

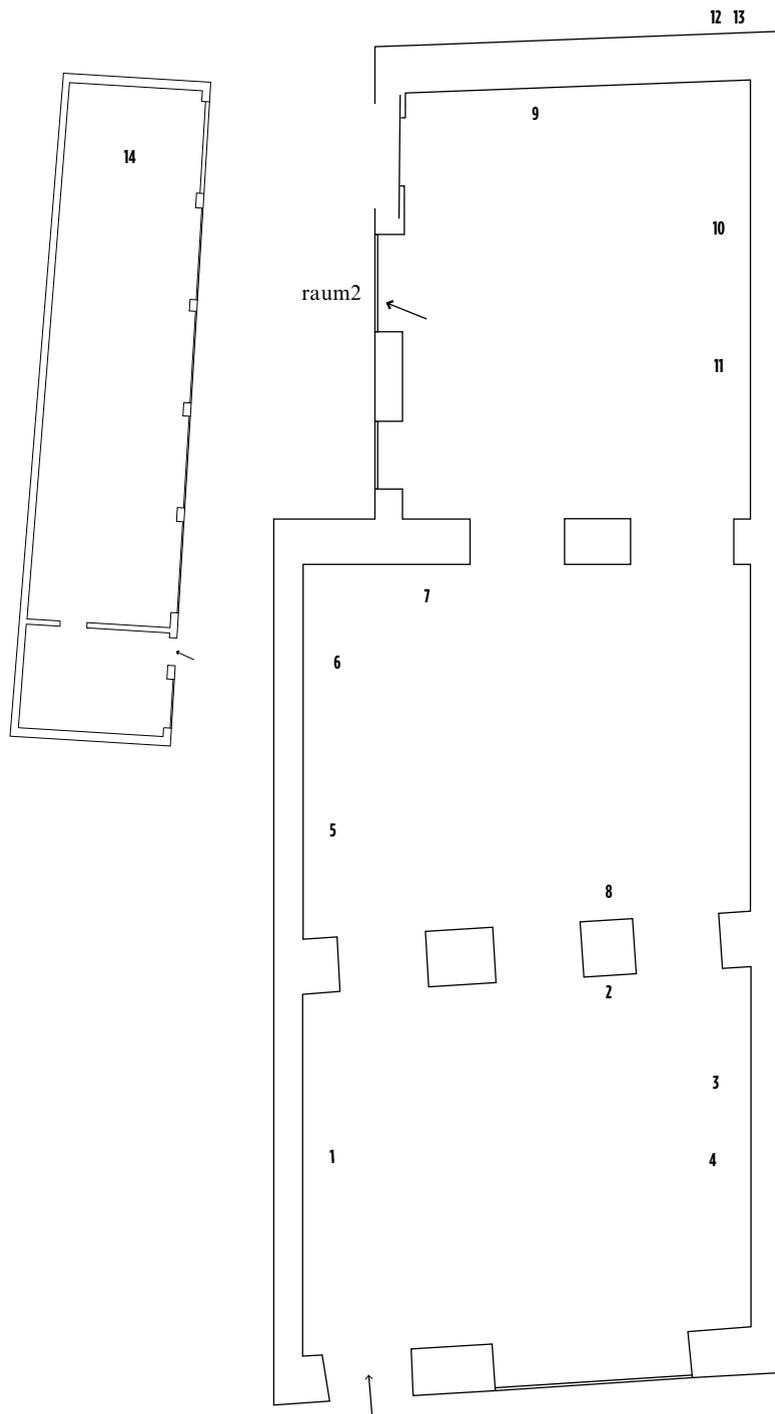
GALERIE RAUM MIT LICHT

ASGER DYBVAD LARSEN JONAS FEFERLE

ANNELIESE SCHRENK AGLAIA KONRAD

»SILENT MATTERS« 22.05. – 29.06.2019





- 1 Jonas Feferle, *untitled*, 2019
- 2 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2018
- 3 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2019
- 4 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2019
- 5 Jonas Feferle, *untitled*, 2019
- 6 Jonas Feferle, *untitled*, 2019
- 7 Jonas Feferle, *untitled*, 2019
- 8 Jonas Feferle, *untitled*, 2019
- 9 Anneliese Schrenk, *G13682/FG190194*, 2016
- 10 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2019
- 11 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2019
- 12 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2017
- 13 Asger Dybvad Larsen, *untitled*, 2019
- 14 Aglaia Konrad, *IL CRETTO*, 2018

