

DAIGA GRANTINA

Portfolio

Grantina's sculptures investigate the encounters between materials and their consequent relationships of dissonance and consonance, inducing an exercise in expanded vision. Her material gestures resonate with the structural shifts of organisms and environments, navigating relations of volume and form at the point where microscopic and macroscopic overlap and intersect. Her abstract vocabulary borrows from bodies and landscapes to explore indescribable matter, a plastic investigation of the formless and misshapen. Intuitively concocted forms self-consume and self-produce, at once a continuous development of a shared idea and a space of tension where the hierarchies of perception find themselves rearranged.

Daiga Grantina

Born in 1985 in Saldus, Latvia.
Lives and works in Paris, France.

EDUCATION

- 2005 – 2012
- Academy of Fine Arts, Hamburg, DE
- 2009 – 2010
- Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, AT

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025
- Daiga Grantina & Prunella Clough, Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, UK (upcoming)
Čučukstēt my hour, Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, London, UK
Leaves, Emalin, London, UK
- 2024
- Slide*, MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique, Paris, FR
Notes on Kim Lim, curated by Daiga Grantina and Stefanie Gschwend, Kunstmuseum Appenzell, Appenzell, CH
Four Sides of a Shadow, Z33, Hasselt, BE
Constellations, Daiga Grantina with Monika Sosnowska, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, PL
- 2022
- Lauka telpa*, Art Museum Riga Bourse, Riga, LV
Moth Mothers, palace enterprise, Copenhagen, DK
- 2021
- Learning From Feathers*, Liebaert Projects, Kortrijk, BE
Atem, Lehm “Fiato, Argilla”, GAMeC, Bergamo, IT
Temples, Emalin, London, UK
- 2020
- What Eats Around Itself*, curated by Helga Christoffersen, New Museum, New York, US
- 2019
- Saules Suns*, curated by Inga Lāce and Valentinas Klimašauskas, Latvian Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennale, Venice, IT
- 2018
- Toll*, curated by Sandra Adam-Couralet, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
Jardin des Pommes, Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris, FR
- 2017
- So Sun dog harena*, curated by Gesine Borchardt, CAPRI-Raum, Düsseldorf, DE
Pillars Sliding off Coat-ee, curated by Rhea Dall, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg, DE
- 2016
- KUB Billboards*, curated by Eva Birkenstock, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, AT
Flight Devidoor, Autocorrect, Vienna, AT
Heap-Core,,,,, curated by Zane Onckule, Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, LV
Basinger Beige, 83 Pitt Street, New York, US
Grotto from Glammar, Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris, FR
LFL, Lundgren Gallery, Palma de Mallorca, ES
- 2015
- The Mountain Guide*, Mathew Gallery, Berlin, DE
- 2014
- Legal Beast Language*, Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris, FR
Mouth Harness, curated by Stephanie Seidel, ba&d, Düsseldorf, DE
- 2013
- scity-ox-tails*, Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf, DE
- 2012
- FUSE, FUSE (Diana at her Bath)*, curated by Stephanie Seidel, NAK Neuer Aachen Kunstverein, Aachen, DE
- 2010
- Strange Overtones*, Hermes und der Pfau, Stuttgart, DE

EMALIN

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GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *10 Years of Marfa*, Marfa', Beirut, LB (upcoming)
URANIA, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris, FR (upcoming)
Second Body, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, US
EDEN: Coming of Age, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, LV
Domino, curated by Thomas Ellmer, Encounter, Lisbon, PT
- 2024 *Padsmī minūtes (Formative Years)*, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, LV
- 2023 *Wearable Memory and Body Techniques*, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, LV
Can't See, Eleventh Edition of Sequences Biennial, Reykjavík, Iceland
The Stuff of Life | The Life of Stuff, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, UK
Inside Out, Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen, DE
Purvītis Prize, Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, LV
Of their time (7), A look at French private collections, Frac Grand Large, in partnership with ADIAF, Dunkirk, FR
- 2022 *The Kick Inside*, X Museum, Beijing, CN
- 2021 *Post-digital Intimacy*, curated by Michal Novotný, National Gallery Prague, Prague, CZ
TOI 700D, curated by Fabien Danesi, Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris, FR
I feel boîte, Loggia, Vienna, AT
- 2020 *Crazy, Cruel and Full of Love*, curated by Kathleen Bühler, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, CH
Words at an Exhibition, curated by Jacob Fabricius, Busan Biennale 2020, Museum of Contemporary Art Busan, Busan, KR
FLAGGE ZEIGEN, Infected Landscapes, Brandenburg, DE
Platform: Paris, David Zwirner Online, Paris, FR
Expectations, Emalin, London, UK
- 2019 *An Autumn Pantomime*, Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris, FR
The Happy Fact: A Popular Mechanics of Feelings, curated by Tania Pardo, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, ES
Delirious, curated by Chris Driessen and David Jablonowski, 10th edition of Lustwarande, Tilburg, NL
Perfume of Thorns, Phillips, Paris, FR
Negative Space, curated by Peter Weibel, ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, DE
Animal – Human – Robot, curated by Erika Grigoravičienė and Ugnė Paberžytė, MO MUSEUM, Vilnius, LT
Hot Dilute Soup, curated by Martina Panelli and Eline Grignard, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris, FR
- 2018 *GIVE UP THE GHOST*, curated by Vincent Honoré, Baltic Triennial 13, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, LT
CHILDHOOD Another banana day for the dream-fish, curated by Sandra Adam-Couralet and Yoann Gourmel, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
Solar Bodies, curated by Ø, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, FR
The Dialectic of the Stars: Extinction Dancefloor, curated by Fabien Danesi, Platform L, Seoul, KR
Crash Test, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, La Panacée, Montpellier, FR
Akadémia: Performing Life, curated by Solvita Krese & Inga Lace, Villa Vassilieff, Paris, FR
- 2017 *Artificial Tears: Singularity & Humanness – A Speculation*, curated by Marlies Wirth, Vienna Biennale 2017, MAK Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, AT
Biotopia, curated by Sabine Rusterholz Petko, Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz, DE
Condo London, Emalin hosting Galerie Gregor Steiger, Emalin, London, UK
- 2016 *Adhesive Products*, curated by Praxes, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, NO
Harmony of Chaos, curated by Elina Spröge, Galerija Alma, Riga, LV

- Les Lèvres Nues*, curated by Noemie Vulpian and Jarry, DOCL, Paris, FR
- 2015 *The Pleasure of the Text*, Campoli Presti, London, UK
Tantrum, curated by Jo-ey Tang, de Geest, Brussels, BE
Crowd Control Rope, Mathew Gallery, New York, US
X is Y, Sandy Brown, Berlin, DE
hTERT, HESTER, New York, US
- 2014 *Boesner Art Award*, Märkisches Museum, Witten, DE
New Generation, FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk, FR
One Night Stand #1: Crampographies, curated by Ulrike Gerhardt, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE
The plates of the presents, curated by Jo-ey Tang and Thomas Fuigerol, Praz-Delavallade, Ivry-sur-Seine, FR
- 2013 *Nouvelle Vague*, curated by Marc Bembekoff, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
Past Future, curated by Cécile Bourne-Farrell, 5th Anglet Biennale, Villa Béatrix, Anglet, FR
Solid enough to be Inhabited, curated Stephanie Seidel, Schloss Ringenberg, Hamminkeln, DE
Opulente Figuren, curated by Katrin Mayer, Golem Hamburg, Hamburg, DE
Time Based..., with Rémy Héritier, Phénix Theater, Valenciennes, FR
- 2012 *Index 12*, Kunsthau Hamburg, Hamburg, DE
Mad-Stir-Delirium, with Ei Arakawa, HFBK University of Fine Arts Hamburg, Daad Galerie, Berlin, DE
- 2011 *Out of Storage. Provisoire & Définitif*, Marres Maastricht, Maastricht, NL
In den Falten des Vorhangs, District Stiftung, Berlin, DE
- 2009 *Richard Prince and the Revolution*, curated by Jonathan Monk, Projecte SD, Barcelona, ES
Fluc Wanne, curated by Marita Fraser, Vienna, AT

AWARDS, GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

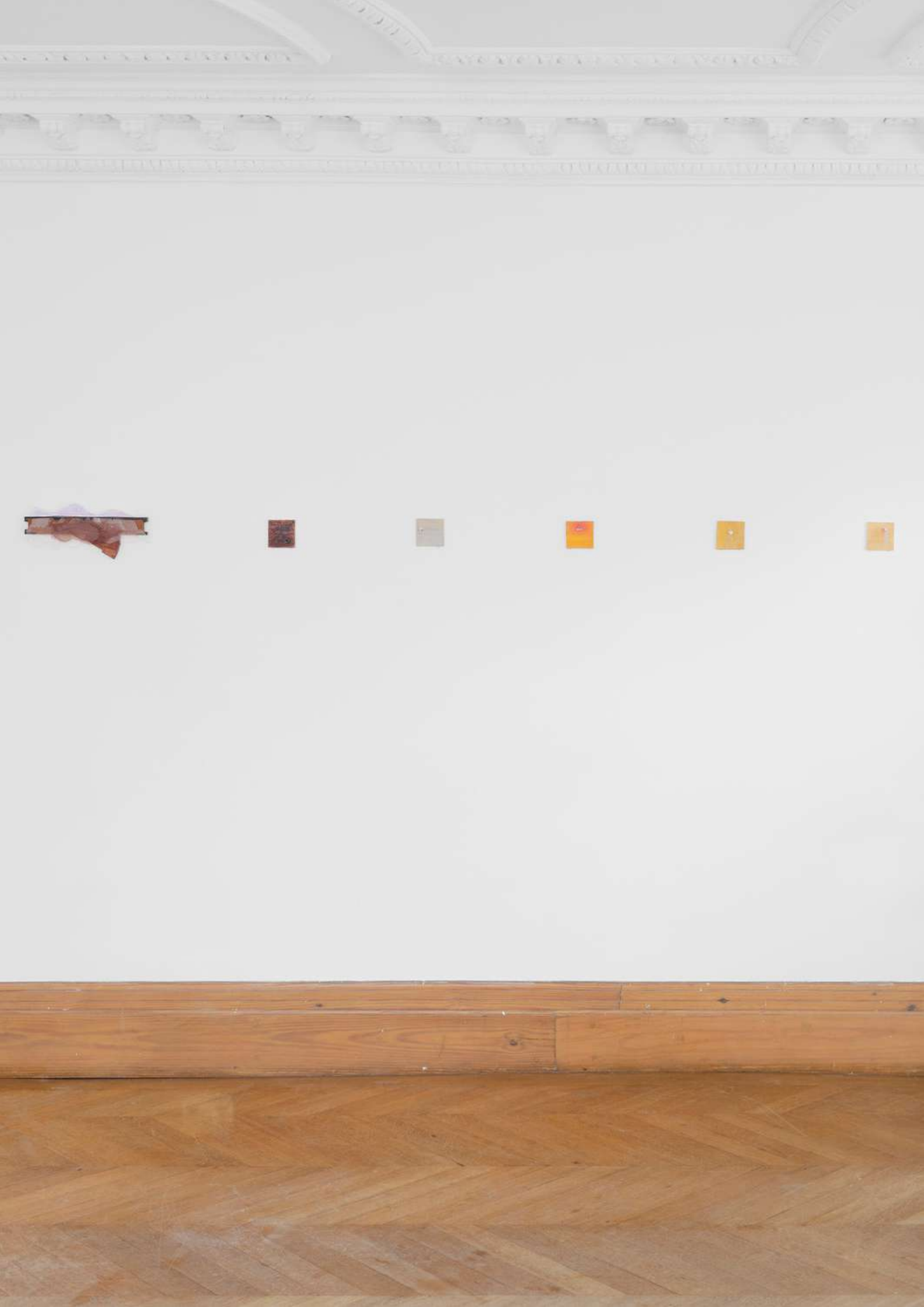
- 2025 Fluxus-CPGA Prize, Frieze London, UK
Medici Residency, The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, Rome, IT
- 2023 Nominated for the Purvītis Prize, Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, LV
- 2022 Cascina I.D.E.A. Residency, Piedmont, IT

PUBLICATIONS

- Grantina, Daiga. *Atem, Lehm*. Berlin: Hatje Cantz (upcoming)
- Grantina, Daiga. *Notes on Kim Lim*. Berlin: Distanz, 2025
- Grantina, Daiga. *Temples*. London: Emalin, 2021
- La Biennale di Venezia. *Biennale Arte 2019*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 2019

COLLECTIONS

- CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, US
CNAP Centre National Art Plastique, Pantin, FR
FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk, FR
GAMEC, Bergamo, IT
Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, CH
Art Museum RIGA BOURSE, Riga, LV
Tate, London, UK
X Museum, Beijing, CN



2025

Cucukstet my hour Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation

LONDON, UK
10 OCTOBER 2025 - 24 JANUARY 2026

Clouds shake air with invisible vibration and like the motion of
time Yesterday was today and the day
Y the suns lasy lay the windows sill
And
No mhy hour

(Daiga Grantina)

Čučukstēt my hour is an exhibition by Daiga Grantina for the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, curated by Vittoria de Franchis, and the artist's first institutional presentation in the United Kingdom.

Daiga Grantina is a poet of gestures, sculptural and semantic. Throughout her oeuvre, she has carved a distinctive abstract vocabulary, articulated in colour, interconnected through light, and with synthetic and organic materials as muses. Reflecting on her practice, the artist notes: "I come more and more to an understanding of my work as sparks of feelings without resolution."

A sense of possibility permeates Grantina's pieces: as every element appears interconnected within a larger system of signs, we are invited to see through. In the exhibition title, *Čučukstēt*—meaning "to murmur" in Latvian—blends with English, giving time an intimate, tentative quality. When she arrived at the Foundation for the first site visit, the clock outside the building—normally stopped—happened to show precisely that moment in time, a coincidence that echoes the synchronicities enmeshed in her pieces.

Often drawing upon to landscapes, for *Čučukstēt my hour* Grantina turned to maritime pines she had observed during her residency at Villa Medici in Rome, whose tall trunks with horizontally spreading crowns suggested "columns for clouds." This metaphor-metaform emerged through conversations around the exhibition and was further shaped by the particular qualities of light and its interaction with water, birds, tiles, and nets seen from the Foundation's windows in London, providing the framework for the sculptures produced over the summer in her studio in Montreuil, France.



Čučukstēt my hour guides the viewer in a contemplative circular motion across the two rooms. The score-like sequence of wall-mounted sculptures encompasses Grantina's signature compositions, here envisioned as "light catchers," alongside a filament of city squares, introducing a new pictorial minimalism in the artist's practice. With geometry intrinsic to her approach, she cites the circle as a central element of inspiration for the exhibition, appearing for the first time in pointillistic assemblies of cylindrical colored beads and nails. A hanging sculpture modulates and reflects the changing light from the window, engaging viewers through its presence and momentarily aligning them with cloud, column, lightning bolt.

In their sentient presence, Grantina's sculptures do not simply occupy space: they sculpt it with the subtle force of becoming.













2025

Leaves Emalin

LONDON, UK
07 MARCH - 10 MAY 2025

The middle part
between two parts.
Sometimes one is separated out of the other;
Sometimes they were always already effortlessly aligned
in parallel movements;
Sometimes they still clearly are one, the distance irrelevant.

The middle
inside one part
is the same as the middle between many parts.
It is incoherence that makes the unity, Leo says.
A rich forest. We separate into two out of a single egg.
The separation itself is the ardent mirror that binds the parts.
Some of them come in unequal pairs.
Like the right and the left arm
being put to different use. The middle is their difference.
It extends their reach from the split of the brain.
Their shape and the endings of their veins speak of their use.
Dina writes that fingernails are extensions of the sun's rays.
And Daisy hands me 'Time passes' in a cup.
Here, please take this.
Time passes.
It is the time corridor that you can feel looking at leaves.
A leaf is a square of both middles.
A leaf's face is an autobiography.
When you see a leaf, you see a face and a profile,
you see the corridors that are passing through its face in real time.

















2024

Slide
MASSIMODECARLO
Pièce Unique

PARIS, FR
29 OCTOBER – 09 NOVEMBER 2024

MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique is very pleased to present *Slide*, by Paris-based Latvian artist Daiga Grantina. On this occasion, Grantina wrote a short poem to accompany her installation in the space.

*A shadow can be freed
When any reflection becomes a forest
An entity as sound is
When I hold my head side ways
And the view rests in the midst.*

*A shadow can be freed
When mirrors become visible as pendulums
And any form is infinitely open, is an open clam.
A shadow can be freed
Because Antigone can carry the colors before dawn,
The colors before color itself
And wrap herself in these like a blanket
Of feathered futures.
A shadow can be freed,
Run around the beach
And write an autobiography.*

Shadows sliding in and out of themselves.

-Daiga Grantina



MASSIMO DECARLO

PIÈCE UNIQUE

Slide (Former Smell of Hay), 2024
felt, wax, wood, ink, fabric, aluminium
installation dimensions variable





2024

Notes on Kim Lim Kunstmuseum Appenzell

APPENZELL, CH

20 OCTOBER 2024 – 04 MAY 2025

CURATED BY DAIGA GRANTINA AND STEFANIE GSCHWEND

The exhibition Daiga Grantina. *Notes on Kim Lim* traces the work of the Singaporean- British artist Kim Lim (1936-1997, Singapore, lived and worked in London, UK) in a contemporary and associative exploration, placing her œuvre in dialogue with the sculptures of the Latvian artist Daiga Grantina (*1985, Saldus, Latvia lives and works in Paris, FR). There are striking similarities and parallels between the works, particularly in terms of their mutability and elasticity, which are constitutive for both artists. At the same time, the differences between the works become apparent, creating an effective tension.

Kim Lim devoted herself to abstract sculpture for more than four decades, using wood, stone and industrial materials. In parallel to her sculptural work, she pursued printmaking and drawing throughout her career. The unifying element across the different periods of her work is Lim's enduring interest in light, space and rhythm, as well as her engagement with the correlation between art and nature. Lim's work resists both the modernist universalisms of Eurocentric art history and an essentialist categorisation of her practice within a pan-Asian cultural space. Through extensive travels to Italy, Cambodia, India, Japan and Egypt, she has broadened her studies and coordinated a visual vocabulary for her own practice from a multiple spatio-temporal field of ancient and contemporary sculptural works. Her grammar derives less from a clarification of abstract forms than from a physical encounter with sculptures in their concrete surroundings.

Daiga Grantina uses a wide range of everyday materials in her practice, from the synthetic to the organic, often reversing and transcending the boundaries of their traditional use to create associative formations. She draws inspiration for the development of her material processes from the numerous adaptive properties of biological life, such as coexistence and self-replication and sees her works as mediators between earthly and cosmic spaces that require an elasticity of our imagination and feeling.



Versatility and elasticity are characteristic and constitutive of the artistic practices of Kim Lim and Daiga Grantina. The works of both artists are rooted in a potential for transformation and parallels can be found in the understanding of the bridging function of images, which mediate between the most diverse cultures, both historically and spatially distant from each other. Parallels can also be recognised in the interest in the essence of geometry, whereby the form does not stand on its own, but merges with flowing and nature-related elements. Both artists seem to be less concerned with representing nature than with reproducing its active forces without organising them. In their sculptural translation into new and free forms, the artists find a proximity to unavailable dynamics. Lim with her own basic elements, Grantina in the transformation of her source material.

Being the first presentation of Kim Lim's work in Switzerland, the exhibition is not intended to be a retrospective, but rather looks at her work from an artistic perspective.

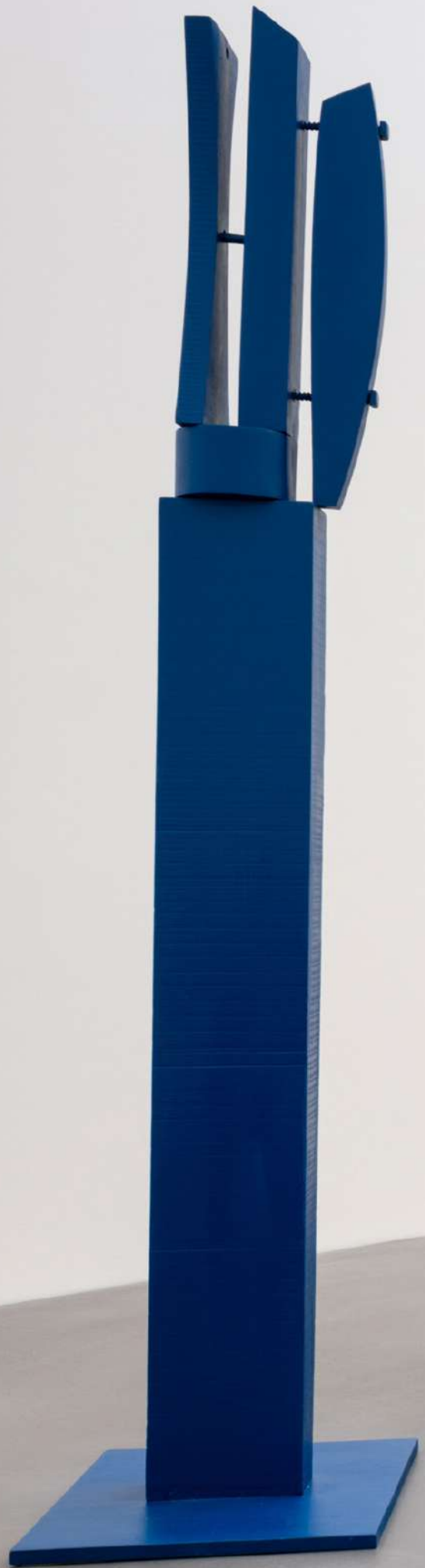




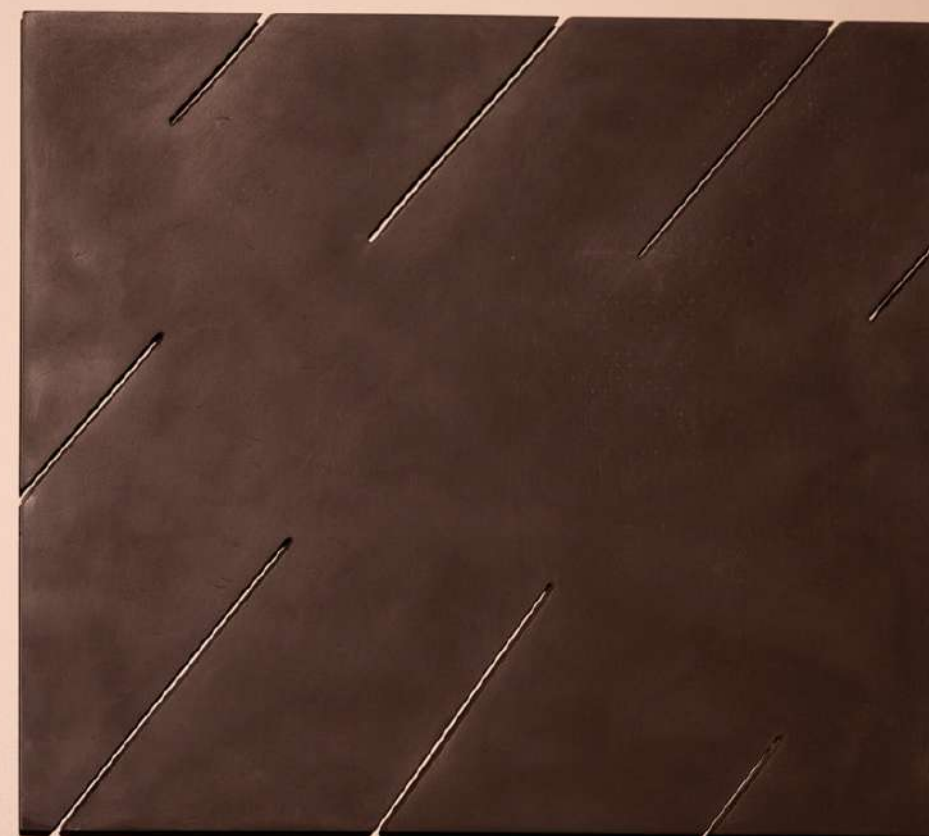














2024

Constellations Foksal Gallery Foundation

WARSAW, PL
05 APRIL - 18 MAY 2024

Foksal Gallery Foundation is pleased to present an exhibition by Monika Sosnowska (b. 1972 in Ryki, Poland) alongside hosting Emalin, London presenting an exhibition by Daiga Grantina (b. 1985, Saldus, Latvia) on the occasion of Constellation in Warsaw. Dispersed across the two floors of the Foundation's building, the sculptors enter in and out of dialogue in their material vocabularies that draw from architectural, domestic and public spaces.

