

Achinoam Alon

Portfolio 2023

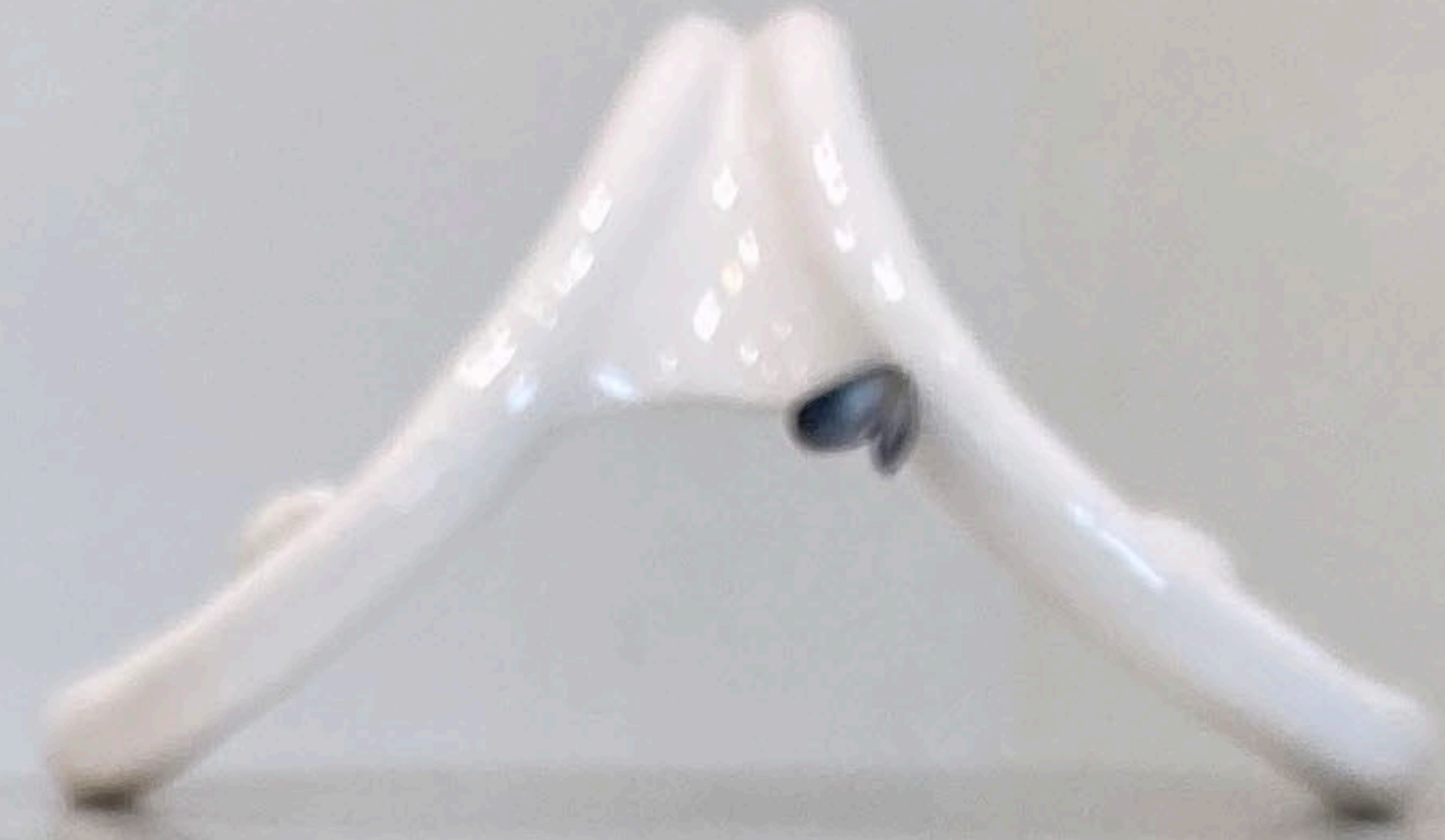


Frenemies, 2022



Frenemies installation views
Photos *Lukas Jantschek*

MIDOLAM 5mg/ml
10 ml ampoule contains:
Midazolam 50 mg



Voyager / an Ending (Ascent)
Aluminium pedestal, laquered motor part, ball-pen drawing on printer
paper, morphine-ampoule, paper scrap



Voyager / an Ending (Ascent)
drawing detail

Voyager 2 / Golden Record / Human-Machine
Aluminium wall-mounted table, engravings on matrix sheets, pencil drawing on printer paper, mussel-shell



