

Nico Müller
Portfolio & CV



Education

2018 - 2021	Master of Arts in Fine Arts (work.master) at HEAD – Genève
2011 - 2014	Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts at Hochschule der Künste Bern
2007 - 2011	Philosophy / History at University of Bern

Exhibitions (selection)

2024	Künstlerhaus S11, Solothurn, <i>Prendre l'air (Solo)</i> Espace Contact, Neuchâtel, July - September 2024 (Solo)	2017	Lokal-Int, Biel/Bienne, <i>Laisse tomber (Solo)</i> Galerie 95, Biel/Bienne, <i>Crib II</i> Kunstmuseum Olten, <i>Voyage, voyage!</i> Kraut Kunstfestival, Luzern, <i>Nico Müller & Eva Maria Gisler (Duo)</i>
2023	Space 25, Basel, <i>Project 13: Jan Hostettler, Nico Müller, Jürg Stäuble</i> Galerie Dufflon/Racz, Bern, <i>Les choses d'ici-bas</i> For Immediate Release, Stockholm, <i>Flyksoda</i> Kunsthau Langenthal, <i>Cantonale Berne/Jura</i>	2016	Forum Schlossplatz, Aarau, <i>Whispering Woods</i> Kunstraum Riehen, <i>Regionale 17: Shades of Grey</i> Kunstmuseum Solothurn, <i>Jahresausstellung</i> Cité internationale des Arts (La Galerie), Paris, <i>LOVE*</i>
2022	EAC Les Halles, Porrentruy, <i>Solitaires (with Sophie Yerly)</i> Baseltorkiosk, Solothurn, <i>Soft Evidence (Solo)</i> Centre Pasquart, Biel/Bienne, <i>Cantonale Berne/Jura</i>	2015	Stadtgalerie, Bern, <i>Cantonale Berne/Jura</i> Kunsthau Langenthal, <i>Die Basis (Collective)</i> Lokal-Int, Biel, <i>Manual Exposure Control (Solo)</i> Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Basel, <i>Complaining Won't Burn Calories</i>
2021	Blueproject Foundation, Barcelona, <i>Como la vida misma</i> Pas une Orange, Barcelona, <i>Las palabras azules</i> Kunstraum Riehen, <i>Regionale 22: We Proudly Present</i> HEAD Genève, <i>Grand Tour</i> Kunsthau Grenchen, <i>Im Wald</i> Accélérateur de Particules, Strasbourg, <i>Regionale 21: Crepuscules</i>	2014	Kunstmuseum Thun, <i>Formsache</i> Kunsthau Langenthal, <i>Unsere geteilte Aufmerksamkeit</i> Kunstraum Aarau, <i>3 pièces +</i> Raum Arbenz, Zürich, <i>Still not</i>
2020	Kunstraum Riehen, <i>Motor</i> Grand Palais Bern, <i>Edition Release: Nico Müller & Nina Rieben</i> Centre Pasquart, Biel/Bienne, <i>Cantonale Berne/Jura</i> Kunstraum Riehen, <i>Regionale 21: Un certain regard</i>	2013	Stadtgalerie, Bern, <i>Cantonale Bern/Jura</i> Kunstmuseum Olten, <i>Jahresausstellung</i> L'ELAC (Lausanne), Oslo 8 (Basel), Jungkunst (Winterthur): <i>17. vfg Nachwuchsförderpreis</i> Cabane B, Bümpliz, <i>CH1903: 597975/201244 (with Karen Amanda Moser)</i>
2019	The Flat, Bern, <i>Intimate Attention</i>		
2018	Kunstmuseum Thun, <i>Spuren in Schnee</i> Space Out, Payerne, <i>Untitled (Solo)</i> Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris, <i>Jeune Création 68^e édition</i>		

