

# CONTEMPORARY IDENTITIES

International Art Magazine

Péter Ágnes | Rados Antonijevic | Kardos Botond | Rachael Kantaris | Farah Mulla | Super Pop Boy  
Bahar Taheri | P.White | Paul Wadsworth | Medina Zabo | Gisela Weimann



ISSUE #8 December 2020

All art is contemporary art because it  
had to be made when it was now.

James Turrell

Artists



Kambiz Derambakhsh



Alireza Meshayekhi



Milton Graser



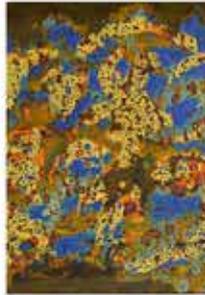
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Gisela Weimann,  
*Reflected Back, 1993, Goods wagon equipped with  
500 Trabant car rear view mirrors was part of an art  
train produced at the Hilbersdorf Railway Works in  
Chemnitz*

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## EDITORS' NOTE

The current Issue of ContemporaryIdentities is the last Issue in 2020. This year has made us to face different challenges. To overcome the challenges we need humanity, expression, and the community that the art creates. Art helps us to express and understand the world around us but above all, its main value is its ability to humanize us. For almost two years ContemporaryIdentities has brought art to the artists and art lovers' homes to view. Viewing art allows us to process our experiences and connect us to the more universal human experiences. Viewing an online exhibition or flipping a virtual art magazine is an expression of what it means to be a human.

Issue 8 features an interview with Gisela Weimann, a German multimedia artist who lives and works in Berlin. The breadth and variety of artistic forms of expression and her working techniques range from painting and printmaking, photography and film, mail art installations and environments to multimedia projects, events, performances and art in public spaces. She leaps over the boundaries between artistic genres by means of intercultural and interdisciplinary cooperation with artists from theatre, music and film, as well as with researchers from various disciplines ... There are two leading threads in Gisela Weimann's life's work: her diaries, which are conceived visually as well as narratively and which describe her continuous reflections on the relation between politics, society and personal experience. . Both threads determine the specific form of her artistic references. Both include her repeated mental struggle with the powerlessness of art against war and violence. In awarding this prize, the jury wishes to emphasize that Gisela Weimann's struggle is not outdated but as important as ever in today's world." Gisela is an inspiring artist who proves that art rejuvenates the soul and the body.

We would like to appreciate the participation of our artists and art writers. In addition to our board members, we also had the pleasure of working with international guest writers such as Sophie Kazan (UK), János Kurdy-Fehér (Hungary) and Emelia Ong (Malaysia). We are also thankful to our joined design team sponsored by Studio Tehran for its hard work and effort.

Finally, we have already launched CI's Online Art Gallery through the past Issue on the magazine's website. Ever since, CI's virtual art space has been hosting the galleries and artists' projects. Take your time and visit CI's online gallery on CI's website.

We are open to receive the exhibition proposals from art galleries, individual artists, and art curators all year round. Take care everyone and see more art in 2021.

Happy 2021 in Advance!  
**Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei**

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# Péter Ágnes

Hungary

János  
Kurdy-Fehér

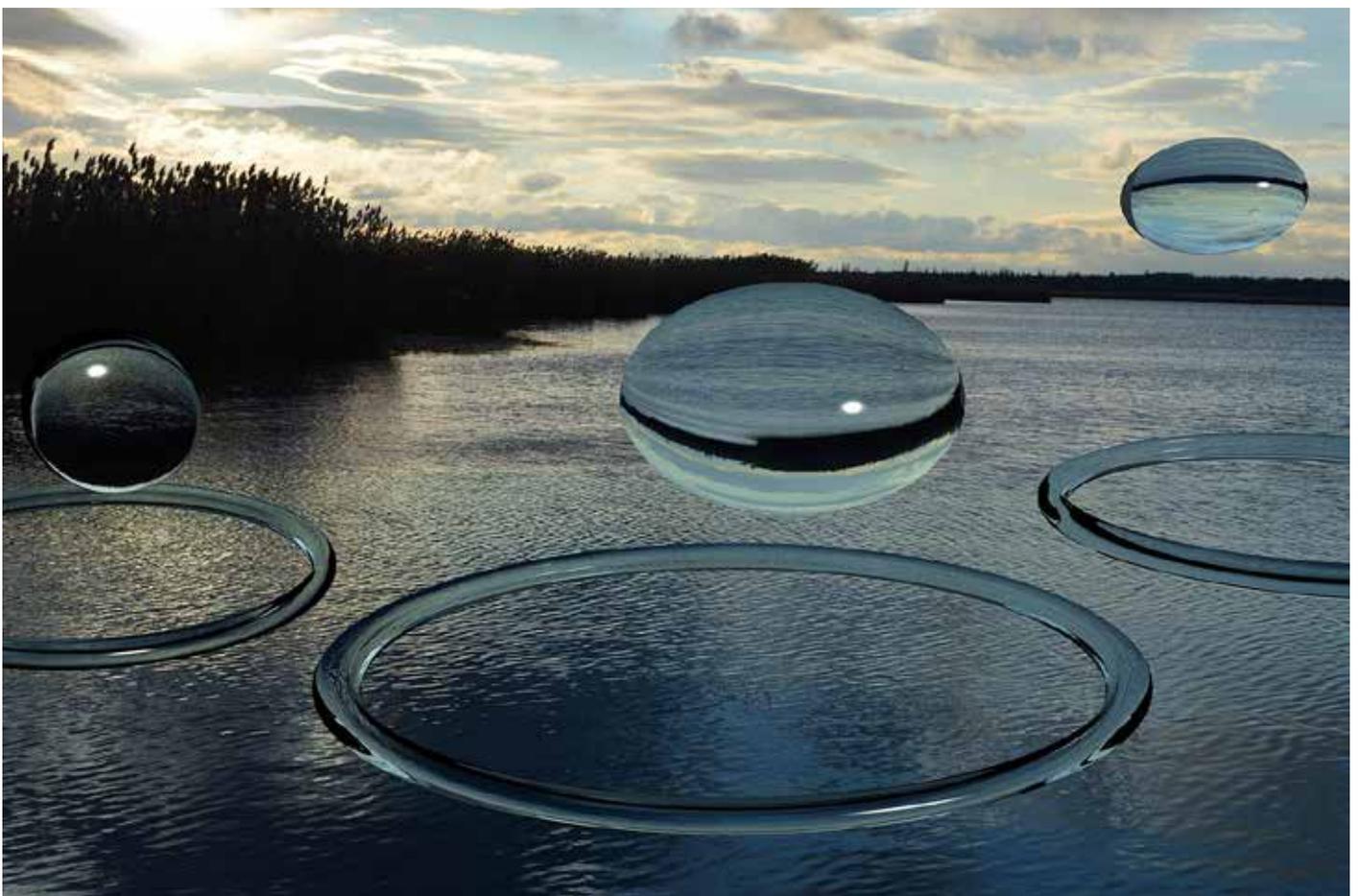


Offering, 2015, Computer print, 100x120 cm



Rings, 2008, Computer print, 100x200 cm

Ágnes Péter found, photographed and edited universal mirrors. In her images with reed and water, the natural and artificial ends of the world meet, while the sights of the two endpoints seem to disappear. e.g. the regular form surrounds the irregular, thus gaining infinity. Meanwhile, the irregular form shows repetitive patterns: these are the traces of human mind in nature. Through her work, we can visually identify the large-scale human operation as the detachment from nature and the return to it alternate, forming layers upon each other, ultimately manifesting itself. It is an ancient, eternal procedure always present-at-hand. Through the spiritual and intellectual practice of "projection", we feel like becoming one with the natural environment. This reflection reassures us suggesting that "there is nothing wrong, more radically: everything is the same, moreover, everything is You". Transferring the intellect from the inside to the outside and vice versa is a great trick of humanity – the universal topos polished to minimalism.