Materials such as steel and concrete, characteristic of the construction of the contemporary urban landscape, constitute the primary material for Monika Sosnowska's sculptures. The artist is a keen observer of the ongoing changes in the architectural fabric of the city subjected to a process of brutal transformation. Demolitions of modernist buildings, ripping out of metal roots, and destruction triggering new investments serve as a source of inspiration for the formal inquiries of the artist.

In her exhibition, Sosnowska presents a "linear sculpture" consisting of a single reinforcing bar, 11 meters in length and 20 millimetres in diameter. The cut, twisted bar floats in the gallery space, connecting it like a "metal umbilical cord" to the panoramic view of the dense centre of Warsaw.

Daiga Grantina's intuitive arrangements of sculptures use deceptively simple forms and domestic materials – wood, twine, resin – to abstract something ineffable about our experience of space, matter and light. The exhibitions she composes like pieces of music play out in the meetings of physical phenomena – such as gravity, reflection or refraction – and the sensorial experiences of language, colour and emotion. At its core, her work points to just how intimate and indescribable reality is when faced with our capacity to perceive.

Her sculptures, which she describes as material gestures, follow the structural shifts of organisms. Wooden brackets align with the geometry of bird feathers, the refractions of light or the gesture of opening and closing of passages. Some materialise in resin cast into womb-like, lung-like shells, like *Bean* (2019), originally created for Grantina's exhibition at the 58th Venice Biennale. Within her layered environments, she pays close attention to the specific qualities of each fold and weave, locating a motion of life unfolding similarly at each scale.



In the recent body of work presented here and on view currently at her solo exhibition at Z33 in Hasselt, Belgium, one of the trails of focus she follows is the idea of a mirror, understood as a surface of connection between our psyche and the surroundings. A mirror emphasises the relationality of an object that is otherwise self-contained. Various parallel dimensions or understandings of these sculptures multiply and overlap in thought and sensation. Grantina proposes a space of intimate perception to each person that enters it.







Every day and just once, 2024
wood, acrylic paint, silicone, tissue, string
261.5 x 685 x 257.5 cm
103 x 269 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 101 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



2024

Four Sides of a Shadow Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture

HASSELT, BE
31 MARCH - 25 AUGUST 2024

"I've been out walking, Nurse. It was beautiful. Everything was grey. Now, you have no idea, already it's all pink and yellow and green. It's turned into a postcard. You have to get up earlier, Nurse, if you want to see a world without colour."

– Antigone, Jean Anouilh, 1944

Imagine wandering down a garden path in the middle of an inky night. Your eyes struggle to register the environment around you, you sense the outlines of bushes to your left and right. They slowly blend into long, trailing arms that hug you. Where do I end, where does the night begin? Shadows become physical; the grey area between human and world thickens.

For Daiga Grantina, shadows appear to "be the interface between a figure's feelings and her surrounding environment," they are a psychological bridge from a subject to a landscape. *Four Sides of a Shadow* is an attempt to give a material form to the ephemeral life of a shadow. Throughout the exhibition there is a movement between shadow and the colour grey.

In the world of optics and pigments there is no 'true' grey. Blue and brown are mixed to create yellow-greys (the hard shine of a tanned animal skin), green-greys (a hazy drift of woodsmoke), purple-greys (the ashy husk of roasted aubergine). Grey is a spectrum to inhabit, a place to move towards and from. Grey, like the shadow, is an atmospheric effect and binding agent; it is both matter and veil.

The sculptures in the exhibition are composed of simple materials – fabric, wood, string, metal, wax – with careful attention given to their sensory properties. The suspended textile sculptures begin by carefully hand-staining lengths of fabric, which are then shaped around inflated objects. Eco-resin cures the surface, rendering the forms hard. Depending on how you approach the sculptures, they can appear voluminous (like a pair of cheeks holding a long breath) or hollow (an abandoned egg shell). They are both interior and exterior; positive and negative; shadow and subject.



Without light, shadow cannot exist (is not night the earth's shadow?). Within the exhibition the many uncovered skylights become lenses of illumination for a choreography of transitory forms. It is a realm that is both luminous and cloaked. On our own path, we tread deeper into the embrace of a shadow: revealing and withholding, here and beyond, matter and emotion.

Joana's Joy, 2024
wood, fabric, ink , resin, spray paint, string
220 x 90 x 50 cm
86 ⁵/₈ x 35 ³/₈ x 19 ³/₄ inches











River, 2024
wood, ink, fabric, resin, metal mesh
313 x 120 x 130 cm
123 ¼ x 47 ¼ x 51 ⅞ inches





2023

Purvītis Prize Latvian National Museum of Art

RIGA, LV
01 APRIL - 11 JUNE 2023

The exhibition comprises a striking selection of paintings, sculptures, installations, photo and video art works created by six artists and groups of authors shortlisted by a panel of independent experts for the eighth Purvītis Prize for outstanding achievement in visual art of Latvia in 2021 and 2022. The nominees are Evelīna Deičmane, Ance Eikena, Kristaps Epnars, Daiga Grantiņa, Daria Melnikova, Evita Vasiljeva and Kaspars Groševs. In all, 21 artists / collectives of artists, whose works have been recognised as important events within Latvia's visual art scene during the period from 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2022, were nominated for the final competition of the Purvītis Prize 2023. The exhibition is curated by Daiga Rudzāte.

"The openwork silhouettes of Daiga Grantiņa's sculptures reveal themselves to the viewer one through another, framing the opulent architecture of the space. The exhibition shows contemporary sculpture as a completely transparent process: there are not many secrets in the technical execution of the pieces. What it does, however, is perfectly demonstrate the close link between the artist's imagination (starting with reproductions of sketches included in the exposition), her unique vision and an impetuous handicraft inspired by DIY aesthetics," the art critic Vilnis Vējš explains the panel's choice.

"The nomination justified by Daiga Grantiņa's ability to create a physically responsive, technically perfect immersive art experience where an essential role is played not just by the three-dimensional experience provided by the sculptural pieces but also by their potential for psychological absorption of the viewer's experience," tells LNMA exhibition curator Līna Birzaka-Priekule.

"The exhibition continues in the musical piece that everybody can take away and transform into dance in their own safe space. [...] The magical thing about this exhibition, so long in the making, is the intimate space of experience created by the artist's delicate momentary images captured in volatile shapes that form an excellent interplay with the rooms of the Riga Bourse. The fact of re-creation of individual pieces does not remain a background melody; we experience each work of art in motion, on its own and independent of the artist: a finite, complete form, an end result is not presumed," adds art historian Antra Priede.







2022

Lauka telpa Art Museum Riga Bourse

RIGA, LV
07 MAY - 31 JULY 2022

The Art Museum RIGA BOURSE presents the largest to date solo exhibition in Latvia of works by internationally acclaimed Latvian artist Daiga Grantina.

Specifically for this homecoming exhibition, Grantina has assembled elements of her sculptural vocabulary developed in her practice to present newly created and recreated works. *Lauka telpa* focuses on the symbolic potential of Grantina's oeuvre – shifting from a process-based practice to one that is rooted in impressions of the mind which simply occur.

Within the space of the exhibition, these visions of the artist's imagination are arranged along a diagonal line, occupying the entire perimeter of the vast hall. A series of sculpture-typologies trace the diagonal, sparking rhythm and revealing patterns of gestures that gradually culminate in a sensation of space. A monumental, red tower piece, previously presented at the Latvian Pavilion of the 58th Venice Biennale under the title *Saules Suns*, integrates the center of the line in a motion expanding vertically. This linear arrangement of objects can be experienced as a spatial notation, a language formed through sculptural drawing: *Lauka telpa* reads physical space as form free to be drawn into.

The drive for this exhibition stems from the encounter with form as something all encompassing: revealing the essence of matter in synthesis with our sensory experience – our capacity to complete form and hence becoming part of it. *Lauka telpa* is a wickerwork of unfolding, cyclical movements that build an expanded surface of contact through material, channelling the spirit of creation and the dynamics of experience. Grantina's sculptural scoring of the space gives points of access to the invisible: the realm of sensation, of intuition, of the subconscious





Cloud Woman, 2022
foam, acrylic medium, ink, fabric, mirror panel
155 x 195 x 275 cm
61 1/8 x 76 3/4 x 108 1/4 inches





2021

The Kick Inside X Museum

BEIJING, CN
17 APRIL - 17 JULY 2022

X Museum is pleased to present the group exhibition *The Kick Inside* from 17 April to 17 July 2022. The exhibition brings together the works of four domestic and international artists, with some of the pieces being newly created in accordance with the space and discourse of the exhibition. Through the transliteration and re-enactment of bodily experiences, the exhibition seeks to explore the volatility of the body, revealing the anchored connections between culture, nature and the human body via the artists' sculptural experiments with various materials.

The body is a fluid and constantly contested system. As such, our consciousness, identity and senses are constructed and emerge into a broader realm through the most essential acts of life — touching, breathing, looking, and hearing. Through the perception and scrutinization of the body, we are able to decipher the complexities of social history and the individual reality embedded in perpetual flux. Examining the 'thingness' of the body, *The Kick Inside* evaluates how the body can be conceived as a place of encounters where biology, material, and personal narratives convene. The title of the exhibition, *The Kick Inside*, is taken from the eponymous 1978 song by British musician Kate Bush. A reference to English folklore, 'Lucie Wan', which depicts a tragedy of incest, the song refers to a corporeal experience unique to women: pregnancy, childbearing, and feeling the baby's kick within. The artists in the exhibition are all committed to a bodily approach to their practice; they invoke or dismantle the multidimensional connotations of the body in an either playful or pensive way, re-contemplating how identities, memories, emotions and fantasies triggered by the body play out through the lens of disparate cultures and histories.

The exhibition aims to reflect how the body's physical presence is entwined within the turbulence of culture and society, underlining how the body is approached as a medium and subject by artists and asking a series of critical reality-related questions in light of this. The Australian feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz once proposed the concept of 'volatile bodies' to emphasise the virtualities and potentialities inherent within biological existence, associating the physicality of the body with social and historical forces in order to articulate the intricate relationship between nature and culture. The body is not merely a material that transcends any conceptualisation;





its formations are actively involved in the transformation and evolving processes of all cultural life. Drawing from four different cultural contexts, the exhibition seeks to understand where the body is critically situated in the otherness of these different cultures. The exhibition thereby intends to construct a perceptual space in which the body is not solely a measure of life, but also represents a crossroads intersecting the historical and the present, as well as the collective and the individual.



Learning from feathers (Sky carpet), 2021
wood, fabric, silicone, string
in three parts, each:
400 x 400 x 15 cm
157½ x 157½ x 5⅞ inches





Learning from feathers (Sky carpet), 2021
wood, fabric, silicone, string
in three parts, each:
400 × 400 × 15 cm
157½ × 157½ × 5⅞ inches



Māja, 2022
plaster, fiberglass, expanding foam, fabric, ink, acrylic, wax
in two parts:
a. 187 × 137 × 110cm, 73⁵/₈ × 54 × 43¹/₄ inches
b. 230 × 115 × 137cm, 90¹/₂ × 54 × 45¹/₄ inches



What Eats Around Itself (For Rilke), 2019–2021 (detail)

2021

Atem, Lehm “Fiato, Argilla”

GAMeC

BERGAMO, IT

10 JUNE - 29 AUGUST 2021

CURATED BY SARA FUMAGALLI AND VALENTINA GERVASONI

For the occasion the artist has conceived a new body of work with a site-specific spatial concept in the museum's project room, Spazio Zero. The consistency, composition, adaptability, color, and texture of the materials are offered to the viewer as plastic entities that stimulate our perceptual system. The artist asks “If and how can we delineate color?” as she puts together the exhibition in Bergamo around both this question and her observations on color and its dynamic relationship with matter and light. In Grantina's work color is fluid and vibrant, neither stable nor static. The experience is not investigated in the symbolic sphere but in its corporeal and mental dimension.

The exhibition at the GAMeC represents a major evolution in Grantina's poetics, a decisive and coherent change of palette and pace compared to the large-scale environmental installations that have characterized her work to date. She is now faced with a desire for containment, vibration, and definition in which geometry and drawing become the grammar of her “gestures”—as the artist defines her sculptural works—translating the perception of the heterogeneous materials comprising her sculptures into an ethereal dimension.

The space is characterized by a mural that surrounds and delineates the space. A line made up of squared units, drawn or filled with iridescent blue and green feathers or of painted wood. The mural forms an open-ended structure with its potentially infinite combinations, inducing an ongoing and bi-directional exchange between scale and proximity. The mural seems to breathe, constraining and distending the grounding of space.

When viewed as a whole, the line marks out a space of resonance where the line itself serves as a hinging point, and its modular squares of different colors, materials, and consistency—organized as a score—can vibrate, absorbing and releasing different frequencies of color and light. The sculptural space is built from a sense of crystallization through the color.

At a closer distance a common frequency of the fibers emerges in the form of a system of lines starting from the mural as a whole to the details of the elements it is made of. The artist aspires to give shape to the sensing of color.



Atemmold, 2021 (detail)

Atem, Lehm “Fiato, Argilla” also looks back at Grantina’s previous work, *Around Green* (2020) or *What Eats Around Itself (For Rilke)* (2019), while placing new accents on the spatial relationships of fullness and emptiness and optical properties such as iridescence. The biomorphic corporeity of *Around Green* interferes with the geometric form of the square, which only exists in nature in salt crystals.

The title of the exhibition *Fiato, Argilla* (“Breath, Clay”) is a translation from German “Atem, Lehm,” a line from *In der Luft, da bleibt deine Wurzel* (“In the air, there your root remains”) by Paul Celan, for whom the breath is inscribed in matter and natural forms. For Daiga Grantina too, the “breath”, that crosses space and moving matter (“clay”), making it vibrate until its contours blur, is rooted in the physical experience that unites both the perceiver and the perceived.

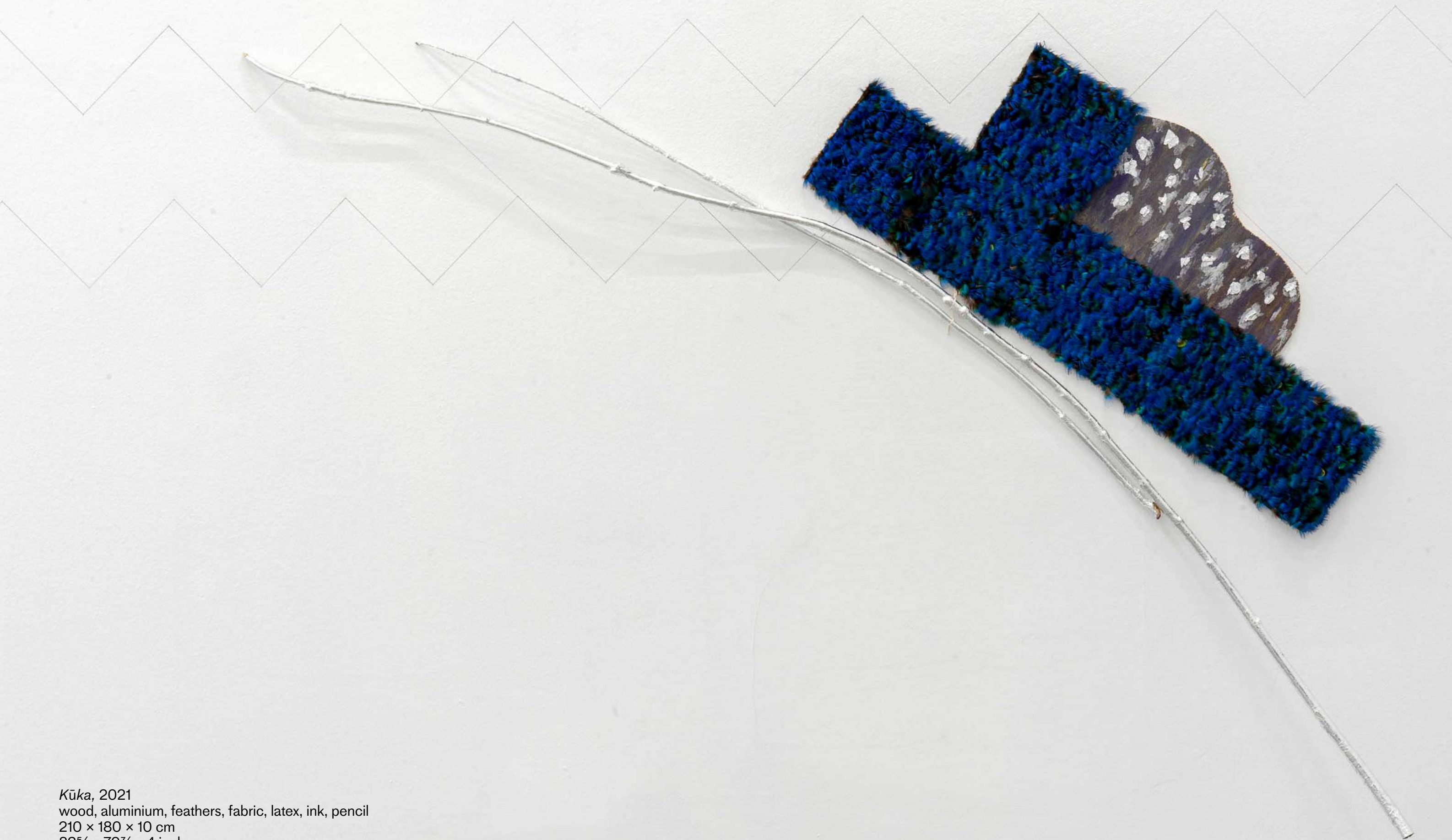
Thus, the “salt-score”—as the artist defines it—in *Spazio Zero* becomes a concrete and aerial space, vital and suspended, as if holding together two dimensions, the terrestrial and the cosmic, in the same way that for Celan, breath defines a two-fold bond between the transcendent and the immanent.

The exhibition is part of a series of initiatives staged with the support of the Club GAMeC—the association of friends of the museum which, since 2005, has supported the activities of the Gallery, aimed at promoting contemporary artistic research in all its forms.









Kūka, 2021
wood, aluminium, feathers, fabric, latex, ink, pencil
210 × 180 × 10 cm
82⁵/₈ × 70⁷/₈ × 4 inches



Atemmold, 2021
feathers, fabric, latex, ink
105 × 380 × 5 cm (approx.)
41³/₈ × 149⁵/₈ × 2 inches (approx.)

What Eats Around Itself (For Rilke), 2019-21
ink, felt, wood, and silicone
in 4 parts, dimensions variable



What Eats Around Itself (For Rilke), 2019-2021 (detail)



2021

Temples Emalin

LONDON, UK
12 APRIL - 22 MAY 2021

Emalin is pleased to present *Temples*, a solo exhibition of new works by Latvian artist Daiga Grantina (b.1985). Grantina's practice investigates the encounters between materials to propose a synthetic concept of the many relationships that shape our world. Operating with an openness that manifests the infinite potential of plastic form, Grantina's sculptures are structural ideas extended from phenomenological experience. Her subtle and associative mode of making encourages an exercise of expanded vision that asks questions about what space is available for thinking about matter beyond material.

For her first exhibition with the gallery, Grantina presents a new body of work made predominantly from fabric, wood, paint and plastic. *Temples* takes as its subject the dialectical relationship between gesture and a shared investigation of light, colour, volume and form. By returning to previous works with new questions around how reflection and transparency materialize colour, Grantina forms hand-dyed spandex stiffened by resin into distended shapes in reds and blues. White painted blotches and swathes of deep blues structure lumpy protrusions, scaffolded and punctuated by plywood lines beneath. These controlled material gestures are disordered by the physical reflections of light that bounce across densely saturated and glossy surfaces, slice through rough-edged sheets of clear plastic, or pass along irregular lines wrapped in crinkled silver foil.

A line participates in the same system of mark-making, whether it is as the fold of a draped piece of felt; a groove drawn and traced in coloured crayon; a sawed section of wood, cut off and fixed to the wall; or an arrangement of individual feathers carefully placed, one by one, in a grid. Initially an exercise of relaxation to offset the concentrated intensity demanded by the larger-scale assemblages, the *Temples* introduce a dialectical tension between two kinds of sculptural ideas taking shape in the artist's studio, proposing a shared set of enquiries from a different point of origin.

The *Temples* put forward the central structure and common language of the exhibition: the triangle, perfectly imperfect. A flat plane figure with three sides and three angles, the triangle opens itself up to unexpected fluidity. None of the included

Temple #3, 2020
wood, fabric, paint
45 × 67 × 5 cm
17³/₄ × 26³/₈ × 2 inches

Temples comply with a perfect symmetry. Instead, their triangular geometries slide between and off of one another, very softly, almost imperceptibly. The absolute formal temple possibilizes a concentration of energies into the smallest possible unit - an implosion of space - and within that condensed moment makes room for gesturing that is shifting, relational and abundant.