Other

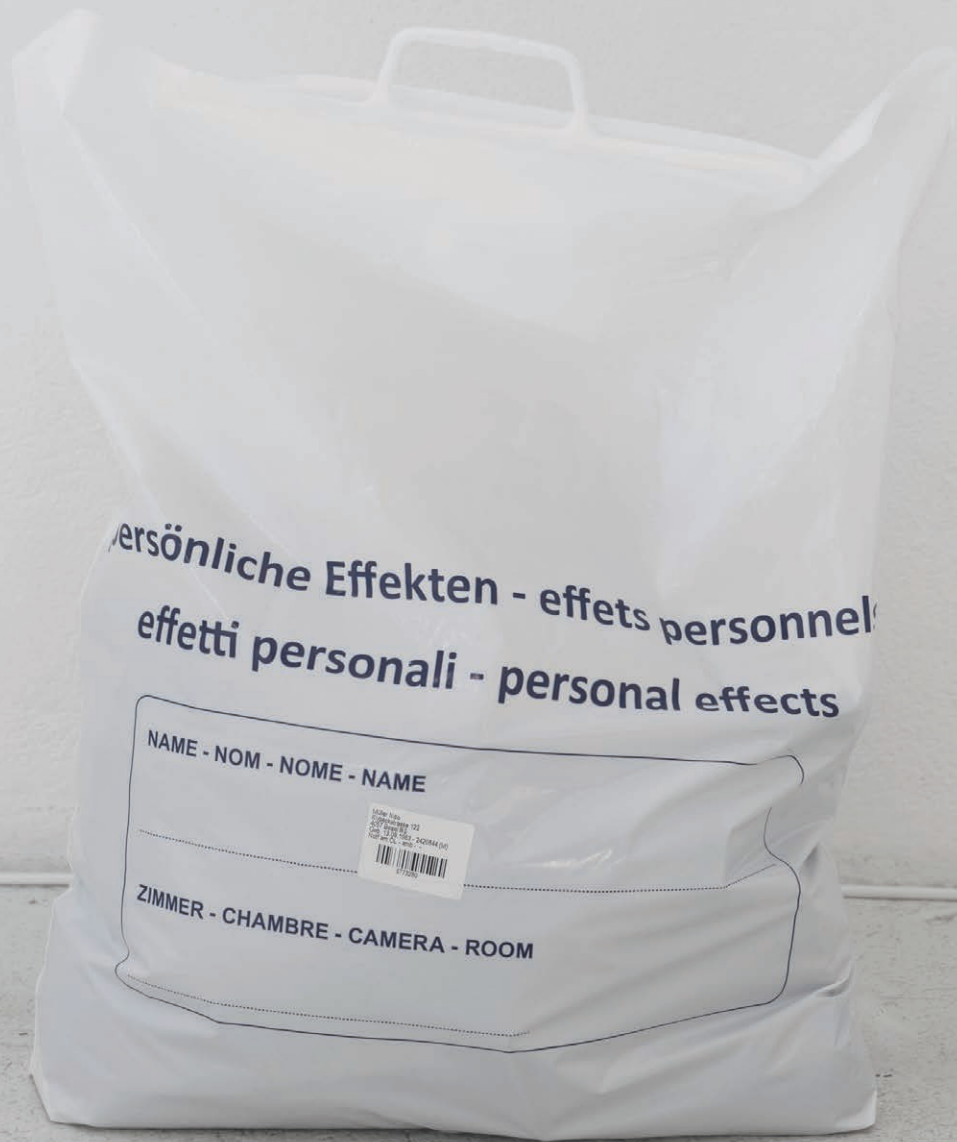
2022	COMO22 Artist Research Lab with John Knight (Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como)	2016	Residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris (Canton of Solothurn)
2022	Project Grant (Kunstkredit, Basel)	2015	Vfg Young Talent Award for Photography (Shortlist)
2021	Residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris (Atelier Mondial, Basel)	2014	Emerging Artist Grant (Canton of Solothurn)
2018	Prix Indépendant: École des arts – Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne (Jeune Création 68 ^e)		



AIR



Airism or the Impossibility of Breathing "AIR"
(GB Airlines, Nike)
2024
Projection, open window



Personal Effects

2024

Softshell jacket, work pants, on sneakers, t-shirt,
socks, mobile phone

40 x 52 x 20 cm

Cicadas on Lake Como

2024

Audio installation, open windows

1h6min

Listen: <https://bit.ly/cicadasonlakecomo>

A field recording of male cicadas at Lake Como on their race to attract the attention of the females, blending together with accelerating sportscars on the nearby road, waterplanes taking off and landing, as well as added mobile phone notification sounds in different intervals.





Installation view: Künstlerhaus S11, Solothurn



Airism or the Impossibility of Breathing "AIR"
(Iraqi Airlines)
2024
Projection, open window



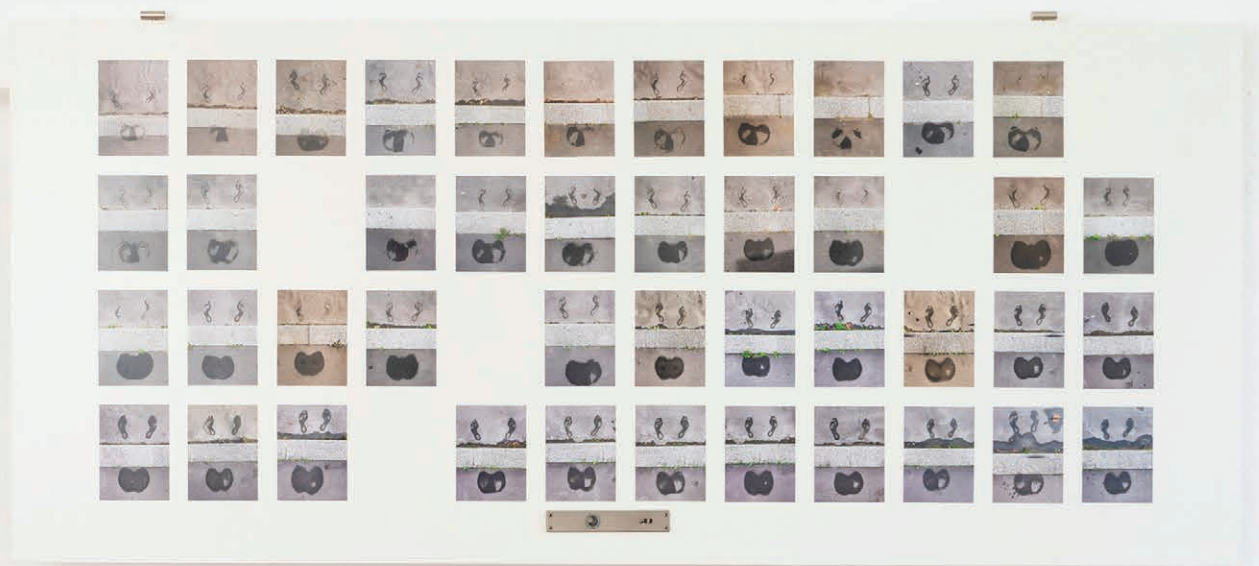


Airism or the Impossibility of Breathing "AIR"
(FlyNordic)

2024

Projection, open window

The work is based on logos from existing brands that contain the word "air" and draw symbolic value from the words meaning. The logos were manually transformed, made to contract and expand as if they were trying to breathe air themselves, confusing the real phenomenon with its symbolic counterpart.