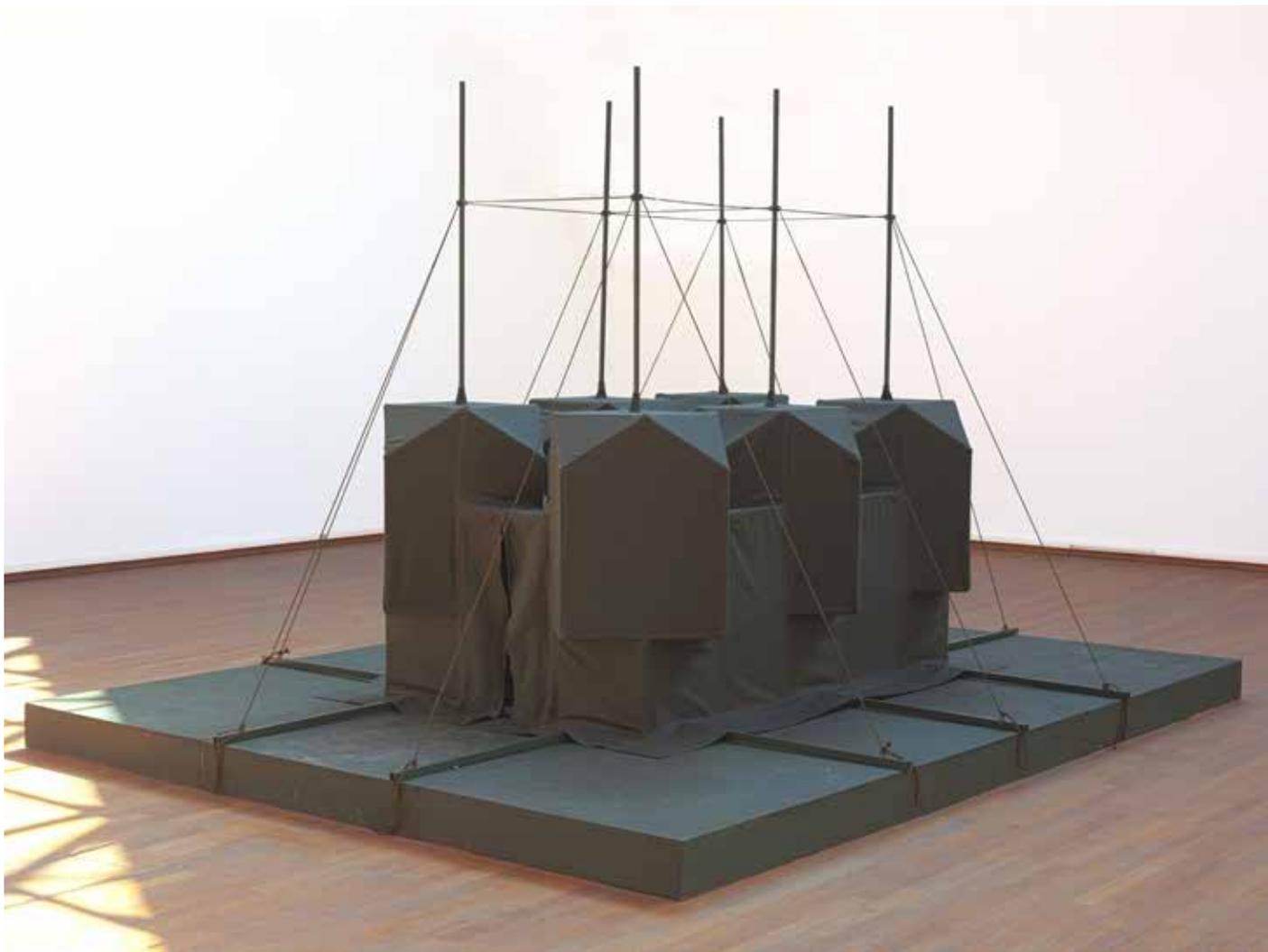


Flowing rings, 2015, Computer print, 100x120 cm

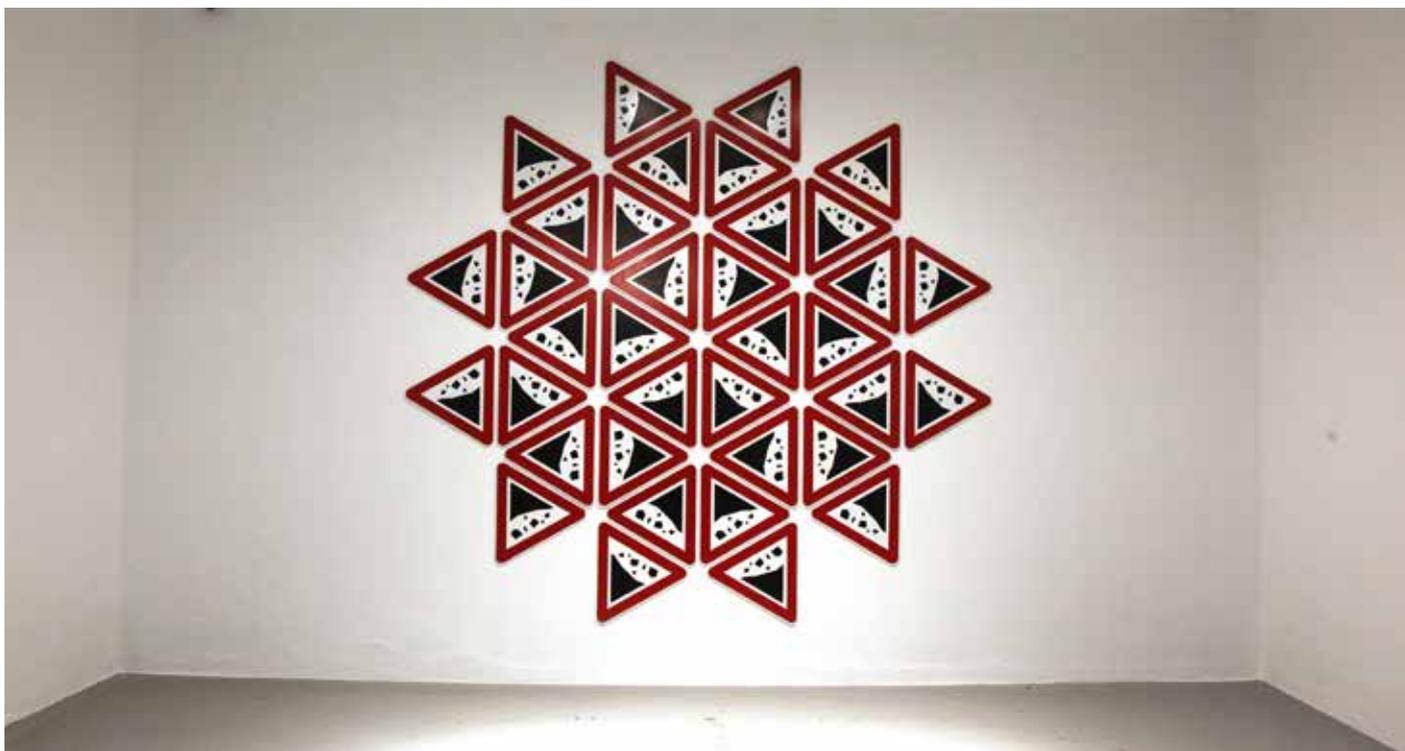


Perfection, 2015, Wall installation, 36 traffic signs made from MDF, 280x280x1 cm

Simple, everyday objects go through a curious transformation in the creations of Radoš Antonijević, acquiring novel meanings and further references, either keeping some constituents of their original significations, or being totally converted. For example noble, traditional architectural forms get recreated with temporary materials, road signs make up abstract patterns, average functional objects become bearers of critical considerations of current social issues.



Tent Museum of Contemporary Art-Belgrade, 2012, Waterproof khaki-colored fabric, metal frame and ropes, 300x400x230 cm



Perfection, 2015, Wall installation, 36 traffic signs made from MDF, 280x280x1 cm

