

LILI

AGG

PORT

FOLIO

Lili Agg b. 1991, is an artist based in Budapest. She studied aesthetics and art history at the Eötvös Loránd University. She graduated as a painter from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2018, and started her doctoral studies at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2020. She is one of the founding members of the artist-run gallery and collective MÚTÓ, established in 2016. Through the rethinking of the concept of utopia she examines sustainable culture in her works. Meanwhile she is focusing on the potential role of art in thinking about our future. She considers her installations as models, in which she investigates the possibilities of combining painting and new media as well as the boundaries of image, object, reality and digital world. Besides her approach that is focused on making artworks, she seeks the possibilities in which art emerges as a community building entity where collective thinking and creating are moving forces.

My works are connected by social critique that appears in them in an abstract or sometimes more exact form. Recently I have been interested in the concept of utopia, and in particular how to construct sustainable visions of the future, or why it is so difficult to imagine anything about the future. I try to find out the reasons behind different phenomena, so the subject of my work and the medium I choose are always in between concepts and techniques. Visual arts allow me to express visions and feelings that I would not be able to capture in words. This is why the inherent materiality, gestures, shapes and the atmosphere created in my works are very important to

me. Through them I can show the gaps or boundaries that are often lost at the level of words. I think in space, I work with a variety of media and materials: I combine painting with digital techniques, 3D printed objects, and sounds in my installations.

In collaboration and networks of small communities I see the possibility to design a sustainable life in which we can pool our energies in such a way that we are less vulnerable to a lack of financial resources or to institutions that are not working well. The foundation of MÚTÓ community was motivated by this idea as well. I cannot relate to the hierarchy of the classical art institutions and the profit oriented system of the commercial galleries. I believe in sharing knowledge in micro communities, hence collaborating with other artists is very inspiring for me. The dialogue between each other gives us space to shape our thoughts on a specific issue and the emergence of new perspectives allows us to reveal deeper layers of meaning. Collaborations and individual creative processes alternate from time to time in my practice, and are built on each other.

Although my work can be read from a feminist perspective, I believe that in an ideal world this aspect should not be emphasised, nor should the fact that I am an Eastern European artist. I am aware of the problems that arise from gender inequalities, but I would prefer to be part of a transnational network that is bound together by similar values and ways of thinking.

(The statement was written in collaboration with curator Andi Soós.)

Statement

In the group's 6-year history, this exhibition is the first where the eight members not only work together in a collectively created scene – in exhibitions, performances, and music events – but also, literally, create together.

This Untamed Field I Know Well is, then, both an experiment and a complex work of art: an attempt at self-definition that explores the boundaries and connections between the individual and the community. The works on display contrast the different operating mechanisms of community and collaboration, as well as of individual motivations. The exhibitors – members of MŰTŐ group – want to showcase collaborative work as a viable alternative but are at the same time conscious of its inherent difficulties, the uncovering of which also played an important role in the project.

The exhibition is the result of an intensive, collective creative process which explored the tensions between social man/woman and the artist's ego. As a community of individuals with individual careers, MŰTŐ uses methods that enable the creation of works of art in a collective way, from the birth of an idea to its realization. The goal is to step out of the comfort zone of personal creativity, to experiment with the blurring of boundaries of artistic identity, and to experience, through collaborative work and with all its triumphs and hardships, an alternative way of creation. Works and installations evolved from ideas from conversations and speak through a plethora of mediums, representing a common denominator among the members. With the project, the group aims to show

the potentials and limitations of community and collective creative work through the mirror of a self-centred society.

Often, collectives are formed to empower their members – to counteract individualism and alienation. We must, however, not overlook the fact that the past decades have seen a growing need for a sense of community and that the increasing number of collaborative art projects hints at reasons that go beyond individual needs, which must also be seen as a reaction to social issues. The limited possibilities of the conservative cultural policies of recent years and the pandemic have only reinforced this tendency.

Community can be seen as a creature, an entity, whose functions can be described through the metaphor of the body. Using the ideas of Italian philosopher and theorist Roberto Esposito and exploring community through the concept of immunity, the exhibition is a system model where excessive self-immunisation, a hermetically sealed-off community, is replaced with an open immune system – a community that is expanding. This theory, rather than closing off the community to outside impulses and influences, and risking self-destruction, opens its borders to, or even integrates, these stimuli. The resulting community is, then, an open system that constantly changes, changing in turn its environment.

MŰTŐ is Lili Agg, Nikolett Balázs, Bence Barta, Zsófia Kókai, Kata M. Kállai, Flóra Pálhegyi, Veronika Romhány, Nóra Teplán.

This Untamed Field I Know Well

Exhibition of MŰTŐ group at
Budapest Gallery, Budapest

2022

CLINTS AND GRYKES

Belonging is a basic human need; however, differences between the interests of a group and of the individual soon become evident. In order to become functional members of a community, we need to sync up our thought structures with those of others. These elements serve as guides for finding both the ideal of community and a sense of belonging. Just as we are transformed by this system, so too is the system itself shaped and formed by members of the community. This dynamic is mirrored in our walk through the spaces, structured by PVC curtains, and in our cooperation with other visitors.

Our thought and perception are based on continuous and compulsive systematization. Our categories vary with our points of view which, in turn, also change with new influences to varying degrees. As part of a community, we are constantly faced with the views of others, which inevitably leads to an all-consuming flood of introspection. Floating freely around in "nothing" is, however, only momentary – immediately, new categories are established, which, again, are subject to change. The video installation of the flooding and restructuring of the land structure created by the members of MÚTÓ captures this process.



NERVE FIELD

The installation shows the organic and labyrinthine systems of networks. It touches upon the networked nature of communities by portraying the reciprocal processes of connection and separation; it also alludes to the organism's ability to convey information and share knowledge – essential functions of any community – on a cellular level.

