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 recycling or aestheticizing these components, she deploys 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

2026 - AIL open lab (Angewandte Interdisciplinary Lab)
"House of Bioplastics"
Various works, exhibition & development

- Leftbank Gallery, "Latinovision", Vienna
"It ain't no honey, babe" Wall installation

2025 - Stadtraum Mitte15, Vienna
"Sediments of the now" Exhibition
"The Nes(x)t Evolution" Light installation

- ADA Space,"Schubladenarbeit", Vienna
"Melt Debris" Object

- Academy of Sciences, Art4peace/
70 years Hungary's membership in the UN, Budapest
"Bon(e)fire", light installation

- AIL, 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
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

- Kunstlerhaus "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 Ombilicus",
urban interventions

2003/2001- "Potusignotus", Buenos Aires/München/Riga/Hamburg
Intercultural project, multimedia installation, website.

WORKS

Fields

Wasteland

It ain't no honey, babe

Wasted away

Snagged

Bon(e)fire

Biodegradability is the new liquidity

Convergence Line

Leak(a)ge

Fukuoka's dream

Tea service for a river

Potusignotus

Fields

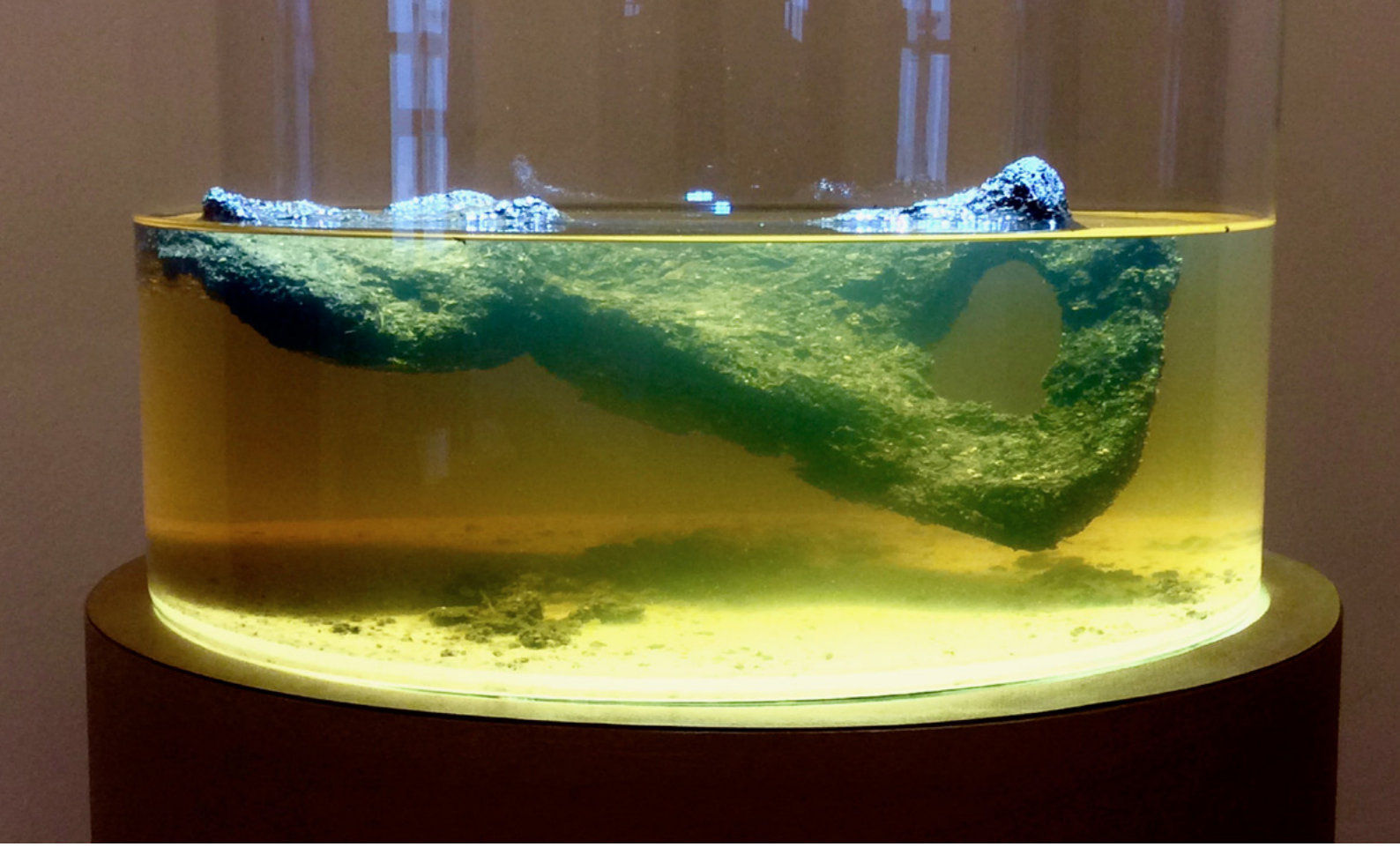
Installation
3 m x 1,20 m
Bioplastic film, LED lights

