

**LATEFA
WIERSCH**







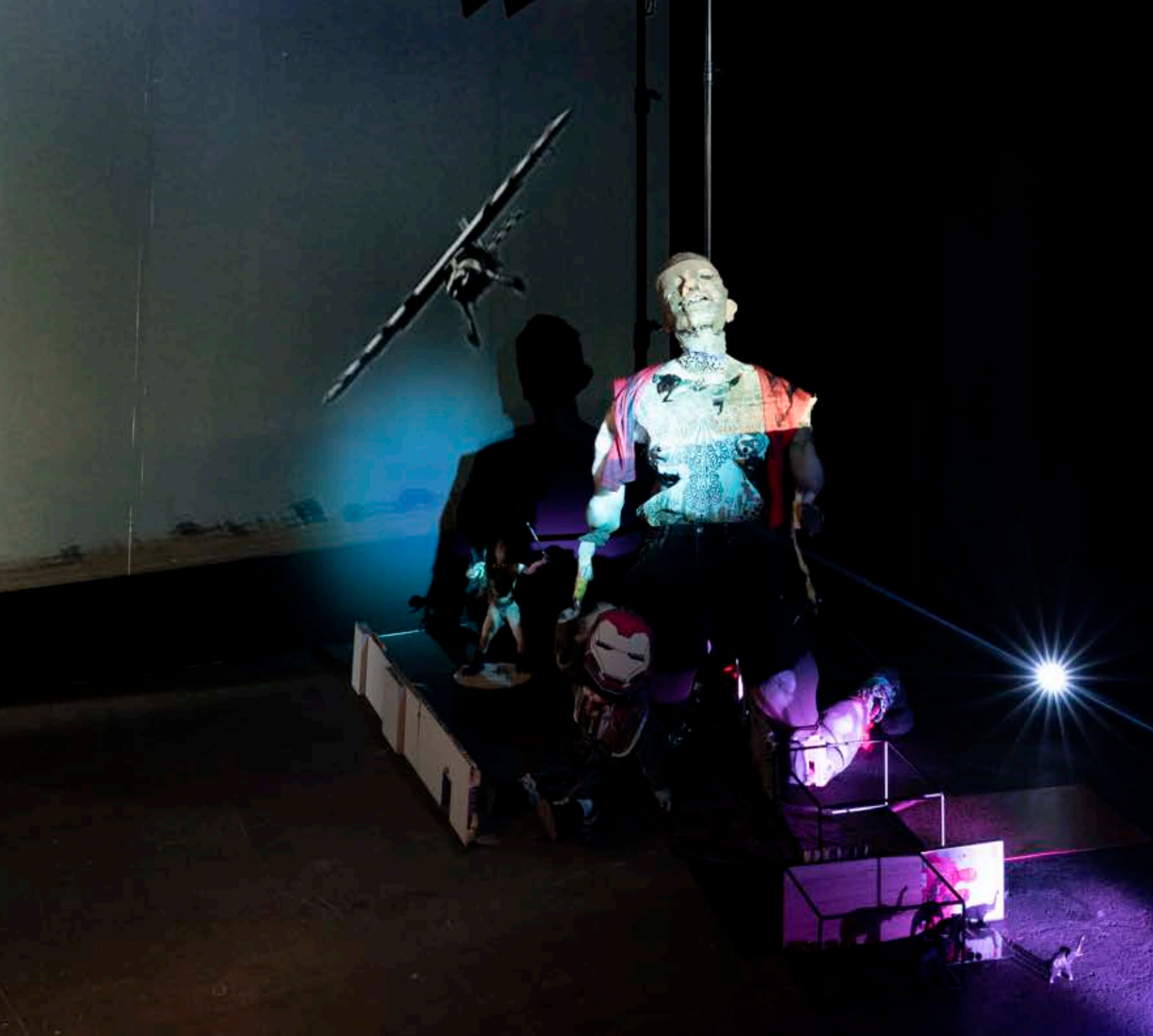












SERENGETI, 2023

The Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, a former German colony, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981. Bernhard Grzimek (*1909-87), a German zoologist and television star, campaigned for it with the documentary "Serengeti shall not die" (1959). In the installation, figures meet the landscapes from the documentary (original excerpts). Their costumes reference Safari, Ranger, and "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" (2022). The Wakanda costumes, in turn, associate with the Maasai who comb for their land until today. Grzimek's zebra airplane stands today as a promotional decorative replica in the Zurich Zoo.







