presented as something both powerful and captive. It moves between the organic and the artificial, between wildness and domestication, raising the question: is this a preservation of power, or a display of submission? In Terrarium, femininity is both alive and restrained, its magic still present, even as it is bound and placed in a shop window.



MEDITATION ON DEATH



THE CURSE OF THE GRANDMOTHER'S STRAND

(THE SERIE OF THE SORCERY OBJECTS)

Hair has always carried a mystical, symbolic power. It is deeply tied to identity, inheritance, and control, yet also to fear, superstition, and death. In many cultures, hair is something to be hidden, bound, or severed—especially for women, whose loose hair has often been perceived as dangerous, wild, or even cursed. This series explores the relationship between ancestral memory, female power, labor, and sexuality, transforming everyday objects into sorcery tools, unsettling relics of the past that refuse to disappear.

Each object in this series merges tools, hair, and the presence of the body, evoking both the power and burden of tradition, the inevitability of death, and the weight of inheritance:

THE SICKLE — A tool of harvest and a symbol of death, but also a weapon of choice. In the hands of a woman, the sickle is not just an agricultural instrument—it becomes a symbol of her power to decide, to sever, to take control over life and death. The braid attached to it is a reminder of those choices, of the sacrifice and strength that come with them.

THE GRANDMOTHER'S TRACES — A piece that directly preserves the marks of my grandmother's fingers, cast in bronze and intertwined with hair. Her hands—once instruments of labor, care, and discipline—are now fossilized, frozen in time. But their shapes resemble worms, creeping, persistent, refusing to be forgotten. These hands trace the traditions of my family, the ones that are so hard to escape. They are both heritage and burden, alive even in their stillness, impossible to fully remove.

THE CREST — A rural tool like the pitchfork, used for work, for survival, for controlling the land. Here, it takes on an almost ritualistic presence, evoking the repetitive cycles of labor, care, and tradition passed down through generations of women. It speaks to the body as a tool of labor, as something shaped by work, bound by routine, and transformed by the burdens it carries.

THE TOY — A wooden form that resembles a horse, something that could have been a child's toy, now bound with a braid that takes on a phallic presence. It is no longer innocent but sexually charged, an object that sits between childhood and adulthood, pleasure and control, play and power. It is a relic of transformation, of shifting roles and expectations, of how objects change meaning depending on the hands that hold them.

These objects exist in a space between the living and the dead, tradition and rebellion, power and submission. They are infused with the weight of expectation, the struggle of inheritance, and the defiance of those who choose to break the cycle. They do not simply remember the past—they haunt it.



Material:bronz, hanf.



IT CRACKS AND SHRINKS

Bread has long been more than just food—it is a material deeply embedded in cultural rituals, survival strategies, and spiritual beliefs. In Russian prisons, bread mixed with sugar is one of the primary materials for sculpting. Objects made from this mixture are remarkably strong and durable, capable of withstanding time, much like the resilience of those who craft them. But bread as a sculptural medium is not limited to prison culture. In Altai, Siberia, people historically molded animals from dough, breadcrumbs, or cheese, offering them as sacrifices to the spirits of the earth, mountains, and forests to ensure success in hunting.

For me, bread carries a sacred significance. In Slavic traditions, bread is more than sustenance—it is seen as a divine gift, a living entity in its own right. The process of cultivating grain and baking bread is often metaphorically compared to the human life cycle: a journey of suffering, culminating in death by fire in the oven and consumption by the eater. The oven itself, in Slavic mythology, is deeply connected to the afterlife, making every act of baking an interaction with another world. A Polish folk belief states: “Whoever reaches into an empty oven for bread that is no longer there is reaching for death.”

In my sculpture, bread becomes a threshold between the physical world and the unknown. As the material cracks, shrinks, and deforms over time, it mirrors both the fragility of human existence and the inevitable passage of life into decay. The transformation of bread in this piece is not merely about material change—it is a reflection of destruction, disintegration, and the shifting states of being.

This work was created in January 2022, before the war in Ukraine began. In retrospect, it seems almost prophetic. Just as the bread cracks and shrinks, so does Russia itself—collapsing, breaking apart, revealing the fractures hidden beneath its surface.



Material: bread.

DON'T WAVE THE CENSER AROUND, SMOKING CIGARETTES AT MY STUDIO!

You come into the studio in the morning, and under your table, on the table, next to the couch, – cooled cigarette butts. They lie sadly and stink faintly. Dead and forgotten by everyone.

This object is a censer, traditionally used in religious rituals for burning incense. However, in this work, the censer becomes a symbol of ritual within a contemporary artistic context, serving as a tool for reinterpreting familiar gestures and symbols. Incense can be placed inside and lit, releasing smoke that fills the space. This process merges sacred purification with the worldly ritual of smoking, which often becomes part of social practice among artists.

The work rethinks ritual as something complex and multilayered, transforming cigarettes and their traces into a constant reminder of habit, which, despite its harmful nature, remains an integral part of the social and cultural landscape. In the art world, smoking is not only an individual act but also a collective ritual, a part of communication and reflection, creating an atmosphere where action and artistic creation intertwine with personal gestures.

The cigarette butts within the censer preserve the remnants of a social ritual, where presence becomes more significant than the act itself. Here, smoking turns into a form of collective existence, an invisible yet palpable element of the artistic process. This object aligns with the tradition of deconstructing symbols, turning an object of faith into an object of contemplation. It does not reject ritual but alters its context, bringing corporeality, materiality, and the very process of transforming the mundane into the sacred and vice versa to the forefront.



Material: ceramic, metal, frankincense.



может, что за неправдой, моя сущность такая
или рассудать здраво и сознательно. Необходимый страх не
покидает меня. Но я не желаю прозвать себя, свои надежды
стремления.

Либо любите меня настоящего, со всеми моими грехами,
либо идите к чёрту.

24.08.2021



MAGIC MOUNTAIN

“Magic Mountain” is a sculptural object made of red and pink lipstick—a material deeply tied to notions of femininity, desirability, and social acceptance. Lipstick promises transformation, beauty, confidence, yet at the same time, it represents an imposed expectation, a mask that conceals reality.

What does it mean to be feminine? For me, this question has always remained unresolved. I have never truly felt feminine. Growing up as a tomboy, I never fit the standard image of a woman—soft, delicate, sensual, “proper.” And while I accept myself as I am, there is always a lingering sense of lack, as if something is missing, as if I am not a “real” woman.

Feminism has given us freedom, yet at the same time, the beauty industry has only tightened its grip. It seems that we no longer have to conform, but in reality, we are expected to do even more. A woman is no longer just applying lipstick—now she must preserve her youth, erase time with Botox, fill in emptiness with fillers, tighten, conceal, and remove every trace of aging. We have become freer, yet control over our bodies has transformed into a new kind of prison, a new form of discipline.

This mountain is a monument to unfulfilled expectations, illusions, and norms that shape female identity. It appears solid, almost rock-like, but its material is fragile, soft, made to be erased and reapplied—just like the very idea of femininity, which constantly demands correction, adjustment, and conformity.

Like in Thomas Mann’s novel “The Magic Mountain”, where the characters find themselves in a space of waiting and the illusion of time, this work speaks about femininity as a social construct—something one can believe in, strive for, but never truly attain. Climbing this mountain is an attempt to reach an ideal, but the higher you go, the more you realize: there is no peak, only an endless cycle of unattainable expectations.

This work is about the paradox of freedom, about how new possibilities turn into new constraints. About the gap between who you are and who you feel you are supposed to be. About the weight of standards that cannot simply be discarded, but can be transformed, broken down, and reshaped into a new landscape.



Material: lipstick.

THE GRANDMOTHER'S AMULET

In many cultures, pitchforks are seen as impure objects—tools of labor that should remain outside, never brought into the home. In Slavic folklore, they are both protective and ominous: they can ward off evil spirits, yet carrying them indoors is a bad omen. As agricultural tools, pitchforks symbolize the physical toll of labor, especially the unseen work of women, whose contributions to survival and sustenance often remain unrecognized.