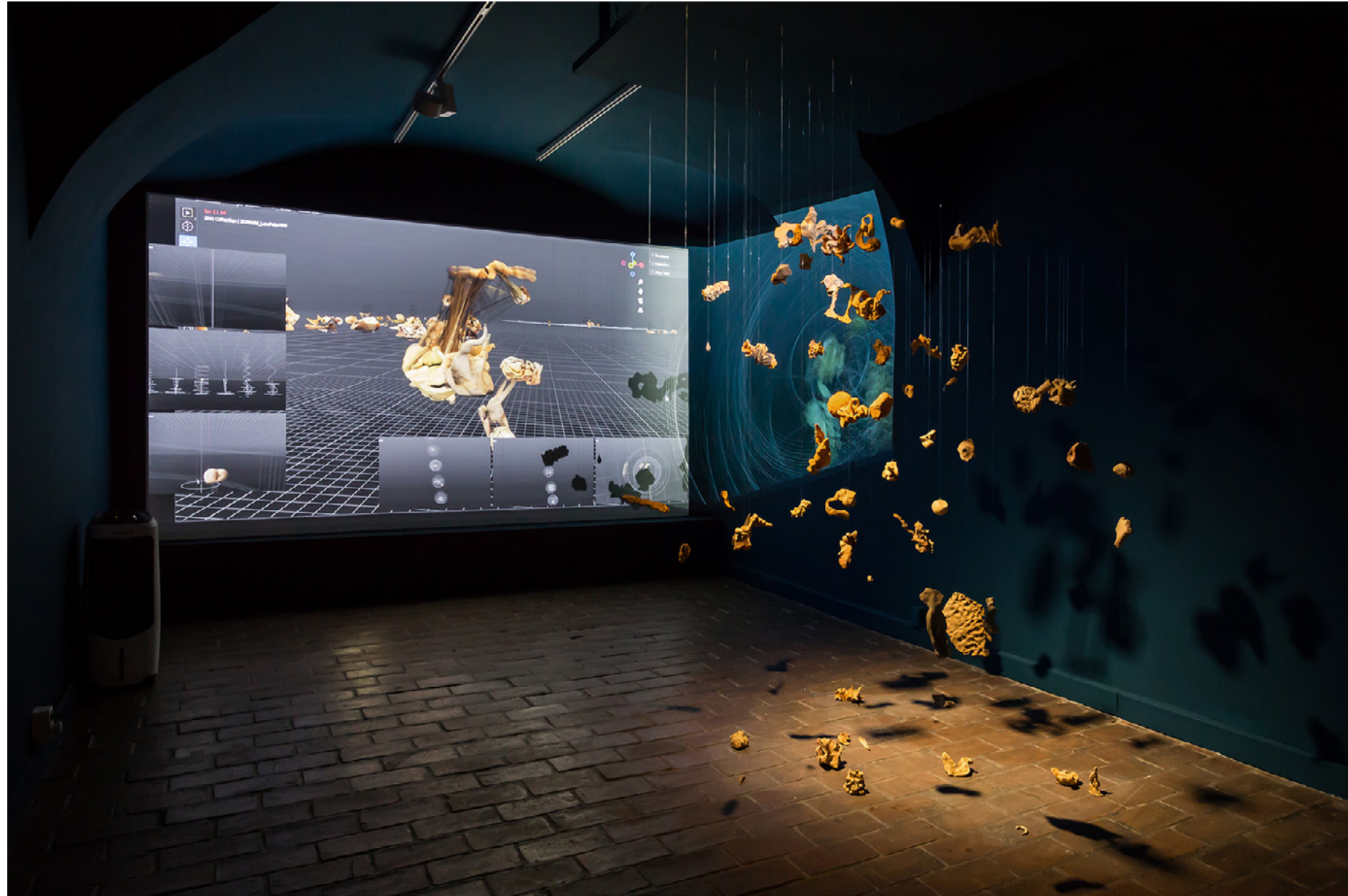
Because of the black, sandy, muddy surface of the tangles, the installation looks both alive, giving off the impression of a living organism, and like charred, dead remains, which raises the question of contradictions inherent to systems. The system is interrupted at several places by junctions, corrupting the unity of the organism like pus-filled wounds, which are indicative of an external breach (of a virus) in the system.



MAGNETIC FIELD

This group of works first started out at an intensive four-day workshop and later turned into a flow-like creative/reflective exercise, eventually resulting in pieces, “DNAs,” unique to each group member. These are bundles of data that have been brought together both physically and virtually, in a 3D animation.

There are dozens of fist-size, corresponding, biomorphic clay sculptures in the room, each coupled by a member with a concept or emotion in the video, on a scale of positive to negative emotions and within a specific set of concepts. These then converge in a morphing animation, a kind of data visualization, where the scanned images of objects create subjective spirals, DNA sequences, before merging into each other according to set criteria. Morphing refers to this merging together and is also a play on French philosopher Catherine Malabou’s concept of plasticity. With the installation in this room, then, MÚTÓ members experiment with how, through working with a specific material (be it, as with Malabou, consciousness or the brain), creative attention can be directed at the inner dynamics of the group. What kind of objects are created when artistic expression is a form of expressing opinions? How can this interpersonal emotional and artistic web of relations be quantified and shown artistically? How can the group’s manifesto and individual tensions and relations be related to each other and owned?



LIMESTONE PAVEME

With this room we reach the end of our journey – the source, or the well. The well appears here as a scene of social life and as a symbol of public goods. By “public good” we generally mean something that cannot be appropriated and, ideally, occurs naturally and abundantly. For MÚTŌ, free thought, creativity, making art, and culture (where it is in the public interest that it be not fenced off and appropriated) are such goods. The public well was chosen as a symbol because access to life-giving water has drawn people together, who are then able to connect with each other, since the dawn of civilization.

The source stands for the possibilities for community which, ideally, are constantly renewed. In a functioning community, this is achieved in an organic, yet controlled (adhering to the rules of the community), manner; consequently, both organic and structured experiences were given emphasis during the process of collaborative creation. Although both symbols are present in the installation, they are physically separated, since the source belongs more to the idea itself, and the well, to accessibility. The group went through the questions concerning the individual concepts and, exploring the positions and roles of the MÚTŌ community, created the structure of the work. Finally, impressions from their conversations were turned into the materials, textures, and gestures of the installation.



