

**kunsthalle
wien**

Prize

2023

**15/4 ———
1/9**

**COME
AS YOU
ARE**

2024

**Željka Aleksić
Mila Balzhieva
Luisa Berghammer
Daniel Fonatti
Valentin Hämmerle
Jusun Lee
Michael Reindel
Anne Schmidt
Marielena Stark
Marc Truckenbrodt**

Installation view: *Come as You Are*. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



Installation view: *Come as You Are*. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





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Foreword

What, How & for Whom / WHW
Artistic Directors
Kunsthalle Wien

Since 2014, the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize* has been awarded annually by a jury of representatives from the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna**, the **University of Applied Arts Vienna**, and **Kunsthalle Wien**. We are delighted to introduce *Come as You Are*: the latest edition of the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize* and third exhibition wherein all the finalists are shown alongside the two main prize winners.

We consider it an institutional priority for **Kunsthalle Wien** to collaborate with local educational institutions to support the thriving practices of recently graduated artists in Vienna. To encapsulate the multifaceted nature of the scene, our artistic directorship chose to forego the traditional format of a prize show, instead organizing a group exhibition in which all the nominated artists are given an equal opportunity to present their work.

We are acutely aware of the liberties and limitations that an invitation to exhibit at **Kunsthalle Wien** carries with it. On the one hand, the institution is an international and easily accessible platform that showcases these practices to new audiences. On the other hand, bureaucratic regulations can greatly hinder the presentation of artworks as the artist(s) originally intended.

In overcoming these challenges, the exhibiting artists have an opportunity to learn while continuing to expand their practices and creative perspectives. The exhibition exemplifies the significant leap from university to the professional art world; a daunting prospect that can nevertheless be overcome with the right amount of curatorial care, patience, and support. The resultant exhibition is a testimony to the curator's enduring efforts to showcase emerging practices in a way that honestly reflects the artists' intentions while introducing their unique points of view to a Viennese audience.

As with any project at **Kunsthalle Wien**, the exhibition required great collaborative effort to organize. As such, we would like to thank all the artists for their patience with the

institution, their determination, and their commitment to participate in the process from start to finish. Further thanks must be extended to Astrid Peterle for her enduring care and pragmatism in curating the exhibition and to Hannah Marynissen for her additional support in this endeavor. We also greatly thank Martina Piber and Danilo Pacher, who enthusiastically ensured the exhibition could be produced in a professional and timely manner. Finally, we would like to thank the entire team at **Kunsthalle Wien**, whose collective hard work ensures we can continue to produce an exciting and relevant artistic program.

Johan F. Hartle
Academy of Fine Arts
Vienna

For the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna**, the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize* is a highly valuable cooperation with the Kunsthalle and the **University of Applied Arts Vienna**. This support for young artists and graduates is one of the most important distinctions for students at the Academy. The prize and exhibition offer the winners—this year, Jusun Lee for the Academy—an opportunity to exhibit together with the other selected graduates from the Academy (Michael Reindel, Anne Schmidt, Marc Truckenbrodt, Željka Aleksić) and those from the Angewandte at one of Vienna's most distinguished institutions for contemporary art, which thereby generates public visibility and impulses for future artistic work.

The theme of this year's exhibition, *Come as You Are*, is the title of a well-known song by Nirvana but also the slogan of an Amazon employee recruitment campaign in Germany ("Komm, wie du bist"). In his diploma project, Michael Reindel focused on the working conditions at Amazon, one of the most controversial global corporations in terms of its social policy. The exhibition title points to a series of art and cultural-political tensions: on the one hand, the license to be as you are suggests a liberation from habitual bourgeois codes (which one might not live up to in some cases) and thus a democratization of cultural work, which, on the other hand, can also entail a banalization with a populist aftertaste. Both aspects share a common ground in their pop cultural reference. This threshold between subculture and commerce—the smooth transition from Nirvana to Amazon—culminates in yet another tension arising from the question of resistance and the commercialization of artistic practices.

The selection of graduates—installation, sculpture, and painting—highlights the diversity of artistic perspectives

cultivated at the Academy. The positions for the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023* encompass a range of discursive references and point to pertinent potentials for the further development of contemporary art. Main prize winner Jusun Lee deals with an intimate space, his own bed, which at once also becomes a fantasy of his own biography. Željka Aleksić and Michael Reindel traverse the abyss between bread-and-butter jobs and the art world, between marketing strategies of international corporations and socio-political realities. In Anne Schmidt's work, the precarity of an artist's life is entwined with the precarity of the material—after all, being allowed to be as you are also implies being able to exist, remain, and survive in this way. Such ideas of continuity and repetition are the pattern of myths, which is explored in the works of Marc Truckenbrodt. You are often not as you are, not for long, or only under certain conditions.

Working with myths of identity is not alien to the educational practice at the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna**. This exhibition opens a window to happenings at the Academy and the impulses emanating from within. We look forward to discovering the interplay between the installations, graphics, performances, and sculptures and their diverse creative approaches in the group exhibition *Come as You Are*. This ensemble of artistic positions gives us good reason to be proud of what our students and graduates continuously put into practice.

Eva Maria Stadler
University of Applied
Arts Vienna

Right at the heart of the city, the heart of Museumsquartier, the heart of the art scene, **Kunsthalle Wien** plays an important role: identifying current trends and tendencies in art and society and bringing them to the eyes of the public are a formidable task and a challenge in the deepest sense of the word, both for the institution and the artists. The *Kunsthalle Wien Prize* offers graduates of the **University of Applied Arts Vienna** and the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna** an opportunity to present their artistic works to a broader audience. This moment of going public is very special: after all, it takes courage to accept this challenge and to engage in a discourse with uncertain, untested ideas, concepts, and artworks. It is also a challenge for the audience, who are called upon to reflect on the questions that the young artists pose in their works. Questions that are not always pleasant, questions that push the limits of what is understood and conceivable, and, above all, questions that shift perspectives.

The end of art studies marks the beginning of a new way of working for artists, a new form of artistic production, and a new mode of communication with institutions and the public. The Angewandte is delighted that in 2023 students were nominated from such different departments—Painting, Stage Design, Sculpture and Space, and Art & Science. The spectrum of artistic media and forms of expression unlocks new perspectives that impact social life in a multitude of ways.

In her installation, Marielena Stark combines painting with fashion, investigating both the autonomy of color, its physical and chemical properties, as well as the potentials of physical movements and gestures. Valentin Hämmerle probes the manifold dimensions of theater between illusion and reality, while exploring the possibilities of sustainable materials in this ephemeral medium. For Luisa Berghammer, who also attended the Stage Design class, the rules of the game and their application form a matrix in which social constellations can be put to the test. Daniel Fonatti deals with matters of space: the Sculpture and Space graduate scales damaged (infra-)structures to reveal their utopian potential. Mila Balzhieva from the department of Art & Science investigates how patterns of thought, pressed into systems of order, take shape within boundaries and open structures by experimenting with the space that plants occupy and that surrounds and confines them.

Creating overlaps between artistic and scientific thinking and work, as expressed in the selection of this year's prize winners, was a mission of Rector Gerald Bast, who steered the course of the Angewandte until 2023. By establishing interdisciplinary degree courses, he paved the way and made an important contribution to a reformed notion of education.

Introduction

Astrid Peterle

Come as You Are—this title is simultaneously an invitation and instruction, an opportunity and restriction, a promise and challenge. The exhibition is conceived as an institutional megaphone for the artists and their individual objectives, which find expression in their works. The title of the exhibition also reflects the polyphony of artistic voices and formats. Artists and audience are invited to contemplate the ambivalence of our present together, for example between the chronic urgency and simultaneous desire for deceleration—or as Nirvana sang it back in 1991: “Take your time, hurry up.”