Voyager 2 / Golden Record / Human-Machine
engraving detail



Conductor

'door' curtain: photography print on fabric, organza fabric, aluminum pipe



Choir

watermarked photo prints on aludibond, organza fabric

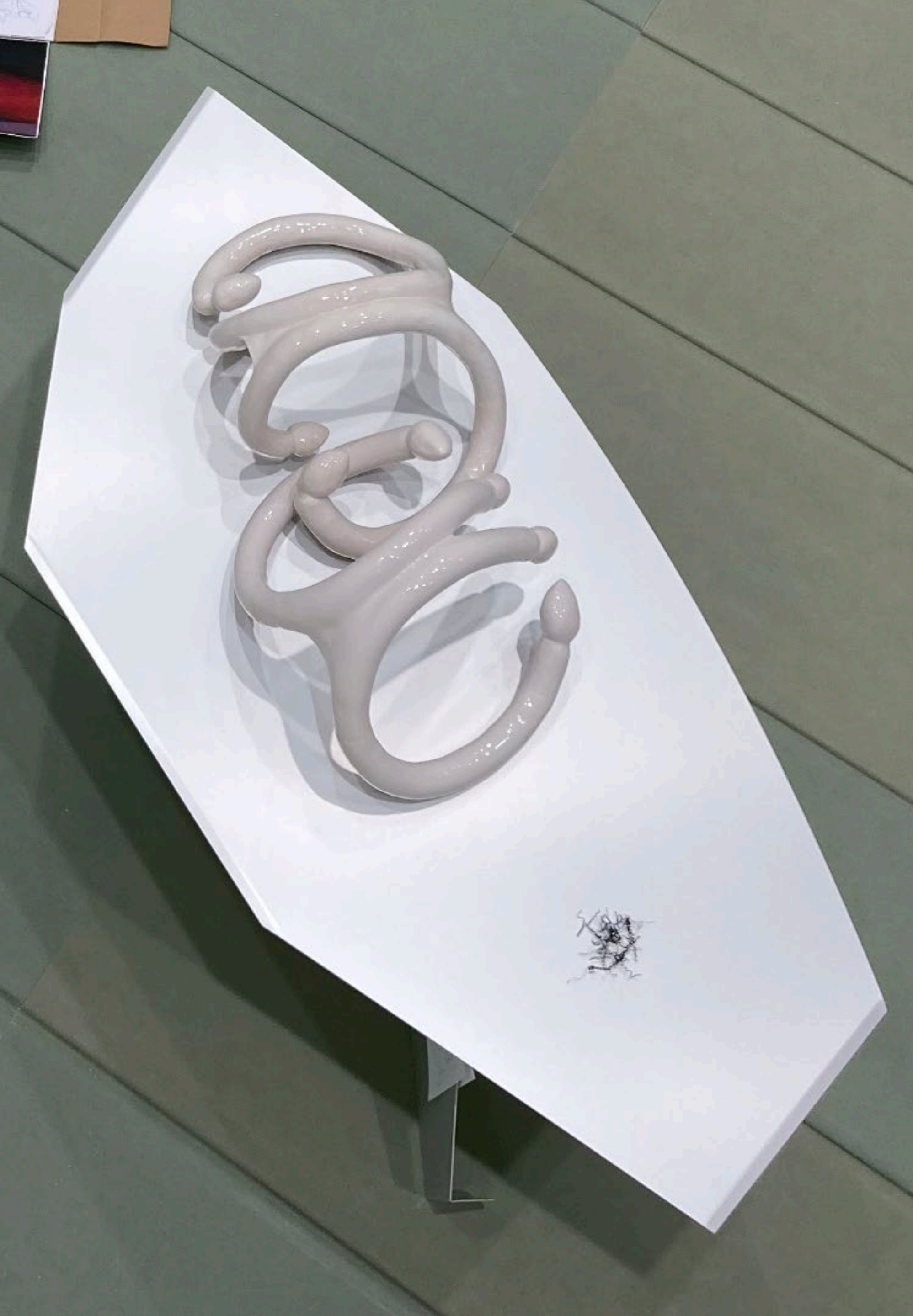
Choir 8/8 (detail)



Choir 1/8 (detail)



Frenemies (Mohn und Gedächtnis)
glazed ceramics, laser-cut aluminum table, ball-pen
drawings, glass marble, magnets, metal deburring scraps



Frenemies
installation view



Frenemies (Mohn und Gedächtnis)
glazed ceramics, laser-cut aluminum table,
ball-pen drawings, glass marble, magnets,
metal deburring scraps



Frenemies (Mohn und Gedächtnis) (detail)
Serpent (Heaven or Las Vegas) drawing

Import/Export, Cleansing Rituals
(Ablenkungsmanöver), (detail)
aluminum table, glazed ceramics, photo-
copies, inverted mussel-shell, soap-glycerin,
paper cuts (statistics by Forschungsinstitut
Gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt)



Import/Export, Cleansing Rituals
(Ablenkungsmanöver), (detail)

tanikō (cold love), 2021



A travel group sets out on a journey in search of a new beginning, among them Marieluise Fleißer, Alexandra Kollontai, Bertolt Brecht, and Ovid. Soon, their euphoric and bookish enactments of past utopias are challenged by the group dynamics that unfold along the stations of their revolutionary trajectory to the promised lands of pleasure. When one comrade's heart falls ill — is it because of homesickness or due to unanswered romantic feelings towards the leader of the group? — the once clear directionality of their voyage threatens to dissolve. At the summit of collective despair, an ominous mountain demon appears and reveals an unforeseen path, less virtuous but therefore lucrative. Čto delat', what is to be done?

A collaborartive set design with Lennart Boyd Schürmann, Marleen Johow and Moritz Nebenführ for *tanikō (cold love)*.
Commissioned by Brechtfestival Augsburg and co-produced by OFS/Münchner Kammerspiele

Text *BRUCH*
Photos *Nicole Wytyczak*



Set for *tanikō (cold love)*
Photos *Nicole Wytyczak*

Nervous Pathways, 2020



Achinoam Alon has created a set of ceramics and corresponding modular tables for K2020. The ceramics are modeled after sectional neurological representations of the nervous system and were activated for meals throughout the communal phases of *This house is not a home* at Lothringer13 Halle. The modular tables were designed as a long dinner table (with the ceramics being its 'spine', a metaphorical infrastructure for social exchange) which was also able to enter a variety of configurations according to its shifting functions, such as pedestal segments, stage platform, living room tables to use in our gatherings and workshops, communal kitchen shelves etc.

