AMELIE JAKUBEK

One thing is clear: visual analyses fall short when confronted with the documentary material through which we are given to understand many of these [socially engaged] practices. To grasp participatory art from images alone is almost impossible: casual photographs of people talking, eating, attending a workshop or screening or seminar tell us very little, almost nothing, about the concept and context of a given project. They rarely provide more than fragmentary evidence, and convey nothing of the affective dynamic that propels artists to make these projects and people to participate in them. To what extent is this a new problem? Some of the best conceptual and performance art in the 1960s and '70s similarly sought to refute the commodity-object in favour of an elusive experience. Yet visuality always remained important to this task: however 'deskilled' or desubjectivised, conceptual and performance art nevertheless manage to prompt a wide range of affective responses, and their photo-documentation is capable of provoking deadpan amusement, wry embarrassment, iconic reverence or appalled disgust. By contrast, today's participatory art is often at pains to emphasise process over a definitive image, concept or object. It tends to value what is invisible: a group dynamic, a social situation, a change of energy, a raised consciousness. as a result, it is an art dependent on first-hand experience, and preferably over a long duration (days, months or even years).

This quote from Claire Bishop's book „Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Specatorship" (2010) describes the problem I have to tackle in this portfolio: It is an attempt to manifest my artistic practice, which is „invisible" for many reasons, namely because it partially takes place in the social sphere or because it is theoretical, organizational or narrative in nature. In fact, a video or a website would be more appropriate for my practice, but I try to give visual entry points with this format as well, using as little text as possible.

After the revolution, what will happen?

„After the Revolution has taken place, who cleans up the mess?" - Revolutions have always been dubious to me because they implied that one group of people overruled another and that there is too little time for everyone to be „brought on board" as revolutions happen fast. In the face of recent revolutions, but also in the light of power shifts in the global North through e.g. right-wing populists or non-human influences, the question became relevant for me again, as we have to deal with situations, intentionally or unintentionally, for which we need to organize ourselves anew. How do we (quickly) organize in a strange new environment without an authority holding us accountable?

Tides in the Swimming Pool (2020 - , multi-sectional research),
when setting up the camera.

No Community (2019, 2-Channel Videoloop, 7:00 min), Installation view.

An artistic research on governance and Constructions of the (collective) self:

Who are „we" and how do we govern ourselves?

There is a tension between collective agency, the possibility for a group of people to develop a will and to implement this will together, and the autonomy of the single person.

A Gender of Agency (2016, video, 3:55 min.), videostill.

As part of our work in the collective ACAD&C (2015-2017), we dealt, among other things, with the gender political implications of community concepts. This video explores the staging of community values under capitalism. The fact that I directed and post-produced a large part of it was an element of our ongoing debate about hierarchies and community authorship.

Table 0.1 The Hollis matrix (based on Hollis 1994, *The Philosophy of Social Science*)

Ontology/Epistemology	Explaining (positivist)	Understanding (interpretative)
Structuralism	Social structures are systems (like clocks, planets, bodies, beehives) external and prior to actions and determining them fully.	Social structures are sets of meaning rules ('games') telling people how 'to do' social life (language, religion, economy). Actors are role/rule followers.
Individualism	Actors are self-contained units and the source of action (act upon individual laws of utility maximization, natural preferences, psychological laws).	Actors are embedded in society but have agency, they can act, initiate change, they have room for reflexive self-direction.

With the Hollis matrix, theories about society can be classified according to how they position themselves in relation to the „agent/structure" question, i.e. to what extent they presume that people are predestined by structures, or to what extent they are based on the idea that people act sovereignly. As an artist, it is important for me to contextualize my work in a theoretically accurate way, and to analyze the paradigms of different disciplines, which I do in analogy to the practice of the field of conflict studies, whose practitioners likewise rely on a process of extracting the ideological parts of a theory in order to produce sound analyses of conflict participations.

Jaydn Hubrecht's Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek (2018, video installation), exhibition view (Photo: Nico Wefers).

It is important to me to reveal the context of my artistic work, to provide a part of the mediation, so to speak, that people can approach my artistic research from different perspectives. In general, it is a challenge for artists who work both theoretically and artistically to make the dimensions of their work visible and at the same time tangible.

Spontaneous Manifestos (2018 – , participatory intervention), exhibition view.
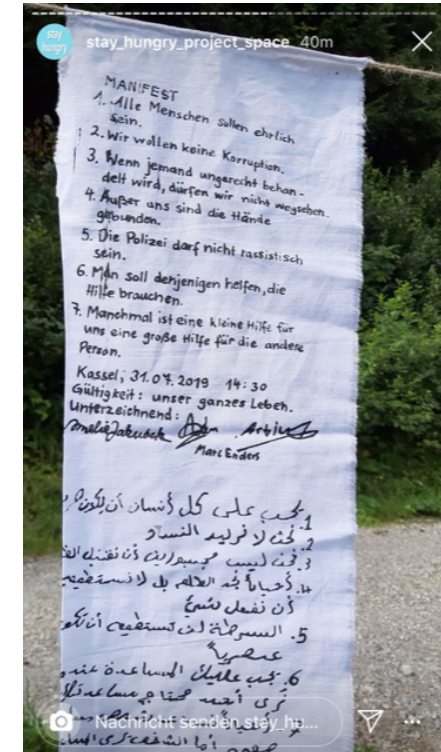
Exhibition view, 2019.

