



Bettina Scholz

Lage der Fiktion

State of Fiction

Selected works 2012-2023

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1) Intro/Artist Statement

My work includes painting, drawings, objects and installations. The most shaping influences for this come from areas that reflect the artistic inventiveness of humankind: from art history, film, literature and music. There is a common thread that connects the works from the different fields: the series of glass paintings. In this series, I deal with sacred images, Gothic book illumination and church art, but also with the visual and musical world of contemporary fantasy and science fiction.

What connects times and epochs? And how are they artistically transformed?

In many works from all groups of works, visual influences from my childhood in the (then) GDR can be found, in which art nouveau-inspired, Eastern European fairy tale illustrations played just as much a role as the fantastic, image-rich world of Michael Ende's books, which found their way to us, sometimes illegally, from "the West". The fact that Ende's storybook "Momo" was banned in the GDR and thus considered dangerous to read is one of my most impressive memories from that time. It showed me that works of fantasy can have an enormous influence on what we call reality. That's another reason why the influence of fiction still interests me today. For me, the fantastic, the invented, in an artistic context has nothing to do with escaping the world or trivialising it, but, on the contrary, can stimulate independent thinking or even develop rebellious potential.

In addition to the glass paintings, I create works with other materials, such as chalk paintings on canvas, sculptures that emerge from painting, objects made from found materials and drawings. I am interested in the possibilities of fiction, fantasy and association as tools that help us to think beyond everyday life, the actual state, and to connect different times, media and themes. Thus, grimacing gargoyles sitting on the roofs of Gothic cathedrals to ward off ghosts find their way into my paintings and objects, as do poems by Gertrude Stein or electronic music from the club culture of the big cities. Also with regard to the present, in the field of tension between negative and positive fiction, between fake news, conspiracy theories and Netflix series with strong images, I keep circling around the central question: What is the state of fiction?





2) Glass paintings



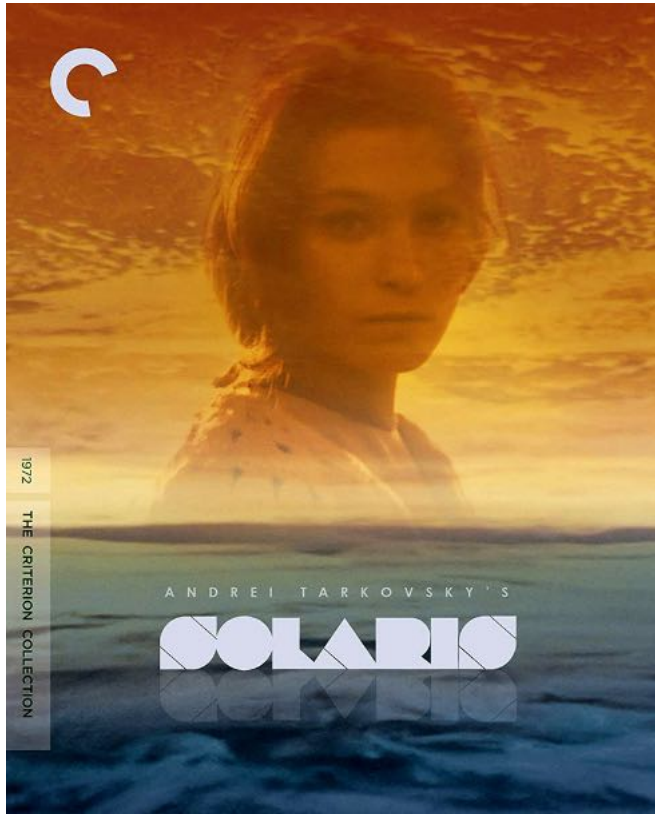
"(...) Inspired by film, literature, but also by Joseph Cornell's surreal showcase boxes, Scholz layers iridescent painterly levels in acrylic paint, ink and spray paint as well as relief-like picture assemblages between up to three levels of glass, tinted acrylic glass or coloured MDF panels. During the process of creation, the painting surface usually lies horizontally on the floor and is worked on from above - associations with Jackson Pollock's Drippings emerge. In further working phases, the pressure of the smooth surface of the glass has a physical effect on the still wet paint, creating streaks, gradients or crystalline structures that seem random or are reminiscent of chemical processes - as if the painting had actually created itself. Here, too, one could draw comparisons to Surrealist painting techniques, the Rorschach technique or Gustav Metzger's fluid Liquid Crystals projected between glass plates, probably the most impressive examples of "auto-creative" art. In between, however, there is also work with composed cavities in which reliefs are depicted, structures or objects are incorporated. Behind the smooth, shiny surface of the glass plate, a multi-layered pictorial space of intense radiance and almost uncanny depth opens up, seductive like the surfaces of smartphones or tablets that can be activated by touch. When viewed in context, the individual panels, which glow in different colours, are also somewhat reminiscent of apps on the iPhone display. At the same time, they make use of old, even sacred techniques and traditions, suggesting coloured church windows or votive shrines and thus making parallel realities and times visible. (...)"

