Michaela Schwentner

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Michaela Schwentner

*1970 in Linz, lives and works in Vienna
1984-1989 College of Fashion Design Linz
1989-1996 Studies of philosophy, history and sciences of theatre, film and media in Vienna
1995-1996 Founding and organising offspace Jadengasse in Vienna
Since 2000 audiovisual collaborations w/ Electric Indigo, Peter Rehberg, Radian, etc.
Since 2004 operator of mosz records, label of electronic music, releases among others by
Peter Rehberg, Rashim, Hanno Leichtmann, September Collective, Martin Siewert
2006-2013 Lecturer at the University of Art and Design Linz
2014 Lecturer at Filmakademie Vienna
Since 2013 Lecturer at the University of Technology Vienna

Awards

2016 Agents of Confusion! Joanneum Graz
2007 Outstanding Artist Award for Film, Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts and Culture
2004 Local Artists Award, Crossing Europe Festival Linz

Grants / Scholarships

2023
Work Scholarship of the City of Vienna
State Media Art scholarship

2022
Project grant of the BMKOES, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film

2021
Project grant of the BMKOES, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film

2020
Project grant of the BMKOES, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film

2019
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film

2018
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film
Working grant of the City of Vienna, Department Visual Arts

2016
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film

2013
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film
Project grant of the Department of Culture of the Province of Upper Austria

2011
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film
Project grant of the Department of Culture of the Province of Upper Austria

2010
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the City of Vienna, Department Film

2009
Project grant of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film
Project grant of the Department of Culture of the Province of Upper Austria

2007-2003
Project grants of the Federal Chancellery, Section Art/Department Film

Acquisitions
2019 Collection City of Vienna
2014 Collection City of Vienna
2003 Centre Pompidou Paris

Residencies
2023 Domus Artium of Upper Austria, Paliano (I); Mecklenburgisches Künstlerhaus Schloss Plueschow (D)
2020 AiR Domus Artium of Upper Austria, Villa Rabl, Bad Hall (A)
2019 subnetAIR Grant + Residency, Salzburg (A)
2018 Dark City, Krumpendorf (A); ORTung, Hintersee (A)
2017 AiR Sasso Residency, Vairano/San Nazzaro (CH)
2016 AiR Embassy of Foreign Artists, Geneva (CH)
2015 Pixel, Bytes & Film | Artist in Residence, ORF III
2014 AiR Egon Schiele Centrum, Czesky Krumlov (CZ)
2012 AiR Domus Artium of Upper Austria, Paliano (I)
2009 AiR Domus Artium of Upper Austria, Malo (I)

Solo exhibitions / presentations (selection)
2023 SYMPOETIC SOUNDINGS, Installation & screening, Creative Space Verbier
2022 sehsaal, Vienna
2020 Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt; Tiroler Künstler*schaft, Neue Galerie, Innsbruck
2018 ANNA, Vienna
2013 K48, Vienna
2012 rhiz w/ art, Vienna
2009 v-port, Museumsquartier Vienna

Group exhibitions (selection)
2023 Jewisch Museum, Vienna; Der Tanz um die Sorge, SOHO STUDIOS, Vienna
2022 Galerie im OÖ Kulturquartier, Linz
2021 Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna
2019 Blickle Raum, Vienna
2018 Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna; Leyden Gallery, London; Künstlerhaus Graz; AIL Vienna
2016 Ursula Blickle Foundation, Kraichtal; London Biennale MANILA Pollination, Manila; Traverse Vidéo,
     Toulouse
2015 Kunstraum SUPER, Vienna; Le Bel Ordinaire, Billère; shut up & listen. Echoraum, Vienna;
     Prague Quadrennial of Performance, Design + Space
2014 Klangmanifeste, Vienna; Dazibao, Montréal
2013 Kulturbrücke, Fratres
2011 ACF, New York
2010 Shedhalle, Zurich
2009 WRO'09. Int. Media Art Biennial; landscape 2.0. Edith-Russ-Haus für Medienkunst Oldenburg
2008 1. Brussels Biennial; Kunsthalle Project Space, Vienna
2007 Transmediale. Berlin; Gerngross, Linz
2006 La Casa Encendida, Madrid; Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam; Kiasma, Helsinki
2005 WRO'05. Int. Media Art Biennale, Wroclaw
2004 Manifesta 4. Frankfurt/M; Articulation. Belef Center, Belgrade
2003 Künstlerhaus, Vienna
2001 Transmediale. Berlin; Kiasma, Helsinki
2000 Künstlerhaus, Vienna

Screenings (selection)

2023 Claiming Spaces, Landuni Drosendorf
2023 Sehsaal, Vienna
2022 Diagonale, Graz
2021 Oktoskop. OKTO TV; Kino im Abseits. VIENNA DESIGN WEEK, Vienna
2020 Kasseler Dokfest, DOK Leipzig
2020 Diagonale, Graz; Filmarchiv Austria, Vienna; Recycled Cinema – A cooperation of Viennale, sixpackfilm
      and Austrian Filmmuseum, Filmmuseum Vienna
2019 Blickle Archive Series #39, Blickle Kino, Vienna; re:voir: Futur antérieur #6. Focus Autrichien. Paris;
      Transform She Said. Blickle Kino, Vienna; B16 Filmfestival, Brno; Under_the_Radar. Blickle Kino, Vienna;
      Living collection sixpackfilm, Filmarchiv Austria, Vienna
2017 B3 Biennial of the Moving Image, Frankfurt/M; FIDMarseille; Diagonale Graz
2016 Int. Short Film Festival Uppsala; Breaking Ground: 60 Years Experimental Cinema in Austria.
      Cinematheque Tel Aviv, Jerusalem Cinematheque
2015 Milano Film Festival; Festival der Regionen, Ebensee
2014 Cairo Video Festival
2013 Breaking Ground: 60 Years Experimental Cinema in Austria. Centre Pompidou Paris, Buenos
      Aires Bafici Film Festival
2012 Breaking Ground: 60 Years Experimental Cinema in Austria. UCLA Los Angeles, Anthology Film
      Archive New York, Semana de Cine Experimental Madrid
2012 Elektra Film Festival, Montreal
2010 1st Experimental Film Forum, Singapure; Black & White. BAWAG Contemporary, Vienna
2009 La Rochelle Film Festival; Parvin Etesami Women Film Festival, Teheran
2008 Diagonale, Graz; Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz
2008 Gene Siskel Film Center Chicago; Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Frankfurt/M; Espacio Plasma, Buenos Aires
2007 Edinburgh Int. Film Festival; Montréal nouveau; National Museum Of Women In The Arts, Washington DC;
      San Diego Women's Film Festival; Diagonale, Graz; Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz
2006 Viennale; Diagonale, Graz; Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen; Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz
2005 Diagonale, Graz; Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz; Transat Video, Caen; Synch Festival, Athens;
      Videofestival Bochum; LIFF London Int. Film Festival; LUFF Lausanne Underground Film Festival;
      Exis, Seoul; Les Voutes, Paris
2004 Diagonale, Graz; Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz; Nova Cinema, Brussels
2003 Sundance Independent Film Festival, Park City; NYUFF New York; Edinburgh Int. Film Festival;
      Sao Paolo Short Film Festival
2003 LIFF London Int. Film Festival; IFFR Rotterdam; EMAF Osnabruck; Diagonale, Graz; Impulstanz, Vienna
2002 Evolution Film Festival, Leeds; Cork Filmfest; NYUFF New York; Wien modern, Diagonale, Graz;
      IFFR Rotterdam; HAFF Utrecht; Microwave Int. Media Art Festival Hongkong
2001 Videonale, Bonn; Diagonale, Graz; Cinema Auricular. Barbican, London; EMAF Osnabruck;
      NYUFF New York; CUFF Chicago Underground Film Festival; IFFR Rotterdam
2000 Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen; Diagonale, Graz; Sonar, Barcelona; Cinematexas, Austin; HAFF Utrecht

Performances, presentations, talks (selection)

2021 ASSEMBLY. Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna
2020 Statement #09: *re*-ASSEMBLY. Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt
2019 Intimité et désir. Sound installation + web stream, ART POP/POP Montréal
2018 AAA! Almost-aged Actionists Anonymous. Interventions and presentations in the frame of Wienwoche
2017 Mapping the Image —The Deleuzian Film Classification. Lecture performance. Grazer Kunstverein,
      Graz; Agents of Confusion! An art and science symposium on dizziness as a creative resource.
      Presentation and artist talk. Kunsthaus, Graz
2016 Concert vidéomusiques électroacoustiques #1. MAMCS, Strasbourg
2015 Schichtwechsel. Performance + installation. Festival der Regionen, Ebensee
2013 Melting Plot. Text/Image/sound performances. ExFonderie Limone, Torino, Casa del Lector, Madrid;
      komm und tanz mit mir. A/V performance. Hundsturm, Vienna
2012 Obras sonoras. Sound performance. Museo Experimental El Eco, Mexiko City
2011 viele köpfe aber auch Os. Performance in the frame of the exhibition Jandl Show. Wienmuseum, Vienna
2010 mélodies en sous–sol. Screening. taps Scala/ Scènes Strasbourgeoises, Strasbourg
2009 female:pressure sound performances. Osaka, Tokio, Naha City; FREI Magazine presentation. Sound
      performance. Secession, Vienna; BLIND DATE. A/V performance. KomponistInnenforum Mittersill;
      Linzer Notate. Screening + artist talk. maerzgalerie, Linz; AUTORADIO. Sound performance. Reheat Festival,
      Kleylehof, Nickelsdorf; A/V performances w/ Peter Rehberg: LUFF Lausanne, La Rochelle Film Festival,
      Cave12 Geneva
2008 ICH WAR SEBALD — ABVERKAUF. A/V performance w/ Peter Rehberg. Radowanhalle, Vienna
2006 A/V performances w/ Peter Rehberg: Les Instants Chavirés, electroni-]k] Rennes
2005 FRESH TRIPS — About Moving Images, Sound Spaces and Performances. Co-curation + Label
      presentation. medien.kunst.tirol, Innsbruck
2003 A/V performance w/ unfair: Netmage Festival, Bologna, SARC Belfast