Based on a historical analysis of decision-making bodies in the vacuum of major power shifts (e.g. the English Revolution or the founding of trade unions), Andy Blunden has developed an important tool for evaluating decision-making processes in groups and identified the problems that arise when scaling up the decision-making process for large groups of people. Since 2018, I have been creating spontaneous manifestos together with groups, demonstrating how difficult it is to formulate one's own convictions and, moreover, to claim validity for a larger group.

THE SPIRIT OF SUSTAINABLE COMPANIONSHIP

Agency for Contemporary Artistic Discourse & Collaboration

ACAD&C Poster campaign (2015) and photographic process documentation of the collective *membrane.*

Documentation, staging and narration: Much of my work and thinking revolves around the narrative and archiving of group activities and inter-actions. What ends up in official archives or is considered valid knowledge often lacks the information about which relationships were at play when it was produced. Femnist and anti-colonial archiving means rendering visible the networks of relationships that constitute social facts and know-ledge. As a means of artistic research, it becomes clear how contingent documentation is, and how editing becomes the staging of power.

Die Räuberinnen und Räuber (2018, 22:03 min.,
process-oriented, collective video epic
with children and young people), video still.

Feminist Potato Puppet Theatre (2019, Live Action
Role Play with avatars), documentation of the process.

Methodology: Group methods, collective authorship and decision making,
from rituals, theatre, pedagogies to Live Action Role Play (LARP), are
examined in the course of my research, in a similar way to the analysis
of theories, with regard to what forms of subjectivities they generate (i.e.
how much they safeguard the autonomy of single subjects), in which form
they promote collective agency and whether and to what extent they are
based on colonial and sexist thought patterns, or how in- or exclusive
they are.

Tides in the Swimming Pool: Mivida Community Club Pool Monologue (2020, 08:30 min.), photographic staging of the distribution of the artistic work.

Types of distribution of artistic work outside of the white cube: Since my artistic work is intended to have a social value, it only addresses the art world(s) where it has to be. This calls for a separate exploration of the addressees, a careful consideration of the extent to which an artist is allowed to add something to a particular context and why collaboration with whom is necessary.

Children and young people contemplate their work *Die Räuberinnen und Räuber* (2018) together. Visitors sitting at the edge of the pool at the screening of Episode 1 of *Jaydn Hubrecht's Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek* (2018).

Visitors destroy the exhibition *Thirst for Slaughter of the Soul* (2014). Participants in Art Gazing (2017).

Exhibition spaces as spaces of encounter: Where art and artistic research are brought together, I try, usually together with collaborators, to create moments that go beyond passive resonance and invite interaction, or to enable experiences of community, e.g. in dealing with objects.

Constructions of one's own: „Jaydn Hubrecht's Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek"

Jaydn Hubrecht is a collective, fictional alter ego that has been existing since an exhibition in 2014. She is the narrator of an episodic tale that deconstructs the sovereign subject of my identity and allows multiple authors to have their say.

Ich will das Selbst infrage stellen.

Episode 1: Pilot - Jaydn Hubrecht´s Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek
(2018, 27:12 min., single-channel video), video still.

„Critical personal narratives are [...] autoethnographies, performance texts, stories, and accounts that disrupt and disturb discourse by exposing the complexities and contradictions that exist under official history (Mutua & Swadener, 2004, p.16). The criticalpersonal narrative is a central genre for contemporary decolonizing writing. As a creative analytic practice it is used to criticize prevailing structures and relationships of power and inequity in a relational context. Counternarratives explore the „intersections of gender and voice, border crossing, dual consciousness, multiple identities and selfhood in a ... post-colonial and postmodern world."

Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies
(Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008, p.12-13)

