

KARINA FERNANDEZ

PORTFOLIO

BIOGRAPHY

Karina Fernandez is an artist based in Vienna, Austria. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she has lived in Riga, Munich, Zagreb, and Vienna since 2001.

She has exhibited in Buenos Aires, Vienna, Munich, Chongqing, Rijeka, and Venice, at institutions including the Biennale di Venezia, MAK, Künstlerhaus, Augarten Museum, Krinzinger Gallery, and Organhaus Gallery in Chongqing, China. She holds a degree in Painting and a Master's in Visual Arts from the University of the Arts in Buenos Aires, as well as a Master's in Digital Arts from the University of Applied Arts in Vienna.

Her transdisciplinary practice explores global concerns like environmental degradation and consumerism, blending bio and multimedia art through site-specific, kinetic, and interactive installations. Her work incorporates plants, fibers, light, water, sound, bioplastics, motors, and microcomputers.

She engages with found objects, discarded and experimental materials, biological remnants, overlooked figures, and peripheral subjectivities—elements positioned at the thresholds of visibility, utility, and cultural value. Rather than simply recycling or aestheticizing these components, she mobilizes them as semiotic agents within a broader critical framework. Through strategies of decontextualisation and assemblage, her work articulates new constellations of meaning that interrogate dominant systems of representation. In doing so, it constructs a speculative ecology wherein material and identity are reconfigured, and the marginal is reinscribed with narrative agency and ontological weight.



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EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 - Otto Wagner Postsparkasse, Vienna
"Biodegradability is the new liquidity", installation
- 2024 - Eindorf Kunstraum, Vienna
"Bio-Diffractions", various works, solo exhibition
- 2023 - Gallery Krinzinger Schottenfeld, Vienna
"Wasted Away" Installation, soluble sculpture, and soundscape
- 2017 - Exhibition center Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna
"Wasteland" Installation with soluble sculpture
- 2016 - Organhaus Galerie, Chongqing, China - "SM art C" exhibition
"Tea Service for a River" multimedia Installation
- 2015 - Augarten Museum, Vienna
and
2015 - MAK, Vienna "Stoffwechsel" exhibition
"Vienesse nights" porcelain objects
- 2014 - "Dock now" exhibition, Donaukanal, Spittelau, Vienna
"Klangflut/Soundtide" site-specific sound installation in public space
- 2013 - Biennale d'arte di Venezia/Arsenale - "Biennale Sessions",
"Leak(c)age" site-specific, image&sound sculpture
- 2013 - Künstlerhaus "Transit für Karl Aspern" exhibition, Vienna
"Convergence Line/Urban Tryptique", urban intervention
- 2011 - "Y/our space" exhibition, Vienna
"Fukuoka's Dream/ This is War", multimedia, interactive installation
- 2006 - "Art Camp Tarsa" exhibition, Rijeka, Croatia
"Chronicles of the Dismantling" and "Acquae Umbilicus",
urban interventions
- 2003/2001- "Potusignotus", Buenos Aires/München/Riga/Hamburg
Intercultural project, multimedia installation, website.

