



AND THIS IS FRANKFURTER
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Art descriptions

And This is Us 2021 – Young Art from Frankfurt

June 2 – September 5, 2021

Participating artists: Max Brück, Agnese Galiotto, Michelle Harder, Valentina Knežević, Isabell Ratzinger, Saya Schulzen, Gintarė Sokelytė, Matt Welch, Faina Yunusova

Curated by Franziska Nori

This is the third edition of the biennial exhibition format which the Frankfurter Kunstverein dedicates to emerging artists from the Rhine-Main region.

And This is Us 2021 - Young Art from Frankfurt is deliberately not a thematic exhibition, so that the participating artists are given the opportunity to showcase their specific approach and practice.

The concept of the exhibition is to accompany the participants in the development of large-scale presentations on an institutional scale and to offer them a nationally visible stage for their works. This year, nine participants were invited.

Artists need a space to create a dialogue with the audience as only this way art can unfold its meaning and social relevance.

Our thanks go to the Dr. Marschner Foundation, which grew out of the commitment of a Frankfurt citizen to help keep cultural life alive for the people of our city.

In Frankfurt, international young artists start their studies and careers at art schools such as Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule, Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach and numerous other universities and academies. Ninety portfolios were submitted and reviewed for this exhibition. All artistic genres and media expressions were considered in order to show the diversity of today's artistic practices and to draw a multifaceted picture of current art production.

In addition to the curated main exhibition, Frankfurter Kunstverein has expanded the format this year in order to offer an even larger number of young artists the chance of public visibility.

The collective Magma Maria was invited to organise the sales exhibition *Frankfurter Kunst Vertrieb*. Along the window facade on the ground floor, artworks in two-dimensional format are being presented. They were submitted by 170 artists under the age of thirty. Throughout the summer, their works are exhibited in alternating cycles and offered for sale. 100% of the proceeds from the sale of the artworks goes to the artists. The non-profit action is based on a solidarity effort as a response to the pandemic times and the resulting reduced opportunities for young artists to present their works.

In addition, the young designer duo Bea&Pierre have made new wearables and unique upcycled bags for an FKV collection.

Over the duration of the exhibition, young electronic musicians will present their live sets to the public in a series of listening sessions.

The Frankfurter Kunstverein strongly believes that despite, or perhaps especially in, times of ordinances and restricted public life, strong signals must come out from museums and cultural institutions that culture is a much needed encounter space and home for people fostering social identity.

Max Brück

Kreislauf, 2021

Max Brück's work deals with the question of how collective memory is created and what material might make this visible. What remains when a city and life in it changes? What shapes the identity of a city and how does it change?

For the installation at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Brück looked at the institution's immediate surroundings, Frankfurt's new old town. Brück's research focused on the Technical Town Hall, a 1970s brutalist building that adjoined the Frankfurter Kunstverein. The architectural conception in the formal language of modernism, its geometric form, the exposed concrete material and the building's function as the seat of the city administration, stood for a historical moment in which the break with the immediate German past was to be demonstrated in urban planning terms. The demolition of this building in the 2010s and the reconstruction of the historicised old town on a medieval street plan ignited fierce and controversial debate about architecture as a symbol of collective memory and social identity.

Just as historical set dressing was attached to the façades of recreated buildings in the New Old Town for commemorative celebrations, Brück returns the once disposed of rubble of the demolished Technical Town Hall to its original location.

Max Brück goes back to the materiality of history. For the site-specific installation *Kreislauf*, he contacted the company that demolished the Technical Town Hall. The remains of this demolition are still stored on the outskirts of the city today, since the concrete – once an ideologically charged material – was crushed to be recycled as a new raw material. As a component of recycled concrete, it is used for new buildings, and the New Old Town itself stands on a layer of gabion baskets in which the rubble of the Town Hall forms the foundation.