Episode 1: Pilot - Jaydn Hubrecht´s Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek
(27:12 min., single-channel video), video still.
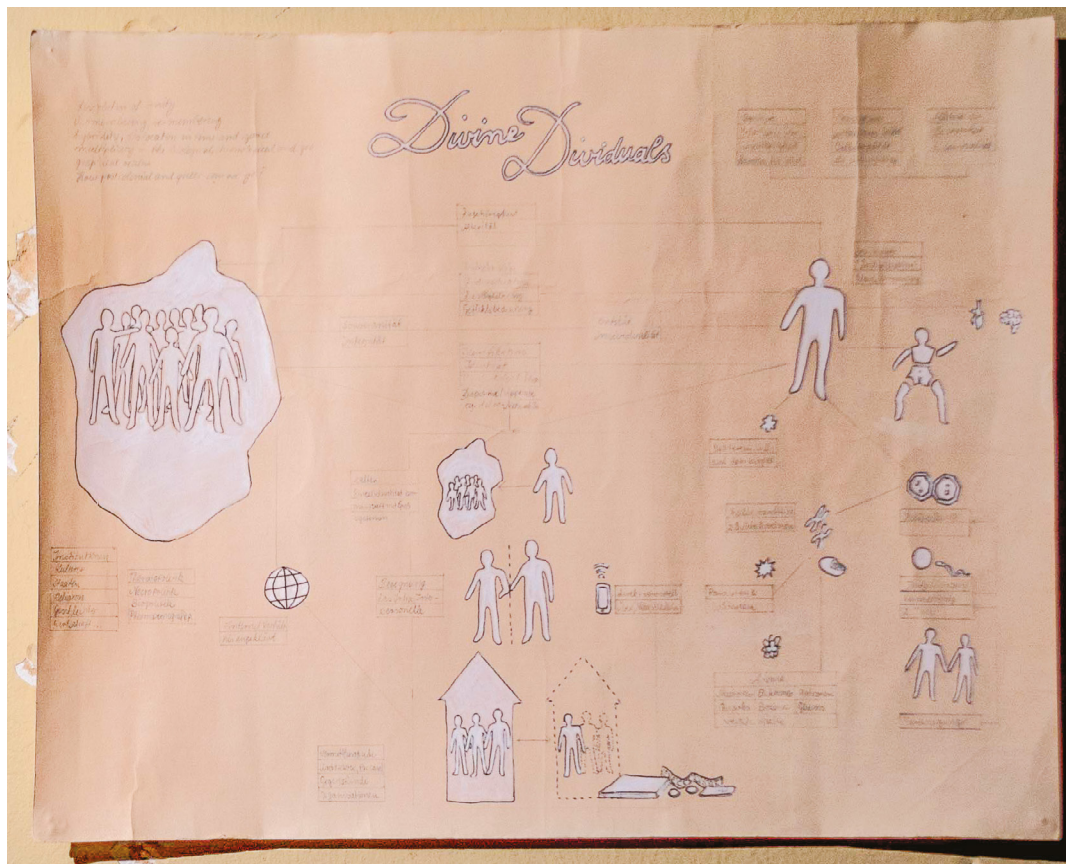
Scetch for *Jaydn Hubrecht´s Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek*. - Means to help my collaborators understand the connection between identity, individual and collective.

In the project *Jaydn Hubrecht's Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek*, which I launched in 2018, I examine my relationships to supra-individual structures and to single people with whom I share my and their identity as authors. In this way I try to reveal that we as subjects shape each other and that only in relationships with each other can we create new realities. Moreover, I want to be part of a practice in which one's own privileges become visible and debatable.
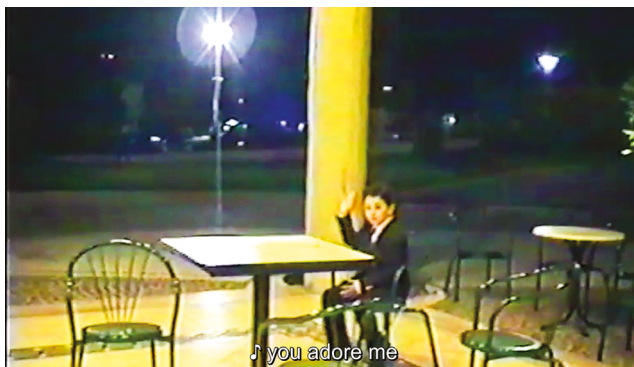
Episode 2: Valentino Caputo (77 min.,
single channel video), installation view.

Within this self-enquiry I reconstruct the relationships to persons and
concepts. After the pilot of the series, I embark on a search for a co-
authorship of my identity with Valentino Caputo. In 2014, when I received
the news of his death, I wrote my first letter to his mother, a woman I had
previously not met. For this film, she, his ex-girlfriend and I search for
traces, memories, artifacts and speculations which create a fragmentary
portrait of my life, his own and his brother's short life. Valentino himself
only gets a chance to speak in the love letters, which actually don't intend
to be love letters, that he and I sent across the hallway of the psychiatric
hospital, where our stays overlapped for a few weeks when we were
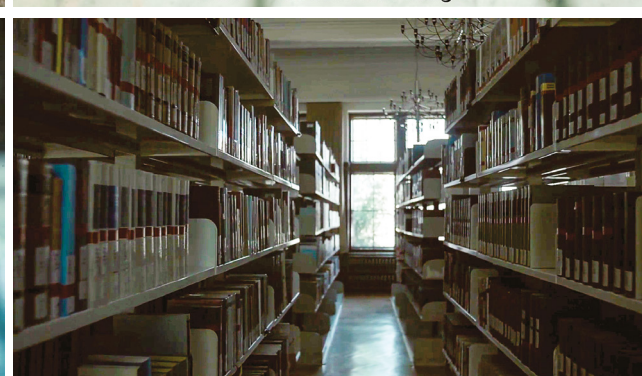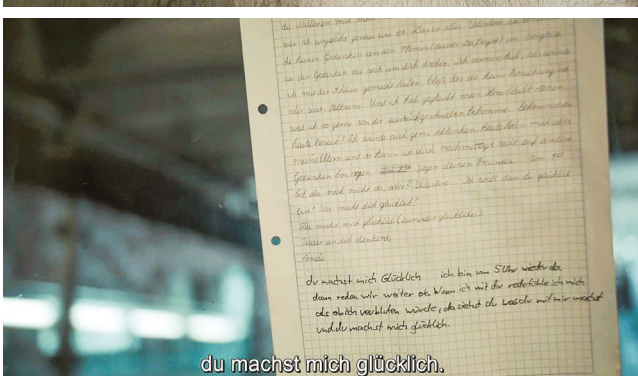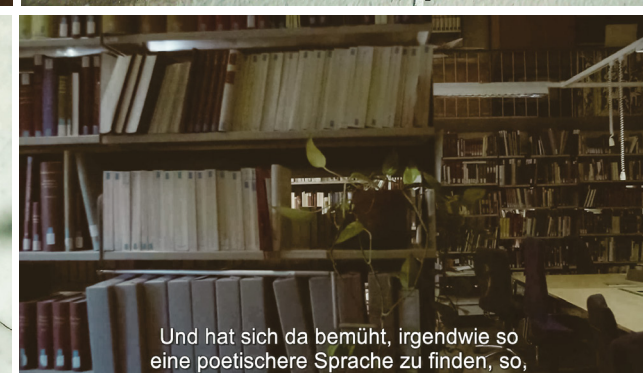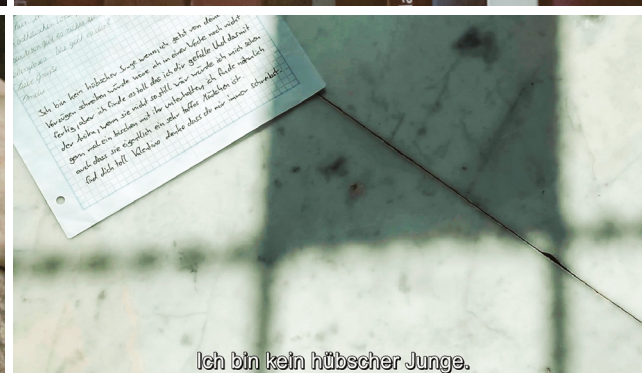teenagers.

