

CURRICULUM VITAE

Merle Dammhayn, b. 1992, Frankfurt/Main

b. 1992

EDUCATION

since 2020

M. F. A., Simon Denny Class, HFBK, Hamburg

2019–2020

Auditing Studies, Simon Denny Class, HFBK, Hamburg

2016–2020

B. A., Visual Communication, weißensee kunst-hochschule berlin (1.0)

2013–2014

Erasmus Studies, Filmography & Political Sciences, La Sapienza – Università di Roma (2 semesters)

2011–2017

B. A., Art History & History, Humboldt-University, Berlin (1.5)

SHOWS & PROJECTS

2021

But I have my gossips, everyone, Frappant e. V., Hamburg (exp. July) & Episode at *PlusX, Cashmere Radio*, Berlin (exp. June) & *Conditions of a Necessity*, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (exp. Spring) & *Magical Soup*, KØS – Museum for Art in Public Space, Copenhagen, DK (exp. April) & *Max-Ernst-Stipendien*, Opening Performance, Max-Ernst-Museum, Brühl, & Annual Show 2021, HFBK, Hamburg

2020

U55, Central Station, Berlin & *Nailing it. A ten finger exhibition on surviving a quarantine*, At Home, Berlin & *K I N G K O N G 2 0 2 0*, Spoiler Zone, Berlin & Moderation of a *PlusX* Episode, *Cashmere Radio*, Berlin & *Saudade*, Random Access Studios, Berlin/online & Annual Show 2020, HFBK, Hamburg

2019

Nailing it. A ten finger exhibition on future tackles, Brussels, BE & *Content Aware*, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin & *Decommuni_ation*, Kunsthalle am Hamburger Platz, Berlin & *Boundaries*, Maison des Cultures de Saint-Gilles, Brussels, BE & *Domingo*, Group Show, Garage du Simonis, Bruxelles, BE & Rundgang 2019, weißensee kunsthochschule, Berlin

2018

Isola Alicudi, Westwerk, Hamburg & *Spring Art*, Weserhalle, Berlin & Rundgang 2018, weißensee kunsthochschule, Berlin

2017

Rundgang 2017, weißensee kunsthochschule, Berlin
Um Antwort wird gebeten, Jungbusch, Berlin

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

2021

But I have my gossips, everyone, Frappant e. V., Hamburg (exp. July)

2020

Nailing it. A ten finger exhibition on surviving quarantine, At Home, Berlin & *K I N G K O N G 2 0 2 0*, Spoiler Zone, Berlin

2019

Nailing it. A ten finger exhibition on future tackles, Bruxelles, BE & *Domingo*, Bruxelles, BE & *Content Aware*, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin

FELLOWSHIPS & RESIDENCIES

2021

Talent Promotion Program, Statal Scholarship, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

2020

Conditions of a Necessity, Residency, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden

2019

Deutschlandstipendium, Statal Scholarship, Mart Stam Foundation

2018

Isola Alicudi, Residency, Alicudi, IT & *Decommuni_ation*, Residency, Shoshenko 33, Kiev, UA & Deutschlandstipendium, Statal Scholarship, Mart Stam Foundation

PRESS & PUBLICATIONS

2021 exp.

Luck-up, Gastgarten (exp. April)
»Ein Gespenst geht um«, Publication of the HFBK Experimental Class (exp. April)

2020

K I N G K O N G 2 0 2 0, KubaParis & *K I N G K O N G 2 0 2 0*, GalleryTalk.net & *Conditions of a Necessity*, Badisches Tagblatt u. A. & *Nailing it. A ten finger exhibition on future tackles*, Le Chauffage Magazine & *Nailing it. A ten finger exhibition on surviving quarantine*, KubaParis