El Hedi steht am Set rum. El Hedi, der nichts zu tun hat, während alle anderen geschäftig tun, während alle anderen die Köpfe zusammen stecken, während alle anderen an etwas sehr Genialem dran sind und in der Pause im plötzliches Gelächter ausbrechen, etwas musste gerade Lustig gewesen sein. El Hedi, der sich zu spät dazu gesetzt hat.

El Hedi spielt seine Rolle gut.

El Hedi stands around on the set. El Hedi, who has nothing to do while everyone else is busy, while everyone else is putting their heads together, while everyone else is working on something very brilliant and suddenly bursts out laughing during the break, something must have just been funny, El Hedi, who sat down too late. El Hedi plays his part well.



Davon abgesehen läuft es schon wirklich gut.

Nach dem langen Tag der Abend, an dem El Hedi auserkoren wird und mit aufs Zimmer darf.

El Hedi im Gehen vor der Treppe, die Blicke im Rücken, El Hedi, der sich strafft und stufenweise wächst.

El Hedi's Triumph über alle Blicke im Rücken, Triumph, der besser schmeckt, als die zu erwartende Lust.

Apart from that, things are going really well. After a long day, it's the evening when El Hedi is chosen and allowed into the room. El Hedi, walking in front of the stairs, the looks behind him, El Hedi tightening up and growing step by step, El Hedi's triumph over the looks behind him, triumph that tastes better than the expected pleasure.























































YELLOW, OR WHAT NATURE IMPLIES, 2023

Yellow, or What Nature Implies asks about the political implications of bodies. Bodies, that symbolize so-called foreign lands and cultures. Bodies that are a link to previous generations we have never known and to places we have never been. Places we have never been. Bodies in which we live. Bodies as fixed ideas. For example, of the exotic. Bodies that move, liberate and transform.

The performance confronts social constructions of "untouched" nature, which in the western hemisphere by supposedly apolitical high-definition camera pictures of landscapes, or by images of scantily or traditionally dressed indigenous people. indigenous people have been nourished. Images that serve to make the case for conservation, national pride or tourism, but which simultaneously manifest racist stereotypes. Meanwhile, images like these are being replaced by those that show a multicultural, "colorful" world of togetherness. Yellow, or What Nature Implies situates contemporary

conservation as the cultural heritage of humanity in the context of historical, colonial stages. The performance chooses as its starting point the gold rush in California, triggered by the Swiss Johann August Sutter, self-appointed colonel and founder of the private colony "New Helvetia" in today's California in 1839, and the establishment of the world's first national park "Yellow Stone" in 1872 by American explorers. Historical and contemporary audio excerpts from various film and television formats form the soundtrack to the performance. They refer on the one hand to (unfulfilled) longings for a connection with nature and on the other to the strategic exploitation of the "Yellow Stone".

Among other things, a report on the toppling of a Sutter statue in Sacramento in 2020 by the initiative of Native Americans is recorded. The contribution comments on how shifts in social power change the view of historical events. It asks about the perspective of the colonized and possibilities for healing.



Serengeti, 2023
Mixed Media Installation
Dimensions variable

(Fog machine, spots, wood, faux leather, faux hair, foam, absorbent cotton, store items Zurich Zoo, model toys, clothing: Marvel costume, Stranger Things shirt/H&M, Nike cap military look, second hand objects and clothing), including a

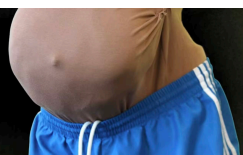
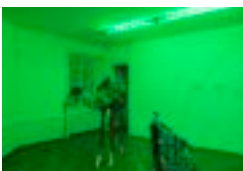
HD video

