

VORDEMBERGE-GILDEWART  
AWARD 2023  
12 ROOMS  
19 MARCH – 11. JUNE, 2023

KUNSTMUSEUM APPENZELL

The Vordemberge-Gildewart Foundation annually awards a work grant to artists under thirty-five years. In cooperation with exhibition venues, the award competition has been held in various European countries since 1983. The award, which comes with a prize money of 60,000 Swiss francs, is one of the highest endowed scholarships for young artists in Europe. The grant was initiated by the founder Ilse Leda, the wife of the artist Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart (1899–1962).

The winner of the work grant is selected by an independent international jury on the basis of a group exhibition, which the Vordemberge-Gildewart Foundation is organising this year together with the Kunstmuseum Appenzell. The exhibition shows an overview of young, contemporary art and brings together twelve artists who are active in Switzerland. The nominees were selected from almost 120 artistic positions that the curator surveyed. A wide spectrum of media, including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, ceramics, drawing, performance, text, video and sound, reflects the diverse artistic practices. The nominated artists show their work in twelve rooms of the Kunstmuseum Appenzell.

My thanks go to the Vordemberge-Gildewart Foundation and its Board of Trustees for the wonderful cooperation, as well as to the jury members who had the challenging task of selecting a winner from the twelve nominees.

Another big thank you goes to my team, who helped make this project possible, and to the Innerrhoder Kunststiftung for their support. I would like to thank colleagues and artists for their suggestions on nominations and their input.

And I would also like to thank the artists for their passion and effort, as well as for the thoughts and concepts that went into this exhibition. Even if only one of them can win this prize, the whole exhibition stands out because of the quality of the artistic positions.

Stefanie Gschwend  
Director Kunstmuseum Appenzell



Alfredo Aceto's installation explores the labyrinthine references of different elements and images linked by juxtapositions, translations and anecdotes. Photographs of damaged sculptures taken for insurance purposes, a noticeboard reminiscent of generic signage with manipulated, waving hands and stacks of black jumpers come together to form an obsessive narrative that converges in the figure of Sergio Marchionne (1952–2018) – an Italian-Canadian Swiss-based industrialist, entrepreneur and manager – forming a fragmented reflection on power structures. Common to the objects is also the reference to corporeality, which can appear present or absent, in relation to the artist himself, his tongue, his speech, his gesture or to his protagonist.

Sergio Marchionne is the absent subject of the presentation, which shows a portrait of him that is observational but always remains hypothetical. The global manager spent much of his time on the plane between Detroit, Turin, Blonay, Schindellegi and Flims – geographical locations that to some extent also interweave the artist's life and that of the manager. From interviews and newspaper articles, Aceto learned that Marchionne owned about thirty black jumpers in each of these places. Clothing that became the symbol of a disembodied figure and illuminates the relationship between distance and intimacy. Over a long period of time, the artist regularly brought the same type of black jumpers to be washed at the dry cleaners in the places where Sergio Marchionne had lived. The cleaning caused the jumpers to age differently, which is reflected in their colour tones and eliminates the uniformity of the garment.

While doing artistic research on his protagonist, Aceto discovered that the view Marchionne had had from his country estate in Blonay corresponded to a painting called *Le château de Blonay* (1874–1877), which for some time blocked the view on Gustave Courbet's *The Origin of the World* (1866) – a close-up view of the hairy vulva of a reclining, naked woman with her thighs spread. The painting had been stored in an antiquarian bookshop where it was to be sold to Jacques Lacan, hidden and protected from prying eyes. Later, Marcel

Duchamp moved into the area and, to tease Courbet, called it "faucou", or "faux-con" (French for false vagina), referring to the painting and mocking the authority and legitimacy of Western "retinal" painting. He even let himself be hired by a small local newspaper to depict feathered birds as a sideswipe at Courbet.

The figure of the successful businessman and leader, which in itself is related to the representation of power, is extended by Aceto through the story of the feather and its connotation. The feather, a symbol of courage, power and strength, was used by rulers and is a trophy. At the same time, it stands for femininity, jewellery, eccentricity or is found in drag as an antithesis to the image of a primary masculinity. This polar attribution of the feather is already echoed by Donatello's bronze *David* (c. 1440). The helmet of the decapitated Goliath, on which the young man steps in a victory pose, is adorned with the long wings of a bird of prey. One of the wings disappears under David's foot, while the feathers of the other nestle against the inside of his thigh, their tips reaching to his crotch. The figure is characterised by an androgynous sensuality that contrasts with the preceding battle against Goliath. Aceto allows stories to collide that seem incompatible at first glance, and points to the complexity of heteronormative attributions with his subversive and distorted messages.