2026, AIL Open lab,
Otto Wagner Postsparkasse
Vienna

“Fields” shifts the notion of the color field away from its postwar modernist tradition in abstract painting toward a material and territorial condition. Composed of bioplastics derived from the bovine industry, the surfaces are themselves the result of processes of extraction, conversion, and transformation.
The “field” thus becomes both image and territory: a site in which the transformation of ecosystems into landscapes of extraction is materially inscribed. What initially appears as abstraction becomes radically concrete, bound to animal bodies, industrial processes, and the economies that sustain them. The work presents this animal-industrial origin as a charged residue, inseparable from the system from which it emerges.

Wasteland

2017, Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna
Mix-media Installation with soluble sculpture
Banana-peel fibers, glass container, water, light



A burnished coloured object in the shape of 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 begins to break apart and dissolve, rendering the water brown.

Banana peel fibres are scientifically* (1) proven to absorb heavy metals (copper/lead) from any given source of water* (2)

The work poses the question on the capability of humanity as a whole to take on the quest of a concrete planet healing in favor of new proofed methods and despite most of the current long-established technologies.

The motif of the pelvic bone is set as a synecdoche and a reference to the early middle-ages legend of Parsifal and the fisher king. It tells the story of a king wounded in his groin, whose sterility is only equivalent to that of his land* (1a). The name of the piece Wasteland references the poem of the same name by T. S. Eliot.

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

* (2) 1,1 billion people around the globe (1/6 of humanity) lack of access to safe drinking water. 3,5 millions children die each year as a consequence of drinking contaminated water.