works

Biodegradability is the new Liquidity

Site-specific installation with
soil and bioplastics

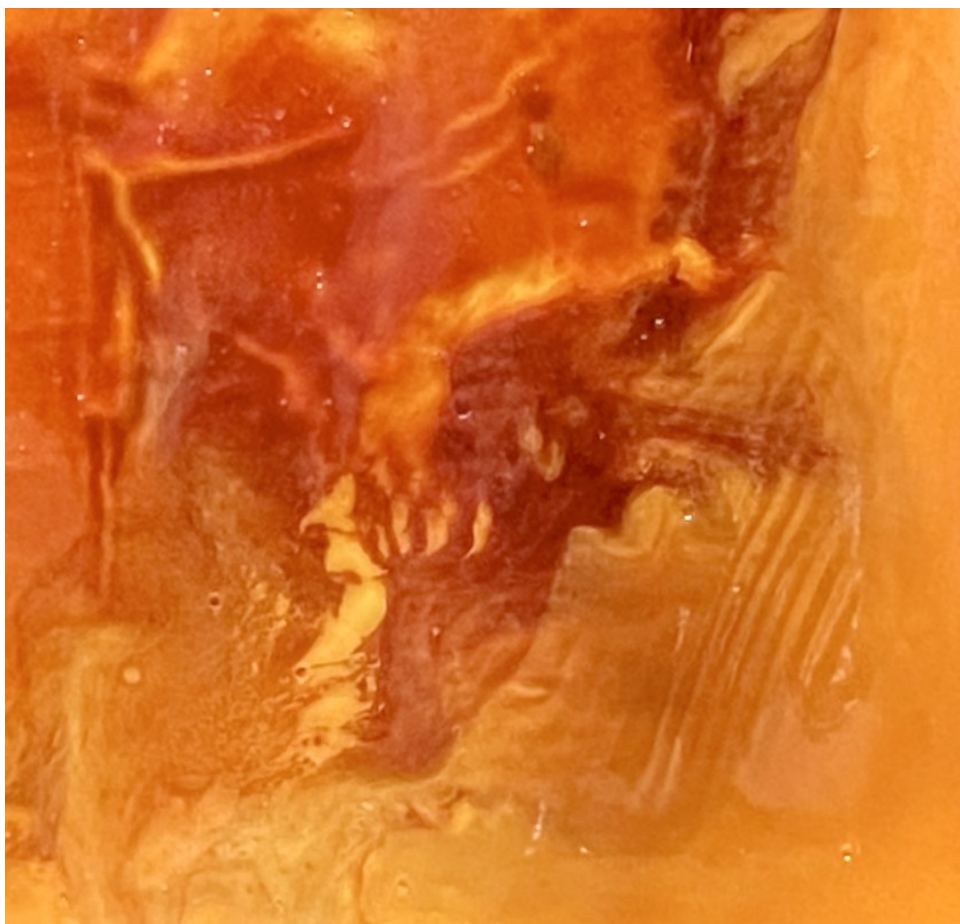
2025

Otto-Wagner-Postsparkasse



Biodegradability is the new liquidity is an installation inside a vitrine of the Otto-Wagner Postsparkasse. Made from biodegradable plastic and soil, it questions the value of cash and assets in a world where air, water, and food contamination threaten life.

It explores plastic waste, while drawing a parallel between financial liquidity - the ease and efficiency with which an asset can be converted into ready cash- and biodegradability, this latter being the ability and ease with which materials break down into basic elements that the environment can safely reabsorb without causing harm or pollution