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environment and to collapse, but also to man's entanglement with nature and the increasing shift into virtual worlds. The bird flock turns out to be a drone choreography, with the individual flying objects looking like digital fireworks. References to digital imagery are inevitable; the surfaces seem to be co-determined by algorithms and their transformational potential fed by information from the internet.

Stefanie Gschwend

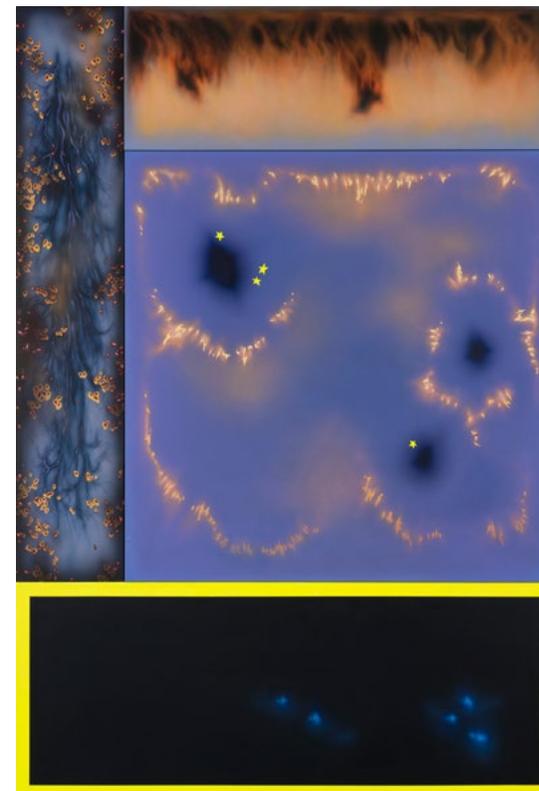
*Murmuration, roots and beliefs*, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 220 × 150 cm, courtesy the artist and galerie lange + pult, photo: Julien Gremaud

Natacha Donzé examines social codes, stereotypes, commonplaces and fables of popular culture in her body of work. Her pictorial compositions isolate, repeat or combine form, surface, colour and symbols from the most diverse cultural spheres, the digital or natural world. In her latest airbrush paintings, the artist creates a multi-layered formal language in which the relationship between the figurative and abstract elements of the canvas is left open.

For the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Appenzell, Natacha Donzé has created a series of paintings around the idea of swarming. Her focus is on the perception of a moving mass, when a swarm turns together, sweeping through the sky or water in tight flowing movements, as if it were a meticulously designed choreography. The idea of something connected with sound also resonates. Like a soft, growing murmur, colours layered on top of each other take form, dark obscure areas contrast with garish signal tones, segmented planes align with each other and the recognisable and the perceptible become an image. The paintings pose riddles about things that can be identified but not necessarily seen in their context. Like hearing something from a distance but not understanding the whole sentence or meaning. Or like the traces of light that remain on the closed eyelids due to the retinal persistence of a point of light.

The paintings from the series *Murmuration* (2023) in a sense work together as an atmospheric installation. They interact and allow the artist to explore visual themes and spiritual phenomena beyond the boundaries of the canvas. Associations of heat, glow, smoke, floods as apocalyptic messengers meet with more untroubled states of sunset or bloom. By drawing on a diverse iconography, the artist achieves to refer both to the cycles of life and creation and to collapsing systems or the signalling of state emergency structures.

The colour-intensive and captivating canvases leave a feeling of trepidation. In their essence, Donzé's works are deeply contemporary and urgent, pointing not only to the



*hecatean lines* is a composition of new works that interact with and reclaim folkloristic forms and aesthetics of appenzell (ch) from a queer perspective; it is inspired by a site-specific research into witchcraft and witch trials in appenzell. in allusion to traditional forms such as the *charivari* (a protective charm) or the *rugguseli* (polyphonic singing), *hecatean lines* retraces the sensuous connections between contemporary queerness and historical witchcraft by employing song, fragrance and language as their ephemeral modes of existence and by focusing on magical practices as tools for world-making.

marc norbert hörler lives and works between appenzell and berlin. marc's practice encompasses poetry, singing, scent, writing, performance, curating and publishing. in working with language and the senses, marc composes spatial, aural and olfactory environments with an interest in sensorial story-telling and diachronic linguistic weavings.