Brück illuminates the fragments of the Technical Town Hall with lights taken from the cycle of constant renewal, lamps from a dissolved archive. As often in his works, the artist makes use of discarded, once functional objects and instruments that are becoming obsolete in a society of constant and ever faster technical renewal.

On one hand, the question of the emergence of memory, and, on the other, an interest in future-oriented strategies such as urban mining characterise Brück's work. Urban mining is a new, sustainable method of extracting raw materials. By this process, materials available in cities in particular can be fed back into production processes.

Brück deliberately chose a controversial landmark in Frankfurt's inner city that continues to spark emotional and ideological debates to this day. The conveyor belts and material chutes, which form a circuit, transport the stage props of an already forgotten inner-city landmark in a constructed deceleration. The artist vacuum seals the individual stones for storage, preserving props that visitors can take with them as souvenirs. A first, visible cycle is created in the exhibition space, which becomes an extended, ideal cycle of collective memory through the participation of the visitors. The individual stone, the fragment, refers to a former larger whole that is only remembered through language and the narrative of what has been, and thus acts as a symbol for the negotiation of identity in a society.

Max Brück (*1991, Schotten, DE) lives and works in Offenbach am Main (DE) and Gießen (DE). In 2018 he graduated with special honors from the University of Art and Design in Offenbach (DE) with the subjects space, sculpture and sociology with Prof. Heiner Blum, Prof. Susanne Winterling and Prof. Marc Ries. From 2015 to 2016 he completed a semester abroad at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (PL). He won numerous awards such as the travel grant of the Hessische Kulturstiftung, the Künstlerhilfe Frankfurt and the working scholarship of the Stiftung Kunstfonds. The artist has exhibited with the following institutions (selection): Kunstforum der TU Darmstadt, Darmstadt (DE), The Watch, Berlin (DE), Kunst- und Kulturstiftung Opelvillen Rüsselsheim, Rüsselsheim (DE),

Bistro 21, Leipzig (DE), Hafenhalle, Offenbach am Main (DE), Neuer Gießener Kunstverein, Gießen (DE), StudioNAXOS, Frankfurt am Main (DE).

Saya Schulzen

Wölfin im Menschenfell, 2021

Milch, 2021

Sublime Submersion, 2021

Die Nähe schlummert, 2021

Weltinnenraum, 2021

Berührte Natur, 2021

Saya Schulzen is an artist in the age of the Anthropocene. She creates associative images of fantastic landscapes in which human and non-human beings live on an equal footing and are interconnected.

Schulzen works sculpturally with clay and she draws with watercolour, gouache and oil pencils. She creates artistic ecologies from imagined and real beings. The landscapes have something paradise-like about them. The imagined worlds are created through the flat, ornamental use of colours on which she arranges her figures. The colours and lines in her paintings are forces that seem naturalistic, but move away from a depiction of the real.

The starting point of her drawings is always the human face, whose gaze out of the pictorial space establishes the connection to the viewer. Schulzen shapes her compositions around this gaze. The artist does not plan the structure of the picture in advance, but relies on her intuitive and associative approach in which she allows the forms to grow in the process of drawing. Humans, animals and plants share the same space as an ideal surface of equal existence. The artist invents a poetic space in which symbolically the interconnectedness of the different species in an equal coexistence is represented as a new ecology.

While some creatures are imaginative neologisms, Schulzen devotes detailed, lifelike representations to wild herbs. Called weeds, the linguistic designation betrays a human classification of living beings within a scale of values of usability. The wild weed symbolises the primordial, which must be brought under control through cultural practice. This concept needs to be rethought and thus stands for a transformation in the understanding of nature. Today's understanding of ecological systems, in which all living beings are interconnected and interdependent and in which nature must be understood as a constant process, overrides the culturally conditioned and humanly constructed value judgement towards individual life forms.

