A … kademie der
bildenden Künste Wien

SCHWEL LE

Exhibit Galerie
Schillerplatz 3, OG 1
1010 Wien

10. 9. – 18. 10. 2026

A…kademie der bildenden Künste Wien
Exhibit Galerie
Schwelle
10.9.–18.10.2026

Artists
Ralo Mayer, Stine Ølgod, Maria Petschnig,
Michaela Schweighofer, Adrien Tirtiaux

Curated by
Ingeborg Erhart
Sofie Mathoi

Programm

10.9. – 13.9.2026, 12 – 19 h
Astoria Artshow
Astoria Garage, Trautsongasse 4, 1080 Wien

14.10.2026, 18 h
Screening „Beautiful and Neat Room
by Maria Petschnig, Topkino, Rahlgasse 1, 1060 Wien

16.10.2026, 16:30 h
Artist Talk with Stine Ølgod and Michaela Schweighofer,
Exhibit Galerie

Schwelle

An exhibition space on the first floor cannot be reached without intention – especially not if it is located in a university building on Vienna's Ringstrasse, designed by the famous historicist Theophil Hansen, who also planned the parliament. It is no coincidence that you stumble into it while strolling. The Exhibit Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, although it shares the foyer with the Gemäldegalerie already positioned by Hansen on the bel étage, is an exclusive place. The exhibition project *Schwelle* tries to smooth out this inhibition threshold and, at the start of the „art season", even before the start of the winter semester, offers different perspectives on spaces that need to be rediscovered. Due to renovation work in the Gemäldegalerie, an additional threshold into the exhibition rooms has to be overcome via the side entrance.

> What separates the inside from the outside —
> and what connects it? A wall, a pane of glass, a convention.

Schwelle brings together five artistic positions that not only address this transition, but also physically challenge it. The artworks of Ralo Mayer, Stine Ølgod, Maria Petschnig, Michaela Schweighofer and Adrien Tirtiaux move into spaces and spheres, shift their contours and question who owns space — who occupies it and how. The rooms of the Exhibit Gallery are also up for inquiry.
Sounds of excavation work, metallic scratching on stone, the rhythm of an excavation interrupted by the beeping of a metal detector draw attention to a video work shown on a cube monitor standing on the ground. Ralo Mayer, who has long been concerned with questions of extraterrestrial ecologies in relation to anthropology and colonialism, has meteorites dug. The installation *Notes on Saal 5* draws an arc into the meteorite hall of the nearby Natural History Museum, shows graphic representations of meteorites as well as texts written in Kurrent script, but also neon posters that play with imaginary events around meteorites and asteroids and point from the gallery into the public space.

Stine Ølgod's photographic shadow collages in the largest room of the Exhibit Gallery are more ephemeral. Taken at places of passage and transition, such as train stations and clandestine meeting places, the artist mounts the images on mirrors, creating effects that surprise the viewer and give them perspectives that make them something like „spies". The object-like framing transforms the images into devices, into analogue spy ware, so to speak.

Windows are the focus of the video *Vasistas* by Maria Petschnig. After a cut from the street view into the rooms behind it, intimate situations not intended for the public form the foil on which the artist performs and reacts to the strange sceneries, sometimes using her own body sculpturally. Adrien Tirtiaux dissects the exhibition space and even the academy building as a whole with his installation *Kreis / Lauf (Circulation).* The passage space between the two large gallery rooms is analysed in detail, the exposure of a window leading to the stairwell, which is hidden behind a fire protection wall, is considered and, including the doors, windows and floorboards, is set in rotation as if a huge drill were eating its way through the building, as if it were building a tunnel.

> A threshold marks access and exclusion at the same time, is an invitation and barrier in one, forms gaps and interstices that in turn enable autonomy.

