



Magdalena Abakanowicz, Kobby Adi, Art & Language, Lutz Bacher,
Heimrad Bäcker, Peter Baum, Herbert Baumann, Joseph Beuys,
Anna & Bernhard Blume, Boyle Family, Marcel Broodthaers, Michael Buthe,
Alexander Calder, Sophie Calle, Nina Canell, Prunella Clough, Bruce Conner,
Melanie Counsell, Moyra Davey, Carla Degenhardt, Sara Deraedt, Erik Dietman,
Annie Ernaux & Marc Marie, Jean Fautrier, Robert Filliou, Lucio Fontana,
Adolf Frohner, Bruno Gironcoli, Christine Gironcoli, Hermann Glöckner,
Louis Goodman, Robert Graham, Hans Haacke, Raymond Hains,
Richard Hamilton, Hans Hollein, Rebecca Horn, Joe Jones, Birgit Jürgenssen,
Allan Kaprow, Wilfried Klanjsek-Bratke, Jürgen Klauke, Marc Kokopeli,
Kurt Kren, Oliver Laric, Louise Lawler, Zoe Leonard, Bettye Lane, Sol LeWitt,
Friederike Mayröcker, Kate Millett, Yukio Nakagawa, Bruce Nauman,
Chie Nishio, Anna Oppermann, Verena Paravel & Lucien Castaing-Taylor,
Michelangelo Pistoletto, Megan Plunkett, Sigmar Polke, Cora Pongracz,
Nina Porter, Arnulf Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, Rudolf Richly, Dieter Roth,
Susan Rothenberg, Paul Rotterdam, Thomas Ruff, Gerhard Rühm,
Constanze Ruhm, Peter Sandbichler, Kurt Schlögl, Leander Schönweger,
Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Daniel Spoerri, Haim Steinbach, Takako Saito,
Elisabeth Subrin, Paul Thek, Miroslav Tichý, Octavian Trauttmansdorff,
Rosemarie Trockel, Richard Tuttle, Cy Twombly, Anna Viebrock,
Wolf Vostell, Yoshi Wada, Franz West, Stefan Wewerka,
Karl Anton Wolf, Heimo Zobernig

(EN) TERMINAL PIECE
JUNE 20, 2026 – FEBRUARY 7, 2027

PROLOGUE
Level 0

ACT 1
Level 4

ACT 2
Level 3

ACT 3
Level 2

ACT 4
Level -2B

TERMINAL PIECE

mumok

Terminal Piece is an exhibition in five acts, anchored by a single artwork: the installation *Terminal Piece* (1972) by artist, activist, and author Kate Millett. As the first acquisition made under mumok's new directorship, it foregrounds the act of viewing itself—asking not only what is seen but from where and on which side of the work one stands. Millett, one of the defining feminist voices of her generation, believed in art's capacity to produce moments of intense, direct experience. The exhibition asks what this idea still means today.

Who is watching? Who is seen? Where do we position ourselves? These questions become a lens through which to consider some 400 artworks, drawn from mumok's collection and placed in dialogue with loans and new commissions. The exhibition invites visitors to explore embodied attention and discover new ways of seeing: Encountering art is never passive. To look is to participate.

Each floor unfolds as a distinct act, tracing the shifting relations between art, life, and perception. It begins with a prologue conceived by Anna Viebrock, transforming the ground floor to propose a new way of encountering the museum collection. In Act 1, Millett's *Terminal Piece* stages the tensions of looking. Act 2 turns inward to trace the friction between political ideals and lived experience. Act 3 looks to documentary and witnessing to approach realities that may exceed language. Act 4 explores the apparatus of seeing through the work of Nina Porter and the collection. Together, the acts suggest multiple ways of engaging with the world.

The word "terminal" typically signals an end, yet it also marks the beginning of something new: a departure connected to what came before. Taking a single artwork as its starting point, *Terminal Piece* treats the museum and its collection as constantly reshaped by the people who move through it—open, alive, and changed by every encounter.

PROLOGUE

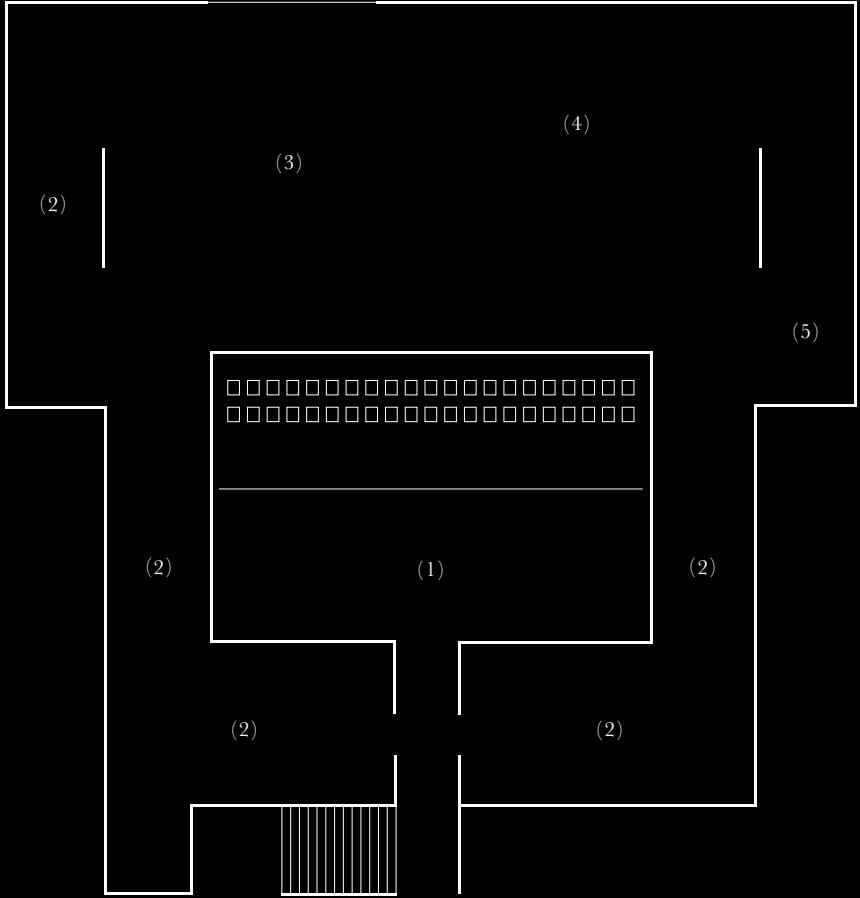


The ground floor is both beginning and end. Conceived by stage designer Anna Viebrock, it unfolds as a total experience with works from the museum collection. Over decades, Viebrock has shaped theater history through settings that layer disparate spaces and times with precision: from the Adenauer-era interiors of her youth, through the recently receding lifeworlds of East German socialism, to the capitalist phantasms of “post-history” that followed. For this prologue, she also turns to the domestic interiors of the collectors Wolfgang Hahn and Peter and Irene Ludwig—whose holdings form an important part of mumok’s collection—evoking the social worlds that gave rise to the museum as it exists today.

Viebrock’s intervention transforms the ground floor gallery so thoroughly that little of its former design remains recognizable. Instead of the familiar white cube, visitors move through a dynamic sequence of spaces with shifting scales and sightlines. Perspectives change constantly, and orientation becomes uncertain. Looking is staged as an event in itself, as much as the works on view, while perception emerges as something relational. The selection of works is not organized by style or theme but developed in dialogue with the spatial dramaturgy. By setting aside conventional curatorial strategies, Viebrock proposes another way of holding and encountering a collection as diverse as mumok’s—one that embraces difference, conflict, and simultaneity.

