

Sophie Schmidt

Portfolio - selected works

There is going to be a different time when the recombination of the human body will be complete and thereby, we humans will have reached new states of being – contrary to the primacy of the head. Then our bodies might be open, might be entangled in and with the world. Until we have reached this point, we need body aids – prostheses – to get entwined with the world and to overcome the separation of mind and body. Until then, we also need our own language, a new vocabulary to describe the immediacy of what we experience in the world. Sophie Schmidt's works center on this different kind of being in the world: She ventures on an evolutionary advancement which will not only transform human anatomy, but also being human and our perspectives on the world. By means of drawings, pictures, texts, and performances – or to use a different categorization: through motion machines, prostheses, operating tables and drawings on chalkboards, she creates a system which allows and at the same time requires her and the observers to completely engage with this new “widening of being human”. This process is structured by a strict set of rules and builds upon precise animistic observations. Schmidt's interest in nature, psychoanalysis, and philosophical – predominately phenomenological – approaches to the body pervades her art. Her way of widening human existence usually begins at the solar plexus and negotiates her immense theoretical knowledge of the human body, which is the basis for her works. Similar to the theories of the philosopher Vilém Flusser, the bodily posture here circumscribes an approach to the world. She wants to get away from a perspective which views nature from above in order to achieve a closer relationship with the world. Her works are extremely personal: Take for example her protective skins which are inspired by insect shells and which offer an aid to oppose vulnerability and pain. For every “shortcoming”, Schmidt develops a prosthesis and instructions. The prostheses help the recombination of the body and thereby they test the new state of being. Snails and insects are not only reoccurring motives, but friends whom Schmidt imitates – their antennae for instance allow a better connection to the world. She integrates the antennae in her works to enable an opening of the bodies. And she builds prostheses of the stomach for the “becoming of the stomach” or creates an aid for balancing in order not to walk vertically through the world anymore. The prostheses are reappearing elements in her works, but they are also aids which enable the transformation of being in the world. The body doesn't end with the skin, but is opened, expanded, and freshly connected. Schmidt employs and explains these filigree body aids or those massive motion machines whose instable make-ups slowly dissolve while being used. Additionally, she continually recombines them. The instable installations are in a constant state of balancing which doesn't survive their usage: Constructing, performative destruction, and re-construction form a cycle. The performances, i.e. the uses of the prostheses and the operation tables, dissolve boundaries or delineate metamorphoses, after which the boundaries of the world have to re-form for the artist – this process is comparable to the resettling of a hermit crab or the state of a freshly sloughed snake.

Text by Anja Lückenkemper, translated by Ulla Stackmann



Im Ziegenzyklus

Group show, Feministic art price
 IKOB-Museum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Eupen, BE
 Painting series in two parts with objects and performance
 2025

Together with science-fiction author and essayist Ursula K. Le Guin and other comra-des-in-arms, I would like to move along utopian sidetracks in my artistic work and renegotiate the body, human existence, and coexistence.

Sophie Schmidt works with drawing, image, installation, text, and performance, constructing what she calls “moving-machines.” In her media, she creates hybrid, prosthetic bodies that invite an expanded idea of what it means to be human. Marina Martinez Mateo writes: “For Sophie Schmidt, the prosthetic does not represent the technological overcoming of nature, but... the unavailability of what is our own: That which we call our “own” body is always dependent on its organic and inorganic—material and technical—Other.”

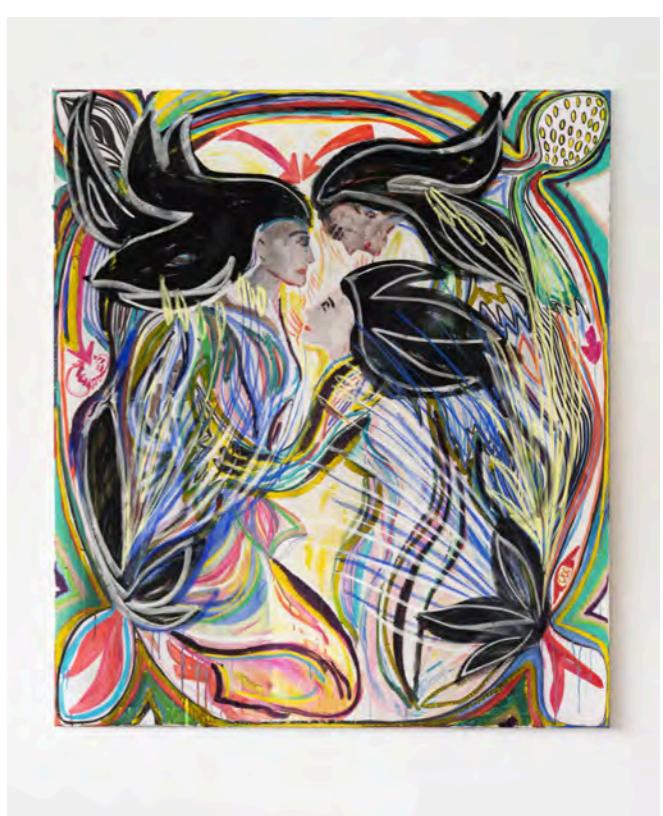
The tongue is a part of the body that functions both internally, in private, and externally, in public. It is indispensable for language and sexuality – an organ that connects our body to the world like no other. In the series of works Mother-tongues in Carrybag (2024), Sophie Schmidt understands the tongue as a “body extension” and uses it as a sculptural canvas. In a performance at the exhibition opening, she activates the sculptures as prosthetics that trigger a loss of control over her own body—for the artist, a critique of the sovereign subject.