Inside the image grid, the following captions appear:

- I can't swallow
- dann ist ja das schon mit den Drogen angegangen.
- Nicht, dass er jetzt mit keinem geredet hätte, aber er war halt anders. Und...
- ... das haben meine beiden Kinder an der Hand gehabt. Da!
- "Wie ist es, tot zu sein?"
- Valentino, wie kannst du nur so wahnsinnig wunderbar sein?
- ♪ you adore me
- cool getan und immer so, aber... weißt schon.
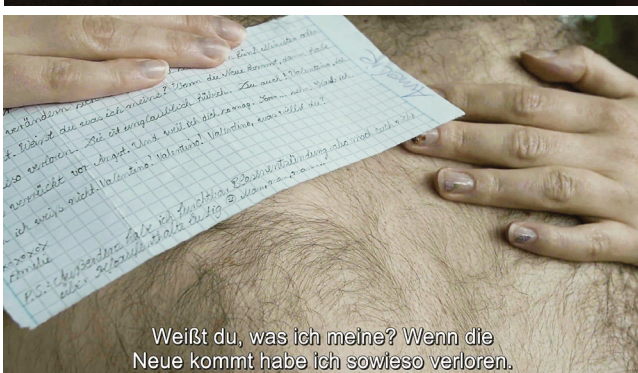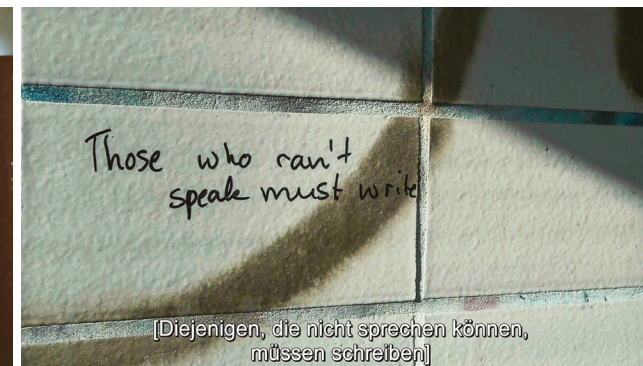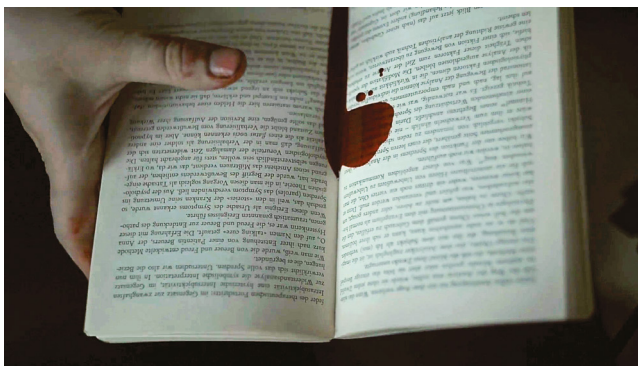- Er hat gewusst, wenn er angezogen ist, so vom Ding her...

Episode 2: Valentino Caputo (77 min., single-channel video), video stills.

I combined old video footage of his Italian relatives (mainly from weddings) with photos, reenactments, pre-recorded audio, prose, our archived notes, Facebook voice messages, freesounds, footage from a historical library and a marble bathroom.

Those who can't speak must write

[Diejenigen, die nicht sprechen können, müssen schreiben]

Weißt du, was ich meine? Wenn die Neue kommt habe ich sowieso verloren.

Ich bin kein hübscher Junge.

Und hat sich da bemüht, irgendwie so eine poetischere Sprache zu finden, so,

du machst mich glücklich.

Und fragt, was wir mit seinem Mund getan haben.

Episode 2: Valentino Caputo (77 min., single-channel video), video stills.

Focus on writing: We were not allowed to use mobile phones. By writing we overcame borders. We imitated styles that did not match our everyday representations. These messages reveal vulnerability and sincerity because they are „unofficial" formulations. Nevertheless, they indirectly refer to canons, heroic sagas and other successful narratives that shape the values we hold dear (e.g. the successful man, or romantic love).

MOTHER*HOOD

In the third episode I derive from the topic of motherhood. By mothers*
I refer to those who are the first carers of children who pass on language
and thus create their own version of reality. The potential for social change
at the interface of generations is of interest, as is the cultural institution of
motherhood. It is shaped by, among other things, creation myths of the
belief systems of the respective societies, their role models and positions,
and reproduces social orders. Heredity (including trauma), territorial rule
and queer families are topics of the continuous investigation in relation to
this field, for which the research question is formulated in the video work.

Teaser of *Episode 3: Universal Mother* (two-channel video, 33:06 min.), video stills

(with red graphics of creation myths with important mother roles: the Egyptian Naunet, who liberated all beings for their individual life cycle and made her the „ mother of all mothers „, and the Sumerian (Mesopotamian) goddess Ninhursanga, who gave birth to daughters, who in turn gave birth to deities. One of them was Ninti, who was born only after her mother had healed her father's rib (cf. Christian mythology).

Teaser of *Episode 4: Social Justice Warriors*
(Two-channel video, 33:03 min), still image.

In the fourth episode I deal with sibling relationships. Xenia (Sister 1) has studied participatory planning processes in political decision-making and now works in a city administration. To her greatest frustration, Delia (Sister 2) is forced to study „Non-Profit and Public Management" in Germany in addition to her training as a nurse so that she can start her own humanitarian organization. Delia is the most radical of us. She does what is generally considered „ to be good „. She used to spend her nights at the Berlin Zoo Mission before she and the wife of the Georgian Minister Irina set up the first Georgian palliative care unit for children.

Moral values, the modulation of proximity and distance and paradigms of competitive thinking are the themes of this research.
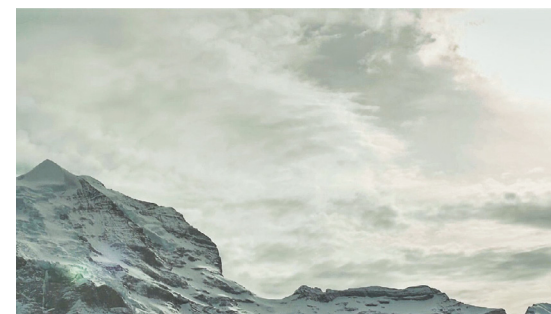
Teaser of *Episode 4: Social Justice Warriors*
(Two-channel video, 33:03 min), still image.

Teaser of *Episode 5: The Mentors* (two-channel video, 33:06 min.), still image.

In the fifth episode I deal with learning and what we learn, from whom and for what. Verbal language plays a central role, but other phenomena also help us learn. Alexander was my first informal mentor. As a 14-year-old I was magically attracted to him without knowing why. Despite his age he attended to me and we exchanged e-mails and letters until we lost contact. To this day I find myself imitating the words and using the writing style I first made contact with in his messages. What I am looking at in more detail here is the question of what we regard as knowledge, communication and intelligence.

Is there a safe space?

RESTAURANT NATIONAL

Teaser of
Episode 5: The Mentors (two-channel video, 33:06 min.), still image.

Ich weiß noch, z.B. es hat einmal
eine Phase gegeben,

Und da war er unheimlich dick.
So Frustesser.

Die Neue... er nicht... an dich und außerhalb
The new one... ching in... arteon to you and beside...

Ja, mit Swimming Pool. Wow.

von Individualität.

The swimming pool repeatedly appeared as inanimate protagonist in my installations and video works. Working with various pool companies and exploring the pool as a place where people experience mutual conditionality through the breaking of waves became the foundation for a further research project that is closely related to *Jaydn Hubrecht's Divine Dividuals of A. K. Jakubek. Tides in the Swimming pool* deals with swimming pools in a world in which ideas of happiness circulate globally and are locally manifested. Swimming pools are the focal point from which I analyze complex group relationships to and with non-human phenomena in the form of monologues voiced by the pool.

How can groups, methods and conditions for transnational artistic action (with European participation) be ethically identified in order to bring about sustainable and inclusive social change?

The aim of my research is to explore methods and roles of mobilization and collective action, in order to find collaborative artistic gestures. It is about identifying who has to listen to whom in order to plan collective action and create sustainable social change and how to involve artistic means. The experimental methodology explored within this larger framework focuses on the pool as a global architectural, political, environmental and social actor. The lifeless object becomes a voice in a context where it is difficult to articulate oneself politically (Cairo/Egypt). The first stage of the research took place in Amsterdam and Cairo as part of a residency.

