



**QUESTION ME**

**& ANSWER**

**ARTIST COLLECTIVE**

**SUPPORTING ARTISTS NEW  
TO VIENNA TO FIND AN ENTRANCE INTO  
THE VIENNESE CULTURAL SECTOR.**

**ADVOCATING FOR MORE DIVERSITY  
IN VIENNESE CULTURAL PROGRAMS.**

**MAKING VIENNA'S ART COMMUNITY  
MORE UNFORESEEABLE.**

# PRECARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

## AN EXHIBITION BY THE QM&A ARTIST COLLECTIVE 2021

“Lives are by definition precarious: they can be expunged at will or by accident; their persistence is in no sense guaranteed. In some sense, this is a feature of all life, and there is no thinking of life which is not precarious [...] Precarity designates the politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence and death.” — Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?*

And yet, we still manage to hold hands and find a home, even in the precarious circumstances, in not the same equal environment, by being not similar at all, in the context of a dysfunctional human-nature relationship, dominated by technology, and constantly confused.

The exhibition is the voice of the collective, of the individual, of the artist living in the contemporary landscape, which is characterized by a variety of economic, political, and social issues.

In 2021 for the six months, 16 artists have been exploring how precarious and vulnerable lives are intertwined. By working in pairs without a given topic, we touched the related realm of the circumstance we live in. Although the medium of artworks stands at a wide range, from print and drawing to sound and performance, the united perception of the wake of changing conditions can be recognized in each of the artwork being presented in the group show.

### **Contributing artists:**

Bitu Bell working with Huda Takriti  
Rehema Chachage working with Pedro Del Real  
Kristina Cyan working with Zhanina Marinova  
Afraz Entessari working with Christian Murzek  
Xenia Snapiro working with Lisa Großkopf  
Mary Maggic working with Maaijke Middelbeek  
Ciwan Veysel working with Sarah Braid  
Marcel Lazar working with Maren Streich

**The exhibition can be seen April 6th to April 10th 2022**  
at SOHO Studios - Art Space Vienna.

The QM&A Artist Collective 2021 is the 4th collective established by the Viennese initiative QUESTION ME & ANSWER. Each year a new collective is formed. In order to become part of the collective artists are encouraged to apply to our open call that is issued at the beginning of each year. The selected artists are divided in groups of two or three artists with which they then co-create an artwork over several months. The groups are formed by assigning artists that have been living in Vienna for a long time to artists that only recently moved to Vienna. This ensures that they have a different perspective on the Viennese cultural sector and can enter into a debate on its nature and inclusivity. Each group is assigned a curator to support their artistic process.

While the artists primarily work with their group, different events are organized for the entire collective to get to know each other better and get insider knowledge about the Viennese art scene. The events can include guided tours in museums, studio visits and talks with important actors inside the Viennese cultural sector.

*All photos by: Maria Belova*

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## WHO IMPLEMENTS QM&A

QM&A started as a joint initiative by Smaranda Krings, Osama Zatar and Justina Špeirokaitė and quickly grew to include many more people. Apart from the QM&A project managers, we work with curators from different galleries such as Improper Walls Gallery in the framework of the QM&A Artist Collective, cultural workers such as Mbatjiua Hambira who are supporting us in the implementation of QM&A On Stage, artists creating the program for the QM&A Kids Summer and many more colleagues supporting us on different projects.

QM&A is an initiative operated by the association Flüchtlinge Willkommen Österreich.