MP4, 10.37 minutes, Loop, Sound: Belia Winnewisser
Installation view Swiss Art Awards 2023
Images (top): BAK, Swiss Art Awards 2023, Gina Folly, Stills from the Video (below): Latefa Wiersch

[Read Jury report](#)

[Watch short video Clip / Vernissage TV, Swiss Art Awards](#)

[Watch video of the installation with the original footage of Bernhard Grzimek's „Serengeti shall not die“ and clips of the Zürich Zoo](#)



Original Features, 2022

Mixed Media Installation

Dimensions variable,

HD Video

MP4, Stop Motion. 4.52 minutes, Loop, Sound: Latefa Wiersch, Samples Daniel Mezger
Installation view: Original Features, Solo Show, 25.08.-13.11.22, Kunsthau Langenthal

Curated by Raffael During and Eva-Maria Knüsel
Images (top): CE; Still: Latefa Wiersch

[Read Review by Alice Henkes, Kunstbulletin 11/22.](#)

[Saalblatt, Kunsthau](#)

[Langenthal](#)

[Exhibition Text, Kunsthau](#)

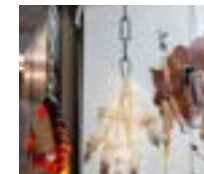
[Langenthal](#)

[Review Art Viewer](#)

Turn Up the Show, 2021

Mixed Media Installation

Dimensions variable, Installation view Werkschau 2021 (Detail)



Museum Haus Konstruktiv Detail) Image: Peter Baracchi

Artist Collective, 2022

Mixed Media Installation (Detail)

Dimensions variable

Installation view „Pulp“, Mouches Volants, Cologne 2022

Black Future Month 2022

Collaboration with Moh Kanim, Anys

Reimann, Theresa Weber, Latefa Wiersch

Invited by Ihsan Alisan

[Read text and view more images here](#)

Artist Collective, 2022

Mixed Media Installation with wall writings, Dimension variable

Installation view „The Puppet Show“
Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, curated by Mohamed Almusibli, artists: Jasmine Gregory, Nils Amadeus Lange, Reba Maybury, Denis Savary, Linda Semadeni, Ser Serpas, Latefa Wiersch. Images: Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève

[Read exhibition text here](#)

[Read Review "The Puppet Show"](#)

[Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève by Olamiju Fajemisin, Flash Art](#)



Yellow, or what Nature Implies, 2023
Performance

Duration 17 minutes



Werkschau, Museum Haus Konstruktiv
2023 and Prozess, Bern/ Bone
Performance Festival, 2023



Concept. objects, choreography: Latefa
Wiersch; costumes: Latefa Wiersch,
Anna Jazewitsch; performance,
choreography: New Kyd, Shebly Al-Baw,
Anna Jazewitsch; Sound: Latefa Wiersch,
New Kyd

[Watch/listen to the short clips used for the
sound of the performance \(references of
the work considering historical and
contemporary Western society's view
Johann August Sutter/ the California Gold
Rush and on Western Nature
Conservatory of the Yellow Stone
National Park/ it's connection to
colonialism:](#)

[John Sutter Statue Comes Down In
Sacramento, CBS Sacramento 2020;](#)
[Princess Mononoke 2007 & 2008; Board
Game „Sutter's Mill Review with Tom
Vasel“, 2009; Yellowstone, Most Watched
Yellowstone Moments \(Part 1\), Netflix](#)



Pudding Club, 2022
Performance

Duration approx. 2,5 hours

Dampzentrale Bern, 2022;
Collaboration with Emma
Murray

Concept: Latefa, Emma
Objects, costumes: Latefa
Choreography: Emma
Performance, Choreografie:
Michèle Benz, Sandra Klimek,
Petr Nedbal; Music: Belia
Winnewisser

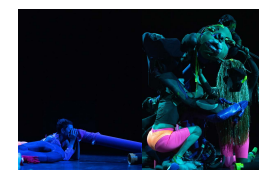
Outside Eye: Simone Augtherlony
Koproduktion: Dampfzentrale
Bern, Südpol Luzern
Images: Yoshiko Kusano

[Watch Trailer](#)