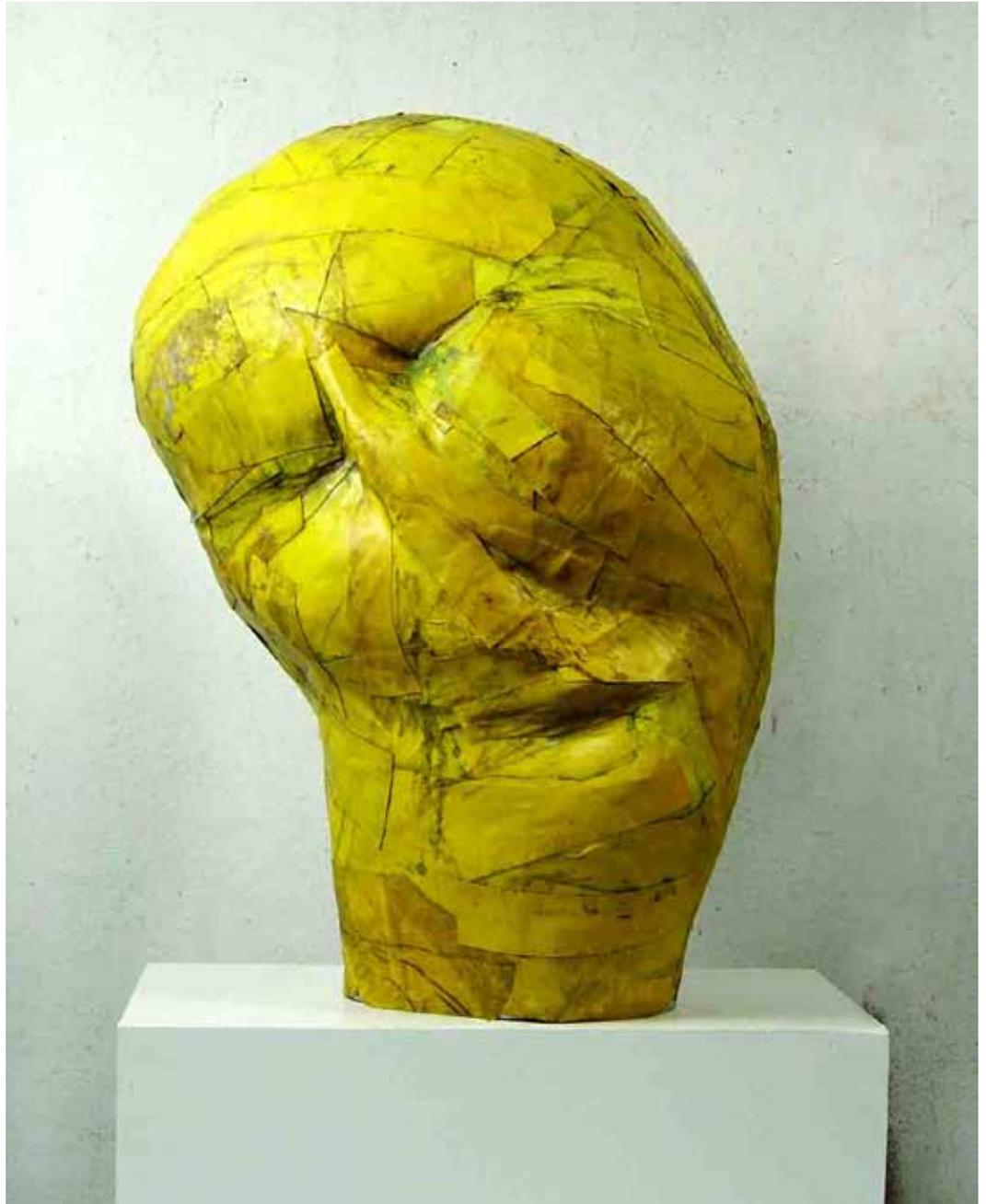
# Kardos Botond

Hungary-Germany

János  
Kurdy-Fehér



Schlaf, 2004, Tarpaulin, 160x120 cm



Schlaf, 2004, Tarpaulin, H: 44 cm

Sculptor Kardos Botond (1949-2010) became known as BOTOND in the International and Hungarian art scene. He had been living in Germany since 1979. He belonged nor to a group neither a school. He had elaborated framework projects since the 80s, which he realized through sculptures, drawings, paintings, photos, and actions. He committed himself to protect his authentic form of expression from the trends of the contemporary art industry.

Several of his works criticize knowledges and applications, e.g. nature/ arts/science/religion/the social distribution systems. His work should not be considered conceptual art despite their inclination for thematization: he used the means of the conventional sculpting, painting and graphics together with features characteristic of his art. His work is complete with criticism and humorous reflections that show themselves in a peculiar form of expression. He was fond of using stainless steel, used truck tilt, polyethylene sewed with thread, velvet, bronze, and wire.





Zengó, 1990, Mixed technique on paper, 170x130 cm



Cueva rosa, 2019, Etching and carborundum, Edition of 15, 60x75 cm

Rachael Kantaris fell in love with etching at Brighton University, studying Fine Art and Contemporary Dance. Etching is a complex process which involves creating the image by 'biting' the surface of metal plates using acid. She inks up multiple plates and builds up the layers of color onto the paper using a press. This produces, "a language of color which I can't achieve with painting."

"There is an alchemy to etching which I find magical and exciting. Then there's that moment when you lift the paper from the press and you know you've finally got it right."

Many of Kantaris' etchings reflect the landscape around her home in St Ives, Cornwall. She is inspired by the color of the sky and wild coastline, the sea and ancient standing stones. Her etchings have a sculptural quality and a powerful presence that reflect Kantaris' creativity and quiet determination.



Sky pink, 2017, Etching and carborundum, edition of 20, Paper, 55x58 cm

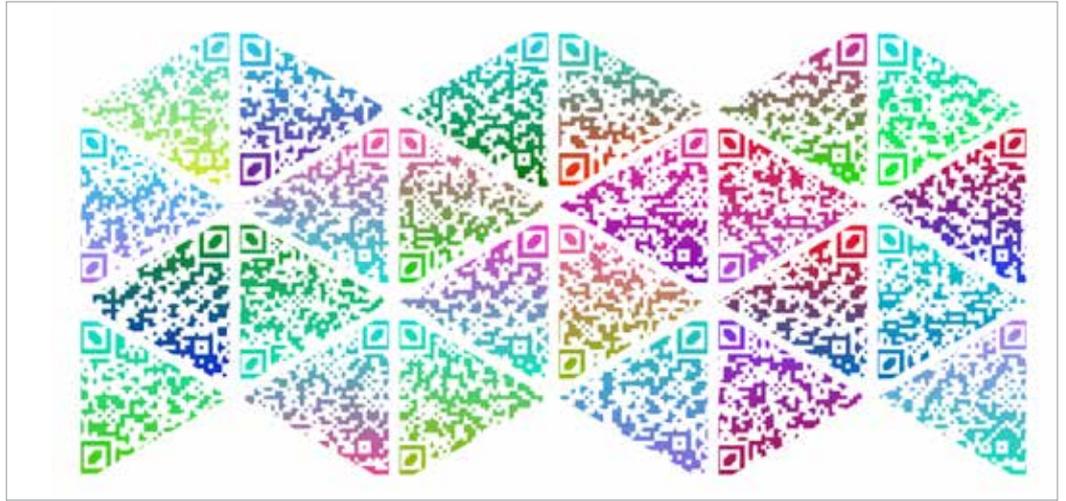


Storm, 2016, Etching, Edition of 20, 60x57cm



Windschatten, 2016, Kinetic sound sculpture, 6ft Hemisphere, Supported by KYTA. Link to audio: <http://farahmulla.wixsite.com/farah-mulla/exhibitions>

Farah Mulla awakens us to our rich and inspiring sonic environment and celebrates the mobile and invisible agency of sound as a foundational materiality of the world.



Translat, 2017, Sonic graffiti, 2in x 2in stickers, Link to audio: <https://farahmulla.wixsite.com/farah-mulla-/honey-link>



Crosstalk, 2019, Sound installation, Variable dimensions, Supported by Serendipity Arts Foundation. Photo Credit: @philippecalia, Link to audio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVxUMk9T6KE&t=14s>

The term 'sonic graffiti' assigned to the work entitled Translat in fact aptly captures the life and force of sound in general. Sound inscribes itself on things, an absence contained within the materiality of the various signs of its presence. It is a writing, like geological markings through which the earth weeps and rejoice.

Therefore, amidst the various sonic narratives about the world, whether they be about human subjectivity or historicity of place and earth, we must heed to the voice of sound itself. Sound is not the aftermath of thoughts and creation but is the very 'material' and pulse of subjectivity and the world. With admirable sense of care, Mulla puts meaning-making under erasure to gesture the fact the acoustic ecology is always already 'meaningful'.

# Super Pop Boy

Germany

Emelia  
Ong



Make a wish! (press the button), 2017, Acrylic on canvas, 130x120x4 cm

Through a combination of comic book style narrative and pop art aesthetic, Super Pop Boy presents a humorous and provocative look at the world we live in. Using well-known comic characters and icons of popular culture, he leverages on the mass appeal of these symbols to draw attention to how they represent our collective desires, anxieties and hopes.



Where are we now, 2020, Acrylic on canvas, 145x145x2 cm



Beavis and Butt-head, 2019, Acrylic on canvas, 130x130x2 cm

Discrete icons and concepts are playfully juxtaposed to present a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the state of society. These larger than life icons magnify the current pulse of urban life along with its struggle to make sense of itself.

The use of play as a thematic invite us to view life metaphorically as a fun and exciting game. His works reflect a world where pop culture, technology and mass media meet to offer us entertainment, relief and perhaps some hard truths.



There is no way to communicate, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 90x90 cm

Bahar Taheri's current series, "There is no way to Communicate" muses on the complex ways we communicate with one another. Different personalities are pictured, each adorned in various masks, headphones, hoods, hats and sunglasses. We relate to each other by way of these intermediary accessories that serve as cultural markers, conveying distinct and unique identities.



There is no way to communicate, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 90x90 cm



There is no way to communicate, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 90x90 cm

Faces are almost hidden and thus depersonalized. The private person it seems, is overtaken by the public persona. Taheri highlights the fact that social media has vastly transformed the way we connect with each other.

Her portraits mirror a sort of disengaged social culture that self-isolates and yet craves attention. Her works speak of the subjective nature of identity and the fragility of social networks that are built on virtual realities.

# Paul Wadsworth

UK Sophie  
Kazan



Sennen cove, 2020, Oil color on canvas, 140x140 cm

Paul Wadsworth's studio is situated in the cobbled yard of a historic country estate. "It's a place which seems to have its own time and pace. I live on the moors so it's also a refuge from bad weather as surrounded by trees and well protected from the wind," he says in his usual mellow manner. Enormous wet canvases line the walls of the studio and enormous leather-bound sketchbooks are strewn all around. Wadsworth is a painter who clearly enjoys the process of painting and loses himself in his work.



Cape Cornwall, 2020, Oil color on canvas, 82x102 cm



Porthmeor beach, St. Ives, 2020, Oil color on canvas, 82x102 cm

Throughout lockdown, he has produced a painting a week. "I try to capture the feeling of the day through all months of the year. The colour changes and becomes about what I see around me. The sea is my main interest, forever changing with the seasons providing energy, life and rhythm to my paintings."



Still life no. II, 2020, Chrome sphere, gravity and light, C-Type Print, 138x138 cm, Editions: 3 + 1 A/P

The Still Life series articulates the centrality of digital technology and imagery our experience of the world and ourselves. In his Photography 5.1 manifesto, the artist summarizes his contemplation on the essence of contemporary life under the reign of digital imageries where images that constitute our experience of reality are no longer constructed from reality (such as scanned or photographed images) but are created digitally from scratch.



Still life no. III, 2020, Chrome sphere, gravity and light, C-Type Print, 138x138 cm, Editions: 3 + 1 A/P



Still life no. IV, 2020, Chrome sphere, gravity and light, C-Type Print, 138x138 cm, Editions: 3 + 1 A/P

This series extend the artist's exploration on how digital reality is not simply a copy of the real but instead a reality that is transformed into a new reality of its own. Thus, they hearken to the historicity of the Still Life and the genre's assault on the human subject, from its documented genesis among the dead in ancient Egyptian tombs to its proper name in art as nature morte (dead nature): the living bond between us and reality has been questionable by default.