2001 PALIMPSEST. Concept + video installation. Wien Modern, Vienna
Curatorial practice
Since 2020 XX Y X — series of open formats and forms of representation featuring women artists
     in sound and visual arts
2019 Transform She Said (w/ Claudia Slanar). Blickle Kino, Belvedere 21, Vienna
2018 Choreography of the Frame. (w/ Maia Gusberti). Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna
2005 Fresh Trips — About Moving Images, Sound Spaces and Performances. (w/ Annja Krautgasser)
     Label presentation. medien.kunst.tirol, Innsbruck

Publications

Shift Change — Slogging Away In Ebensee. Festival der Regionen 2015, Ed. Festival der Regionen,
Ottensheim 2015

Film Unframed. A History of Austrian Avant-garde Cinema. FilmmuseumSynemaPublikation,
Ed. Peter Tscherkassky, Vienna 2012

Subverting Disambiguities. Shedhalle 2009-2012, Ed. Anke Hoffmann, Yvonne Volkart. Zurich, 2012

Visionary. Index DVD, Vienna, 2009

female:pressure DVD1. female:pressure, Vienna, 2008

Video Edition Austria. Release 02, Vienna, 2008

The Gift of Sound and Vision, Der österreichische Film. Edition Der Standard, Vienna, 2007

CrossMedia. Kunstverein Medienturm (ed.), Folio Verlag, Graz, 2007

Le cinéma autrichien, In: Austriaca. Cahiers universitaires d'information sur l'AutricheN° 64, Presses

universitaires de Rouen et du Havre 2007

Radiostation. medien.kunst.tirol, Innsbruck, 2006

The Mozart Minute. Wiener Mozartjahr, Vienna, 2006

Sonic Fiction. Synaesthetic Videos from Austria. Index DVD Edition, Vienna, 2005

Austrian Abstracts 02 | 005. Lanolin, Vienna, 2005

Abstraction Now. Ed. Norbert Pfaffenbichler, Sandro Droschl, Verlag Edition Camera Austria, Graz, 2004

The Essential Frame: Austrian Independent Film 1955-2003. Mark Webber. The London Film School 2003

My artistic practice is mainly driven by examinations and negotiations of the absent:
desire or the place of longing or, more specifically, the desire machine, the projection
surface film itself as a source of reflection, or archives whose historical representative
content always refers to something disappeared, extinct, crossed out or under-
represented in history, society and culture.
In my work, I deal with spaces of meaning that expand into real space in continuing
processes: researched and fictionalised material, assemblaged and recontextualised,
opens up the space for different reflections on different levels. My approach is
figurative thinking, and in my work I often use the model as a vehicle of translation
and visualisation of thoughts and ideas.

In my practice I pursue the topics desire and absence as well as their representation,
be it sonic, cinematographic, photographic or literal, and archives as collectively built,
accessible and usable storage systems. These topics are negotiated partly in an inter-
woven way mainly in my ongoing work series *re*-PARADISE and *re*-STAGING; the
prefix *re*- refers on the one hand to the act of repetition, to take up a theme again,
also reconstruction, on the other hand to the re in repair. Both strategies can certainly
intertwine.

re-PARADISE comprises investigations of sites and spaces that allow, evoke or mirror
desire, longing, phantasy, hope, dreams, etc: constructions of heterotopias, reconstruc-
tions of paradisiac sites and structures; repeating themes are absence and projection,
memory and desire or longing; the past, the disappeared, what we once knew, today
remember or no longer know, as well as to the future, to what is coming, to what is
becoming, which we can help to shape and decide.

The *re*-STAGING projects investigate and develop forms of retelling existing narratives,
including reconstructions of archival material (pop cultural, mimetic, collectively experi-
enced, remembered, collected material) as re-enactment or reconstruction.

In my practice I prefer working on the model as a possible way of approaching specific
topics as well as a form of thinking. Technically and contentwise I focus on recon-
structions of structures and economic conditions of social patterns as well as (moving)
image production. I mainly work in the fields of video, photography, installation and
site-specific intervention. My working methods include transition, transformation, re-
construction, repetition and multiplication.

re-BIRDING
Installation view *Der Tanz um die Sorge*, SOHO STUDIOS, Vienna 2023
Photo 3 © Erik Vacev
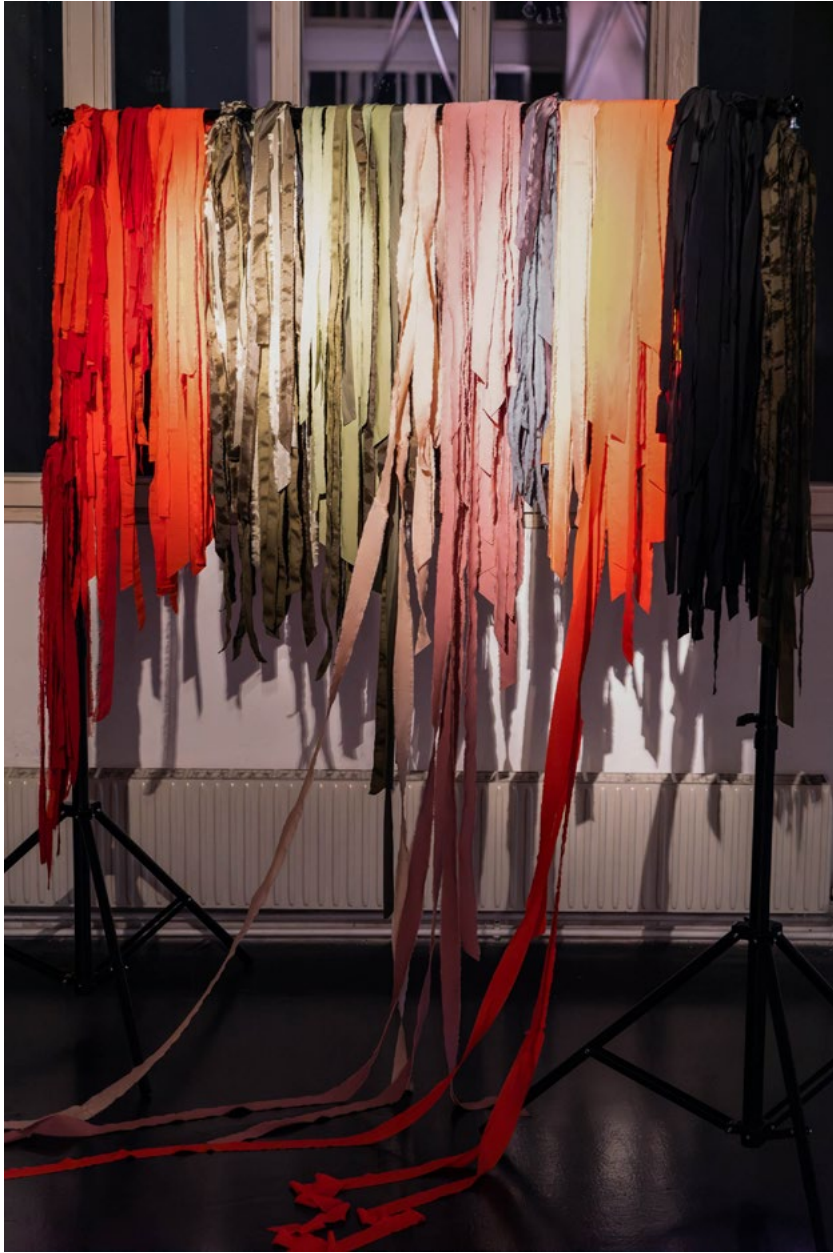
re-BIRDING
Installation view *Der Tanz um die Sorge*, SOHO STUDIOS, Vienna 2023
Photo © Christian Tietge/eSeL

re-BIRDING
Video, 6K, 16:9, colour, sound, 26 min, 2023
video stills

In *re*-BIRDING, I examine ecological and economic connections and effects in connection with the ongoing extinction of species. In doing so, I poetically link human sound production with that of selected endangered or already extinct bird species.
On a cultural level, there has always been a connection of birds and humans, it is only in recent years that scientists and ornithologists have discovered a similarity in voice production of birds and humans.
Birds use the same mechanism to produce their voice as we humans do. Whereas humans produce their sounds in the larynx, most birds produce their sounds in the the avian vocal organ, called Syrinx, after the Greek pan flute, precursor of the flute. In turn, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, small flutes such as the flageolet were used to teach caged birds to sing popular tunes in order to increase their market value.

The film sheds light not only on the past times but also on the current situation of songbirds in Europe. Based on studies conducted by transdisciplinary research projects and bird stations, also taking into account the current status of Red Bird Index lists, representatives of various endangered or already extinct bird species reflect on current society, its ecological and economic structures as well as their view of the environment, and ask how far human treatment of nature affects biodiversity and ultimately us humans again. I reflect on colonial and ecological violence and alternative collective activities of reparation, recovery and restoration in terms of a more sustainable and harmonious relationship with the surroundings, the environment, the land.

Tracing a world without recording systems
The project is an essayistic musical arrangement which can be installed, performed and screened. Digital (re)constructions of bird sounds and bird phenomena, sketches for costumes based on bird depictions, and short film sequences are assembled in a model setting that sketches a temporal, spatial and structural background, enabling contextual orientation. Through the staged reconstruction and narration of extinct bird species, the retrospective view is directed to questionable scenes and actions of the past. Thus, the colonial history of European countries, its principles and structures, its settings and consequences are also questioned. The second part of the film, the narration of contemporary endangered bird species, is staged in a real environment.

