

Portfolio
Olivia Abächerli

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2026

- Le Commun, Geneva [Rivages \(shore\)](#)
- ARD art institution, Cairo [Latent, yet Operative](#)

2025

- Messe Art Basel [Swiss Art Awards](#)
- Kunsthaus Langenthal [Im Haus der grossen Frau. Ein künstlerischer Blick auf die Sozialpionierin Amélie Moser-Moser](#)
- Picalilli Gallery, London [All Over The Place](#)

2024

- b-05, Montabaur, GER [ECHOHALL IM BUNKER: history invades the present](#)

2023

- Our Place, Taipei, TWN [Neutral background](#)
- Imaginary Z, Hangzhou, CHN [Light and cold conversation: Agency and Technology](#)
- CAN Centre d'art Neuchâtel [Video Show & The Blind Pigeon](#)

2022

- Nieuwe Vide & GOLF-festival, Haarlem, NL
Collaboration with Harun Morrison [Ataraxia](#)

2021

- E-Werk, Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, Freiburg, GER [Material Worlds – Storied Matter](#)
- Kunsthalle Basel [...von möglichen Welten](#)

2020

- Espace 3353, Le Carouge, Geneva [The Stones in our Hands](#)

SOLO PROJECTS

2025

- Hirscheneck, Basel [wing beat](#)
- Greenpeace UK headquarters, UK [How do you weigh a sigh?](#)

2024

- Kunsthalle Bern [the center and the other \(title in progress\)](#)

2023

- Projekt Links, Galerie DuflonRacz , Bern, Kollektiv «Companionship Euphoria» [You are not here with me in the kitchen right now, but I wish you were](#)
- Kunsthalle Luzern [the center and the other](#)

2022

- Espace libre, Biel/Bienne [global earth powder trace](#)

2021

- Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Basel, Kollektiv «DUELL» [Smudge, the messenger –](#)
- Galerie Hofmatt, Sarnen [IBU SILLA](#)

2020

- Benzeholz – Zeitgenössische Kunst, Meggen, Kollektiv «DUELL» [Riddley, how does one make fire again?](#)

2019

- M8 Art Space, Helsinki, FIN [I can't hear myself without you listening](#)

PUBLICATIONS

2025

- [Tools for collective being](#) (Book project with Égle Šalkauskyte, unvague, Bern)

2024

- [Ibu Silla](#) (Book project, Edition Fink, Zürich)

2023 – 2024

- [Jelly Sunday Zine](#) (Online Zine, monthly, curated by Égle Šalkauskyte)

2023

- [Ich bin frei und mir ist schlecht](#) (with Tanja Schwarz)

EDUCATION

2019–2021

- Fellowship [Sommerakademie Paul Klee](#) (Tirdad Zolghadr – STATECRAFT)

2017–2019

- MA Art Practice, [Dutch Art Institute](#), Arnhem, NL

2013–2016

- BA Fine Arts with distinction, Hochschule der Künste Bern

CURATORIAL PROJECTS & TEACHING

2024

- Hochschule der Künste Bern, Y-Institut, with Yvonne Lanz [How do I care if everything seems to fall apart?](#)

2023

- Hochschule der Künste Bern, Y-Institut, with Yvonne Lanz [Radical Empathy](#)

2021

- Hochschule der Künste Bern, BA Fine Arts, with Felipe Castelblanco and Airi Triisberg [Decolonial Sensibilities](#)
- Hochschule der Künste Bern, Y-Institut, with Yvonne Lanz [Future Cartographies](#)

2019

- Hochschule der Künste Bern, BA Fine Arts, with Felipe Castelblanco [Para-Fictioning](#)

2017–2021

- [Cabane B project space](#) (Organisation, curation)

2016–2019

- [Immer Am Achten Schwobhaus](#) (Organisation, curation)

2015 / 2017

- [Artist Residency Weidli](#) Residency programme with Remy Erismann (Organisation, curation)

To witness is the same
thing as to breathe (to do it
once is not enough)

Iterations

- «To witness is the same thing as to breathe (to do it once is not enough)», (video) 2025
- «To witness is the same thing as to breathe (to do it once is not enough)», (drawings on cardboard mount) 2025
- «weight of a day», (drawings on paper) 2022 - 2024



↑ Film still: «To witness is the same thing as to breathe (to do it once is not enough)»

«To witness is the same thing
as to breathe (to do it once
is not enough)»

2025

Full HD, stereo, loop

16:9, 15'20''

[Video link \(pCloud\)](#)

The animation shows discussions with
the artist's sister, who has different
political perspectives. They become
visually flickering, distorted, and co-
alesce with their environment. Another
scene depicts the movement of an
organized collective from the table to the
streets.

- Messe Art Basel «Swiss Art Awards», 2025
- Talmuseum Engelberg «Nächster Halt», 2025



↑ Film still: «To witness is the same thing as to breathe (to do it once is not enough)»



↑ Film still: «To witness is the same thing as to breathe (to do it once is not enough)»

«To witness is the same thing as to breathe (to do it once is not enough)»

2025

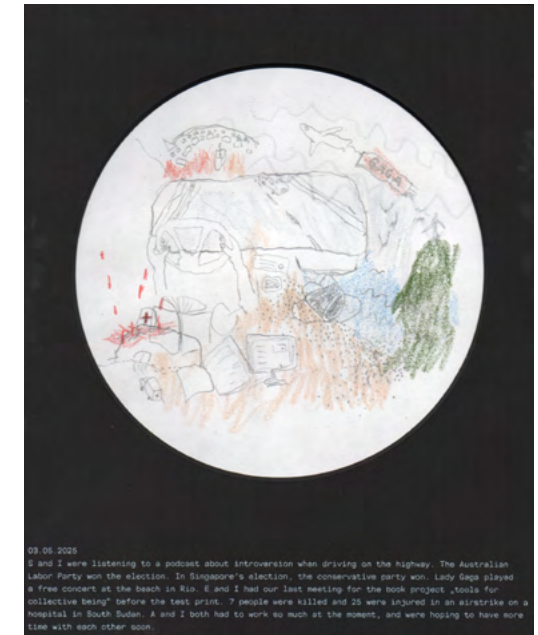
Pencil and color pencil on paper, UV flatbed print on archival board