Mr. Parkinson, he knows, Installation, Paper clay porcelain processed and cold painted with chemical additives, Steel wool, altar candles-wax, mixed media, Variable dimension

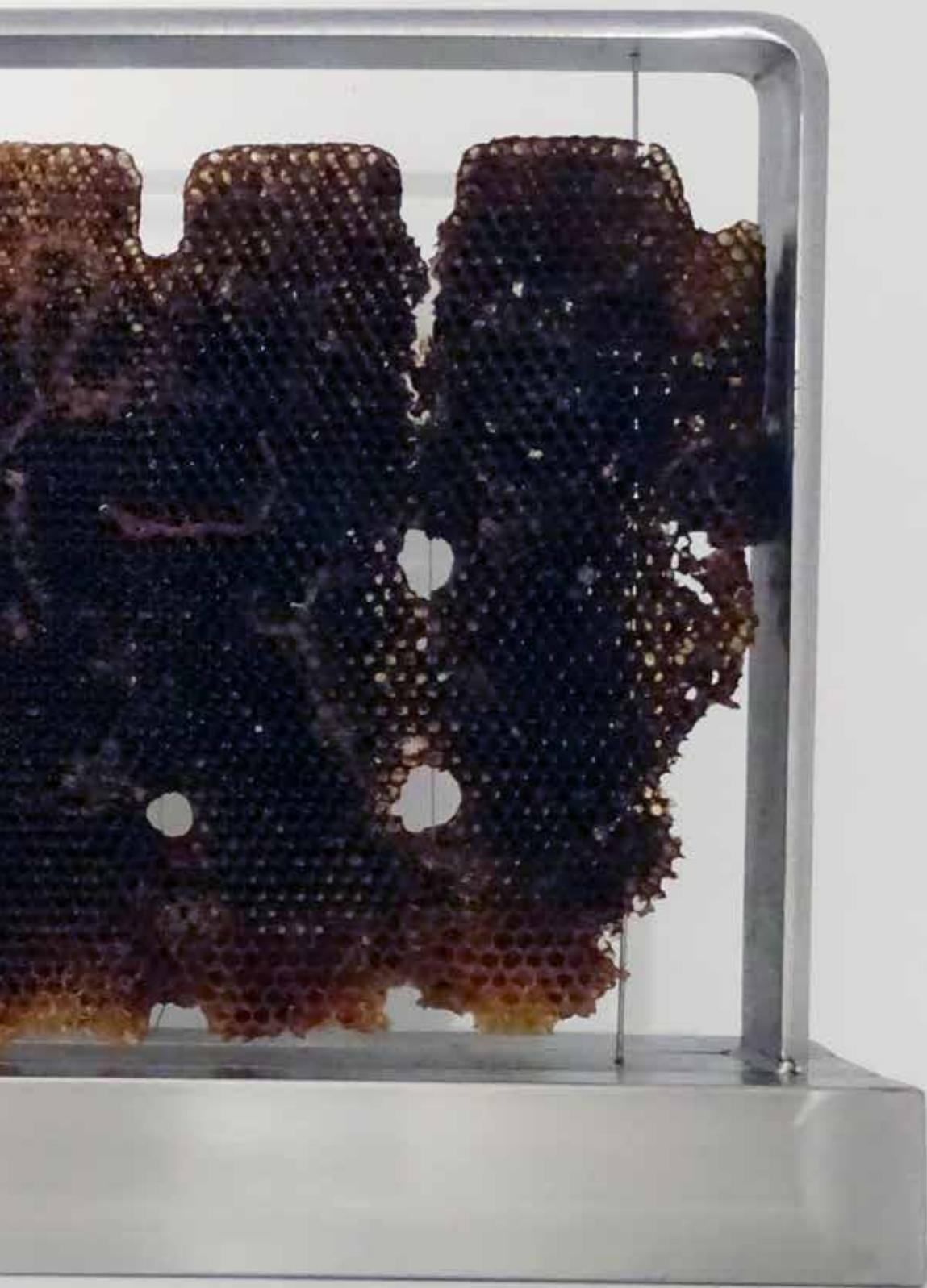
In her artistic practice, Medina Zabo is fascinated by an almost paradox question: how to investigate fundamental structures and essential principles with elements in transition.



Tamed h/abit, Installation, 2020, Powder coated stainless steel, parasited honeycombs stabilized, imprimatura, Variable dimensions, 47x32.5x7 cm each

Transformation and construction, metamorphosis and crystallization – both in literal and metaphorical senses of the words – are inspiringly displayed in her works of art made with natural materials, including beeswax and stearic wax, thus searching for parallels between natural and man-made structures and social patterns.





# Gisela WEIMANN



Departure from home, 2018, Edited self-timer photo from the work series 'My shadow remains'<sup>1</sup>, Variable dimension

## **Preliminary remark**

When this lexicon was compiled 30 years ago, it already described a considerable body of work from 20 active years of my life as an artist. As I went through the 50 numbered topics that art historian Brigitte Hammer had extracted from her observation of my work, conversation notes, catalog texts, and my written statements, I was surprised that the underlying essence of my approach, my methods and my often-

1. <https://vimeo.com/105114993>



Dîner à la Maison des Artistes, First installation with found objects from the studios at Maison d'art Contemporain in Asilah/Morocco, 2014. Image of the second installation at gallery 'interno\_14' in Rome, 2017

ambiguous humor are still relevant to my current work. I will therefore use a selection of keywords from this lexicon to reveal the common thread of my projects to guide readers in an associative, dialogical manner through the questions about my life and work posed by Sara Berti and Elham Shafaei, the editors of Contemporary Identities, international art magazine.

Gisela Weimann, Berlin November 2020



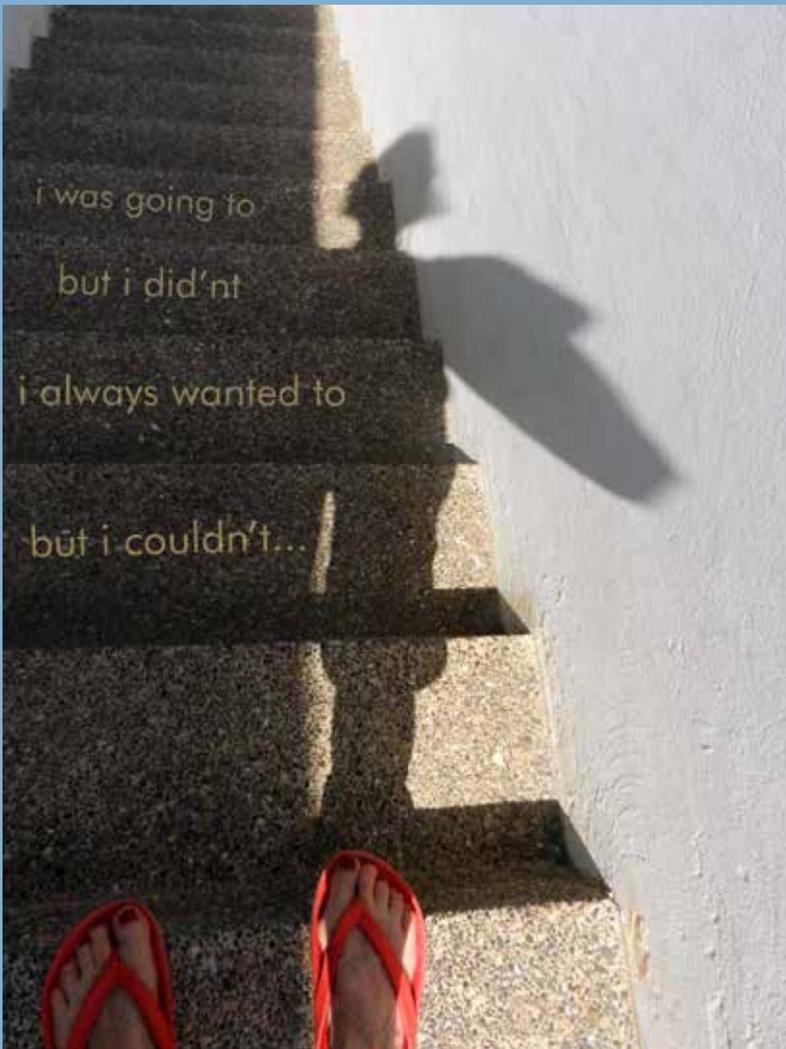
In the Garden of Female Composers, Olga, Irene, Pauline and Beethoven, Violeta and Natalia, 2020, Space installation, Womens' Museum Bonn

**CI: 1. Tell us about your early influences.**

**BH:** Auge / Eye – is the medium that makes knowledge possible, it is the seeing, the knowing and the third, the protective eye, but also the questioning, the observing, the inquiring and the crying eye, and all these eyes look out of the pictures and confront the viewers with themselves.

**GW:** I was born in Bad Blankenburg/Thuringia in the East of Germany in 1943. In the aftermath of the collapse and unconditional surrender of Germany I experienced first the American and then the Russian occupation, without being consciously aware of the insecurities and danger of the time and the atrocities of National Socialist rule that led to it. The Russians quartered officers in our house. They treated us politely, and as soon as I found out that one of them had sugar candies hidden in a drawer, I became his special friend.