The image series Beim Frauenarzt (At the OB/GYN, 2024) focuses on the menstrual cycle and the fertility of a woman in her late thirties. In the first part of the series, we encounter a figure that is half woman, half goat, surrounded by a ring depicting the different phases of the menstrual cycle. In the wild interplay of human, animal, nature, and energy, Schmidt conveys the power of transformation. The second part shows the figure in a consultation chair at a fertility clinic. In these scenes, the combination of oppressive clinical surroundings, threatening medical equipment, and fantastical body parts unfurling into space intensifies the ambivalence of the situation.

Brenda Guesnet



Sex im Ziegenzyklus, 140 x 120 cm, Charcoal, acrylic and watercolor on canvas, 2024



Drei Frauen im Ziegenzyklus, 140 x 120 cm, Oil, pastell and watercolor on canvas, 2024



2. Oktober 2024, Blastozyte und Knieberge, 200 x 200 cm, Charcoal on canvas, 2024



26. September 2024, Operation beim Frauenarzt, Durchmesser 80 cm, Charcoal on canvas, 2024





Blutabnahme mit Karpfen und Wölfen, Charcoal on canvas, Diameter 80 cm, 2025



25. September 2025 am Hauptbahnhof München, Charcoal on canvas, Diameter 80 cm, 2025



Großmutter, Mutter und Tochter mit Hornisse auf einem Zebrastreifen in Paris, Charcoal on canvas, Diameter 80 cm, 2025



Die Raddicchiofrau and the Brooklyn Based Crab

DG Kunstraum, Munich

Performance with painting, installation is part of *Rosa Immergruen – Zeitgenössische Kunst und lyrische Zeitreise*
2023

Link to performance documentation: <https://vimeo.com/857062289>

Sophie Schmidt shows in her work connections to Donna Haraway's statement "nothing is connected to everything, but everything is connected to something". Accordingly, species entangle in her works and the artist enters a relationship with the individual works. In her performances, sculptures also become new prostheses. On the large canvas, human limbs can be found on two flower heads glowing in red and black. The cyborg 'Radicchio Woman' continues the series of works that were created during her stay at the Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig (German Center for Studies in Venice).

In the exhibition a sculptural ensemble complements the canvas; "Tränengeweih" and "Tränengeweihtrilogie" were developed in the Kunstverein Friedrichshafen and give first impressions of her stay in the USA, mainly through integrated photographs. The sculptures turn out to be material assemblages that range from elements typically associated with femininity like tampons, domestic appliances, and drawings in the shape of dragonfly wings to building material and branches. The artist will connect to these sculptures during her performances.





4. August 2025 Paris, Schlafende Freundinnen und roter Tisch in Paris mit Pferd und Schwalbe, 66 x 50,5 cm, Watercolor and ink on paper, 2025



26. August 2025, Bei Pomposa: Schlafende Freundinnen mit Flusskrebs,
50,5 x 66 cm, Watercolor and ink on paper, 2025



Brutality of Spring

Duo-show with Anna Łuczak
GIG Munich
2024-2025

In "The Brutality of Spring," Anna Łuczak and Sophie Schmidt collaborate in homage to a recently deceased mutual friend to produce a multimedia installation, a vanitas-like project that is rooted equally in the transience of the domestic sphere and the fragility of the human body. The plates refer to the domestic language of vanitas. We eat on them with forks and knives, we wash them and we put them away. The colorful ribbons belong to the "kapliczka," the wayside shrines that can be found on almost every street in Poland, equally Catholic and pagan. Sophie Schmidt's wooden constructions hold everything together in an extremely fragile way; they are extensions of the body, with its fragility, strength, and brittleness.





Biss I, Diameter 80 cm, Ink, acrylic and UV-lacquer on canvas, 2025



Erdbeere, Diameter 80 cm, Ink, acrylic and UV-lacquer on canvas, 2025



Biss II, Diameter 80 cm, Ink, acrylic and UV-lacquer on canvas, 2025



Installation view, Circular painting from the series *Bauchvorhangöffnung*. Atelierhaus Baumstraße, 2025



