Michaela Putz







Portfolio Selected Works

About

Michaela Putz is a Vienna-based artist whose cross-disciplinary practice explores the relationship between image, memory, nature, and technology. Starting from the photographic image, she investigates the overlaps between archival material, digital reconstruction processes, and ecological questions. Rather than focusing on acts of preservation, her interest lies in the permeability of images; toward what is missing, forgotten, or imagined.

In recent years, she has worked intensively with digital traces of extinct and endangered species. Using image fragments and 3D reconstructions, she creates speculative visual spaces in which the boundaries between documentation, simulation, and memory become fluid.

Her work has been presented in numerous international exhibitions, screenings, and festivals, including Tricky Women Festival 2025, Vienna Collectors Club, Bildraum 01, Kunstverein Eisenstadt, Fotogalerie Wien, Ars Electronica Festival (AT), Museum Villa Rot (DE), Espacio de Arte Contemporáneo (UY), Athens Photo Festival (GR), Imago Lisboa, a ilha (PT), Behnoode Foundation (UAE), and Yassi Foundation (IR). She has been published in magazines and catalogues, amongst them Camera Austria Forum (168/2024), Fotogalerie Wien, Museum Villa Rot, and morgen magazin.

Putz studied at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. She has received several grants and awards, including the BMKÖS Start Stipendium (2019), the Burgenland Art Award (2018), and the international residency grant for Shanghai by the Federal Ministry of Austria (2024).



Unseen

Photography and manipulation based on found footage images 2025

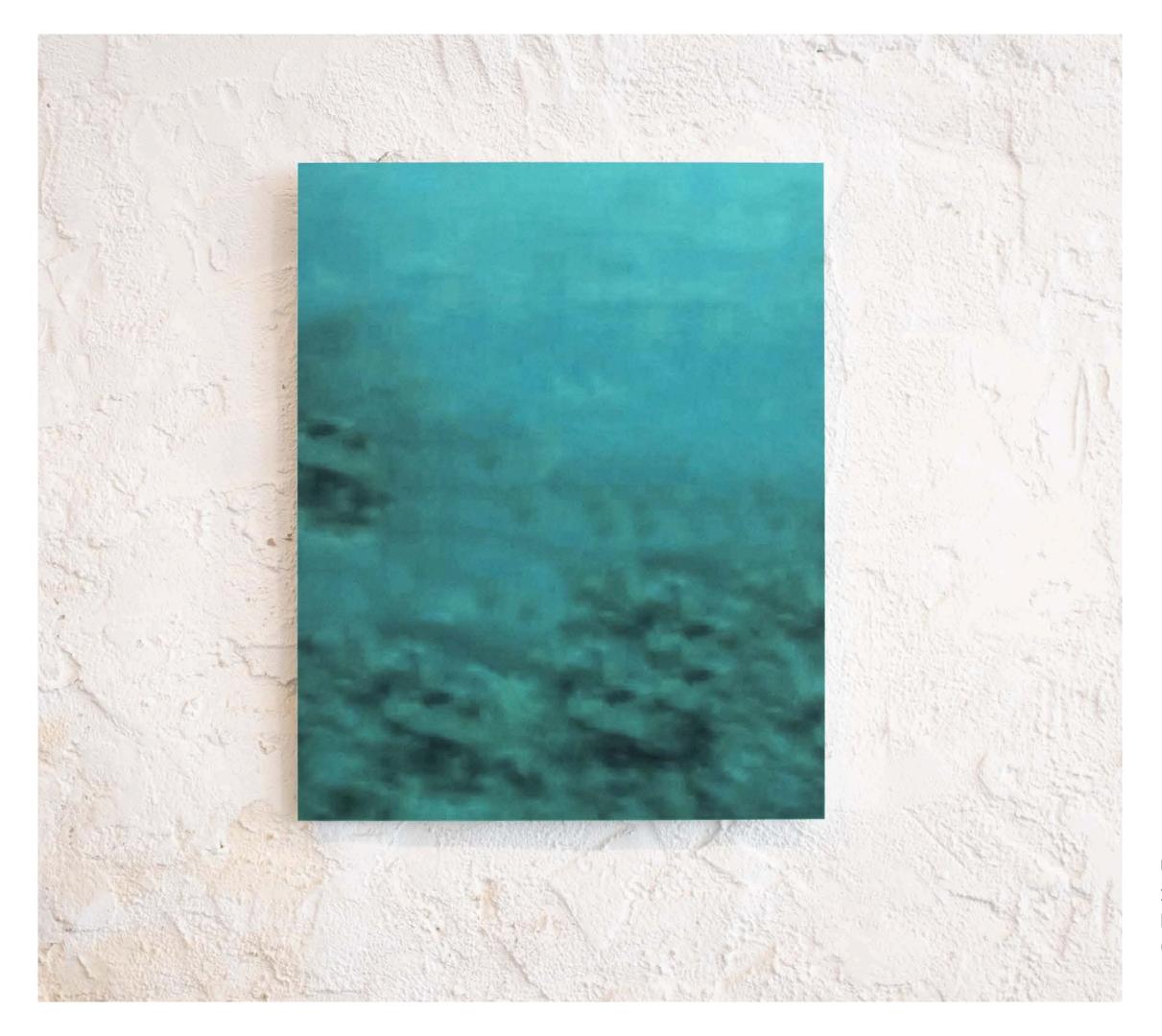
"During her three-month residency in the Yangtze Delta in Shanghai—a place where ecological fragility and global production chains are inseparably intertwined—Putz began her engagement with the Baiji, a nearly forgotten river dolphin last sighted in 2006 and now considered extinct. In the photo series Unseen (2025)—comprising five small-format fine art prints on aluminum dibond (each 18 x 14 cm) and a larger print (40 x 50 cm)—the animal serves as a starting point but remains absent from the images. Instead, Putz uses found digital image material gathered from private individuals and researchers' archives. Clues to the animal have been digitally removed—the disappearance lingers subtly. What remains in digital archives, what is lost, and how does memory manifest in the image? Or is it erased altogether?

Pixelated landscapes with color shades of the river—images filled with artifacts, disruptions, and overlays—come into view. Putz is drawn to the fragmentary, to what eludes clear visibility. At the same time, human intervention in natural systems becomes visible—the industrialization of the delta, its ecological strain, and the silent extinction of species. The series weaves loss, image logic, and ecological fragility into a quiet, critical resonance space." – Livia Klein, 2025

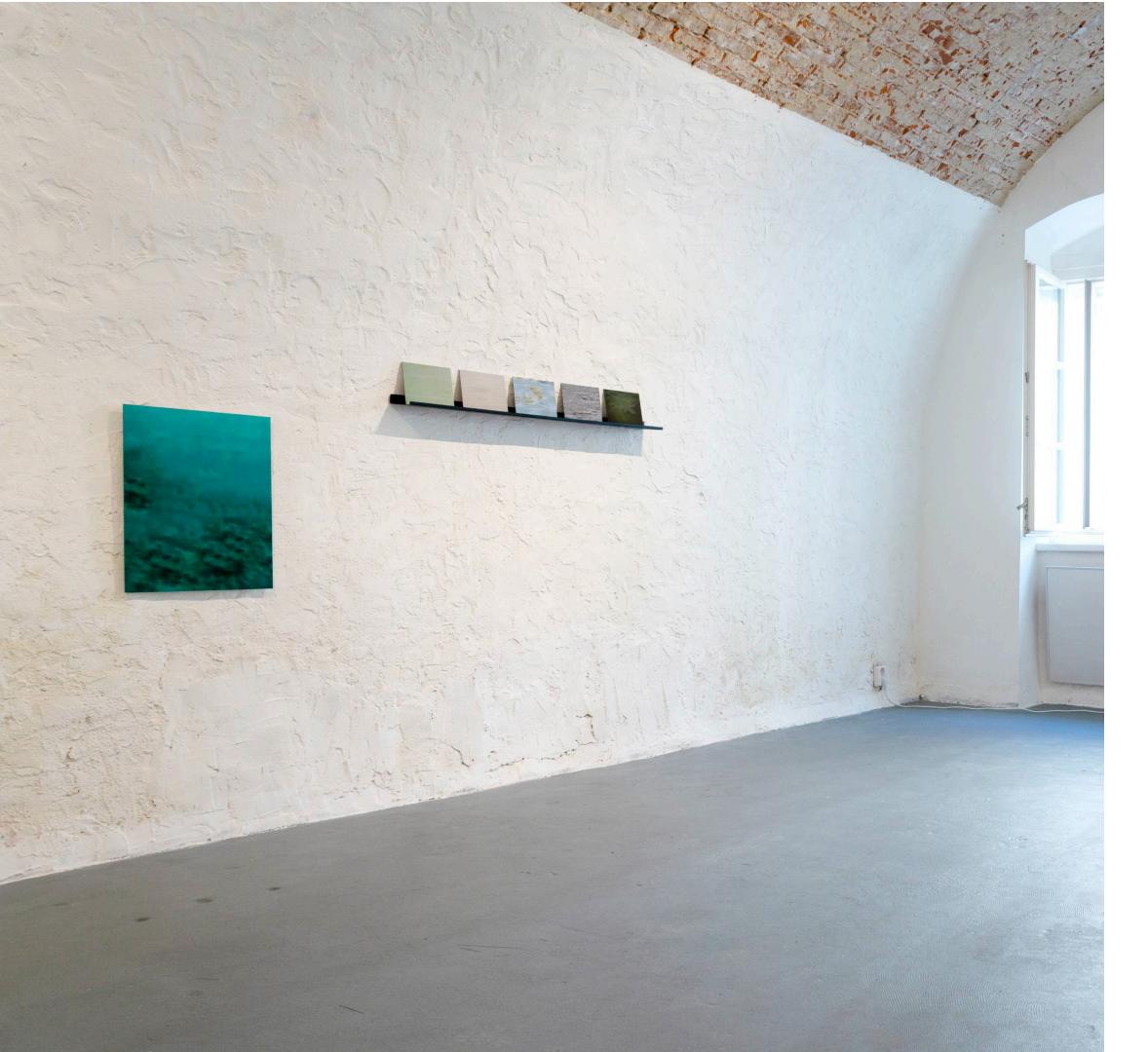




Exhibition view EPHEMERE LANDSCHAFTEN, 2025, Duo with Elena Kristofor, Stein*Stein Krems (AT) (c) Elena Kristofor, Bildrecht



Unseen (30)
2025
Pigment print mounted on alu dibond, 50 x 40 cm
(c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Exhibition view EPHEMERE LANDSCHAFTEN, 2025, Duo with Elena Kristofor, Stein*Stein Krems (AT) (c) Elena Kristofor, Bildrecht



from the series Unseen 2025 Pigment print mounted on alu dibond, each 14 x 18 cm (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Unseen 03 2025



Unseen 04 2025



Unseen 06 2025



Unseen 07 2025

Phantom of a Garden

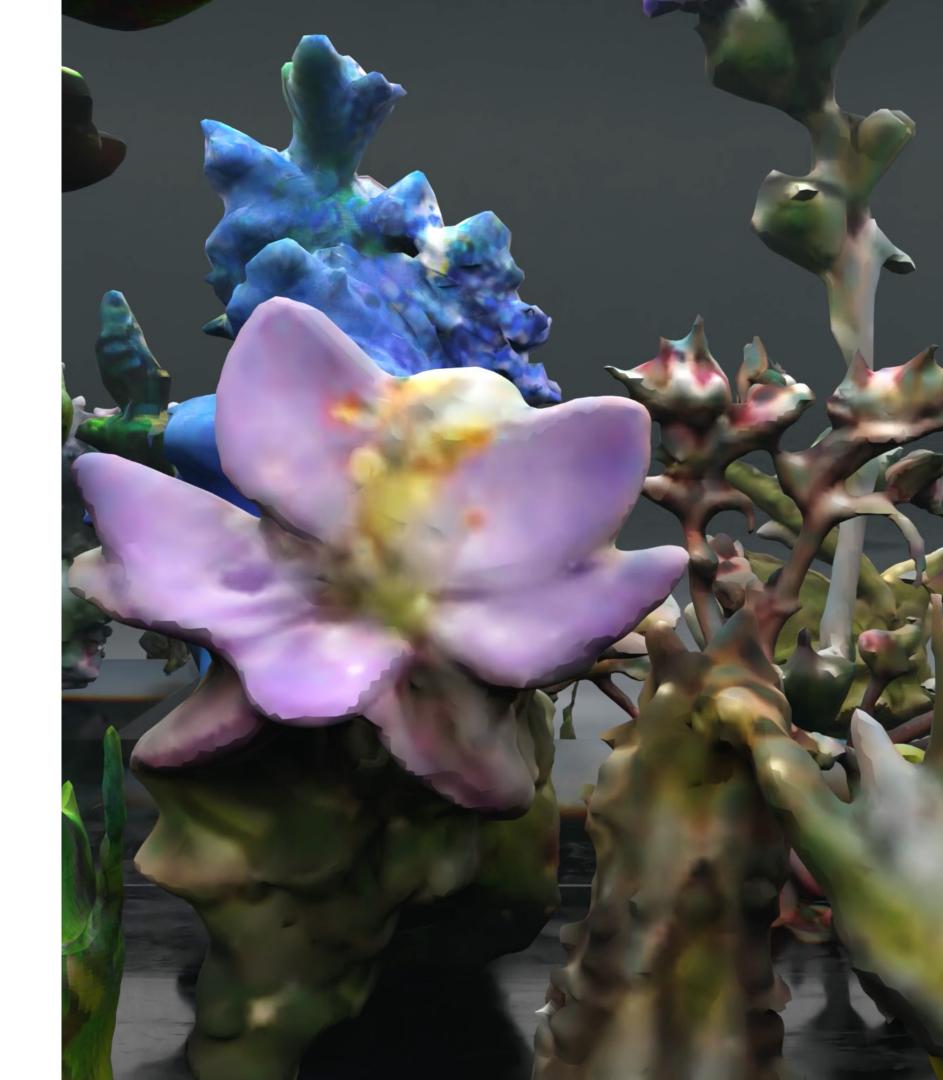
Video work and multimedia installation 06:24 min 2024

As a result of working with digital image archives of extinct plants over the past two years, "Phantom of a Garden" imagines a future in which lost things are brought back to life in a digital realm. Based on a found-footage image archive of extinct and endangered plant species, the digital images and image fragments were subjected to a transformative process with the help of an AI that interpreted the images as 3D models. Without a real template, based only on collected images devoid of perspective and detail, the rendered plants are usually glitchy and reminiscent of ghostly apparitions or phantom echoes of their former selves.

Creation of the 3D landscape. In collaboration with Multinode Studio

With the kind support of Land Burgenland







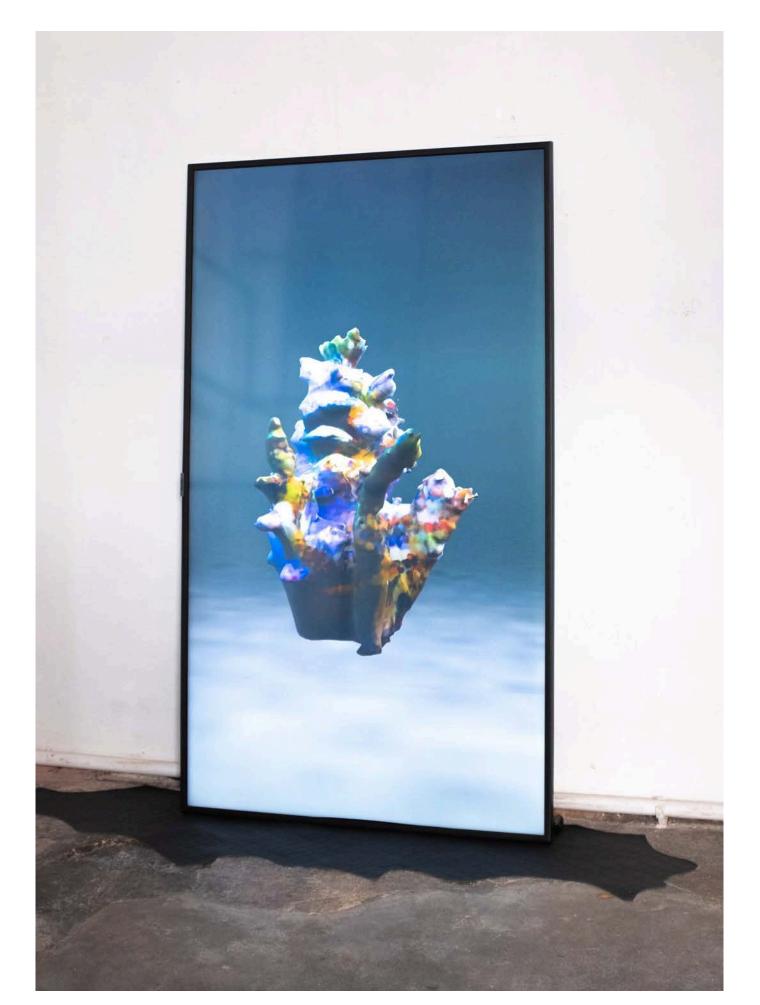
Exhibition view "Uncanny Gardens", Medienwerkstatt Wien (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Exhibition view "Uncanny Gardens", Medienwerkstatt Wien (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



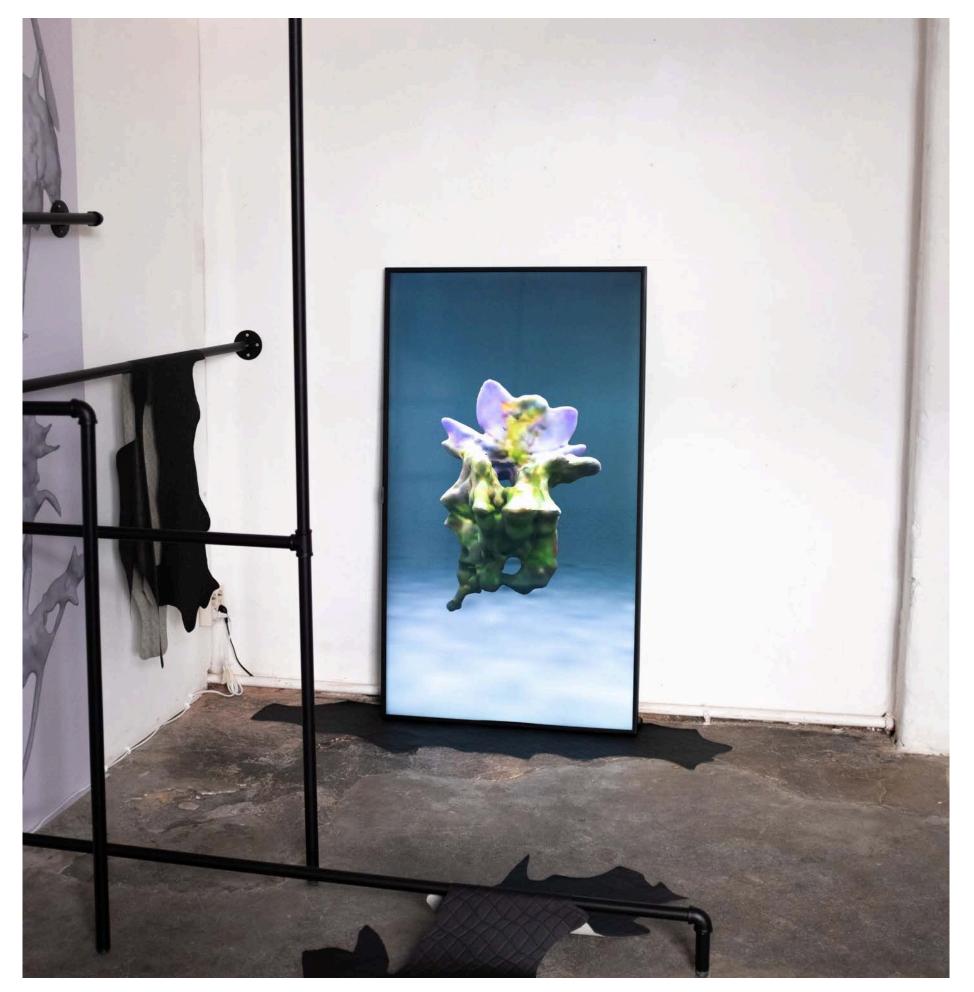
Exhibition view "Uncanny Gardens", Medienwerkstatt Wien (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