Research on *Tides in the Swimming Pool* (2020 -).
One of the pools is located in the gated community „Mivida" in New Cairo (Google Maps, and street map), a desert city that has been developing in the east of Cairo since the early 2000s and which has a high density of pools.

Cairo
data © OpenStreetMap
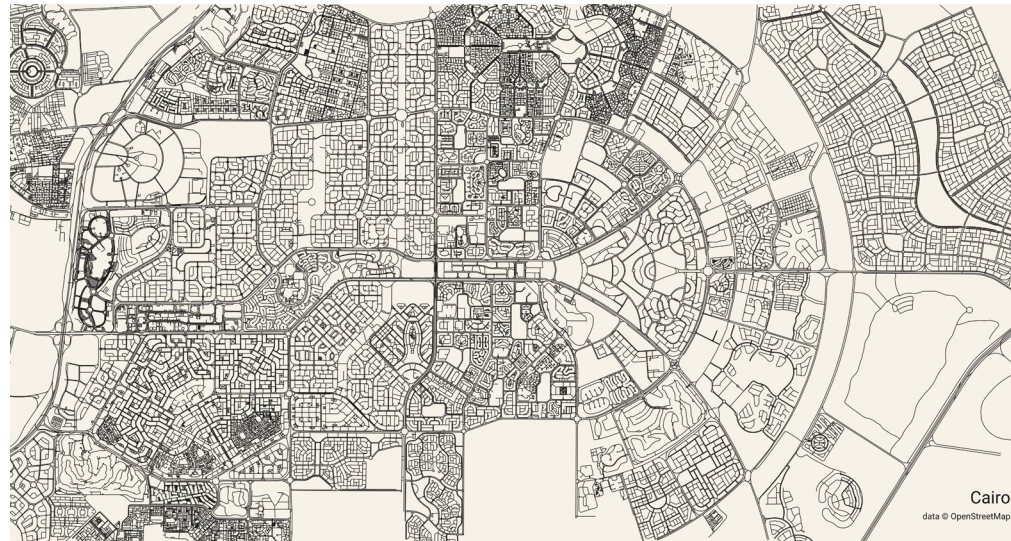
Although I know how to approach people for a certain topic in my local context, how to approach a foreign city from the perspective of a white, physically healthy, educated, young European woman is not self-evident. As far as Cairo is concerned, I need to reflect more carefully on my position and the means I can use to understand a city/context. I need to take into account who I work with and how I can mediate between their needs and requirements and my own wishes (e.g. to make relevant criticism). My position as an artist is different from that of an anthropologist, who may have tools and methods at her disposal. As an artist I can choose my methods from a variety of contexts and even create new ones.

Collaborators of *Tides in the Swimmingpool* (2020 -): Aida Hamed El - Oweidy, Huda Zikry and Lama Ahmed. But I also met city guides and uber-drivers, scholars, a pool builder, and many others.

I am experimenting with the hypothesis that one way to produce and analyze knowledge effectively and validly is to establish very different relationships with diverse people within a context and listen to their accounts of reality, physically experience their lives, analyze their arguments, synthesize them with the contexts I am familiar with, and then relate these totally biased and subjective perspectives to each other (including a thorough analysis of my own perspective and the group dynamics involved, if it is a research team). The results of this research are to be considered provisional and yet complete, as I was only able to lay the foundation for such research in Cairo by making a variety of twists and turns.

Material for *Tides in the Swimming Pool*
**(2020 -): Destroyed tourist resort by
the Red Sea, a private pool in New Cairo,
water source in an oasis near the White
Desert, Ain Sokhna, holiday apartment
complex for Egyptians*, the abandoned
pool of the Cairo School of Medicine.**

I documented various water basins in the urban space and the
surroundings of Cairo in video and audio and retrospectively analyzed
the who and what which is connected with the pools in a geographical,
idealistic and material way. This resulted in surprising references, which I
took up in the reflection in th form of monologues by of a personified pool.
Inventing the character of a pool, its mood and its political claims was part
of the reasoning. The other part was an analysis of what could be criticized
from the perspective of the pool. The pool monologues allow me and the
collaborators to experimentally formulate criticism that may be expressed
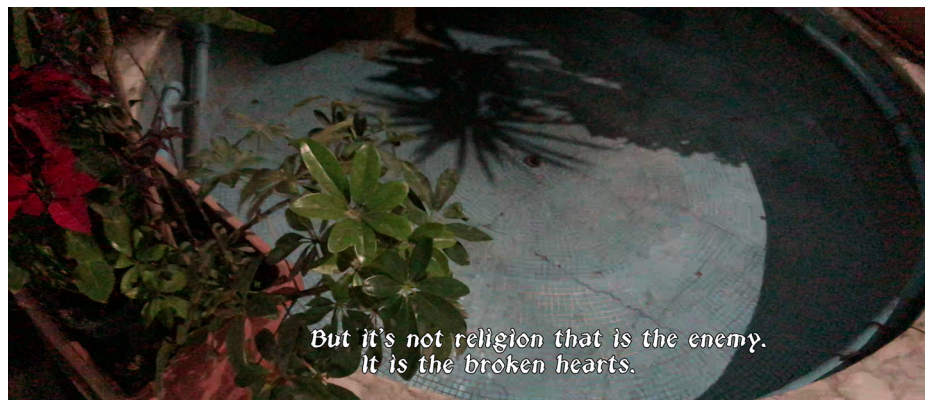from a position of not-knowing.