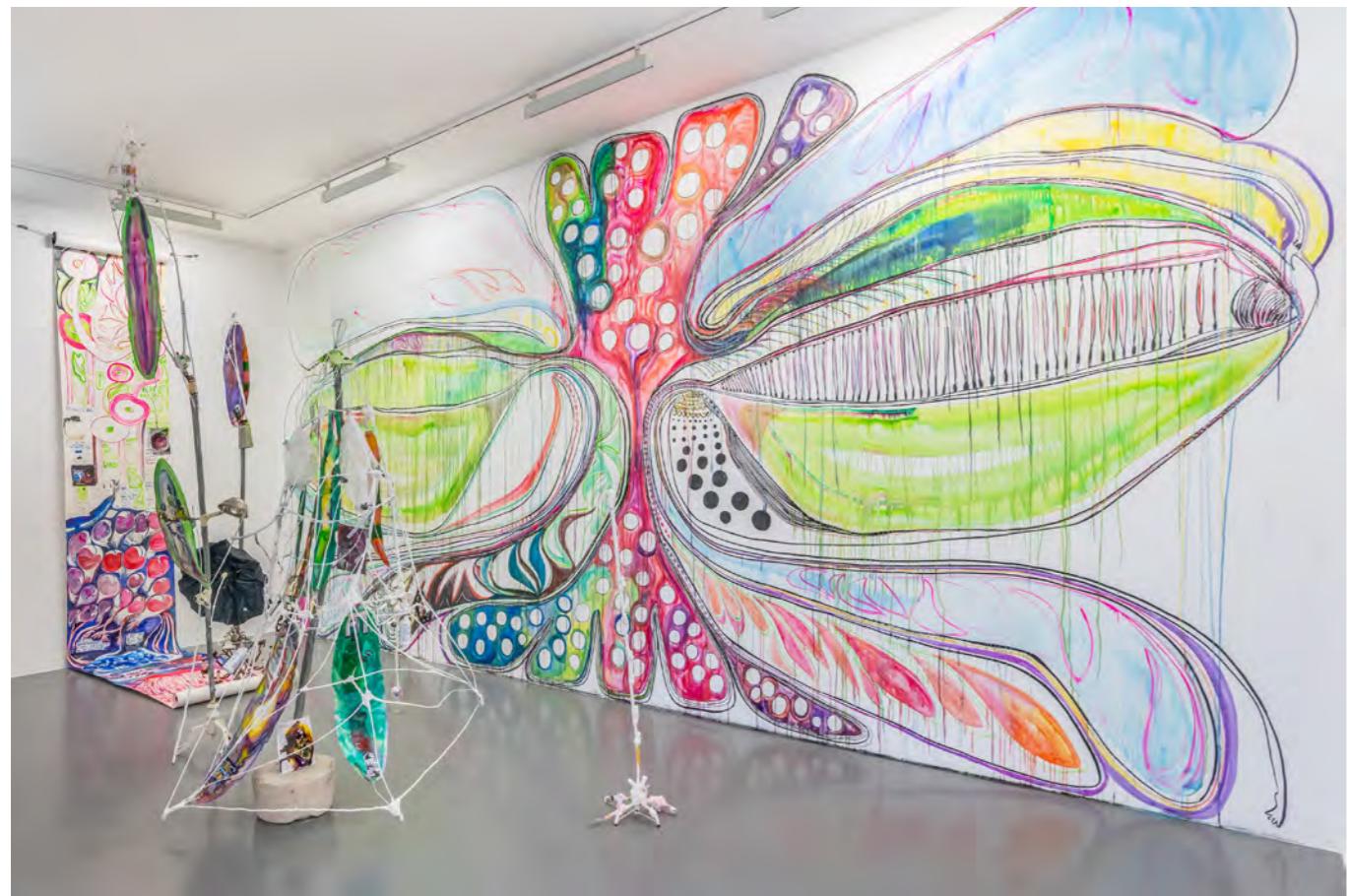
Paragraph 57, Unterschleif, Diameter 40 cm, Ink, acrylic, photoprint and UV-lacquer on canvas, 2025



Pastasieb, Diameter 80 cm, Ink, acrylic and UV-lacquer on canvas, 2025



Aprikose, Diameter 80 cm, Ink, acrylic and UV-lacquer on canvas, 2025



Mein Herz kracht, wenn ich dir in die Augen schaue, Ink and watercolor on paper, 78 × 105 cm, 2023

Ein schweres Herz muss man sich leisten können

Solo show
 Kunstverein Friedrichshafen
 Drawings, mural Painting, object and performance
 2023

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

She has already processed the impressions she has gained on numerous journeys in her exhibitions and artist's books before. And this time too, she takes us to one of the most remote places in the world, to Anchorage, Alaska. „At the edge of the Round Lake. At the edge of the Round World.“ as written in one drawing of the exhibition. She takes us to her Airbnb on the Malibu RD, onto the eternal ice that centuries ago connected the continents and makes us feel the forces of nature in this place so pristine, so hostile to life, that humanity hasn't been able to subdue it. Arriving in Chicago, everything that civilisation has to offer culminates. The American Dream collides with poverty and crime, no-go areas with a glittering skyline, and America's colonial past also manifests itself in the shocking contrast between the rich north and the poor south of the city.

The artist describes all this on a pictorial and textual level in the exhibition's collages, and drawings, interweaves it with texts by other literary figures, notes and an letter exchanges, and transforms it into an opera in which moods, body parts, organs, tear-antler prostheses, moose, snow, trees, architecture, Anchorage and Chicago take on a life of their own. From the Pacific Ocean we thus follow Sophie Schmidt to Lake Michigan, to finally find ourselves at Lake Constance. During this journey, she shares with us her multi-layered and profound world poetry.