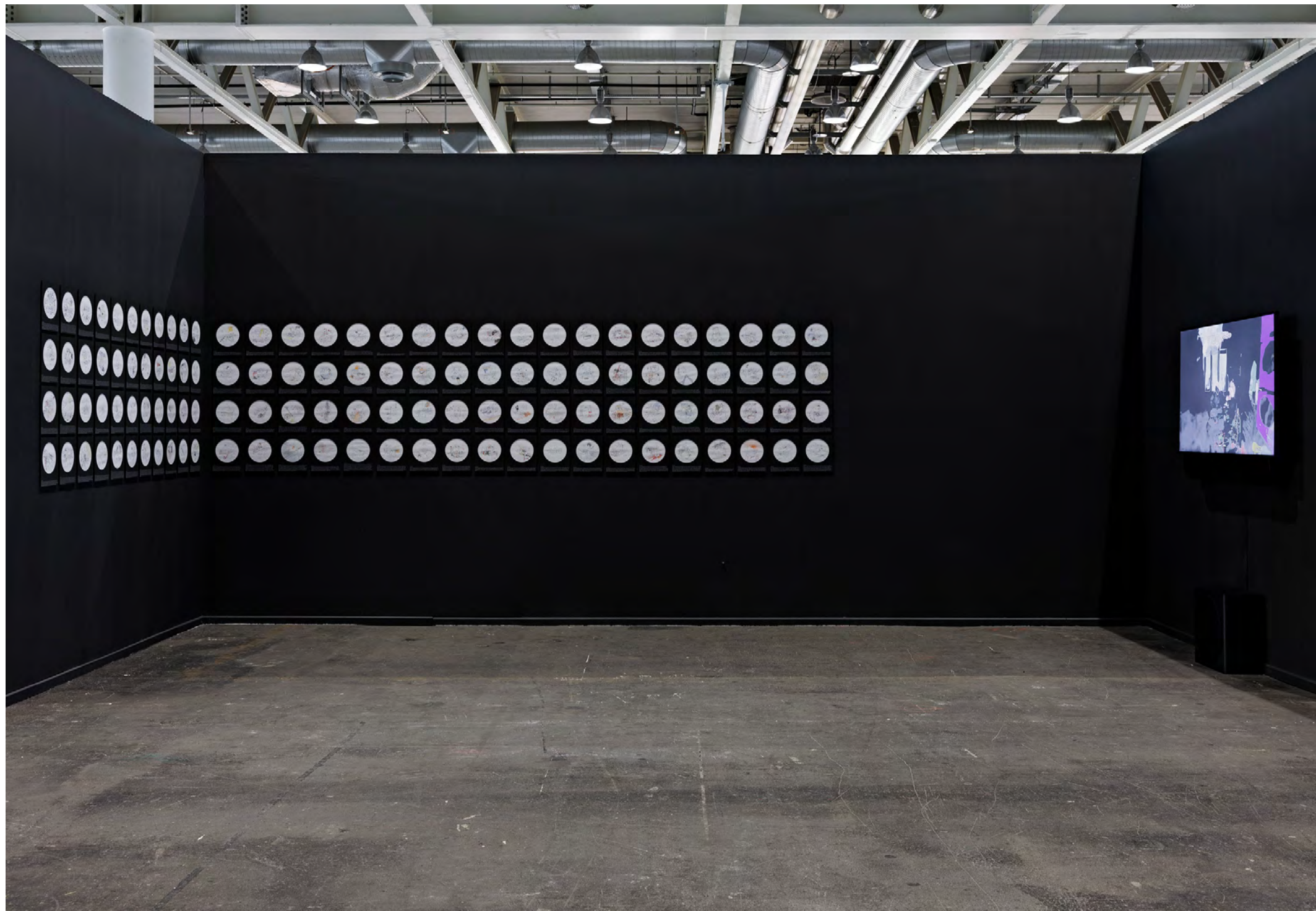
23,1 x 18,7 cm

Series of 125 pieces

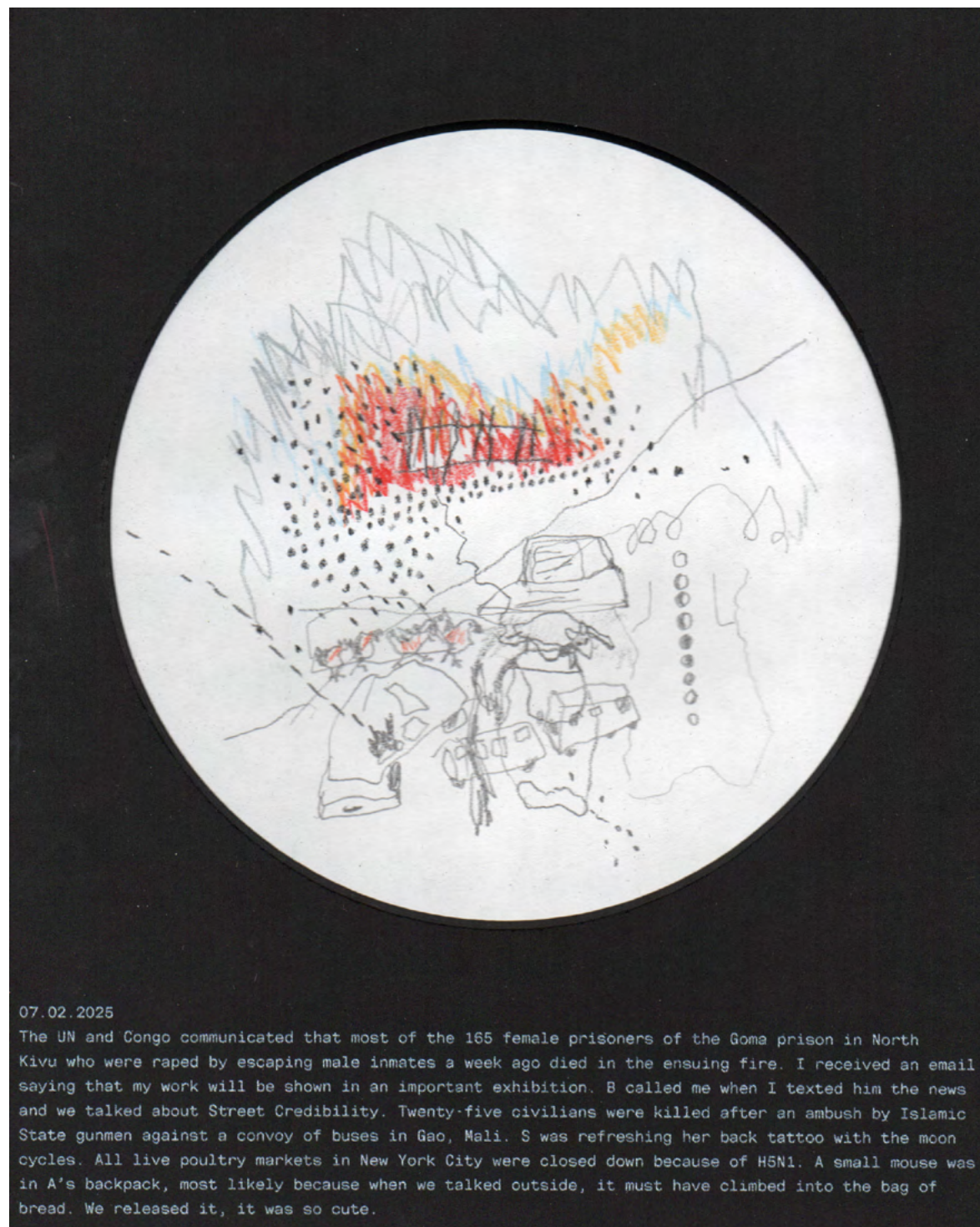
• Messe Art Basel «Swiss Art Awards», 2025

Through writing and drawing every day, the artist documents global events of de-democratization, imperial genocides, wars, and the climate crisis. She places her personal daily life in these texts and drawings, contextualized within that global situation but also often in harsh contrast to the horrors of those events.





↑ Exhibition view: «Swiss Art Awards», Messe Art Basel, Photo: Gina Folly





my mouth on a bridge (tools for learn- ing Arabic)

«my mouth on a bridge (tools
for learning Arabic)»
2026
Video
HD, stereo, loop, 16:9, 9'39''
[Video Link \(pCloud\)](#)

Can I see you without searching for
traces of myself in you, without project-
ing my own images onto you?

The muscles in our mouth are built
through our primary languages. The
associations we get from sounds are
shaped by everything we experienced
and heard.

This work proposes the use of our

embodied, individually shaped ways of
sensing and relating not as an obstacle
for understanding each other, but as a
potential tool.



↑ Film Still: «my mouth on a bridge (tools for learning Arabic)»



how do you weigh a sigh?

«how do you weigh a sigh?»
2025 - ongoing
Drawings on cork board, pins
120 x 120cm

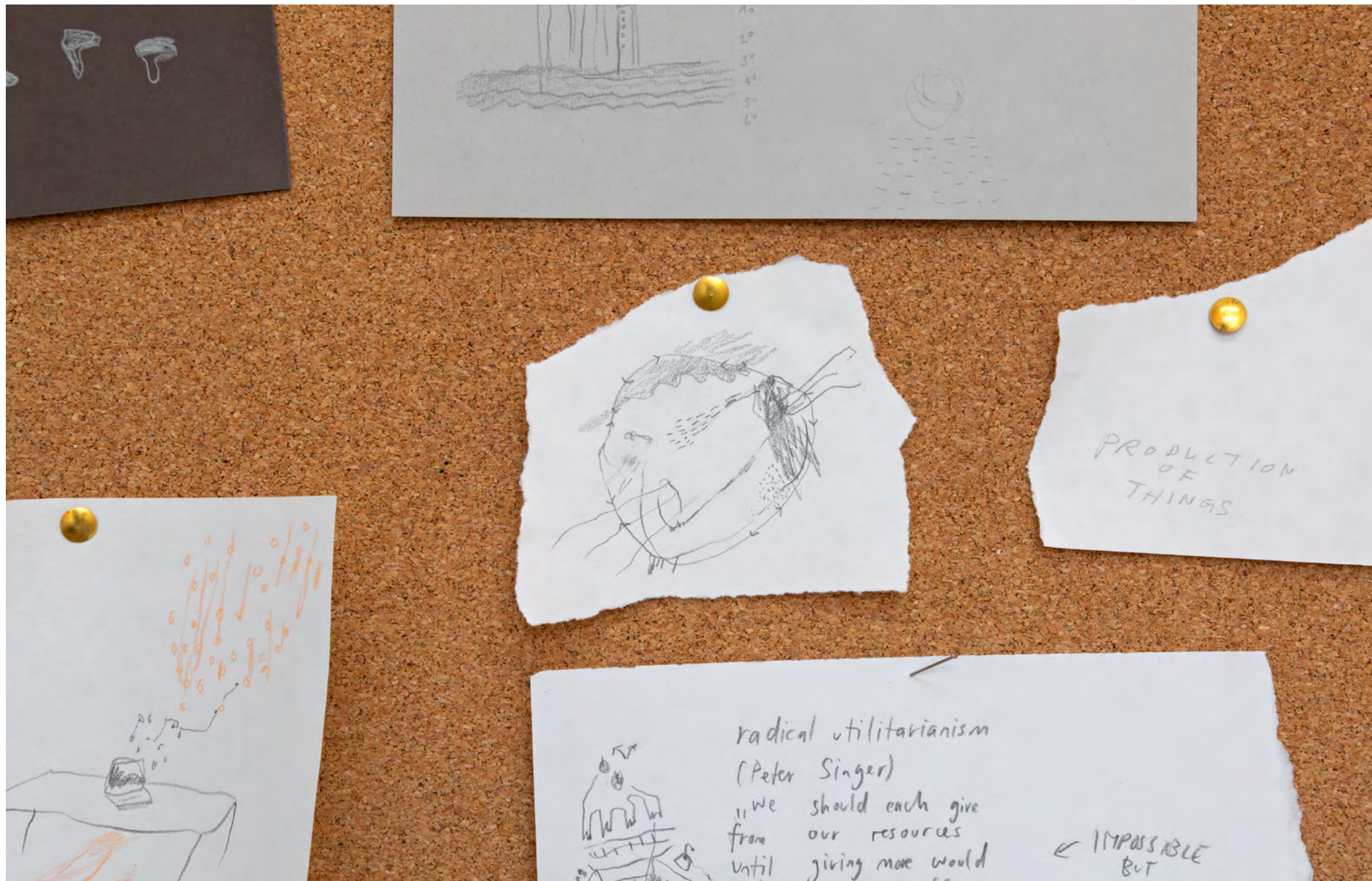
- Greenpeace UK headquarters, London
- Picalilli Gallery, London

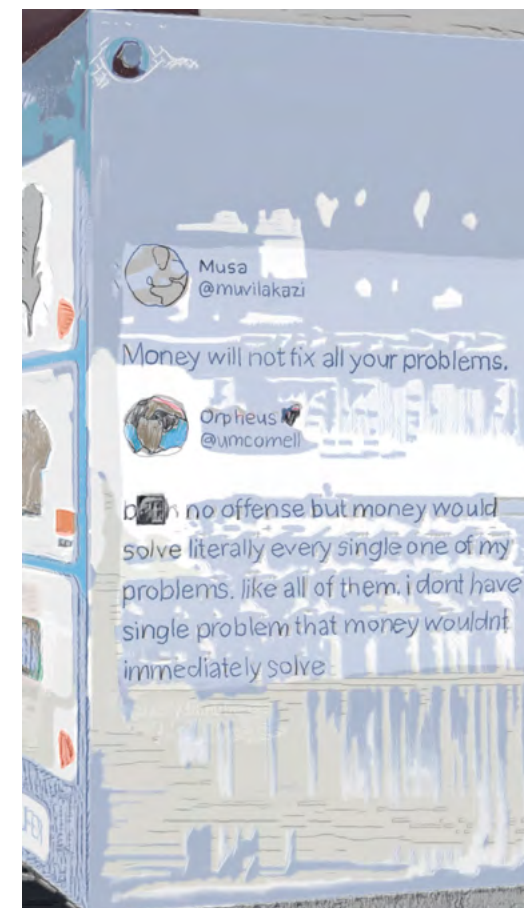
«How do you weigh a sigh?» features scores of informal notes and drawings. Olivia externalizes a series of inner conflicts, contradictions and emotional tensions arising from her own questioning of how to live amid political and climate crises. The work thematizes feelings of being overwhelmed and the desire to grasp the complexity of personal, scientific and political entanglements.

(Text: Harun Morrison)



↑ Exhibition view: «All Over The Place», Piccalilli Gallery, London, Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson





Warm fingers, moving

«Warm fingers, moving»
202
Video
HD, without sound, loop
9:16, 32'34''
[Video Link \(Dropbox\)](#)

• Museum Bruder Klaus, Sachseln «Frieden – Мир»,
2025

The overwhelming sensation of perceiving the hyperspeed and complexity of world events correlates with the rhythms of consuming social media. The eye jumps from war images to fashion ads, to snippets of daily life from friend groups, and then to political educational work.

„Warm fingers, moving“ merges and slows down these seemingly unrelated

contexts and thus makes potential connections graspable.



the center and the other

Iterations

- «the center and the other»
(solo), Kunsthalle Luzern,
2023
- «the center and the other»,
Aeschlimann Corti Stipendi-
um, Kunsthalle Bern, 2024
- «the center and the other»
(solo), Kunsthalle Bern,
2024



«the center and the other»
2023
chalk on wall
28 x 3,5 m

• Kunsthalle Luzern «the center and the other»,
2023

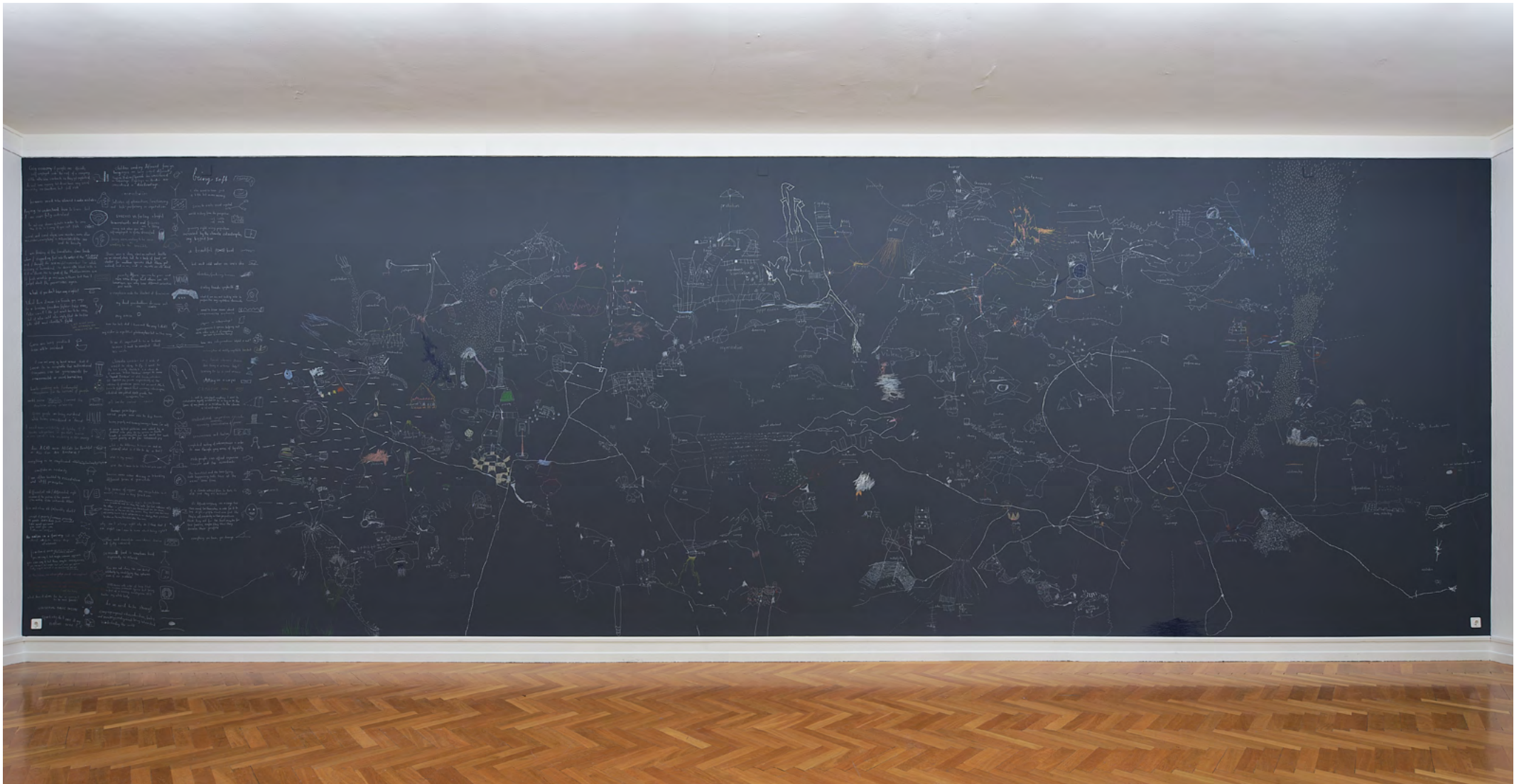
«How is intersectional feminism or the principle of property related to the difficulty of shopping seasonally?»

A subjective cartography of 28 meters makes connections: The wall drawing - dimensionally a quarter of a panoramic painting - includes an index of 120 terms, explanations, symbols, and questions that either concern or are of concern to

the artist. How are complex situations intertwined, and where am I in it – where do I position my subjectivity specifically? This section of a contemporary „horizon of thought“ presents itself as a very personal, exposed reflection of the artist's inner self. It is a performative piece about grasping the specificity of one's personal perspective among other's.



↑ Exhibition view: «the center and the other», Kunsthalle Luzern, Photo: Kilian Bannwart



«the center and the other»
2024
chalk and pencil on wall
11 x 4,5 m

• Kunsthalle Bern «Aeschlimann Corti Stipendium»,
2024

The iteration of „the center and the other“ at Kunsthalle Bern begins on a flat, uncurved wall. It contains 280 additional abstract and concrete terms (like «companionship», «illness», «spaghetti») that constitute the «world» from the viewpoint of an exemplary subjectivity.



↑ Exhibition view: «Aeschlimann Corti Stipendium», Kunsthalle Bern, Photo: David Aepli



↑ Exhibition view: «the center and the other (title in progress)», Kunsthalle Bern, Photo: David Aebi

«(Facing shame) facing conflict»

«(Facing shame) facing conflict»

2024

Video

HD, stereo, loop

16:9, 18'56''

Guitar/Synthesizer: David Koch

Animation template: Brigade Brut

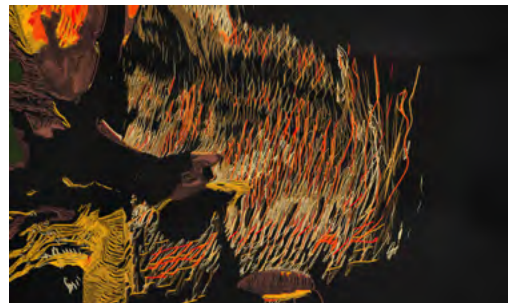
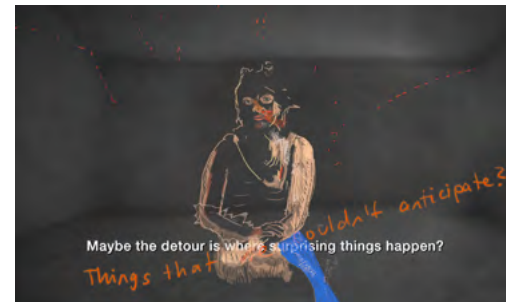
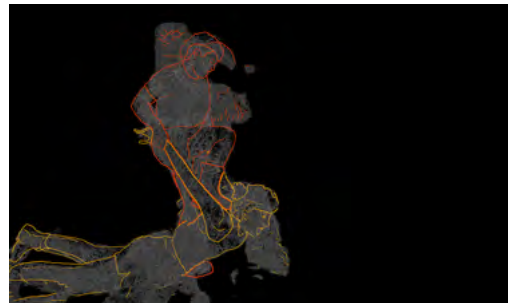
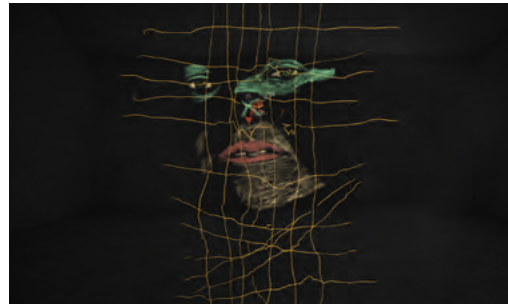
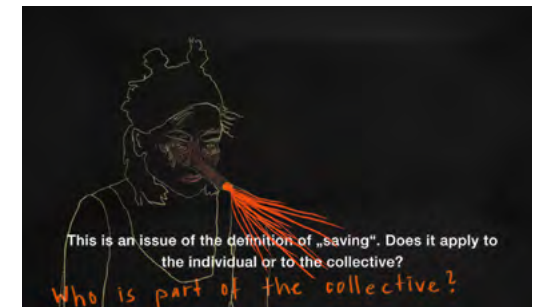
[Video Link \(vimeo\)](#)

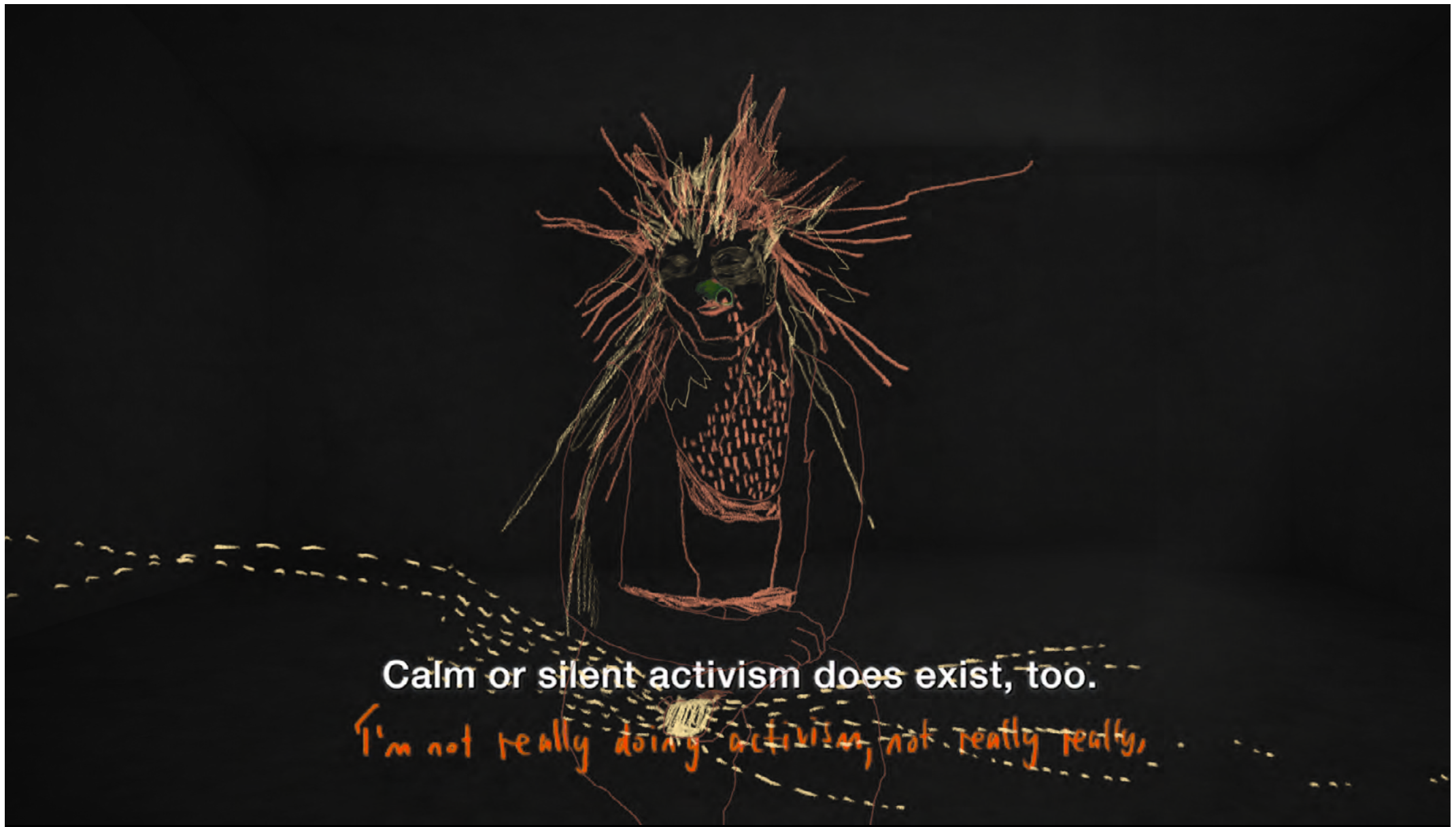
- b-05 «ECHOHALL IM BUNKER: history invades the present» Montabaur, GER, 2024
- Kunstmuseum Luzern «ZENTRAL!», 2024