The birds' lost sounds, essential tools of communication and territorial manifestation, are (re)constructed or invented anew by the use of artificial, instrumental sound. What might an extinct bird have sounded like? (How) can a song be translated into a contemporary, artificial sound? Varying translations of bird sounds are developed from collected natural sounds (field recordings) and the development of artificial sound material (compositions). In the composition of pieces for voices and instruments, I refer to tradition, records and interviews as well as to poetic-technical translations of archived bird recordings, revisiting musical sources, historical as well as contemporary. All collected and generated sound material is instrumented by voices, recorders, transverse flutes, electronics, synthesizers, etc. Especially the use of transverse flutes, and here specifically the recorder is obvious, since recorder derives from Latin: recordārī — to remember, recall, memorise, repeat, recite, make music, from French: recordeur — someone who retells. Also, birds produce their sounds in the the avian vocal organ, called Syrinx after the Greek pan flute, precursor of the flute.
All sounds are simulations, invented sound objects, poetic approximations of the unrecorded sounds of the past. By reconstructing and reanimating the blank spaces, lost or unknown information of the disappeared, the non-real, the no longer existing is emphasised even more — the sonic act as becoming world (again). Here, the vocal act will not only be reproduction or invention of sounds but also an expression of artistic and collective thinking.

re-BIRDING
Video, 6K, 16:9, colour, sound, 26 min, 2023
video stills

A

Michaela Schwentner
Portfolio

re-PARADISE /

re-BIRDING
Installation

S—15

Colonialism destabilised:

The bird figures are depicted like those in power: monarchs, regents, sovereigns —
in representative paintings. In this way, the connotation, the attribution is overturned:
The bird figures are staged like the representatives — the conquerors, explorers,
robbers, murderers, colonisers, colonialists — but their position is misaligned and
questioned.

The arrangement of the pictures does not follow a stately/representative form; the
prints are either unframed and lean against a loose panel in an open frame, or they are
framed but the picture seems to have slipped, it stands up at the bottom of the frame,
and the picture is not hung but leans against the wall.

So the installation, the arrangement, seems very temporary, as if it were not yet
finished. but it is precisely this unfinished quality that is my working and presentation
principle, which is also intended to show that history, the past, is never something
closed, but always open, also in order to go back into it later and retell it anew, in order
to learn and to do much better today and in the future.

The open installation also shows the fragility of life, of society, of narratives. The
damage caused by colonialism is conveyed by the fragile form of the installation.

The liveliness of organisms, organic forms, networks, weavings, ... is given by flexibility
of forms and formations, which are in mutual interaction and also mutually dependent.
If one element breaks, others also fall.

The factuality of the space: the chosen location, a dance studio and rehearsal room,
a temporarily used space, enables and reinforces the model character of my setting
and at the same time opens up an extended scope for interpretation, in that nothing is
predetermined, ascribed or visible and thus counteracts the horizon of experience.

re-BIRDING
Video, 6K, 16:9, colour, sound, 26 min, 2023
video stills

re-BIRDING
Video, 6K, 16:9, colour, sound, 26 min, 2023
video stills

re-BIRDING
Screening and installation
Sehsaal, Vienna
April 2023

re-WILDING
Screening and intervention
TEDxVerbier, CH
August 2023

COMPOST
COMPOSE

COMPOST

COMPOSE

COMPOSE

COMPOST
COMPOST

COMPOSE

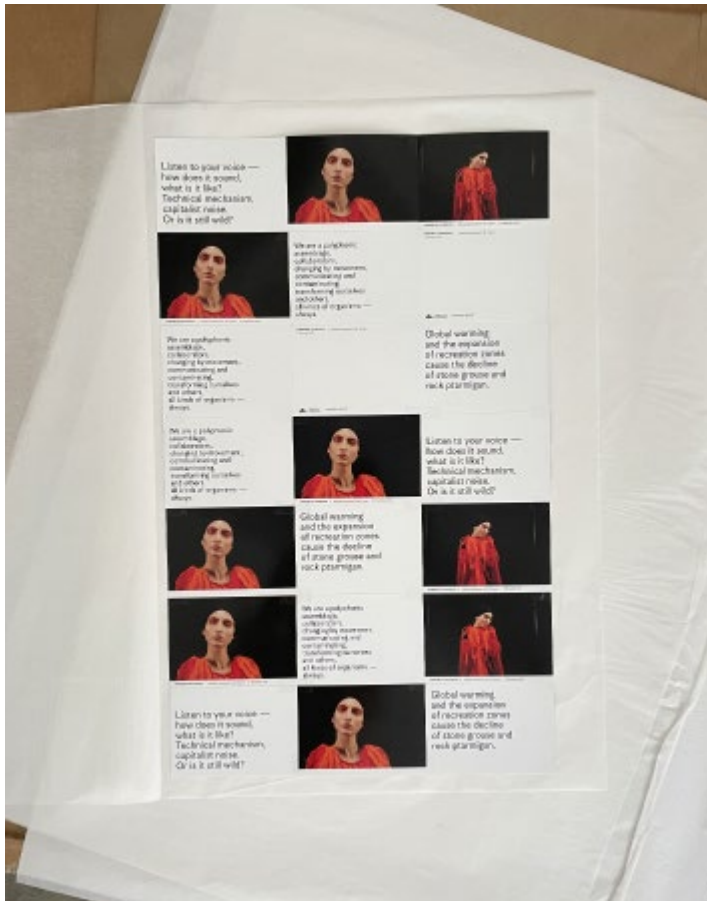*re*-WILDING
Screening and intervention
TEDxVerbier, CH
August 2023

Intensive agriculture
and increasing
conversion
of arable land into
grassland,
of wetland into
greenland
cause an
accelerated
decline of
woodlark,
mountain pipit
and hoopoe.

A

Michaela Schwentner
Portfolio

re-PARADISE /

re-WILDING /
remember your landscape

S—21

re-WILDING /
remember your landscape
Posters for intervention
TEDxVerbier, CH
August 2023

re-WILDING /
remember your landscape
Postcard posters for intervention
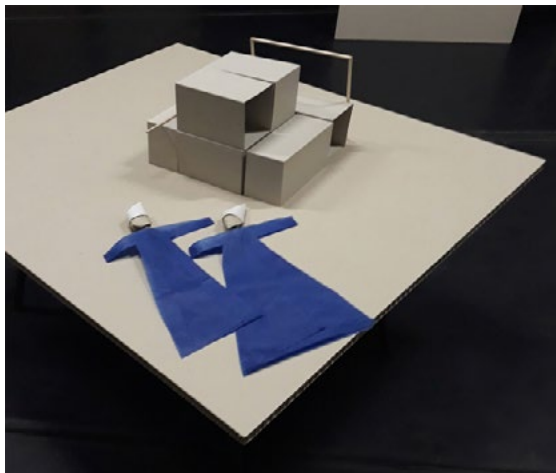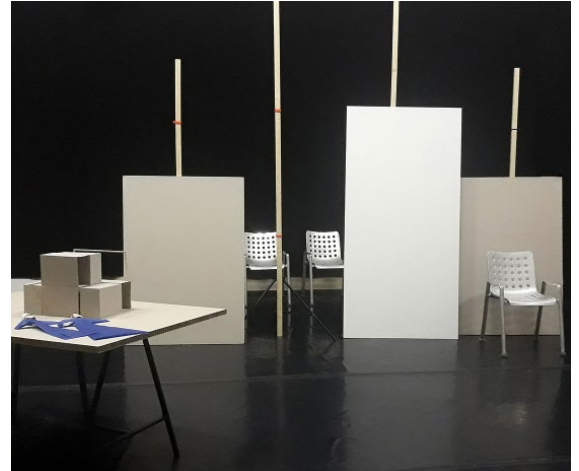TEDxVerbier, CH
August 2023

hob
das
augenlid

über
die
angst

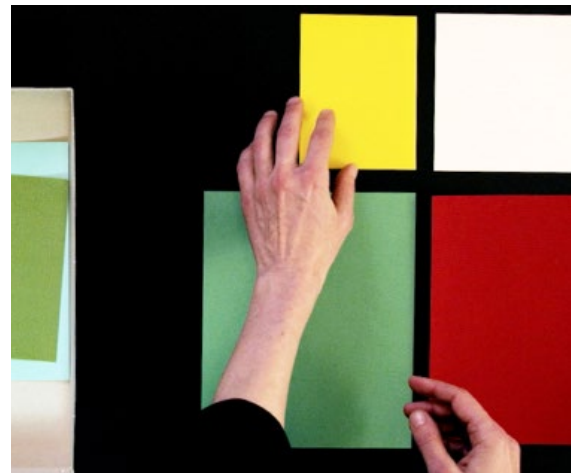Reconstruct, She Said
Installation views, Sehsaal, Vienna
June 2022

Reconstruct, She Said
Installation views, Sehsaal, Vienna
June 2022

Doc-Essay about the Swiss artist and philologist Georgette
Klein and Casa Sciaredo, first private modernist building in
Ticino, designed by her and realised together with her husband
in 1932.

re-GEO / rendering reconstructions of desire
Video, 6K, colour, sound, 33 min, 2020-21

Doc-Essay about the Swiss artist and philologist Georgette
Klein and Casa Sciaredo, first private modernist building in
Ticino, designed by her and realised together with her husband
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re-GEO / rendering reconstructions of desire
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Doc-Essay about the Swiss artist and philologist Georgette
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in 1932.

re-GEO / rendering reconstructions of desire
Video, 6K, colour, sound, 33 min, 2020-21

re-GEO / rendering reconstructions of desire is a poetic approach to Georgette Klein (1893-1963), Swiss Germanist and sculptor from Winterthur, by means of the (re-) construction of her house as a model and her artistic work, including her numerous notes and letters.

