



FINJA SANDER

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The constant, unwavering work on and research into the concept of performance forms the core of Finja Sander's work. She searches for ruptures and ambivalences in the everyday, for unnoticed automatisms, which she consequently picks out, isolates and brings into new contexts within multi-part processes. Sander's own body is a source of inspiration, a catalyst, a kind of seismograph. Strategies of temporal extension and repetition of actions in sequences, as well as the exaggeration of gestures, deepen and stabilise these performative approaches as they develop into expansive, site-specific sculptures and installations. By engaging with originary materials, rugged, resistant textures as well as religiously connoted imagery and rituals, Sander opens up a further spectrum of different, cultural-historical narratives and traditions, which are mostly expressed subliminally even today and still unconsciously guide our everyday actions and thoughts.

To date, she has created over 39 performative works that relate to each other to varying degrees and constantly influence each other. Their commonalities are mostly based on recurring materials and locations, which change and develop in their nature and quality in each new work. The performance often reaches its climax when Sander's body temporarily subordinates itself to the intended image and thus takes on object-like characteristics. The objects and relics that emerge from the performances function as sites of conservation for

the performative actions and tie in with their narratives. The photographic works, which have become increasingly prominent over time, also function in that detached manner while at the same time forming a counterweight to the strongly physically orientated works. As they manifest the artistic premise, they often function as a framing device for the work cycles. In this way, new semantic sequences are formed in current series, which develop a strong momentum of their own and detach themselves from a purely performative origin.

Finja Sander is currently working intensively on the concept of the memorial, embedded in her artistic research into the German culture of remembrance and the history of monuments. Based on Ernst Barlach's Güstrow memorial "Der Schwebende" (The Floating One), Sander has developed a twelve-part performative series, shown once every month at different locations throughout 2023. Further, seemingly fragmentary but related gestures, objects and photographic series are put together over time to form a very condensed approach to research, which in its formal abstraction, away from concrete historical references, strives for a re-evaluation of the role of commemoration.

VITA

Selected Group Exhibitions

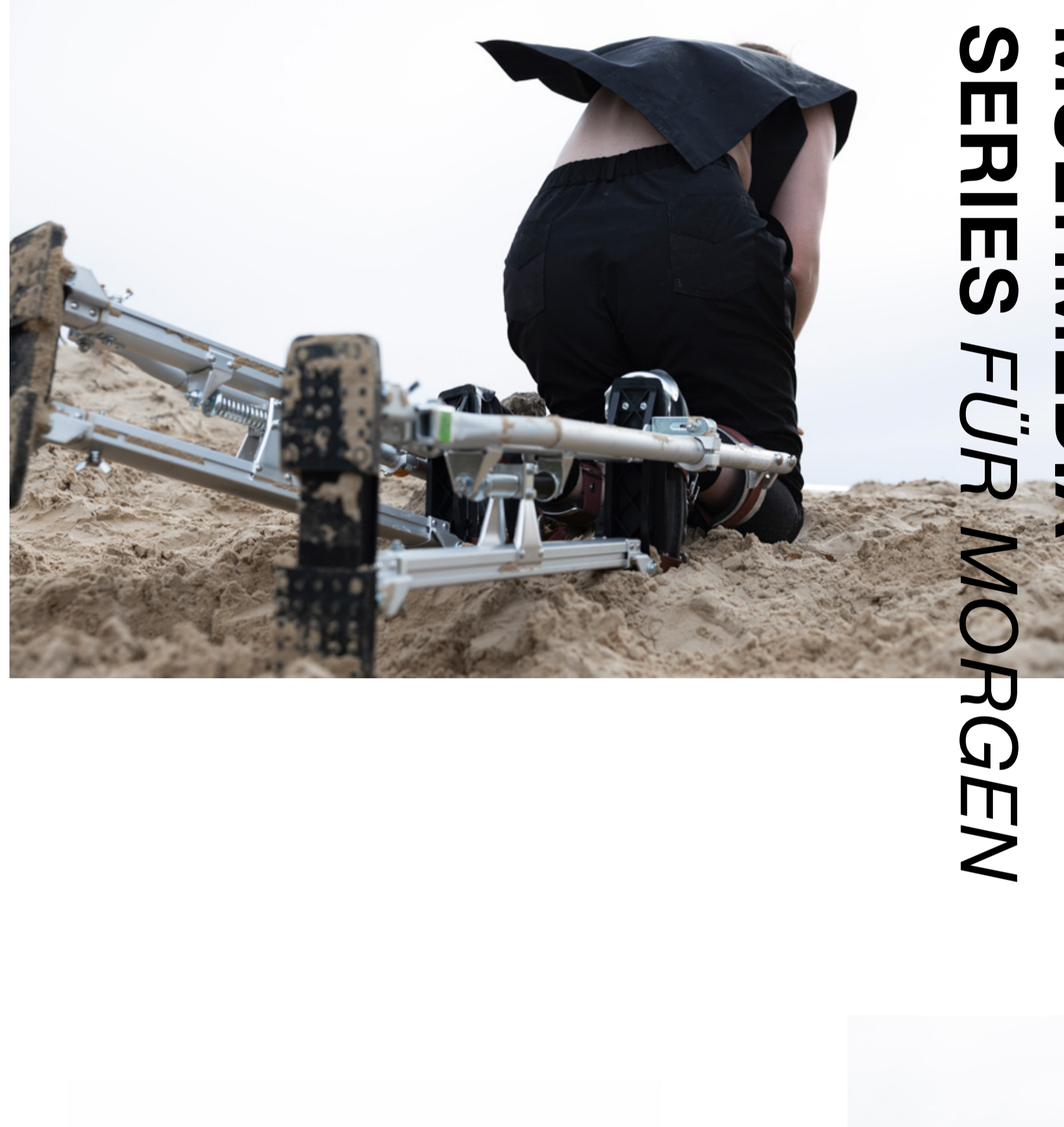
- 2024 Interface, international section, Lille Art Up Fair, Lille, France
Arco Madrid, Group show, Galerie Jochen Hempel
- 2023 OUT, Museum Haus des Papiers, Berlin
Utki Berlin Art Award, galerie burster, Berlin
You are here!, Biennale LANDSCHAFTKUNST IX, Kolonistendorf Neuwerder, Brandenburg
Nominee exhibition, Udk Berlin Art Award, University of the arts, Berlin
Out Of Office, Galerie Burster, Berlin
- 2022 All I Want, galerie burster, Berlin
Berlin, Galerie C Neuchâtel, Switzerland | KONSOLIDIERUNG with Daniel M.E. Schaal
Excuse me, I am looking for the rabbit hole, Cullerim Gallery, Berlin
I got you covered, curated by Pola van den Hövel and Julia Meyer-Brehm, Cullerim Gallery, Berlin
SPÉCHER'n, neue Kunst im Saatgut Silo, Potsdam in cooperation with mit Kunstraum Potsdam
Förderpreis Junge Kunst 2022, nominee exhibition Raittaugalerie Reinickendorf, Berlin
Free Space (for UKR), benefit exhibition, curated by Pierre Granoux, LAGE EGAL, Berlin
- 2021 PROLOG: never gonna give you up, curated by Jakob Urban, ROAM, Berlin
Direkte Auktion, Slot 4, curated by Miriam Schwarz, galerie Burster, Berlin
Club Quarantina II, curated by Gilles Neiers, Galerie Witk Patis, Düsseldorf
This one time, in cooperation with KWADRAT GALERIE, with Daniel M.E. Schaal, HEW, Berlin
Nothing ever happened [yet], curated by Maren Lübke-Tidow, Museum für Fotografie, Berlin
The Performing Object, curated by Justin Polera, Kunstraum Potsdamer Straße, Berlin
Club Quarantina I, curated by Gilles Neiers, Grimm Museum, Berlin

Residencies/ Grants

- 2024 Residency Kunstverein Augsburg, Augsburg (upcoming)
- 2023 Residency Gmünder Kunstverein, Schwäbisch Gmünd
Club Quarantina I, Curator: Gilles Neiers (Winner)
- 2022 Förderpreis Junge Kunst, Kommunale Galerie Reinickendorf (Nominated, Shortlist)

Selected Solo Exhibitions / Performances

- 2024 In einem Land vor unserer Zeit, Kunstverein Augsburg, Augsburg
Performance „Für Morgen“, Villa Hügel, Essen
- 2023 Für Morgen, standort_12, in the exhibition „Enthüllt“, Zitadelle Spandau, Berlin
Performance 39, KVOST, Berlin
Für Morgen, standort_10, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Köln
FELSENFEST, galerie burster during Art Week, Berlin
INVENTORY archiv SANDER | SCHAAL, Galerie Georg Nothelfer during Art Week, Berlin
Für Morgen, standort_09, Seelower Höhen, Seelow, Brandenburg
Für Morgen, standort_08, Willy-Brandt-Haus, Berlin
Tat es weh, als du vom Himmel gefallen bist?, Gründer Kunstverein, Schwäbisch Gmünd
Für Morgen, standort_07, Johanniskirche, Festival for european church music, Schwäbisch Gmünd
Für Morgen, standort_06, Skulpturen Triennale Bingen, Bingen am Rhein
Für Morgen, standort_05, Universität der Künste, Berlin
Für Morgen, standort_04, Olympiastadion, Berlin
Performance 38, during Gallery Weekend, Out of Office
Performance 37, galerie burster, Karlsruhe
Fernab jeglicher Schwere, Soloshow, galerie burster, Karlsruhe
Für Morgen, standort_03, Barlach Museen, Güstrow
Für Morgen, standort_02, Dokumentationszentrum Prora, Rügen
Für Morgen, standort_01, Truppenübungsplatz Döberitzer Heide, Brandenburg
- 2022 Performance 36, colorado projects, Galerie Jochen Hempel, Leipzig
Performance 34, colorado projects, Galerie Jochen Hempel, Leipzig
Adieu! (Performance 33), Meisterschüler exhibition, Udk, Berlin
Nicht das Fell berühren, with Daniel M.E. Schaal, LAGE EGAL [in the Rackroom], Berlin
ENFREUDUNG, galerie burster, Berlin
Performance 31, Auktionshaus Grisebach, Berlin
- 2021 Performance 29, Spoiler Aktionsraum, Berlin
Performance 27, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
Performance 26, Museum für Fotografie, Berlin
- 2020 Performance 24, Studio 1 Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin
PRÄPOSITION, with Daniel M.E. Schaal, galerie burster, Berlin
- 2019 Performance 18, Rundgang Universität der Künste, Berlin
Performance 16, Gustav-Adolf-Kirche, Berlin
Performance 14, C/O Museum, Berlin
- 2018 Performance 3, Bar Babette, Berlin
3 Studien zur Last, Raum für drastische Maßnahmen, Berlin
- 2017 Resonanzräume, Projekttraum POWERA, Berlin
SVDKD, nope studio, 48 Stunden Neukölln, Berlin