'The exhibition Unfold in Unknown Waters investigates possible solutions for our fundamental needs and seeks to offer a new vision of the future in a peculiar sensual way that approaches the line of futurisms.

The starting point of the project was Lili Agg's solo show made in the summer of 2021. Her concept derived from a Google Earth image of the Siberian Sea, where a blurred, dark spot appears in the middle of the blueness. To think more about this mysterious, completely hidden place on our planet provides us with the possible implementation of a new utopia on this island. Agg, together with Veronika Romhány (aka Nimova Projekt), examine the layers of this utopia to see how theoretical, historical, geographical and other abstract layers can melt into each other - similar to the water washing the sandy shore, forming a transition between liquid and solid states - and structure a new kind of subtle, steady imagination.

Utopias which at one time were seductive now became empty visions of the future: often terrifying thoughts of dictatorial social systems; isolated comunas or even problematic promises of neoliberalism. Apart from a few exceptions, it seems that alternatives to these utopias barely exist, as if we cannot envision the future anymore. Neither the objects of desires adapt to our challenging present, they're habitual, aligned with social expectations.

The question arises: Can we create any vision of our future if the terms and tools of our present are dysfunctional? Despite the expansion of utopias in time and space, we rightfully feel that these

concepts have lost their society-shaping power. Instead of being critical and/or ambitious about the visions of our present and future, we think about them as only stories built up from well-known schemas. All this creates a suffocating atmosphere where one questions the *raison d'être* of desires, which often becomes blocked with (self)destructive effects. In the exhibition Unfold in Unknown Waters we go beyond asking questions about our lost future and we visualize, reconstruct and localize transitional states where the change (place for hope) can exist.

Lili Agg and Veronika Romhány collaboration comes from similar interests and their research focuses on past non-realized utopias and on current critical proposals to restructure modern society. The first step of their collaboration is this exhibition at U10, composed of mostly jointly created site-specific multi-media installations which provide the viewer a walkthrough on the research and imaginations of the two artists.'

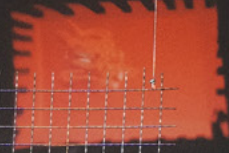
Zsófia Kókai

photo: Nina Ivanovic, David Pavlasevic

Unfold in Unknown Waters

Exhibition with Nimova Projekt aka Veronika Romhány at U10, Belgrade

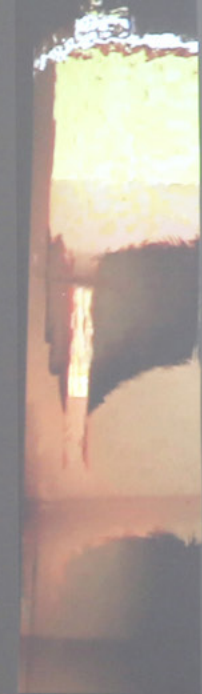
2022



phqmm/mw ■■■ rñW Joad ß mrd nrr

happ'k back. With ■■■ own minority
spex they will flatten and build your level.