Language eventually runs out.
(Jonas Fejerle)

Alberto Burri (1915–1995) is regarded as the creator of paintings made with other materials. Stunned, he processed the traumas of war by allowing various materials to (re-)interact. Today, the increasing digitalization of everyday life is contributing significantly to the suppression of the fundamental autonomous power of the physical realm. The desire for a reality that is easy to handle comes to nought. Contemporary art is responding to these developments with an increasing awareness of the aesthetic qualities of materials. Is there a return to Alberto Burri under different circumstances?

In *Silent Matters*, Galerie Raum mit Licht shows four artists' work that lend visual expression to the silent events of the material world.

Works of canvas, leather and metal are on display. At first glance, their purpose defies clear definition. So they oscillate between pictures and installations, or exude the suggestion of a foreign body. The life that reveals itself on their surfaces has not yet been told as a story. Concrete references remain open, questions are raised: What asserts itself as a massive outer profile, what presents itself as an inner or rear side, what opens up as a side of the face capable of dialogue, as an ephemeral projection surface that can be played on, what proves itself as storage for light phenomena or even dissolves into a hermetic reflection? To what extent do these surfaces define boundaries, exclude, cover, seal, or were once grown together with a living body (as the most sensitive of all sensory organs)? Did these surface materials develop organically? Have they been cut out, pieced together, detached or become brittle in the process of hardening? And furthermore, how is time stored in them? As the traces of touch, as scars, as a patina or as decay?

The poetic spaces that can unfold in encounters with the concrete realm of materials can be forgotten under the dictates of seemingly ageless, uniform monitors. The last work in the show is the film »Il Cretto« by Aglaia Konrad (2018). Slowly and without sound, the camera's view closes in on the white concrete ceiling that Alberto Burri had covered the ruins with from the earthquake at Gibellina in 1984-1989. It was not until 2015 that his work was posthumously completed. Today, the first cracks have appeared in the cement and nature is encroaching. Aglaia Konrad uses the projection to show what it is that Alberto Burri had wanted to show. The story that materials relate bears testimony to the constraints of time. It is never finished. Language, however, eventually runs out.



Film still, *IL CRETTO*, Aglaia Konrad, 2018



ASGER DYBVAD LARSEN (2019)
untitled,
 mixed media,
 75 x 110 cm
 Unique



JONAS FEFERLE (2019)
untitled
 glass, gilder milk, blow aluminium, blow copper, varnish
 243 x 80 cm / each 60 x 80 cm
 Unique

Photo: Rudolf Strobl



ASGER DYBVAD LARSEN (2019)
untitled, mixed media, 160 x 120 cm

right: *untitled*, mixed media, 190 x 140 cm
All Uniques



ASGER DYBVAD LARSEN, b. 1990. Lives and works in Aarhus. Studied at the Jutland Art Academy, Aarhus, and the Malmö Art Academy, Lund.

Larsen's works revolve around the theme of painting as a genre where individual and supra-individual impressions overlap, the personal and the anonymous meld. So it is not only the long (cultural) history of art with the specific cultural techniques related to craftsmanship that are implicated here. The artist understands his individual works as captured moments, distillations of an individual's lifelong creative process. The studio is of particular significance. It is an archive, a laboratory and a source of inspiration combined. Sometimes Larsen only finds new solutions by destroying existing works there. The merging of traditions remains visible in his works. Sutures, for example, lend tactile presence to his composite works. The self-reflexive creative process follows his credo:

„I often compare people and paintings. I appreciate people who are self-reflective — people who can look into themselves and dare question their own existence, and in some way I create art that reflects on its own process, on its place in art history, or its relation to a previous set of works.“ (Asger D. Larsen, 2018)

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JONAS FEFERLE (2019)
untitled
aluminium-compound sheet, gilder milk,
blow aluminium, blow copper, varnish
213 x 35,5 cm and 283 x 47 cm
Unique

Photo: Rudolf Strobl

JONAS FEFERLE, b. 1983. Lives and works in Vienna. He studied philosophy at the University of Vienna and photography at the Institute for Visual and Media Arts at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Jonas Feferle was deeply inspired by Robert Morris and other proponents of Minimalism and Post-minimalism. Radically, he decided to pursue existential questions in engaging with metals. It is the properties of conductivity, malleable and glossiness that characterize the substances of this chemical family.