Text K2020 team

Photo *Constanza Meléndez*



Nervous Pathways, 2020 (detail)
CNC-cut wood, lacquer, 12 glazed ceramic dishes



Nervous Pathways in various configurations



MayDay, 2019





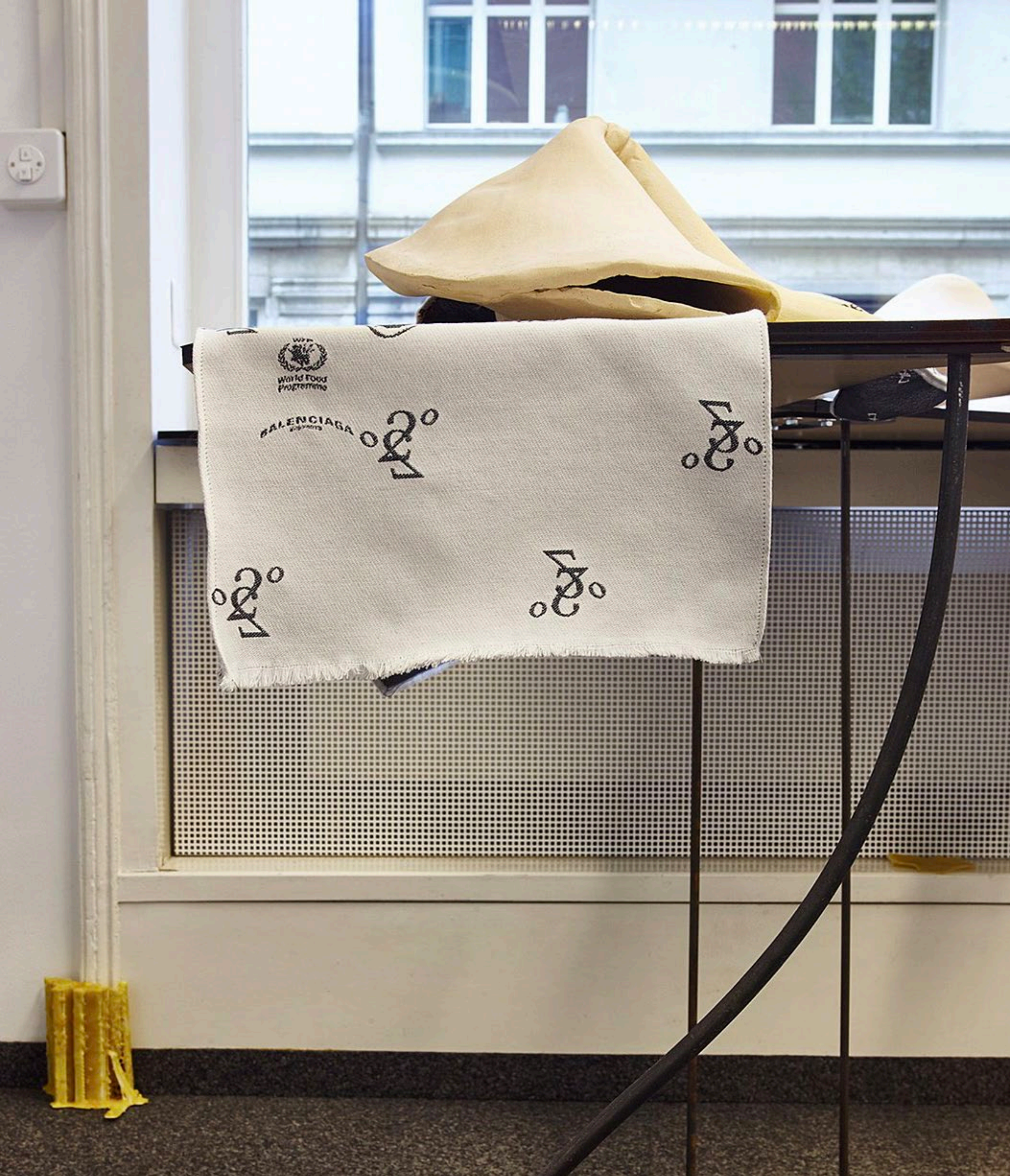
Motherboard I
bisque ceramics, own-design Jacquard fabric,
MDF, paper, steel, beekeeping veil



Motherboard I, (detail)

Motherboard I, (detail)





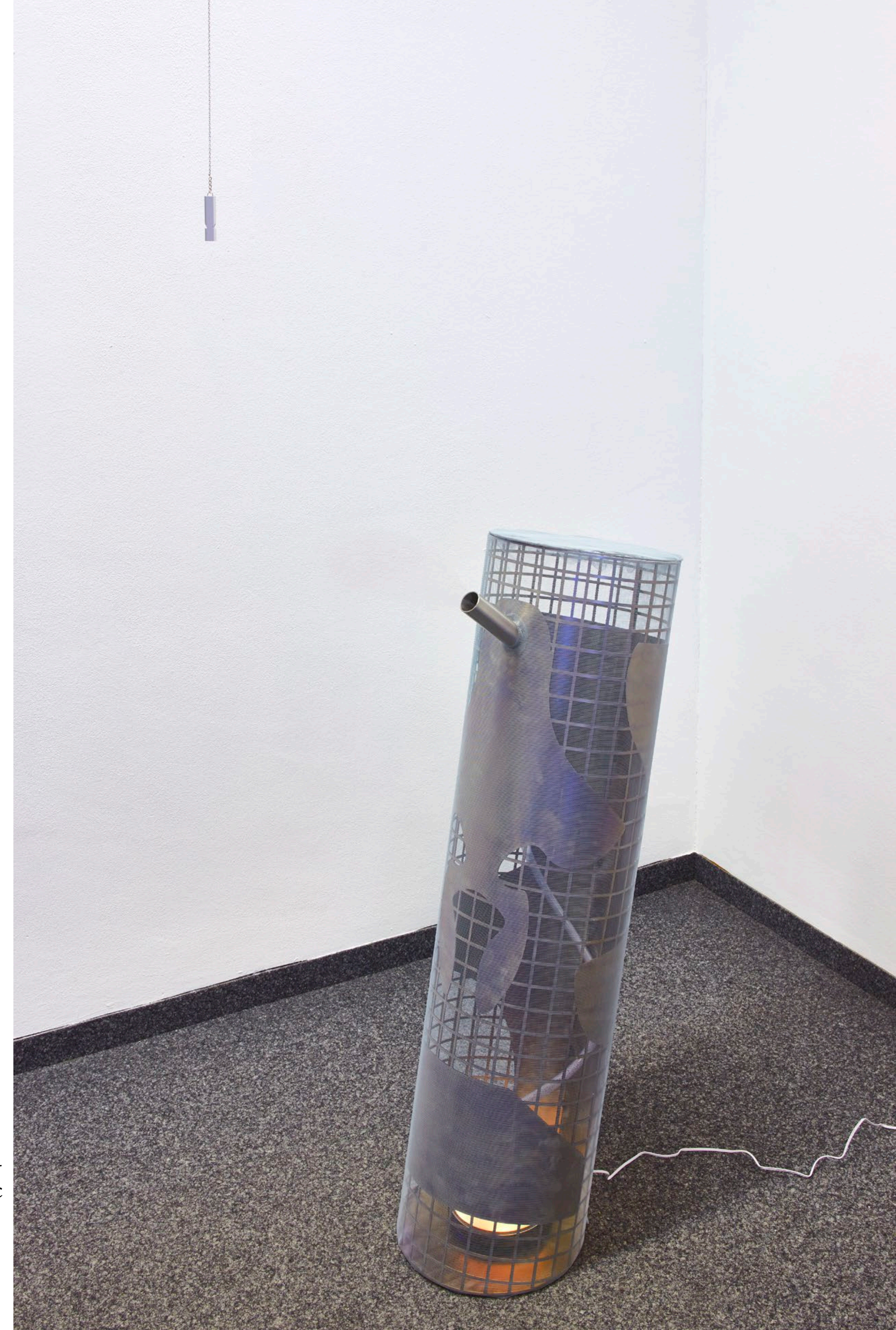
Motherboard II (detail)
ceramic, own-design Jacquard fabric, MDF, paper, steel

Whistle-Blower 1/3
emergency whistle, chain



Mambo No. 5 (Sandra)
laser-cut steel, stainless steel pipe, tulle-fabric, aroma diffuser, honey-scent, pvc hose pipe

Whistle-Blower 2/3
emergency whistle, chain





Fruit Of The Loom (Sweat)
photography print of UV-luminated robot-arm welding exercises
tablets on alu-dibond



The Bony Labyrinth
PLA, epoxy, beeswax

Mambo No. 5 (Jessica), Mambo No. 5 (Monica)



Mambo No. 5 (Jessica)



A slow drip of a viscous material congeals into a solid mass. Wax and honey are made by bees, specifically worker bees, whose hexagonal designs are arranged by the hive-mind. From the day of birth, these labourers are assigned with a societal order – a responsibility to their queen.