Anna Viebrock
Stage model for *Doktor Faust*, 2003
Various materials, scale 1:20,
constructed by Susanne Gschwender
Courtesy of the artist
Photo: Hans Dekeyser

ACT 1



- (1) KATE MILLETT
- (2) MEGAN PLUNKETT
- (3) MELANIE COUNSELL
- (4) KOBBY ADI
- (5) MIROSLAV TICHÝ



Do we situate ourselves inside or outside, as complicit participants or disinterested observers? Act 1 begins with the exhibition's namesake, Kate Millett's 1972 installation *Terminal Piece*. As a work whose meaning shifts as viewers move through the space, it stages the tensions of looking that run throughout the exhibition. This floor is organized around the threshold and the view across it. Leaving the darkened enclosure, the space opens into a vast gallery punctuated by the museum's only large window. The shift from darkness into daylight marks both a physical and conceptual passage. In the space between, Megan Plunkett's intimate excavation of what remains after her mother's death evokes a ritual of mourning. By contrast, Kobby Adi's installation presents an impassive optical device that registers human presence only as shadows flickering at the edges of perception, recalibrating the viewer's sense of scale and significance. Together, the works in this act look at what it means to be seen, and also to disappear.

KATE MILLETT
Terminal Piece, 1972

When speaking about *Terminal Piece*, Kate Millett suggested that she had to make it because she could not bear to write it. Profoundly shaken by the torture and murder of sixteen-year-old Sylvia Likens in 1965, Millett turned to her art practice as a way of staying with that horror without having to explain it. The result is an installation that unfolds in the uneasy silences between work and viewer. A lone mannequin sits amid rows of empty chairs, separated from the audience by a barrier of bars. It becomes unclear who exactly is being put on view. Within this staging, every moment of meeting the figure’s gaze—or looking away—becomes part of the work itself.

Terminal Piece draws on Millett’s pioneering work as a feminist activist and scholar, known for her landmark 1970 book *Sexual Politics*, as well as her research into practices of incarceration. Yet, the experience of the installation exceeds these contexts, foregrounding an unsettling dilemma of individual agency. As the exhibition’s namesake, it asks: What does it mean to work from a place of personal urgency and truth that does not shy away from politics but refracts it? How to endure in the discomfort of witnessing without the prospect of any immediate answer? Despite her achievements as a writer, Millett concluded that it was art that had the power to produce an image “so irrefutable that it lingers in the viewer’s mind like something memorized, or presaged. Perceived so powerfully and understood so deeply and with such feeling that it cannot be dislodged.”¹



Bettye Lane
Terminal Piece, 1972
B/W photograph
mumok – acquired with support of
The Jenni Crain Foundation, 2025
© Bettye Lane Photos

1 Kate Millett, “From the Basement to the Madhouse” [1988], in *Kate Millett, Sculptor: The First 38 Years*, ed. Kathy O’Dell, exh. cat. Fine Arts Gallery, University of Baltimore County, February 27–April 5, 1997 (Catonsville, MD, 1997), 41–50, quotation on p. 41.

MEGAN PLUNKETT
Dissemlancer 01–16, 2020–2026

From a distance, the images look like light fixtures or lone UFOs drifting through the night. Gradually, they come into focus as constellations of household objects—dishes, dice, scraps of paper, a tube of glue. Megan Plunkett began making these images in 2020, while caring for her mother, who was living with dementia. Her mother had taken to arranging small sculptures in bowls from whatever materials were at hand, and Plunkett started photographing them as a way to pass the time. In the years since her mother’s passing, she has returned to this inadvertent collaboration, reworking the images as a means of reconnecting with a moment now irretrievably gone.



Megan Plunkett
Dissemlancer 05, 2020–2026
Inkjet print on Canson Platine
Fibre Rag paper, wooden frame
Courtesy of the artist and
Sweetwater, Berlin

MIROSLAV TICHÝ
Various photographs, n.d.

The small black-and-white photographs are riddled with imperfections: blurred contours, muddy prints, streaks, and stains. Add the hand-drawn borders and marks, and they begin to look less like artworks destined for the gallery wall than snapshots salvaged from a private archive—which, ultimately, is what they are. Initially trained as a painter, Miroslav Tichý turned to photography in the 1960s and spent decades obsessively taking pictures of women on his daily walks through town. Sometimes he photographed them openly; at other times, from the shadows. To this end, he cobbled together homemade cameras from whatever materials were at hand: elastic bands, tin cans, and cigarette cartons. He even improvised telephoto lenses from plastic drainpipes and toilet-paper rolls.

Often photographed from behind or from the side, the women in these images raise a recurring question: did any of them actually consent to having their picture taken? In one image, a subject appears to shield her face from the camera. According to some accounts, the makeshift appearance of Tichý’s equipment may have led some women to assume he was merely pretending. The artist’s history of mental illness, coupled with his later mythologization as an outsider, has led many to overlook this aspect of his practice as harmless eccentricity. At the time, however, his voyeurism got him banned from the local swimming pool and may even have led to his arrest. Today, these creepshots also double as documents of the violence implicit in the gaze, especially when the pursuit of beauty comes at the expense of another person’s autonomy.



Miroslav Tichý
Untitled, n.d.
B/W photograph, felt-tip pen
Collection of Tomáš Brychta

KOBBY ADI
The Machine, 2026

The Machine is a sculpture composed of various elements: a heavy metal laboratory table, cables, sleeving, multiple live video outputs displayed on large flat-screen monitors, and a bioimaging device designed to document DNA and RNA samples in agarose gels. The UV lightbox intended to illuminate these samples has been removed and the door to the apparatus left open.

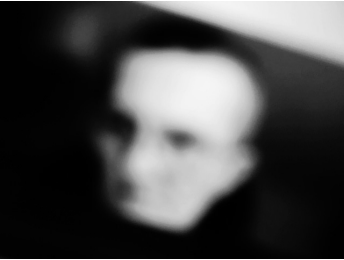
The black-and-white live feed depicts the interior of the empty box, the camera registering shifts in ambient light, passing shadows, subtle adjustments produced by the presence of the viewer's body in the room, and the broader atmospheric conditions of its location. Through the constancy of an impassive lens, the sculpture transmits the effects of its own presence within the space, suspended between the inner world of the work itself and the threshold of the outer world within which the artwork is located.



Kobby Adi
The Machine, 2026 (detail)
Various materials
Courtesy of the artist and
Cabinet, London
Photo: Marc Blower

MELANIE COUNSELL
[last moments seen from above], 2026

Trajectory, through the space and out of the window.
What window?
The one that's been hidden; it's going to be revealed, opened up,
letting the light in.
From the outside, the window is high up, I see it reflecting the
sky and the clouds.
Inwardness, outwardness, trapped spaces.
Unbeknown to me, unbeknown to all of us,
edges will meet and we will make a scene.
Silence falls on a large angular, metal object.
A sculpture to step into, like a room made of hollow,
empty spaces, an architecture containing itself against other
architectures.
A table flipped on its back, adorned with adhesive vinyl stickers
repeatedly, accompanied by its absent missing leg.