P O R T F O L I O

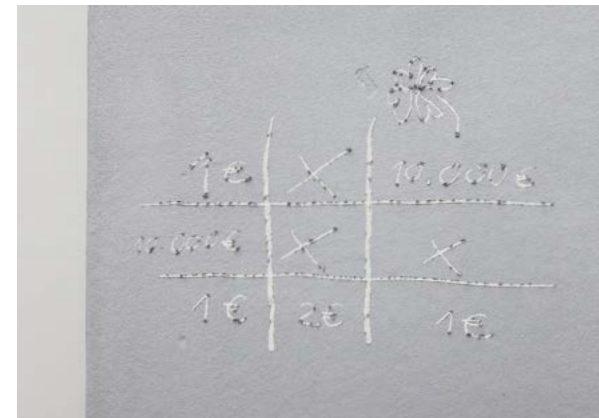
Merle Dammhayn

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LUCK-UP

in collaboration with Belia Brückner, first of the two-part site specific installation *Hedge Fund*
site specific installation, scratch-off paint on door, 50m light tube

2021



Luck-Up is the first manifestation of a common research on the complex of gambling. In this first of the two-part work *Hedge Fund*, an entire studio door was covered with a scratch-off paint commonly used in industrial offset as well as silkscreen printing. Over the course of the exhibition students and staff are invited to rub off the paint. The door, thus, is – scratch by scratch – gradually being returned to its original state, eventually, revealing the institution itself. The silver paint refers to the tickets of the various lotteries offered by the stately regulated or owned German lottery companies. Their federal regulation requires companies to contribute their surplus, 30–40% of their turnovers for »public benefit« purposes. In 2020, this expenditure amounted to 3.1 billion EUR, which reveals as significant when, for instance, compared with the revenue from alcohol taxation, which accumulated up to 2.7 billion EUR in the same year.

These so-called »other levies« are largely used to promote »culture«. The boards, which decide upon which projects to fund or not, dispose in a merely non-transparent manner. The companies neglected – even on demand – the disclosure of the premises of their funding structures. On the contrary,

requesting the detailed annual reports revealed a bizarre distribution practice, which for example designated horrendous sums to shooting clubs, which are notoriously known for being hotbeds of right-wing radicalisation. The in-depth research and use of civil transparency acts also divulged grotesque director's salaries (some higher than the salary of the German Chancellor herself), which proved to be absolutely incompatible with the austerity principle to which public authorities are usually subject.

Statistically, lottery players are mainly recruited from socio-economic milieus with lower income and less access to education. Hence, those who enable such accumulation and also well-promotable funding practices ultimately benefit less from the redistribution to opera houses, conservatoires, museums – and art academies. To draw attention to the structures of this unbalanced redistribution, *Luck-Up* deliberately occupies architectural elements. To, furthermore, point out this tension between inside and outside, a second work was realized on the occasion of the new semester's prelude. *Clover-Up*: a hedge of lucky clover hems, since it's planting the top step of the entrance staircase and, thus, obstructs the main access to the university.



As the second part of the two-part site specific intervention *Hedge Fund*, *Clover-Up* is located outside the cultural institution. This work is, just like *Luck-Up*, significantly affected by its environment, although not by the willful intervention of various actors. The clover – equally the corporate logo of the lottery companies – finds the strength to grow by drawing on outside resources; light, water and air. Alongside *Luck-Up*'s subsiding dynamic, *Clover-Up* exerts a growth, which increasingly blocks the access to the institution.



»EIN GESPENST GEHT UM«

2020

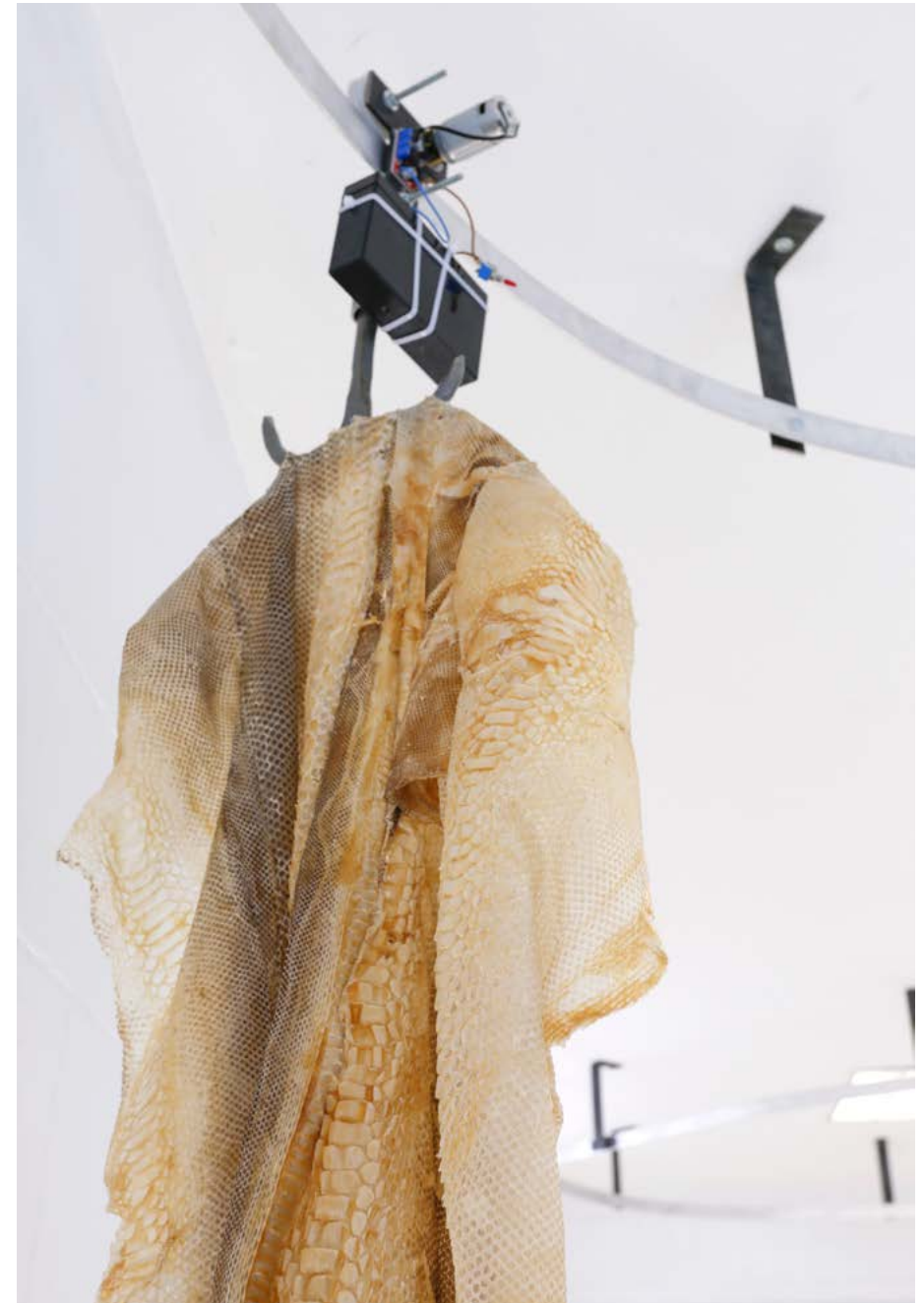
spatial installation, rail system with electrically operated sculpture made of ceramic elements and snake skin, roll turf and bead chains, soundscape, light tubes, and a book, approx. 5 x 8 m x ceiling height



»Ein Gespenst geht um« represents an attempt at an installative translation of an essayistic argument. An analytical reference to Silvia Federici's investigations into the persecution of »witches« serves as the framework for the work's engagement with the systematic enclosure of women*. In particular, (female* identifying) sex workers are structurally marginalised, controlled, discriminated against, incapacitated and persecuted almost everywhere in the world. The figure of the sex worker attacks traditional conceptions of the female role model and, thus, the capitalist system logic. This threat is the reason for the disproportion and persistence of their relentless exclusion and punishment. »Ein Gespenst geht um« pleads for the integration of the fight for sex workers' rights into a broader spectrum of feminist agenda – or even to place it at its starting point.

To emphasise the feminist cause, five more artists – Belia Brückner, Nina Emge, Franziska König, Anna Regner and Laura Stellacci – were invited to enter into conversation with the work in the context of an exhibition. KINGKONG 2020 presented installations, performances, sound and video works to open a dialogue about paternalistic infantilization, validity, legal and official paternalism, narrative identities and their forms of expression.

In the framework of an ongoing research on the systematic discrimination against sex workers, interviews are being conducted with sex workers, brothel operators and employees of initiatives that advocate for the labor rights of sex workers.



Installation Shots: Linus Müllerschön & Franziska König & Merle Dammhayn

NAILING IT, ED. I & II

a ten finger exhibition on how to survive a quarantine
concept for a project space, curation and performance of a group show & textile design

2020

On the occasion of the 2019 Brussels' *Gallery Weekend*, fourteen artists, activists, and theorists were invited to participate in a ten (+1)-part performative group exhibition on my hands. Ten nail extensions fitted onto my natural nails were distributed. The different artistic positions were asked to create a piece of art on these 1.76 cm²; articulate a thought; sketch a strategy; quote an inspiring debate; highlight a dichotomy; draw a utopia. Together came a drone landing platform, an inter-human vibrator, a knife, the proclamation to get hands dirty, and many more. Three collectives, seven artists working individually, a choreographer and myself brought together a piece that seeks to reflect on group show formats, wobble imaginaries of project spaces, burst regular opening hours, and tackle physical restrictions of curatorial practice.

A second edition of *Nailing it* in April 2020 dealt with the shifts of the public and the private abruptly heralded by the corona pandemic, with the blurring of both spheres, with pragmatic questions about resilience, answers to the future and security that have remained open, needs for proximity and visibility.

This year, a third edition will provide a platform for auditory works. This will be done in collaboration with the Berlin radio show *Plus X*, situated in the *Cashmere Radio* program.



Edition I on future tackles with:
Ahmed Isam Aldin, Altin-Stark, Lilly Busch, Confusion of Tongues, Hrefna Hörn Leifsdóttir, Fleur van Ooststroom-Brummel, Maxine Puorro, Tom Esam & Raphael Rizzo, Sarah Rosengarten, Laura Stellacci, Sebastian Weise

Edition II on how to survive a quarantine with:
Kristina Bekker, Belia Zanna Geetha Brückner, Zuzanna Czebatul, Kurt Fritsche & Joshua Gottmanns, Okka-Esther Hungerbühler, Jana Jedermann, Franziska König, Marlie Mul, Emile Rubino, John Ryaner, Laura Stellacci, Amelie Wittenberg & Merle Dammhayn