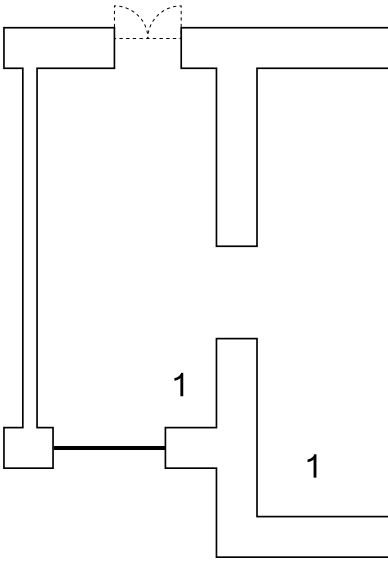
It is precisely in this field of tension, in this ambivalence that Michaela Schweighofer works. Like a detective, she examines spaces, knowing that they are never neutral, and brings together structures of urban architecture and those of furnishings, reads traces and inserts found objects and observations into new constellations in a meaningful way. In the Exhibit Gallery, she leans on the dimensions of the ventilation grilles in the exhibition space, thus referring to the breathing of the building.

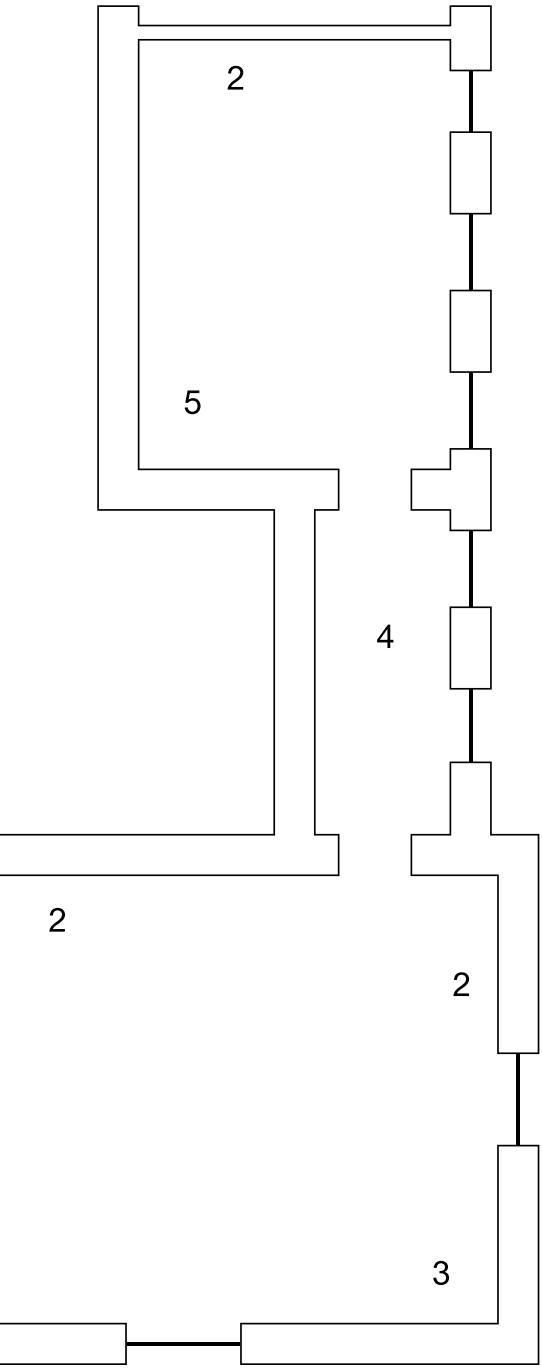
The short film *steppin' out for lunch* by Maria Petschnig seems to be the psychogram of a dilapidated house in which men do not get a floor under their feet with their renovation attempts, on the contrary: it develops a life of its own and casts a spell. With his needs, people enter into an uncanny symbiosis with the building.

As visitors, we cross the thresholds from room to room, each space holds a different aesthetic experience. Visiting the exhibition turns us into performers ourselves – into actors of an „In Between" that takes us close to the limits of the incomprehensible: skylines and rotational movements paused as if at the push of a button, hidden yet public places, transformed bodies, the examination of extraterrestrial material and whatever else may come to mind. Free association and reflection on spatial qualities is expressly desired.