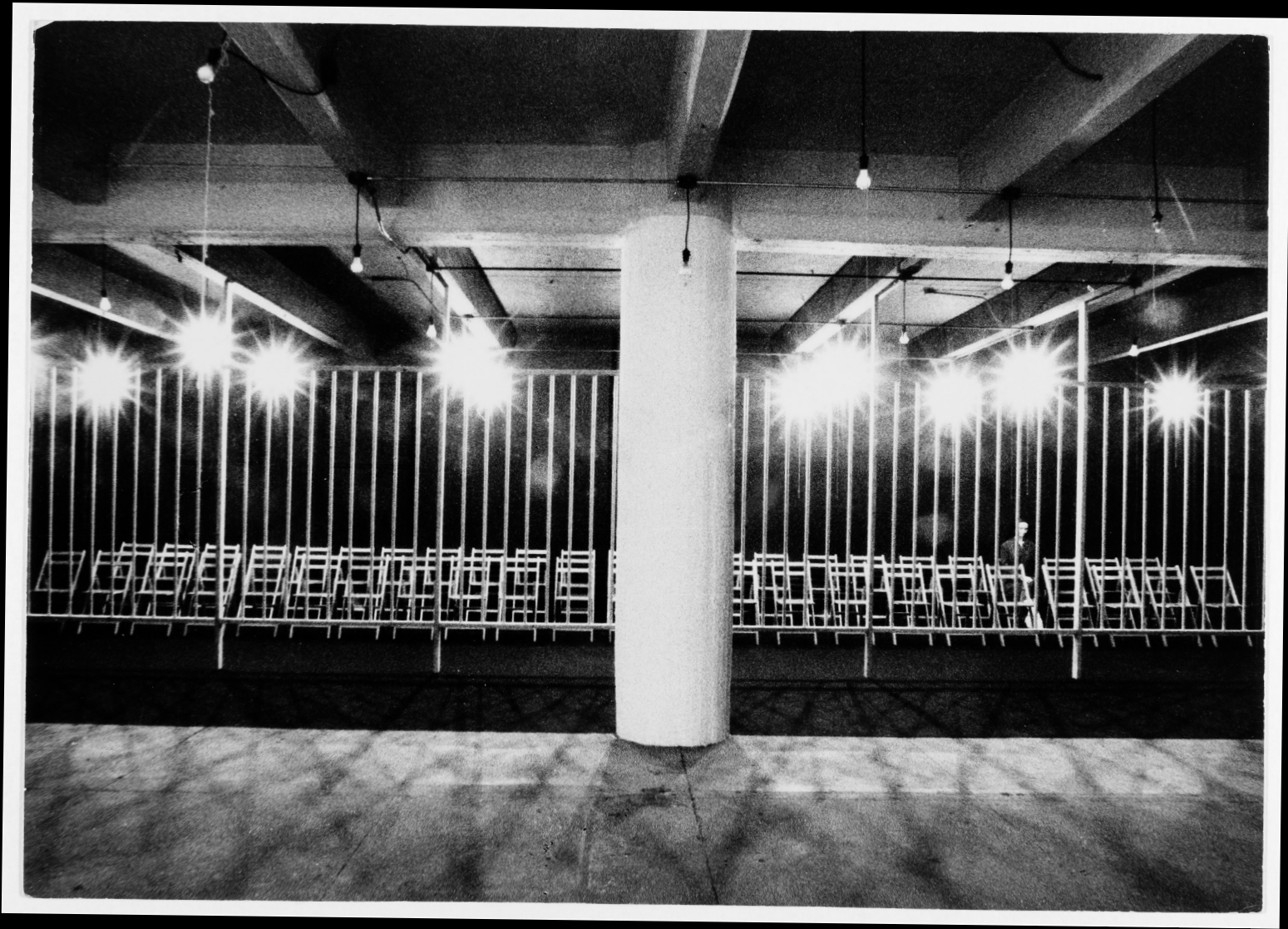
Melanie Counsell
[last moments seen from above], 2026 (detail)
Steel and vinyl stickers
Courtesy of the artist

Melanie Counsell, 2026



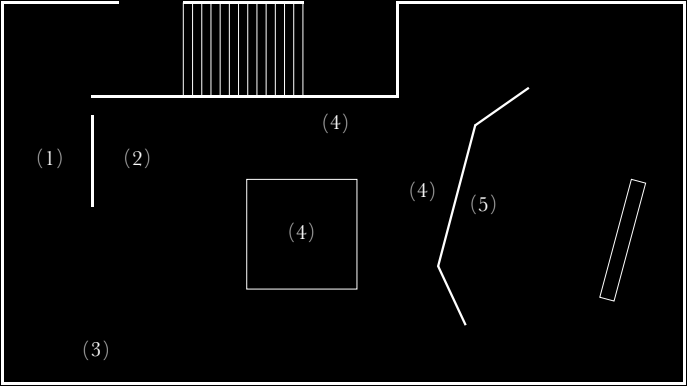
Megan Plunkett
Dissemlancer 03, 2020–2026
Inkjet print on Canson Platine Fibre
Rag paper, wooden frame
Courtesy of the artist and
Sweetwater, Berlin

Melanie Counsell
[last moments seen from above], 2026 (detail)
Steel and vinyl stickers
Courtesy of the artist



Chie Nishio
Terminal Piece, 1972
B/W photograph
mumok – acquired with support of
The Jenni Crain Foundation, 2025

ACT 2



- (1) ANNA OPPERMAN
- (2) BIRGIT JÜRGENSEN
- (3) MARC KOKOPELI
- (4) LOUIS GOODMAN
- (5) ELISABETH SUBRIN



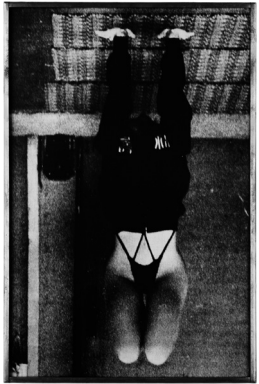
Louis Goodman
Untitled, 1964–1968
 Scale with forks, coil spring
 and other items
 mumok – former Hahn Collection,
 Cologne, acquired in 1978

How do the ideals of an era register within lived experience? Act 2 turns inward to trace the frictions between collective aspiration and private life. It takes its cue from Elisabeth Subrin’s film *Swallow*, which tracks a shift from the hopeful activism of Kate Millett’s generation to the more ambivalent emotional landscapes that emerged in its wake. Weaving together found footage and intimate scenes of girlhood, the film moves through bulimia, depression, and forms of psychic dysfunction that persist in the shadow of social progress. The setting of this act mirrors that inward turn. In a subdued domestic atmosphere, works by Birgit Jürgenssen and Anna Oppermann reveal highly personal and idiosyncratic responses to the conditions of their time. At the center of the space are Louis Goodman’s strangely animated assemblages. Archival photographs document his home studio and personal museum, drawing out the continuities between artistic production, collecting, and everyday life.

BIRGIT JÜRGENSSEN
Schwarzer Honig meiner Träume, 1989–1992

The figures and objects in Birgit Jürgenssen’s *Schwarzer Honig meiner Träume* (Black Honey of My Dreams) seem submerged, like distant memories rising from the depths. Layered with latex, voile, and tulle, the suspended images become liminal—at once skin, threshold, and screen, interfacing between this world and the next. Alongside women’s bodies and hands appear recurring images of masks and beaded chains, evoking the gendered rituals and performances sedimented over the course of a life. Gestures and props keep up appearances on the surface, while the murky materiality conjures the chemical bath of analog development, where images emerge from a tightly controlled darkness before entering the world as seemingly stable forms.

Spectral as these apparitions may seem, Jürgenssen’s use of material filters tethers the supposed transparency of photographic technique back to the body. While the veils of voile and tulle subtly haze the images depending on the viewer’s position, torn and wrinkled layers of latex directly reference skin. The works thus appear less like windows than membranes. No longer impartial records, they become responsive surfaces that register the accretions of time and experience, transformation and decay.



Birgit Jürgenssen
Schwarzer Honig meiner Träume,
1989–1992 (detail)
B/W photographs, rayographs,
latex, voile, tulle
mumok – acquired in 1993
© Birgit Jürgenssen / Bildrecht, Vienna

MARC KOKOPELI
Pferdeoper ring, 2024

Why wear a television? Then again, we’ve already been sold any number of “smart” contraptions—watches, armbands, glasses, and, not least, rings. Marc Kokopeli’s *Pferdeoper ring* reads as a tongue-in-cheek take on the trend. A miniature Raspberry Pi encased in rhodium-plated brass feeds footage into a tiny LED screen dressed up as a retro CRT; in this case, it’s looping season one of the Austrian historical drama *Sisi: Austrian Empress*. Against the promise of an ever more frictionless future, Kokopeli stacks anachronism upon anachronism in a gesture that mirrors the movements of contemporary mass media. We’re far less likely to witness the world of *Blade Runner* in our lifetimes than to sit through the 37th reboot of *Spider-Man*.

Here, novelty and nostalgia collapse into each other, though it’s the latter that has a way of haunting discussions about Kokopeli’s

work. Although the artist seems less interested in the contingencies of personal memory than in the manufacture of shared experience—images and events broadcast so insistently that we come to mistake them for our own. You may not remember your first kiss, but you probably remember where you were when the news of 9/11 broke. Stripped of any claim to historical authenticity, or even irony, Kokopeli’s work can feel like a distillate of the consciousness industry, the subtle science of mice and cheeses that keeps us coming back. Why do we keep buying more of what we already have? Why do the TVs keep running, even when no one’s home?



Marc Kokopeli
Pferdeoper ring, 2024
“Sisi” Season 1 (2021), OLED,
Raspberry Pi, rhodium-plated brass
Collection of Cristina Paris Garcia
and Maximilian Hagemes

LOUIS GOODMAN
Untitled, 1964 (various assemblages)

Not much has been written about artist and inventor Louis Goodman. Born in 1905 in Baku, Azerbaijan, he and his family emigrated to the United States in 1922 and settled in California, where he spent most of his life. He never received formal training yet patented several inventions and continued to make art well into old age. In Germany, his work was embraced by Fluxus and Neo-Dada circles, even though he was described as more closely aligned with the “naive and lyrical Surrealism of the West Coast.”¹ Galerie Inge Baecker regularly exhibited him alongside artists such as Allan Kaprow and Wolf Vostell. In his assemblages, the affinity is not difficult to recognize.

The sculptures, composed from everyday objects, demonstrate patient craftsmanship and an undeniable visual wit. Whether a Buddha nestled in a fish tin or a whiskey bottle wearing sunglasses, Goodman seemed to relish the absurdities of the consumer world. Some of the surviving photographs of the artist at home reveal just how deeply his creativity was bound up with domestic life, his curling, cluttered forms seeming almost to grow organically from the endless rows of trinkets lining his shelves. As a local reporter noted in 1972, his home appeared to contain everything imaginable. The most striking thing, however, wasn’t the profusion of objects but the sense that, in his hands, nothing remained unchanged for long.



Louis Goodman
Untitled, 1964
Halved bottle with sunglasses and cone
mumok – former Hahn Collection,
Cologne, acquired in 1978

¹ Inge Baecker in an invitation note
to an exhibition at Inge Baecker
gallery, June 15, 1975.

ELISABETH SUBRIN

Swallow, 1995

Swallow takes girlhood as its starting point for a kaleidoscopic reflection on depression, bulimia, and the pressure to perform. The mashup of original and found materials guides viewers through the stations of a teenager’s life. Family dynamics become strained. Friendships change. College approaches on the horizon. In between the rapid scenes, Subrin herself also flickers into view — as a secretary, as a journalist, and eventually as an editor on the verge of losing it. Refracted through firsthand accounts and diagnostic materials, these fragments of vulnerability coalesce into a hybrid narrator that doubles as a collective portrait of an era.

Even the choice of cameras is historically charged. Subrin moves between then-high-end Betacams and grainy handheld PixelVision footage, of the kind favored by feminist filmmakers such as Sadie Benning and Peggy Ahwesh. The contrast is tactile: institutional clarity against DIY grain. Between snippets of collective marches and militant speeches, she shifts the register toward another reality entirely: individual illnesses and dysfunctions that persist in the shadow of political progress. By tracking a drift from the hopeful activism of second-wave feminism to the more ambivalent realities of the third, Subrin casts the women’s revolution as yet unfinished business. As one of her interlocutors quips, “It was 1983 — there were careers, not consciousness.”



Elisabeth Subrin
Swallow, 1995
Video: color, sound, 28:07 min
Courtesy of the artist