Vase, 2020
fabric, plastic, wood, ink, screws
145 × 100 × 36 cm
57 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches









2020

Words at an Exhibition Busan Biennale

BUSAN, KR

05 SEPTEMBER – 08 NOVEMBER 2020

CURATED BY JACOB FABRICIUS

The 2020 edition of the Busan Biennale is pleased to announce its artistic theme, organized by Artistic Director Jacob Fabricius, of the exhibition opening this September. *Words at an Exhibition* — an exhibition in ten chapters and five poems examines the city of Busan to expand the various spectrums of a metropolis through artistic expressions. For the 2020 exhibition, ten fiction writers and one poet were invited to write on the characteristics of the city of Busan as a conceptual basis for selecting the artists, each responding through new commissions and existing works within the context of the exhibition. The authors—which represent different generations, genres, and writing styles—have each created and written fictional layers around and about the city, some with direct reference to Busan, others through indirect and ephemeral urban tales involving the locale. Mixing past, present, and future, the artists and writers involved in *Words at an Exhibition* — an exhibition in ten chapters and five poems use Busan as a backdrop in ways that create a narrative that simultaneously combines reality, history, and imagination through experiences of contemporary fiction, a focus on soundscapes and film works, as well as paintings, photographs, sculptures, and site-specific installations.

INN, 2020
felt, silicone, wood, ink
269.9 × 180 × 69.8 cm
106¼ × 70⅞ × 27½ inches



INN, 2020 (detail)

Q & A WITH DAIGA GRANTINA

1. Could you tell me about your sculptural approach for the work in Busan?

Reading the story by Kim Un-Su made me look at a picture again that I took some years ago of a pattern in sand formed by the movement of sea water and revealed during low tide when I took a walk in the lagoon of Leucate. Through this picture I can relate to the story and the sensing of a harbour.

A think of it as a pied-de-poule pattern in sand and an encompassing deviation of the grounds of memory. In the process of the Busan piece a moment of continuity derived from folding a sheet of felt. Two independently folded shapes lead me to one ground, a parallelogram. The felt shapes themselves became lateral softening of its own edges, the lines of the geometric shape. Like a heavy imbued coat, imbued by the forces of deviation. At once a pattern, an experience of a sculptural infinity expands out of the material truth of felt (and) color when the golden blotches liquify in blue. It is a memory picture of the relative strength of liquefaction.

2. What is the title and why?

I was thinking mainly about a sound. I like that it sounds stronger than it means. Even though it is a common word the title is also a graphic echo of the parallelogram in the work. The togetherness of parallel lines can be directly linked to the meaning of it: INN. It is a dwelling place as much as there is a dwelling in place. The piece being in Busan finds its inn in an existing green light reflection on the wall of the harbor building and in the narrative of the story. INN is a brief dwelling in a parallel togetherness.

3. How do you feel about translating or transcending a work into another medium – like Mussorgsky composed Hartmann's paintings and drawings into music?

It is something that means a lot to me as it offers us to think of language as part of a larger sign system. It means talking WITH form by talking OUT of form. This approach presupposes a voluntary proximity, a willingness for the sensing of meaning in form. I can relate to the approach of transcending one form of expression into another as form itself can find different materials to resonate with but can share strong relations in the overall medium of creativity. It is a way to give distance to a form of expression like singing instead of talking. It is a form of mediation in cultural kinship.

INN, 2020 (detail)





2020

What Eats Around Itself New Museum

NEW YORK, US
21 JANUARY 2020 – 03 JANUARY 2021
CURATED BY HELGA CHRISTOFFERSEN

Daiga Grantina creates large-scale sculptural assemblages that emulate the natural world, often resembling terrariums and vegetation. Her labored configurations employ synthetic materials and incorporate conflicting physical qualities: soft and hard, transparent and opaque, mobile and static, strong and weak.

The title of the exhibition, “What Eats Around Itself,” refers to the dynamic properties of lichen, a composite organism that results from the symbiosis between fungi and algae. Grantina draws inspiration from lichen’s many adaptive qualities, like co-existence and self-replication, to devise her material processes. For her New Museum presentation, the artist premieres a new site-specific sculptural installation that interweaves cast silicone with paint, latex, fabric, and felt. Suspended from wooden planks and clinging to the gallery walls and floor, this work mimics the growth of lichen, which typically develops into a crusty, leaflike, or branching formation. The work’s amorphous structure appears to undergo construction and decomposition at once, much as lichen reproduces and consumes its own biological matter.

Grantina’s sculptures also draw from the lyricism of poet Rainer Maria Rilke and his profound interest in the rose, which he viewed as an emblem of promise, possibility, and the power of art to give life deeper meaning. On his gravestone, Rilke’s self-composed epitaph reads, “Rose, oh pure contradiction, desire / to be no one’s sleep under so many / lids.” The central forms in Grantina’s installation resemble both rose petals and eyelids, evoking Rilke’s manifold interpretations of the flower as a conduit between vitality and sleep, life and death.



Ster-T, 2019
felt, fabric, wood, and silicone
425 × 320 × 207 cm
167³/₈ × 126 × 81¹/₂ inches



Ster-T, 2019 (detail)





Ster-T, 2019 (detail)



hormé, 2019
fabric, wood, resin
207 × 260 × 150 cm
81½ × 102¾ × 59⅛ inches



Spindel, 2019
foam, ink, fabric, silicone, felt, and screws
340 × 240 × 130 cm
133⅞ × 94½ × 51⅞ inches







2019

Saules Suns 58th Venice Biennale

LATVIAN PAVILION

VENICE, IT

11 MAY - 24 NOVEMBER 2019

CURATED BY INGA LACE AND VALENTINAS KLIMAŠAUSKAS

Project “Saules Suns” is a multi-centred landscape that unfolds around several suns, several sources of light traversing manifold materials and shapes. As if the scene of some cosmological dawn, it opens itself up as a site and moment for the generation of possibilities. Our sense of these possibilities, which is mirrored in the diversity of the shapes that appear across the landscape, in the range of their spatial and physical attributes, is strengthened by the multitude of possible perspectives and paths through the installation.

The revelation of both the corporeal and immaterial qualities of substances is at the centre of the work. Daiga Grantina uses a wide range of everyday materials, from the synthetic to the organic, often inverting and trespassing beyond the limits of their traditional uses. She bends metal into spirals, casts light into shadow, fluffs cotton into fuchsia purple blossoms. Her soft and porous objects bear the fresh imprints of their moulds and are interwoven with white strings that stretch in every direction—ontological signposts extending upwards and outwards.

However, signs should not be read as fixed or finale but as temporal, morphing and generative. For instance, what may be read as the signifier may also function as the signified, the real may be registered as the imaginary, and the imaginary may extend into the symbolic. Through inviting an awareness of the multiplex ties between the work on display and our experiences of it, the installation suggests the possibility that each of the encounters it precipitates might extend towards an all-embracing openness.











Bean, 2019
tissue, artificial resin, feathers
85 × 107 × 120 cm
33½ x 42⅛ x 47¼ inches





2018

Toll Palais de Tokyo

PARIS, FR
16 FEBRUARY - 09 SEPTEMBER 2018
CURATED BY SANDRA ADAM-COURALET

Daiga Grantina has created a vast sculpture from a range of materials with varying qualities: hard and soft, transparent and opaque. Blended together in a strange and colourful landscape, each one of these materials has a role of its own in this organism that is playful, furious, confused, and a little 'toll' (the German term meaning 'mad' or 'astounding' which lends Grantina's work its title).

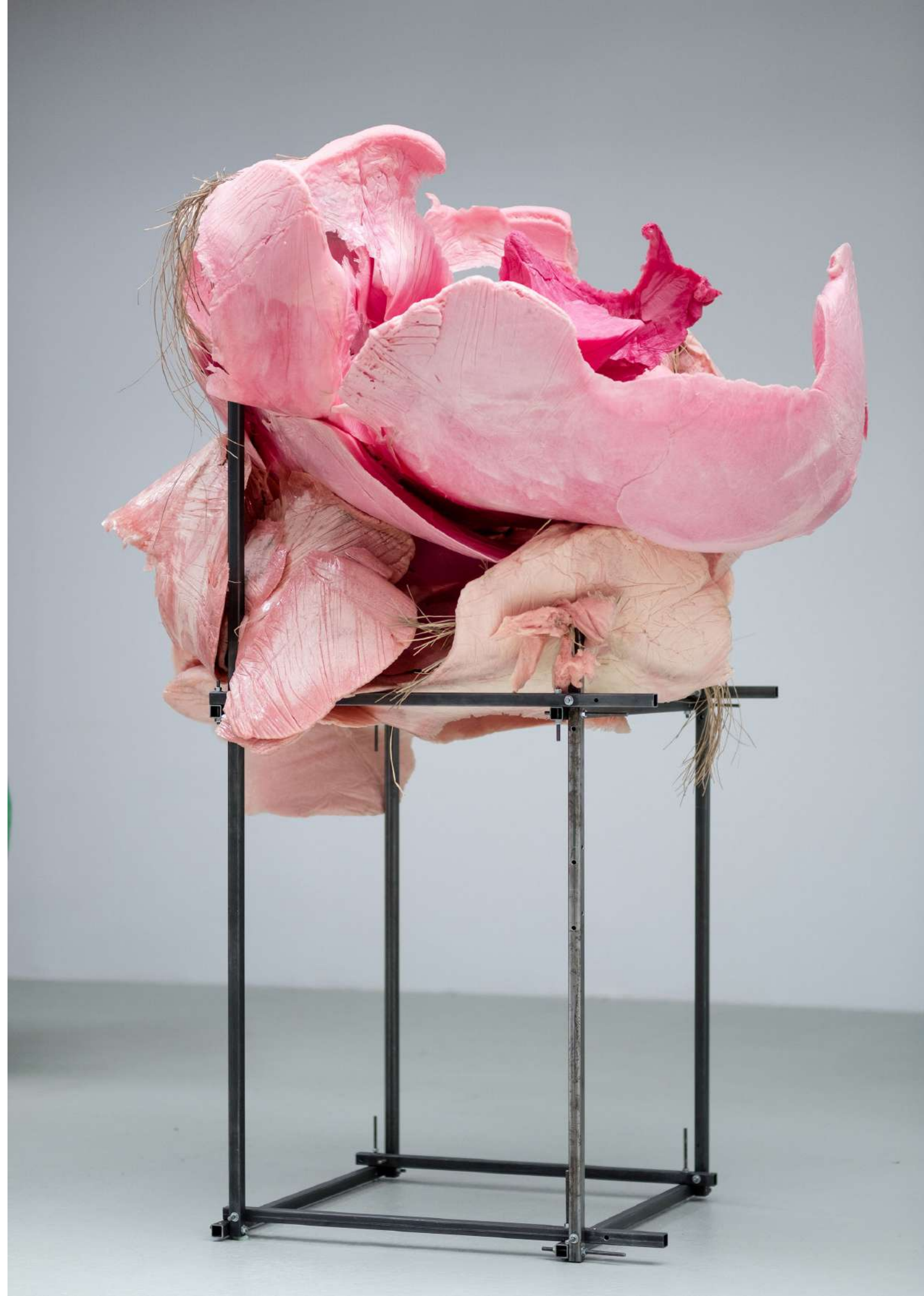
The different elements of this assemblage-sculpture, exhibited in an unfinished and imperfect state, come to life thanks to beams of light that unite the various materials and, in turn, delimit further spaces. The uncontrolled atmosphere takes on a material form through the foam that expands into space, echoing the power of childhood flights of fancy in which tables and whatever materials are to hand suddenly become the stuff of improvised and potentially habitable refuges.







La Med fresh, 2018
foam, metal, straw
230 × 160 × 140 cm
78¾ × 47¼ × 47¼ inches





La Med fresh, 2018 (detail)



Tau buoy, 2018
foam, metal, wool
200 × 140 × 140 cm
78¾ × 55⅛ × 55⅛ inches



O Mega Mooring, 2018 in the background: Cab Scoop, 2018
metal, plastic, foam, fabric, plaster
150 × 150 × 220 cm
59 × 59 × 86⁵/₈ inches



Quitting the house, 2014-2018
fabric, plastic, metal, foam, wood
180 × 70 × 40 cm
70⅞ × 27½ × 15¾ inches







Sleep low, 2018
fabric, plastic, metal, wood
200 × 80 × 80 cm
78¾ x 31½ x 31½ inches

2018

GIVE UP THE GHOST Baltic Triennial

VILNIUS, LT
11 MAY - 12 AUGUST 2018
CURATED BY VINCENT HONORÉ

The Baltic Triennial has historically taken place at the CAC Vilnius only. For its 13th edition, it will – for the first time – be organised by and take place in Lithuania, Estonia (opening on June 29th) and Latvia (opening on September 21st), taking the form of three distinct chapters.

Baltic Triennial 13 is informed by a shared concern: what does it mean to belong at a time of fractured identities? BT13 – GIVE UP THE GHOST unfolds through and with this very question, careful not to offer a single or illustrative response. Instead, it opts for a collective vision of what is at stake: independence and dependency—and everything that lies in between—to territories, cultures, classes, histories, bodies and forms. The fluctuating notion of belonging, which can be understood to exist within the conceptual and formal framework of a relationship, allows us to think beyond identity as something fixed, self-contained and essentialised.

The exhibition in Vilnius, set within an ambitious architectural intervention designed by architect Diogo Passarinho, and which considerably changes the institution by opening it up and reconfiguring the entire space, tackles the concept of belonging by bringing together unstable territories and bodies.



Li Li, 2018
coating, flax linen, wood, fabric, metal, rubber, plastic
50 × 50 × 130 cm
19¾ x 19¾ x 51⅞ inches







2018

Solar Bodies Musée d'Orsay

PARIS, FR
10 APRIL - 15 JULY 2018
CURATED BY Ø

A contemporary counterpoint to Baltic symbolism.

The summer solstice is a key moment of earthly breathing, an instant to become aware of the cosmos that surrounds us and of bodies that inhabit it. Through a majority of newly produced works, the opulent ballroom of Musée d'Orsay becomes a dance floor for solar bodies. Choreographed by three artists from the Baltic scene, the space is punctuated by Pakui Hardware's biomorphic devices, Daiga Grantina's anthropomorphic landscape, and a video on body heat by Young Girl Reading. The all project is connected by Norman Orro's atomic graphic design. Although the invited artists are not directly inspired by the Symbolism of their predecessors, they nevertheless share a certain "subjective distortion" advocated by Jean Moréas in his "Manifesto of Symbolism" in 1886. Matter expands as much as time, which is apprehended in all its complexities. In a moment that seems to be as pivotal as troubling as the turn of the last century, the artists embrace a similar equivocal relation to their time; a sceptical attraction for a world where the division between nature and culture disappears, where human and non-human intertwine, synthetic and organic become one. But, far from the construction of a national identity supported by Baltic artists at the dawn of 20th century, the creators of SOLAR BODIES embody a fluid and moving identity, as elusive as the flames that spring from all sides during this solstice celebration.

In-Contra-Counter (after Courbet), 2018 (detail)





In-Contra-Counter (after Courbet), 2018 (detail)



2017

Pillars Sliding off Coat-ee Kunstverein in Hamburg

HAMBURG, DE
28 JANUARY - 02 APRIL 2017
CURATED BY RHEA DALL

In cooperation with Neue Kunst in Hamburg e.V. and curated by Rhea Dall, the Kunstverein is pleased to present the young artist Daiga Grantina (*1985 in Riga, Latvia) with her first major solo exhibition in Germany. Grantina creates voluptuous sculptures out of perforated and shifting surfaces that despite their apparent monumentality convey a frail lightness. The semitransparent, body-like structures climb and crawl through the exhibition space in constant metamorphosis, merging supposed opposites such as liquid and solid or soft and hard. Let loose in the white cube, Grantina's glittery, embrittled matter absorbs the surrounding architecture. Akin to burgeoning algae, her interventions displace, color, and undress the institutional coat in an equally invasive and all-inclusive drive.

The show marks the start of the Kunstverein's Best & Boldest series featuring a variety of young artists who work in all media and with different convictions, but have one thing in common: the multifaceted engagement with questions of our reality.





Spore shack, 2017
plastic, fabric, wire
200 × 40 × 40 cm
78¾ x 15¾ x 15¾ inches



Rheap, 2016
plastic, fabric, wire
200 × 45 × 160 cm
78¾ x 17¾ x 63 inches





Buff gang and Nectar bough, 2017
fabric, plastic, wire, wood
260 × 100 × 80 cm
102³/₈ × 39³/₈ × 31¹/₂ inches



2017

Biotopia Kunsthalle Mainz

MAINZ, DE
31 MARCH - 30 JULY 2017
CURATED BY SABINE RUSTERHOLZ PETKO

Today, in the Anthropocene era, human beings have become the determining factor in evolution. According to the Mainz-based atmospheric chemist and Nobel prizewinner Paul J. Crutzen, for thousands of years humanity was forced to stand its ground against the primacy of nature, but this relationship was turned on its head at the very latest with the advent of industrialisation. This exhibition presents a generation of artists who, mindful of the way in which people are controlling and threatening nature, are on a quest for alternatives to the evolutionary dead end.

In their desire to distil essences and construct models which can serve as potential counter-concepts, or at least approaches for changing the way we think, the artists have made their way to the most distant corners of the earth, parts of nature that have hitherto been virtually unexplored. From the last-remaining sanctuaries of the jungle and the depths of the ocean, they have devised computerised simulations, biological experiments, and futuristic biofictions. They have chased down the paradox of an untouched nature created by humankind, mixing philosophically critical and animistic thought with elements taken from the life-sciences, bio-engineering, and geo-engineering. At the same time, the artists have utilised state-of-the-art technologies for creating images and editing material.

By means of virtual reality, computer animation, and 3D printing they have generated pictures that range from enchantingly beautiful to confusingly hyperreal. The works oscillate between post-apocalyptic scenarios and alternative eco-visions, between poetically abstract representations and utterly tangible DIY ideas. And although people are nowhere to be seen in the exhibition, the hand of human construction is recognisable in all the works. Something that at first glance might appear natural and unadulterated is actually always literally (hu)man-made. The artists are walking on a tightrope between alternative visions and the dysfunctional dynamics that inevitably loom when people meddle irrevocably in natural processes. This is connected to criticism of the anthropocentric and profit-driven concept of society that sees nature as a resource to be exploited rather than an end in itself. Ultimately, the exhibition is scrutinising humanity's understanding of itself as a species. Yet in their search for perspectives which seamlessly incorporate ecological and technological developments,





the works sound out the current dilemma about the future, which fluctuates between carefully preserving the fragile coexistence of people and nature on the one hand, and radical measures concerning apocalyptic dynamics on the other. Balancing these could ultimately even destabilise human control, creating space for a post-humanist era where nature and technology join forces against humankind. In these speculative scenarios about the future, the dualisms of nature and technology, fact and fiction, and optimism and pessimism cannot be easily separated.

Pants fruity off of teeth, 2017
plastic, fabric, wire, plaster
in two parts: 210 × 90 × 80 cm; 200 × 70 × 100 cm
82⁵/₈ x 35³/₈ x 31¹/₂ inches; 78³/₄ x 27¹/₂ x 39³/₈ inches





Pipe-in dog and sun, 2017 (detail)
fabric, plastic, wire, plaster
90 x 220 x 135 cm
35³/₈ x 86⁵/₈ x 53¹/₈ inches





2016

Heap-Core,,, kim?

RIGA, LV
02 SEPTEMBER - 16 OCTOBER 2016
CURATED BY ZANE ONCKULE

Heap-core,,, is the Paris-based artist's, Daiga Grantina's, first solo-exhibition in Riga. The expression integrated in the title refers to the outward direction of formal (hard-core) motion, accumulated somewhere in the inner core. The exhibition hall will be transformed into a site-specific installation, where openings made around the perimeter of the surrounding wall will conduct light tunnels from windows hidden from view, integrating light as a material into the body of sculptures.

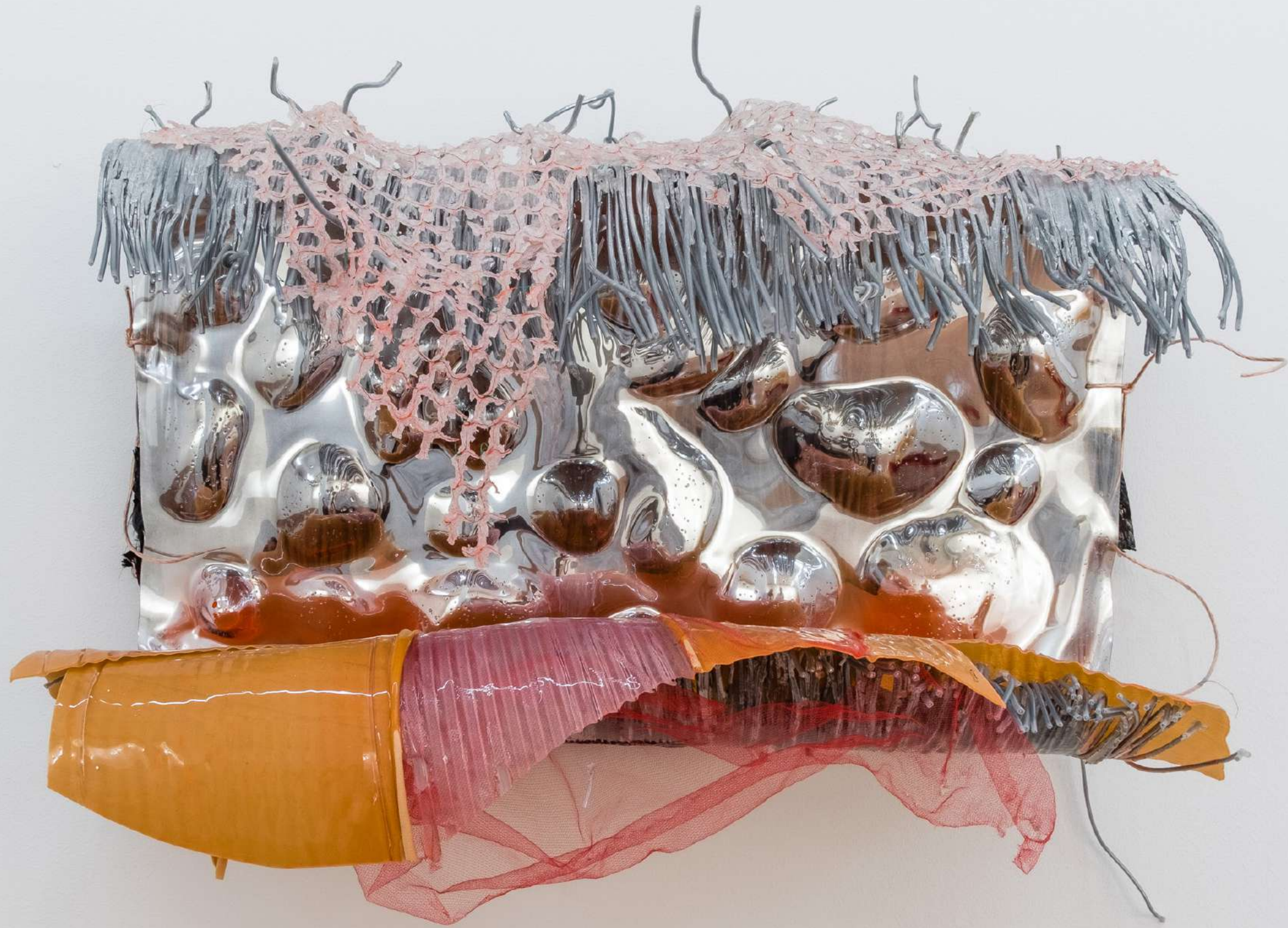
Guided Tour is Angela. For instance, she aspires to be an early riser; one of those up-with-the-sun types who accomplishes a lot in the small hours, before the rest of us look at the time on phones that light up our faces beneath sweaty sheets. But the truth is, Angela wakes up late. Late enough to screw up the rest of your day. A domino effect of lateness. Coexisting with both the start, and its middle. Also, she stays away from mirrors.