*spell for \*bluescht* (video still), 2021, performance, scent, garments, with Marzella Ruegge, Raphael Vuilleumier, marc norbert hörler, Kunstmuseum Appenzell, camera: Michèle Flury

## *hecatean lines* 2023

a folklore  
a reclaiming  
a queering  
a community  
a marginalisation  
an occult  
a paralinguistics  
a fragrance  
a space  
a time  
an affect  
a fire  
a water  
a sensoriality  
an absence  
an environment  
a conjuring  
a smell  
a smoke  
an atmosphere  
an air  
a burning  
a brewing  
an ephemerality  
a ferment  
an obsidian  
a poem  
an invisibility  
a gaze

a reflection  
a projection  
a breath  
an ace of swords  
a poem  
an encryption  
a secret  
an intellect  
a materiality  
a softness  
a tarot  
a weave  
a text  
a chain  
a charivari  
a noise  
an existence  
a charm  
a name  
a memory  
a marten bite  
a belonging  
a legacy  
a song  
a spell  
a harmony  
a dissonance  
a rhythm  
a mouth

a language  
a tongue  
a vocabulary  
a recital  
a rewriting  
a summoning  
a rugguseli  
a polyphony  
a repetition  
a resonance  
an invocation  
a listening  
a singing  
a nursery rhyme  
a garment  
a corsage  
a folklore  
a body  
a community  
a bondage  
a skin  
a touch  
a texture  
a poem  
a fire  
a heat  
a grammar  
a glamour  
a knowledge

But these are not campaigners: they don't have a point to make but simply seem to take their place in some configuration that allows them to communicate with us, each other, and their world. They extend into other forms of life, and inorganic matter and processes too, not least because these are ceramics, which are themselves difficult to situate on one side or the other of the line that we still imagine extends between natural and artificial processes. And although Maya also works with all sorts of other materials and techniques, all her work has a lot in common with the qualities of ceramics, which are somehow strong and fragile too, brittle and also malleable, resistant and conductive, even super-conductive.

The ceramics themselves are often glowing from within, radiating light, sometimes sound, always imperceptible vibrations. Their surfaces are marked by the traces of intricate paths, streams and vines, roots and veins, fungal threads, spiders' webs, fern fronds and fairy filigrees, but also scales and scars, signs of decay. Echoes of caves and grottoes, chimerical figures forgotten or fantasised, dreamt in or out of existence, or left, like the furry headless figure on the sofa, to sleep off the last days of the human race.

Did we also talk about altars then? Or is this another theme we didn't quite address, but was present nonetheless, as though in the air, or perhaps in the tea, hanging around implicitly. In any case, their presence in her work says a lot about the care with which she handles her materials, paying them attention, giving them respect, allowing them to show themselves, to be effective, to have affect. Is an altar a mirror of some kind, in which to see the world reflected, or distorted, or tipped to an angle at which nothing is quite square, or straight, or true? Or perhaps more like a window, or even a door, a portal opening onto another kind of space?

Sadie Plant

I had heard of them before, but it was not until I saw the figures Maya Hottarek calls eukaryotes that I really saw just how useful such a term can be to think across the boundaries of species, genders, classes, families. Was this what we talked about, the first time I went to her studio? Or is it rather baked into her work? Did I somehow absorb it, while we drank that warming tea and I began to see that you and I – and the dog and his fleas, those mushrooms, that beetle and this tree – are all eukaryotes, life forms whose cells have distinctive nuclei – true cores, hence *eu*-karyotes, which also suggests that all the lives we see, and many more too small for the naked eye, are made up of good hearts, kernels of truth.

Maya's new eukaryotes are off-beat, unhinged, dis-organised creatures: too many legs or none at all, no bodies formed and fired and glazed to the point of reflectivity. Their world is enchanted, but also under threat, destabilised, unbalanced: top heavy, with us on top and too heavy for the rest. Like all Maya's works, they inhabit the lively, interconnected world that is increasingly prominent in contemporary theory and philosophy, where new materialisms edge towards post-materialisms and an interest in a pan-psychedelic thinking that runs through everything that was once so strictly divided into nature and artifice, organic and inorganic, the human and everything it is not. Quantum physics meets queer epistemology, fluid identities emerge from microbiology; technologies of information and communication converge with notions of the world in contact with itself, in touch with all its elements.