Exhibition text (excerpt) by Eva Scharrer (2018)

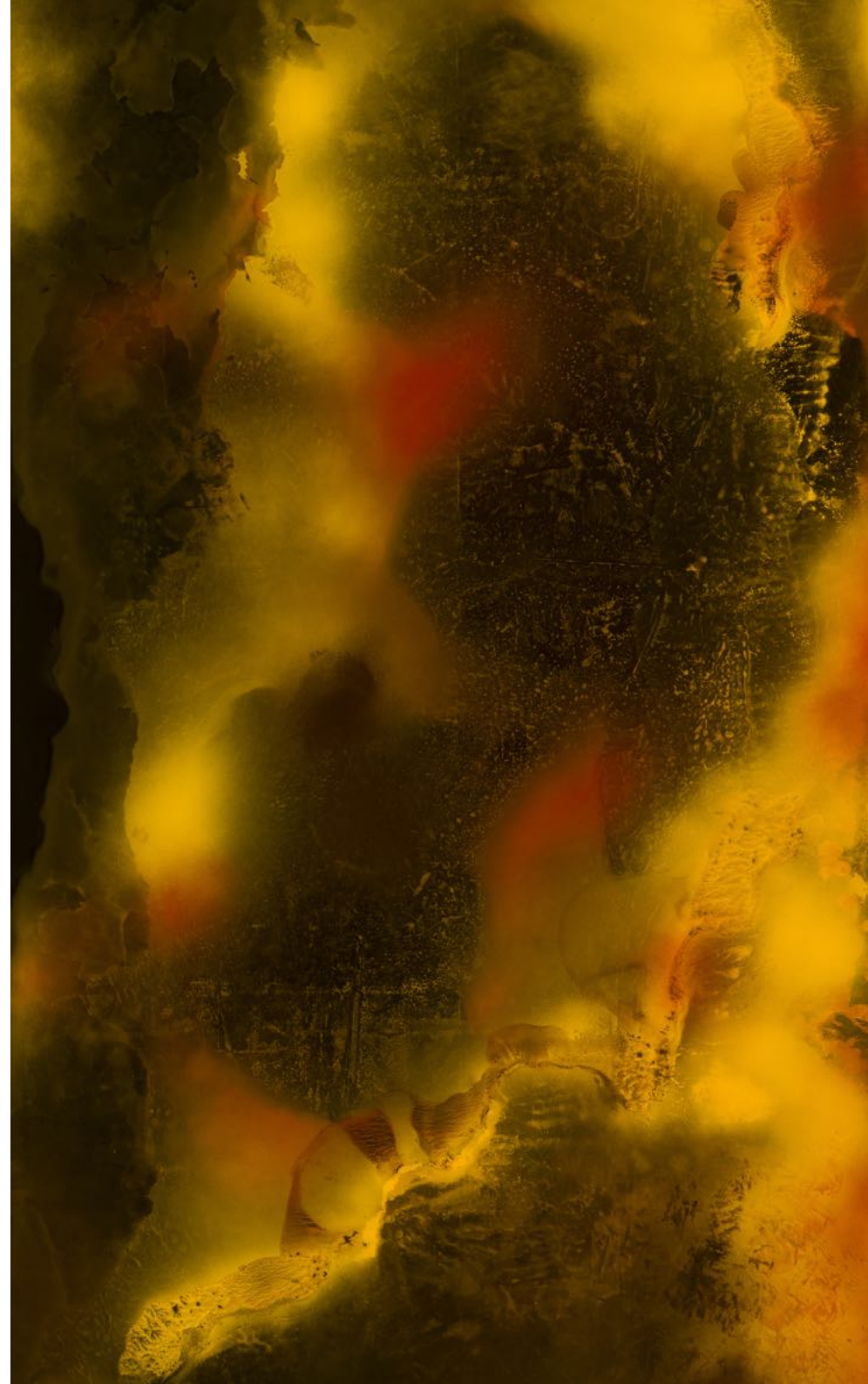




Left: Ivan Bilibin, Firebird from Russian Folk Tales, illustration, c. 1905, Right: Bettina Scholz, Firebird, oil and pastel on MDF and Plexiglas, 100 x 120 cm, 2022, Page 6: Glass painting Sleeping Movement of Plants and Drawings, studio view 2012, Uferhallen, Berlin, Photos: Marcus Schneider



Right: Glass painting based on the film music of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, created in connection with the exhibition "Hyper! A Journey Into Art And Music", Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, 2019, photo Marcus Schneider







Glass painting Blade Runner (after H.Z. and B.W.), after the soundtrack to the film, with exhibition views (pages 9, 10 and 11), "Hyper! A Journey Into Art And Music", Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, 2019, Photos: Marcus Schneider and Bettina Scholz





" (...) In the three paintings Bettina Scholz has created for the HYPER! exhibition, she has expanded the circle of her elective affinities to include the field of music. In her earlier paintings, she mainly focused on influences from literature and film. One of her works from 2017 is titled Magnon (after L.R.). The acronym stands for the writer Leif Randt and his acclaimed science fiction novel Planet Magnon. The story is set in a parallel universe where an emphatic, interest-balancing artificial intelligence rules the humans. The humans, in turn, consume a drug called Magnon, the consumption of which promises enhanced cognition - a constructive intoxication of a very different kind. Bettina Scholz imagined the colour of this drug and painted a bronze-coloured picture.

Now music comes into play: Bettina Scholz stays in the realm of science fiction and chose three scores to three science fiction films as her new elective affinities, to which she painted associatively - or synaesthetically. Synaesthesia is, in short, multi-perspective perception. You hear music and see a colour in your head. A synaesthetically acting painter can, for example, try to match a colour tone that she sees when listening to a certain music. Bettina Scholz chose Edward Artemiev's film music for Andrei Tarkovsky's Solaris, Hans Zimmer's score for Denis Villeneuve's Blade Runner 2049, the Queen soundtrack for the B-movie Flash Gordon.