Endangered minus

2024 Kunstraum Eindorf

Wall sculpture

Bioplastics, LED lights, insects



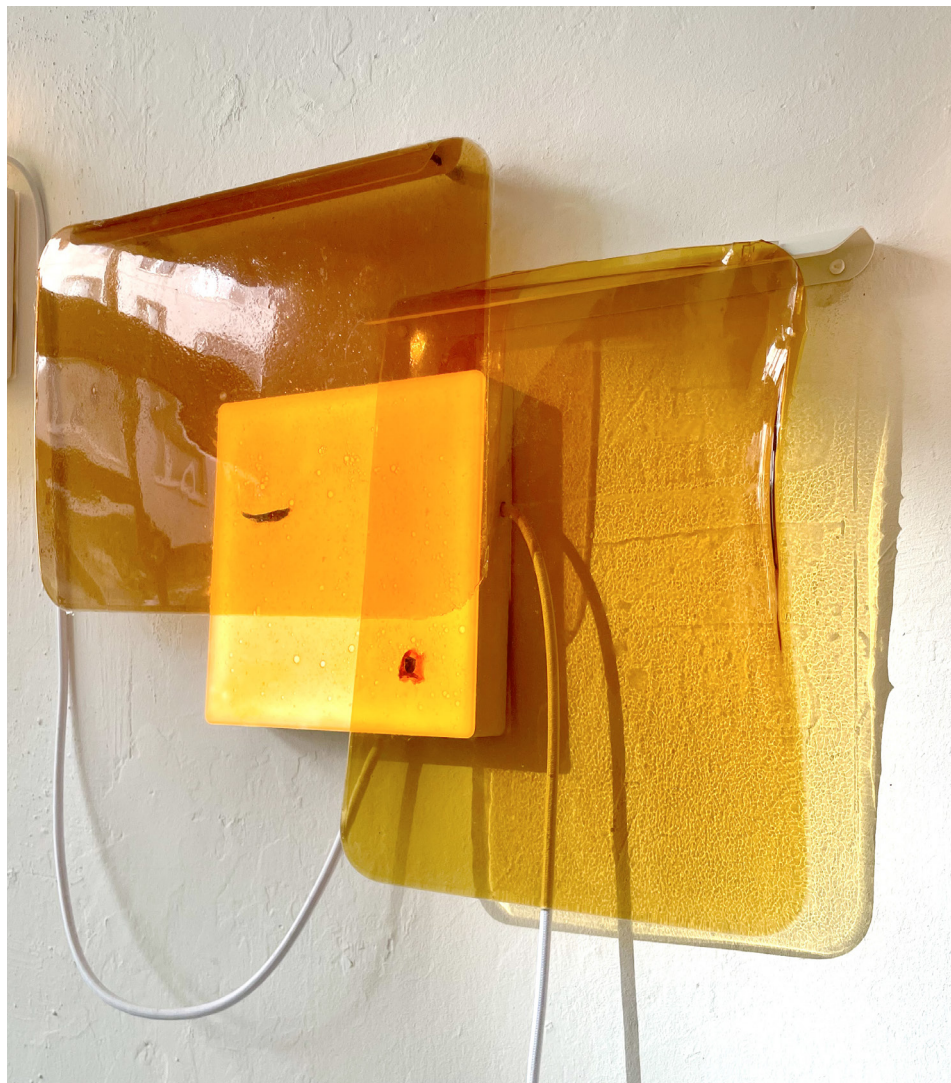
A set of randomly organized, yellowish, light-emitting square objects is displayed on the wall. The array showcases a mixed layout of luminous surfaces and translucent, amber-coloured sheets of bioplastics. On closer inspection, some shapes have dissected common insects perched on them.

The work "Endangered Minus" addresses the issue of plastic pollution and its contribution, among other factors, to diminishing biodiversity on our planet.

The title "Endangered Minus" refers to the denominated species in danger of extinction. This category contrasts with all other species living on our planet, which are not directly threatened by extinction under this system but face a hyper-fragile situation given the current status quo of pollution and climate events on Earth.

In recent decades, humans have come to the realization that the mass production of non-biodegradable items pose a threat to themselves and all living organisms.

Unlike traditional plastics, bioplastics are obtained from renewable resources, and most are biodegradable.





A close-up of a bumble bee* suspended in one of the bioplastic sheets // *The insects inhabiting the work "Endangered" were found trapped and not alive in hidden corners of the artist's studio.

Wasted Away

2023, Krinzinger Galerie, Vienna

Mix-media/Kinetic Installation with soluble sculpture,
Banana-peel fibers, glass containers, water, light, steel table

Video

<https://vimeo.com/838844508>

Duration: 1 minute





Wasted Away draws attention to consumption, waste, pollution, and their effect on biodiversity. The materials used include banana peels*, water, light, sound, glass, motor, magnets, and steel.