Ingeborg Erhart and Sofie Mathoi

Werkliste





1 Ralo Mayer

Notes on Saal 5 [2026]

Installation consisting of the following components:

(A lattice of stories across time and space that figure the meteorite currently known as) MUONIONALUSTA [2025]
7 natural prints of a meteorite slice;
fine art print of a poem
48 x 50 cm

Saal 5 [2026]
UV Printing on Transparent Paper
300 x 120 cm

10 Posters for the Meteorite Matters Working Group [2026]
Printing on neon paper 84,1 x 59,4 cm
(In collaboration with: Eleanor S Armstrong, Julia Cartwright, Craig Henry Jones, Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, Romane Le Roux, Anton Nikolotov, Aliça Okumura-Zimmerlin, Alana Osbourne, Anaïs Walsdorf

Writing Exercise on the Discussion of Possible Translations of the Term "Asteroid Mining" [2026]
Ink on paper 29,7 x 21 cm
(In collaboration with: Dr. Julia Walter-Roszjár, Co-Kuratorin der Meteoritensammlung des Naturhistorischen Museum Wien)
Text: „Der Bergbau befasst sich mit dem Abbau, der Aufsuchung, Exploration und der Gewinnung von Material und Stoffen, und verrichtet sein Berg-Werk an jeglichem Ort und zu jeglicher Zeit."

Possession 2 (Muonionalusta) [2025]
PAL-Video, mit Ton
24 Min.

2 Maria Petschnig

Blb [2021]

Archival print, framed
34 x 42 cm

``" [2021]

Archival print, framed

38 x 57 cm

sniXx [2021]

Archival print, framed
75 x 55 cm

Vasistas [2013]

HD-Video
05:07 Min

steppin' out for lunch [2013]

HD-Video
06:31 Min

3 Stine Ølgod

Cache (drop off) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
29 x 50 x 4 cm

Lady with a suitcase (hardshell) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
20,5 x 50 x 4 cm

Hi, hi, hi (I C U) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
20,5 x 50 x 4 cm

In transit (key switch) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
29 x 50 x 4 cm

Close monitoring [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
20,5 x 50 x 4 cm

Sanitize (rodepose) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
38 x 50 x 4 cm

Brush pass [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
29 x 50 x 4 cm

Blown (code red) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
38 x 50 x 4 cm

In transit (pick up) [2026]

Shadow collage with POV-frame.
Print on PVC, mirror, metal and wood
20,5 x 50 x 4 cm

4 Adrien Tirtiaux

Kreis / Lauf [2026]

Site specific installation consisting of doors, interior windows, inspection flaps, LED lights, paint dust, connecting elements

