

CHRISTOPH WEBER

Touch Fragments

6 November - 24 December, 2022

Opening Sunday 6 November 2 pm - 6 pm



Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff | 43 rue de la Commune de Paris | 93230 Romainville | Tuesday to Saturday 10 am - 6 pm | +33 1 42 03 05 65 | www.galeriewolff.com

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff is pleased to present the solo exhibition by **Christoph Weber**, whose attachment to concrete, the main element of his production, speaks to the ambivalences of human expansion on their environment, by means of the flaws and contradictions of the material itself.

The exhibition was conceived by the artist as **the story of a transformation**, that of limestone into concrete. It reflects the links between the **lithosphere, biosphere and technosphere**, between the earth, the human beings, and the industrial use of natural resources. In the space of the gallery, visitors will be able to discover a dialogue between Christoph Weber's latest works : large human-sized columns reflecting imprints of limestone surfaces. Elsewhere, a selection of works from recent years charts the artist's developments on this theme. Weber's use of concrete served, in this way, to transcend the material's social and political symbolism, as the primary material representing the Anthropocene epoch.

Austrian artist who lives and works in Vienna, Christoph Weber uses concrete as his material of choice, which he has been confronting, questioning and becoming complicit with for many years through his practice. The artist refers to his artistic strategy as "Nachvollziehen methodologisches", a methodological re-perception by means of which he grasps a given reality to divert it both methodically and methodologically, often in a process of mise en abyme, thereby creating a new artistic reality. He was awarded the Förderungspreis Bildende Kunst Wien in 2008. In 2010, he was an artist in residence in New York as part of the International Studio and Curatorial Program, and in 2013 he received the Art Austria Award. Currently on view as part of the collective exhibition *Varia* at the Centre d'art contemporain, Meymac, France, 2022, recent exhibitions include *Climate Care: Reimagining Shared Planetary Futures*, A MAK exhibition, at the Vienna Biennale for Change 2021, Austria, 2021, *Contact*, solo show at Ibid Gallery, Los Angeles, USA, 2018, solo show at BAWAG contemporary, Vienne, Autriche : *Post / Postminimal*, at Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland, 2014.

To accompany the visit, the gallery has invited the critic and curator **Marianne Derrien** to compose a text on the subject of these new works.

Finally, as an introduction to the exhibition, Christoph Weber's *Gegenstück series* is exhibited as part of the **outdoors circuit Sites of Paris+ by Art Basel**, from October 18th to 23rd at the Jardin des Tuileries.

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Touch Fragments

by Marianne Derrien

(...) *All life comes from a single material, the biosphere*

Lynn Margulis

Christoph Weber has extended the concept of sculpture to include modern and contemporary architectural design, and the potential to deconstruct materiality. With *Touch fragments*, the artist explores haunted and *spacetimeattering* landscapes, as described by Karen Barad, an American physicist and a feminist theorist of "agential realism": "Touch is never pure or innocent. It is inseparable from the field of differential relations that constitute it."¹ The world is made up of a convolution of "social" and "natural" organisations.

Whilst the starting point of this exhibition is a set of samples, of surfaces which have been "stolen" by taking prints from walls of limestone and mouldings from concrete columns, it is mainly concerned with the existence of matter and its properties. The artist dissects and carves out the "local realities" of the city of Vienna, where he lives and works. Constantly on edge, tactile and technical, organic and sedimented, his works are part of a policy of matter that literally disarms concrete, the raw and living mass which Christoph Weber incorporated into his sculptural practice as a result of a reflection on the geopolitical crises in the Middle East. Concrete, which is made up of natural silica or limestone aggregates, cement and water, is a material that bears witness to our time. It has colonised our urban landscapes in the name of efficiency and progress with a standardised, globalised habitat that reproduces and destroys itself ad infinitum.

The forms produced simultaneously embody authority, subversion and emancipation: they are connected to power relations and the possibility of resistance.² Christoph Weber elaborates this counter-history of matter, or a secret history of concrete, at the crossroads between geology, quantum physics and political philosophy, between optics and tactility, between naturalness and artificiality. The limits of sculpture are pushed back in a reformulation of conceptual and minimal art: they accentuate a fragility, a fault, repeatedly contradicting the physical and chemical characteristics of concrete. At the threshold of their fall, their disappearance or their spectral form, the friction between abstraction and reality manifests itself with full-scale photographic copies of silicone prints. An anthropology of contact and resemblance³ is redesigned and experimented with using contact prints on photo paper, a large beeswax moulding, limestone rocks propelled on concrete blocks laid on the ground. These works are the relics of an absent referent, one which has disappeared. The dialectic between the form and the counter-form, between solids

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

and hollows, takes on its full weight here: matter acts and becomes politicised by narrating itself from within. Its almost ghostly existence is troubled by the reversible interplay between negative and positive, between resemblance and difference. Tension emerges from this scopic desire to enter into matter.