## WHY DOES QM&A EXIST

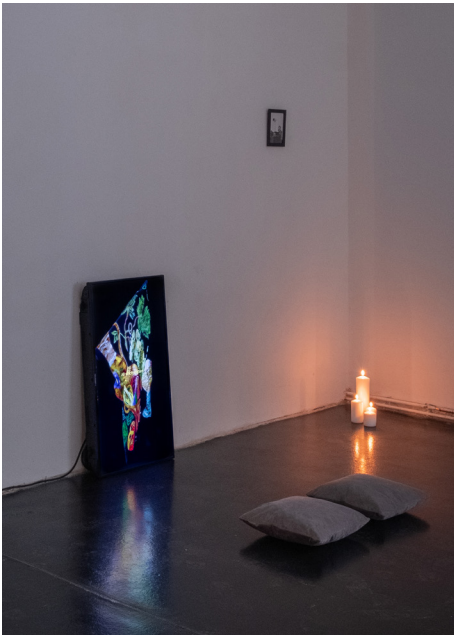
**It's hard for every artist to find an entrance into the Viennese artist community and art market. However, it's even harder as a person who has only recently arrived here, be it as a migrant or a refugee.**

Oftentimes, people do not yet have a professional network in the Viennese art sector and don't have the needed amount of time to organically build up this network. QM&A wants to shorten this process of network-building and foster exchange between artists who have been based in Vienna for a long time and those who have newly arrived. Active network-building constitutes a vital aspect of this initiative, which is achieved by various programs and events. Furthermore, we offer courses to convey key competences for successfully navigating the Viennese cultural sector. These include lectures by gallerists, curators and bookers. As a newly arrived artist, certain difficulties arise in finding the correct venues for your exhibitions, concerts or any other form of cultural event. For these cases, we offer counselling and direct contacts.

Another important aspect of our work is advocating for more diversity in Viennese art programs. Vienna is a city with a wide range of diverse nationalities, backgrounds, experiences and genders and we believe that art should reflect this character. Cultural institutions should be a place where each and every one of us can recognize themselves or part of themselves. We don't believe this is currently possible and therefore aim to foster the discussion among cultural institutions to bring the topic to the agenda. The following questions should always be raised:

- Are programs designed and implemented taking into consideration different perspectives?
- Do the artists and curators invited correctly represent the entire Viennese population or just a small privileged part of it?
- Are invited artists that are not seen as "Western" being exoticised and tokenized or is this actively worked against?

We want to support cultural institutions in implementing mechanisms for the inclusion of artists with different backgrounds living in Vienna into their regular program. A strong focus has to be laid on working against the tokenization of people belonging to a certain minority. We want to constitute a force that helps ensure that Viennese cultural programs reflect the unique Viennese character that is diverse in genders, nationalities and backgrounds.



## PARADOX PARADISE

**Huda Takriti, Bitá Bell**

Curated by: **Justina Špeirokaitė**

2022

*Installation-Performance*

*Video, 02'50"*



Walking ahead  
in the unknown  
with uncertain steps.  
Looking back  
at what's  
no longer there.

Missing.

I said something  
and you replied:  
“Funny! I also!”  
You then said something  
and I replied:  
“No way! Same thing!”

We are not similar  
but the circumstances that  
have brought us  
to this very moment  
are.

“What happens when  
two artists  
hold hands?”

Born in Iran, **Bitá Bell** is a dance artist-activist who relocated from the U.S. to Vienna in 2020. Her often non-proscenium and participatory choreographic works are personal and collective auto-historia of gender and national identity politics. She became a dancer for Pussy Riot in 2019 and is currently one of the curators and managers of the arts and cultural events at Die Labile Botschaft.



**Huda Takriti** (b. 1990) is a trans-disciplinary artist currently based in Vienna. Her works explore the relationship between history, politics, memories and counter memories and the construction of our own subjectivities. Her works span different media; video, film, installation, and painting. Her works attempt to generate questions about how we relate to others, how we tell personal stories in the framework of collective history and how we deal with our patrimony and traditions.









## WHITE NOISE

**Afraz Entessari, Christian Murzek**

Curated by: **Urte Špeirokaitė**

2021

*Painting, Sculpture*

*220x150 cm, 17x16x28 cm*

WHITE NOISE shows different approaches to the use of digital technologies and methods. In Christian Murzek's work, it is algorithms, for example cellular automata, that form the starting point of a digital and analogue process. He not only works on the code, which delivers binary output, but also overwrites digital forms by means of manual interventions. Afraz Entessari reacts to existing information technologies and data indirectly. He translates them by means of analogue algorithms, i.e. through numerous defined individual steps, into serial analogue structures. Only when looking at the details do they tell of the process of their manual production. What both approaches have in common is that they open up the black box of algorithms to a certain extent.

