



Michèle Pagel
Reisst die Hütte ab!

Großer Saal

06.Mai - 02. Juli 2023

Textheft

Reisst die Hütte ab!

The hut has to go!

Text by Patricia Grzonka

Michèle Pagel's exhibition "The hut has to go!" deals with a familiar theme, which could be shortened to "home builder's dream disaster." On the one hand, this begins with the domestic nuclear family idyll: a father and two possible children, each male and female. The father is represented by a punching bag with a baby carrier, whose weight is held up by a concrete penis anchored in the floor.

The "children" as white trash bags, sit on the floor, a small "Sparkasse" car serves as a toy: a fast vehicle with gullwing doors made of two bank door handles.

Interrupted by four display cases (equipped with Pagel's paintings, graphics, small sculptures, literary cross-references and found objects), we find on the other side of the spatial setting an arrangement that contrasts the realm of the domestic with a global, or rather a "heavenly" aspect: On an oversized mobile suspended from the ceiling on a three-meter-long axis, an angel balances five smaller objects: a half or three-quarter moon,

which would best be described as a disk - which is, after all, how we perceive it - as well as several smaller figures containing antennas. These are young objects of a completely different kind, namely space debris that has long since taken an eternal place in the firmament.

This exploitation and commercialization of space by earthly entrepreneurs meets here with a still dominant belief in religious or romantic notions of redemption in the afterlife.

A cubic globe built of hewn bricks, simply the rotating globe at its pole, provides the frame of reference. The two spheres of the domestic and the global are on opposite sides of the spectrum, but they belong together in terms of content, they are like Ying and Yang and represent the visible and the rear side, just as the moon has a visible and a "dark" side.

Fotos: Brandstaetter-Foundation,
Andrew Phelps,
Sophia Haas

Text: Patricia Grzonka

Art: Courtesy of Galerie Meyer Kainer

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www.mpagel.com



untitled (Wichtel) 2022;
glazed brick, jute cord,

Das muss Liebe sein! 2023
20x30x40cm digital print, framed; 70x100cm

It's Not A House, It's A Home! 2011
solid wood, textile; 60x40x8cm

As a sculptor, Michèle Pagel works with hybrid methods, combining and varying found materials and her own sculptural processes with craft techniques such as ceramics. Also for “The hut has to go!” she elaborated a set of objects made of industrially produced bricks, as they are used in house construction. On display, however, are also some sculptures that were created recently and thematically also revolve around the domain of the domestic. However, the sculptures always retain a raw look and the authenticity of the material. The children in folkloristic clothing, for example, are made of tin legs in combination with a concrete bag for the torso, whose volume, slightly bent in the area of the “shoulders,” is reminiscent of slumped, lifeless bodies. Essential to many of Pagel’s works is an overlap in content through bringing together various objects and ideas. Body parts are replaced by functions. The “White Trashbag #2 (Infantin)” that is, the white garbage bag, is the child, its “tip” is the hairstyle. Thus Pagel works with a figurative and metonymic superimposition of meanings and images, exaggerating typical things or representing them literally.



White Trash Bag #2 (Infantin), 2023
white concrete, steel, 80x30x75cm

Solide Anlage, 2023
concrete, steel, bronze 140x30x45cm

o.T. (Flügeltürer), 2023
brick, steel, bronze 90x45x50cm



o.T. (*Flügelträger*), 2023
brick, steel, bronze 90x45x50cm



Solide Anlage, 2023
concrete, steel, bronze 140x30x45cm



Das Nest, 2021
wood, metal, ceramics 120x90x30cm



White Trash Bag #2 (Infantin), 2023
white concrete, steel, 80x30x75cm



White Trash Bag #1 (Stammhalter), 2023
white concrete, steel, 40x40x80cm



Blut und Boden, 2023
concrete, steel, mortar
500x200x50cm

Das Nest, 2021
wood, metal, glazed bricks
120x90x30cm

White Trash Bag #1 (Stammhalter), 2023
white concrete, steel,
40x40x80cm

We easily recognize in this small group a very specific “type” of family. Particularly bitter, because it presumably corresponds to reality, is the fact that a representative of the mother is missing. This particular space of the domestic, characterized by a home-builder mentality, manages without a female element because it is a man’s world anyway. Michèle Pagel’s thematic series can be understood like social scene portraits: Sometimes it is the office world, visualized by personalized houseplants, other times a series of bird figures, which in quirky combinations - a parrot with a typewriter - point to conventions and everyday working worlds. In her work, often committed to a DIY aesthetic, ideas of the commonplace collide with the fantasies of the individual. Pagel’s works often also refer to very concrete problems and address abuse, sexism, or classist themes and, more generally, also deal with environmental and capitalist issues.