Touch is a recurring motif in Schulzen's work. The gesture of physical proximity between the different figures stands for a new awareness of felt connection with the different. In her sculptural work, Saya Schulzen creates figures in clay inspired by marine worlds. Schulzen forms sea anemones, creatures that live as solitaires on the seabed, and which, as animals, resemble plants and flowers in their appearance. Again, the blurring of the boundary between the different life forms is a theme of Schulzen's artistic interpretation. Her work is representative of a generation of artists and writers who plead for a new sensibility in which living beings are understood both in their physical, scientific and subjective reality. They seek a new humanism in which all living beings and things of nature are ensouled.

Unlike the numerous dystopian world views that are taking place today in the debate about the Anthropocene, Schulzen's work positions itself as a fantastic projection of paradisiacal states of hierarchy-free coexistence. The idealised pictorial worlds are an expression of a search for new narratives of being human, in which biological boundaries are abolished and fantastic and dreamlike elements are allowed to coexist.

Saya Schulzen (*1992, Bad Schwalbach, DE) has been studying at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach (DE) with Prof. Heiner Blum and Prof. Merja Herzog-Hellstén since 2016. Her main focus is on ceramic sculptures and watercolor drawings. Previously, she studied philosophy at the Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main (DE). Among others, Saya Schulzen has exhibited at the following institutions: Kunstforum der TU Darmstadt, Darmstadt (DE), HfG Kunsthalle, Offenbach am Main (DE), Kunstansichten, Offenbach am Main (DE).

Agnese Galiotto

Miracoli (Miracles), 2021

Agnese Galiotto is a filmmaker and painter. For the exhibition at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, she has produced a new film that traces the inner and outer world of a subject named Claudia. Claudia lives in the northern Italian region of Veneto. In the 1930s, in the mountainous landscape of her home town of Chiampo, a monk and sculptor created a faithful reproduction of the grotto and the statue of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes. A strong Catholic faith and the veneration of the Madonna deeply shape the culture of the region to this day, as it does the image of women and the concept of family as a task of self-sacrifice. At the beginning of the film, the off-screen voice, which is the voice of the artist, introduces the connection between the original grotto in Lourdes and the replica in Chiampo, which is closely linked to her own family history.

Claudia is the artist's mother. As in previous works, she deals with people from her immediate environment, but always maintains an observationally neutral gaze. Claudia's story is marked by the responsibility she had to assume for her brother at an early age. He was born with a disability for which his parents repeatedly prayed to Our Lady for healing during numerous pilgrimages. They made pilgrimages to Lourdes. The connection between their village and the French place of pilgrimage determines the identity of the family as well as the entire region.

We see Claudia today, as a grown woman, training in a wintry landscape. The cycling marathon, in which riders are again and again pushed to the edge of their physical limits over several days, has become an essential part of her life in recent years. We hear Claudia's voice, hinting at her youth and what her close bond with her brother meant for her own identity. The film's images situate the voice in a deserted, vast and silent mountain landscape, where Claudia encounters nature by day, by night or at sunrise, alone, with only her bicycle. The artist directs her reserved and observing gaze at Claudia's physical endurance and mental concentration. For days, she accompanied her lonely ride in the seclusion and silence of the mountains with her camera. She succeeds in creating a dense and concentrated mood through the images. The protagonist is part of a remote landscape harshly depicted, barren in winter. Claudia moves alone in nature, an experience through which she has learned to feel herself again. The film overcomes the biographical incident and draws the archetypal figure of a person who encounters herself in the vastness and silence of nature.

The artist does not reveal much about her family background. But we get a glimpse of how strongly societal expectations determine a biography and how much effort it takes to create space for oneself through the brief and only hinted at portrayals of the two voices, her own and that of her mother. With delicate colours and few gestures, the film tells the story of a transformation.

