

The installation takes place in the cellar of Kurzbauergasse, which is normally closed to students and has seldom been used as an exhibition space before. The cellar is comprised of a long brick hallway, with storage rooms on the side which house old artefacts, the building's air compressor, and mold-making and casting relics from the Academy. This underground, subconscious level of the building reveals the infrastructure of the building itself through the tangle of exposed pipes and cables which run along the ceiling like blood vessels or skeletal structures. Using this space meant that I would not displace anyone else from their work space for my own exhibition.

The starting point for the sculptures which are installed in the hallway was the problem of my own spine - I have a fairly severe curvature of the spine, and it's something I've been neglecting for a while. Making a sculpture of this phenomenon was a way to finally confront the issue. By systematically dissecting the chaotic, unruly core of my own body it was possible to view it instead as a machine, with the individual vertebrae connecting like parts. Plaster casts of vertebrae and spinal discs and three aluminum casts of contorted spines are arranged on a wooden table with two levels. The table also holds several small metal boxes, steel molds, and broken graphite crucibles, which were used in the metal casting process. The archival, systematic arrangement is an opportunity to coldly and scientifically inspect an out-of-control scenario.

The second table in the installation has a surface made out of sand-cast aluminum, which was made by melting down and re-casting scrap metal and old artworks. The undulating texture of the surface is taken from a cast of an enlarged skin surface. Three kitchen utensils (a spoon, knife, and fork) which were used for mixing the molten aluminum, are placed on the surface. Pellets of condensed graphite and metal suggest vessels or cups on the table. When researching the history the cellar I heard a rumor that workers of the building had had a secret bar down there - this fantasy of a subversive place for eating and drinking informed the work. The lower level of the table holds the exhibition text as well as three large hand-made metal storage boxes.

Both tables were constructed from weathered wood which was originally found in the trash and then used for the construction of various functional things in the studio over the years. The dirty, burnt, and pencil-marked surface of the wood is contrasted with the thoughtful construction of the tables themselves. The window-like object hung on the wall is a failed experiment from several years ago; in this context the work seemed to gain new value. The surface of the material - galvanized sheet metal - is the same as the surface of parts of the functional infrastructure of the cellar. By being resourceful and repurposing used and de-valued materials from my past, the sculptures give an importance to my recurring daily physical labor in the building over the years.

The doors of two storage rooms on the side of the hall were removed from their hinges to frame a view onto the dimly-lit contents of the room. In exposing and framing this view, the forgotten objects from the Academy's past are linked to my individual sculptural practice; both are given equal value. The question of the limits of my own body in relation to sculptural practice is placed within the history of other artists and manual workers in general who used their bodies up on the way to realizing their work.

Irina Lotarevich  
*The Metabolic Spine*, 2021



A wooden table with a light-colored top and legs, positioned in the foreground of the hallway. The table is divided into several sections. The top section contains a large black tray filled with numerous small, dark, irregular objects, possibly components or parts. Below this, there are several smaller black trays, some containing white objects. The table is set on a concrete floor, and the walls are made of stone.

EXIT























120