**Self Care during Late Capitalism
(Paris 2022)**
2024
43 Photographs mounted on door
198.5 x 86 x 4 cm



Air Circulation Device

2024

Shoebbox, plastic bottles, ventilators, wiring

25 x 33 x 20 cm



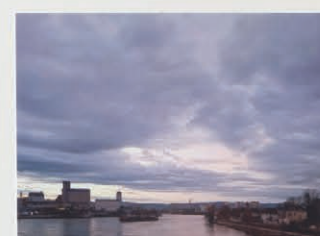
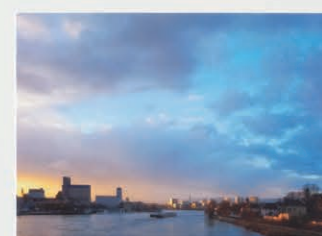
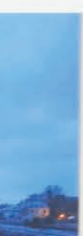
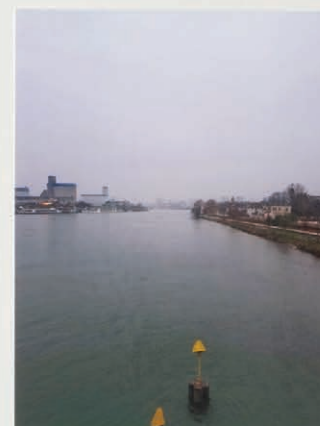
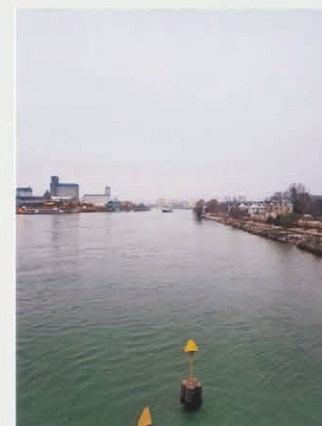
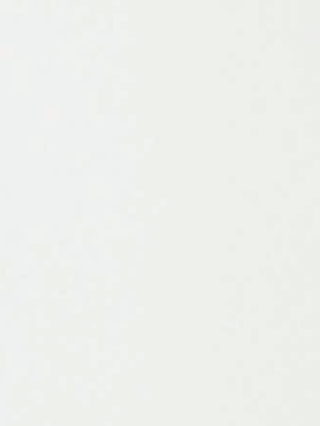
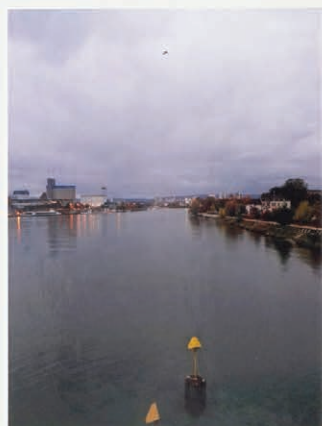
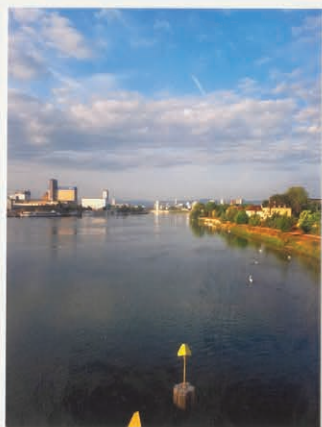
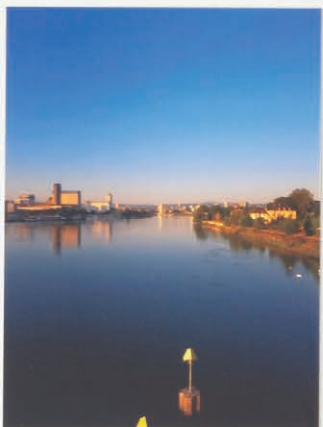
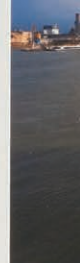
Self Care during Late Capitalism (Basel, 2023-2024)

2024

42 Photographs mounted on door

198.5 x 86 x 4 cm

A series of 42 photographs taken over the course of 1.5 years in the middle of my running route on the Three Country Bridge between Germany and France, facing Basel. Each picture was instantly posted on social media, where it was available to be seen for 24h. The series found its natural conclusion when I had to stop running due to a cardiac event. The works title puts the focus on the difficulty of doing things for their own sake in today's world, instead of regarding them as a source for further extraction of value / content.





Installation view: Künstlerhaus S11, Solothurn



Conspiracy

2024

Inflatable lungs, blower, arduino, PIR-sensor, relay, wiring

3 x 3 x 3m each

Two inflatable lungs in the two wings of the exhibition space, performing a codependent choreography. When one lung inflates, the other exhales and vice versa. Breathing together and at the same time symbolically providing the space with oxygen.