For this project, I took casts of my grandmother Nina's fingers while she shared stories from her past—how she worked as a physical education teacher in Tashkent, UzSSR, how she helped and guided others, how she never complained. I cast her fingers in bronze, preserving their shape, their texture, their history, and attached them to the wooden handle of a pitchfork. Her aged, curled fingers—marked by time, labor, and resilience—became something both mythical and powerful.

Years ago, a friend saw my grandmother's hands and called her a witch, judging solely by their twisted, worn shape. This reminded me of the way witches have been historically perceived—not just as supernatural beings, but as women whose bodies bear the marks of labor, knowledge, and time. Folklore tells us that witches' hands twist and curl from accumulating energy, but perhaps this transformation is simply the result of a lifetime of work, of sacrifice, of survival?

By fusing my grandmother's hands with a pitchfork, this piece reclaims the tool of labor as a symbol of strength, resilience, and wisdom. It is no longer just an instrument of the field, but an artifact of memory, honoring the women whose hands carry history, even when their efforts remain invisible.



Material: bronze, wood.

MY LITTLE PRINCE!

In the slavic fairy tale “The Frog Princess,” the youngest tsar’s son is unlucky—his arrow, meant to guide him to his bride, lands in a swamp, where it is found by a frog. He mourns his fate, but not for long—the frog soon transforms into a beautiful maiden. However, she warns him: as long as she remains in her human form, he must not destroy her frog skin. It is a lesson in patience, in trust, in the understanding that transformation takes time. But the prince, impulsive and foolish, burns her skin—believing he can force permanence, that he can make the transformation complete. Instead, he loses her forever.

This piece plays with gendered expectations of transformation—the idea that women must shift, adjust, and mold themselves into something more desirable, more acceptable. In traditional fairy tales, a woman is often rewarded for enduring hardship and becoming her “best” version, but what if she does not wish to change at all? What if, instead of an inevitable metamorphosis into an idealized form, there is only resistance, stagnation, or even self-destruction?

The arrow, a symbol of fate and masculine power, here becomes an absurd tool—its tip not piercing flesh, but uselessly lodged into a pickled grape leaf, an object of preservation. Instead of action, there is inertia. The prince may still be waiting, but so is the toad.

This work reflects the tensions present throughout my practice—expectations placed on women, the weight of myths and traditions, the absurdity of gendered roles, and the ways transformation is demanded rather than chosen. In twisting this fairy tale, I question: who is really cursed, and who has the power to break the spell?



Material: tree leaf, metal.



SCHWEIN GEHABT

Throughout history, amulets and protective symbols were placed at the entrances of homes to ward off misfortune. Even today, despite modern advancements, superstitions persist, shaping traditions and beliefs. This sculpture, depicting splayed pig hooves, carries multiple, often contradictory meanings—it resembles a peace sign, the “rocker’s goat” used to chase away demons, a blooming flower, and even the prehistoric Venus of Willendorf.

The pig itself is a paradoxical symbol: in some cultures, it is viewed as dirty and impure, while in others, it represents fertility, prosperity, survival, and intelligence. In German-speaking countries, pigs are good luck charms, and the phrase “Schwein gehabt” (“had a pig”) means to be fortunate. This duality mirrors the historical treatment of women, who have often been worshipped and feared, celebrated and controlled, associated with both abundance and excess, power and impurity.

The rounded organic forms of the sculpture recall the Venus of Willendorf, a symbol of fertility, strength, and the enduring power of the feminine body. Yet, like the pig, female bodies have been idealized and shamed, revered and dismissed throughout history. This work plays on that tension—is it a sign of protection, a token of luck, or a remnant of a system that both elevates and subjugates?

By casting this form in cement and metal, the sculpture makes what is traditionally seen as soft, natural, or disposable into something permanent, weighty, unmovable. It is a monument to contradictions—to the duality of luck, femininity, and survival.



Material: concrete.

A WOMAN'S FAIRYTALE

A photographic series on the myths, roles, and expectations imposed on women

This series of photographs explores the myths, fantasies, and realities of womanhood, particularly in the post-Soviet space, where patriarchal structures continue to define the role of women. The works reflect expectations, sacrifices, and restrictions—whether dictated by tradition, war, or societal pressure. By using elements of fairy tales, folklore, and surrealism, the images blur the line between dream and nightmare, magic and oppression.

Each image in the series represents a different archetype of femininity—some drawn from Slavic mythology and folklore, others from contemporary gender roles.

INTO THE ABYSS

This image speaks to the suffocating pressure placed on women in post-Soviet patriarchal society. Women are expected to fulfill a singular purpose: to marry and bear children, with little autonomy beyond these roles. The woman in the image, dressed in white, is almost consumed by the landscape—a metaphor for how women are objectified and stripped of agency, existing only as a reflection of societal expectations.



DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD

This image portrays a figure lost in obsession, hysteria, or transformation. The blurred face suggests loss of self, a dissolution of identity under the weight of external pressures. In many folkloric traditions, women who stray from the prescribed path are seen as mad, enchanted, or possessed. This image plays with the idea of losing one's mind in a world that constantly reshapes what it means to be a woman.



MOTHERLAND

Inspired by Vasnetsov's painting of Alyonushka, this photo reinterprets the innocent girl as a militant Motherland, a figure burdened with sacrifice, duty, and despair. In the midst of war, women are often expected to embody both nurturing and resilience, yet their suffering is rarely acknowledged. The reflection in the water suggests the duality of innocence and violence, reinforcing the expectations of women to endure war as both victims and symbols of endurance.



THE SERPENT'S VEIL

A woman in a traditional white wedding gown, her face turned away, revealing not a human form, but a reptilian tail. The setting—a heavily decorated Soviet-era interior—adds to the sense of confinement, a domestic fairytale turned uncanny. The dress, a symbol of purity and idealized femininity, contrasts with the primal, bestial transformation happening beneath it. This work explores the contradiction between the roles imposed on women and their inner, untamed nature—suggesting that beneath societal expectations, something wild, something ancient, still lingers, refusing to be fully tamed.

– A woman dressed in opulent furs, sitting in a ruined landscape, gazes into a mirror—perhaps seeking validation, or perhaps questioning her own reflection. This photo plays on the fairy tale tropes of beauty and vanity, drawing attention to the modern Russian woman, who must navigate a world where external appearance remains a currency of power. The contrast between the luxury of her clothes and the decay around her speaks to the paradox of aspiration and reality, power and vulnerability.



MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL, WHO'S THE FAIREST OF THEM ALL?

A woman dressed in opulent furs, sitting in a ruined landscape, gazes into a mirror—perhaps seeking validation, or perhaps questioning her own reflection. This photo plays on the fairy tale tropes of beauty and vanity, drawing attention to the modern Russian woman, who must navigate a world where external appearance remains a currency of power. The contrast between the luxury of her clothes and the decay around her speaks to the paradox of aspiration and reality, power and vulnerability.



