

An aerial photograph of a canal, showing the intricate patterns of ripples and small waves on the water's surface. The water is a deep teal color, and the light reflects off the crests of the waves, creating a shimmering effect. The perspective is from directly above, looking down at the water.

SLASH ARTS BOAT GALLERY
Regent's Canal, next to Granary Square
20th - 24th Sept 2023

VISITOR INFORMATION

BODIES OF WATER

Only at second glance the domestic space of the houseboat, traditionally associated with woman, will turn out to be an exhibition out of subtle but strong artistic interventions.

curated by Hannah Imhoff

Richard Cook / @richard.cook.art

Self Portrait, 1st July 1972

textwork

I was just over a year old when NASA approved the project that was to become Voyager. The journey of the Voyager probes through our solar system accompanied the progression of my childhood; their breakthrough to interstellar space marks off the passage of my ageing. The occasional news of another of Voyager 2's systems being powered down in exchange for a few more years of working life, or a report of a tiny amount of data received from Voyager 1, connects me to every moment of my past self.

I have been keeping a record of the progress of the Voyager project, correlating it to the timelines of my personal history and other pertinent events on our planet. I seem to remember hearing that now, having left our solar system, given the probes' immense velocities, the first opportunity for planetary interaction with our nearest stellar neighbour, and, perhaps, the next opportunity to encounter life of any sort, will be in 40,000 years. Self Portrait, 1st July 1972 is a proposal for something impossible – but that now exists, just the same.

Miya Kosowick Mawatari, @miyakmawatari

Marginal Leak, 2023

Salt, Water, Seaweed

This project contributes to my ongoing exploration of the relationship between inside and outside. I bring the sea inside the boat in the form of a trace. It is the lack of water that brings attention to the water. Like Derrida's notion of the Trace, it is the presence of absence that I am interested in. It is a past threat of leakage, an issue that isn't clear whether we are experiencing the current consequences. Posthumanist writer Astrida Neimanis speaks about bringing water from the background to the forefront as it is the environment that makes up the majority of our planet. She asks the question: "How are we going to renegotiate our human contract with a nonhuman world?" Water is often the first sign of life. The project is a subtle warning whether we decide to overlook alternative perspectives or turn our attention to what we have marginalized.

This project expands a previous installation titled Maintenance Required (2023) which explores the impermanence of boundaries and space. The first iteration had plants seep through the cracks of skirting boards, the work draws attention to the inevitable change in these divisions. Boundaries and buildings are in constant states of transformation whether through their eventual decay, continual maintenance, or changing social contexts.

Konstantina Hornek / @koartspace

Audio Guide, 2023

textwork

An audio guide is provided for visitors for a self-guided audio experience of the Regent's Canal or any body of water nearby.

Film „ID 1489“, Vienna 2023

videowork

The ID number 1489 was originally assigned to the Viennese Danube Canal. An empty identification number which is given to any water body in Vienna. Along the Danube Canal, structures, symbols and architectural elements were examined film. They are manifestations of regulation, control and (ab-)use. The audiovisual material almost speaks for itself as a metaphor for women's bodies too being affected by similarly restrictive processes.

Naj Shirazi / @najshirazi

LAY ON ME, 2023

installation of body-shaped cushions

LAY ON ME is an installation of body-shaped cushions in a cosy corner for the audience to relax. These cushions are crafted from fabric printed with photographic images of body parts like feet, legs, and hands, resembling a disassembled body. This playful twist subverts patriarchal norms and challenges traditional views of the body. The fluidity and adaptability of these cushions reflect the symbolism of water, representing freedom and change. This echoes the idea that gender and identity are performative, shaped by societal norms – a nod to Butler's idea of gender performativity. The boat serves as a floating stage for rebelling against traditional gender norms, with the water symbolizing a path to emancipation. It allows us to navigate beyond ordinary constraints, fostering a more inclusive and liberated understanding of gender and the body.

Satur Chong / @satur.chong

Bald Hat, 2023

woman hair, silicone bra, vintage bowler hat

The bowler hat has a deep-rooted cultural linkage with the identity of specific gender, race and status. Besides the mischievous play between decent and awkward, covering and unveiling, sociological and biological characteristic of the term 'gentleman', the hidden feminine materials symbolically hint that woman is gradually escaping and revealing from the shedding patriarchal world. I think this work shows both sides of feminine materials being shaped to decorate the patriarchal society, and feminine materials spontaneously re-shaping the figure of the society.

Miss Chief, 2023

silver, wood, plastic, paint, second-hand high heel

Smoking a foot with an erotic high heel pipe. This object's densely infused with desire and satirises towards the stereotyped sexual characters as well as the association between foot fetishism and the satisfaction of status disparity in sadomasochism. Beyond or still entrapped in the model of sexual relationship, the film casts the artist's masculine and feminine roles with fluid emotion overlaid within each scene and unfolds the dizziness and narcissist sensuality of polarized identities within one self.

Man Nequin, 2023

framed photography

An elegant hat has its wide brim exaggerated into a mannequin, where the body becomes the display of jewellery. It comments on the phenomenon of adornment dominating our real figure. It is also a criticism of the curvy, elegant shape of a mannequin that the society tacitly shapes as an imagined 'ideal' wearer figure.

Poleaxe, 2023

wood, book

Kafka once said that a book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us. A book can be seen as an axe that splits itself into endless layers. But here a book is also a body being murdered or given birth to by an axe, or a tool to reproduce ideological and physical axes where we march towards the forest again and again and again.