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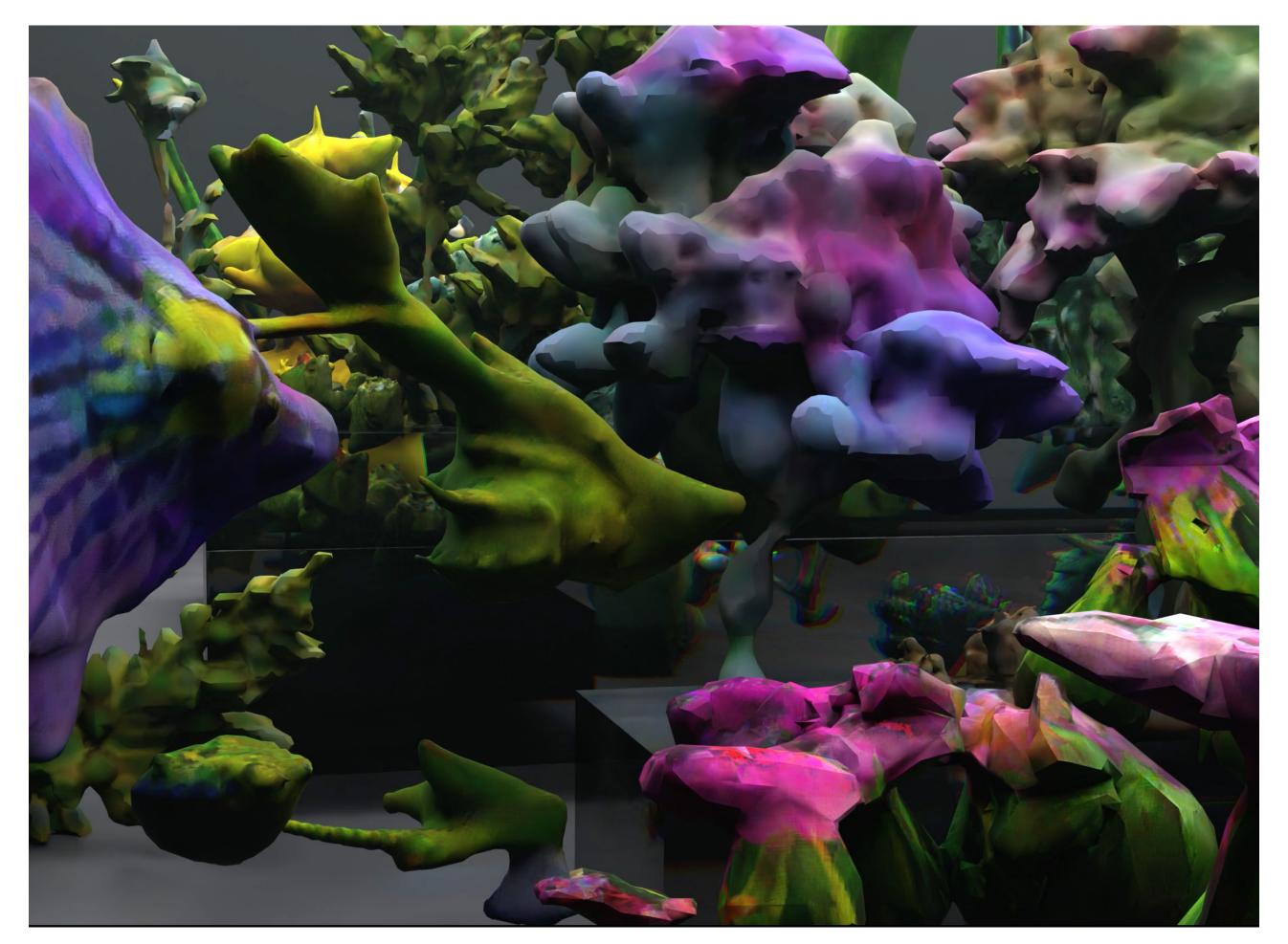
Exhibition view "Uncanny Gardens", Medienwerkstatt Wien (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



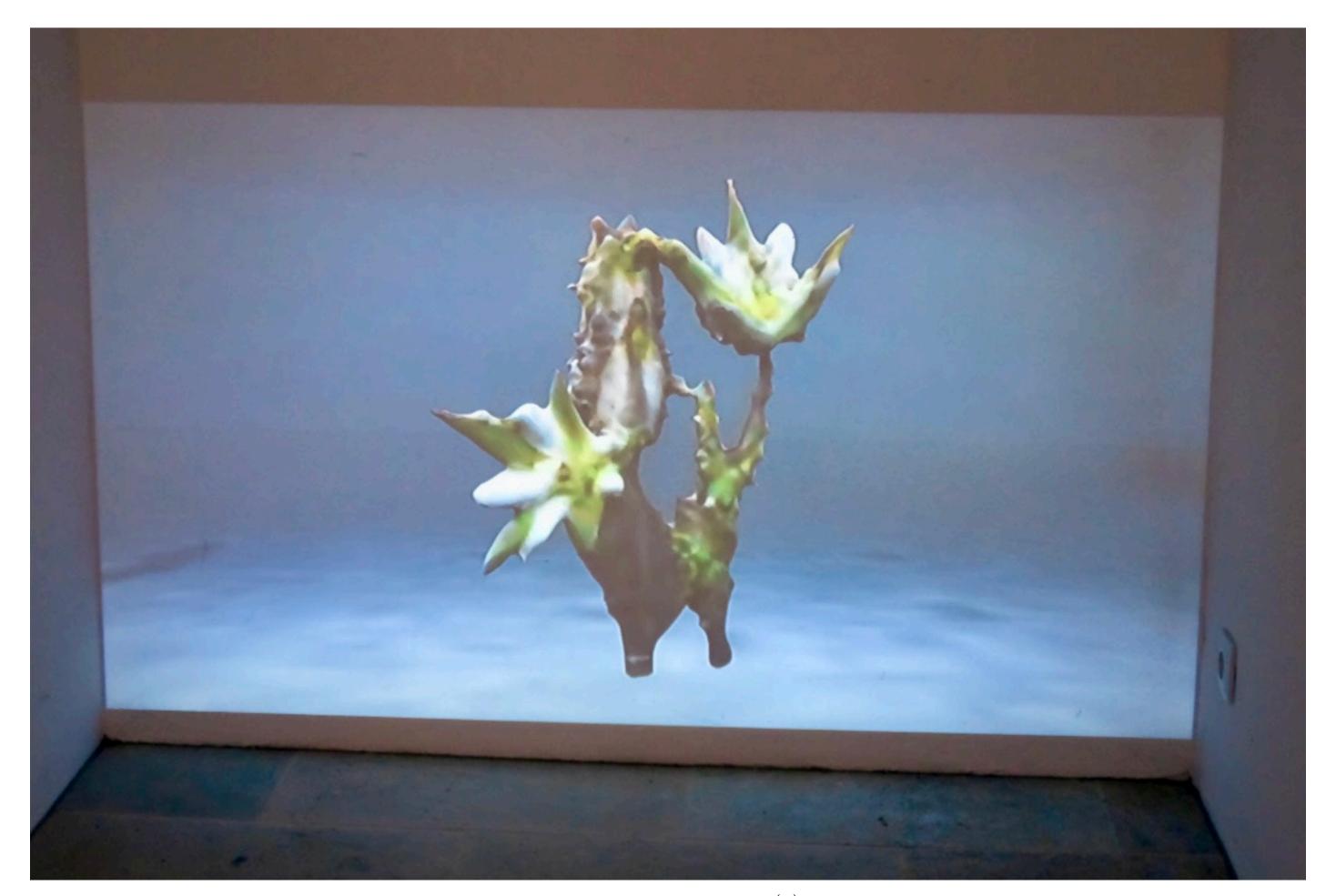
Exhibition view "Uncanny Gardens", Medienwerkstatt Wien (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Exhibition view "Uncanny Gardens", Medienwerkstatt Wien (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Video still



Video screening Werkstatt für zeitgenössische Wahrnehmung, OFFEN Burgenland (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht

Cutouts

Photography & digital collages 2023-2024

In Cutouts, Michaela Putz examines the fragility of extinct plant species. Using photographs of landscapes taken directly from her computer screen, she digitally erases the depicted plants and then reconstructs the empty (ecological) spaces through meticulous montage techniques. These voids are filled with close-up fragments of the very species that were removed. The resulting collage-like compositions not only visualize loss and disappearance, but also reflect on the ways digital technologies store and reconfigure memory.

Cutout #002 2023, Pigment print on cotton paper, 80 x 60 cm, edition of 3 (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht









Cutout #001 (left)
C-Print mounted on Alu Dibond,
80 x 60 cm, framed, edition of 3
Exhibition view "9 Artists, 9 Days",
Otto Wagner Pavilion (AT)
(c) Michaela Putz



Cutout #003, C-Print mounted on Alu Dibond, 80 x 60 cm, framed, edition of 3 (c) Michaela Putz



Zooms, each 14 x 9,5 x 2 cm, photography, acrylic glass, wood, unique works, 2023 (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Zooms, 14 x 9,5 x 2 cm, photography, acrylic glass, wood, unique works, 2023 (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht

Collected

Series of collages from C-Prints (Fujicolor photo paper matte) In situ wall collages, various dimensions 2023-2024

"Michaela Putz's archive includes photographs of endangered plant species collected on the web, (...) Image data are exposed as C-prints and these (always) rectangular photographs are cropped in a next step, some follow the outlines of flowers, others take on new organic forms. (...) Even the otherwise invisible screen on which Michaela scrolls along her search results becomes visible when the artist photographs some of the plants from the screen and a keyboard partially burned into the Retina display of the Macbook after years of use becomes visible as a bright outline, just like dust, scratches or fingerprints. Even tools of image processing, such as the magnifying glass, become part of the composition." - Ruth Horak, translated by Paula Marschalek

Project supported by:



Bundesministerium Kunst, Kultur, öffentlicher Dienst und Sport ■ Österreichische Botschaft Lissabon





Wall collage, Inkjet prints, photography, 4 x 2,40 cm, 2024 // Exhibition view ALCHEMICAL IMPOSSIBILITIES, sehsaal Wien (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Untitled (Bud Entanglement), 2023, 26 x 18 cm, Collage from C-Prints, Unique work // Exhibition view FRAGMENTARIUM, Vienna Collectors Club (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Exhibition view FRAGMENTARIUM, Vienna Collectors Club (c) Anna Ignatovich, Vienna Collectors Club