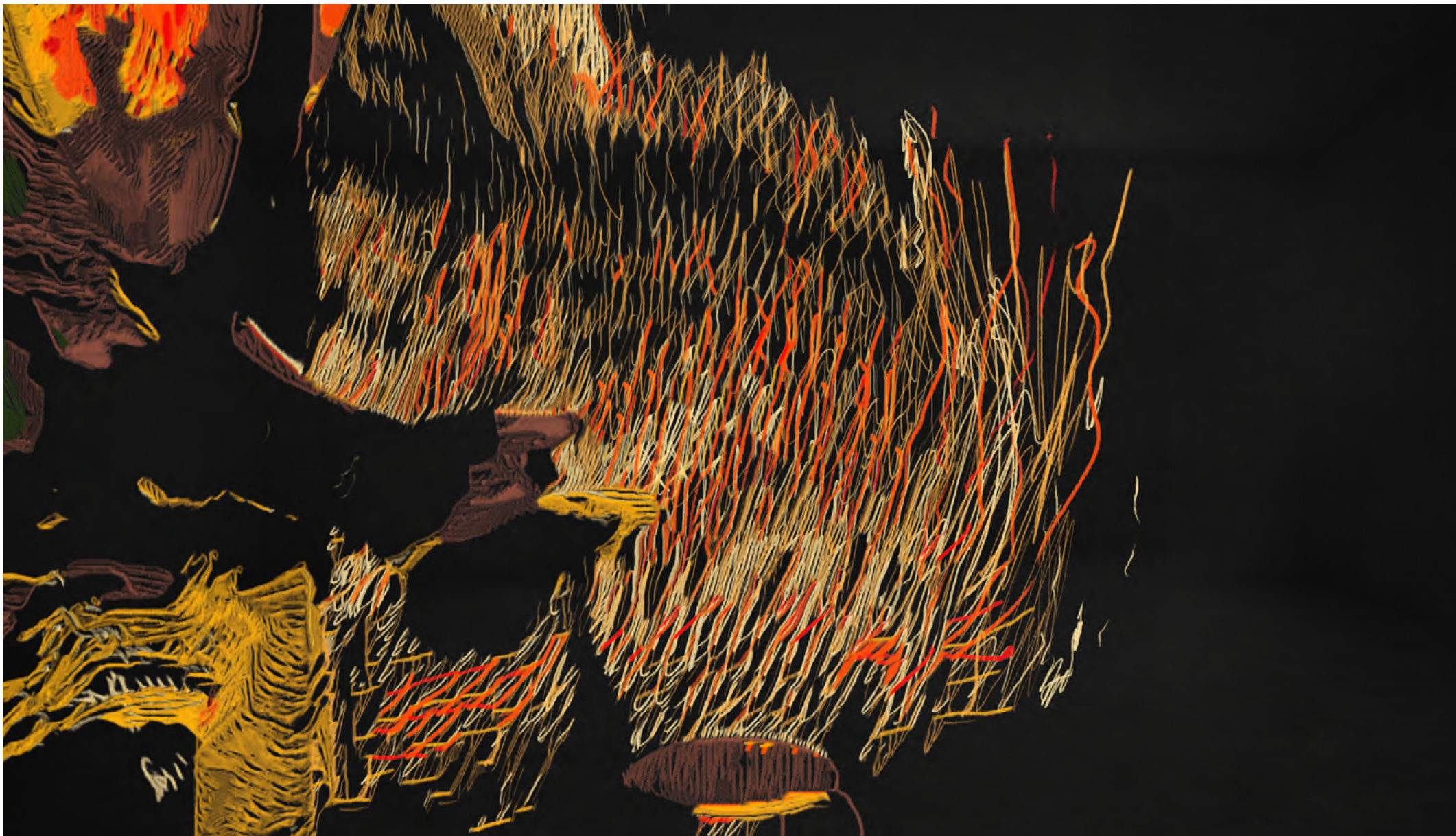
«(Facing Shame) facing conflict», shown in a repurposed German bunker, addresses the constant failing attempts at personal positioning in the current political climate. What happens inside when the world outside is burning?

When personal logics are constructed and get caught in contradictions? When the actors in the conflicts are unclear? In this work, countless new, diffuse faces appear, similar to the ever-escalating contradictions in our reality. The work extends the concept of the «bunker» from the architectural to the psychological. In our minds, too, there are thick walls and mechanisms of isolation.

(Translated, original text: Till Langschied)









Everything series 1

«Everything series 1»

2024

Interactive digital drawing
Soapstone, plasticine, joy-
stick and projection, pencil
[Link exemplary joystick move-
ment \(Video file, Dropbox\)](#)

«Everything series» deals with the
infinite endeavor to visually capture the
entirety of everything that exists. Part 1
is an initial digital drawing through
which, using a soapstone, one can
navigate infinitely in two dimensions
across all sides.

• Nidwaldner Museum, Stans «NOW 24», 2024

↑ Digital view (cropped section): «Everything series 1»



sketches on loving a family

«sketches on loving a family»
2023

Video

HD, stereo, loop, 16:9, 16'35''

Soundscape: Till Hillbrecht

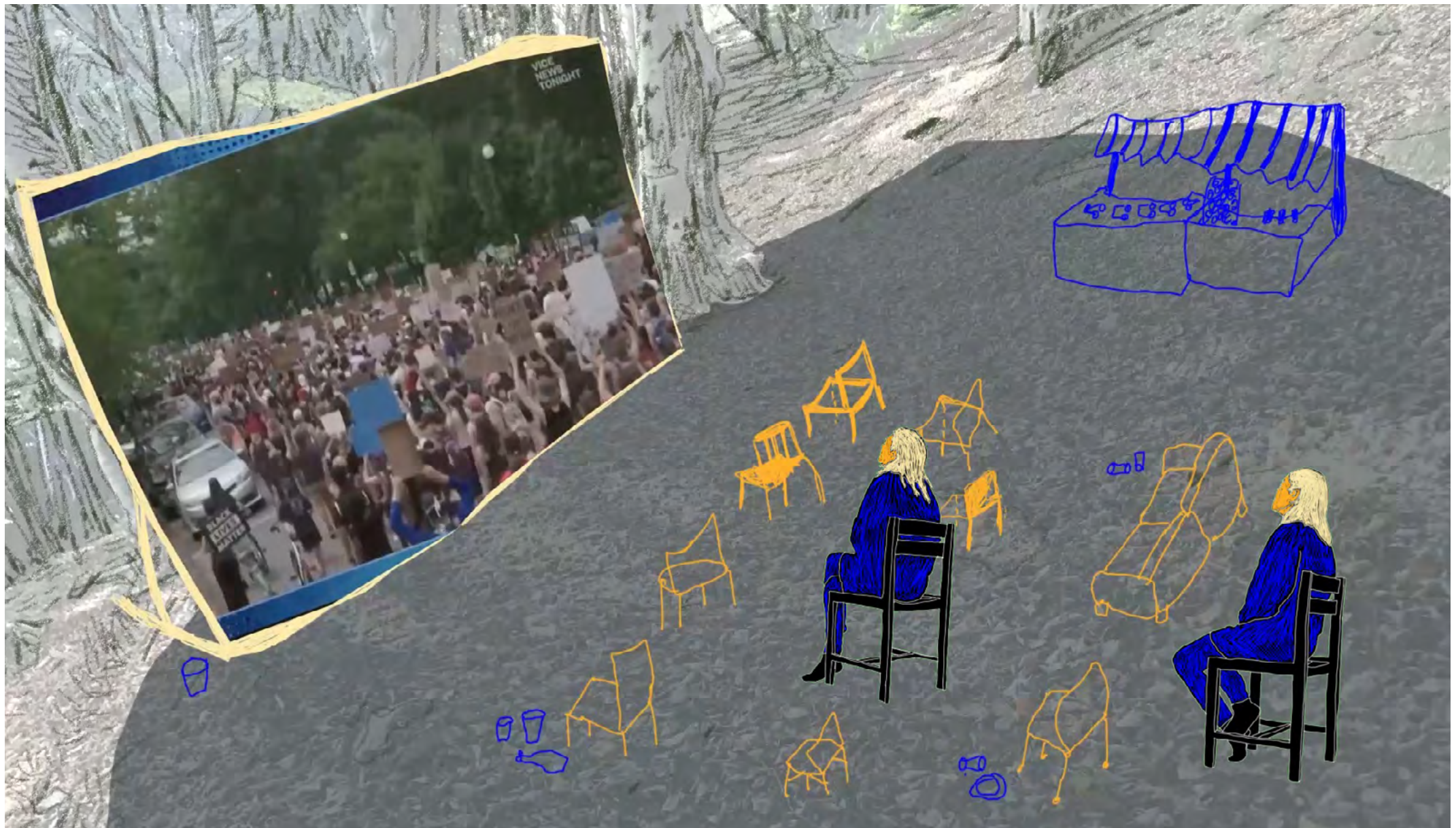
[Video Link \(Dropbox\)](#)