Bobby Sweet / @bobbysweet

Thames talismans, 2023

jewelry intervention in the windows

Thames Talismans were made during a time of uncertainty and vulnerability. I felt the desire to embody my strength and a sense of belonging into a physical object, for me to cling to in times of insecurity to bring a sense of calm and control back into my focus. After researching Talismans, totems and charms from a variety of different cultures, tribes and time period it became apparent that Material, more so than imagery, was the most significant part of many talismans and was where the spirituality, messages and energy was held. The focal point of each of my talismans are the 3 fragments of tobacco pipes I found mud-larking along the banks of the river Thames. I needed a material that signified my growth and strength. The clay pipes I collected range from the 16th - 19th century and have been washing and swelling around the river ever since. A fragile material, yet readily available for me to collect at low tide, somewhat intact, hundreds of years later. The pipes quickly became the personification of the message and energy I wanted to pass on with my talismans. Even when life is hard, like the clay pipe, you can come out the other end, somewhat intact, ready to be bloomed into something new. Thames Talismans can be worn in any way the wearer pleases, they can be hung in the home, worn on the jeans, hung off your keys, buried in your bag... It's up to you. The Talisman is there as a reminder of your own strength and durability, a visual and physical reminder to love yourself, and to keep your head above the water when currents are dragging you down.

Birdly (Cornelia Voglmayr) / @birdly_graffiti_jewelry

Ein Stück Wien / a piece of Vienna, a-now

jewelry

Birdly collects the hardened layers of paint that are created when graffiti is applied over graffiti from Viennese graffiti walls to turn them into pendants, earrings, rings or bracelets – and thereby preserves a piece of Viennese youth culture. Paint over paint “grows” over years into the source material, that Voglmayr collects when sprayers remove the legal Viennese walls for their new works.

Nadine Schuller / @nani.chula

XR Mexico, 2021

linocut

Stratum Spinosum, 2023

Stratum Granulosum 1 & 2, 2023

Echinodermianiacs, 2023

No title, 2023

Endoskeleton, 2022

Epidermaniac, 2023

ceramics

Nadine Schuller is an Austrian ceramist, printmaker and writer. As an environmental activist, her intention is to rekindle human connection with the rest of nature through her artistic work. Based in a different country every six months, her work is informed by a wide range of cultures but always rooted in the laws of nature. Her approach is biomimicry; generating appreciation for nature as our teacher through slow observation and creation.

Hannah Imhoff / @imhoff_hannah

who pays the price, 2023

calendar

'Who pays the price' looks like a bureaucratic folder resembling a calendar, that shows our time. On second glance, one sees that it depicts the costs of the travel from Vienna to London, and London to Vienna during every day of the show. It addresses the fact that Bodies of Water brings London and Vienna-based artists together. It invites us to reflect on the conditions that an international collaboration like this faces. It points out the social framework in a time of climate crisis, which impacts the costs of sustainable action at the expense of the individual.

Raab Sisters / @faniraab, @cilli.raab

it's what's inside that counts! - please touch me, 2023

two wine glasses, water from danube channel, water from Regency Channel, three cans

Three similar cans all filled with different water compositions (e.g. Plastic, pebble stones, wood...) that were found at the side of a canal. What are the differences of the sounds in the cans? Can you guess what's inside?

Simon Hodgkinson / @slash.arts

Best Before, 2023

vacumed fish, text

Food consumerism is threatening our planet.

Project Echo / @protect_echo

ECHO, 2023

glacier ice, glacier water, bowl

The summer of 2023 is one of the warmest summers Austria has had on record, presumably as a consequence of climate change. Among other things, such heat waves massively increase glacier melt. We, five artists (Elisa Schober, Hannah Parth, Anna Häupl, Anna Ryabenkaya, Abel Kortoman) take the summer to deal with the topic through the lens of the impact of climate change on Austria's Climate. We made an interactive sound installation "Echo", which could be seen and heard from 07.-09.09.2023 near the Taschachhau. From hollow bodies made of ceramics, which look like glacial boulders, and which, when equipped with a motion detector, reproduce sounds from the urban environment. The work explores the connection between the cause and effect of global warming. Based on fairs that used to be held at the glacier to stop the threatening growth of ice, we hiked to the glacier tongue to perform on site. The ice and melted water were collected in the course of the performance. Preserved in two thermos containers, the glacier water was transported by hand to London. As part of Bodies of Water you can every day watch this glacier ice melting in the disfunctional freezer.

Damla Ilhan, @droppy_

The womb, 2023

spacial installation

'The womb' is a spacial instillation designed to function as a safe(r) space. The utopian room is located in the domestic space of the house boat on the Regent's Canal drawing a connection the birth canal. The audience is invited to enter and feel a sense of calm in the red surroundings as they present a feeling of comfort similar to the subconscious knowledge of the comfort of the womb. Guests are invited to explore, examine and find comfort in the room, the womb.

Konstantina Hornek / @koartspace

Mother(ing) nature, 2023

sound installation

Water bodies are rhythmic and often create a calming surrounding, be it crashing sea waves, rivers or rain. As part of our hydrofeminist utopia, the womb and birth canal (parallel to the water body) are imaged as untouched and peaceful spaces. Mothers care for and carry us, as do water bodies. Gently rocking back and forth, warmly hugging us, singing to us.

Layout: Franziska Raab, Konstantina Hornek & Hannah Imhoff

Text: by the artists

Lectorate: Richard Cook & Ninka Oltarzewska

Image: Konstantina Hornek

Insta: Damla Ilhan, @bodiesofwater_exhibition

Supporters:

