

15. 11.—20. 12. 2024

Galerija Tkalka

Tajda Novšak

Katalog razstave
Exhibition catalogue

Shapeshifting™



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Odprta knjiga An Open Book

Zbirka rešenih psiholoških, osebnostnih in kadrovskih
testov ter horoskopsko znamenje Tajde Novšak

2019/2020



Razstava *Shapeshifting* predstavlja predelana in preoblikovana pretekla umetniška dela umetnice Tajde Novšak. Temelji na ustvarjalni praksi, ki jo je razvijala med študijem na Akademiji za likovno umetnost in oblikovanje v Ljubljani. Svoje kiparske prakse ni omejila na tradicionalne tehnike, ampak razvila metodologijo, ki se je osredotočala na preplet umetniškega izraza in psihološkega raziskovanja. Ustvarjala je objekte, ki so vizualno spominjali na kletke in prikazovali ograjene osebne prostore, reflektirajoč tako fizične kot mentalne bariere, s katerimi se je soočala v določenem obdobju svojega življenja. Te strukture so postale orodje za introspekcijo in dialog o duševnem zdravju, stresu in osebem razvoju, s čimer so pridobile terapevtsko vrednost.

Na vprašanje, ali je bila odločitev, v kaj bo predelala obstoječa umetniška dela intuitivna, je odgovorila: »Seveda, zamislila sem si, kako bi jih lahko uporabila in ohranila v svojem domu.« Koncept uporabnosti je služil kot vodilo zamisli. Vendar je vzgib po tem globlje narave in se tiče sentimentalne vrednosti umetniških objektov, ki so nosilci spominov nekega preteklega življenjskega obdobja. Empatija do lastnega dela je Novšak napeljala, da se je lotila novega projekta predelave in preoblikovanja umetniških artefaktov, ki so zadnjih nekaj let potrpežljivo čakali v garaži in delavnici domače hiše. Kot sama pravi: »Zavoljo novega življenja« in v izogib trajni pozabi.

S tem pristopom odpira nova razmišljanja o osebnostni rasti, svoji vlogi ustvarjalke in sočasno vlogi umetniških del. Recikliranje (lastnih) del odpira nov pogled na trajnost, namen in funkcionalnost umetniških objektov v času, ko se kulturno polje zavoljo preživetja v času hitrega kapitalizma sooča s hiperprodukcijo. Umetniška dela so odslužila svoj razstavni namen, niso bila prodana kupcu, njihova najverjetnejša

usoda je skladišče in pozaba. Hkrati pa avtorica postavlja pod vprašaj vlogo umetnikovega dela na osebni in kolektivni ravni. V kontekstu širše družbene problematike postane to vprašanje še posebej pomembno, saj nakazuje na potrebo po preoblikovanju umetniškega sistema, ki umetnike pogosto postavlja v položaj, kjer se njihova dela po zaključenih razstavah znajdejo v stanju neuporabnosti ali pozabljenosti.

Začetna pozicija je osebna. Transformacija v umetnosti ni samo tehnični postopek, ampak globoka refleksija o naravi ustvarjalnosti in odnosu do lastnega dela. Novšak s predelovanjem preteklih del reflektira minljivost trenutka, ko je bilo delo ustvarjeno. Umetniška dela, ki so nastala v določenem življenjskem obdobju, so nosilci specifičnih čustvenih in mentalnih stanj, znotraj umetniških individualnih in družbenih kontekstov. Proces transformacije se tu kaže kot kompleksna praksa, ki preči osebne, materialne in družbene sfere, podobno kot to analizira filozofinja Jane Bennett v delu *Vibrant Matter* (2010), kjer opozarja na vitalnost neživih materialov in njihovo sposobnost, da vplivajo na svet okoli nas. Umetnica s svojo prakso poudarja prav to – ko so predelana in preoblikovana, umetniška dela postanejo dejavne entitete v nenehni interakciji s časom in prostorom, v katerega so postavljena. Interakcija ni zgolj estetska, ampak tudi metafizična: kako lahko materiali, ki so nekoč nosili določene pomene, v novem kontekstu pridobijo nove vsebine in s tem odsevajo našo lastno preobrazbo? V trenutku predelave izgubijo specifično časovno pripadnost in se prerodijo v nove entitete. Proces je podoben osebnostni rasti – kot se posameznik nenehno razvija in prilagaja na življenjske okoliščine, tako se tudi umetniško delo razvija, ko je postavljeno v druga razmerja do stvarnosti. Adaptacija, kot jo razume umetnica, ni zgolj praktično dejanje, ampak ima globoko simbolno vrednost. Proces

ponovne uporabe del je hkrati dekonstrukcija in konstrukcija, kjer preteklost in sedanjost sobivata v liminalnem prostoru med umetnostjo in funkcionalnostjo. S tem se njena umetniška dela naložijo s svežimi sloji pomena, ki se prepletajo s preteklimi izkušnjami in hkrati ostajajo odprta za nove interpretacije.

V sodobni umetnosti, kjer se produkcija in potrošnja umetniških del odvijata z vedno večjo hitrostjo, projekt *Shapeshifting* odpira tudi kritičen pogled na teme, kot so delovni pogoji umetnikov, hiperprodukcija, trajnost in psihološki učinki umetnosti. S transformacijo obstoječih umetniških del v nove (uporabne) predmete Novšak ne samo izpodbija konvencionalne umetniške prakse, ampak tudi ponuja vpogled v možnosti umetniškega dela kot orodja tako za osebne kot družbene spremembe. Pri tem ni zanemarljiv širši socialni kontekst, v katerem delujejo mlajše generacije umetnikov. V polju kulturnega ustvarjanja, ki je zaznamovano s hiperprodukcijo, se pojavljajo vprašanja, kot so prostorska stiska, naraščajoče cene materialov in sistem, ki zahteva stalno produkcijo brez ustrezne podpore. Umetnost, ki naj bi bila temelj refleksije in družbenih sprememb, pogosto postane žrtev tega sistema, ko umetniška dela po razstavah končajo v skladiščih, brez pravega mesta v javnem ali zasebnem prostoru. Prav s tem je proces preoblikovanja del, kot ga izvaja umetnica, odziv na ta paradoksalni položaj: namesto da bi umetniška dela ostala v pozabi, se transformirajo v nekaj novega, uporabnega in relevantnega.

V tem procesu se odraža tudi ideja o preseganju avtonomnosti umetniškega dela, kot jo je zasnoval umetnostni teoretik Nicolas Bourriaud v delu *Relacijska estetika* (1998). Bourriaud opozarja, da umetnost ni ločena od družbenih odnosov, temveč je z njimi tesno prepletena. V kontekstu projekta *Shapeshifting* umetniška

dela niso zgolj avtonomni objekti, temveč tudi del širše družbene mreže, ki, poleg umetnice, njenega osebnega in umetniškega razvoja, prav tako vključuje družbeno okolje, v katerem dela nastajajo in se preoblikujejo. To pa napeljuje na vprašanje delovnih pogojev umetnikov. S tem mislimo predvsem na pomanjkanje dostojnih, finančno dostopnih ateljejskih prostorov, ki bi ustvarjalcem omogočali varno produkcijsko okolje. Veliko državnih, občinskih in tudi zasebnih nepremičnin raje naseljujejo duhovi, kot da bi jih po modelu začasne oskrbe lastniki ponudili v uporabo in vzdrževanje ustvarjalcem iz kulturnega sektorja.

S transformacijo neuporabljenih ali neželenih umetniških del v nove objekte, ki (lahko) najdejo svoje mesto in funkcijo v vsakdanjem zasebnem in javnem življenju, razstava odpira tudi razpravo o ekonomski vrednosti umetniškega dela in umetnikovi sposobnosti za preživetje. Nerazvitost umetniškega trga v Sloveniji ter institucionalna brezbržnost za podporo in promocijo umetnosti tako doma kot v tujini sta simptoma širšega problema, ki preveva sodobno umetniško produkcijo. Ne glede na to, kako zelo si zatiskamo oči, umetnost na žalost živi znotraj hiperobjekta globalnega kapitalizma.