The house built by Georgette and her husband Luigi Tentori in 1932 according to Georgette's plans is preserved in its original form and still captivates with its objectivity. The Casa Sciaredo is located above Lake Lugano and is considered the first modernist residential building in Ticino.
After her death in 1963, the house was to become a residence for artists at Georgette's request, but it remained unoccupied until the 1990s. It was only after the Sciaredo Foundation (Swiss Werkbund SWB, Visarte and the Sciaredo Association) was founded in 1996 that the house was restored, first in 1999 by Lukas Meyer and Ira Piattini, and again in 2016 by the Lugano architect Jachen Könz in close collaboration with the cantonal monument preservation office. The Fondazione Sciaredo maintains the house and the surrounding garden and organises the AiR programme.

In my film, I set out on the trail of the loner, artist and (in theory) convinced socialist Georgette Klein, primarily from the aspect of construction and the constructed image.

Who was this woman who was sceptical about marriage, because it could harm her artistic work, who then fell out with her family precisely because of her improper marriage, who was a mediocre but persistent sculptor, whose way of life and thinking was self-confident and modernly oriented, and who nevertheless could not completely free herself from established social structures, who, as a doctor of German studies, not of architecture, tailored a house for herself and made dresses for friends and acquaintances until the 1950s, always realising her conceptual vision of freedom, and who placed this architectural jewel in the landscape of the Swiss Ticino?
Why have neither Georgette Klein nor Casa Sciaredo received greater attention? Because the house was designed and built by a woman? Neither Georgette nor the building are known outside Switzerland.

The film examines the constant intertwining of reality and projection: Georgette's lifelong longing for intellectual dispute, also for Fritz Bodmer, admired fellow student from her student days in Zurich, with whom she maintained a long correspondence, left a gap that only her artistic work and that in the property she designed, including the park and vegetable garden, could fill.

By means of a multi-layered narrative structure of newly assembled material from Georgette's estate, which is now archived at AARDT Lugano and includes records (diaries, letters, notes in books she has read) and documentary material (plans, sketches, photographs), the aim was to create an image of this woman that might give a sense of the ambivalence of her personality.

Georgette's disruption gave birth to a house that was like a skin for her, a shell that protected her — from the world, from herself, from the compulsion to function in the system.
My cinematic works are "frameworks" that enable me to look at and negotiate an idea, a theme, more closely and objectively. Other terms for frame are framework, scaffolding, structure, staging and performance — they all outline very well my approach to cinematic reflection and realisation through fragmentary approximation and poetic image production. Thus, this is not an architectural film, but a fusion of personality, idea and housing.

A   Michaela Schwentner   *re*-STAGING /   *re*-GEO /   S—29
           Portfolio   rendering reconstructions of desire

The film consists of poetic images within an overall image, which corresponds to my approach and the way I deal with questions and narrative forms in a cinematic context. The approach and orientation of my work can be defined by these two thematic fields of re-PARADISE and re-STAGING: re-PARADISE comprises investigations of places and spaces that allow, evoke or reflect desire, longing, ideas, fantasy, hope, dreams, etc.; it is about constructions of hetero-topic places, reconstructions of paradisiacal places and constructs and about the repair of destroyed paradises, formerly untouched places that have been almost or completely irretrievably lost through human intrusion.

In the re-STAGING projects, I investigate and develop forms of retelling existing narratives from the collective memory (which becomes pop-cultural, mimetic, collectively experienced, remembered material) in the form of re-enactments or reconstructions.
As in earlier filmic works, each consisting of a single shot, a single space or a single existing image, the focus in *re-GEO / rendering reconstructions of desire* is also on the reduction of images and at the same time on the visualisation of an idea, a theoretical question, in this case that of construction — the construction of a building, which is negotiated in a reconstruction, like a constructed image, an image within an image. The frame here is not only a figure of thought, a frame, but a literal subject — in the form of the construction in the image, the construction of the idea, the image (of the casa), Georgette's concept of life, her self-perception. The construction is also a re-construction: reconstruction of an idea, of Georgette's reflections on the Casa and the building as a sketched model, also in the sense of a vehicle in approaching the development history of the Casa.

The film contains different narrative strands that are interwoven: the documentary, the poetic, the topical. The history and personality of Georgette Klein are (re-)constructed through different and multiple interweavings of the strands on the visual and sound levels.
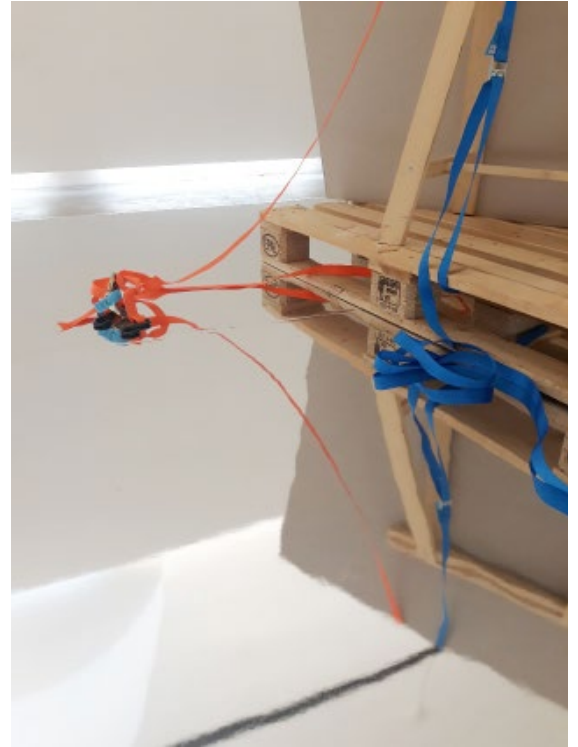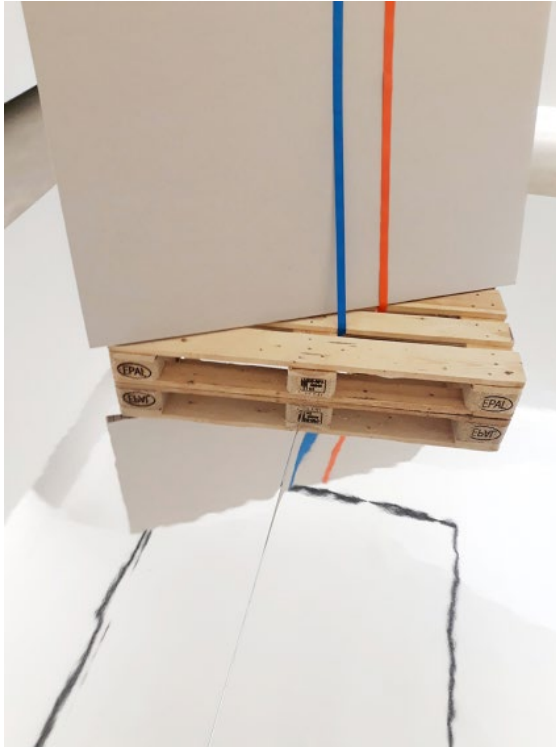
European Standards /
Miranda's disappointment

Installation, mirror foil, wooden pallet, comb cardboard,
orange and blue belt, sound mono 7:36 min, 2020

Europe / EU: construction, projection, framework, idea?
What is the idea of a united Europe today? What does it mean in times of agent's wars,
migration as consequence, overpopulation, growth, neoliberalism, climate change?
What was the promise? Where are we now? What are these so-called European values?
'2015 should not happen again', European politicians claim — what do they mean by that?
The unjustifiably named refugee crisis never ever was a crisis caused by refugees but
rather a crisis caused by cynical morale, democratic failure and unwillingness in terms of
taking action of political systems of the Western world, in particular of the EU.

Miranda of Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* stranded and isolated, is surprised by the sight
of people on the island who turn out to be rescuers in a way — today, there's only little hope
for salvage of people facing a similar fate. European migration politics has failed completely.