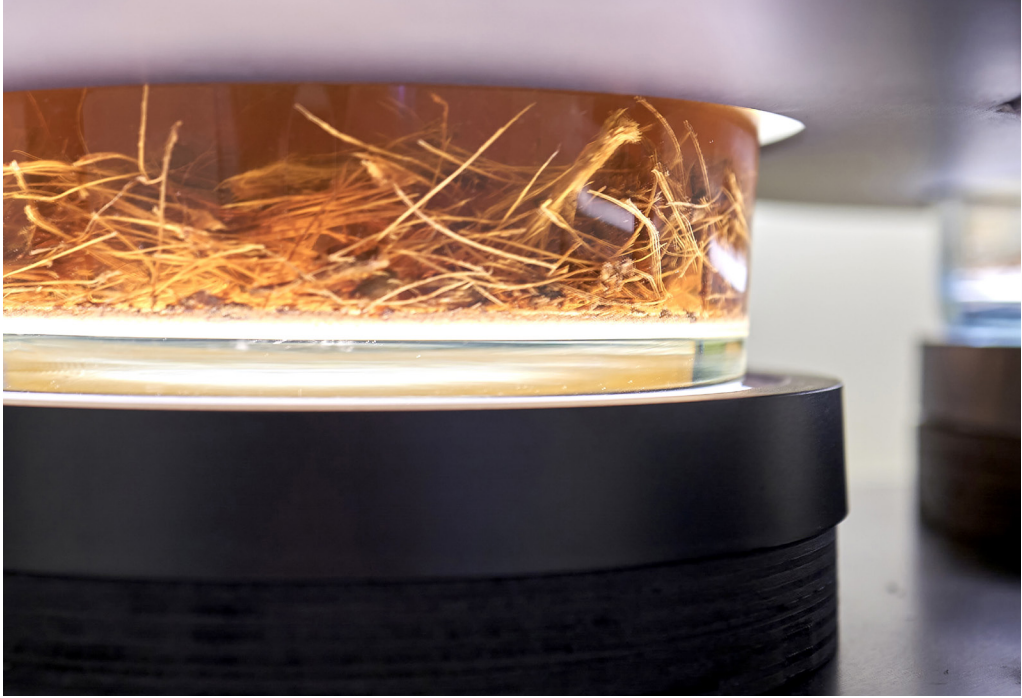
*Banana peel fiber is scientifically proven to absorb and remove heavy metals from polluted water bodies.

In this installation, six glass containers with samples of banana peel fiber. Inside one of the containers is a cast of a human sacral bone — out of such fiber — gradually eroding and dissolving in water. A low-pitched soundscape plays in the background.

'Wasted Away' merges and confronts long-lasting biological decomposition processes with eco-technological possibilities; the sacrum is a sturdy bone and one of the last to break down in a decaying human body, while banana peel fiber is scientifically proven to absorb and remove heavy metals from polluted water bodies.

The installation points out that sustainable technologies can invaluablely help tackle critical environmental problems yet remain largely unused in the face of increasing global calamities.

The image of the object-like human sacrum bone softly dissolving in water within a closed system is a visual comment on the actual situation on planet Earth, with its alarming numbers of species exponentially decreasing and disappearing directly or indirectly through pollution and global warming; humanity, as such, is not exempt from this.



Bon(e)fire

2024

Light sculpture

Bioplastic, LED light, banana peel fibres, tree-resin rocks





A circular, glowing, backlit panel covered with a thick translucent layer of amber-coloured bioplastic holds rough-edged pieces of resin scattered across its surface and two dark brown coccyxs sculptures made from a paste of banana peel fibres, also irregularly coated in a bioplastic film.

Bon(e)fire focuses on the issue of plastic pollution.

In recent decades, humans have realized that the over-consumption of natural resources and the mass production of non-biodegradable items threaten them and all living organisms.

Conventional plastics are made from petroleum and do not biodegrade. They break down into microplastics and are expected to remain in the environment for centuries. They have been found in the bodies of all living organisms, including humans, and everywhere on our planet, from sea-floor sediments to mountain peaks, in the air, and waterways.



Detail: close-up of one of the sculptures of a human coccyx bone included in the work, made out of banana peels-fiber paste, also coated in multiple layers of bioplastics.