(...) Bettina Scholz paints pictures that are like alchemical pours of paint. Many viewers see apocalyptic motifs in these paintings, so rich in associations are her abstractions, which she always frames behind glass. Through the distance plane of the glass and the resulting reflections, but also through the use of strong, bright colours, Bettina Scholz's paintings often remind us of oversized smartphones or tablets, gigantic back-glass screens (...)."

Text: Max Dax, Hyper Diaries, 2019

<https://www.deichtorhallen.de/halle4/hyper-diaries-4>

Glass painting on the left: Queen (after F.G.), spray paint and ink on MDF and Plexiglas, 230 x 130 cm, after the soundtrack by Flash Gordon, 2019, photo: Marcus Schneider, page 11 left: Panel discussion on the exhibition Hyper!..., right: Exhibition view, Deichtorhallen Hamburg, 2019



Left: William Blake, The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed in Sun, 1803-1805, right: Untitled after William Blake, pastel, ink and charcoal on wood and Plexiglas, 2022, Photo: Marcus Schneider





Exhibition view: Bettina Scholz – Drift, SETAREH Galerie, Düsseldorf, 2019, photos: Ivo Faber



Exhibition view: Black Album/White Cube, group exhibition, Kunsthalle Rotterdam, 2020-2021, Foto: Bettina Scholz

3) Sketchbooks



Years and Years - Sketchbooks, 2020 - ongoing

I started these sketchbooks in the first pandemic year 2020 and have continued them regularly since then. In the meantime, books with over 400 drawings and collages have been created. They are both (visual) diaries and places where I record new ideas. While projects and exhibitions were cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, they opened up a multitude of new possibilities for me in a small space.

Sketchbooks are the smallest studio unit. They don't need an expensive physical space. They are mobile studios. They are also cheap and comparatively sustainable in terms of material consumption. They elude easy exploitation on the art market because they cannot be consumed quickly at fairs or the like, but need certain exhibition and handling conditions. At the same time, they allow for a maximum of artistic freedom and can represent large designs and dissolute ideas in a very confined space. They are an ideal engine for new inventions.