In a poetic setting the void and shallowness of this so-called community of (shared) values,
the lack of will of EU-politics are revealed by displaying a makeshift construction of assembled
debris, improperly held together by belts.
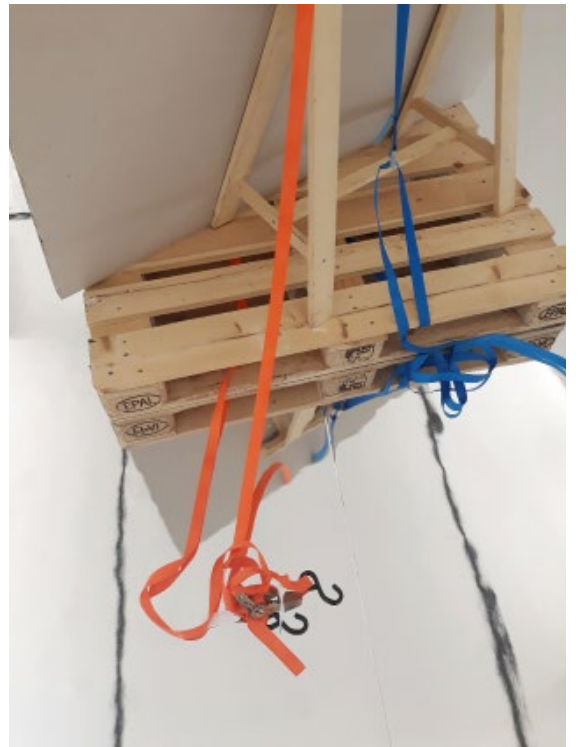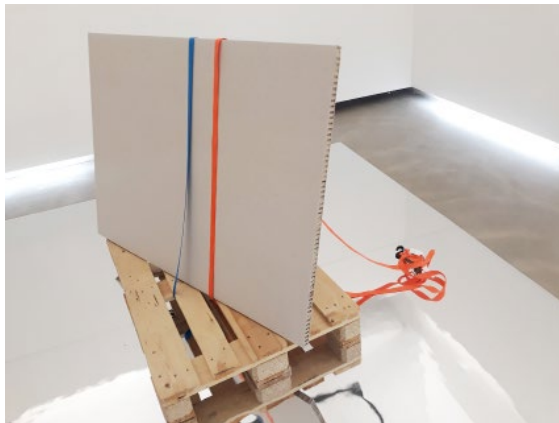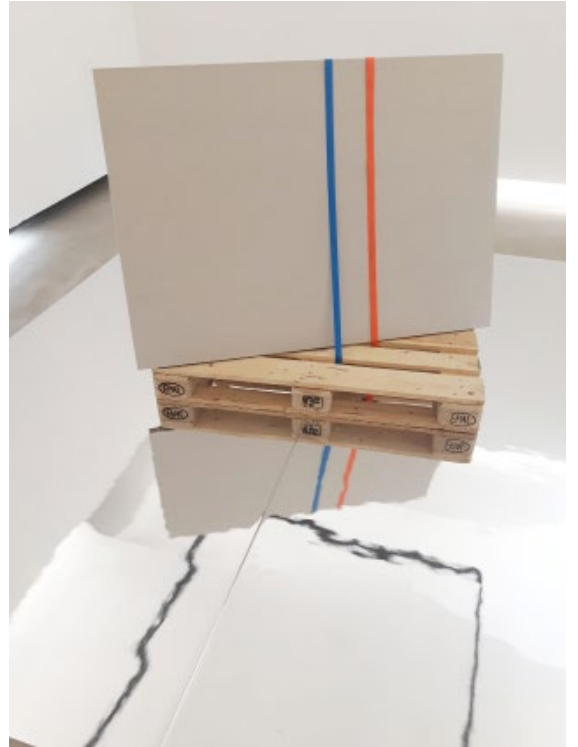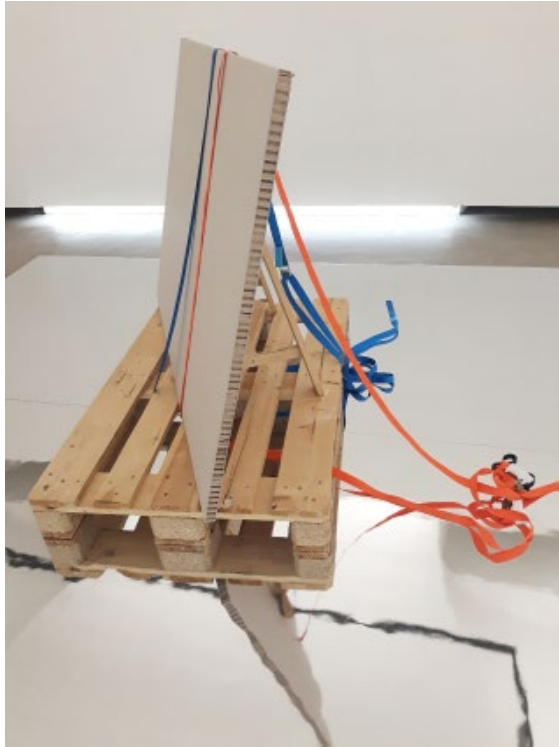
European Standards /
Miranda's disappointment

Installation, mirror foil, wooden pallet, comb cardboard,
orange and blue belt, sound mono 7:36 min, 2020

Chairs or seats are parts of social settings: we always find arrangements of chairs/seats to organise collectives in communication, socially or politically participation, perception, education or administration processes or situations. So, this performance installation assembles a variable, but rather large number of chairs, varying in form and materiality, configured and arranged in different ways, representing any kind of collective like an audience, socio-political forces, the people, society in general.

Two performers re-configure and re-form these chairs in various ways, trying to create an equilibrium. Since these performers have presumably different approaches to the world, a different sense of balance, of security/insecurity, etc, the arrangements would always be different. The dialogue/interaction might be radical, trying, discursive, diplomatic or gentle — the challenge is to achieve an agreeable, convenient state for both performers: If we want to change discomforting states or situations, we ourselves must act.

In the act of re-arranging, re-configuring, re-forming political and social mechanisms and their moving patterns are revealed. Social and political forces form themselves in new and diverse ways.

In the course of the performances various arrangements, choreographic structures and forms of action/reaction, dialogue/monologue are developed. The particular arrangements are always the result of interaction of differently characterised forces.

ASSEMBLY
Performance, installation, video and photographic series, 2020

ASSEMBLY. Film set

ASSEMBLY. Film stills

*re*-FORM *[again!]* Exhibition views Neue Galerie Innsbruck
© Daniel Jarosch

re-FORM *[again!]* Exhibition views Neue Galerie Innsbruck
© Daniel Jarosch

Historical, political, and social mechanisms are subject to a process of constant transformation.
If you look at the details, certain movement patterns in society come to the fore. The perfor-
mative installation *re*-Assembly by Michaela Schwentner investigates how these processes can
be translated in the exhibition space and become tangible. To this end, materials and everyday
objects found on site are employed to (re-)format art spaces over the course of the exhibition
period, interpreting the semantic potentials of the term "assembly" as gathering, accumulation,
and composition.
The main element in this project is the high number of available chairs, which are time and
again repositioned in the space as Michaela Schwentner searches for a balanced state.
In *re*-Assembly the artist's interventions leave traces in the exhibition space, creating both an
expansive installation and a permanently changing sculpture. The assemblages that emerge
in the production process are documented as spatial constructs throughout the various stages
of their development until the tentative end. It remains open, however, whether the camera
is a part of the performance or if it only serves as a documentary medium for the performative
setting.

The choreography and progression of the performance are based on the subject of and the
search for the absent and its affect: the longing for balance, equality, desire, utopia. Historical
and contemporary political and social mechanisms along with their movement patterns and
processes are revealed; social and political powers continuously build up in new and different
ways. The reconfigurations of the spatial and infrastructural conditions of the exhibition space
generated during the performative setting can be retraced on the basis of film sequences.
But the question remains: Will the respective constellations of elements (as metaphors for
all possible powers and mechanisms within society) ever arrive at a final arrangement? (Text:
Kunstraum Lakeside, 2020)
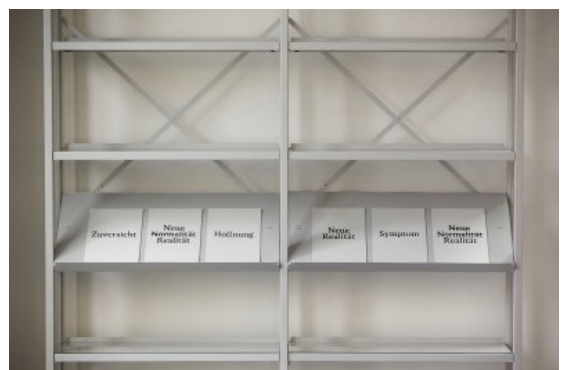
re-Assembly
Performative statement and presentation, installation and video
Statement#09: *re*-Assembly, Kunstraum Lakeside 2020
Installation views @ Johannes Puch

re-Assembly
Performative statement and presentation, installation and video
Statement#09: *re*-Assembly, Kunstraum Lakeside 2020
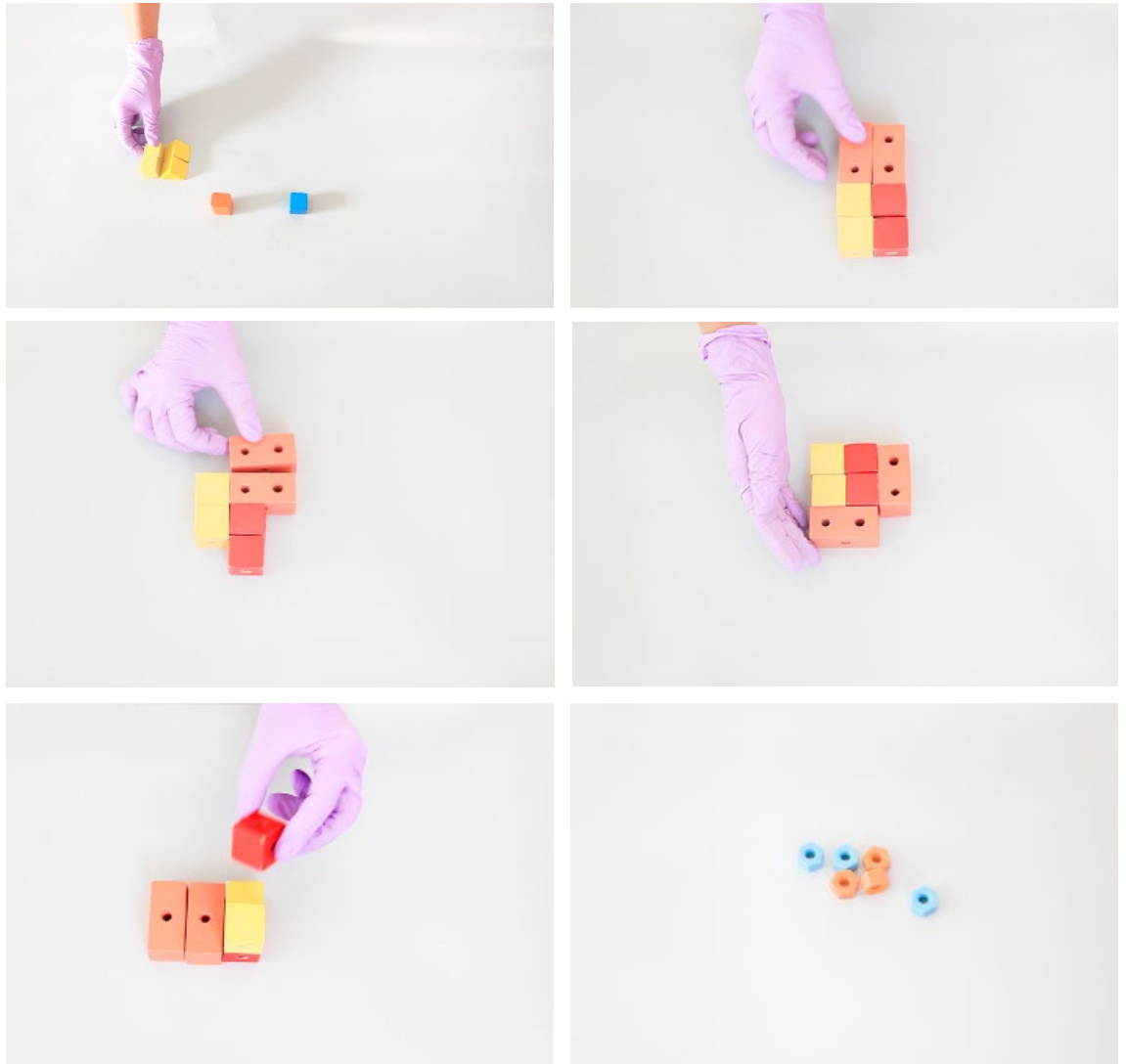video stills, 2020