INVISIBLE LABOUR

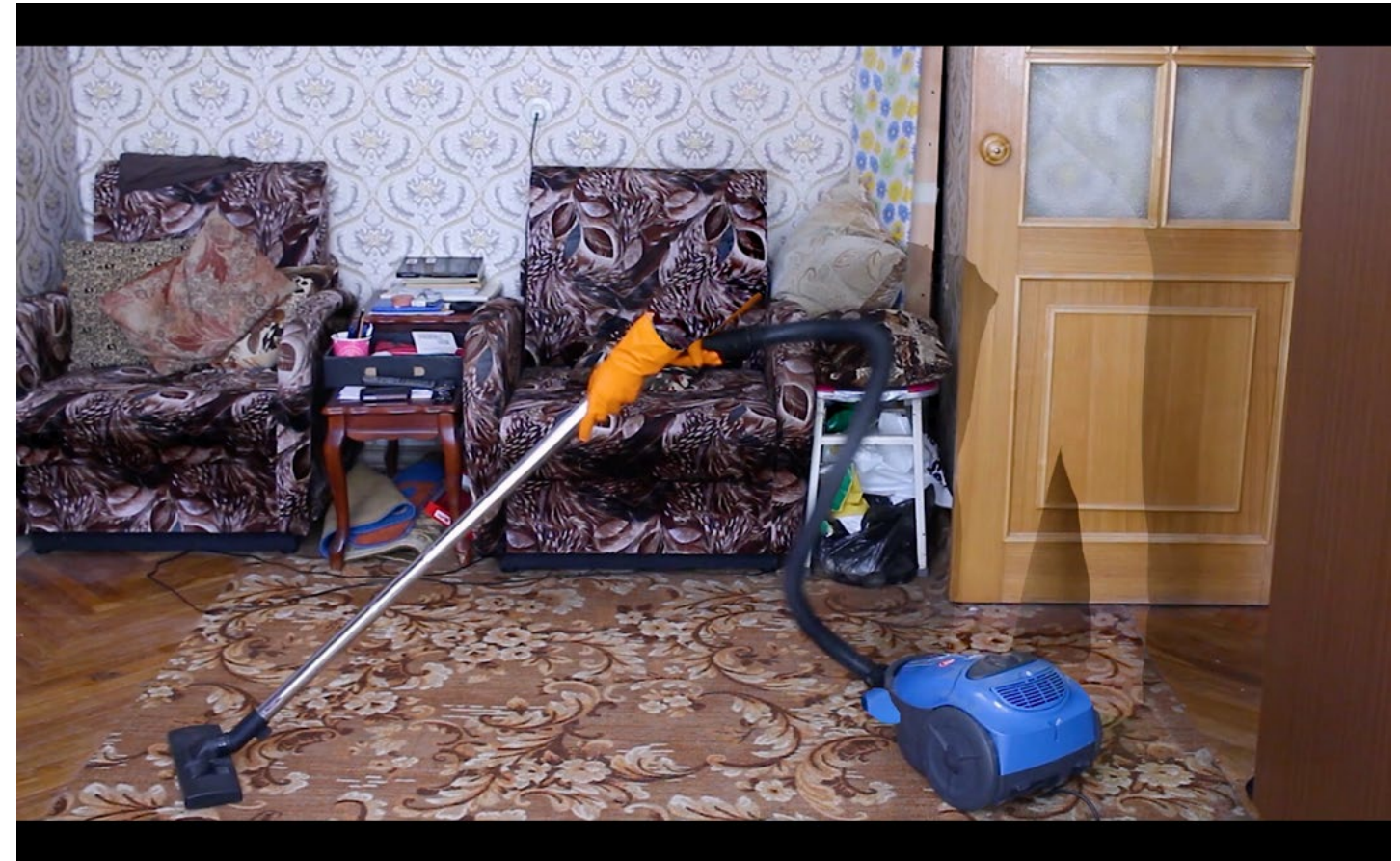
Once upon a time, my grandmother told my mother that the most invisible work is home cleaning.

This video reflects on the erasure of those who perform domestic labor—a form of work that is constant, exhausting, and yet rarely acknowledged. On screen, we see only gloves, a sponge, a vacuum cleaner—the tools of cleaning, but never the person using them. The one who cleans remains unseen, faceless, disappearing into the act itself.

As a woman from Russia, I grew up witnessing how all domestic labor inevitably fell on the shoulders of the female members of the family. Cleaning the home takes time, effort, and energy, yet it is considered an unremarkable task, something expected rather than valued. The cleaner—the caretaker—fades into the background, their presence reduced to mere gestures and objects.

With this work, I explore how domestic labor makes a person invisible—how repetitive, unrecognized tasks can dissolve individuality, leaving behind only movement, only function.

<https://vimeo.com/510139669>
(the video uploaded in a low quality)



I DO, I CARE!

My project explores the dual nature of protection—both in the personal and political spheres. Home and state promise love, care, safety, but often these promises become tools of control, restriction, and violence.

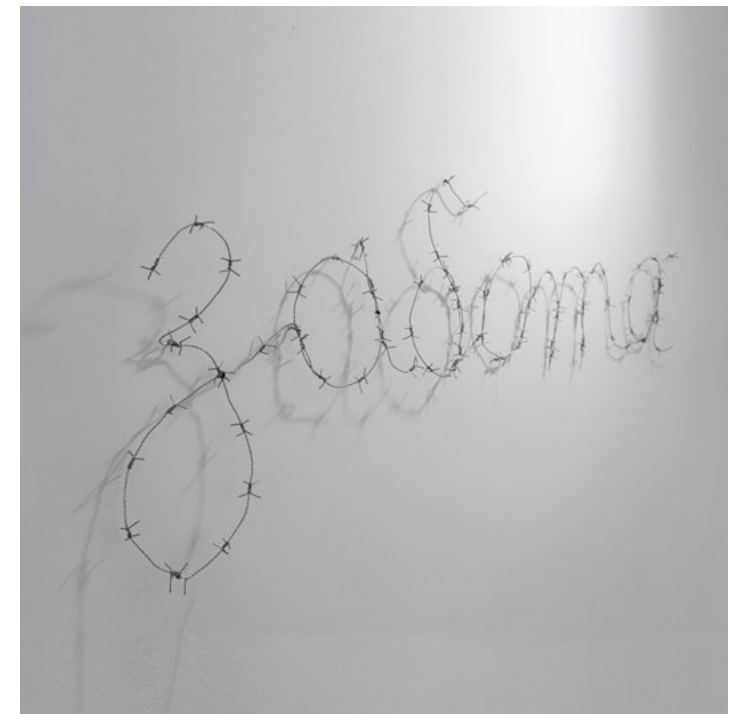
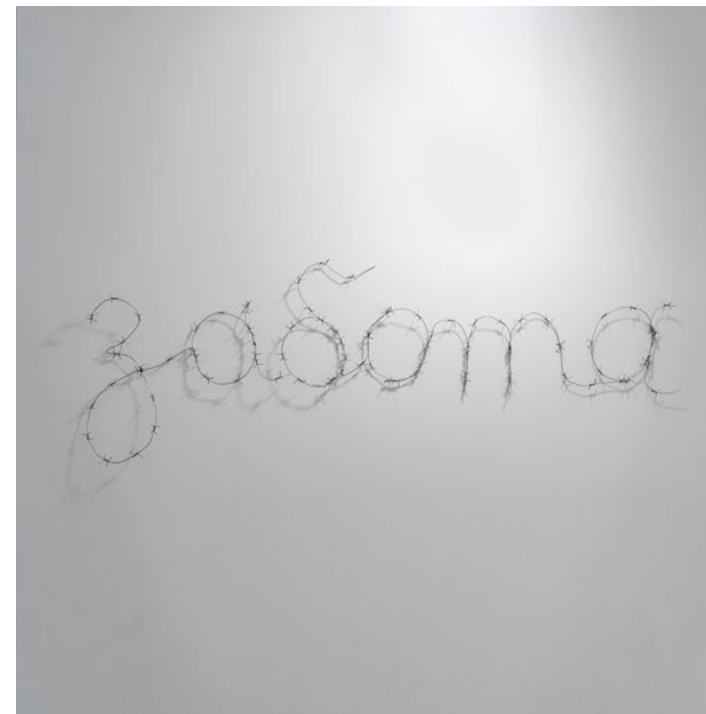
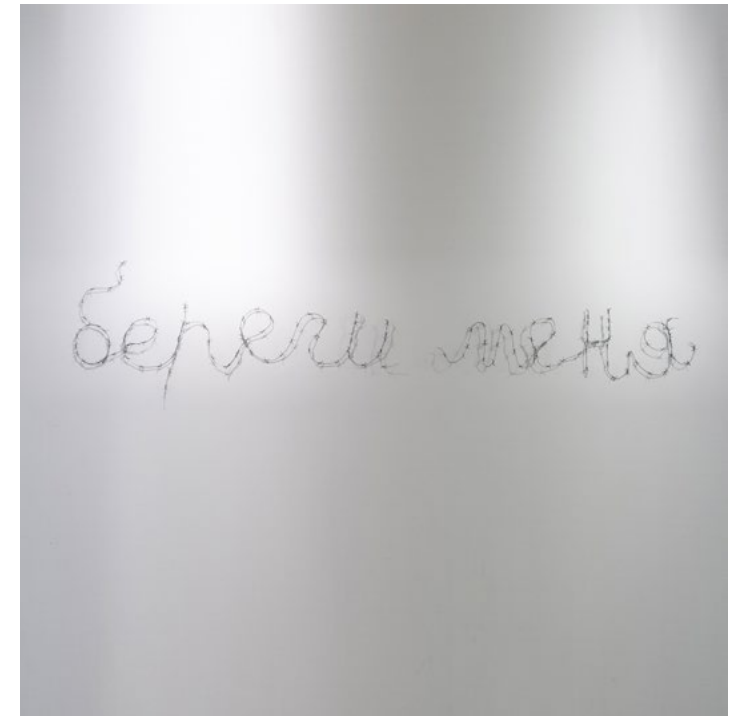
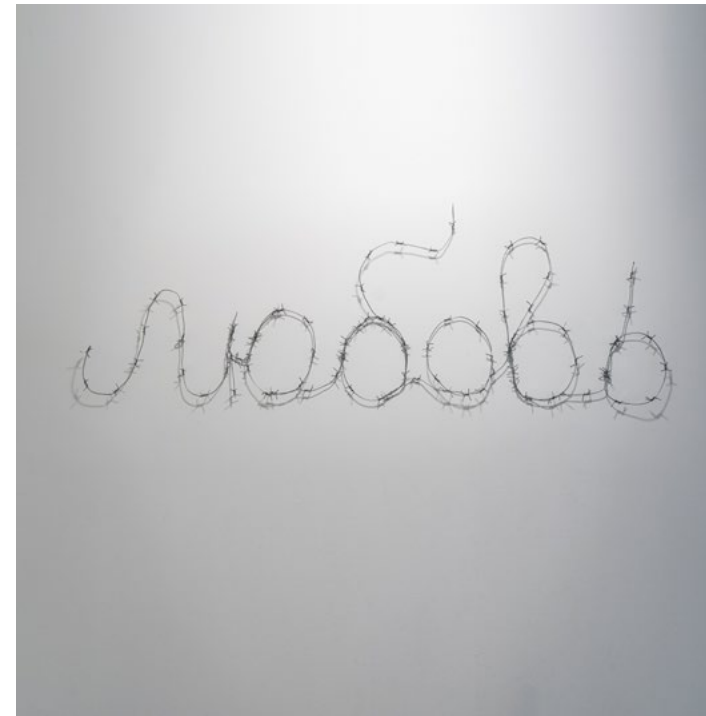
The work consists of the words “LOVE,” “CARE,” “TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF”, crafted from barbed wire. These phrases, usually associated with warmth and support, here become painful and wounding. Barbed wire, a material linked to borders, prisons, and confinement, turns care into a tool of subjugation and love into a means of control.