Performance 40, 2024
duration: 5x3h | material: body, clothing, working stilts, metal rod, concrete frame



The work *Performance 40* builds on Finja Sander's previous engagement with contemporary culture of remembrance and our approach to monuments and cenotaphs in public spaces. During the Arco Madrid art fair 2024, Sander stands on two stilts for several hours every day and assumes various poses reminiscent of heroic monuments and historical representations. She is holding individual parts of a metal frame in her hands that she used last year for her performative series *Für Morgen*. For this performance series, Sander created a fluid monument in 2023 based on Ernst Barlach's "The Floating" memorial, which she now dismantles into its individual parts. Through self-aggrandizement and idealizing stylization, the artist references millaristic monuments as well as socially circulating narratives of so-called heroes. At the same time, her performance addresses the fragility and one-dimensionality of today's remembrance, which, through ritualized ceremonies, is moving ever further away from sincere, devoted remembrance.





passiv aggressiv X (2024)
Euro container, transport scooter, glass wreath
60 x 40 x 50 cm
unique



Schutzwall (2024)
relics of Performance 27, 2021
digital print on fine art paper, acrylic glass,
aluminium frame, tension strap
120 x 80 cm



installation view
INTERFACE, Lille art up! 2024, curated by Annuschka Leung

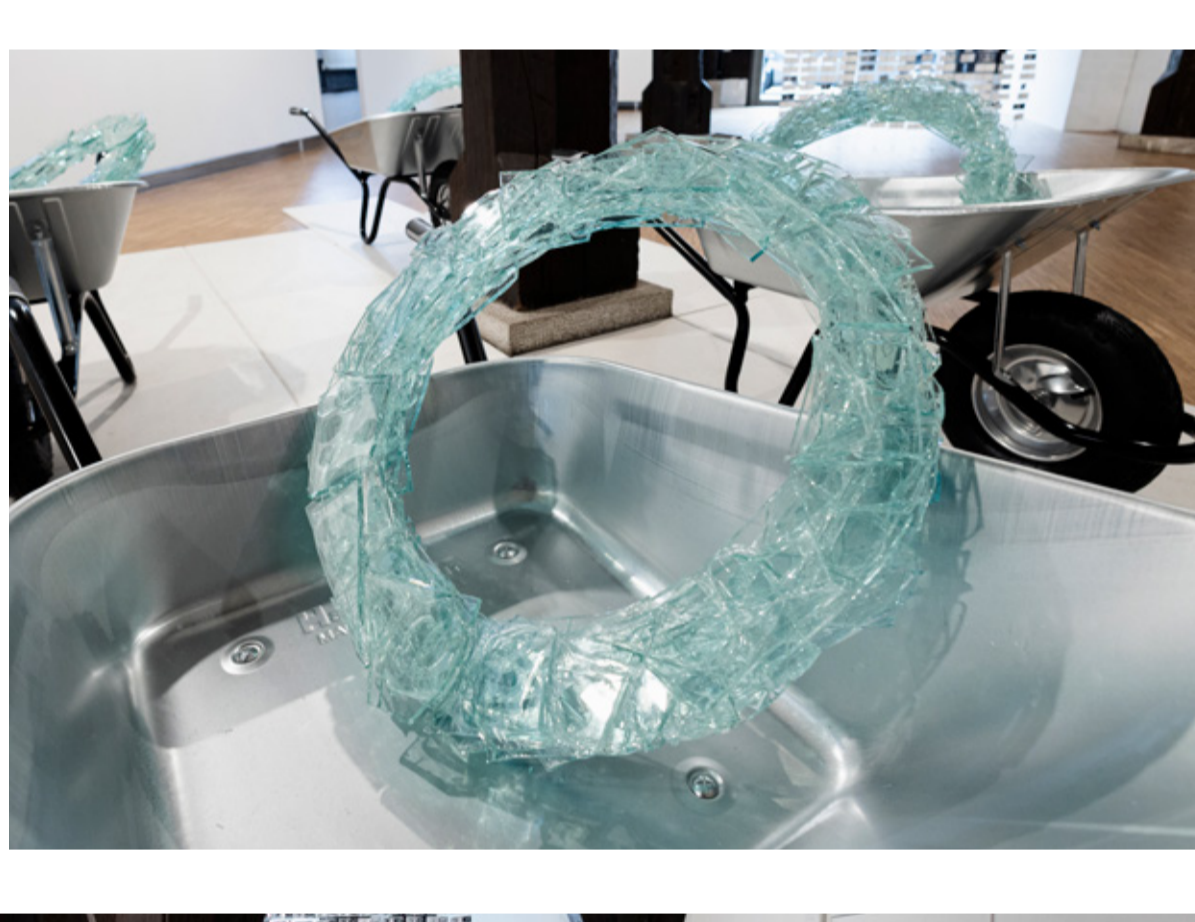
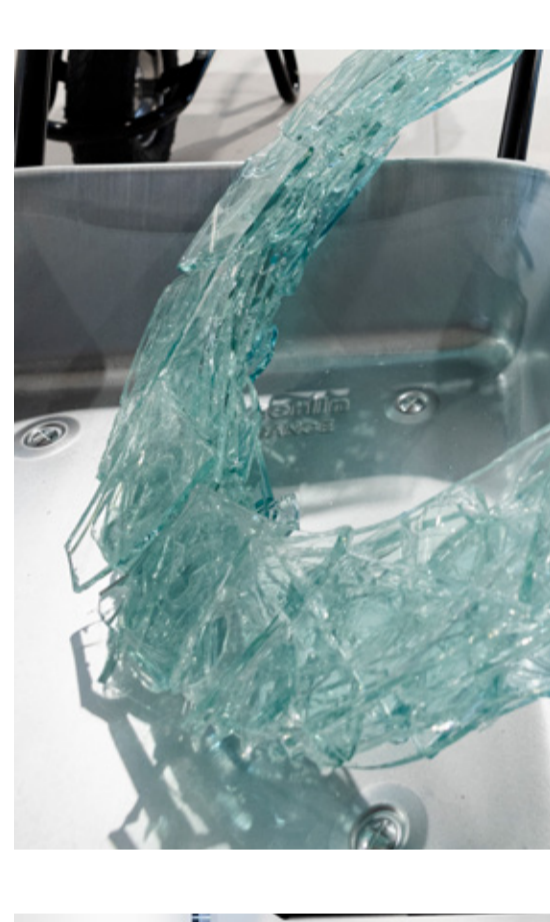




passiv aggressiv XII (2024)
Kraxe, Glaskranz
78 x 70 x 28 cm



passiv aggressiv [set up] 2023
glass wreath, deconstructed
wheelbarrow, metal mounts, foil
385 x 320 x 60 cm



Installation View Gmünder Kunstverein
Tat es weh, als du vom Himmel gefallen bist?

passiv aggressiv IV-VIII 2023
plasterboard, wheelbarrows,
pieces of broken glass, construction adhesive
dimensions variable



The sculptural series *passiv aggressiv* (passive aggressive) represent an integral part of Sander's multimedia explorations within the series *Für Morgen* (For Tomorrow). Glass wreaths, composed of hundreds of pieces of broken glass, lie in wheelbarrows or other commonplace means of transport, waiting to be moved. They are reminiscent in size and shape of funeral wreaths, which, as a circle without beginning or end, symbolise eternity, recurrence and a unity of past, present and future. The fragile objects evoke associations with memorial services and political ceremonies. However, purpose and pathos have completely escaped these objects. The fir's greenery has been replaced by sharp and cold pieces of broken glass. Hope gives way to a threatening fascination. Particularly in view of the German culture of remembrance, the expression of one's own guilt or mourning is understood as a transition to the possible reintroduction of violence and injustice, and thus refers to gestures of political demonstration of power and nationalist demarcation.

passiv aggressiv III 2023
pieces of broken glass, construction
adhesive, hand truck
142x60x114 cm