Curating is a form of care, a practice of respectful, appreciative exchange with artists, but also care for the audience and the themes being conveyed. Entering into a curatorial dialogue with artists at a public institution means to support and enable them to develop their practice within a framework that adheres to specific rules that can sometimes be perceived as constraints. “Come as you are” is our invitation, a warm welcome. It might just as well be “Come almost as you are”—because institutional “welcome culture” is not always seamlessly compatible with the freedom and inviolable integrity of artistic creativity. Not everything is feasible in an institutional context, not everything can be enabled in a public space that functions according to specific regulations and procedures, a necessary bureaucracy, and official requirements. Hence, the task of curatorial care is also to balance wanting to enable and being able to enable.

In a present time brimming with ambivalence, in which tolerance for its existence is often sacrificed for an inclination to divide the world into harsh, binary contrasts—black-and-white painting instead of shades of gray—the legendary song by the even more legendary band from my youth, *Come as You Are* by Nirvana, often crosses my mind. A band shaped by ambivalence, that wanted to be rock but became pop, and that still inspires the generation of the exhibiting artists as much as they did their contemporaries back then.

The ten artists are in a transition phase, between art university and independent activities in the professional art field. For most of them, *Come as You Are* is their first experience exhibiting in a larger institutional environment outside of their educational setting. We invited them to adapt their prize-winning thesis projects or, in turn, encouraged them to consider their works as completed and to develop new ones. We approached them with a curatorial curiosity to learn how the artists desired to express their respective practices in this specific framework and context, to try out new things or continue thinking about existing interests. In many of the exhibited positions, there is a high degree of self-reflexivity, being an artist in a turbulent present, under precarious working conditions generally associated with the decision to become a professional artist. This is where ambivalence resurfaces, between desire and realization, between a consciously chosen lack of alternatives and pragmatism in light of existential necessities. Not accepting this ambivalence but making it the focus of artistic exploration, reflecting on social circumstances and limitations experienced – these intentions can be identified in the work of the artists in this phase of transition.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Željka Aleksić, Mila Balzhieva, Luisa Berghammer, Daniel Fonatti, Valentin Hämmerle, Jusun Lee, Michael Reindel, Anne Schmidt, Marielena Stark, and Marc Truckenbrodt. They generously opened their artistic practice to us with great trust, embarked on a journey, out of the university and into what is often their first experience working together with a larger exhibition venue and all the institutional logics that come with it.

If the institution is to be seen as an amplifier for the artists and their individual objectives, the dialogue must not be limited to the curators. This is why we encouraged them to make use of the many different ways of communicating with the institution, but above all with the public. In close collaboration with our colleagues from the Communications and Education departments, formats have been elaborated in which the artists' voices resonate beyond the general confines of an exhibition. Here my special thanks go to David Avazzadeh, Katharina Baumgartner, Jelena Fischer, Wiebke Schnarr, and Marlene Zlabinger as well as Carola Fuchs, Andrea Hubin, Michaela Lankes, Michael Simku, Daliah Touré, and Martin Walkner for participating in this expansion of the artists' practices. An exhibition in the Kunsthalle is the result

of the combined efforts of many, this is always a credo in our collective work!

I would like to express my gratitude to a few colleagues. What, How & for Whom / WHW – I would like to thank Nataša Ilić, Ivet Ćurlin & Sabina Sabolović, the artistic directors of **Kunsthalle Wien**, for their trust and support and for rethinking the concept of the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize* during their time as artistic directors, from a duo show for the two main prize winners to a group exhibition that offers ten artists the opportunity to exhibit at **Kunsthalle Wien**. My heartfelt thanks goes out to my fabulous assistant curator Hannah Marynissen for always keeping everything on track and being an indispensable curatorial companion. My special thanks also go to the production team Danilo Pacher and Martina Piber for their excellent cooperation. And also to Leonie Huber and Nicole Suzuki for the wonderful publications to accompany the exhibition.

“Memoria, Memoria” sings Kurt Cobain in *Come as You Are* – listening to this refrain, I hope that our exhibition for the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023* will enable a memorable experience for the artists and the public alike. The journey of the exhibition continues with the book you in your hands. Despite the exhibition's fleeting nature, it has now arrived in a physical state of memorability. The journey of the artists has only just begun with this transition phase. May they never lose their curiosity and enthusiasm for the world around them and for unraveling ambivalences! And may we all look to the future with more tolerance for ambivalence!



Željka Aleksić ¹⁶

Mila Balzhieva ²²

Luisa Berghammer ²⁸

Daniel Fonatti ³⁴

Valentin Hämmerle ⁴⁰

Jusun Lee ⁴⁶

Michael Reindel ⁵²

Anne Schmidt ⁵⁸

Marielena Stark ⁶⁴

Marc Truckenbrodt ⁷⁰

Željka Aleksić

Das Kapital, 2023, Publication
Numinous Toy, 2024, various materials

Coming from a working-class background in a non-EU country, Željka Aleksić assembled receipts from the precarious side jobs she undertook while making her diploma work *Das Kapital*—including working in a bakery, as a hairdresser, and as a cleaner. Wryly presenting this extensive record as a book alongside acryl paintings made from her personal archive of photographs, the artist exposes the (often unacknowledged) effort required to financially sustain one's study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. In her new work *Numinous Toy*, Aleksić introduces this confrontational reality to the privileged space of an art institution by drawing on bathroom tiles using her own hair that had fallen out due to stress. Traditionally, hair and the bathroom evoke ideas of women's health, beauty, cleanliness, and care, which Aleksić twists by uncannily presenting them as a visceral installation within the exhibition. Visitors may not want to spend an entire working day in the uninviting space created by Aleksić, even though this is precisely what she had to endure for the privilege of presenting her work to them.

Installation view: Željka Aleksić, *Numinous Toy*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *Numinous Toy*?**

I wanted to recreate an intimate space, an inner feeling that comes from our everyday experiences. At first glance, the sculpture seems withdrawn from touch just because of its plush material, which reminds me of beauty, elegance, and style. That is what I as a woman want to show: natural physical beauty, refinement, and untouchable perfection. The two-meter wall represents the isolation of my own intimate space. While one side shows beauty, on the other side, everyday life is shown through the imitation of a bathroom space and a mirror, where each day I ask myself, "Who am I?"

2. **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

I'm not sure if I can even manage. Although I graduated from the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna** and I should take a more serious approach to the development of my artistic practice, I fail because my existence does not allow me to do so. I am a bakery worker and spend most of my time selling burek. The very fact that I was given the opportunity to be part of the artistic environment in some way—first at the Academy, now at an institution like Kunsthalle—still motivates me and makes me think the stone of Sisyphus I'm pushing has some meaning. I would like to keep believing in the fairytale of earning a living solely from my work as an artist.

* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

Considering that my artistic practice so far has been based on lived experience, I often produce works of art with materials from everyday life. I would like to step out of the shoes of the burek seller and be an artist, get some kind of economic stability, and live in Vienna. For me, that would mean that I have more time for my artistic practice, for research, questioning, learning, and perfecting my work. I think that I would not go beyond the framework on which my artistic practice is based now and that my interests would be similar; that is, my interest in feminism and ways of re-examining the position and role of women in society.