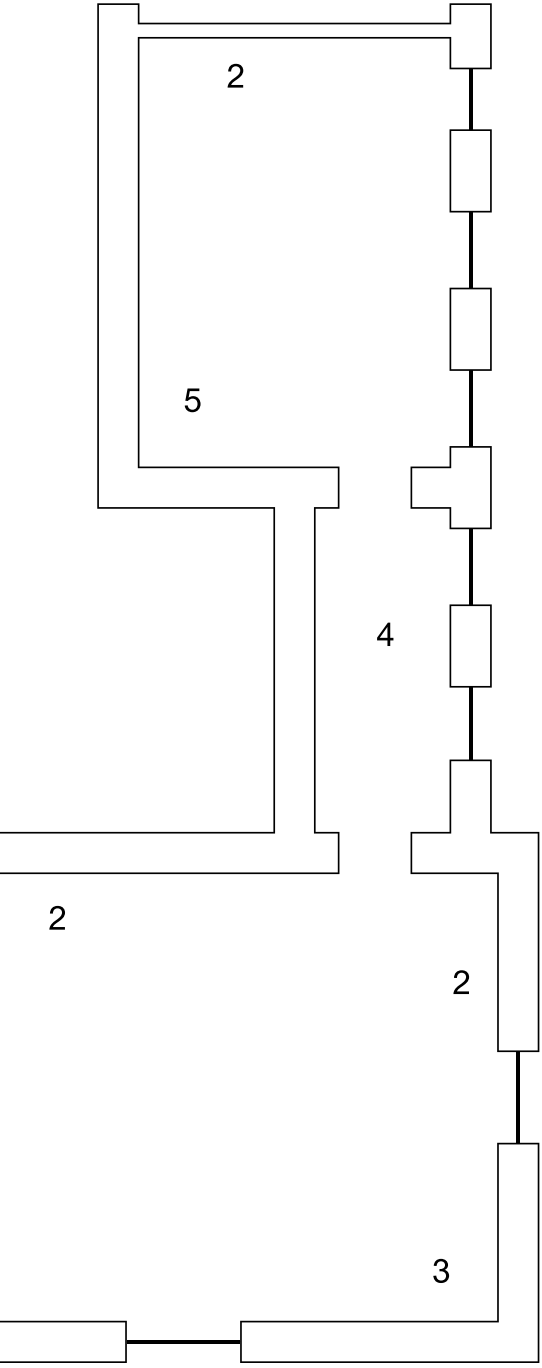
5 Michaela Schweighofer

Thick Air, Thin Walls [2026]

found scarves, silk chiffon,
UV print on chiffon, paper, wood
205 × 55 cm

Private Anger [2026]

found scarves, silk chiffon, paper, wood
130 × 55 cm


2
5
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Künstler_innen

Ralo Mayer

Room 5 of the Natural History Museum Vienna presents one of the world‘s most extensive meteorite collections. At the same time, Room 5 is an archive of extraction: since 1778, extraterrestrial rocks have been gathered here, 4.56 billion years old, collected from all over the world and arranged in display cases according to natural and cultural history. But who searches for these stones – and by what right? It is precisely this question that Ralo Mayer‘s installation *Notes on Saal 5* takes up, speculating on possible additions to the collection and its presentation. Rather than following the scientific narrative, the work traces the economic and political lines running through the collection‘s history: How are meteorites searched for, who is allowed to find, sell, and own them? The installation reads the room as a site of geopolitics in outer space, in which colonial modes of thought – claims to territory, to resources, to what appears „ownerless“ – are perpetuated in contemporary visions of space exploration. The gaze upward and outward, Mayer suggests, is never innocent; it carries with it the extractive logics of the past – while simultaneously drafting those of future space mining.

Posters for fictional events developed together with the Meteorite Matters Working Group.

Document rendered in Kurrent script in collaboration with Dr. Julia Walter-Roszjár, co-curator of the meteorite collection at the Natural History Museum Vienna.

Ralo Mayer, b. 1976 in Eisenstadt, lives and works in Vienna.

Education:

1998–2004 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Conceptual Art
with Renee Green and Marina Gržinić

2001–2002 Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen:
„mur og rum," with Yvette Brackman and Rirkrit Tiravanija

From 2003 to 2008, Mayer was a co-founder of the self-organized Manoa Free University, where he also launched the research series „HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORLDS." In his artistic-scientific doctoral thesis „Space Un·Settlements" at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Mayer examined the interrelations between scenarios for future life in outer space and more earthly realities here on our planet. Ralo Mayer's work has been shown in international museums, at film festivals, conferences, and theaters, and has received numerous prizes and grants. In 2024, the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Austrian Science Fund awarded him a „Disruptive Innovation" postdoctoral fellowship for his transdisciplinary research project „Plots of Un·Earthing," on human engagement with meteorites as a pre-enactment of future space mining scenarios.

Vasistas, which happens to sound like the German „Was ist das?“ („What is that?“), is said to be the French word for the small transom windows found above doors — supposedly named because German-speaking visitors, encountering them for the first time, kept asking exactly that question. They are also known as „fanlights“ (or, more literally in German, „fighter windows“ — Kämpferfenster). For Maria Petschnig‘s video work, the title carries a charge of tension, conveying a sense of voyeurism that is at once forbidden and arousing. The scenes open with a window filmed from the street. A cut — and suddenly one finds oneself inside, with the sensation of having stumbled into a setting to which one was never invited. Figures, mostly groups of men, believe themselves unobserved. Through montage, the artist inserts herself into these scenes, performing with her body — deploying costume fragments or packing-tape bondage in ways both provocative and at times sculptural — and parodying the presumed events captured in the found, private analogue photographs she continually collects. One figure also recurs across a series of three photo collages, framed like objects and hung in the same room. The collision of different materialities, the oozing of undefined substances, and the open question of whether what we see is devastated interior or artistic intervention, sustain an ambivalent charge that sometimes edges toward the limits of intimacy.