Installation View UdK Berlin Art Award 2023

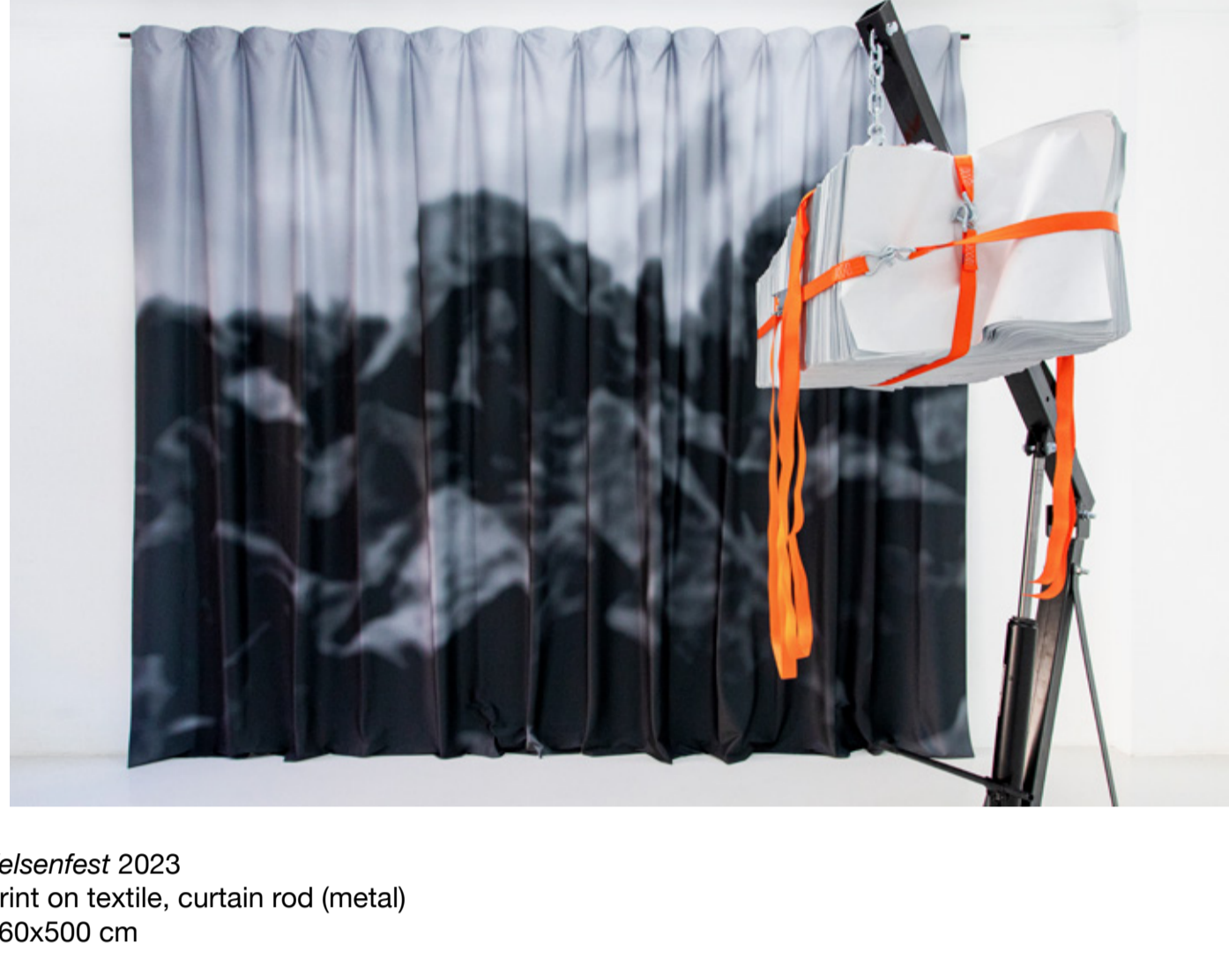


Denke groß, sei aktiv, halt dich fit 2023
 photographic reference to Performance 38
 polaroid photos, acrylic glass
 dimensions variable



Installation View Ausstellung *FELSENFEST*
 galerie burster 2023

Wucht und Vehemenz 2023
 mobile crane, poster bundle, tension belt
 dimensions variable

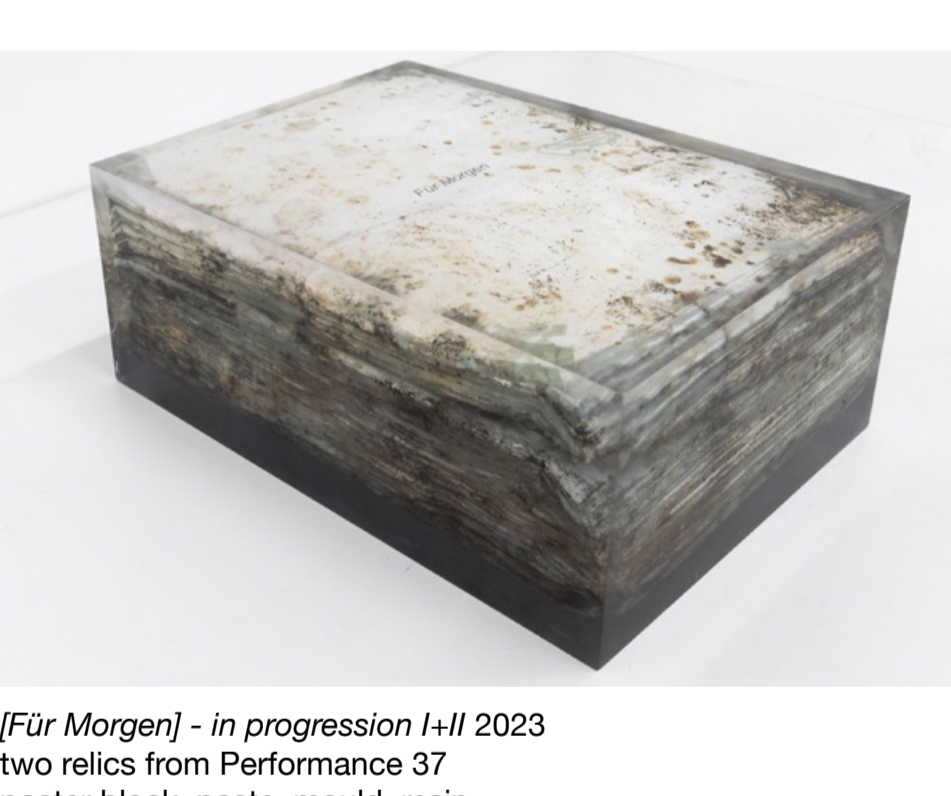


Felsenfest 2023
 print on textile, curtain rod (metal)
 360x500 cm



„(...) As Susan Sontag emphasised in her essay „Fascinating Fascism“ from 1975, the works of Leni Riefenstahl, for example, whether in her role as an actress or as a director, stylised the mountain as a central element in propagandistic narratives. As Sontag describes Riefenstahl's film "Das Blaue Licht" (The Blue Light, 1932), „the mountain is represented as both supremely beautiful and dangerous, that majestic force which invites the ultimate affirmation and escape from the self - into the brotherhood of courage and into death.“ Sander in turn reflects this in regards to the construction of many monuments of honour and memorials from these approaches and describes them as a continuation of ideological formal language. (...)“

Fußnote „Fascinating Fascism“ 2023
 beamer, projected video, plinth
 dimensions variable



[Für Morgen] - in progression I+II 2023
 two relics from Performance 37
 poster block, paste, mould, resin
 each 45x32x15cm



Sander uses repetition in particular as a stylistic and analytical tool. She reproduces objects, gestures and movements with meticulous precision. One can also witness this with the 20.000 posters that Sander layers sheet by sheet on the wall surface in the exhibition *Fernab jeglicher Schwere* (Far from any kind of heaviness, Galerie burster, Karlsruhe, 2023). Printed with the inscription *Für Morgen* (For Tomorrow), the performance is reminiscent of political poster campaigns in urban space. In this seemingly endless process, massive blocks of paper are created, which Sander had moulded in synthetic resin over the following months. The posters, mouldy from the paste, now appear frozen in time and untouchable, as they become artefacts of an action that no longer seems tangible.

Finja Sander's works move in a constant flux and can never remain certain of being fully complete. Constantly transformed, they enter into complex dialogues with other works, as they oscillate between being dissolved and rebuilt. Through context-specific approaches, Sander creates new positions, moving between site and work, which end up becoming part of a process that constantly places past works in relation to the present.



Performance 37 2023
 galerie burster, Karlsruhe
 body, clothing, 20.000 A3 posters,
 paste, plastic bucket, tassel, stone plate,
 water bottles, painting film, tape



Installation View, Exhibition *Fernab jeglicher Schwere*
 galerie burster, Karlsruhe, 2023



PERFORMATIVE SERIES FÜR MORGEN

The performative sequence Für Morgen_standort_1-12 (For Tomorrow_location_1-12) is difficult to grasp. Once built, a scaffold made of conventional metal rods and neon-orange ribbons stands by itself, only activated through the artist's performance, hanging in the frame for an hour at a time. She borrows the form and idea from the bronze figure "Der Schwebende" (The Floating One), which the artist Ernst Barlach created for the Güstrow Cathedral in 1927. The sculpture was at the time exhibited there with its eyes closed and arms folded, floating horizontally in a side chapel, where it was intended to convey „a heavy, resting immobility as an expression of never-ending grief" arising from the death and suffering of the First World War. The result was a memorial that shifted away from current standards at the time: Instead of focusing on the heroic deeds of the soldiers standing on plinths, Barlach created a memorial image of mourning and guilt. This pacifist message prompted the National Socialists to decry the work as degenerate and melt it down in 1937. The hidden model of the work preserved the form of the sculpture, allowing it to be exhibited after the Second World War, first in the Antonite Church in Cologne and finally back in the Güstrow Cathedral. The post-war period and its burgeoning culture of reappraisal and remembrance led to Barlach's memorial being read as an increasingly relevant peace monument.

In times of crises and wars, Der Schwebende becomes increases once again in its contemporary relevance. However, Finja Sander's engagement with Barlach does not only constitute a quasi-activist demand for peace. In these ambivalent times, where urges for peace are appropriated for expressions of ignorance and a distortion of history while calls for increasing militarisation are being made, Sander turns to the mechanisms of remembrance. She is less interested in an evaluation of peace and war than in the emergence and role of German monuments and the culture of remembrance, which gained importance in the context of the two

world wars and the National Socialist crimes. In this interest lies the hope of emphasising the relevance of remembrance for the present and developing new ways of dealing with the German past.

In her interest in Barlach's memorial, Sander takes the floating posture of the sculpture literally and approaches it through her own bodily experience. The body thus becomes a site for the transformation of sculpture into a performative act. In her endeavour to become an object herself, to give up her own physicality and to subordinate herself to the resulting image, Sander draws on many of her earlier performances.

Für Morgen_standort_1-12 was performed once every month at a total of twelve different locations over the course of 2023. This creates a repetitive rhythm that expresses the need to continuously engage with German remembrance culture. In an experimental manner, the artist confronts locations related biographically to Barlach or places that are charged with the National Socialist past as well as sites related to the work beyond these references. Sander posits that questions of memory and guilt are localised everywhere in Germany and the need to ask them is always present. Within the contrast between rigid objecthood and fluid humanity, Sander scrutinises the role of memorials and at the same time develops it further with an understanding of a peaceful present and future that can only be found in an examination of the past and the mechanisms of remembrance.