Installation view: Željka Aleksić, *Numinous Toy*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Željka Aleksić, *Blaue Lagune (work day)* 2023, photo: Željka Aleksić



Željka Aleksić, *Das Kapital (Detail)*, 2023
photo: Željka Aleksić

Željka Aleksić

(b. 1989, Knjaževac, Serbia) is currently looking for a way to continue living and working in Vienna. A graduate of the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna**, Aleksić studied under Ashley Hans Scheirl and Despina Stokoe. In 2023, she received an award from the university for her diploma project, which was also shortlisted for the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize*. That same year, Aleksić was a finalist for the Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos competition in Serbia, and at the beginning of 2024 she received a fellowship to the WHW Akademija in Zagreb, Croatia. Her previous exhibitions include *THE AFFAIR* (Subotica Gallery, Serbia, 2023), *DOING THE DIRTY WORK X WIENWOCHE* (Sammelweisklinik, Vienna, Austria, 2021), *Bečka škola—istureno odeljenje* (Homeland Museum, Knjaževac, Serbia, 2021), and a group exhibition at VBKÖ—Austrian Association of Women Artists (Vienna, Austria, 2021).

Aleksić expresses the difficulties faced by women in unsafe working conditions through her practice of painting, sculpture, and performance. In her diploma presentation *Das Kapital* (2017–2023) she examined the economic situation of a student at a prestigious university who comes from a working-class family in a so-called “developing country” (in this case, Serbia). Through visual documentation of the jobs the artist undertook to financially sustain her studies, the work raises the question of the (literal) cost of becoming an artist.

Mila Balzhieva

Roots and Spirits, 2023, hologram

Roots and Spirits – Portal, 2024, text on LED façade display

Roots and Spirits – Shield, 2024, textile

Mila Balzhieva's multidisciplinary artistic practice combines scientific inquiry with her curiosity for the otherworldly. Her installation, *Roots and Spirits*, encourages viewers to reconsider their perspectives on the Anthropocene (and the ways in which humans interact with nature and vice versa). Taking her houseplant as a point of departure, Balzhieva was interested in finding a visual language that translated the possibilities and limitations of interspecies communication. Through her research, she was surprised at the complexity of the houseplant's existence; for example, such as its sometimes erratic behavior despite its inherent desire to thrive. Allowing herself to succumb to the perplexing nature of the organism, Balzhieva used the experience to broaden her way of thinking, choosing to seek inspiration in the inexplicable rather than answers. Balzhieva poetically encapsulates this process in a hologram of the house plant that floats midair: a magical apparition of a solid object that one is incapable of grasping.

Installation view: Mila Balzhieva, *Roots and Spirits*, 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *Roots and Spirits*?**

I felt free when I started to transform my work for the Kunsthalle space. However, adapting it took some time. In my diploma project, I was able to expand on every aspect of my work and dedicate space to each part of it. It is divided into different worlds: Upper, Middle, and Lower—similar to a shamanic experience of the world. In traditional Byruat-Mongolian Shamanism, these three worlds are all inhabited by spirits, and each of them reveals different aspects of life. The Middle World is our material world, the Upper World is a place where we can get a bigger perspective on things, and the Lower World is inhabited by souls awaiting their next rebirth. It holds the wisdom of ages and encompasses everything we have created that separates us. At Kunsthalle, I wanted to play with ways of representing the multidimensional world of my work without losing the meaning of each part.

* **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

Losing the safe environment of the university felt strange at the beginning, but it feels good to take full responsibility for my career and focus on my personal goals. Receiving the prize is an amazing opportunity after graduation. Working with such a big institution like Kunsthalle is a new learning experience—I was impressed by the attention to technical details but it was hard to grasp at first. When I find myself in a

restrictive situation, I try to take it as a challenge to develop my skills and expand my knowledge.

* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

At the moment, I am at a transition point in my life, and I'm trying to take everything step by step. For now, I want to bring my work to a bigger scale and have more freedom to experiment with different materials. I aim to further develop my interdisciplinary approach to my practice and avoid getting stuck at one point. And, of course, I want to sustain myself with my art. I believe I will need more exposure for this...and I guess I will need a bit of luck.

Installation view: Mila Balzhieva, *Roots and Spirits* – *Shield*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Mila Balzhieva

(b. 1991, Buryatia/Eastern Siberia) lives and works in Vienna. Balzhieva completed her degree at Moscow State University of Design and Technology and at the **University of Applied Arts Vienna** in the Art & Science department. She has participated in projects with CERN; Boxels, Biennale Sessions, La Biennale di Venezia; and Vienna Design Week. She received the Startstipendium Bildende Kunst 2023 and is currently participating in the Mentoring Program for Female Artists by the Austrian Ministry of the Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport, organized by the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna**.

As a multidisciplinary artist, researcher, and designer, Balzhieva explores the realms of multispecies conviviality, language, shamanism, and symbiotic relationships through various artistic mediums, including biomedicine, textiles, video, and drawing. Her work delves into questions of identity, representation, the Anthropocene, and magic.

Mila Balzhieva, *In a Language We Don't Understand*, video, 2020 (up left)

Mila Balzhieva, *"Toromiro Shield"*, textile, 2023, photo: Sophie Pölzl (down left)

Mila Balzhieva, *My Garden Has No Soil*, digital graphic, 2022 (right)

Luisa Berghammer

with **Quirin Babl**, **Zorah Berghammer** and **Luíze Nežberte**, *people would call you a faker and it hurt your feelings*, 2024, video: 7'50" (loop), Acting: Arthur Berghammer, Voice: ML Poznanski, Music: Kirils Ēcis, Foley: Nikolaus Gehr, Soundmix: Xaver Dienz, Color Grading: Mikhail Evstratov
non-permanent valorization struggle, 2024, text on LED façade display

Luisa Berghammer uses the institutional platform to address collective working processes; in this case, the complex collaborations involved in making the exhibited film—*people would call you a faker and it hurt your feelings*—and how an artist can best recognize them. The video confronts the viewer with a dizzying list of names as a broader observation by Berghammer, Babl, Berghammer, and Nežberte on hypervisibility versus a lack of recognition, and the position of the artist (and their ego) in this context. Different kinds of labor, such as the intellectual and emotional, are credited equally alongside the physical and technical to question established modes of image production and how a group can best address their positions in this process. This idea becomes particularly provocative when considered within the context of *Come as You Are*, as a prize exhibition founded on the idea that certain graduating artists should be rewarded over others.

Luisa Berghammer with Quirin Babl, Zorah Berghammer and Luíze Nežberte, *people would call you a faker and it hurt your feelings*, 2024, film still,
 photo: Luisa Berghammer



- * **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *people would call you a faker and it hurt your feelings*?**

The diploma project, a video work in the format of closing credits that presented a fictional team, was to be followed by a more collaborative approach. This introduced important perspectives from sculpture, painting, and film next to the work with video and scenography. Our talks in the core team generated content that was not only pertinent to **captain screeching**, it also took on a momentum of its own: in the search for methods to depotentiate the self, we came across the “choking game”—a fainting challenge often practiced by teenagers in schools, for instance. As a formal device, it enabled us to address the structural power of institutions, but also physical experience and the topics of security and (auto)aggression. Of course, there was also disagreements and limitations. As a group, we inevitably represent a “we-ideal,” which must be viewed critically, and the work left many killed darlings in its wake.

- * **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

With every new institution comes a new agenda it pursues. Finding our position in relation to this became crucial in the development process: How can our work counter the agenda of a municipal institution? Our inevitable embeddedness in a multitude of institutional structures and thus also their ideals was something we wanted to take up in

our work. At the same time, it is a public appearance, similar to an “opening sequence,” which offers a new scope and access to many resources. As a stage designer, I am fascinated by platforms and questioning visibility. The opportunity to play with a (temporary) increase in the symbolic value of a work—or, as in our case, with “credits”—was very attractive.

- * **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

Factors such as economic resources and a physical space where you can think and work are just as important to me as a discursive and supportive environment. But most of all, I would like to strengthen my dialogue with perspectives outside the cultural apparatus and its conventional discourse. On the whole, I hope for more vulgarity and formal eclecticism—in my own practice, too.