May Day is labour's festivity, a celebration of production by the erasure of work. Abolishing work could be possible with automation, but today it seems more likely to experience the end of the world than the end of work. Never before have we toiled more hours under 0- hour-contracts and countless methods of social self-surveillance. Algorithms outpace our thinking, collecting online and offline “cookies” and replacing domestic labour. The female voices of our first mass-servants Alexa and Siri strive to seduce and to please.

Our unconscious desires surround us through targeted ads. Prediction itself has always been a business that homogenises the population. Fortune cookies were first served in San Francisco where today's tech companies crowd the Bay Area. Like palmistry, or tarot, it is based on systemic methods of applying data and generalised formula – and yet what would happen if we knew the future?

Containing a fortune to fit demand – a reading of 2 degrees Celsius in the form of a high-end-fashion logo marks a dystopian present in which social action is relegated to corporate brands and thus dependent on profit motives. The “reading” of 2 degrees refers to our environmental point of no return – a universal prediction to which each individual will be undoubtedly affected in the not-so-distant future.

When it slowly melts, changes its outlines and transforms its shape as it approaches the water, does it remain the same as before? Scientific projections of environmental cataclysm strike no emotion. AI and jellyfish will survive in the future landscape – bees and humans will find a different fate. Sea-snail shapes adapt to the inside of our ‘ear snail’ of our inner ear. Bees-wax scales to wax produced by the human body. A mechanical humdrum, Balenciaga- sponsored-apocalypse-shelters, larval bodies occupying hexagonal frames. Another May Day passes on our warming planet. The wax gets softer.

Text *Àngels Miralda*

Photos *Joseph Devitt-Tremblay*



Infinite Crawl, 2019



Infinite Crawl
Installation view



Infinite Crawl (detail)
Photos *Kira Krueger*



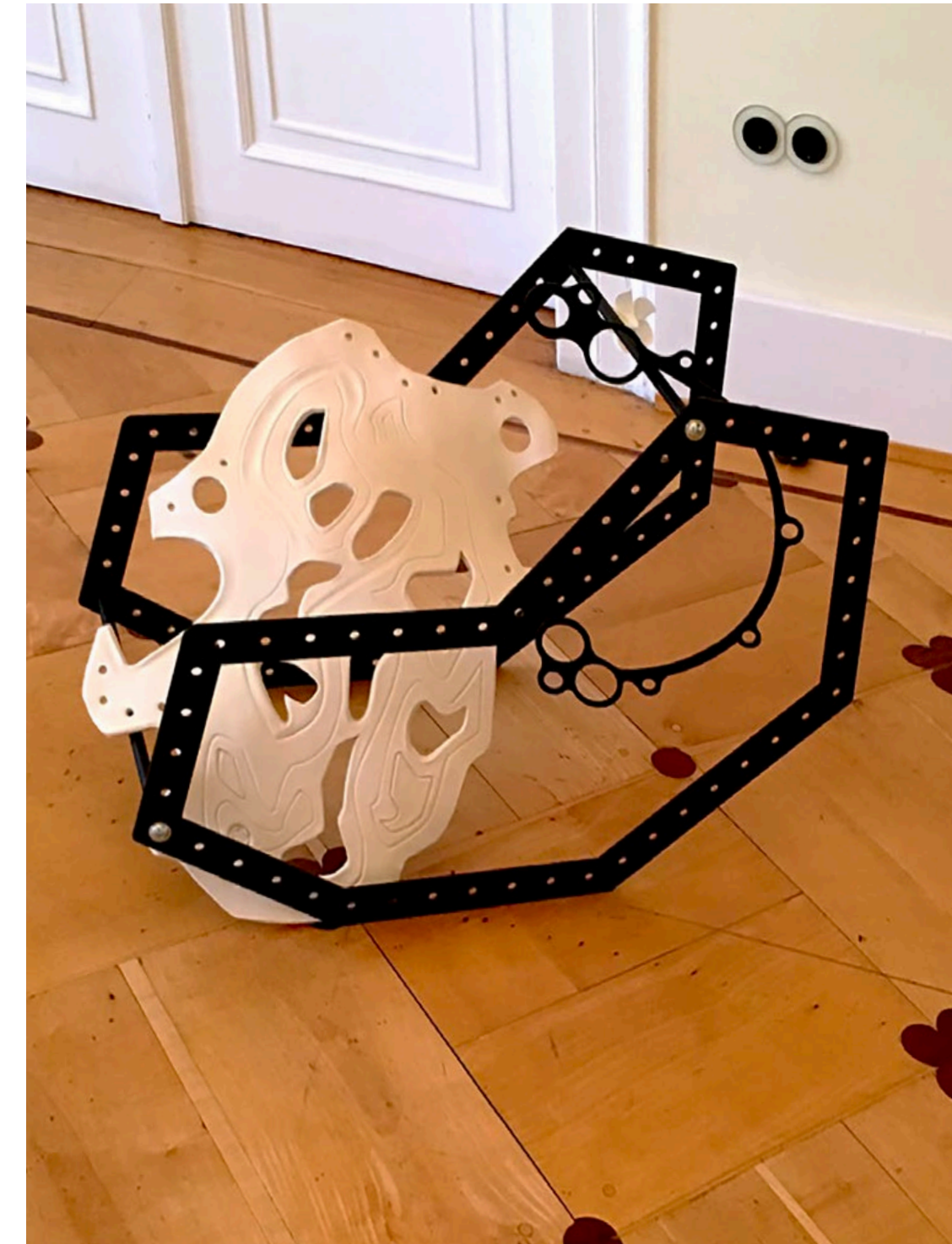


Affektive Allianzen brachte Arbeiten von Studierenden und Alumni der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Nürnberg in einen Dialog mit den historischen Räumlichkeiten von Schloss Callenberg und dort ausgestellten Kunstwerken, Möbelstücken und Objekten. Mit ortsspezifischen Installationen und künstlerischen Interventionen werden vorgefundene und ausgewählte Exponate zu der Geschichte der ehemaligen Privatresidenz wie der herzoglichen Familie Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha kommentiert, aktiviert oder aktualisiert. Die Gruppenausstellung begibt sich auf eine unmittelbare Erkundung und schlägt dabei Korrespondenzen und Bündnisse vor, durch die Kategorien wie Klasse, Geschlecht, Historizität und Repräsentation adressiert werden.