Snagged

2024

Light sculpture

LED light, banana peel paste, bioplastics, fishing hooks



Six sculptures of human coccyx -made of banana peel paste- hang from the ceiling, held by fishing lines and hooks. They are unevenly spaced along a wavy, glowing yellow LED light stripe covered in an amber-coloured layer of bioplastics.

“Snagged” addresses the issue of global plastic pollution and the dangers that it poses to all living beings, humans included.

Conventional plastics are made from petroleum and do not biodegrade. Unlike traditional plastics, bioplastics are obtained from renewable resources, and most are biodegradable.



Wasteland

2017, Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna

Mix-media Installation with soluble sculpture

Banana-peel fibers, glass container, water, light
27 cm x 27cm



A burnished coloured object shaped like a human pelvic bone lies submerged in a glass container half full of water. The bone-shaped form - cast out of pressed banana peel paste - slowly breaks apart and dissolves, rendering the water brown.

Banana peel fibres are scientifically proven to absorb heavy metals (copper/lead) from any given source of water. Such is the case with industrial and agricultural toxic effluents polluting waterways around the globe and, moreover, in developing countries where access to water and water quality is usually poor, consequently harming people's health and the environment.

The motif of the pelvic bone is set as a synecdoche and a reference to the early middle-age legend of Parsifal and the fisher king, telling the story of a king wounded in his groin, whose sterility is only equivalent to that of his land.

The work displays one of many concrete ways that science today offers us to tackle and effectively solve one of the current global pollution problems. It also poses the question of the capability of humanity as a whole to take on the quest of a concrete planet healing in favour of new proofed methods despite most of the current long-established, mostly profit-oriented technologies.



LEAK(C)AGE

2013 "Biennale sessions"/Arsenale/Biennale d'arte di Venezia 2013

2013 "Digital frictions "das Weisse Haus" gallery, Vienna

Kinetic sculpture

Video

Duration: 1 minute

<https://vimeo.com/158918557>



GUTTA
CAVAT
LAPIDEM

Leak(c)age

Audiovisual sculpture

2013 "Biennale sessions"/Arsenale/Biennale d'arte di Venezia

2013 "Digital frictions "das Weisse Haus" gallery, Vienna



metal lid on wooden box 24x24x14 cm/LED light projection/microcontroller

A quotation by Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso, 43 B.C.- 17 A.D.) is projected onto the metal lid of a closed box: "gutta cavat lapidem" or "a water drop hollows out a stone". A hit, delivered mechanically from inside the container at regular intervals of 3 seconds, opens the lid briefly only to let it drop and close the box until the next hit can be heard. The sequence repeats itself undefinable in this kinetic art sculpture.

Leak(c)age is an audiovisual sculpture displayed in multiple international contemporary art scenes, which deals with the complex relationship within the imperatives of information secrecy and disclosure in the public interest. Also in this line, Leak(c)age is an *homage* and a prayer to whistle-blowers throughout human history, imagined or real, such being the case of the figure of Prometheus in Greek mythology or persons from the current global scene such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden. (Also, Ovid, as it happens, ended up in exile)

Convergence line - Urban triptique

2013 "Transit für Karl Aspern" Kunstlerhaus, Vienna
Site-specific intervention in urban space with red rope



A skein of red thread lies on one arm of a Rubens sculpture at the Kunstlerhaus Museum's entrance door. One end of the line disappears into the ground, only to reappear in the shape of stitching on the opposite wall. Many miles away, the thread finally resurfaces from the ground in Seestadt Aspern.

Does the fabric of a city determine and shape our lives as citizens? Or is it us city-dwellers, the ones who, thread by thread, weave the town we like to inhabit into existence? Is the answer somewhere in between these ideas?

Both preplanned urban settlements on loosely woven urban patches - like the ongoing project in Seestadt Aspern - and deep and tightly woven city areas throughout the ages - such as Karlsplatz in central Vienna - have confronted us with this and similar questions daily.