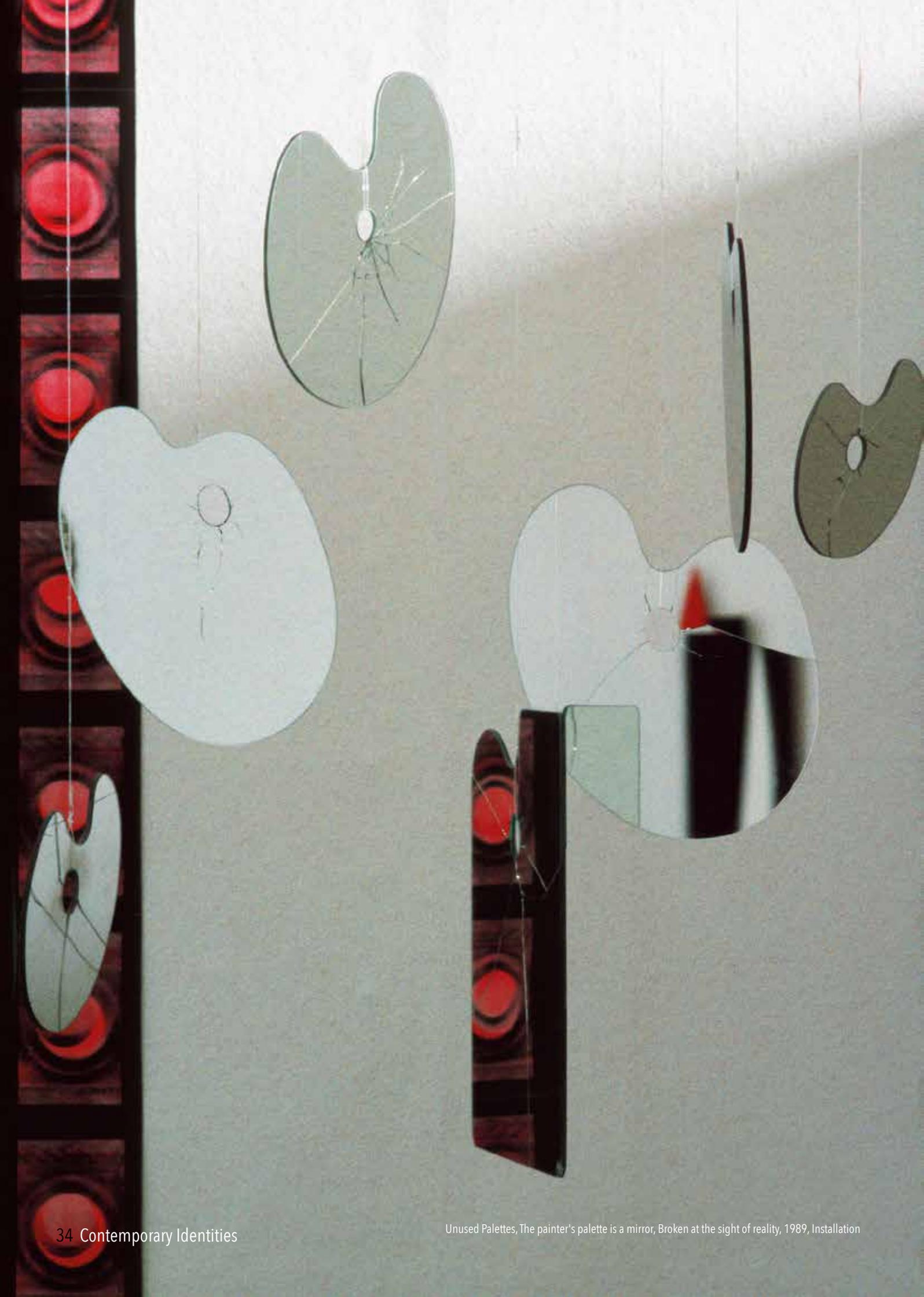
Contemporary Identities= CI  
 Brigitte Hammer= BH  
 Gisela Weimann= GW



Flying, I was going to, but i did'nt, I always wanted to, but I could'nt, 2015, Edited self-timer photo, digital print on canvas, 164x96 cm

He gave me a wooden horse so that I could ride to Moscow to visit him when I was older. This was my first international experience of learning that strangers are friends. It followed the risky preparation of the flight of our family with seven children to the west. Before we departed, Liselotte, the younger of my two sisters caught a lung infection and died at the age of 19. She had begun to study painting and became later my mirror image and partner of silent dialogues in my search for artistic identity.

We found refuge in the moated castle 'Haus Cappeln' with spiral staircases, secret corners and a huge loft full of dusty boxes and strange stuff from past owners. Our family was housed in the Knight's Hall, a huge, cold room with high, painted ceilings. It was an improvised life without amenities. For me it was full of romantic images and stories, but also full of fears. From the village, the castle was reached by a long, narrow alley with crooked willow trees and ditches on either side. Coming home in the dark as a child walking on this narrow ridge, accompanied by the shadows of the willows which transformed into menacing people and ghosts, was frightening.



The castle was surrounded by a park with huge rhododendron bushes in which we played hide-and-seek – and it was also here, where the summer meadows of my childhood grew, in which margarites and poppies bloomed and delicate blue butterflies fluttered around. I was a thin, undernourished and introverted child with a deep sense of inferiority, but when I was about eight, I started to draw – images of queens who I imagined to having lived here earlier and of my teacher, Fräulein Bürgermeister on the chamber pot. Drawing became an activity I liked that brought me attention and respect.

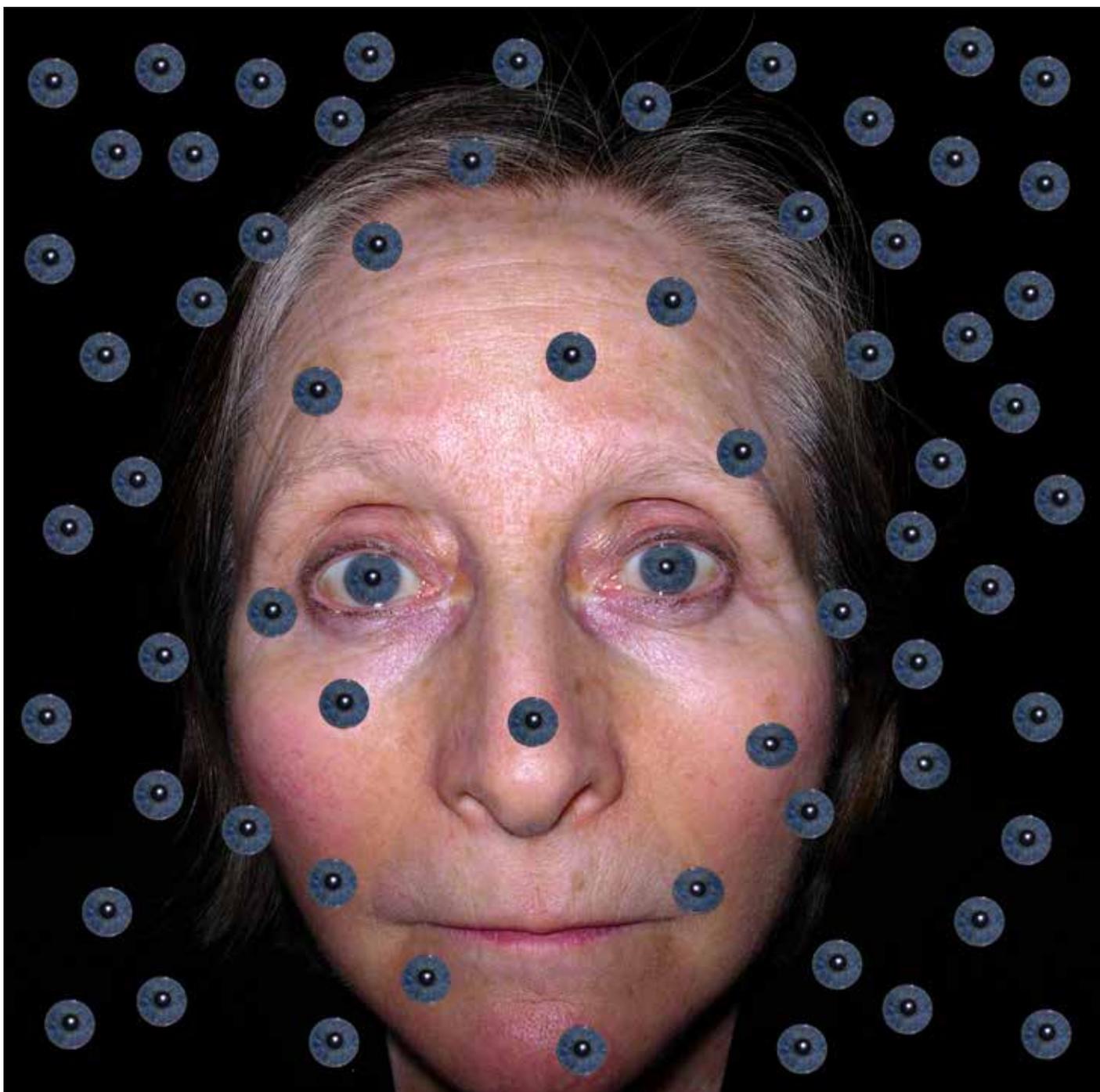
When I was thirteen, we moved to Tecklenburg into a small house of our own. In this little historic town, I found a second family of like-minded artists and musicians. I began an art education at the art school in Münster, lost confidence in my talent, started looking for another path and went to the USA to live with a family in Hackensack, New Jersey from 1962-1963. It was a complete change of my life with uncountable new impressions: The nearby hectic New York City; visits to the Metropolitan Museum with its huge collection of contemporary art and all the other incredible museums and galleries; television, with the live broadcast of the Vietnam War and the assassination of President Kennedy; a drawing course at the Englewood Art Center that renewed the wish to continue my art education...