Everything shifts into this contact zone, which materialises a geography of domination (David Harvey). Under the influence of major construction lobbyists, concrete has become a “capitalist weapon of mass construction,”⁴ according to the philosopher Anselm Jappe, with disastrous consequences for health and ecology: mass extraction of sand and gravel, overconsumption of energy and CO2 emissions,⁵ damage to human health and soil sterilisation. The concrete urban towers of the 1950s-1970s inspired Achille Mbembé, an historian and philosopher, to borrow the concept of brutalism from architectural theory. With this weight of raw materials, he took a new approach to the question of a *machine-future*, a *matter-future*, and advocated a recasting of the human community in solidarity with all living things.

The processes for the production of cities emerge from a back-and-forth between interiority and exteriority, placing these works by Christoph Weber in relation to the social realities of the city of Romainville, as a vibration, an energy, a geological or even a cosmic force. Nevertheless, between attraction and repulsion, we will only achieve an affective ecology by repairing what has been broken.

1. Karen Barad, *On Touching—The Inhuman That Therefore I Am* (v1.1), *Differences*, volume 23, Issue 3, 2012

2. Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Feminism*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2021

3. Georges Didi-Huberman, *La ressemblance par contact: Archéologie, anachronisme et modernité de l’empreinte*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2008

4. Anselm Jappe, *Béton. Arme de construction massive du capitalisme*, Paris, Éditions L’Échappée, 2020

5. The technosphere, a concept coined by the American geologist and engineer Peter Haff, professor emeritus at Duke University in the United States, includes the mass of CO2 emitted by industrial activity and refers to the physical part of the environment affected by anthropogenic changes.

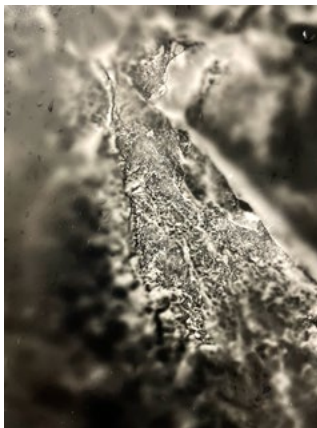
Visuals for press



Christoph Weber, *Burst*, 2022, limestone, concrete, 43 x 26 x 27 cm, unique, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff



Christoph Weber, *par contact*, 2018, lead on wood, 60 x 45 x 3.5 cm, unique, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff



Christoph Weber, *Contact Prints (Lafarge Limestone Quarry Mannersdorf)*, 2022, contact prints on photo paper, detail, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff



Christoph Weber, *Touch Fragments (nonhuman, man-made)*, 2022, beeswax, detail, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

BIOGRAPHY

Né à Vienne, Autriche, 1974

Vit et travaille à Vienne.

Exhibitions (selection)

- 2021 *CLIMATE CARE: Reimagining Shared Planetary Futures*, A MAK exhibition, Vienna Biennale for change 2021, Museum of applied art, Vienna, Austria
- 2019 *FRAGILE*, Maria Elisabetta Novello, Christoph Weber, Anna Marra Contemporanea, Rome, Italy, curated by Giorgia Gastaldon
- 2019 *Discrete Austrian Secrets*, The Galaxy Museum of Contemporary Art, Chongqing, China, curated by Margareta Sandhofer
- 2018 *Contact*, Ibid Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 2017 *On Fold*, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain
- 2016 *carton/pierre*, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris, France
- 2015 *o. T., Kleine Sperlgasse 1a*, Vienna, Austria (with Andreas Duscha)
- 2013 *Uncast*, Ibid., London, UK
- 2014 *New York stories: twenty years of iscp*, International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York City, New York
- 2014 *Post / Postminimal*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland
- 2008 *Opening of BAWAG Contemporary*, Vienna, Austria, curators: Christine Kintisch and Brigitte Huck
- 2004 *Playback spaces*, Display, Prague, Czech Republic
- 2004 *Stagnation*, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris, France

Awards (selection)

- 2013 Art Austria Award
- 2010 Artist in Residence at International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York City, Sponsored by bmukk, Ministry of culture, Vienna, Austria
- 2008 Austrian Young Artist Award, bmukk, Ministry of culture, Vienna, Austria
- 2008 Artist in Residence at Cité des arts, Paris, France
- 2007 Staatsstipendium für Bildende Kunst, bmukk, Ministry of culture, Vienna, Austria
- 2003 Artist in Residence at International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York City, Sponsored by Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen, Dresden, Germany

Bibliography / Monographs (selection)

Christoph Weber, *Uncast*, Spector Books, Leipzig, Germany, 2015

The First Minutes of October, Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2009

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

CONTACT & INFORMATIONS

Preview by invitation only | 6 November 2022 | 12 am - 2 pm

Public Opening | 6 November 2022 | 2 pm - 6 pm

For press enquiries, images, interviews and additional information :

Ana Bordenave, a.bordenave@galeriewolff.com / info@galeriewolff.com

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

43 rue de la Commune de Paris 93230 Romainville

Tuesday to Saturday 10 am - 6 pm

+33 1 42 03 05 65

www.galeriewolff.com

