

Pergola I

Sara Bjarland, Doris Frohnapfel,
Annette Kisling, Christiane Löhr,
Hans-Jörg Mayer und Jasmin Schmidt

30. August – 12. Oktober 2024

GALERIE
M29

RICHTER

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Öffnungszeiten: Mi–Fr 14–18 Uhr

Sa 12–16 Uhr u. n. V.

In the group exhibit **PERGOLA**, 12 artists engage with the structure and architecture of plants, gardens and landscapes, documenting them, transforming them into abstract forms and patterns and constructing novel, similar entities or fantastical hybrids.

Nature's constant cycle of reinvention, growth and decomposition is arrested in paintings, sculptures and photography. Plants shed their real appearances, becoming something unreal, artificial, constructed, while simultaneously confronting us with uncontrollability and our own fragile nature.

The first section of the group exhibit, organized as part of **DC OPEN**, features work from Sara Bjarland, Doris Frohnapfel, Annette Kisling, Christiane Löhr, Hans-Jörg Mayer and Jasmin Schmidt.

The second section, planned in tandem with **Art Cologne**, will include Hubert Becker, Robert Haiss, Katharina Jahnke, Jochen Lempert, Jürgen Stollhans and Vincent Tavenne.

In her photographic and video series *Vedute del giardino*, **Doris Frohnapfel** documents a fenced-off, abandoned and decaying villa, in the experimental architectural style of the 1970s. The garden has overgrown the property and wiped away the borders between nature and architecture. The playfully constructed house, with its futuristic, spherical outbuilding lying in the garden as if it had fallen from the firmament, becomes part of nature, its forms and transformations.

“Built of concrete and glass in the 1970s in an experimental brutalist style, abandoned for years, weathered away to a ruin, it is overtaken by nature and draws a contrast between “brut/brutal—organic”—or that was my first impression. In the course of my research and a 2022 visit to the fence of the property on which Casa Albergo stands, according to my knowledge long forgotten, it transpired that the project is now under the supervision of Raynaldo Perugini and the architecture department of the University of Rome. Entry to the property and buildings is now restricted, vandalism has been curbed and graffiti has been removed. Attempts are underway to restore the building, using donations and public funds, and occasional tours are being offered through Open House Roma. Floating over the earth, the “casa” (house) is built as an open continuum, in which outside and inside are united into a simultaneous state. The classical monolithic spherical form of the “palla” (orb), rests on the garden soil between heaven and earth. The garden, indeed the entire property, is enclosed on all four sides by a concrete wall with red iron spikes. I was unable to obtain an appointment to visit, but was nevertheless able to observe, photograph and film the house, the orb and the garden from the fence, and edited the footage gathered there into the video/photo-film “Kugelgarten” (Orb-garden).”

The photographer **Annette Kisling** interrogates how architecture shapes and defines planned spaces, and how the nexus of architecture, nature and society creates change. In her photo series *IIM Bangalore**, the architecture of the buildings and the architecture of the garden interact and complement one another. Built forms and organic forms stand in contrast to each other, yet rhyme with one another nonetheless. Viewed by day or by night, in color or in black and white, this interplay of nature and architecture iterates itself again and again.

* The campus of the Indian Institute of Management

Christiane Löhr takes up the forms and architecture of the plant world in her delicate objects and drawings. She gathers and uses organic materials, building geometric bodies and minimalistic architectural constructions out of them. Her drawings too, on paper made with flowers, appear as translucent and fragile as impressions made from leaves or twigs. Löhr brings fleeting forces into equilibrium and frangible elements into a stabile spacial construction. In the process, these objects reflect our own inner, invisible structures and intrinsic vulnerability.

“It’s about vulnerability. It’s about smallness. It’s about attaining stability with this vulnerability and little else.”

Jasmin Schmidt constructs canvases and fabric wall-objects featuring leaf motifs. These are composed of leftover fabric from previous projects, shorn and excised, folded and sewn together anew. Various textiles, folded and sewn together, give way to brushlike effects, including diverse color fields and shadings. Wrinkles and creases endow the images with spacial and plastic dimensions, resembling the vital and vulnerable organic architecture of the leaf.

Hans-Jörg Mayer paints spiderwebs. The images *Piranesi* and *Zeittt* are painted over blue velvet. The spider reflects the deepest fears of the subconscious, the fear of the unknown, the inevitable and death. Its complex web is like a labyrinth, constructed as an invisible trap. In pop culture and film, it shows up in abandoned, dark and eerie places. Here, the webs seem to flash up from the field behind them and catch us, but also to simultaneously pull away from our gaze like nearly transparent abstract strokes, swallowed up again in the blue below.

In her photography, **Sara Bjarland** depicts plants like a portrait artist. Her subjects stand on a stone floor along with all their rootmass. Already in the process of wilting, they become objects of artifice and beautifully formed sculptures that seem ready to step out of the photo frame with the force of their presence. Her spatial sculptures consist of pieces of plant matter and discarded materials, which unite into hybrid entities, contradictory organic-artificial objects, resembling phantasms in their vague function and ineffable definition.

“In my work I use discarded materials to think through and reflect on my experiences with the world around me and the legacy that the current generations on our planet are leaving behind. For my sculptures and installations, I collect broken, dirty or half-decayed objects, which I find in my urban environment, at the roadside or at recycling facilities. I am interested in them as detritus of today’s consumption-oriented society and as carriers of meaning. I am also interested in the concept of liminality in relation to these materials and how objects which are dirty or falling apart can be unsettling or uncanny, because they linger between the recognizable and the unknown, between the dirty and the clean, between that which has use and that which is useless, or between the living and the lifeless. In my exhibits I often imagine a post-human world, in which the leftovers become witnesses to a past age, and sometimes even take on a new life.”