On return to Germany I took up a three months au pair in Paris, studied the Impressionists and enrolled for a life drawing class at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière to prepare my application folder for the University of the Arts in Berlin.

1965, after passing the entrance examination I moved to Berlin and a new chapter in my life began: I partly lost my fear of people, joined groups, engaged in university policy activities and searched for new forms to relate art with society and social questions. "Artists, get out of your ivory tower was the demand of the time!" I identified with leftist and pacifist thinking. At the same time, however, I began to focus my interest on women and our issues, with the hope that our world would be a better one.

The demands of equal rights, fair share and international solidarity of the feminist movement related to my sense of justice, my social-mindedness, my interest in other cultures and the experiences of 1968, in which all the postulations of equality, social justice, peace and freedom were not applied when it came down to private and professional life and the giving up of male privileges.

Some years of stability and positive change followed, and now...?



Cassandra, *Seen with my own eyes*, 2005, Edited self-timer photo, digital print on canvas, 100x100 cm

**Diary note, Berlin 2 February 2017...** the uncertainty whether everything is real grows – was I in rome? – imperium romanum and all before and after, each with a bloody will to power, were they there, and are they still living under and above soil, allowing their dreams of national greatness to resurrect? – I cannot locate myself, the compass spins wildly to all directions, confuses over-hasty thoughts until everything turns dizzy – thousands of years and the history of my own 73: born during the war and crosslinked to downfall all around – I am still on my way carrying heavy luggage ...

## **CI: 2. How have you developed your career?**

**BH: Leben /** Life is part of daily art and it is the whole within time, it has a beginning and an end and in between it has been delightful effort and work and what remains is a 'living museum'.<sup>3</sup>

**GW:** I would rather call it a life-long search than a straightforward career, because it was accompanied by insecurities and doubts. After concluding the study of painting with the 'Meisterschülerin' degree at the University of the Arts in 1970 I received a scholarship of the German Academic Exchange Service for a post-graduate course in printmaking at the Royal College of Art in London from 1971-72. I had found an apartment in a house in Amor Road in Hammersmith, inhabited by artists. We named our group 'Amor Artists' and exhibited together on the ground floor<sup>4</sup>. The lively cultural scene in London was trend setting in the early 70s in art, fashion, music and life style. I was offered a part-time teaching job at the Medway College of Art in Rochester, changed after two years to a full-time position at the Gloucestershire College of Art and Design in Cheltenham and decided after 5 years to leave England.

The routine of daily teaching and the external security of a quiet town surrounded by meadows and gentle hills did not correspond to my inner restlessness and I felt that I needed new challenges in order to advance my own artistic position. However, my study and teaching years in England were inspiring and fruitful. I was encouraged and supported and learned to appreciate two important skills: politeness and humor.

In the process of a difficult re-integration into my German life I conceived the social research project "Women from an apartment house in Berlin-Wedding", by tradition a working class district. I had kept my backyard-apartment in this house, inhabited by tenants from various countries and different social backgrounds. With a circular I invited the women to come to my small studio to be portrayed and interviewed so that we could all get to know and understand each other. The extensive interviews were successfully exhibited together with the portraits at the producers' gallery Happ in Berlin in 1978.

3. The Living Museum was a concept and a public gallery that I developed and directed from 1990-93.

4. "Amor Artists", Pat Gilmour in: 'Arts Review' Nr. 25, London 1971



Cooking Pot Orchestra, 2005, Sound hats made of pots and pans

It was this experience of a living production process that made me look for new forms of production and presentation and I was grateful for the opportunity to study film and photography at the Art Institute in San Francisco with an Airlift/Fulbright scholarship from 1978–79. This was another formative year at an excellent institution in a beautiful, liberal, international city. I enrolled in courses with female professors and lecturers like Gunvor Nelson from Sweden in film editing, the late Ingeborg Gerdes from Germany in photography and the Afro-American Angela Davis in ethnic music. Besides the constant courses the college offered an impressive lecture program with experimental filmmakers like Peter Greenaway and Michael Snow, the composer John Cage and the protagonist of minimal music Steve Reich, who performed his “Clapping Music” with us. 1979 was the year of a special celebration of the achievements and contributions of women to human civilization, symbolized by Judy Chicago’s “Dinner Party” and exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Many feminist groups around the world paralleled this event with dinner parties in their countries and women artists in San Francisco with a “Box Lunch”.



My first 16 mm film "Memories, or the failed attempt to escape" that I finished for my BA in film says already in the title that I was still carrying my heavy luggage around with me, filled with impressions from my German past and additional ones from the present of the USA<sup>5</sup>. Before returning to Berlin, I wanted to visit a German friend living in Tepoztlán, a village located at a one and a half hours car drive from the capital in the state of Morelos. It is embedded in one of the holy valleys of ancient Mexico with the pyramid Tepozteco on one of the surrounding hill tops.

The special atmosphere of this place captured me at once and I had the feeling of having been called to come here. By chance I found an estate offered for sale that I could rent for very little money. It consisted of several buildings on three plains and a garden with exotic plants, voluptuously blooming bougainvillea and orange, avocado and misbero trees. I stayed for over a year, living alone with 10 cats that had invited themselves. For a long time I had no light and no gas. When the sudden tropical night fell from the sky, curious neighbors fled the house, and I, too, felt uncanny when I walked down from the upper terrace to my bedroom with a flickering, shadow-casting candle.

In the first few nights I had eerie dreams, felt observed and tested but finally accepted and admitted to the secret. Mexico is a magical country, full of fantasy, ingenuity, sensuality and 'joie de vivre' with a simultaneous, ever-present closeness to death. 'Brujas' and 'brujos' (sorcerers/healers) are in contact with the 'invisibles' (the invisible ones) and a traditional knowledge that they use during 'limpias' (purification ceremonies) and pagan-Christian rituals.

These experiences, supported by 'hongas', created a wide open, receptive state of consciousness that gave rise to dreams, new sensations and surprising images with chimeras and floating figures in my hundreds of watercolors. I owe much to Mexico, its beauty and spirituality, the inspiration of its ancient and contemporary art and to the unlimited fantasy and skill of the indigenous folk artists.

My formal studies were completed with my return to Berlin. I had to find a paid job and accepted the post as head of the Department of Art and Creativity at the University of Continuous Education in Berlin-Wedding, which turned out to be an enormously rich process of learning from life.

From 1982-87, I developed an ambitious program for public cultural education, inclusive of courses by excellent artists from all genres and the organization of exhibitions. Five years seem to be my limit of sharing my own artistic work and development with commitments for gaining financial security. With the exception of part-time management of the "Living Museum Gallery" from 1990-1993, which was a project especially dear to me, I gave up my job.

5. <https://vimeo.com/24649178>

6. "Above all the Stars", in progress since 2005. Inspired by the publications that accompanied the Einstein Year, the latest theories of quantum physics and the speculations about parallel universes, I began to create my own universe in the drawer. [http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/pdfs/16/Weimann\\_INSAPVII\\_Without\\_Time\\_and\\_Space.pdf](http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/pdfs/16/Weimann_INSAPVII_Without_Time_and_Space.pdf)

Magic Correspondence, 1988, 21 envelopes in the format 23x32 cm, made of mirror foil with inlaid watercolors, form a band



Until today, invitations to projects and fairs, longer and shorter work grants and residencies allowed me to keep up an active life as an independent artist with individual and collective exhibitions in Germany and international. I met incredible people and build up an international network. Public funding enabled the realization of comprehensive multi-media projects and the publication of two books, with the participation of many practioners and theorists I had met on my way.

My gain was and is continued learning about the beauty of the world and the wonderful works of art that have been and are created by people everywhere as well as a deep gratitude towards all my colleagues and friends and their countries. Ultimately, every artist knows that satisfaction does not come from what one has done, but from the continuous, critical dialogue with oneself and the unpredictable mystery and pleasure of creating.

**Diary note, Berlin 14 May 2013** ... the time, day and night in hazy motion blur – when I stand late at the open window and ask for insight I become aware of the deeper meaning of the story of the fall of man – how else can I explain the inconceivable of infinity, space and time, to which our limited awareness is exposed – although everything I do shrinks into insignificance in these moments, I start all over again when the next day begins: today I want to tidy up, today I want to clean, today I want to apply for three project participations, today i want to mail the english version of my illustrated documentation of 'beginning end here now'<sup>7</sup>, today i want to do everything that I will not be able to accomplish any more in this life ...

### **CI: 3. What does your work aim to say?**

**BH:** Kunst / Art is a spiritual universe that unfolds in daily actions of the production of words, thoughts, images. Every day, every action, every thought is part of 'art as a whole'<sup>8</sup>.

**GW:** In almost 60 years of artistic activity, content, goals and means of expression have taken on different forms with the changes of cultural and social issues, my personal interests and the increasing global threats. I am a traveller, inspired by foreignness and otherness, by the sounds of other languages and surroundings and by the images and memories of other cultures, who is longing for a family in spirit, the break down of restrictive national boundaries and a just and peaceful world, cooperating on cultural, economic and environmental issues without competition and power games.