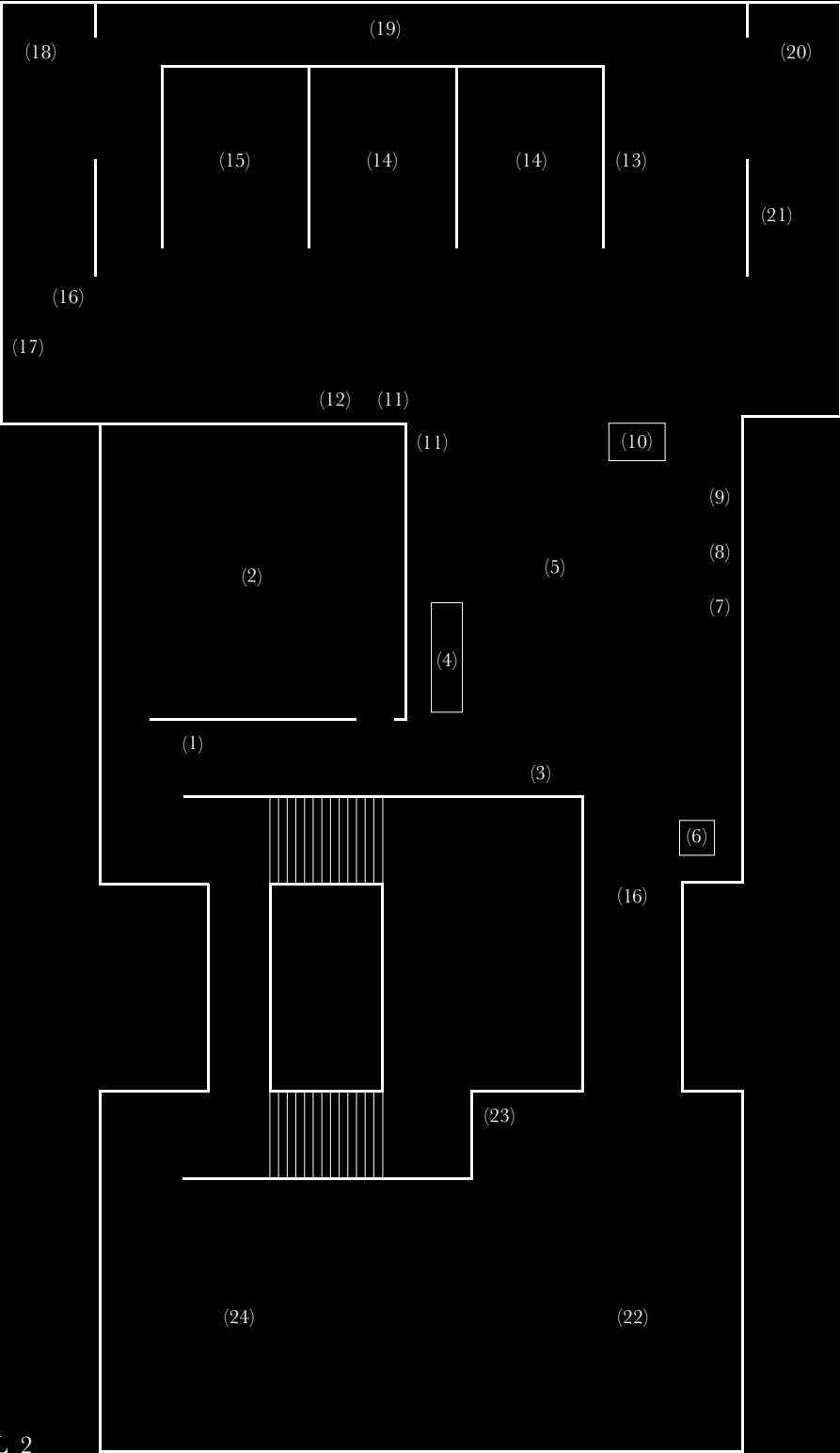


Birgit Jürgensen
Schwarzer Honig meiner Träume,
1989–1992 (detail)
B/W photograms, rayographs,
latex, voile, tulle
mumok – acquired in 1993
© Birgit Jürgensen / Bildrecht, Vienna



Elisabeth Subrin
Swallow, 1995
Video: color, sound, 28:07 min
Courtesy of the artist

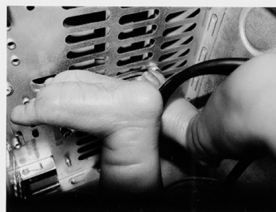
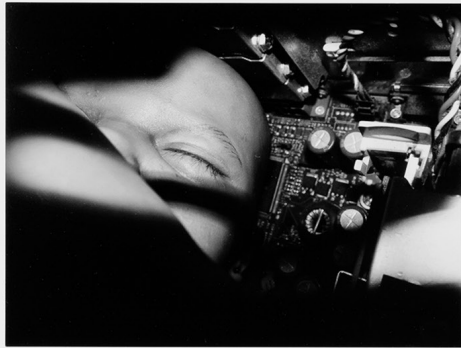
ACT 3



LEVEL 2

- (1) LUCIO FONTANA
- (2) VERENA PARAVEL LUCIEN & CASTAING-TAYLOR
- (3) ADOLF FROHNER
- (4) MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ
- (5) HERBERT BAUMANN
- (6) FRANZ WEST
- (7) BRUCE CONNER
- (8) ANNA VIEBROCK
- (9) PRUNELLA CLOUGH
- (10) WOLF VOSTELL
- (11) DIETER ROTH
- (12) BRUCE NAUMAN
- (13) HANS HOLLEIN
- (14) JEAN FAUTRIER
- (15) CHRISTINE GIRONCOLI
- (16) HEIMO ZOBERNIG
- (17) HERMANN GLÖCKNER
- (18) HEIMRAD BÄCKER
- (19) CORA PONGRACZ
- (20) YUKIO NAKAGAWA
- (21) MICHAEL BUTHE
- (22) ANNIE ERNAUX & MARC MARIE
- (23) REBECCA HORN
- (24) SARA DERAEDT

How do we confront a world that leaves us speechless? Act 3 turns to documentary and acts of witnessing as ways of approaching a realism that remains grounded in personal experience. At its center is *Leviathan* by Verena Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor. Projected at monumental scale, its visceral imagery immerses viewers in a disorienting world that strives to move beyond the anthropocentric perspective in its confrontation with brutality. Encounters with life-and-death situations recur throughout the surrounding galleries. From the intimate photographs by Annie Ernaux and Marc Marie, documenting their relationship during Ernaux's chemotherapy, to Jean Fautrier's testaments to victims of fascism, the works hold fragility and survival in uneasy proximity. Elsewhere, Sara Deraedt's series of babies being born out of computers heralds the arrival of a posthuman condition in concert with Rebecca Horn's machinic sculptures. In an echo of Millett's approach, Act 3 foregrounds sensory experience as a means of engaging novel and at times unspeakable realities.



UNBORN BABY INSIDE OF A COMPUTER

VERENA PARAVEL &
LUCIENCASTAING-TAYLOR

Leviathan, 2012



Verena Paravel &
Lucien Castaing-Taylor
Leviathan, 2012
Video: color, sound, 87:00 min
Courtesy of Verena Paravel &
Lucien Castaing-Taylor

Leviathan follows a commercial fishing trawler off the coast of New England. In an audiovisual maelstrom, it presents scenes of violently rattling machinery, industrialized slaughter, and a churning twilight in which sea becomes indistinguishable from sky. This visceral effect comes from the filmmakers’ distinctive use of GoPro cameras—devices designed for heroic self-documentation, here repurposed to decenter the human entirely. Swirled through the air, dragged through the depths, or strapped to the filmmakers’ or the fishermen’s bodies, the cameras generate images that cascade through unfamiliar vantage points—those of fish, gulls, machinery, and ocean—disrupting the usual eye-level view. Rather than following a single protagonist, the film unfolds from the perspective of an entire system.

Within this system, individuals play only a minor role, and the film proceeds largely without language. Human perception becomes just one element within a much larger cosmos. Instead of soliciting empathy through sentimental storytelling, the filmmakers insist on direct sensory experience as a way of confronting an otherwise unspeakable reality. The only interpretive cue lies in the title, which invokes both the biblical Leviathan from the Book of Job and Thomas Hobbes’s seventeenth-century political treatise, while the film itself resists allegory. What remains—and unsettles—is the analogical: the trawler as sovereign, the sea as archive, the system as the only subject that counts. Hobbes’s still-unresolved question drifts beneath the surface: under what conditions may life be taken with impunity?

MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ

Booby Trap, 1987

The series that became Magdalena Abakanowicz’s *War Games* came about almost by accident. While visiting a friend’s country house one summer, she noticed foresters felling trees by the roadside. The artist asked whether she could have one, but the workers politely declined: the freshly cut wood had to be sold as lumber. Instead, they offered her one of the old, rotting trunks they could no longer use. Abakanowicz later recalled how much that first crooked oak reminded her of a body—its amputated limbs still full of strength and personality, its core like a spine threaded with channels of sap

nerves. Back at the estate, she promptly set to work on it with an ax and chainsaw. Later, she torched the surface and added metal sheathing that clamps onto the form.

Throughout the process, Abakanowicz’s relationship to the material was marked by both violence and care: a desire to rescue another being, but also to transform it into something of one’s own making. The finished works retain something of that ambivalence, appearing at once as weapon and wound. At more than five meters long, the sculpture *Booby Trap* most clearly evokes a Frankensteinian body sliced in two while also suggesting a sinister infrastructure or containment device. What Abakanowicz pursued was not resemblance but a more associative familiarity that hovers at the edge of estrangement. By her own account, she sought to create “an object which carries similarities unknown to the imagination of nature.”¹



Magdalena Abakanowicz
Booby Trap, 1987
Iron, wood
mumok – on loan from
private collection, since 1989
© Abakanowicz Foundation /
Bildrecht, Vienna

1 Magdalena Abakanowicz (1988),
quoted in Barbara Rose, *Magdalena
Abakanowicz* (New York:
Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 136.