“Convergence line / Urban tryptic” is a site-specific installation, a piece of urban pop art which goes further in signalling art as the constant booster of new connections/horizons as well as reminding us of the key role that art has to play as “meaning-crafter”, being this latter an undeniable quality when it comes to plan and effectively change both new or old city areas to transform them in places worth to live in.

Fukuoka's dream/This is war

Multimedia installation
2011 "Y/our space" exhibition, Vienna

Bio-seeds balls, soil, edible plants, motor, microcomputer, wood, metal



A cannonball fires seed balls every time the share prices of biotechnology groups rise on the stock exchange. With each new piece of stock-market information, the balls are shot into a hip of composted earth opposite the gun. The sprouting of the organic seeds and the growing process of the edible plants can be observed throughout the exhibition term. Also, a video on the wall shows an action in a public space where the cannonball could be seen in action as a piece of urban pop art.

Fukuoka's dream installation directly responds to the current global agricultural policies and comments about our consumerist and nutritional practices as a society



Tea service for a river

Site-specific installation

2016, LP House-Organ Gallery, Chongqing, China

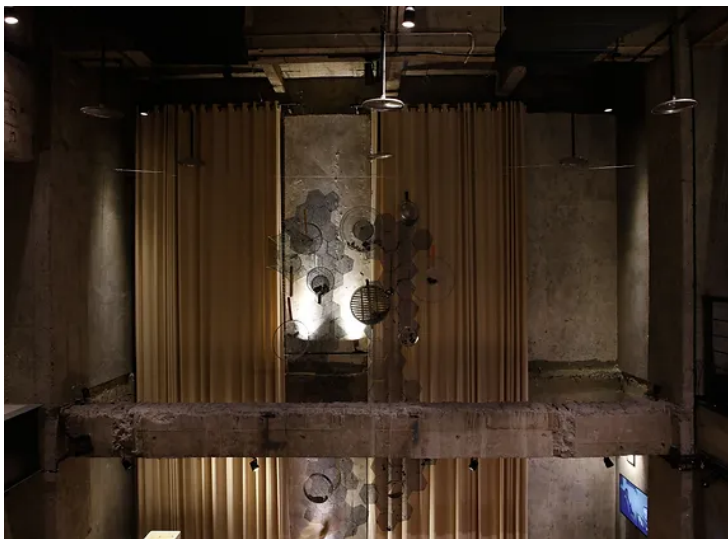
Cooking utensils from public markets in Chongqing, processed banana-peel chips



Tea service for a river

Site-specific installation

2016, LP House-Organ Gallery, Chongqing, China



"Tea service for a river" is a site-specific installation in the LP House for the Organhaus Gallery in the city of Chongqing, China, hanging from ceiling to floor and displaying layers of intervened fishermen tools and cooking utensils with screen-like structures: these are fishing nets, buoys, strainers and sifters which in turn contain dark chips made out of a dried banana peel's fibers paste.

Banana peel fiber has been scientific⁽¹⁾ proven to absorb heavy metals (copper/lead)⁽²⁾ from any given source of water, such being the case with industrial and agricultural toxic effluents polluting waterways around the globe⁽³⁾

The installation is a comment on the status quo from water on many regions and cities of the planet, where in order to access suitable water from natural sources - for drinking, household or irrigation purposes - it is unavoidable to go through a process of water filtering and brewing just like in the process of making a cup of tea.

In a wider sense, "Tea service for a river" is also as a plea to go beyond the established and easily available nets of information, to strain our individual opinion out of bigger frame than the one which is given upon us.

⁽¹⁾ <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/ie101499e>

⁽²⁾ heavy metals are only one kind of pollutants which could be found altogether in toxic water; others groups are bacteria, viruses, diluted drugs including synthetic hormones and chemicals in general. Against these last pollutants, other materials than banana peels have proved to be useful

⁽³⁾ in many developing countries access to water and/or water sanitation is usually poor with the consequent harming effect on people's health and the environment: 1.1 billion people around the globe (1/6 of humanity) lack of access to safe drinking water. 3.5 million children die each year as a consequence of drinking contaminated water.