Installation view: Space25, Basel



Inner Values

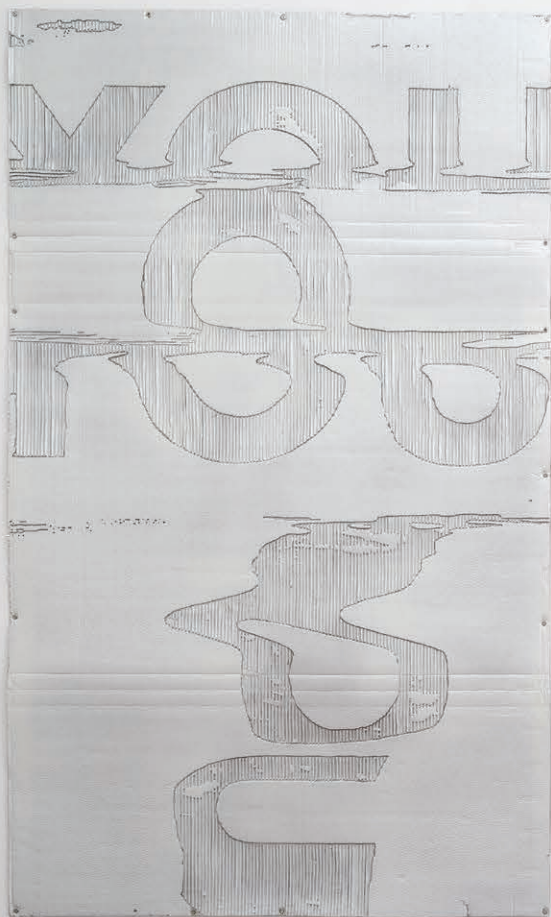
2023

Paper lamp, bio-based epoxy, plate,
candles, LED-candles, dust and dirt
60 x 60 x 60 cm



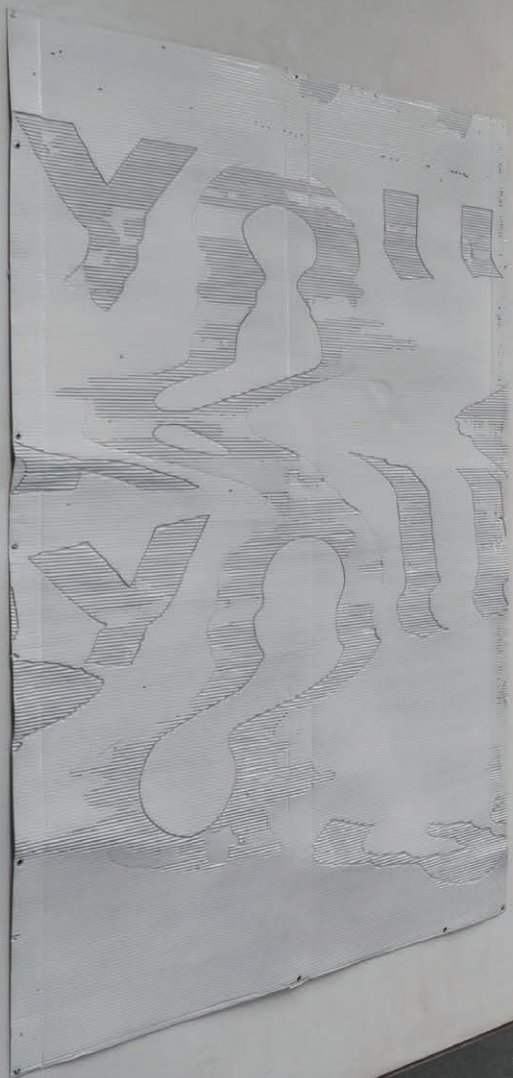
Pocketchange I/II
2023
Lambda print, framed
29.7 x 42 cm





If You're Not the One
2023
Varnish on cardboard engraving
128 x 215 cm

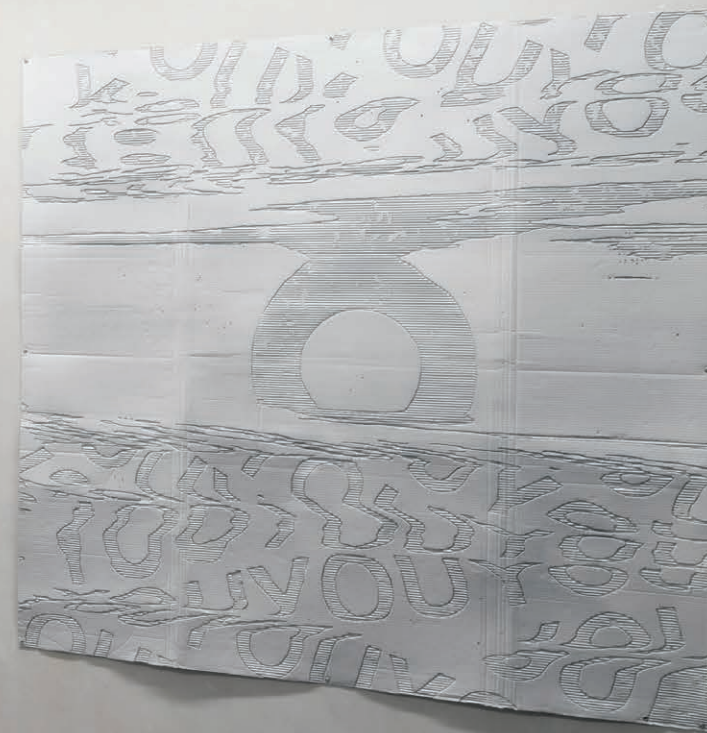
I've Got You Under My Skin
2023
Varnish on cardboard engraving
131 x 233 cm



It Had to Be You

2023

Varnish on cardboard engraving
118 x 187 cm



I Only Have Eyes for You

2023

Varnish on cardboard engraving
173 x 171 cm

(les halles)
espace d'art contemporain

One Way, Both Sides, Partially
2022
One way mirror window film
Variable dimensions