Buff in Flight, 2016
plastic, fabric, feathers, wire
350 × 170 × 170 cm
137¾ × 66⅞ × 66⅞ inches





Grotto from Glammar, 2016



2016

Adhesive Products Bergen Kunsthall

BERGEN, NO
02 SEPTEMBER – 09 OCTOBER 2016
CURATED BY PRAXES

As part of Bergen Assembly 2016, PRAXES and Bergen Kunsthall present a group exhibition with works by Nairy Baghramian, Olga Balema, Lynda Benglis, Daiga Grantina, Sterling Ruby, and Kaari Upson. Tracing ideas of suspended fluidity and mushrooming masses sliding off the walls and spilling over the floors, this exhibition takes as its starting point “the frozen gesture”, a term coined by art critic Robert Pincus-Witten in connection to the early works of Lynda Benglis. With this phrase he described not only a fluid materiality, but also gestural action unafraid of the theatrical, the decorative, the vulgar. Within PRAXES’s year-long, episodic investigation of Benglis’s art practice (with previous shows and events in Bergen at KODE, Bergen School of Architecture, Kunstgarasjen, and Entrée), this exhibition is the first to include works by other artists.

Departing from strategies of eccentric, vigorous expansion, the works by Baghramian, Balema, Benglis, Grantina, Ruby and Upson flood, bulge, droop, and melt. With vastly different, coagulated outcomes, these artists confidently let their actions speak in and of the materials.

Bergen Assembly is a triennial for artistic production and research. In 2016 Bergen Assembly presents a program following three, differently timed curatorial propositions: Tarek Atoui, freethought, and PRAXES. Within this context, PRAXES presents a whole year of events, publications, and exhibitions, created in collaboration with numerous Bergen venues and communities. The epicenters of this extended investigation are two unassociated artistic practices, those of Lynda Benglis and Marvin Gaye Chetwynd.



Buff in Bloom, Glow and Thumos, 2016



2016

LFL
Lundgren Gallery

PALMA DE MALLORCA, ES
11 MARCH – 30 APRIL 2016

This is a tour back to the red and open, a convection flow for your personal weather. A through, a passage through a leg fold: Leg – Fold – Leg. Search steps for openings in horizontal plane. And a friction forecast in more vertical angles. So it is that LFL aligns with currents of air and trade. Fold-in, and folding, of raw glimmer from instincts to surface. Is the blow caused by pages of a book? Because it is precisely a practice of spacing, the inscription of out-work, hors-livre! Upside down walking sticks become ersatz space pens for the creation of bottom weather and relative rest. Wave managers like myself are vulnerable when flooded by atmospheric red vapor. Therefore I stick, air, fold, group with the velocity of notes in the envelope of my mind.

Ill of R, 2016
various materials
200 × 180 × 90 cm
78³/₄ × 70⁷/₈ × 35³/₈ inches



Torque, 2016
various materials
130 × 50 × 70 cm
51½ × 19¾ × 27½ inches



Satellake, 2016
various materials
140 × 380 × 90 cm
55 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 149 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 35 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



Selected Press

DAIGA GRANTINA
in conversation with Amy Jones
photographed by Benedict Brink

Grotesque Functionalism

Flash Art



Olga Balema
Cecily Brown
Racheal Crowther
Sofia Defino Leiby
Sophie Friedman-Pappas
Karla Kaplun
Sidsel Meineche Hansen
Alexandra Metcalf
Phung-Tien Phan
Agnieszka Polska
Pipilotti Rist
Lyric Shen
Kiki Smith

THE CURIST Andreas Führer On Institut Funder Bakke, Silkeborg
CRITIC DISPATCH Performing the Grotesque
FOCUS ON Zurich

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CN	\$ 34.95

POSTE ITALIANE SPA SPEDIZIONE A.P. - D.L. 353/2003 (CONVERTITO IN LEGGE 27/02/2004 N° 46) ART. 1, COMMA 1 LO/MI

Flash Art, May 2025

Fog Work

IN CONVERSATION WITH
AMY JONES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
BENEDICT BRINK



Daiga Grantina's 2020 exhibition, "What Eats Around Itself," at New Museum in New York — my first encounter with her work — was rooted in her interest in lichen. She was particularly drawn to its symbiotic composition: a living organism formed through the interdependence of fungus and algae, a byproduct of their mutual reliance for survival. This felt like a strikingly prescient preoccupation just months before the pandemic, when indigenous and anarchist principles of mutual aid entered the popular discourse as people responded to the crisis. Grantina's amorphous forms seemed to at once grow in and out of each other as they stretched across the windowed ground-floor space. Each sculpture was punctuated by exclamations of red, orange, or purple in silicone, paint, and fabric. It was a riotous sweep of color and dramatic sculptural gesture.

A year later, I wrote about "Temples," Grantina's first London exhibition at Emalin, and one of the first shows to open after the lockdown. Whereas "What Eats Around Itself" expanded across the museum's gallery, "Temples" felt more restrained: the work was confined to the walls. Here, her sculptural investigations appeared to have returned to their foundations, focusing on the relationship between light, color, volume, and form. The titular series "Temples" (2020–21) comprised seven small, triangular forms constructed largely from pieces of fabric, wood, and paint. Color was deployed sparingly, but with precision. Despite their size and sparse appearance, each was characteristic of Grantina's larger sculptures. They were complex, interrelated forms that, with each movement, seemed to shift and collapse before your eyes: material, color, and form as questions yet to be answered.

This conversation, which began in the back of a taxi in east London and continued over video from her studio in Montreuil, took place during Grantina's second solo show in London and her return to Emalin's space. If "Temples" felt confined and "What Eats Around Itself" expansive, the new show, "Leaves," seemed to mark a shift into murkier territory. Viewers were confronted with muted grays and violets, as well as material shifts that included an expanded use of metal. Like her sculptures, which appear to oscillate between announcing and undoing themselves, we enter Grantina's practice in its continual process of transformation and discovery.







Daiga Grantina in Conversation with Amy Jones

Amy Jones: I wanted to start by talking about the triangulation of shows that frame our conversation: “What Eats Around Itself” at New Museum in 2020 and your two exhibitions at Emalin in London, in 2021 and 2025, respectively. There’s something about the shifts in color, material, and form that feels emblematic of a practice that’s in continual movement — destabilizing and reforming itself.

Daiga Grantina: That’s a particularly extreme triangulation, yes. The time period between the New Museum show and “Temples” was defined by COVID. “What Eats Around Itself” was closed for over a year during confinement, and then “Temples” was one of the first exhibitions to open in London afterwards. The New Museum show felt far out in my process’s spiral, and sometimes, after that moment, you then need to come close again and restart the spiral from the inside. That’s how “Temples” felt — the works were small, but concentrated. It got close to one element of the practice.

AJ This image of the spiral is a central idea that underpins the way you work. Can you say more about it?

DG The spiral is a way to position yourself. Much of my process is about proximity, sensitivity, and intuition: the detail of the everyday, how you feel about or what you see in small gestures. That counts so much. The spiral becomes a way to connect those small gestures and observations into something larger. When you can feel your heart slowly shrinking, the spiral is a space from which to grow. It’s a daily practice. If you try to push right to the big feeling, you fall totally. Instead, when I come to the studio, I just look at what happened yesterday. Over time, I tend to forget what day of the week it is, and then that spirals out further, and I start to even lose my sense of the seasons. When that happens, it’s like it’s announcing something — a new direction I’ll eventually follow in the work. Then I’ll spiral inward, make again, and push forward. It’s about concentration and containment and being in touch with intuition and fear.

AJ Your latest show, “Leaves,” encompassed a wide range of forms and materials, from large bent metal structures to small twig-like forms. It was scattered throughout Emalin’s space, escaping out of the gallery and into the stairwell. At moments, it almost crept into the gallery office too. The colors are mainly grays and other washed-out hues. Metal, such as aluminum sheets, mesh, and stainless steel, showed up in the work more prominently than ever before.

DG When I use metal, I remind myself that the core of the planet is liquid iron.

Materials have different tonalities that you can internalize and feel. Metal can be low and heavy, but it can also almost evaporate. It’s incredibly liquid and can be used in so many ways. I’m excited when a material opens up for me, when molecules become fog and I can go inside. It’s like exploring a new planet.

AJ I’m interested in this image of fog. One of the works in “Leaves” also has the amazing title *Fog Saw* (2025), and the show was also accompanied by a chapter from Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927), where fog is used as a literary device. Can you say more about your interest in it?

DG Fog is like a large membrane that you can walk inside. It’s incredible how it transforms a landscape, making everything feel like one unit. Like snow or night, it creates a sense of wholeness. When there’s fog, everything becomes possible. I don’t think in media-specific terms, like sculpture or painting. Being in the fog collapses that distance. Instead, it’s about how far you feel the resonance can take you. It’s similar to smoke. When you smoke a cigarette with someone — I am not a smoker, it’s not really my thing, but I like smoking with my friend, curator Sara Fumagalli — it seems to intensify the conversation. Through the smoke itself, you’re almost giving volume to the space that you share. There’s a lot of fog between all the shows we’re talking about, in the sense that they each helped me to grasp space differently.

AJ The color gray feels connected to that too.

DG It’s been so long since there was a lot of gray in my work. I link it to some memories and things I’m seeing, and it also feels like a necessity when you work with color to eventually find your way to gray. When I was in Rome recently, Muriel Pic was talking about this technique, called *grisaille*, that has this interesting history and was particularly popular in the early Renaissance. It was used to depict a lot of demonic scenes during that period of painting. I think gray can be urgent. If you expose yourself so much to color, gray is a relief.

AJ Like a pause.

DG Something almost comforting, yeah.

AJ Your interest in language continues to run through your work. Previous exhibitions have made reference to writers and poets like Ben Marcus, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Virginia Woolf. More recently, your own writing — specifically poetry — has been entering the practice too. This was the case in “Leaves,” which included a poem by you.

DG Language is just so suspicious. I wrote that poem after I’d finished making the work, when everything was in boxes, ready to leave. I like writing, but it doesn’t





Daiga Grantina in Conversation with Amy Jones
 substitute what materials can do. Words can be powerful, but they're also easy to cling to. I am slowly finding my way into writing, but it's not a ground I can walk on. There's not a foundation for me in language. For "Leaves," the poem wasn't created to explain something, but as a doorstep — something standing between you and the room where the work is waiting. It's a threshold made of a different material. Writing is precious for finding a common way to discuss things, but it depends on the other person and how the conversation builds. I think poetry is an abstract way of talking to a group of people. I find that in one-to-one conversation, you make a poem in between two people somehow, but that's harder in a group. I think that's why I like doing it, because it's still a space for my voice, but it's also large enough for other people to enter into conversation. It's the second show at Emalin, but there's so much that has happened between the first and the second exhibition, so many conversations. It also brings these people and voices next to the work, and it changes the feeling of an exhibition for me. It holds everything together.

- AJ** I like this idea of poetry as a way to return to something: an idea, a feeling, a conversation. This idea of return or revisiting also comes up in other parts of your process.
- DG** Yes, when the work arrives back at the studio after a show and you take it out of its box, it's like looking at myself in the mirror. It doesn't always feel good or easy what you find. It confronts you each time, but I'm looking for that diversity of feeling in the work. Sometimes you see something I want to change a little, and other times I can't take what you see at all. I'm interested in the process of going back into the work before releasing it again. I find it as interesting as making a totally new work. Perhaps there's something that was not right, and then I learn from it, I learn why it wasn't right, even if the work is then destroyed in the process.
- AJ** In a previous interview you did for this publication in 2020, you spoke about the influence of Tony Conrad's incredible "Yellow Movies" (1972–73). You mentioned it again in our recent conversations, too. Those works, squares of emulsion paint which Conrad articulated as endlessly "screening" films, document the passage of time through the slight yellowing of their surface. They're subtle, but grow into these vast gestures through their sheer duration. Last time, you talked about their relationship to light, but there's also so much there in how you understand the materials you work with over time.
- DG** Yes, Tony Conrad, and the "Yellow Movies" in particular, remain significant

for me. It's film as skin. I understand that work as a growing, large, porous membrane. My practice is about how far I can become that skin, how sensitive I am. Time becomes increasingly important to how deeply you can occupy that position. Now, I'm using many different materials, and each material has its own time. I can't work with everything at the same pace. Some materials demand more contact, and that defines the pace. Even though I'm using metal now, it's metal that feels like a tissue. I look at wood and see its fibers. There are constant possibilities for materials to flow in and out of each other. This gives me a sense of being able to travel through an entire feeling — from cold to smooth to warm. Materials become like instruments, helping you get somewhere. It's a feeling of liberation, being able to travel so far.

- AJ** It brings us back to the spiral again. How the everyday experience of light shining through a window, in Conrad's case, transforms into something monumental over time.
- DG** What can happen in a day is an existential thing. It's not to be undervalued. When you look closely, even impressive human movements like space exploration are about small steps, teamwork, and multiple parts coming together — not just one person's achievement. The art world is similar. We're all working on something incredibly large, but we don't always see that. We're traveling in an incredible space through culture.







Daiga Grantina in Conversation with Amy Jones

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Daiga Grantina (1985, Saldus) lives and works in Paris. Grantina's sculptures investigate encounters between the materials, and their consequent relationships of dissonance and consonance, inducing an exercise in expanded vision. Her material gestures resonate with the structural shifts of organism and environment, navigating relations of volume and form at the point where microscopic and macroscopic overlap and intersect. Recent solo exhibitions include Emalin, London; Kunstmuseum Appenzell; Z33, Hasselt; Art Museum Riga Bourse; Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw; Palace Enterprise, Copenhagen; Liebaert Projects, Kortrijk; GAMeC, Bergamo; and New Museum, New York. Her work has been included in group shows at the Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga; Eleventh Editions of Sequences Biennial, Reykjavik; Sainsbury Centre, Norwich; Kunstverein Göttingen; Frac Grand Large, Dunkirk; X Museum, Beijing; National Gallery Prague; Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris; Loggia, Vienna; Kunstmuseum Bern; Busan Biennale; Infected Landscapes, Brandenburg; David Zwirner Online, Paris; and La Casa Encendida, Madrid. Grantina's work is currently on view in the group exhibitions "Domino" at Encounter Contemporary, Lisbon, through July 12, 2025, and "EDEN: Coming of Age" at Kim? Contemporary Centre, Riga, through August 3, 2025.

Amy Jones is a curator, writer, and editor based in Cambridge. She is currently the curator at Wysing Arts Centre in Cambridgeshire. Previously, she was associate curator at Chisenhale Gallery, London, where she curated the first solo exhibitions in the United Kingdom by Simnikiwe Buhlungu, Joshua Leon, Lotus L. Kang, and Nikita Gale (2022), among others. As an editor, her projects include the first publications by Benoît Piéron (*Slumber Party*, Mousse Publishing, 2023), Ayo Akingbade (*Show Me the World Mister*, Bookworks, 2023), and Lotus L. Kang (*In Cascades*, Hurtwood, 2023). She has also previously held curatorial positions at FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) and the Liverpool Biennial, and served as director of The Royal Standard, Liverpool.

Flash Art

Alex Bennett, Daiga Grantina “Leaves” Emalin / London



Seeing sometimes involves letting go. Watching schools of shiners on a summer evening, Annie Dillard becomes an “unscrupulous observer” in this mode: “I breathed an air like light; [...] I was ether, the leaf in the zephyr; I was flesh-flake, feather, bone.”¹ Daiga Grantina’s sculptural and phenomenological project likewise awakens seeing that loses itself. Through associative (de)creation and relational assembly that is always attuned to its surrounds, her dissonant yet coherent materialism both rewards and disorients unscrupulous observers. Coactive textures betray the constitution of her interfused materials, rousing Dillard’s kind of seeing that looks alive.

What is a leaf? A shred, a shift, “a leaf is square of both middles,” writes Grantina in a poem accompanying “Leaves,” her second exhibition in Emalin’s sun-lanced gallery. “It is the time corridor that you can feel looking at leaves,” she writes, alluding to Virginia Woolf’s “Time Passes,” the second chapter of her novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and the subtextual lens for the arrayed sculptures. Prefacing the exhibition, the chapter’s excerpted pages and marked-up passages, chosen by writer Daisy Hildyard, occupy a vitrine and wall display. Woolf’s intermedial chapter expands elapsed time between two linear narratives, concentrating on nature’s involvement within the interior of an empty house, while human events remain contracted to parentheses. A decade becomes an evening as nature assumes a consciousness: “little airs” are wisps of venturing wind; light is petalled “like a flower reflected in water”; moonlit trees are “kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves.” Air, light, dust, water, petals, shadows, feathers, leaves: all are agents that animate the state of time’s passage, breathing atmospheric organicity through the vacant architecture — a discursive materiality preluding Grantina’s own. Woolf likened her novel to the form of the letter “H” with “Time Passes” forming the crossbar. The chapter enacts a formal ligature akin to a sculptural join, occupying the interspace of transition while fusing two parallel times. Which is to say, every material, whether textual or sculptural, contains its own temporality. Fuses, interspaces, transitions? Leaves grow of themselves that way.

In *Rising leaf* (all works 2025), arrowed silhouettes of taut string beckon the eye upward while elongating the sensation of passage as one ascends the staircase. Higher still is *Pouring* and , its folded aluminum foil steadied by gestural stretches of gauzy fabric and silicone that, seemingly natant, infers a liquid plash. Punctuated by a black nub, its titular comma is a virtual threshold upon which the floating arc of *Anafi*, its husk of polycarbonate as diaphanous as wind, seemingly depends. Light’s fluctuation is an especially animating agent for these sculptures, ensuring the rested and suspended forms refuse conclusiveness. That each is open to light’s interruption, that will make and unmake it, elucidates the works’ conspicuous placement. Orbital, they are situated at varying heights or at awkward corners, aerating space and sanctioning wayward drift so that seeing becomes an outgrowth that confounds as much as clarifies. *Flute*’s perforated white bar hangs remotely near the staircase’s landing, the wrinkles of its foil-wrapped branch leaking the shiest of lights. Elsewhere, a little tile of yellow-flecked feathers, fixed to an argent twig, is an accent floated in space. Grantina’s awareness of the possibilities latent in the existing architecture enhances her sculptural entities as relational bodies that divide, dissolve, and become undone; like a series of middles or a collection of leaves, they are both individuated and indeterminate.

Ink, branches, wood, fabric, silicone, feathers — these rudimentary materials are handled in ways that sees their formal properties transmute and regenerate, osmosing a polysemy of contradictory qualities. At times, meshes are filamented shadows as plastics are sticky hydrations; at others, ink tumescens as wood liquifies. The sensory porosity of phenomenological experience becomes enhanced as materials speak beyond their substance, its transmission also effected by color. In *Crescent life*, a curled blade of plywood drops sheerly to a fine tip, meeting the wall in tentative touch. It casts a lengthened shadow as its bleeding-edge shifts from crimson to rose beige to frosted mint to streaked white. “I think colours are linked with a sense of time” Grantina has said. “As it accumulates, tonality becomes a rhythm and can be perceived as a gesture.” Color initiates reverberant movement, shading the work as fleeting or firm, substantial or pliable, intimating Lisa Robertson’s notion that “colour, like a hormone, acts across.”² The convexity of *Fog Saw*’s chrysalid is englobed in a cloud of gray. Light sluices the peak of its curve, contouring the oily wrinkles and delicately dented surface of its waxy carapace. The grisaille fields of this ovate form, itself a deft stroke of economy and ellipsis, are elaborated by vertical sheets of fraying metal mesh and air-bubbled silicone whose complex webs of feathered texture hold implausible ripples. Underneath, tonality graduates from a serrated strip of scarlet to a loose pulse of plum, whipped grays, and aeriform lavenders. In its ambiguous, violaceous pallor, *Woolf* comes into view: “There was a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath.”

Grantina’s embrace of light as sculptural form makes material ludic. It’s these spritzzy contingencies mobilized by light that sets phenomenal consciousness aglitter. Gelatinous glares are whirled through seaweedy shreds of plastic; dense glows upon steel are pearled and spatialized; fluke iridescence nuances fronds of metal mesh, its nubilous moiré silvering at the edges. In a chance beam, white light sparked over the creased aluminum sheet of *Rocker*, making it scintillate with infinitesimal greens, grays, and snaps of pink. These gritty pinks spangled its gleam and were rosed moreover by folded fabric and a swathe of blossomy silicone.

The semiotic glue of description, to say what you see, is sabotaged by Grantina’s fugitive materialism, where appearances can’t be merely accepted. The works’ tactile invitation to get close, to get granular, encourages seeing that returns to the senses. “Look at the leaf,” writes Ian White. “It is yellow. Or red. [...] Look at the colour. The colour is real, it is something to do and it can be done.” A leaf’s color can be seen as if for the first time, simply “what is there is not what you saw before.”³ It’s a manner of seeing in plain sight, depending on your willingness to let go.

¹ Annie Dillard, “Seeing,” in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper Collins, 1974), 34.

² Lisa Robertson, “How to Colour,” in *Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2011), 129.

³ Ian White, “Removing the Minus,” in *Here Is Information: Mobilise* (London: LUX, 2016), 310–11.

New kids on the block: the younger galleries bringing the avant garde to Frieze London

As always, the Focus section at Frieze London looks at younger galleries—those in operation for 12 years or less. It is what you might call the Frieze fringe, and its tighter structure and more open stands make it feel friendlier, more discursive, less formal and less competitive, perhaps, than the main section. But even though the 35 galleries from across the globe are showing work that might reflect a more cutting-edge sensibility than elsewhere at the fair, it doesn't mean everyone here is emerging: in this selection of eye-catching stands, while most of the artists are in their 30s, Estonian Kaarel Kurismaa was born in 1939.