*Isomorphous drip*, 2021, in collaboration with Julian Zehnder, glazed ceramic, rope, water pump, water, steel, hand drum, installation view Krone/ Couronne, Biel/Bienne, 2021, courtesy the artist, photo: Michal Schorro



*Te lire densement*, 2022, oil on canvas,  
30 × 24 cm, courtesy the artist

“I just truly want to listen to you and myself  
sincerely. Please, baby”,  
I write to you by letter.

We just have to tell ourselves stories that make  
us feel that what we are doing makes sense.  
Yes to compost, provided it bears fruit in the  
repetition of the cycle.  
And feeds caterpillars.

Solo with the cat puking it all out.  
Running after success.  
Bravo bravo bravo!  
Dreaming of achieving a desirable future.  
Bravo bravo bravo!

Dancing helps.  
We swear.  
Empathy forever.  
Disguised as a tree on the wet concrete.  
Jeanne Jacob

How do we care?

The world is shit too.  
Poetry helps.

How much of this shit do I carry (consciously or  
not) in my pocket when I meet you?

I'm looking for narratives that aren't linear, that  
don't go from A to B.  
Happy-end yourself.  
You know it's more complex.  
Ambiguity is okay.  
Just not so comfortable.  
Some think “pigeonhole”, others “station”.

Dreaming and flirting helps.

We answer more freely and safely.  
If we put an end to projections, what remains?  
(((Or what remains when we stop all kinds of  
projections?)))  
How hard does it stink then?

You can make compost out of shit.  
Compost warms.  
Compost helps.

Deconstruct expectations.  
Bury binary hetero-thinking.  
And maybe find narratives that stay for dinner.

I photograph two cardboard boxes with prints lying on the table. One says “Conflict/Postconflict Relics” and the other “Farming Fishing Village”. My work is often about showing and not showing.  
Roman Selim Khereddine

Sri Lanka, 23 February. Many of the Buddha statues standing by the roadside wear hoods covering their heads. I learn that these are unfinished statues or ones that are being restored. Only when the face has been painted or repaired is it unveiled. The statues in orange robes and black hoods make me think of the prisoners in Guantanamo. And of the *Hooded Man* of Abu Ghraib, who became an icon of the Iraq war exactly twenty years ago. Here the hood protects the unfinished Buddhas from prying eyes, there the tormentors from the eyes of the tormented. Often my work is about seeing and not seeing. I visit a British portrait and landscape photographer who has lived in Sri Lanka for decades. He has documented the civil war, has gained access as a white European to sites that would never have been accessible to locals (but he rejects my label of “war photographer”). One of his pictures catches my eye because it seems almost banal: two men pose smiling in front of a white van without a number plate. The photographer explains that thousands of civilians disliked by the state were abducted in such vans during the war. “To disappear someone” – in English it sounds even more brutal because no auxiliary verb is needed. I wonder if the abductees were hooded beforehand.





In his sculptural works, Robin Mettler deals with the transformative potential of material, which he processes with unexpected technical skill and craftsmanship. He combines water transfer printing, as known from the tuning scene, with rococo stucco, he evokes the effect of stone, marble or granite with styrofoam and building foam, or combines stylistic elements from different eras and cultural contexts to unsettle our perception by playing with the appearance of materiality. What his sculptures often have in common is the valorisation of building materials. Inexpensive materials from DIY- and hobby stores, ranging from plaster and polystyrene to building foam or spray paint, form the starting point. Sometimes, the simple materials find a representative form in the artistic realisation; sometimes, the decorative elements are manipulated in such a way that they lose their decorative function.

The three stucco rosettes *Strahler* (2023) allude to the decorative ornaments of magnificent edifices and to the representational function of architectural elements. The profiles of the stuccowork are highly exaggerated and do not

express the usual lightness and elegance, but take on an aggressive shape. The projecting objects are ambivalently related to the small size of the room and instead of curved forms, the stuccowork ends in strongly pointed rivets, as known from punk, gothic, the rocker scene or sadomasochist practices. The irritation arises from the dissonance between a formal vocabulary that on the one hand alludes to handmade precious objects and on the other to the symbolism of various subcultures, causing the ornamentation to tip over into something threatening.

