

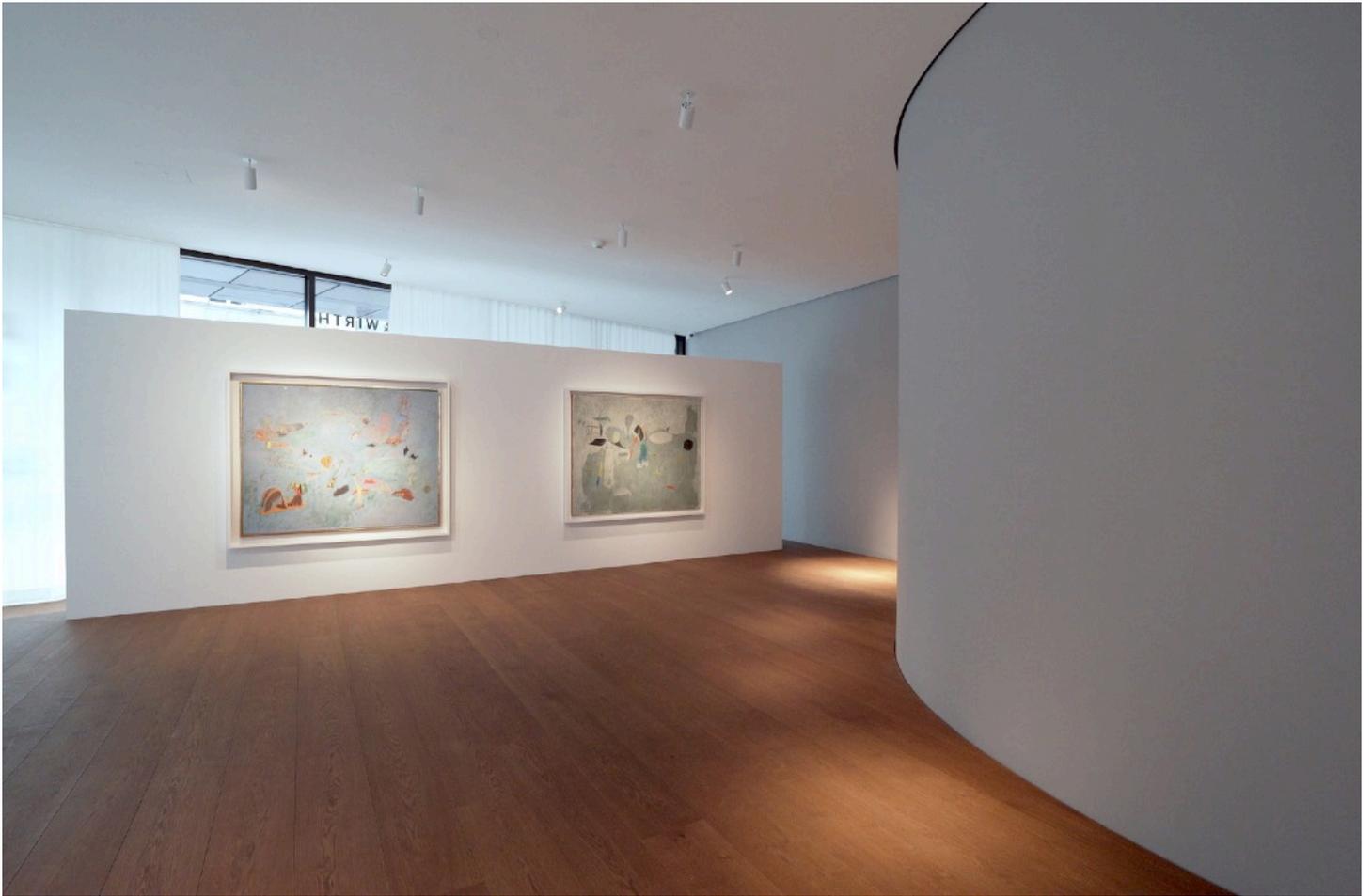


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Cover: Liz Larner: Hands, 1994. Kunsthalle Zürich, 2022.

Photos: Didier Leroi | www.didier-leroi.com



Liz Larner / Arshile Gorky / Biennale Arte 2022 / Art Basel
2022 Unlimited





Liz Larner

Kunsthalle Zürich

Coinciding with Zurich Art Weekend 2022, Kunsthalle Zürich has opened a solo exhibition with Californian artist Liz Larner (b. 1960). Over the course of her career, Liz Larner has created a diverse oeuvre that refuses to adopt a visual style. Her extensive exhibition at Kunsthalle Zürich consists of two parts: a selection of works created between 1988 and 2022, and a new sculptural installation that is shown for the first time.

Link to video:

<https://vernissage.tv/2022/06/10/liz-larner-below-above-kunsthalle-zurich/> –

Transcript of the conversation between Liz Larner and the director of Kunsthalle Zürich, Daniel Baumann, June 3, 2022.

Daniel Baumann (DB):

So we're at Kunsthalle Zurich and in the midst of preparing, installing the new exhibition by American artist Liz Larner. And what you see is not at all the finished show. It's a brand new piece. We don't want to say too much now. My first question would be to Liz, who's sitting next to me, and thanks for doing this, do you remember how it all started?

Liz Larner (LL):

Oh, yes. Well, we'd known each other. I think that you put me in a show in the early nineties that you curated and, but, so we've known each other and, and had a few different times, and then you called me one day, and out of the blue, and asked if I would be interested. And I, you know, said yes and, yeah, and then, did you come to visit after that?

DB: I think I travelled to Los Angeles and we started discussion about... so I saw these 30 years of work, 35 years of work now, and I tried to figure out, how can I show to the audience all the different things you did, because you also developed so many different sculptures and yet at the same same time, how can we do a new piece? And I think you came up with this idea here that has absolutely to be seen here, because it's super spectacular. I think that's that's somehow how it started. Yeah.