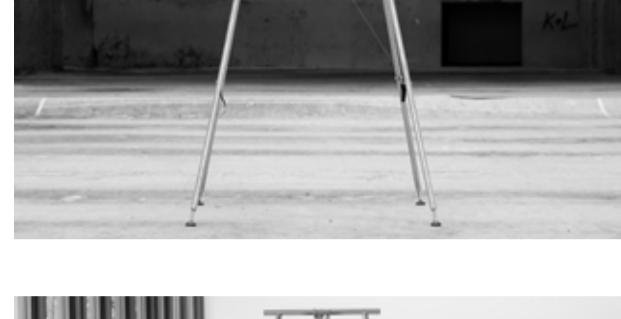
Text: Nikolas Geier

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_standort_01
Truppenübungsplatz
Oberitzier Heide, Brandenburg



_standort_02
Dokumentationszentrum
Prona, Rügen



_standort_03
Museumshalle
Barfischmuseen, Güstrow



_standort_04
Aachenerbahn
Olympiastadion, Berlin



_standort_05
Herdenbergstraße 33
Universität der Künste, Berlin



_standort_06
Skulpturenreimale Bingen
Bingen am Rhein



_standort_07
Kriegsmuseum
Schwabach Grund



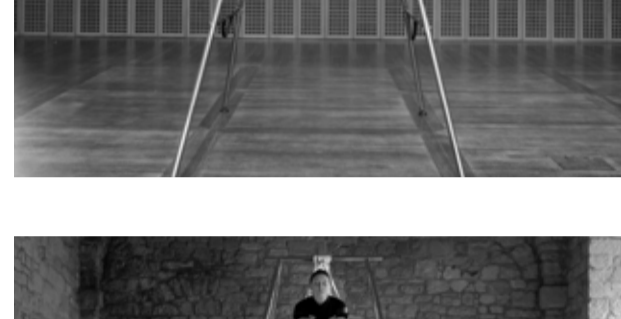
_standort_08
Kriegsmuseum
Willy-Brandt-Haus, Berlin



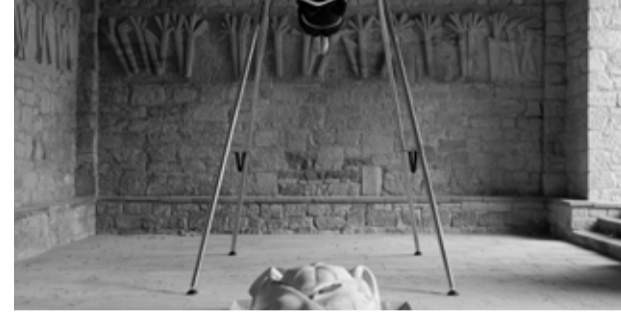
_standort_09
Kriegsmuseum
Seelower Höhen, Brandenburg



_standort_10
Sittensaal
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Köln



_standort_11
Mahnmal (Karlsaue)
Kassel

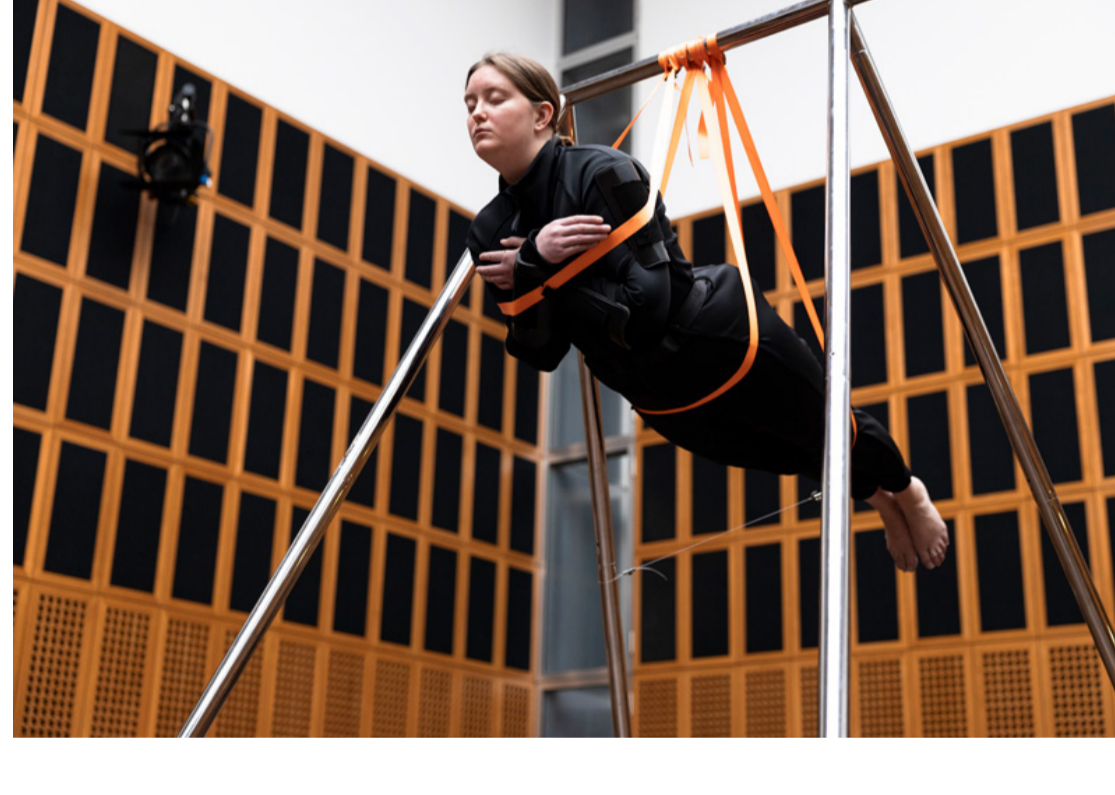
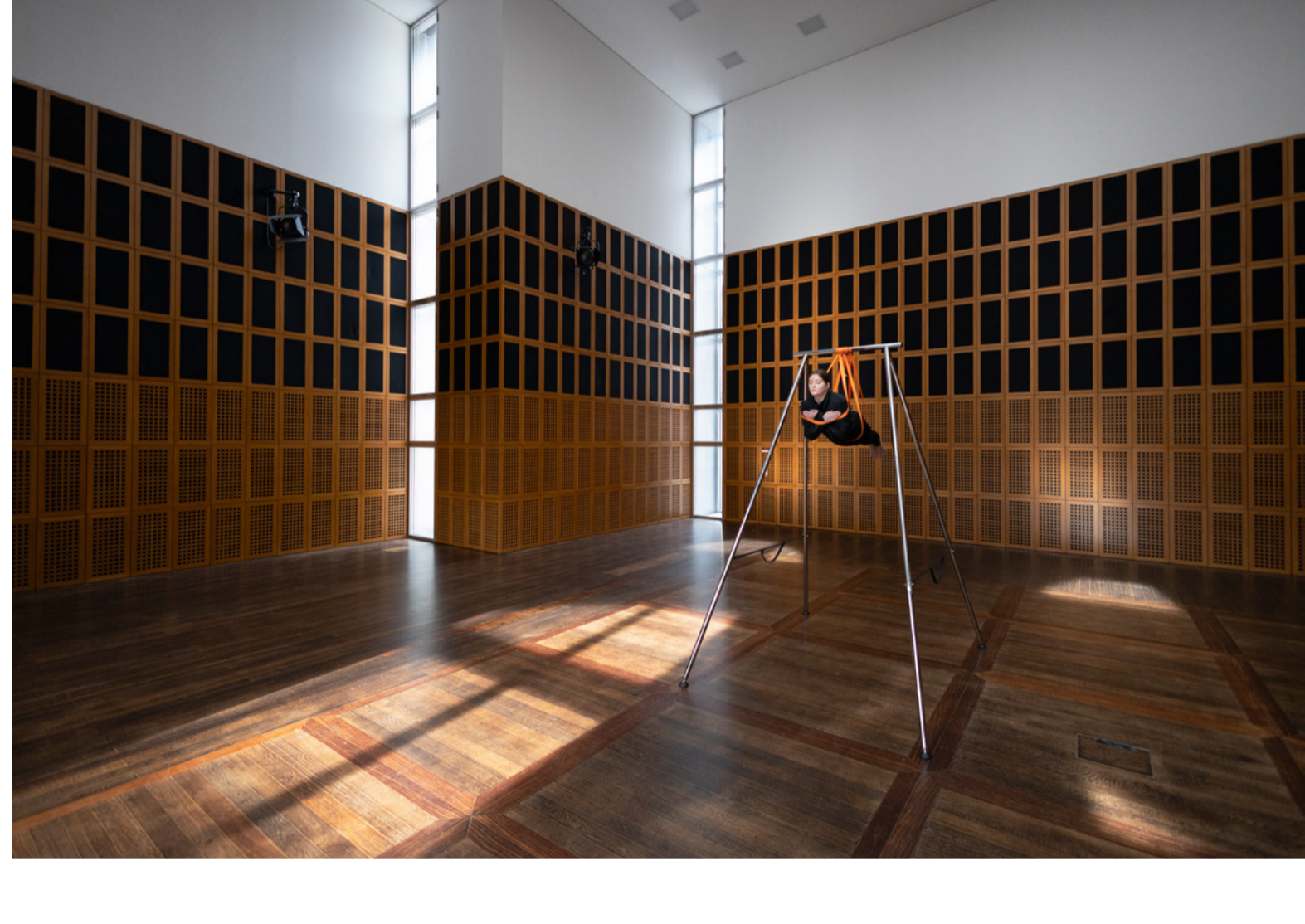


_standort_12
Ausstellung „Ernhult"
Ziadele Spandau, Berlin

_STANDORT_09 KRUGBERG, SEELOWER HÖHEN, BRANDENBURG



_STANDORT_10 WALLRAF-RICHARTZ-MUSEUM, COLOGNE



click here: [TV REPORT westart, wdr 11/23](#)



_STANDORT_11 MAHNMAL (KARLSAU), KASSEL





MULTIMEDIA CYCLE

EINFRIEDUNG



Performance 39, 2023
Kunstverein Ost, Berlin
Material: flowers, clothing, studio lights
Duration: 15 minutes



For the multimedia cycle EINFRIEDUNG (Enclosure) Sander collected over one hundred dried potted plants from various households in Berlin. The accompanying photographic series stages selected specimens, laid out on blue velvet fabric. Building on these works, she conceived a week-long performance in which the plants were cleaned, organised, gilded and archived. The work reflects on the failure to take care of something, even at this small scale keeping a plant alive, through the pictorial exaggeration and the performative act.