JEAN FAUTRIER

Têtes d’otages, 1943–1945

Jean Fautrier began his *Têtes d’otages* (Hostage Heads) series in 1943, during the Nazi occupation of France, partly while staying in a clinic outside Paris. Given his involvement with the Resistance and prior arrest, it is believed he was hiding there from the Gestapo, though the exact circumstances remain unclear. His son, for example, later suggested that Fautrier was wanted on charges related to illustrating pornographic literature. Another acquaintance speculated he was suspected of gold trafficking. Whichever the case, his iconic series was prompted by the screams of hostages being tortured and executed in the neighboring forests by the Nazis. At the time, the occupiers were known for targeting their victims’ faces—especially the young—often leaving behind little more than an indistinguishable pulp of flesh and hair.



Jean Fautrier
Tête d’otage no. 17, 1944
Mixed media on paper on canvas
Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation
Collection, Athens, Greece
© Jean Fautrier / Bildrecht, Vienna
Photo: Chris Douleris

Built up in thick layers of paper, plaster, and congealed paint, the images seem modeled and carved as much as they are painted. Contemporary critics noted how Fautrier abandoned conventional linework and associated principles of form in favor of mass, color, and texture. The paintings do not invite the viewer into any illusionistic idea beyond the picture plane but quite literally bulge into the real space between them. Their bruised surfaces, with splinters of crushed pigment glistening between thick lumps of paste, bypass the realm of concepts to address the body directly: its pain and vulnerability, its abjection and familiarity.

BRUCE NAUMAN
Audio-Video Underground Chamber, 1972–1974

Beneath the bocce court in the MuseumsQuartier, a concrete chamber lies buried underground. Inside the museum, a small monitor displays a live feed of the interior. The image scarcely changes, and the connection between what appears onscreen and the world outside remains a matter of faith. Still, this information lends the space a strange sense of reality: just tall enough to crawl into, the chamber almost invites viewers to imagine themselves trapped inside. An intercom button embedded in the monitor adds a touch of wry humor, as though offering to patch them straight through to the void.

The wit of Nauman’s gesture becomes more appreciable in context. In the preceding decade, a debate had unfolded around the idea of presence in American art. Critics such as Michael Fried extolled the way color field abstractions could present themselves all at once, a quality he called “presentness.” Meanwhile, artists like Robert Morris abandoned the image altogether, focusing instead on the perceptual effects that emerge between artwork and viewer in real space over time. *Audio-Video Underground Chamber* flips this debate on its head. The live feed promises immediacy, yet the space it depicts remains essentially inaccessible. And perhaps it is precisely this contradiction that gives the work its peculiar force.



Bruce Nauman
Audio-Video Underground Chamber,
1972–1974
Monitor, speaker, pencil on paper
mumok – on loan from the Austrian
Ludwig Foundation, since 2003
© Bruce Nauman / Bildrecht, Vienna

CHRISTINE GIRONCOLI
Die Hand des Generaldirektors I and II, 2023 and 2024



Christine Gironcoli
Die Hand des Generaldirektors II, 2024
Oil on canvas, soot on
cardboard and cloth
Private collection
Photo: Kai Middendorff
Galerie, Frankfurt am Main

Christine Gironcoli led several lives before coming into her own as a painter. She was a pianist, a mother, and, not least, a professional restorer. In recent years, her artistic practice was intimately linked to the latter. Gironcoli held on to the remnants of the restoration process, especially the lining canvases used to mend old paintings, some of them more than a hundred years old. These heavily aged textiles bore smears, stains, and ghostly outlines, rife with reminiscences of all the images they once held. She reworked them with gestures ranging from imperceptibly subtle to vividly painterly, at times recombining them with objects from entirely different times and places—acts opposed to the invisibility expected of the restorer’s hand.

Die Hand des Generaldirektors (The Hand of the General Director) began as one such restoration commission. A firm had asked Gironcoli to restore a portrait of its director, but upon receiving

her estimate, decided to restore only the head and cut away the rest. The remaining hand is paired with what initially appears to be a photogram, though the image was actually produced by accident when a fire covered her studio in soot. Gironcoli sutures the evidence of two destructive processes into an image that also reads as a jab at male fantasies of authorship. She does not begin from a heroic tabula rasa, nor does she pretend to overcome what came before. In her hands, the traces of destruction and repair are woven into a form of memory entirely her own.

HEIMRAD BÄCKER
Farbe TV, 2015
ohne Titel, n.d.

Heimrad Bäcker was an ardent supporter of fascism in his early years, from his active membership in the Hitler Youth to his work as a journalist for the *Tages-Post* newspaper in Linz. After the war, he was sentenced to work in the infirmary of the former Mauthausen concentration camp. What he encountered there would occupy him for the rest of his life. He returned regularly to the camp, taking hundreds—if not thousands—of photographs of walls, gratings, gates, and other remnants of its infrastructure. Rejecting the explanatory impulse of documentary photography, these mute witnesses underscore the medium’s inability to fully account for this epochal crime, while insisting on the necessity of returning to the details of what we think we already know.

Bäcker’s photographs of television broadcasts extend this inquiry into the domestic sphere, tracing how the memory of the Holocaust is mediated, repeated, and gradually absorbed into everyday life. Some of these manually produced screenshots isolate fleeting stills from the slipstream of events; others dissolve into hazy color fields where only the station logo remains. In contrast to the forensic clarity of his site photographs, these images already bear the blur of forgetting. Throughout his career, Bäcker maintained a profound distrust of narrative—perhaps because plot inevitably tends toward closure. Yet the complacency in the face of evil that facilitated these atrocities remains uncomfortably close at hand.



Heimrad Bäcker
ohne Titel, n. d. (detail)
115 photographs: color photographs,
B/W negatives, B/W contact sheets,
B/W slide, poster
mumok – donation by
Michael Merighi, 2015

CORA PONGRACZ
Ernst Jandl, 1977

Cora Pongracz was already well established as a commercial photographer and chronicler of Vienna’s cultural life before she started gaining recognition for her artistic work. It is therefore hardly surprising that her art emerged in deliberate opposition to the demands placed on her professional practice. Rejecting the assumption that portraiture should distill the sitter’s authentic essence into a single image, Pongracz developed a body of work that quietly unsettled the drive toward stable identification. Nowhere was this clearer than in the title of her first solo exhibition: *Verwechslungen*, German for “mistaken identities.”

Among the works in that show, these photographs of Ernst Jandl were perhaps the most emblematic and went on to become some of her most frequently reproduced images. Rather than reducing her subject to a singular likeness, Pongracz disperses him across ten photographs. She circles Jandl, capturing him from every angle, while he simultaneously rotates in his chair, taking a photograph on each side. The reciprocal rotation of camera and sitter destabilizes any clear sense of orientation or succession, underscoring the fundamentally relational nature of perception. Pongracz thus estranges the image of a familiar public figure while drawing attention to the viewer’s own frustrated desire to impose continuity. As her husband, the writer Reinhard Priessnitz, noted at the time, the images ask us to consider whether we “perceive them as identical to the original because of a particular intentional framework, or simply because our own intention insists on it.”¹

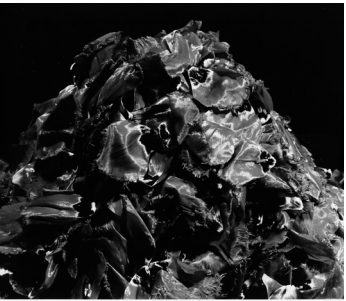


Cora Pongracz
Ernst Jandl, 1977
Series of 10 B/W photographs
mumok – donation of the artist, 1979
© Estate of Cora Pongracz /
Fotosammlung OstLicht, Vienna
1 Reinhard Priessnitz, quoted in Marie
Röbl, “Verwechslungen: Im Umfeld der
Wiener Avantgarde” in *Cora Pongracz: Das
fotografische Werk*, ed. Marie Röbl
and Peter Coeln (Vienna: Schlebrügge
Editor, 2016), 58.

