



NEUE GALERIE INNSBRUCK
05.05.2023 – 05.08.2023

GESTURES OF AFFECTION

Laura Cemin
Robert Gabris
Anna Lerchbaumer
caner teker

curated by Bettina Siegele

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GESTURES OF AFFECTION

The exhibition *Gestures of Affection* is dedicated to the practice of loving, tenderness as an affirmative action, and the body as central to utopias. Based on feminist critiques by authors such as Alva Gotby, bell hooks, Şeyda Kurt or Audre Lorde, who all plead for a feminist reinterpretation of love, the exhibition shows how much the attribution of emotions and feelings is subjected to a neoliberal market logic and thus consolidates patriarchal social structures and gender ascriptions. In order to counteract this targeted commercialisation through romanticising, the curatorial concept also draws on Şeyda Kurt's theory of Radical Tenderness, in which she replaces the term „love“ with that of „tenderness“.

“The goal cannot simply be tenderness. I want to think more consistently. It has to be about radical tenderness. I understand radical tenderness as a programme of justice. (...) It is about the simultaneity of tenderness and radicality. It is about the simultaneity of fairness in the private sphere and justice in the political sphere. And about the fact that these demarcations will no longer be necessary at some point. (...) Radical tenderness is the admission of the necessity for visions that are political and diverse at the same time.”¹

¹ Şeyda Kurt, *Radikale Zärtlichkeit. Warum Liebe politisch ist*, HarperCollins 2021, p. 13.
[Translated by Lucinda Rennison]

4 The exhibition *Gestures of Affection* brings together four artistic positions that renegotiate these concepts of tenderness in a variety of ways, setting in motion processes that question the prevailing structures and explore innovative ways of approaching ourselves, our fellow human beings, and our environment with more tenderness.

The beginning makes **Laura CEMIN**, whose oeuvre focuses on the interpersonal, on interactions, relationships and encounters between people and bodies. Seemingly ordinary and everyday gestures adopt a key role.

In the work *In between. The warmth*, the artist documents a personal, intimate performance experience: for exactly ten seconds at a time, the artist embraced people close to her, confronting in this way the unease she has felt about intimacy and physical closeness since childhood.

As opposed to the standardised unit of time, Cemin tried to describe the duration of the hugs with emotions and so introduce them as a basis for measurement. Each of the hugs and touches produced different impressions and feelings, which found expression in the objects as embodied memories. In this way, Laura Cemin translated the otherwise elusive and fleeting emotions into haptic objects.

*"It is mostly through intimate relationships that we reproduce ourselves emotionally, and that we create our sense of authentic subjectivity."*²

² Alva Gotby, *They Call it Love. The Politics of Emotional Life*, Verso 2023, p. 1.

In the next room, the series of works *My Country, My Blood* by **Robert GABRIS** also employs emotions to appropriate rationalised and standardised methods of (mis)measurement.

Emotions serve him as an inner guidance system, a compass to map the diverse silhouettes of his inner landscape. These lines represent both rejection and contempt for boundaries, as well as being an individual map of love and gentleness. The drawings reflect a longing to return home, a utopian place free of rejection and hatred. In these drawings, physical viewpoints become peripheral; metaphysical localisations take centre stage.

The detailed structures and fine lines of the series *Landscape of Dreamed, Departed and Naive Love* are reminiscent of a microscopic study of human flesh. They oscillate, flow and constantly reshape themselves. A characteristic the drawings share with those in the series *Landscapes of Excretion 1,2,3*, which show macro-views of abstracted sperm.

In *My Emotional Landscape*, the map is covered with 260 pins of emotions collected by the artist over the years in his home country. In this way, he empowers himself through the landscape in order to subsequently make peace with those same emotions. Power and property relations in patriarchal societies are characterised by violence and domination. With *My Emotional Landscape*, Robert Gabris addresses a rejection of norms and traditions that exclude, discriminate, and oppress diverse bodies from specific territories. Fluid, queer bodies and their relationship to the homeland are not marked by flags and anthems, they have no currency, churches, offices or parliaments; they are characterised by personal and collective memories and emotions.

6 With the background knowledge of Gabris' commitment to the Roma community, to which he also feels a sense of belonging, the work also symbolises what the author Alva Gotby terms a compensatory act of *emotional reproduction* among marginalised groups: Racism, homophobia and transphobia can have serious emotional effects. Not infrequently, healing of these is sought within a community.

The next artist in the exhibition deals with a different form of *emotional reproduction*³. For *Gestures of Affection*, **Anna LERCHBAUMER** handles the subject of motherhood artistically for the first time. Fascinated by the technologies and numerous devices that have accompanied and surrounded her since she became pregnant, the artist built two sculptures especially for the exhibition from used baby bouncers and swings, which, accompanied by the rhythmic sounds they produce, resemble nurturing care robots.

Lerchbaumer's partly colourful, gently rocking and swaying sculptures are complemented by two wood-turned objects of abstracted mammary glands hanging on the wall. The boundaries between the human body and artificial technology are barely perceptible.