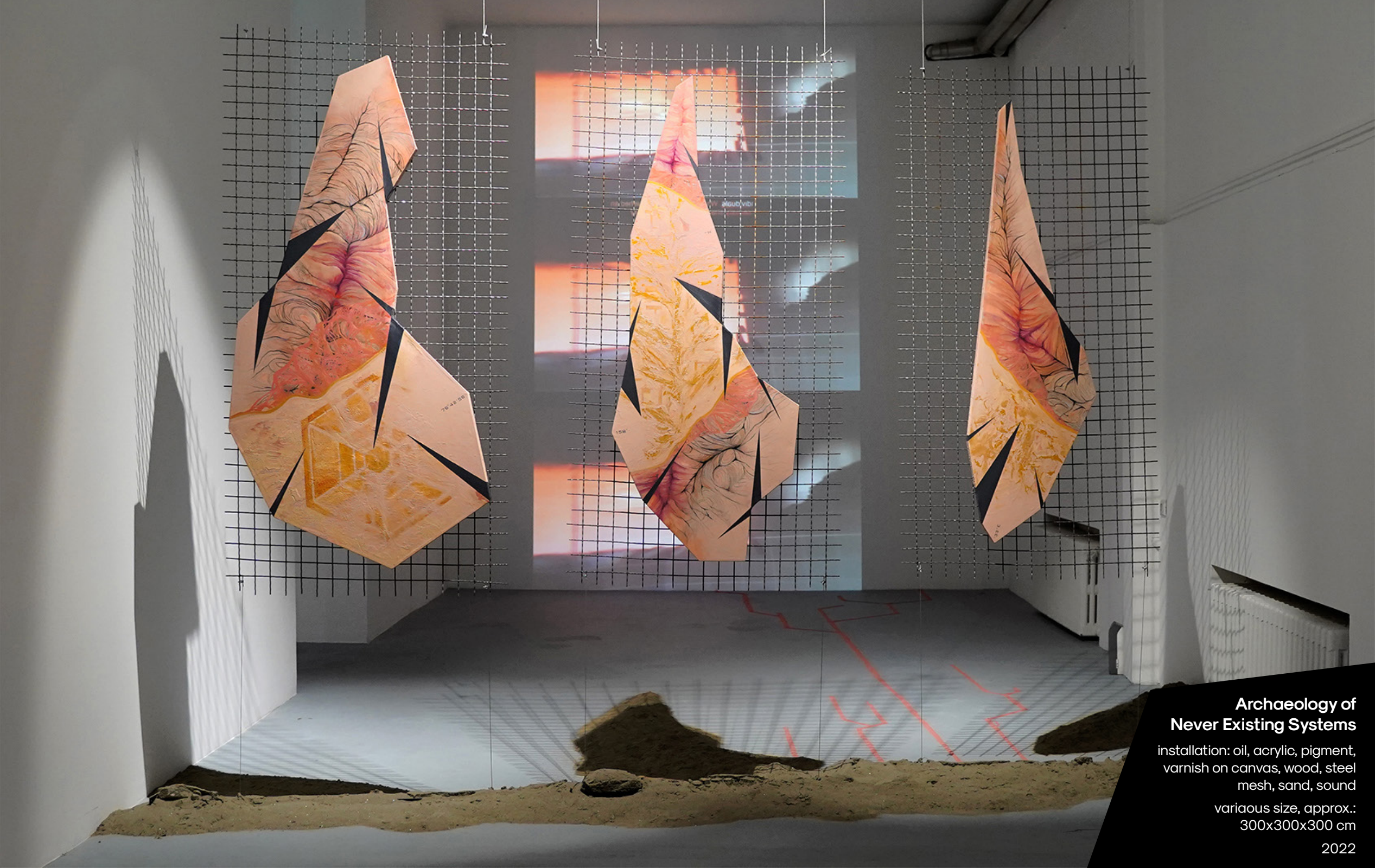


**The Possibility of an
Island**

oil, acrylic, pigment, varnish on
canvas, wood, stainless steel

132x170x70 cm

2021



**Archaeology of
Never Existing Systems**

installation: oil, acrylic, pigment,
varnish on canvas, wood, steel
mesh, sand, sound

variaous size, approx.:
300x300x300 cm

2022









It's May Hidden Here

mixed media, canvas, wood,
stainless steel, sand

250x55x20 cm

2022



The Possibility of an Island

2021

The starting point of the exhibition is a found Google Earth image of the Siberian Sea, where a blurred, dark spot appears in the middle of the blueness. As the mysterious masking was clarified quickly, the Eastern-Siberian Jeanette Island has never been a secret military base as many people thought, the amorf shape was accidentally created by a pixel error. However, the small bug inspired me to imagine this location as the last, completely hidden place on our planet. The island, just like a tabula rasa, provides us the possible implementation of a new utopia.

Anytime I imagined this place - ignoring the geographical reality - a sunny, warm, Mediterranean island appeared, that shows similarities with the sites of many old, well-known utopias. Before I started to think about the ideal social structure that my escapism gave rise to - although I would never undertake it seriously - I realised that my imagination wasn't able to release the visions of lost worlds. The utopias which at one time were seductive, visions of the future became empty, often terrifying thoughts of dictatorial social systems, isolated comunas, failed initiative of community living by Le Corbusier or the problematic promises of neoliberalism, etc. Apart from a few exceptions, it seems that the alternatives of these utopias barely exist, as if we don't have a vision of the future. Neither the objects of my desires adapt to our challenging present, they're habitual, aligned with social expectations.

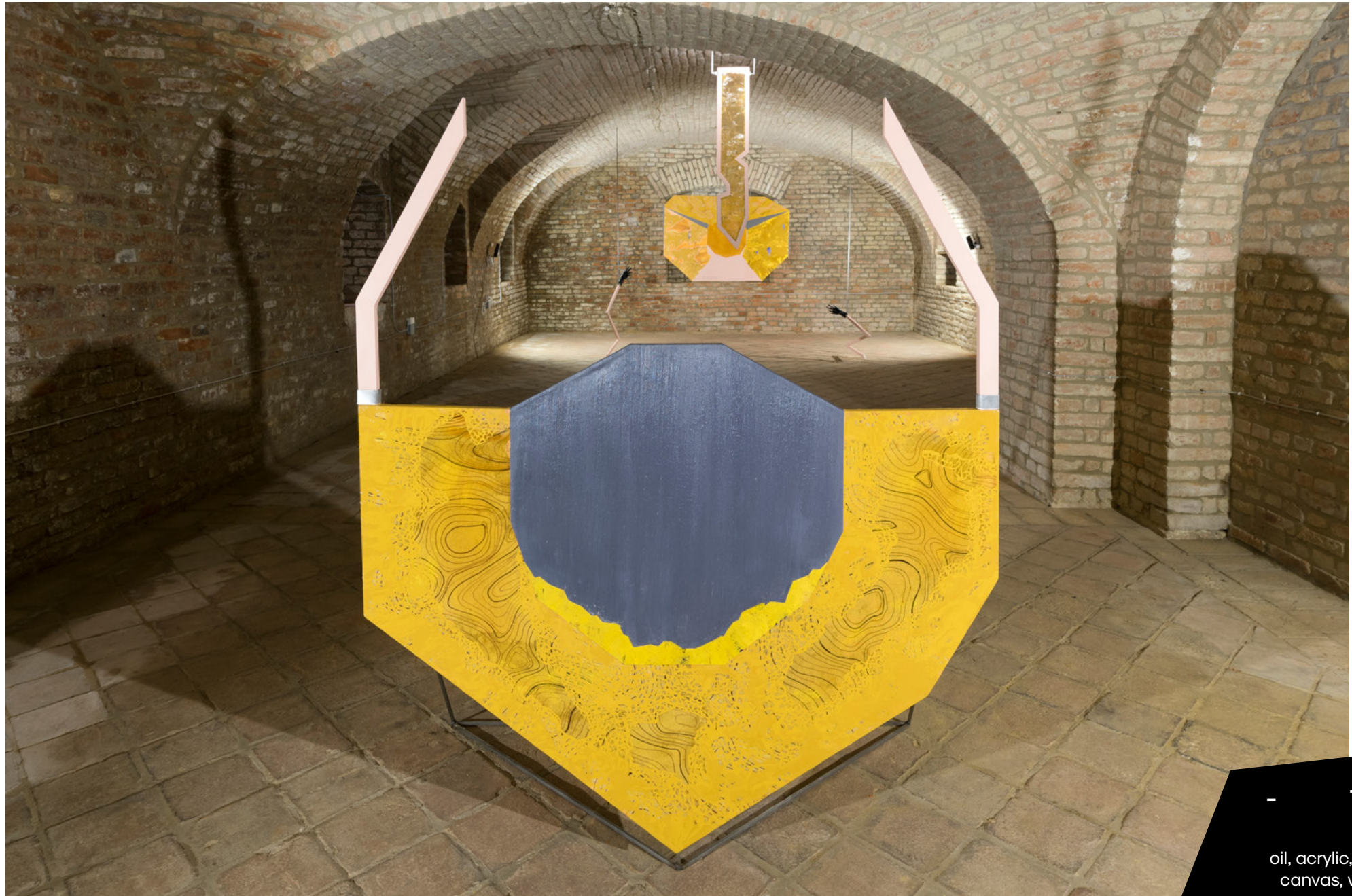
Perhaps, the creative visions and solutions have never been as necessary as they are now, when the shutdown of the last one and a half years takes our everyday life to a distant horizon of an utopia. More precisely, this period amplified the accessibility of the future full of inevitable resignations. The question arises: how can we create the visions of our future if the terms and tools of our present are non-functional?