YUKIO NAKAGAWA

Discovery, 1976 *Flower is the Mystic Mountain*, 1989
Green Sphinx, 1994 *Sacred Mountain*, 1993

Rotting blossoms, fallen petals, and broken stems: for Yukio Nakagawa, these traces of deterioration are not merely imperfections but a means of accessing a flower’s truest form, beyond its function as gift or decoration. Trained in ikebana at the Ikenobō school—the oldest in Japan—he ultimately turned against the strictures of the discipline in search of new approaches, leading him toward performance, photography, and installation. The photographs on



Yukio Nakagawa
Flower is the Mystic Mountain, 1989
Cibachrome print, Sammlung Gaby und
Wilhelm Schürmann
Photo: Mareike Tocha

view were meticulously composed for the camera, a method that may initially seem at odds with ikebana’s philosophy of transience. Yet the images themselves are suffused with a deep sense of time, evoking landscapes, body parts, or simply meat.

In *Discovery*, for example, some 4,500 decaying tulips are compressed into a form resembling nothing so much as a slab of beef. Meanwhile, *Flower is the Mystic Mountain* assembles wilting petals into a mound of offal. Suspended between beauty and ruin, the images invite viewers to consider human experience on a different temporal scale—one marked by smaller cycles, though perhaps greater continuity. Decay, here, is not an ending but simply another stage in an ongoing process of transformation.

ANNIE ERNAUX & MARC MARIE
Various photographs, 2003–2004

Remnants of breakfast scatter the morning light; hastily discarded shoes peek out from beneath the bed; an empty wine bottle and a full trash bag look on from the sides. Together, these postcoital still lives chart the course of an affair between writer Annie Ernaux and photographer and journalist Marc Marie. The arrangement of the objects seems largely incidental, the images themselves summarily composed, and the real action decidedly out of frame. As Ernaux later remarked, they were trying to capture “the unreality of sex in the reality of what it leaves behind.” For Marie, the images and the objects within them came to resemble documents of a crime scene.

In their co-authored book *The Use of Photography*, they recount how the affair coincided with Ernaux’s treatment for breast cancer, with passion and mortality closely entwined. That proximity to death may go some way in explaining the urgency of their lovemaking: along the corridor, in the kitchen, on the stairs. But perhaps what makes their snapshots most poignant is how they embrace the medium’s inability to say much about sex, let alone love. Photography can only sieve the surface of a moment, never its depths, no matter how hard one tries. As Ernaux approached the end of her treatment—and of their affair—she found herself surveying all the photographs laid out on a table: “Without thinking, I took a photo of the whole thing. Perhaps to give myself the illusion of capturing a whole. All of our story. But it’s not there.”



Annie Ernaux & Marc Marie
Küchen, 17 April, 2003
Cibachrome print
Courtesy of the artists /
Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

SARA DERAEDT
Baby being born out of a computer
Unborn baby inside of a computer
Baby born out of a computer
Unborn twins inside of a computer
Baby born out of a computer
2024–2026



Sara Deraedt
Unborn baby inside of a computer, 2024
Lambda print on board
Courtesy of the artist

The series elaborates on a sculpture by Morag Keil titled *Baby Being Born Out Of A Computer* (2022). *Baby being born out of a computer* (2024) is documentation of Keil’s sculpture, as seen in Le Consortium Dijon in February 2024. *Babies born out of a computer* (2024) are the babies after birth. *Unborn babies inside a computer* (2024) are the babies unborn. What triggered me most in Keil’s sculpture wasn’t in the first instance the science fiction scenario nor the computer but the fact that the baby was so very alone. I wanted to hold on to that but also elaborate on the narrative, and stretch it backwards and forwards in time. Documenting Keil’s sculpture taught me how to do this: to photograph in the world of the sculpture and document more babies.

Sara Deraedt, 2024

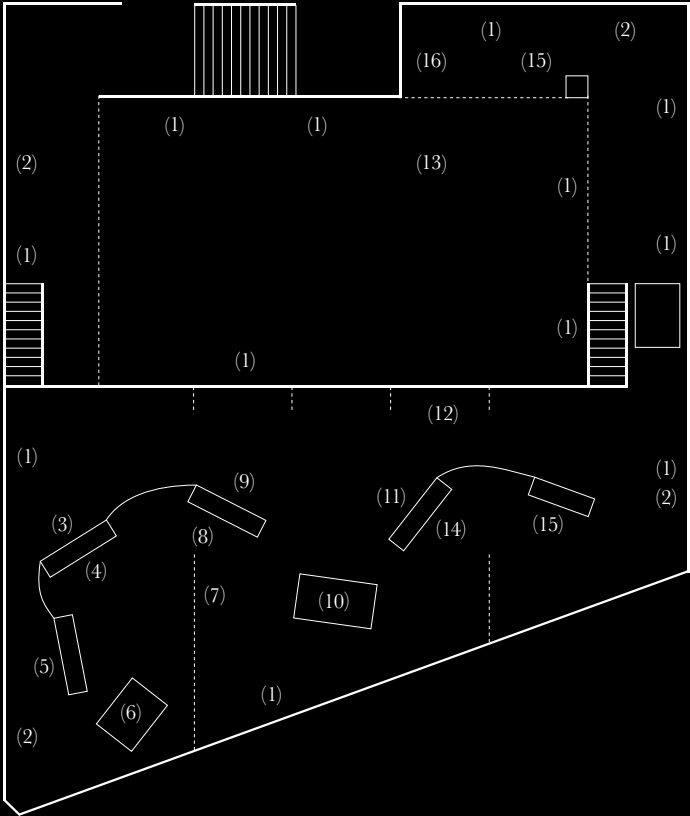


Jean Fautrier
Bouquet des Fleurs, 1929
Oil on canvas
mumok – acquired in 1980
© Jean Fautrier / Bildrecht, Vienna



Annie Ernaux & Marc Maré
The Kitchen in the Morning, Sunday 16 March, 2003
Cibachrome print
Courtesy of the artists /
Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

ACT 4



LEVEL -2B

- (1) NINA PORTER
- (2) KOBBI ADI
- (3) ANNIE ERNAUX & MARC MARIE
- (4) YOSHI WADA
- (5) ZOE LEONARD
- (6) KATE MILLETT ARCHIVE
- (7) ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
- (8) ALLEN KAPROW
- (9) SIGMAR POLKE
- (10) RICHARD TUTTLE
- (11) KURT KREN
- (12) CY TWOMBLY
- (13) ALEXANDER CALDER
- (14) TAKAKO SAITO
- (15) JOE JONES
- (16) NINA CANELL



Nina Porter
SPR7W4445WC5240424, 2024
 From the series *Measures*:
 C-type contact print and negative
 in artist's frame
 Courtesy of the artist and
 a. SQUIRE, London
 Photo: Jack Elliot Edwards