Installation view: Luisa Berghammer with Quirin Babi, Zorah Berghammer and Luize Nežberte, *people would call you a faker and it hurt your feelings*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Luisa Berghammer, **captain screeching** (filmstill), 2023, single channel video work, 7'05" min (loop)

Quirin Babi, Arthur Berghammer, Luisa Berghammer, Zorah Berghammer and Juan Vera, *Casting* (filmstill), 2020, single channel video work, 2'46"



Luisa Berghammer

(b. 1997, Klosterneuburg) lives and works in Vienna. Parallel to her diploma degree in Stage Design at the **University of Applied Arts Vienna** in 2023, Luisa Berghammer is studying fine arts in the Department of Sculpture and Space. She has written texts for exhibitions by colleagues (*sidequest*, Vienna, 2023; *The house is smoky and I quit it*, Vienna, 2024) and presented a stage in the Volkstheater Dunkelkammer (Vienna, 2022). Her works have been shown at Oststation (Vienna, 2021), Parallel Vienna (Vienna, 2022), and Kunstverein Zink (Vienna, 2023). In 2024, her work will be featured in a group exhibition at Neuer Kunstverein Wien.

In her diploma thesis **captain screeching**, Berghammer focused on the interfaces between performativity, scenography, and media art. Close-ups of stage materials are intrinsic to her practice and convey a sculptural perspective of theater; in this approach, she seeks to correlate aspects of the simulated with materiality. Recurring motifs in her work are refusal strategies and staged autonomy – of the individual and the artwork alike. She works alone and in collaborations.

Daniel Fonatti

Anchored in common ground, 2024, wood panel, aluminum cast
The ground was there to meet the feet (read) (red), 2024, text on LED façade display

Remnants and ruins fascinate Daniel Fonatti. Scattered like ghosts within the cityscape, these structures remain in limbo; their states of abandon evoke promises from the past that can no longer be remembered. While his diploma installation poetically explored the skeleton of a disused slide in Sicily, the artist turns his attention toward a local waterslide for his new work, *Anchored in common ground*. Casting the slides in polished aluminum, Fonatti considers these constructions with a newfound romanticism. Combined with a recycled wooden panel bearing traces of its previous use, the artist sensitively draws our attention to the temporality of capitalism and how it shapes the city as a site of constant negotiation. Exhibited in the second structure to be built on Karlsplatz, Vienna—replacing an initial building of Kunsthalle Wien that opened in 1992 and was demolished ten years later—Fonatti's installation blocks the outside cityscape, a haunting reminder of the ways in which cities previously have and will continue to change, perpetually oscillating between states of *no longer* and *not yet*.

Installation view: Daniel Fonatti, *Anchored in common ground*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *Anchored in common ground*?**

Much like others. You typically start with nothing, then the stress kicks in, you throw yourself into it, leave no stone unturned, and somewhere along the line you have a project. Perhaps all the information needed earlier on for planning required a certain leap of faith: speculating into the future about what the work will be, without it actually being there. But in the end, that's what you get. Many topics tend to already be in the air; often you just need an occasion to realize them.

* **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

For me, not standing still after graduation is a great help. It doesn't have to be exhibition opportunities necessarily, rather an ongoing search for settings I can dedicate myself to. Having an occasion also gives you motivation. In this case, it is of course fantastic to be recognized by such an institution. It helps you to formulate your work more self-confidently. But it also challenges you to position yourself in the institutional context and learn to adopt certain productive standpoints.

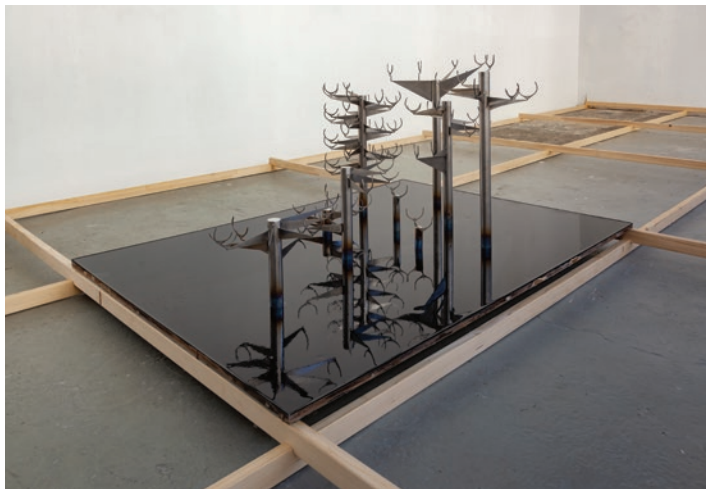
* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

In the future, I hope to be involved in settings where I can work on themes and projects together with others on a

regular basis. Naturally, this could be an institution, but collective projects or exhibitions that serve as a platform for exchange have priority. Sometimes, it is difficult to draw new hope from your own work. But as soon as I speak to others, I realize that we are often asking ourselves similar questions. Finding answers in a collective, which does not exclude your own artistic position, is just as important as the opportunity to realize works in studios or workshops—although that's always a challenge, too.

Installation view: Daniel Fonatti, *Anchored in common ground*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Daniel Fonatti, *The ground was there to meet the feet*, graduation show, 2023
photos: Jennifer Gelardo



Daniel Fonatti

(b. 1994, Vienna) lives and works in Vienna. He graduated from the **University of Applied Arts Vienna** in 2023 with the diploma project *The ground was there to meet the feet*, which was nominated for the *Kunsthalles Wien Prize*. Most recently, he realized the solo shows *Ghosttown* (Pfeiler, 2023) and *Rimini (offseason)* (Verein Fortuna, 2023). Alongside his independent practice, Fonatti is a member of Conte Potuto, a Viennese artists' collective founded in 2016: collective processes coalesce the diverse working methods of its members into transmedial walk-in stories.

Fonatti's works fluctuate between spatial interventions and objects. His sculptural ideas are inspired by fleeting social and material phenomena in the city as a site of sensations and conflicts. They manifest in the form of narratives and fictions, but also in ephemeral constellations between places and objects. The point of departure is often the movement of objects from one environment to another. In transit, their previous meaning fades and gives way for other narratives to circulate.

Valentin Hämmerle

to iron a curtain, 2024, various materials

Valentin Hämmerle's site-specific diploma installation *LIGHT YELLOW GAZE 9201-104* *** demonstrated his acute awareness of the principles of stage design and evident pleasure in their transgression, while opening his practice toward multiple artistic media. Critically reflecting on the basic tenets of his discipline, he turns to other formats and languages, such as those of sculpture and painting, but without losing his sense of space in relation to bodies in motion. In his installation *to iron a curtain*, Hämmerle cites the materiality of his graduation project: pressed polylactic acid panels create a surface that simultaneously conceals and reveals. The foundations of stage design intertwine with the principles of painting and allude to the ambivalences that also underpin the curatorial framework of the exhibition.

Installation view: Valentin Hämmerle, *to iron a curtain*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *to iron a curtain*?**

I haven't done anything like this before, so I see the process behind my work as a premiere. It began with an existing work that was conceived in a very clear context and presented as a site-specific diploma project. The idea of taking such a specific body apart again and then reassemble it in a different setting took some getting used to for me at the beginning. I refer to my diploma project as a body because I see it as a self-contained, distinct entity. As I moved to France at the end of last year, balancing the adaptation and new version of my work from a distance proved to be the greatest challenge.

* **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

I never had the feeling of being constrained. On the contrary, even though a large part of the infrastructure is gone, leaving the university was an emancipatory step for me. The current transition phase legitimizes my work method in new directions, which I feel comfortable with.

* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

Time is becoming an increasingly important resource in my practice. I believe certain processes should be given their time to unfold and to resist an apparent sense of urgency. Slowly, without being paralyzed. I often switch

between commercial and freelance projects—the boundaries are quite fluid when it comes to speed and frequency. Time also needs to be granted space—currently, I don't have a permanent studio, which hampers my aspirations for long-term work processes. Finding a space to claim it will be my next step.

