

Application for the call

Exhibition „Kunst-TANDEM-artistico“

Galerie Vivere Arte, Wiesloch

Funded by the Heimann Foundation

Joint exhibition concept by Vitalii Fedotov and Mimi Kohler

The planned collaborative work by Vitalii Fedotov and Mimi Kohler transforms the Vivere Arte gallery in Wiesloch into a public bath that serves not only as a physical, but also as a metaphorical place of encounter. Inspired by the long history of public baths, which in many cultures, including ancient Greece and Rome, served as centres of hygiene, sociability and places for political or philosophical debate, Fedotov and Kohler's interaction with the space encourages visitors to free themselves from cultural, linguistic and social boundaries in a symbolic act.

Historically, public baths in Italy were more than just places of personal hygiene; they were social meeting places where business was conducted and political and philosophical debates were held. Places like the famous Roman baths were not only architectural masterpieces, but also central points of social life that offered physical and spiritual regeneration. Fedotov and Kohler take up this tradition and reinterpret it by staging the jacuzzi as a modern "festive ritual".

This site-specific work also refers to an artist residency for both artists, which was sponsored by the Heimann Foundation in 2018. One evening towards the end of the residency, an actual Jacuzzi bathtub became a meeting place that brought all the participants together in an extraordinary way. The seemingly ordinary jacuzzi in the basement of a flat was transformed into a vibrant place of community and openness. Something that was intended for maximum intimacy and relaxation was not only not disturbed, but extended to a whole group of people "beyond its capacity". The relaxed and welcoming atmosphere of the water facilitated an unprecedented closeness among all 12 artists in the fellowship, both emotionally and physically. This unexpected encounter led to a deep emotional exchange and connection that the participants had not previously experienced with such intensity.

At the centre of the planned exhibition is a sculpture depicting a Jacuzzi bathtub. This will not only be presented as a work of art, but also as an interactive installation made of various materials such as clay, wood, polyester and polystyrene.

Another dimension that Vitalii Fedotov and Mimi Kohler deal with is the aftermath, the physical transformation of the body. Both refer to the skin that is washed to emphasise the sublime "commonality" that literally crumples identity by mixing up all the fingerprints. This transient phenomenon of skin maceration occurs when hands and feet remain in water for extended periods of time. The sculptures utilise the unmistakable fingerprints, the most intimate signs of human touch, to initiate a discussion about individuality and collective experience. Each object bears the unique lines of its creators, becoming a direct, almost intimate transmission of physical identity.

Both Fedotov and Kohler use clay in their works to emphasise both the transience and permanence of human interactions. The additional depiction of wash skin on the fingertips adds another layer of vulnerability and transience to the objects by visually capturing the natural changes of the skin.

In the gallery, all these objects become central elements of a larger network. They invite the visitor to explore the fine lines and subtle texture of the wash skin, symbolically crossing the boundaries between the self and the other. In this way, Kohler and Fedotov's works act as catalysts that not only connect human relationships, but also build cultural bridges by placing centuries-old traditions in a new context.