re-Assembly
Performative statement and presentation, installation and video
Statement#09: *re*-Assembly, Kunstraum Lakeside 2020
Installation view @ Nik Thoenen

ASSEMBLY
Performative Installation
Kunsthalle Exnergasse, 2021
Installationsansicht @ Marisel Bongola

zwischen mir und der welt / aufräumen
Video, HD, colour, sound, 24 min, 2020

Hands in rubber gloves steadily re-arrange building blocks into new patterns.
On the voiceover are testimonials from people on the Autism spectrum.
Profound self-reflections make it impossible to draw the line between normality
and behaviour disorder, inviting a critical rethinking of systemic conditions
and social power structures. (Michelle Koch, Diagonale catalogue, 2020)

The short film also asks questions about the concerns of the diagnosed and their
reliability in terms of Asperger's own rather unquestioned history and involvement
in the Nazis' eugenic policy at the children's clinic Am Spiegelgrund in Vienna in
the 1930s which included selection and killing processes.

zwischen mir und der welt / aufräumen, video still

The playful impression disappears quickly. The wooden blocks are, indeed, luminous and colourful as bonbons, but the hands that constantly rearrange the objects for the camera are in rubber gloves. The incessant piling and arranging, twisting, turning, and moving is reminiscent of a restless search for the "right" constellation.

"But what is normal, anyway?" asks the voice superimposed over this arranging in *zwischen mir und der welt / aufräumen*. In the film, Michaela Schwentner gives people who have been diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum, more specifically, with Asperger syndrome, the chance to speak. They offer profound reflections on what isolates them from the so-called world out there, how their social handicap and the difficulties in communicating with others lead them to experience the disturbance as a prison. The limitations as well as the compulsion are reflected and intensified at the visual level: the organizing of the geometric structures becomes a Sisyphean struggle; it is a symbol of the inability to grasp the structure of a social situation.

zwischen mir und der welt / aufräumen also goes beyond the mere documentary element. When those affected by being stigmatised as "unnatural" or lacking empathy talk about hiding their "difference" and about Hans Asperger's involvement in the eugenics of the Nazis at Spiegelgrund in Vienna, a flash of defiance emerges again and again, which casts doubt on the normalcy of dominant social systems.

Anne Katrin Feßler, sixpackfilm catalogue entry, 2020
Translation: Lisa Rosenblatt
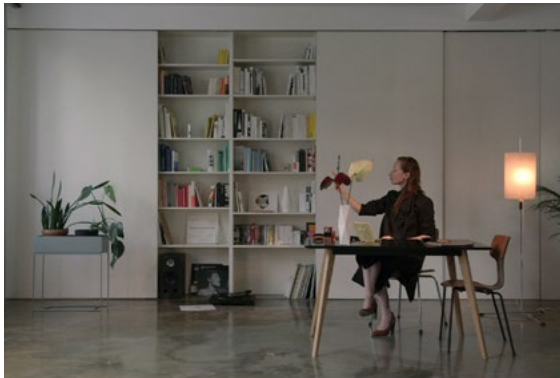
Personne
Video, 5K/HD, colour, sound, 9:40 min, 2016

Personne
Video, 5K/HD, colour, sound, 9:40 min, 2016

"A static long shot of a spacious room, on the table is a woman applying her make-up —
several minutes of self-adulation, which the camera observes from a distant perspective.
The longer the gaze, the more mysterious the shot. An uncanny miniature about gazes and
perception, about the experience of observing and being observed."
(Michelle Koch, *Diagonale* catalogue entry, 2017)

What do we see, when we look? What do we learn, what do we know then? Can we rely
on our perception, since it is just a partial aspect, one perspective of reality? Because in
fact, we always see just fragments (of the world).
The vague and intimate staging creates a surreal, oneiric atmosphere accompanied by a
mysterious effect, which generates a confusing feeling — we are exposed to the act of
observing and thus forced to be voyeurs.

Personne
Video, 5K/HD, colour, sound, 9:40 min, 2016

The film is a kind of "Gestell" — a framework for reflections on the essentials and
mechanics of film as well as on film production itself. In this sense, the make-up scene
reveals the actress's transformation into the film figure.
Thus, it references Eleanor Antin's video performance *Representational Painting* (1971)
in which the act of applying make-up as a traditional mode of self-expression was
explored and staged, amplifying the observational aspect.
Also, connections to Ingmar Bergman and Alfred Hitchcock are at hand when it comes
to the concept of the figure(s): both figure and idea refer to Bergman's *Persona* on
the level of the internal conception, on the level of external conception to Hitchcock's
Rear Window.
The cinematic action that follows a prescribed plot has been shot over the course of
a day in 17 takes. Basically it's impossible to realise exact and congruent repetitions, so
each take within the scope of action is slightly different — even more so by the change
of daylight throughout the day a different atmosphere and light situation was created.
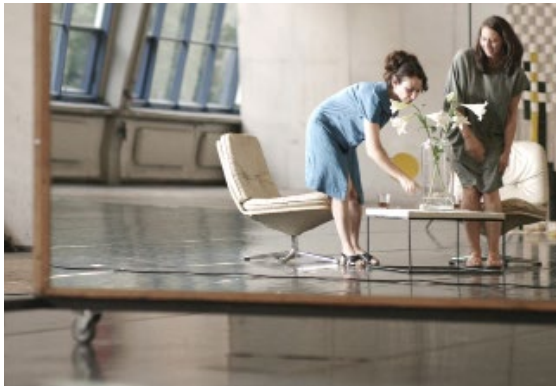
Penelope / In the Scenery / Reflecting / Relations
Video, 4K/HD, colour, sound, 18:45 min, 2015

Penelope / In the Scenery / Reflecting / Relations shows two women sitting in the
scenery of a theatre or in the backdrop of a film set. It is not clear whether these
two figures are acting or waiting for their scene, trying to kill time by telling stories
and reflecting on film-immanent matters.
Are they outside their role, outside the film set, or are they acting in a film which
is about two women playing in a play or a film, waiting for their scene reciting lines
from other films which (seemingly) have nothing to do with the situation they are in?
Are they rehearsing? Some scenes are repeated several times, still it is not a rehear-
sal, but instead a film that uses montage of image and sound to transfer figures from
one context into another or a new one and by that question production processes
and mechanisms and the aesthetic realisation of the film.

A

Michaela Schwentner
Portfolio

re-STAGING /

Penelope / In the Scenery /
Reflecting / Relations

S—47

This plot is on the one hand the story of Penelope, told from a contemporary and emancipated perspective (Ulysses is not at all present, Penelope is no longer waiting), and on the other hand about storytelling, staging and playing itself: Penelope is knotting and interweaving fragments of her personal love stories, while she is also reflecting on film, acting and narration per se by retelling stories and by reenacting several iconic film scenes.
Fragments of narration from different contexts are interlinked and interwoven to assemblages and thus create a new narration-image which follows the principle of the mise en abîme. Also, the form follows this principle and consists of fragmented images and reflections. The reflection on narration itself and on projection has its equivalent on the formal level in the sense of mirroring.

The film can be read as a passionate tribute to film and film-making, as a reflection on film-making, the interest in modernism and its reproductive technicality. It also shows by recontectualising several iconic film scenes that film production is always connected with the time present.

The short film essay *The Contest* is both cinematic reconstruction and staging and
refers to a (pop)cultural moment of 20th century history.
I was interested in the intersection of historic moments and aesthetical practices and
in the examination of our relationship to collective historic and visual experience.
In a sequence of about five minutes *the contest* shows two young female performers
in a gymnastic performance situation. The minimalistic setting of the scene filmed in
 a real but still staged studio unfolds in static shots and shows the performers primarily
in long shots by considering the symmetry of the image.
The performers movements equal real practising movements of figures skaters, still
the reduced image composition lets the choreography appear somehow artificial.

The formal aesthetic approach to the historic event which is grounded in the collective
memory and visual archive on one hand and to the presentation of subjective expe-
rience on the other hand result in a stylised image which is supposed to merge into
a timeless form. It was not my intention though, to dissolve the historic event in the
aesthetic, but to objectify it by reducing all narrative moments.
The negotiated historic event was a spectacular case in the history of US-American
figure skating: during a decider preparation for a championship one of two rivals was
attacked and incapacitated. The other athlete got suspected of initiating the attack and
was subsequently suspended from all further championships.