The basic element of many of his works is aluminium panels and aluminium dibond plates of various sizes and weights, depending on the sizes that the industrially prefabricated materials were available in or the format required for the work concerned. These are usually used as supports for photographs, so they disappear behind the illusion laminated onto them. However Feferle remains faithful to the medium of the raw material and uses very light squares of copper or aluminium leaf, which are commercially available in sheets of 14cm x 14cm or 16cm x 16cm. In contrast to the perfection required in Minimal Art, where an artist's personal gestures are not permitted any room for expression, Feferle allows the joints between the attached sheets of metal leaf to be uneven. His signature touch becomes visible. However, beyond this, in doing so it demonstrates that each individual act of repetition cannot produce the same result.

Angular and cut with precision, his metallic creations hang, stand and lie in the room or wrapped around their supports. Sometimes they are garments, sometimes bodies. Nothing is done at random. The basic module is always recognisable. Everything is in relation to the rest. The shimmering surfaces, however, reflect the viewers back on themselves and stimulate their experience of presence. While a number of surfaces also depict an illusionary space with their treatment of perspective; and at the same time they show that they are hard, hermetic and durable: each touch leaves its traces, some of the patina reveals painterly qualities. The panels prove themselves to be merciless chroniclers of their creation. An encounter with Feferle's work leaves an impression of profound irritation. Where should the viewer position themselves between their exclusion through hermeticism, mirroring (self-)reflection and an inspiring range of projections?

ANNELIESE SCHRENK, b. 1974. Lives and works in Vienna. Studied fine art and art and communication/fashion and styles at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Anneliese Schrenk has long engaged with the cultural coding of an organic material: leather. Every piece was once skin. „But skin“, according to Anneliese Schrenk, „represents the outer border of a living being. It gives it its individual form and relays its history. Skin without a body is inconceivable“. Between the skin of a body and leather lies the taboo of death. This gives the handling of the medium an unmistakably existential and ethical dimension. It is not surprising that the motif of skinning, skin and leather has its own place in many myths and proverbs. If we look at the broader meanings of „skin“, „peau“, „haut“ or „pelle“ in different languages, contrary qualities, such as vulnerability, security and protection overlap. The inner and outer merge in the dense connotation of skin. Subjectivity and objectivity cannot be separated.

While animal skins are considered waste by the meat processing industry, tanneries qualify them as „renewable raw materials“. In order to satisfy their customers' taste, the leather industry endeavours to erase the individuality that each (animal) skin has „acquired“ over the course of its lifetime (Anneliese Schrenk). The artist tries to counteract this. „How would it be,“ she asks, „if when we sat on an airplane, in a car or in a train every seat was as unique as each person sitting on it?“ So, Schrenk works explicitly with skins that have been rejected, so-called ‚reject hides‘, regardless of whether they were damaged during the tanning process or because they have too many natural irregularities, such as scars, skin folds, excessive pigmentation or insect bites.

Inspired by Alberto Burri, for this exhibition the artist chose a light animal hide that was probably intended for an aircraft seat. In its present state, it is referred to as ‚crust leather‘, an undyed or only lightly pre-dyed hide. The natural signs of the strongly pigmented hide typical of black and white Holstein cattle are clearly visible. Such areas of pigmented hide are usually dyed over. Only in rare cases does the tanning process prove ineffective and the leather is rejected. The artist has stretched a metallic frame around the centre of the Holstein cow hide. It does not hang perpendicularly on the wall but orients itself on the displayed image that it encloses. As if under a microscope, the artist uncovers the traces of a (cattle's) life lived, lending the animal dignity and respect. Protruding pieces of velvety hide fall in soft folds — while the body that once was remains recognisable in the irregular outline.



ANNELIESE SCHRENK (2016)
Weiße Landschaft I (G13682/FG190194)
Leather on frame, nails, screws, silver chain
150 x 230 (Rahmen: 160 x 130) cm
Unique

AGLAIA KONRAD, b. 1960. Lives and works in Brussels. Studied at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht.