Tides in the Swimmingpool (2020 -): Gezira Sporting Club Pool (single channel video, 7 min), video stills.

At the same time they provide the opportunity for stepping out of one's own subject position. Similar to characters in fictional books, the figure of the swimming pool enables the respective author to venture beyond his or her own perspective. This helps initiating a dialogue about contexts that have not yet been scientifically confirmed. Some data is not accessible to scholars, or cannot be relied upon (in the context of Cairo), and if there weren't organizations that could collect independent data, it would not be possible to express precise criticism. Collective consciousness about existing problems is a step towards collective agency. Cultural assets „sense" the conflicts and provide initial indications of how to develop a community awareness.

People are used to seeing water here. In fact it is just a big road.

But it's not religion that is the enemy. It is the broken hearts.

Tides in the Swimmingpool (2020 -): Garden City Swimming Pool (single channel video, 10 min.) video stills.

This pool is located in the entrance of a building next to a central street between the Garden City and Tahrir Square (known from the 2011 protests), Nil Corniche, which is a one-way street. It is close to the Syrian, British and American embassies and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry. Two streets ahead you will find the Egyptian parliament building. The pool addresses diplomats and the inner divisions of young men between a traditional social order and the unfulfillable promises of capitalist romantic love, which they reflect upon while waiting in their cars in long traffic jams towards Garden City, passing the pool and the architecture of political processes.

Tides in the Swimmingpool (2020 -): Mivida Community Club Pool (single channel video, 8 min.), research material and video still.

The work is directed towards first generation academic women, most of whom live with their parents in New Cairo. A branch of Emaar Properties, based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is developing and investing in New Cairo. The Maktoum family around Sheikh Mohammed has been the main shareholder with 33 percent of the shares since its foundation in 1997. The urbanism of EMAAR Misr, is not only problematic in terms of global power relations, but generates generic images that influence what people consider a „good life to have". The majority of the population cannot afford the prices for the villas and apartments, the infrastructure is not good enough to allow the promised freedom, and so it isolates people from each other, which upsets the pool in the central community club.

Older works

On the following pages I present works that have already dealt with the tension between the single persons or bodies and the group, and which ultimately provide the context for my current work.

*A Gender of Agency* (2016, video, 3:55 min.), video stills.

The protagonists are paralyzed and bored while waiting in a deserted office. Despite the intimacy of the room, the gestures performed, such as the trusting handshake and the posing as a team, seem to fail because of the hollowness of the cold aesthetics.

The interactions, atrophied into meaningless phrases, refer to the merging of the private and the public, the collective and the individual. The workplace becomes a sacred place of complete self-realization. The need for social and physical „recreation" seems unattainable alongside the compulsion to constantly re-form. Social issues must be flexible and become a battle zone where ACAD&C intervenes with lollipops and the joint caressing of a pomelo.

*A Gender of Agency* (2016, video, 3:55 min), installation view (photos: Claudia Mucha).
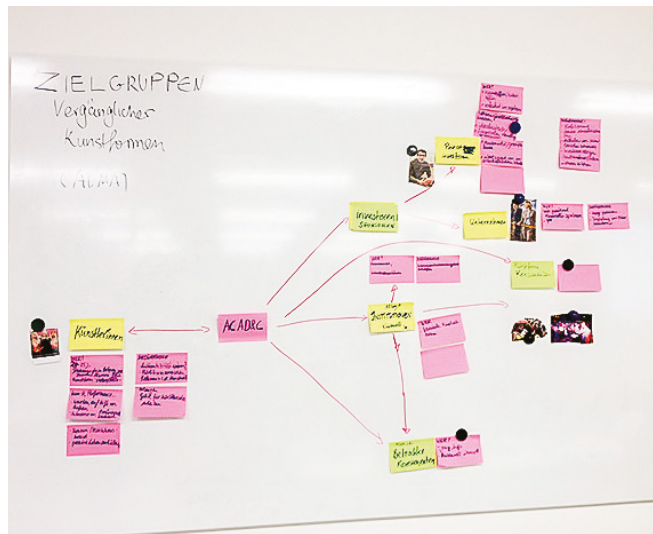
GUM (2015/2016, Performance), documetnation of the process.

In a performative research Paula Mierzowsky and Amelie Jakubek founded their own German legal entity, the GbR *GUM*. In an examination of the financing and anti-elitist orientation of art, the world of start-up companies was to be examined, as well as the ideas of group organisation and systems of knowledge and workforce management that prevail in it. *GUM* took part in two start-up competitions at the University of Kassel, among others.