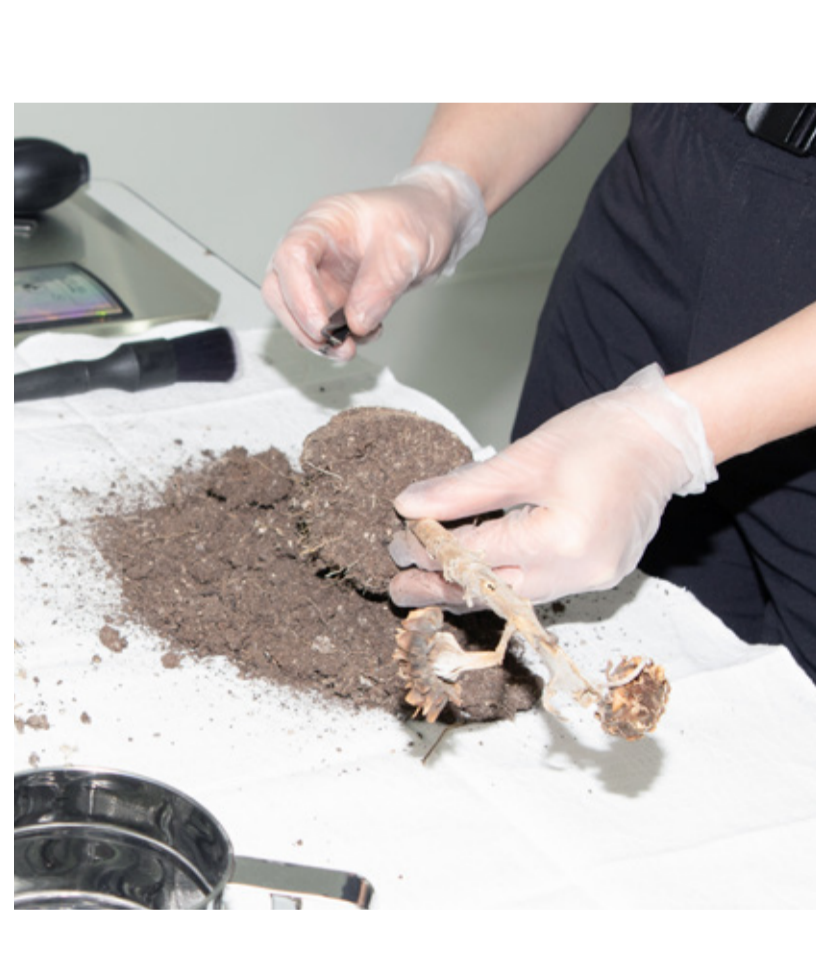
Zyklus Einfriedung -2, 2021
Fine Art Print mounted on aluminium, framed
70x47 cm



Zyklus Einfriedung -1, 2021
Fine Art Print mounted on aluminium, framed
130x200 cm



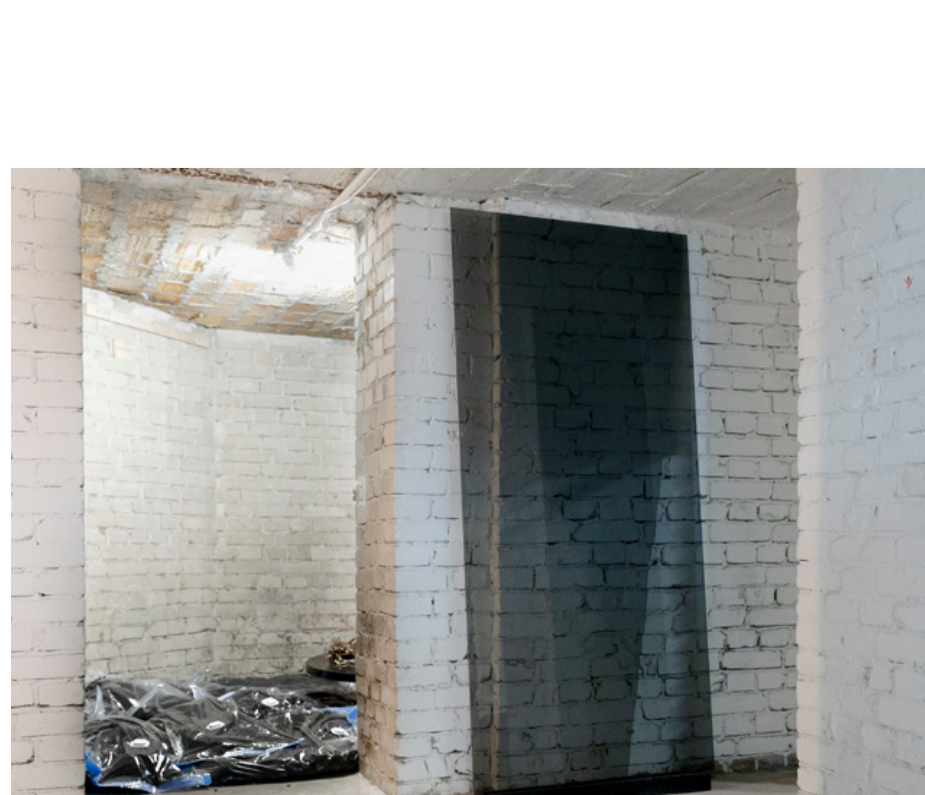
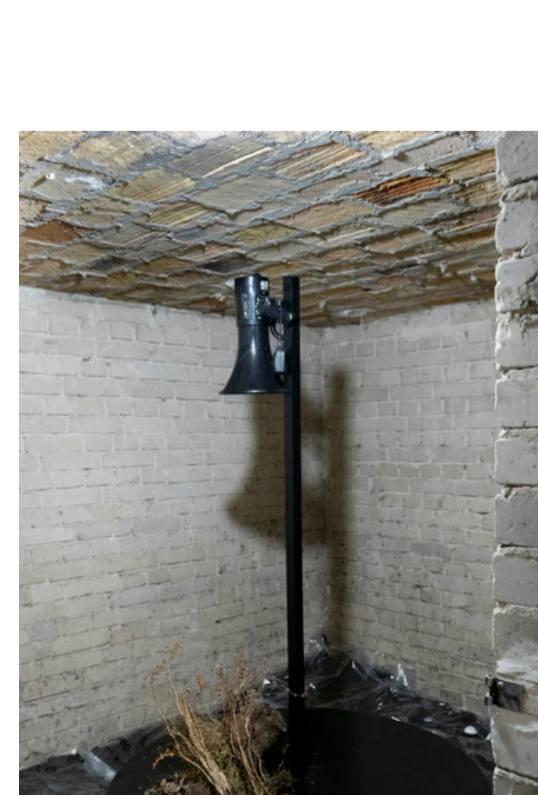
Installation View EINFRIEDUNG 2022
galerie burster, Berlin



Performance 32, 2022
Exhibition EINFRIEDUNG, galerie burster Berlin
Material: clothing, vinyl gloves, magnifying glasses, brush, tweezers, water, gold leaf, bellows, melodica, dried plants, archive boxes, sachets
Duration: 4x2 hours

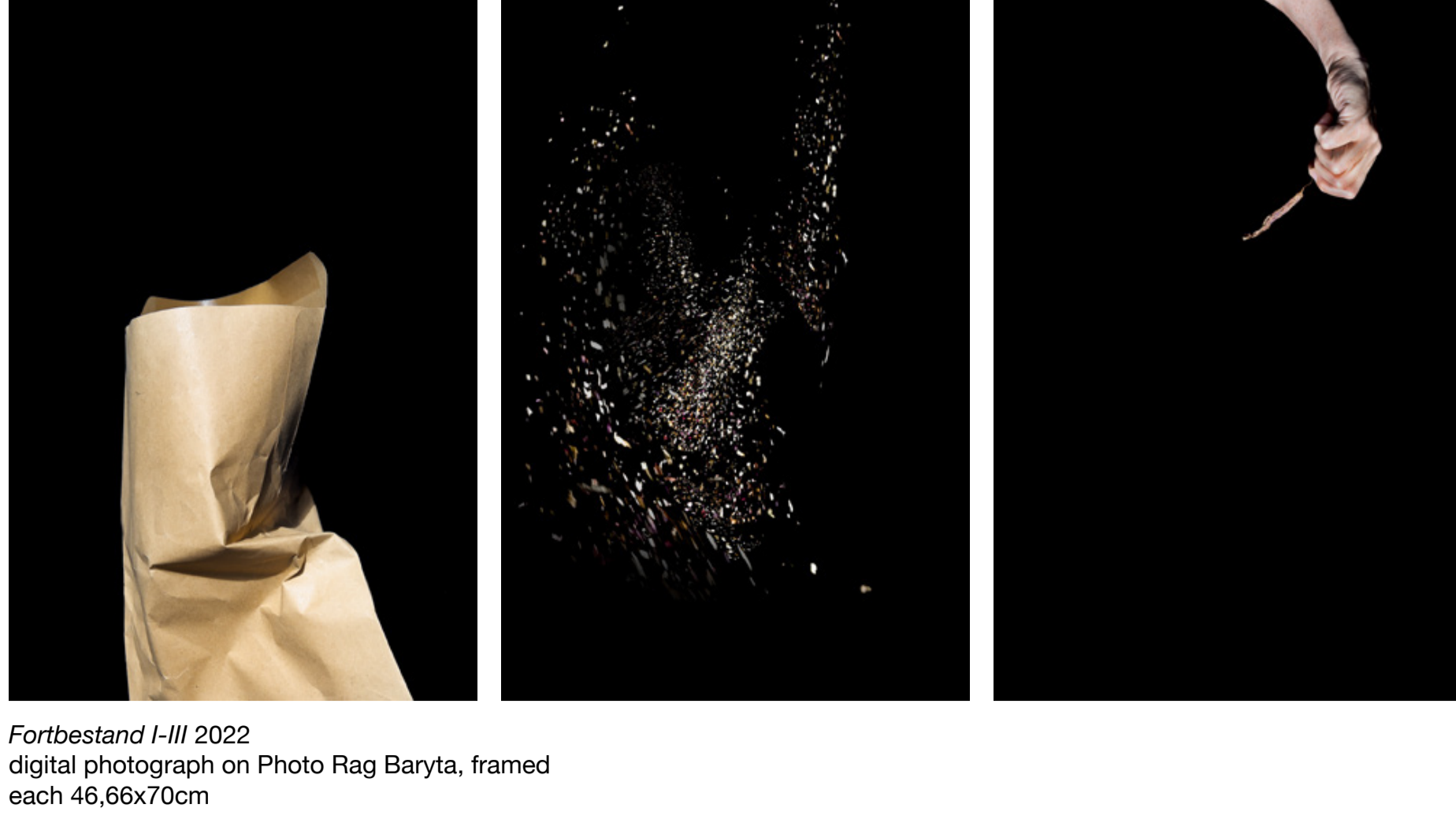


vice versa II 2022
Fine Art Print on gold tinted glass, framed
13x18cm



vice versa I 2022
tinted bulletproof glass, wooden rail, vacuum-sealed soil, rotating platform, dried plants, megaphone, sound