Photos: Sketchbooks: Marcus Schneider, Cinema 4D designs (room views): Bettina Scholz and Rasmus Bell

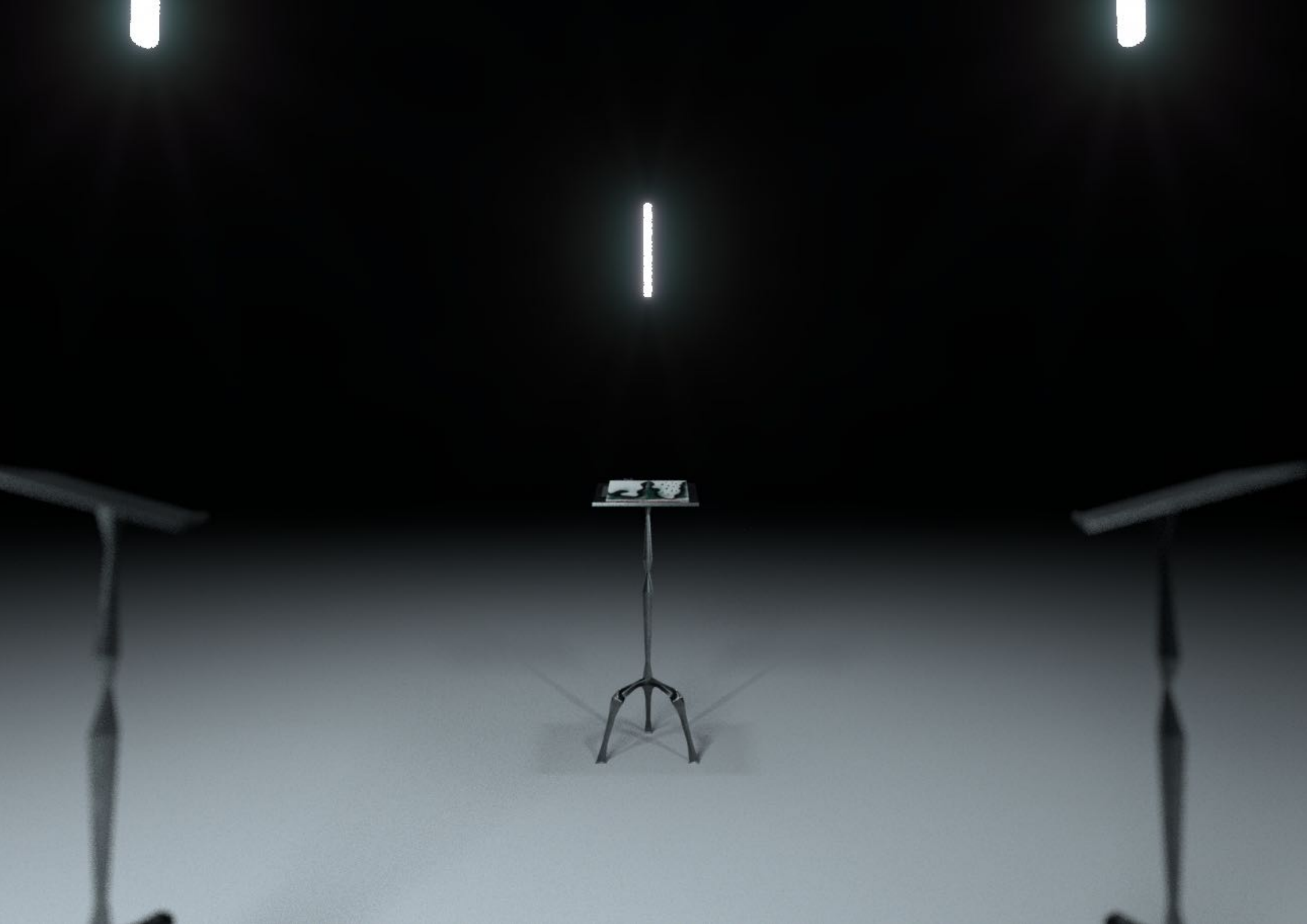






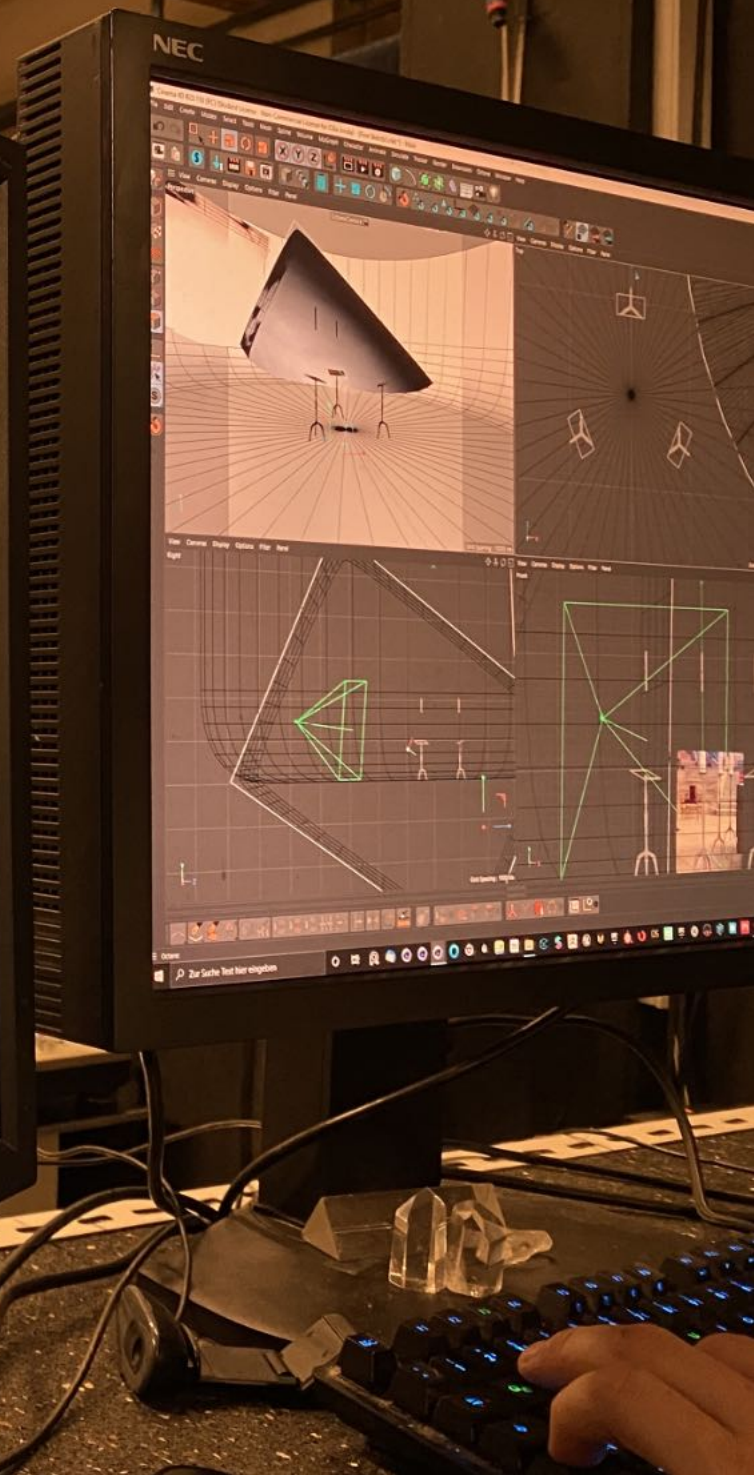
Years and Years sketchbooks 2020 - ongoing, installation with different lighting design, Cinema 4D design, 2022 (work in progress)













4) Objects



Backbone can be read as a self-dissolving image, as something that questions its individual parts and itself. At the same time, the work refers to the phrase "having a backbone" - this seems to be just lost here. Backbone is either in a final process of dissolution or in a state of metamorphosis: in the midst of transforming into a new, different thing, object or image.

Page 26 The work Backbone in the group exhibition On Equal Terms, Uferhallen, Berlin 2022, Page 27-28: Backbone (side view), Mdf, glass, frame, spray paint, 2012, Photos: Marcus Schneider, Marlene Gawrisch







My sculptures and objects are "side arms" of painting and drawing. They develop from ideas that emerge from working on the sketchbooks or from painted pictures and the questions they contain. In terms of content, I usually revolve around the same themes as in painting. At the same time, they give me the opportunity to explore the boundaries of painting and to recognise and examine my own thought patterns and design principles.