steppin‘ out for lunch, in the third exhibition room, seems to form the psychogram of a severely dilapidated house in which men, attempting renovations, never manage to get solid ground under their feet — on the contrary, the house takes on a life of its own and draws them into its spell. The people, whose faces are never recognizable, enter into an uncanny symbiosis with the building through their own needs. Half-raw chops, unfried meat patties, and

used dishware seem less to satisfy the hunger of those presumably engaged in Sisyphean labor than to symbolize unfulfilled desire.

„It can always get worse.“ — so begins the Diagonale‘s text for the screening of Maria Petschnig‘s feature film *Beautiful and Neat Room* (2025), which will be shown on 14 October 2026 at 6 p.m. at the Topkino.

„It can always get worse. That is the one rule Marie can count on in her attempts to find temporary roommates for her rented apartment in Brooklyn, NYC. At $47 a night, the room is unbeatably cheap — but in exchange, it rains into the kitchen, and the place is so cramped that there‘s no getting out of each other‘s way. In a satire as idiosyncratic as it is precise, Petschnig tells of the small animosities and carelessnesses among roommates.“

The psychological and physical relationship between people and (living) space has occupied Maria Petschnig for many years, and she balances deftly on the threshold between affinity and repulsion — a tightrope act.

Maria Petschnig, born 1977 in Klagenfurt, lives and works in Vienna.
She studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, at the Royal College of Art, London, and at Wimbledon School of Art, London, and works as an artist and filmmaker.

Her work engages with themes of memory, voyeurism, and intimacy, drawing on a range of media including video art, experimental film, and feature film. Her often psychologically charged and deliberately unsettling works interrogate power relations and the role of the audience as observer. Petschnig’s work has been shown internationally, including at MoMA PS1, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and Anthology Film Archives in New York, and has been reviewed by renowned outlets such as The New York Times, Artforum, and Art in America. In 2021, her first documentary, Uncomfortably Comfortable, was released, following the life of a homeless man in New York. The film premiered at the Duisburg Documentary Film Festival and won the ARTE Documentary Film Award. Her feature film Beautiful and Neat Room (2025), inspired by her own experience living with more than 60 roommates, won the Grand Prix at the Split Film Festival. As she told The New York Times, cohabiting like this was “a way to survive as an artist in New York.”

Stine Ølgod

The nine-part *"shadow collages"* series takes public urban architecture and the surveillance bound up with it as its subject. The photographs show transitional spaces and ephemeral functional architecture — in this case "The Mall" at Landstraße Wien Mitte, a train station combined with a shopping centre. It forms a threshold for travelers and locals alike, between public buildings, administration (the tax office), and a zone of consumption.

As in shadow play, the collages emerge through the use of light and shadow. By letting sunlight shine through layers of photographic prints, coloured paper, and cut-out shapes, the artist creates the motifs. The collages are analog by nature, yet are captured as digital photographs — a shifting between levels that is also reflected in the pictorial content of the series.

Pictograms of walking, female-coded bodies bring movement into the otherwise static images. They deliberately replace the pictograms usually read as male.

The feeling of being observed, and the act of looking itself, run through the entire work as a recurring motif: additions attached to the sides of the frame, overlapping the picture surface by a few centimeters, already hint at this situation of observation. It is reinforced above all by the mirror onto which the collages are mounted using transparent film — here, viewers themselves become observers and, at the same time, part of the scene. Different lines of sight emerge, and echoes of the first-person perspective familiar from video games evoke further associations for the viewer.

Stine Ølgod, b. 1989 in Copenhagen, Denmark,
lives and works in Vienna.