This project speaks not only about the home but also about the state as a larger home that claims to protect, yet in reality constructs systems of oppression. Just as a patriarchal household can shield while simultaneously imprisoning, the state enforces its rules under the guise of care, restricting freedom. Here, security is not protection—it is a barrier, a boundary that offers no escape.

Domestic violence is often disguised as care. Women are taught that love requires endurance,

that care is sacrifice, that if they are beaten, it means they are loved. Just as the state punishes those it calls its citizens, an abuser justifies violence through words of affection. The barbed wire shaping these words makes pain visible—love does not always save, care can suffocate, and protection can become control.

At what cost does care come? When does love turn into a trap? Is it possible to break free from protection that wounds? These questions form the foundation of the work, where words that promise warmth become symbols of captivity, and the home ceases to be a refuge, transforming instead into a cage.



(SELF)DESTRUCTION

The project (self)Destruction is a sculptural object in the shape of an ouroboros, sewn from a wedding dress and veil. The ouroboros, an ancient symbol of the endless cycle of birth and destruction, becomes a metaphor for the home as a space of domesticity, traditions, and prescribed roles that can both protect and constrain.

The wedding dress and veil, symbols of the beginning of family life, are transformed into a closed loop where the idea of home is linked not only to rootedness but also to self-destruction. In a patriarchal culture, the home often becomes a space where female identity dissolves into domesticity, care, and sacrifice. It is a place where love and protection can turn into invisible burdens, and repetitive rituals form an endless cycle from which escape is difficult.

Yet, the ouroboros is not only a symbol of destruction but also of rebirth. Can this cycle be broken, or does it perpetuate itself over and over again? Can the home be a space where a woman does not lose herself but redefines her role? This contradiction creates tension between the home as a refuge and as a trap.

The fabric from which the object is sewn carries its own meanings. A wedding dress is traditionally associated with purity, light, and hope, but here, it is twisted and torn, its seams resembling traces of violence upon the material—and, by extension, upon its symbolic meaning. The veil, which conceals the bride's face, becomes a shroud through which the home is no longer perceived as a space of warmth but as a mask hiding an inner reality.



This project explores the home as a space of memory and transformation, where traditions can be both a source of stability and a mechanism of suppression. It raises questions: Is the home a place of shelter, or is it where a person slowly disappears? Can this cycle be broken and transcended? Or, like the ouroboros, will it always recreate itself?



CURATORIAL PROJECTS

A...CADEMY OF FINE KINK NEW INTIMATE HORIZONS

The main theme of this year's exhibition "PFFV x A...cademy of Fine KINK: New Intimate Horizons" is the interaction between the realms of our realities and modern technology. Digital platforms such as Pornhub, Grindr, Tinder and the new AI sidekicks influence and change (sometimes even without our own awareness) our perceptions of concepts such as sex, gender and political practices, political behavior. These tools let us witness a new wave of sexual exploration and identity performance, but they are also definitively transforming power dynamics. How do we look at each other? How do we communicate and how do our bodies behave in the digital age?

Using various art forms such as photography, painting, installation, film, sculpture and performative practices, the exhibition endeavors to address these queries. "New Intimate Horizons" tries to change the narratives about pornography, which is still associated with taboo and shame in our culture, but furthermore showing it as a playground for questioning and transformation. The artists break and challenge society's conventional views and picture realities and futures of inclusivity, desire, freedom and safety in sexual expression. Each new (intimate) horizon offers a new perspective on the world and ourselves.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

Ana Vollwesen, Agostina Prato, Andrea Pass, Emma Grima, Florian Leibetseder, June Hwajung, Ilkin Zeybek, Jakob Liu Wächter, Jana Nowak, Katja Buranich, Konstantin Novikov, Sophie Greistorfer, Lars* Kollros, Milena Nowak, Carrot Root, María Riot, Sara Mlakar, Sepideh Hassani, Wayssa Wayno, Aleksandra Kola Kluczyk, Efthy-

mios Charmalias, Gabi Moncayo Asan, Chucky Schuster, Justyna Tuchorska, Iris Kaufman, Hidéo SNES, Orçun Karamustafa, Olivier Hölzl, Ludovica Galleani d'Agliano, SamHel (The Maker), Aleksandar Murkovic, Claudia Virginia Dimoiu, Wolf & Paul inc., Johannes Grenzfurthner, Thomas Kranabetter, Christian Schüller, Offerus Ablinger, Alexei Dmitriev, Daniel Rajcsanyi

Curated by Olga Shapovalova, Jasmin Hagendorfer and Lars* Kollros.