The Contest
Video, HD, colour, sound, 16 min, 2015
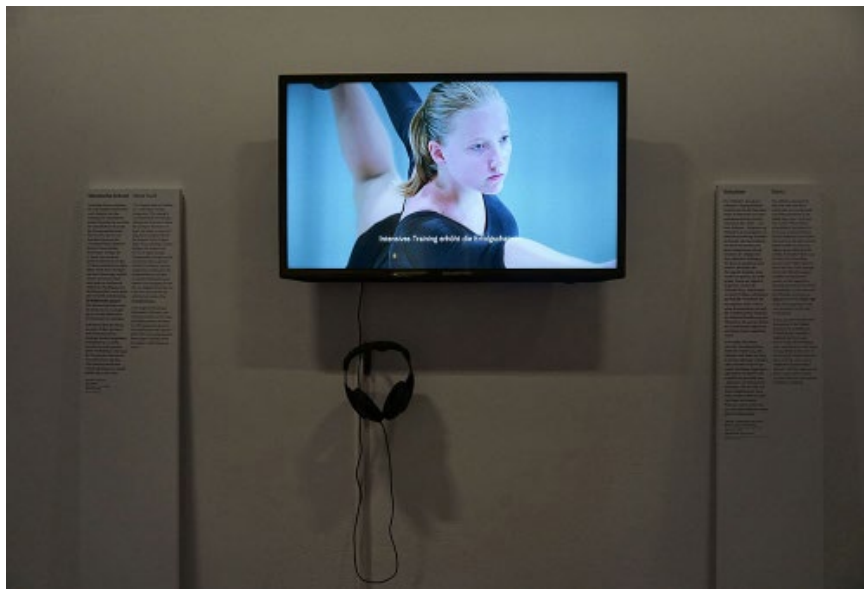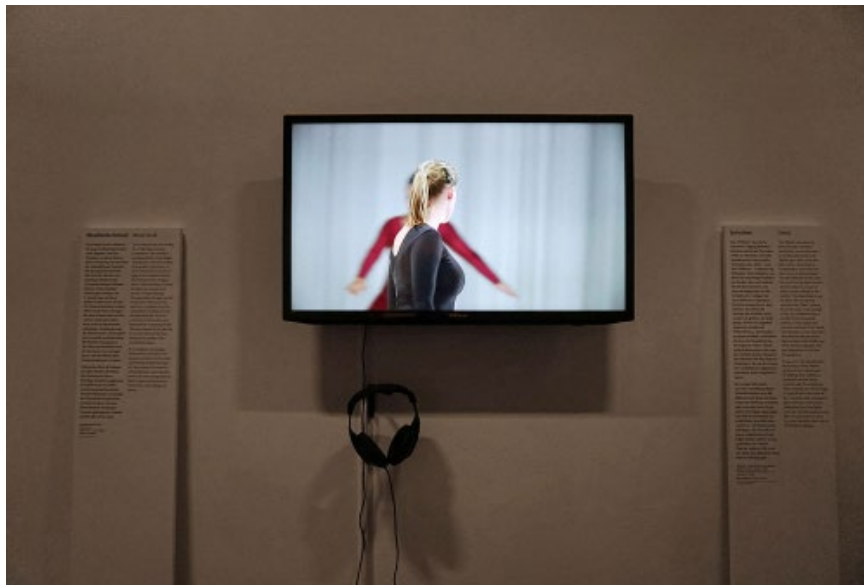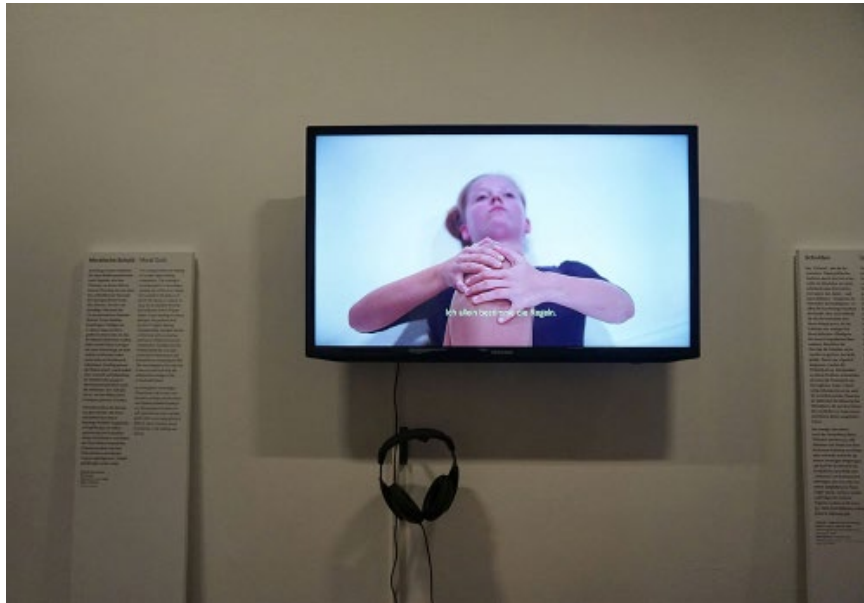
SCHULD Group exhibition
Exhibition views
Jewish Museum Vienna, 2023

Figures. Exhibition view KM— Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien Graz, 2018

Figures (women under influence) was another result of my preoccupation with appropriations of cinematographic action images. I've been examining ways of transmitting narrative content by the use of various media and their formal options and in the question of authorship in the context of moving image production.

The transference of a cinematic image of the key action in films of popcultural history—primarily into a sculptural arrangement and finally into a photographic image—separates action and reduces the image to its essence: the motif around which the film is designed. By transference, the view is directed to the core of the cinematic narration and thus reflection on various ways of presentation can be initiated.

Significant actions of female figures in particular film key scenes are transferred to spatial assemblages made of daily life objects, the movements are portrayed by coloured cuct tapes. The way the tape is applied refers to the main motif of the flm and corresponds with the outfit of the female lead: Camillle (Le mépris, J.-L. Godard, 1963), Myrtle (Opening Night, John Cassavetes, 1974), Catherine (Jules et Jim, François Truffaut, 1962), Martha (Martha, Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1974) and Giuliana (Il deserto rosso, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964).

The depictions of the arrangements don't provide possibilities of identification; the female film figures are not recognisable as such; instead these assemblages are complex images: the film concept, the tension of the plot and of the key scene as well as entire distances and motion sequences the protagonists cover are incorporated, condensed in a way. Thus, the meaning of body is questioned: How much knowledge informs a body, makes it tangible, experiencable, comprehensible, recognisable? A body is not just a physical sensation, a physical appearance, but also storage for all kinds of information (which over time is inscribed in the body). How much knowledge informs a body, makes it tangible, experiencable, comprehensible, recognisable?

Figures: giuliana, martha, myrtle. Fine art paper, 70cm x 110cm

Descending a Staircase / In Shifts
Performance and video installation, 2015
Sketches

A woman is descending stairs wearing a yellow bathrobe — again and again. This action-image refers to a film scene from Le Mépris (J.-L. Godard, 1963). The title of the work refers to Marcel Duchamp's Nu descendant un escalier no.2.

Descending a Staircase / in Shifts was conceived for Festival der Regionen 2015 in Ebensee. Referring to the festival's motto "Change of Shifts" I realised a reenactment based on the short sequence from Le Mépris. The sequence was divided into 3 shifts: 3 performers went down and up the stairs over the course of a day.

The work also consists of several changes of layers on a technical level: on one hand there's the change from one medium to another: the intervention was filmed, the film material was edited and presented as video installation later. The economic layers changed: from analogue physical performance to video and further on to the projection in a subway. Furthermore, the title of the work refers to the change of clothes: The english term "shift" not only means shift in the sense of work, it was also an expression for undergarment in former times. So the performers also changed the layers of clothing: from the bathrobe to the undergarment and back again.

The piece was at the same time performance, reenactment, an intervention in public space, the making of, a video installation and finally: the work of performers (on a film set).
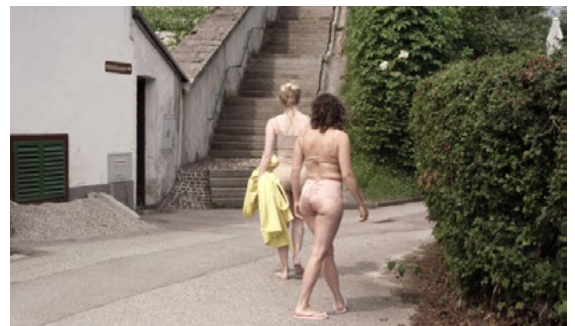
Descending a Staircase / In Shifts
Performance and video installation, 4K/HD, colour, 33 min, 2015

Un divertissement d'amour
Video, 4K/HD, colour, sound, 11 min, 2012

The short film un divertissement d'amour examines on the one hand the phenomen of spatial experience, on the other hand forms of communikation which comprise both language and the gaze. I'm interested in the formal aspect of putting someone into picture: the mise en cadre. After Eisenstein, every frame becomes "accelerated" if by selection of a frame in contrast to a previous or following one a movement of consciousness of the viewer is provoked like the addition of a fragment.
In this context Roman Jakobson was talking of the pars pro toto as basic method of film for the transformation of things into signs. In this work I try the opposite: fragments and details are visible already in the beginning, but get assembled throughout the film and become a new image in the end.
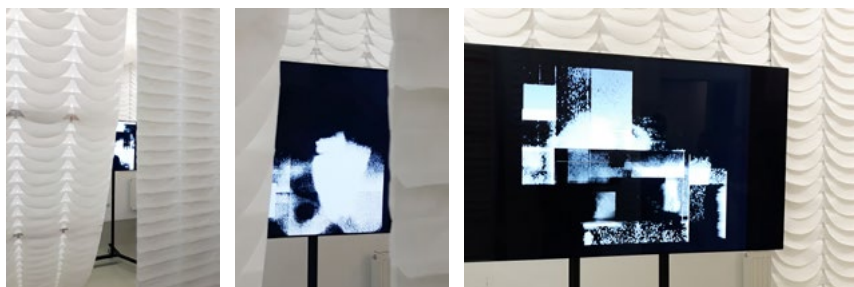The camera scans the space in an unusual way. Fragments and details are not only used on the viusal level, but also on the sound level: subject of this work is a conversation which is created out of recontextualised text fragments. So the visible and the audible are assembled without subduing one of each layers to the other.