Hannah Ecksteinn, excerpt of text



Installation view, Ein schweres Herz muss man sich leisten können, 2023



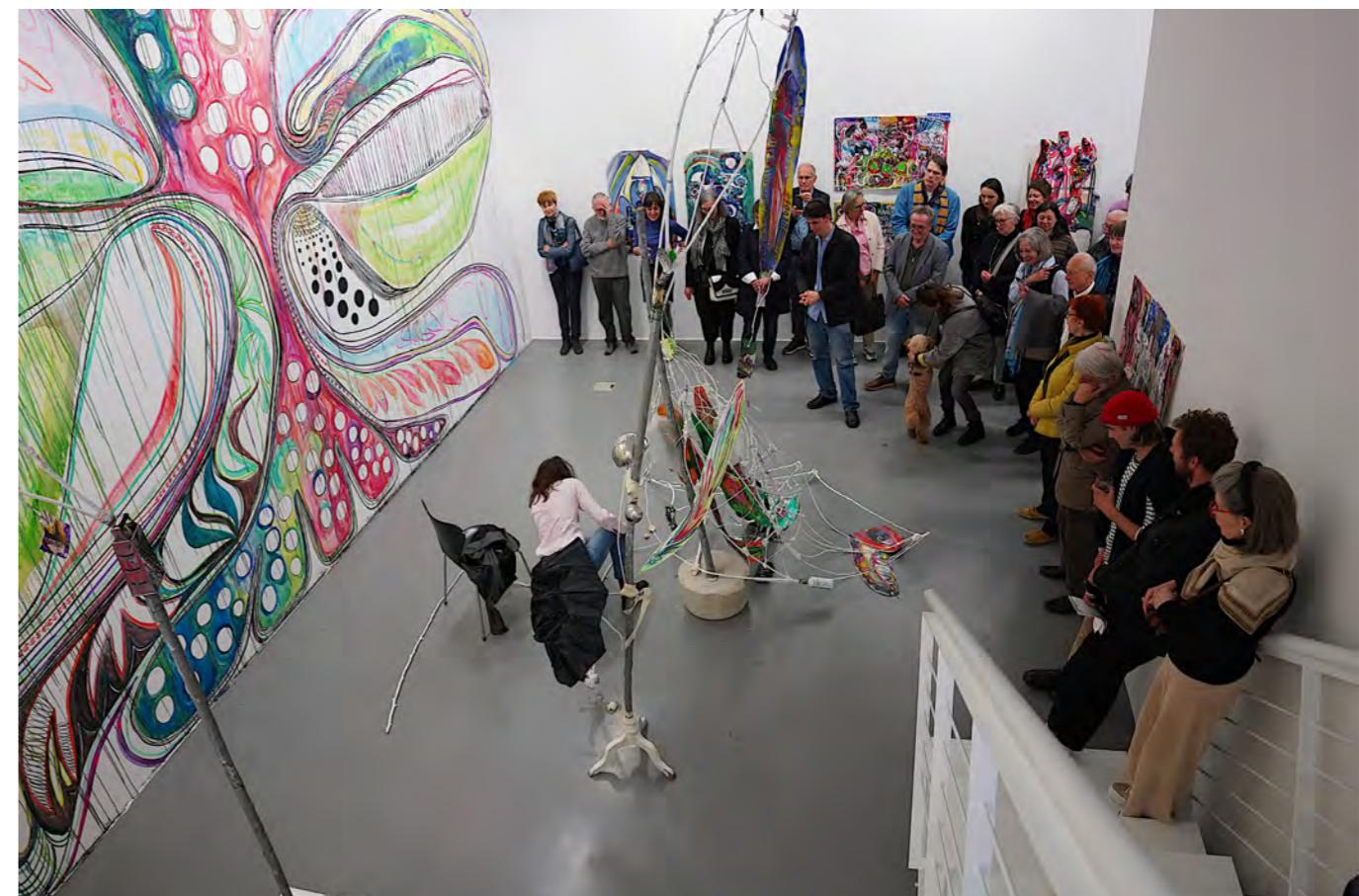
Im Januar 2023 lebe ich selbst auf diesem Winterplaneten, Ink and watercolor on paper, 76 x 57, 2023



Chicagohochhausobring, 86 x 60 cm, Collage, Ink, photoprint and watercolor on paper, 2023



Fingernägelglück am Chicagosee, 86 x 60 cm, Collage, Ink, photoprint and watercolor on paper, 2023





Die seitliche Intelligenz der Diva – Im Spangenglobus

Opernkollektiv DIVA

Opera Performance by and with Nikolai Gümbel, Samuel Fischer-Glaser, Sophie Schmidt, Angela