**Afraz Entessari's** artistic practice is an exploration; the intangible, oddities and unlikely combination or (sometimes distorted) semantic relation between materials, objects and concepts. With the tendency to expand definitions and dissolve the boundaries. Working with materials he studies their symbolic means and their functional role in human culture and life. With playfulness and a touch of absurdity, Afraz engages with materials and sometimes relives their history - raw materials are like pure feelings and sentience - and language itself as the medium, from title to the description text and language as materials.



**Christian Murzek** was born in 1986 and lives and works in Vienna and Lower Austria. He studied philosophy at the University of Vienna. In 2012 he started studying at the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna) with Silke Otto-Knapp, Gunter Damisch, Veronika Dirnhofner and Christian Schwarzwald. His work focuses on the interface of digital and analogue processes, where codes and algorithms serve as the starting points of his artistic expressions and are then transformed into prints, paintings and drawings.



## TALKING REDIENTS

**Pedro Del Real, Rehema Chachage**

Curated by: **Urte Špeirokaitė**

2021

*Installation (Sound, Different objects)*

*Pumpkin 2:04 min, Flour 4:04 min, Sardines 2:24 min, Tomatoes 3:41 min*

Ingredients tell stories: from the functional - on how to use them in the kitchen - to their more symbolic use, passing through the histories behind them or their entanglement with our personal biographies.

Ingredients make us tell stories. They are objects that trigger memories of specific moments in our lives, they are the vertebrates from which we reflect on our reality or shed light on our past.

These talking ingredients, our Talking Redients, invite you to listen and to speak to them. We want to tell you our stories, in turn, we also extend an invitation for you to tell us yours - whether complex covering an array of narratives shaped by centuries of agricultural labor, migration, and gentrification of food... or less complex, connecting to family histories and handed down/adopted recipes, we invite you to tell them all!

Our Talking Redients are the conversations around the kitchen table, a Proustian muffin or a thought triggered in the pantry.

Let's talk!



Send your ingredients to:  
**senyordelreal@gmail.com**  
to participate in the story pantry



Pumpkin  
Rehema  
Chachage



Flour  
Rehema  
Chachage



Sardines  
Pedro del Real



Tomatoes  
Pedro del Real



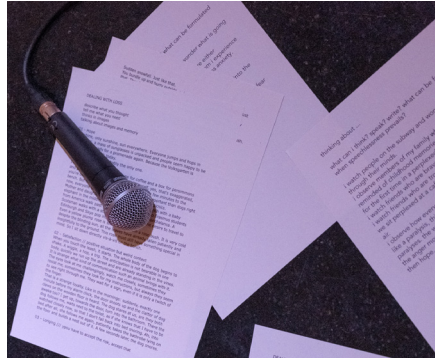
**Pedro del Real** (b. 1990, Barcelona) does many things related to words: lecture performances, cartoons and writing. His performances try to engage the audience with new concepts and ideas, focusing on the interaction with them as means of discovering new aesthetics. Magic and Games and Beautiful Slides are his specialty.



**Rehema Chachage** (b.1987, Dar es Salaam) is a visual artist whose practice can be viewed as a performative archive which untraditionally collects stories, rituals and other oral traditions in different media (performance, photography, video, text as well as physical installations); which traces hi/stories directly tied to (and connecting with) her matrilineage; and, which utilizes methodologies which are both embodied and instinctual, employing written texts, oral and aural stories, melodies, and relics from several re-enacted/performed rituals as source of research.