As a photographer and filmmaker, Aglaia Konrad has a strong interest in changes in the urban fabric resulting from social and political decisions — the demolition of collapsing or abandoned buildings, for instance. Void of people, her images present the architecture as well as the defining raw materials as arbitrary participants that influence — and outlive — civilization. Concrete, which resists decay for a particularly long time, plays a key role in her photographs.

In 2018 the artist travelled to Sicily to film Alberto Burri's spectacular landscape work Grande Cretto (1984-89/2015). A severe earthquake had razed the town to the ground in 1968. Local residents were resettled, and the artist covered the ruins of their houses with a concrete mass. He left the former network of streets unfilled, creating a monumental symbolic image of the earth torn open. Even today it appears to swallow its visitors since the concrete walls reach up to eye-level, blocking the view from the inside outwards and from the outside in. However it looks very different from a distance: the Italian artist's work nestles against the hilly landscape like a bright sail. One conventional interpretation, possibly going back to the wartime doctor Burri himself, sees it as a shroud, an association that can be easily reconciled with the idea of a commemorative site. Remembering Landscape is the apt title of an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Siegen, for which Aglaia Konrad originally created her film *Il Cretto* (16mm transferred to video, 13', colour, sound).

Numerous different film directors have already taken the Sicilian landscape as the subject of their films. However Aglaia Konrad's work differs fundamentally from these documentaries: only the credits are streamed in the conventional manner and underlaid with sound. The actual film, the work, is best described as a kind of cycle of unsynchronised, silent glances. The silence signals that one is not where one is looking. Equipped with their own attention span, each of these moments now appear alongside one another on the projection screen. At first, a double, horizontal projection opens up, calling two train windows to mind. The view wanders into the distance, and under a cloudy sky the shimmering concrete wasteland looks as if it



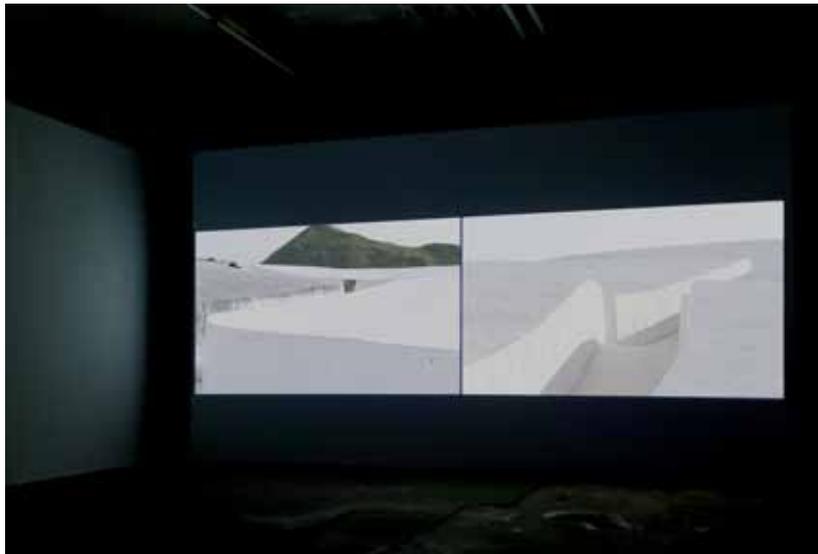
AGLAIA KONRAD (2018)
IL CRETTO

16mm transferred to video, 13', color, sound, 11.21 min.

Ed. 1/3 + 2AP

The landscape moves past as other, smaller projections gradually fade in and out from below and from above. They transform the screen into a movable collage, from which the concrete can now be experienced close-up and in glistening light. That weather and resistive nature have meanwhile taken hold of it. It becomes visible. The wind that travels through the young stalks does not know its history. Through the minimalist reduction to only what is visible, which viewers have to piece together for themselves, Aglaia Konrad succeeds in creating a filmic equivalent of Burri's work that congenially takes into account the grotesque incompatibility of the close-up experience and the monument's impact from a distance. Existential shock lives on.

Text: Heidrun Rosenberg 2019
Translation: Jonathan Quinn



Exhibition view



Exhibition views

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Di - Fr 12 - 18 Uhr, Sa 11 - 14 Uhr

Tue - Fri 12 - 6 p.m., Sat 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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