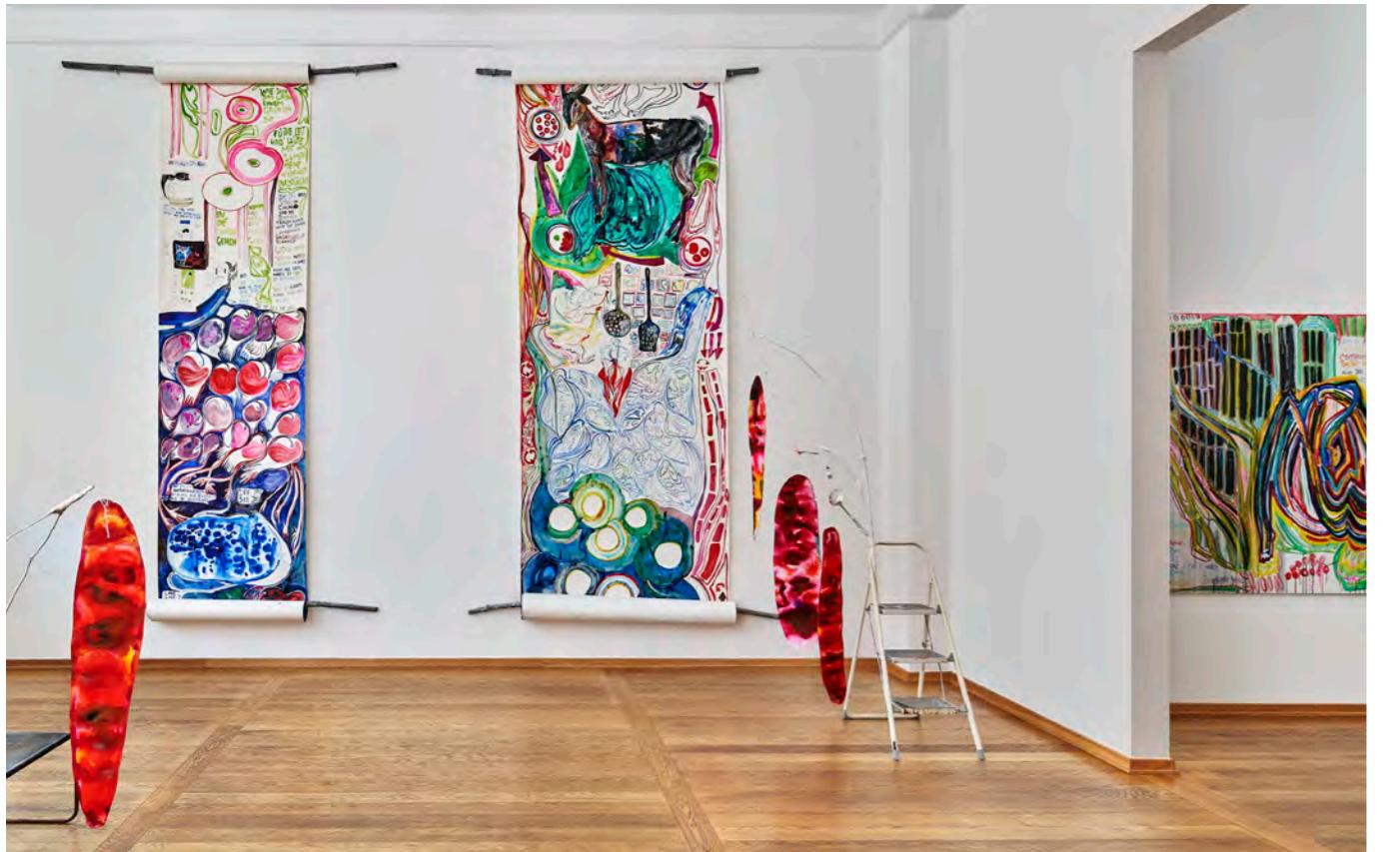
Stiegler und Lili König

as part of the closing event „IGGI: Ingenieur-Geist und Geistes-Ingenieure. Eine Geschichte der Künstlichen Intelligenz in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland“, Deutsches Museum, Munich

2023

The starting point for the performance was a scientific experiment conducted at the Max Planck Institute in the 1950s, in which a great diving beetle was placed on a globe assembled from six small straws. The experiment was used to monitor neural activity in motion perception and played a role for the early development of artificial intelligence. Stepping away from a linear conception of both progress and intelligence, we entered a lateral movement that weaves together companion species in the face of shared mortality. Just as the great diving beetle enters the stage, the weaver's servant also takes on a central role, recalling the oppressed weavers in the Silesian weavers' revolt of the 19th century. Wearing fur hats, the research team stands in front of a sea of melting ice floes.





Mothertongues in Carrybag

Solo Show
Gallery Knust und Kunz, Munich
Performance with objects, paintings and drawings
2024

The current group of drawn and painted scrolls and screens by Sophie Schmidt is diaristic in nature, recording in the artist's own words and imagery her time in the US during a scholarship that took place in 2023 and included periods in Los Angeles, Alaska, Chicago and New York. But the notion of the diary does not fully capture the function of these works within Schmidt's oeuvre and the way they operate as part of her artistic strategy, since it situates them as side works running in parallel to her multi-disciplinary performative practice.

A wider scope through which the current group of works should be observed would characterize them as Schmidt's experimentation in *Écriture automatique* (automatic writing) and automatic drawings recognized with the work of surrealist artists such as André Masson (1896-1987), whose practice examined altered states of consciousness and the expressive discharge of the unconscious beyond the grip of rationalized output. The framework of automatic writing and drawing anchors the current works at the heart Schmidt's performances, and as performances in themselves. It also allows us to view them in relation to drawn and painted imagery by performers of previous generations, such as Gunter Brus (1938-2024) and Carolee Schneemann (1939-2019), meaning as part of a performative practice, as well as performative relics.

More than anything Schmidt's recent production is a sort of hieroglyph consisting of logograms, a hybrid of words, characters and images. One could also suggest these works are palimpsests, i.e., a multi-layered arrangement of painted and inscribed surfaces superimposed one on top of the other. These connotations stage the works as an active process replayed and continues through their deciphering by the viewer/reader in the 'here and now' of the exhibition, which therefore becomes an all-encompassing performative event.

Ory Dessau



Anleitungen des Alltags, 900 x 140 cm, Ink and watercolor on paper roll, 2023



*Still there are seeds to be gathered and room in the bag of stars.
(Ursula K. Le Guin)*



Mothertonges in carrybag, Dimensions variable, Sticks, forks, tea bags, spoons, plaster, paint and paper, 2024 2024



Frau mit Badebürste in Brooklyn, 200 x 200 cm, Oil, pastell, watercolor on canvas, 2023



Luft zu Haut

Solo Show
Beacon, Munich
5 Paintings

The body is the central theme of the exhibition “Luft zu Haut” (Air to Skin). The title suggests the idea that air can become a kind of skin, that the atmosphere surrounding the body becomes part of the body’s perception. Here at beacon, with a focus entirely on painting and text, the works speak of inner body images seeking expression, of movements, and always of symbiosis between humans and animals.

The “starting point” for this presentation is “Nothing lies between us anymore, nothing separates us”: In it, Sophie Schmidt depicts her physical and sensual understanding of a suddenly glowing, attention-grabbing bridge of the nose, the narrow ridge between the nostrils. The abstraction on the canvas allows the nostrils and nasal conchae to be identified as motifs, yet it is completely detached from any unambiguous meaning. The accompanying caption, a typical example of Schmidt’s écriture automatique, is part of the expressive performance that this painting represents. Physical boundaries dissolve into a vision.