In view of the increasing number of armed conflicts, the ruthless dispute over resources, the greedy expansion of personal power by some individuals, the bloody arguments over questions of faith together with obscure conspiracy theories, my impression grows that the peaceful communication among artists takes place on a parallel earth.

7. "Beginning End Here Now" is an imaginary music room. The title refers to Olivier Messiaen's "Quatuor pour la fin du temps"/Quartet for the end of time, written and premiered in a German concentration camp in 1941. [http://www.giselaweimann.de/pdf\\_mw\\_coll/11\\_Beginning\\_End\\_Here\\_Now\\_1996.pdf](http://www.giselaweimann.de/pdf_mw_coll/11_Beginning_End_Here_Now_1996.pdf)

8. "Teile des Ganzen/Parts of the Whole" belongs to a series of projects developing in parts over a period of time under the motto "everything is part of the whole art".



Reflected Back, 1993, Goods wagon equipped with 500 Trabant car rear view mirrors was part of an art train produced at the Hilbersdorf Railway Works in Chemnitz

**Diary note, Berlin 5 May 2011 ...** in my head the time turns in circles – life: a time-based medium – the question remains who operates the controls, the devil or god – should it be the people themselves in the end, it turns out that they have not mastered the program of humanity in the sense of a compassionate, warm-hearted and tolerant attitude towards all forms of life ...

#### **CI: 4. How do you work?**

**BH: Dialoge/** Dialogues are an essential method of inventing images, which Gisela Weimann practices with various artist colleagues. Whether she exchanges one hundred numbered halves of postcards with Paula Levine in London, to be reassembled when each half has been covered with overpainted fragments of a German and an English newspaper with thoughts on the topic of time – “über DIE ZEIT / over THE TIMES” – or whether she sends pieces of postcards to Hans-Jörg Tauchert in Cologne, that he completes with his own image associations, always two related parts form a whole.

**GW:** A recurring part of my projects are the diaries, which are created visually as well as narrative. They are produced everywhere I live in the form of letters in dated envelopes that I write to myself. By recording my feelings, observations and thoughts they inspire ideas in an inner dialogue and support the development of new works. Born under the sign of Gemini, I miss my second half and find it through this soliloquy and the collaboration with other artists.

An exchange project of special importance to me is “Fragmente des Anderen/Fragments of the Other”<sup>9</sup> with my Romanian artist friend Andor Kömives that spanned a period of 20 years.

The basic idea of the project is a creative dialogue between two European artists who are not only of different nationality and cultural backgrounds but received their formation under two different political systems.

By exchanging scraps from drawings and paintings from our work tables and drawers we entrusted each other with fragmented visual material that was the starting point for new collages.

Over the years, the pictures changed with the type of the arriving fragments, reflecting our sensitivities and our respective focus of work in Berlin and Cluj. This cooperative work process generously overcame the anxious insistence on one's own, unmistakable style and opened up to the pleasure of allowing the magic and enrichment of otherness in a playful visual dialogue. In reference to the famous Arabian tales' of 1001 nights we wanted to create a European tale of 1001 collages. Death did not allow for it and forced Andor to leave this world in July 2019.

**Diary note, Berlin 18 February 2017 ...** a gray day with candlelight – i could start to live, i could... – i give up – the night is too big – i close my eyes and return to the black birds of thought – they float silently through time – the old one ask: "what was, what is?" – in the subjunctive: "what could be if i could?" – in the indicative: "i cannot, it cannot be" – all that, what was, cannot be true, all that, what is, i don't understand ...

9. <http://www.giselaweimann.de/2019/FRAGMENTS-OF-THE-OTHER.pdf>



Peace Soup, 2019, Performance in the frame of the 6th International Art Biennale in Baku/Aserbaidshjan. Musicians: Matthias Badczong, Friedemann Graef, Friedrich Koch, Katia Guedes

### CI: 5. How has your practice changed over time?

**BH:** Theater is an art form that requires cooperation and communication and appeals to the visual as well as auditory level of experience. The interaction of the arts was convincingly demonstrated by Gisela Weimann in the summer of 1989 at Willi Baumeister's one hundredth birthday in collaboration with colleagues who work with other media<sup>10</sup>.

**GW:** In the post-war period with the politically heated climate in Berlin in the 68s, as a left-wing artist, I felt called upon to denounce social injustice and initiate solidarity processes through art.

<sup>10</sup> The anniversary exhibition in honour of the artist Willi Baumeister took place at the New National Gallery in Berlin in 1989. [http://www.giselaweimann.de/pdf\\_mw\\_coll/01\\_On\\_the\\_Outside\\_1989.pdf](http://www.giselaweimann.de/pdf_mw_coll/01_On_the_Outside_1989.pdf)

My studies in England and the United States with the learning of different realities and additional techniques directed my artistic process towards commitment for equal rights and solidarity within international exchanges and cooperations. The secluded stay in Mexico opened the door to inner worlds of fantasy and brought about a very personal imagery.

In the early 1980s the merging of different artistic means led to site-specific installations. One that I see as pointing to a new direction in a period of internal strife consists of an installation of artist's palettes made of mirror glass, destroyed with cracks. In the following years sound installations, performances and experimental music-theatre productions became the focal point of my work. My inventions have their origin in a poetic play on words or emerge from collaborations with composers, musicians, dancers, and theorists from different national descends. They intend the transformation of every day activities, objects and events into works of art and complex communication processes, which include the audience as an integral part.

**Diary note, Berlin 2 January 1987** ... now the days have gone by and taken a whole year with them... – a new chapter is beginning – time for maturity, for summing up, time for creation based on memory – so many unpainted pictures, so many un-lived dreams want to enter the world – the calm planning and the timeless beginning are overlapped and manipulated by duties in society – but my internal pictures are also a duty, and I want to find the strength to comply with it – to take part in the mystery of the self ...

#### **CI: 6. What art do you most identify with?**

**BH:** Un-Sinn / Non-sense is not pointless. DADA already knew that the reversal of meaning not only creates new realities, but also creates art. The fact that Gisela Weimann uses the game with the levels of meaning as a method of art-finding is just as plausible as it is consistent.

**GW:** My interest in the diversity of language led me on the mysterious paths of fantasy to new realities and the playful change and reversal of words and their normal, accepted meanings. This made it possible to detach from an art geared towards effectiveness and a fixed goal.

The freedom to create works without purpose and monetary value enabled an independent art that was not a product made for the art market. The foremost aim was the pleasure of the thought process with unforeseen results. Of course, despite the invitation to laugh, there is always a hidden message and criticism behind it.

49 strange visitors, with huge feet replacing their ears and a long finger instead of their noses knocked on the door on my 49th birthday. The "Cow School for young cows, who do not yet know where to go" founded on the 10th of October in Selk, North Germany, in cooperation with Magdalena Drebber and the friendly help of the progressive farmer Claus Andresen, aims to give a solid basic education to the many inexperienced young cows in Europe that would enable them to stand up against the great competition of the European Market.

For the "Kitchen Symphony in five courses with service", a "Cooking Pot Orchestra" was created with instruments played by the musicians on their own heads or on those of others, and Pauline Oliveros composed a "pea(ce soup)"<sup>11</sup> for it with the hope that everyone, anywhere, could eat their 'pea soup' in peace.

11. <https://vimeo.com/233838292>

**Diary note, Berlin 27 April 2016 ...** sitting still, doing nothing, spring is coming, the grass is growing – how nice it would be if spring would also tidy up and clean my apartment, but it doesn't – on the contrary, the dust blooms up, too, and everything overflows – that staying quietly at the kitchen table happens out of desperation ...

**CI: 7. What work do you most enjoy doing?**

**BH:** Vergnügen / Pleasure as a pastime is alien to Gisela Weimann. Time is just too limited and too precious to be killed with purposeless amusements. Even eating a meal becomes an art activity when the tablecloth is painted and the meal-time is staged.

**GW:** It has always been my greatest pleasure to develop and implement ideas, and since these arrive while I fall asleep, wake up, take a shower, have breakfast and during work in the studio, I had no other choice but being always ready in order not to lose them. Staged meals are, of course, a 'part of the whole art', whether as "Mal-Mahlzeiten", (Painting Meals) with colleagues or as thematic meals like "Der unvorbereitete Tod", (The unprepared Death).

I do not want to miss any opportunity to include such time-consuming gatherings into the daily art as well. Because art arises from art and artistic relics stay behind at all work processes, discarded utensils inspired the next project, the "Dîner à la Maison des Artistes" (Dinner at the House of the Artists), that took place in Asilah/ Morocco where I worked on a project about immigration together with four other artists in 2014. I collected dried up brushes, plates and bowls used for mixing colour to set the table.

**Diary note, Berlin 14 December 2014 ...** in the morning, through the moments between day and night, time moves and does not want to be stopped – all my decades of trying to outsmart it have failed – time has passed according to its own laws and i according to mine – as far as possible i took influence by trying to escape to distant places, but it was always there before me ...

**CI: 8. You have done different projects, which one is your favorite so far?**

**BH: Musik**<sup>12</sup> / Music shapes the space, columns structure the space, mirror images reflect the sounds, the communicative interplay brings the music to life, the dance movements make the structure visible, columns set signs, music and art correspond to one another, they are as well 'parts of the whole'.