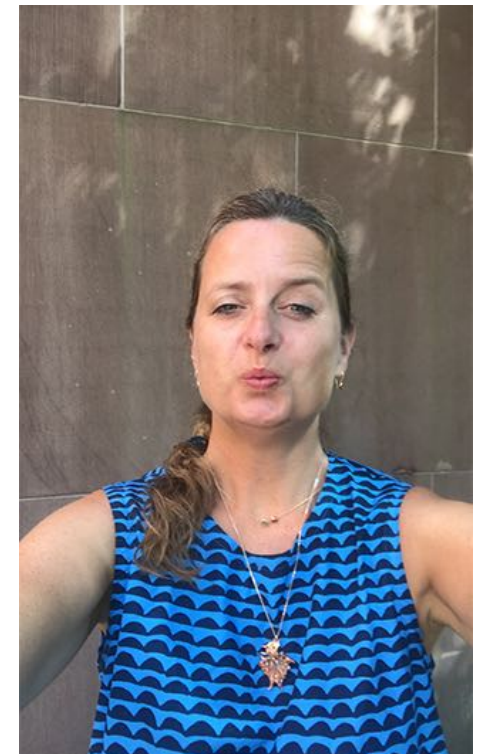






The Gargoyle Jewellery Edition was created in the midst of the pandemic from a painted image (see previous pages). The reason for this work was the unprecedented isolation in which many, if not all, people found themselves at that time. I gave this jewellery edition to friends and acquaintances and saw it as a community-building work - as hopefully encouraging greetings from the isolation.

Gargoyles (= gargoyles/fantasy creatures) are depicted in sacred art, fantasy and science fiction as beings capable of warding off evil spirits. The edition was published in an edition of 77. The number 77 is considered to be a lucky number, it is still treated as a special number today, for example in LOTTO.



A series of ceramics developed from the Gargoyle project in 2022, based on the leaf mask of the Bamberg Rider. The occasion for this was the exhibition Zeitregen, Kunstverein Bamberg, (together with Jochen Plogsties), 2022



Pedestal sculpture of the Bamberg Rider (top left) with ceramics relating to it (selection three of seven), various sizes, 2022, Photos: Susanne Zeile



Ohr (Big Ear Radio, The Light Has Changed) is inspired by the Big Ear Radio Telescope at Ohio State University. In 1977, it received the so-called WOW! signal from space, the origin of which has apparently not been clarified to this day. One serious possibility is that the signal represented an interstellar communication attempt, i.e. the establishment of contact between extraterrestrial life and Earth. Space travel and the exploration of the universe are areas in which fiction and reality, facts and dreams, mix again and again. To this day, they are the occasion for novels, films and art, but also for political power games, which is why they particularly interest me - not only in the science fiction genre.