O.T., 2023

**Mixed media Installation,
Four life size figures**

Collaboration with Fiona
Omnes for Systema 2023
with Voiture 14; Installation
view: Palais Carli, Marseille
2023



Neon Bush Girl Society, 2022
Performance

Duration approx. 30 minutes

Swiss Performance Art Award 2022,
Kunstmuseum Lucerne,
Images: Performance Art Award
2022; Dortmund Goes Black Festival,
Schauspiel Dortmund, 2021
Collaboration with Rhoda Davids Abel,
Dandara Modesto

Credits:

Text – Rhoda Davids Abel

Music – Dandara Modesto

Performative objects – Latefa
Wiersch

Performance: Latefa, Rhoda, Dandara

[Watch Video Documentation and
more images](#)

[Read Jury report / Swiss
Performance Art Awards](#)

From everyday materials Latefa Wiersch creates objects and puppets that seem like strange hybrid beings of human, animal, plant. With her installations and performances, the artist reflects on what it means to be human in our society. Kunsthaus Langenthal presents her first institutional solo exhibition.



Kunstbulletin 11/2022
Fokus „Original Features“
25.08.-13.11.22 Kunsthaus Langenthal

Latefa Wiersch - Social clichés skewered with rough pinpricks by Alice Henkes

Like a guide through the exhibition, she stands in the corridor on the second floor of Kunsthaus Langenthal: a life-size figure with a dark beard. The clothing mixes elements of Arab men's clothing with Western sportswear. The face is sewn with rough needle stitches, as if drawn with spontaneous, half-caricaturing, half-searching strokes. The deliberate imperfection, however, also creates a kind of vulnerability and thus gives the figure something very human, something touching. The facial features of the figure are based on those of the main character in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film 'Angst essen Seele auf': El Hedi Ben Salem M'barek Mohammed Mustafa. When the film about the relationship between an aging German cleaner and a Moroccan immigrant was released in 1974, it was celebrated as an anti-racist statement. The situation of the Tunisian-Moroccan actor in Germany was not discussed. It was only in 2011 that filmmaker Viola Shafik elaborated in her documentary 'Jannat'Ali' that El Hedi Ben Salem M'barek Mohammed Mustafa had been treated with great indifference by Fassbinder and his team on the film set and in private. On the screen he might play the leading role, off it he lived in a sphere of invisibility in which most people with an immigrant background found themselves at the time.

Femininity as machine-like

The figure in the white sportswear sweater with a familiar brand logo on the front leads visitors into this sphere of invisibility. A sphere that still exists today in the midst of Western society, where the so-called foreign and other mixes with the repressed and suppressed. A realm full of hidden longings and aggressions, unexpressed fears and desires. In Latefa Wiersch's first major solo exhibition, this sphere of invisibility becomes a place where the banal and the bizarre meet, the hilarious and the brutal, the stirring and the absurd. Wiersch creates figures out of everyday materials and textiles that seem to have stepped out of a Frankenstein laboratory and in which the human, the animal, the machine- like are mixed. In performances they become an equal counterpart to different actors. Horrifying, but also touching, strange, but also very familiar. They are figures that look strange and yet communicate in the same way.

The gaze of the figure in the sports sweater goes in the direction of a small room in which stands a massive object that looks like a mix of human and building. Two huge breasts are emblazoned

above an archway that leads into the figure's interior. The bizarre overemphasis on female body parts makes femininity appear as something monstrous, but also as something purely mechanical: all one has to do is push, pull, rub in the right places and milk will flow, lust, warmth, perhaps even a child will emerge. The figure does not have a recognizable head, but what good is a head? The biology does its job well, there is no need to think about it further. Latefa Wiersch found inspiration for this work in the Swiss myth of the Sennentuntschi, but also in E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale of the 'Sandman' - material that deals with the creation of artificial humans, artificial women. With her interpretation of this, the artist shows a radical confrontation with traditional ideas of femininity, which are only seemingly outdated and pop up again and again in slightly modified form.