Untitled (Actaea europaea), 2023, 40 x 30 cm, Collage from C-Prints, Unique work (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Exhibition view
FRAGMENTARIUM,
Vienna Collectors Club
(c) Anna Ignatovich,
Vienna Collectors Club



Michaela Putz Untitled (Astragalus danicus), 2024, Collage, C-Prints
Fujicolor photopaper matte, 22 x 16 cm, unique work (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Wallcollage & Collected series (26 x 18 cm & 22 x 16 cm), unique works // Exhibition view "Plants, Sand, Sea", XYZ Lisbon with Laura Sperl (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht





Michaela Putz Untitled (Linum radiola), 2024, Collage, C-Prints Fujicolor photopaper matte, 22 x 16 cm, unique work (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Exhibition view "Between Light & Shadow", Duo with Hessam Samawatian (c) Theresa Wey // left: Untitled (Paper Archaeology) #01, Herbarium paper (47,8 x 56,8 cm), middle: Untitled (Linaria arvensis), Collage from C-Prints (100 x 70 cm), right: Untitled (Linaria arvensis), Collage from C-Prints (100 x 70 cm), right: Untitled (Linaria arvensis), Collage from C-Prints (26 x 18 cm)



Michaela Putz Untitled (Artemis alba), 2024, Collage, C-Prints Fujicolor photopaper matte, 22 x 16 cm, unique work (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Untitled (Cuscuta epilinium), 2023, 26 x 18 cm, Collage from C-Prints, Unique work // Exhibition view FRAGMENTARIUM, Vienna Collectors Club (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Untitled (Artemis alba), Collage from C-Prints (100 x 70 cm), unique work // Exhibition view "Between Light & Shadow", Duo with Hessam Samawatian (c) Theresa Wey



Michaela Putz Untitled (Orchis coriophora), 2024, Collage, C-Prints Fujicolor photopaper matte, 22 x 16 cm, unique work (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht

Extinction Ballads

Digital collages based on found footages photographies 2021-2022

"The digital works include found-footage footage of recently extinct or endangered plants. Michaela Putz translates the evidence of former diversity into a transfiguring baroque aesthetic, interrupted only by the smudgy traces of the often inconsequential scrolling we find on our tablets and smartphones. In the work, the artist refers to a conspicuously invasive-destructive element of human action as well as to the increasingly evident futility of fleeting 'gestures'." – translated from a text by Esther Mlenek





with Simon Lehner and Flavia
Mazzanti 2021, Salzamt Linz (AT) a
cooperation between Bildrecht,
Ars Electronica Festival & Salzamt
Linz photos: (c) Anna-Katharina
Nickel, 2021



Extinction Ballad #05, Digital
Collage/Painting, Fine Art Print on
Hahnemühle Ultra Smooth,
mounted on Alu Dibond in
aluminium frame, 100 x 60 cm,
Vienna Art Week Open Studio
(c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



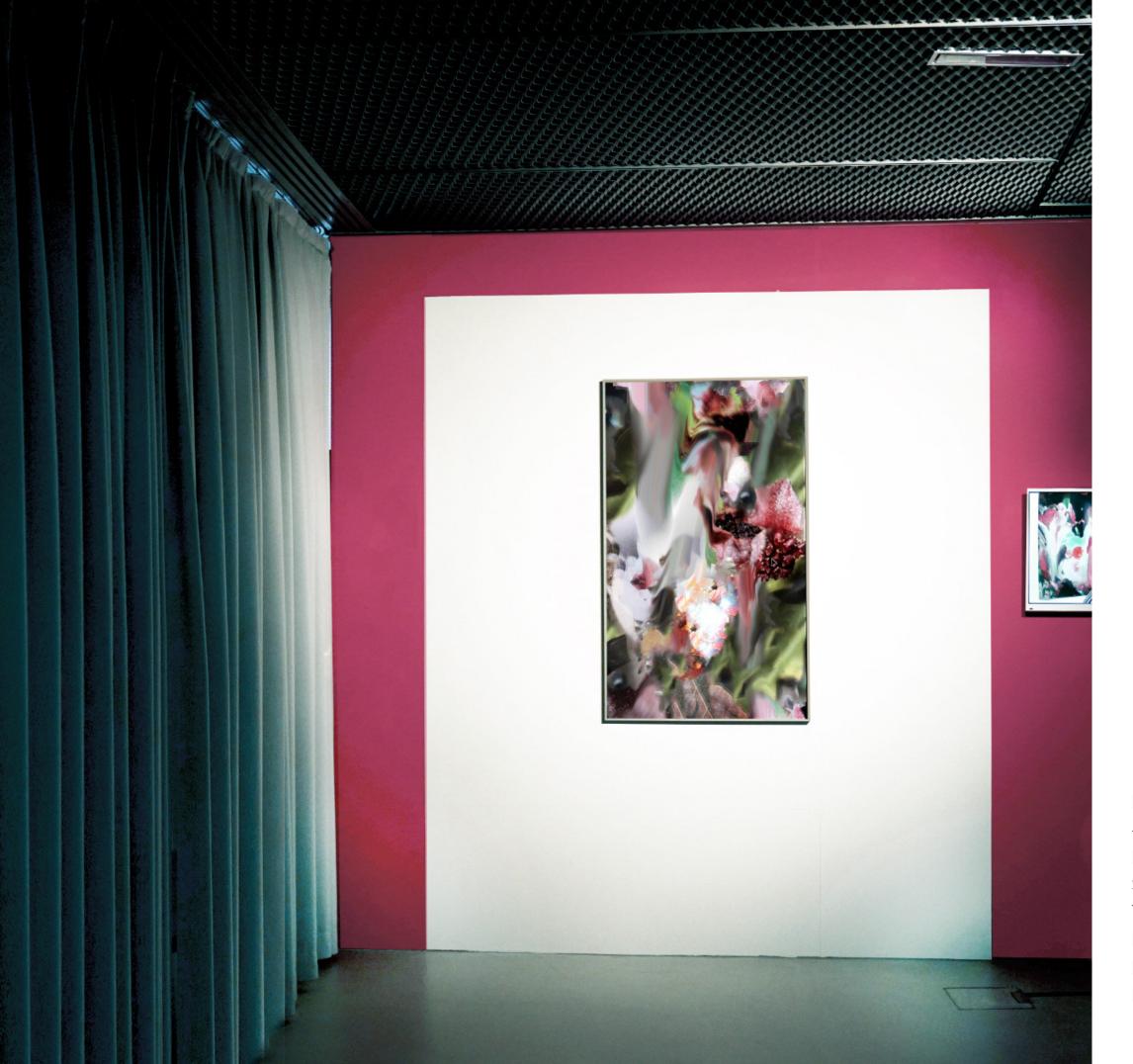
Works from the series
Extinction Ballads, Fine
Art Prints on
Hahnemühle, mounted
on Alu Dibond, framed
(dimensions 75 x 45, 100
x 60, 125 x 75 cm),
UV-Print on Vinyl (500 x
150 cm) // Exhibition
view "Flora Iranica",
group show2022, Yassi
Foundation (IRN)
curated by Farshido
Larimian (c) Yassi
Foundation, 2022



Extinction Ballad #03, Digital Collage/Painting, Fine Art Print on Hahnemühle Ultra Smooth, mounted on Alu Dibond in aluminium frame, 100 x 60 cm, Vienna Art Week Open Studio (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht



Extinction Ballads, Fuji
Crystal Archive matt
on Multiplex-Wood,
each 60 x 40 cm, 2021
// Exhibition view:
"Proximity and
Distance", Fledermaus
(AT) 2022, (c)
Michaela Putz



Extinction Ballads
#09, Fine Art Print on
Hahnemühle Ultra
Smooth, framed, 125 x
75 cm, in 2021,
Landesgalerie
Burgenland (AT) (c)
Kerstin Kremser, KBB



Extinction Balis #08, Fine Art Print on Hahnemühle Ultra Smooth, framed, 125 x 75 cm (c) Michaela Putz