For the Förderpreis Junge Kunst 2022 of the municipal gallery Berlin Reinickendorf, the artist created a three-part tableau that refers to the employees of the Reinickendorf town hall and integrates them into the existing multimedia cycle *Einfriedung* (Enclosure). A donation of dried plant leaves, collected in a standard envelope, forms the material basis for the continuation of the series.



Fortbestand I-III 2022
digital photograph on Photo Rag Baryta, framed
each 46,66x70cm



Die Hinterbliebenen 2021
objects and relics from *Performance 27*
soil, fleece, industrial sacks, dollies,
plant buckets, bamboo plant, cotton



Performance 27, 2021
Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
Material: body, bamboo plants, grave soil, painting fleece,
ointment, gauze, cotton wool, tape, iron rods, box
Duration: 5 hours

MEILENSTEINE



MEILENSTEIN I, 2022
stone paper, hot glue, trolley
dimensions variable



MEILENSTEIN I - aufgeschnitten, 2022
stone paper, hot glue

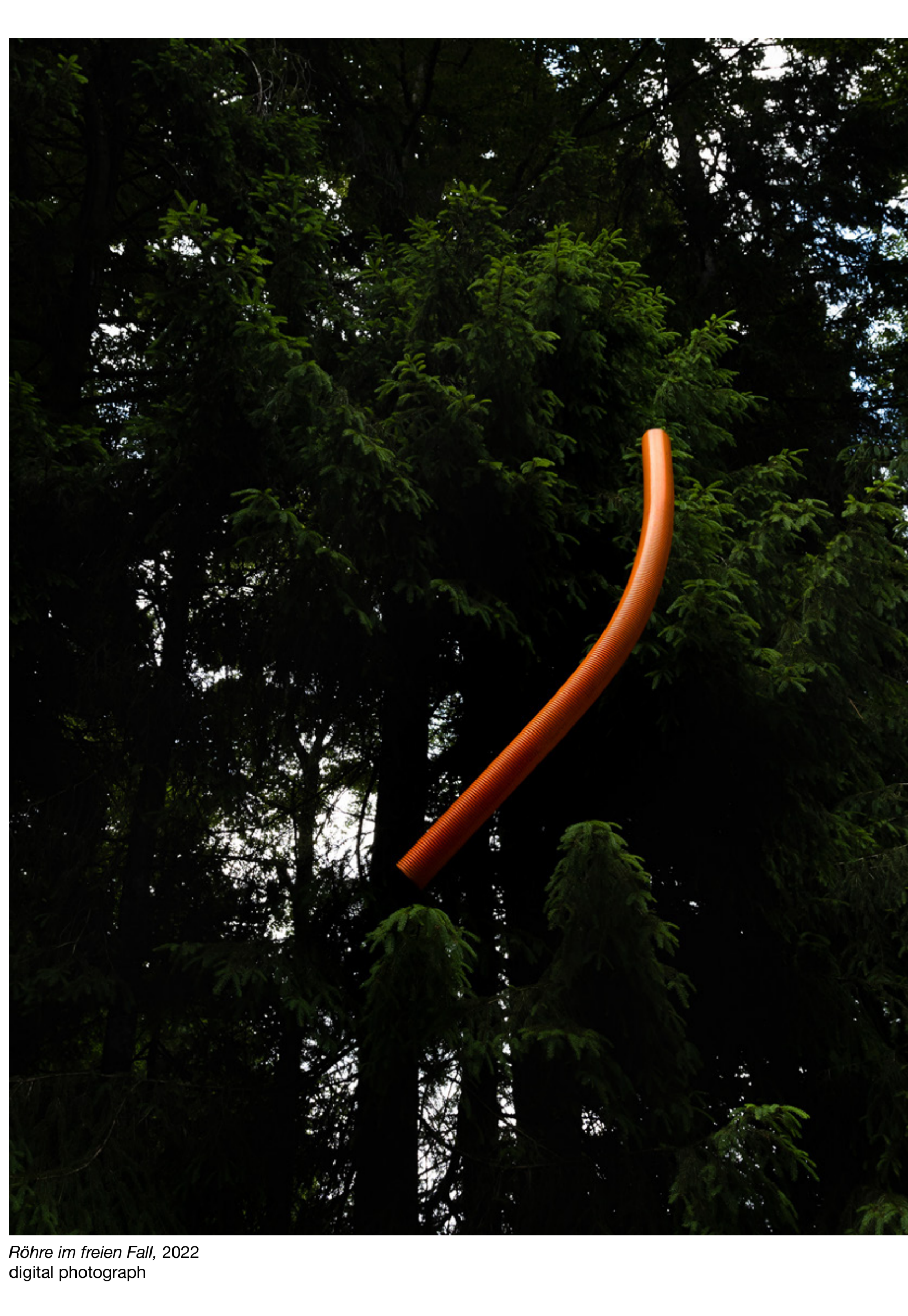


Performance 31, 2022
Auktionshaus Griesebach, Berlin
Material: stone paper, hot glue
Duration: 5x6 hours

The series *MEILENSTEINE* (Milestones) is based on the performative exploration of stone paper, a very versatile material with properties such as durability, very high density (and therefore an unusually high weight per sheet) and water resistance. When exposed to sunlight though, it gradually dissolves into its individual components. This led Sander to taking on the task of creating several massive boulders from sheets of stone paper piled up in many layers. In the near future, when they a certain amount of individual pieces has been reached, they will be exhibited in a public place and left to their own devices. Over time, they will continue to change shape due to external influences and will ultimately be destroyed in parts. Here, the performative process begun by Sander continues independently and forms its own life form, which actively communicates with its surroundings and blends into them.

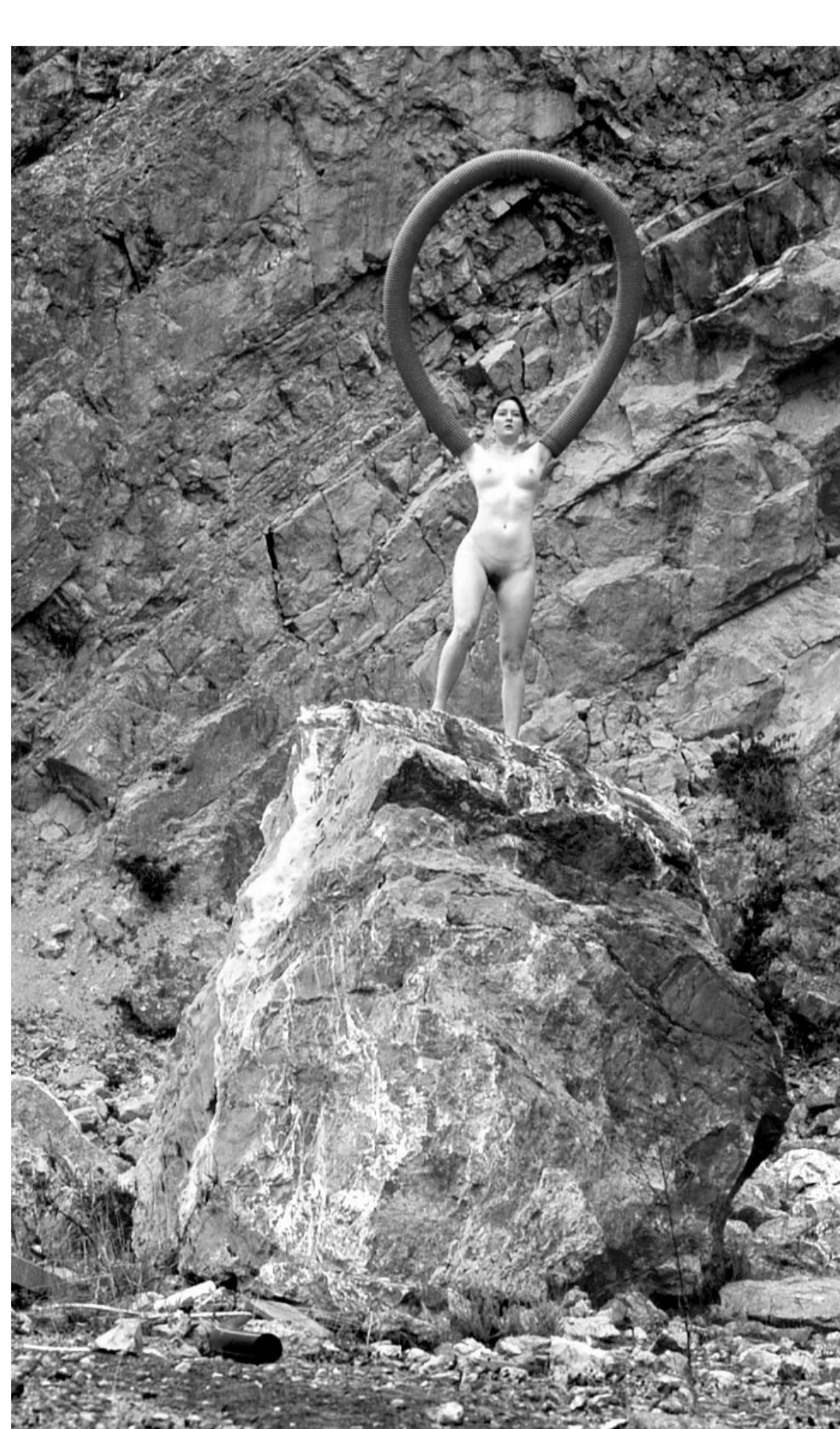


TUBES.