Giuliana 64:03
Video, b/w, sound, 3 min, 2003

On a white background, black rectangles fall from the left upper edge of the picture. They amass to form larger surfaces, to then immediately thereafter shrink or shift on top of one another, and from time to time be lifted off each other by thin white lines. Similar to the cinema screen, the rectangular surfaces carry the schematic, digitally processed image of a woman, which is difficult to recognize as such. Instead, its large-pixel outline merges with the abstract forms, which constantly form anew. Like in a puzzle, individual facial details show up in different places; the various parts are continually put together, yet without ever revealing a completed picture. The stark, reduced soundtrack, which stems from Antonioni's *Il deserto rosso*, as does the initial visual material, emphasizes the clarity of the images and opens the gaze to the constantly changing forms. The face reduced to flickering black and white areas takes its place in this strict composition.

At one point, the picture becomes almost completely black from the steady overlapping of different layers. Shortly thereafter, the schematic contours of the face push into the field of vision. In the end it seems to have almost won out over the abstract forms. This impression is supported by the replacement of the noise on the soundtrack with human voices. However, before the music (which begins suddenly), can spread out, and the black and white contours become completely recognizable as the reproduction of a human form, they turn quickly to the side and the picture disappears into the blackness.
(Corinna Reicher)

Giuliana 64:03
Exhibition views Video *Kabuff*
Blickle Raum Vienna, 2019

Masking [ISO 216 DIN A0] negotiates representations of desire, the absent, and forms of imprint of man in natural environments.
What does the vestige of our paths, actions and patterns look like — basically, and in particular in terms of climate change, (socio) political shifts and migration?
The photographic series is a poetic, condensed form of contemporary reflecting on the Anthropocene.
The rectangle is poetically set up in a natural environment. The human being stays in the back, is not in but behind the image and remains unseen. The area usually envisaged for portrait or any kind of depiction, stays empty, blank, it is projection surface.

Masking [ISO 216 DIN A0]
Performance and photo series, 2020
Visualisation of traces of human being by means
of a performative imprint of man: the rectangle —
symbol and symptom of modernity — in nature

A   Michaela Schwentner   *re*-PARADISE /   reconstructing archives by   S—57
           Portfolio   rendering representative
                                                                   complexities into moments
                                                                   of desire

reconstructing archives by rendering representative
complexities into moments of desire N°1, 2014-2016
Pigment print on Fine Art paper, Photo Cotton Rag 295g, 90 x 60 cm

reconstructing archives by rendering representative
complexities into moments of desire N°2 + N°4, 2014-2016
Analogue reproduction on Baryt paper, 50 x 40 cm

A   Michaela Schwentner   *re*-PARADISE /   reconstructing archives by   S—58
Portfolio   rendering representative
complexities into moments
of desire

What is paradise?
A state? A place?
A garden? A greenhouse?
A botanical garden?
A present? Souvenir?
Loot, profit?
Colonised land, uprooted life?

The series is developed from the film *Prospects*. Starting point
were plants in parks and botanical gardens in the Mediterranean
that I depicted. The garden as manifestation of paradise, the
plants as mute witnesses (of historical) political conquest,
colonisation.
The prefix *re-* in the title refers on the one hand to the recon-
struction of an idea, an image, the technical reproduction of the
images, on the other hand an association with the term reparation
is wanted — a reference to Walter Benjamin's *Angel of History*.
Repair is to be understood in a cultural, political or natural sense,
but also as a socio-cultural, gender-geometric concept.

The depicted plants origin from regions colonised and exploited
by mostly Western powers. They found their way to botanical
gardens for educational and research purposes and into private
livingrooms for decorative reasons.
Walter Benjamin wrote that in history only that can be recon-
structed in which presence recognises itself: the botanical
garden as an archive in the search for the contemporary and the
reconstruction of the past in the present time. Conflicts from the
past can't be rectified ex post facto, butour approach to history
can be changed by contemporary reflection which might include
reappropriation and repair.

The digital plant depictions were printed, arranged with indoor
plants in my studio and photographed again. The result are con-
densed images with the intensified substantial relation between
the historical and the contemporary by the use of contemporary
and antiquated technologies and techniques.

re-PARADISE / reconstructing archives by rendering representa-
tive complexities into moments of desire N°6 was 2019 acquired
by Sammlung Wien Museum.

reconstructing archives by rendering
representative complexities into moments
of desire N°6 + N°9, 2014-2016
Analogue reproduction on Baryt paper, 80 x 130 cm

A

Michaela Schwentner
Portfolio

re-PARADISE /

reconstructing archives by
rendering representative
complexities into moments
of desire

S—59

reconstructing archives by rendering
representative complexities into moments
of desire N°6 — N°9, 2016-2018
Analogue reproduction on Baryt paper, 80 x 130 cm
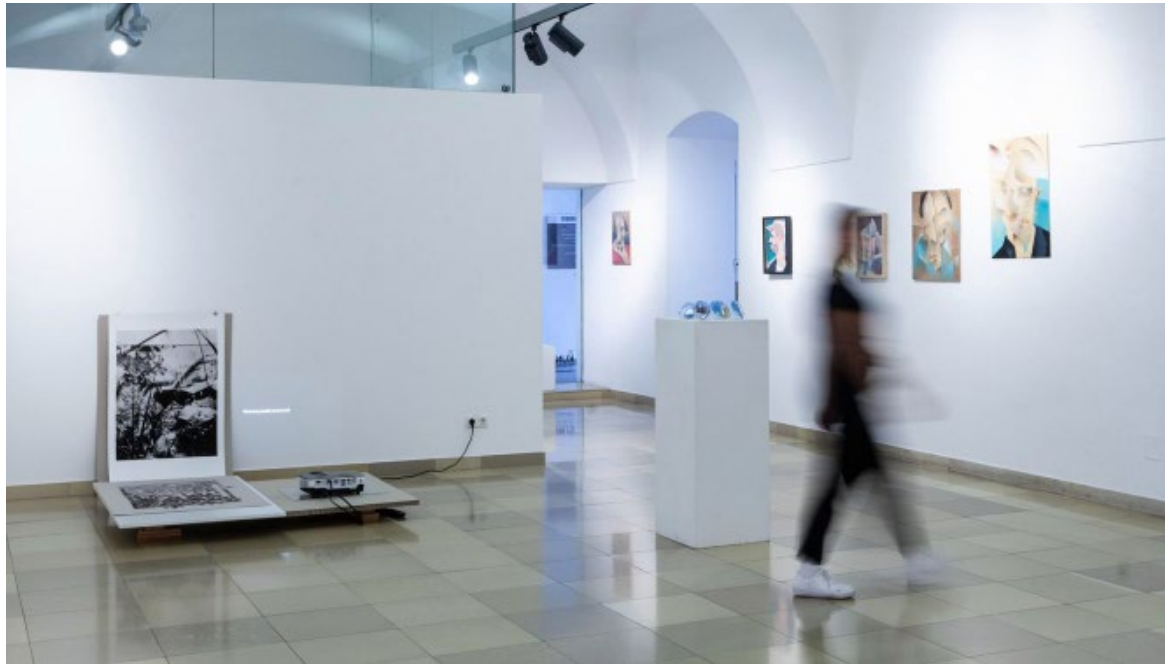
Everlonging, Galerie der Kunstschaffenden, Linz
May/June 2022
Exhibition views © Katharina Acht

30-40 plants of different sizes and proveniences in pots
(palm trees, ficus elastica, marginatas, fejkas, figue trees,
bananas, etc) are arranged in a rectangle under a tent made
of transparent plastic planes to protect them from heavy
rainfalls.

The plants stand close with only little space between them.
So it's not really possible or easy for people to move between
the plants, apart from the aspect of inconvenience there's
also the aspect of respect (risk of damaging the plants) and
restriction (what does it mean to be not allowed to enter
a space, even if it's 'just' plants?). How do plants grow under
new, unknown conditions?

Installation, 30-40 diffent plants in pots,
tent construction with transparent plastic sheets,
2012

A

Michaela Schwentner
Portfolio

re-PARADISE /

Collective works
Michaela Schwentner
Nik Thoenen

S—62

reconstructing archives
by rendering representative complexities
into moments of desire —
Installation version, 2018

In the installation depicted content of botanical archives is
recontextualised. Digital black and white prints in 'archived'
technique, transmission oil, a petroleum distillate, as well as
developing trays

A   Michaela Schwentner   *re*-PARADISE /   Collective works   S—63
Portfolio   Michaela Schwentner
                                                      Nik Thoenen

The site-specific work we realised in the frame of *Dark City* AiR (Krumpendorf, Carinthia) is reduced to a single image which was applied to the outer wall of the ÖGB training centre site which hosted *Dark City*.
The image shows a plant ensemble in the nature reserve of Pörtschach. We transferred the nature landscape to an artificial surrounding.

re-constructing /
re-locating
Intervention + installation, 2018

A

Michaela Schwentner
Portfolio

re-PARADISE /

Collective works
Michaela Schwentner
Nik Thoenen

S—64

re-PARADISE /reconstructing botanical archives by
representative complexities in history into moments of desire
Intervention and installation, 2018

Masking [ISO 216 DIN A0]
Performance and photographic series, 2020