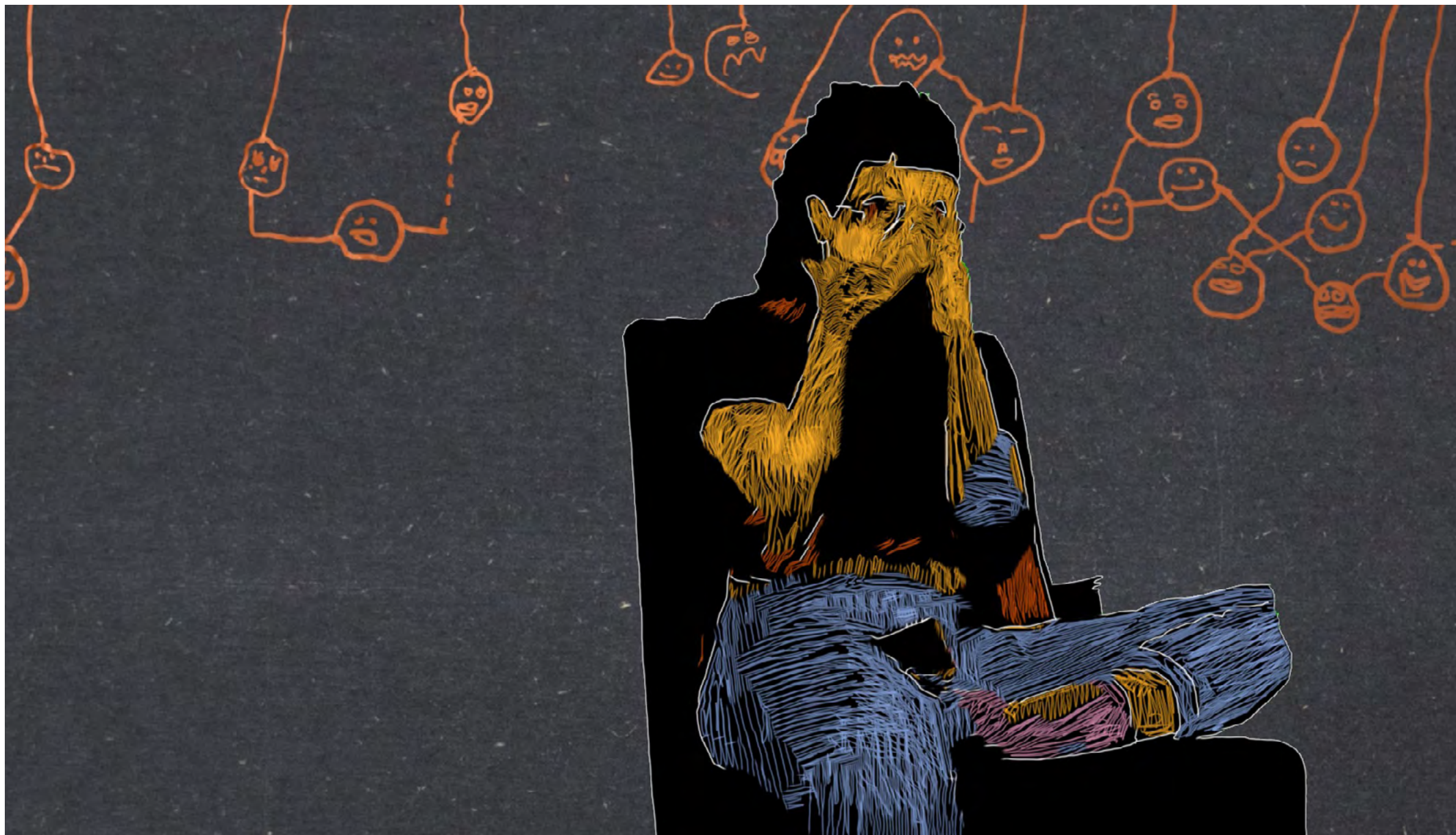
- Kunsthalle Luzern «the center and the other», 2023
- Kunstmuseum Thun «Cantonale Berne Jura», 2023
- Prozess, Bern «on loving a family», 2024

How to deal with political differences or vast ideological gaps within families, how to manage emotional tensions and your own borders of acceptance?

«Sketches on loving a family» contains interviews with 5 people of a diversity of familial, ethnical, class and national backgrounds (Brazil, USA/Germany, Argentina, Lebanon and Switzerland)

who talk about their relationships with politically clashing family members whom they still love in different ways. The video starts with a scene of the US «Daily Show» on political polarizations that is shown in an animated forest cinema. Then, the interviewed persons appear as animated characters that slowly and increasingly become deformed and distorted - visually «torn apart».





Dear grandfather (grandfather's face)

«Dear grandfather (grandfather's face)»

2021

Video

HD, stereo, loop

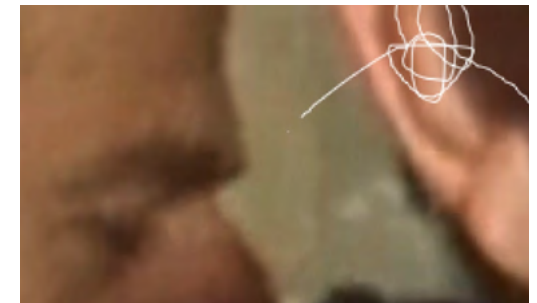
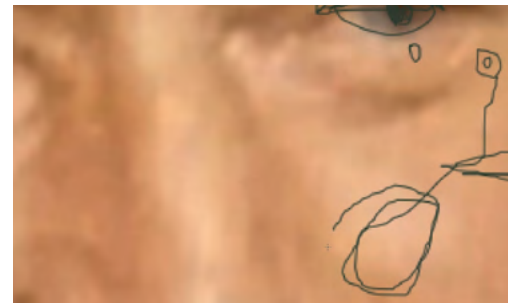
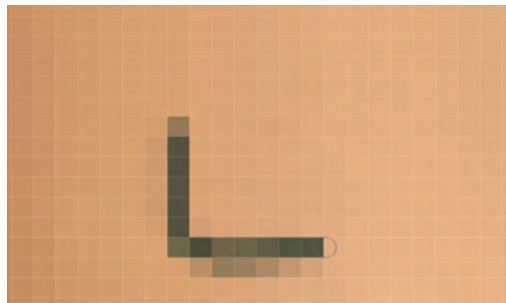
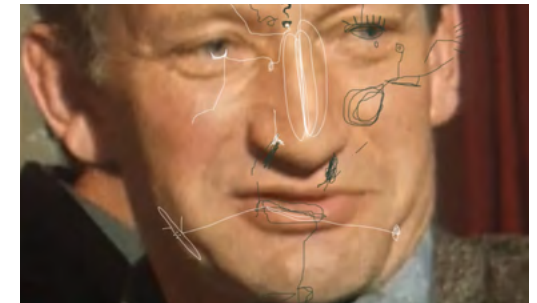
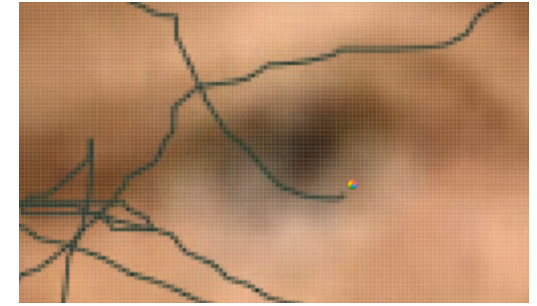
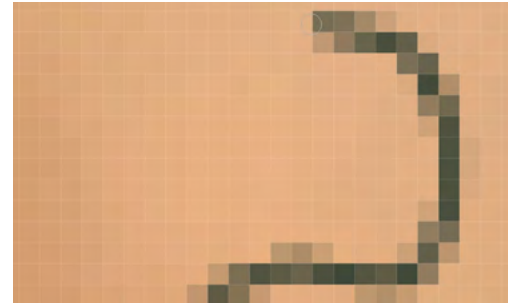
16:9, 03'07''

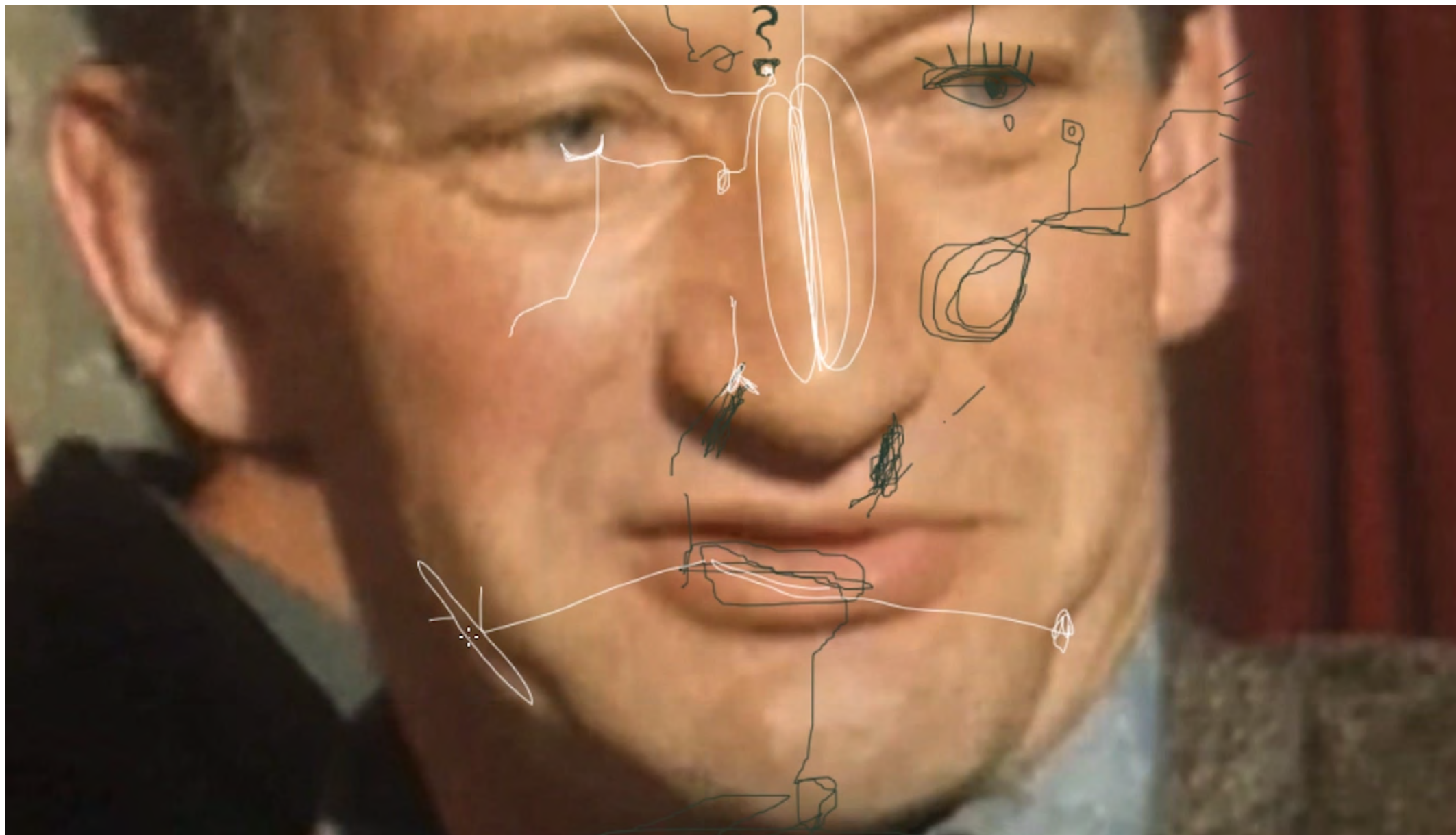
[Video Link \(Dropbox\)](#)

- Kunstmuseum Luzern «ZENTRAL!», 2022
- EAC (les halles) «Cantonale Berne Jura», 2022
- CAN Centre d'art Neuchâtel «Video Show & The Blind Pigeon», 2022
- Videokunst.ch: Showroom PROGR, Bern / Houdini Kino, Zürich / Klibühni, Chur, 2022
- Cité Screenings, Cité internationale des Arts, Paris, 2022

«Of course I'm against it, too» – In 1975, the artist's grandfather has been stating his opinion on the women's right to vote on Swiss national tv.

How to deal with contradictory feelings towards beloved family members with whom one dissents fundamentally about basic worldviews? Writings and drawings are directly being marked on the footage, on the grandfather's face, onto the surface of the very moment of his «painful» statements. Thereby, the core question processually shifts from „How to relate?“ towards: „How to deal with non-relating?“





«Ibu Silla»

Iterations:

- «Ibu Silla» (Video), 2022
- «Ibu Silla» (Book), 2024
- «this is my landscape, this is my landscape for you» (VR video installation), 2021

«Ibu Silla»

2019-2021

Video

HD, stereo, loop

16:9, 48'40''

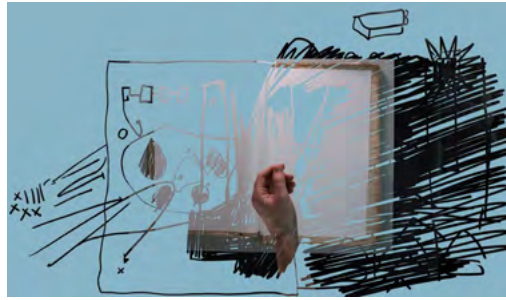
[Video Link \(Dropbox\)](#)

- Galerie Hofmatt, Sarnen «Ibu Silla», 2021
- Kunstmuseum Thun, «Cantonale Berne Jura», 2022

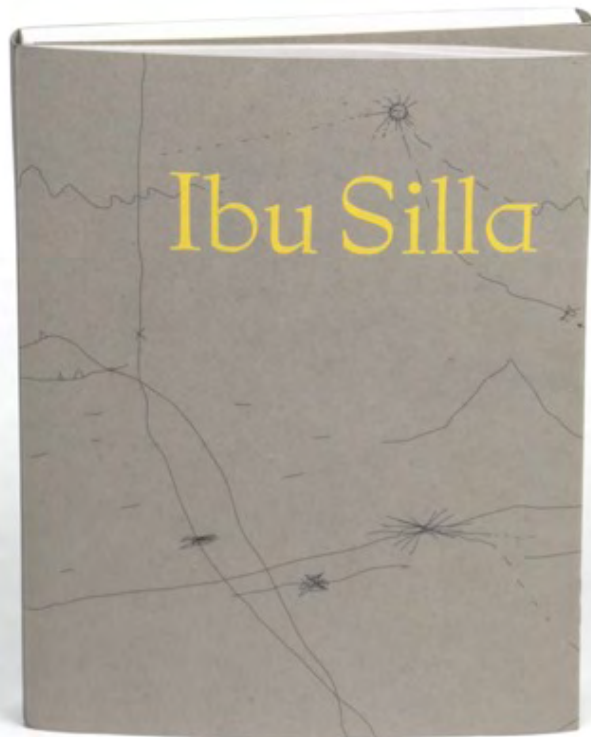
The State Archive of Nidwalden holds 15 boxes of diaries belonging to the mercenary Alois Wyrsh («Borneo Louis»). From 1816, Wyrsh was stationed in Borneo (Banjarmasin) under Dutch colonial rule and returned to Nidwalden in 1832 with two of his children, whom he had with an Indigenous woman. This woman, referred to in the documents as Johanna, Ibu Silla, or Belle, was left behind along with another child. In the diaries, the passages where he writes about her have been meticulously cut out. The reasons for this remain speculative.

In 14 chapters, this video work now speculates on realistic to abstract biographies. The subtractive drawing process resembles the scraping away of a layer, uncovering documentary imagery and formally referencing the cut-out gaps.

The open questions about Ibu Silla unfold possibilities for multiple biographies. The methodology of this work proposes a way to engage with male-white-dominated historiography: allowing «counter-narratives» or «para-stories» to emerge in the «mental archives» thereby fostering a multiplicity of perspectives.







«Ibu Silla»
2024
Book project
edition fink, Contemporary Art
publishers

The book project consists of the fictional
text on the speculative biography of Ibu
Silla, an explanatory essay, and a fold-
out drawn map.

Short documentary on real lesbianism

«short documentary on real lesbianism»

2021

Video

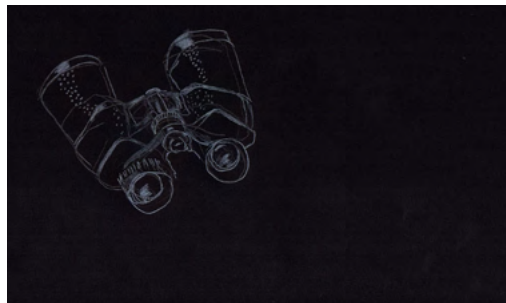
HD, stereo loop

16:9, 01'52''

[Trailer Link \(vimeo\)](#)

Password: lesbian

The fictional documentary takes place in the core forest, a dense forest near the village where the artist grew up; a village where the artist experienced her lesbian identity as abnormal during her teenage years, and where the secret, intimate wish arose to live in a society made up only of lesbians. This narrative centers around the absurd fiction of a ‚Swiss indigenous people‘ consisting solely of lesbians. However, this essentialist fantasy of purity and equality within a society could dangerously resemble nationalist or racist images of the ‚purity‘ of peoples; an issue that is part of this exploration.





neutral background

Iterations

- «notational system on neutral background» (video installation), 2017 - 2021
- «neutral background» (print on wallpaper), 2020
- «credit of about 420 billion Swiss francs (...)» (laser-cut on paper), 2021



«notational system on neutral background»
 2017 - 2021
 2-channel video installation / video
 HD, stereo, loop
 16:9, 56'59" / 10'44"
[Video Link \(long version: Dropbox, 2 files\)](#)
[Video Link \(short version\)](#)

- Sommerakademie Paul Klee, Online-Publikation «STATECRAFT», 2020 (kurze Version)
- E-Werk Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, Freiburg i. Br., GER «Material Worlds», 2021
- Centre d'Art Pasquart «Cantonale Berne Jura», 2021
- Nidwaldner Museum «NOW 21», 2021
- Kunsthau Langenthal «Aeschlimann Corti Stipendium», 2022

«Notational System on Neutral Background» evolves from expanded ongoing research on problematic entanglements of Swiss economic policies. Swiss mythologies and self-identifications of neutrality and innocence still (partly) persist when it comes to discussions of colonial histories and racism. Strong economic involvements, be it in the transatlantic slave trade, or, more recent-

ly, human rights violations on behalf of global corporations, have been overlooked. This research focuses on such global involvements, and asks how Swiss policymaking is involved. [...]»
 (Text: Tirdad Zolghadr)



↑ Exhibition view: «NOW 21», Nidwaldner Museum, Photo: Christian Hartmann



↑ Video Still: «notational system on neutral background»

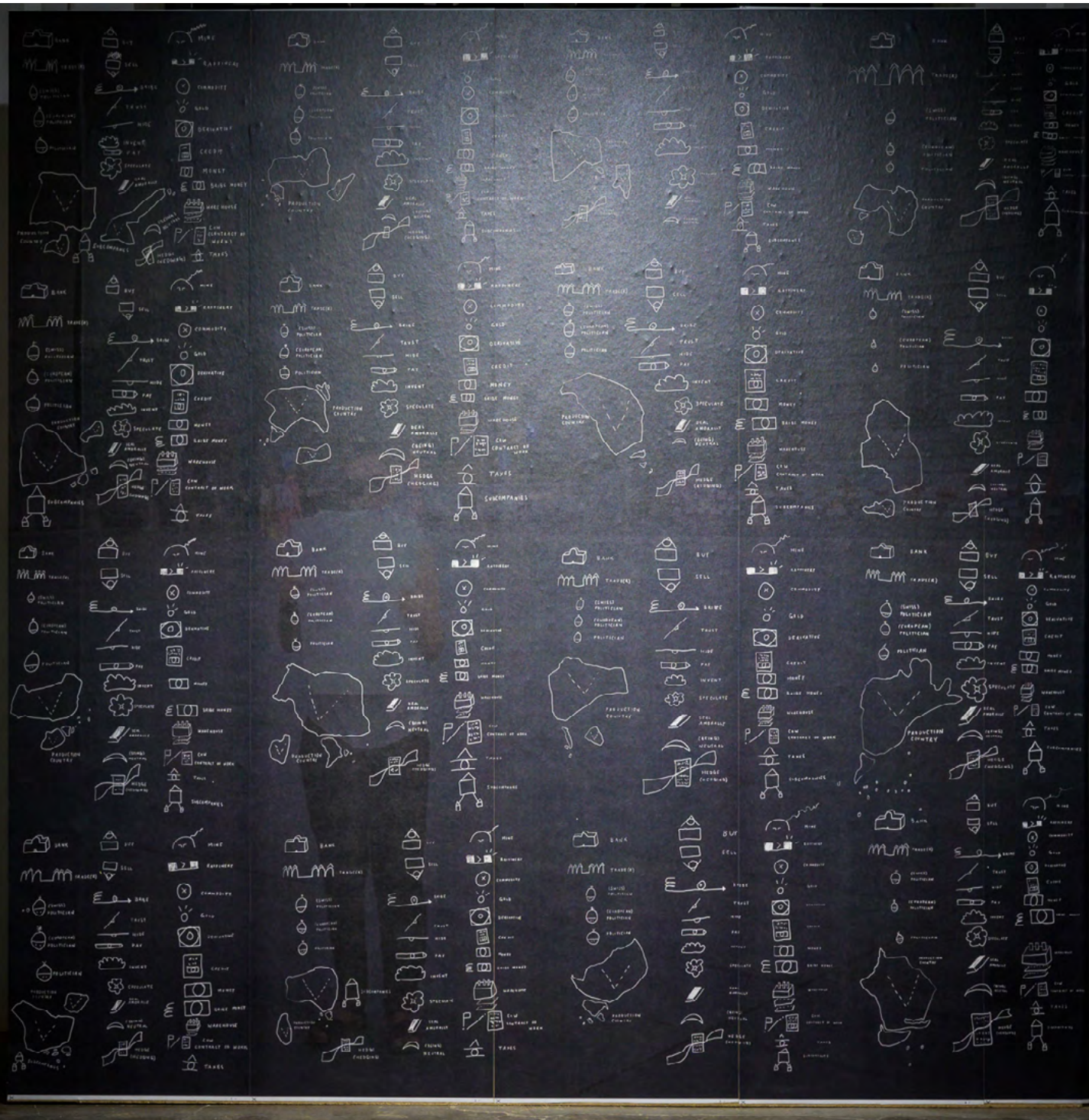


«neutral background»
2020
digital print on wallpaper
series, 3 parts
size mutable

- E-Werk Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, Freiburg i. Br., GER «Material Worlds» 2021
- Kunsthalle Basel «...von möglichen Welten» 2021
- Kunstmuseum Luzern «ZENTRAL!» 2020

The wallpaper series showcases the development of the visual vocabulary that makes the complex facts of economic policy more visually accessible. It highlights problematic entanglements in terms of their structural form and deep-rooted embedding within the system. The recurring forms of power structures in the trajectories of colonial and post-colonial relationships become

motifs for a reproducible and shareable product: a series of wallpapers, with the drawings / maps / network structures forming their pattern. The patterns use a unified vocabulary of symbols and shapes but are not directly repetitive as is typically the case with wallpaper. Instead, the wallpapers display the process of understanding: the development of the notation system.



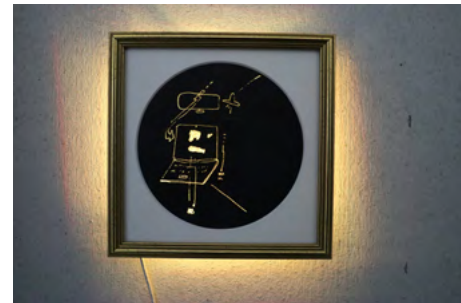
↑ Exhibition view: «Material Worlds – Storied Matter», E-Werk, Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, 2021, Photo: Marc Doradzillo

credit of about 420 bil- lion swiss francs (...)

«credit of about 420 billion
Swiss francs (...)»
2021
12 lasercuts on paper, LED
strips, framed
20 x 20 cm

- E-Werk Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, Freiburg i. Br., GER «Material Worlds» 2021
- Kunsthaus Langenthal «Aeschlimann Corti Stipendium» 2022

Laser-cut paper silhouettes of twelve
morally problematic events in Swiss
economic history are backlit with LEDs.





↑ Exhibition view: «Material Worlds – Storied Matter», E-Werk, Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, 2021, Photo: Marc Doradzillo



↑ Exhibition view: «Material Worlds – Storied Matter», E-Werk, Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, 2021, Photo: Marc Doradzillo



We have found traces of a people that lived without any gravity.

How Do Stones Grow?

«How Do Stones Grow?»
2018, video
HD, stereo, loop
16:9, 13'43''
[Trailer Link \(vimeo\)](#)

- Stadtgalerie Bern, «Cantonale Berne Jura», 2019
- Nidwaldner Museum, «in cavo: where all the aims cross», 2018
- Baehndlistrasse 86, «Wesen», 2024

The study and staging of the «Other» was often used during the Enlightenment to construct a contrast in order to present and define one's own culture as superior. Olivia Abächerli addresses this in her video «How do stones grow?» by impersonating an anthropologist who discovered a previously unknown past society: beings that move, communicate, and live differently, exposing our way of

existence as just one of many possibilities. (Translation, original text: Karen Amanda Moser)



If they are a map

Iterations

- «If they are a map» (mural), 2019
- «If they are a map» (mural), 2019
- «I saw convex equatorial deserts and each one of their grains of sand» (mixed media on canvas), 2022



«if they are a map»
2019
oil pastels on wall
2,2 x 2,2 m

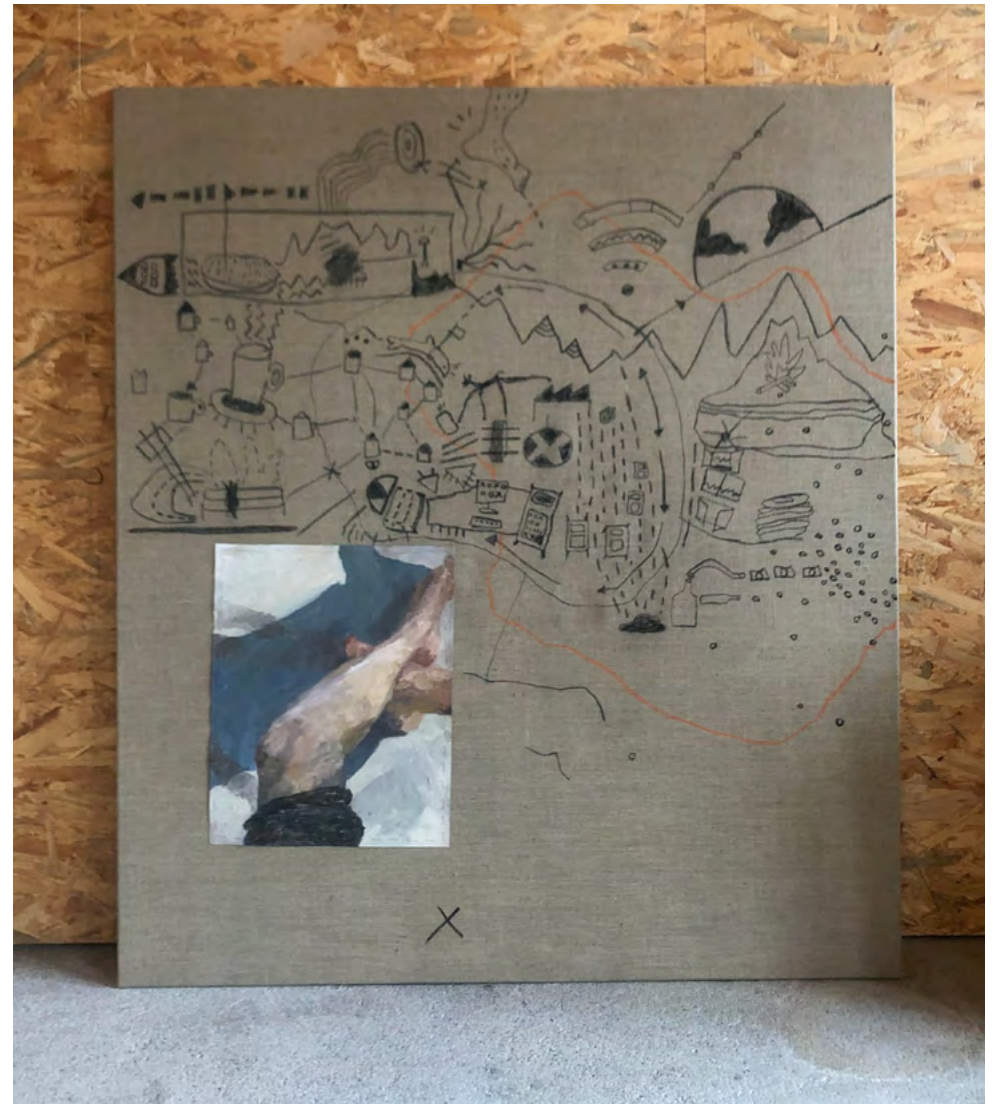
- Grand Palais, Bern «Les Environs (le voisin et son stupide chien)», 2019
- Hot Wheels Projects, Athens, GRC «How it comes to matter», 2018

«If they are a map» is a drawn investigation into how we can orient ourselves, locate ourselves, and contextualize in the complex present. How does anyone orient themselves in a multitude of parameters of time, space, and social contexts? In the large-format drawings, this question is addressed by layering a multitude of subjective cartographies – a variety of perspectives.



«I saw convex equatorial
deserts and each one of their
grains of sand»
2022
Mixed media on canvas
each 160 x 140 cm

• Espace libre, Biel «global earth powder trace»,
2022



↑ Studio shots: «I saw convex equatorial deserts and each one of their grains of sand»

Companionship Euphoria

«Companionship Euphoria»
collective: Isabella Beneduci
(artist, social anthropologist
and activist from Brasil),
Line Rime (Illustrator and
feminist activist from Fri-
bourg) and Olivia Abächerli.

Projects:

- Reading group «Unlearning Imperialism», Cité internationale des Arts, Paris, 2022 - 2023
- «You are not here with me in the kitchen right now» (Exhibition project), 2023
- «Companionship Euphoria Letter Reading» (Performance), 2024
- «Companionship Euphoria», (Research project on political agency through feminist friendship), 2024 - ongoing



↑ Exhibition view: «You are not here with me (...)», Galerie Duflon Racz Projekt LINKS, Photo: Line Rime

«You are not here with me in the kitchen right now, but I wish you were»

2023

Mixed Media on wall,
Print on carpet

Audio

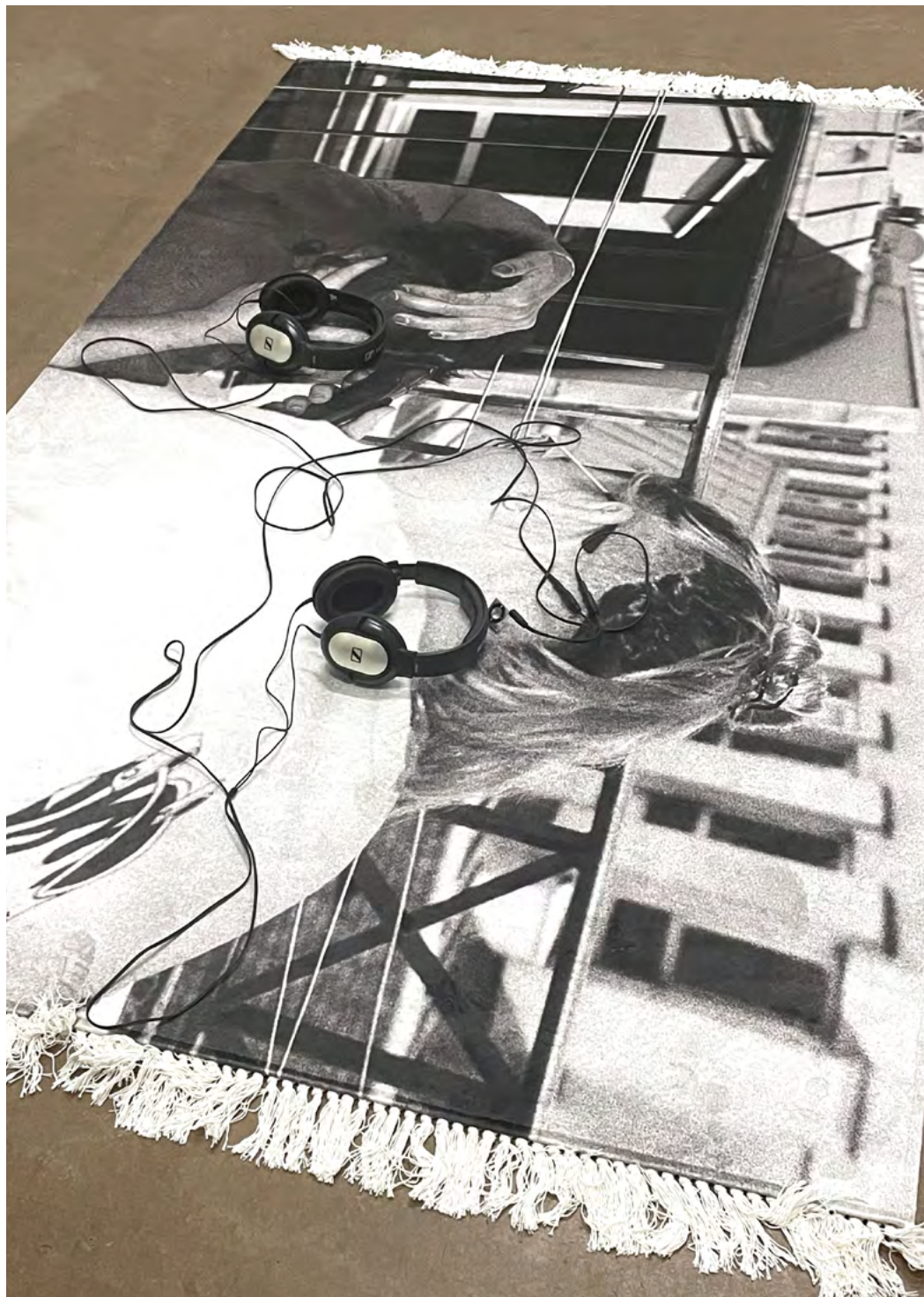
WAC, stereo, 26'58''

[Audio Link \(Google Drive\)](#)

• Galerie Duflon Racz Projekt LINKS, Bern «You are not here with me in the kitchen right now, but I wish you were», 2023

Through letters and exchanged drawings, the collective engages in dialogue with the respective political contexts – and how these influence personal lives. In a group exhibition, some of the drawings were displayed, while the letters – the connections – were translated into a wall drawing by Olivia Abächerli. A carpet with a photo (by Isabella Beneducci) depicting Olivia shaving Line's hair

formed the centerpiece of the space, where it was possible to listen to spoken passages from the letters.