Installation view: Valentin Hämmerle, *to iron a curtain*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Valentin Hämmerle, *fall of the folds*, 2024 photo: Valentin Hämmerle



Valentin Hämmerle

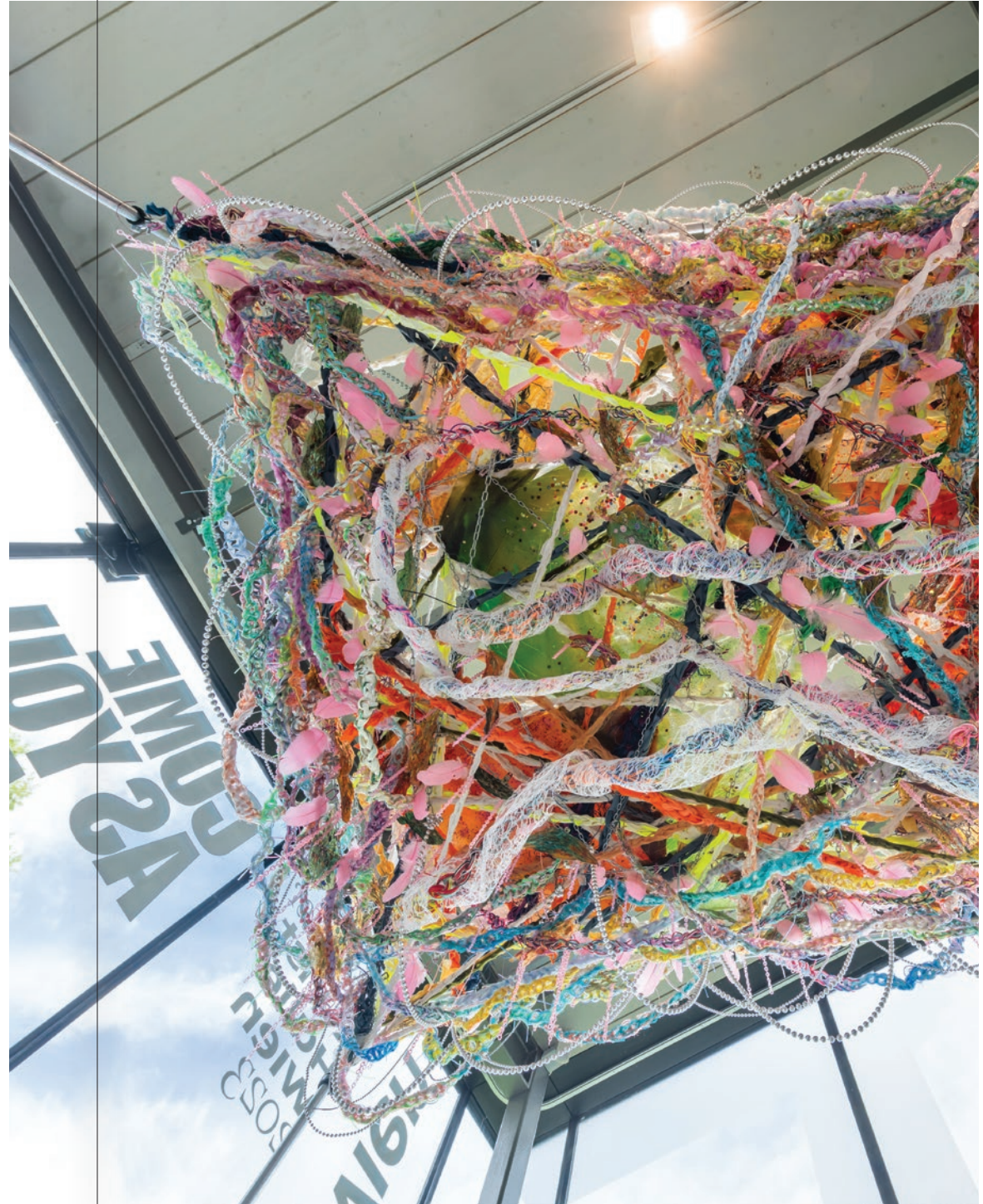
(b. 1995, Bregenz) lives and works in Paris. He studied Stage and Film Design with Bernhard Kleber at the **University of Applied Arts Vienna**. In his practice, Hämmerle balances commercial commissions for the creative industry (for example, Mario Sorrenti), work for the film and music sectors (including Alice Rohrwacher, Bilderbuch, Wanda, Mavi Phoenix), and freelance projects in performing and visual arts. Building upon his studies in stage design, he now increasingly embraces a cross-media approach. His works have been shown at the Diagonale Graz, Karlovy Vary, Kunsthalle FRO, WERKSTATT Oberzeiring, FAQ Bregenzerwald, and Wien Modern, among others.

Jusun Lee

Dreamtime, 2024, various materials

Born in South Korea and raised in a conservative family, Jusun Lee felt stifled in the exploration of his own identity. Feeling socially alienated and desiring comfort, he would seek refuge under the blanket of his bed—safe but hidden. For his diploma, Lee created a work that embodies his transition from a shy individual to someone empowered by his own artistic expression. His immersive diploma installation *Safe Zone*, which won him one of the two main prizes in the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023*, offered visitors a comforting space to reflect upon the uncomfortable topics of social isolation and rejection. In *Come as You Are*, the artist nostalgically revisits the site of his bed with a newfound confidence. Physically inaccessible, the bed floats like a faint memory, something Lee can no longer grasp but which nevertheless encapsulates his past anxieties and his salvation from them. Color and texture emanate vibrantly from the frame, expressing an individuality that can no longer be contained in the safe (but suffocating) environment of his childhood bed.

Installation view: Jusun Lee, *Dreamtime*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *Dreamtime*?**

It was a journey marked by self-reflection, drawing from personal experiences of identity and societal estrangement. The artwork merges my past memories and unattainable fantasies within an incomplete bed, symbolizing the convergence of reminiscences and future aspirations. Navigating a delicate balance between individual narrative and universal resonance, this installation initiates an introspective quest, shifting between the realms of reality and dreams. The installation method underscores these concepts, directing viewers to delve into their inner depths to explore the past, the future, reality, and imagination.

* **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like *Kunsthalle Wien* can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

Transitioning from art school to the professional art field entails navigating the complexities inherent to institutions like **Kunsthalle Wien**. While they offer platforms for exposure and validation, they also impose constraints on artistic expression. To negotiate these ambivalences, I embrace the enabling aspects while challenging restrictive norms. By staying true to my artistic vision and engaging in critical dialogue, I carve out my own position within these institutions, seeking spaces where creative freedom and innovation flourish while advocating for inclusivity and diversity in artistic discourse.

* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

Moving forward, I aspire to deepen and expand my artistic practice and delve into new realms of expression and engagement. To achieve this, I will seek resources that foster experimentation, collaboration, and reflection. Access to studio space equipped with diverse materials and tools is essential for artistic exploration and creation. Additionally, opportunities for mentorship, residencies, and interdisciplinary exchange would enrich my practice, providing avenues for growth and dialogue. Ultimately, I envision a practice that continues to evolve, resonating with audiences on emotional and societal levels while pushing the boundaries of artistic possibility.

Installation view: Jusun Lee, *Dreamtime*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Jusun Lee

(b. 1992, South Korea) lives in Berlin and Seoul. Lee graduated from the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna** in 2023, where he studied in the department Art and Space | Installation with Nora Schultz. He is currently studying performance and installation with Jimmy Robert at the Berlin University of the Arts. Lee participated in the group exhibition *Teach Nature* (KunstHausWien, Austria, 2022), and his most recent exhibitions are *Sideshadowing* (ks-Room, Kornberg, Austria, 2023) and *PATCHWORK*, curated by the Young Curators Club (lautlos.haus, Vienna, Austria, 2023).