Die Ausstellung fand im Rahmen des 200. Geburtsjubiläums des Coburger Prinz Albert und seiner Frau Queen Victoria statt und wurde von Judith Grobe und Gergana Todorova kuratiert.



Infinite Crawl (detail)
glazed ceramic, powder-coated steel, shower-ring, felt



Infinite Crawl (detail)
glazed ceramic, powder-coated steel, artificial flower



Your Epidermis is Showing, 2018



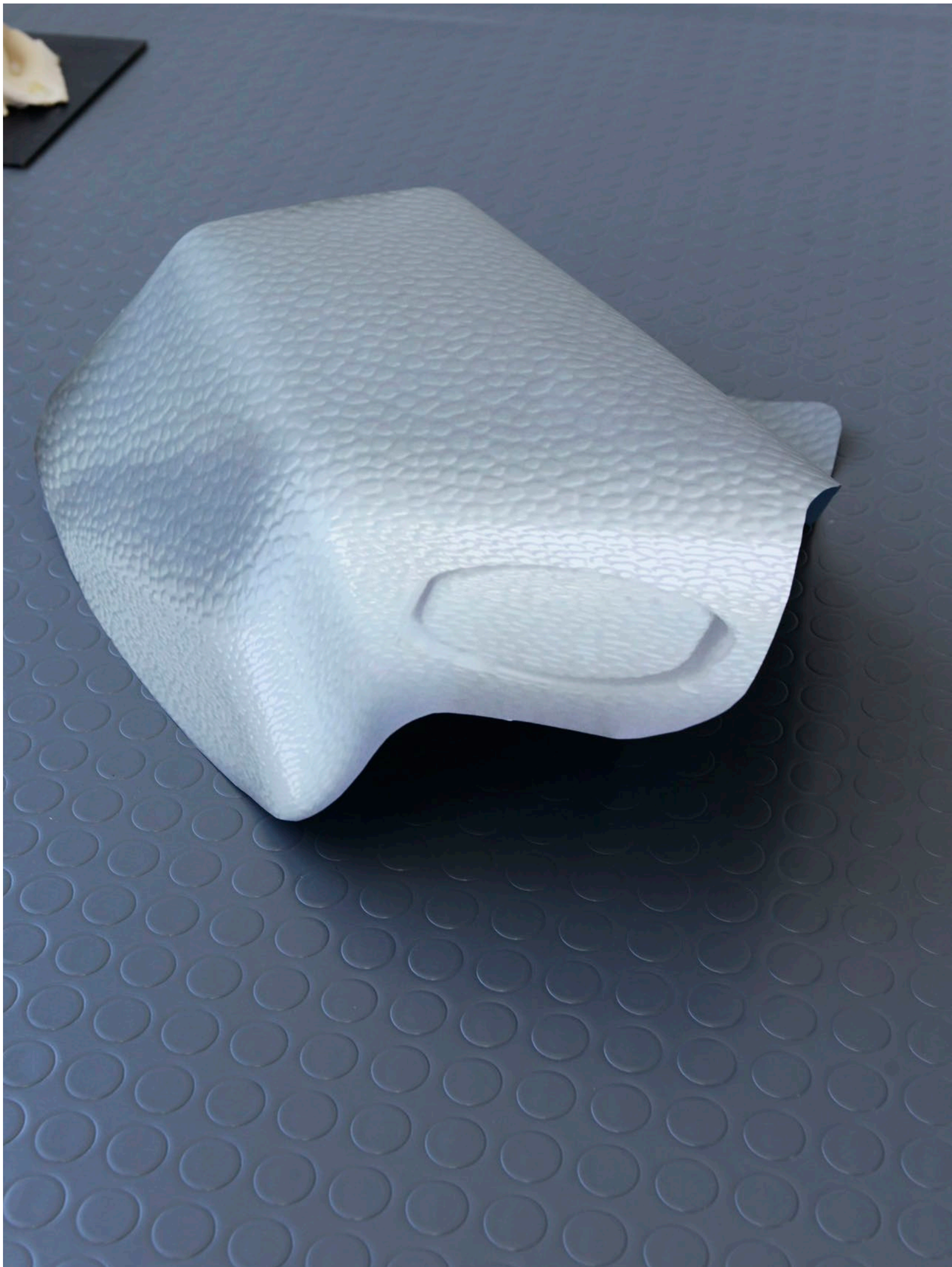
Your Epidermis is Showing
photography on paper, steel, glazed ceramics, bisque ceramics,
PVC 'pirelli' flooring, agar-agar, razors, fabric, dog food, stain-
less steel, plastic, rhinestones, wood, metal wires, salad spin-
ner, awning crank, satin rope, foam, pigments