³ In her text *The Politics of Emotional Life*, Alva Gotby foregrounds the notion of „emotional reproduction“ as an integral part of social reproduction. Affection in its most diverse forms represents essential, yet unpaid or underpaid care work. Emotions play a key role in a capitalistically organised society and its reproduction.

In a similar way to the work *In Between, The Warmth* by Laura Cemin at the beginning of the exhibition, in the last room of the gallery **caner TEKER** archives the physicality of a past performance with *tools for anarchiving*. By recycling distilled sweat and leather into olive oil-based bars of soap in the shapes of the tools used in the actual performance (such as the Hex key), teker found a way to preserve the Kirkpınar performance and add to it a new level of experience. The performance took up the tradition of Turkish oil wrestling. The wrestlers' hyper-masculine behaviour, representative of (toxically) recognised masculine behaviour, was questioned and suspended during the performance by translating the physicality of close combat into tender gestures of physical desire between the two performers. In this physical act, movements, consensus, dominance, attraction, violence, desire, gender and gender attribution were deconstructed, made fluid and ultimately radically tender.

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Bettina Siegele

Bibliography

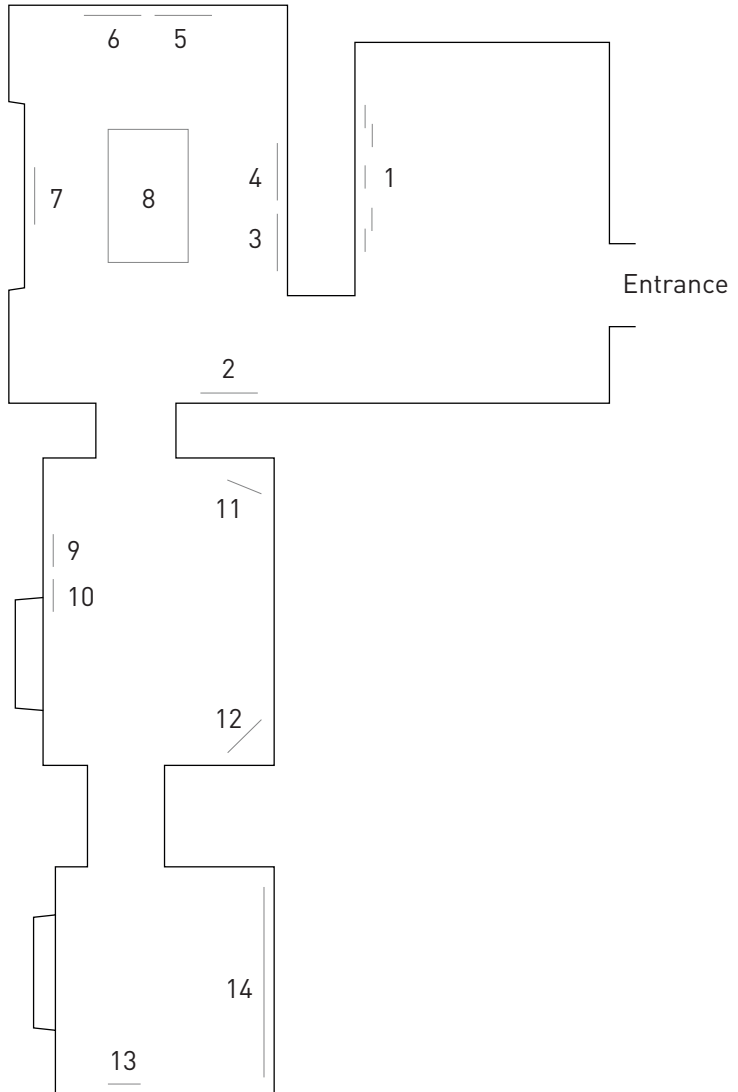
Alva Gotby, *They Call it Love. The Politics of Emotional Life* (2023)

bell hooks, *All About Love* (2000)

- 8 Beatriz [Paul B.] Preciado, *Kontrasexuelles Manifest* (2003).

Şeyda Kurt, *Radikale Zärtlichkeit. Warum Liebe politisch ist* (2021).

Audre Lorde, *Scratching the Surface. Some Notes on Barriers to Women and Loving* (1978) sowie *Uses of the Erotic. The Erotic as Power* (1978)



1 Laura Cemin, *In between. The warmth.*, 2017-2020

Photo series on fine art paper, objects in variable materials

Courtesy: the artist

2-8 Robert Gabris, *MY COUNTRY, MY BLOOD*, 2017-2020:

2 *Landscape of Dreamed Love*, 2018

coloured pencils on paper, framed, 100x70 cm

Courtesy: STRABAG Kunstforum, Wien

3 *Landscape of Excretion 2*, 2020

coloured pencils on paper, framed, 100x70 cm

Courtesy: STRABAG Kunstforum, Wien

4 *Landscape of Excretion 1*, 2020

coloured pencils on paper, framed, 100x70 cm

Courtesy: STRABAG Kunstforum, Wien

5 *Landscape of Dreamed Love*, 2018

coloured pencils on paper, framed, 100x70 cm

Courtesy: STRABAG Kunstforum, Wien

6 *Landscape of Departed Love*, 2018

coloured pencils on paper, framed, 100x70 cm

Courtesy: STRABAG Kunstforum, Wien

7 *Landscape of Naive Love*, 2020

coloured pencils on paper, framed, 100x70 cm

Courtesy: STRABAG Kunstforum, Wien

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8 *My Emotional Landscape*, Wien 2017 – 2020

red fineliner 0,25mm on paper and 260 needles with written emotions, 190x100cm

Courtesy: the artist

9-12 Anna Lerchbaumer, *3 verpasste Anrufe am Babyphone*, 2023:

9 + 10 *Stillen ist Stillen*

Turned wooden parts, black MDF

Courtesy: the artist

11 *Sanftes Wiegen - ein Aufprall und die Hilfe der Hormone*

Metal frame with baby weighing motor, black MDF, turned wooden elements, rubber ball

Courtesy: the artist

12 *Alles schaukeln - FOMO trifft auf Realität*

Automatic baby cradle, white sculpture, rain gutter bead

Courtesy: the artist

13+14 caner teker, *tools for anarchiving*, 2022

soap, distilled sweat, distilled leather trousers, olive oil, aluminium, sizes variable

Courtesy: the artist

- 12 **Laura Cemin** (1992) is a Helsinki-based Italian artist active in the fields of visual and performing arts. Although her work always originates from a performative action, it can appear in multiple media and forms, such as text, photographs, and installations with objects. She received an MFA from Umeå University of Fine Arts in 2019; previous to her Fine Art education, she worked professionally for Ballet West, a dance company based in Salt Lake City (USA). Her work has been presented internationally in galleries and museums, such as Bildmuseet (SWE), Museum für Neue Kunst (DEU), Tallinn Art Hall (EST), Kiasma (FIN), and the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York. Her dance performance “How the Land Lies” has recently been selected for Aerowaves Twenty23.
- www.lauracemin.com**

Robert Gabris, born in former Czechoslovakia, lives and works in Vienna. He studied at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (SK) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. His artistic work deals with multiple questions of identity, queerness, and marginalisation in normative social structures. Drawing as an experimental form serves thereby as a method of resistance against exclusion and racism. In addition to drawing, the artist uses a variety of media: from poetry to performance and sculptural objects. As part of the Roma community, he is also strongly committed to the community. Most recently, his works have been shown at the Bergen Assembly / Bergen (NOR), the Temporary Gallery, Cologne (DEU), The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York (USA), documenta fifteen, Kassel

(DEU), among others. Robert Gabris is the current recipient of the Belvedere 21 Art Award.

www.robertgabris.com

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Anna Lerchbaumer is a sound and video artist, based in Vienna. In her work she reflects the relationships between environmental issues, humans, and technology. The artist works with found objects and seemingly discarded material/garbage. Anna Lerchbaumer creates volumetric installations in which the sculptural aspect plays an important role. She spans a field between performance, music, and visual art. Objects become instruments, balloons become performers and field recordings become spatial installations. Anna Lerchbaumer combines obsolescence, raw material things spatially as well as acoustically to create humorous and critical connections. Solo exhibitions, exhibition participations, and performances have been shown at Krinzinger Projects, the Head Office, and Vienna Art Week, as well as internationally like in China, India, and Japan. The artistic, philosophical long-term project, Toxic Temple, in collaboration with Kilian Jörg was published as a book in 2022 by Edition Angewandte / de Gruyter, and deals speculatively with waste and pollution.

www.annalerchbaumer.com

- 14 **caner teker** graduated as Meisterschülerin at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and studied at SNDO - School for New Dance Development, Amsterdam. their work deals with the entanglements of identity, labor and postmigration in the context of their personal experience as a German-Turk and the stories of her own family. caner's practice is described as transformative, parasitic, queer, and anti-capitalist. In 2020, caner received the Förderpreis für Bildende Künste of the city of Düsseldorf and was Guest Fellow at PACT Zollverein. caner has shown performances at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (DEU), Les Urbaines, Lausanne (CH), Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin and Atonal Berlin (DEU), among others. The performance karadeniz premiered in 2021 at tanzhaus nrw and HAU- Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin (DEU). In 2022 caner was a danceWEB scholarship holder and performed at Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin, Haus der Kunst Munich and Tanzquartier Wien. caner teker is one of the 3 winners of the ars viva-price 2024.

Curator: Bettina Siegele

Production Management: Cornelia Reinisch-Hofmann

Exhibition Architecture: Paul Irmann & Lukas Klestil

Booklet: Milena Thurner

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EVENTS

24.05.2023 | 17.30 tour with the curator

03.06.2023 | 15.07.2023 | 11.00 exhibition tour Art & Coffee

12.07.2023 | 19.00 ARTIST TALK with Robert Gabris & Bettina Siegele

Current information about events

in the context of the exhibition can be found at:

www.kuenstlerschaft.at



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Kunstpavillon: Mittwoch – Freitag 12.00 – 18.00 & Samstag 11.00 – 15.00

Neue Galerie: Mittwoch – Freitag 12.00 – 17.00 & Samstag 11.00 – 15.00

Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen: Auf Anfrage

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