Lee materializes a narrative of self-discovery and communal resonance in installations he crafts from latex and metal. His works—born from a nuanced understanding of his own identity during periods of social alienation—surpass personal anecdotes to become conduits of collective communication. Through his art, Lee invites viewers to navigate the intricacies of human emotion, where understanding thrives beyond verbal articulation. With a great sensitivity towards material and form, the artist invites individuals to find solace and solidarity in shared experiences, fostering a cycle of empathy that transcends boundaries.



Jusun Lee, *Safe zone*, 2023 photo: Pyo E

Michael Reindel

*inventory performance index**, 2024, various materials and fragments of sculptures
Untitled, 2024, various fragments of sculptures

In Germany, Amazon recently advertised for new employees under the slogan “Komm wie Du bist” (Come as you are). Connected by an autobahn axis, the global organizational logic of the company with its NUE1 Fulfillment Center in Bavaria bears a direct relation to the biography of Michael Reindel and his sculptures. His installation in the exhibition echoes the original temporary architecture of Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz, which the public ironically referred to as the “IKEA box” in its time. To this end, Reindel dismantled some of his sculptures from recent years. A stuffed toy animal occupies a green arm, which in another work connected a model of his parents’ house to a pedestal. His seemingly arbitrary arrangement of artworks and goods prompts questions about value and worth as well as possible reuse. Is the clamp biting into the steel girder of the exhibition space an antenna or the symbolic distance between his family home and the NUE1 Fulfillment Center?

Installation view: Michael Reindel, *Untitled*, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, Foto: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *inventory performance index** and *Untitled*?**

Investments in infrastructural projects by platform-based companies are usually built on very accurate calculations of the present and a potential future. A wide array of data sets about the financial market, income structure, risk of environmental disasters, or consumer behavior are correlated in autonomous, algorithmic processes. These mathematical results manifest both in the growth of private enterprises and an extrapolated inscription of built infrastructures into the Earth. "Our network is your network"—you produce and sell the goods, we handle the storage and shipping via our Fulfillment Center. The calculation of your "IPI score" indicates how efficiently and productively you as a sales partner manage your goods in our warehouse.

* **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like *Kunsthalle Wien* can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

How can I help you today?

...

Certainly! Here's a response that an artist whose work revolves around critical theory concerning infrastructure and platform capitalism might give: "In my biography, you'll notice the intentional juxtapositions, this geographical and socio-economic interplay becomes a canvas for my exploration of infrastructure's impact on our lives. My sculptures, in a perpetual state of

disassembly and reassembly, mirror the transience and instability inherent in the infrastructural systems I critique. Collaborating with my mother, packing sculptures in Amazon totes, and immersing myself in the logistics center are not just performative acts but immersive experiences aimed at bridging the gap between theory and lived reality. In essence, navigating the ambivalences of institutions like **Kunsthalle Wien** involves a constant negotiation between embracing the exposure they provide and critically engaging with their structures. It's about finding spaces within these institutions where my work can disrupt, question, and contribute to a broader dialogue.

* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

Unfortunately, 32 characters are not enough resources for an answer.

Installation view: Michael Reindel, *inventory performance index**, 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Michael Reindel, *ISO* is derived from the Greek "isos", meaning equal. Whatever the country, whatever the language, we are always ISO. *ISO Today.*, photo: Michael Reindel



Michael Reindel, *Tschüss Opa*, 2023
photo: Vik Bayer



Michael Reindel, *Tote V820 (with a fragment from NATURA2000, personal objects from grandparents and materials from 1955–2023)*, 2023, photo: Michael Reindel

Michael Reindel

(b. 1993, Hof, Germany) spent his childhood between the Bavarian Vogtland highway junction and a decommissioned gravel quarry that is part of the European "Natura2000" network. In his practice, he localizes abstract and hard-to-grasp academic discourses about global value creation, ecology, and economic supply chains in the immediate surroundings and infrastructural realities of his childhood home. In this edifice, he repeatedly dismantles, transforms, and reassembles existing sculptures. Together with his mother, he packs sculptures into Amazon transport boxes, he performs in their logistics center, and tests in alternating collaborative teams materialities and strategies for a post-carbon society.

Anne Schmidt

Strahlte, Geschöpf, Champagner, zottig, Klumpen [Radiated, creature, champagne, shaggy, lump], 2023, various materials, publication

Anne Schmidt's multifaceted oeuvre culminates in her diploma exhibition *Strahlte, Geschöpf, Champagner, zottig, Klumpen* [Radiated, creature, champagne, shaggy, lump]: giant ice cream cone sculptures, a chainsawed "procrastination pig," the autofictional novel *Me after two anal orgasms*, and tennis balls are among the protagonists, along with the artist herself. Schmidt's activist and cultural studies background resonates in her precise, energetic analysis of normative images of desire in capitalist consumer society and her artistic explorations of institutional logic. For *Come As You Are*, she transfers elements of her diploma into the Karlsplatz exhibition space with all its regularities and regulations. The questions posed about the precarity and ostrichism of artistic work, about escapism and the unstable identity of artistic existence, attain a profound urgency and a due sense of inevitability.

Installation view: Anne Schmidt, *Strahlte, Geschöpf, Champagner, zottig, Klumpen* [Radiated, creature, champagne, shaggy, lump], 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



- * **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *Strahlte, Geschöpf, Champagner, zottig, Klumpen* [Radiated, creature, champagne, shaggy, lump]?**

At first, I thought I would make a new work. After realizing that a group exhibition with ten people is not enough space for a retrospective show of all my student work, I decided to show my diploma. That was the right decision because when you work with an institution, it's good to have an overview of everything months in advance. I really like this kind of anticipatory approach. It gives the work a certain stability and nonchalance.

- * **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

As I'm here presenting existing work rather casually, I really look forward to making unknown things in no-name spaces just for fun once again. But I've also set up a new spreadsheet template, which I have used to define work lists with insurance values and durations for other exhibitions—thanks to the production department for this!

- * **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

Above all, I'd like to move around more, and for that I need friendships and independence.

Installation view: Anne Schmidt, *Strahlte, Geschöpf, Champagner, zottig, Klumpen* [Radiated, creature, champagne, shaggy, lump], 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Anne Schmidt,
*Strahlte, Geschöpf,
Champagner, zottig,
Klumpen*, 2023,
photo: Anne Schmidt
(left)

Anne Schmidt,
*Me after two anal
orgasms*, publication,
Edition 502, Berlin,
2023, photo: Anne
Schmidt (right)

Anne Schmidt,
Prokrastinierschwein,
2023, photo: Anne
Schmidt



Anne Schmidt

(b. 1990, Brandenburg, Germany) lives and works in Vienna. Schmidt is a multimedia artist and author of autofiction. At the age of fifteen, she worked as a sour-cherry harvester and in a cheese-products factory in order to finance her prom dress and her living expenses. Later, she completed a few degrees at prestigious institutions, including sociology, criminology, art, and art criticism. She has participated in exhibitions with international reach, publishes, and would like to attach herself to the street for hours using superglue to stop traffic and create a quieter city for pedestrians. So far, she has worked thirty-two jobs to finance her interest in the world. Her next essayistic film will be an autobiographical, nonfictional, feminist criminology on sexual, patriarchal violence.