## CLOSE LOSING

**Marcel Lazăr, Maren Streich**  
Curated by: **Justina Špeirokaitė**  
2021-2022  
*Performance, Installation*

The past years reinstructed the world about distance, breaks and different qualities of loss. Dealing with the different qualities of spoken words and performed music, the artists exchanged memories and experiences in their artistic languages and started a poetic-musical dialogue. Their live performance will evolve the overlapping languages in the room, evolving the emotions in different artistic ways

**Maren Streich**, Mag.a (\*1993) is an actress, theatre maker, author and sees herself as a maker of the scenic arts and experimental social observer. She is a co-founder of LOT in the Brotfabrik Vienna and co-founder of the resident cultural association ECHO-LOT. Starting from her engagement with acting, she transfers experiences from volunteer work or interviews into texts, performances and other artistic research works. In the performance duo „raum::zeit“ she works on memory and history of the present. „DESIRÉE“ is a collective in which above all the vibrational space of longing, desire, sexuality and origin is questioned. She trained as an actor at the Max Reinhardt Seminar, after studying at the Berlin University of the Arts and the Humboldt University Berlin. In June 2021 she took over as assistant to Claudia Bosse (Theatercombinat).



**Marcel Lazăr** was born in 1993 in Chişinău, Moldova. He holds a master's in Piano from the National University of Music and is currently studying at the The University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna (MDW). Since 2015, Marcel has been organizing Moldo Crescendo, a Classical Music Festival, which brings classical music to the biggest cities and villages in Moldova and Romania.