Elisa Tamaschke, text excerpt



Schneehuhnfrau I (Dein weiches Fell, das aufsteigt bis zur schneeigen Hornspitze), Acrylic, chalk, coloured pencil, charcoal on canvas, 200 x 200 cm, 2022



Kaktuserotik, 23. Oktober 2022, Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas, 200x 200 cm, 2022

So weit wir auch fahren,
so nah wir auch kommen

Solo Show
Gallery Tobias Naehring, Leipzig
Painting, objects, performance
2022-23



Los Angeles, Pasadena, Aug. 30Th

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

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

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

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

Sophie Schmidt, Text excerpt from the travel diary



Kaktuserotik, 21. Oktober 2022, Watercolor, ink and charcoal on canvas, 200x 200 cm, 2022



Moby Dick in Cologne

Art Cologne, Kunst Knuz Gallerie Editions, Cologne

Performance with Objekt

Wire, plaster, vinyl tubes, branches, metal

2021

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





One Last Glory of the Legs

Solo Show
KNUSTxKUNZ+, Munich
Performance with Objects, Collages and Paintings
2022

Here we see the event of transformation.

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

Sophie Schmidt

Link to Performance:
<https://vimeo.com/448836262>



Raucherschuh, Mixed media, 50 x 30 x 20 cm, 2020



Knieberge

Solo Show
 Gallery Tobias Naehring, Leipzig
 Paintings, Objects, Performance
 2020

San Gennaro, the Italian patron saint of the androgynous, lives in a “room of one’s own” in Sophie Schmidt’s new works according to the accompanying text. In the essay of the same name, which is fundamental to feminism, Virginia Woolf declares that an accomplished author has to unite masculine and feminine qualities in herself, and that, consequently, creativity encompasses both genders. As femminello, San Gennaro combines both genders in himself, and in Schmidt’s largesized charcoal drawing, he appears to be blessing in a flowing garment with an almost baroque theatricality. At the same time, he shows the facial features of the artist. A distinct sex, without being socially constructed, is discredited as a limitation.

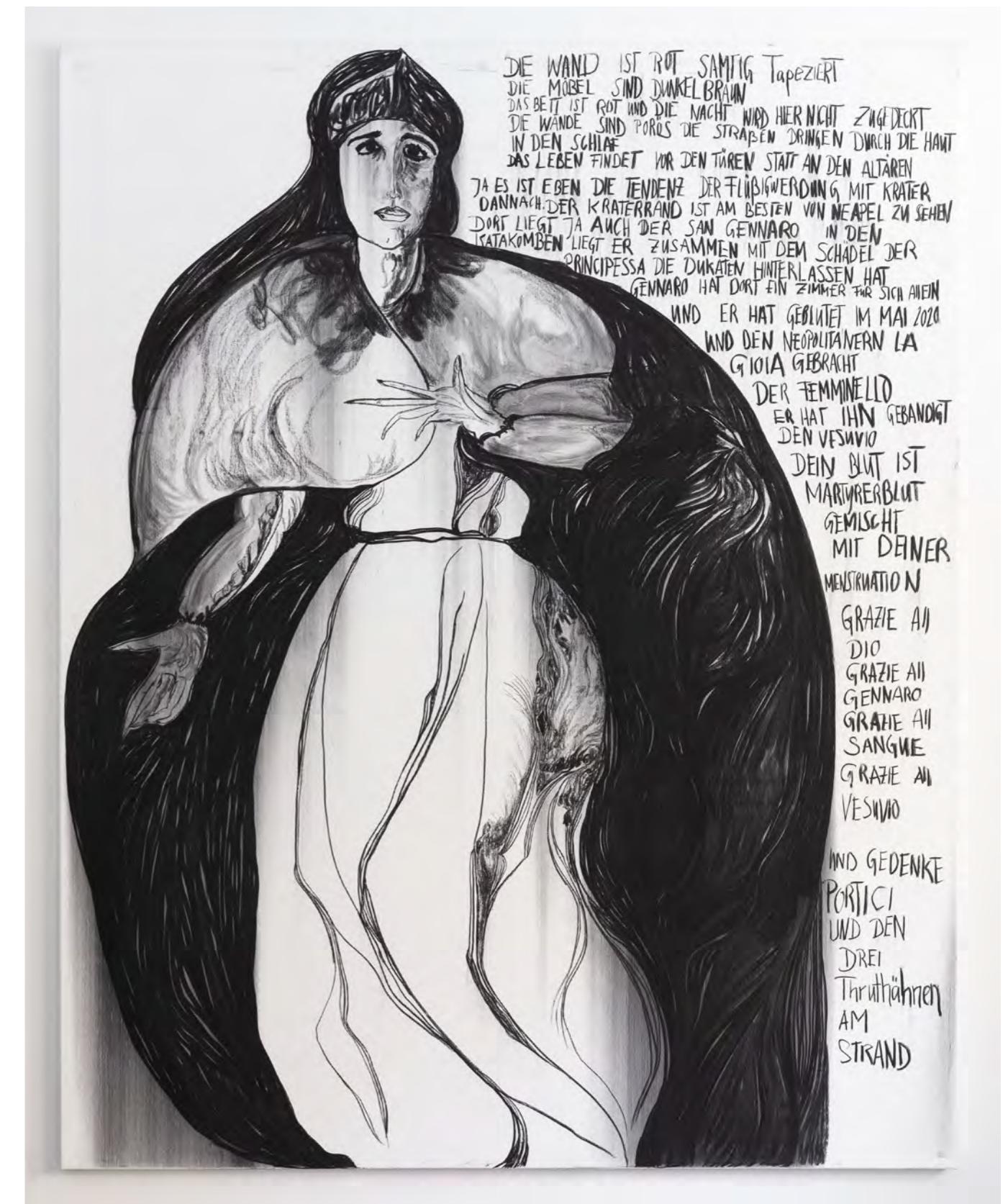
Julia Dellith, Text excerpt,
 Translation by Ulla Stackmann