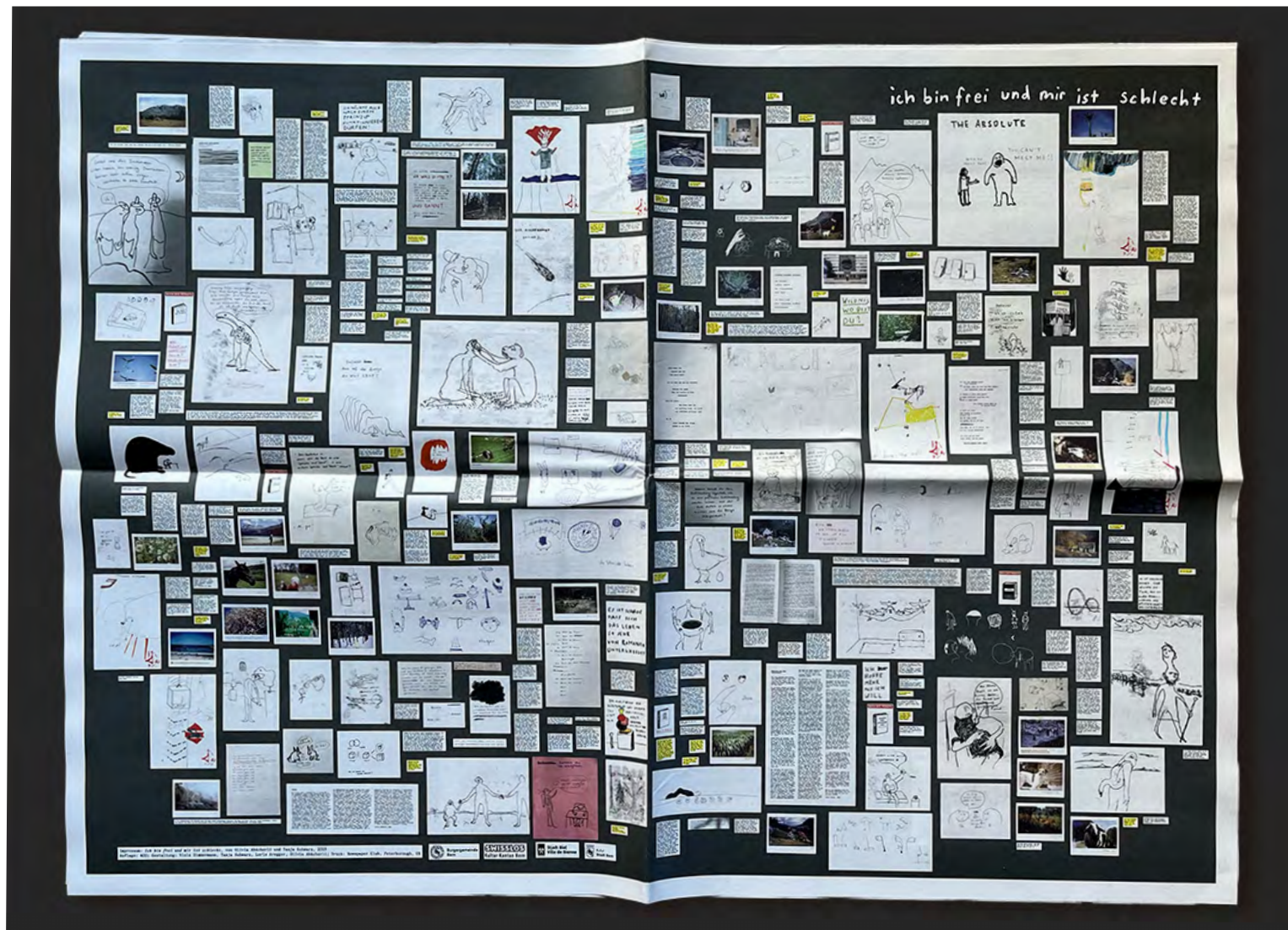


↑ Exhibition views: «You are not here with me in the kitchen right now, but I wish you were», Galerie Duflon Racz Projekt LINKS, Photos: Line Rime



↑ Exhibition views: «You are not here with me in the kitchen right now, but I wish you were», Galerie Duflon Racz Projekt LINKS, Photo: Line Rime





ich bin frei und
mir ist schlecht

«ich bin frei und mir ist
schlecht»

2023

Publication by Tanja Schwarz &
Olivia Abächerli

35 x 50 cm

24 pages

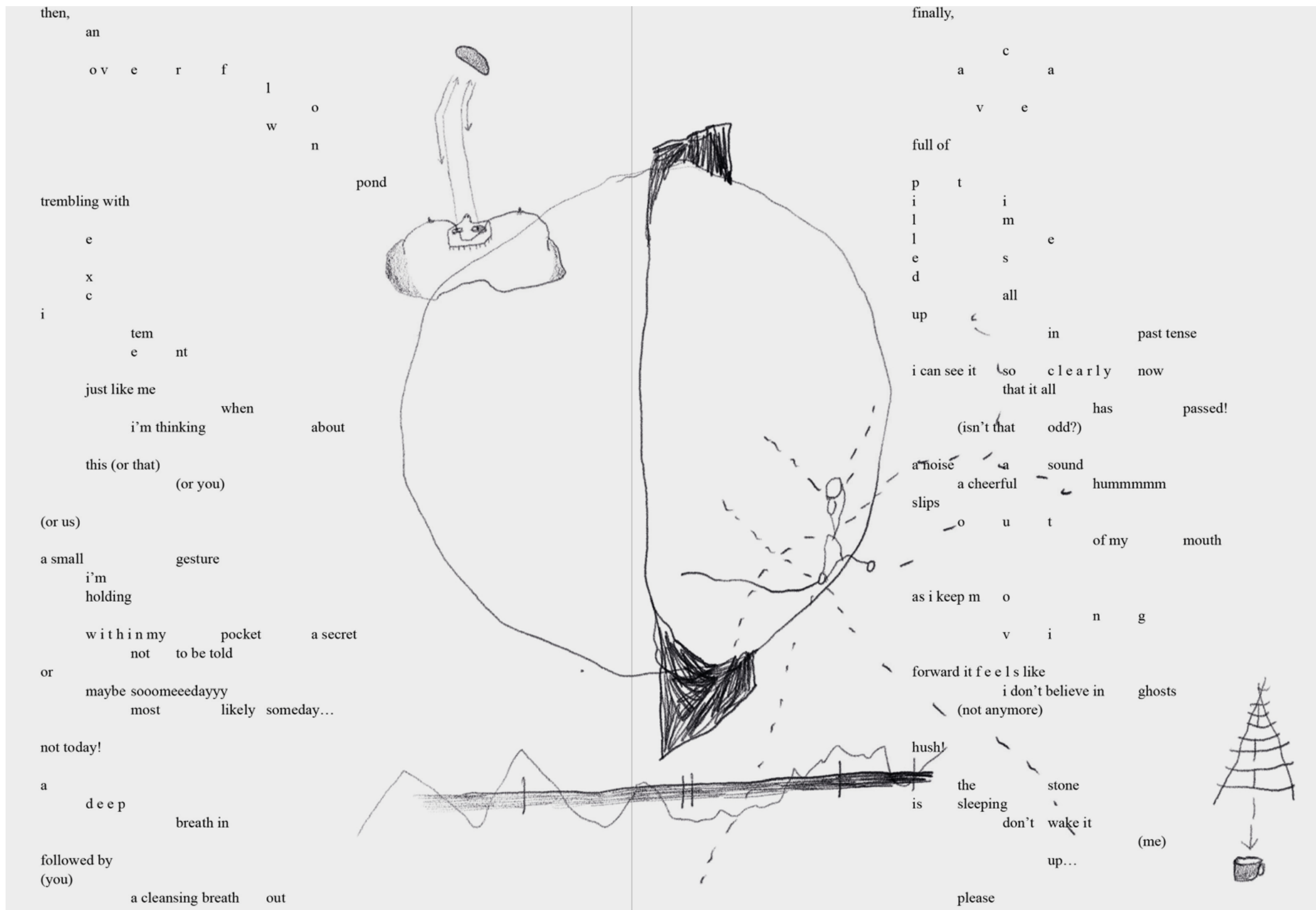
- Kunsthaus Interlaken «10+10+1», 2023
- Kunsthalle Bern «Cantonale Bern Jura», 2023



Jelly Sunday
Zine

«Jelly Sunday Zine»
2023 -
digital Zine, released monthly
[Link \(Bandcamp\)](#)

Collective with:
Égle Šalkauskyte, Saskia
Winkelmann, Jasmin Christen,
Juliette Henrioud, Olivia
Abächerli



- - - - - Material flows

Iterations

- «- - - - - Material flows» (installation), 2022
- «Where do I shoot my arrow», (performance), 2018



«- - - - - Material flows»
 2022
 chalk and coal on 4 stone
 plates
 each 1 x 2 m
 Multiple: Offset print
 78 x 63 cm

What does it mean to own land? What responsibilities or privileges are associated with it? Common lands or corporations («Commons») are historical models for communal property and land management, often of mountains, forests, or water. From the exploration of the meaning of land, territorial, and (agricultural) resource ownership, a visual vocabulary

emerged. Territories, paths, and trails were left as traces of chalk and coal on four local stone slabs. The accompanying map provides insight into the research and serves as an index for the visual vocabulary.

• Turbine Giswil «Kulturlandschaft Obwalden»,
 2022



↑ Exhibition view: «Kulturlandschaft Obwalden» Turbine Giswil

↑ Exhibition view: «Kulturlandschaft Obwalden» Turbine Giswil

Contact

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