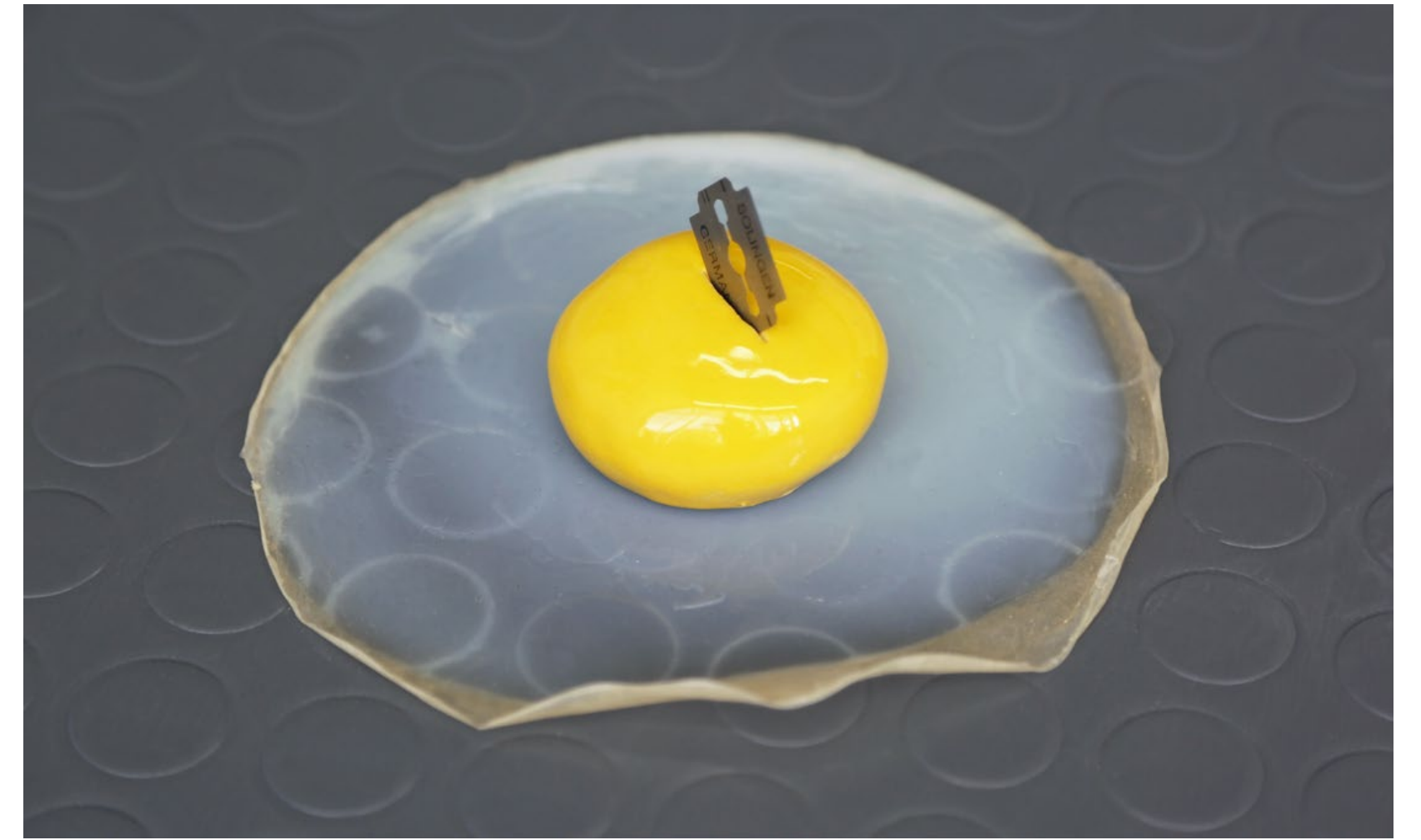
Your Epidermis is Showing (detail)



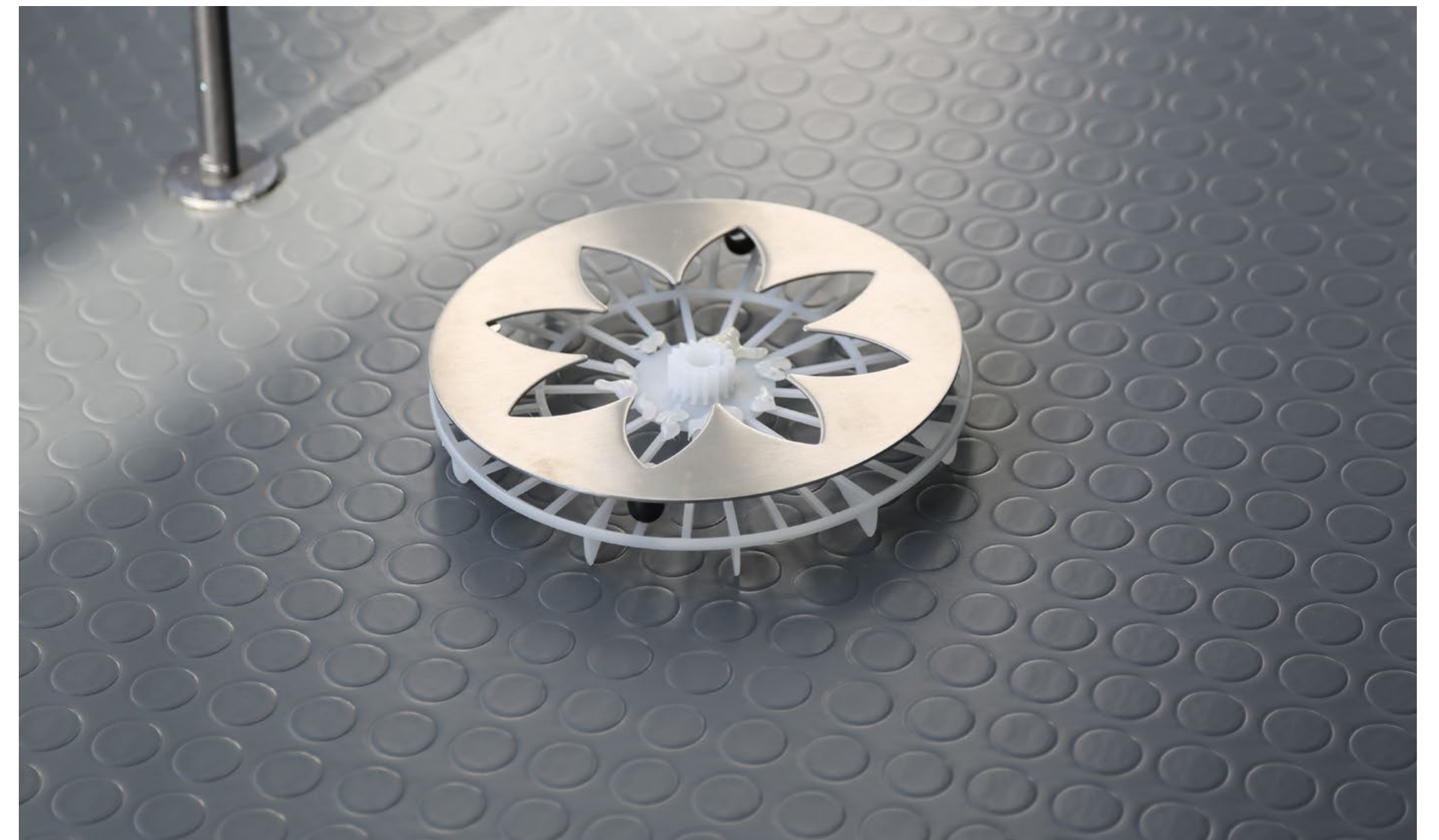
Your Epidermis is Showing installation view



Your Epidermis is Showing (detail)
photography on paper, plastic



(detail) agar-agar, glazed ceramic, razor blade





*Earthship is Sinking / Bring
Your Own Cameltoe, 2018*





My Olives Have Seen, 2018





Progress, (detail)
glazed ceramic, horse-bit

My Olives Have Seen, (detail)
glazed ceramics, bisque ceramics,
olives, soap bar with motif, silicone,
steel, pigment, anti-slip stool part