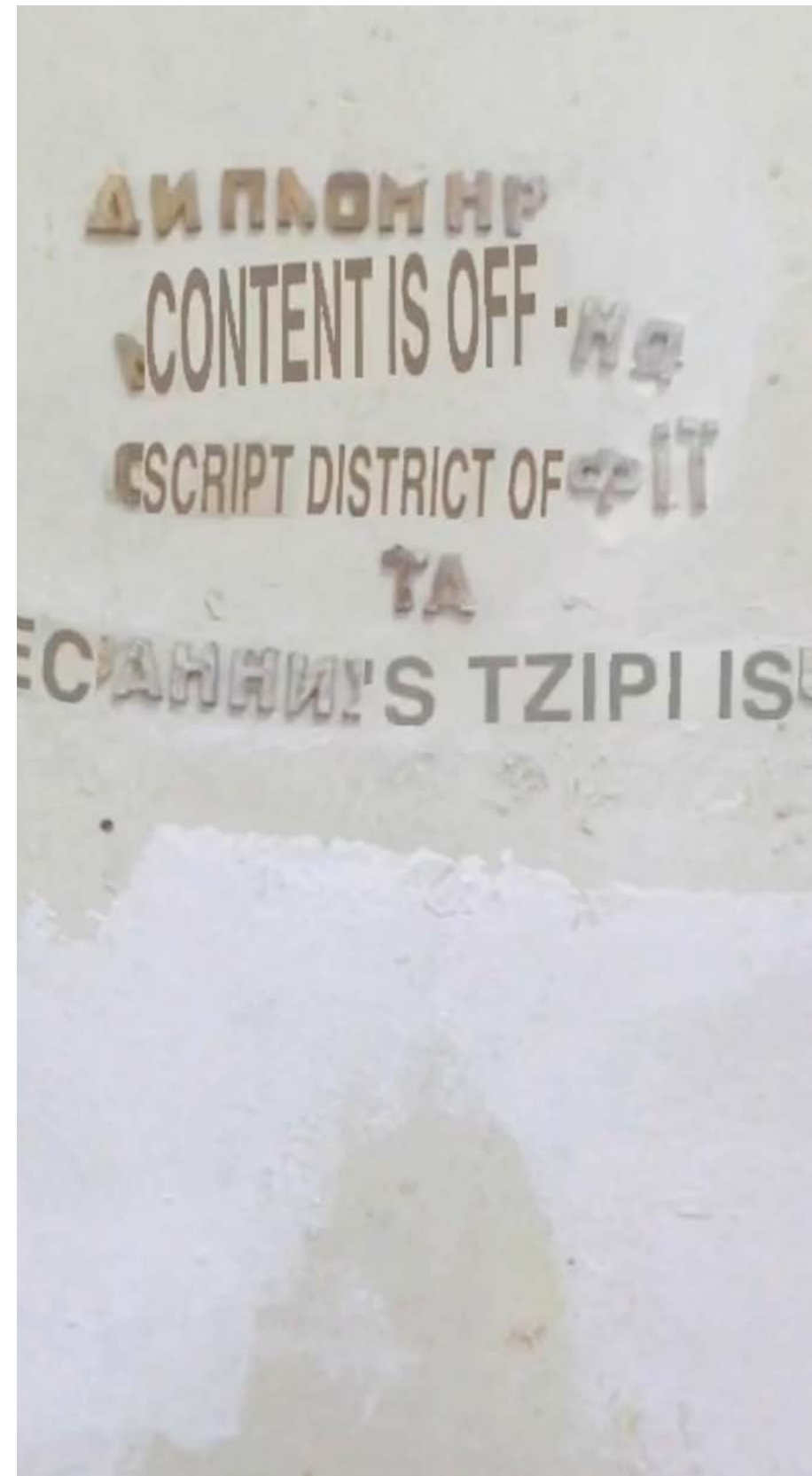
Installation Shots and Details: Merle Dammhayn



»SING IN ME, MUSE...«

video collage, 9:16 on 72"screen, 5.07 min

2019



»Sing in me, muse, ...« is a visual collage of algorithmic epic prose. Google's instant translator opts by accessing the input image of a device's camera. It appears to work in a surprisingly dysfunctional manner. The app recognises words, phrases and titles of masterpieces – such as Homer's *Odyssey* – in surfaces; structures and patterns of tiles, wood, buildings' skeletons, pavements, brick walls, branches, beer glasses and fish scales. Regarding the setting of algorithmic confidence factors, this defect allows to assume what kinds of datasets the tool's model has been trained with – predominantly religious (in particular Jesus, Judas, ashes, paradise, master), medical (doctor, ambulance, infrared), and gastronomic vocabulary (beer, dish) such as insults (bitch, ass) and nationalities (Belarus).

This precarious subject matter, was woven into the formal framework of the *Odyssey's* hailing the muse. »Sing in me, muse, ...« is presented by Lemer, an avatar, whose role as author, meta and actress blur reciprocally.

»Sing in me, muse, ...« was developed during the cooperative exchange program *Decommuni_ation*, co-organised by *Shoshenko 33*, which brought together artists and activists from Kyiv, Ukraine, and Berlin to collectively work on the topic of decommunization.