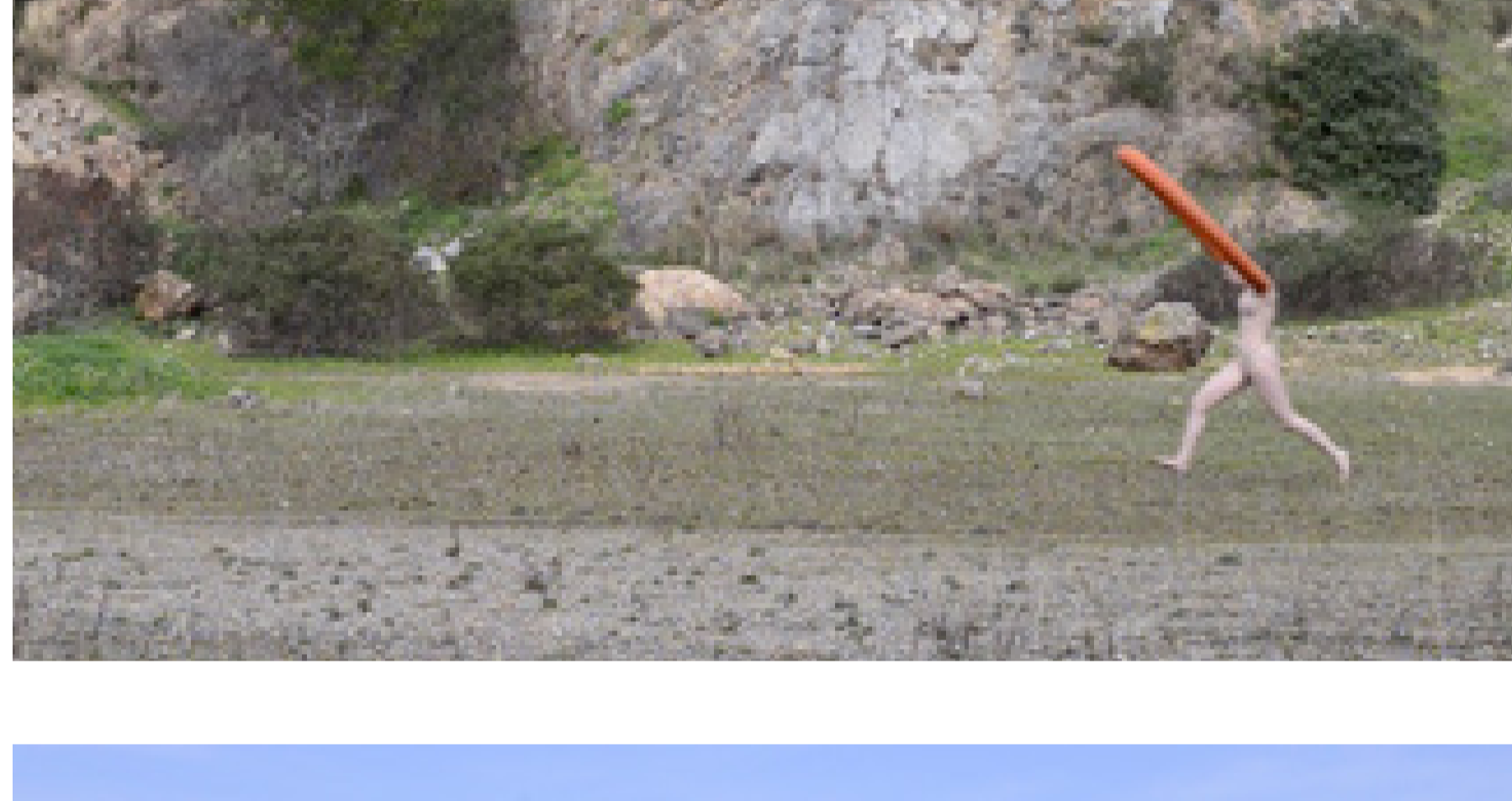
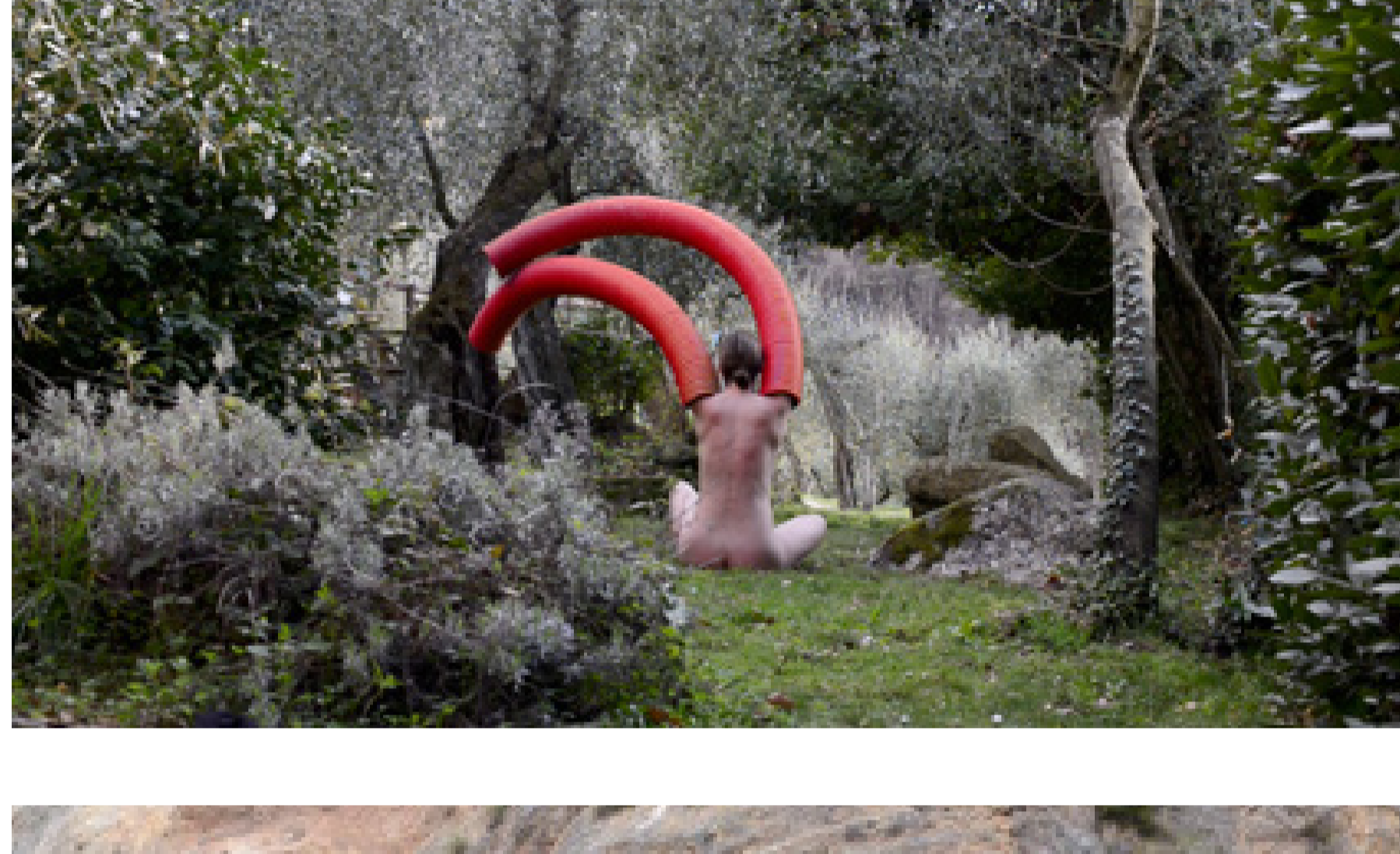