<https://www.oehakbild.info/finekink/impressions/>

PFFV x A...CADEMY of FINE KINK

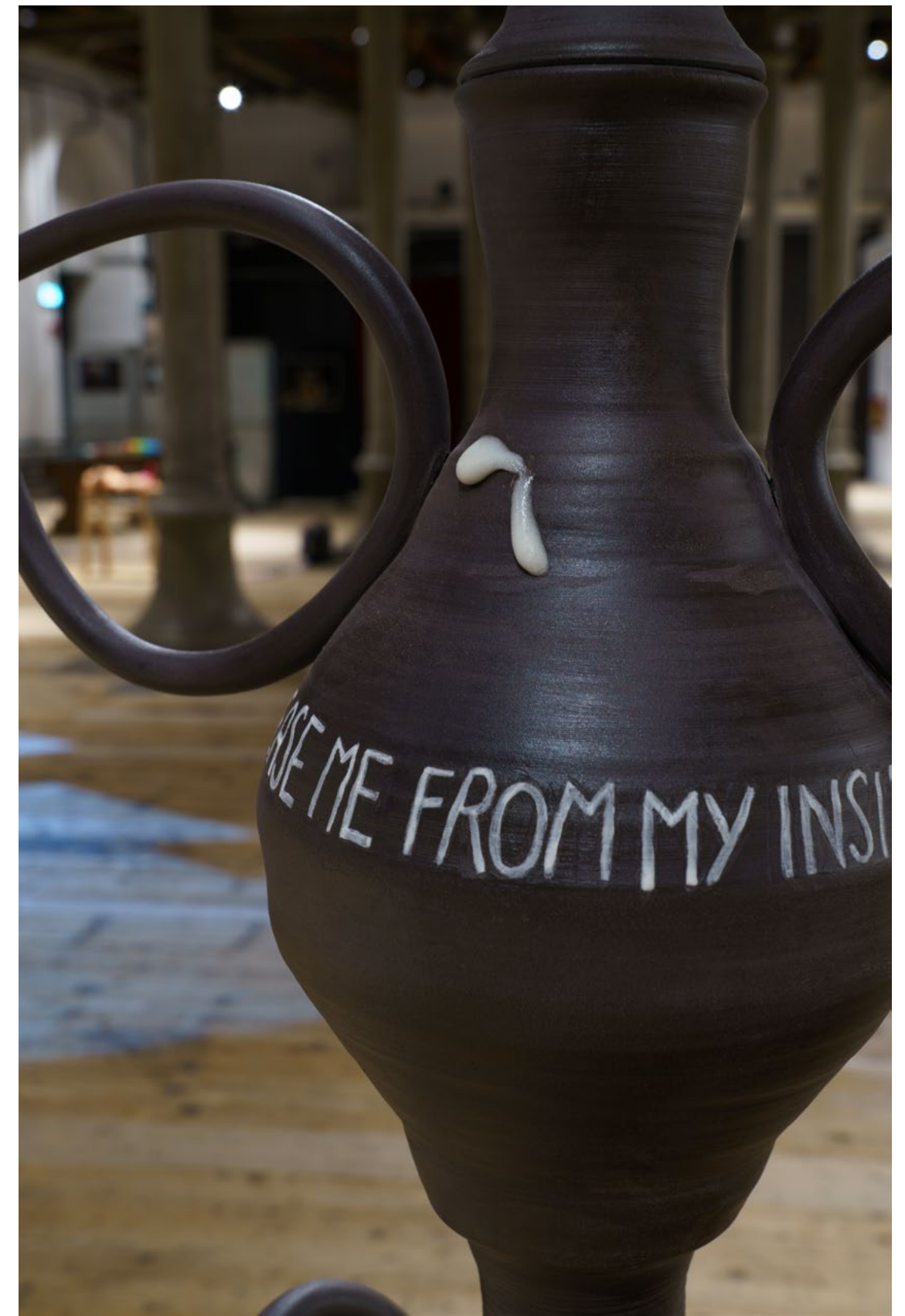
ÖH
AKBILD

Opening & Afterparty
9.04
20:00-02:00

20:00 - Opening
20:30 - Performances
22:00 - Afterhex
00:00- Parisbohn&Jorkes0

EG NORD SEMPERDEPOT / 10.4-14.4 / 14:00-20:00

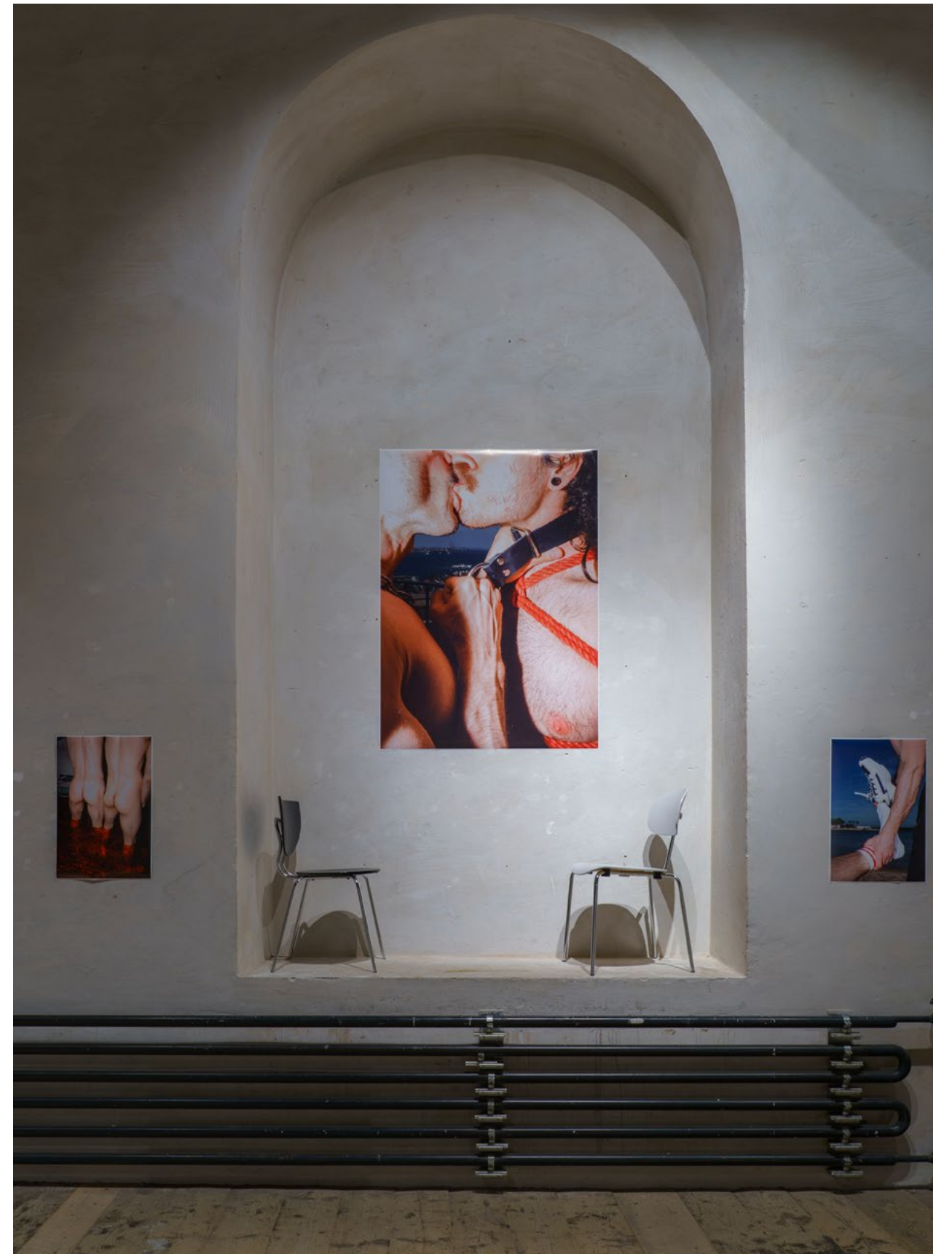
PFFV x A...CADEMY of FINE KINK











THE FINAL SHOW

Finishing the work in the Exhibit Studio, curators Olga Shapovalova & Christian Azzouni conclude their annual round of exhibitions with The Final Show. Throughout this time, their focus has been the life of a young artist, a student of Art Academy.