Blut und Boden, 2023
concrete, steel, mortar 500x200x50cm



Exhibition View



01 o. T. (Motiv für Baumkalender)
2017 aquarelle on paper

02 untitled (Skizze für Wurstmobile)
2022 aquarelle on paper

03 untitled (Haus als verstopfte Pore)
2018 aquarelle on paper, bound

04 untitled (Shrimp) 2017
glazed brick

05 05 untitled (Motiv für Baumkalender) 2017
aquarelle on paper

06 untitled (BRD Schlapfen)
2017 glazed brick



07 Frauennotruf
2015 concrete, matchbox cars

08 untitled (Motiv für Baumkalender)
2017 aquarelle on pape

09 untitled (Sketch for exhibition „Pollys Cracker“)
2019 aquarelle on paper

10 untitled (Sketch for exhibition
„Pollys Cracker“)
2019 aquarelle on paper

11 untitled
(Sketch for „Alina Dreamer“)
2022 aquarelle on paper

15 untitled (
Sketch for exhibition „Pollys Cracker“)
2019 aquarelle on paper

12 untitled (Sketch for „Grilfriend Material“)
2019 aquarelle on paper

13 untitled
(Sketch for „Alina Dreamer“) 2022
aquarelle on paper

14 untitled
(Sketch for „Alina Dreamer“) 2022
aquarelle on paper



16 16 untitled
 (Motiv für Baumkalender) 2017
 aquarelle on paper

19 Gartensalat mit Hausdressing
 2016 ceramics, glazed

20 o. T. (Sketch for „D'apres une histoire fraie“)
 2018 aquarelle on paper

17 Amanda, Hope, Piper 2013
 quail eggs, concrete

21 o. T. (Sketch for „TREUROPA“)
 2014 felt pen on paper

18 untitled (Sketch for Crrreature Of Habit)
 2021 aquarelle on paper

22 o. T. (Toast)
 2020 ceramics, glazed



24 Sozart & Missi
2015 popcorn, colored concrete

25 Ein Kaufhaus möchte ich sein 2012
acrylic on paper

26 Melted Brick 2021

28 Schweinezyklus
2010 aquarelle on paper, digital print (flyer)

23 untitled (Sketch for „I want to believe“) 2020
aquarelle on paper

27 Die Nordhalbkugel fickt die Südhalbkugel 2018
juice carton lithography

29 untitled (Shrimp) 2017
glazed brick



Exhibition View



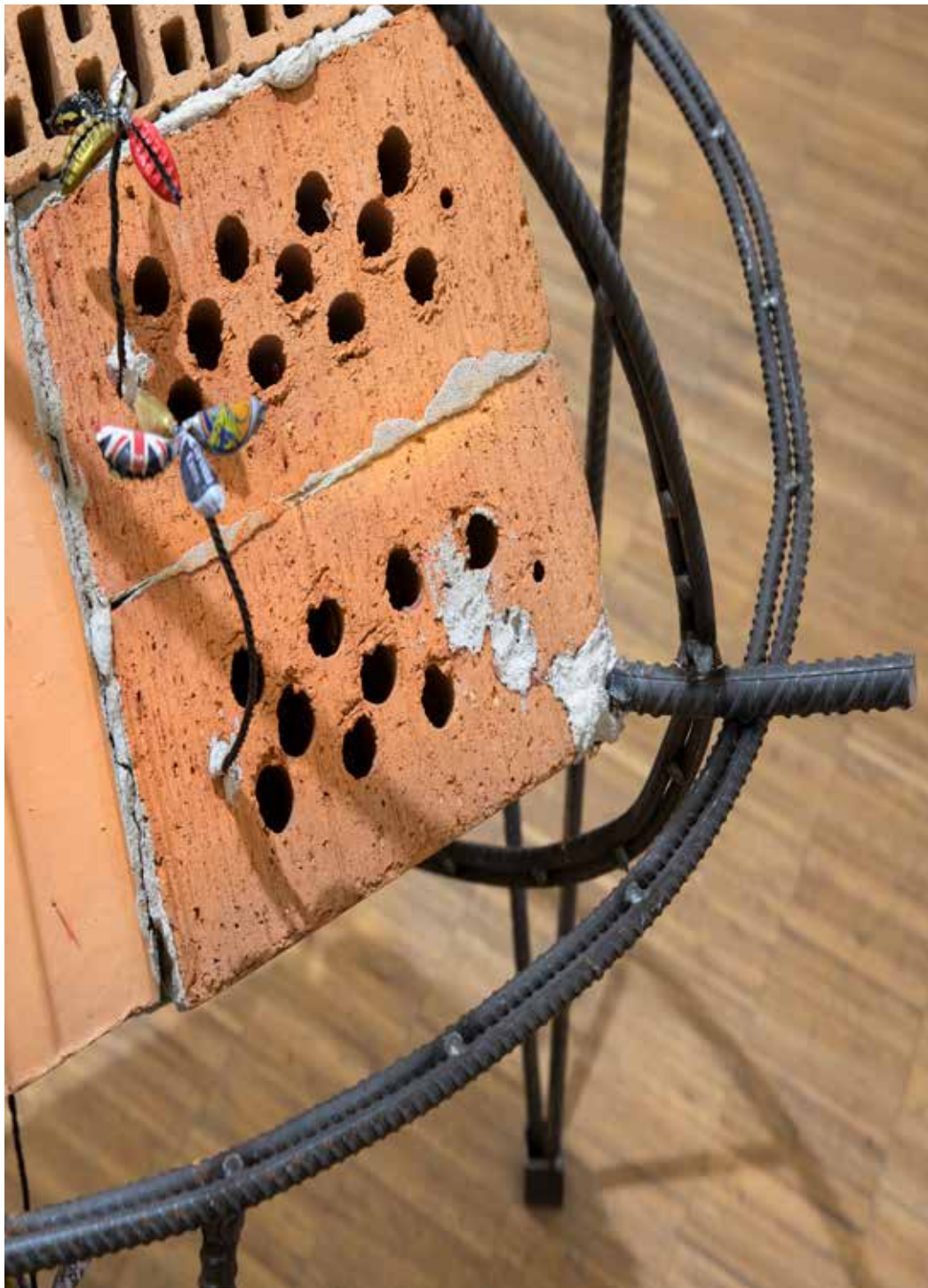
Exhibition View