Installation view: EAC Les Halles, Porrentruy, Photo: Philippe Queloz



Suspended Singularities (Candy-Cane, Houndstooth, Cheshire, Tartan, Baby Azure, Blue Haze)

2022

Rattan, chinese paper, wood, epoxy, cables, full spectrum lightbulbs
60 x 60 x 195 cm each



Six epoxy-soaked paper lanterns with anthropomorphic silhouettes hang from the ceiling grid. The sculptures share a common origin but are deformed and hardened in different ways. What renders them unique are the patterns and colors of their connecting cables and the traces of their deliberately handcrafted production process. Like empty shells, their bodies are illuminated by full spectrum lightbulbs, whispering the promise of compensation for the lack of sunlight during the dim winter months.

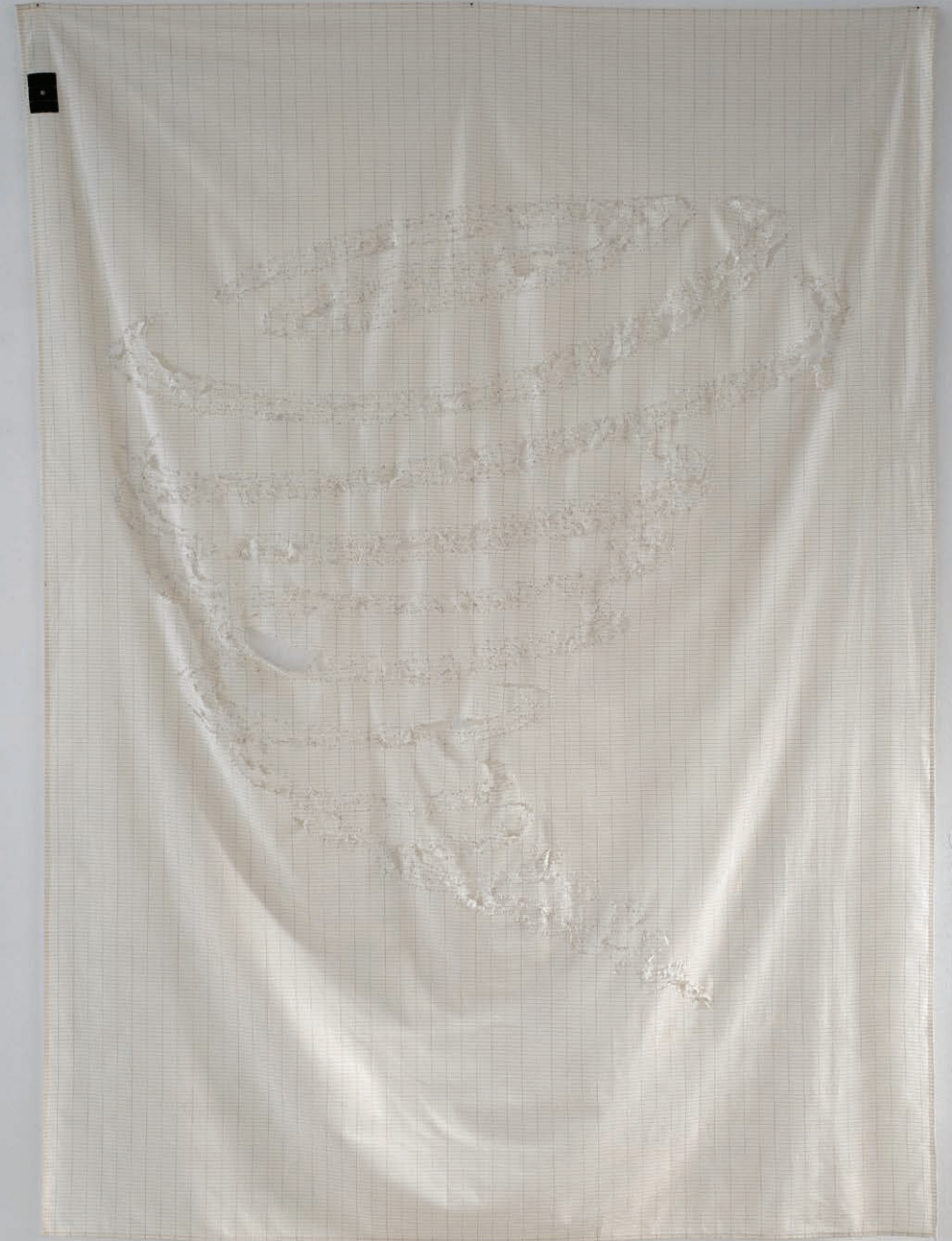
The works *Emotional Storm* and *Doing What Matters in Times of Stress* both take their origin in a manual of the WHO with the same name. The manual teaches us how to deal with stress by modifying our selves through adaptation to a given set of circumstances. While the *Emotional Storm* is that which threatens us in such situations, the five slogans that are engraved into cardboard propose a way out of the situation of unease. At first these imperatives of self change appear to be soft, but since every individual is responsible for their own mental health, they become a mandatory set of commands if one wants to keep participating and competing in today's labor market.

Emotional Storm

2022

Perforated grounding sheet

160 x 200 cm



UN
HOOK
YOURSELF

notice
name
refocus

MAKE
SPACE

ACT
ON
YOUR
VALUES

KIND
BEND

GROUND

YOUR
SELF

notice
slow down
connect
refocus
engage

Doing What Matters in Times of Stress
2021
Cardboard engraving, spraypaint
70 x 90 cm each

During several months I was filming my studio on a daily basis with a mini drone. The drone was controlled with a remote control and video goggles.