Daiga Grantina

Emalin

Latvian artist Grantina recently had a residency near Lake Orta in Piedmont, Italy, and her small, abstract reliefs reflect on her time there with a watery lyricism. Grantina took note of everything on the lake—from the ripples and reflections of light to the insects that skate on its surface. She achieves powerful effects with a light touch: pieces of plywood cut into undulating or angular shapes, stained with ink; fabric forms that flow like liquid, set in silicone. But there's also a spareness—a tough directness—in her method: the fabric is clearly stapled onto the wooden supports with a staplegun, for instance. Arranged around the stand, the reliefs have the appearance of glimpses of experience, memories captured poignantly and elegantly.



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Neringa Černiauskaitė, ‘Review: Daiga Grantina at Art Museum Riga Bourse’

Daiga Grantina's works always give visceral pleasure. This was truer than ever in her recent show “Lauka telpa” (Field Space), curated by Zane Onckule at the historic Art Museum Riga Bourse. For her largest solo exhibition to date in her native Latvia, the Paris-based artist showed twelve large sculptures made over the past four years. Their elegance and scale—as well as their combination of mundane and unusual materials, textures, and colors—were immediately appealing. Her works are both present and withdrawn: They slip away from any attempt to pin them to meaning or reference. The sculpture that lent the show its title, dated 2019–22, is made of wood panels, fabric, ink, and silicone, and was accompanied by a light projection. As its deep-brown wood panels almost disappeared into the darkness and the beam on the black marble floor beside it produced an amorphous shadow, Field Space and its elusive presence seemed to offer a key to the whole show. This was a space in which we encountered shadows of thoughts, structures to grip color, something like an architecture of the unconscious.

Entering the dim, extravagantly ornamented hall with its walls of pinkish marble, arched ceiling, and lines of gray columns, one was greeted by Saules Suns (red), 2019, vertically shooting toward the ceiling and then arching downward. The intensity of its titular hue was striking, as was the work's trunk-like structure, which reached out like a large tentacle. Smaller feelers were all around, translucent and soft on the edges of rigid wood panels in Queen, 2022. The wood structure stood firmly on the floor like an oversize corset decorated with a couple of thin lines of peacock feathers on each side. Tiny flat antennae graced the textile of the bright-orange Sarrasvati, 2020, which hung over the exhibition hall like a wing or a part of a roof, shielding the viewer in its warm color. Held together by a few wood shards, the work radiated ephemerality and the potential to shape-shift. Some of the sculptures, such as Swallows and Bride^^2^^, both 2022, resembled origami constructions one makes as a child: the paper fortune-teller sometimes

called a cootie catcher and known in the Baltics as the “day night” game for its brightly colored exterior and dark interior. These seemingly rigid geometrical shapes were containers for color—hot orange, yellow, ink black—but each was softened by pleats of tissues or silicone, bringing fleshiness to structure. They also drew the room itself into their fold, as space itself became an invisible component that the sculptures encompassed.

Distinct from the other, more minimal works in the exhibition, Cloud Woman, 2022, unwound on a mirror pedestal like a baroque dress, feeling at home with the marble that surrounded it. Light pink and beige tulle fabric, resembling fleshy tissue and growing on the foam shell of the sculptural body, evokes vulnerability: The form seems too soft to be open like that. The exhibition's sensual experience was accentuated by Polish composer Raphael Rogin'ski's meditative guitar piece, which melded evocatively with Grantina's sculptures. The alluring vibration of each work in the show was powerful enough to swallow the viewer and the space around them.



echo gone wrong

“Lauka telpa’ by Daiga Grantina at the Art Museum Riga Bourse’

The Art Museum RIGA BOURSE presents the largest to date solo exhibition in Latvia of works by internationally acclaimed Latvian artist Daiga Grantina.

Specifically for this homecoming exhibition, Grantina has assembled elements of her sculptural vocabulary developed in her practice to present newly created and recreated works. Lauka telpa focuses on the symbolic potential of Grantina’s oeuvre – shifting from a process-based practice to one that is rooted in impressions of the mind which simply occur.

Within the space of the exhibition, these visions of the artist’s imagination are arranged along a diagonal line, occupying the entire perimeter of the vast hall. A series of sculpture-typologies trace the diagonal, sparking rhythm and revealing patterns of gestures that gradually culminate in a sensation of space. A monumental, red tower piece, previously presented at the Latvian Pavilion of the 58th Venice Biennale under the title Saules Suns, integrates the center of the line in a motion expanding vertically. This linear arrangement of objects can be experienced as a spatial notation, a language formed through sculptural drawing: Lauka telpa reads physical space as form free to be drawn into.

The drive for this exhibition stems from the encounter with form as something all encompassing: revealing the essence of matter in synthesis with our sensory experience –our capacity to complete form and hence becoming part of it. Lauka telpa is a wickerwork of unfolding, cyclical movements that build an expanded surface of contact through material, channelling the spirit of creation and the dynamics of experience. Grantina’s sculptural scoring of the space gives points of access to the invisible: the realm of sensation, of intuition, of the subconscious.

The Polish composer Raphael Rogiński will provide a musical entry point to the visual experience by interpreting the sculptural notation in an improvised composition.

Rogiński will turn the sculptures into acoustic vibrations which trace Lauka telpa’s compositional line and the exhibition’s detachment from the regimen of the visible sphere – to an opening up of a dimension of joint interplay. Rogiński’s score has its own format that exists independently: as a concert, a performance, and as a presentation for radio.

Daiga Grantina was born in Saldus, Latvia, studied in Hamburg (DE) and Vienna (AT). She lives and works in Paris, France. Selected solo exhibitions include Atem, Lehm curated by Sara Fumagalli and Valentina Gervasoni at GAMEC Bergamo (Italy, 2021); What Eats Around Itself curated by Helga Christofferson at the New Museum (New York, USA, 2020); Saules Suns curated by Inga Lāce and Valentinas Klimašauskas at the Latvian Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2019); TOLL curated by Sandra Adam at Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2018) and Pillars Sliding off Coat-ee curated by Rhea Dall at Kunstverein Hamburg (Germany, 2017).



echo gone wrong, June 2022

Alex Bennett, “Daiga Grantina: Temples”

Daiga Grantina’s engagement with sculpture is opulently panoramic and exacting. Her purview handles material acutely and intuitively, accreting relational assemblages or singularly charged compositions—in each case they are profoundly about their material. For *Temples*, her first exhibition in London, Grantina deviates from her suspended, coagulant, and deliquescent complexes of form to unfold a sculptural poetics of more subtle and studious manner.

This departure is foremost established in response to the planar surface, with a majority of wall-based works further accommodated by a partition echoing parallel lines of the existing exhibition space. This spatial negotiation formulates another instructive variant: Grantina’s use of the imperfect triangle as geometric lens and structuring device for each numbered “Temple” (2020–21), partnering lightly sawn, elongated triangles of wood as substrate for material testing. Despite a liminal artifactual presence, their titular echo of monumentality diffuses majestic density in favor of rhythmic, meticulous sensuous enquiry.

In *Temple #5*, graphite lines striate the lateral wooden triangles, their crosshatched haze interfusing with the wood’s outermost splintering edges. Three seams of feathers occupy the center with lambent tips like flared brushes in colors shifting from amber, sienna, and mahogany to clouded down. A chartreuse pencil line bisects the work horizontally, evoking, I am informed, the “green flash”—an optical phenomena that occurs transiently at sunset or sunrise, where changes in Earth’s atmosphere cause sunlight to refract at different frequencies, glowing green. The gesture deftly intensifies Grantina’s process-driven reflections on the shimmering particularity and evanescent magnitude of visual experience. Naturally, light’s immateriality facilitates a pursuit of destabilizing quality. In *Temple #4*, carved plastic sheets incur fibrillating waves at their edges; each is overlaid like sliced agate to create a cross-sectional stratum with reflections and shadows incarnating its

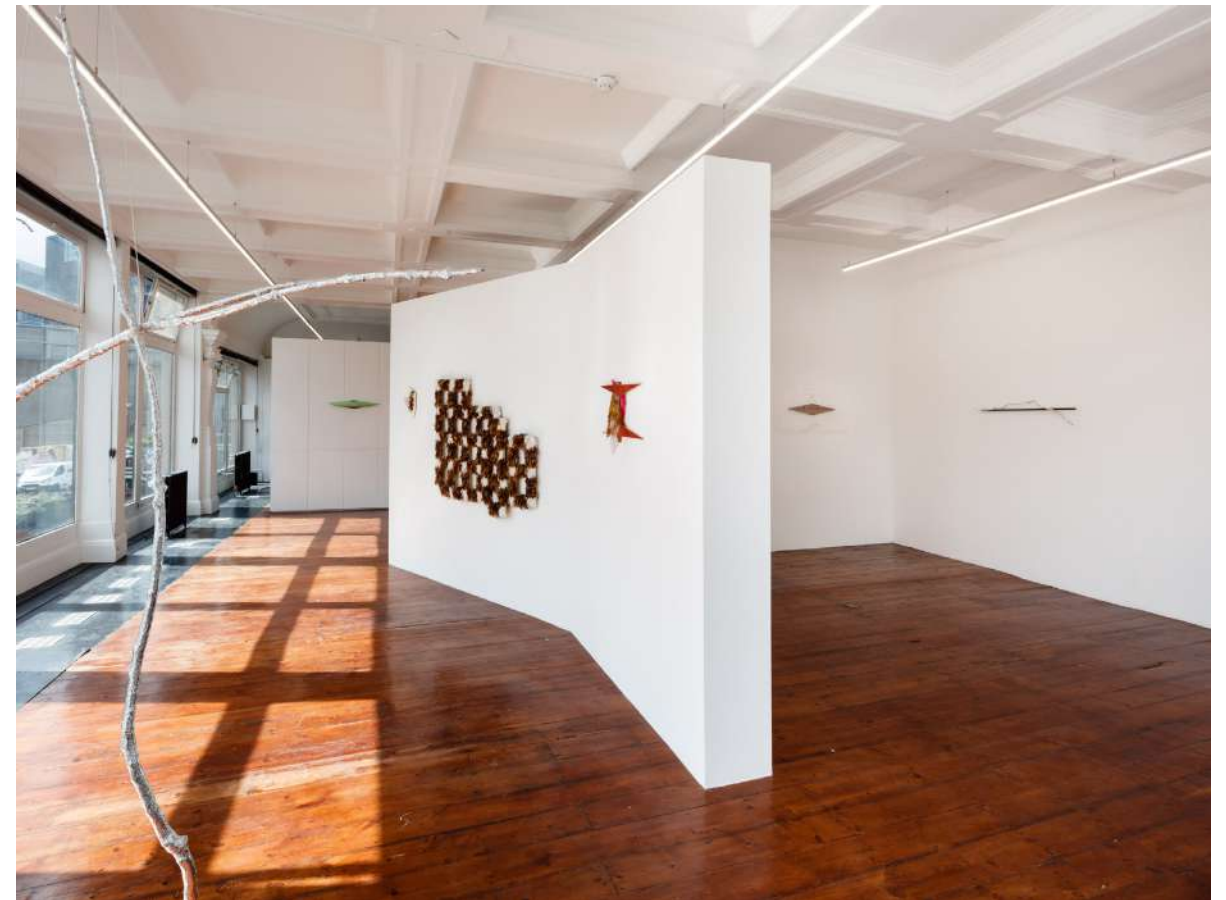
own dimensions. *Temple #6* is tilted and gridded by three cylindrical batons; darkly punctual in lacquering shades of molasses with triangles freckled by unctuous sea sparkle of golden yellows and scarcely detectable blues. The inked, cratered coating prompts gravelly, terrestrial qualities, yet the crinkled foil, with its palette of caffeinated stains puddled by mulberry speckles, renders a parched and friable shed skin.

In the minutiae of material choice and gestural mark, Grantina’s “Temples” achieve differing temporalities and light frequencies, which ultimately prolong the experience of looking. One attunes to detail as its own matrix: the system within a seam; the aberrations of a graphite line; the infinitesimal facets of scrunched foil; the pentagonal perforations of gauzy textile; the squashy corpus of folded fabric. The “Temples” evidence that every material holds its own time, comes into the world differently, much like the non-linearity of time itself: its protrusive shocks and lapsing reversals as parallels and entanglements over pointed destinations. Articulating its eponymous etymological root meaning “to rest, be quiet,” *kweie* (2020), an irregular fabric grid composed of placed feathers, is its own caesura. The pattern recalls a rug gifted to Grantina by her grandmother and, much like the discernment of memory, it requires intimacy to distinguish its mercurial life: the fluctuant hues of ivory, walnut, bronze, metallic teal, and the impressionistic blur of overall plumule.

The “Temples” accentuate transversal communication among other, more durational works, such as vase and *Certain locations attract events* (both 2020). Each incorporates Grantina’s gibbous chrysalides of hand-dyed and resin-stiffened stretched spandex—informally known as her “Buff” forms for their referral to the quality of buffalo skin, as well as the verb “to buff.” Indeed, they exude a rubbed sheen. But this skin is more an interface for light; its precarity appears almost soluble. Of chlorinated blue and dipped black, vase’s efflorescence forms two

undulant ovals screwed to curvilinear brackets of wood, the membrane is held in beetling swell where light befogs at certain flexures, and hydrates in others. Its lamina camouflages fractal, fern frost wrinkles. The poison-dart frog red of *Certain locations attract events* employs the indicia of curled wood as floating flakes whose streaky texture mimics moiré; tangerine fabric nests within its mollusc shell as slippery insulation. Here, Grantina’s dyes have evolved bleary yellow colorations. This interaction of material is less a fetishization of chance and more a rigorous acknowledgment of the vibrant life of matter as it amalgamates, hardens, withers, jellies, desiccates, distends. Grantina’s plastic perhaps best expresses the vivifying vulnerability of her materials, that any suggestive completeness of form simultaneously induces horizons of ensuing mutation.

As is perhaps now clear, Grantina’s sculptures realize continuity between material transformations and imaginative processes—they compel a linguistic analogue: description. I am reminded of the smearing of description as a viscous activity, a means to make the world malleable. The sticky materiality of the mind as it describes, eating away at what surrounds oneself from within, is made generative by these sculptures. In *Temple #2*, roughly hewn wood is marginally visible, supporting a small, flecked pistachio green and taffy-twizzled “buff.” Its synthetic reflection causes a watery horizon line; only now it is cushioned by ample, imperishable, green.



ARTFORUM

Amy Jones, 'Amy Jones on Daiga Grantina

Daiga Grantina

EMALIN

Emalin's new sun-filled space in London's Shoreditch is a natural home for the wall-based assemblages of Paris-based artist Daiga Grantina. She has long been preoccupied with light and its sculptural qualities, having developed her practice from an interest in experimental film-making. Her recent exhibition "Temples" continued these inquiries, with light from two walls of windows providing an ideal setting for her sculptural investigations.

The work here contrasted starkly with Grantina's solo exhibition at New York's New Museum in 2020–21, where a riot of color, texture, and sculptural gesture swept across the gallery space. At Emalin, Grantina's approach to color—central to her ongoing inquiry into material, absorption, and hyper-reflection—was precise and muted. This shift was most apparent in the "Temples" series, 2020–, consisting of seven small wall-based works constructed largely on plywood triangles. Their palette, featuring passages of untreated wood, is dominated by subdued beiges and browns.

The initial impression of restraint soon gave way to a sense of distilled energy. Small instances of intense color permeate the muted planes. A wedge of hot pink pierced through two shards of wood; sunlight bouncing off crumpled, crimson-dappled aluminum foil revealed flashes of brilliant white. Color was scattered across a range of materials, from clear plastic to various fabrics, reflecting or absorbing the sunlight at different moments as you moved through the gallery.



Almost maquette-like, each *Temple* felt like a study of the process through which color, texture, and composition coalesce.

Rather than holding meaning together, Grantina's constructions actively work to pry it apart. This fraying of signification is most evident at the works' very edges. The wooden edges are coarse and splintered, such that the uniform geometry of the triangles from which each *Temple* is constructed begins to unravel. Lines that appeared clean from a distance show themselves to be uneven and jagged, while others betray themselves as simple pencil strokes dividing a diamond shape in two. Shapes that once seemed fixed and foundational reveal an unexpected fluidity. At the edges, where the works met the pristine walls of the gallery, the malleability of each triangle threw the logic of Grantina's compositions back into question.

Viewing the exhibition at Emalin, I was immersed in a series of ongoing conversations taking place within Grantina's practice. The "Temples," when considered in relation to the artist's previous work, bring new questions to her ongoing study of scale and gesture. The dialogue between color, light, material, and composition creates a unique chromatic experience, one that shifts and evolves with each glance and evinces the artist's ongoing interest in color theory. Grantina's "Temples" follow their own interior, associative logic, inviting us into a new, if disorienting, way of thinking. Each assemblage works to collapse meaning into its constituent parts, transforming itself and slipping away from you with every step. These temples are willfully built on shaky ground. The moment you feel you've grasped the intricate layout, you stumble across a corridor that leads nowhere, or a small door that opens into a new world.

—Amy Jones

Daiga Grantina,
Temple #1, 2020,
wood, fabric, plastic,
ink, 16½ × 26⅜ × 2".
From the series
"Temples," 2020–.

Flash Art

Alex Bennett, 'Daiga Grantina Discusses “What Eats Around Itself” at the New Museum, New York’

CONVERSATIONS

Daiga Grantina Discusses “What Eats Around Itself” at the New Museum, New York by [Alex Bennett](#)

June 22, 2020



Daiga Grantina, "What Eats Around Itself". Installation view at New Museum, New York, 2020. Photography by Tean Yu-Hui. Courtesy of New Museum, New York.

Alex Bennett: Though your work involves sculptural assemblages of extremely diverse material, it's curious to know that film was your initial interest. You even created your own Super 8 films. You've mentioned Tony Conrad's "Yellow Movies" as a significant influence for you; to start, can we talk about this interest and the migration of particular principles/effects of film in your sculptural work?

Daiga Grantina: During my time at the art school in Hamburg I lived in a small attic flat. I worked in

my living room, which was a little extension of the kitchen. I liked the concealment of this space, its density. And there was an idea of a composite between the filmed and the filmic material. I made a space encompassing assemblage that existed only on and for the film. Like making a mold for the time-material-entity of the film. In Paris I worked in an even smaller attic room. It was here that the turning point between projection and sculpture happened. I stopped using a camera and projected snippets of existing films to layer it with sculptural elements in the space. The projected light cones defined the entire order of forms. Maybe it was a way to achieve more distance from my surroundings and to use the tiny rooms for a process of pupation into a space of imagination. Somehow film was part of the small room; the attic room was an extension into an inside world. The "Yellow Movies" can be a metaphor for an augmented sensing and a jocular phenomenological approach to projection. Seeing that work shifted the way I perceived the idea of the medium. I wanted to make something more bare medium-wise.

AB: Conrad created a border, within which a temporality emerged — the tension of staging and mobility is useful when considering your work. I'm interested in your approach to light as a possible connective tissue or immaterial spine through larger, deconstructed assemblages. How do you perceive and handle light as a structure as well as a symbol? I'm thinking of the light cone, for instance, and its capacity to behave as a suspended space...

DG: Light is part and parcel of how I understand sculpture. As something that completes form and can be form itself. In Venice I followed both of these strings in parallel. I uncovered a large palladian window to have direct sunlight instigate and complete the process of laying out the pieces. And I made light shapes that existed in relation to the sunlight and also by themselves, depending on the hour of the day. Rotation and a constant sliding of the ground were part of handling the light and inherent to the sculptures. So light is not exactly a symbol or a through-and-through symbol. I like light to be its own dimension and embody all of matter.



Daiga Grantina, "Toll". Installation view at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2018. Photography by André Morin. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris.



1 2 3 4 5 6
Daiga Granīna, "What Eats Around Itself", installation view at New Museum, New York, 2020. Photography by Toan Vu-Huu. Courtesy of New Museum, New York.

AB: Your manipulation of organic and synthetic material undoes the fixity of its material to prioritize a generative, morphing system. "For What Eats Around Itself," your new institutional show at the New Museum, you refer to the properties of lichen and the organism's duality: the fungus as protective layer, the algae as photosynthesis generator. Their coexistence and self-replication develops its own organic surface across all kinds of terrain. How did you choose to allude to the characteristics of lichen, both in the construction of and materials used, in "What Eats Around Itself"?

DG: My friend Athena gave me a dry branch with lichen, and it was decorating the kitchen cupboard for a while until my cats started gnawing it and I had to pick up the pieces from all over the floor. The lichen was sometimes leafy and sometimes more bush-like. I found out that these kinds of growths were macrolichen. Meaning that scale in lichen is a question of form. Which I think is true for sculpture too. How is size determined by shape? I often felt that a work makes itself, a swirl that seems inherent in its line, like a frequency. So that self-replication is not adding or joining pieces but it is a question of matter as such. The matter is the joining.

I had in mind an underlying organometric structure. A structure that would not necessarily hold things physically together but still transmit my ideas of symbiosis and continuity. I used the overlock seam to carve large pieces of fabric into shapes. It is a very strong seam that works more like book binding because it joins the edges from one side. I didn't assemble pieces of fabric but used one single piece so the seams are fixing a fold. The unity of the piece is visible with the interruptions of the seam. The seam is a marker of space. And it is pulling open another space. I chose a very dense fabric so that there would be no draping with the weight when hung. The seam takes the sole responsibility for how the piece will take shape. The pieces work as glyphs in the larger picture and

carry elements on the inside that extend inward out of the seams. They are floating hinges. I am interested in lichen for they are the hinges between our soil and the atmosphere. They make the atmosphere.



1 2 3 4 5 6

Daiga Granīna, "Saulos Suns", installation view Pavilion of Latvia at Venice Biennale, 2019: May You Live in Interesting Times. Photography by Toan Vu-Huu. Courtesy of Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga.

AB: I wonder if language is one way of coordinating the interplay of material; you seem to engage with language for its influence upon form as well as its own malleability of meaning. For "What Eats Around Itself" you reference Rainer Maria Rilke's relation of roses to eyelids: "Rose, oh pure contradiction, desire / to be no one's sleep under so many / lids." While in the much earlier exhibition, "Legal Beast Language" (2014) at Galerie Joseph Tang, the title references a glossary in Ben Marcus's *The Age of Wire and String* (1995), which collects redefinitions and invents new terms (such as CLOTH-EATERS). Following Rilke, the dynamism provoked by both sleep and vitality, weariness and excess, is interesting; how do you like to use language? Is there an impulse to decenter or interrogate figuration and the anthropomorphic?

DG: At this moment I am experiencing very closely the becoming of language in the early stages with my daughter. It is imbedded in gesture and action of the body. It is sound and song, gesture and dance. If gesture and figuration extend from the same line, then maybe cadence is what links language and figuration, so figuration can bring resonance into being as much as a sound line. I would like to connect this thought back to lichen. Can we speak of a musical scale in lichen? Is scale the connecting element in sign systems? The sign system of lichen would then be a possible category of languages, a language of transfiguration maybe. I am interested in Ben Marcus and Rainer Maria Rilke for how they exceed the identity of language. Through their work I can read language as part of a larger sign system to unlock expressions of the heart.

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MORE STORIES BY

Alex Bennett

Kay Whitney, 'Daiga Grantina'

Despite the expectation that artworks serve to implement a pragmatic social agenda, many artists still privilege the work of the imagination over the demand for function. In rejecting the requirement of such utility, they produce objects that do a different kind of work—an associative, poetic labor that spells nothing out but resonates in the mind, like a tuning fork, activating an unprogrammed response.

Daiga Grantina, a Latvian-born artist working in Paris, has produced a rare thing: a series of sculptural moments that together evoke certain structures of the natural world. Her strategically spaced, sequential pieces are effectively about their own materiality, enclosed and defined by how and from what they are fabricated. Draped, gathered, mounted on the wall, and suspended, these objects are sui generis—what they imply to the eye of the beholder is left to the beholder to resolve. Slung across the long, narrow, high-ceilinged Lobby Gallery of the New Museum, Grantina's interrelated fabric-based objects create a wavering panorama. They animate and occupy the space in an oddly non-aggressive, inviting fashion, like the decorative elements inside an aquarium. In the hierarchies of perception, the materials, in combination with everything that's been done to them, make the first hit.

The exhibition title, "What Eats Around Itself," along with its literary and artistic sources, amplifies the lack of aggression and the sci-fi, biomorphic feel of the objects. Grantina is interested in the evolution of plants and, for this piece, drew inspiration from Tim Wheeler's

photographs of lichen. Lichen consist of a fungus living with an alga or cyanobacterium—the fungus feeding off of and protecting its partner organism. Grantina has arranged her suspended and wall-hung objects in a way that ties them into an implied cycle of growth and decline, mirroring lichen's adaptive qualities. She was also inspired by Rilke's comparison between roses and eyelids: "Like a rose, life unfolds with each blink."

In a recorded statement made for the exhibition, Grantina states that she works almost entirely intuitively. Her relationship with her materials, what they are (cast silicon, paint, latex, various fabrics), and what she does to them (gathering, tying, draping, plasticizing, suspending) are her first considerations and her relational platform. She makes her objects for specific spaces, which in turn determine the final form and outcome, because the work is first and foremost site-specific in nature. Though she does make models, ultimately the work bridges intention, fabrication, shifted scale, and the challenges of architecture and light.

Grantina's materials are strung along a spectrum of sensation constructed from very basic sets of oppositions: natural/synthetic, hard/soft, dark/light, opaque/transparent, hotly chromatic/indifferently colored. She uses color and light not so much as aspects of a particular surface but as characteristics of materiality. Color is used as a spatially differentiating element and point of exclamation. The work consumes the space and creates a cool, otherworldly, wholly artificial environment that oddly mirrors our own distance from the natural world.



Sculpture, 07 May 2020

Shraddha Nair, 'Daiga Grantina makes her solo debut in America at the New Museum'

The Latvian artist is presenting her first solo exhibition in the US - What Eats Around Itself - a series of playful installations for viewers to walk through.

New York City, known as the art capital of the world, is home to many greats. What is exceptional about the city, however, is that it is also the rich soil that helps growing artists bloom. Many remarkable artists first made their bones in a New York City museum before going on to create waves in the industry. Manhattan's New Museum is one such institution. The director, Massimiliano Gioni, says, "It's not by accident that some of the greatest artists of today, ranging from Jeff Koons to David Hammons to Adrian Piper, or more recently, artists like Wu Tsang, Urs Fischer, and Chris Ofili, had their very first New York museum exposure at the New Museum. That's what we have been doing at the Museum for more than 40 years: we show the art of tomorrow, today".

In a continuation of this tradition, New Museum is presenting Daiga Grantina: What Eats Around Itself. Daiga Grantina is an emerging artist of Latvian origin, who lives and works in Paris and is showcasing a range of adventurous and exciting art installations at the New Museum, in a first ever solo in America. The exhibition is a display of past works as well as one large scale site-specific installation, curated by Helga Christoffersen.

Grantina's recent works are inspired by lichen, referenced directly in the exhibition title, and she draws inspiration from its aesthetic and natural qualities.

Grantina employs silicon, textile and plastics to create amorphous installations that read as an organic sculpture but are, in fact, entirely artificial. Her work in the past has played with these derived dichotomies in its materiality, creating a sense of curious confusion in the viewers' eyes. This show will be no different. Although lichen is a natural composite, its structure is repetitive and as Christoffersen puts it, "mechanically produced, systematic, grid-like". Grantina explores this duality in the series, bringing

into question the true nature of a material and the real materials in nature. Grantina calls on her audience to leave behind any preconceived notions, inviting us to question our perception of the boundaries between natural and artificial.

Christoffersen comments on the relevance of this tension between organic and synthetic materials in Grantina's work, "We are living in a world where we are surrounded by new substitutes and surrogates for everything around us. Whether it is the food that we eat or the clothes we wear, or the houses that we live in, there is an incredible shift happening in the composition of materials. Natural materials are artificially engineered, and something that can feel like a familiar object or feel like a familiar texture, is often not what it appears to be. In Grantina's work I see an obsession with testing the limits of materials and exploring this middle ground between the natural and the artificial".

In the site-specific installation by Grantina, she creates an environment for viewers to literally step into the work and get a micro and macro perspective on this installation. Christoffersen tells us what excites her about this curatorial process, "It is always an incredible process to work with an artist who creates new work for a specific space or context. In this case Grantina really considered the nature of the New Museum's lobby gallery, a very transparent space that can be encountered from multiple angles due to its long glass wall. In addition, the space has a skylight, and Grantina uses the space almost like a glasshouse for the growth of organic matter, with her sculptural installation taking the form of many separate elements that form one larger and connected whole".

Grantina represented Latvia at the 2019 Venice Biennale with her solo presentation Saules Suns. She has had solo exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2018), Kunstverein Hamburg (2017), and others apart from a number of group exhibitions as well. The solo at New Museum opens on January 21, 2020 and runs till May 17, 2020.

Stir, 21 January 2020

The Observer

Laura Pitcher, ‘Industrial Materials Morph Into an Organic World in the New Museum’s Lobby’

Daiga Grantina’s sculptures consume a room. Voluptuous and flowing, it’s obvious that they’re influenced by the natural world, and yet they offer a fresh perspective that can often seem otherworldly. Born in Riga in Latvia in 1985, the artist studied sculpture and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg. Initially captivated by experimental film, her sculptural work plays with lighting to create an organic feel.

Now based in Paris, and with an impressive list of European institutions that have hosted her work, Grantina is about to open her first ever solo museum show in the U.S. “Daiga Grantina: What Eats Around Itself,” will run from January 21 to May 10 at the New Museum (on view in the Museum’s Lobby Gallery), and has been curated by Helga Christoffersen, the executive director of Art Hub Copenhagen and former curator at the New Museum.

The exhibition showcases what Grantina does best: large-scale sculptural assemblages that evoke the natural world. Here, she has been inspired by photographer Tim Wheeler’s images of lichen and the Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke’s comparison between roses and eyelids. “Like a rose, life unfolds with each blink,” the artist explains. Using cast silicone, paint, latex, fabric and felt. Grantina contrasts industrial and synthetic materials to create an installation that mimics the amorphous, leafy figure of lichen climbing the gallery walls. The plant-like being, which is comprised of a fungus living in symbiosis with an alga or cyanobacterium, is remarkable in the

way that the two materials support each other—with the fungus both feeding off of and protecting the organism that has become its partner. In Grantina’s work, this give and take is experienced through forms that seem as if they’re both growing and decomposing at the same time.

When creating the exhibition, Grantina constructed a scaled-down model of the Lobby Gallery to mock up the work. Experimenting with materials, soft and hard, transparent and opaque, mobile and static, she drew inspiration from lichen’s many adaptive qualities (like coexistence and self-replication) to create a space that is fluid and intriguing. The amorphous structures are suspended from the ceiling and make their way down the gallery walls and floor, encompassing the entire room. Each piece on its own is complex, and yet together they fit effortlessly.

When asked if she’s always considered herself an artist, Grantina told Observer that she’s unsure that such decisions can be made in childhood, and that there’s a clear difference in being aware of art and experiencing making something that could be art. But in her work, she has found that new projects often find their genesis in the one that came before. “Like a bookmark,” the artist describes how she often uses the thought-process of her previous work as a jumping off point to approach something new. With this in mind, we can no doubt expect more beautifully strange organic matters in whatever follows her solo American-debut.



Flash Art

Alex Bennett, ‘Paris Roundup 2019’

Saturation occurs once again, the city drenched in expos, events, and itinerant first-timers. Given the slight period in which to encounter the vast array on offer, I'll start with the broad rubric of time itself. While some things deteriorate, others resist time's effects by way of relation-ality, reconciliation, or the favoring of capricious notions of community. Such is the modus for Palais de Tokyo's "Future, Former, Fugitive," which pools together forty-four intergenerational artists and collectives as a marker of "a French scene" — nearly ten years since its similarly monumental show "Dynasty." In Oliver Cadiot's 1993 novel Future, Former, Fugitive, he sets an inventory of tactics in the event of exile. In this same story, Cadiot invents Robinson, a vehicular character through which sensations and perceptions are processed at accelerated rates. Evolving from Cadiot's early cut-up poetry, Robinson's narrative "I" becomes an empty site for the heteroge-neous language of the contemporary world, provoking a hallucinatory proliferation of linguistic excess. Though a marker of a scene (one of many we shall see), Palais de Tokyo's approach is in a similar vein, reconstituting a place for games of language, excess, and doubt.

Contagion seeps through even the most solitary ex-pressions: Nils Alix-Tabeling's wooden reptilian hybrids queer mythological narratives to confront the apocalyptic present in sculptures featuring, among many cross-breeds, a two-faced arachnid vase and a nimble throne adorned with carved dragonfly wings, a lolling cock, and clawing hand. Corentin Grossmann's crayon, pastel, and graphite drawings perk the attention with their woozy vistas, untroubled nudes, and rolling landscapes. The marzipan-smooth scenery is populated with de-stoned avocados, hovering planets, botanical phalluses ejacu-lating foamy toothpaste, and sushi traveling downstream while yellow tang fish float above. Renaud Jerez presents burlesque characters inspired in part by Orwell's 1984 and the recurring sex workers throughout Otto Dix's oeuvre. Industrial pipes create interconnected exoskeletons as a figure guards a mirrored tomb; the room is bookended by two canvases featuring a dissolving grim-reaper and a bewitched ode to John Everett Millais's Ophelia.

To the volcanic center of it all and with no thematic spine in mind, I stumble into booths weeping in white light under the Grand Palais, gunning for more fine flakes of excess. In a queasy head rush, best to start with de-capitation. Picture: slurry of verdant greens; picture: an abattoir-picnic of Cicero's rotting head strung to a tree; picture: eyes, whole abscesses, pustular and galactic in sparkling putrefaction; picture: a snake twirling into the fleshy envelope, feasting on its contents inside out. Kye Christensen-Knowles's The Silence of Cicero (2019), on show with LOMEX at this year's Lafayette Sector in FIAC, was a welcome contusion in the system.

Thirsty for more hot proclivities, masochistic practice, or profuse materiality I reach Galerie Joseph Tang's presentation of work by Daiga Grantina: magnificent quenelles rolled into craquelure-like hardened caramel in tones of toffee, peach, and blood orange, the latter's lower curve dipped in a smattering of feathers. A central assemblage composed of hulking shards of foam and silicone in licorice-red and rosewater reads disarticulated nest, while the discrete wall clusters are neatly gelled, feeling like more assertive endnotes for a faintly folkloric and rich plastic lexicon.

Making up a small portion of works at Anton Kern Gallery are paintings by David Byrd (1926–2013), who formerly worked for thirty years in the Veterans Administration facility in Montrose, New York, before retiring to paint. In his bleached pastel palette, figures, landscapes, and at times the softening unity of the two, are sensitive renderings of his time spent working in the VA where the most distressing forces are often invisible. In Man In Bed (1973) a figure appears awash in liquid flurries of cotton, the body scarcely distinct from the mattress. In another, Byrd traces the medicalized mind in solitary extremis via a male figure holding only a string.

Other stroboscopic notices came in quick succession: a painting of one luminescent citron cocktail served like a lambent candle by Dike Blair at Karma; equally radiant were the extreme cropped talismans of Alexandra

Noel's paintings at Freedman Fitzpatrick, including an injured horse, and retro American houses — their roofs illuminated like razor blades. For a bigger splash I ogled Louisa Gagliardi's silky paintings of metallic phantasms and oily reflections at David Radziszewski: black symbolist felines, hollow bodies, and golden globes where faces slip and slide onto other bodies, onto cherries, or bust into pure steam.

Pivoting from diaphanous cacophony to infatuated authorial mark, I visit Hans Hartung. At Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, his gestural and abstract style, so promiscuous with scrawl, is more radiant and scathing than I anticipated. Almost libidinal with tricks of something machinic in his handling of sprays and aerosols, Hartung's paintings, pastels, and lithographs are hatch marked close to oblivion, swirled and lyrically erased in great unctuous waves. His swathes of black, bronze, and navy evoke the graphic fluster of ruffled plumage. Representations of hallucinogenic wind, a cockatoo's shock, or bizarre weaponry: Hartung could suggest them all.

More transient and site-specific was the program for the inaugural Salon de Normandie, housed at Le Grand Hotel de Normandie in the shadow of the Louvre. Curated by multidisciplinary collective The Community, the project is a playful destabilizing satire on the conservative nine-teenth-century salon. Given its context, participating galleries and nomadic collectives embed display within setting, leaving objects, commodities, and atmospheric installations interpenetrating hotel facilities. Orgiastic and bacterial in scope, the hotel summons a portalist methodology with each room a peephole. However, pre-carious form and rudimentary application is its connective tissue, clear in Nick Sethi's live, site-specific ode to India; Alison Lloyd's introspective sequence of photographic self-documentation; or Michael Iveson's manipulation of space through painted bubble-wrap vestibules.

Of less wild and more discrete fashion continues Paris Internationale. Enjoyments include Autumn Ramsey's interspecies bacchanalia at Crève-cœur, including an eagle with overinflated talons and a runaway satyr. Similarly, silhouettes of smooching heads by Robert Brambora at Sans titre show trans-species relations both animal and botanical; or Koppe Astner's presentation of New Realist works by the late Miguel Cardenas, displaying psychedelic sentient cacti razed like modernist sculptural icons. At Paris Internationale, the Performance Agency's live TV studio, orchestrating events, tours, talks, and performance, is a dizzying feat in itself.

At Sultana, botanical bodies sit behind glass cabinets dripping in condensation for Jesse Darling's "Selva Oscura." In partial reference to Dante's dark forest, the plants are desynchronized from seasonal time, stripped from the period of dormancy for further root entanglement. Bookbinders and toilet brushes adorn a forest of crutches, the binder of elaborate ideas become undone. I capture Louis Fratino's new ceramics and sculptures at Antoine Levi, his intimate paintings rendered in three dimensions. I crop them further at a forearm's shelter or a twisting embrace, inventing their subliminal passion and pulse.

For calm, I stop by "Speed of Life" by Peter Hujar at Jeu de Paume. Consistent documenter of the downtown New York avant-garde, Hujar recorded a multitude of queer subjects including Candy Darling and Quentin Crisp. "Speed of Life" is also sheltered, lonely, and gentle. Hujar crops a leg to linger on the veins touring down the fundamental foundation of the foot. In others: a lone road is made suede by rain, its surface supple with the pressure of petrichor; Skippy the python creates curlicues in a labyrinth atop a varnished chair; lipping the wind, the Hudson river is frozen as a sheet of slate; Stephen Varble sports Christmas-tree netting, festooned with faux dollar bills. Pausing for the act of looking itself, I'll close this heady walkthrough of the many constructions of value.

DIRECTIONAL FORCES

Julia Zakharova, ‘The Cosmological Process’

Daiga Grantina's Saules Suns at the Latvian Pavillion of the 2019 Venice Biennale confronts a number of challenges concerning materiality and process. This is an exhibition that functions more like an experience in its positioning and processing of materials ranging from faux fur and cotton to steel conduits and paper. At play here in this cosmology is the notion of world-building and world-destruction.

Descending upon the installation I had the sensation that I came upon a strangely magical structure, a studio or playroom perhaps, where people are making mysterious things out of even more mysterious materials. In this playroom, one imagines children from another planet, another species and another intelligence...

Looking up the term “saules” I read two interesting definitions. The first, defines “saules” as the plural form of “soul” in a now obsolete Scottish terminology. In the other definition, perhaps the artist's intended usage, “Saule” is the solar goddess found in numerous Latvian and Lithuanian mythological tales.

Perhaps it is more accurate to describe Saules Suns as the atelier of this secret Solar Goddess who has descended on the Earth in the year 2019, to find the planet apoplectic with its contradictions and the wars within its spirit.

Venice may be the perfect city for this descent. I have read many critics describe this installation as a series of suns. I'm not sure this is the pathway I would take in explaining my experience. Saules Suns defies structure in the way Grantina has utilized space, light and shadow to counter predictability and predication. It is this total exploration of every corner, structural element, wall and floor that makes Grantina's work so very memorable and somehow so appealing. There is a strong commitment to taking things to a level of excess in a way that never strays from the elegant and the provocative.

Saules Suns may be considered a test of wills at war: the war between sensuality and rationality, the conflict

between the soul and the brain (assuming there is even a distinction, and the cataclysm between the creation of a thing and its extinction, or more accurately its violent disappearance.

Indeed Ms. Grantina's work here appears to speak to many central phenomenon of our age: the process of industry and the cost it heaps upon our natural world. The Latvian sculptress poses questions about origins and destinations concerning the relationship between handcraft and production.

This question, on how things are made, may be the foremost inquiry of our time.

This relationship is one with many forebears in contemporary art, be it Joseph Beuys or Carl Andre, One can even explore the Latvian Pavillion within the framework of Arte Povera and view Saules Suns as the grandchild of work by such figures as Eva Hesse and Allan Kaprow by way of Lucian Fabro. That the materials at play here vary from they synthetic to the naturalistic is only one of the most prominent features but it is a phenomenon that rewards further study.

This distinction may be viewed as a product of this trajectory.

This is a work, an environment and a phenomenon beyond logic and beyond classification, thought it does offer traces, or perhaps more appropriately, tracks from prior teachers and inspirations. One sees Sara Sze's scatterings and the frightful fetishisms of Isa Genzken.

There are moments of desperation and traces of optimism found in the nascent gathering of the materials that can either be viewed as one large sculptural installation or individual pieces, each with an identity its own. Ms. Grantina's offering here appears to come as propulsive event, as if she blew up a pile of mysterious materials, things out of which one might build a spacecraft or a giant stuffed panda bear. It doesn't really matter.

It's the “thingness” that provokes. It's the meditation on confluence and meeting points between fiber and metal, between linearity and metamorphosis that makes this a memorable work of sculpture, a phenomenological experience best apprehended perhaps with a few critical faculties studying the blue skies and labyrinths of Venice and the rest contemplating the architecture of fantasy and apocalypse.

On the Precipice of Anti-Art

Saules Suns offers visitors perhaps the most immersive experience at this Biennale. By “immersive” I don't mean anything like a literal step into a pool of images or sound. I am suggesting rather, that Saules Suns seduces you into a state of vision and thought that travels beyond the pre-determined borders of most contemporary sculpture today.

Ms. Grantina is building a cosmos with this work.

The immersion takes place emotionally as much as visually and this is the strength of the work, particularly within the context of other sculptures in the Biennale, many of which flirt so ferociously with irony and cynicism of the visual kind, or, in other words, anti-art.

Judging by this Biennale the garish and the kitsch appear to be the new borders of style among many younger artists across the world, as if they all adopted the ideology or language of contemporary art from the same textbook, each with his or her own foreign conceptual accent. Kitsch has become so pervasive in art today that its very presence is no longer a shock but a stylistic utterance as casual and mindless as artificially-torn designer jeans.

What distinguishes Saules Suns from kitsch and hence anti-art, is its commitment to material discovery and its openness to multidimensional exposition from the point of view of length, width and height. This is a very phenomenologically geometric work of art, one that defies measurement and survey.

Ms. Grantina's work it is not a discourse on negative theology and hence, carefully evades the allure of trends and the comfort of conformism found among so many artists these days.

This is a work of affirmation, perhaps even outright proclamation, the type of utterance one speaks after a traumatic experience in the sub-tropics of the careworn spirit. There is hope here. There is serious meditation. There is a positive approach to re-imagining aesthetics here that does not necessitate a decadent relationship to art history. Curated (how one can curate this piece I have no idea!) by Valentinas Klimašauskas and Inga Lāce, Saules Suns beckoned passersby and curious art tourists to remain and reflect.

During my visit I saw women and men of all ages stay longer than usual in their course of travel through and within the Arsenale. I was able to view many pauses and many little discussions among the travelers.

Considering the scale of the buildings at the Biennale and the number of works to encounter, this is perhaps the greatest praise one can bestow on an artist: the energy for careful contemplation.

198 PORTRAIT DAIGA GRANTINA

TEXT BY
INGRID LUQUET-GAD

PORTRAIT BY
TOAN VU HUU



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Born in Riga in Latvia in 1985, Daiga Grantina studied sculpture and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and the University of Fine Arts Hamburg. It was experimental film, however, that first caught her interest and defined the features of her sculptural work to come. "I started by doing Super 8 films. They were abstract films, centered around energies and light effects. Discovering Tony Conrad's Yellow Movies was a big inspiration to me." Gradually, she started to extract elements from the videos that she would materialize in physical space. The light cone, however, stayed a fixture in her practice, enabling her to delineate a suspended space where the mind could project itself. Not quite real, not quite imaginary either, this was a space where linear time as well as terrestrial gravity seemed to have waned, enabling a collection of potentialities to unfold in several, non-exclusive spatio-temporal dimensions. Somewhere in the process of going from 2D to 3D, a fourth dimension had appeared.

One of her first solo shows, Legal Beast Language (2014) at Galerie Joseph Tang in Paris, built on this tension. Hung from the ceiling or stranded on the floor, silvery sculptural elements mixed with translucent shapeless masses, radiating with intensities manifesting themselves via a diffuse, magenta hue. Melted plastic, crumpled aluminum, tangled wires as well as various plastic trinkets were combined, giving birth to nomadic singularities resembling post-nuclear organs without bodies. At that time, a generation of artists that she has frequently been shown alongside were inventing a renewed way of approaching science fiction, conceived not so much as a narrative as an abstract texture infused with a speculative transformation potential. Feeding on dystopian tales of dark glamour, they merge polluted particles with glimmering post-nuclear waste to produce eerie concretions, chrysalides or microcosms.

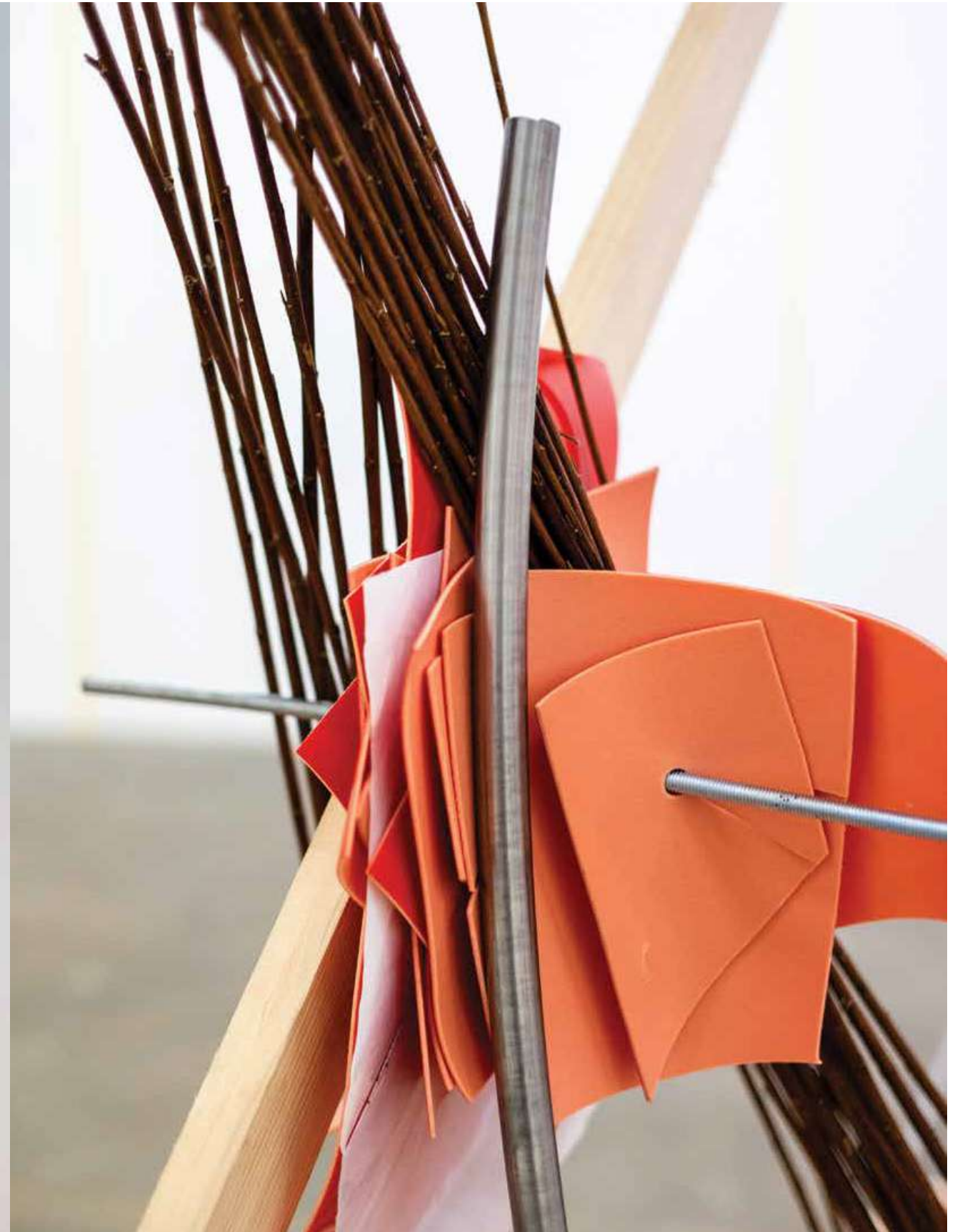
Daiga Grantina's work acknowledges the changes happening in our ecosystem. Science fiction, however, if applied to describe her work, should not so much be

understood as an impulse towards the future than as a confrontation with something radically unknown. As she puts it herself: "Ursula K. Le Guin once said that people use science fiction when they can't come up with another term. This would be the modality I am working towards." In her last shows, Pillars Sliding off Coat-ee (2017) at Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany, or Toll (2018) at Palais de Tokyo in Paris, her palette has taken on a more subdued quality. The hard, metallic tones have developed into eggshell beige, burnt orange or withered greens. The shimmering surfaces now coexist with plaster, knobby wood or coarse fabrics. The contrast between various moments of production, organic spontaneity and meticulously built structures, have become more visible. "I start with a sketch or a model and I restart with a work which is more spatial. It stays a sketch somehow," explains Daiga Grantina.

When we meet in her studio at DOC, a former school turned into self-administered artist ateliers in the neighborhood of Belleville in Paris, she is preparing for the Venice Art Biennale where she has been chosen to represent Latvia. Several parts lie scattered on the floor, waiting to enter into a larger composition. Like the smaller pieces, the bigger installations also derive from finding a satisfying connection—the unexpected, intuitive one—between two parts. She then moves on segment by segment to gradually solidify an initial, defining intensity or rhythm. In Venice, projected light will once again play a central role. Its spectrum, however, does not conjure up other worlds as much as it induces an exercise in expanded vision. From her early experiments with film, Daiga Grantina has kept a time-based practice that favors an exploration of the here-and-now. What appears in the light cone is a non-linear pluriverse, where microscopic and macroscopic scale overlap and intersect. Everyday material, shapes, objects become alien to us. Walking around Daiga Grantina's sculptures, we experience how our daily environment might look through a non-human perception system.



CURA, March 2019





TOLL, 2018 (details), installation view, Palais de Tokyo, Paris Photo: Toan Vu Huu (p. 204)

Omelandella, 2018 (p. 205) All images Courtesy: Galerie Joseph Tang



Valentinas Klimašauskas, ‘The detail is potential for a scope. An interview with Latvian artist Daiga Grantina’

Latvian artist Daiga Grantina (b. 1985 in Riga, lives and works in Paris) is renowned for her site-adapted sculptural installations made from a range of materials with varying qualities, merging plastic and organic elements within an extensive color palette.

Still on view until September 9, 2018, is Daiga Grantina’s solo show “Toll” at one of the most important contemporary art institutions in Europe – Palais de Tokyo in Paris. Moreover, on June 21st, Grantina took part, alongside other younger generation artists from the Baltic countries – Pakui Hardware and Young Girl Reading Group, in the exhibition titled “Solar Bodies” coinciding with one of the biggest projects of the Latvian Centenary “Wild Souls. Symbolism in the Baltic States” at the Musée d’Orsay in Paris. On this occasion curators Valentinas Klimašauskas and Inga Lāce interviewed Daiga Grantina about the exhibition and her work in general.

Daiga Grantina has also recently participated at the Baltic Triennial 13 in Vilnius and Tallinn (2018), curated by Vincent Honoré, as well as exhibitions at Villa Vassilieff, Paris, and La Panacée, Montpellier (2018). She has also been taking part in the Bergen Assembly (2016) in Norway. Her recent monographic exhibitions have taken place in Kunstverein Hamburg (Germany, 2017) and Kunsthau Bregenz (Austria, 2016). Her work has also been shown in Latvia at the solo exhibition at kim? Contemporary Art Centre in 2016 and in a group show “Portable Landscapes” at the Latvian National Museum of Art, organized by the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. Grantina is also a part of the artists’ collective in Paris called DOC which actively participates in the life and dynamics of the neighbourhood and art ecosystem of Paris. Daiga Grantina is represented by Galerie Joseph Tang in Paris.

Daiga Grantina will represent Latvia at the next year’s Venice Biennial with a project which is called “Lighthouse”. The richly charged metaphor was previously used as a symbol for metaphysics and religion, however, in our times

of wars, immigration, climate change and technological acceleration the connotations of the ‘lighthouse’ might vary from a safe harbour to a symbol of changes. It may also refer to ever-changing borders between the sea and land and accelerating technology, as now the GPS and other digital technologies are used for navigation purposes instead of old-fashioned lighthouses.

VK: Historically there is a relationship between the discovery of materials and their history and development of art history as when certain colours are discovered and allow certain painterly developments. How do those material histories intertwine with your work?

DG: I am reading Michel Pastoureau that every French art student has read. He wrote a series of books, each on the history of a colour. As for red it starts with the cave paintings, done in the very first colour available, obtained from the iron oxide in the earth. I am very interested how colour is entwined with matter, light included. I mean the palette of the screen is also specific, just as paper, foam or textiles. Joseph Albers would recommend colour tests with paper for example. A palette is its own parallel human and non-human, a sort of non-categorical, history.

VK: I’m very much interested in the relation of your work to art history and specifically to realism and symbolism as in the context of your new work at “Solar Bodies” exhibition at Musée d’Orsay. As it is mentioned in the exhibition text, your new work may be read as a reference to “The Étretat Cliffs after the Storm” by Gustave Courbet or may be associated with “The Past” by Lithuanian symbolist, pre-abstractionist Konstantinas Čiurlionis. I’m pretty sure some other references may also be mentioned. However, to systemise the question in the background of those two works, one may say that, firstly, what really stands out in your work is the attention to a detail, which is an attribute of realism. Secondly, what is also very noticeable is the relation of detail to the totality of your installation, to landscape, to larger world, cosmology, which is part of the symbolist thinking. Thus to continue this line of

thought I’m very interested how your work combines a few different thinking schools and styles as inspirations. Could you tell us more why you specifically mentioned “The Étretat Cliffs after the Storm” and “The Past” and not other works? Is it because of the materiality of the depicted objects, landscapes, painterly situations?

DG: There are some encounters that are especially sticky. With this painting it’s like you could smell the freshness of the air after the storm, Courbet catches the aftermath, the relief which might be a pun on painting the cliffs and his way of doing it with a knife. Looking back it actually marks a moment in his life before a storm. During the preparation for the show in Musée d’Orsay I inspected the painting more closely, and only with technical means, by zooming into the high-definition pictures where the water meets the pebbles, a group of figures appears, like a secret announcement. So, yes, I can relate to what you say about the detail. The detail is potential for a scope. And it seems to me that it is what Čiurlionis has painted in “The Past”. Somehow he is depicting the opposite of Courbet with this radiating flat stone face but the feeling that comes along is similar and the titles are suggestive of that. What I am trying to do is relate detail and landscape. The subject is what I receive from these paintings, that moment of appearance in a sense of a personal reality effect and the work puts that into a perspective, a scope.

VK: One may also add that your work may be also described as a sculptural installation. Having that in mind, what historical sculptures or installations influenced your oeuvre?

DG: The year I immigrated to Germany Jessica Stockholder made a work called “Growing Rock Candy Mountain Grasses in Canned Sand” and one of my favourite fashion items was these pink leggings made of lycra which was also the main material for that installation in Münster the same year. Much later I discovered that work in a catalogue at Sautter and Lackmann bookstore. That made me want to wear my leggings again which had not happened yet and at around the same time I was introduced to the work of Eva Hesse by my theory teacher Hanne Loreck in Hamburg, and I was sketching around with film stuff and montage which is still how I think of installing. It’s like laying out the film and moving inside and around.

VK: As your work is very spatial and even may be called operatic because of its richness of colours and shapes, is there also some connection to music, which you find interesting?

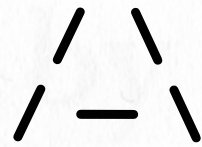
DG: I realized that colour became interesting to me through texture first. So the change or movement of colour and that colour acts like a sensual interface. It includes all dimensions we want to think of. I visited the lighthouse cathedral of Auguste Perret in Le Havre recently for which Kandinsky was a major influence. The windows are composed in relation to the sunset. It felt like watching an Agnes Martin “Blade Runner” version with a soundtrack by Klaus Schulze. It’s like the architecture was not out there but inside me.

VK: Have you ever experienced synaesthesia, for example, hearing words as colours or colours as music?

DG: As part of a workshop, that was an experiment in making a collective show that addressed the process of ‘installing’ as a collective creative act, we underwent a session of hypnosis. It was led by Magda Kachouche, a member of the DOC association in Paris. The task was to focus on all our senses and fold them into one feeling: the sound of the street and body functions, the feel of the feet touching the concrete ground, the taste in the mouth and the focus on breath in order to see with the eyes closed. Somehow these few minutes of being all together and sharing something so non spectacular worked as sort of sublimation, from which we could rethink our encounter and the individual agenda. From automatic writing to automatic installation so to say.

VK: Colour is a very important and distinctive part of your work. How have you made the choice of your palette?
DG: If we talk about the “Toll” exhibition then what I tried is to slide on a scale between red and blue, sometimes slightly beyond and playing with the lights. The red was used as baseline which is also the large red wave in the space, right at the left front. Out of this the magenta, pink and deep purple shades are emerging. The red wave flows out in a heart-like structure. It was important for me to have a general warm or heated feeling about the show so it works with the greenhouse like architecture of the roof. We can see the sky through it. There is also a cooler corner behind the big blanket hanging in the back of the space. With each colour comes a texture to the feel so the shades can be really varied — sliding between red and blue.

arterritory /



MATERIALIZER OF LIGHT

An interview with Latvian-born
artist Daiga Grantiņa
in Riga by Odrija Fišere

Daiga Grantiņa was born in Latvia in 1985, at age seven her family moved to Hamburg, Germany. Grantiņa studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Hamburg (HFBK Hamburg), and at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. She then lived and worked in Berlin for several years, but for a while now she has chosen Paris as her home base. There she works with Joseph Tang gallery, but she still keeps close ties with Berlin, where she is represented by Matthew Gallery. In January 2017, Kunstverein Hamburg presented a solo exhibition by Grantiņa (on view through April 2, 2017), whereas during the past year

Grantiņa has had shows at Galerie Joseph Tang in Paris, Stefan Lundgren gallery in Majorca, kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, and at 83 Pitt Street in New York. Some of her latest group shows include *Adhesive Products* at Bergen Kunsthall, Norway; *Les Levres Nues – DOC*, in Paris; and *The Pleasure of the Text*, at Campoli Presti gallery in London. Grantiņa's work has been covered in such publications as *Les Inrockuptibles*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Artforum*, *Artagenda.com*, and *Frieze International*, among others. When asked about her relationships with galleries, Grantiņa answers that



she likes relationships in which you don't know where they will take you, and where nothing is predictable. It seems that Grantiņa follows a similar principle when creating her works – the creative process itself is important, as is randomness – as the foundation for the work. Also, it's important that in the artwork there is something that the artist herself does not yet know.

You studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Hamburg, and at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Those institutions are linked to many famous names in the history of contemporary art. Why did you choose to study art, and why at these schools specifically?

I didn't choose Hamburg; that's just where I woke up (*laughs*). In 1992 my parents decided to move to Hamburg, and that's where I received my general schooling. My art teacher in high school inspired me to continue my education in the arts. He himself had studied at the Hamburg Academy when Joseph Beuys was an instructor there. At that age, the decision itself to study art was more important than where.

Who did you learn under?

Various artists, and also guest professors. I studied under a very conceptual artist, and then under another one I studied painting.

In Vienna I was in the sculpture group, but at that time I was most interested in experimental film. I mostly worked with Super 8 film. Slowly my interests developed further; after my studies, I began to work with the projection space itself – the space between the projector and the surface of the wall or screen on which the light lands. In this space, I began to introduce objects that reflect light, and in that way, they materialize the projection space itself. Over time, the ever-increasing number of objects that began entering this light space took over. Basically, the objects ate up the light (*laughs*). Now the ray of light is slowly returning. At the kim? exhibition, there's great emphasis on that – starting with how natural light is “framed”, or materialized (I'm always talking about “tunnels of light”) in the way that architecture embraces light – how it accommodates it. The rays enter the space through the tunnel and become physical; they become a part of the sculpture – that's the main idea.

Was this – what you are describing as tunnels of lights – on view at your solo show at Joseph Tang gallery in Paris?

The name of the Paris show was *Grotto from Glammar* – I wanted to transfer the idea of a grotto into a standardized space – make the space into a grotto. I used drywall to make



Daiga Grantiņa. *Grotto from Glammar*, exhibition at Galerie Joseph Tang (2016). Photo: Aurélien Mole

a smaller space within the larger room – like the Russian nesting doll principle. I cut holes in the drywall which related to both the silhouettes of the sculptures and the perception perspective from within the “grotto” itself. In this way, the holes also became sculptural material – just like in the case with the tunnels of light. There were sculptures both within and outside of the “grotto”. This sculptural place was more like a permeable frame – similar to an arcade. In a sense, it’s a way for me to format the work – like a jpg or tif. A work can have various formats – it can have greater resolution, or less. Just like a picture, except in three dimensions. I’m slowly understanding that in this way, through objects, I have arrived at sculptural space. I believe it’s a retrospective process: to step back and notice that things aren’t going only in one direction – they’re jumping backwards.

Like crochet...

Exactly: mental crochet! I’m crocheting with the help of time; I lay down one layer, then a second one, then I take a deeper layer, and then – the surface. It’s not as if I begin with an idea or a theme. There’s the material aspect – colors, textures, scale and form, how the material reacts with light – and I try to communicate with the process; sometimes I even suspend

it, in order to understand in which direction it can go. Perhaps that which goes on between me and the material could be called psychoanalysis.

So, what is important to you is an interest in the space, an interest in light, and then the process itself. How important is the end result to you?

If I have a concrete idea, if I know what it should look like – what the end result should be, then there is nowhere for me to take the next step. In that case, the idea becomes a product, or a fetish of mine. I try to pierce through this. That means overcoming myself and looking at: how I can move forward; what are the work’s prospects; and what kind of scene, tunnel or window this work will open. That is much more important than the end result in itself. Probably the most crucial thing is – what sort of effect does the work have on me; the sense that I realize that it is somehow affecting me (either positively or negatively), and that lets me continue working on it.

Does that mean that none of your works are finished?

It’s important to me that they remain open. That there’s something there that I still don’t know myself.

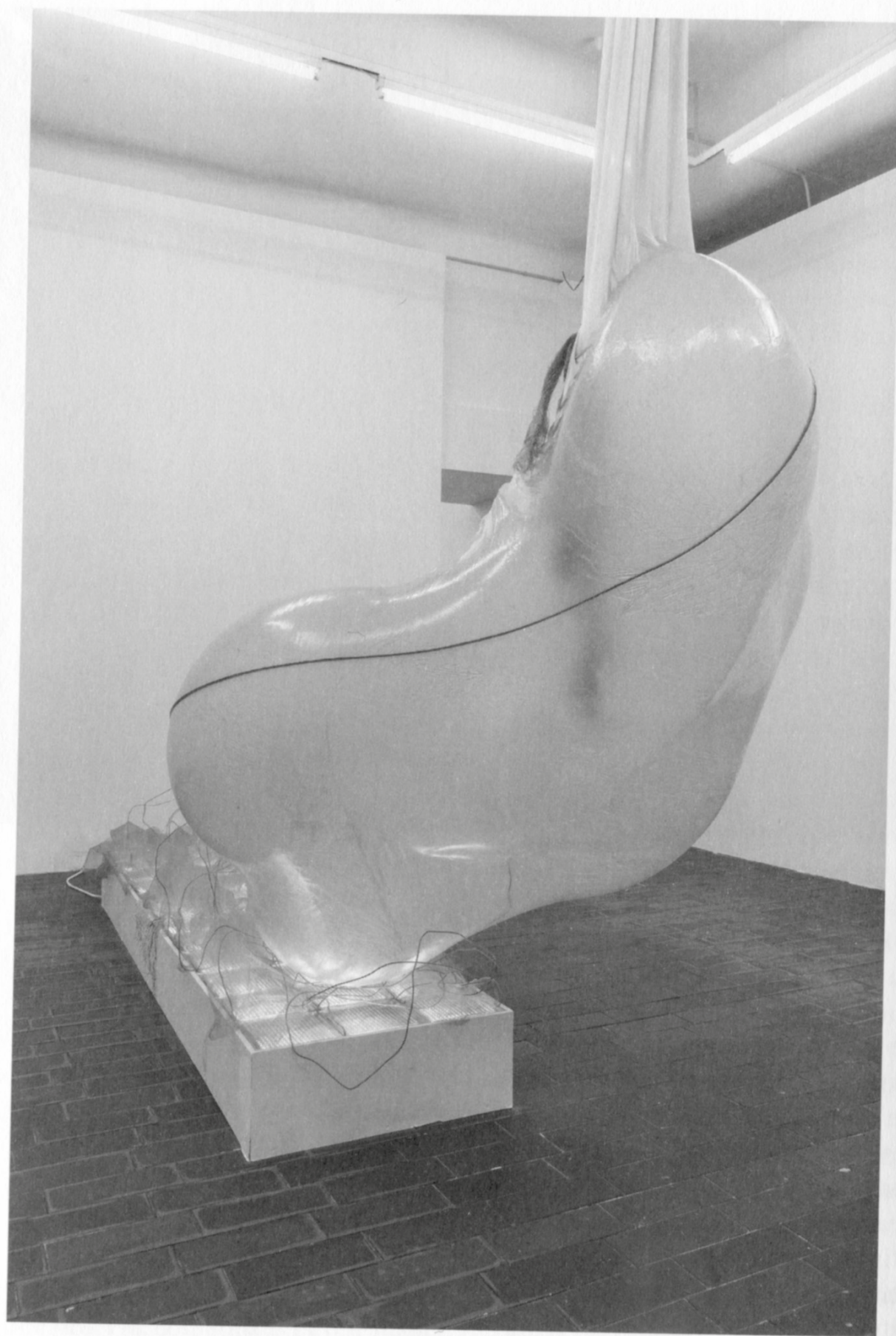
How do you know at what point to stop?



Daiga Grantina. Grotto from Glammar, exhibition at Galerie Joseph Tang (2016).
Photo: Aurélien Mole

I sense that the work isn’t letting me do anything; it’s resisting. You sense that he or she is... There are also works which I’ve divided into parts, but just like with a hydra – you cut off one head, and five grow in its place... Sometimes there are practical reasons, e.g., the piece has been created in an exhibition room, and it’s become so

large that it can’t get through the door, etc. That’s when you understand that the work is like an organism that has its own place. The process was there, but now it simply does not exist physically anymore, and it transforms into something else. Moreover, works have different natures – some have a heart, and nothing more can be done



Daiga Grantiņa. Pharmakon and Being Pool (Buff).
Exhibition Heap-core,,, at kim? Contemporary Art Centre (2016). Photo: Toan Vu-Huu

to them; others are like octopuses – you cut off one arm, but it keeps on living nevertheless. But I don't want to say that an octopus doesn't have a heart...

You talk about works as if they were living things. Is that how you perceive them?

Yes, and I hope that that is how they perceive me (*laughs*).

When you talk, it sounds a bit like it's coming from the pages of a science-fiction novel or a movie. Are you interested in this genre?

I'm very interested! Actually, it's very difficult to avoid any subject – you go on the internet and they jump out at you themselves. You just have to keep your eyes open. This intensity is important to me – so many things are going on at the same time! All of these different worlds are happening in one window. I'm interested in the latest information of all kinds, and music has always been especially important. It's like nourishment. Everything is nourishment.

What do you listen to? Do you compose music yourself?