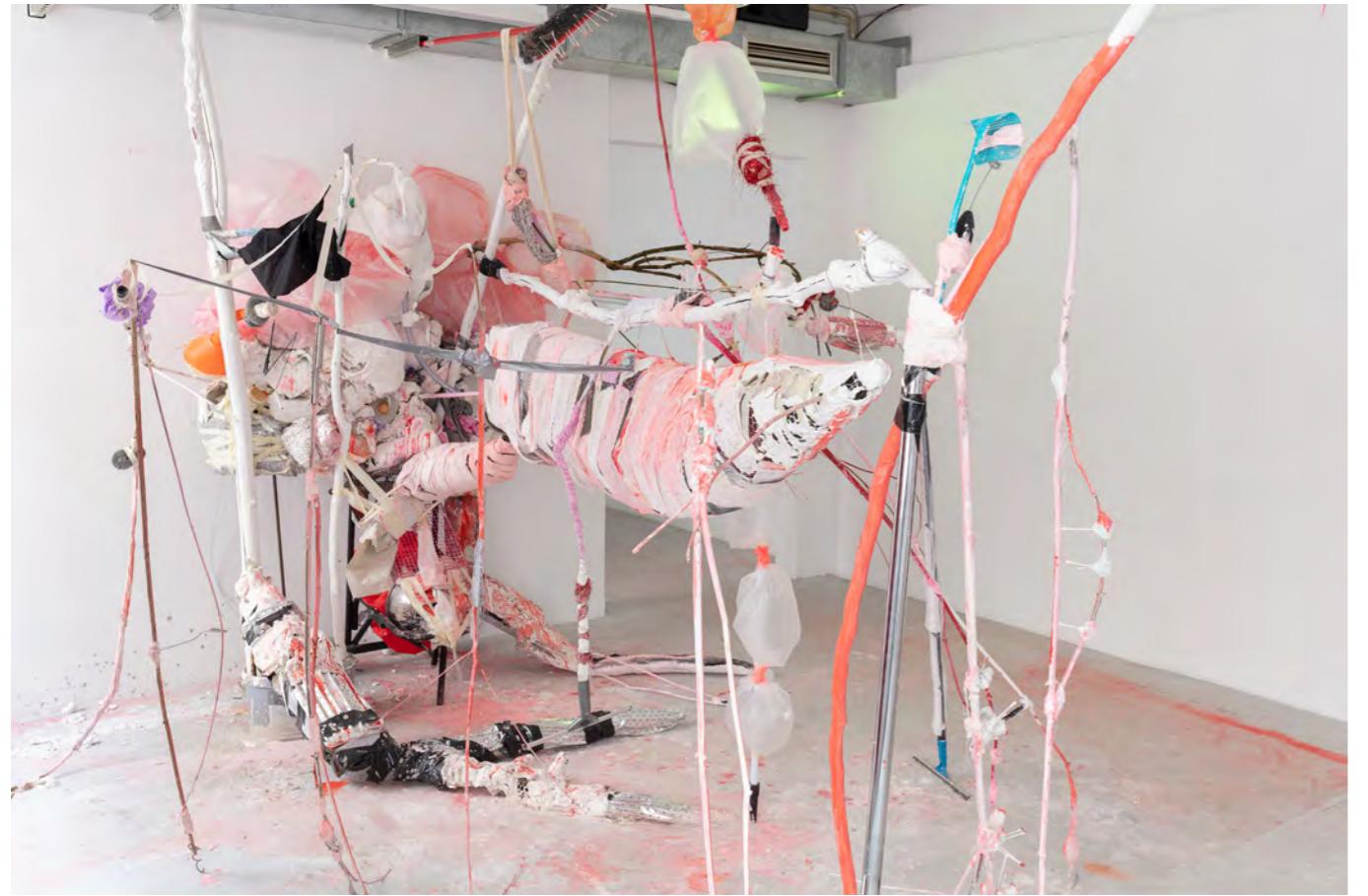
Raben, 200 × 160 cm, Charcoal on canvas,
 2020



Lungenbrütler, 200 × 160 cm, Charcoal on canvas,
 2020



San Gennaro, 200 × 160 cm, Charcoal on canvas, 2020



Einsiedlerkrebs ohne Haus

Group show
Point of no return Kunstkaden, Munich
Installation with performance and paintings
2019

The common feature of hermit crabs is that they hide their abdomen in empty snail shells. This behaviour is vital for them, as their abdomen is soft and unprotected and could serve as a point of attack for predators. As they grow, they need ever larger shells, which they swap with other hermit crabs.

The hermit crab, which was created in the Munich Kunstkaden as a bricolage of plaster, wire, sticks, kitchen utensils, etc., has lost its protective shell. It is naked and vulnerable.

Sophie Schmidt



Einsiedlerkrebse in der Fühlerflut, Watercolor and acrylic on canvas, 140 x 120 cm, 2019



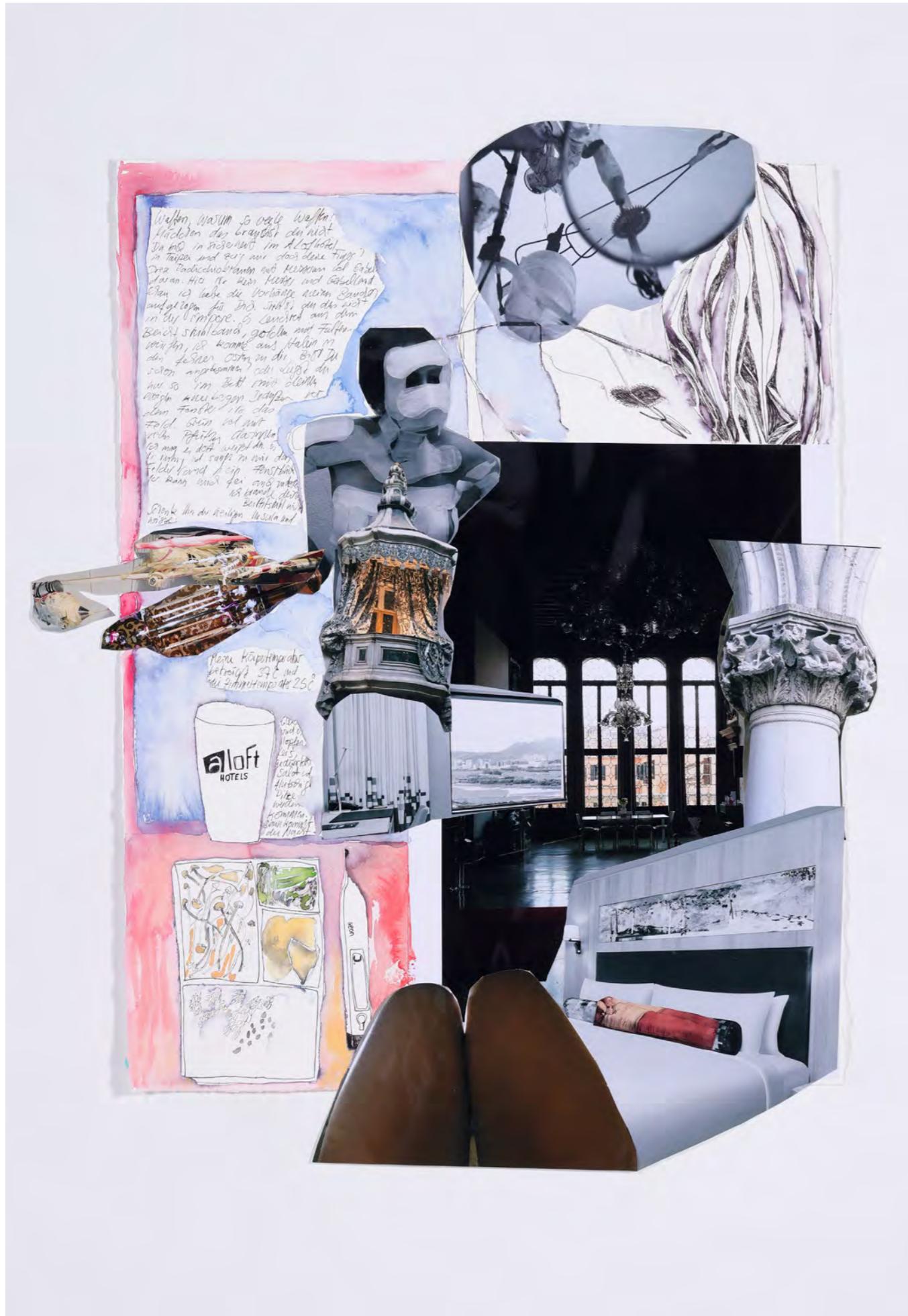


How much Venice water do you carry in
your legs, still?
And how much Taipei water do you feel
in the fields, now?

Solo show
Frontier Gallery No. 9, Treasure Hill Artist Village
Taipoh TWN
2021

Link to performance : <https://vimeo.com/784588973?share=copy#t=0>





Schau, ich habe die Vorhänge meines Bauches aufgezogen für dich. Siehst du das Licht in der Empore?,
65 × 50 cm, Watercolor, ink and photoprint on paper, 2021

How Much Venice Water Do You Carry In Your Legs, Still? How Much Taipeh Water Do You Feel In The Fields, Now? dokumentiert die künstlerischen Arbeiten und Texte die im Jahr 2021 im Rahmen von zwei Residenzen (Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig sowie Taipei Residency Program, Taipei Artist Village, Taipeh) entstanden sind.

Verbindende Elemente ihrer Reise, die die Künstlerin zunächst nach Venedig und anschließend nach Taipeh führte, sind das Wasser der beiden Inselstädte sowie die Isolation, pademiebedingt das Hotelzimmer nur temporär oder auch gar nicht verlassen zu können. Die künstlerische Auseinandersetzung dreht sich mithin um Fragen des In-der-Welt-Seins als gleichsam existentieller physischer wie psychischer Prozess der Erkundung des Eigenen und Fremden. Die Bilder, Collagen, Performances und Textminiaturen geben Einblick in das innere Geschehen, das eng mit der Bühne des äußeren Geschehens verwoben ist, jenes nämlich, das sich vom Bett aus diesseits und jenseits des Fensters wahrnehmen ließ. Körperlich bewegungslos, aber emotional in Aufruhr, bestimmen zwei Hauptmotive die expressiven, mit pulsierendem Pinselstrich vorwiegend in Rottönen gehaltenen Arbeiten: die Gegenüberstellung Renaissance Venedig/Gegenwart Taipeh sowie die Körperweitungen und Prothesen. Die Grenzen auflösend, verbinden, verzweigen, vermählen sich Körper und Welt, verschmelzen mit Blättern, Früchten, Vögeln, Fischen, Landschaften, Architekturen und Räumen, werden ornamental, fließen und schweben, vom allgegenwärtigen Wasser durchdrungen, das die Körper gleichsam zu verbinden und durch sie hindurchzuströmen scheint.

Carina Herring



Hier vor dem Fenster dampfen die Felder, auch das Zimmer ist feucht hier innen,
78 × 106 cm, Watercolor, ink and photoprint on paper, 2021