It is one of the core themes of the artist, who was born in Dortmund and now lives in Zurich. For several years Latefa Wiersch has been running the Instagram account @artpop_insta, on which she regularly posts photos showing a sewn alter ego, a doll cavorting at parties or in brothel stores, on display in the studio or at art events, in public moments but also in very private situations. With her Instagram project, Wiersch caricatures the trend toward permanent self-portrayal and the mixing of private and professional spheres that has become quite normal, especially for artists. In particular, she also questions how women present themselves in social media: Her artist doll appears again and again in new outfits, with new hairstyles, cool, hip and above all sexy.

Wild and racy?

Latefa Wiersch challenges clichéd notions of femininity by working with drastic exaggerations. In a darkened room of the exhibition, where only the figures shown inside are illuminated with spotlights, sits a doll with a pregnancy belly and thick breasts. A C-section scar is visible on her round belly. Her arms and spread legs are in shiny black sheaths. This figure also has no head, only a luscious dark curly wig that identifies her as a "racy" black woman. The black vinyl clothing emphasizes her "wild" eroticism. Here, too, the seams that hold the figure together are clearly visible. Latefa Wiersch thus shows her way of working, and she also shows how cliché images are constructed, how we concoct ideas about the being of others. Her needle hits the mark, and from the coarseness with which the figure is worked, it becomes visible how inaccurate and empty is the gaze with which we look at and judge others.

BIOGRAPHY

Latefa Wiersch (*1982 in Dortmund, Germany) lives and works in Zurich. She studied Art at the Universität der Künste Berlin and the Hochschule der Künste Bern.

Latefa Wiersch's installations and performances deal with questions around identity and body in the postcolonial present. In order to investigate what it means to be human in our society, the artist often constructs clichéd images. In particular, the doll is staged as an inanimate counterpart. Another focus is satirically dedicated to topics of collective art production, institutional critique as well as to the mixing of private and public as it is presented on social media.

Wiersch won the Swiss Art Award in 2023 as well as of the Swiss Performance Art Award in 2022 in collaboration with Rhoda Davids Abel and Dandara Modesto. She has received grants and awards from the Canton of Zurich, the City of Zurich, among others.

Since 2018, performances which are often developed in collaborative constellations have increasingly taken center stage and could be shown at Horst Art & Music Festival, Vilvoorde (2023), Fondazione Sant'Elia / Istituto Svizzero Palermo (2022), Kunstmuseum Lucern (2022), Schauspiel Dortmund (2021 and 2022), Theater Südpol Luzern (2022 and 2020) and Dampfzentrale Bern (2022 and 2020) and Rote Fabrik Zürich (2022).

Her work has also been shown at Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (2022), at the Palais Carli, Marseille / Systema 2023, Voiture14, with Fiona Omnes (2023); Kunsthaus Langenthal (2022, Solo, and 2018), Museum Haus Konstruktiv (2023, 2019 and 2021), Swiss Art Awards (2023, 2021), Stadtgalerie Bern (2021), Zentrum Paul Klee in collaboration with Dampfzentrale (with Emma Murray, 2019) La Nef, Le Noirmont (2018), Shedhalle Zürich (2018), Dortmunder U (2015), Zentrum für internationale Lichtkunst, Unna (2014), Welterbe Zollverein Essen (2013), and Galerie Adler, Frankfurt (2010), among others.

2024

Upcoming shows are "Apropos Hodler. Current perspectives on an icon" at the Kunsthaus Zürich and "Les inaccoutumés printemps 24," Centre Culturel Suisse. On Tour with la Ménagerie de verre et le festival Belluard Bollwerk in Paris with the installation „Original Features“ 2022, as well as the dance performance „Pudding Club“ 2022, in collaboration with Emma Murray, that will also be presented at Dampfzentrale Bern in February.

Latefa is artist in residence 2024 at the Swiss Institute, New York City.