## SCOBY SPIN CYCLE

**Mary Maggic**

Curated by: **Ale Zapata**

2022

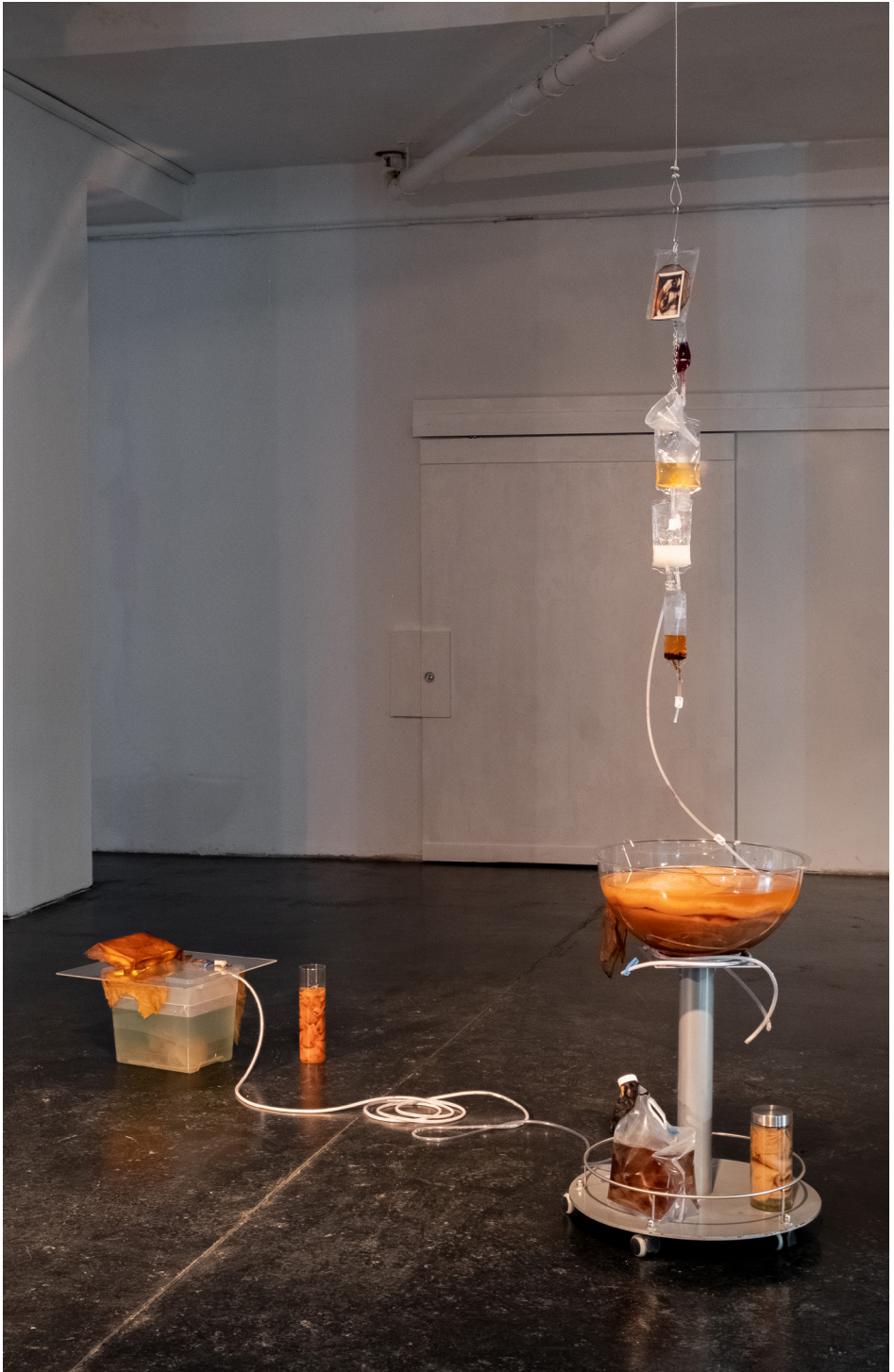
*Technical expertise by Derrick Puck*

*Exercise bike / SCOBY / Rotating disk bioreactor*

SCOBY Spin Cycle is an interactive installation where humans and non-humans train together to achieve the impossible fantasy of post-natural optimization. Appropriating industrial designs of SCOBY micro cellulose production, the installation incorporates a kombucha bioreactor that is kept in constant rotation by a human-powered exercise machine. As human muscles burn from lactic acid buildup, the SCOBY thrives in a similar acidic environment when it converts alcoholic compounds into acetic acids during the fermentation process of making kombucha. Thriving and surviving in sour spaces, the SCOBY aggregates into large, fleshy masses while human participants training on their respective machines build their own muscle masses. Through the cross-species performance of fitness and technological enhancement, SCOBY Spin Cycle reflects on how we are already living in a simulation of post-natural capitalist aesthetics, and whether labor, care, alienation, and kinship can all coexist in simultaneous harmonious tension.

**Mary Maggic's** interdisciplinary practice is one of socio-political excavation, investigating the role of institutional science and biotechnology in the construction of somatic fictions and mass political imaginaries. Drawing upon the concept of public amateurism, her practice manifests through public participatory workshops and biohacking as critical sites for knowledge production and collaborative queerings of the status quo. Through her hormone research of the last five years, Mary chooses the molecular semiosphere and its micro-performativities as the starting point for culturally examining body and gender politics and the ever-increasing alienation of what we commonly believe to be eco-heteronormative. If these molecules are to be black boxes from which to be emancipated and demystified, biohacking and “freak science” protocols trigger the unearthing of the histories, origins and futures of our collective mutagenesis. As a product of this world that is permanently polluted and colonized by industrial toxicities and capitalist aims, Mary Maggic runs with this urgency to figure new (xeno)feminist strategies that embody the radical porosity of human, non-human, and planetary. Cross-contaminations are indeed how we survive together. Purity is not an option!







## MY ARTIFICIAL WOMB

**Maaijke Middelbeek**

Curated by: **Ale Zapata**

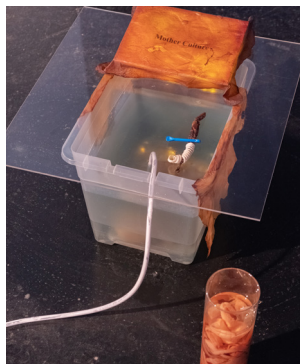
2022

*Installation, Scoby*

I am human. I am lost. Since we were born, since we left the womb of our mothers, we feel naked and defenseless. We built encompassing incubators: houses, cities, civilizations, immune systems, borders between you - my microbial ancestors - and me. Bacteria merged to create human cells. They are what we grew from. They date back almost 4 billion years, while we, homo sapiens, emerged only yesterday on earth's scale, about 300.000 years ago. Some of those ancient microbes still guide us today. They are on and in and around us. We need billions of them to help run our system, to feel happy.