Umetniki so, tako kot ostali ustvarjalci, ujeti v kolesje nenehnega ustvarjanja, kar pogosto vodi v kreativno izgorelost. Novšak s počasnim, premišljenim preoblikovanjem preteklih del postavlja v ospredje alternativo hiperprodukciji, kjer lahko umetniška praksa temelji na refleksiji in trajnostnem ustvarjanju, ne pa zgolj na nenehnem pritisku, da je treba ustvarjati nekaj novega.

Dela na razstavi se gibljejo v liminalnem območju med estetskim umetniškim objektom in utilitarnim vsakodnevnim predmetom. Njihove oblike spominjajo na pohištvene

kose, a se zaradi umetniške obdelave izmikajo enoznačni kategorizaciji. Kovinske konstrukcije so hkrati hladne, industrijske, a tudi subtilno preoblikovane v oblike, ki bi jih lahko srečali v naših domovih. Na primer, kovinska slika (prvotno *Dead Coin Painting*), prepredena s starimi kovanci, je predelana v špansko steno, ki v tradicionalnem utilitarnem namenu služi kot pregrada za razmejevanje prostora in zamejevanje pogleda med zasebnim in javnim, z delno transparentnostjo pa v novem kontekstu namiguje na prepustnost teh meja. Železni maski sta preoblikovani v samostoječi svetilki, ki s svojo arhaično obliko in svetlobo delujeta kot simbola zaščite in varnosti. Zanimiva je tudi konstrukcija iz železnih gradbenih palic, ki spominja na sarkofag. V procesu predelave je izgubila prvotno zaprto formo, pridobila pa namembnost vitrine ali kabineta kuriozitet. Vanj je umetnica umestila osebne predmete sentimentalne vrednosti, ki hranijo spomine, hkrati pa s predstavitveno funkcijo vabijo k raziskovanju pomenov in zgodb. S sopostavitvijo razstavljenih del, rastlinja in avtoričinih osebnih predmetov se tako vsi elementi v galerijskem prostoru povežejo v dinamično instalacijsko okolje.

Preobrazba umetniških del je tako metafora za širšo družbeno transformacijo, kjer smo vsi soudeleženi v procesu nenehnega prilagajanja in rasti. V tem smislu *Shapeshifting* deluje kot katalizator osebnih in družbenih sprememb, ki presega zgolj estetsko in funkcionalno vrednost in odpira prostor za globlji razmislek o tem, kako umetnost sooblikuje našo realnost in nam ponuja nove načine sodelovanja in soustvarjanja življenjskih prostorov, v katerih bivamo.

The exhibition *Shapeshifting* presents a series of reworked and transformed past artworks by artist Tajda Novšak. It builds on the creative practice she developed during her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana. Rather than confining her sculptural practice to conventional techniques, Novšak devised a unique methodology that emphasizes the interplay between artistic expression and psychological exploration. She created cage-like objects that evoked confined personal spaces, reflecting the physical and mental barriers she encountered at a particular time in her life. These structures served as conduits for introspection and dialogue on mental health, stress, and personal growth, thereby acquiring therapeutic value.

When asked whether the decision to transform existing artworks was an intuitive one, Novšak replied, "Naturally, I had an idea of how I could preserve and repurpose them in my home." The concept of usability emerged as a central guiding principle, but the motivation behind was deeper, having to do with the sentimental value of these artworks, which held memories of a past chapter in her life. With empathy for her own creations, she undertook the project of reworking and transforming pieces that had been stored for years in her garage and workshop. She explains, it was done "for the sake of a new life" and to prevent them from fading into permanent oblivion.

This approach offers fresh insights into personal growth, the artist's role as a creator, and, at the same time, the role of artworks themselves. Recycling (one's own) works sheds new light on the sustainability, purpose, and function of art objects, especially in a cultural landscape pressured by hyperproduction to sustain itself in the era of fast capitalism. The artworks that have fulfilled their purpose in the exhibition and

remain unsold are likely destined for storage and eventual obsolescence. This situation prompts the artist to question the function of artist's work on both personal and collective levels. Within the context of broader social issues, this inquiry becomes particularly pressing, underscoring the need for systemic transformation in the art world, where artists frequently see their creations deemed redundant or forgotten after exhibitions conclude.

The author's initial position is inherently personal. Transforming art is not merely a technical exercise; it is an introspective exploration of the nature of creativity and the relationship between the artist and their work. By reworking her past pieces, Novšak reflects on the fleeting nature of the moments in which they were originally created. Artworks created in a specific period of an artist's life are infused with the emotional and mental states that define a certain time, reflecting both the artist's individual and social contexts. Here, the process of transformation emerges as a complex practice that bridges personal, material, and social dimensions, resonating with philosopher Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (2010). In this work, Bennett emphasizes the vitality of inanimate materials and their capacity to influence the world around us. Novšak's practice underscores this notion: when reworked and transformed, artworks become active entities, constantly interacting with the temporal and spatial contexts in which they exist. This interaction extends beyond the aesthetic into the metaphysical: how can materials that once conveyed specific meanings acquire new content in a new context, mirroring our own transformations. At the moment of transformation, the original temporal identity of these works is dissolved, allowing them to be reborn as new entities. This process parallels personal growth: just as individuals evolve and adapt to life's changes,

so do artworks transform when repositioned within a new reality. For the artist, adaptation is not solely a matter of practicality but holds deep symbolic significance. The act of reusing her work involves both deconstruction and reconstruction, allowing the past and present to coexist within a liminal space between art and function. In this way, her artworks gain new layers of meaning, interwoven with past experiences yet open to new interpretations.

In contemporary art, where the production and consumption of artworks occur at an accelerated pace, *Shapeshifting* offers a critical perspective on pressing issues, including the working conditions of artists, hyperproduction, sustainability, and the psychological impact of art. By transforming existing artworks into new (functional) objects, Novšak not only challenges traditional art practices but also offers insights into the potential of art as a catalyst for personal and social change. The project also considers the broader social context in which younger artists work. Within a cultural landscape defined by hyperproduction, artists face numerous challenges, from limited space and rising material costs to a system that demands constant output without adequate support. Art, intended to foster reflection and social change, is often entangled in this system, with works relegated to storage after exhibitions due to a lack of public or private placements. Novšak's transformation of her pieces responds to this paradox, reviving artworks by turning them into objects that are new, functional, and contextually relevant rather than allowing them to fall into obscurity.

This process also reflects the concept of transcending the autonomy of art, as proposed by art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud in *Relational Aesthetics* (1998; English version 2002). Bourriaud contends that art is not an isolated entity but

is deeply enmeshed in social relations. Within the *Shapeshifting* project, artworks function not as standalone entities but as integral parts of a broader social network that includes the artist, her personal and artistic evolution, and the social environment in which these works are created and transformed. This perspective also raises critical questions about the working conditions of artists, particularly the scarcity of affordable, secure studio spaces that support creative work. Numerous properties owned by state, municipal, and private entities remain vacant and unused – “inhabited by ghosts” – rather than being made accessible to artists who could temporarily maintain and use them.

By transforming unused or unwanted artworks into new, functional objects that (can) be integrated into everyday life in private and public settings, the exhibition also sparks a debate on the economic value of art and the sustainability of the artist’s livelihood. The limited development of Slovenia’s art market, coupled with institutional indifference toward supporting and promoting art domestically and internationally, indicates a broader issue within contemporary art production. Regardless of our attempts to ignore it, art also unfortunately resides within the expansive hyper-object of global capitalism.

Like other creative professionals, artists find themselves trapped in a relentless cycle of production that can lead to creative burnout. Novšak’s method of slow and deliberate reworking of past artworks offers a compelling alternative to this hyperproductive approach, wherein artistic practice can be based on reflection and sustainable creation instead of just the constant pressure to produce something new.

The works presented at the exhibition inhabit a liminal space between aesthetic art objects and utilitarian everyday items. While their

forms resemble furniture pieces, their artistic treatment defies straightforward categorization. The metal constructions convey a sense of coldness and industrialization, yet they are subtly reimagined into forms that could easily fit within a home. For instance, a metal piece (originally titled *Dead Coin Painting*), interspersed with old coins, is transformed into a Spanish wall. Traditionally, a wall serves to demarcate space and blur the lines between private and public; however, its partial transparency in this new context suggests the permeability of these boundaries. Additionally, two iron masks have been reconfigured into freestanding lamps that, with their archaic forms and light, symbolize protection and safety. Another notable piece is the construction of iron bars that evokes the shape of a sarcophagus. Through the process of transformation, the object has shed its original closed form, acquiring the function of a showcase or cabinet of curiosities. Inside, the artist has displayed personal objects of sentimental value that preserve memories while simultaneously inviting viewers to explore their meanings and stories through their representational function. By juxtaposing the exhibited pieces with vegetation and the artist’s personal objects, all elements in the gallery space are interwoven into a dynamic installation.

The transformation of artworks can therefore be viewed as a metaphor for broader social transformation, highlighting our collective engagement in a continuous process of adaptation and growth. In this context, *Shapeshifting* acts as a catalyst for personal and social transformation, transcending the aesthetic and functional value of art. It creates a space for deeper reflection on art’s role in shaping our reality and opens new avenues for participation and co-creation of the spaces we inhabit.







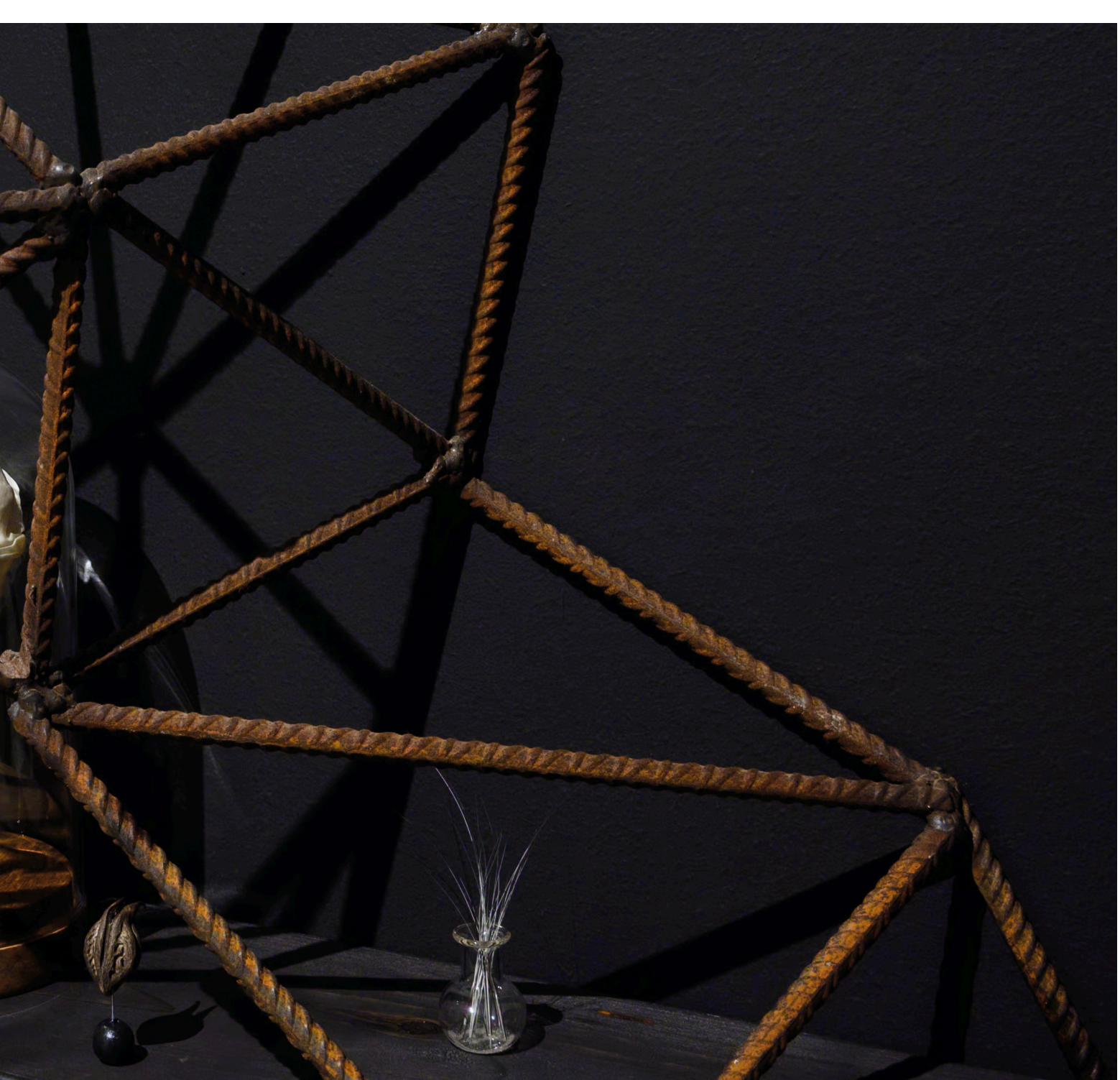






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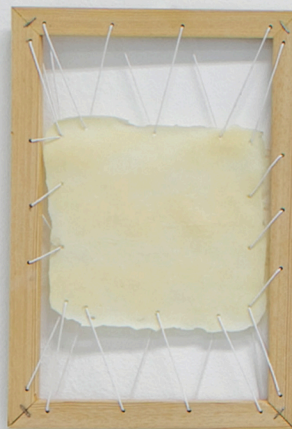


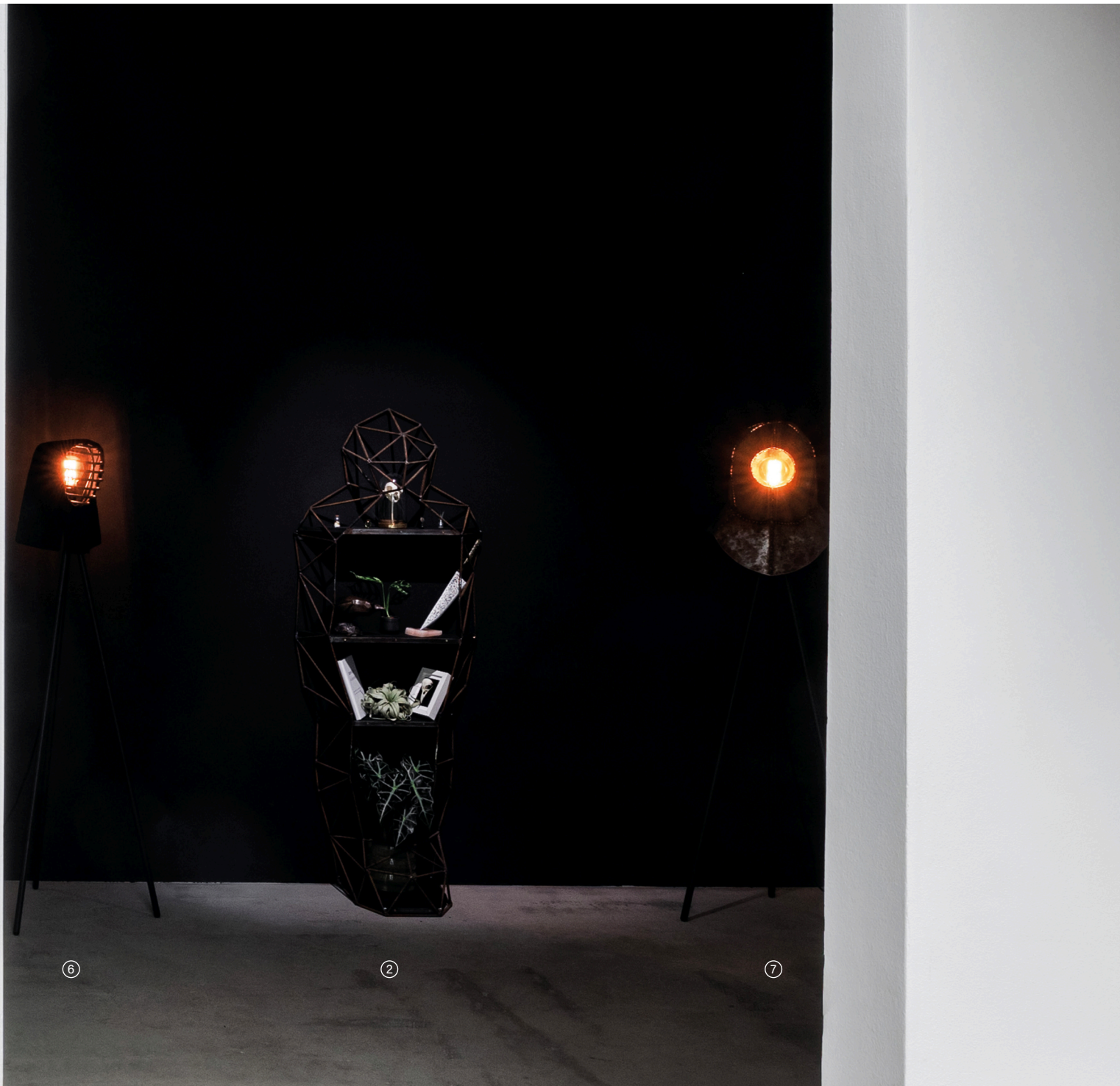


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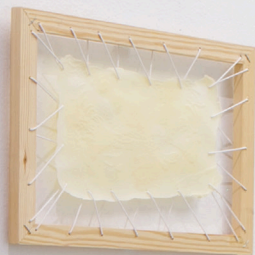
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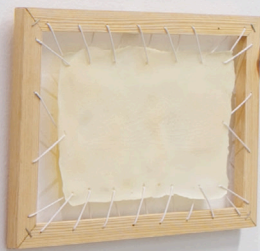








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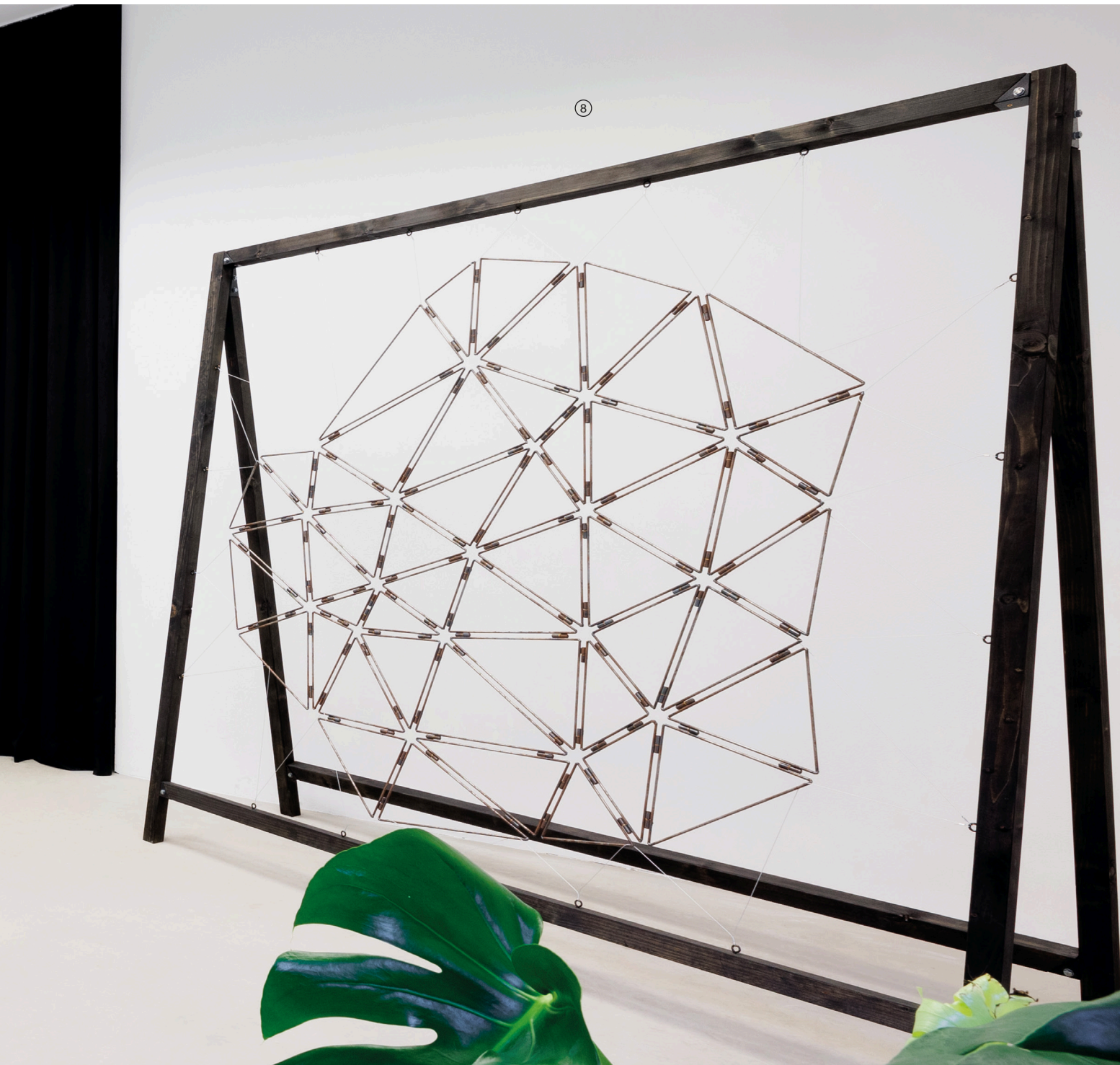
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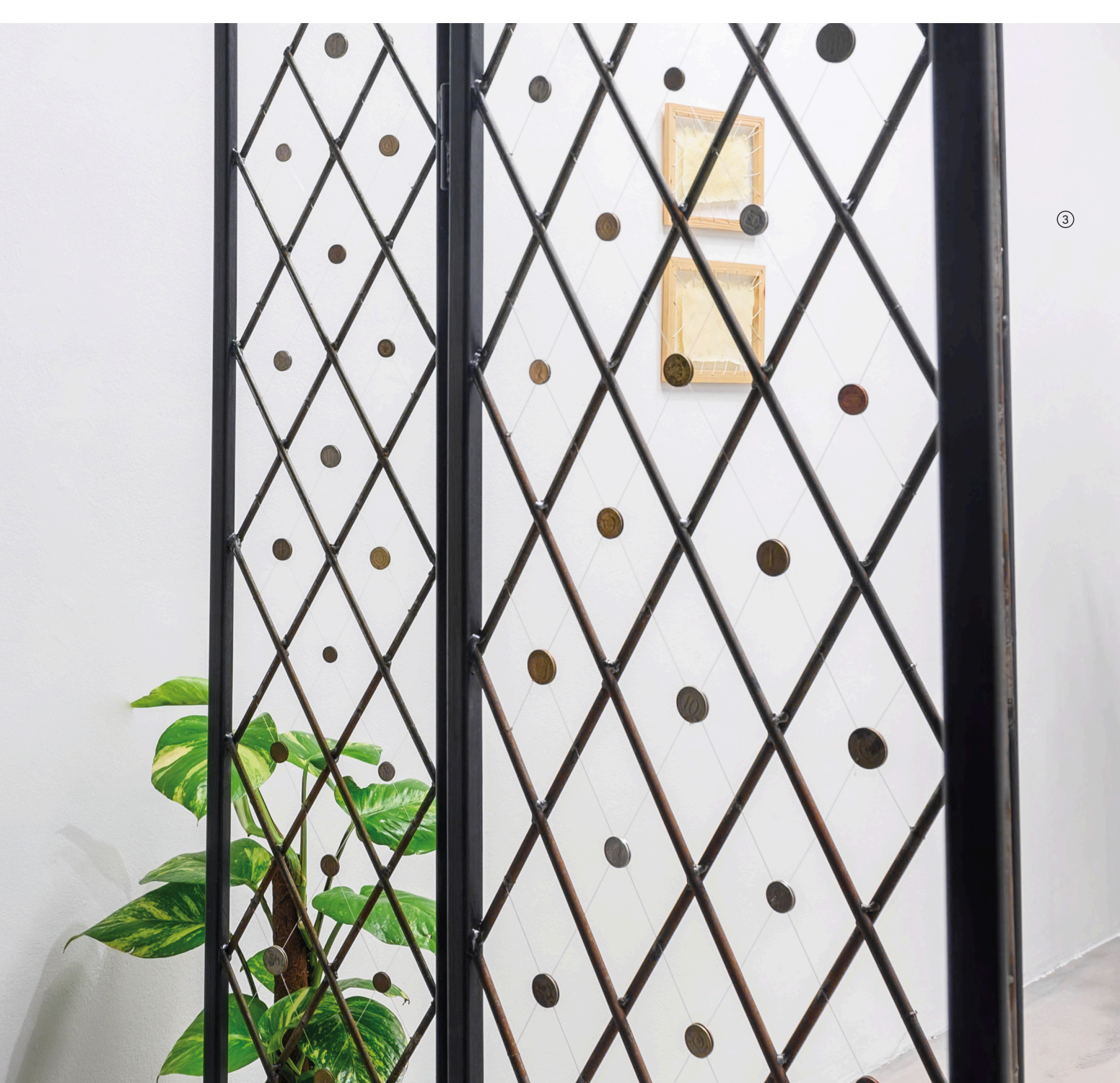


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| ① <i>Klop za ljubljenske PAARTHURNAX, 2024</i>
železo, tekstil | Izvirno delo ①A |
| ② <i>Kabinet kuriozitet TAIGHDE, 2024</i>
železo, les, osebni predmeti umetnice | Izvirno delo ①A |
| ③ <i>Španska stena MATTIA, 2024</i>
železo, kovanci, laks | Izvirno delo ①B |
| ④ <i>Barska miza LOKI, 2024</i>
železo, les | Izvirno delo ①C |
| ⑤ <i>Premični vrtiček SYGIN, 2024</i>
železo, plastika, rastline | Izvirno delo ①C |
| ⑥ <i>Svetilka KENDO, 2024</i>
železo, tekstil, plastika, žarnica | Izvirno delo ①D |
| ⑦ <i>Svetilka SKAFA, 2024</i>
železo, plastika, žarnica | Izvirno delo ①D |
| ⑧ <i>Stojalo SELKIE, 2024</i>
železo, les | Izvirno delo ①E |
| ⑨ <i>Brezrokavnik SKIN, 2024</i>
pvc | Izvirno delo ①F |
| ⑩ <i>Skrita risba I, 2018</i>
plastika, les, umetna masa | |
| ⑪ <i>Skrita risba II, 2018</i>
plastika, les, umetna masa | |
| ⑫ <i>Skrita risba III, 2018</i>
plastika, les, umetna masa | |
| ⑬ <i>Skrita risba IV, 2018</i>
plastika, les, umetna masa | |
| ⑭ <i>Skrita risba V, 2018</i>
plastika, les, umetna masa | |
| ⑮ <i>Ograjeni osebni prostor, 2021</i>
video | |

EXHIBITED WORKS

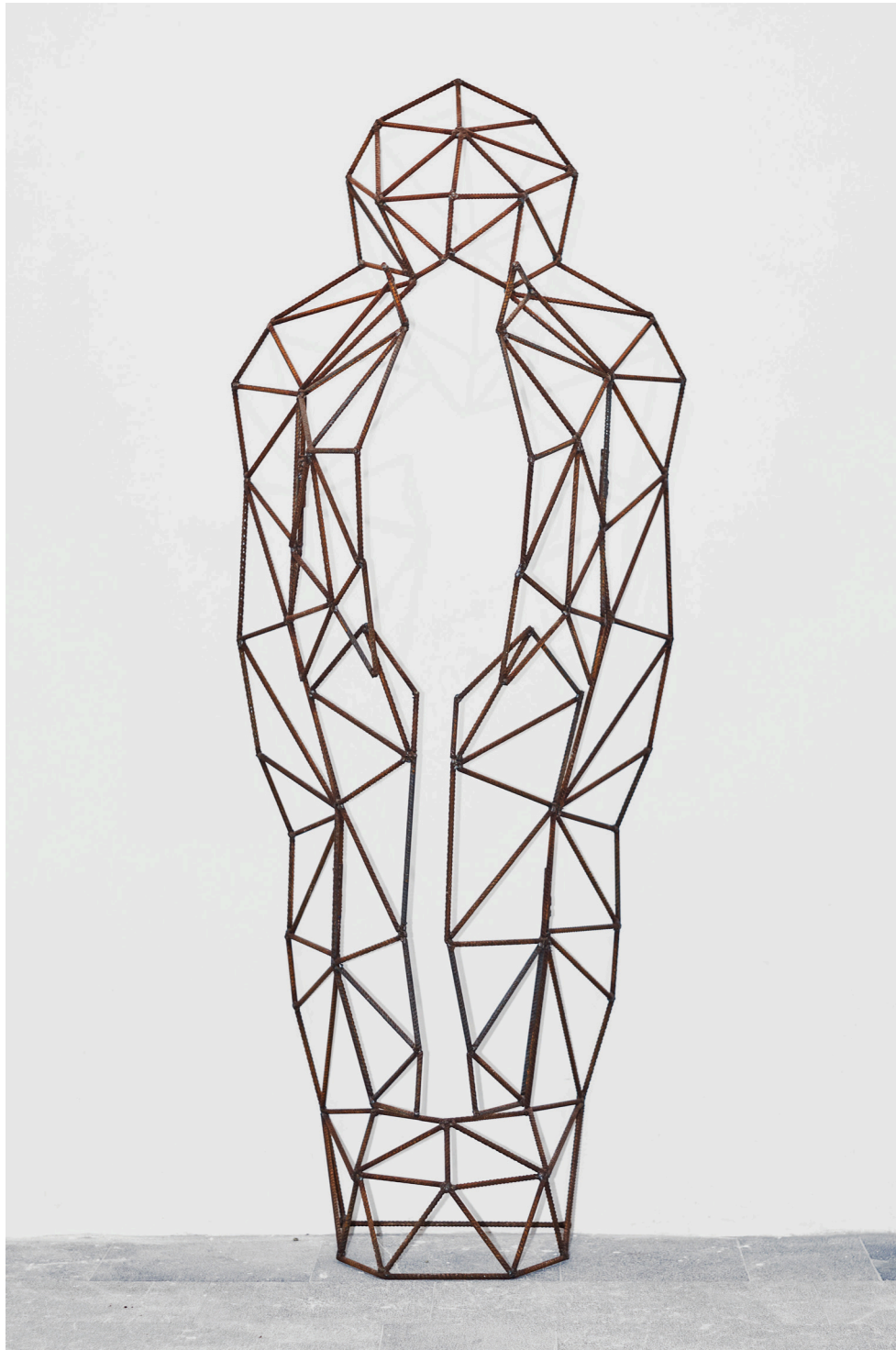
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|---|---|-----------------------|
| ① | <i>PAARTHURNAX Pet Bench</i> , 2024
iron, textile | Originally artwork ①A |
| ② | <i>TAIGHDE Cabinet of Curiosities</i> , 2024
iron, wood, artist's personal items | Originally artwork ①A |
| ③ | <i>MATTIA Spanish Screen</i> , 2024
iron, coins, fishing line | Originally artwork ①B |
| ④ | <i>LOKI Bar Table</i> , 2024
iron, wood | Originally artwork ①C |
| ⑤ | <i>SYGIN Mobile Garden</i> , 2024
iron, plastic, plants | Originally artwork ①C |
| ⑥ | <i>KENDO Lamp</i> , 2024
iron, textile, plastic, lightbulb | Originally artwork ①D |
| ⑦ | <i>SKAFA Lamp</i> , 2024
iron, plastic, lightbulb | Originally artwork ①D |
| ⑧ | <i>SELKIE Stand</i> , 2024
iron, wood | Originally artwork ①E |
| ⑨ | <i>SKIN Vest</i> , 2024
PVC | Originally artwork ①F |
| ⑩ | <i>Hidden Drawing I</i> , 2018
plastic, wood, synthetic material | |
| ⑪ | <i>Hidden Drawing II</i> , 2018
plastic, wood, synthetic material | |
| ⑫ | <i>Hidden Drawing III</i> , 2018
plastic, wood, synthetic material | |
| ⑬ | <i>Hidden Drawing IV</i> , 2018
plastic, wood, synthetic material | |
| ⑭ | <i>Hidden Drawing V</i> , 2018
plastic, wood, synthetic material | |
| ⑮ | <i>Enclosed Personal Space</i> , 2021
video | |

Delo sestavljata dve kletki, ki raziskujeta dialektiko med udobjem in ujetostjo. Prva kletka z dinamično mrežo in mehko peno simbolizira varnost in povratek v prenatalno stanje, v katerem fetalni položaj predstavlja zaščito in sprejemanje. Vendar to udobje prinaša tudi opozorilo o tveganju pasivnosti in regresije, kjer varnost postane omejujoča. Fetalni položaj se tako pojavi kot simbol hrepenenja po varnosti, ki hkrati preprečuje soočanje z zunanjim svetom in osebno rastjo.

Pravo nasprotje je druga kletka, ki s svojo togostjo in antropomorfno obliko ustvarja občutek utesnjenosti in nelagodja. Hladna, neprožna struktura, ki evocira sarkofag, tematizira smrt in dokončnost človeškega telesa. S tem odpira vprašanja o ujetosti v fizičnem svetu ter smrti kot morebitni osvoboditvi iz teh omejitev. Delo na simbolični ravni raziskuje kontrast med rojstvom kot začetkom ujetosti in smrtjo kot končno osvoboditvijo iz telesnega bivanja.







Ⓐ *Untitled I and II, 2015*

Ⓔ

Materials: iron, foam, fleece

The work comprises two cages that explore the dialectic between comfort and confinement. The first cage, with its dynamic lattice and soft foam, symbolizes safety and a return to the prenatal state, where the foetal position represents protection and acceptance. However, this comfort carries a cautionary note about the risks of passivity and regression, transforming security into a restrictive force. Thus, the foetal position becomes a symbol of a yearning for safety that simultaneously hinders confrontation with the outside world and impedes personal growth.

In contrast, the second cage, characterized by its rigidity and anthropomorphic form, evokes a sense of cramped discomfort. Its cold, unyielding structure resembles a sarcophagus, thematizing death and the finality of the human body. This raises profound questions about entrapment within the physical realm and death as a potential release from these constraints. Symbolically, the work explores the juxtaposition of birth as the onset of entrapment and death as the ultimate liberation from physical existence.



Delo sestavljajo anorganske celice, katerih jedro tvorijo pozabljeni kovanci, ki jih je v posodici za margarino hranil umetničin dedek. Kovanci, iztrgani iz izvirnega konteksta in časa, v delu ponovno oživijo kot organizmi spomina.

Spomin v delu nastopa kot dvojni koncept: lahko je varno zatočišče, kjer se hranijo nostalgčni in lepi trenutki, ali pa postane omejujoč oklep obrambnih mehanizmov. Prijetni spomini nas povezujejo s preteklostjo, travmatični pa lahko ustvarijo psihološke prepreke, ki zavirajo osebno rast in posameznika ujetega zadržujejo v škodljivih okoliščinah. Spomin je krhek in fluiden sistem, pogosto izkrivljen zaradi zunanjih vplivov ali prirejen na podlagi zgodb drugih. Ta manipulacija, bodisi skozi poneumljanje ali zlaganje, lahko človeka zapre v negativno psihično kletko, ki onemogoča njegovo svobodno gibanje skozi čas in prostor.





⑧ *Dead Coin Painting*, 2016
Materials: iron, coins, fish string

EN

This work consists of inorganic cells, with their core made up of forgotten coins stored in a margarine container by the artist's grandfather. These coins, removed from their original context and time, are reimagined as organisms of memory.

Memory in this piece embodies a dual concept: it can serve as a sanctuary for nostalgic and beautiful moments or transform into a restrictive armour of defence mechanisms. While positive

memories connect us to our past, traumatic experiences can create psychological barriers that inhibit personal growth, trapping individuals in harmful situations. Memory is a fragile and fluid system, often distorted by external influences or reshaped by the narratives of others. Such manipulation, whether through suppression or layering, can confine a person within a negative psychic cage, restricting their ability to move freely through time and space.



© *Solze ali strup*, 2017

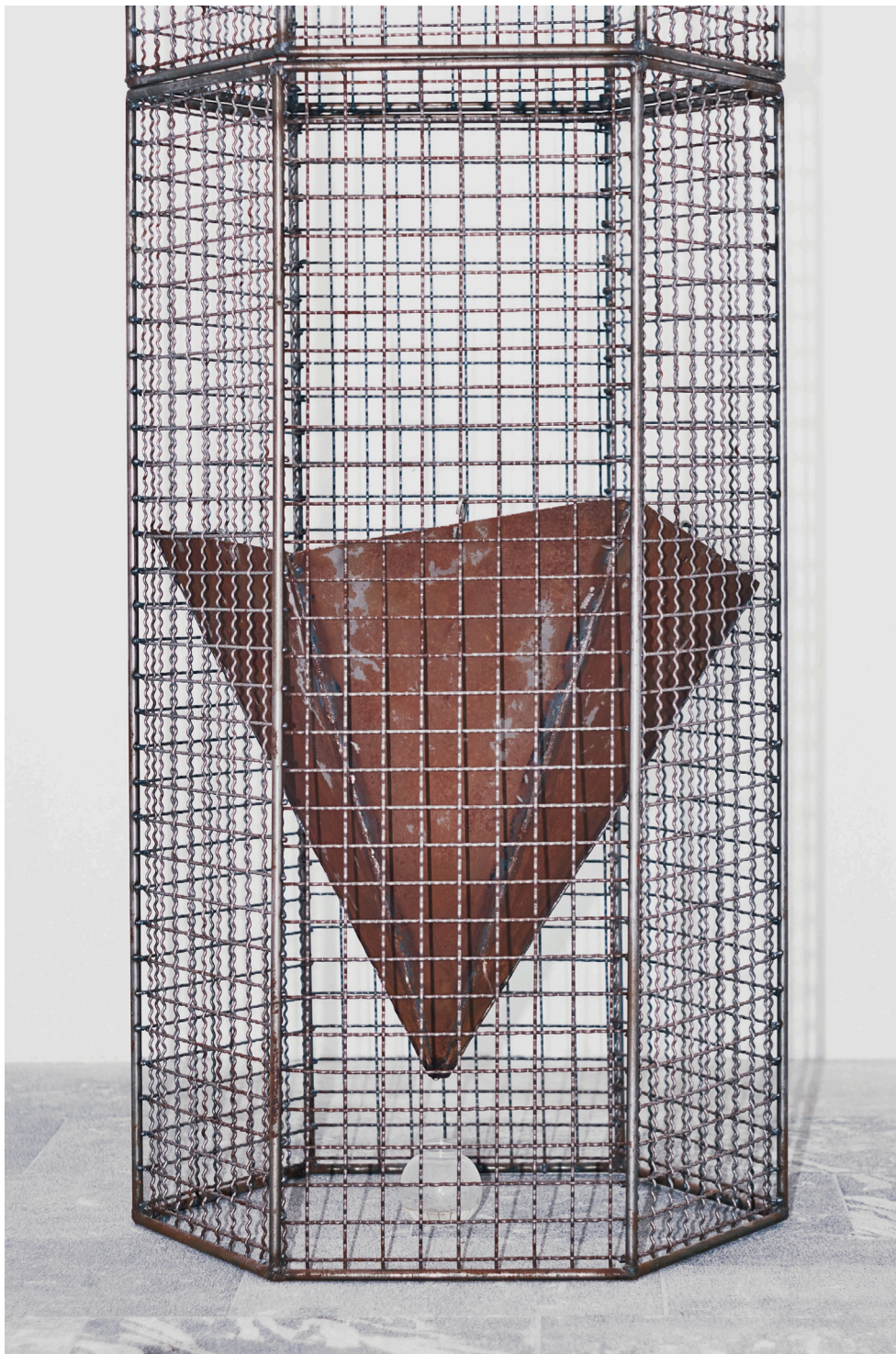
SI

železo, steklo, fiziološka raztopina

Sprva je delo prikazovalo sago o kaznovanju nordijskega mitološkega boga Lokija, ki je priklenjen na drevo. Nad njim visi kača, ki mu večno kaplja strup na telo in povzroča neprestano bolečino. Ob njem zvesto čaka njegova žena Sigyn, ki v posodo lovi strup, da bi ga zaščitila. Vendar se delo skozi čas premakne od specifične mitološke zgodbe k univerzalnemu premisleku o okoljih, ki nas postopoma, fizično in psihično, zastrupljajo. Fiziološka raztopina – solze – počasi razkrajajo železni lij, kar povzroča zbiranje rjave tekočine, ki ponazarja učinek tega nevidnega procesa.

Delo odpira vprašanja o subtilnem in počasnem razkroju človeške psihe, kjer ne gre za fizično bolečino, temveč za vplive, ki postopoma odvijajo pozitivne psihološke elemente, kot so samozavest, veselje in jasnost misli, ter jih nadomeščajo z negativnimi, kot so zavist, ljubosumje, škodoželjnost in elitizem. Pomembno je prepoznati trenutke, ko družba in okolje posamezniku škodujeta, in se naučiti, kako se zaščititi pred tovrstnim strupom. Umetnica opozarja, da toksično okolje ni omejeno le na delovno ali šolsko okolje, temveč je lahko tudi prostor, v katerem smo odraščali.

Čeprav je novo okolje lahko sprva neprijetno ali celo strašljivo, ima lahko osvobajajoč učinek na psihično in posledično fizično stanje. Vendar mnogi ostajajo ujeti v znanem, saj človek pogosto dojema poznano kot manj strašljivo od neznanega, kar lahko preprečuje odločilen korak k osvoboditvi iz ujetosti.



© Tears or Poison, 2017

EN

Materials: iron, glass, saline solution

Initially, the work portrayed *The Punishment of Loki* saga from Norse mythology, where the god is chained to a tree, a snake dripping venom onto him, inflicting eternal pain. His wife, Sigyn, faithfully waits by his side, catching the poison in a bowl to protect him. Over time, however, the work evolves from a specific mythological narrative into a universal reflection on the environments that gradually poison us, both physically and psychologically. A saline solution, representing tears, slowly dissolves the iron funnel, causing a brown liquid to collect, illustrating the impact of this invisible process.

The piece prompts inquiries into the subtle and gradual decomposition of the human psyche. It shifts the focus from physical pain to the influences that erode positive psychological attributes such as self-confidence, joy, and clarity of thought, replacing them with negative emotions like envy, jealousy, spite, and elitism. Recognizing when society and our surroundings become harmful is crucial for learning how to protect ourselves from this type of poison. The artist emphasizes that a toxic environment can extend beyond workplaces and schools to include the very places where we grew up.

While new environments may initially feel uncomfortable or frightening, they can ultimately liberate our mental and physical states. Yet, many individuals remain trapped in the familiar, as human perception often views the known as less intimidating than the unknown, hindering the decisive steps needed to break free from confinement.

Vsaka maska v tem delu simbolizira zakrivanje, zaščito in preobrazbo. Skafander, Kendo maska in posmrtna maska so artefakti, ki so skozi čas spremenili svojo namembnost in funkcijo, hkrati pa umetnici omogočili nov, introspektiven pogled na sebe in svet. Maske, tako v umetnosti kot življenju, niso zgolj zaščita pred zunanjim svetom, temveč lahko postanejo orodja, ki nas omejujejo in hkrati transformirajo našo identiteto.

Maska je vsestranska in vsakdanja oblika fizične in psihološke kletke, ki se lahko manifestira kot predmet za zakrivanje obraza ali glave, pa tudi kot metafora za prikrivanje čustev, imitiranje druge osebnosti ali pretvarjanje. Maske, bodisi fizične ali psihološke, si ljudje pogosto ustvarjamo, da bi lažje delovali v družbenih okvirih in se prilagajali različnim situacijam. Vendar umetnica opozarja, da nošenje teh mask ni vedno koristno za našo samozavest in lahko vodi v izgubo pristne osebnosti.





© Masks, 2017

EN

Materials: iron, textile, epoxy

Each mask in this work represents concealment, protection, and transformation. The spacesuit, Kendo mask, and death mask are artifacts that have evolved in purpose and function over time, allowing the artist a new, introspective perspective on herself and the world. In both art and life, masks not only shield us from external forces but can also serve as tools that both limit and reshape our identity.

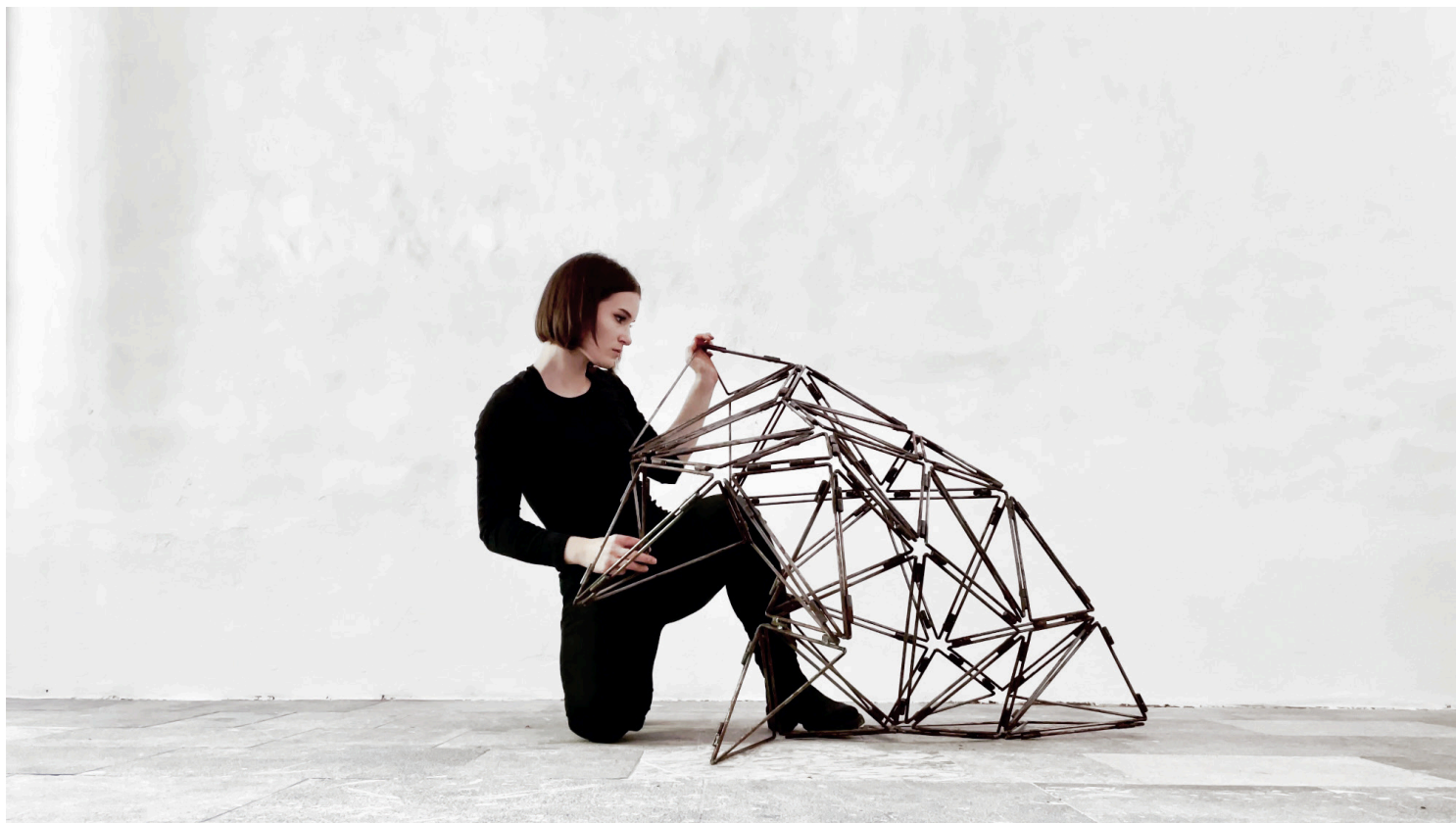
The mask serves a multifaceted form of both physical and psychological cage. It can function as an object to cover the face or head, while also serving as a metaphor for concealing emotions, adopting another personality, or pretending. Masks – whether tangible or psychological – are often created by individuals to navigate social contexts and adapt to various situations. However, the artist cautions that donning these masks can be detrimental to our self-esteem, leading to a loss of authentic identity.





Umetnica se v delu osredotoča na kožo kot transformativni medij, organ, ki se nenehno prilagaja in preoblikuje, kar je motiv, pogosto prisoten tudi v mitologiji. Koža služi kot površina, kjer se skozi raztezanje in krčenje vzorcev odraža sposobnost preobrazbe. Trikotni vzorci, značilni za dele telesa, kjer se mora koža raztezati v vse smeri, so vključeni v delo; umetnica jih imenuje »železna koža.«

Delo nosi dvojni pomen transformacije – fizične in psihične. Fizična je vpeta v železno strukturo, psihična razsežnost pa raziskuje prehajanje in premagovanje psiholoških ovir. Vsak premagan izziv rodi novi, kar ustvarja neskončen proces mentalnega razvoja. Umetnica poudarja pomen tega neprekinjenega razvoja, hkrati pa opozarja na nevarnost, da bi posameznik padel v »žrtveno kletko«, kjer se zapira pred kritikami in nasveti, kar pa ovira njegovo osebno rast in napredek.



Material: iron

In this work, the artist explores the skin as a transformative medium – an organ that constantly adapts and evolves, a theme frequently found in mythology. The skin serves as a canvas reflecting the capacity for transformation through patterns of stretching and shrinking. The triangular shapes, characteristic of areas where the skin must expand in multiple directions, are integrated into the piece, which the artist refers to as "iron skin."

The work conveys a dual meaning of transformation – both physical and psychological. The physical aspect is embodied in the iron structure, while the psychological dimension examines the navigation and overcoming of mental barriers. Each challenge surmounted gives rise to a new one, fostering an ongoing process of mental evolution. Novšak emphasizes the significance of this continuous development, while cautioning against the risk of entering a "victim cage," where individuals may shut themselves off from criticism and guidance, ultimately hindering their personal growth and progress.





Ⓕ *Topografija spomina*, 2019
železo, lateks, vezice

SI

Delo je sestavljeno iz lateksnih odlitkov delov teles članic magistrskega kiparskega kolektiva 2019 na ALUO. Vsaka kiparka je prispevala izbrani del telesa, skupaj z zgodbo o bolečini, travmi ali brazgotini, ki jo je zaznamovala. Odlitki metaforično tvorijo odebeljeno kožo, ki je napeta na železne okvirje in sestavljena v obliko zaščitnega brezrokavnika. Slednji simbolizira zaščito, ki jo umetnica črpa iz skupnosti kolektiva, ter nakazuje na trdo kožo, ki jo posamezniki razvijamo v skupnosti, da bi se zavarovali.

Brazgotine, čeprav pogosto nevidne, niso manj resnične. Večina psihičnih bolečin in kletk, ki nas omejujejo, ostaja očem skrita, a še vedno močno vpliva na posameznikovo notranje stanje. Te nevidne rane lahko počasi razžirajo človeka od znotraj in ustvarjajo škodljive obrambne mehanizme, ki omejujejo osebnostno rast in zdrav razvoj.



© *Topography of Memory*, 2019

EN

Materials: iron, latex, eyelets

The work comprises latex casts of pain-imprinted body parts from the 2019 master's sculpture collective at ALUO. Each sculptress also shared her personal story of pain, trauma, or scars inflicted upon her in the past. The casts metaphorically create a thickened skin stretched over iron frames, assembled into the shape of a protective vest. It symbolizes the protection the artists draw from the collective community, reflecting the tough skin individuals develop to safeguard themselves within a community.

While often invisible, these scars are no less real. Many psychic pains and cages that limit us remain hidden from view, yet they profoundly impact our inner states. These unseen wounds can gradually erode a person from within, fostering harmful defence mechanisms that impede personal growth and healthy development.

BIOGRAFIJA

Tajda Novšak (1994) je vizualna umetnica, ki se v svoji praksi posveča raziskovanju psiholoških procesov in njihovega prepleta z umetnostjo. Njena dela, ki so po obliki večinoma kiparski objekti iz železa in drugih materialov, temeljijo na simboliki fizičnih kletk, ki izražajo ujetost posameznika v družbene in psihološke spone. Te metaforične strukture, ki izražajo notranje mentalne stiske in omejitve, hkrati postajajo sredstvo za njeno nadaljnje raziskovanje procesualne umetnosti.

Leta 2021 je magistrirala iz kiparstva na Akademiji za likovno umetnost in oblikovanje v Ljubljani. Deluje kot vizualna umetnica, ukvarja se z izdelovanjem rekvizitov za gledališke predstave, kratke filme in videospote (*Silence: Vocabulary of Madness, Proces{i}*). Pogosto sodeluje tudi z različnimi umetniki in oblikovalci, ki jim pomaga pri izvedbi umetniških del ali končnih produktov. Zanima jo obdelovanje in raziskovanje tako fizičnih kot psihičnih materialov.

ZAHVALA

SI

Želela bi se zahvaliti Anji Seničar, Tini Gerlec (Galerija Tkalka) in Mateju Tomažinu (Zavod Artopolis) za izjemno podporo pri produkciji te razstave. Vaša predanost in kreativnost sta bili ključni pri oblikovanju projekta ter njegovi izvedbi.

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Na koncu se zahvaljujem vsem, ki ste mi stali ob strani v tem stresnem in kreativno nabitem letu. Vaša podpora, razumevanje in spodbuda so mi dali moč, da sem kljub izzivom nadaljevala in dosegla zastavljene cilje. Hvaležna sem za vsak trenutek, ki ste ga delili z menoj.

BIOGRAPHY

Tajda Novšak (1994) is a visual artist whose work delves into the interplay between psychology and art. Primarily focused on sculptural forms made from iron and other materials, she explores the concept of physical cages that represent how individuals can feel trapped by social and psychological constraints. These metaphorical structures convey inner mental distress and limitations, while also serving as a medium for her exploration of process art. In 2021, she earned her MA in Sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana.

As a visual artist, she also creates props for theatre performances, short films, and music videos (including *Silence: Vocabulary of Madness* and *Proces(i)*). She frequently collaborates with other artists and designers, assisting them in bringing their artistic visions to fruition. Tajda is particularly interested in processing and exploring both physical and psychological materials.

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EN

I would like to thank Anja Seničar, Tina Gerlec (Tkalka Gallery), and Mate Tomažin (Artopolis Institute) for their outstanding support in the production of this exhibition. Your dedication and creativity were essential to the design and execution of the project.

I am also grateful to the Rog Centre and my colleagues for providing the physical and mental space necessary for my creative process. Your assistance and hospitality allowed me to bring my ideas and visions to life.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who has stood by me during this challenging and creatively intense year. Your support, understanding, and encouragement have given me the strength to persevere through difficulties and achieve my goals. I cherish every moment we shared.

Tajda Novšak na Artopolisu. →
Tajda Novšak on Artopolis. →



Tajda Novšak: SHAPESHIFTING



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Tajda Novšak: SHAPESHIFTING



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