No, I have yet to compose anything, but I'm interested. Right now I'm listening to the latest albums by Kaytlin Aurelia, Solange, and Christian Naujoks.

Do you create your works yourself? Do you have assistants?

I do it myself, although I've reached the point where I need four hands because, in terms of size, the works have outgrown me. I've had good luck – for a while now I've been assisted by a young Estonian artist, Kristin Reiman.

What does your studio look like?

It depends – at the start of the working process, everything is very organized. I like to organize everything – I take down from the shelves things that could be important, and I make little piles of materials according to texture and color.

Do you purchase or "find" your materials?

At the time when I began working with sculpture, I worked at the Palais de Tokyo's residence Le Pavillon, in Paris. You can do a lot of walking there, and that's how I found many things. Especially after Christmas – people throw out a lot of things, especially shiny ones, which are of interest to me in relation to projections. Now I don't want to wait for Christmas... (*laughs*). In addition, I like to select materials according to the colors in which I see the place – every city has its own color which has been somehow integrated into its environment.

What is that color in Riga?

Riga has a lot of green – for instance, on the scaffolding erected alongside buildings; there are also shades of red. It's rather close to nature. There's not much of the color blue, as there is in, for example, Berlin and Hamburg. Shades of brown and gray also dominate there. In Italy, orange is a very conspicuous color.

How great of a role does chance play in your work?

That's the foundation on which I base it. It could also be looked upon as one of the variants of conceptualism (*laughs*). In any case, it would be in the same category as Gil Joseph Wolman's *L'Anticoncept*. I think it's very closely related to one's perception of life. That's how it enters the work, and that's as much as you allow.

Do you follow along with what's going on in contemporary art?

I'm very interested in conversations with artists, what artists themselves write and publish, and how active they are when it comes to taking responsibility for their works. I also think it's very important to actively accept your role and not hide behind the works. I also tell myself that as a form of therapy (*laughs*).

Do you position yourself as a Latvian artist?

No.

Does that even seem relevant to you?

No. I have a very difficult relationship with the concept of identity. And that's not just in terms of nationality. I think that is related to the fact that I grew up with several languages. Depending on which language I'm speaking, my voice changes. The Latvian language has its own voice frequency; that of the German language is much lower; and French is somewhere between the eyes and the nose. All of that, I think, influences identity. I think it's important that I don't have this sense, and that I don't search for my national identity. There are a few people whom I talk to a lot, and with whom I spend a lot of time – and that's enough. And that's something that you can create yourself.

Daiga Grantīņa. Grotto from *Glammar*, exhibition at Galerie Joseph Tang (2016).
Photo: Photo: Aurélien Mole



Chloe Stead, 'Daiga Grantina: Pillars Sliding off Coat-ee'

Daiga Grantina
"Pillars Sliding off Coat-ee"
Kunstverein in Hamburg
28.1. – 2.4.2017

Like a fair few of her contemporaries, Daiga Grantina (*1985) makes idiosyncratic, zeitgeisty sculptures that can be seen as abstractions of bodies. But, whereas the proxy bodies of, say, Olga Balema or Jesse Darling often emphasise the imperfect nature of our real ones (which drip, ooze, slump and collapse), Grantina's sculptures are remarkably self-contained and in many cases appear not entirely human. In this show, for instance, *Head bark* (2017) looks more like a strung-up jellyfish than a person. Bunched-up material is held together by wire to create a centre of sorts that, along with tentacle-like strips of wood which graze the floor, are wrapped in a translucent "skin".

creepy, because it speaks of a near future in which cyborgs have broken out of our imaginations and infiltrated our daily lives. The eerie science fiction aesthetic is balanced out with the bon-bon hue of other sculptures, such as the almost lickable *Buff gang or Nectar bough* (2017). Its bulbous shapes are created by elastane stretched and made rigid with a layer of liquid plastic. Through the use of a specialised "pulling" machine, which stretches and folds air into the mixture, its molecular structure is actually changed during the production, enabling it to be both hard and soft in its finished form. Liquid plastic also used in other works from the same series, *Buff off RED* (2016–17) and *Buff in Flight* (2016). These pieces, along with *Tadasana* (2017), hang from the ceiling and imitate the protective sphere of an insect's cocoon or a crustacean's shell. They are curiously human-sized, however, bringing to mind a huge Venus flytrap or its horror-movie equivalent, the vagina dentata.

Daiga Grantina
Installation view



Deep-sea creatures like jellyfish and octopuses (as well as many insects) fascinate and repel us in equal measure because their physiology is so different from our own. Grantina taps into this primordial fear through her intricate layering of materials. In works like *Playing house* (2017), different types of fabric and plastic are crumpled together, coated with a layer of plastic the colour of pre-op, antiseptic-swabbed skin and threaded through with wires. The result is distinctly

Not all of these assemblages are as successful as others. *White Corridor-odour (The Mountain)* (2017) attempts to be a site-specific modification of the white cube, but it ends up looking like an experiment that could have been left in the studio. Overall, though, the show lures the viewer in with an attractive facade that leaves one with a pervading sense of unease not unlike the experience of looking at a many-legged insect. Chloe Stead



DAIGA GRANTINA

by Stephanie Seidel

Daiga Grantina's sculptures and installations are material experiments as much as they are associative formations. Subjecting collaged material to associations of bodies and landscapes, Grantina addresses human desires and longings as they become activated through the eye of the viewer. Grantina directs the view in manifold ways, both secluding and revealing, as she opens surfaces and volumes at one point and seals them through the amalgamation of disparate materials at another. Spanning between the poles of figure and landscape, her layered sculptural installations are at times voyeuristic, panoramic and archeological.

In her exhibition *The Mountain Guide* (2015), shown at Mathew Gallery, Berlin, Grantina set the exhibition space as a landscape, populated by sculptures, which acted as its "inhabitants." Winding up out from the floor, protruding from the walls as well as sitting heavily and slothfully on the ground, these sculptures amalgamate disparate materials into dismembered figures. Floating along a Plexiglas bell of a jellyfish, bright red textile bobbles wiggle along plastic encrusted wires. A glass marble is suspended in the wide throat of an extractor tube staring back at the viewer like the abject iris of Bataille's *Story of the Eye*. Another work supports a net of wire distended with transparent bulges of an anonymous, coagulated liquid, streaked with slim red strings like veins, summoning the female body as morphologically muddled and abstracted. A little crystal earring dangles coquettishly over the whole ensemble as if to lure prey into a trap.

Grantina's works are slowly grown ensembles that break down and metabolize their material like fuel or nutrients, mutating their matter by forces of heat, adhesion and the pull of gravity. They are not singular things in themselves but rather an aggregate of varied substances, flowing into each other, rejecting each other, merged forcefully and stringing into process-like narrations which are elliptical, irrational, sensual. Interference and overlapping result in barbed frictions. These shimmering, sticky concatenations evince the irreconcilable tension that results from deliberate making and a yielding to the unfolding of material properties, forces of forming and deforming.

At the center of Grantina's exhibition is the eponymous piece *The Mountain Guide*, both a figure and a landscape. In a wreckage of wire, plexi, plastic and aluminum enveloped by a floppy membrane of acrylic, the work suspends from the ceiling at the same time leaning on an askew crutch-like pole, dug in the ground. Its leg and poles are wrapped in cables bundling energy, while blue marble eyes vigilantly peep out of a multitude of folds and creases of plastic sheeting. Through the multiple layers of half-melted plastic, a projector throws a grid pattern, similar to a map, in splintered facets and at kaleidoscopic array onto the room, as if diagramming the position of the other figures in the room.

The sculpture's posture resembles the pose of the mountain guide in Balthus' painting *The Mountain* (1937). Here, seven scattered figures are depicted on an imaginary mountain plateau, unaware of one another. Their





Grantina, 2015 Installation view, *The Mountain Guide*, Mathew, Berlin, 2015 Courtesy: Galerie Joseph Tang and Mathew (p. 203)
Buff in Red, 2016 Installation view, *Heap-core,,, for kim?* Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, 2016 Photo: Toan Vu-Huu Courtesy: Galerie Joseph Tang (opposite page)

gaze is trancelike. Rendered in exacting detail, the realism of the figures and landscape seem at odds with the surrealistically contrived narrative. A young woman, stretching her upper body into the sun is subject to the desirous look of the mountain guide, who is kneeling on the ground resting on his hiking pole. While the connection between the figures is dramatically mute, there is a tight correspondence between the shape and posture of each person and the surrounding mountain formations. Here, the figures seem to merge with the mountains and become as inert as the rocks, while the landscape gains vitality through theatrical light. The distinction between animate and inanimate, body and place, seems to be suspended as matter in a state of phase change – the precise material condition of which Grantina induces in her exhibition.

Balthus' brother Pierre Klossowski describes this conversion of materials into one another, writing about the effect of light on the landscape:

"The landscape of Turin, the monumental squares, the promenades along the Po River, were bathed in a kind of 'Claude Lorraine' luminosity [...], a diaphanousness that removed the weight of things and made them recede into an infinite distance. The stream of light here became a stream of laughter – *the laughter from which truth emerges*, the laughter in which all identities explode [...]. What also exploded was the meaning that things can have or lose for other things, not in terms of a limited linkage or a narrow context, but in terms of *variations of light* (despite the fact that this light is perceived by the mind before it exists for the eye, or that a reminiscence emanates from its rays)."

In her compositing of aluminum tubes, Plexiglas, cables, plastic objects and wires, Grantina explodes functionality into a vortex of material and haptic properties which sediment into unstable bodies. Light here is treated as a material equally

destabilized and deformed, as it filters the manifold components of the installation. The works of *The Mountain Guide* oscillate between figure and micro-landscapes, gestalts, which shift in scale. These voluptuous, slumped characters, reveal mini-vistas within their cracked surfaces: mountains and valleys built-up of smoldering plastic and bent metal, suffused with projected light, marbled with stripped wire.

Grantina's sculptural approach to landscape continues in her solo exhibition *Heap-core,,, for kim?* Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, Latvia (2016). Building a second wall that frame the windows of the space in a dramatic angle turning them into light shafts soaring into the sky, Grantina manipulates the architecture of the exhibition space so that the walls seem exceptionally thick, giving the whole space a darkened vault-like enclosure which seems to be cloistered underground. Sculpting the light that is directed into the space *The Natural History of Tan* hits the skin of the figures inside the space as the latter becomes a secluded grotto. This motif of the skin continues in *Buff in Bloom, Glow and Thumos*, a group of sculptures shown in the frame of the group exhibition *Adhesive Products* at Bergen Kunsthall at the same time, comprised of resin-stiffened spandex, suspended from electrical cords, interspersed with luminous plastic strings and with gaping openings of bent metal ventilation pipes. The outer shell of the works is skin colored and leathery – "Buff" originally referred to the color of a buffalo's skin. They recall hollowed out nudes, reposing open-air, each bearing tiny traces of personality, such as the accessories of a grand dame: a fluffy garland and pouting aluminum wings; bright green curls and blue-ish veils. Yet, their cast-off skin bears no flesh. The skin is not substance but threshold, an interface that does not divide an inside from an outside but assembles contact, where light and surface momentarily hold shape before shape-shifting again.

Sarah Hyde, ‘Young and Fun, Paris Internationale Fair Cements Its Reputation as a Serious Contender’

The second edition of the fair Paris Internationale, directed by the youthful duo Silvia Ammon and Clément Delépine, held its preview October 18, a day before FIAC. This fair may be young and fun, but it's certainly not a game and it has doubled in size since its debut last year.

The fair takes place in the 19th century hôtel particulier home of Calouste Gulbenkian, situated just by the Arc De Triomphe, in the heartland of the most luxurious arrondissement. This is the house that featured in the Bertrand Bonello's film Saint Laurent, and Paris Internationale takes place in it, including the servant's quarters and the back stairs.

The entrance to the fair is very discreet. There is hardly any indication that there is an important art fair taking place inside, but this low key entrance works well, as does the apparent informality of the event. The atmosphere is enthusiastic, smart, friendly, and charming rather than dry and professional. All of this contributes to reducing expectations, which is perhaps intentional and means visitors will be all the more dazzled by the quality of the fair contained within.

I was lucky enough catch up with Delépine, co-director of the fair at the entrance. "Participation at the fair is by invitation only. Gallerists submit their proposals and we allocate them spaces," he said, explaining how Paris Internationale works and what makes it special.

Delépine's extensive experience as a curator at the Swiss Institute in New York is evident and he delights in working with the space of the hôtel particulier. "It is so much more interesting than a sterile white space," he said.

"We try and keep the cost of the booths down because we want people to take risks, I want the gallerists to feel that they can be braver," he said, when asked about the cost to exhibitors.

The actual fee is between €4,000 and €8,000, depending on the size and location. Delépine has also included seven non-profit organisations into the mix, allowing them to sell at the fair at no extra cost, keeping the mixture vital and pure. To confuse this fair with anything outside or against the Parisian art establishment would be a mistake, however, as the large contingent of serious Swiss collectors leaving as I arrived demonstrated.

Delépine would like to see Paris Internationale as absolutely complementary to FIAC, although there is no official relationship between the two at this stage and FIAC has its own junior section. His nose screwed up when I suggested that it was a "feeder fair." With prices ranging from between \$1,000 and \$50,000, the artists represented here are important if not yet stellar, and many have represented their countries at the biennales and have shown at major museums.

One of the intended functions of the fair is to bring international galleries into Paris. Of 53 galleries and 7 project spaces hailing from 19 countries, only 11 are local. Five are the galleries that established the fair: Crèvecoeur, High Art, Antoine Levi, Guillaume Sultana, and Gregor Staiger.

When I discussed this melting pot effect with Elyse Derosia, from the Bodega Gallery in New York, she said: "This was one of the major attractions of the fair, a chance to see works from artists who are represented in other countries and perhaps find potential synergy."

On the day of the opening the atmosphere was cracking with energy and optimism. The booths are relatively small and gallerists can only offer a taste of what they sell, but it is the thoughtful positioning of each gallery that makes Paris Internationale work so well. It is almost like eating a carefully prepared tasting menu, one delightful artistic exchange follows the next. By careful curation, each is more outstanding because of its comparison with its

close neighbor, and I suspect that Delépine and Ammon have big careers as curators ahead of them.

Moving around the fair, Dubai's Green Art Gallery makes brilliant use of the display cabinets in their space, to show the works of Nazgol Ansarinia, a female artist from Tehran, who has represented her country at the Venice Biennale. Her practice involves breaking down domestic items and putting them back together again to explore the inner workings of a social system. By placing the works in this context they gain another layer of complexity.

Further along, Joseph Tang gallery maximizes the use of the space, displaying Daiga Grantina's show stopping Three Graces from the ceiling, blowing my theory that gallerists here are showing works that are easy to see on a domestic scale, and making Delépine's words about wanting gallerists to take risks echo in my mind. The

pieces own the space. In the next room, the delicate conceptual works of Guy Mees, exhibited by Brussel's non-profit Bureau des Realities, appear even more fragile and minimal because of this genius juxtaposition.

The phrase "expect the unexpected" is perhaps the best guideline for visitors, and works by Kaoru Arima, from Tokyo's Misako Rosen gallery, were particularly strong in the basement kitchen. My journey into the underbelly of the house continued with more joyful surprises, including discovering Bailey Scieszka, a larger than life performance artist from Detroit, as she lit up the gloomy laundry room.

Other personal highlights included Basim Magdy's work at Hunt Kastner and Sean Townley at Antoine Levi, the amusing paintings by Celia Hempton at Sultana, and, of course, the intrepid OUTPOST, coming all the way from Norwich, on the top floor.

ARTFORUM

Melissa Canbaz, ‘Critics’ Picks: Daiga Grantina’

The exhibition “The Mountain Guide” by Daiga Grantina features five abstract sculptures composed of found objects that together articulate a vision simultaneously poetic and disturbingly uncanny. The individual works consist of complex striations in which transparent and metal materials, melted plastic, and cables are woven together until they start to resemble organic forms while taking on other, alien, futuristic qualities.

Here and there, elements emerge that breathe life into the bizarre shapes. In I source D (all works 2015), for instance, red cables and wires run through a figure as if they were pumping blood through its body. A work lying on the floor, titled PF—also known as Path-Finder in the exhibition’s accompanying pamphlet—is a cocoon-like formation that, like an ouroboros, bites its own tail. This is reminiscent of how, in analytical psychology, the iconography of “self-consuming” serves as a metaphor for the early development phase of childhood in which no conscious differentiation between inner and outer worlds has been learned, and also no gender identity is yet assumed. The piece hanging on the wall, Realm of Desire, takes this thought further. Based on a treatise by psychologists Alfred Kind and Curt Moreck, “Morphology, Physiology and the Sexual-Psychological Significance of the Secondary Gender Characteristics of the Female,” this work hints at an examination of a female history of sexuality and the erotic. Characteristic of the whole show, Grantina sketches a visual landscape that, by way of a multilayered analogy, opens out into an eruption of psychological moments.

Translated from German by Diana Reese

Artforum, 02 October 2015

ARTFORUM

Mary Rinebold, ‘Critics’ Picks: Daiga Grantina’

In psychoanalytic terms, a visual or a literary preoccupation with abject forms, such as sludge or refuse, is a manifestation of the death drive—an instinctive, often repressed aspiration to return to formless, corporeal material. Daiga Grantina obliquely explores this fascination with indescribable matter via diverse references and an abstract, plastic lexicon. For instance Crashino (all works 2014), which references J. G. Ballard’s 1973 novel Crash, consolidates scrap materials: a repurposed red plastic automobile brake light; slot-machine ribbons that depict iconic fruit shapes. Patches of red sprouts resembling algae populate the assemblage’s surface, altogether secured by red thread coated with an eerie yet appealing clear acrylic gel.

Nearby, an otherworldly mood permeates Quitting the House, a vertically oriented composite of white gel matted over and through a twisting bulk of silver twine suspended from the ceiling by cord and hook. This thick, congealed braid meets the floor in the shape of an eccentric-looking tripronged claw that alludes to Baba Yaga, a forest-hut-dwelling female archetype from Slavic folklore and a historically ambiguous figure whose abode was set atop an unforgettable identifying feature: a pair of chicken legs. 1930s-era Russian critics associated the stilt-based houses designed by Le Corbusier with the avian appendages, which here signify Grantina’s fixation on misshapen anatomies. According to Grantina, the sculpture at the gallery entrance, □R—an interpretation of a carnival taffy-pulling machine, rendered with reflective polycarbonate foil, upon which a white, circular grid against a fuchsia background has been digitally projected—is intended to provide an amorphous, glimmering map to the somatic exhibition that follows.

Artforum, 30 November 2014

Barbara Sirieix, ‘Daiga Grantina’s “Legal Beast Language”’

There are not many galleries above the ground in Paris. Every time I walk up the narrow stairs to the second floor of 1 rue Charles-François Dupuis, I brace myself, as if I’m about to enter a state of altered air density or gravity. Previous events there have often dwelled on constraining the political body, such as the two-year program of “The Institute of Social Hypocrisy” initiated by artist Victor Boulet and developed between 2009–2011, where curator Damien Airault was locked up inside for a week and was exclusively fed on whale meat. The apartment was later taken over by gallerist Joseph Tang, who continued with the radicality of these earlier artistic projects. Last winter Boulet, now also represented by the gallery, removed the windows of the space and arranged a wall where only a tiny Alice in Wonderland-sized door allowed Joseph access to his office. These past experiences of the space lead me to be on the lookout, and true to form, the current exhibition induces an unease in the viewer, soliciting the body’s sense of place towards a greater consciousness of the enthralling, blood-curdling chaos of space.

The first Paris solo show I saw of Berlin-based Latvian artist Daiga Grantina comes as a genuine surprise. The artist’s previous projects had generated mostly video and photographic works; she seems interested in an extended materiality of film towards the mineral, as if drawn by the vortex of contemporary archaeology, working on layering images and materials towards an organic flatness. With “Legal Beast Language” the artist takes a steep turn towards sculpture, revealing her interest in the densely theorized concept of the formless, from Georges Bataille to Rosalind Krauss. Allowing for the three-dimensional, the exhibition unleashes a pack of semiotic dogs.

The display stands as an organic annexation of the space, where its politics mate with the materials via language. The title “Legal Beast Language,” a quote from the glossary in Ben Marcus’s book *The Age of String and Wire* (1995), situates the exhibition as a system of animal semiotics, where one can think about how words come into contact with matter to shape forms, in a general interrogation

of the definition of figuration. This gesture works as a cycle of referentiality; as Marcus quotes the American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson in his foreword, “Every word was once an animal.”

Across the threshold stands the riddle RR (all works 2014), an unpronounceable name for an installation harnessing a range of potential realities between two letters: it looks like a massive crumple of torn-up bouquet wrapping; or an old lady sitting in a pink lampshade; or an astronaut sleeping in a crashed spaceship; or a cyborg grotto; or... Each proposition remains interchangeable. The materials used are as variable and unpredictable as the weather: mostly transparent or reflecting plastics, heated, folded, creased, or wrecked around a projector. A moving beam of light reflects on the lavish folds of the wrapping, so every breath of the projected image reshapes the work. The creases cast trembling shadows on the wall like twitching membranes, reminiscent of the microscopic filming of cells.

RR stands as a sort of permanent referent for the other pieces in the exhibition, as the native work while the others are born elsewhere, in the artist’s studio. It stands as the commander of an alien army in turmoil, a prime number of an absurd equation over chaos. Together they unfold in the room as a spill of mucus, plugging into the walls of the gallery in a variety of ways.

“Across the communications landscape move the spectres of sinister technologies and the dreams that money can buy,” wrote JG Ballard in the 1995 introduction to his novel *Crash*, a suitable referent to the title of Grantina’s floor piece *Crashino*, to the rear of RR. On a red Plexiglas plate stands a lump of burned brake lights and slot machine rolls, flecked with a rosso corsa lichen, giving form to the contraction of the words “crash” and “casino.” Next, stands *Quitting the House*, an eerie stalactite held up by a tripod and attached by strings at the ceiling, a failing supporting arch of knotted plastic and metal innards for the space. Opposite, vertically sticking up in the air is FRUSC, a phallic club made out of a mannequin arm

wrapped up with small yellow lights, transparent plastic, artificial asparagus, and wires. Stepping back towards RR, Mouth Harness hangs uncertainly from the ceiling, as a melted cornucopia pouring phony translucent red grapes and plastic necklaces; the result of an attack of heat which has formed some lace pattern upon the synthetic material, hanging as a chimerical garment.

Each sculptural gesture resonates as an evocation of the body and its limbs, and their relation to the space

through the way they invest its architecture. Grantina develops a conflicted dynamic system that simultaneously generates and devours objects, a black hole turned into a wild beast, further expanding her interest in physics, and her interrogation of the matter of light, which is present throughout the entire show. Despite the pandemonium of forms, it feels that she is ultimately reducing her enquiry to a very simple question: what is a gallery truly, if not a space wrapping up light?

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