„My womb“ is a symbol of connection. The fantastic apparatus allows me to make contact and fuse with my other-than-human kin. It helps to rehabilitate a bond to those that were at the very beginning of life. No other human experience comes close to the symbiotic state of connection to another being than growing a child within the safe borders of your own body. But then it is „my artificial womb“. It is a technically induced, externalized intimacy. My bodily fluids mingle with the symbiotic mother cultures of the bacteria and yeast. I inhale the vapors and steams of this process of life. We care for each other, we contaminate each other. We communicate, although there is this „artifact“, through this artifact, the artificial, the cultured, we become with each other.

**Maaijke Middelbeek's** recent concepts and works aim to be symbiogenetic, thus grown in symbiosis – in a mutually beneficial relationship. She collaborates with various fungi and became fascinated by the process of decomposition with mycelium as well as other organisms and micro-organisms in a compost environment. With her interest in ecology and life's interconnectedness, understanding that every relationship within the network of life has meaning, she grew feelings of care and responsibility as an artist and questioned her work and its relationship to life on a damaged planet.





## HOME ≠ HOME

**Xenia Shapiro, Lisa Großkopf**

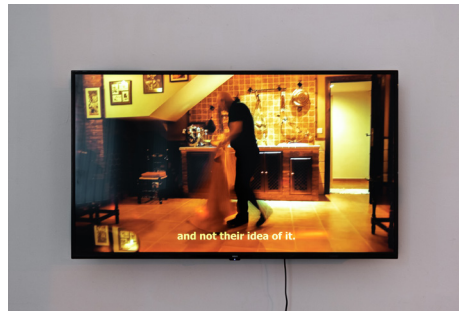
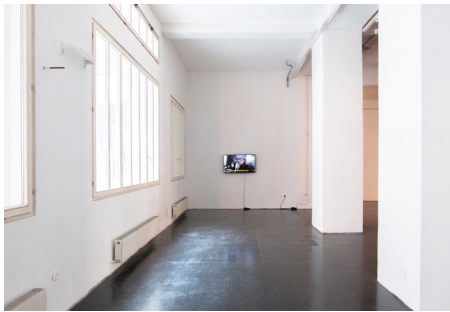
Curated by: **Ale Zapata**

2022

*Two channel video installation*

In their two-channel video installation Xenia Shapiro and Lisa Großkopf engage with a central space of everyday life: living rooms - with the concrete, visual design as well as on a meta-level. In her performative video work „Ein zärtliches Gefühl“ , Lisa Großkopf imagines a relationship between the private living room and the broader concept of home by reading a text by journalist Robert Misik considered one of the most controversial left-wing writers of his generation.

Xenia's video however features individual thoughts about the notion of home while juxtaposing a mosaic of moving images.



**Lisa Großkopf's** works encompass diverse media, including site-specific installations and ephemeral interventions in public space as well as performances, photography, video, artist books and posters. The miscellaneous works are related by the recurrent intermingling of truth and fiction, which is an invitation to a critical examination of granted constructions of reality.



**Xenia Shapiro** is a visual artist from Ukraine. Based in Vienna and with documentary and conceptual photography being the two main directions of her work, she uses photography to tell stories and research the role of social imagining in aesthetic experience. "I personally perceive documentary photography as a type of movie making. These days, if you are outside of your home – you are in the cinema, whether you like it or not. I go outside and take photos of the ordinary life around me, especially in countries like Ukraine and Russia, everything becomes cinematographic. In those countries I have the opportunity to see what has changed over the years and what has remained the same. I understand the people living there well and with the help of photography, I manage to document important aspects in the process of exploring cities or observing how life goes on there."