LL: Yeah. And so then it was supposed to be in 2020, June, and that didn't happen.

DB: We postponed it to '21, and postponed it to '22, which actually gave us also the occasion on my side, but also on your side, as you told me to, to readjust. I think you then said on the top floor, Daniel, you do what you want. I do this new piece down here. And the more historical part you choose here, you figure out what you want to do, which is a rare thing that an artist just trusts you like this. And so in my case, I also started – always in conversation with you – to edit. So there are a few early pieces. There's also a piece from 2003, I think the Big X and even then a very new piece from '21. What is it called? You may...

LL: You might have to live like a refugee.

DB: You might have to live like a refugee from '21. Maybe you could say something about this very new landscape work.

LL: Or seascape.

DB: Seascape or skyscape.

LL: Yeah. So, well, I had been wondering about refuse plastic or plastic that was supposed to be recyclable but you know, wasn't really being recycled because China had stopped accepting our recyclables. And, you know, in the States we really didn't have the means to do it. So I decided I would just save what was my family's recycling and very rapidly it got really big and it was surprising how big it got and educational to say the least. So I really did want to do something with it, but I didn't know what.

And then I got this opportunity to do a large installation in this wonderful large room. So that's when I came up with the idea to do a kind of seascape and have these are called Meerschaum Drifts. And so it's kind of taking the form of sea foam, but constructing it with all refuse plastic.



DB: And so you assembled all of this yourself with your assistant?

LL: Yeah. Yeah, I had an assistant. Rachel Dean helped to sift through the whole thing, and then she quit. She'd had enough. It was... Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was quite... It was not an easy thing to make. And, and but, you know, it wasn't a bad ending. I'm just saying, she'd had it with plastic and she wanted to move on to something else in her life. And that's the thing. It's not an easy material to have around you a lot, but, uhm...

DB: But it's everywhere.

LL: But it's everywhere.

DB: Yeah.

LL: And, and so that was, that was the thing. It's a, it's really about scale, the effect. It's, you know, that's a sculptural concept, scale. And this is about the scale of this material that we don't really see in scale, except it's, it's very degraded and we don't want to look at it. So, I thought it was an interesting thing to try to do that with.

DB: And then here it's basically maybe two months of a family plastic waste?

LL: No.

DB: More?

LL: It's more. Yeah, it's more. I don't, I don't know exactly how much because I have a lot of it left at the studio. You know, we really picked out the prize pieces, but, um, but... and I did get some, I did get a bail that I barely used any of. But, you know, then there's



another element of that that's not in this shot that is the asteroids. So the asteroids are made of ceramic and they will populate this kind of impossible landscape, seascape, um, in the end, when hopefully people come to see it.

DB: And then being them asteroids. So that's before they would come to earth, if they even do come to earth. So it's, so it's a contradiction because the seascape and it's a... and it's a skyscape and it's made out of clay from the earth. And this is made out of...

LL: Fossil fuels.

DB: Fossil fuels. Exactly. So all these things come together and are also contradictory and is something strange happening? But this one, you had to do this, you know, this working with trash or plastic, something occurred to you. Something happened with... because you said about each piece being made. Can you maybe develop on that?

LL: Yeah. So there's the three elements and I'm thinking about this space and how you come in and you have this long view from here and then from there you look back. So there's this sort of progression of it from... so this would be kind of the things that's maybe on the boardwalk or coming... and then this is, you know, kind of more like the beach and then that has the color of the ocean. So it's sort of like the way that it comes, you know, human trash like kind of migrates to the sea itself.

And then the idea that you said like, yeah, you know, it's a, it's a fictional landscape with the skyscape with the asteroids because the sea and asteroids cannot be together because... and anyway in English, when something comes through our atmosphere, it becomes a meteoroid. So it's kind of, you know, something you can do in art is make these impossible situations be together.

DB: And one thing that I also observed, you produce everything yourself. You even, you know, the asteroids, this big clay, you have your own kiln, as it's called, and you so sometimes also... can you say something about you doing everything yourself and also about, you know, eventual disasters or problems that occur that... when the material doesn't do what you want it to do.



LL: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, I do. I mean, I have some assistance and like I said, Rachel and then Mark and Nady and this guy Ben worked with me for a little while, Ben left and... but, but, you know, I have people that help me out, so it's not just me all alone in the studio. But I do like to make, you know, I've grown more interested in making everything in my own studio rather than trying to use fabricators.

So it's, it's just important to me to be able to do that. And also, I don't know how you would convince a fabricator to do this. That seems impossible.

DB: Can you say something about your relationship to material, how you control it or not? Who controls who? Because, you know, with clay, for instance, things are happening.

LL: Yes. So I just feel like even with this, even with the plastic, you know, I had to learn how to work with it. It's not so much of an idea of dominance over material. It's more like getting to know it and trying to work with it. And as much as... and then as I work with it, I can understand more what is possible. And with these asteroids, they're so large, you know, and that I just allow, I allow for things to happen that maybe some other people working in ceramics would think was a failure.

But it doesn't, you know, for me, I don't see it that way. I kind of feel like it's evidence of the encounter of me with the work rather than trying to make this, you know, a perfect object or that has a certain aspect to it where it's like, fine, a fine ceramic. I'm really kind of stepping back and letting the clay teach me how to work with clay and accepting it when it says I do it wrong. But that doesn't mean that it has to go in the trash. Sometimes it does. Not every time.

DB: But has it always throughout your last 35 years of doing art, has it always been like this or is that the more recent thing, if you think back?