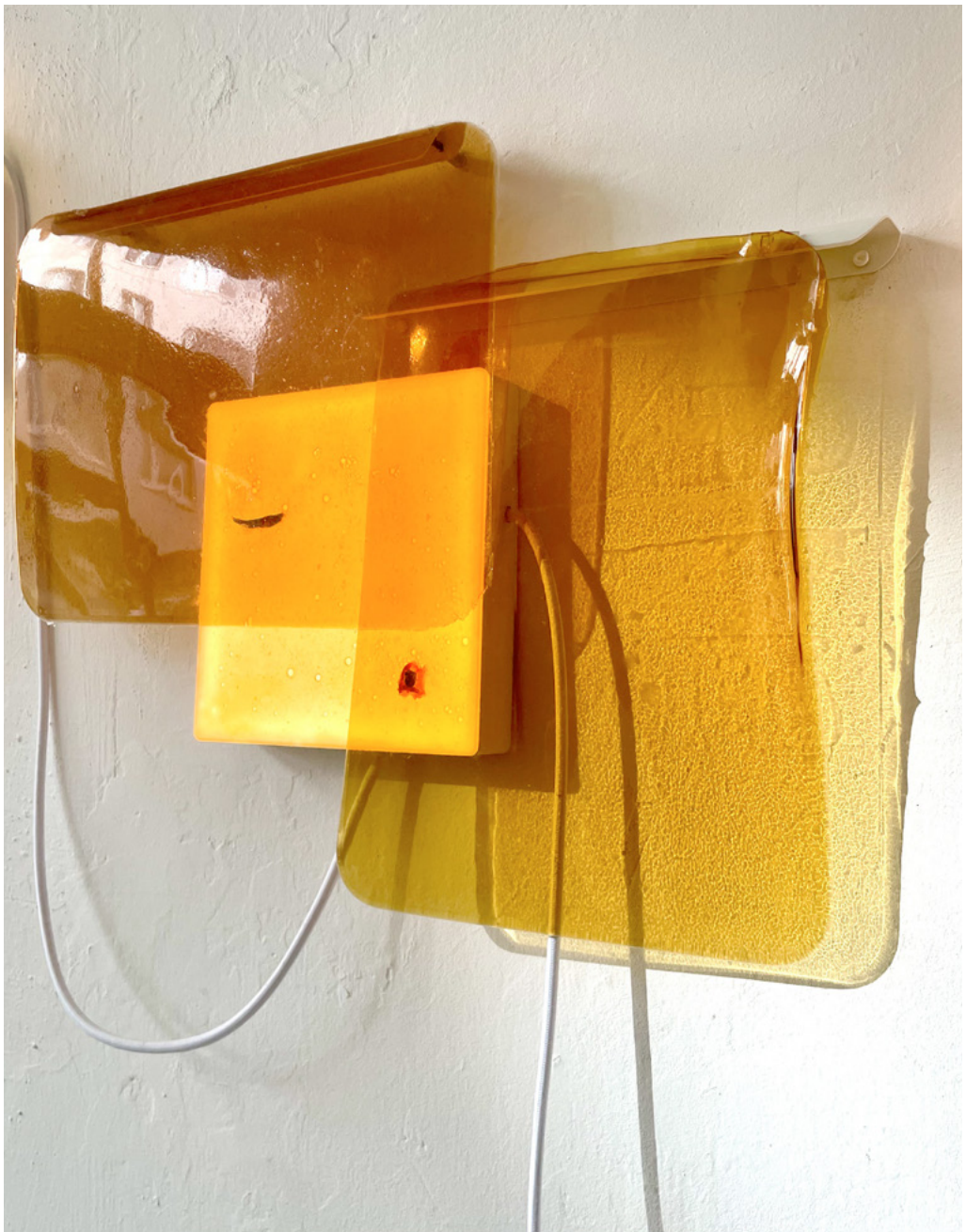
* (1a) The fisher king is the keeper of the Grial and the second main character in the legend of Parsifal, the hero of a myth which roots are deeply woven within European folklore.

It ain’t no honey, babe

2024 Kunstraum Eindorf
Wall sculpture
Bioplastics, LED lights, insects

“It ain’t no honey babe” brings together translucent, backlit wall modules with insects semi-embedded in surfaces made of biodegradable plastic based on bovine gelatine. At a material level, the work condenses the intersection point between a subproduct at industrial scale and the progressive erosion of biodiversity, fixing the point of capture where life remains held, immobilized, and exposed.

At the global level, agricultural expansion remains the main driver of deforestation: nearly 90% of forest loss is linked to agriculture, and livestock grazing alone accounts for almost 40% of the total. In the tropics, the expansion of pasture for beef production represents 41% of deforestation, equivalent to 2.1 million hectares per year.