And this brings us back to the house builder scenario at the Salzburger Kunstverein. For all the cynicism that appears in the works, there is also a certain philanthropy or perhaps an analytical view in them. Here, too, the frame of reference is set much wider on society than is apparent at first glance. It extends to the forced policy of building houses and financing them through a „Bausparvertrag“, a regional form of bank contract, which was used after the Second World War, not only in Austria but here in particular, to tie young families to the home and the workplace. Above all, chaining through a contract to a financial institution - in Pagel's case, the savings bank - is representative of a form of control by the state. The individual ties himself or herself to a fixed job through a building/savings- contract, receives the longed-for house in return, but will then usually also submit to conventional family planning, which brings with it the usual side effects such as a satellite dish, a car with a carport, a leisure subscription to a sports club, and so on.



Lantschern, Gatschen, Quilk, 2014
concrete, steel pipes 40x50x70cm

Wüstenrot or Planet B, 2023
brick, steel, mortar, beer lids 90x90x90cm



Wüstenrot oder Planet B, 2023
brick, steel, mortar, beer lids 90x90x90cm



Lantschern, Gatschen, Quilk, 2014
concrete, steel pipes 40x50x70cm



Sorry We Are Closed, 2023
concrete, steel, ceramics, asphalt 80x85 x120cm

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu examined this mixture of neo-liberalist everyday life in his study "*Der Einzige und sein Eigenheim*," the title of which is a paraphrase of the economics-critical philosopher Max Stirner's "*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*."

Bourdieu's conclusion here is unsurprising: people do not become happier by being bound to so-called "compulsory contracts," on the contrary, buying a house often means financial overload and social isolation, not to mention the ecological disasters that follow as a result of urban sprawl and increased CO2 emissions.

Michèle Pagel addresses such problematic issues and also names things with clear language:
The hut has to go!



Sky Is The Limit or: Maschine brennt 2023
glazed brick, steel, mortar, gold leaf, impact metal 450x300x150cm

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