The interior of the studio is in a constant change, iterating between different degrees of order and chaos. The gaze of the drone is itself unstable, on some days it is well balanced and takes the viewer on a smooth ride, on other days it has a hard time keeping its equilibrium and crashes into whatever comes its way.

Soft Evidence

2022

1 or 2 channel video

6h

<https://vimeo.com/687724962>



Installation view: Baseltorkiosk, Solothurn





And so on
2021
Three MOOD Valletta ceiling lamps
30 x 30 cm each

According to the *broken windows model of policing*, signs of disorder (such as broken windows) are important indicators for generating and sustaining more serious crime. While there is no direct causal relation between disorder and crime, disorder leads to increased fear and withdrawal from the residents, that allows more serious crime to rise. Art spaces on the other hand are often an indicator of gentrification, a sign for elevated or rising property values in the surrounding area. Applying a sign of disorder onto the window of an art space works against the involuntary consequences of free floating cultural capital. The tape "drawings" are based on photographs of broken windows, collected during the past several years in various European cities. The functional lines of duct-tape on a broken window in one city are recreated and reinterpreted in another city, multiplying the the blast radius of the original stone.

Reconstructed Tape Composition #2

2021

Orange duct tape and wood, drawn by Eladio Perkman

200 x 200 cm



Installation view: Pas une Orange, Barcelona, Photo: Roberto Ruiz



Installation view: Pas une Orange, Barcelona, Photo: Roberto Ruiz

Reconstructed Tape Composition #3
2020
White duct tape, drawn by Eladio Perkman
80 x 200 cm



Installation view: Pas une Orange, Barcelona, Photo: Roberto Ruiz

Constellation (Minerva)

2021

Nine engraved coins, thrown by Laura Olea Lòpez on 22/09/2021 at 21:10
variable dimensions





Nine coins (generously donated by my friends) in various currencies (USD, EUR, CHF, CFA, GBP, BRL) from which all information regarding currency and value was removed. The curator of the exhibition was asked to invite a person close to him to throw the coins into the space. Gently, like one would throw an oracle. The coins were fixed in the place where they fell. The name of this new constellation, Minerva, was chosen by the curator together with the person that threw the coins.



Installation view: HEAD, Genève, Photo: Théa Giglio



In Suspension

2021

IKEA DURERÖ, nylon strings, epoxy, electrical wiring, full spectrum lightbulb
40 x 40 x 120 cm



languish, languish.

2021

Cardboard engraving, spraypaint
52 88 cm

The Google Home device represents the complete abstraction of human language and its integration into the flow of abstracted labor, the algorithm. A perverted feedback loop that slowly mutates from the primitive accumulation of user data to the modification of human behaviour. The stonelike, muting effect that the casting of the device into concrete has, mirrors the isolation and division that comes along with with the cult of the individual. The final object itself reminds of a model for a Brutalist building.

Home

2021

Concrete, Google Home

15 x 15 x 30 cm



Installation view: HEAD, Genève, Photo: Théa Giglio

On the first look the works appear to be actual screens. While their design and proportions were taken from existing screens their front surface looks different. The polished epoxy that covers the layers of recycled cardboard has a wavy structure and reflects the gaze of the onlooker in a distorted, almost liquid manner.

The works imitate TV- or info-screens, that are part of the constant flow of information surrounding us. Through the absence of displayed data, the focus is drawn toward the object itself. Having an object like this present in a space also draws attention to the technical infrastructure that is present in the space, but not part of the work. In that way the objects consciously blurs the lines between artwork and the context it is in and therefore claiming complicity between the two.

XBR-75X9OOF-2

2021

Cardbord, acrylic paint, spraypaint, epoxy
167 x 96 x 3 cm

PM55H-1

2020

Cardbord, acrylic paint, spraypaint, epoxy
123 X 70.5 X 3 cm

PM55H-2

2020

Cardbord, acrylic paint, spraypaint, epoxy
123 X 70.5 X 3 cm

XBR-75X9OOF-1

2021

Cardbord, acrylic paint, spraypaint, epoxy
167 x 96 x 3 cm



Installation view: HEAD, Genève, Photo: Théa Giglio

The humidifiers are set up to distribute words. The inkjet printed, soaking wet paper passes its information on to the water, which is then vaporized and distributed in the room. It is the invisible flow which embeds all the other works in the room as well, and becomes one with the air that the viewer inhales and exhales. The texts in the bottles describe themselves a flow or forcefield or possession: that of subjectivation. They talk about how we are shaped through the dominant rhythm (Moten/Harney) and the drive behind it (Zubov). Three of the papers carry thunderwords from the night language that inhabits *Finnegans Wake* (James Joyce). These 100/101 letter words are assembled from different words and parts of words to sound like thunder. They insert a rupture into the flow, destabilizing the narrow boundaries of normalized language, a destitutive potential.

Essential Breathing

2021

Plastic bottles, epoxy, ultra sonic mist module, computer ventilator, thermo-plastic adhesive, printed paper¹²³, water

- 1 Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *All Incomplete*, New York: Minor Compositions (2021), p. 55-60
- 2 Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism – The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, New York: PublicAffairs (2018), p.8
- 3 James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, London: Faber and Faber (1939), p.3, 332, 424



The engraved cardboard works are part of a larger series that is currently in progress. All of them are engraved into found pieces of cardboard with a rotary-tool. The technique mimics contemporary computed engraving technologies like CNC through a nostalgic re-appropriation of manual labor. The manual engraving allows to adjust the depth and mode of engraving in a more precise way. While the escape of white heterosexual men into the workshop or man-cave can be seen as an escape from the politisation of private life, it seems to me that today's spiritual escapisms fulfill a similar (though less gendered, less heterosexual) function. The work's materiality aims to destabilize the perceived neutrality in contemporary ideologies of self-improvement through the suggestion of coercive, almost violent undertones.

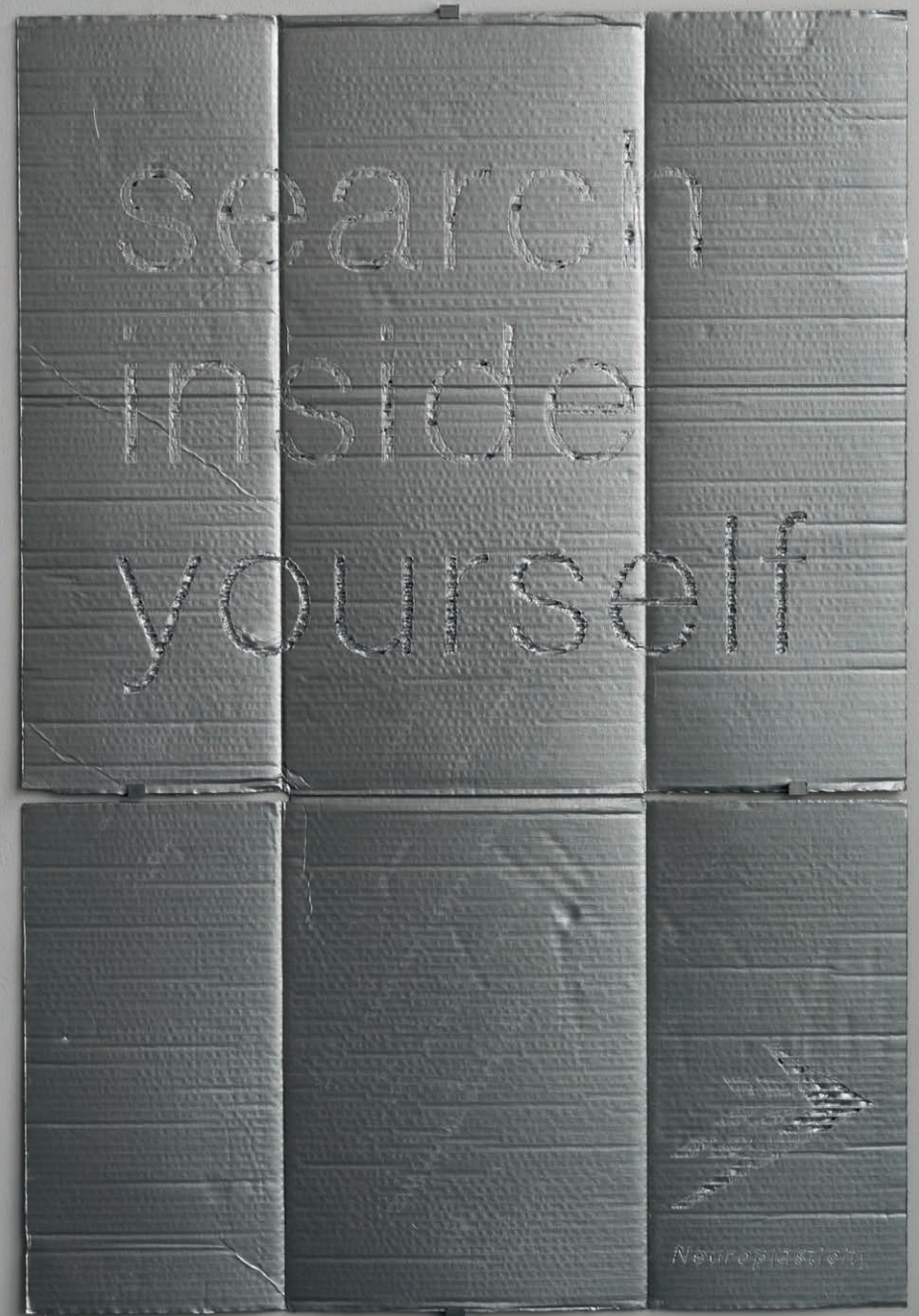
In this line of thought, the series uses the DIY approach of hand engraving to outline imperatives of 'positive mental health' and through this hints at the withdrawal of the subject into the basement of the self.

Search Inside Yourself

2021

Cardboard engraving, spraypaint

67 x 98 cm



Constellations (Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Cepheus, Perseus, Cetus)

2020

Various coins, double sided tape

variable dimensions



A constellation as a set of relations between a number of points. The ensemble of these points creates a surplus value that is added to the individual value of each point. The points, in this specific case, are coins of different origins. As coins they have a material value (based on the stock market price of the metal they are made of), as well as a monetary value. The monetary value is claimed through the imprint. This imprint consists of a numerical value (expressed in a certain currency), a mentioning of the institution (in most cases a national state or a union of states) that backs the proclaimed value, plus (in most cases) a reference to the values through which the institution legitimizes itself (symbols, etc).