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

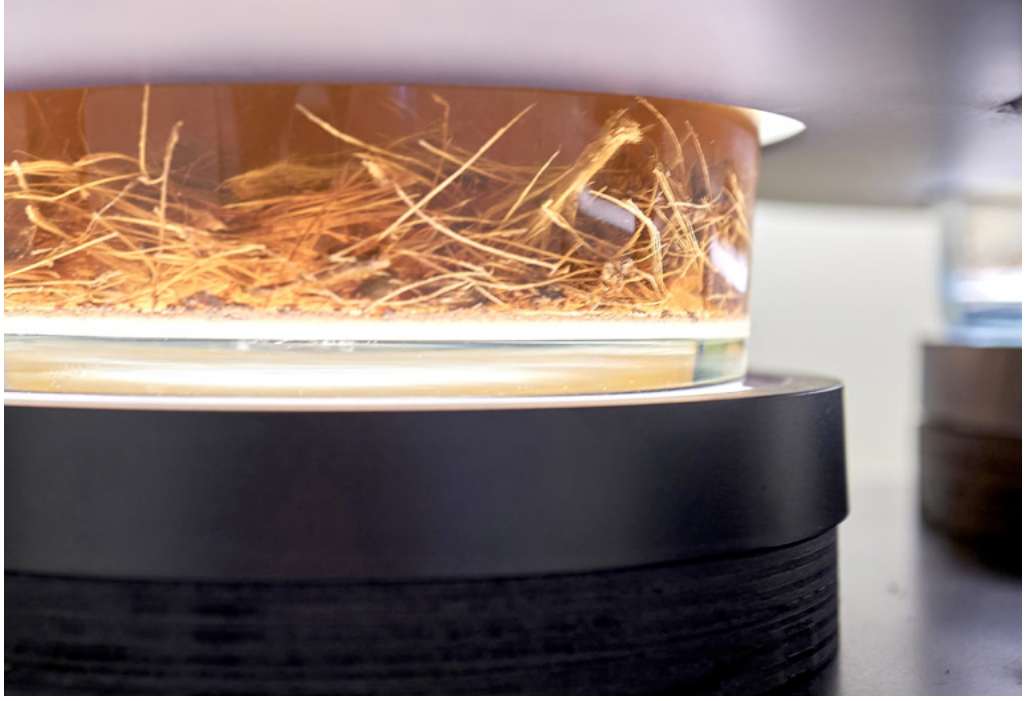
Wasted Away draws attention to consumption, waste, pollution, and their effect on biodiversity. The materials used include banana peels*, water, light, sound, glass, motor, magnets, and steel.

*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 invaluably 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 overconsumption 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, inclu-
ding humans, and everywhere on our planet, from seafloor 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.

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.

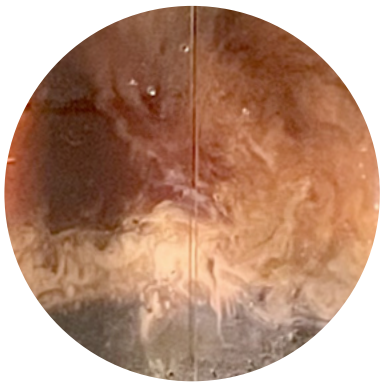
It explores plastic waste, while drawing a parallel between financial liquidity - the ease and efficiency with which an asset can be converted into ready cash- and biodegradability, this latter being the ability and ease with which materials break down into basic elements that the environment can safely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

Both processes, liquidity and biodegradability, have their parameters and methods to be measured. In both instances, it is a matter of the fluidity with which complex elements are transformed into basic ones.

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

What value do assets have in a world where the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we consume, with their associated pollution levels, lead to poisoning, threatening our own lives and, for the matter, life in all its diversity?

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



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.

Leak(c)age

Kinetic&Light sculpture
2013 "Biennale sessions"/Arsenale/Biennale d'arte di Venezia 2013
2013 "Digital frictions "das Weisse Haus" gallery, Vienna

Video
Duration: 1 minute

https://vimeo.com/158918557

A quotation atributed to 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 hommage 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)

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 12 m x 4 m
2016, LP House-Organ Gallery, Chongqing, China.

Cooking utensils from public markets in Chongqing, processed banana-peel paste chips with water from the Yang.tse river

"Tea service for a river" is a 12 m tall site-specific installation in the LP House for the Organhaus Gallery in the city of Chongqing, China, hanging from the ceiling 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 scientifical* (1) proven to absorb heavy metals (copper/lead) from any given source of water, such being the case with industrial and agricultural toxic effluents polluting waterways around the globe* (2)

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) 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/Soundtide

Interactive sound installation
2014 “Dock now” exhibition, Vienna/Donaukanal
Loudspeakers, soundcards and sensors inside 5 boxes

“If people don’t go to the river, the river must come to the people”

Soundtide is an interactive, site-specific urban sound installation located along a 70-meter stretch of the Danube Canal, adjacent to the cycle path. Passersby can hear a musical scale comprised of five progressively louder falling water drop sounds, which are triggered by the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

The waterdrop sounds can be heard independently of each other through 5 small loudspeakers installed at a height of approximately 4 m. When switched on by movement, they play for approximately 10 seconds each.

The work explores how people interact with water in urban areas and questions the accessibility of urban water surfaces for city residents.

Potusignotus

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

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

This project attempts a sinestesic 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.