LL: It was you know, it was a progression towards, I think from the Cultures and then, you know, gaining a little more of an ability to make things and learning how to do that until finally it came to doing 2001, which is this very precise object that used a lot of I did a lot of it, and it was a computer, we were using the computer. And it was it really, it's a huge object and it really looks like a hologram, even though it's a real thing. But what I realized about it was that it was so perfect that I call it my perfect mistake because it's... it went too far into being so perfect.

And so because it can't really exist as an object, because it's so fragile in a way that any... it's so perfect that any little scratch or one little thing, it's ruined. Yeah. Yeah. And, and that was a huge lesson for me in that I don't want to make things that are like that. You know, that was the things that I really think that is not... that was not a path for me. And it... and I think in some ways it allowed me to move more into ceramics and with all of the change and kind of uncontrollability of that with, you know, within certain...

DB: So initially you studied philosophy, that's your bachelor degree or that's how you started. But you're still somebody who reads a lot and is very interested in theory. So maybe you could say... could you say something about the last readings you have done that influenced you?

LL: Um, yeah. So I didn't get it. I skipped out on my last year of my bachelor's degree and moved to art school. So just to be clear that yeah, I, yeah, I really like this cons... I mean, there's a lot of concepts about the post-human. I particularly think that the way that Rosi Braidotti thinks about the post-human is something that's really influenced me. I do believe that we're in the Anthropocene and that that is the new condition for humans to exist in. And it's something that, you know, I want to think about when I'm making my work. And um...

DB: And this is very much about...

LL: Exactly.



LL: Yeah. It's...

DB: Also about that.

LL: It is about that. Yeah, yeah.

DB: Yeah. Can you say something about style. Not as something as it looks like, but as a form of approach.

LL: Yes, I think it's been like fairly confusing and thank you for not kind of adhering to that and going with... going with the work and being interested. But, I think that this insistence, that style is the way something looks is something to question. And I think as an approach like I'm not saying that everyone can accept this, but for some people like yourself, you know, it allows you to like move through my work and you can see the connections with.

And that's what I like about your selection upstairs is that it lays out these connections that are not just about how something looks, but you know, in some ways it's about flow upstairs. There's a lot of different kinds of forms from figurative to abstract, but the connections that are drawn, you know, that's, that's the style that I hope people can understand that the thinking and, and the interest in materiality. And in the work.

DB: And also, I think the role of the visitor in an exhibition. I think in all your works, although it doesn't look at all like this, but now that I think about it, it's, I think, they look like, they look like autonomous objects. But actually they need visitors to go around as any sculpture needs it. And I think so there are these connections in attitude, in approach, but not in the look. Yeah. Yes, I look forward to have it installed and open it.

LL: Me too. We have some work ahead of us, but it's going to be good.















Biennale Arte 2022

La Biennale di Venezia



<https://vernissage.tv/2022/06/10/liz-larner-below-above-kunsthalle-zurich/> –

Gabriel Chaile



Simone Leigh



Tau Lewis



Emma Talbot



Emma Talbot



Kerstin Brätsch



Solange Pessoa



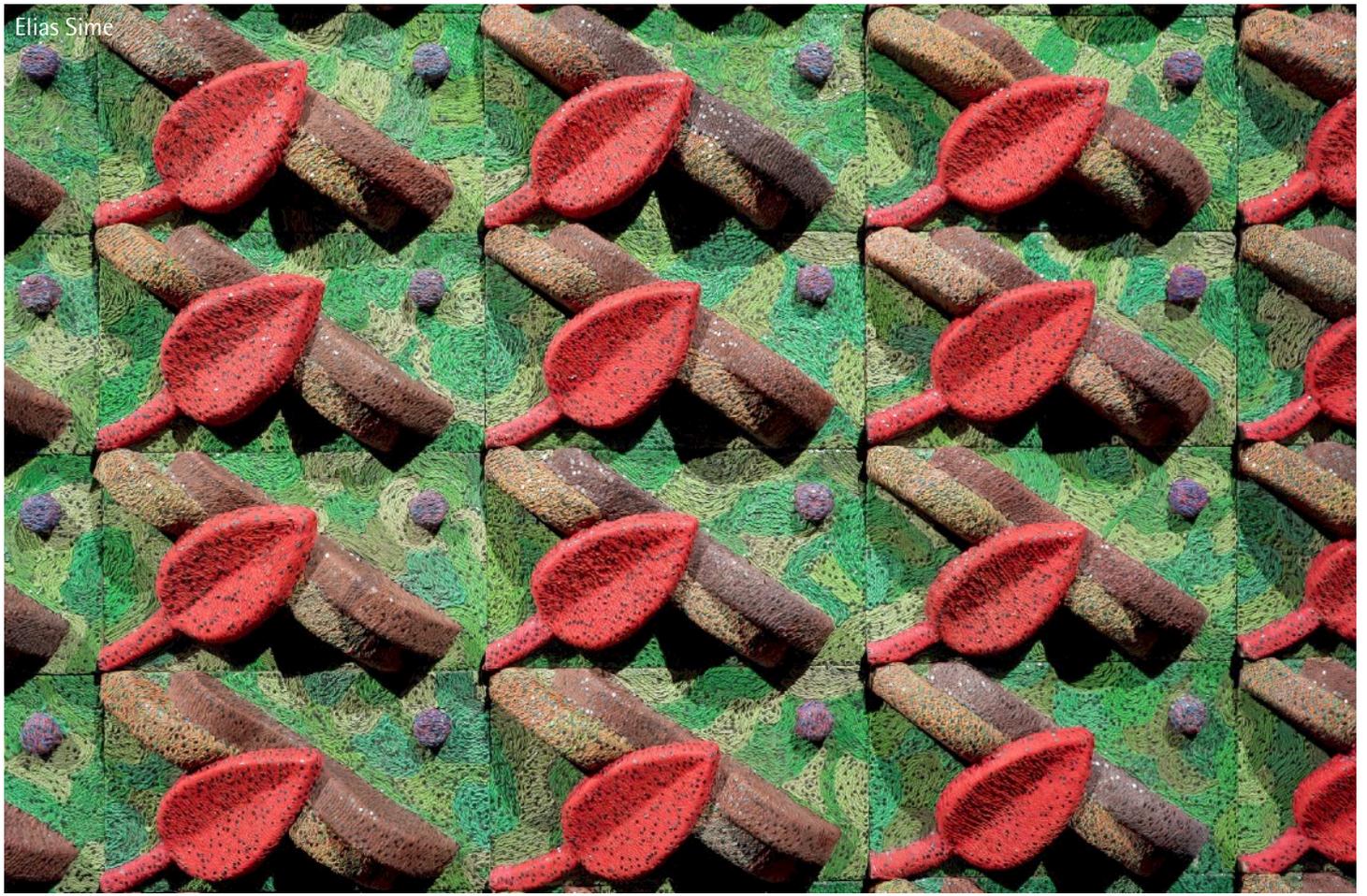
Monira Al Qadiri



Lavinia Schulz & Walter Holdt



Elias Sime



Elias Sime



Cosima von Bonin



Katharina Fritsch



Paula Rego



Andra Ursuta



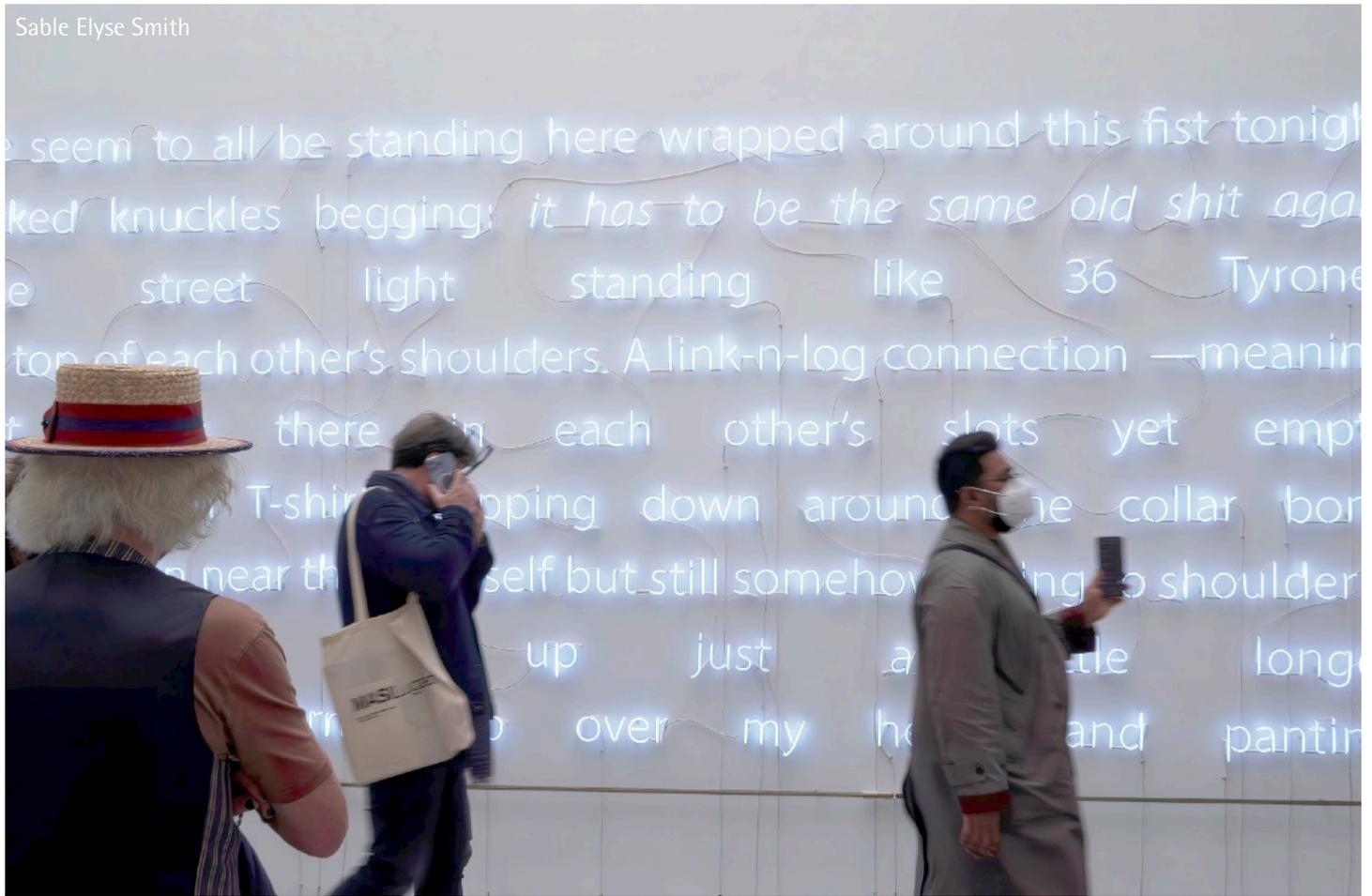


Jana Euler



Bronwyn Katz









Arshile Gorky

Beyond The Limit
Hauser & Wirth Zürich

Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Bahnhofstrasse 1, currently presents the newly discovered painting 'Untitled (Virginia Summer)', 1946-47 by Arshile Gorky (1904-1948). The painting is displayed for the first time in Europe, alongside Gorky's well-known work 'The Limit', 1947, under which it was hidden until its discovery during restoration work in Zurich in 2020. The exhibition at Hauser & Wirth presents both paintings side-by-side as well as a selection of works on paper directly related to 'Untitled (Virginia Summer)'. This video provides you with a look at the exhibition and an interview with Saskia Spender, Arshile Gorky's granddaughter and president of the Arshile Gorky Foundation.

Saskia Spender is a ceramicist and lives in London. In this video, she talks about the surprising discovery of the work that has been hidden for so long, the connections between the two paintings and the drawings, Arshile Gorky's life, the Arshile Gorky Foundation and the Arshile Gorky Catalogue Raisonné, as well as new insights gained from the discovery.

Arshile Gorky: Beyond The Limit. Solo exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Zürich. Zürich (Switzerland), February 3, 2022.

<https://vernissage.tv/2022/02/17/arshile-gorky-beyond-the-limit-hauser-wirth-zurich/> –

Transcript:

Hauser & Wirth is presenting this new work from my grandfather Arshile Gorky, which I like to think was conceived in New York City but born in Zurich, because for all these years since, um, it was first exhibited in 1947 it has been obscured by one of Gorky's most celebrated works, a work on paper, The Limit, painting on paper, which went around the world really in first an exhibition from MoMA called The New American Painting, which introduced European audiences to abstract expressionism and was art representing progress in the 20th century in the American century and in fact its first stop outside of MoMA was the Kunsthalle Basel.

But, so, for 75 years this work was hidden by that it went everywhere and nobody saw it. And then The Limit needed some conservation work last year during the pandemic and the conservator is based in Zurich, Mr. Olivier Masson, who knew the work well

The Limit (1947)



and had to remove some tape that a framer had placed around the work. And when that was removed we could see there was something underneath, because the paper was mounted on canvas and there was paint showing through the canvas, but we have never dared disturb this work. And last year, Olivier was able to lift it very easily, because it was not attached really, his opinion is that the two works were somehow conceived together and they were mounted in such a way as to protect each other. So they have been really like sister works that have traveled.

They were painted in 1947, which was Gorky's most prolific painting year. We know that the last layer of paint in the painting we have subsequently referred to as Virginia Summer is concomitant with the painting of its successor. But if you look at the imagery, um, you see something that was very typical of Gorky's practice, where a series of related drawings with recurrent motifs and a similar composition would later transform into a specific painting. And in fact my father, who is a Gorky scholar as well as an artist in his own right and wrote a book, a biography of Gorky's, had postulated that somewhere there was a painting that was related to this series of drawings, um, that you can see in the exhibition, but we were unable to find this painting. So when The Limit, the work on paper, was lifted off the canvas, we instantly recognized the missing painting that was associated with these drawings, whilst The Limit is associated with some other drawings that are specific to it.

These drawings were drawn in 1946 on plein air in Virginia. It is difficult to say what they represent, but as you will see they recur in this entire series of drawings, which has been chosen precisely because they're related to this painting. So, and then the following winter or in this case two winters later back in his studio in New York, he transferred that that imagery onto canvas and painting, and there is a difference between the painting and the and the the drawings. The drawings are very detailed. It is extremely tempting to try and decipher what this personal language of Gorky was, in which he was overlaying somehow the interior experience that he was living at the time with the nature that was before him and that he was observing. And somehow the two merge.

What's in the painting: it's more about the emotional impact of color and there is some line he was able to replicate with a very thin graphic brush some of the effect of line drawing. They're almost tinted drawings these. But at the same time you can see that the

Untitled (Virginia Summer) (ca. 1946-47)



paint and just the washes of color is becoming more important for Gorky and he is eliminating a lot of detail. As audiences, when we look at these works on paper we have a way of understanding something about the paintings and we still don't really know what, but we know that at some point Gorky described in a letter, you know how when a child is drawing and says, oh, this is a cow, and this is a tree, and this is a house, and you don't necessarily recognize the imagery. He was doing something similar, where his own personal memories, desires, imaginations, his dreams perhaps were being overlaid on the landscape that he was immersed in.

The biography of Arshile Gorky is not unusual unfortunately in the sense that he was born at the end of the Ottoman empire in a part of the world that subsequently became between different countries and he experienced the the Armenian genocide as a child and in fact his parents had previously been married to other people and lost their spouses in earlier massacres previous to the Armenian genocide. So really this uh ethnic strife was really at the basis of his conception. His parents' marriage was not a happy one. His father emigrated to America and had nothing more to do with his mother and in fact failed to bring over their children, including Gorky, and as a result they had to suffer the genocide, and his mother died subsequently, possibly of starvation, but perhaps she was ill.

Anyway, what's sure is that they had a very difficult life. Eventually through the help of a half-sister he was able to emigrate to the United States where it became obvious immediately that he was not suited to the factory life that his siblings were living. And he moved to Boston first, he was always drawing and he was always an artist, and in Boston he joined an art school but very rapidly, within a couple of months, he was one of the teachers in the art school and his colleagues there said that his drawing was on a par with John Singer Sargent's, even if he was very young. Boston was too small for him and he changed his name uh and more or less created himself as this person Arshile Gorky without a past, he was, and without a country. If anyone asked him he would go into a rage because he didn't think that nationality was relevant. And no doubt his experience as a child refugee had contributed to that sense of dislocation. His biography is quite heavy and so often we ascribe meaning of his works in relation to that, but there is absolutely no way of knowing what the meaning of his work has. We just can appreciate it for the way he presented it and the action that he took in painting it.

The Limit (1947), (Detail)



The foundation was created with the initial express purpose of making a catalogue raisonné of Gorky's work and we have just published a first installment, which is not a complete catalogue, but shows the bare bones of the catalogue and possibly over 95 percent of Gorky's work is in the catalog as it is now. We're working on getting up-to-date photography and verified evidence of everything that is in that catalog. But you should have a look at it because it's accessible to anyone online. You just have to register once and you can do all sorts of fun things such as your ideal Gorky exhibition with it. A long time has passed since Gorky's death and just as he was very careful not to leave anything that might give clues that were extraneous to his work, we really have had to make a concerted research effort and really in one way or another people have been working, scholars have been working on this catalogue raisonné for about 60 years, but it's only in the last five years that we really pushed on getting the right structure, the right research, and everything you will find in there has been documented and archived.

This discovery produced some new insights in the way Gorky worked and the process. For instance, you can see that in the new painting that we have found, there is like a veil of color or mist over an already developed motif and it's almost as if having devoted many um many years of his practice to including detail in the canvas. Gorky was deciding to simplify things and to remove detail and *The Limit*, the work on paper that overlaid *Virginia Summer*, is a classic example of that and perhaps the epitome of that: very paired down, elimination of detail, just to focus on a few themes. So we just showed this exhibition in New York a little bit with this fewer works on paper, it's more complete here, and it was important for us to take it to Zurich, which is where this drawing, painting, was discovered. But when it was up in New York we had the most fantastic sensation of looking at something for the first time in 75 years that hadn't been looked at by other people and so it was a curious experience of freshness and as if the gazers of audiences had not really left their aura on this work and I think you will have some of that experience here.

Untitled (Virginia Summer) (ca. 1946-47), (Detail)



The Limit (1947), (Detail)



Untitled (Virginia Summer) (ca. 1946-47), (Detail)







Art Basel
2022

Unlimited





Kennedy Yanko



Kennedy Yanko

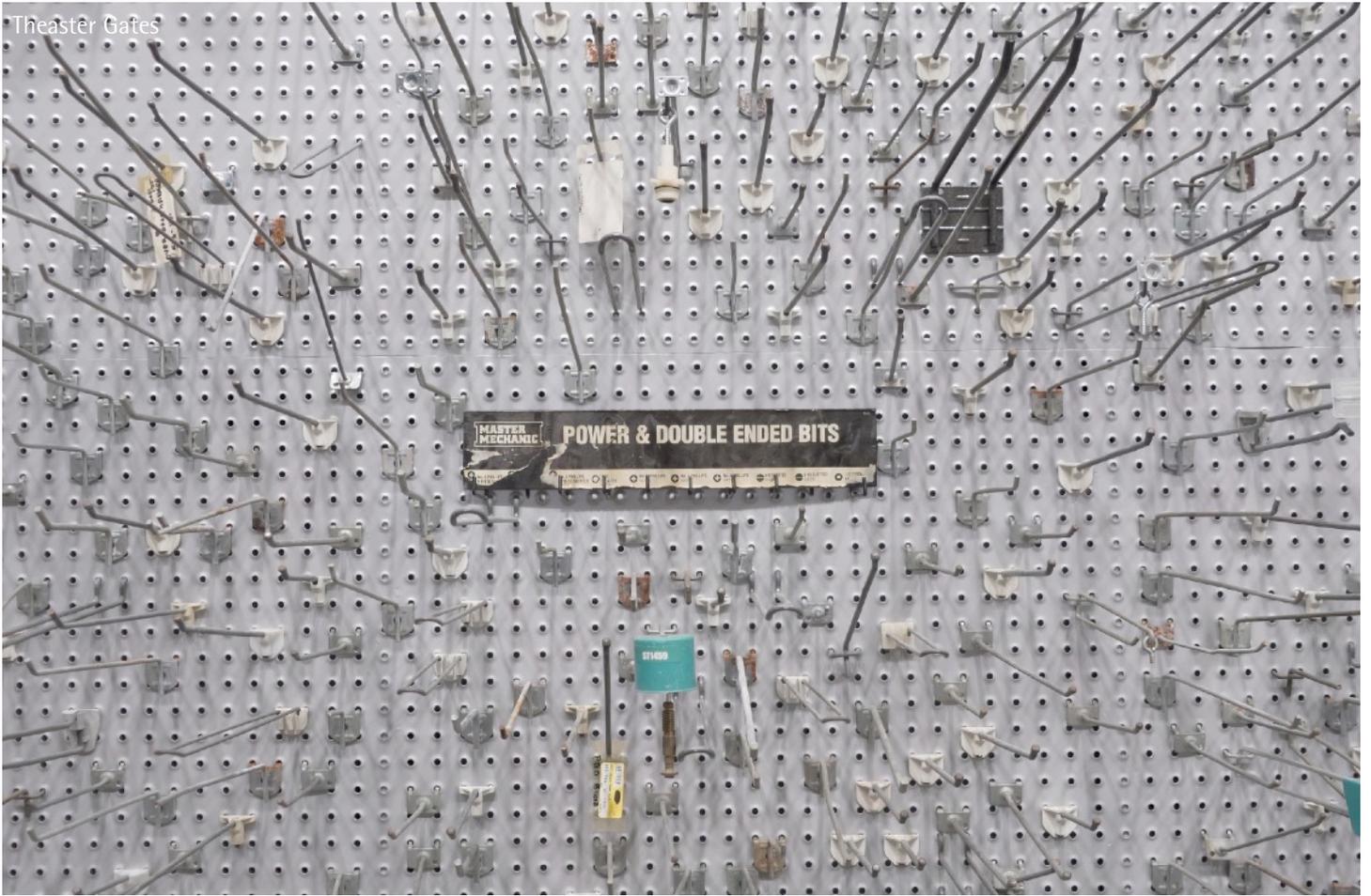


Andrea Zittel

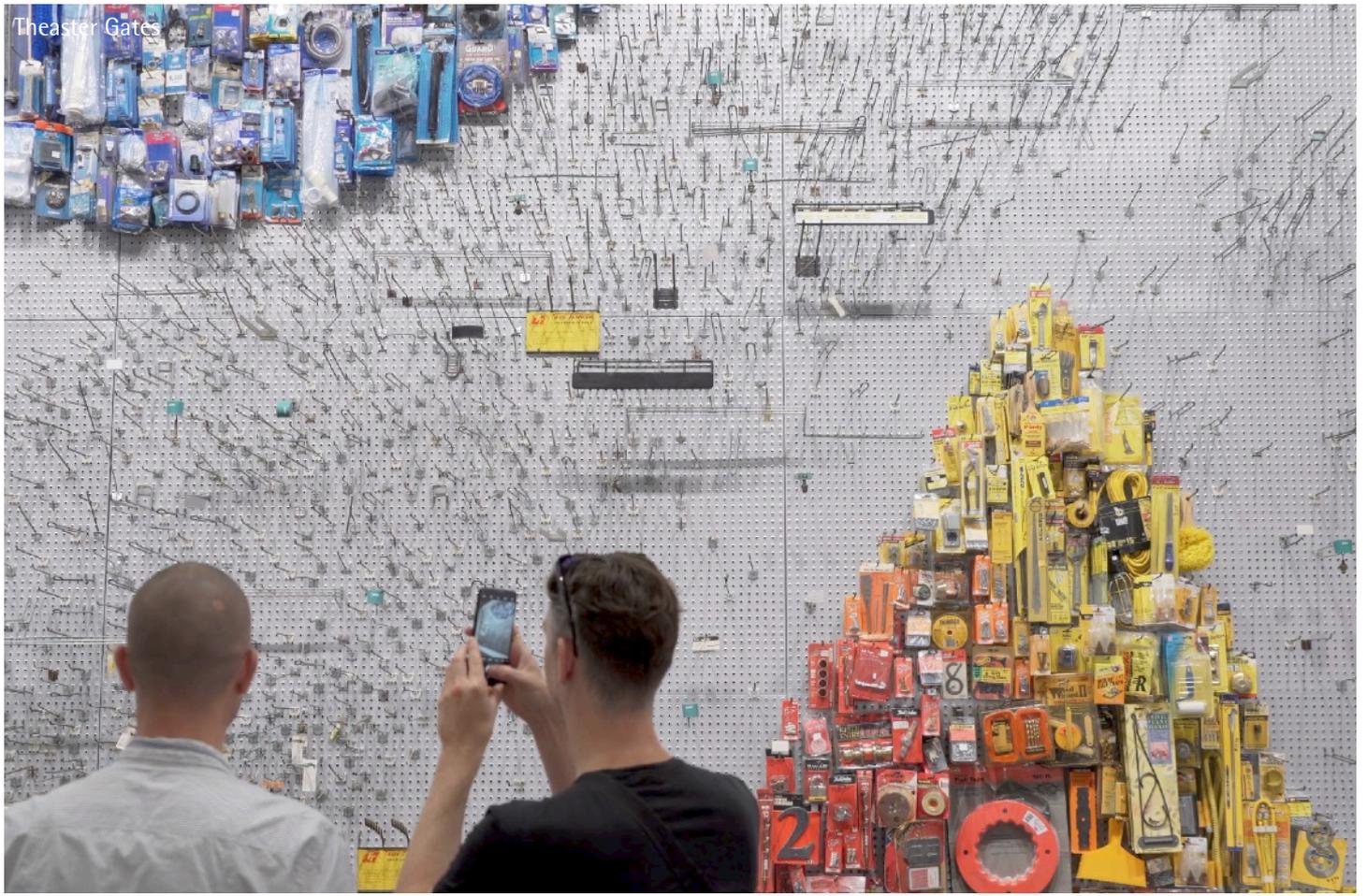


Stano Filko





Theaster Gates



Anita Molinero



Thomas J Price



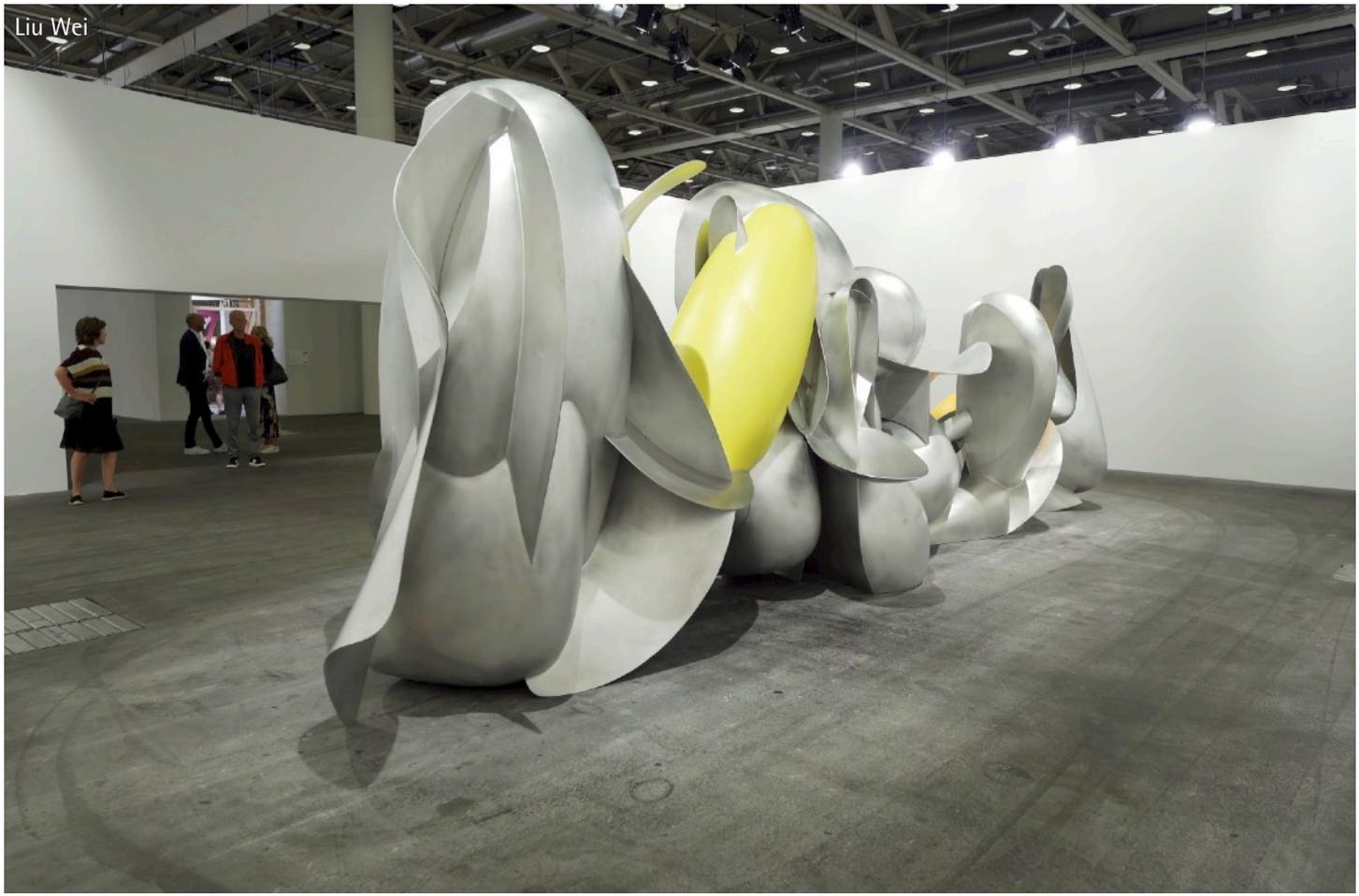
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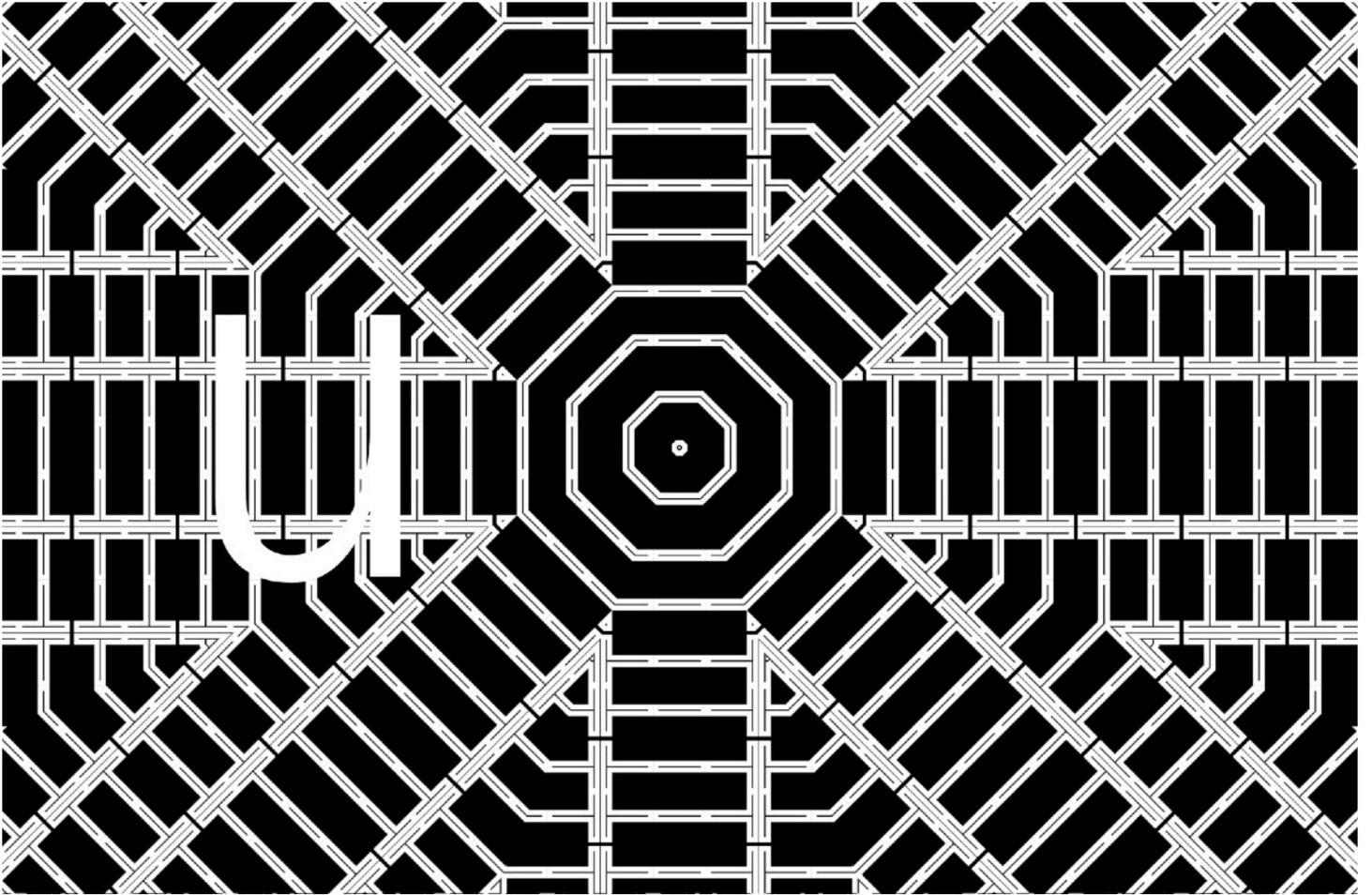
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Isa Genzken







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