Galiotto extends the visual space of the film into real space by translating the wintry tree silhouettes and bluish colours of the film onto the windows and wall of the Frankfurt Kunstverein. Sunlight penetrates through the painted branches as it does through the woods and nature in her film, which is on the verge of the transformation of springtime. It is this transparency that she seeks and which enables her to still leave the world behind clearly visible through painting. As a trained painter in the fresco technique, Galiotto has tackled the challenge of stained glass for the first time. In order to achieve the water-like colours and translucence with sparing application of paint, she has developed a specific colour material with traditional pigment manufacturers from Italy. Deliberately making delicate interventions with her painting, Galiotto chooses not to cover anything, but to create an additional layer and thus change the way we look at it. This carries over from her painting to her film work. As in previous films, Galiotto observes the people close to her in search of who they are and where they come from.

Agnese Galiotto (*1996, Chiampo, IT) is a painter and filmmaker living and working in Frankfurt am Main (DE) and Chiampo (IT). Since 2018 she has been studying at the Frankfurt Art Academy Städelschule (DE) with Prof. Willem de Rooij. Previously, she completed her bachelor's degree in painting at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan (IT), where she acquired the technique of fresco painting. Since 2020 she participates in the residency program Dolomiti contemporanee (IT) and is an annual fellow of Künstlerhilfe Frankfurt (DE). The artist has exhibited with the following institutions (selection): Palmengarten Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main (DE), MediumP. An honest institution, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Jo-Anne, Frankfurt am Main (DE), BFI Southbank, London (GB), Palazzo Mandelli, Arena Po (IT).

Michelle Harder

Exuvie, 2021

Michelle Harder's work emerges at the intersection of sculpture, installation and performance. Here, clay is her central material. In a long search process, she chose six tonnes of excavated earth from the region around Limburg and had it brought to the premises of the Frankfurter Kunstverein. The loamy composition was a prerequisite for carrying out her sculptural work. In a concentrated physical process, Harder mixes the clay with water, compacting and moulding it again and again into a plastic and elastic mass, which she fits into hollow moulds.

Harder works with plaster casts of her own body. In a previous process, she bandaged parts of her own body with plaster-soaked gauze, awaiting the hardening of the material, and then releasing herself from it. From the resulting shells, she creates two-part hollow bodies as negative moulds for her sculptures. She presses rolled-out clay mass into these and allows it to dry before carefully removing it. Sometimes the fragile form breaks in the process.

In the exhibition space, Harder has created a landscape of mounds of earth from which she lets the created body fragments grow. From the clay soil, which the artist calls topsoil – in German, *Mutterboden*, the moulds of her own body emerge like a seed. The artist rearranges the fragmentary body sculptures, forming constellations of recognisable parts and skin envelopes that become one with the natural soil.

In its moulding, the artist's own body gives form to a hardened surface, a hollow and fragile form that remains after the artistic creative process. It is the relic of a vital process, like an insect or reptile's shed skin. The shape remains and bears witness to a body that has left behind the exterior and begun a new life cycle. The exuvia of a being,

the plastic memory of what it was before and out of which it has grown. A transformation has taken place and a new phase begins. The cycle of life and matter starts anew, temporarily taking on a form and passing away again. The fragility of the clay forms is an essential component of Harder's artistic work. She exposes the sculptures to external influences and knows that the forms might break at any time. The installation itself was created for the duration of the exhibition. Temporarily removed from the natural cycle of life, the soil will be returned to it after the exhibition.

Michelle Harder (*1995, Stuttgart, DE) lives and works in Offenbach am Main (DE). Before she started her studies at the University of Art and Design in Offenbach (DE) with Prof. Heiner Blum and Prof. Heike Schuppelius in 2015, she completed a state approved ballet dancer training in 2009. Her sculptural works deal with questions of corporeality and identity. In 2020 she was a one-year scholarship holder of the Künstlerhilfe Frankfurt (DE). The artist has exhibited with the following institutions (selection): Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Zollamt Galerie, Offenbach am Main (DE), Hafenhallen, Offenbach am Main (DE), Kappus Seifenfabrik, Offenbach am Main (DE).

Faina Yunusova

#SugarMacht, 2021

Faina Yunusova is concerned with the conventions of the internet and the emergence of communities that contribute to the collective construction of digital phenomena. She identifies and uses as many as possible of the factors that in social media generate success and high user numbers.

The digital performance *#SugarMacht* created for the Frankfurter Kunstverein begins on Instagram and finds its extension in the exhibition space. Yunusova cites a variety of currently successful aesthetics that can be seen as a backdrop for self-staging in social media. The purple light, the ring light for better self-portraits, the intimate atmosphere of a bedroom. The bed stages a supposedly private sphere of the artist that only serves to present herself to the public. The neon writing hanging from the ceiling with the hashtag *#SugarMacht* is an invitation from the artist to the visitors to participate in the performance and become part of her work.

The first screen shows a compilation of content produced and posted by the artist herself. Here, Yunusova stages herself as an influencer who performs TikTok trends, thus inviting the audience on site to participate and imitate her. Instagram and especially TikTok reinforce the practice of remix. Mashups and challenges are generated based on

the repetition and interpretation of others' specifications. Her mise-en-scène is a fake, practiced as a convention of online self-representation. The artist uses her body as a placeholder for collective imaginings, but through a variety of filters, music and comedic dislocations it is used as a staging of a digital person.

The space visible in the digital presentation and potentially misjudged as reality is actually entered by visitors to the exhibition and thus made usable again as a backdrop. Yunusova creates a loop of self-reflection between digital and analogue, in which the staged space is not only viewed via the mobile phone interface, but is offered as a real stage on which the visitors now also perform themselves. If you post a picture or a video on Instagram under the hashtag *#SugarMacht*, you become part of the installation – the audience can view themselves in real time on a screen that is connected to the internet and randomly displays posts that have been shared under the hashtag.

Through her own language based on dancing, music and self-parody, the artist shows the playful nature of social media (*#Sugar*) and reveals how the spread of trends builds collective identity, actively and increasingly merging an online community. Simple interaction mechanisms of social media are revealed. What appears banal suggests the dependence on self-dramatisation and the power of mass production in the making of content that can result from the use of social media (*#Power* – in German *#Macht*). Those who define themselves as influencers and believe they have power to “influence” people are themselves influenced by the mass culture of others. Thus, the hashtag *#SugarMacht* indexes the ambiguity of social media.

Faina Yunusova (*1991, Tashkent, UZ) currently lives and works in Offenbach am Main (DE). Her work explores digital presence on social media and the creation of virtual identities. She has been studying at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach (DE) since 2017. She previously studied at the Stroganov Moscow State Academy of Arts and Industry in Moscow (RU) before being expelled from the university for her internet activism. Among others, Faina Yunusova has exhibited at the following institutions: Basis Projektraum, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Rumplmayr Neukirchen, Sägewerk, Neukirchen (AT), Academy for interdisciplinary processes, Offenbach am Main (DE), Zwo Gallery, Vienna (AT).

Valentina Knežević

Yurval, 2021

Yurval is the title of Valentina Knežević's work. The word *Yurval* is made up of the names of the first two cosmonauts Yuri Gagarin and Valentina Tereshkova. The artist grew up

hearing that she was named after this first female astronaut. Knežević's video work is a science fiction narrative that developed in collaboration with graphic designers, scientists and filmmakers. Knežević works with the means of digital animation, which she developed together with digital graphic artist Lidija Kljakovic. The voice-over in the film belongs to satellite data engineer Nikolina Govedarica.

The animated film imagines a future scenario of the human species in search of new expanses. In the artist's vision, humans have evolved as *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* and are searching for new habitats in outer space. She explores the idea of the end of history, in which the Earth is no longer the place where utopias and human longings are realised. The evolution of man through the development of machines has also been overcome and biological matter has merged with technological matter to form a super-organism. The theme of the primordial human urge to discover and conquer new spaces determines Knežević's work. In her film, the artist argues that the earth has been fully explored and studied and that there is no further history to be written on this planet. The imaginary space for new utopias is thus exhausted and all visions for a reinvention of humanity are projected into space. Future humanity now strives to continue its history in space.

The work *Yurval* comes at a historic moment when the United Arab Emirates, China and the United States of America have each launched separate missions to Mars. Through Nasa's *Perseverance* rover landing on the red planet and the Mars helicopter *Ingenuity*, humanity has obtained the first high-resolution images of an unknown landscape that has fuelled the imagination of mankind for centuries.

Knežević poses the question of what future humanity will have when planet Earth is destroyed and parts of humanity have left it. What will a society look like that has to make a new start on a distant planet? Will it repeat the same mistakes it is trying to escape? Will social inequality, racism, intolerance, poverty and war be overcome? With her work, Knežević relates to utopian projections of a humanity that asks about the nature of being human in the age of the Post-Anthropocene. Her film raises questions about the fate of humanity, which, despite the eternal search for new spaces, will ultimately always be thrown back on itself and only recognise itself in the distant and unknown.

Valentina Knežević (*Split, YU) is a video artist living and working in Frankfurt am Main (DE). In 2019 she graduated from the Frankfurt Art Academy Städelschule (DE) as a master-class student of Douglas Gordon. Previously, she studied theater, film and media studies at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt am Main (DE). In 2020 she won the working scholarship of the Hessian Cultural Foundation. Among others, Valentina Knežević has exhibited at the following institutions: 45cbm, Kunsthalle Baden Baden, Baden Baden

(DE), Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (IT), Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (FR), Bangkok Biennale, Bangkok (TH).

Isabell Ratzinger

And This is the Rest, 2021

And This is the Rest. Die Streber oder die Strolche, 2021

Isabell Ratzinger's work often finds its point of departure in the givenness of the contingently encountered site and its function. For *And This is Us 2021*, the title of the exhibition series serves as a template to elaborate the institutional format of the curated selection of young artists into an expanded narrative scenario.

The artist inverts the phrase "and this is us", and asks who then is "the rest". Ratzinger's installation takes place in two sites on the exhibition circuit: in public space, directly in front of the entrance to the Frankfurter Kunstverein, and on the upper floor. On the ground directly in front of the entrance, the artist places numerous chewed gums that form the words "And This is The Rest" and are exposed to decomposition when visitors step on them to enter. Chewing gum is the material from which Ratzinger builds a spatial staging and to which she ascribes a figurative meaning belonging to youth culture and a passive form of rebellion.

Above, Ratzinger constructs a space in which all the existing elements are made from the different components of *Extra Professional White* chewing gum. She builds pillars out of the cardboard packaging on which she positions reflectors, which in turn are made out of the aluminium paper of the product and are meant to dazzle the visitors entering. The unwrapped strips of chewing gum, with traces of soot from burning, are used to cover a bench. Leaning against the walls are functional weapons, crossbows and bows, which were made according to online instructions from scraps of former household appliances.

The central elements of the installation are human silhouettes of two opposing groups. The shapes are created through cut-outs from the application of countless chewing gum paper balls. Absence determines the spatial structure, since the viewer encounters traces of an action that has taken place. Two imaginary groups fictitiously confront each other in space. Ratzinger's narrative intention suggests that "the rest" has been up to its mischief here and that the room bears traces of their time spent in playful and effortless togetherness.

Ratzinger is part of a comprehensive network of young artists from Frankfurt and Offenbach with whom she realises temporary projects in changing constellations. For example, the artist has involved numerous fellow students and colleagues in the

production of her installation in order to draw her image of an anonymous group of non-present young artists on the exhibition walls. The artist claims her conceptually chosen act of spitting casually chewed paper stands for a rebellious attitude. Ratzinger constructs a controlled act of provocation that rubs against the idea of the white cube as an exhibition space, while the chosen working material refers to this institutional space through its name *Extra Professional White*. Ratzinger, then, is part of the tradition of institutional critique, which examines the conditions of exhibiting, of work in institutions, the functioning of the art system itself, the economic exploitation of art and the relationship of art to its recipient.