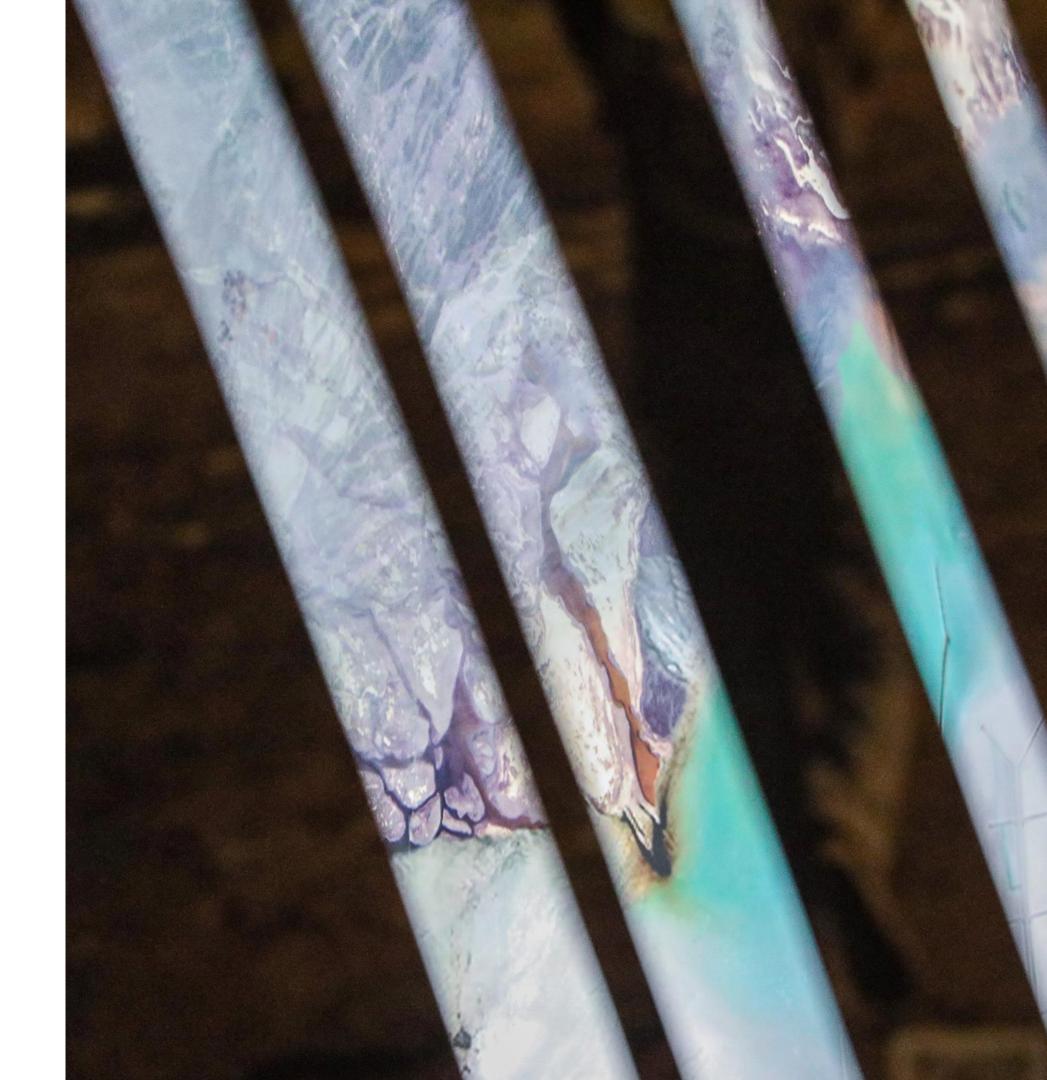


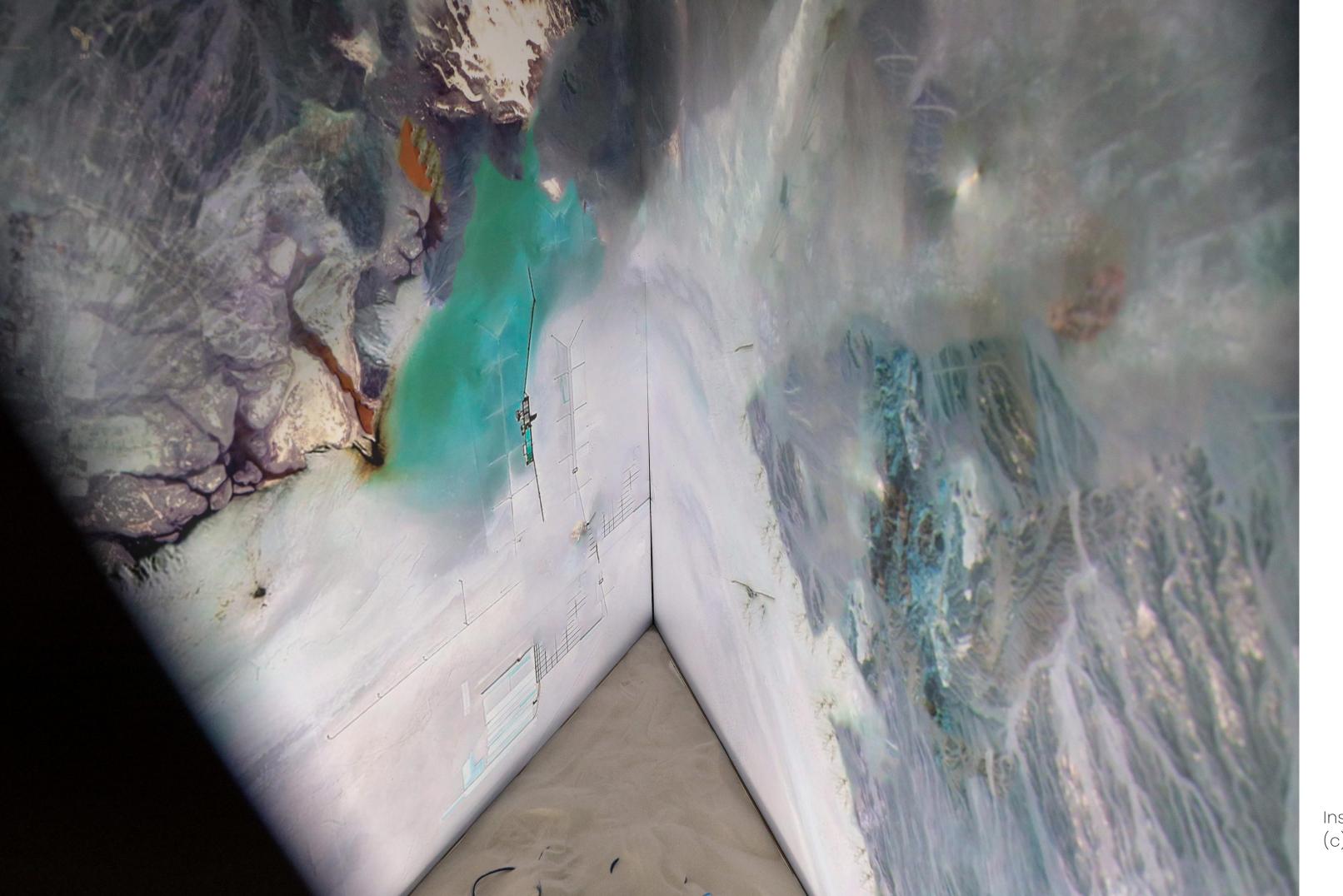
Abies Alba 1 & 2, C-Prints on Alu Dibond, lacque, 100 x 60 cm // ABIES ALBA 2021, Red Carpet Showroom, Karlsplatz, solo (AT) (c) Michaela Putz, Bildrecht 2021

Hypercene

Interactive Installation in public space for Mikrogalerija CPN in Belgrade (SRB) with Mato Lagator December 2021 - February 2022

The interactive installation for the Mikrogalerija CPN in Belgrade took upon the issues of the digitalization of our everyday lives and the consequences that such everyday life creates – rare metal mining, energy consumption, planned obsolescence of technology, electronic waste, social ignorance of the implications of the comfort that digital technologies provide. It questionned the knowledge of the components that our computers are made of, what minerals are in the batteries of our phones and where these raw materials have been excavated before they ended up in the devices. A temperature sensitive layer on the front window revelaed more information about these questions and the hidden digital traces of the "hypercene".





Installation view (c) Marko Risovi, 2021



Installation view (c) Marko Risovi, 2021



Installation view (c) Marko Risovi, 2021

Screen Romance

Photography, 2018-2020

"In Putz's "Screen Romance", (...) swiping is an expressive gesture. Sometimes it materializes as a decisive, emphatic movement, at other times as an almost tentative touch; sometimes the traces agglomerate into an energetic cluster, at others they remain so subtle that they are barely visible. (...) Almost every glance is also a touch. We palpate the images, want to know more, zoom into the photo, pause, move the selection, zoom deeper, until the shot dissolves into pores or pixels. Out again, on to the next image, stop, continue, stop, continue, double click, zoom in, and so on. It is a process in which the photographic image comes to life. Digital data may be cold and incorporeal, but photos have always been lifeless matter, dead moments that had to be animated by our gaze and imagination to become carriers of memories."

- Fabian Knierim, translated by Georg Bauer

Project supported by:





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Photography, 2018-2020

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Project supported by:







Screen Romance,
Digital prints on
fabrics, various
dimensions //
Exhibition view
"Memory Matter. The
Relationship Between
Objects and Our Self",
Museum Villa Rot,
2022 | Photo: (c)
Xavier Gonzalez



Screen Romance,
UV-Prints on acrylic
glass // Exhibition
view "Memory Matter.
The Relationship
Between Objects and
Our Self", Museum
Villa Rot, 2022 | Photo:
(c) Xavier Gonzalez



Screen Romance, photography, dimensions variable



Screen Romance, photography, dimensions variable

PALINOPSIA

Artist Book, published by XYZ Books (PT), 2021

Palinopsia is a visual disorder in which images are present in the visual field that were seen seconds or minutes before. Artist Michaela Putz's first artist book is titled PALINOPSIA and is an exploration of the afterimages of our digital age: the visual feeds from our smartphones that superimpose reality in front of us. The works presented in the book are from the "Screen Romance" series: For these, motifs from the artist's mobile image archive were photographed from the smartphone screen.

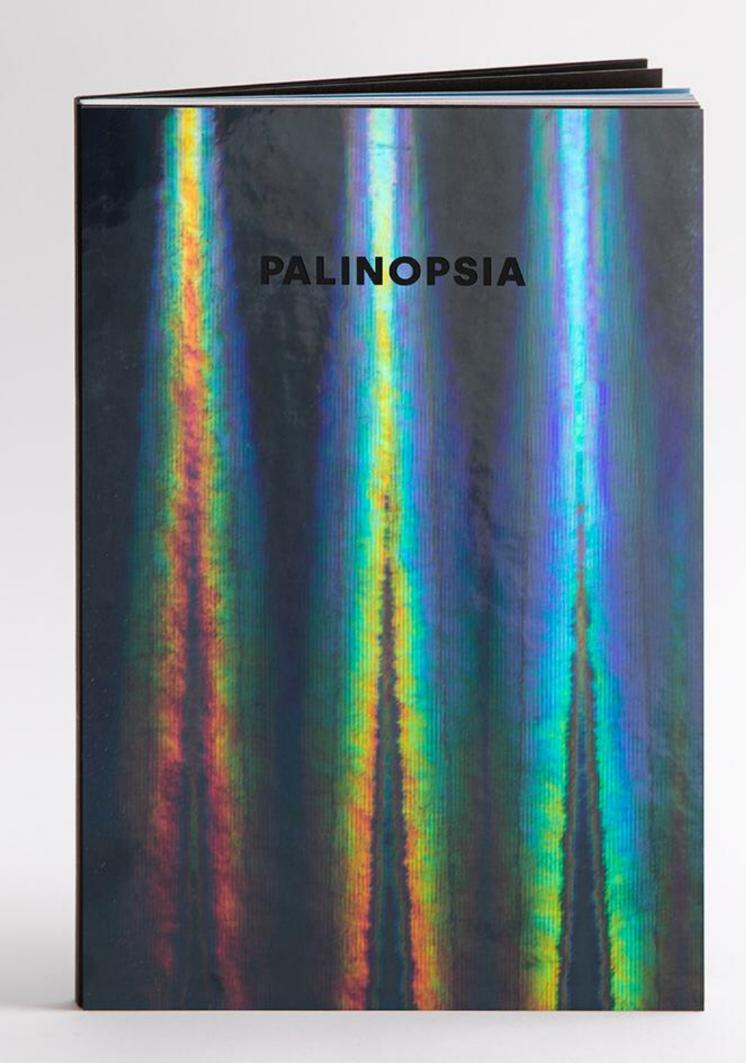
Realized with the kind support of: BMKÖS, Land Burgenland, Österreichische Botschaft Lissabon