Marielena Stark

Afterlifestyle, 2023, various materials

In Marielena Stark's installation, painting, pop-cultural elements, and ethereal silk formations are set in a constellation: basketball hoops with a choreography of ghosts. The spectral quality refers to the solidarity of a community as a positive aspect but also to revenge as a motif that ghosts are often associated with. The installation is a variation of the diploma project *Afterlifestyle*, which won Stark one of the two main prizes in the *Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023*, and is inspired by her ambivalent fascination with transcendent painting—a kind of “aesthetic visitation”—and her longstanding interest in fashion. The dyeing technique with indigo, urine, and walnuts used on the fabrics echoes in the text sections on the posters. As meditations and manifestations, the poster texts generate a connection to the basketballs and spiritual sides of sport. Incidentally, Chat GPT falters with the meaning of the non-existent term “afterlifestyle,” but human viewers have the emotional knack to access the artistic experience of it.

Installation view: Marielena Stark, *Afterlifestyle*, 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



* **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making *Afterlifestyle*?**

Afterlifestyle is a non-existent term that I use as branding for my installation. The dyeing process with walnuts, which involved various draping and drying techniques over the course of several days, was dialogical: I tried to control the color, but it did its own thing. This collaboration did not always have a friendly feel, sometimes it was downright hostile, and an idea of “revenge” ran through the work. It is evident in the autonomy of the material and my interactions with it; it also manifests in the dyeing as a hint of writing; and finally, it can be read as a sporting revenge through the recurring basketballs—an omnipresent merchandising motif that also sets a choreography. An “afterlife” can be found as a quote of Altinstark Fashion¹—dyeing with one’s own urine leaves its traces—but also in the feeling of being pursued by an aesthetic, in this case by ethereal, transcendental painting.

* **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

Collaborating with the different departments of the Kunsthalle on the exhibition development and installation processes was very helpful. Together with the art educators, for example, a workshop with Altinstark will be held during the exhibition, where we will paint caps with liquid wax and dye them

with indigo. Traditionally, the dyeing vats contained urine and indigo: indigo pigment is extracted from the leaves of the same-named plant. When the dyed material is removed and aired out, the fabric is yellow to light green and then changes color from various shades of green to blue.

* **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

My next project focuses on collectivity and performance. With Altinstark, we will produce a new merchandise collection of streetwear dyed with urine and indigo, which involves different collaborations among friends and will be presented as part of an event with performances. As we live in different places, the really essential resource is flexibility.

¹ Altinstark is a fashion collective founded by Altın Marielena Stark and Esra Altın.

Installation view: Marielena Stark, *Afterlifestyle*, 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Installation view: Marielena Stark, *Afterlifestyle*, 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



Marielena Stark

(b. 1986, Schwäbisch Hall, Germany) lives and works in Vienna. She completed her studies in fashion design at weißensee school of art and design berlin, continued at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, and graduated from the **University of Applied Arts Vienna** with a diploma in the painting department. She has exhibited at Spoiler (Berlin) and the University Gallery of the Angewandte in Heiligenkreuzerhof (Vienna) and performed at *On the New* at Belvedere 21 (Vienna), No Man's Art Gallery (Amsterdam), and Bar Barbette (Berlin). Upcoming exhibitions in 2024 at Gold & Beton (Cologne) and Kunstraum Schleuse (Vienna). For her diploma exhibition *Afterlifestyle*, she received in 2023 one of two main prizes of **Kunsthalle Wien**.

In her artistic practice, she creates installation works combining painting, objects, and fashion and investigates historical and experimental dyeing techniques, choreography, the fetishization of everyday objects, and ideas of merchandising. Her collaborative projects include the collective Altinstark, a fashion label founded in 2013 with Esra Altın, the band *Die Süßen Mäuse*, and the flute ensemble *Recorder Company*.

Marielena Stark, *Afterlifestyle*, 2023
photo: Demian Kern

Marc Truckenbrodt

Der Fürst [The Prince], 2024, acrylic on canvas

Prometheus, 2024, acrylic on paper

"There must be some way out of here", 2024, acrylic on paper

Marc Truckenbrodt's works stem from his personal perceptions of the present and the inter-relationships that shape them. Consisting of five large-format figurative paintings, his diploma work *Behauptung* [Assertion] focussed on the ideas of power, heroism, masculinity, and their underlying contradictions. In his new works for *Come as You Are*, the artist deepens this exploration by turning his attention to the idea of 'mythos'—broadly defined as a widely held belief or idea. Truckenbrodt sees his paintings as a visual mythos: poetic expressions that transcend logic in order to help us better process our complicated existence. From his perspective, the complexities of our daily lives are often caused by systems of power that rely on ideologies to sustain themselves, leading the artist to ask: Is it possible for any person to remain independent in this kind of society, or are we all trapped in our own constructed realities?

Installation view *Come as You Are*, Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



- * **Looking back, how would you describe the process of making your works *Der Fürst* [The Prince], *Prometheus* and *“There must be some way out of here”* in the exhibition?**

Ideas for paintings come to me very much alive, without any explanation. I never think about what they might mean; I only think about making the paintings, however illogical they may seem. I let them invade me. An idea comes to me and then, by painting it, this blurred vision becomes clearer; it pulls itself into focus. The titles of the paintings in this exhibition existed first. They give an idea of some of the things that have inspired me, or topics that are on my mind and that I am thinking about, trying to make sense of. One of them, *Der Fürst* [The Prince] (2024), for example, is related to the essay of the same name by Niccolo Machiavelli, an Italian philosopher from the fifteenth/sixteenth century. The titles are suggestive and open to a multitude of interpretations. Each title is intended as both a name for, and as a possible introduction to, the painting.

- * **You find yourself in a transition period between art university and the professional art field. Institutions like Kunsthalle Wien can be both enabling and restrictive; how do you navigate these ambivalences and find your own position within them?**

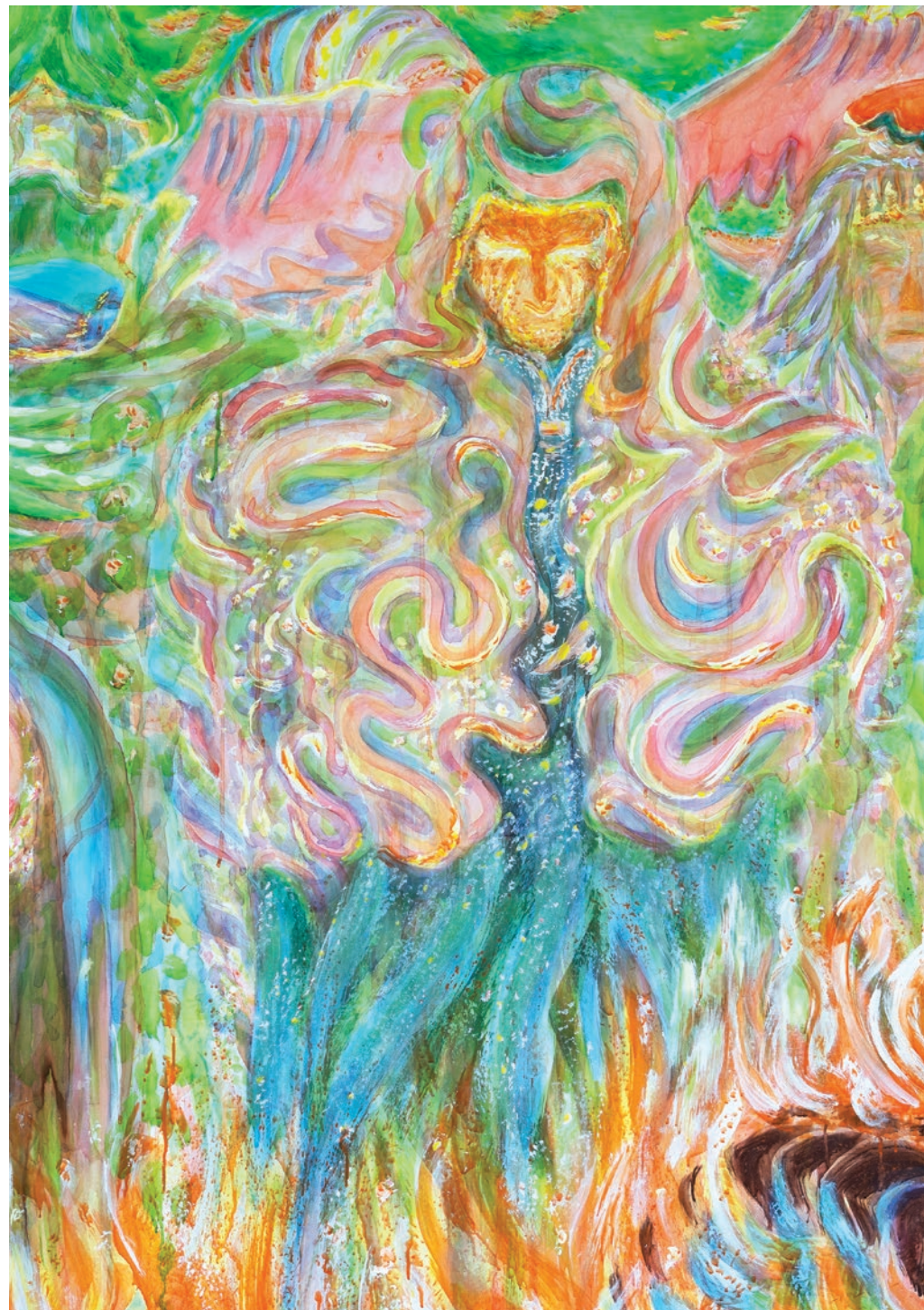
Doing art means having to deal with restrictions and freedom all the time. All artists have to deal with that. I think restrictions are necessary to push boundaries and break through. It creates greater tensions and a different dynamic. Showing new paintings at the Kunsthalle Wien is an opportunity for my work to be accessible to a larger