Isabell Ratzinger (*1996, Mainz, DE) lives and works in Offenbach am Main (DE). She has been studying at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach since 2015. Previously, she studied sociology at the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz (DE). She has exhibited her installations and spatial interventions in the following institutions, among others: Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Kunstverein Familie Montez, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Magma Maria, Offenbach am Main (DE), 1822-Forum, Stiftung der Frankfurter Sparkasse, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Kunstforum der TU Darmstadt, Darmstadt (DE), Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden (DE), Zollamt Studios, Offenbach am Main (DE).

Matt Welch

The Secret Millionaire Part 2 – Sense of Doubt, 2021

Matt Welch works in sculpture, drawing and film. His new film, trilogy *Sense of Doubt*, produced for the exhibition *And This is Us 2021*, is envisaged as the second part of the trilogy *The Secret Millionaire*.

In *Sense of Doubt*, Welch weaves together numerous references to films and music related to the Berlin's past and its symbolic interpretation. This includes images and memories of his own time living in Berlin and the stories of a German friend, who fled from the GDR to West Berlin in 1984.

The film is shot entirely in subjective camera angles corresponding to the gaze of the main character in the film, and take place on three different levels. We see through the eyes of the male character as he drives through contemporary Berlin in a seemingly aimless car journey, listening to his inner monologue, the memory of formative experiences of alienation and exclusion; we experience him walking through streets, following the instructions of an inner voice, like that of a director. Finally, the camera glides through a red, wet, sore tunnel. The passage, both a gullet and a sewer, serves as

a transition between the outside world and the inside, a membrane between a conscious and an unconscious perception of the world.

The figure in the film walks among the non-places of an altered urban environment. The architectures of Berlin become stage sets for a contemporary production. The remains of the Wall and the former *death strip* between East and West have become a no-man's land in which the protagonist searches for ways out and cover, as if in a cage. An atmosphere of exhaustion and despair and the lack of a clear direction condenses. Again and again in Welch's work, the stomach appears as a metaphorical form. Welch speaks of the organ as a biological equivalent to the urban infrastructure of a waste system, a hidden place of processing, absorption and disposal. The camera descends into the depths of the body and its interior, penetrating an underground, a dark space that symbolically serves as a shelter for the protagonist.

For the presentation of his work, Matt Welch has chosen a space in the Frankfurter Kunstverein lying outside the regular domain of museum visitors, a flat used for artist residencies. Welch gives the rooms the appearance of an anonymous Airbnb residence where one can withdraw without the place reflecting one's own identity.

Sound plays a central role in both rooms. In the living room, piano music echoes, in the bedroom, where the film is shown, we hear the inner voice of the acting character. The songs are instrumental arrangements of tracks from David Bowie's albums *Low* and *Heroes*. Bowie composed and recorded these albums as parts of his *Berlin Trilogy* with Brian Eno. Having fled from Los Angeles to Berlin to escape his drug addiction, here Bowie was able to live relatively undetected in the city with Iggy Pop, his neighbour, going to underground clubs and bars untroubled by fans or paparazzi. The piano interpretations at the Frankfurt Kunstverein pick up on Bowie's synthesiser instrumentals and reinforce the film's atmosphere of loneliness and melancholy. *Sense of Doubt* is dominated by a mood of diffuse anxiety. The flowing alternation between the observation and scanning of the world in its appearance and the perception from the internal view of the stomach level dissolves the categories of inside and outside, central and peripheral. The inner monologue is the link in which the thoughts and feelings of the narrator are conveyed to the viewer in an atmospherically dense manner.