## BORDERS / GRENZEN

**Ciwan Veysel, Sarah Braid**

Curated by: **Philipp Renda**

2021

Acrylic on canvas

80x100

In a world where borders are created in symbolic and material ways, fear and insecurity are widespread for many artists who continue to produce their own works under precarious circumstances. Artists who have migrated to Western countries from other parts of the world struggle with systemic injustices, borders, rules, laws and bureaucracy, all of which restrict their freedom significantly. Borders, identities and passports are now being exposed as part of a systemic violence. Bearing all this in mind, artists cannot meet in the same equal environment.

**Sarah Braid** lives and works in Upper Austria and Vienna. She studies Media Art at the Art University in Linz and Fine Arts (Painting and Animation) at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and has been working in graphic design, illustration and animation since graduating at „die Graphische“ in Vienna. She deals with various forms of expression and media in visual art focusing on painting, drawing, (frame by frame) 2D animation and creating cartoons and comics.



**Ciwan Veysel** is a visual artist born in Turkey who lives and works in Austria. He opened his first solo exhibition in Berlin in 2018 and his second one in Vienna in 2021. Through the connection between art and identity, the artist's production deals with political memory issues such as immigration and diaspora, social memory, queer struggle, borders and the political subjectivity of Kurdish identity. Ciwan also continues with photography, curating and performing at artist collectives and art festivals created by Vienna-based immigrant artists.





**(WHITE) UNTITLED, 2022**  
**(TRANSPARENT) UNTITLED, 2022**  
**(BLACK) UNTITLED, 2022**  
**PATH, 2019**

**Kristina Cyan**

*Mixed media 60x60x60*

*Mixed media 90x90x90*

*Mixed media 60x30x120*

*Videoart 5.35*

**Kristina Cyan's** work and practice focus on the intersection of (media- and bio-) technology, body-politics, politics of images, feminist and environmental studies. From her point of view, technology is not only a tool, but also represents hybridity politics of extensions and enters questions of information, identities, publicity and politics.