Despite the expansion of utopias in time and space, we rightfully feel that these concepts have lost their society-shaping power. Instead of being critical and/or ambitious about the visions of our present and future, they're only stories built up from well-known schemas. The exhibited installation built up in the symbolic basement of a baroque mansion as the conservation of feudalism, urges the reformation of utopias. The setting of the artworks creates a pseudo-mystical place, which promises about an idealistic world through the painted contour map-like patterns and the emerging layers. Meanwhile, the fragmented shapes draw attention to dysfunction of previous visions. The suffocating atmosphere of the painting at the back with the two, cuffed, powerless hands questions the *raison d'être* of our desires, moreover, shows their blocking, sometimes destructive effects. The exhibition reflects on one of our fundamental needs, that a new vision of the future is required, that shows a way out from the transitional periods we stuck in.









- **The Possibility of
an Island**

oil, acrylic, pigment, varnish on
canvas, wood, stainless steel

132x170x70 cm

2021





Anomie

pigment, varnish on
paper, wood, stainless
steel

30x175x2 cm

2021







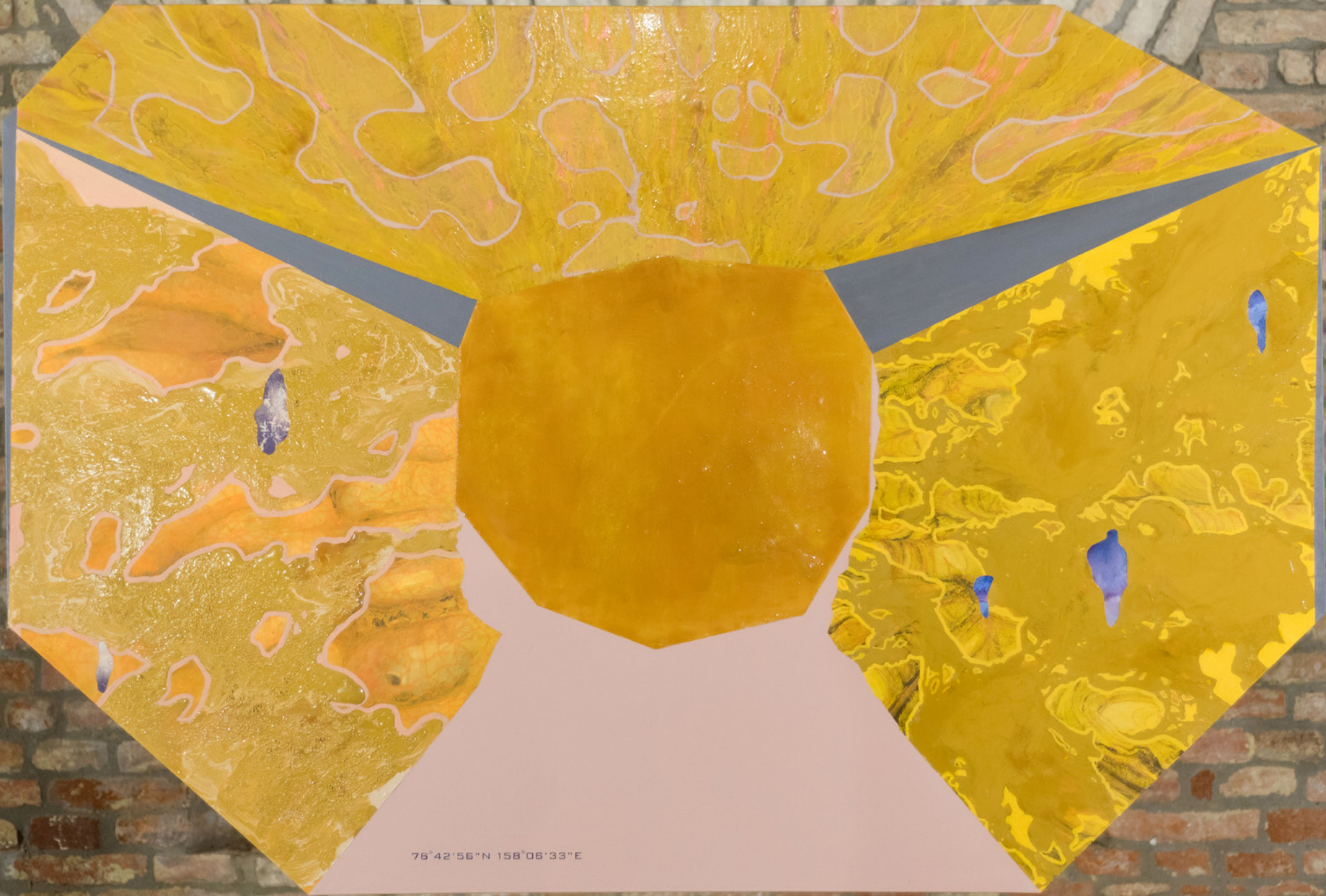
Shackle

3d printed object, wood,
stainless steel

dimensions variable

2021





76°42'56"N 158°06'33"E

Melting Utopias

oil, acrylic, pigment,
enamel, varnish on
canvas

200x134 cm

2021





'In the exhibition Invitation to Practice Boredom, Lili Agg confronts the current social impacts that weigh down the individual. In the period of late modernity, the psychic apparatus of the Kantian and Freudian self was replaced by the compulsion to perform and the invisible, all-pervading notion of pseudo-freedom. The performing self represents, qualifies and becomes addicted to virtuality. Agg begins to examine a system which moves in a circular orbit, and it is almost impossible to break out from it.