*Mimetic Polycarbon* (2022) consists of steel bars attached to the ceiling, on which forms proliferate that oscillate between organic growth and synthetic structure. A simultaneously attractive and disconcertingly artificial materiality contrasts the idea of a natural material such as stone. The rough and brittle surface is paired with a shiny carbon coating and the seemingly grown bodies expose themselves as perfidious instruments of torture. We find ourselves in a kind of artificial landscape that echoes the gaming aesthetic and projects a dystopian vision of our world. Mettler's spatial staging leaves us with a feeling of contemplative trepidation in which different temporal and spatial dimensions seem to open up. A retro-futuristic view of our planet unfolds, a perspective from a time when humans are already extinct and nature has merged with technology and taken over. Or, to put it another way, the ruins of human achievements seen from a distant future. Through the formal and material entanglements, the objects appear futuristic, but also echo traditional arts and crafts, such as the carving of stone. The title *Mimetic Polycarbon* – imitating plastic – implies the artistic strategy. Trickery as an instrument for questioning our values and the relationship between original and plagiarism.

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in which there is an “on stage” and a “back stage”. In this way, they become spectators and performers at the same time. The boundaries between scenery, stage and backstage are fluid and change the perception depending on one’s position. The installation is wrapped in the words of a gentle female voice, spoken in a soothing and relaxing manner, reminiscent of a meditation class or digital assistant. They are comments and personal thoughts of the artist alongside instructions on breathing exercises, curse words or remarks on architectural details that layer on top of each other, merge into rhythm and dissolve back into a single voice. One believes to be able to identify parts, but fails to grasp their context, until, after listening for a while, their meditative effect tips over into something discomfoting. The association of well-being gives way to a patronising mantra and becomes an attack on personal freedom. Relaxation for the body’s sake gives way to the purpose of performance enhancement and productivity so that it reveals itself to be an obsessive strategy.

With *Shelter* (2023), Morger intervenes in the surroundings of the Kunstmuseum and the building structure. Under the overhang of the cubic architecture, she sets up a hideout for animals that creates a new habitat and thus expands the function of the museum and its remit. The artist points to an unused void, designed as a stylistic element that goes unnoticed as a usable space. By actively claiming the terrain and building a hiding place for local species, Morger explores the relationship of the concept of care and the dependencies this can create, but also points to the parasitic nature of art (strategies).

The video work *Graben* (2023) shows two people digging in the snow with shovels and their hands. Carefully, almost with the meticulousness of an archaeological excavation, but at the same time in a feat of strength, the mass of snow is removed until it becomes clear that a gravestone is being uncovered. Sounds of breathing mingle with the digging sounds of the shovel and snatches of conversation. The scene seems strange, as the spur of the diggers seems pointless because their work will be destroyed by the continuous snowfall. The artist reflects on her personal approach to the commemoration of the dead and the work involved in tending the grave. The figures’ urge to find the grave has to do with the desire to take care that the connection to the deceased person is not lost while the tomb disappears under the snow –

which seems grotesque, especially since it is unclear at first whether they are shovelling in the right place.

Stefanie Gschwend



*Lèche Vitrines* (video still), 2020, video, HD, 16’48”, courtesy the artist

Martina Morger creates socio-critical performances and installations that often arise situationally and relate to a location. Central questions revolve around individual freedom and its relationship to the technologised living environment or constructions of gender roles. The artist examines both the impact of the demand for performance in our consumer-driven society and what effect power structures have on the body. She sees her work as positioning within the existing system and, on the other hand, as assertions against that same system. Morger creates narrative utopias between care and desire, thus conveying a contradictory longing for freedom as well as the urge to make control visible.

*Soft Opening* (2021) plunges the room into darkness. Two spotlights illuminate an organza curtain that shimmers in the light, separating the space and inviting the audience to pass through. The visitors find themselves in a stage situation

what is narrated, but also the claim of language as an interpersonal means of communication in itself. Anina Müller deforms, manipulates and condenses her words until they almost dissolve into sounds and rhythm. Incoherent fragments of language pile up on top of each other, narration becomes a fragment, important things become irrelevant or contentless things become content. She exaggerates language and brings emotion to ecstasy within it. In *Chewing Gum* (2019), the artist lolls on a red chaise longue and discusses her relationship to chewing gum in a monologue. Starting with a childhood memory of the forbidden substance – because chewing it is not girly – to dream scenarios that escalate into sexual desire, making chewing gum the site of emotionality but also of social structures, and finally to instructions addressed to the audience on how best to chew a piece of gum.

For the performance *Home Sweet Home* (2023), the artist set up a domestic setting inspired by the architecture of the Kunstmuseum Appenzell, which looks like a series of small family homes. The platform and the windows form a kind of bourgeois living room, which the artist activates during her performance. She deals with the role of the single-family house and the housewife, mixing her own experiences as a childless single woman with an exaggerated narrative: “Am I my own family when I live alone in a single-family house?” In Anina Müller’s exploration, the house is not only linguistically but also visually anthropomorphised; it becomes the counterpart of the “house-wife” and the mirror of longings, frustrations and social norms. Using the means of language, the artist questions the interaction between people and expectations of relationships.