Education:
2014–2019 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Art and Space | Object
2012–2014 University of Fine Arts Hamburg, Time-based Media

Exhibitions (selection): “Drop off,” Plateau, Vienna, 2026; “LIVE DEMOCRACY!,” public space Vienna, 2025; “Scopaesthesia,” Pilot, Vienna, 2024; “Dunkelblau riecht Salzig, Gelb schmeckt bitter” (Dark Blue Smells Salty, Yellow Tastes Bitter), Kommod, Vienna, 2023; “Kribbel” (Tingle), Kunstverein Zink, Vienna, 2023; “Zeit” (Time), House of Spouse, Vienna, 2022; “Pending Objects pt. II,” New Now, Frankfurt a. M., 2021; “Bis wir Gesichter haben” (Till We Have Faces), with Katharina Schilling, Galerie AAAA, Vienna, 2021; “Pending Objects,” Galerie 5020, Salzburg, 2021; “Getaway,” with Mads E. Hvidtfeldt, Stiftung, Vienna, 2020.

Michaela Schweighofer

Michaela Schweighofer examines architecture, furniture, and domestic objects as testimonies to social norms shaped by gender, power, intimacy, and inherited notions of family. Drawing on sacral architecture, flea market finds, textiles, and painting, she develops sculptures that oscillate between furniture, shrine, and cabinet. Found scarves and metal fragments become materials through which intimacy, sexuality, and vulnerability are negotiated in an ongoing dialogue between artist and object.

For her contribution to *Schwelle*, Schweighofer searches the exhibition spaces for traces of functional architecture and exposes these structures. The work *Thick Air*, *Thin Walls* nestles against the building's ventilation system, whose course becomes openly visible on one wall, disrupting the aesthetic evenness the exhibition space was intended to project. In doing so, the work turns the wall itself into a threshold: what is conceived as a neutral, enclosing surface reveals itself to be a permeable boundary, behind which functional and infrastructural systems are hidden. Schweighofer turns this concealed layer outward, raising the question — in keeping with the exhibition's theme — of who the space actually belongs to: the institutional fiction of the pure white cube, or the invisibly co-regulating technical and normative structures that first produce it.

Michaela Schweighofer, b. 1983 in Graz, lives and works in Vienna and Brussels.

She studied English Studies, Philosophy, and Psychology, as well as Fine Art at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and HFBK Hamburg. Solo exhibitions include Loggia, Vienna (2026), WIELS Affiliate, Brussels (2024), and Komplot, Brussels (2023). Her work has most recently been shown at Kölnischer Kunstverein and at Martins&Montero, Brussels.

Adrien Tirtiaux

The space Adrien Tirtiaux chose for his installation is itself already a threshold: a passage and connecting space located behind a staircase, whose function is defined solely by its relationship to the surrounding rooms. Not a place to linger, but one to pass through — architecture as a pure medium of circulation. Tirtiaux takes this transitional logic of the space as the starting point for a radical inversion: he strips the room of precisely those elements that organize and simultaneously control its permeability — doors, interior windows, floor inspection hatches — and reassembles them into a new, self-contained structure: a circular form suspended in the room. The doors, taken down from above, together with the windows form a circle. Tirtiaux deliberately uses no new materials, working instead with what he finds on site. What once enabled transitions — between inside and outside, visible and hidden, accessible and closed off — becomes a self-referential form without direction or destination.

This deconstruction of the threshold elements simultaneously exposes their quiet authority. Doors and windows regulate who sees and is seen, who enters and who remains outside; inspection hatches conceal the infrastructure that makes a space functional in the first place, without ever appearing themselves. By removing these elements from their unobtrusive, service-oriented position and condensing them into an autonomous, space-claiming form, Tirtiaux makes visible what usually exists only in the mode of function: architecture shifts from an instrument of demarcation to an object of contemplation.