Klangflut/Sound tide

Interactive sound installation

2014 "Dock now" exhibition, Vienna/Donaukanal



"If people don't go to the river, the river must come to the people"

Soundtide is an interactive, site-specific urban sound installation set up along a 70-m stretch of the Danube Canal and on the side of the cycle path. Passers-by can hear a musical scale—made up of five increasingly louder falling waterdrop sounds—caused by the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

The waterdrop sounds can be heard independently of each other through small loudspeakers installed at a height of approximately 4 m and - when switched on by movement - are played for approx. 10 seconds each.

The work addresses the possibility of interaction between people and water in urban spaces and asks questions about the accessibility of city residents to the existing urban water surfaces.



"Vienesse nights"

Karina Fernandez/Tomoyo Yoshida

Porcelain objects

2014/2015 "Stoffwechsel" exhibition, Vienna: Augarten Museum/
MAK (*Museum für Angewandte Kunst*)

Golden overglaze hand painted on
Augarten porcelain tea cups.
Depiction of Vienesse
buildings and windows
at dusk



Quartered porcelain wall-plate, golden overglaze
painted by hand. Stylized depiction of illuminated
windows at dusk

Dimensions: 30x55 cm

"Chronicles of the dismantling"

Urban intervention

2006 "Art Camp Tarsa" exhibition, Rijeka, Croatia



Archaeology of the Dismantling: how to dissect garbage and Survive to Tell the Story

The first level of an abandoned sugar factory from the communist era displays an empty, airy space and a row of nine piles of debris aligned near one of the walls. Each bundle is built from a specific material due to room cleaning and rubble selection. Some of these highly toxic materials were found on the spot as remains of former electricity installations, asbest dividing walls and glass window panes, among others. On careful examination, they showed traces of successive assaults through the last fourteen years since the closing of the factory, conducted by unknown people to extract what could still be reused, recycled or sold.



Chronicles of a Dismantling is a comment on complex issues emerging as a result of the former communist era remains in confrontation with rapid changes in Croatian society amidst the abrupt rising of regional capitalism.

Potusignotus

2001/2003 Crosscultural project; interviews, performing,
installation, website
BuenosAires/Hamburg/Riga/Munchen



Foto selection of interview held at Mrs. Radins apartment in Riga, Latvia, April 2003

This project attempts a sinesthetic approximation to emerging chronicles and images*** amidst the context of interviews celebrated with voluntary people in regard of appropriated/adopted/brought to mind Potus plants under their care.

Interviews take place at people's place or workplace, where their Potus plant is also to be found. The conversations would be recorded or written down. Photos of the plant are taken, mostly with their caretaker; in some cases they specifically ask not to be included in the photos. In other situations, contact with the interviewee is made overseas via Skype or post-mail. If all participants are physically present - interviewee, interviewer & Potus plant - we would usually start or finish the interview by playing a match of "Dominotus".

Dominotus is an altered design of a domino game in which no grouped points, hence no numbers are included.

A project for an installation includes and displays all of the above described features plus an animated presentation of the interviews; the scope of it is to explore the multiple topography of images, words and sounds taking course during the narrated chronicles, focusing mainly on its contradictions and addressing its paradoxical aspects better than those conclusive.

***These circulating imagery and tales related to the Potus don't seem to emerge from any specific source and they haven't made an appearance in any specific moment; simply put, they are "in the air" and in everyone's mouth but put to look for its origins, it is improbable that we end up with any certain information. This stories are not short of contagion; people already knew them or someone said something about the plant and someone else would repeat it. The Potus plant belongs already in countless aspects to the extended, collective region known as "commonplace": it constitutes itself in another member - with well earned degrees - of the enormous body of things that we use to take for granted and we consequently end up by not noticing at all.