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Anina Müller’s artistic medium is language, and her interest lies above all in its influence on people. She writes monologues and texts on topics such as love and clichés, expectations and desires or community and loneliness, and in them confronts reality with fictional narratives that can reach the absurd. In her exploration of these themes, the artist repeatedly reflects on stereotypical role models, as in *Don't Look at the Sun* (2022), touches on the fragile boundary between violence and pleasure, or contrasts the lightness of the narrative with the heaviness of the content.

She pushes language to the limits of its comprehensibility in her humorous theatrical stagings, undermining not only the expectation of

their recollected lullabies  
and burnt soil

it's reassembled and tender choruses  
it's self organised and collective care  
it's composed dances of refusal  
and choreographies of pleasure  
it's singing voices as protection  
it's embraced skin as memory  
it's caressed protection spells  
their gentle songs of unrest  
it's warm reverberations  
my soft hum as refusal  
your lineage of change  
it's caring vibrations  
and our lullabies of  
tender defiances

Can I create an intimate touch  
a connection between the margins of my voice  
and the permeable beginning of another body?

Tina Omayemi Reden

lullabies of tender defiances

Can I create an intimate touch  
a connection between the margins of my voice  
and the permeable beginning of another body?

I remember the melody  
that caring caress coming from their voice

I remember the rhythm  
of a tender lullaby marking my skin

their songs of defiances  
their echoes still floating



*echoes I - III*, ceramic vases, sensors, exhibition  
view BINZ 39, Zurich, sound design: Melua  
Chua, sound: Melua Chua, Tina Omayemi Reden,  
ceramics: Ursula Vogel, Tina Omayemi Reden,  
photo: Tillo Spreng



*Poetisches Sujet, üabend*, 2021, Fine Art print  
on Hahnemühle, non-reflecting glass,  
framed, 120 × 80 × 4 cm, courtesy the artist,  
photo: Nina Rieben

stereotypically romantic motifs, such as day and night, windows or the moon, confronted with a smooth and cold aesthetic, as in *Affirmation ghost* (2023). Rieben thus disarms the elements of their symbolic value and unites them with what she calls “unstable sensuality” – a state on the border between emotion and irony, between pathos and emptiness.

The dark veil of *Loose attempts of sorrow* (2022) draws the eye to sign-like forms that have been almost carelessly attached to the transparent fabric. Like loose fragments, they float in space and seek clues on the walls that lie behind them. These fleeting gestures seem like symbols or cryptic characters to be deciphered, but at the same time they elude our understanding as soon as we think we have found a meaning in them. Language becomes form, or appears as an idea of the existence of language, but which is not accessible. The mixing of a potential fiction with reality, in combination with the unfinished aesthetics and the voids that Rieben uses as a guide for her artistic production of works, creates a blur and throws our perception into disarray.

*Sidelines in a corner of potential* (2023) is a symbol of movement and refers to a standardised design product. At the same time, shoes are everyday objects that call for action and a willingness to perform. Together with a shoemaker, the artist designed the object according to a commercial model in an almost caricature-like manner, but without depriving it of its function. Traversing paths and passing through times of day or light moods emphasises the inherent temporality of the object and unites what has happened and what is to come. At the same time, the potential for movement is contrasted with the soft fabric parts inside the shoe. By modifying the symbol and subverting its scope of action, the artist explores how personal desires or rituals become fixed in everyday objects or places.

Stefanie Gschwend

Nina Rieben asks questions about what reality we trust and how we construct it in the interstices of abstraction and association, feeling and knowledge or personal and social norms. What the reality of the work is remains undetermined or is the result of our imagination, our memory, our presumption. By means of photography, objects and language, she allows traces of text, material and image to collide spatially as anecdotal descriptions of conditions. We often encounter

For his performances, Soland works with self-made instruments, modular synthesizers, electric bass and voice. As a composer, he has written music for theatre and developed video or performance soundtracks and audio pieces. In 2021, his first solo album *YUKI* was released on the Futura Resistenza label (NL/BXL).