Gloom of Mnemosyne

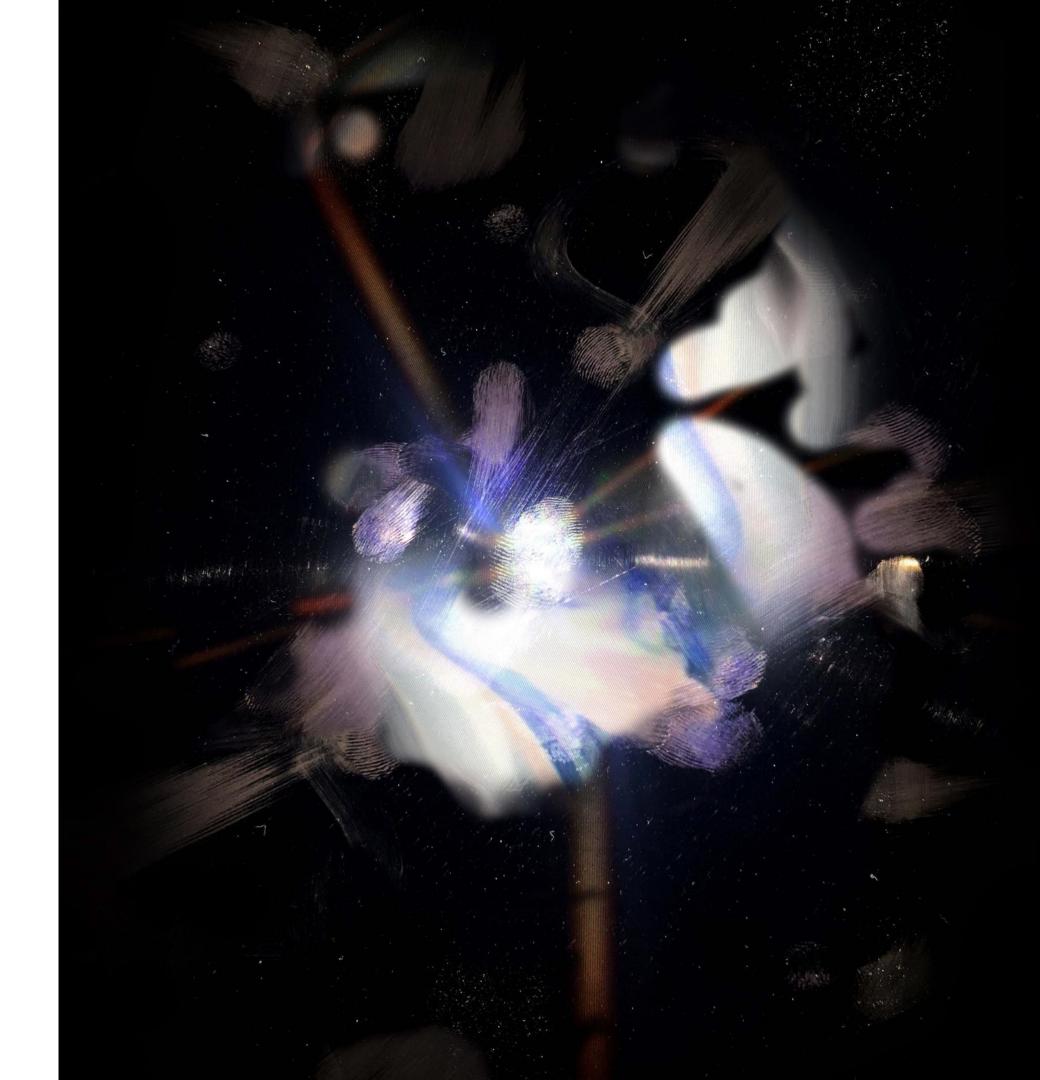
Photography and Object, 2019

Through digitalization, the endless stream of images stored in the cloud fills these gaps. Virtual memories complement the imperfection of our human memory and let us forget fewer and fewer events from our own past. In the project "Gloom of Mnemosyne", the works explore the partial incomprehensibility of memories. Images from the artist's own past, stored on computer and hard disk, serve as starting material. In a digital retrospect, these images are captured directly from the screen, whereby fingerprints and dust on the screen are also part of the image word, as well as technical artifacts. The works become fragments of a memory, superimposed on the traces of time and alienated by technological interventions - and sometimes drift back into the darkness of oblivion.

With the kind support of:

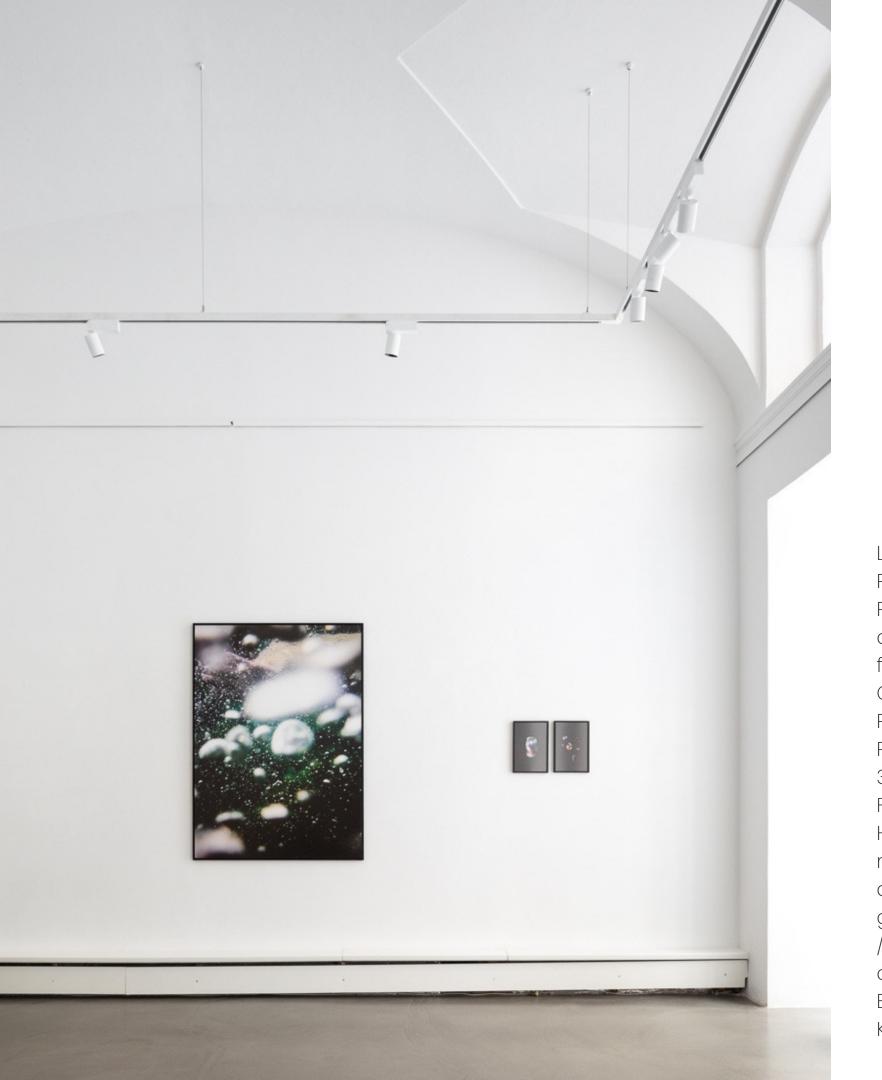








Left: Archival Fine Art
Print Hahnemühle Photo
Rag, mounted on alu
dibond, in shadow gap
frame, 140x100 cm,
Center: Archival Fine Art
Print Hahnemühle Photo
Rag, framed, each
30x20 cm, Right:
Wallpaper (various
dimensions) // Exhibition
view "Gloom of
Mnemosyne (Solo),
Bildraum 01 (AT) (c) Eva
Kelety, Bildrecht



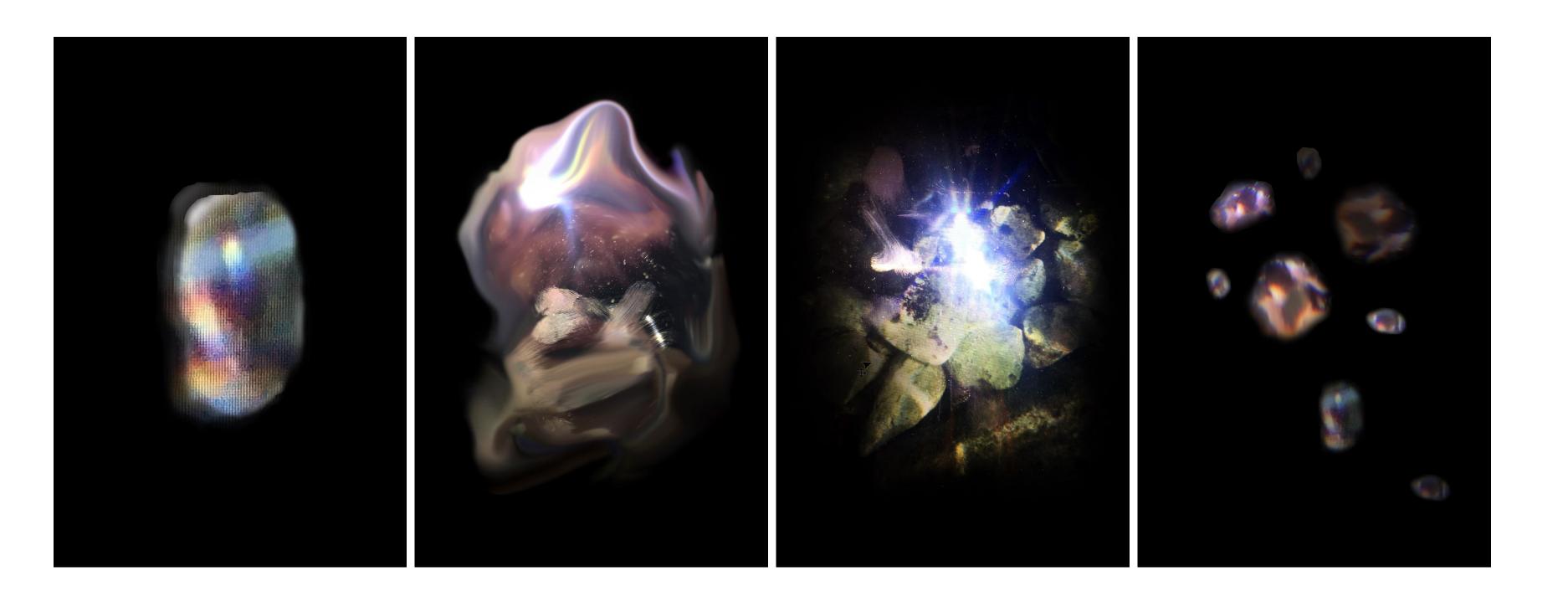
Left: Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on alu dibond, in shadow gap frame, 140 x 100 cm, Center: Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, framed, each 30x20 cm, Right: Archivel Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on alu diabond, in shadow gap frame, 140 x 100 cm // Exhibition view "Gloom of Mnemosyne (Solo), Bildraum 01 (AT) (c) Eva Kelety, Bildrecht