## LIFE IN A BUBBLE, 2022

**Zhanina Marinova**

Curated by: **Philipp Renda**

*Pencil on paper 240x140 cm*

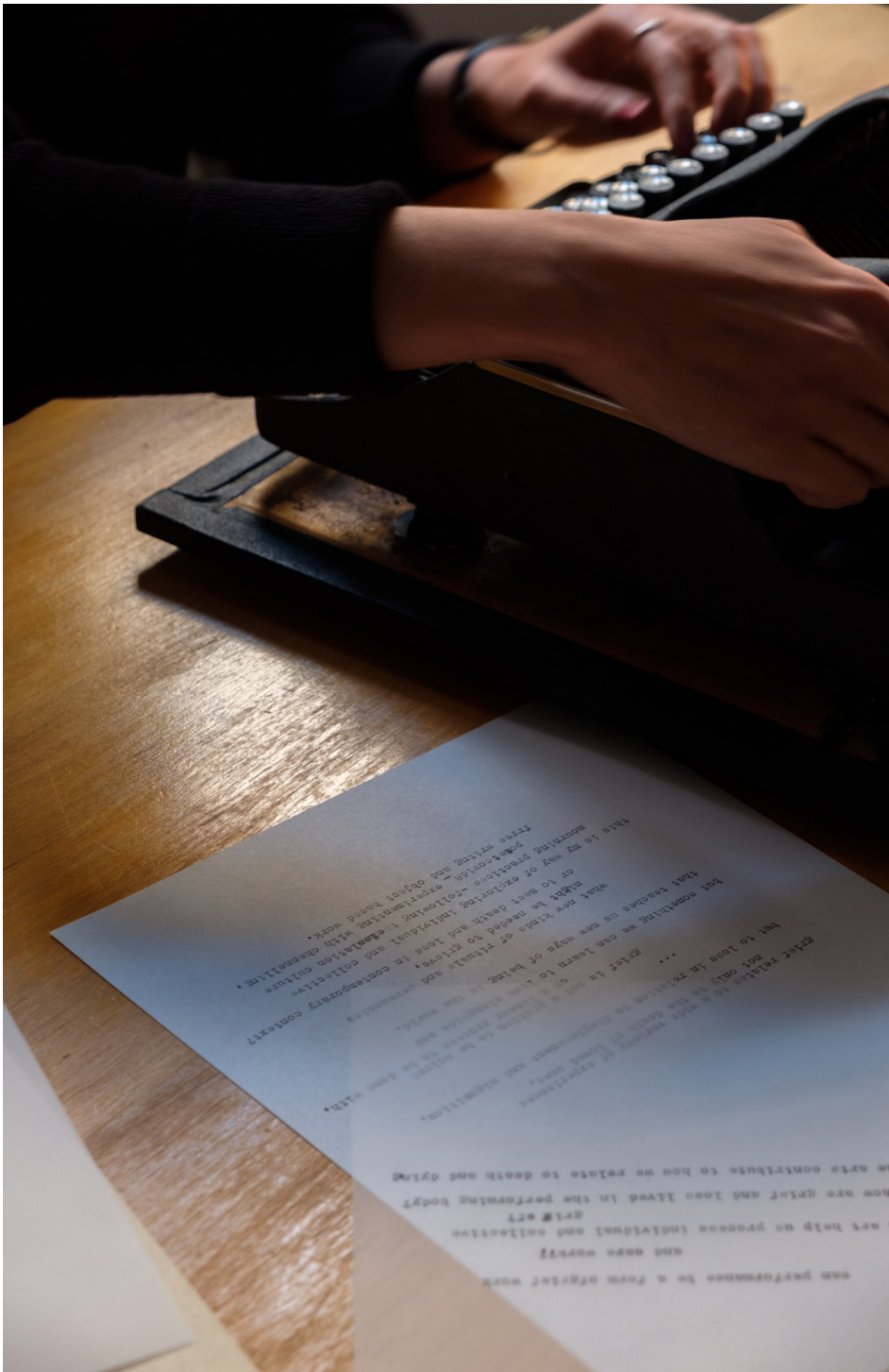
Life in a bubble.

Where everyone and everything live together but they can't meet.

The bubble is a highly fragile structure, although highly protective. Thinking about the new life we all have to find the new strategies, if we want to withdraw from precarious conditions, and if we want to not end up again in the current situation. How can feeling safe grow in unity? What new can we notice, in order to build a new form of communication and collaboration?

These issues concern globalization, processes of interaction with society and advanced media technologies and do affect and influence our fragmented perception of reality and materiality. And this is the area, where **Zhanina Marinova's** aesthetic concerns are addressing a challenge of ethics. By presenting imagination as a kind of materialized fiction, which for her is closely linked to the idea of the relationship between presence and absence, Marinova invents her own reality and explores the deep constellations of perception, thoughts, feelings and memories. Marinova works primarily in the field of screen printing, drawing, installation and book art, using such diverse materials as fabrics, paper, transparent foils and wood as canvas for her screen prints. With such a variety of surfaces, the only constant is the large scale.















WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE NUMEROUS PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS WHO CONTINUOUSLY SUPPORT OUR WORK AND THEREBY CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING VIENNA'S ART SCENE REALLY REPRESENT THE VIENNESE SOCIETY. BECAUSE VIENNA IS DIVERSE IN GENDERS, NATIONALITIES AND BACKGROUNDS - VIENNA IS ALL OF US.

FUNDED BY

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Kultur



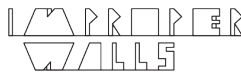
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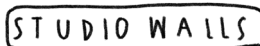


THIS YEAR'S PARTNERS:

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**SUPER**



**STUDIO VINCENT**

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