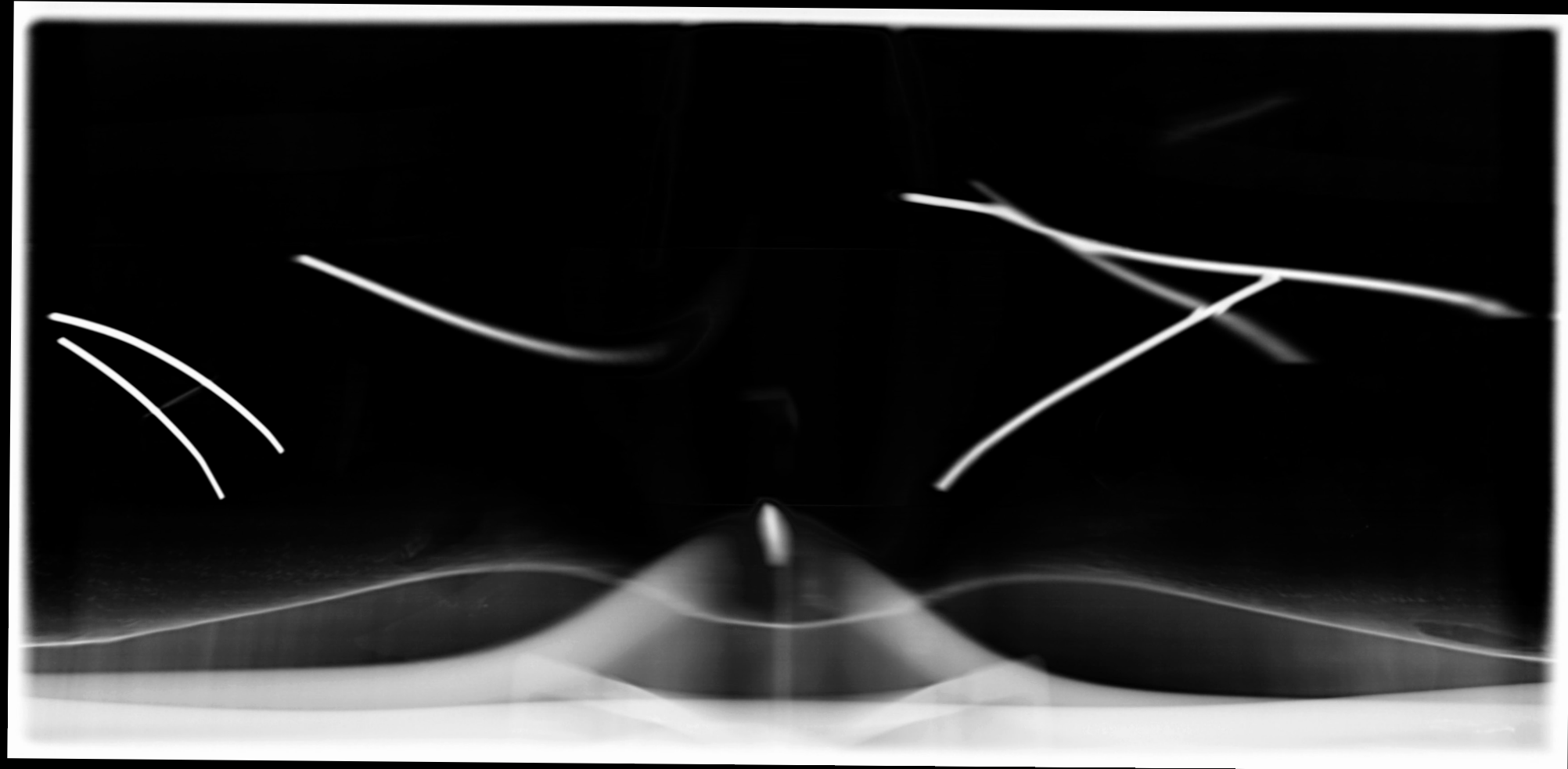
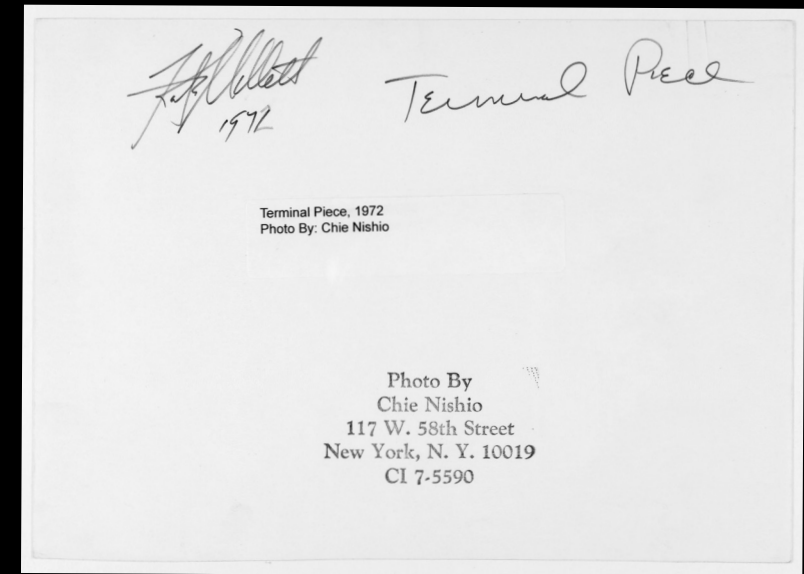
What shapes an image before we can see it? Act 4 loops back to explore the tension between possibility and given conditions. Situated partly in an exhibition space and partly in a former children's workshop still marked by its previous use, Nina Porter presents a selection of new and existing works alongside material from the collection. The installation revolves around states of suspension—intervals between one moment and the next. A key work is Porter's sculpture *Articulating Train*, in which modular steel structures on wheels double as vehicles for other works. Various evoking prayer benches or museum transport carts, their mobility is implied yet arrested. Set down as temporary resting places, they almost read like still frames extracted from the stream of circulation.

Central to Porter's practice are self-made cameras that define specific ways of interfacing with the environment. Some are discreet devices worn on the body; others are unwieldy mechanisms that can only be supported by architecture. Her series *Measures*, for example, is produced using tubes more than two meters long, fitted with multiple pinhole apertures along their length. Although the resulting filmstrip-like images contain clear traces of their surroundings, their form primarily indexes the apparatus that produced them. This logic continues in *Inside Landscapes*, where large-format X-ray images turn inward, exposing the interiors of her single-use cameras rather than directing them outward. They foreground material density over optical output, appearing in a dormant state while implying future use.

Alongside these works are materials from Kate Millett's archive related to the production of *Terminal Piece*. These include concrete production costs—"Mannequin: \$48.15; Wig: \$18.50"—as well as records of working conditions at the time. Millett, for instance, was not paid for the reproduction of her work in a forthcoming publication, while her photographer's fee covered only a single print, with each subsequent reproduction incurring additional costs. Together, these documents register all the day-to-day labor that goes into an artwork committed to ineffability.



Chie Nishio
Terminal Piece, 1972 (front)
 B/W photograph
 mumok – acquired with support of
 The Jenni Crain Foundation, 2025



Chie Nishio
Terminal Piece, 1972 (back)
 B/W photograph
 mumok – acquired with support of
 The Jenni Crain Foundation, 2025

Nina Porter
Inside Winter '35, 2026
 Digital print mounted on aluminum
 Courtesy of the artist

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www.mumok.at

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June 20, 2026 – February 7, 2027

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