Left: Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on alu dibond, in shadow gap frame, 140 x 100 cm, Center: Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, framed, each 30x20 cm, Right: Archivel Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on all disband, in shadow gap frame, 140 x 100 cm // Exhibition view "Gloom of Mnemosyne (Solo), Bildraum 01 (AT) (c) Eva Kelety, Bildrecht



Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, framed, each 30x20 cm (Ed. 2+1 AP)







Left: Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on alu dibond, in shadow gap farme, 100x70 cm, Center: Archival Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, framed, each 30x20 cm, Right: Archivel Fine Art Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag, mounted on all disband, in shadow gap frame, 140 x 100 cm // Exhibition view DIGITAL I - ARTEFAKTE OstLicht.Galerie für Fotografie by Fotogalerie Wien (AT) (c) Michael Michlmayr, 2022



Left: Archival Fine Art
Print Hahnemühle Photo
Rag, mounted on alu
dibond, in shadow gap
frame, 70 x 50 cm //
Exhibition view: Salzamt
Linz, Ars Electronica
Festival 2021 (c)
Anna-Katharina Nickel



Group show NÖ
DOK Dokumentation
szentrum für
moderne Kunst
St. Pölten
January 2020
(c) Sonja
Dürnberger





Obscure Mirrors

Photography, 2018 Series of 4 images, Ed. 5+2 AP UV print on back of acrylic glass

The motif of the Black Mirror is deeply rooted in human history. Already in Mesoamerican culture, polished obsidian was used as a magical tool, acting as a portal to another world. In Europe's early 19th century, the Claude Glass was common among picturesque artists: A small, convex-shaped black mirror that could fit in the pocket and helped to frame the beauty of a scenery. The works from the series "Obscure Mirrors" take into account these traditions of the usage of black mirrors, which nowadays are the screens of our smartphones. Like the black obsidian, they also act as a tool to connect different realms: they bridge the gap between the physical and the virtual world. And as many other "magical" tools, they need to be touched, demand to be activated, through tapping, swiping, and stroking. These interactions of the human body leave traces of fat and dirt on their cool and sleek surfaces, becoming one in the process of documenting these with the means of photography.

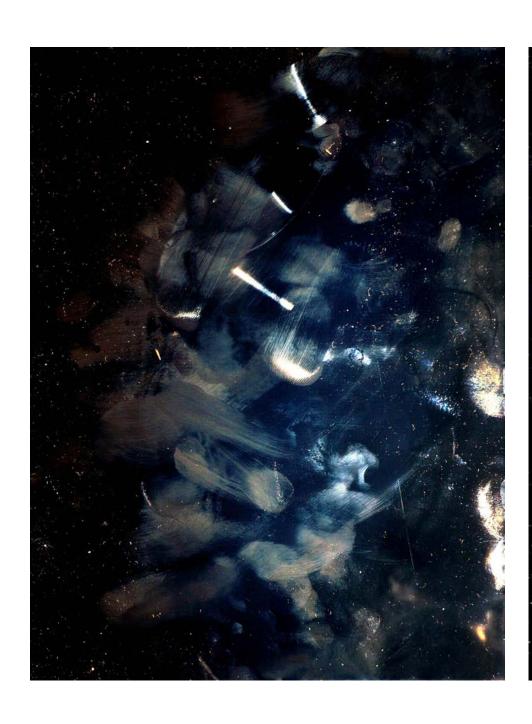




Installation view / Everlasting Light - TIM NOLAS 2019 photo: © Tim Nolas 2019



Installation view / light specific / minuszwei 2020 photo: © Anna-Katharina Nickel

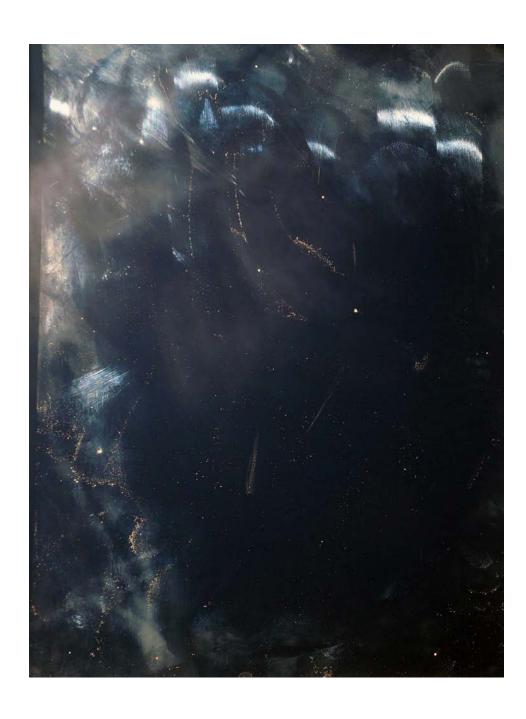


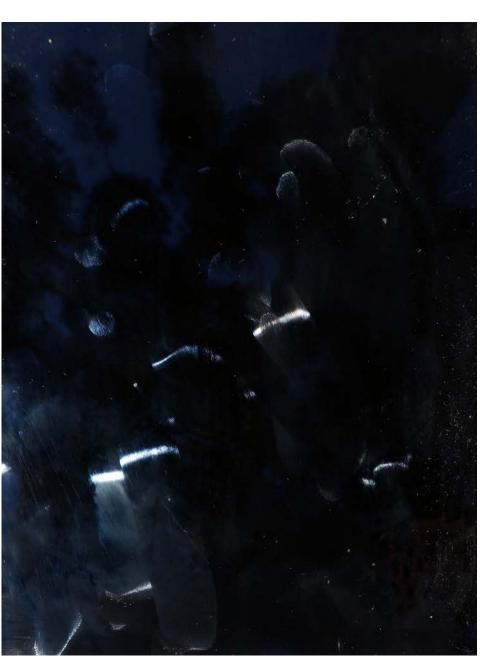


Photography, 2018 Series of 4 images, Ed. 5+2 AP UV print on back of acrylic glass



Installation view / light specific / minuszwei 2020 photo: © Roland Zygmunt



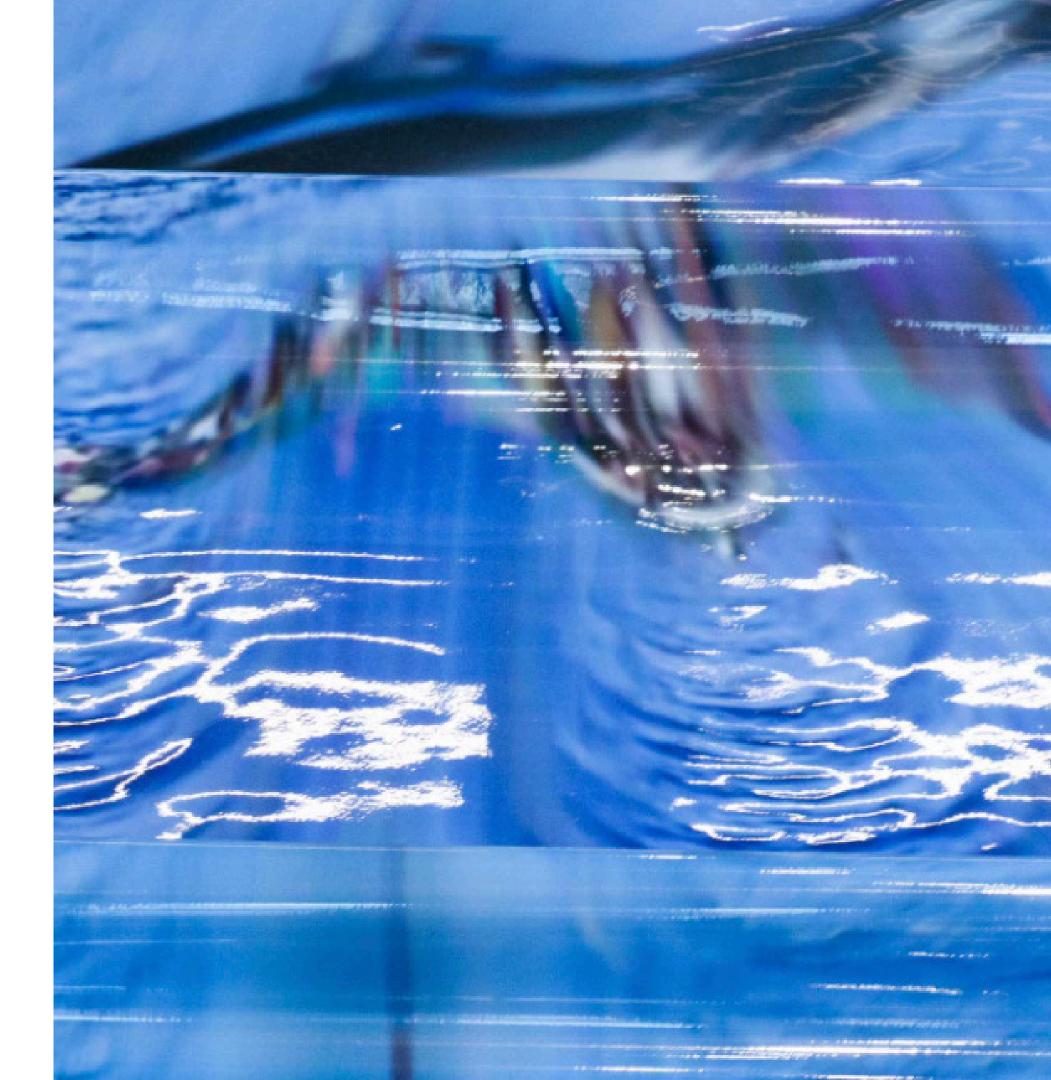


Photography, 2018 Series of 4 images, Ed. 5+2 AP UV print on back of acrylic glass