Flaccid Selves - a study on inanimate protagonists
(2019, recyclete PE-folie) installation view.
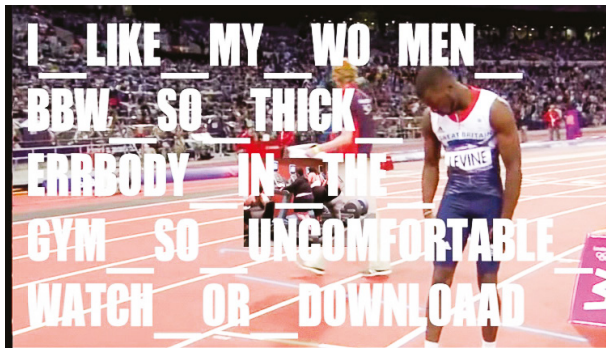
Corporal Entity 1 (2015, 14:02 min.), videostills and installation view.

In a personal account by a 60-year-old employee council member about his life as an athlete, friend and alcoholic, visual parallels are drawn to the mass-driven synchronized staging of bodies on th einternet. Audiovisual „documents", uploaded and titled on different platforms, represent the diversity and uniformity of the narrative modes of bodies. Is the healthy, independent, beautiful and young body considered a good body? The personal effort to preserve the fantasized integrity of the body at some point inevitably fails due to the idiosyncrasy of the organic, whether through illness or age-related decay. The struggle for control, interpretative authority and self-determination is summarized in a reluctant ballad.

Heavy Social Responsibility (Performance, 60 min., 2015).

This work was created in exchange with people with physical disabilities who practice contemporary dance and/or improvisational theatre, but whose everyday lives depend on assistance to varying degrees. Their dependence on support contradicts the Western ideal of the sovereign subject, which regards dependence on others as a deficit.

Accepting dependence does not necessarily lead to a violation of pride based on individualistic subjectivity, but rather reveals the form in which dominant paradigms limit the positive recognition of connectedness.
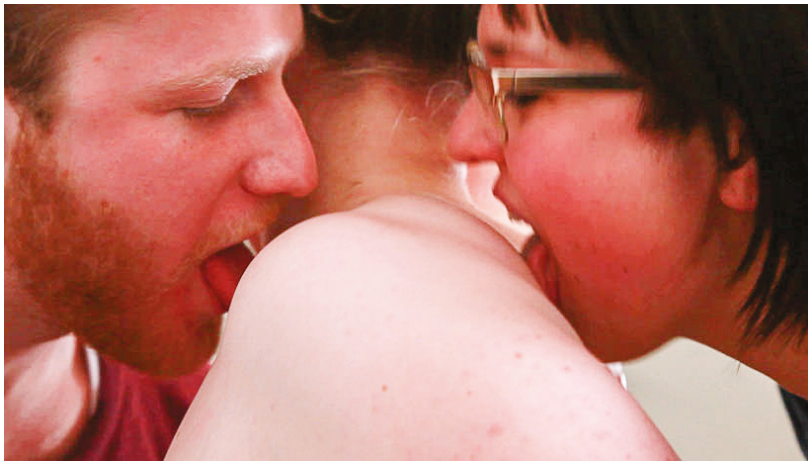
Candygirl (2013, 2-channel video installation with caramel object), video stills and installation view.

The main video shows Amelie Jakubek without clothes, with seven clothed participants exploring her naked body with their tongues at the artist's instruction. Candygirl is about licking as a communicative gesture. To what extent does cultural conditioning and physical sensation influence the real experience, and the visual result, when several people lick the body of a naked, fat woman?

Licking could mean total acceptance, welcoming and absorbing someone or something as a whole. The extent to which a new connotation is possible is examined in this installation. In addition to the video, a caramel miniature representation of Amelie Jakubek's body is set up, ready to be licked by recipients.

My little Violand (2013, utilizable installation),
installation view.

My little Violand explores diverse forms of violence and aggression as (physical) means of communication. Neither criticism nor moral judgements are expressed. In eight small souvenir televisions with click mechanisms in the form of little houses, original images were replaced by new visualizations of gender-specific attributions of violence. The eight soundtracks focus on personal and physical experiences of structural violence on different narrative levels.

Hard Core (2013, Performance, 4 hours), photo documentation.

In many ways, Amelie Jakubek's body is placed in the center of attention, as she herself stands vulnerably naked under her apron while she reproduces herself as a cake. She is soft and big, baking delicious and inedible fillings into the submissively crouched or desperately cowering miniatures.

Who benefits from the exploitation of a particular idea of weakness, what economy thrives on this fetishization of the body and thus on devaluation mechanisms? In a low-threshold exchange, the performer and the participants enrich and strengthen each other.

„I deconstruct/delocalize/disposess/dissolve/ disassemble/reassemble and recall my own identity to suggest that my self is only a by-product of material whose clashes and interrelations are entangled in networks of global and local narratives, stories and their personal manifestations. The only true form of power we have is the rearrangement of these artifacts [identities, Jaydn Hubrecht's note] *within ourselves and the active decision to give voice to our marginalized identities. To those identities that feel weak, vulnerable and who are suffering."*

Quote from *Jaydn Hubrecht's Preliminary Episode Guide* (Accompanying written reflection on *Jaydn Hubrecht's Divine Dividuals of A. K . Jakubek*) - I see every body as a temporary node and expression of intersecting relationships between people, generations and the world. Each body unfolds a multitude of identities, which do not have to be tamed in the sense of a colonized conception of self and compressed into a performative, coherent narrative, but can be fanned out, examined and, if necessary, appropriately mourned or celebrated in its polyphony.

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