The constant flow of information from the Internet causes attention issues for an entire generation. The anxiety of falling behind, being absent, and the accumulation of tangible and intangible assets is constant. At the same time, there is a revival of the dialect of romantic longing, which encourages detachment, an escape from digital noise, from overturned self-images. The persistent search for identity and self-development denies the legitimacy of boredom and contemplation. The artist, on the other hand, makes a call to the viewer: what happens if we unwind our minds and surrender ourselves to monotony?

In the work of Lili Agg, the issues of lack, burnout, inaccurate memory-recall and errors are recurring elements. The installations placed in the gallery space are in a repetitive motion, revealing the Sisyphean nature of our aspirations in a distorted mirror. Her geometrical "statue paintings" break the notion of the

traditional, historical oil on canvas. Agg's shaped canvases sustain the narrative of motion. Her work can be interpreted as the momentary freezing of the flux of imagery, which goes beyond the conventional scope of interpretive frameworks.'

Zsófia Danka

photo: Zoltán Hasznos

INVITATION TO PRACTICE BOREDOM

2020





Under Pressure

mixed media on textile,
wood, thread

250x80x90 cm

2020

Too Tired to Decide

kinetic sculpture

programmed motor, 3d
printed object, wire,
painted board

220x120x60 cm

2020



The rooms of an artist couple's home are symbolical spaces, where conversations about aesthetic, philosophical and social problems begin, and what is more important, these exchanges of ideas are mixed with usual conflicts, personal distress, unpaid bills and unwashed dishes. The exhibition researches the connections, effects and mechanism between home, artist's studio, same interest, the elements of artist's unique, typical marks and everyday life.

Can be a home regarded as an artist studio in nonstop operation, and if the answer is yes, how can artists filter and use the external inputs? Agg and Barta reveal the proportion among the artist practice, disappointing weekdays and the intimacy of home. In their working process, they experiment with the boundaries of these fields, for example, they explore the discussion of art as an existent per se. If we destroy the intimacy of home and turn it into a total artwork, can we show a little piece of this idea? Or we just show one more example for decreased private spaces which is quite usual in our present.

Analysing the essentials of home, the exhibition visualizes it as a more fluid and abstract idea which is dispossessed from the exact place and objects. This process is an analogy of how artistic toposes, gestures and manners ripped out of their original environment appear in a new context. These elements are escalated due to the artistic routine, which is not independent from the artist's personality, the society where or when she/he lives in, etc. It's a banality, of course, but the question arises then: how can they uproot these solid, artistic things from the context of art pieces and plant back to the field of everyday life? Or can't they be seen without the context of being an artwork and part of the cultural institution system?

The installation shows inspiring, intimate,

humorous, sometimes annoying and frustrating moments of private life, also a space of conflicts from the mixture of the universal and the local, the public and the private, at least, the art and the triviality.

'I didn't quite remember how long we'd been here talking when I noticed the first one of those soft piles laying on the bedroom floor.

Whatever I thought, after spending all these years at home I have no fear anymore. So I sat to watch dust and hair starting to grow and clog together. And I sat to feel how the pigments of all the expectations, anxiety and distress are slowly dripping on to sculptures of tenderness.

- *Sculptures of the same fears I didn't feel anymore.*
- *Have you locked the bedroom door?*
- *I'm still surprised by the joy to realise I haven't seen the doors at all.*
- *At least there's enough room for all our conversations.*
- *For all what you feel here.*
- *For all that here, you don't fear of anymore.*
- *We should clean this up eventually, a home needs to be tidy. Clean to work within. To think.*
- *What could we think about if we cleaned all this paint up? what we'd do?*
- *What could we feel?*
- *How could I sleep in safety when I don't remember ever seeing the bedroom door?*
- *I need to stay inside to keep on doing what I'm doing.*
- *If you lock the door if there is no any, who is inside?*
- *I don't quite remember how long we've been here having these conversations on the floor.'*