On The Water

Photo-sculpture, 2018

The work On The Water explores how we deal with the endless stream of news about human tragedies in the digital age. We encounter an image of a tragedy – a refugee boat in the Mediterranean, for example – and after a short moment of affectedness, we swipe away the image to make way for new inputs. The piece takes such images collected online and recreates the gestures of conscious disregard – the gesture of swiping the image to continue the flow of information: one image is substituted by the next one in a constant stream that transforms attention into disaffection. This process allows us to create a distance between ourselves and the pain of others, by turning the reality of suffering into a constant smudge of images that robs them of any meaning or emotional weight. This work fits into the broader framework I have been exploring in my recent projects, which focuses on the relationship between gestures we make on our personal devices and the perception we form of the world around us.





Digital smudge
on found
footage
images, print
on PVC /
577x90cm //
Installation view
/ Kunstraum
Nestroyhof /
VERRAT DER
FOTOGRAFIE,
2018 program
partner of FOTO
WIEN / (c)
Philipp Pess

Narcissus' Ponds

Objects, 2018-2023 Resin and black pigments, various sizes and dimensions

These objects were once liquid, now solidified: Poured from synthetic resin, their shiny black surfaces reminisce on one hand the pond in Greek mythology, in which Narcissus reflected himself and fell in love with his self-image so deeply that he was thus unable to detach from it. On the other hand, they remind of smartphone screens, who also lure their users into obsessive occupation with what's on and behind its surfaces.





Exhibition view BETON 7 (c) Daniel Castells



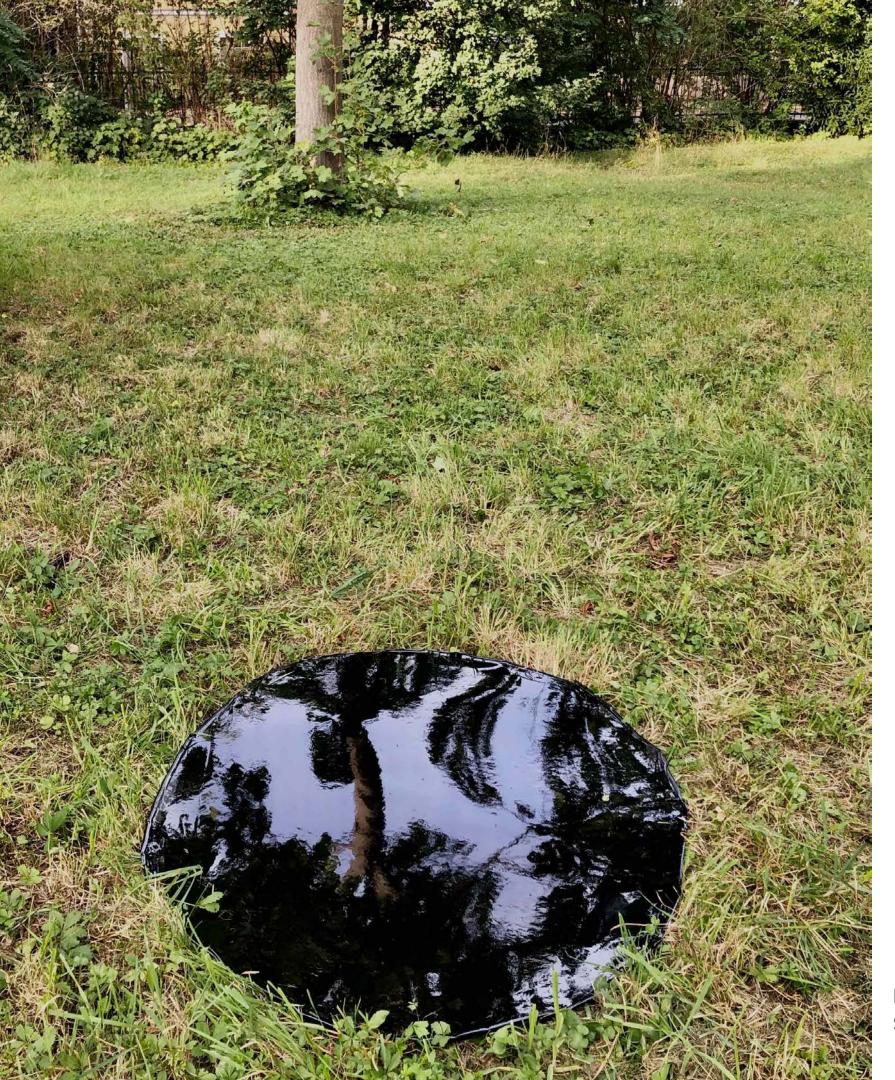
Exhibition view: Feelings are Facts: ANGST, Kunstverein Eisensadt, 2023, (c) Rudolf Strobl



Exhibition view BETON 7 (c) Daniel Castells



(c) Michaela Putz



Installation view / HORTUS CONCLUSUS / Skulpturengarten Vienna (c) Michaela Putz

Black Mirror Portrait

Photography, 2018

Our smartphones are cameras, storage media – and black mirrors: From their screens, we reflect back on ourselves, like Narcissus did, when he was falling in love with his own image. But the screens are dirty and our images stained, lured by technology and prone to merge with virtuality.





Feelings are Facts: ANGST, Kunstverein Eisensadt, 2023, (c) Rudolf Strobl



Installation view: TIM NOLAS 2019 / EVERLASTING LIGHT Photo by © Tim Nolas 2019

Traces of Seemingly Insignificant Gestures

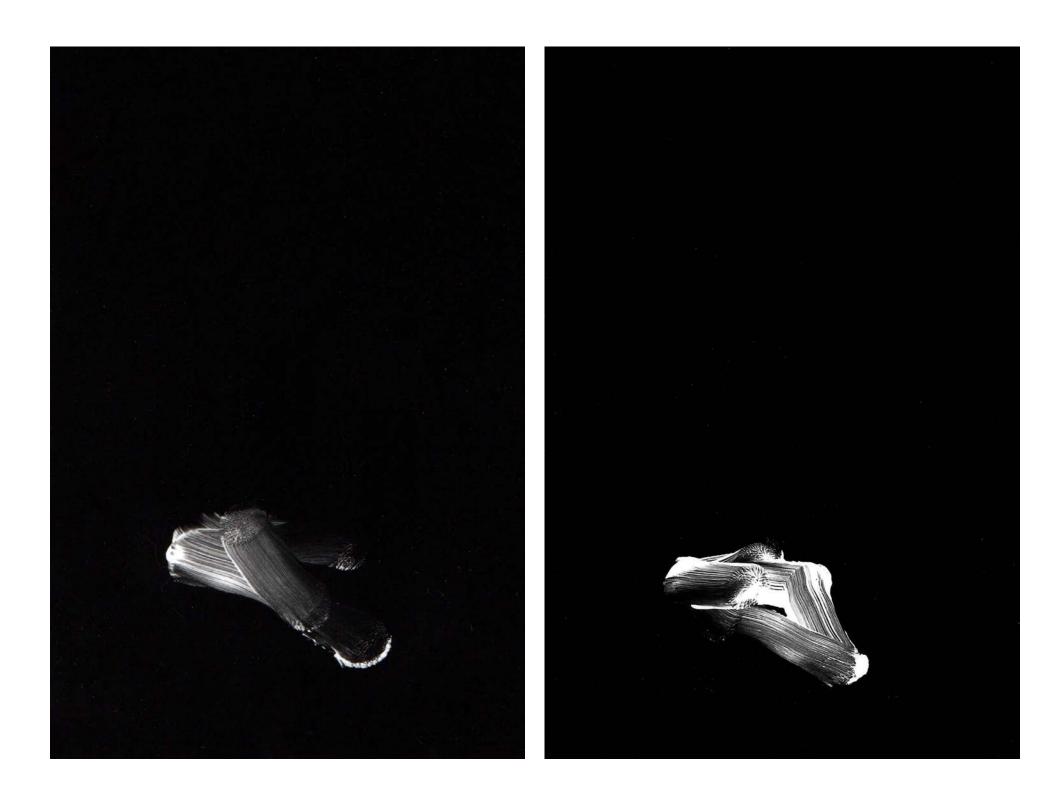
Photogrammetry, Steel, Installation, 2017
Photogrammetry (15x10cm), Steel tables, Glass, black paint LED
Photogrammetry reproductions: 60x40cm (Edition 5+2)

Not only did the use of technology like our smartphones change the way we communicate with each other; it also produced a whole series of new gestures, the gesture of writing, for example. Sending text messages means to move our fingers around on our screens. A process that leaves traces as stains of fat on these shiny and sleek surfaces. These traces can be seen, when we turn off our phones and the light shines onto the black screen. But there are also algorithms that can identify us by the way we write. Our typing dynamics can be seen like our personal handwriting, our fingerprint. In a process of recreating those movements of writing, a series of photograms have been produced to make traces usually volatile traces visible and permanent. They show a new way of writing, a new kind of script – brought forward by technology. But also do they question the mechanisms of power related to the constant monitoring and analyzing of our actions.





Installation view | Heiligenkreuzerhof Vienna, Diploma exhibition 2017 (c) Peter Kainz





Installation view with
Philipp Pess | Ars
Electronica Festival 2018,
Bildrecht Gallery Space |
(c) Philipp Pess



Installation view with
Philipp Pess | Ars
Electronica Festival 2018,
Bildrecht Gallery Space |
(c) Philipp Pess

Mag. Michaela Putz MA

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