Röhre im freien Fall, 2022
digital photograph

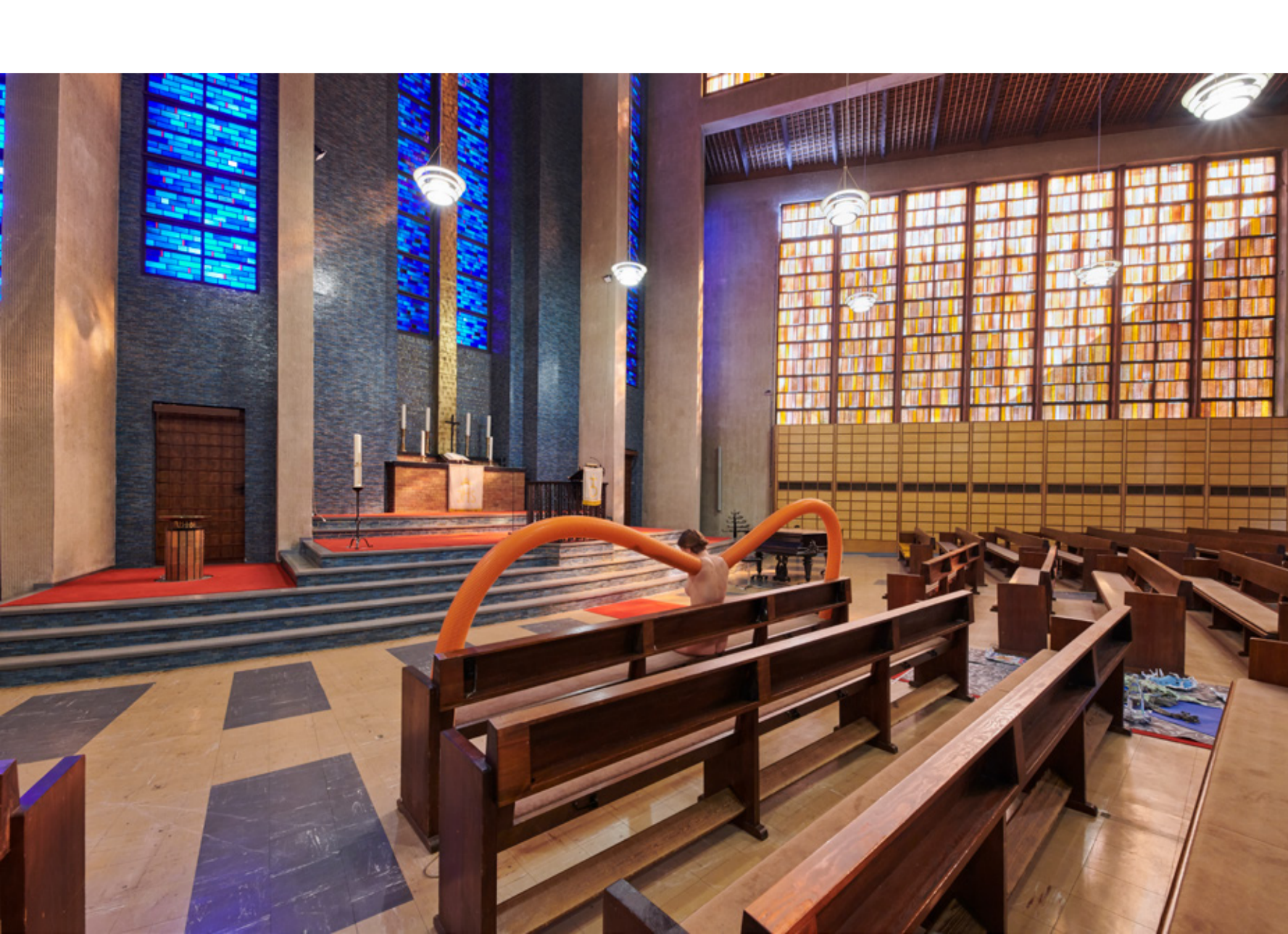
During a two-week residency in the Luca region of Tuscany, the artist discovered a quarry that was no longer in use, finding numerous unused building materials. Especially interested in the drainage pipes she found on site, Sander was lead to develop several performative video sequences in which she adapted her movements and poses to her chosen environments. This initially experimental arrangement of form ultimately resulted in further performances and photographs.



großer Stein, 2019
still from video, digital file



Performance 16, 2019
based on Performance 13
Gustav-Adolf-Kirche, Berlin
Material: body, 2 drainage pipes (DIN120 2,5m)
Duration: 150 minutes

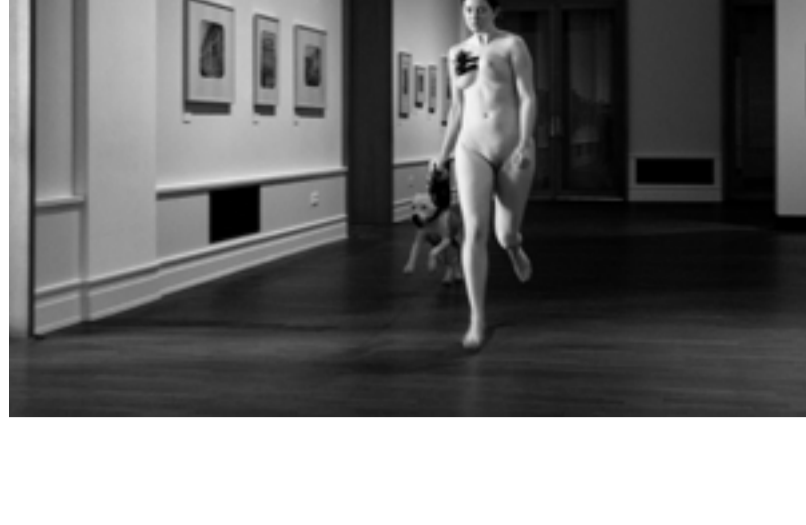


TURNUS

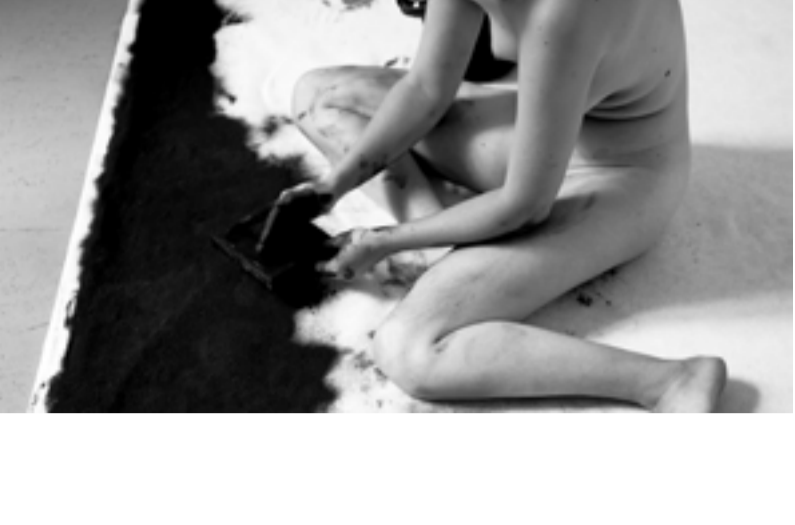
The series turnus contains a selection of different performative actions functioning independently. Mostly using a site-specific approach, they are embedded in minimal experimental arrangements. Through the consistent repetition of gestures and the use of recurring materials, a unique style emerged, paving the way for longer-term narratives and research.



Performance 29, 2021
Spoiler Aktionsraum, Berlin
Material: body, custom frame, pvc foil, pokeberries, wine, water, waffle fabric
Duration: 2 hours Spoiler Aktionsraum, Berlin



Performance 26, 2021
Kaisersaal, Museum für Fotografie, Berlin
Material: body, dog, leash, recording device
Duration: 60 minutes



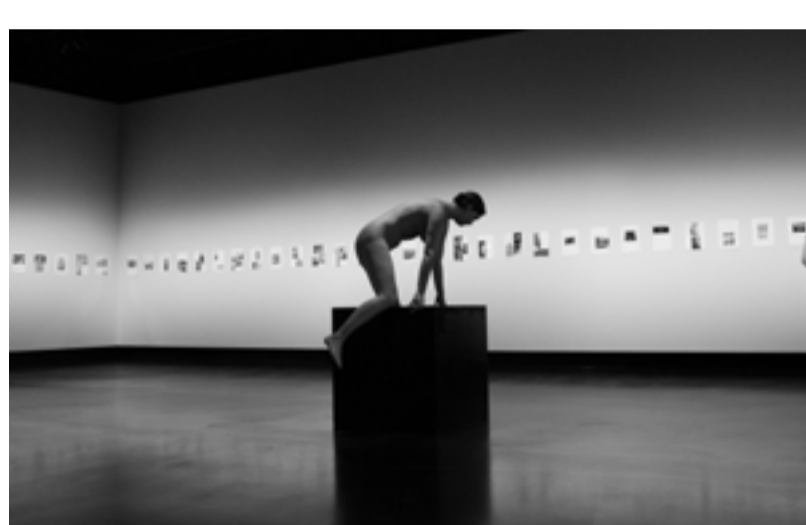
Performance 22, 2020
galerie burster, Berlin
Material: body, pond fleece, sieve, beech ash, nautical bucket
Duration: 3,5 hours



Performance 20, 2020
Sandgrube im Jagen 86, Grunewald, Berlin
Material: body, rope (120m)
Duration: 100 minutes



Performance 18, 2019
Rundgang, Universität der Künste Berlin
Material: body, clay (900kg), wooden platform, pond liner, buckets, water
Duration: 12 hours total



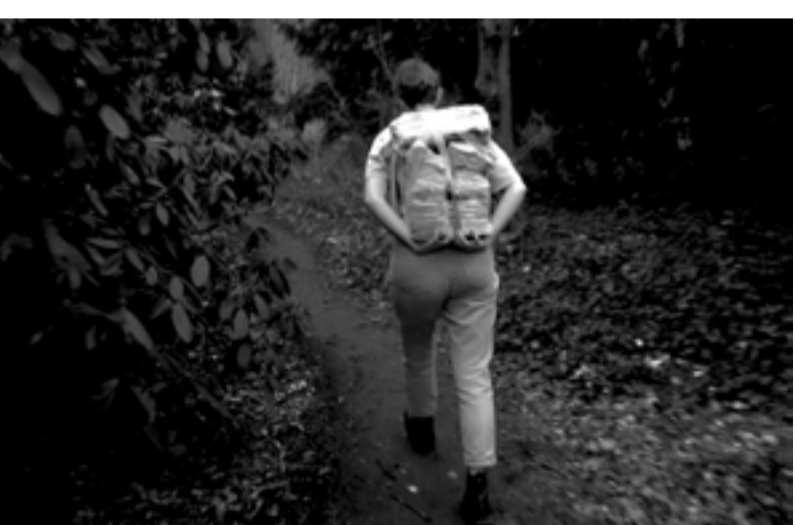
Performance 14, 2019
Fotomuseum C/O Berlin
Material: body, wood box (lacquered, 74x74cm), grave soil
Duration: 60 minutes



Performance 9, 2018
Rundgang, Universität der Künste Berlin
Material: body, dolly (175x50cm)
Duration: 6 hours



Performance 7, 2018
Raum für drastische Maßnahmen, Berlin
Material: body, suit, tube, clamp, stock pot, dishes and cutlery, 10l soup
Duration: 120 minutes



Performance 6, 2018
Britzer Garten, Berlin
Material: body, plastic tape, clay (30kg), clothing
Duration: 180 minutes



Performance 5, 2018
Atelier - Universität der Künste, Berlin
Material: body, zinc tub, water, birch ash, paddle brush
Duration: 30 minutes



Performance 4, 2018
Baustelle - Steinplatz, Berlin
Material: body, t-shirt, rock wool
Duration: 20 minutes



Performance 3, 2018
Kosmetiksalon, Bar Babette, Berlin
Material: 2 bodies, seating cushions, clothing, 5kg clay each
Duration: 180 minutes

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