The artist draws personal and mystical figures and hybrid beings that populate the picture plane. They are reminiscent of the fragments of the Parthenon relief, creatures from science fiction novels or the supernatural creatures of Japanese “ashinaga tenaga” folklore, which extol the virtues of a harmonious working relationship. They merge into a melting pot of traditions and explore aesthetic aspects of human and anthropomorphic forms. Many of the motifs are inspired by the Japanese heritage with which Soland has family ties, such as the “netsuke”, mythological figurines combining animals, flowers, fruits or objects and scenes from everyday life, or the “kokeshi”, traditionally handcrafted wooden dolls believed to be lucky charms. The latter are often painted with chrysanthemums, cherry blossoms or plum blossoms, while the head is decorated with a wreath-shaped hair ornament of red petals that extends down to the cheeks. The hybrids have in common the connection of man with nature and the spiritual striving for union with it.

Soland's themes contrast with the choice of image carrier and his drawing technique. He uses ballpoint pens on leatherette or prints it with digitally produced drawings. The faux leather itself is made similar to a print, through embossing or colour and gloss effect. The artificiality of the carrier, which imitates nature and physicality, in combination with handwriting applied by machine with a nozzle, creates an irritating moment of perception. The animal body associated with leather meets the flatness of laser printing and its industrial production, while the folkloric-inspired pictorial theme collides with the use of new media. The hanging also opens up further thinking spaces: while the leather pieces nailed to the wall recall the processing of animal products, the works attached to the wall with Velcro are rather associated with the functional character of garments. Soland's leather works are complemented by a 2023 publication of around eighty of his digital drawings. Strung together, they form an associative story accompanied by intuitive texts by the artist Cassidy Toner. The format of the

print medium corresponds to that of a tablet screen and thus preserves the original character of the sketches. Intimate and humorous drawings – often self-portraits –, absurd motifs or scribbles merge into an intense colour spectrum.

In a gesture of zooming on a screen, distorting and transferring, the drawings link with music-making on a computer or synthesiser. The drawing process is similar to acoustic zooming, where a miniature movement can become a grand gesture. On the floor of the room, Soland has placed an old Japanese stringed instrument, “koto”, and juxtaposed it with a simple imitation, the self-made instrument *ASMR Koto* (2023). During the performance, both are amplified with contact microphones, distorted and supplemented with the help of a modular synthesiser. The miniature attempts to reach the original through translation steps, association loops and the interplay of proximity and distance. If the instrument and its imitation are not activated by the artist, a low hum of the “koto” remains, immersing the room in a meditative atmosphere.

Stefanie Gschwend



*untitled 2*, 2021, digital drawing, print on paper, part of the publication *Yanik Soland: Drawings* (Edition Haus Am Gern), courtesy the artist

Yanik Soland's work places visual art, composition, improvisation and performance on an equal footing, creating connecting lines and complementing each other. There are often juxtapositions of sound with visual media, such as drawing or installation.

Alfredo Aceto (b. 1991, Turin) lives between Turin and Geneva. He studied Fine Arts at ECAL (École cantonale d'art de Lausanne) and at the MSA^ (©The Mountain School of Arts, Los Angeles). His work has been exhibited at DOC!, Paris; Museo Pietro Canonica, Rome; Museo del Novecento, Milan; Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen or Kunsthhaus Glarus, among other venues. In 2019, he received the Leenaards Cultural Grant from the Fondation Leenaards.

Natacha Donzé (b. 1991, Boudevilliers) lives and works in Lausanne. Her works have been shown in various solo exhibitions, most recently at Kunst(Zeug)Haus in Rapperswil (2022), Musée des beaux-arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds (2021) and galleries such as galerie lange + pult in Zurich (2022) and Galerie Parliament in Paris (2020). In 2019, she received the Kiefer-Hablitzel Prize for Young Artists and in 2017 she was awarded as a young talent at the Biennale at the Musée des beaux-arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

marc norbert hörler (b. 1989, they/he, Appenzell) lives and works between Appenzell and Berlin. marc studied Fine Arts (BA) at the Institut Kunst Gender Natur at the Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW (2013–2016) and Art Praxis (MA) at the Dutch Art Institute in Arnhem (2018–2020). marc's practice includes poetry, song, scent, writing, performance and publishing. In 2021, marc received a work grant from the Innerrhoder Kunststiftung for the project *occult words diffusing remembrance of a scented future*.