CV

*1982 in Dortmund) lives and works in Zurich

2017-2019	Master Contemporary Arts Practice Hochschule der Künste Bern
2011 - 2012	Fine Art, Universität der Künste Berlin, Master student
2008 - 2011	Fine Art, Universität der Künste Berlin, Diplom
2007 - 2008	Fine Art, Kunstakademie Münster

ART AWARDS (SELECTION)

2023	Swiss Art Award
2022	Swiss Performance Art Award (in Collaboration with Rhoda Davids Abel and Dandara Modesto)
2020 (and 2023)	Award of the City of Zürich
2019 (and 2023)	Awards of the Kanton Zürich
2024	Artist-in-residence 2024, Swiss Institute, New York City

EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2024	Apropos Hodler. Current perspectives on an icon, Kunsthau Zurich, upcoming; Original Features (Solo) at La ménagerie de verre, Paris, upcoming
2023	Werkschau, Museum Haus Konstruktiv Zürich; Kunststipendien der Stadt Zürich, Helmhaus Zürich; Swiss Art Awards, Basel; Systema (with Fiona Omnes), Voiture 14, Palais Carli, Marseille;
2022	The Puppet Show, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Genf; Kunstankäufe der Stadt Zürich 2011–2018, Helmhaus Zürich; Original Features, Kunsthau Langenthal (Solo); Pulp, Mouches Volantes, Köln;
2022	The Puppet Show, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Genf; Kunstankäufe der Stadt Zürich 2011–2018, Helmhaus Zürich; Original Features, Kunsthau Langenthal (Solo); Pulp, Mouches Volantes, Köln;
2021	Swiss Art Awards, Basel; Galleria Di Berna, Stadtgalerie Bern; Werkschau, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich Cockroach or Queen, Last Tango Zürich

2019	Werkschau, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich Extase, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern / Dampfzentrale, Bern (mit Emma Murray); Festival des Artes, MA CAP, Kunsthau/Centre d'art Pasquart, Biel/Bienne
2018	Cantonale Berne/ Jura Kunsthau Langenthal / La Nef, Le Noirmont; Die Versammlung, Shedhalle, Zürich
2015	DEW Kunstpreis, Dortmunder U
2010	Beast, Galerie Adler, Frankfurt

SINCE 2018 PERFORMANCES / COLLABORATIONS (SELECTION)

2024	*Wiersch/Murray, Pudding Club: Festival Les inaccoutumés printemps 24, Centre culturel suisse with la Ménagerie de verre et le festival Belluard Bollwerk; Dampfzentrale Bern;
2023	Horst Art & Music Festival, Vilvoorde. *collaboration with New Kyd, Anna Jazewitsch, Shebly Al-Baw, Eman Hussein, Yellow, or what Nature Implies: Bone Performance Festival, Prozess, Bern; Werkschau, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich.
2022	*Wiersch/Murray: Pudding Club: Fondazione Sant'Elia / Istituto Svizzero, Palermo. *collaboration with Rhoda Davids Abel, Dandara Modesto, Neon Bush Girl Society: Swiss Performance Art Award, Kunstmuseum Luzern; Rote Fabrik Zürich; Schauspiel Dortmund. *Wiersch/Murray, Pudding Club: Theater Südpol Luzern; Dampfzentrale Bern.
2021	Monsterhood Part II Sennentuntschi, Schauspiel Dortmund
2020	*Wiersch/Murray, Monsterhood I, Theater Südpol Luzern; Dampfzentrale Bern.

PRESS (LINKS)

Flash Art, Review by [Olamiju Fajemisin](#), 12 April 2022
"The Puppet Show" Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève
RTS Radio Télévision Suisse, Florence Grivel, 6 avril 2022
Les marionnettes envahissent le Centre d'art contemporain de Genève
"The Puppet Show seen by Tracy Charlene", Novembre Global
[Latefa Wiersch on Kunstbulletin \(overview\)](#)
Kunstbulletin 11/2022,
[Deborah Keller - Editorial — Auf Spurensuche am Körper](#)