The Kiss, (detail)
soap bar with motif



My Olives Have Seen, (detail)





My Olives Have Seen, (detail)
saddle-holders, bisque terra cotta



My Olives Have Seen, (detail)
memory-foam, glazed ceramic, horse-bridle

May–Day
Interview between curator Àngels Miralda and Achinoam Alon

Àngels Miralda: This interview is in relation to your exhibition in Zürich, May Day, which ran from 5 May to 9 June at Lemoyne Project. A while ago you sent me an article by Harvard law and business professor Shoshana Zuboff titled “Big other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilisation.” In it, a variety of themes are explored relating to massive daily data extraction and the velocity of change and consequences this has on our lives and the structure of labour. I really enjoy how your exhibition juxtaposes these big themes with the material qualities of art making with honey collecting in order to make a relation between data and ecology. Firstly, can you describe the work that can be called the starting point of the exhibition: a series of the differently-sized ceramic cookies that create the metaphoric basis of this juxtaposition?

Achinoam Alon: I initially approached fortune cookies out of an interest in their affordance, their interface. Their invitation to a primal gesture of cracking them open – a kind of subtle, irreversible violence is suggested there.

We seem to ‘accept cookies’ online and the sophisticated violence practiced on us in the form of surveillance, data mining, and control, as casually as we do our collective fortune – the scientific certainty of global warming. We dismiss alarming scientific forecasts in our everyday behaviors with the same manner we would with a fortune cookie reading. The aphoristic character of the fortunes can be applied to and related by most people. This touches on themes of increased automation of our everyday experience through algorithms, memes, and a human life based on mediated stimulus-response, as well as our inclusive future as a species.

Observing the fortune cookie as a ‘prediction tool’, one with the potential of behavioural modification (power of superstition), I found parallels to our emerging ‘digital assistants’ (i.e. Alexa). Those too, are in the business of behavioural prediction and inevitably, its modification. In her article, Zuboff quotes Hal Varian: ‘The way to predict the future is to observe what the rich people have because that is what the middle class and the poor will want too’, where he is basically talking about personal assistants.

Inside and around the cookies, you can see this branded fabric which I produced with several references to logos and the prediction of 2 degrees. The monogram woven on the fortune is relying on this old capitalist logic expressed by Varian, referring to the evolution of luxuries into necessities. Implementing this concept through marketing the rise of ‘just’ 2 degrees as the ‘luxury’-scenario prediction for human life can be seen as the last attempt to draw everyone’s attention. We are witnessing this freak phenomenon in contemporary consumerist culture, i.e. in its reverted form, with Balenciaga’s ‘World Food Programme’ collection, where a symbol of hunger becomes that of ‘taste’.

ÀM: Zuboff uses the term “extraction” which is one that I reference frequently in more material and ecologically-minded exhibitions. In her words, data flows are termed as “data exhaust” which is formed by the runoff actions of users in mega-platforms such as Google and Facebook. This data is related to “raw material,” which can be compared to the ore or the product that comes from the ground and later for refinement and production purposes. Can you delve a bit more into this metaphor of exhaust with fossil fuels and how exhaust can relate to the scent vaporisers in the exhibition?

AA: the scent released from the sculptures is sweet, meant to attract and lure – it’s a sticky honey-trap and your new lover is only really there with the intention of invading your life and make you reveal all your secrets for the benefit of a third party. Observing the main aspect of the aroma diffusers for what they are originally, I like to make a connection to the ‘Wellness Industry’. Some people I know use them with the purpose of blurring unpleasant smells coming from the street, this is corresponding with the phenomenon of treating environmental symptoms instead of the cause – what can’t be remedied is only temporarily camouflaged or greenwashed.

Simultaneously, the nozzles are reminiscent of the smokers used to sedate bees before approaching their hives for harvesting purposes. The scented steam can be than seen as mere smoke, also as idiomatic reference to a metaphorical ‘smoke screen’ that tech companies are using in obscuring their intentions of what seems to be a sophisticated ‘warfare’ on our intimate sphere. It’s about how people are getting inured into giving away so much of their personal information, bring these data collecting devices into their most private spheres, for vague promises of increased convenience and services in return.

Going back to the term ‘exhaust’ – as with refineries so with bee keeping, raw materials are processed into several derivatives and sub-categories. With us being the raw material for the big tech companies, there’s usefulness to any kind of data we produce – all is collected and analysed. In that manner, the algorithmic power of ‘big data’ is way more efficient in its ability to process everything – it is really zero-waste.

ÀM: There’s another concept that I think relates very well to your exhibition and that is of technology’s ability to produce a “psychic numbing” towards exploitation. This relates to your fabric pieces that we discussed prior. How do you see the psychic numbing of labour and climate collapse as related?

AA: well, most people are either busy ‘keeping their heads above water’, or creating as much a convenient and efficient life for themselves as possible. Also, considering the amount of virtue and resources put into the development of AI technologies, one could claim that there’s a brain drain from disciplines that would have taken on finding solutions to our upcoming climate catastrophe, into the gutters of more lucrative realms of ‘big data’ and specifically the surveillance project.

ÀM: I want to bring in another reference which is connected to science fiction and narrative. In an episode of Black Mirror called “Hated in the Nation,” the plot proposes that bees have gone extinct. Humanity has patched up this lack with a series of algorithm-controlled drones whose sole purpose is pollination. They are controlled by a central government system. In the episode, a hacker interrupts the code to respond to trending Twitter themes and kill the person who is most hated in trending hashtags. This episode combines a lot of the themes that you do including technological collapse, the security issues still apparent with hacking and technology, the weakness of the system we inhabit, and social control. Can you speak more about the bees in your project and how they differ or are similar to the premise of this episode?

AA: Honeybees form societies in which thousands of members integrate their behaviours to act as a single functional unit. The process of automation of our Everyday through hyper-mediated communications and transactions must be endorsing the hive mind functions of human society. We already suffer some of the consequences of this influence through social media, as we got to learn the power of targeted ads and the online propaganda made possible through government–tech-giants alliances, has to create political revolutions. When interaction patterns and social dynamics of individuals can be recorded, classified and the contents accordingly ‘personalized’ – when we are hacked – Democracy is hacked too.