Maya Hottarek (b. 1990, Chironico) lives and works in Biel/Bienne. She studied Fine Arts at the Bern Academy of the Arts and at the Institut Kunst of the FHNW in Basel. Her recent exhibitions include *Intelleaks* at N/A/S/L in Mexico City, at Liste Art Fair Basel, *Petri dish dream* at A.ROMY Gallery in Zurich, *Isomorphous Drip* at KRONE COURONNE in Biel, *Situation 1 and others* at Kunsthalle Basel and *INSONNE* at Sonnenstube in Lugano.

Jeanne Jacob (b. 1994, Neuchâtel) lives and works in Biel. In 2019, she completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Lucerne School of Art and Design. Her artistic work encompasses painting, performance and drawing. Her works have been shown in various institutions, off-spaces and at festivals. Jacob won the Prix Kunstverein Biel/Bienne 2020 and was nominated for the Swiss Performance Art Award 2022 as part of the art duo Le Collectif Les Heureuses.

Roman Selim Khereddine (b. 1989, Zurich) lives and works in Zurich and holds a master's degree in History and a master's degree in Fine Arts. His work was shown in solo exhibitions at Espace 3353 in Geneva, Tunnel Tunnel in Lausanne, BINZ39 in Zurich (all in 2022), as well as in group exhibitions at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Plattform21 at MASI Lugano and the Helmhaus in Zurich. In 2019, Khereddine received the Kiefer-Hablitzel Prize for Young Artists.

Robin Mettler (b. 1993, Cormoret) lives and works in Bern. He studied Fine Arts (BA) at the Bern University of the Arts. Since 2017, he has exhibited in various group and solo exhibitions in various venues including Amore, Basel (2022); Millieu, Bern (2020); Kunsthhaus Centre d'art Pasquart, Biel (2023, 2021); WallStreet, Fribourg (2020); Kunsthhaus Langenthal (2018/19); Sattelkammer, Bern (2019). In 2021, his work was awarded the Aeschlimann-Corti-Förderstipendium.

Martina Morger (b. 1989, Vaduz, LI) lives and works in Hanover and Balzers, Liechtenstein. She studied Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Zurich and Media Art in Zurich and Vienna and completed a Master's degree at the Glasgow School of Art. Her works have been shown at Lovaas Projects in Munich, at the Kunstmuseum Appenzell, at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris, or at the 58th Venice Biennale. In 2021 Martina Morger received the Manor Art Prize St.Gallen.

Anina Müller (b. 1997, St.Gallen) lives and works in Basel and Winterthur. In 2020, she completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW. She works primarily in the media of performance, language and video. Her works have been shown at the Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2022); Museum Tinguely, Basel (2022); Kunsthhaus Baselland, Muttenz (2020) and Kunstverein Freiburg, Fribourg (2019), among other venues. In 2019, she was awarded the sponsorship prize of the Maurer-Billeter Foundation and in 2022 she received a work contribution from the cultural promotion of Appenzell AR.

Tina Omayemi Reden (b. 1991, Zurich) is a lecturer, cultural and community worker in Zurich. She studied at the Zurich University of the Arts, the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam and has taught, mentored and offered workshops at art schools in Switzerland and the Netherlands (ZHdK, MA Transdisciplinarity and BA Fine Arts; ArtEz Arnhem, BA Fine Arts; HSLU, BA Art and Mediation, etc.). She is an active member of the network Bla\*Sh (Black Feminist Network) and the collective FUBU (For Us By Us).

Nina Rieben (b. 1992, Bern) lives and works in Basel and Bern. She studied Fine Arts at the Bern Academy of the Arts and at the Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW. Her works were shown, among other venues, in Parallels, CAN (2022); in Neuchâtel (2020); at Palazzina, Allschwil (2020, *neither the either, nor the or, are places to be* [co-exhibition with Brigham Baker]), Stadtgalerie Bern (2019, *oder stimmt etwas nicht mit dem Gefühl* [solo exhibition]). In 2019 she received the Aeschlimann-Corti-Förderstipendium.

Yanik Soland (b. 1990, Basel) lives and works as a musician and artist in Basel. He studied Fine Arts at the Institute of Art of the Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW (BA) and at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam (MA). Since 2022 he has been studying Composition and Improvisation at the Musik-Akademie Basel in the Classical Department. As a composer, he has written music for theatre (Schauspielhaus Zürich, junges theater basel, Theater Basel) and developed video soundtracks and performance soundtracks, among other things. He had exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel, Kunstverein Freiburg or Kunsthalle Zürich.

On the occasion of the exhibition  
 VORDEMBERGE-GILDEWART AWARD 2023  
 12 ROOMS  
 19 March – 11 June 2023

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