Matt Welch (*1988 in Liverpool, UK) works predominantly with sculpture and video. He studied an undergraduate degree in Painting at Wimbledon School of Art, London (UK), and graduated with a master-class student from the class of Haegue Yang at Frankfurt Art Academy Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main (DE) in October 2020. In 2020 he won the graduate prize of Sammlung Pohl for his work at Kunsthalle Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (DE). Among others, Matt Welch has exhibited in the following institutions: Kunsthalle Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Croy Nielsen, Vienna (AT), Dortmunder Kunstverein,

Dortmund (DE), Limazulu2, London (UK), Ormside Projects, London (UK), Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt am Main (DE).

Gintarė Sokelytė

Selfnoid, 2021

Gintarė Sokelytė draws, paints, but is also a sculptor and filmmaker. For the expansive installation she has developed for the exhibition *And This is Us 2021*, she presents a three-channel film work and eleven sculptures.

The body is the starting point of her investigation. For the artist, the human body is the key to the perception of the world. The body is both the instrument through which the self experiences the world and its own existence and the connecting surface to the soul and the emotions.

The action of the film is set in a dark, stage-like space where two female figures sit in relation to each other. They remain separated by a glass wall through which they observe one another. One is dressed in black, she sits still and her gaze goes into space. The second wears white and paces the room in constant restlessness. Only after a longer look does the controlled, fixed position and reduced facial expression of the first woman reveal that she is a humanoid robot with artificial intelligence. She sits motionless and her body reveals nothing of the state of her mental processes or emotions. The movements of the young woman in white, on the other hand, are hasty and expansive, she frees herself of her clothes and bends her body to the utmost. First with a video camera, then with a mirror, she repeatedly tries to capture her own body and explore the woman in black through the glass wall, despite being unreachable. The humanoid robot derives from the artist's immediate circle of friends. It was constructed by a friend as an artificial intelligence with a human body, facial expressions and gestures. The programmer spent time with the figure until they could no longer withstand the effect of *Uncanny Valley*, the paradox of the artificial but lifelike. Sokelytė took over the character and made her one of the two protagonists of her film. This character is the counterpart of the young woman. While the latter acts out turmoil and restlessness, the android remains calm and seemingly emotionless.

The actions in the film are accompanied by a barely perceptible constant hissing. The arrangement of the three screens in the room relates to the narrowness of the action stage in the film. A space within a space is created in which the visitors must also engage in a sounding-out movement, like the young woman in white.

Through the spaces between the screens, lines of sight are created to eleven sculptures on the wall. In human size and without skulls, they show their open forms in

poses of overstretching. Eleven white figures whose skeletons the artist has welded with concrete reinforcing bar, covered with wire and shaped into brittle flesh by applying fibreglass soaked in plaster. A stone on the floor, its rusty surface altered with acids, lies head-like on the ground.

The question of the visibility of mental states in physical matter runs like a thread through Sokelytė's film and sculpture. Photographs and images on the wall behind the young woman in white, placed almost unnoticed, demonstrate the whole repertoire of physical tension in the act of extreme deformation. It is these images that served as models for the artist in creating the sculptural figures; images of athletes in extreme poses, bodies in convulsive deformation, paintings of people in ecstasy. Sokelytė's central motif is the question of the body as an instrument for perceiving the world, the inner and the outer. The forms of the presented bodies in their overstretching and spreading, open up associations that range from the possibility of an acting out of lust to the expression of torment.

Gintarė Sokelytė (*1986, Kėdainiai, LT) lives and works in Vilnius (LT) and Frankfurt am Main (DE). She works with various media and realises videos, site-specific paintings and sculptural works. Since 2016 she has been studying at Frankfurt Art Academy Städelschule (DE). Previously, she completed her bachelor's degree in screen printing at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (LT) from 2005 to 2009. In 2008 she spent a semester abroad at Odense University of Southern Denmark (DK). Among others, Gintarė Sokelytė has exhibited in the following institutions: Osthang, Darmstadt (DE), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (FR), Montos tattoo art space, Vilnius (LT).

Texte: Franziska Nori