**GW:** This is a difficult question for me as I see everything I have produced as equal 'parts of the whole' which are connected to and have emerged from my life experiences. But as I said earlier, satisfaction does not come from what has been achieved, but from developing and realizing new projects. "In the Garden of Female Composers" is my latest, half-finished work. The completed visual part is a reflective installation presently on view at the Womens' Museum in Bonn in the frame of BTHVN2020, an exhibition and festival celebrating Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday.<sup>13</sup>

12. [http://www.giselaweimann.de/2016/vol37\\_nparadoxa\\_Sarah-Frost\\_Gisela-Weimann.pdf](http://www.giselaweimann.de/2016/vol37_nparadoxa_Sarah-Frost_Gisela-Weimann.pdf)

13. <http://www.giselaweimann.de/2020/Konzept-englisch-gesamt-final.pdf>

Twelve contemporary composers from Romania, Spain, Brazil, Japan, France, Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Germany are invited to let their imagination run freely when inventing musical flowers for the garden in the form of small songs for female voices (soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto), relating to personal experiences or to poems, myths and musical traditions from their home countries. Rearview mirrors from the former East German car brand "Trabant" represent the blossoms of the imaginary plants of the garden, with embedded photos of the composers and of Beethoven. They are screwed onto curved threaded rods, forming the stem, and on iron feet.

Three singers will bring the silent garden to bloom up with a concert performance of the compositions at the end of the exhibition. In 30 ,2020 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall these mirrors gained a special symbolism for me in relation to German-German and European history. As part of a museum exhibition and the BTHVN2020 festival, the locally and globally celebrated world citizen Beethoven, our European dream garden is placed in an important historical time frame. Furthermore, with the effects of climate change on people, animals and plants, the composers' garden gains another level of meaning.

**Diary note, Berlin 15 March 2016 ...** in the morning the thoughts rush around to plan the new day – everyone wants to be taken into account at once and to influence today and tomorrow – my life experience shies away from decisions, knowing full well that it only takes a moment, however, the detailed further development and implementation takes weeks and months ...

**CI: 9. Can you briefly explain about this project and tell us why it is your favorite?**

**BH:** Teile / Parts of the Whole is the collective title for various work cycles developed in recent years. They describe the longing for completion in the awareness of daily inadequacies and the experience that in human things perfection must remain utopia. The desire to add to and accumulate the parts remains unfulfilled.

**GW:** The rear-view mirrors used in this garden installation are in a special autobiographic way 'a part of the whole'. They were first acquired in 1991 and attached to a rusty goods wagon as my contribution to an art train that crossed East Germany. The magic transformation into a "Garden of Memories" with animated plants happened in Zakopane/Poland in 1996 with the integrated premiere of a composition by Witold Szalonek. For an individual exhibition on my 75th birthday I set the mirror garden up to reflect the works on the walls around at the 'alpha nova & galerie futura' in Berlin in 2018.

Now, in 2020, the multi-sided plants developed roots and form the pictorial backdrop for reflections about the overcome past of German and European separation with mental and physical walls. Composers and singers from European countries and farther away are inspired by each other's personal narratives and artistic styles, create a cycle of songs and enchant the silent, motionless plants into blooming and sounding flowers that will continue to grow unexpected new forms in the future.



Ano/R 2017

**Diary note, Berlin 15 February 2011 ...** the time disintegrates into a thousand fragments – i have not counted, but it could also be much more than a thousand – i try pick them up, recompose them and fail every day – to accept that i only hold parts of the whole in my hands is difficult to accept for me...

**CI: 10. What memorable responses have you had to your work?**

**BH: Antwort /** Response is the most important reaction the artist expects from the viewer of her work. Whether correspondence or dialogues: art happens in and through exchange.

**GW:** The process of becoming increasingly aware of time and a personal end has brought about the concept for the exhibition "Leben im Spiegel/Life in the Mirror" of my works with mirrors and reflections from thirty years, in conjunction with a colloquium at the 'Galerie im Körnerpark' in Berlin in 2001. Through this process, I wanted to look back on my life as an artist and share this looking back with other artists, art theorists and art critics, many of whom had accompanied me over the years.

The results of this collaborative assessment were made public with the book "Reflexionen/Reflections"<sup>14</sup> a year later. The dialogue is reflected throughout the book by correlating my project-orientated working concepts and diary notes to the individual scholarly contributions. In a wonderful prologue the Spanish art historian Mercedes Replinger put that into words:

Gisela Weimann's project 'Life in the Mirror' is fascinating, because the critic and art historian is not a voice running parallel to artistic discourse here, but an authentic mirror of the work – like a 'Doppelgänger' or double, performing as an impassioned shadow of the artist. Thus, artist and art historians mutate into 'one' medium, closely related in the viewing of the work.

In this way, the text is reflecting the work and at the same time gives it a new meaning through this 'reflection process'."

Madrid, letter from 29 September 1999

In continuation of this search I undertook a look back at my early years in Berlin together with other fellow students from the University of the Arts and women in various art professions in Berlin, Europe and abroad. The resulting book "Geteilte Zeit", (Shared and Devided Time) was presented in the frame of an international symposium at the European Academy in Berlin 2008<sup>15</sup> under the heading "Shared Times: Art History as International Dialogue". Kathy Deepwell, the publisher from the feminist journal "n. paradoxa" has translated my concept and introduction to the symposium and a selection of the lectures into perfect English.<sup>16</sup>

**Diary note, Berlin 28 October 2014 ...** when I try to describe the autumn morning at the kitchen table, the night pushes ahead and doesn't want to give way to the day – so much burdens the dark floor of time, deposited, dusty, petrified – I sink deeper and deeper into this underground like in a sucking swamp, it becomes more and more difficult to rise, to greet the sun, to live the future and carefree in timelessness – nevertheless I plan for years and act on schedule ...

14. VDG Weimar 2002, ed. Gisela Weimann, ISBN 3-89739-302-6  
<http://www.giselaweimann.de/reflexionen/refstarten.html>

15. [http://www.giselaweimann.de/pdf\\_exh09/GW\\_geteilteZeit\\_programm.pdf](http://www.giselaweimann.de/pdf_exh09/GW_geteilteZeit_programm.pdf)  
16. [https://www.ktpress.co.uk/pdf/nparadoxaissue20\\_Gisela-Weimann\\_4-11.pdf?](https://www.ktpress.co.uk/pdf/nparadoxaissue20_Gisela-Weimann_4-11.pdf?)



Fragments of the Other, 2017, Collages, (collage no. 432: AndorKömives, collage no. 431: Gisela Weimann), each 29.7x21 cm

**CI: 11. What do you like and dislike about the art world?**

**BH:** Problem / a problem remains the material survival. The 'Postgalerie'<sup>17</sup> and other self-organized artistic activities devour considerable amounts in material costs, and the studio and livelihood also have to be laboriously procured, often through non-art wage labor. Art that refuses to meet the market laws is also difficult to sell.

**GW:** To illustrate how I deal with the hustle and bustle of the artworld, I would like to present the "Parallel Actions" project with the "Postgalerie".

The Postgalerie 1988 marks the beginning of a series of parallel actions by Elke Nord and me. They are inspired by the novel "The Man without Qualities" by Robert Musil, where the parallel action is also introduced by a letter. In it, the father asks his son Ulrich, who is the hero of the novel, to become the secretary of the parallel action. Unfortunately, we don't have a secretary yet, otherwise there are many personal and current references to Musil's parallel action. Elke Nord and I move in a double parallel parallel to the festivities of E88. About parallels it is known that they do not meet in the finite, that is, we want to keep our distance from the official cultural program in 1988 and develop our work independently side by side.

Postgalerie is a very mobile gallery. It moves in the mail by plane, train and car. We send small-format originals in this way. Our gallery owner is the mailbox on the next corner. The exhibition takes place at the recipient. This year, 107 selected addressees will be supplied. Elke Nord's work is entitled "Kontaktbogen" (contact sheet) and depicts a photo story that has developed over the course of the year.

My package is called "Parts of the Whole" and is a painting on paper that has been broken down into 12 parts. If something has been entrusted to the secrets of the mail, arrives unexpectedly, and the anonymous recipients can say about and do with it what they want, then this process opens up a new freedom in dealing with art – a freedom especially for the artist.

When the hatch has fallen over a letter, the picture is painted, framed, hung, the exhibition announced and opened, she and he can save themselves the wine and the hang over and immediately turn to new things. And, another liberating point of view, in the Postgalerie the works are given away, no negotiating, writing invoices, no percentage of the art trade, no tax returns, no doubts with the buyer whether the acquired art object really has the stated value – art and communication in its purest form. In response to the legitimate question of the reader of these statements, "what does the artist live on?" I don't want to go into more detail at this point, but just say a few sentences: Material survival is a serious problem. It is even more important to survive spiritually, and an artist can only do that if she and he move at a critical distance parallel to reality. (Published in Berliner Kunstblatt No. 58, 1988)

**Diary note, 1 March 2017 ...** outside is spring, inside still winter – in the night room thoughts go up and down, back and forth, looking for a beginning, a goal, meaning – I tell them about which projects and exhibitions I have committed myself to in the past days – they react stressed because I had not included them in a detailed planning and set up an equation of time, money and unknowns with cold realism, end at bottom line at minus and say: "you have miscalculated"

17. [https://www.ktpress.co.uk/pdf/nparadoxaissue20\\_Brigitte-Hammer\\_12-14.pdf?](https://www.ktpress.co.uk/pdf/nparadoxaissue20_Brigitte-Hammer_12-14.pdf?)



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