audience and to inspire and touch people. I think that is what art is supposed to do. Important artists work with institutions like Kunsthalle and I am happy to be able to follow in their footsteps.

- * **How would you like to develop your practice further and what resources would you need for this?**

I want to expand [my practice] and explore new materials and work on a large scale. I want to push the limits of intensity and strength of expression in my paintings and find out how material and technique lead to other questions and content. Other important and necessary resources, I think, are time and space.

Installation view: Marc Truckenbrodt, *Prometheus* (detail), 2024, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Kunsthalle Wien





Marc Truckenbrodt, *Behauptung I-V* (Assertion I-V), 2023, exhibition view *Graduating Diploma Works*. Vienna 2023 photo: Dirk Truckenbrodt (in the foreground sculptural work by Dean Maaßen)

Marc Truckenbrodt

(b. 1998, Jena, Germany) lives and works in Hamburg and Hangzhou (China). Truckenbrodt graduated from the **Academy of Fine Arts Vienna** in 2023. In the same year, Materialverlag Hamburg published his first comic book *Die Abenteuer von Löwe und Krokodil* [The Adventure of Lion and Crocodile] and the comic *Die Insel* [The Island] was released at Museumsquartier in collaboration with KABINETTpassage. His works have recently been shown at DISTRICT4art (Vienna), Landeskulturzentrum Ursulinenhof (Linz), MOORDNART (Guangzhou, China), and Shan Shang Gallery (Xiamen, China), among others. In 2024, new works will be shown in a duo exhibition at the kunstraumarcade (Mödling).

In his works, Truckenbrodt combines formal, epic storytelling with a poetic objective to create intense, contradictory, and multilayered relationships. Interwoven with emotions, experiences, and events, his interest in literature forms the breeding ground for his work. Truckenbrodt sees this process as the means and end of his work. At the core of his work lies a search for the identity of the individual, which manifests in paintings, drawings, prints, or comics.

Installation view: *Come as You Are*. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler





Installation view: *Come as You Are*. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



Željka Aleksić

- *Das Kapital*, 2023, publication
- *Numinous Toy*, 2024, various materials

Mila Balzhieva

- *Roots and Spirits*, 2023, hologram
- *Roots and Spirits – Portal*, 2024, text on LED façade display
- *Roots and Spirits – Shield*, 2024, textile

Luisa Berghammer

- *non-permanent valorization struggle*, 2024, text on LED façade display
- with **Quirin Babi, Zorah Berghammer and Luīze Nežberte**, *people would call you a faker and it hurt your feelings*, 2024, video: 7'50" (loop)
Acting: Arthur Berghammer
Voice: ML Poznanski
Music: Kirils Ēcis
Foley: Nikolaus Gehrer
Soundmix: Xaver Dienz
Color Grading: Mikhail Evstratov

Daniel Fonatti

- *Anchored in common ground*, 2024, wood panel, aluminum cast
- *The ground was there to meet the feet (read)(red)*, 2024, text on LED façade display

Valentin Hämmerle

- *to iron a curtain*, 2024, various materials

Jusun Lee

- *Dreamtime*, 2024, various materials

Michael Reindel

- *inventory performance index**, 2024, various materials and fragments of sculptures
- *Untitled*, 2024, various fragments of sculptures

Anne Schmidt

- *Strahlte, Geschöpf, Champagner, zottig, Klumpen*, [Radiated, creature, champagne, shaggy, lump], 2023, various materials, publication

Marielena Stark

- *Afterlifestyle*, 2023, various materials

Marc Truckenbrodt

- *Der Fürst* [The Prince], 2024, acrylic on canvas
- *Prometheus*, 2024, acrylic on paper
- *"There must be some way out of here"*, 2024, acrylic on paper

Opening***Comes as You Are. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023***

Mo 15/04 2024, 7 pm
Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

With a performance by **Željka Aleksić** – GLEDAJ MAJKU, BIRAJ ČERKU-KORENJE [See the mother, choose the daughter - Roots] – and a performance by **Jusun Lee** – Unshackling. Followed by a set by DJ Ebhardy.

A Reading of Me after two anal orgasms (2023) by Anne Schmidt

Tue 28/05, 6 pm
Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

Schmidt will read an excerpt from her first published novel, *Me after two anal orgasms (2023)*. Dealing with female* sexuality, pornography, appropriation of the female* voice and mental health living in a patriarchal society, Schmidt's novel questions where [FLINTA*] people stand in relation to their sexual desires, when confronted with the reality of an external inequality of power. All in all, a romance novel.

Short but Sweet.***Artist's Talks* with...**

Valentin Hämmerle, Tue 23/4
Marc Truckenbrodt, Tue 14/5
Luisa Berghammer, Tue 21/5
Marielena Stark, Tue 25/6
Mila Balzhieva, Tue 2/7 (in English)
Michael Reindel, Tue 9/7
6 pm, Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

On selected Tuesday evenings, artists from the exhibition *Come As You Are. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023* and our art education team meet for a joint discussion on their artistic practice.

Indigo Dyeing Workshop.***Indigo Cappies******Artist's Workshop for Kids from 6 – 14 years***

Sat 18/5, 10 am – 12 pm
Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier

The indigo dyeing technique has been known for many thousands of years. In the dyeing workshop with the Altinstark fashion collective, you will learn how to paint your own cappie with wax and then dye it with indigo. Then, miraculously, the coloured material turns from green to blue on contact with air!

Kunsthalle Wien Podcast

Tune in and listen to the podcast to hear what the artists have to say about their work.

Regular updates and further details on the public program can be found on our website: www.kunsthallewien.at

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What, How & for Whom / whw
(Ivet Čurlin • Nataša Ilić • Sabina Sabolović)

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Astrid Peterle (introduction)
Hannah Marynissen, Astrid Peterle
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VÖSLAUER

Installation view: *Come as You Are*. Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2023, Kunsthalle Wien 2024, photo: Klaus Pichler



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