text: Ráhel Anna Molnár

photo: Leontína Berková

LET ME IN

Exhibition with Bence Barta at HotDock, Bratislava

2019

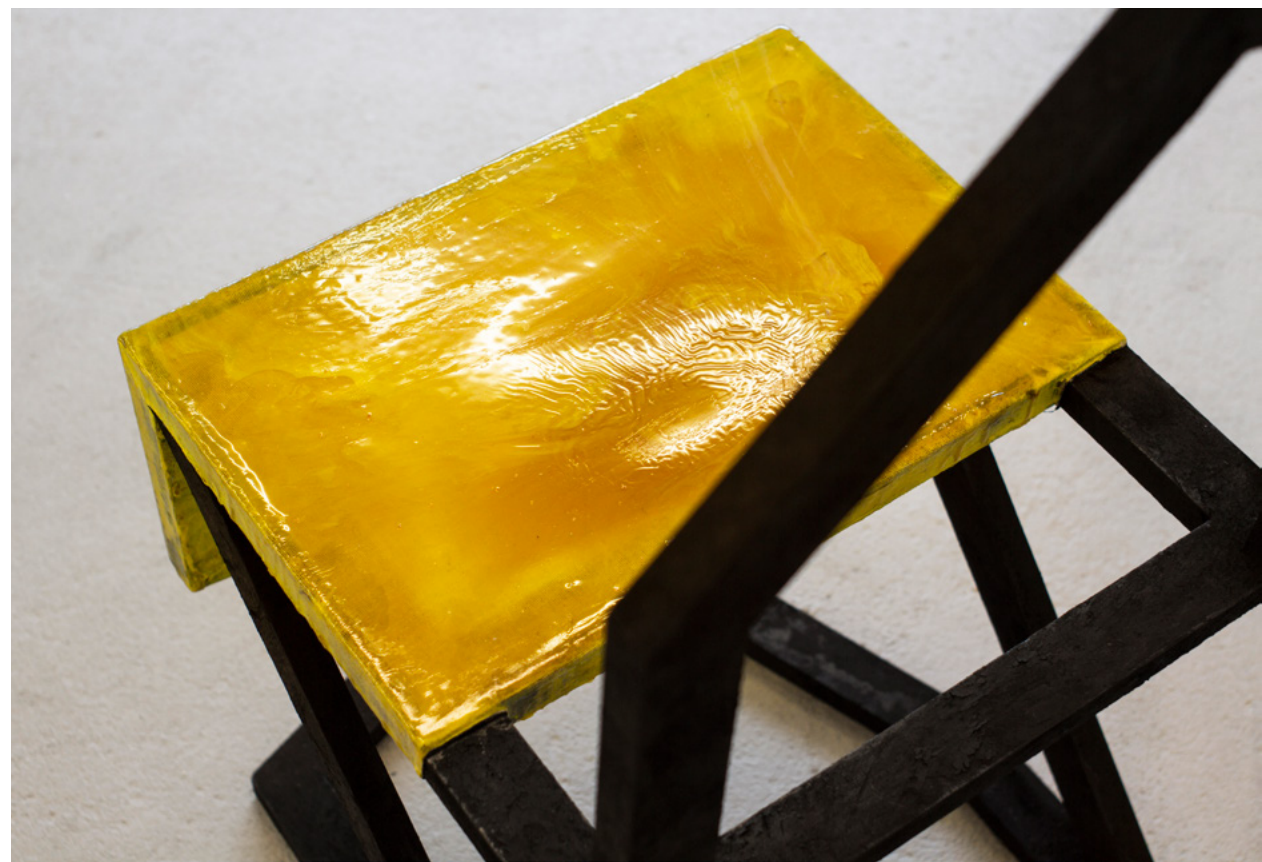


Chair

mixed media on canvas,
wood, pigment

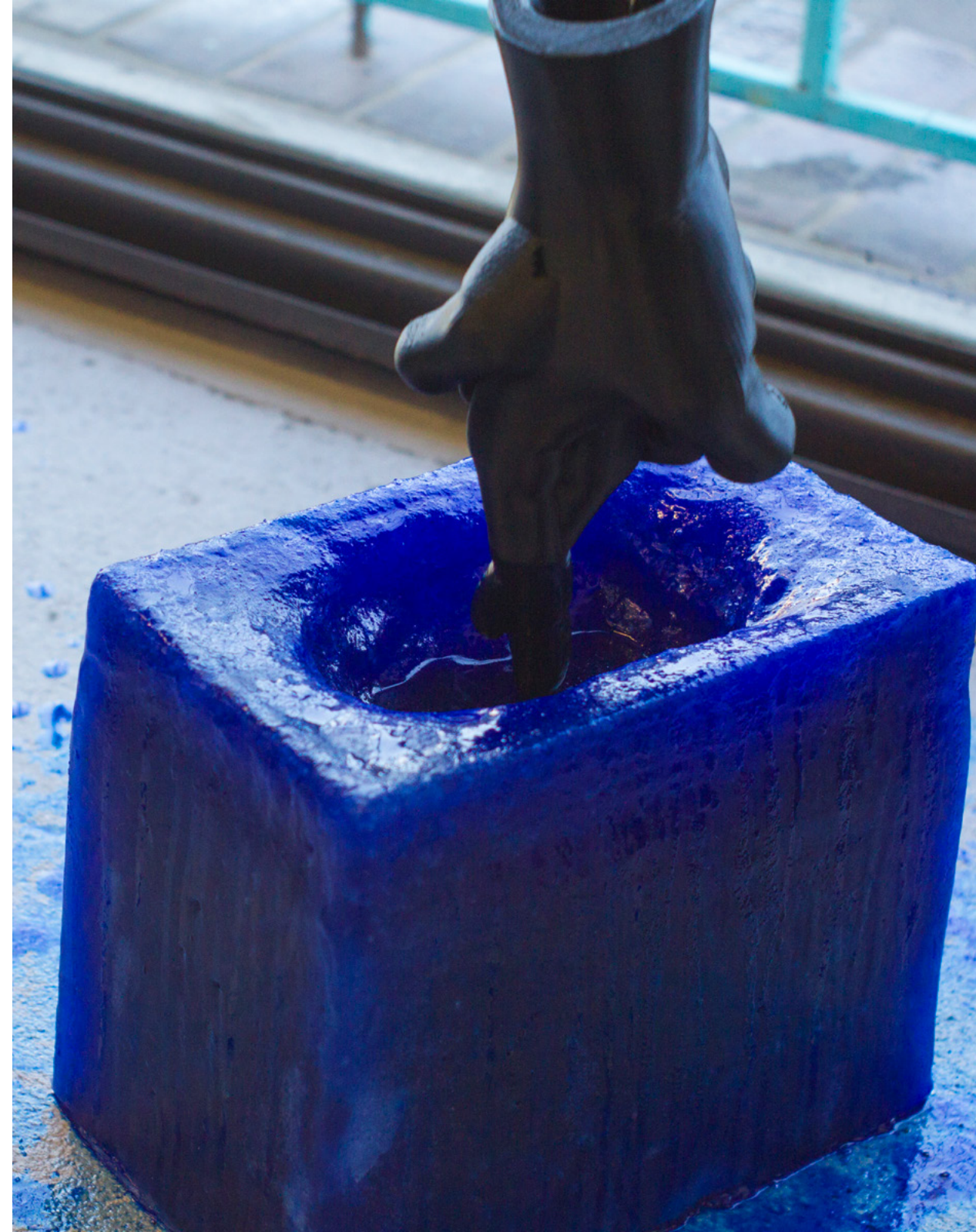
80x40x60 cm

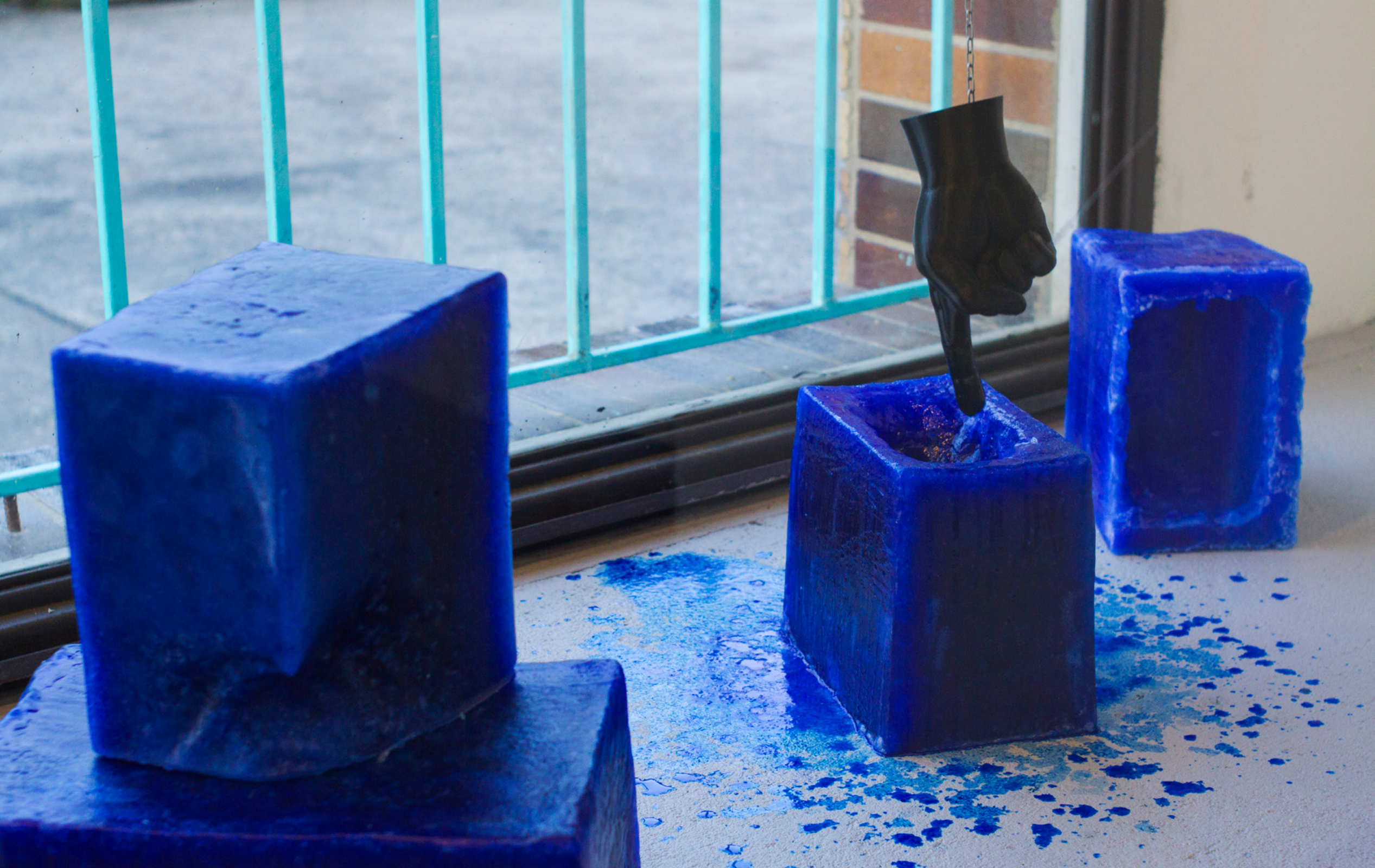
2019



Let Me In

kinetic sculpture
wax, pigment, lace,
3d printed object,
programmed motor
2019





APPROPRIATION OF ATTENTION

2019

The inspiration of this series came from a medieval painting which represent a horrifying moment when Saturn eat his son. The most interesting part of this image is Saturn's hand pointing the opposite way from the main act. Why do we see these kind of painting with huge interest and curiosity? What do we find in these collections of medieval images which we've just seen on the web? They may show a little piece of the mysterious world they came from, their grotesque brutality seems to be closer to our present then a painted landscape from the end of 19th century. However, the question arises: do we understand these illustrations which were made for a totally different way of communication? If we think of the impalpably huge amount of images what we see every day, we should realize that we have to change our perception to get information from them. Our present is in the middle of a paradigm shift where we have to learn a new way of look and interpretation of images, and also texts which lead our eyes due to edited and visually emphasized parts. The main problem is that using new digital platforms, network structures with our classical cultural knowledge, communication and interpretation from the 20th century make us vulnerable. Nobody cares the context where the image came from, neither what we see on it or made for.

This digital universe seems to be a coordinate system without measurement where everybody can believe in whatever he or she wants. If we do not realize this problem, our attention will be stolen, used and manipulated. The installation's aim

is to create a pseudospace with mixed coordinates, where the viewer's regard is guided by an external authority, his or her decisions are just choices in a limited scale. On the other hand, we have the opportunity to solve our frustration caused by appropriated attention: we have to dissolve our identity between the different layers and be a part of the system. The spatial paintings are built up from fragmented elements of enlarged tissues, abstracted patterns and pure paints, show a realistic image of our present. The viewer is forced to leave behind the broken world of labels, and choose a new way of perception.





aa01

mixed media on canvas,
3d printed object, lace

160x150x200 cm

2019





ac02

mixed media on canvas,
3d printed object, lace
120x150x90 cm
2019







aa03

mixed media on canvas,
3d printed object

150x110x70 cm

2019





aa00

mixed media on canvas, 3d
printed object, mirror,
interactive videoloop

66x45x30 cm

2019