ÀM: Lastly, I want to bring up a final reference that has to do with technology and identity. Your series of sculptures are titled off of the women listed in Lou Bega’s “Mambo Number 5.” The sculptures embody some kind of proto-AI Siri or Alexa “characters” and reference the feminine naming of these personal helpers. They are the “ears” in the home of capitalist self-surveillance society. Cultural anthropologist Andrea Matošević has a text titled “Industry Forging Masculinity: “Tough Men,” Hard Labour, and Identity,” returning to extraction and labour, I was wondering if you could comment more on gender in these works. How are the changes in labour organisation and femininity in robotics used in a changing labour industry?

AA: at the moment, these changes seem to be used for maintaining old power structures. It is still soon to grasp the scope of how recent developments are going to influence us in the long term, but technology has always defined and determined society and gender relations with it, as historically reviewed in Matošević’s essay. Now, there’s a tendency towards greater inequality. We know that Tech working environments are pre-dominantly male and are familiar with the sexism hovering through cyberspace. I guess the shift goes from treating labouring bodies as technologies, hence when humans are fetishized for their functionalities and physicality which makes them be perceived as obsolete and replaceable beyond their obvious temporality, into reflecting that upon ‘female’ identified entities.

Whereas Matosevic references Zoolander, the titles of each sculpture refer to one of Lou Bega’s women characters from his son Mambo No. 5. Siri and Alexa are anthropomorphised algorithmic workers that affect our daily lives, just as gender and identity have done for all of human history. There is motivation to change these conditions and May Day serves as an urgent reminder of what is yet to be done, as well as a general reflection of the contemporary’s anxious mood – constantly at the brink of collapse.

Unter einer betont zurückhaltenden Oberfläche und außerhalb ihrer vollendeten Form, mäandern die Arbeiten von Achinoam Alon aus, lassen im Rückgriff auf präzise ausgearbeitete Trägerelemente und Halterungen die Grenzen von Objekt und Display verschwinden, verbinden einzelne skulpturale Gesten zu installativen Environments und nutzen so fast symbiotisch die Qualität ihrer räumlichen Umgebung um komplexe Informations- und Bezugssysteme zu beschwören.

Diese Systeme greifen auf eine polymorphe Syntax zurück, die aus sprachlichen Bildern, grammatischen Bedeutungsverschiebungen und objektiven wie affektiven Material-Kausalitäten besteht. Sie zeichnen den historischen Materialismus einer Technologie- und Kulturgeschichte, die Information und Wissen ebenso als Herrschaftsinstrumente begreift, wie Erinnerung und Begehren.

Dabei affirmieren sie oftmals Wissenschaft und technologisches Wissen als Ausgangspunkte konzeptueller Überlegungen, wie sie in ihrer Ausgestaltung und sinnlichen Erfahrbarkeit auf die Bedeutung psychosozialer Prozesse verweisen. Die Arbeiten werden dargeboten, wie Gaben oder kultische Objekte, stellen den eigenen Warencharakter ebenso bloß wie die Autorität kultureller Wissens(re)produktion und die Herrschaft der materiellen und kulturellen Umstände, der sozio-ökonomischen Verortung, über das Ich.

Auf diese Weise werden sie zu einer produktiven Linse, die eine Material gewordene Wissens- und Mediengeschichte dieser Subjektivierungsprozesse zeichnet und erfahrbar macht. Eine Geschichte, die sich letztlich in der ästhetischen oder konzeptuellen Verwandtschaft zwischen den Objekten entschlüsseln lässt, sofern die Betrachtende bereit ist, nicht nur am gezielt platzierten Honigtopf der ästhetischen Erfahrung kleben zu bleiben, sondern das eigene kulturell-historische Wissen und so auch die Erfahrung des eigenen Werdens in Relation zu setzen. Dann aber schlagen sich in den Tropfen des süßen Nektars das Begehren im Wissen und das Eros der Erinnerung nieder. Ein Spiel vielleicht, gespielt als Traum auf den Stützen der Lust.

Text: Joannie Baumgärtner

Achinoam Alon
1989 Tel Aviv, Israel

2023 Meisterschülerin of Prof. Michael Stevenson
2016 – 2022 Sculpture studies, Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg, Prof. Michael Stevenson
2019 – 2022 Sculpture studies, Academy of Fine Arts Munich, Prof. Nicole Wermers
2012 – 2015 Chronic disease and convalescence
2010 – 2012 Fashion Design studies, Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin

Exhibitions

2023 group exhibition at Xxijra Hii, London
2022 The Hallucinated Countryside, curated by Andrzej Steinbach and Steffen Zillig, Briefing Room, Brussels
2022 3DCXP, Space Rosa Stern, Munich
2022 Dear Developer..., Kunstverein Nuremberg
2022 Frenemies, graduation installation, Pavillon 31, AdBK
2020 This House Is Not a Home/K2020, Lothringer13 Halle, Munich
2020 Ruinous Times, 'Ruine' @Lenbachhaus, Munich
2020 Cosmic Dandruff, Florida Fenêtre, Munich
2019 Jahresgaben, curated by Milan Ther, Kunstverein Nuremberg
2019 May Day, solo exhibition, curated by Àngels Miralda, Lemoyne Project, Zurich
2019 Affektive Allianzen, curated by Judith Grobe and Gergana Todorova, Callenberg Castle
2019 On a Scale of Many, curated by Judith Grobe and Gergana Todorova, Ausstellungshalle AdBK
2019 Infinite Crawl, Aula AdBK Nuremberg
2018 Cosy Crunchy Circuits, Edel Extra, Nuremberg
2018 Earthship Is Sinking / Bring Your Own Cameltoe, solo exhibition, Die Vitrine, Nuremberg
2018 Your Epidermis Is Showing, solo exhibition, Galerie Douglas, Nuremberg
2018 Don't You Blame Anyone (Future Comes Quickly), curated by Övül Durmusoğlu, Akademie Galerie, Nuremberg

Other Projects

2022 artistic contribution, KLITTERN (aesopica), by Lennart Boyd Schürmann, co-produced by Otto Falckenberg Schule/Münchner Kammerspiele and BRUCH
2021 artistic contribution, COLD LOVE (seelenstahlbaden) co-produced OFS/MK/BRUCH
2021 Stage for taniko by L.Boyd Schürmann, Brechtfestival Augsburg
2021 Esch sunny ceramics born in grief
2020 Stage for ERMITAGE by L.B.Schürmann, co-produced by OFS/Münchner Kammerspiele

Awards / Nominations

2022 Ars Viva Prize 2024 Nomination
2019 DAAD Prize, annual exhibition at AdBK Nuremberg
2018 Shortlisted for the 24th German Federal Art Prize for Art Students