Kunstbulletin 11/2022, [Latefa Wiersch — Soziale Klischees mit groben Nadelstichen aufgespiesst](#), Fokus by Alice Henkes
Kunstbulletin 06/2019, [Digitale Kunst / Latefa Wiersch, Hinweis — Raffael Dörig](#)
Kunstbulletin, Werkschau 2023, [Latefa Wiersch, Notebook — Selma Meuli](#)
Kunsthau Langenthal, Latefa Wiersch, [Original features exhibition text \(English\)](#) / [Kunsthau Langenthal, Latefa Wiersch, Original Features, Saaltext \(deutsch\)](#)
[Art Viewer, Latefa Wiersch at Kunsthau Langenthal, October 7, 2022](#)
[ORIGINAL FEATURES by LATEFA WIERSCHE at KUNSTHAUS LANGENTHAL](#)
[curated by RAFFAEL DÖRIG and EVA-MARIA KNÜSEL \[from 20220825 to 20221113\]](#)
[Swiss Performance Art Award 2022 Jury report \(deutsch\)/ Swiss Performance Art Award Jury report \(French\)/Swiss Art Awards 2023, Jury report \(English/deutsch\)](#)
[Kunstbulletin 01/23, Kunstschaffen im Jetzt — Ein Stimmungsbild, Fokus — Meret Arnold](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Artist Book, Präsenz Editionen Latefa Wiersch: artpop insta
Hrsg. Kunsthau Langenthal und Präsenz Editionen, 2022, ISBN 978-3-906282-28-2
[Natanja von Stosch, Juliet Kothe und Matthias Kliefoth, BOOBS – fe: male bodies in pictorial history, Distanz, 2023, ISBN: 978-3-95476-406-8;](#)
[Barbara Basting und Ramona Brückner \(Hrsg.\) mit Beiträgen von Barbara Basting, Giulia Bernardi, Ramona Brückner, Raquel Brühlmann, Deborah Keller und Corine Mauch. Fotografien von Georg Aerni, Kunst für Zürich. Kunstankäufe der Stadt 2011–2021, Scheidegger & Spiess, 1. Auflage 2022, ISBN 978-3-03942-103-9;](#)
[Priska Gisler, Laura Hadorn, Anna Hipp, Priska Ryffel, Digitales Kapital im Einsatz. Eine Ethnografie zur Transformation digitaler Praktiken in der Kunstausbildung, Transkript, 2022, ISBN 978-3-8376-6435-5;](#)
[Josef Spiegel und Sigrun Brunsiek \(Hrsg.\), freiRAUM-Gründerzeit, Stiftung Künstlerdorf Schöppingen 2012, ISBN: 978-3-937828-30-5;](#)
[Ursula Neugebauer und Katharina Hohmann, Von Inseln und Identitäten. Robinson und Freitag in Genf und Berlin, D'ileset d'identités. Robinson et Vendredi à Genève et Berlin, UdK Berlin 2011, ISBN 978-3-89462-204-6;](#)
Kunstakademie Münster (Hrsg.) New Grass, Münster 2008, ISBN: 978-3-86206-212-6

PRESS RELEASES

„With crude stitches she sews set pieces of humanity into figures that are disturbing, but also pitiable, alienating, but also seem very human. She relentlessly pushes sexualisation and exoticisation to the extreme, so that the sight is almost shameful. Wiersch's confrontational depictions scratch at the power relations between viewer and viewed, reversing them completely - at least for the moment - when the artist brings her dolls to life in performances.“

Deborah Keller, Kunstbulletin 11/22

(...)“the seams that hold the figure together are clearly visible. Latefa Wiersch thus shows her way of working, and she also shows how cliché images are constructed, how we concoct ideas about the being of others. Her needle hits the mark, and from the coarseness with which the figure is worked, it becomes visible how inaccurate and empty is the gaze with which we look at and judge others.“

Alice Henkes, Kunstbulletin 11/22

„non-realism is offset by the imposition of Latefa Wiersch's sculpture ...which present anthropomorphic models (puppets) made of various relational materials including readymade costumes and furniture, satirizing the broad overlaps of the public performance of private life. (‘The operators are giants, interlopers.’, Susan Sontag, ‘A Note on Bunraku,’ Threepenny Review, no. 16, Winter, 1984)“

Olamiju Fajemisin, Flash Art, April 22

„Visitors become extras. In this densely-packed space it is difficult to find somewhere to be. Everything is on collision course, both spatially and temporally. Grzimek's plea for wildlife as a cultural heritage of mankind clash with contemporary references to Black Panther 2, effectively calling into question the meaning of preservation and protection.“

Swiss Art Awards 2023, Jury report