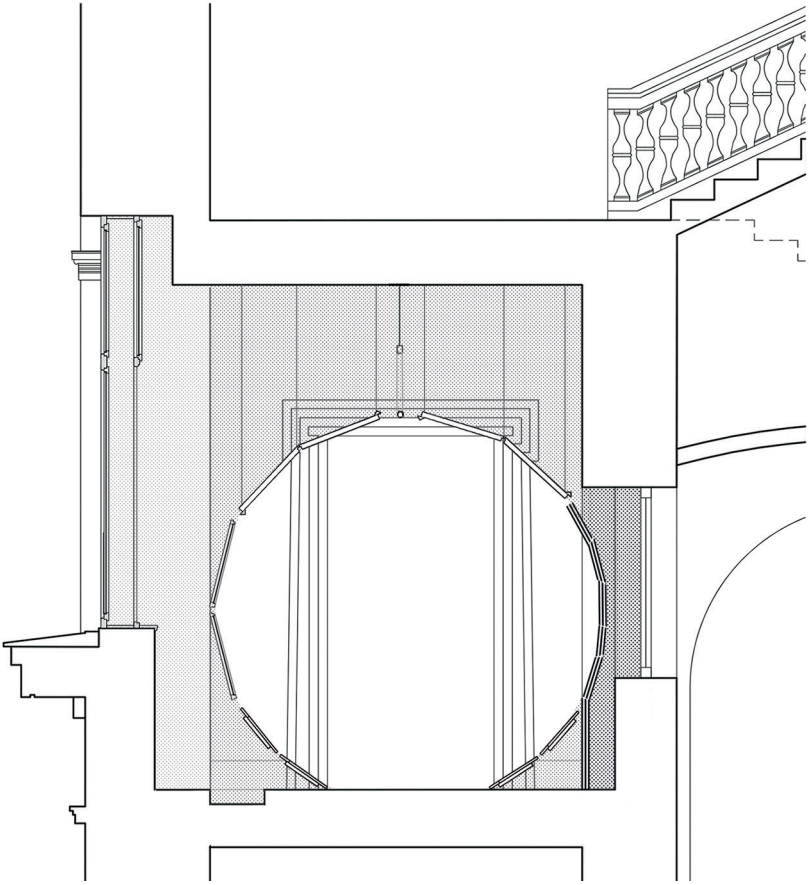
The second, quieter part of the work carries out this logic in reverse. In its original architecture, the room had windows facing the staircase — another threshold, now erased, between two circulation spaces of the building. A later fire-safety wall completely sealed these openings; the window now exists only as an absence, as forgotten information within the wall's structure. Tirtiaux approaches this buried trace with a remarkably restrained intervention: he removes only the topmost millimeters of paint from the fire-safety

wall, making the outline of the window behind it legible again — not as reconstruction, but as a retracing, an uncovering of a boundary archived within the building itself. Where the first gesture is expansive and sculptural, this second one stays at the surface: minimally invasive, almost restorative, yet equally consistent in its interest in what architecture conceals.

Both gestures — the circle formed from removed threshold elements and the careful uncovering of a vanished window — can be read as two registers of the same question underlying the exhibition *Schwelle*: to whom does a space belong, and who determines where it ends? Tirtiaux answers this question not discursively but constructively: by turning the material carriers of demarcation into the work's raw material itself, thereby demonstrating that every threshold is always also a decision — about visibility, accessibility, and the silent labor by which architecture makes spaces into what they appear to be.

Adrien Tirtiaux (b. 1980 in Brussels, Belgium) lives and works in Antwerp. He studied architecture and civil engineering at the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium, and from 2003–2008 studied Performative Art and Sculpture with Monica Bonvicini at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

His work has been exhibited at major institutions in Belgium (Bozar, M HKA, Bruges Triennial) and internationally (Manifesta 7, Secession Vienna, Marta Herford, Taichung Art Museum). In recent years he has also created several permanent public artworks in Belgium, including for the city of Maaseik (2025), Haren Prison (2022), and ING's headquarters in Louvain-la-Neuve (2021). His works are held in public collections including M HKA and Middelheim Museum in Antwerp, as well as MAK Vienna. Tirtiaux is represented by Galerie Martin Janda in Vienna.



Adrien Tirtiaux, *Kreis / Lauf* [2026]

Imprint

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