Starting with the first exhibition I can't handle this, driven by artistic passions, they had a conversation about obsession, about non-stop work, about the artist's haunted ideas, which can't find enough place in artists heads.

In continuation, the second show having a good time conducted a talk about the belonging of contemporary young artists to one community, the subculture of artists, and how it interacts with club culture.

The third show my reality is not you reality was a reflection on reality, artists' perceptions of it, their psychological state and how artists deal with attempts to find a ground under their feet.

The Final Show is not only their last exhibition within the walls of Exhibit, but also thoughts on how students feel when they graduate from the Art Academy. Shapovalova & Azzouni wanted to recreate the feeling of a border space (felt by graduates), where they are no longer students but not yet professional artists. A place on the threshold of something new, but still struggling with the old. Where graduates are still searching for their place in the art world. No one does know yet where this is going, or what will become of it. We are waiting for something is taking its course...

Within this context, the life story of an emerging young artist is also confronted with the essential question of their own identity within their art career. Young artists use art to express their personal experiences, thoughts and emotions. This creates an exciting tension between the self and the work. Artistic practice becomes a field of experimentation in which questions of origin, belonging, gender, sexuality and other aspects of identity are explored. This artistic reflection can contribute to both self-discovery or self-destruction.

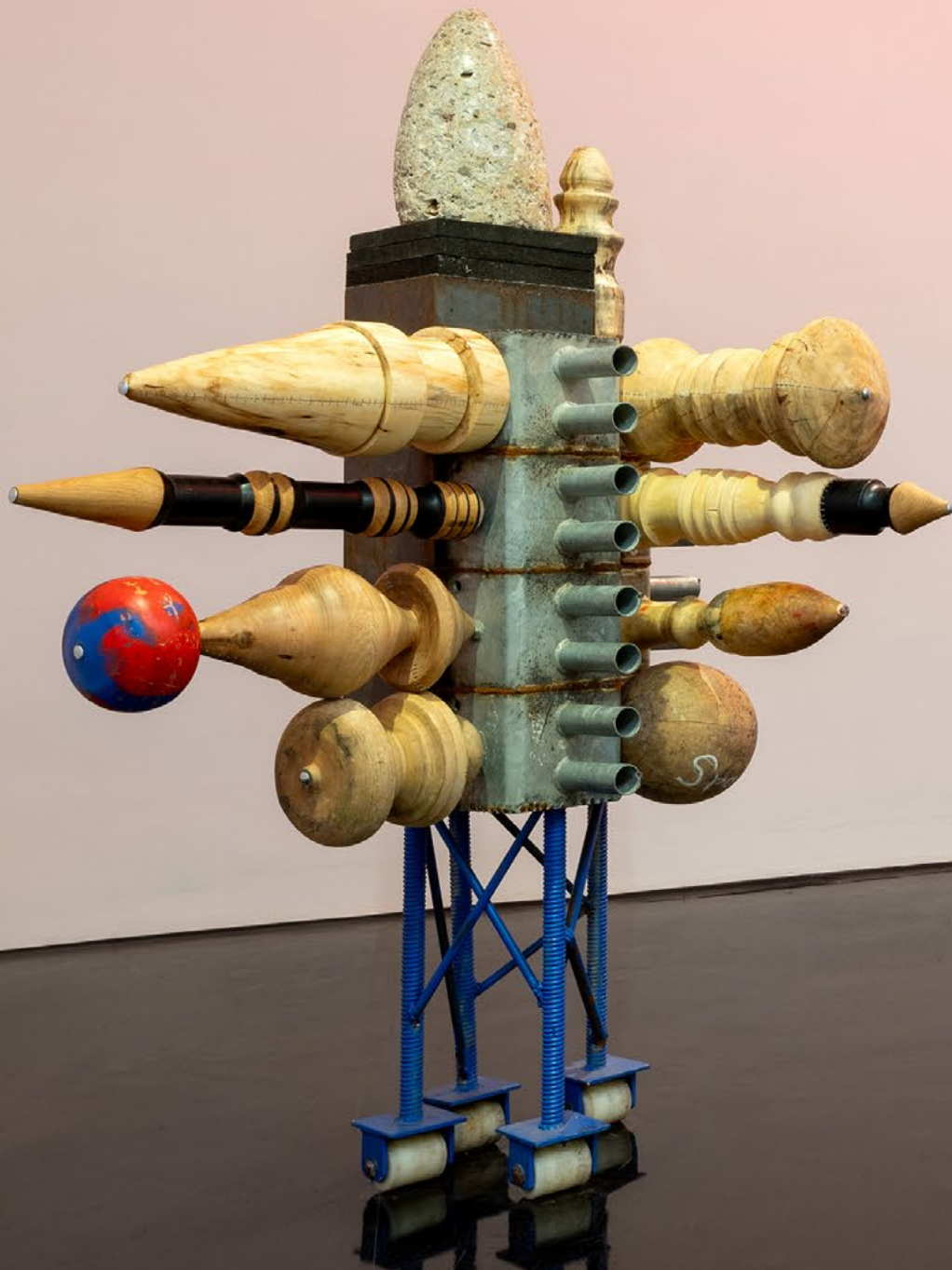
In the Final Show we pose the profound questions about artists existence, such as who we are, our purpose as artists, where we're headed, and the nature of art being. What art means in our world right now that is very confusing and messy? Does art still have the power to make us feel hopeful and make the world better? Does it retain the potency to kindle hope and enact transformative change, or is it destined to succumb to the overpowering influence of the art market, mass culture, (wars) and the fragile impersonal milieu we inhabit?

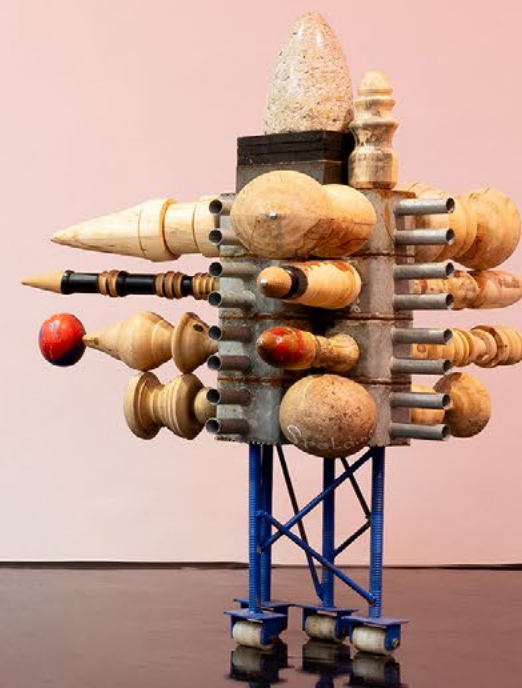
Today's generation of young artists has to deal with a complex and multifaceted landscape. They have grown up in an era where networked technologies and increasing globalization are redefining notions of culture, identity and community. In this fragmented world, young artists occupy a variety of positions - depending on their own grit, determination and self-reliance. The diversity of perspectives on the world allows them to draw inspiration across cultural boundaries and explore new forms of artistic expression.

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien Exhibit Studio The Final Show 9.11.2023 – 11.2.2024

Carli Biller
Laura Hatting
Red Huemer
Julia Karpova
Alevtina Lyapunova
Iben Zorn
So Young Park
Sim

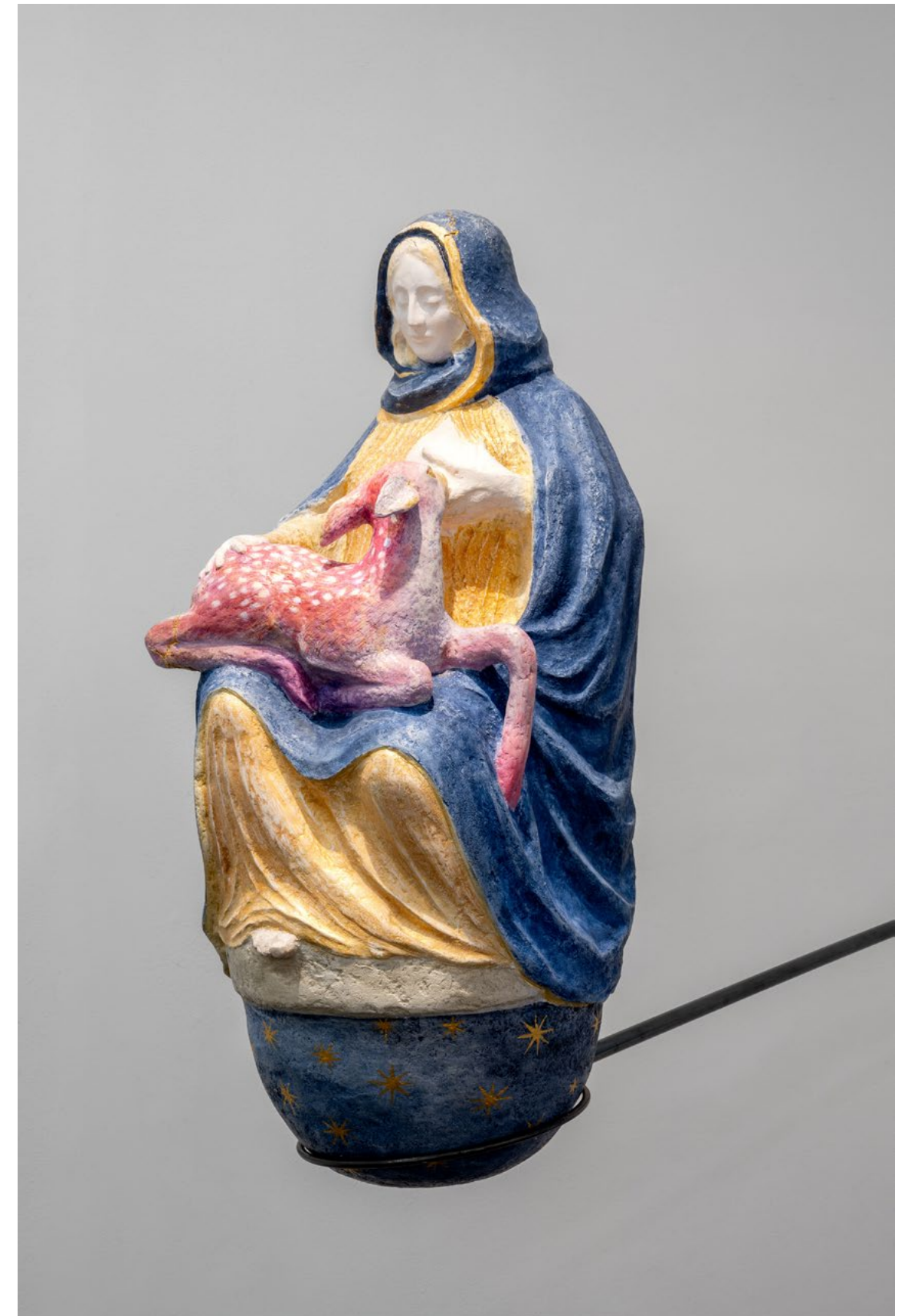














MY REALITY IS NOT YOUR

After significant projects, moments of indulgence, or clubbing all night long, devastation often comes – not only physical, but also emotional (burnout, hangover, etc) and we are being forced to face back the everyday reality that spreads out in front of young artists. It is overlapped with various psychological traumas, and the art market's constant pressure on the ongoing production of art. This is the time when reality is often questioned because the perception of one's own reality can function independently of the concept of the real. Here the desire to be in another world, in another reality, manifests itself the most strongly.

The participating artists employ various strategies, both subtle and overt. They might engage in obsessive work or purposefully step back to reflect. Some choose solitude, while others seek inspiration in endless parties. They might establish a nurturing environment or push their limits to explore their position in the world. In employing these coping methods, artists confront the complexities of reality, striving to carve out their place within it.

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien Exhibit Studio

My reality is
not your reality

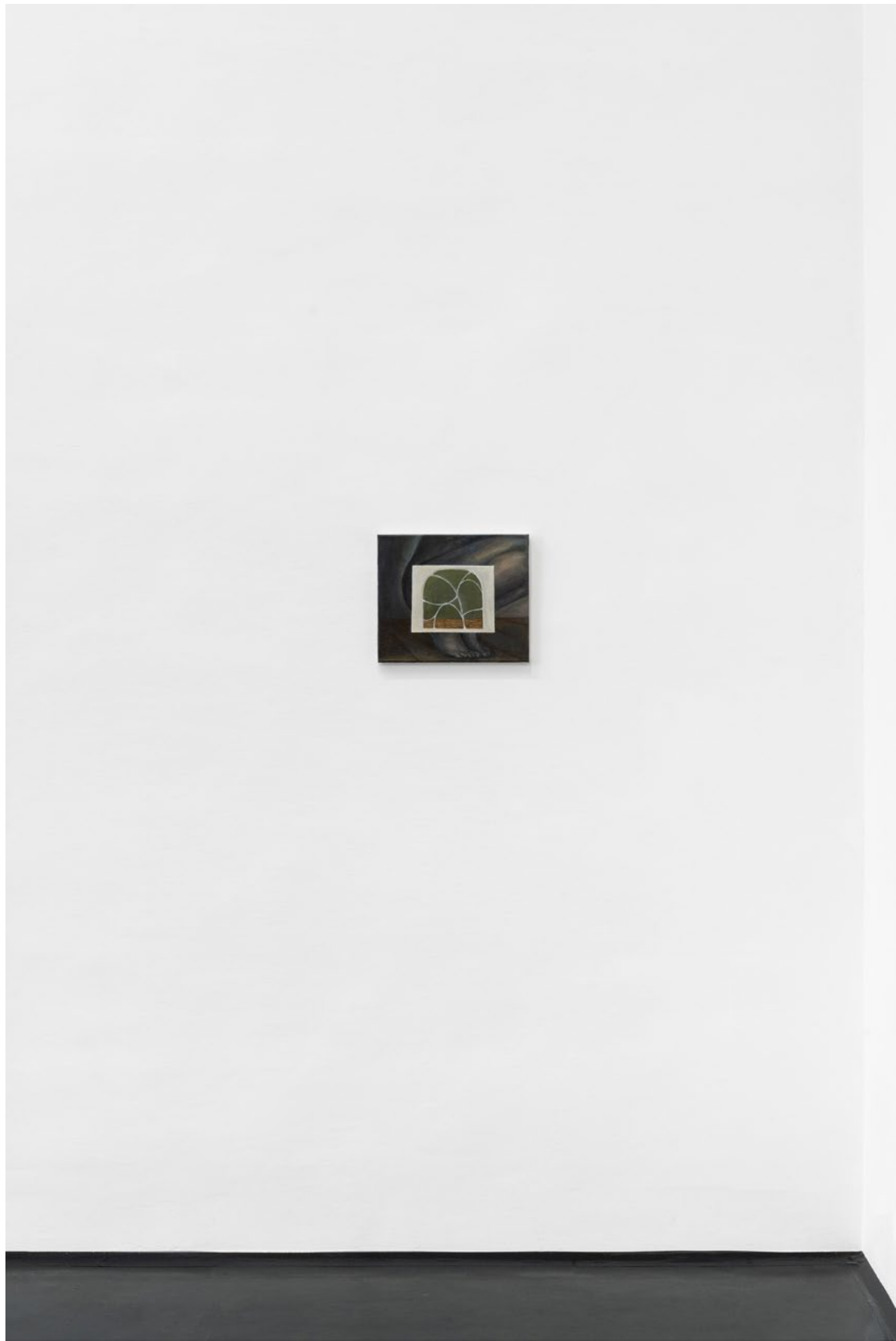
8.9. - 15.10.2023

Jakob Braito Alberto
Cappai Jason Frania
Felix Grühbaum Natalia
Gurova Reka Horvath
Susanna Maila
Charlotta Öberg
Jennifer Posny, Neslihan
Yakut, Jonas Hammerer
Lera Weinrub Stephan
Wiesinger











HAVING A GOOD TIME

Nothing could better signify the 'complete disappearance of a culture of meaning and aesthetic sensibility, than 'a spinning of strobe lights and gyroscopes streaking the space whose moving pedestal is created by the crowd' (Baudrillard 1982: 5).

The exhibition "having a good time" is a first-person story. It immerses us in the world of modern art students and young contemporary artists. This journey outside their studios begins at the exhibition space (the so-called 'Exhibition mode'), where they meet new people, their friends, have short talk and free drinks. Is another art opening only an excuse to get out of the house, to meet new people/friends and to 'have a good time' this evening or pure interest in art? In times when there is no reason to leave home, art events can be an alternative to 'cultureless leisure'.

"having a good time" recreates the atmosphere of the art opening that smoothly flows into the party ('Club mode'). At sunset, art fades into the background and the spirit of club culture wakes up. The doors of the art show are closed and suddenly everyone dance next to fragile sculptures and indulge in any hedonistic temptations. Are we all really artist or just wanna have a good time and at the same time be involved in something beautiful and important...

but the sun is rising and the party must turn back into an exhibition. we leave the safe space and behind the dark curtains the real world awaits with its rigidity and all devouring state machine.

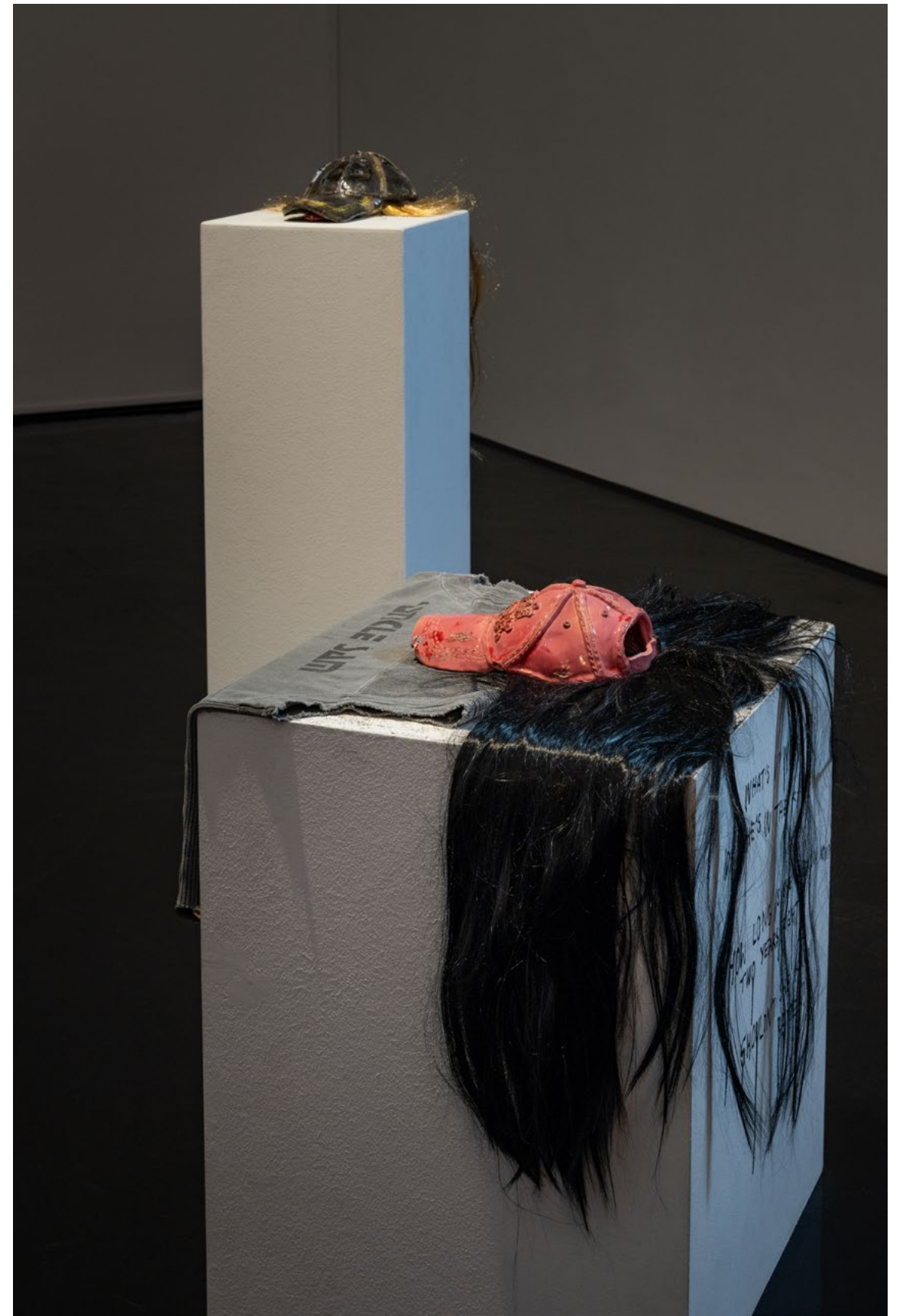
Ready or not, here they come.

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien Exhibit Studio having a good time 22.3. – 21.5.2023

Ju Aichinger
Alessandro Albrecht
Antonia de la Luz
Kašik Anna Hanghoj
Daniel Rajcsanyi
Polina Sokolova
Daniel Silva Flandez
thirdworldlabour
rogine Alexandra
Wanderer Marlene
Zehder













I CAN(NOT) HANDLE THIS

It is said that artists oscillate between genius and madness.

Their pronounced obsessive desire for creativity is an inexplicable phenomenon, thereby distinguishing them from other people, symbolizing a state of heightened perception and imagination.

Unconditional commitment is the antithesis of self-restraint or self-control, obsessions express an alternative to socially accepted lifestyles that demonstrate other ways of being. They can release from restrictions, but if they are lived too intensely, the consequences will not be comforting.

The exhibition "I CAN (NOT) HANDLE THIS" is an attempt to comprehend the little explored areas of the wild creative thirst for self-expression, where often works are created without artistic intent. Whether it is an attempt to cope with an obsession that haunts you, a desire to escape from reality, or just an attempt at collecting that grows to uncontrollable proportions(amounts)...

I CAN (NOT) HANDLE THIS is a statement about various kinds of obsessions pursued by artists, but which, at the same time, elude the direct legitimising pressure of the art market and discursive contexts.

I CAN (NOT) HANDLE THIS denies any canons of established aesthetics and generally accepted understanding of art. All kinds of obsessions are welcome here. Even yours!

A...kademie der bildenden Künste Wien Exhibit Studio I can (not) handle this 19.1. – 5.3.2023

L.H.S Emma
Hummerhielm
Carlén Theresa
Katharina
Horlacher Anna
Anvidalfarei
Seul A Shin
Alina Sesser
Nanae Mitobe
Lotti Brockmann
Taro Meissner
Evi Jäggle Selin
Karaman Emil
Eckert





thinking
3 months
forwards &
3
months
behind
gently performing
and you pick up

and you pick up
gently performing
behind
3 months
forwards &
3 months
thinking