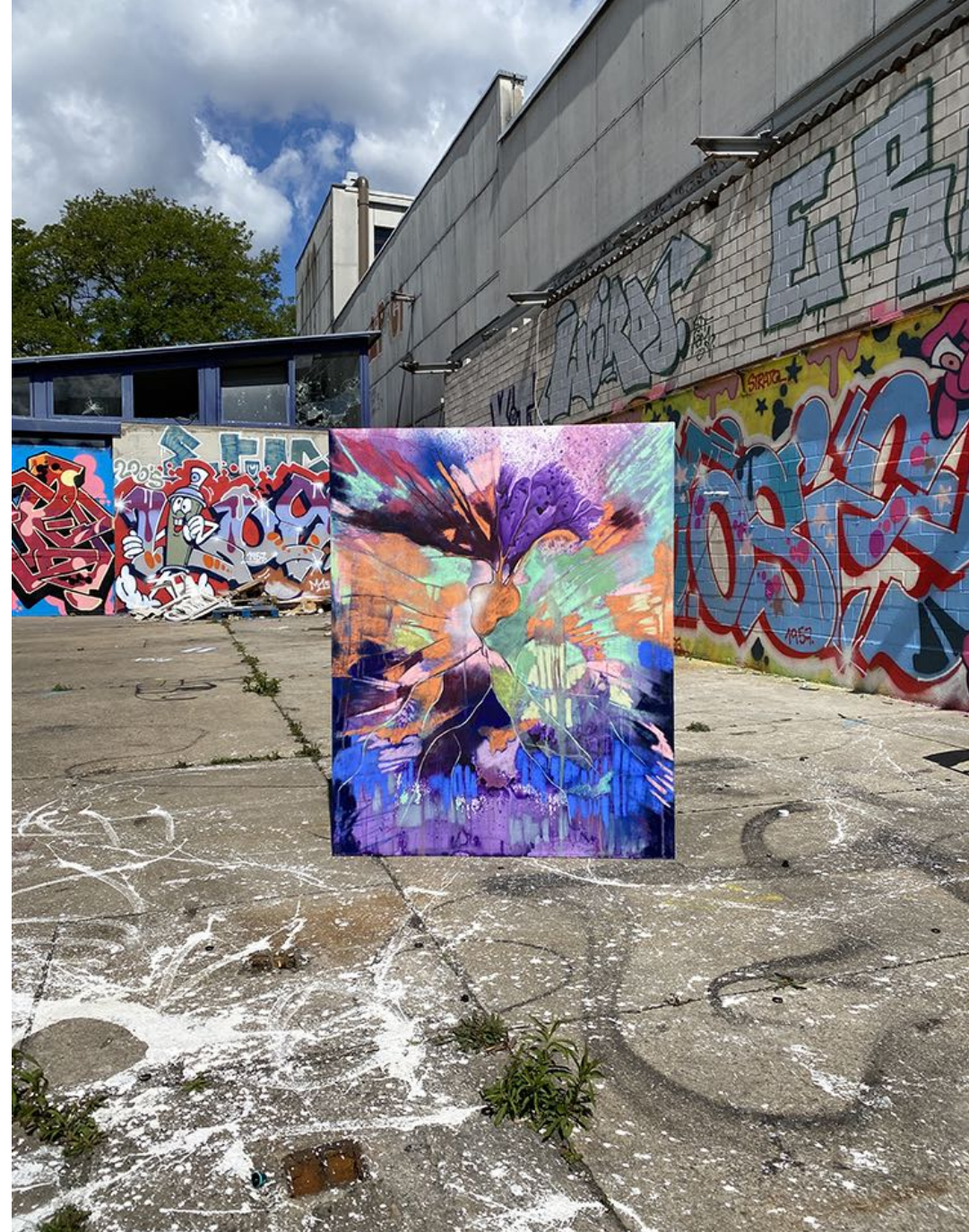
Page 35 left: Ear (Big Ear Radio, The Light Has Changed), oil on plaster mould, black glass plate, 2017, page 37 right: Exhibition view Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, 2019, Photos: Marcus Schneider, David Brandt





5) Chalk paintings





The chalk paintings were created from the Years and Years sketchbooks and from designs for planned stained glass windows. Like my other works, they often refer to films, literature, painting or music, and I particularly investigate the effect of images from the Middle Ages to the present day.

Page 37: The Good and the Bad, pastel chalk, charcoal and acrylic, mural, 340 x 530 cm, studio view, 2020

Page 38: Gargoyle, A Day in 2120, City of Angels (from left to right), all images: Pastel chalk, ink and acrylic on canvas 150 x 120 cm, 2020 - 2021

Page 39: Studio view, Uferhallen, Berlin 2021

Page 40: City of Angels, pastel chalk, ink and acrylic on canvas, 150x120 cm, 2020

Page 41: Flying Form, Wandering Plant, Troy, (from left to right), all images: Pastel chalk, ink and acrylic on canvas 150 x 120 cm, 2020 - 2021

Page 42: Studio views, Uferhallen, Berlin 2021







7) Unrealised Project: *State of Fiction*

Exhibition created with Cinema 4D













8) Links to Interviews/videos/podcasts (selection)



Video, StrrrTV, 2018 (German with English subtitles)

<https://www.strrr.tv/episodes/4/6>



Video, Artist Talk mit Michael Stoeber (Autor, KUNSTFORUM) und Jochen Plogties (Künstler), 2022 (in German)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14XEwGJU4PA>



Podcast, DIGITAL (ÜBER)LEBEN, Kunst im Wandel, Folge 1, Host: Nicola-André Hagmann, 2022 (in German)

<https://digitalueberleben.podigee.io/>