The work uses three kinds of coins: original coins, coins on which parts of the imprint are removed, and blank coins. They can be divided in two categories, readymade objects and

assisted readymade sculptures. Through the modification of some of the coins by sculpting them, they keep their material value but lose their institutional monetary value. Through the work that was invested in the coins by sculpting them, the addition of artisanal qualities, they actually gain in monetary value.

The single coins embedded in value systems. The numbers on the coins whose value is only valid if its legitimized by an institution, derives its meaning, like the single star, from the constellation it is placed in. A constellation that is embedded inside an ensemble of constellations, which is the artwork. The artwork then again being placed amongst other artworks inside an institution. The institution being amongst other institutions in relationships of proximity and exchange, being part of what we call the artworld.





The work *Door* translates the door symbol from architecture plans into an object. As such it confronts the real existing space with the planned space of architecture. The object itself reminds us of a piece of functional furniture, possibly a coat hanger. Through this it refers to dwelling, an interior space that is shaped through our habits and at the same time shaping our habits.

Door
2019
Wood, paint
80 x 80 x 40 cm

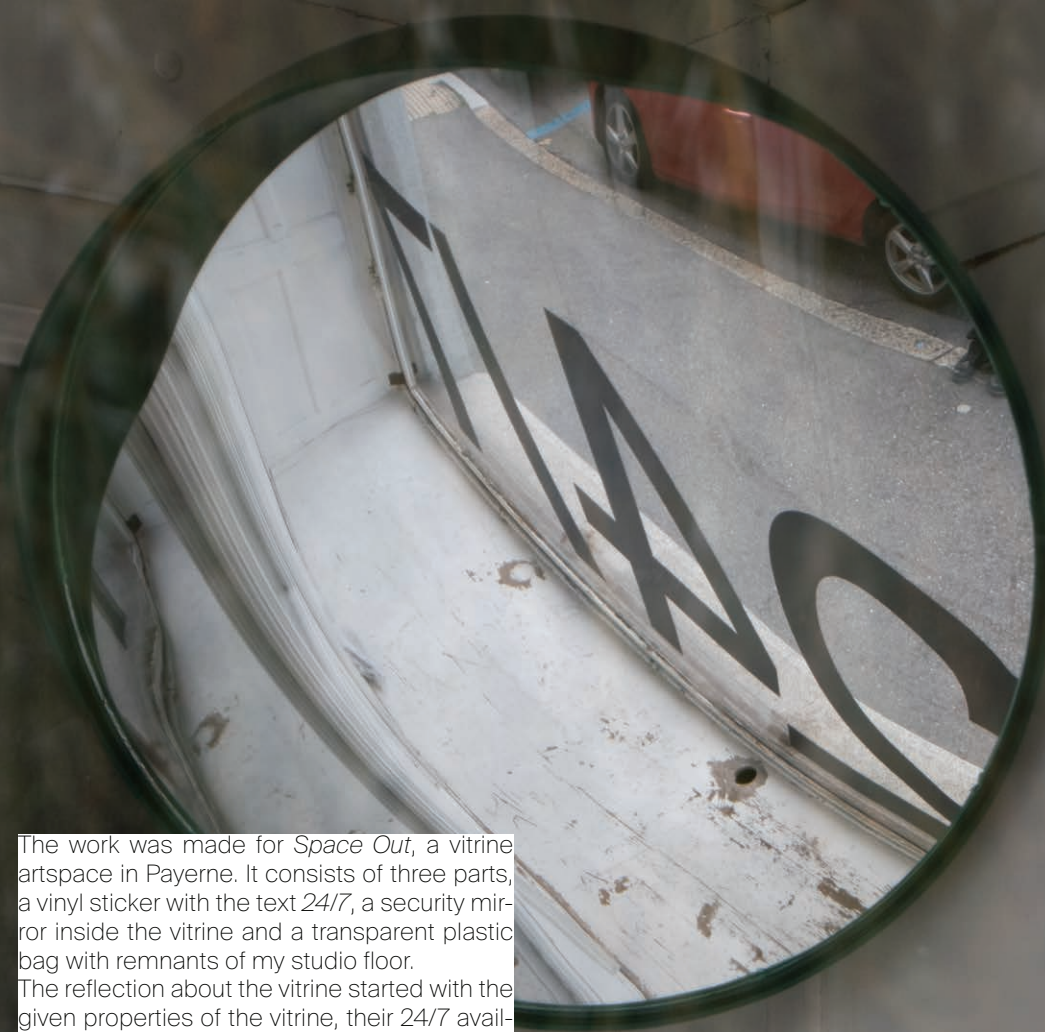


Installation view (The Flat, Bern)



Vinyl Sticker, Security Mirror and Plastic Bag With Studio Floor Residue
2018
Installation
Variable dimensions

Installation view: Space Out, Payenne



The work was made for *Space Out*, a vitrine artspace in Payerne. It consists of three parts, a vinyl sticker with the text *24/7*, a security mirror inside the vitrine and a transparent plastic bag with remnants of my studio floor.

The reflection about the vitrine started with the given properties of the vitrine, their 24/7 availability. While *24/7* states the obvious when it is written in a vitrine from the outside, its meaning becomes less sure once the text is inverted. It is like the ideal visitor sits on the inside and has the text projected onto the world. The expression is also used to describe the contemporary mass synchronization and around the clock availability.

In the security mirror that is hanging in the right corner of the vitrine, the visitor can see her/himself looking at the vitrine, but also her/his reflection being within the space where the body has no access to. The bag with the remnants of the studio floor brings in the living conditions of the artist and the hard material traces of immaterial labor.

